

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Judge George Birrell

Personal Experience

O.H. 862

ATTORNEY BRUCE BIRRELL

Interviewed

by

Stephen G. Papalas

on

January 5, 1984

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

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INTERVIEWEE: ATTORNEY BRUCE BIRRELL

INTERVIEWER: Stephen G. Papalas

SUBJECT: Kinsman, Bonthrone, Lincoln Zephur

DATE: January 5, 1984

P: This is an interview with Attorney Bruce Birrell for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on the Judge George Birrell project, by Stephen G. Papalas, on January 5, 1984, at 726 Shady Lane, N.E., Warren, OH.

Mr. Birrell, first of all, tell me about your childhood. Where were you born? What do you remember about your childhood, dealing with your father, and so forth?

B: I was born in Warren, Ohio. The thing that I remember the most is we used to spend our summers on what used to be his. . . . He was born and raised in Kinsman. When his mother died in 1928, he took the family home in Kinsman as his inheritance. After that, we spent all of our summers, from the time school was out in June to Labor Day in September, and lived in that house in Kinsman. My father worked in Warren and drove back and forth every night. I can remember travelling with him on the old roads of Kinsman when he would go out to see a client. I might ride along with him. I remember driving the old back roads of Kinsman at that time.

I remember the farmers would come to visit him at the house and the people that he had known for a long time. I was too young to remember the days when he was a prosecutor. Anything that I know about it is: what I have read in the paper, pictures that I have seen, or [things that I] heard my family discuss. Other than that, I don't actually remember that period of time.

P: What did your father say about those days as prosecutor? Did he ever talk much about it?

B: He didn't discuss it a great deal. It was something that he had done. He felt that it was his duty to enforce the law, right or wrong. I don't know that he thought prohibition was right, but that was the law at the time, and he felt that it should be obeyed. Consequently, that was his duty to obey. I think people were very--people who drank during prohibition were uncomfortable in his presence.

P: Why is that?

B: I don't know. I just had that feeling. He didn't disapprove of the drinking specifically. He disapproved if it was obtained illegally. I think that was his position, always that the law should be enforced right or wrong. When it is wrong, people realize it and change it. Finally, prohibition was repealed.

P: Was that unusual, during that time, during prohibition to wield an axe like he did?

B: Yes. I am sure it was.

P: Have you ever spoken with people who remember him?

B: Yes.

P: What have they said about him?

B: They always smiled and spoke of him with a great deal of affection, I think. He was not afraid of anything. He went down there. My mother said later that she just lived on pins and needles that somebody would take a shot at him, when he was down there with the axe. His attitude was, "Oh, this won't happen." Luckily, it didn't.

P: Did he take other policemen in with him when this happened?

B: He had several private detectives that worked for the prosecutor's office. I can remember talking to them in later years, when I would run into them. They would talk about those days and how much fun they had going down with those axes and breaking up those bars. In some ways, they were like children. It was just a lot of fun to destroy that which was. . . .

P: Are any of them still alive today?

B: No. The last one that I knew died about fifteen years

ago. It was fun to run into them. They always smiled and said what a good time they had with my father when they went on those raids.

P: What kind of person was he? Was he a quiet spoken person, outgoing?

B: He was very reserved. He had a very keen sense of humor. He quite often had a twinkle in his eye. He was not an extravert as you would describe a person. He was very serious. He was a great believer in the law. He spent his time in the evenings. . . . I can remember seeing him in the home in the study, or whatever it would be. He had a whole set of law books at home, and he would study. He planned his instruction to the jury and legal questions. He was very much interested in the law. He was very devoted to it. He came out to be a common pleas judge, as you probably know.

P: What year was that in which he was elected judge?

B: He ran in 1944. He served from 1944 to 1968. He served twenty-four years on the bench. He had four terms.

P: I didn't know that he was in there that late. What were some of his more interesting cases? Did he ever discuss them, or do you remember some of them?

B: I pointed out the picture to you. I am sorry this isn't marked. I am not sure if that was a murder trial or what that was. I am sure that was during prohibition, and I am sure I don't know what the charge was against the gentlemen sitting at the table. He would talk briefly. He never dwelt on the era a great deal.

P: Why is that?

B: I think that he felt that he had done his job and it was completed, and he went on to something new. I can't remember your question.

P: I asked why he never spoke of that time period? Did he look at things as a challenge or just something that he had to do? Did he just go through the motions at times?

B: No, I think that he vigorously felt that the law should be enforced. I think he took that position on the bench. His position was, "If you had a law suit, let's try it." He was not a great settler of the case. If you had two sides, you had the hearing and he made his

decision. If the lawyer didn't like his decision, then he should appeal it. That was his position. The law is set up so that everybody had their day in court rather than attempting to settle things. He was not what I would call a plea bargainer.

P: He wasn't a wheeler dealer?

B: No, not at all. If there was enough evidence that a person should be tried, he was tried in his estimation.

P: Did you know Harvey Burgess?

B: Yes, I knew of him. The Burgess's lived one block from us. Bill, I knew when he was in high school.

P: It sounds as if your father and Mr. Burgess, the attorney, were from the same mold.

B: That is very possible.

P: I remember Mr. Burgess, but not his time as a prosecutor. Of course, that was before I was born.

In Niles during the 1930's, your father prosecuted seven policemen--that made up half of our police department in that city--for accepting bribes from bootleggers? The bootleggers openly admitted that they had given these fellows bribes. The officers wanted an increase in pay, and they threatened to shut them down if they didn't get that money. The bootleggers turned them in. Your dad had a great problem in prosecuting those officers, because he thought that the bootleggers also should go with them for giving them bribes. All through the trial, it is really spiced up with his remarks.

B: Is that right?

P: Yes. I should have brought the xeroxed transcripts. The newspaper articles were xeroxed. Did he ever talk about that? Did he ever talk about corruption and so forth, and the police department? Did he ever remark to you about that case?

B: Maybe casually, he did once or twice. He would remember something about it or see a name and say, "Oh, I remember him." He never dwelled on it. He probably was disappointed in the policemen that they would do something like that. As I say, he was devoted to the law. You asked me if I had remembered anything. I remember very clearly walking down the streets here in

Warren. I would guess that it was in the 1930's, and he was no longer with the prosecutor's office. Maybe I was fourteen or fifteen. A man walked up to him and said, "Hello" to him. It has got to be later than that. It has to be the late 1930's or early 1940's. The man said, "Hello, how are you?" They talked for a moment. It seemed as congenial as possible, and then, we walked on. Then, I casually said, "Who was that?" He said, "Oh, I sent him to prison ten years ago." I said, "You did?" He said, "Yes." The fellow who remembered him was just as casual and friendly as could be, as though they had been old friends. We didn't go on and discuss why he had. I assumed that he had been one of the bootleggers or somebody that had been in prohibition and. . . . I will never forget that day. I really was so shocked. If you would have seen them talking, you would have thought that they were old friends.

- P: He was able to forgive and forget a little bit, too.
- B: I was surprised that the fellow didn't seem to have any animosity towards him. I think that was probably typical. Many of those people had a great deal of respect for him because they felt that he had done his job honestly and fairly. They knew that they were wrong, and they couldn't make any deal with him.
- P: Would your dad possibly have a stubborn streak in him at times?
- B: Yes.
- P: I picked that up. There were some hung juries, and some of the officers were found not guilty. Your father. . . .
- B: He wouldn't give up.
- P: No, he had all of them.
- B: If he thought he had the evidence, he wouldn't give up.
- P: He just didn't give up is right.
- B: He was not a settler. He was not one who wanted to settle a case. If he felt that he was right and he had the evidence, he would go ahead and try them and try it over again.
- P: When I finish with that stuff, I am going to give it to you to use. Maybe you want to xerox it off. They are

old newspaper articles. It is just incredible. It went on for months. He did a heck of a job.

P: How tall was he?

B: He was about 5 feet 11 inches or 5 feet 11½ inches.

P: What would you say his weight might have been?

B: Maybe 160 or 165 pounds. I am not really sure.

P: Can you tell me a little bit about your family history? How far back can you go with your family?

B: I can go back quite a few years. I can go back to Scotland.

P: Oh? Go ahead?

B: It is very interesting. It would be his on his father's side of the family. His father's mother and father lived in Scotland in a town called Ochtermuckte. She was the daughter of the Scotch Brewer.

P: That would be your father's grandmother?

B: Yes. Their name was Bonthrone. Her name was Nancy Bonthrone.

B: Her father was the Scotch Brewer. He owned the brewery. Nō. Yōū dīdñ't brew scotch.

P: What do you do?

B: What do you do? You brew beer, but you don't brew Scotch.

P: Distill it?

B: He owned the Scotch Distillery in the community where they lived. George Birrell was the son of the Coachman.

P: Which coachman?

B: The coachman who was the coachman for Mr. Bonthrone.

P: Okay.

B: She was Mr. Bonthrone's daughter.

P: George Birrell was the son of a hired employee of

Bon throne. He was the coachman who drove his coach. They ran away and got married.

P: George [married] Bon throne's daughter.

B: George Birrell and Nancy Bon throne. They were married, and they came to Pittsburgh first. Then, they came from Pittsburgh to Gustavas, Ohio. They lived on a farm in Gustavas. I am not able to tell you at what point they moved to Kinsman. I always thought that was kind of a romantic story. That was about the 1840's. It might have been the 1830's when they came from Scotland. I understand that they were very, very poor. I have heard that they were very, very poor and very, very proud.

P: Over in Kinsman, when they lived there?

B: That was when they first started out. He became a very successful farmer. He had my grandfather, George William Birrell. They several children. My grandfather, George William Birrell, my father's father, was one of their children. I think he was born in 1847.

P: What was his name?

B: George William Birrell. There were a lot of Georges in there. He married a woman by the name of Ellen Griswold. They lived in Kinsman. He was the cashier at the bank. He was president of the cheese factory. At that point in time, they didn't have refrigeration. The farmers made cheese out of their milk and sold the cheese. What they could sell locally, they would sell. They didn't have refrigerated cars to ship to Cleveland or Pittsburgh or wherever.

P: Was this in Kinsman?

B: Yes.

P: He was a teller in the bank?

B: He was the cashier in the bank.

P: Which bank would that be?

B: That was the old Kinsman National Bank. Somebody came along and offered this to me one day. Considering that he died in 1907, that is quite an old piece of paper.

P: It sure is.

B: It says up here 1890 something. He was cashier at the bank.

P: He died in 1907?

B: [In] 1907. He was shot by Thomas Kinsman. Thomas Kinsman was the son of the Kinsman Family, that is related to the Kinsmans of the Kinsman House here in Warren. This Thomas Kinsman was mentally retarded. I don't know what you would say. His mother, Mrs. Kinsman asked that my grandfather, as cashier of the bank, handle his money for him. Unfortunately, I don't know the legal details of what was set up. She had asked my grandfather to manage this Thomas Kinsman's money and not to let him spend it foolishly, and to maintain him and keep him. He and I have talked to people in Kinsman who remember the day that it happened. They remember seeing Thomas Kinsman walking from up State Street, a street going north out of Kinsman. He was walking down State Street to the Square and walking into the bank. He was demanding his money from my grandfather. He [my grandfather] refused and was shot by this Thomas Kinsman. They took him home. I don't know whether he died that day or the next day. Thomas Kinsman was tried. His defense was that he was insane. To my knowledge, he spent the rest of his life in a state institution. At the time of his death, my father was at the Oberlin Academy. He was 17 years old. It was kind of a prep school. He didn't finish high school in Kinsman. Whether he took his last two years of high school at Oberlin Academy or what, I do not know. My father never discussed this period of his life.

P: Why?

B: I think he was too hurt by it.

P: About being at Oberlin or about what happened with his father?

B: About what happened to his father. The only thing that I know about it is what people have told me about the events. I had seen a newspaper account that was probably in the Tribune in 1907 of the death of George Birrell and probably the trial of Thomas Kinsman at a later date. My uncle used to have those newspapers. I never saw them. My father didn't have them. I didn't find them in any of his things. I am told that he received a telegram when he was seventeen years old. He received a telegram from somebody in Kinsman saying, "Father shot. Come home at once!"

P: What was his reaction?

B: I suppose he came home. For the next year or so, or from that period of time, there was a great deal of newspaper coverage of the fact that Thomas Kinsman was tried for murder. His defense was insanity. He was sent off to a mental institution, from what I understand. I have really never checked that out. My father never discussed it. I think it was a period in his life that was very tough for him. It was very sad. I am sure it must have been in the Spring of 1907. He entered Oberlin College in the Fall of 1907 and graduated from Oberlin in 1911.

He was a physical education major. He worked in a YMCA in Pittsburgh, following his graduation, for about a year. He taught school at the Vernon School and the Gustavas School. He didn't enter law school until about 1916 or 1917. When the war came along, he enlisted and went into the Air Corp.

P: That was in 1917?

B: [In] 1918. That war was over on November 11, 1918. He came back from the service and. . . .

P: Did he fly?

B: Yes.

P: He was actually a fighter pilot?

B: He was never in combat, but he was in training, at the time the war was over, at a place called Americus, Georgia. I don't know if the town exists anymore.

He came back and took sufficient courses to complete his law studies. At that time, after that war, he took the bar exam and passed it. He didn't need his degree to become a lawyer, if you could pass the bar exam. He took the bar exam, passed it, and came to Warren in about 1919. [There] he set up his law practice. Taking the bar exam and passing it qualified him. They would let him take the bar exam.

P: What school was that?

B: Case Western Reserve. About 1949 or 1950, Case Western Reserve gave him his law degree. I should go back and say that my grandmother said to my grandfather--Ellen Griswold Birrell to George Birrell--that he shouldn't

take care of the Kinsman boy and that it would lead to trouble. She felt that he was ominous, that he was not right, and that it would be a problem. He insisted that he had told his mother that he would take care of his money and he did.

P: You feel that she had an ominous feeling, then?

B: Yes. She always felt that he should let somebody else do it and not take care of it. Something would happen. She was right. It did. Consequently, I don't think my father ever thought much of the insanity plea. He had good reason. At seventeen, his father was shot by somebody who pleaded insanity. People had watched him with the gun walk up the street. He walked about two miles from his home to the Kinsman Square and into the bank with the gun.

P: Interesting.

B: Yes. That would make a good book sometime. He went back and delved into it. I am sure that talking to people, who are older people in Kinsman and who are deceased, would tell me about seeing Thomas Kinsman walking, and hearing later that was what he had done, shot the cashier at the bank. . . .

P: I guess maybe it is an exciting thing for the community. They must have been shocked and horrified by it. A prominent family like that Kinsman, doing something like that to such a prominent man in the community.

B: Yes. He was really basically trying to help them in a problem that they had with this child. I have no idea to what degree mentality that he had. Of course, they weren't as sophisticated then to know what kind of mental disability that this fellow had. Maybe it could be cured today, and then, you would just seem to think that he just wanted his money and that the cashier was just keeping it from him.

P: Does the Kinsman Family have a display of some sort in the library here in Warren upstairs? Is that the Kinsman Family with the furniture and so on from the house?

B: There is the Kinsman House here. It was built . . . I can't think which one of the Kinsmans married a Perkins. The Perkins Family--where the Warren City Hall is, was built by the Perkins Family. The Perkins had a daughter, and that daughter married a Kinsman. The

Kinsman that she married, I believe, was the son or a brother of the Kinsman that founded Kinsman, Ohio. They came from Connecticut. I can't tell you in what time frame. It might be interesting to look up the history of the Kinsman Family and tie it all together. If I had more time, I would have done that for you, today, to get the names right.

P: What kind of father was George Birrell?

B: He used to help me in the evening with my Latin. He had taught Latin. He felt that I should take four years of Latin in high school because of the law field. That was what I was interested in. He was very interested in what I was doing. He never told me what to do.

I can very definitely remember sitting in the sun room, at home when I was in high school, going through a Latin lesson with him. He would pick it up just like that, and I was struggling on it. I think he taught Latin when he was in the Vernon and the Gustavas School.

P: Where did you live at when you were a boy?

B: We lived on Oak Knoll, Southeast.

P: Burgess told me that.

B: He lived on Woodbine.

P: What other events can you remember with your dad, or your bother with your dad?

B: I can remember that my older brother went to. . . .

My father graduated from Oberlin in 1911. I told you that he went to work for the YMCA in Pittsburgh right away. His mother took him on a trip West in 1911. They went to California and spent the winter there. I heard, from my mother many years later, that his mother took him out there and they visited relatives. She bought a car, so they could get around. We have found old pictures of her showing, with a long coat and hat, in California. My mother told me once that his mother was so disgusted, because the whole time he was out there, there was a girl back home that he wanted to come see. He was always anxious to come home, and she wasn't anxious to get home. He came home and saw her once and never saw her again. That amused me to no end.

My brother, William, who was killed in the plane crash,

went to West Point. The first summer that he had from West Point was in 1938. My father insisted that we take an automobile trip West, drive to the West Coast. My brother was home from West Point for part of June, all of July, and part of August. That wasn't exactly the way he had anticipated to spend vacation, travelling with his parents. My father insisted on it, and I always thought that it was because of his trip that he took in 1911 with his mother. He wanted to go back and take his children with him and show them the West as he remembered it. We spent five or six weeks on the road driving. We went everywhere on the West Coast.

I remember very distinctly going down on a mule into the Grand Canyon. I remember driving up Pikes Peak and going to Yellow Stone and seeing all of those places.

P: You still remember that?

B: Very clearly. I can remember driving up Pikes Peak, and the car over-heated. My father got out with a thermos. He saw a stream 100 feet down below us. He went down to that stream and got water, and filled up the radiator with water. We hadn't driven another half mile, and there was a pump with water. If we had just waited long enough. I remember throwing snowballs on Pikes Peak in the middle of July. I remember those trips with him. He liked to travel.

I also understand from my mother that he liked to dance. He liked to play cards and euchre. It seems to me that he used to go to Niles to play euchre with somebody down there.

P: Travelling, cards and what else?

B: Euchre is a card game. He liked to play bridge and euchre. How you spell it, I don't know.

P: Euchre in Niles?

B: Yes. It seems as though he went some place to play euchre.

P: He enjoyed travelling, playing cards and what else?

B: He liked to play golf. He took the family home to Kinsman, where he was born and raised. It is about a block east of the square in Kinsman. He used to talk about the days when he was a child on the farm. He used to talk about how they went down to cut ice and take it

up to the icehouse and store it in sawdust. They would have ice all summer, because they would get it from the creek down below the house. They used to have to walk to school. They always had an hired hand. He always talked about the hired hands. They always had an hired worman to help on the farm. His father was cashier at the bank. They had to have somebody to run the farm. He and his brother were supposed to help. I doubt if they did much, but from the way he talked, they did a great deal.

When we went to Kinsman in the summertime, we always had a garden. We always had chickens. We had chickens in the henhouse. He rented the rest of the farm out. Somebody farmed it. He grew potatoes on that farm. When you had a good potato crop, you had a good yield. In fact, in 1937, he bought a Lincoln Zephyr. The previous summer, he had a good potato crop, and he had enough money from that to buy that car. That is the car we drove West in, during 1938.

P: He bought a Zephyr?

B: It was called a Lincoln Zephyr. They used to be the great big Lincolns in that time. In 1936 or 1937, Lincoln came out with a four-door regular sedan. We bought that Lincoln. We always had Fords. We always had Fords, because my uncle was a Ford dealer. My uncle got him this Lincoln Zephyr. It had a gear shift. You wouldn't remember a gear shifter would you?

P: No, not really.

B: In the house we lived at on the farm, I remember we had no hot water. In the summertime, you didn't have the furnace running. The hot water in the house was built into the furnace. You didn't have a separate heater. Whenever you took a bath, you had to heat the water on the stove. We used to go up on weekends in the fall. I remember growing up in that house. The furnace hadn't come on yet or the coal wasn't put in yet. You would run downstairs to get dressed in front of the fire place.

I remember that they put in a coal heating element on the water tank. You could build a coal fire down in the basement, and we would have hot water. Finally, he graduated from that to electric. They finally, came out with electric water heaters, and he put one in.

He enjoyed going back to that house. It was the house

of his childhood. He had been born and raised there. He enjoyed going out in the fields. He used to take a scythe and go out and cut thistle. A farmer doesn't like thistle. When he had nothing else to do, he was up there. That was his vacation. He enjoyed going to Kinsman and getting into his old clothes. If you had ever seen him, you would have thought that he was a tramp. You saw him around the farm, because he enjoyed getting out of the dress clothes and putting on an old pair of trousers and an old shirt and going out and working on the farm.

P: What was his reaction to your brother's death?

B: He had a terrific reaction. I think it changed my parents very much noticeably.

P: That was William who died?

B: They were very proud of him. I think you will learn that a first child is very special. He was born when my father was in the service. He was not there when he was born. He came home, and he had a son. That would have been December of 1918. He was very proud of him. It was a tremendous shock to him. My brother was killed in a plane crash in 1941. Nothing would do. At that time, they flew to California, when he crashed, and brought his remains home. My father wanted to go up to the scene of the crash. Because of the winter and such, the Air Corp could not take him in. It was up in the mountains. He made arrangements that winter for us to go to California the following summer. That would have been the summer of 1942. He hired a guide, and we all went up to the scene of the plane crash. He had a monument made here at Warren Marble and Granite. We took that monument and set it there at the site of the crash. I think that is an example of his devotion to that child.

P: That says a lot about him.

B: We was a very strong person.

P: Did you see anything there at the site?

B: Yes. I could get you a magazine article that was written about that flight. It started in Windsorlot, Connecticut of twenty-five planes with the U.S. Army. They flew to the West Coast. Along the way, they lost five or six planes as they went along. They were flying from Southern California to the North. They hit fog. Supposedly, the orders should have been given

immediately to disperse instead of staying in formation. That order was not given. I think six or seven pilots were lost. I can't remember the numbers.

P: Did they contact you or something?

B: I wrote to my brother George, and he wrote to the writer of the article and explained what had happened.

P: Is it in a remote area?

B: Yes. It is up in the mountains.

P: What did the monument say?

B: I think it said, "William E. Birrell, U.S. Air Force, 1918-1941." That is vaguely what I remember. Of course, to set the monument, you had to dig a foundation and pour concrete. We took concrete and sand. We couldn't take water. I was assuming there was a place where we could get water. We mixed the concrete and made a foundation. We laid the monument in there so it would stay there.

P: Do you have any pictures of William?

B: Yes. He belonged on the cession. I think he had been a deacon. I don't think he was a member of the trustees. He was active in an organization called the Westminster's Men's Club. I believe he was the president of that.

P: Did he ever discuss his philosophy on religion or anything like this?

B: He went to church faithfully. In fact, I can remember on that trip out West in 1938, we went to church every Sunday. It didn't matter where we were. I remember on Sunday, we were out in the Plains. I started out, and I thought we wouldn't go to church because there just wasn't any town around here. I remember we drove into this little town, and he found a church. We went to church that Sunday. [In] town with four or five houses and not too many more people in the church, we went to church that Sunday.

His mother played the organ in the First Presbyterian Church in Kinsman. She was the organist for years and years. He went faithfully to church. He didn't discuss his religion, but he went.

P: What church did he go to?

B: The Presbyterian Church here in Warren.

P: Did he have a philosophy on life? For example, Burgess could remember his father sitting with Clarence Darrow, and they had quite a philosophy. Did your dad have any? Was he a deep thinker or anything like this? Is there anything that you could shed on that?

B: He was a great reader. He liked to read.

P: What did he like to read? What kind of books?

B: In later years, he spent a great deal of time reading law books. He belonged to the Great Books Program. I don't know if you ever heard of that. It goes back to the. . . . I don't know what it was about other than it was some type of a course they went to for several years. They got together and discussed great books. You had to read the books to enter in the discussions. I can remember my parents talking about going to the Great Books [meeting] night. They would go to this Great Books course. I think he was a great believer in the law and that you obeyed the law.

P: Was that a Great Books course?

B: Yes.

P: Where at?

B: In Warren. Supposedly, it was available nationally. Possibly, somebody at Youngstown State University would remember it. I was still living at home at the time. It has to be in the 1940's sometime, when they took that course, if it was a course.

P: Did he have a temper?

B: Yes. You didn't see it very often, but he did.

P: It was a temper in which he seldom showed in other words?

B: Right.

P: Can you remember a time as an attorney when he may have displayed that?

B: It doesn't come to mind at the moment. We knew when he

was displeased at home.

P: How did you know?

B: You could just tell by the way he looked.

He believed in the old adage, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." He always thought that you had brains in the seat of your pants. My mother used to say that he would take my two older brothers down to the furnace room to paddle them. He paddled my older brother William, for doing something. She said my younger brother, George, would scream so that he didn't paddle him as hard. When he got to him, he screamed his head off all of the time. We used to laugh about that in later years. That was her evaluation of it. Whether it was true or not, I don't know. He expected you to work hard and achieve.

P: What type of husband was he?

B: My mother very devoted to him. Whatever he wanted to do--I wonder if she wasn't of the old school that the husband was the boss whether she approved or disapproved. When I look back now, he was definitely the head of the household. There was not question about that. If he was displeased about something, he made it known to her. She always deferred to him in making certain decisions, or maybe they discussed it together. They always presented a unified front, as far as the children were concerned, with discipline and such. My mother did not paddle, but when my father got home, she told him and he took care of it. My older brother used to complain that I wasn't paddled enough. She said, "William, I think we have just gotten tired." He was definitely the head of the household.

P: What were the age differences between you and your older brother?

B: Eight years. My older brothers were very good to me.

P: My--I was the baby brother. They were great to me. My brother George used to take me where I needed to go when he was driving. When he was sixteen, I was only ten years old. If I needed to go someplace, he was glad to take me.

P: What influence do you think your dad had on you and your brothers? I'm sure he had an impact. In what way can you measure?

- B: Oh, yes. I think we are very--probably, very positive individuals. He was a positive person. There was nothing [negative] about him. That which he thought was right, he stood up for. That which he thought was wrong interfered, [and he didn't mind] saying so.
- P: You boys were raised to be the same way?
- B: I would say yes.
- P: When did your dad pass away?
- B: [In] 1971, December 4, 1971.
- P: How did he die?
- B: He was in a nursing home at the time. It was a cardiac-arrest. I had seen him that morning. It was a Saturday. He seemed to be pretty good. My mother called me. I was gone. In fact, I had gone to Cleveland, and she called me in Cleveland. He was gone.
- P: How old was she?
- B: Eighty-one.
- P: Is your mom still alive?
- B: No. She died in 1973. She had been gone ten years.
- P: Why didn't your dad continue as judge?
- B: As prosecutor or judge?
- P: He stepped out in 1968, did you say?
- B: Because of health. His health was definitely failing. he had arteriosclerosis, which left him with hardening of the arteries, which causes a memory loss of some things.
- P: Were there any famous cases in which he presided over?
- B: There were, but I can't tell you at the moment.
- P: I will probably come across them as I continue.
- B: Probably one of the most famous things was he presided over the strike when Taylor Windfield was out on strike. When they came into court, he was the judge that handled it. He was not afraid to take on. When there was a

strike in town and the company came in and wanted an injunction, for some reason, he always took them. He wasn't afraid of them, regardless if it was popular or unpopular. He would take them and decide as he felt the law said. There is a David Seman up the hall. He said to me on several occasions, "When one thinks about your father, we could disagree in court, but I always knew exactly where he stood, what his position was. Whether I disagreed or not, we could still be friends. If he would rule one way, I knew if I disagreed, I could appeal it."

P: I take it that your dad influenced you into going into law?

B: Yes. I would say that is the reason [for going] in the law practice.

P: When did he start to influence you? As a young boy?

B: Never by any word of mouth. Only by what he did.

P: How is that?

B: I think I knew he was in the law practice. When clients came to the house in Kinsman, they would come and I would see them. I would ride with him occasionally, when we would go out and see a client. Clients would never come to the house in Warren. I remember we used to go out for rides. It was fun in the summer evenings. We would get into the car and ride through the back roads. As we were going along, he might say, "I need to stop and see somebody here." We would stop and sit in the car. He might stop and talk to the clients for a few minutes.

P: Is there anything else that you might want to add? Perhaps we didn't cover on something?

B: I can't think of anything at the moment.

P: I really appreciate the time. Thank you.

B: Thank you. It has been interesting.

END OF INTERVIEW