

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

OCTOBER 18, 2017

A. LOVELL ELLIOTT

Q. Good morning. My name is Kevlin Haire. I'm at the Ohio State University Archives. It's October 18, 2017, and we'll be interviewing Lovell Elliott as part of the Oral History Program here at the Archives. Joining me in conducting that interview is Mary Alice Casey, Editor of the OSU Alumni Magazine, and of course our subject, Lovell Elliott. Good morning.

A. Good morning, Mary Alice. My name is A. Lovell Elliott. And it is A. And that's been the bane of my existence for low these 93 years, because no one can understand a birth certificate could just say "A." But if you have about 13 minutes I could tell you the story behind that, but I don't think we want to waste it on that. So we'll move on.

Q Now, actually you've started out well because my first question was, to tell us your full name, your date of birth, and where you were born. So we know your full name but when were you were born and where were you born?

A. Well, I was born on December 4, 1923. That's 1923, not 1823, in Toledo, Ohio, at the Flower Hospital. I was the last of five children and the only one born in a hospital. My four predecessors were all born at home. I think I probably was the big mistake because I came along 5 ½ years after my next oldest who was a brother. Probably my parents regretted it but they never told me so. My mother always said, "Oh, you're the greatest thing that ever happened," just to keep my self-confidence up.

Q. Oh sure, I understand. Now you've already answered the second question. You told me where you grew up and how big your family was. So we're set on that question.

- Q. [Mary Alice:] So just a follow-up to that. You were the last of five kids you said?
- A. Yeah, I had two brothers and two sisters. The two sisters were the eldest, then two brothers, then along came little Lovell 5 ½ years later.
- Q. Okay. And I understand your father and one of your older brothers attended Ohio State. Can you tell us a little bit about how they ended up here and what they studied?
- A. My dad always hoped to be a farmer. He grew up as a semi-orphan in southeastern Ohio. And he decided to go to Ohio State to study what was then known as Agronomy. He was there in the early part of the century. I know he's in the Makios of 1906 and 1907. And then my second brother attended Ohio State in Engineering. He was a little bit older. He had attended RPI in Rochester [New York] for a couple of years and then decided to study Engineering at Ohio State. So he was about three or four years ahead of me. I don't know just exactly what the incentive was particularly, except that it is a good Engineering school and it was cheap and those were depression days, which of course leads up to the reason I went to OSU: I had been thinking Ivy League type things, but I was certainly probably thinking beyond my academic capacity. Anyhow, in those days all Ohio high school seniors took a senior scholarship test. And I ranked high enough in the state so that I got a great big scholarship that covered my first year at Ohio State. Would you believe that the fees at that time were \$25 a quarter? So my three quarters' scholarship amounted to \$75. But it was enough to thwart me from all my Ivy League interests. My parents of course thought, "Oh wow, with that, in depression-time you go to Ohio State." And I don't think I ever regretted it. It was a wonderful experience for me. I had lots of fun there and found my beloved.
- Q. Did your father and brother graduate from Ohio State?

A. My father did not graduate. My brother graduated in Industrial Engineering, and in fact, he was the highest ranking member of the Engineer/ROTC when he was there. He was the cadet colonel. I don't know how long my dad was there. I do know he played some baseball for Ohio State, and he was good looking.

Q. This is Kevlin. Can you tell us your father's name and your brother's name?

A. My father's name was Augustine Lovell Elliott. And that's the reason I ended up with "A." My grandmother probably thought in so naming, there's a chance for a legacy since she had a rather well-to-do uncle by the name of Augustine Lovell. And so she named dad that. I think all he ever got was a bathrobe and a cameo ring, which he lost some years later, and a five-year subscription to the Youth Companion or something like that. Anyhow, when I came along they were kind of running low on names I guess. And my mother decided she wanted to have a junior but she never liked Augustine because dad was always known as Gus. So she made it "A." So I'm A. Lovell Elliott.

Q. Gotcha.

A. Aren't you sorry you asked?

Q. This is Kevlin again. What was your brother's name?

A. Winston Huntington Elliott.

Q. Okay, thank you.

A. The other one was Phillip Lovell Elliott. He attended Ohio Wesleyan for a couple of years on a scholarship. And then he got an appointment to West Point, from which he graduated when I was in high school.

Q. This is Kevlin. I'm going to ask you about being a freshman here, but tell me the year that you matriculated to OSU?

A. I started in the fall of 1941. I was in and out. I had gone to Waterville High School about 20 miles south of Toledo, where my graduating class consisted of 18 people, all of whom are dead except me, as of about two months ago. There were not enough boys to play football. I never would have been playing football if it would have been a school of any size at all. But we had this six-man football team. And I injured my shoulder such as that I wasn't able to get in to any branch of the service. They wouldn't even take me in the ambulance corps. But my brothers kept telling me, "Boy, don't you worry, our family is giving enough." My oldest brother, as I say, was a West Pointer and a Colonel. And my brother who went to Ohio State, the engineer, was in the combat engineers. And won two bronze stars for bravery under fire. They both kept telling me that the family was doing enough and I shouldn't feel bad about it. Does that answer what you just asked me?

Q. No, but that's good information to know. Let's talk about, this is Kevlin, and let's talk about your freshman year, 1941, just before we entered the war. What were your first impressions of campus?

A. You know, I can't really remember what they were except I imagine what you would expect from a guy who came from a class of 18 to a huge enrollment. But I was interested in activities, and very soon after I started living at what was then the new Baker Hall, I got into a lot of activities. So I was into the Ohio State campus scene pretty quickly. Incidentally, at Baker Hall, my brother Winston was still living there when I moved in. We were the only ones that ever had a doggy that was sort of a mascot for Baker Hall, a Dalmatian. He is shown in the pictures in the Makio for that period.

Q. Oh, interesting. And then did you stay at Baker Hall your whole time at OSU?

A. No, no. I only lived there about a year. I became a member of Phi Delta Theta Fraternity. The Phi Delta house had been used during the war for ASTP, the Army Specialized Training Program. When they were finally moved out and the fraternity wanted to reopen, the house corporation dictated that they wouldn't reopen it for the guys that were there unless I would come and run the place. I would have to go and live there. And so I gave up the real cushy arrangement which I had at Baker Hall at that time. There were two apartments, one at either end, that were reserved for the proctors. A couple other guys and I were allowed to live in one of those. In return for that we operated the telephone switchboard at Baker Hall. Then the fraternity could not reopen unless I went there to live. So I did.

Q. And what fraternity was that?

A. Phi Delta Theta.

Q. Okay. We just received a phone from Baker Hall, probably from the era in which you were there. So you may have actually touched this phone.

A. How about that!

Q. Okay, so tell us about academics. What was your major and why did you choose it?

A. Well, I majored in Marketing and Advertising specifically. I had been interested in it since I was very young and decided to make a career of it. Got my first printing press when I was 12 years old and started selling printing. Ended up selling most of the printing in the little town of Waterville. Those items that were too big or specialized for me to print I would sell for mail order companies in Illinois. And so I kept that up. This paid for a good bit of my college.

Q. Okay, great.

Q. [Mary Alice:] And what you just described for us is a little business that you had going that helped you pay for college. You did that through your teenage years?

A. Through what?

Q. Through your teenage years? Operated this printing press and did print jobs.

A. Yeah, I used to go home quite regularly from the University, I usually would hitchhike from Columbus to Waterville, which was a little over 100 miles. Or take a bus or the interurban. The interurban was a wonderful way to go. And so I continued the printing all through college too. Printed college stuff and I had a magazine agency at the University. I was always selling stuff.

Q. And what sort of printing did you do for various businesses?

A. Well, when I started out the press was big enough to print nothing bigger than a business card or a shipping tag. But the company that made the presses had a trade-in process. So I soon traded that in for a "huge" one that would print as big as a post card. And then after that I bought an old press that I heard about in Toledo. This was in 1938. And my brother Winston and I drove in to Toledo and dragged it out of a basement. Paid \$25 for it. Incidentally, I sold it a few years ago for a thousand dollars. It would print 6 ½ x 10. I did a lot of printing on that one. I lived to regret one of the jobs that I got. Waterville had an annual Apple Blossom Festival. They would auction off a new car. One year, when I was a sophomore in high school, I got the job to print the raffle tickets. 50,000 of them. There had to be a stub, so I had to use a perforating rule. So I had that chewing up the rollers on my printing press. And then I had to hand-stamp a number twice on each one. So I just about went bananas, and my school work was suffering, I'm sure. But I was determined to

make it. Anyhow I finally got those turned out. That was one of the highlights of the printing business.

Q. This is Kevlin. Did you win the car by the way?

A. Pardon me?

Q. Oh you couldn't win the car; you just printed out all the stubs for the raffle.

A. Yeah, right. One of the events of that Apple Blossom Festival was a dance in Graf's Garage. The Big Apple was a dance that was popular at that time. It wasn't popular very long. But they had a Big Apple contest there. I was watching, and there was another girl watching. In fact, she was the girl with whom I sang the lead in the high school operetta. When I was a sophomore she was a junior. I had no business singing the lead but I think the vocal teacher wanted to give me some self-confidence or something. But anyhow, this gal says, "Hey, let's go in." And I said, "I don't know nothing about this." She says, "Oh we'll do it." We just acted crazy and sort of danced. And we won. Got these little white jackets with red apples sewed on them.

Q. Congratulations.

A. That's a slight deviation. I'm deviating too much. I'm sorry.

Q. So I'm curious. This is Mary Alice. I'm curious about your studies at Ohio State and since you already had a good foundation with this printing business that you had, how did your studies at Ohio State in Advertising and Marketing, how did those sort of complement and build on what you had already kind of started as a teenager?

A. Well, you know, I should say at this point that I probably made a mistake by going into the Commerce College. If I had it to do [again], I would take a liberal arts course with the amenities, the arts, history, philosophy, English, and that sort of thing. I wish I had, but

instead I had corporate finance, sales management, and all that sort of stuff, which you can learn on the job. It was too bad I didn't have a more liberal course. And there were only a very few Advertising courses. They really weren't worth a great deal. The guy teaching was a bust in one of the courses. I think he was using the same notes he had been using for 50 years. The time I took that particular course I was working at an advertising agency downtown. I worked mornings and hurried back to the campus at noon time on the street car, grabbing lunch somewhere along the way. I sat right in the front row of this guy's one o'clock class. And would you believe in this year of 1941 or 1942 maybe, 1943, somewhere in there, he arranged the boys on one side and the girls on the other, and also alphabetically so that I sat right in the front row? After my getting up early and my morning's work, and just having had lunch, being kind of pooped out, I would just be so tempted to go to sleep right in the front row because his lectures were worthless. Anyhow, I endured at least one quarter with that.

And then my Psychology course – there was Psychology of Advertising – and everybody in the class, including the professor, would just look out the window when discussions were going on. And I was trying to get something out of it. Actually, my experience in the University in that respect was kind of limited. I did have one good guy, a great guy, by the name of Kenneth Dameron. And I don't know whether you know about him or not but he was big in Advertising. He had an office in New York. He sort of took me under his wing and wanted me to go to New York, making appointments for me with agencies there at the time. I was in touch with him off and on until he died.

Q. He was one of your instructors?

A. Yeah, he was. He was the head of the Advertising curriculum actually. And I did have a couple of courses under him. And his were good because they were practical. And he was a great guy. He was awfully good to me.

Q. Interesting. Tell us about some of your extracurricular activities, your involvement with Phi Delta Theta and some of the other things you did, I guess without the humor magazine [experience] because that's a whole other area we want to explore with you.

A. Well, this would relate to that. I was somehow put on a committee known as the Council on Student Affairs. It was sort of an overall general committee that included the Dean of Men, Joseph Park, and the Dean of Women, Christine Conaway, and I think maybe Jack Fullen, the Alumni [Association] Secretary, and Bland Stradley, who was Vice President of the University. I was the student representative.

Q. And what was the purpose of that committee?

A. Well, here's one example of its role: Later on, you're talking about the humor magazine, the Sundial. As you probably know, it had a reputation pretty high among humor magazines on campuses throughout the country. It had for many years, a very outstanding staff, many of whom later gained prominence, like James Thurber and Elliot Nugent and Milt Caniff and Gardner Rea. Just lots of big names. Then some people that were running it just did some terrible things, published stuff that was just awful. And so it was banned from the campus. Later there was this move to bring it back. The matter went to this Council on Student Affairs Committee for a decision. They decided that the only circumstances under which they would let the magazine come back would be if it was given a new name and if I would edit it. Well, I had enough experience at editing like the high school newspaper and stuff like that. I had always been in that kind of thing you know, advertising. So anyhow

I took over the thing. Then we conducted this contest and came up with a name, Scarlet Fever, which was kind of embarrassing to me. But it was voted in as the winning name. So then I edited that for about a year. It was not too long before I graduated. I decided my last quarter in school that I was going to can all these activities and drink some serious beer at Larry's, which you folks probably know about. I guess Larry's is still there. And so I devoted that quarter to that. One day when I was in there I saw this lovely girl and decided I had to get a date with her, which I did, and it turned out that we were married two years later. Other things:, I was co-chair of Homecoming one year. Had to speak in front of the Stadium [football game crowd], which scared the holy you know what out of me.

Q. Stop one moment. Excuse me for interrupting but why did you have to speak? Were you introducing the court or what were you doing?

A. Yeah, I think that was it. I was co-chairman with a fellow by the name of Paul Hatfield, who was a neat guy. He and I met running track, freshman track, except that he was really good and I was just taking it because it excused me from taking Phys Ed. He and I were co-chairmen. We were introducing the queens on the field and I really loused it up. But there's so much noise I don't think anybody paid any attention to what we were saying anyhow. I don't worry about it anymore.

Q. Now this is Kevlin. Let's go back to the track. Your comment about track reminded me, and it's not in the questions here, but you had a military science requirement, right? You had to do ROTC, what now is called ROTC?

A. Yeah, right. I did, and would you believe that in those days Ohio State's ROTC, other than the engineering branch, it was all artillery. A horse artillery was part of it. The University maintained a number of horses in the stable across the Olentangy right by the bridge there.

I thought that would be more fun. So I took the horse artillery, if you can imagine that. I made staff sergeant. Then when I was called up for service they discovered my shoulder injury. But anyhow, I was also on the Student Court and the Student Senate, and something called the Commerce Council. A member of Toastmasters and the Fraternity Managers Association and the Fraternity President's Council. And was sports editor of the Makio. I was in the three class honoraries: Romophos, Bucket & Dipper, and Sphinx. Getting back to the service thing, you might be interested to know and maybe this is off the subject, but I had a couple of relatives that were all Columbus-ites or from near Columbus, and one was so outstanding he was called the best company commander in the first infantry division. Went through some horrible fighting during the time of the Battle of the Bulge and so forth. He was killed there. His commanding colonel had ordered him to go behind the lines for some R and R. He was afraid for my cousin's life. Then, [my cousin] couldn't stand it and after a couple of days he said he wanted to go out in front and see what was going on. His jeep driver took him out and he was killed by a German on the way back. Anyhow, there is a bridge in Southeast Ohio named after him: Capt. Robert Hess. And then a cousin-in-law, Howard Hiveley, who was really an ace of aces, in the Air Force. He started out in the Royal Canadian Air Force and ended up in the U.S. Army Air Force. Had 14 ½ kills, earned eight air medals and seven distinguished flying crosses. Then he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, which is the next thing to this Congressional Medal of Honor. I don't know whether that's of any interest. But anyhow, I was always concerned about those guys and my brothers, of course.

Q. We're getting a little off topic, but I want to continue with this just a little bit. When war was declared a lot of people left campus, a lot of the male students signed up. And you

tried to sign up and weren't able to make it. So did you see a noticeable change in campus once that happened? Did you feel yourself surrounded?

A. Probably one reason that I was elected President of the senior class was that there weren't that many men to choose from. The enrollment, of course, had dropped substantially at that time. Now I think we're the largest enrollment on a single campus in the country, aren't we? Sixty thousand or something like that?

Q. We're either one or two. I think you're correct. Mary Alice wants to ask you a question, I think.

Q. Getting back to the Scarlet Fever, so I was interested in some of the letters that are in your scrapbook, one of your scrapbooks. It almost seems like it was something of a letter-writing campaign by alumni who were, in part, responding to some invitation that you must have put out there for them to contribute.

A. No. One of the things I did when I was in school, I decided that a book or a manual with advice from people of all walks of life, with little sayings that they went by, adages that they lived by, and so forth would be well-received. So I got off a bunch of letters to people of considerable prominence.

Q. Alumni?

A. No, I wrote people of all sorts. One of the responses I had was from Dale Carnegie. I don't know whether that name means anything to you or not. In those days he was very prominent. He wrote a bestselling book called How To Win Friends and Influence People. He wrote me a very nice letter and told me that he had on his desk, The Salutation to the Dawn from [The Bhagavad Gita in] Sanskrit. I also heard from Norman Rockwell and a

number of others. The letter from James Thurber was about the new Sundial name of Scarlet Fever.

Q. So the letter from James Thurber says, “Dear Mr. Elliott, I can’t very well take sides in the Sundial controversy since I do not know the right or wrong of the case. There must have been specific charges, but you don’t go into details. In any event, I am firmly opposed to the changing of the name. For surely the name was not the cause of the trouble.” And then he goes on to say, “I will be very glad to write my feelings on this point to whatever University official you suggest as the proper one.” And then he says, “I’m much too busy to write anything for you but if I can dig up a drawing I’ll send it along.”

A. Oh, I was probably asking for contributions in the way of cartoons we could publish.

Q. In Scarlet Fever?

A. Yeah. And it may be that in so doing I explained to these people that this was a Sundial as they knew it, and I was interested in their points of view about the name. I think that’s what prompted that. I remember one of them wrote back, “I think it’s a pretty good idea. It sounds like a good thing to me.” Most of them were, of course, regretting the fact that the old traditional name was being abandoned. I think that must be what that was, Mary Alice.

Q. So this manual you were talking about, was that something for an article you wanted to do in Scarlet Fever?

A. Oh no. That was just a little project of mine. I had hoped to get enough responses to publish a little manual so that one could see if Glenn Miller or Benny Goodman or James Thurber had any adages to live by. That had nothing to do with the school or publications or activities, no.

Q. I see. Did that ever come to pass?

- A. I just didn't get enough response.
- Q. So some of the people who wrote about Scarlet Fever and the change to that name from Sundial, was that at all intended to be any kind of campaign by the staff or anything, to get back to the title of Sundial, or was that really something the students wanted at that time?
- A. There really wasn't any effort in my time to change it back. Later on, a few years ago, I saw a copy of what was allegedly the humor magazine, and it was just terrible. Just back to the same old terrible stuff. And I'm sure the Council on Student Affairs, if there still is such a thing, would have acted on that too.
- Q. [Kevlin] There's apparently a web site, although I don't think it's updated or contributed to very much. It does not live up to the name, I'll say that.
- A. Uh-huh. I really don't know the current situation. I don't think it's anything, but I really don't know.
- Q. It's nothing like it was previously.
- A. Uh-huh. One thing, I don't know whether it's of any interest, but I have been in philanthropies over the years, and the biggest one that I've supported for years since we moved east here, is the Boston Food Bank, where I'm one of the major donors. But I also have set up funds, the Joan T. and A. Lovell Elliott Fund, with the Guide Dog Foundation and with the American Indian College Fund for Native Americans and the Semper Fi Fund that is operated to serve veterans who are not getting the proper attention from the VA. So I have those three funds that I will contribute to in very substantial ways until my demise, which probably won't be too far away.
- Q. You sound like you're doing pretty well to us.

- A. I've now reached the age which is the average of my two brothers' age at their demise. So I'm ready anytime. I'm not really ready, but I mean I should expect it any time.
- Q. [Mary Alice] So I have a question about just the experience that you had of being a student editor on campus. There's a little note here in your scrap book that talks about how it was just a little note that obviously you wrote when you were leaving that role, and how much you appreciated the readers who had helped put Scarlet Fever across and establish it as a campus tradition. Can you talk a little bit about what it was like to be an editor on campus in those days?
- A. Well, it was kind of fun. Was that you, Mary Alice?
- Q. Uh-huh, that was me.
- A. The things that you selected for that page in the monthly had great emphasis on that. And one was that ad for Hennicks, and that was kind of fun to go in there and have the little ceremony and hang a plaque for the Scarlet Fever on the stairway in Hennicks. Do you gals know about Hennicks?
- Q. I do, yes, and I know what that was. That was a restaurant, wasn't it? This is Kevlin.
- A. It was the hangout for those who didn't drink, for those who didn't drink alcohol. It was right next to Long's bookstore as I recall. Right there, just a little bit south of 15th and High.
- Q. Yes, correct.
- A. Right. Well, I spent many happy times, of course, in Hennicks. We used to take dates there. And then, of course, to Larry's for beer. It was interesting to see some of the dirt that was dug up by reporters that would bring in stories about who was going with whom you know. Things like that. It was a lot of fun. There's a picture, I don't know whether you have the old Makios. I have them here and I don't know what I'll do with them. I don't think my

kids want them. But there's one on the section page on publications and it shows four or five of us sticking our heads around the door in the Scarlet Fever office. I don't know whether you've seen that one or not. But I know there was a lot of fun there and I had a little old radio that I brought with me from home that I had bought for five bucks. It was just the guts of a radio outside of its little cabinet and I had it on my desk there in the Scarlet Fever.

Q. And then you said you were also sports editor for the Makio.

A. Yeah. As a matter of fact, the way it worked, the freshmen could volunteer, anybody could come in and work. Then so many were picked to be what they called sophomore editors. There were about 10 of those, I believe. And I was picked for one of those. And then assigned to do the sports. A fellow by the name of Ralph Paffenbarger, who was a wonderful guy, was editor. He told me confidentially that he was going to appoint me editor the next year. Well, then I didn't go back to school. Ralph graduated from the Med School and made a big name for himself in research in Chicago. If you want to look up Ralph Paffenbarger. It's really not germane here but he deserves attention because he really was an achiever and a really nice a guy.

Q. All right, thank you, that's a good tip for the Archives. We like to find out more information about past graduates that we might be able to pass along in blogs and things like that.

A. I doubt if he has an enemy in the world. He had a very renowned career in research. I forget what his medical field was but there was some specialization that he was sort of the "it" man. So it's worth looking up if you are interested in that sort of thing.

Q. This is Kevlin. I just want to clarify the timeline because you entered school in, you said, 1941, the fall of '41, correct?

A. Uh-huh.

Q. And you graduated in March 1946?

A. Yeah.

Q. You mentioned leaving school because that's why you didn't become editor. Were you gone for a time?

A. Yeah, I thought I'd be going into the service. Actually, what happened, when I went home after the first quarter of my sophomore year, I had to have an emergency appendectomy. So I couldn't go back to school winter quarter. I was in the enlisted reserve and I decided that since I would probably be called up, there wasn't any point in going back to school. So I got a job in a factory in Toledo, where they were preparing military tanks for shipment overseas. I think they were Shermans. And we would just cover them with this tape to keep the saltwater from eating them up on shipboard. I worked at that for several months until they found out that I could do lettering. And so they took me off of the taping on the line. If you can imagine, they had so many rag drums that they had to have somebody to paint the word "rags" on the side of the drums. I've never figured out since how there could be so many. But anyhow, I did that for a while, to the dismay of an old fellow who was already doing that. He thought, "Oh this kid, he can't letter professionally." But I did that for quite some time. When I was called up and they found out that they didn't want me after all, I came back to school. So that accounts for the irregularity there, Kevlin.

Q. Okay, gotcha. And when did you come back to school?

A. I really don't remember. Those dates and years are all just kind of hazy to me now.

Q. I understand. But did you once again live in the Phi Delta Theta house?

A. Yes. The chronology doesn't seem to check out somehow. But that was the case, yeah. I had to move in there. I was Treasurer and President at the same time. And then my senior year I was just President, and someone else became Treasurer. By that time we had quite a big bunch of guys, and the pictures in the Makio show that.

Q. Okay, thank you.

Q. [Mary Alice:] I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about being the senior class President, how you got involved in student government, and maybe some of the issues that student government was dealing with at the time.

A. You know, there really wasn't much student government. I mean, student government of much consequence. But there was enough to have a couple of parties and one was known as OSPA, which must have been Ohio State Political Association, or something like that. And to represent the fraternity I went to a meeting. They were making up a slate for officers, and they made me the candidate. And I don't suppose there was much of a turnout for the election. But I remember I bought some paper bottle caps that they used to put in milk bottles. You probably never heard of that but milk bottles had big necks on them. The neck was filled with a cardboard lid with a little tab on it so you could open it up easily. So I got a bunch of them. And printed on them "Elliott for senior class president." We decided on a memorial, which had to do with the entrance gates which our class paid for. I do remember on the occasion of Franklin Roosevelt's death, they called on me. I had to give the eulogy, pay respects to him from a campus balcony. And I just wondered, did there used to be balconies on the library before all the change took place on the front, somewhere between the Thompson statue and the building? Was there a balcony?

Q. [Kevlin:] Yes. It was recently renovated and the balcony has returned. So it very well could have been a balcony from the library.

A. Yeah, that must have been what it was. That would have been in April of '45.

Q. Okay.

A. When Roosevelt died. It would have been at the dismay of my family who were dyed-in-the-wool Republicans, that I would do this job. And I felt like I was not being very honest with myself that I would deliver this.

Q. What entrance gates were you talking about?

A. The main entrance to the campus at 15th Avenue.

Q. There used to be gates at the entrance. Those were removed.

A. It was a gate in name only. It was a stone pillar on either side, I think was the extent of what we referred to as a gate. That would be something I suspect would be available to you in some history somehow, of exactly what that amounted to. But that's what we gave our funds to, the contributions that we made individually. And really I didn't really have much to do as President. I can't say that it was a very responsible job.

Q. [Mary Alice:] So you met your wife here, you said?

A. Yeah.

Q. So tell us about that and about the things you did for dates and just that whole sort of dating thing at the time.

A. I think it was very unfortunate for her, in the long run I'm sure she thought it was. Anyhow, as I said before, I was down at Larry's and one afternoon I saw this girl. I said, "Oh my God, I've got to meet that woman." And so I found out who she was and arranged for a date. She was already pinned to a Delta Tau Delta. I always felt bad that, I guess what

you'd have to say, I took her away from him. He was, until a few years ago, Athletic Director of the University of Oklahoma. Unfortunately for her, I was about to graduate and she had another year of school to go, two more actually. And I had taken a job with the national fraternity. They had only an Executive Secretary and office staff and no one doing field work. And they needed me to go out, to do what they called chapter visitations. And I spent a year, the first job I had out of school, I agreed to do this for a year, to visit chapters and inspect them and report on them, and tell them how they're supposed to be doing things. And to try to see the highest-ranking person on the college staff at the same time. That was a pretty interesting job because took me to 44 different states. And all the provinces of Canada except for the Northwest Territory, I guess. And certain schools, like when I visited Kansas State at Manhattan, I had a nice long chat with its president Milton Eisenhower, the President's brother. I told him how I was concerned that I had picked Advertising for a career, and not something more in the field of public service. He made me feel good about it, saying I could do both. He was a really nice guy. And I visited the President of Brown, Henry Wriston, who is credited for making Brown a leader that it is now in the Ivy League. Anyhow, all during this time, poor Joan was loyal to me and not dating and at OSU. She drew men like flies, and they all wanted to date her, but she just stayed in her sorority house. It wasn't fair. I would come back about every month between my trips. We would have nice times together for several days. And then I'd be out again. So anyhow she stuck it out until she finished in June of '48. And we were married in July.

Q. Okay. At the time you were married, and then I'm assuming after your year with the national fraternity, did you decide then you were going to tackle this Advertising career?

- A. Yeah. The fraternity prevailed on me, I stayed three more months, which I didn't want to, but they had so many things they wanted me to do, that they just talked me into staying. Then I went to work for Byer and Bowman Advertising Agency in Columbus. I only worked there about eight months. My oldest sister had married a guy who was in business in Charleston, West Virginia, and had a big business going and wanted an Advertising person. I made the mistake of leaving the advertising agency in Columbus and going down there for nearly seven years. I not only handled his advertising, but I managed a Dodge Plymouth dealership for about five years. I decided this was not for me. So Joan and I packed up with our two young kids. I had about \$500 in the bank and we moved back to Columbus. We bought a little house up on Weisheimer Road in Clintonville and I opened my advertising agency. It was a little hole in the wall down on Hudson Street, paid \$15 a month for rent. It was a miserable place but we painted it up and bought doors. In those days the vogue was to buy wrought iron legs and attach those to hollow core doors to make inexpensive desks. So I was in business. I lucked out and it grew. I never had more than half a dozen people working for me. It was never a big deal. But I ran it for about 20 years.
- Q. What was the name of that agency?
- A. By coincidence it was called A. Lovell Elliott Advertising.
- Q. [Kevlin:] That's really creative.
- A. That was one of the most creative things I ever did. Well, I thought about Batten, Barton, Durstine and Osborne but that had already been taken.
- Q. Did you focus on a particular area, since you had experience, for example, in auto dealerships?

A. For a while I did a lot of automobile dealerships, including Dan Rohyans Ford in Columbus, which was one of the biggest Ford dealers in the country, and handled his stuff for, I forget, maybe a dozen years. Dan Rohyans was a wonderful guy. I don't guess that name means anything now because the name was changed after that. You all probably wouldn't remember because that would go back to the '60s and '70s. The biggest account I had was Quikrete packaged concrete. It started in Worthington. At the time I started working for them to handle their advertising, they had five franchisees or licensees. By the time I quit they had 52 plants throughout the country, in Hawaii and Guam and going into South America. And then I decided I just had to get out. The last 20 years or so I have been dealing in autographs, historic documents, autographs of famous people. I stocked all the Presidents, always had a complete selection of the Presidents. And everybody from Hitler to Marilyn Monroe. Lots of movie stuff, which in sort of closing out the operation I donated 150, I think, items to the library there at OSU, which is known as the A. Lovell Elliott Theater and Movie Collection, I guess they call it. More will be added as time passes.

Q. To the library, which library?

A. The main, well it's from the main library movie and theater department [the Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee Theatre Research institute].

Q. Okay, great.

A. The OSU library. And then before that, you know about the cartoon library [Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum] that is there?

Q. Right.

A. Well, that is the cartoon library as far as the country is concerned, as far as I know. I donated, before I did this other one to the theater section. A collection of cartoon art.

Q. Oh, that's great.

A. So that, you can look that up too if you like. It's not very extensive. I don't think there are more, I don't know, 35 items maybe, or something like that. But the theater movie thing was pretty extensive. And if want to find out more about it, it should be very easy to check it out.

Q. Wonderful. I have colleagues who work in both of those collections, so I will definitely ask them about that.

A. Good.

Q. [Mary Alice:] I'm sorry, I focus on timelines, but tell me about the span of your Advertising career. When did you decide to switch careers to autograph collecting?

A. Well, by the early '80s, I decided that I'd spent enough time in the advertising business. But the Quikrete people kept encouraging me to stick around. At the same time I was getting more and more involved in the autograph business. It was, in the end, a smooth transition. When I started this business there was a monthly called Autograph Magazine, which was aptly named, I thought. I used to have three-page ads every month. I would list hundreds of items. I had customers all over the country. I would get remarkable calls, like someone from Sweden would say, "Do you have President Buchanan?" How do you figure out something like that? But anyhow, it was a fascinating business and I made friends all over the country with that. I still have a lot to dispose of. I have half a dozen Hitlers, which a lot of auction houses won't touch anymore. I had been saving them thinking, "these can do nothing but enhance in value," and it just proved not to be the case.

Q. Interesting. What was it about autograph collecting that was attractive to you?

- A. The reason I got into it, Mary Alice, was my interest in history and the Presidents. One day I just decided, “Well, wouldn’t it be nice to have something signed by this guy?” I can’t remember which the first President was, that I got. Then the bug bit me and I went on from there until I had all the Presidents. And then I had them all again, and then finally some of them in great depth, the more common ones like Calvin Coolidge and Harding and guys like that. So I decided it’s only smart to sell some of this and use it to buy other stuff. So there I was all of a sudden a dealer. It was a pretty busy enterprise for a number of years. Now the printed magazine has folded. I still have a web site. I’m trying to phase out. My heirs wouldn’t know what to do with this stuff, and I think I owe it to them to dispose of it. There just aren’t enough hours in the day for me. I make lists of the things I have to do and pretty soon I’m making lists of the lists. I just kinda feel snowed under all the time. I can’t seem to relax and enjoy life.
- Q. So it sounds like a lot of the autographs you acquired by buying and trading and that sort of thing, did you have any that you got in person, and if so, what would be your favorite one of those?
- A. I never really tried to do that. There would be rare occasions like, I happened to have a signed photograph of the Rat Pack in front of a Las Vegas gambling casino. And everyone had signed it except Joey Bishop. Fortunately, Joey was still living. He was a really nice guy. So I sent it to him and he signed it. But that’s one of the few cases where I have actually gotten them directly. Most of them were acquired in auction sales. I would have bids going every month in half a dozen or more different auctions. That was the source of most of it. Excuse my voice. I seem to be losing it.

Q. That's all right. So I have just one more question about the autographs. So after having been at this for 43 years now, what would you say is your most prized autograph? Just for you personally; not the most valuable or whatever, but which one do you cherish the most?

A. The one that I will hate to see go probably more than any of the rest is a little note that Mrs. Coolidge wrote to her grocer, returning a bottle of olives for the President. It was not the proper brand. She wanted the President's account credited for 75 cents. And it was signed Grace Coolidge.

Q. And she was the first lady at the time?

A. Yeah, she was in the White House at the time.

Q. And why do you like that so much?

A. I don't know.

Q. That's all right.

A. I have had some items of considerable importance. I had a battlefield letter of Lee, with detailed orders, in his hand, and which I sold through Christie's in New York. And I just recently sold a Washington letter through Christie's. One of the things that was interesting was a signature of Leon Czolgosz, the man who shot McKinley. It was one of only two known to be in private hands. And that was also sold through Christie's.

Q. This is Kevlin. I know your voice is going. We're almost done actually.

A. I'll go as long as you want to go.

Q. Back to OSU: In your time there, what is your best and what is your worst memory of being at student at OSU?

A. I don't know, maybe being elected the President of the senior class and the President of Sphinx senior men's honorary. And then, of course, meeting my wife to be.

Q. Good answer.

A. Political.

Q. And do you have a bad memory? Maybe that class you took.

A. I do have a bad memory, and it's getting worse all the time.

Q. I'm sorry, I mean a memory that ...

A. Bad memory?

Q. Yeah. And maybe it was that class you took, the professor you said wasn't any good.

A. Well, that would qualify. But one consists of both bad and good. I can remember studying, when I lived at Baker Hall as a freshman, into the wee hours because of a midterm exam that was coming up the next day. I should have studied probably through the quarter, but I procrastinated as I usually did about everything. And hearing that rather mournful sound of the train in the distance. And at the same time that was the occasion to go over to a place called Ptomaine Tommy's. Did you ever hear of Ptomaine Tommy's?

Q. I have, yes.

A. Well, it was down about the same latitude as Baker Hall, on High Street, right about across from the campus, around 10th or 11th Avenue. He had a sign up that said something like, "We seat 10,000, twenty at a time," I think it was something like that. But he had the best hamburgers in the world, really. He had some kind of sauce that he kept warm on the grill. He would fry the hamburgers in that. They were just out of this world. You could eat them by the dozen. So there was a combination of knowing that I could run across the street and get one of those hamburgers along with the mournful sound of the train in the distance. There was always a train. And it would be in the middle of the night and I would be studying. That's a kind of a mixed emotion, isn't it? A little good and a little bad.

- Q. Yeah, kind of like life, huh?
- A. Yeah. I can remember some bad times I had in opening up the fraternity house again. There were people that should not have been around that I had to go to bat for. I can remember they were not good moments, but let's forget about those.
- Q. [Mary Alice:] So you mentioned having made some of these donations of autographs. What other connections have you had with Ohio State through the years as an alum?
- A. Not as much as I should have. I've had more in recent years. Of course, I became a life member when I graduated and have gotten The Monthly every year. I've read every one of those that's come. And often commented on the quality or lack thereof, thinking I had a right to do that.
- Q. You have every right to do that.
- A. Well, I don't know whether that was well received or not. But it has varied from time to time and I think you're doing a wonderful job right now.
- Q. Well, thank you.
- A. It seems like a first-class magazine to me, the way such magazines should be. And I get several, oddly enough, because I have, on occasion, donated documents to libraries at other universities, where they weren't appropriate for Ohio State, but I've sent them to, oh my gosh, all over the place. And sometimes they then put me on their mailing list. I get The Terp from University of Maryland and quite a few others, which incidentally is a good alumni magazine. They do a good job also. But I get a lot of stuff from other schools.
- Q. Do you get back very often to Columbus?

A. No, I don't. It's been a long time since I've been back. A long time. I would like to see the campus, but I don't know whether I ever will. You know, I'll be 94 in December. I'm not nearly as mobile as I used to be. Or as sensible as I was.

Q. You and Joan had children?

A. Yeah, we had two sons and two daughters, one of whom unfortunately took his own life six years ago here. Outstanding guy, I thought. Was a photographer. And an Ohio State graduate, incidentally. I hadn't thought to mention. He started out at Bard College in Annandale, New York. Bard College, are you familiar with Bard?

Q. I am. I had a friend whose daughter went there.

A. Very outstanding school. In fact, the President of Bard is Leon Botstein, and in addition to being, if you can believe this, President of Bard, he directs a symphony orchestra in New York. And he is just a remarkable person. At the time my son was enrolled there, Joan was by herself walking across the campus, wanted directions and she stopped this young guy for help. In the course of the conversation he introduced himself as the President of the University or as it was at that time, Bard College. Anyhow, he went there for a couple of years, our son, Jay. And then he came back and went into the Cinematography Department at Ohio State, graduating with a degree in Cinematography. When he was in second grade in Worthington, one of his classmates, Blair Forward, became a close friend of his. They remained so forever. The friend went to Hollywood. He was handling the video, the simultaneous video taping. They don't use rushes anymore to speed films into processing. They have a video camera taping the scene at the same time, so they've got immediate access to what they just shot. This friend of Jay's was running one of these for Kevin Costner's *The Bodyguard*. And Jay went out to Hollywood to work with him. He looked

so much like Mel Gibson that people would go up to him on the street and ask for his autograph. Incidentally, when I was doing Quikrete I arranged for a commercial that we did in Hollywood with Don Knotts. Does that name mean anything to you?

Q. Uh-huh, Andy Griffith show.

A. Yeah. So Jay was a really good-looking guy. Fortunately, he took after his mother and not his old man. He became quite a friend of Kevin Costner, went out to his house and shot baskets with Kevin and his sons. So there was that connection. What brought that up?

Q. I don't know.

A. I don't either. Forgive me for being superfluous. I've often been accused of having constipation of the brain and diarrhea of the mouth. Or, the kind of a guy that you ask what time it is and he tells you how to build a watch.

Q. Is there anything we haven't talked about, that you would like to add?

A. One thing of interest about my coming out to the Cape that will bring my life back into perspective a little bit, I had eight relatives that came on the Mayflower and though I could be accused of mentioning it once in a while, I'm not one of these people who forever brings up the subject. Whenever this subject would come up and we'd be at a party or with friends and I would mention this, [my wife, Joan] would always hasten to say, "Oh yes, but don't forget that in those days there were no immigration laws." So she would put me in my place.

Q. I did notice in one of the articles that you sent, that it says you have several relatives there in the local cemetery. Is it Barnstable?

A. Yeah, Barnstable. It's named after a city in England. We bought this house a couple hundred yards from a cemetery. At the time I had no idea, but it turned out that the cemetery

is named after my grandfather with eight greats, who was the first Congregationalist minister in the United States. He came here to Barnstable in 1639. He's buried over here, as are the first two generations after him and their wives and others. There's another cemetery in a town called Osterville, which is on the other side of the Cape, very toney place where the homes are multi-million dollar stuff. It used to be known as "Lovell's Neighborhood." And that's where my progenitors came from. My great, great grandfather was a sea captain named Thomas Sturgis Lovell. He and his brother, Russell, left the Cape in 1814, to go to Ohio. The two of them in two covered wagons with five horses headed west and settled down about 30 miles west of Marietta, in the primeval forest. On the other side of the cape where Thomas Sturgis Lovell came from, there is a cemetery in the town of Osterville where there's a quarter acre of dead Lovells. Many subsequent generations are interred over there.

- Q. That's amazing. Well Lovell, I want to thank you very much for this interview. We appreciate your time. I'm going to turn the recorder off so we can handle some logistics. But again, thank you very much. This is Kevlin. Thank you very much.
- A. I'm sure I talked much too much and I'm sorry to have monopolized things. That's just the way I am.
- Q. That's your job in this interview. So hold on, let me turn the recorder off.
- A. Just don't ask me how to build a watch.