LOUIS BOAS
First Interview

Interviewed by:
Sam Schrager

Oral History Project
Latah County Museum Society

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Louis Boas

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(10 minutes)		

with Sam Schrager

July 30, 1976

LOUIS BOAS

Moscow; b. 1900

newspaper editor

2 hours

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	03	1	Prominent Moscow businessmen in the twenties. Importance of Star Mirror to Moscow. People took the Spokesman Review for national news. The paper's major responsibility is to be the watchdog over public institutions: importance of challenging police secrecy. Right of the people to a free press.
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II. Transcript

LOUIS BOAS

This conversation with LOUIS BOAS took place at his home in Moscow on July 30, 1976. The interviewer was SAM SCHRAGER.

LOUIS BOAS: Probably the best-he went back to Professor Baker's Drama School at Princeton.

SAM SCHRAGER: This was Talbot Jennings?

LB: Yes. You've heard of him? And of course later he went- he wrote several plays and they were produced in England, mostly. And then he joined the crew at Hollywood and became very familiar with Norma Shearer and her husband. And he wrote about three or four movies. That won Oscars.

SS: Mutiny on the Bounty, is one.

LB: Mutiny on the Bounty, with Charles Laughton and then Across the Wide Missouri. And Romeo and Juliet, he adapted for the movies. And The Good Earth and The Black Pearl, which did not succeed as well as the rest, but he had three or four. Northwest Passage, he wrote that and about four of them won Oscars. He's still living, West Glacier, Montana. We get a Christmas card from him.

SS: Who else was in that group that went out to write or make a living in English?

LB: Well, there was Blaine Stubblefield, who became editor of the motor and travel magazine, I can't tell you the name of it in New York and then he got tired of the rat race and came out to Weiser, Idaho and free-lanced and he was a great promoter of the Hell's Canyon as a recreation area. I believe he died now a few years ago. And Joel L. Priest who went to work for the Salt Lake Tribune, and then became the public relations man and writer for the Union Pacific Railroad. He's retired and in Carmel, California. And my wife who did a little free-lancing and I entered the newspaper business after being a ghost writer for Westinghouse Electric at Pittsburgh. I spent a year with them and I

couldn't stand Pittsburgh.

SS: Wasn't there one fellow who went on to Stanford?

LB: Yes, Buck, can't think of his first name now. Phillip Buck, who went on to Stanford and wrote some- he wrote work of higher class than we did. PhD type writing of papers and brochures on obscure subjects that English teachers write about. Analyzing Beowoof or some particular abstract thought that the rest of us wouldn't see.

SS: Do you think that the English Department at the University at that time was strong?

LB: Very strong. Very strong. George Morey Miller was the head of the department and he was a martinet but he had a good department. And of course, John Cushman, who is still living, he's eighty-five, and he lives in Moscow for nine months of the year; he is the one who attracted the people that were interested in writing. He had what he called a creative writing course and he attracted those peo ple to his course. And he encouraged Talbot Jennings to go on with his writing. He encouraged me to go on. And another of that era was Orin Fitzgerald who worked for the Salt Lake Tribune, and later came to Moscow as agricultural editor. And he wrote literally hundreds of articles for agricultural publications. He worked for a short time after he was here at the university, he left and went back to Boston as the editor of a publication for the Sheep Growers Association or something and he didn't like Boston, he was purely a Western man and gave it up and came back to Idaho. But he was a staff writer for several agricultural publications. One was- is it the American Farmer put out by the folks of the Saturday Evening Post?

SS: I'm not sure.

LB: I can't remember the name of it. It's still being published but he was a staff writer for them but located in Moscow and he had an article

about once a month. And he wrote for agricultural publications in Denver; one of them was a Cattle Association magazine at Denver that he wrote for extensively. And the Idaho Farmer, he wrote for the Idaho Farmer published in Spokane. He did a lot of writing.

SS: You say that George Morey Miller was sort of a martinet, what do you mean by that? He ran the department--

LB: He ran the department with an iron hand and if you made a mistake in English he just climbed all over you. In other words, he wouldn't allow you to split an infinitive and he wouldn't allow you to say, "the team, they", and you read the modern newspapers, that's 100% what they do. The city council, they did so-and-so. And my wife says that in later years that became acceptable. Well it never did to me! When I was editor of the Idahonian if I saw the story that"the team they did so-and-so,"I corrected it, and told the reporter that that was verboten. And my wife said, "Oh, they accept that now." I suppose the English language grows by usage.

SS: In other words, team would be singular rather than plural?

LB: Yes, it is singular. What would you say with two teams?

SS: That's plural.

LB: Okay, what do you say with one team when you say "they"? (Chuckles) Get my point? I think it should be singular at all times. And I notice in the newspapers they talk of so-and-so that was elected city councilman. Well, of course, it should be who. And then they will say, "The horses who ran over the grade and so forth," it should be what or that. They confuse the personal pronoun, either leaving it out and using another reference word or use a personal pronoun when it should be the impersonal pronoun. This is done all the time. I see the Lewiston Tribune, and I see it in all publications, ex-

cept I don't see it in the Wall Street Journal, which is one publication that is factually correct. I never noticed that in the Journal.

SS: You know, speaking about Miller; did he strike you as he seemed to strike a lot of people in Moscow as being a character?

LB: He was a character. He was eccentric. No question about it! He was an eccentric character, although his majors adored him. Say that he was a fine man. And he insisted upon correct usage of the English language, there is no question about it. And they used to call him an eccentric because you had to buy a tablet of paper to use for your themes which carried on the cover his rules for the usage of English. And he made a royalty on selling those. The freshmen had to buy that booklet. And he was criticized for that, which is wrong, no question about it. (Chuckles) I don't think a professor should have a racket of that nature, where he makes you buy a certain publication because he's got a royalty on it. George Morey did. But he required and instilled in the freshmen- at that time we had two general lectures a week from George Morey Miller on English.

SS: All freshmen?

LB: All of them in one group. It was either two or one. They all met in the auditorium and he lectured the entire freshman class in English.

SS: On usage, primarily?

LB: Oh, usage and literature, whatever happened to be his topic. We had a general meeting of all freshmen English students.

SS: Was it good?

LB: Yes, it was good. They way they do, and I think they still do in chemistry I, have a general lecture by department man once a week and then you go to your individual classes for additional lectures and questions and answers and quizzes.

SS: Let me get this straight; this was for the whole- just the English students, or the whole class?

LB: Freshmen. The whole class.

SS: No matter what your major was?

LB: No, no matter what your major was. And of course, Freshmen English was required. The entire freshmen class met once or twice a week, I can't remember which, in the auditorium for George Morey Miller's lecture on English. And then you spent, say, two periods a week with your individual instructor in which you wrote themes, answered oral quizzes and took your written quizzes.

SS: Do you think at that time the presence of men like Miller and Cushman had an effect on attracting students to English as a major?

LB: John Cushman did. He attracted people who were interested in writing; definitely. I don't know that George Morey Miller did; no. But we had a man here who was an outstanding authority on history; Hulme, who went from here to Stanford. And he was one of the, at least United States authorities and I think a world authority on European History. And he was here in the early '20's and left about 1921. He was a fine man. And he attracted students here for history. And he became- he was recognized while he was here and after he left, he was recognized as a worldwide authority on history. The University of Idaho now has two worldwide authorities in science; Dr.Peck in physics, he's a world authority on certain phases of physics. Had a friend of mine who's son graduated in physics from Stanford University and came here for his MA because he couldn't afford to go on to Stanford any more and he was amazed to find that Dr. Peck was here as a member of the physics department when he had studied his book at Palo Alto- Stanford. Other of course, worldwide authority is Miss Jeannine- she married Grenver.

She's a worldwide authority today on fluorocarbon chemistry. Do you remember her?

SS: No, I don't know her.

LB: You don't know her?

SS: No.

LB: Jeannine Shreave. And she's traveled all over the world giving lectures on fluorocarbon. It's an accident that we got her, she came from Montana as an unknown, as a young graduate, a young PhD, and she was interested in fluorocarbons and she had her candidates for a master's degrees and Phds work on fluorocarbons and she became a world authority. I think we have a fewer percentage of those now than we had in 1920, because we had some very good teachers. We had A. W. Fahrenwald in mining, who is still living, and he's a world authority on mining problems. He developed the flotation processes for separating minerals from ores. And he's been called all over the world to consult mining companies. He went to Cypress a number of years ago. Well, he's been retired for twenty years. And we had a better faculty overall than we have today.

SS: What do you think the difference has been in time?

LB: I don't know. I do not know. Except that it was a small school, we had a small community; the people liked the climate. I think we were paying a comparable wage at that time, which is nothing what it is now. They got $7,000 or $8,000 a year and now they get $25,000 a year and yell. Except in English, I think they're in demand more than they were then. We've had an explosion in the number of students all over the world. It's gotten to the point that if you don't go to college you don't amount to anything; that's wrong.

SS: I wondered if the competition among the three Idaho schools would have an effect as well because of the demands from BSU and ISU for funds.

LB: I'm sure that three institutions do mean that we have to spread it thinner. We have to spread our support for higher education between three institutions rather than one. And that's the way it was; it was one then. what we as know Idaho State College was known then as Idaho Technical Institute. It was purely a technical institute where you learned barbering and cosmetology and auto mechanics and so forth. Then it became a branch of the University; the Southern Branch then it became an independent institution; two year institution then a four year institution and now it's giving graduate work and they want to give Phds. You can't, you can't for 750,000 people, you can't afford that. It's like putting three degree granting institutions supported by the public money of the the city of Seattle. Can't be done, in my estimation.

SS: Do you think that there was concern at the University of Idaho back in the '20's about it's development?

LB: Yes, certainly. It's always been here as long as I've been around Moscow. And we though we had politically, Moscow people thought they'd solved the problem when they made Pocatello , the Institution of Pocatello, was asking for college status instead of an institute, and it was accepted by the legislature as a branch of the University and it became a two year college. So we thought we'd solved that, that they were under us. We controlled it and we sent a dean from Moscow to Pocatello to operate it.

SS: That was Dean-

LB: Angell. Dean Angell, who's daughter lives two doors from here.

SS: Dusault.

LB: Mrs. Dusalt. We thought we'd solved it, because it was part of us; the Southern Branch, we could hold it. You couldn't hold it.

SS: What happened?

LB: They got the bigger population and they got the people down there so they voted to make it an independent institution; make it a four year school. And of course, Boise started out as a junior college, with a junior college district which encompassed all of Ada County as a taxing unit, you see. And I think it took in some of the smaller areas around Ada County, probably part of Payette County and so forth as a taxing unit. And they supported that as a junior college. Well, you know, you get 75,000 people in an area, there's another 75,000 in the environs and Nampa and Caldwell and Payette and so forth, why, they wanted their own school, so they made it a four year school. And mark my words, I won't live to see it, you will, when Boise is the major institution in the state of Idaho. No question about it. Just ten days ago the State Board of Education approved a course, a four year course, in legal technology to graduate people with enough legal knowledge that they could do the paper work of the lawyers and let the lawyers free- did you read about that?

SS: No, but I know the course you're talking about because I know-

LB: Just in the paper ten days ago. That's the beginning of law school. You wait, four years from now, they'll say, "We've got this, why not have the law school to follow it?" It's coming.

SS: How much do you think that the university here is protected by it's alumni who have gone on to become the leaders?

LB: Very little. Who are the leaders for advancing Boise College to graduate status and PhD status, and the law school? Who are they? They're the lawyers of Boise who all graduated from the University of Idaho. They tried to move the law school down to Boise two years ago. They tried four years ago to move it; who were the prime movers? The lawyers of Boise, ninety percent of who graduated right out here. So you can't

depend upon that, in my estimation.

SS: What does protect the university then?

LB: Oh, the fact that it's been here; it's the oldest school, it has prestige and it has age, but that won't protect it forever. Boise's got the population. Boise itself is 100,000 people. Spokane's 180,000; well, Boise's getting up there.

SS: So you think ultimately it's a question -

LB: Power politics. Power politics. Boise's population gives them as many representatives in the Senate and House as all of South Idaho. And they're going to get what they want; it's bound to be. Just bound to be. That's why Frank Church didn't get to be vice president, he comes from a little state; no influence. That's why Sweicher was chosen by Regan because he could influence 110 delegates in Pennsylvania, or so he thought. It's Power politics.

SS: It makes me think of the old story about the origination of the university here rather than down there. I'm just curious about the version of that that you've heard. Did you hear it as a way of keeping North Idaho in the state?

LB: Yes. Definitely. Idaho was on the verge of seceding and joining with western Montana and eastern Washington to form the state of Lincoln. In fact, there was a bill passed by the legislature to create that state and it was vetoed by President Cleveland; I believe it was President Cleveland. It was vetoed; it passed. And there is no question about it, they demanded something up here and Moscow was one of the leading communities of North Idaho. Moscow and Lewiston and they put it in Moscow. No question. They had a couple of smart men down there as representatives and so forth. One was Forney, Judge Forney. He was there and he was a smart man and he persuaded them to give the univer-

sity of Idaho. And they thought that was of minor importance and that'll mean fifty or seventy-five young people going to the university and so forth and so on. No question about that.

SS: You mean, that that's what they thought? They didn't realize the implication?

LB: No, they did not. Because state universities were not too popular. There was one in California and I suppose one in other states; Washington had one. It was a state before we were. But it wasn't considered any great big plum.

SS: You yourself were raised in Boise, weren't you?

LB: Yes.

SS: How do you feel than? Do you feel divided loyalties at all?

LB: No. Because I haven't been back to Boise since I was about twenty years old. Oh, I've been back for visits. We came out from Ohio in 1910 and when I was eighteen I came to the University of Idaho and stayed here for a couple of years and the recession came along of 1920 and '21, and I knew my dad was a little hard pressed so I went to work and earned my way through school from then on. And was only back there one year, I went to Westinghouse at Pittsburgh as a ghost writer. I graduated as an engineer. And I knew when I graduated that I was not an engineer, but I had the degree. In other words, I didn't like engineering. I liked chemistry and always have, but I didn't like the engineering that went with it. Mathmatics was a headache. So, the fact that Westinghouse needed a writer and I could understand the language I got a job. And I wrote articles for technical and semi-technical publications which carried the name of the scientist or engineer that did the work. I wrote it; he did the work; he couldn't write; I couldn't do the work. You get my point? And the term had not been devised at that time. I never heard the term ghostwriter until much later. That's what I was, I was a technical writer. And I stayed in Pittsburgh

for one year.

SS: Why did you leave it?

LB: Leave? Well, if you had seen Pittsburgh in those days you would have known why. They've cleaned it up since then, but it was the dirtiest place in the world. And the plant where I worked was right out in the east end, Turtle Creek or what they called East Pittsburgh and populated with ethnic minorities, which were commonly referred to as "hunkies", or Negroes. We lived in another area six miles away; Wilkinsburg, which is a nice little town but it was a dirty town. And I didn't have any friends there and I had a girl out here and that was that! So, I quit.

SS: Did you feel that the West was the place to be rather than the East?

LB: Then I did, yes. When I graduated from college I thought you had to go East to be anybody. If you wanted to amount to something you had to get back East, so I went back East. And when I got there I was disillusioned.

SS: Do you think that was a common attitude among the college graduates?

LB: Yes, I think it was. I think it was. It was the place where the big money was. It was the place where life was interesting. It was a place where people advanced. There wasn't anything out here, at least in Idaho. You didn't have any industries in the West. Now California's full of them. But we didn't have those.

SS: The attraction would be East rather than Seattle, Portland or California at that time?

LB: Yes. Oh, yes. People came to California to retire. There was no industry of any major import. I wanted to go East; be in the big time and so forth and so on. And one year there and the dirt and the filth-it was just awful dirty, they had not cleaned it up. Air pollution

was terrible! Smoke- you couldn't sit on the grass, ever! You had to put a newspaper down when you sit on the grass. It was just soot. And it was just awful. And I took it for one year.

SS: And it sounds as though the cities were socially disorganized, too.

LB: Well, I didn't know. I was young and I didn't know anybody. I had a roommate who was from up at Weippe. One of the Space boys, Ralph Space. He since died. There were three or four of 'em, and all of 'em brilliant. And he was my roommate and he left before I did. He stuck it out about eight or nine months and then he had to get out here in the wild area of the Weippe region and became a forester. And he was an electrical engineer. And I stayed a little longer and finally just gave it up.

SS: Let me go back to the decision of going to college; talk a little bit about the college years here. I'm curious about the way that you would be going to college. Was it a foregone conclusion?

LB: No, it wasn't. Minority of students at that time went to college. I don't know what the percentage was; fifteen percent; twenty. It was a minority, but I wanted to go to college and my dad wanted to go to college and I was interested in chemistry; that was my favorite topic in high school, so I came up here to be a chemist. And they told me the best route was chemical engineering, so I took chemical engineering.

SS: Had either of your parents gone to college?

LB: No, neither of them. My dad was a candy maker. He had a store in Boise.

SS: There was a value that he placed on going to school?

LB: Oh, yes, there was a value he placed on education, that's right. And my friends came to college; almost all of 'em. Those that I ran around

with. They almost all came to college.

SS: To Moscow?

(End of Side A)

LB: Yes. Those of my group came to college. Ted Sherman who lives in Moscow is one of them. And that's about the size of the ones that are here. We came to college, and we all finished.

SS: Was that express that I've heard about, was that running at that time? The train.

LB: The train?

SS: Yes.

LB: Special? Oh, yes.

SS: What was that like?

LB: Well, of course, the North and South highway had not been built until several years later, and the only to get here was the Union pacific Railroad. And students did not have cars. I remember the first student that had a car on campus was from Twin Falls; was about his junior year and he was an oddity; everybody looked up to him. His father was a judge, and he had a car.

SS: What year would this have been then?

LB: About 1922. He had gone to the University of Illinois or the University of Michigan, I forget which for one or two years. I don't know if he flunked out. I don't know if he ran out of money or what, but he came to Idaho, and he was a hotshot and he had an automobile. The first one in town- the first student who had an automobile. So when you came to the University the dates were set and they formed a special train, starting in at possibly Idaho Falls, but at least Pocatello and I'm thinking Idaho Falls and it just came around the loop in through Oregon into Moscow. And it was a big train. They'd have ten or twelve Pullman cars and a diner and baggage car and so forth and so on. And

it was strictly segregated; girls in one car and men in another. And the Dean of Women always rode the train. Dean French. She rode the train, she was chaparone. At a certain time of night, why, if you were sitting in a seat talking to a girl in the girls' section it was time to go to the men's car and you got the hell out of there! And then of course, at Christmastime they formed another one and went south. And they came back and in the spring they had another one taking the students home. That was that. Oh, that ran for years. Student Special!

SS: Dean French live in Boise?

LB: Oh, she lived in Moscow.

SS: So it was just to accompany the train that she went?

LB: Oh, yes, just to accompany the train. She was always on the train. She was a fine woman. very big. She was the Superintendent of Public Instruction and she was born at Hailey. Then she became County Superintendent and then finally State Superintendent and from that she became Dean of Women at Idaho. She died about twelve, fifteen years ago, way up in her eighties. She lived in Seattle later. And she built- she was a leader. She knew that sutdents had to have recreational facilities. All we had in town was a picture show. And all college dances, almost every weekend there was an all college dance. Usually in the old gymnasium, which is now the women's gym. And they had an all college dance in each fraternity and sorority, and there were only half as many as there are now- had one dance a year, sometimes two, and she saw the need for another recreation area and she built with her own money the Blue Bucket Inn. She financed; paid for it; hired a manager and ran it. One of the things she had there was beer, and it was near beer to begin with, then of course, we still had Prohibition. But she ran

it and later when Prohibition was over, she had real beer there, but it was a student place to gather. Two floors; lower floor was a soda fountain and chairs and tables where you could go and get a coke or a sandwich or cookies and things and upstairs was a dancehall. It's located about now where the Book Store is. And after the University took it over, that same building was the Book Store for MANY years until they remodled the Student Union and tore it down and built a modern book store there.

SS: Did she run this really as a service to the students rather than to make any sort of profit?

LB: She went broke. (Chuckles) She went broke. Well, she tried to make money. She wanted to break even on it and she never did and finally she went broke in it. She was losing money and the University bailed her out. Don't tell the legislators that in the south of Idaho, that they bailed her out, and they bought it for not as much as she paid for it, but they bailed her out and she got most of her money back and then the University ran it for a few years as the Blue Bucket.

SS: It was a really socially important function, and the university should bail her out.

LB: Yes, that's right, that's right. And they ran it for some years as a student hangout. And then the Nest came into being and the Perch came into being, and there WAS no longer any need for it and so they converted it into a student bookstore.

SS: Wasn't it the major meeting place for the students at that time?

LB: Yes. Yes, it was a hangout. Just the way the Student Union is now. Go down there and get a cup of coffee or a coke, coke and root beer were more popular than coffee. Coffee is a later thing, but you dropped in there and get a five cent glass of Coca Cola and hang around.

Buy a bag of peanuts and chat. And upstairs was a dance floor, and they converted that and had many of the all student dances up there on Saturday nights. And the fraternities and sororities would rent it for their big occasions. Their pledge dance and sweetheart dance and so forth.

SS: It was considerably nicer than the gym?

LB: Yes, oh, yes, yes. It was a nice place; very nice. Comparable to the present Student Union. It was not as big but it was a good dance hall.

SS: Would you tell me that story that you were telling me before about your effort to make sure that her picture stayed in the Student Union rather than--

LB: Well, yes. We went up, my wife and I went up to some function at the Student Union and the main stairway going up to a landing and then coming back this way to go up to the main big hall of the Student Union; at the landing spot hanging on the wall there was Dean French's picture, an oil painting. And we went up there one time and saw it was gone, and I was curious, didn't see it. Oh, not many weeks later I was approached to make a donation to the performing arts building, and so I pledged $1,000 to the performing arts along with a lot of other people in Moscow. And I happened to see Jim Lyle who was the alumni secretary on the street, down at Third and Main, and I just stopped him and I said, "Jim, I noticed a week or two ago that the portrait of Dean French was no longer hanging in the Student Union building. "Oh," he said, "I hadn't noticed it." I said, "Well, it's not there. I don't know where it is, maybe it's been moved." I says, I'm telling you now that I'm cutting my pledge in two for the performing arts building unless I get a satisfactory explanation of why they moved the picture." A number of years before that, while Dean

French was still alive, she was dead by this time, there was a movement started by the alumni, through the alumni president, and I don't know who he was, to get an oil painting of Dean French to hang in the Student Union. The painting cost roughly $1,500. Now it might have been $2,500, I don't know, but at least $1,500. It was done by an artist in Seattle where Dean French was then living. And it was juat a quiet movement to raise the money, and we raised the money, I maybe gave $10 and a lot of others did, and she came over to see it, and we hung it in the Student Union. Well, a couple of weeks went by after I saw Jim Lyle and I got a telephone call from President Hartung, and he said, "I understand you're a little disturbed about something Louis, would you come up and talk to me? And I said, "Be glad to." So I went up and he said that Jim Lyle had told him what I had said. I says, "I feel that way very strongly." He said, "Well, we have decided to put the photographs of all the deans in one room at the library, and line the walls the pictures of all the deans, past and present. And so, that will go there." And I said, "Yes, and those photographs usually are eight by ten that cost about seven dollars." And I said, "This one of Dean French was an expensive, at that time, oil painting." I said, "It's fine to have the deans' photographs in the library, but Dean French started with her own money the Blue Bucket Inn, and went broke at it. She did it as a service to the students. That's the forerunner of the Student Union. Her photograph belongs in the Student Union." I said, "I believe in tradition." I said, "There are buildings on the University of Columbia campus that are two hundred years old and they're still there and they still have the same names; so-and-so's hall. It's true in the University of London. It's true at Oxford; I've seen them. Hundreds of years old and

they have the same name." I says, "I believe in those traditions and you can have all the other deans in this one room, but Dean French's belongs in the place that she started as a student service." He says, "I see your point." Well, another couple of weeks went by and Jim Lyle called me up and said, "Your picture of Dean French is back in the Student Union." It's still there. That's that. It's not hanging in the same place. It's hanging right next to the Borah Theatre.

SS: She sounds like an extremely dedicated person.

LB: She was. She had various rules, in other words, no girl could appear on campus in anything but a skirt, except when the temperature got down below a certain degree in winter. Ten above zero or zero, or something. And then they could wear slacks. Otherwise, they wore skirts. No question about it. You were home by nine o'clock week nights, you were in your dormitory or sorority. Period! Saturday night and Friday nights you were in by eleven-thirty, and Sunday night by seven. And it was a rule, no one questioned it. She was very strict. But the students as such disliked her and as graduates they loved her. That's correct. I thought she was the weeds! (Chuckles) I didn't like her, and yet she was always invited to every fraternity and every sorority dance. Not to invite Dean French was unthinkable.

SS: While undergraduates?

LB: While undergraduates, oh, yes, it was unthinkable. And some student would be assigned to escort her and they did. And everybody in the house, every man in the house danced with her, always. You danced with her, maybe you had to cut in, but you danced with her and she appreciated it that it was a courtesy. She did this; she would announce to a fraternity and a sorority that, "I would like to be invited to dinner next Sunday. I want to give a little ten minute talk after dinner."

And so forth, so you invited her. And her talk at the dinner table was on table manners and common courtesy. And you didn't see students after that shoveling food in their mouths with the wrong hand or holding their fork this way. She did that every fall. And she taught them manners. And it was part of the college career to learn to be ladies and gentlemen. No one does that now.

SS: Where do you think the source of the dislike of her as undergraduates would come to school?

LB: Oh, she was too strict, she was too strict.

SS: Didn't want to be regulated, it looks like.

LB: They wouldn't stand for it now.

SS: Exactly, that's what I mean.

LB: But then, her word was law. She had the authority, I suppose she had the authority given to her by the president, that she was to supervise the morals of the campus and be dean of women and see that the women were in their residence hall at a certain time of night. And that the boys were gone by a certain time of night, and that was that. And she ruled with an iron thumb. The girls loved her. Many of the boys, including myself-

SS: The girls did like her?

LB: Oh, yes.

SS: I was noticing in one of these Blue Buckets that some of the attitudes didn't seem very different than some of the attitudes today. I don't know whether who was writing it was just being really daring, but, I'll see if I can find it- there's something here which struck me as being a bit racy. This one little story; "The local laundryman having scoured the inner chambers of some of the female boardinghouses secured valuable information including the real meaning of the Grecian symbols."

LB: (Chuckles)

SS: "Gamma Phi Beta, Good Petting Bunch." Is the first one.

LB: Yeah.

SS: "Kappa Alpha Theta, Keen After Twilight. Chi Beta, Come on Boys."

LB: Yes.

SS: It just seemed to me from reading some of that, that there was, I don't know if this is just on the boys' part or not, but there really seems to be the same kind of interest in the opposite sex as there is today.

LB: Oh, sure! Sure. I think it was common knowledge that the girls of one sorority were a little more lenient than the girls in another sorority. Just the way they do today. Some sororities pick students, some pick good-looking girls, you know. That's true. The Kappas have always gotten students. They've been number one or number two or number three in student achievements all through the years, until a few years ago, it's not more than five, six, that they have stopped releasing the grade averages of sororities and fraternities. Before then they would release the averages. The average of a sorority would be 2.49 and became a habit that the Kappas were always number one or number two. And so, because of that, that alone, the complaints that were made affected rushing the following fall, they dropped it. But it's been true the Kappas have always somehow gotten good students and they've also gotten very attractive girls. That's probably correct. That was this boy's opinion of the girls, of the ones that would allow you to kiss them at night and so forth and so on and those that wouldn't. That's true. But Dean French was quite well- reasonably well liked by the girls and despised by the majority of the men. But ten years out of college you loved her! You knew she was right. You knew she gave you something. She gave you table manners. When a woman came into

the room, you stood up. And she gave us all these things, you know. And that's part of college life. Now, with these students living in these trailers and wearing dirty cutoff jeans; I'm sure that a lot of them have no concept of being what the old English would say was a gentleman and a lady. And Dean French saw to it that you got that much culture. Whether it stuck or not, I don't know.

SS: Do you think there was any difference in terms of the needs of students for getting this kind of culture? Whether they came from a rural or urban background?

LB: More came from rural backgrounds than probably is true today, because we have fewer farms. We have larger farms and fewer farms. More city people. Boise is a city of 100,000; Boise was a city of 17,000 when I came here. And we didn't have many big cities. There wasn't the work and it was more rural; there were more farms. You didn't have farm machinery, you didn't have combines, you threshed the wheat and put it in stacks and then a stationary thresher was located in the field and you hauled the grain to the thrasher. Well, you could get by on a sixty acre farm. If you haven't got 600 acres now, you might as well go out of business.

SS: These sons and daughters coming from the rural areas, were they more likely to be, in the view of Dean French as needing some more graces?

1B: Yes. I'm sure she felt that way. And I'm sure they needed it. Sure they needed it. More so than they do now. We didn't have as many rich people in Idaho. Oh, those people who had money would do as they still do; send their sons - send their students to Harvard or Yale or Stanford was quite a popular school. My wife, for example, went the first two years of her college work to University of California at Berkeley, until her widowed Mother, she knew, could no longer afford it. I don't think the mother ever said no, but my wife was like I was, smart

enough to know that tuition had gone up in California, so she came to Idaho her junior year. But that was true.

SS: But those who were the wealthy would tend to send their children-

LB Out of state, yes. To a better school. In other words, they, oh, just the way you used to go to Salt Lake to buy your clothes, if you lived in the Pocatello area. They way the people do in Moscow now. Certain percentage of them go to Spokane to do their shopping. Stores here aren't quite good enough for them, they don't have the selection. And that's been true; still true.

SS: Well, talking about dating and activity between the sexes; In those days, I'm curious about it in terms of the contrast in the way it is now. Was it usually that you date a lot of different people during your years in college, or was it that they tended to being going steady?

LB: I think it hasn't changed. I think it's about the same. Except you did other things. Popular pastime then was to walk the railroad tracks. Heavens yes! You didn't have a car. There was no picture show on Sunday. The American Legion- No- the churches kept Sunday movies out of Moscow until 1928 or '29, and then the American Legion persuaded the city council to allow the picture shows on Sunday. And Mr. Kenworthy gave, for many years, a percentage of his receipts from Sunday movies to the American Legion. But up until that time, when I was in school, there was no Sunday movies. And you had a date with your girl on Sunday; what do you do? You don't sit around the sorority living room with fifteen other couples! You can't be personal there! So, you'd go out and you'd walk around town or you'd walk the railroad tracks. I've walked the railroad tracks out toward Pullman time and time again! Or out towards the cemetery. That used to be a popular pastime; go down to Main and walk the railroad tracks out to-

ward the cemetery. Saunter along and you could talk to your girl. That was a popular pastime. It was enjoyable. I got engaged when I was walking the railroad tracks down the Pullman road! (Chuckles)

SS: That's interesting, because I know for instance at Elk River, the decision of the church- the Community Church - prevailed on the city council to stop Sunday movies, and caused really bitter feelings on the part of the young people because of the isolation of the place. They had been having Sunday movies, then there was nothing for them to do.

LB: That's true with the students here. We had about- I came here just after World War I and the enrollment jumped about 200 that year, around 650 to 850. Big jump in enrollment, and that was quite a lot of students to toss on the community without anything to do, so all you could do was to walk. (Chuckles) And railroad track was level, and you didn't have to think about the few cars that would be going along a dusty road and so forth, and so you walked the railroad tracks and you'd see a dozen of 'em!

SS: What kind of an attitude did that foster in the students? A slightly negative attitude towards Moscow? A place with nothing to do?

LB: No.

SS: Students nowdays complain there's nothing to do at Moscow.

LB: I know it. But, my gosh, the Student Union with the bowling alleys and the pool tables and the coffee bars and records to play, to dance, in such and such a place. We had nothing- none of those. Only thing you could do was go to the Blue Bucket and get an ice cream soda and sit there until somebody else wanted your table and get up and get out! Or you'd walk. My wife and I used to walk around this part of town, and you'd just walk and saunter and as long as you got back by a cer-

tain hour, why that was that.

SS: In those days, do you think that there was much sex before marriage? Nowdays, it's relatively common.

LB: Wasn't as common then as it is now, no, no. Good girls didn't do it. Frankly. There was some, certainly. There has been since Adam. But it wasn't as accepted as it is now. No two students lived together as they do now. Now there are hundreds of them. I see 'em at the grocery store. There are hundreds of them living together. That was not done. There was sex on campus, I suppose. I know one of the houses- I won't name it- but the rumor spread real rapidly that a baby was found in a dresser drawer. That's true. A girl gave birth to a baby in the sorority house and stuck it in the dresser drawer. I forget- I don't know if the baby lived or died, I forget. But it spread like wildfire all over the campus. It was true. And there were certain gals who were "giving out' as you say, the same as there is now. But it was not as common as it is, by one-tenth. If you thought you could live with a girl- why, Dean French would see that she was out! Tomorrow morning. They kicked them out.

SS: I imagine it was difficult to keep things from Dean French.

LB: It was. It was. She knew what was going on. Heavens on earth! She knew every couple that was going together. Period! How she knew, I don't know, but she knew! She knew my girl was Ruth Hawkins, no question about it. She knew, she knew what every man, who his girl was. She knew every girl who had more or less a steady date. She knew!

SS: Well, in those days. This just something that strikes me from reading; then as compared to now. Do you think- like today, men are never expacted to get involved in [illegible] or things like that. That's a thing of the past as far as experience in growing up. But do you think on

the campus in those days, that was more accepted for what men would do to get experience?

LB: It was no more accepted, but I think that more men did it, yes. They used to hike off to Lewiston. Lewiston was a lumbermen's and mining town. The miners and lumbermen would come into Lewiston once every six weeks to blow their wages.

SS: Blowing in?

LB: Yes. There were a certain number of houses and certain students would see to that themselves. They could take care of it. They'd go down to Lewiston on the train or otherwise. Yes. Not a great percentage of 'em, but a few. But if they propositioned their own girl, why, they'd get slapped in the face and that was that!

SS: And lose her?

LB: That's right, they'd lose her.

SS: You know, there's a lot of discussion of women's liberation these days- and I'm wondering about how much equality between the sexes there was in those days? I know, for instance, that women didn't seem to have the opportunities to get involved in a lot of different fields of study that they do today. Their career opportunities seem to have been relatively restricted.

LB: That's right. It was unthinkable, almost. (End of side B) There were no women in the college of engineering. And if a girl had enrolled in the college of engineering the dean would have done everything to discourage her. It was a man's field. I remember Bernice Day, who's father had this big house on the corner here, the Day home, and he and his brothers owned the Day Mine in the Coeur d' Alenes and had a big stock in the Bunker Hill and Sullivan Mines. Jerome Day was one of the discoverers of the Bunker Hill and Sullivan Mine, and he had a daughter; he had a son and a daughter and his son was drowned on Lake Washington in Seattle as a boy of about nineteen.

And it broke his father's heart. And he had a daughter and she was huge in size, and she took mining engineering. And that was just the scandal of the campus. But she did it and she graduated. But it was almost unheard of. She was a freak to take mining engineering. She died a number of years ago. She was younger than I am, but she died because she was huge in size and that was just a mortal cinch she wouldn't live to old age.

SS: Why do you think the attitudes were as they were at that time? About that sort of thing? It doesn't seem sinful to me for a woman who wants to study mining engineering to take it. But that's my generation.

LB: Well, the woman's place was in the home. She should take home economics or English or languages or some of the fine arts courses. She wasn't supposed to earn a living. The man earned the living. She was supposed to stay home and raise the family, so why take engineering? She couldn't get a job. Of course now it's different, you see you've got equality, but in those days you couldn't get a job if you were a woman engineer! Hopeless. You couldn't practice law because you'd be ostracised. There were no women lawyers in those days. Just the same as a boy would never enroll in home economics. A few of 'em do now! Just the way the world was built. It's different now! (Chuckles)

SS: Do you feel that on an intellectual plane that women were regarded as less competent?

LB: In certain fields, yes. It bothered the hell out of me when Dean Angell's daughter was enrolled in my calculus course as a sophmore. I was a sophomore in engineering. She majored in mathematics, and she was in my calculus course. The only woman I ever had in any course related to engineering. And she's a good friend of mine. Lives two doors down here; Mary Evelyn Angell Dusault. But she took calculus

in my course, and the men resented it. I resented it. Probably because she was smarter than most of the men! Probably true. But they just didn't like it! They didn't like it! I can tell you a story if you're interested about the teacher of that course. Taylor, Professor Eugene Taylor. And I think it was in the calculus course that he announced at the beginning of the year that he had been teaching for seventeen years; he had never missed a class in his life; he had never been late for classes in his life and he said that if any time the bell rings and I'm not here at my desk, it means that something unusual has happened and that's that! You may be free to go. On the other hand, if one of you students is not in his chair when the bell rings, you're not present! You can stay, but you're not present. And that was that. And throughout the course, he'd be lecturing, or putting something on the blackboard and the bell would ring and he'd lay his chalk down. That's the end of the course, you never kept you five seconds overtime. One day the bell rang and Professor Taylor was not in the room. So we all get up and walked out. Opened the door and there was Professor Taylor just coming up. "Morning, Mr. Taylor." "Good morning gentlemen". We kept on going. And the next morning he said, "Gentlemen, I made a mistake," he said, "I've been in the habit of accepting a ride from one of my neighbors, Dean Messenger of the college of engineering. Yesterday we had a flat tire. I was late. Gentleman, from now on I shall walk." And he walked to class. He lived over here, just as far from the campus as I do; he walked to class every day until he retired about forty years later. He never rode. I used to go to work in the morning at seven-thirty and I'd pass him going down Third Street. He walked the rest of his life. He only died about two years ago, up in his nineties.

But about five or six years ago I was at a cocktail party of a friend who lived right near there and the Taylors were invited. And I saw Mrs. Taylor there and I said, "You know, I got a good story to tell about your husband." And I started to tell her and she says, "My God were you in that class?" And I said, "Yes." She said, "We have talked about that many and many a time. Go over and tell Gene that you were in that class." Which I did, and he enjoyed it. But everyone knows that Gene- that Eugene Taylor walked to and from class every day for forty years, and that's the reason.

SS: This passion for punctuality; was that the way he taught, as well?

LB: That's the way he taught. Yes sir! He flunked me in an exam one time. I think it was calculus, it might have been engineering mathematics, I don't know, and he asked me to stay after class, and he gave me a flunk in, oh, a periodic exam, it wasn't a final exam and he said, "Mr. Boas," he said, "I flunked you on that course. You did the problem right, but you made a mistake in arithmetic." And he said, "You know, you are poor enough student, you can't afford that!" From that day to this I brag, I never make a mistake in arithmetic. I do, occassionally, but I'm particular, I see that the arithmetic is correct. Because I did the problem right, but I got the wrong answer. Didn't give me anything; he gave me zero. Some professors would have given you half credit for doing the problem right, but I had made a mistake in arithmetic. He lived mathematics. His life was mathematics from the time he got up til the time he went to bed. He was prompt; he lived mathematics and he was my favorite professor. He and Dr. Costellic in chemistry are my two favorite professors.They were different, entirely different.

SS: What is it about them that--?

LB: Well, they were just good teachers. They were just excellent teachers. Everyone thought that Taylor was an excellent teacher, and he was an excellent teacher.

SS: By excellent, do you mean ---?

LB: Yes, oh, yes. He'd work with you; he'd answer questions. You could go to his office anytime and he would take time out to explain things. And he was never too busy to help you, but he lived by the rules. If you weren't in your seat when the bell rang, you were not present! And, that's that!

SS: Does that mean you couldn't ask any questions?

LB: You couldn't ask any questions, you couldn't turn a paper in, you could not participate in the discussion. You could listen, but you couldn't do anything else; you were not present. And believe me, everybody was in his seat when the course started!

SS: When you first came to Moscow, what did you think of the town, as a freshman student here?

LB: Thought it stunk! It was a lousy town. We all made fun of it. It was small; didn't have any good stores; the movie theatre was a small theatre on Third Street. And before I graduated they had the one down on Main; just one of them. But it was a poor town, no one liked it, they all made fun of little Moscow. But of course, actually, it was a nice little town. It's the way you believe, you know. Home is best; home is good; home is fine, this is no place to be.

SS: Well, it certainly wasn't very urban compared to Boise at the time, I imagine.

LB: Yes.

SS: Did you become involved in fraternities very quickly after you came here?

LB: The second year; Sigma Chi.

SS: What made you decide on that one?

LB: Well, that was new, I was one of the organizers of it. There were only about four fraternities at that time, and there was room for more. And during that period there were three or four fraternities started. Sigma Chi was started, Alpha Tau Omega was started, the Pi Phis were started and TKEs later. There were four or five started. At that time there were only about four. Kappa Sig, Beta, Theta - or Phi Delta Theta and Sigma Nu, those were the only fraternities we had.

SS: What were the advantages to a student to being in a fraternity then?

LB: Just the same as it is now. No different. Friendship and a place to live and so forth and so on. Just exactly the same as now.

SS: I understand that the freshmen were in a somewhat disadvantaged position in regard to the older students.

LB: Oh, surely. They were razzed. They've given up that now, mostly.

SS: Had to wear green hats?

LB: All freshmen on campus had to wear green hats. If you didn't wear a green hat on campus, you got paddled by the upper classmen. And I mean paddled; if an upper classman, junior or senior, caught a freshman without- and we were all known, everybody knew who the freshman were, if they caught you without a green beanie, why, someone would rush and get a paddle and bend you over their knees and paddle you! (Chuckles) They had traditions. Of course, that's what made the institution; juniors and seniors could wear corduroy trousers. Every junior and senior wore a corduroy pair of pants. And as soon as you got to be a junior, the first thing you did was to pay six dollars for a pair of corduroy pants. And the rule was; you never washed 'em! The dirtier they got, the better! (Laughter) Just what they do now with their

jeans!

SS: That was fashion?

LB: That was fashion. You didn't wash them. If they stood up by themselves, that was fine! (Chuckles)

SS: I'm surprised Dean French tolerated that. But then, I guess was the dean of women.

LB: She was the dean of women. And of course, the seniors carried canes. Senior men carried canes.

SS: Did they?

LB: Yes.

SS: I didn't think they would be that old by then!

LB: Well, just as a distinction. You knew he was a senior because he carried a cane. (Chuckles)

SS: What about the senior sneak? Was that a real institution?

LB: Yeah. Oh, they passed the word around, or else have a meeting. I think it was the senior class meeting, and they'd decide on a certain day. And of course, the faculty was always advised of it. They weren't supposed to be, but they always knew, and so that day the seniors would sneak out of the house early and have rented two or three vans or a stage and go to Coeur d'Alene or Lewiston or Elk River or something for a picnic and get home about nine o'clock at night. It was the senior sneak. And you were not docked for having missed class. It was just one of the things that was done; the senior sneak. I guess the sororities do it to this day. Maybe the sororities and fraternities do it up to now, I don't know, but they did for a good many years later, but not the whole class.

SS: What about the Hulme fight? Or how do you say that?

LB: Hume. H-u-m-e. Well, it was named for Dean Hulme, who was a very,

very popular teacher. I never took a course under him because I was in engineering and didn't have time, but he was a very popular teacher. And he had a world reputation. And he was a good joe, and he encouraged them to have a Hulme fight. It was a case of getting a long rope and stringing it across Paradise Creek and the freshmen on one side and the sophomores on the other and see who'd get dunked. And then, during the evening, why, the freshmen would roam the town looking for sophomores to paddle them and the sophomores would look for the freshmen to paddle them and they formed an army and they'd march around Main Street and up and down Third. And the sophomores were always in the minority, so they usually kept out of the way, although both sides claimed victory. That was that. Something to do. There wasn't anything else to do.

SS: It sounds like institutionalizing what otherwise could be more rowdy.

LB: Yes, uh-huh. That's right.

SS: And disorganized. Well, what about the rivalry with Washington State?

LB: Very severe. More so than now. When Washington State would play Idaho in football, they would wear their rooters caps. The WSU cap, gray and red with a WSU across it. The object was for Idaho students to swipe them. And when Idaho went to Pullman we went by train; hired a special train, three or four cars and they'd all go over to WSU by train and march from the train to the campus for the football game. March as a body. And we all wore our I caps. And the object was for the WSU students to swipe an I cap. And so, if some man, possibly some women, would stray five feet away from the line of march, why, some WSU Student would dart out and grab the cap and he'd be protected by his fellow students and he got away. I had a WSU cap for years, I don't know what happened to it. (Chuckles) But I got one some place.

SS: But wasn't Idaho badly outmatched in the football games?

LB: Not as badly then as we are now. Not as badly then. No.

SS: But what about the bonfire? Was that a regular---?

LB: That was a regular event the night before the WSU game. They had the bonfire on what is now Ghormley Field. At that time, I called it recreation park, but it was just an open field, there was no baseball diamond, there was nothing on it, it was just a piece of ground. And for a week they would gather used lumber, used boxes, cardboard boxes, wood, anything they could possibly get to build a huge bonefire, about the size of this house. And they always had to be topped with a privy! So then, about eight o'clock at night, when it got dark, they'd light the bonfire and have a rally. And the cheer leaders would lead the students in rallies; singing the Idaho fight song and cheering the team. And after forty minutes it would break up and the fire would die down and somebody would watch it through the night so that it wouldn't spread. And that was that! Just a bonfire! They had a lot of those things. They had to do something to amuse the students besides now, they go to the beer halls.

SS: One other one that struck me, was the pajama parade.

LB: Well, the pajama parade was I think was-

SS: Was through downtown. And it looked to me as though it was kind of a human chain.

LB: Yes. Seems to me it was only girls, but I could be wrong. Maybe it was boys and girls. Wasn't downtown so much, as it was through the dormitories and halls. And they would be lead by the cheer leaders, and they all wore pajamas and stocking caps, and they would parade through the house at dinnertime or right after dinner, yelling and shouting and swiping souvenirs on the way and so forth and so on. Just

a matter of letting off steam but cheering the team. In other words, it was an expression of student unity and student support for the ball team or the basket ball team. I don't recall whether the pajama parade was before a basketball game or a football game. I think it was football.

SS: How strong would you say, in looking back at it, was the community spirit?

LB: Much stronger. Much stronger.

SS: Would you call it a real community?

LB: Yes. Uh-huh. The stores always closed for the Idaho-WSU game. A store would never stay open. I don't know if they stay open now or not. Some of 'em may close, but it was just universal. They just closed. That was that. Grocery stores and everything.

SS: But on the campus, itself, with the small size of the student body as it was, did that make a very closely knit relationship?

LB: Yes, I think it did. Decidedly. For basketball games, I was writing for half a dozen newspapers my junior and senior year ; I had a string of papers and we had to file 'em by telegraph. The Associated Press was a lot slower than it is now, because it was operated by the Morse code. And that's true; the Spokesman Review, the night main wire was taken down in Morse code by an operator. I worked on the Idaho Statesman when I quit the Westinghouse Electric Company for a year. And they received their Associated Press news by Morse code. I don't know how fast a man could operate, maybe twenty-five words a minute. Well when they got teletypes, it was sixty words a minute and now I don't know how fast it is, but it's a lot faster. They get more news. Well, the papers that served Idaho and attempted to cover the news, they would have correspondents. I wrote for the Salt Lake Tribune, the Portland

Oregonian, the Seattle Post-Intelligencer and the Seattle Times and the Spokesman Review. And I would try to write two stories so that they wouldn't see each other. And my wife and I attended the basketball game and we'd run to the telegraph office to get ahead of the one or two other correspondents that wrote for other newspapers. Joel Priest, a good friend of mine, had the Idaho Statesman and I guess he had the other paper in Salt Lake. But the first that got there was the first one to have the privilege of getting it on the wire. We used to run down, and of course, the basketball games were then played in what is now the women's gym. It only held five or six hundred people. We used to stand in line for an hour to get in. When we played the Pacific Coast Conference games here, and I wrote that up for the brochure at the dedication of Kibbe Dome. I don't know if you saw that little brochure.

SS: No, I haven't seen that yet.

LB: Haven't you seen it?

SS: No, I knew about it.

LB: Well, I wrote a story in there on the support of athletics in the early days. And we won the Pacific Coast Conference and we were in the Coast Conference. We defeated California in best two out of three games. And it was held here, and of course the Californians from Berekeley thought the gym was a crackerbox, but it was a standard sized basketball court, but the seats were right up to the line. I think we went out to take a sandwich with us, but we went to stand in line about five o'clock in the afternoon to get in. And the game didn't start until eight o'clock or seven-thirty and we had to stand there for two hours to get in. And of course, we won the Conference championship. And there was the Northern Division and the Southern division. We defea-

ted Washington for the Northern Division and California defeated- I don't know who, for the Southern Division and the championship was decided here. Next year, it would go to the Southern Division, but we had it here and we won the title two years. Coast championship for the Pacific Coast Conference. One year on strictly percentage basis and the other year by meeting the divisional leaders.

SS: Was Upham the president at that time?

LB: I believe so. Lindley was the president when I first came here. Can't think of his name now. He went from here to Kansas. Ernest K. Lindsey. He had a son here who was Ernest K. Lindsey, Jr., and he played basketball. He was a big fellow about six foot-three. And he later became editor of News Week magazine. And he was the biographer of Franklin D. Roosevelt. And he had been out here a couple of times to renew acquaintances. Pause in tape ∧ In April they had the fiftieth anniversary of it. It was publicized. Did you see it?

SS: Oh, yes. Of the airmail flight.

LB: Well, that was the first flight. Yeah. That was the first airmail flight in the nation. And it was Varney Airlines. And they were to start from Pasco going east to Salt Lake and then transfer from Salt Lake to faster train going East and then start from Salt Lake West going to Pasco and from Pasco to be distributed to Seattle and Portland by train. And Boise made quite a celebration of it. I was on the city desk of the Idaho Statesman, and they had a big parade in the morning; I'm guessing at ten o'clock. And of course, in those days on every occasion they had a parade; that was the thing to do. And they scheduled an outdoor dance on the plaza in front of the State Capitol for that evening. Well, the airmail plane came in from Pasco at oh, eleven, eleven-fifteen, maybe eleven-thirty in the morning, and

the pilot was Leon Cuddyback, who later became the administrator for the FAA at Seattle. He's still living; he's past eighty, but he's still living. And he was in Boise a few weeks ago for the celebration. And the mayor was there at the airfield, which is where Boise (College 13) State University now is and it was a small biplane and the mayor was there and I believe Senator Borah was there. And there was a small package of mail for Boise and a larger one for Salt Lake. They had an afternoon paper there called the Capitol News. Well, my photographer and I were on top of the Owyhee Hotel and he took some pictures of the parade and then we went down to the field and he got a picture of the first airmail pouch being handed to the mayor and so forth. And the Capitol News went to press around two-thirty as an afternoon paper and of course they had the break on the story and so they wrote the story up and they had pictures of course of the event and they told how the first mail came in on time and the package was given to the mayor and the northbound flight came in at two o'clock from Salt Lake and went on to Pasco and so forth. And along about four o'clock, why, we began to hear rumors that the plane coming north had not arrived. And the managing editor was Horatio Miller and he wrote under the byline of Canto the Censor, and he was managing editor and so he began to get interested and about a quarter to five he became more interested and we could see off in the southwest over the Owyhee Mountains, which were about ninety miles south of Boise, the dark, black clouds. So he put a call in to Salt Lake and found out that the plane had left. (End of side C) So he began to get a little nervous, and he called up say, Twin Falls or Rupert- and whether he heard that the plane had been seen going over or not I do not remember, but along about six o'clock or six-thirty why then it was apparent that the plane was down. And the telephone

office, the Intermountain Telephone Company was right next door to the Statesman. So Miller went over about six-thirty or seven o'clock and saw the chief operator and asked her to put one of the long distance operators at our disposal. He gave her instructions to contact through other exchanges every farmer in Southwest Idaho who had a telephone. And so he'd get on one phone and I was on the other and some of 'em had seen the plane and most of 'em had not. And so, in those days- you used earphones on radios, it was the beginning of radio in 1925, and radio was an oddity and very few people had them. And so he decided, I didn't, he decided to put out a special edition and get it out about ten o'clock and go up to the big dance at the Capitol and sell 'em and sell 'em on the streets. So we put out a special edition and that means you just change the front page enough to get one story on it, and the rest of it was just the same as yesterday's paper. And we put out a special and I learned a very valuable lesson, that you never anticipate the news. Well, they didn't hear from the man for five days. And he landed over in Jordan Valley and he wrecked the plane and it took him five days to walk out to a farmhouse where they had a telephone. I guess he went to a couple before that, but he finally walked out to where they had a telephone. His name was Rose. Don't know his first name.

SS: And this was the return flight.

LB: The return flight. The first flight was south to Salt Lake and the return flight was Salt Lake to Pasco. And it was return flight.

SS: Had the other newspaper- was there another newspaper in Boise?

LB: Yes, yes.

SS: They had already gone out with the story that-

LB: It was an afternoon paper and they included in their story the fact

that the morning plane came in and there was a big celebration and so forth. That the afternoon plane came in approximately on time and deposited it's package and had gone on to Pasco. Of course, there was no celebration for the afternoon flight, but they just included in their story that the flight had gone on to Pasco.

SS: It must have caused consternation at the dance.

LB: Oh, yes, it did. Well, yeah. (Chuckles) But it made the other paper look silly because they anticipated the news, you see. But he had run into the thunder and lightning storm over the Owyhee Mountains and he had tried to skirt it and got lost. And of course, at that time, all they had was an ordinary compass and he got lost and didn't know where he was and put down in the field down in Jordan Valley. If you've ever been through Jordan Valley you'd know that you could walk for five days and not find anything. So he had walked out. I don't know, but he walked in circles, and he finally walked out and got to a telephone.

SS: Did you get a lot of good newspaper experience working on the Statesman?

LB: Oh, yes. Yes. It was a good paper then. I don't see it now anymore. Of course, newspapering in those days was much different than it is now. When I ran the Idahonian, if you've looked at the issues for the ten years before I quit; I had a rule of twenty-five stories on page one. Now, they run four stories on page one. The Idaho Statesman when I worked there would run forty to fifty stories on page one. And I still think that is preferable. I have yet to find anyone among my friends who read these long, indepth stories. There was one last night. I can't read all of 'em. I read that much and I'm all through, and they run them for two columns. I don't think one person in fifty reads the whole thing except those about whom it's written or their friends.

I prefer to see them ten-inch stories and run a lot of 'em. Give 'em the news. I get more damn news out of the Wall Street Journal than I do out of any newspaper, because they've got one column, right there, and they carry more news of the world in that much than you get out of any daily paper that I've seen. And I tried to get twenty-five on page one, I didn't always make it. Sometimes there'd be eighteen, sometimes twenty-one. But I would run a half a column story from the top of the page to the fold; that was about enough.

SS: What was your job in Boise on the paper?

LB: City editor.

SS: Was that a demanding job? Did you try to cover the city?

LB: No, no. At that time the Idaho Statesman had seven reporters. One of 'em Glenn Balch, who is still living, and he writes children's stories and he has for the last forty years. He was riding circuit. He'd spend one day in Glenns Ferry and one day in Rupert and one day in Twin Falls and one day in Gooding and then about ten o'clock at night he would phone in his news. And once every month he'd drop into Boise for a Sunday. He was single. And we had one man rode circuit from Boise to Caldwell and Nampa and back on the electric Interurban Line. He'd do that every day. Leave about nine o'clock in the morning and stop off at Caldwell and get the local news of Caldwell at the courthouse and so forth and then go to Nampa. The trains ran about once an hour. Just one car; called it the Interurban.

SS: So they would get the news at the courthouse?

LB: At the courthouse or he'd go to the Chamber of Commerce or anyplace else. And once in a while he'd stop at Meridian and once in a while he'd stop at Star, get local news. Now of course, they do it by having a paid correspondent. But as the city editor I made assign-

ments to the other three reporters or four, if there was something special and the copy came to me and I would edit it and write the headlines on it and pass it over to the managing editor, and if he liked it he would take it as is and if he didn't like it, he would either cut it himself or say, "I don't like the headline, Louie." Or so forth and so on. He was managing editor. He ran it. And the opposite to me was the telegraph editor; had the telegraph news. He would write that; world news. And the managing editor would find out from the business manager or the composing room the number of inches we had available for news. So at seven o'clock at night he would say we got a hole of so many inches. And the city would have forty percent of that hole and the telegraph editor would have sixty percent, or visa versa. And you had a sheet and every story that came in I was allowed say fifteen hundred inches and I would take every story and estimate that it would be five inches or seven inches or so forth, and keep a running total of numbers of words- or numbers of inches- and just the beginning of the headlines so I'd know what it is and I could look back and see what the story was. And when you got full, you quit. That was the job. I don't know how they do it now. They probably say-

SS: Before we get into the newspaper business, we should save that for next time.

END OF FIRST INTERVIEW

Transcribed by Frances Rawlins on September 13, 1977