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Arkansas Democrat Project

Interview with:

Andy Morris
Telephone Interview
April 21, 2007

Interviewer: Jerry McConnell

Jerry McConnell: This is Jerry McConnell. I'm here in my home in Greenwood, Arkansas—and I believe this is April 21, 2007—preparing to do a telephone interview with Andy Morris—that's M-O-R-R-I-S, I take it—who is in Austin, Texas and has been in private business for some time, but over the years has had a lot of dealings with both newspapers in Little Rock—in particularly in sports related matters—and grew up in Little Rock. So Andy I think we just need to start and get you along the way, but first I need to ask you, though, do I have your permission to tape this interview and turn it over to the University of Arkansas for the Pryor archives for Oral and Visual History?

Andy Morris: Yes you do.

JM: Yes. Okay.

AM: That probably will be my only contribution in my lifetime to the University of Arkansas. [Laughter]

JM: Okay. [Laughs] Your full name?

AM: Luther Andrew Morris.

JM: That is M-O-R-R-I-S, right?

AM: Yes, M-O-R-R-I-S.

JM: Okay, where and when were you born Andy?

AM: I was born in Little Rock in 1939—January 24, 1939.

JM: Okay. And what were your parents' names?

AM: L.W. and Mildred.

JM: L.W. Morris and Mildred?

AM: Mildred Morris, yes.

JM: What was your mother's maiden name?

AM: Mildred Wiley.

JM: W-I . . .

AM: W-I-L-E-Y.

JM: W-I-L-E-Y.

AM: Yes.

JM: Okay.

AM: She was—incidentally while we're talking about it, it may or may not be of any significance—but she was a cheerleader of Little Rock High School.

JM: Oh, okay.

AM: And she was—I believe—the first female cheerleader at Little Rock High School.

JM: Oh.

AM: Because back then you only had boy cheerleaders.

JM: Yes. Yes, okay.

AM: But she was the only girl on her squad, and I believe if I recall correctly she was the first girl cheerleader at Little Rock High School.

JM: Yes, yes. Okay. All right, good. All right, so you went through all the way through school in Little Rock then?

AM: Actually, yes, I lived in North Little Rock until the ninth grade.

JM: Oh, did you really?

AM: Yes.

JM: Okay. You went to North Little Rock High School.

AM: I went to junior high school until the ninth grade, and then in the middle of the ninth grade I was at Fourth Street in North Little Rock. We moved across the river, and I was then going to East Side Junior High School.

JM: Okay.

AM: So half of my ninth grade year—or the last part of my ninth grade year—was spent at East Side.

JM: Okay. And then you went to Little Rock High School?

AM: Little Rock Central High School.

JM: Little Rock Central.

AM: Yes, that's right. My diploma says Central High School.

JM: Yes, 1958 I think. But at any rate, and you graduated from there?

AM: I graduated from there in the spring of 1957. Correct.

JM: 1957. You got out just a few months before the big turmoil.

AM: Yes, as a matter of fact that is correct. And, in fact, I am sure I was among the first to see the Arkansas National Guard placing barricades at Little Rock Central.

I don't remember the date, but I was returning home late at night, in early Sep-

tember of 1957. I decided to drive past Little Rock Central one last time, because I was headed to school in Texas in a few days. I saw several troop trucks and saw guardsmen placing barricades at perimeter locations at the two main intersections of 14th and Park and 16th and Park. I raced over to a friend's house and we returned to see history in the making. By that time they had closed off Park Street, which ran in front of the school.

JM: Yes.

AM: I actually saw them setting up at several of the intersections. And at that time . . .

JM: This was at 10:00 or 11:00 at night that you are talking about?

AM: That's right. 10:00 p.m. or 11:00 p.m. at night. That would have been of course the National Guard that Mr. Orval Eugene Faubus called out.

JM: Yes, right.

AM: You know, we didn't have any idea what was going on. I mean not at all. But I actually saw that take place.

JM: Yes, okay. [Laughs] Well a lot of other people didn't have any idea at that time what was going on either. It came as a big surprise to a lot of people. Okay, so how did you get into journalism? Andy, how did you get interested?

AM: You know, I was of course playing baseball around Little Rock all the time, and I was also umpiring little league and, eventually, legion and other stuff. When I was umpiring little league baseball, Jack Keady's son was playing. As a matter of fact, Buddy Laing and I managed a team—I guess right after our senior year in high school. We managed the Colonial Bakery Little League Team, and Jack asked me if I would like to start writing up scores from the little league—the Junior Deputy Little League out there. I said, “Yes. Yes, that's fine. I'll do it.” So I

would go down there early in the morning, and I remember—Jerry, I swear I remember the first time that I did it—you know, I took my pencil and paper and was handwriting stuff! [Laughs] I had no idea. I remember Jack Keady came over and he said, “What are you doing?” I said, “Well I’m writing these notes up for you—writing this story for you.” He said, “Well turn around there and use that typewriter.” I said, “Well okay, but I got to write it first.” He said, “No you don’t. You got to learn to use that typewriter.” He said, “You can use your notes, but you need to type from your notes.” That was my introduction to journalism right there. [Laughs]

JM: Yes, okay. Hold on just one second. Jack Keady was the sports editor at the *Arkansas Democrat*, right?

AM: That is correct. Yes.

JM: And it is spelled K-E-A-D-Y.

AM: K-E-A-D-Y.

JM: As I remember Buddy Laing was spelled L-A-I-N-G. Is that correct?

AM: Yes. That is correct. That’s right.

JM: Yes. Okay, so . . .

AM: So, anyway, I started doing that, and then one thing led to another I guess. I went to school at Sam Houston, and then I transferred at midterm that first year to Arkansas State University. It was at Arkansas State that I ran met Dr. Leland “Tex” Plunkett. I took a journalism class, I guess. He was a great professor, and a great advocate and promoter of journalism, and a great guy. He got me interested in it. The next summer I went to work at the *Democrat* in the summer time just doing what the college kids would do—covering whatever.

JM: Yes. Yes.

AM: I did that every summer for several years. Also, when I went back to school for my second year, I went to work as the part-time guy at the *Jonesboro Sun*. I got immersed real quick. I was a journalist at an early age—college-wise anyway—for most of the year—for most of my college life, I guess.

JM: At that time you were at the *Sun*, then I guess you were doing sports.

AM: Yes, I just covered sports. I covered high school football and high school basketball. Tommy McDonald was sports editor of the *Sun* at that time. Of course, he covered Arkansas State.

JM: Yes, okay. Now, as I recall along at that time while you were doing all of this, you were also an athlete yourself. You played sports.

AM: I played baseball.

JM: Okay.

AM: I played baseball every summer in the Little Rock area and came up through the various leagues. I played in the first official Little League, the first Pony League and the first American Legion League. After Legion ball, I played in college at Arkansas State, and during the summers I played in the first Prep League and also for a couple of semi-pro teams in the Little Rock area. So I played baseball, covered it as a sportswriter and even umpired it. Kind of ran the table, I guess.,

JM: Yes. Yes. Okay, you were playing Legion ball in Little Rock, which at that time was a really strong town as far as legion ball was concerned.

AM: Yes.

JM: We mentioned it earlier and as I remember, at one time—I guess when you were small—they only had one team, which was the Little Rock Doughboys.

AM: Little Rock Doughboys, that's right. They were really a regional power. Amongst all the players they turned out was one guy named Brooks Robinson who is one of the—maybe the greatest third baseman who has ever lived.

JM: You played against Brooks. Is that correct?

AM: I sure did.

JM: Yes.

AM: He was a great athlete. You didn't have to go very far in Little Rock to know that he was a great athlete. He was a great basketball player, and he was also a great baseball player. He played for—I believe Brooks played for the KATV Team, and I played for Boyd's Dairy.

JM: Okay.

AM: That was the start of what they called the Legion League in Little Rock.

JM: Okay.

AM: There were six teams that first year. That was when they split the Doughboys up, because there were so many kids coming out of the pony leagues at that time that they needed a place for them to play.

JM: Yes.

AM: So, yes, I played against Brooks, and it was quite a thrill. I used to—in fact, I made a couple of catches down underneath the scoreboard at Porter Field. I remember him hollering at me one time asking me why I didn't buy a ticket and come on in. [Laughter] He was a super guy, and he was obviously a great baseball player. He'd get my vote as the greatest third baseman of all time.

JM: Yes, mine too. As I remember, at that time though, he was probably a second baseman wasn't he?

AM: Well he played second for the Doughboys, but really, when he started in the Legion League, I remember him also playing third base.

JM: Okay, now then but you were working for the *Democrat* in the summer, and you were working some for the Jonesboro paper while you were in school and everything. When you finished school, what did you do?

AM: Well, when I finished school I went into the [United States] Army for six months That was in January of 1963. When I got out in August of 1963, I came home and went to work for the *Democrat* full-time. My first assignment was—I had one or two days at home right out of the Army, and I jumped on a plane and went to Indianapolis and covered the [Arkansas] Travelers for a series up there. It wasn't long after that I came back and Mr. Keady—for whatever reason—that year didn't want to go on the Southwest Conference Tour. I'm sure you remember that every year they had that Southwest Conference Football Tour.

JM: Yes.

AM: I went on that thing. He said, "I want you to do this." So I jumped on the bus—or I jumped on the plane, I guess—and went to Dallas. We got on the Frito Bus. The Frito-Lay people had this big bus, and they took us all around to all the campuses and everything. I got immersed real quick. [Laughs]

JM: You would go around and interview coaches and players and all that stuff.

AM: That's right. I still have a letter from Hayden Fry [head football coach at Southern Methodist University] that he wrote me after reading the report that I did on SMU.

JM: Okay.

AM: But anyway, it was pretty neat meeting Darrel Royal [University of Texas football

coach] and the others coaches. It was pretty heady stuff for a young guy. I enjoyed it. It was great. I had a great time.

JM: Okay. What do you remember about the *Democrat* at that time, and the *Democrat* sports department at that time?

AM: Well, mostly I guess the people and the place. At one time—and of course the *Democrat* at that time—and I forget when you left the [Arkansas] *Gazette*, but you were one of the mainstays on the *Gazette* team. The *Democrat* team at one time had Jim Pattillo and Charlie Adcock along with Mr. Keady, and then, I guess the *Gazette* had you and Orville [Henry] and Jim Bailey.

JM: Right.

AM: I recall walking into that environment, and knowing—having read the *Gazette* all my life and the *Democrat* too—and walking into that environment and saying, “Well you know I’m a part of this team. We need to whip the *Gazette*.”

[Laughs]

JM: Yes. Yes.

AM: I remember we were really competitive with the *Gazette* in the sports department. We really wanted to get the scoop, do a better story, do a better job, etc., etc. I’m not sure that ever took place, but that was kind of the environment we worked in.

JM: Sure.

AM: Mr. Keady encouraged that, and he was great to work for. I remember he was probably one of the kindest people I ever worked for, and I owe him a lot.

JM: Yes.

AM: Jack Keady was a good man. I remember Charlie Adcock covered the AIC [Arkansas Intercollegiate Conference], and Jim Pattillo was a columnist. Of course, I

had read Jim down through the years.

JM: Jim might have been doing high school some, too.

AM: Well, I guess that's right.

JM: Yes. He was probably covering Little Rock Central at that time, and Hall [High School], and all the others. Yes, okay.

AM: I remember those two guys, and then Jimmy Wilder was there when I got there—full-time. Fred Neusch came to work for us. He was from Henderson down in southwest Arkansas. Larry Rea was working for us too.

JM: Yes.

AM: He ended up at the *Commercial Appeal* in Memphis [Tennessee].

JM: Yes.

AM: I guess he is still with the *Commercial*.

JM: Yes. I think he's—trying to remember if he is still—or if he's—I think maybe he's sort of semi-retired, but maybe he's still doing a column for them or something.

AM: Right. I think Jimmy Wilder told me that.

JM: Yes. I'm going to try and get him interviewed. I might say in here Neusch—do you remember the spelling? I think it's N-E-U-S-C-H, but I'm not sure.

AM: I think that's it Jerry.

JM: Yes.

AM: [Laughs] You'll have to go check a back copy, because I don't remember.

JM: Yes. Okay. But he . . .

AM: Actually, Jerry, Neusch didn't come to the *Democrat* until Jim Patillo and Charles Adcock had left. Patillo went to work in PR for the United Way, and Adcock left

to become a coordinator and PR guy for the AIC. So that created some pretty big voids on the sports staff. That's how I got to cover some things. I just sort of moved up. We also had a guy from Batesville, John Moore, who came to be our copy editor in sports. He later worked for one of the New Orleans papers.

JM: Yes he did.

AM: And then maybe came back. I'm not sure.

JM: Yes. You had some good people there, but you also—maybe was typical of the *Democrat* over the years—the part I'm familiar with—they had a lot of turnover too.

AM: Yes.

JM: Yes.

AM: I guess really there was a lot of turnover. I remember guys on the other side of the building in the newsroom. Gene Herrington was the managing editor at that time—just as fine a gentleman as I ever met—a nice fellow. Fred Petrucelli was one of the guys that was over on the news side over there. I remember those guys would come around and—you know we always had a little bit better assignment than those guys, because we'd come in and work from 6:30 a.m. in the morning until noon or so. We got the paper out. It was an afternoon paper at that time. And then, if you didn't have an assignment or weren't going to go look for one, you pretty well had the rest of the day off.

JM: Yes.

AM: You might have had somewhere to go cover a game a couple of nights a week, but it was pretty good duty if you think about it. I just recall I've always said I think that's the best job I ever had. I didn't make a lot of money, and I don't

know if you remember what money was like during those days. [Laughs]

JM: Yes.

AM: I remember that my first job out of Arkansas State—full-time job at the *Democrat* was for \$85 a week. I worked some overtime, and made it a little bit better than that. And that wasn't bad, man. I had a new car. I was doing great. [Laughs]

JM: Well that was—I've told this story before—but this was 1964 or somewhere around there?

AM: Yes.

JM: Yes. In 1951 I went to the *Democrat* for \$45.12 a week. [Laughter] So things . . .

AM: Things got better didn't they. [Laughs]

JM: Yes. Things improved quite a bit. But still, the times—the thing that always happened when I was there too was that we had lots of good people, but they kept leaving for better paying jobs.

AM: You know I think that was the case, and in almost everybody's case. That was sort of discussed around—you know, informally—that the *Democrat* was one of the best training grounds in town. Good people really did leave and go other places eventually. That may have been true of a lot of places, but it certainly was true of the *Democrat*. I think one of the reasons why I remember had to do with Mr. Engel, K. A. [August] Engel, who was the publisher and the owner.

JM: Right.

AM: He was the big guy. I may have seen him a time or two, but I certainly never met him. I do remember my first year there. I told you that I went to work there in August of 1963. I got a Christmas bonus. Everybody got a Christmas bonus. We

lined up to go down to Ms. Eatman's office and pick up that bonus.

JM: Fannie Eatman.

AM: Fannie Eatman. That's right. She was a wonderful lady. Just took me under her wing. She was so nice to me.

JM: She was great.

AM: [Laughs] I went down there—I think it was Wilder or Adcock or somebody said, “Well let's go down and get our Christmas bonus.” I said, “My God! You mean we get a Christmas bonus?” “Yes, man. You'll really be surprised.” Boy, I was. It was for \$5. [Laughter] I swear it was for \$5. For some reason that's always stuck with me. It wasn't that I was unappreciative, but you know I always thought that a Christmas bonus was \$100. [Laughs]

JM: [Laughs] Yes. Something that could make a difference.

AM: It was typical of at least of the reputation of Mr. Engel. He ran a tight ship. He was a penny pincher. He did not spend a lot of money on anything. That was just kind of the word around.

JM: Yes.

AM: My recollection was, Jerry, that it was good people who kept that thing going on a fairly good level for a long, long time. It was because somehow management was always able to attract fairly good people. They kept good people for a period of time anyway, but there was a lot of turnover.

JM: What kind of sports editor was Jack Keady?

AM: He was great to work for. I don't know that Jack was a talented writer. In fact, I'm fairly certain that he was not a talented writer on the same level that Orville was.

JM: Yes.

AM: Orville was a talented writer, but Jack ran a good ship. He paid attention to detail. He encouraged us to do things. I recall covering a game one night—and you'll remember some of this—between Little Rock Central and North Little Rock. That would have been during that two year period that I was there. I can't think of the names of both coaches at the time, but the Little Rock coach was Cathcart.

JM: You're talking about basketball now.

AM: Yes. Basketball.

JM: Yes. Okay. Yes. Okay. Okay. Jimmy Cathcart.

AM: Jimmy Cathcart. I forget who the hot headed guy was that was the . . .

JM: Jim Bohannon, probably.

AM: No. It was before Bohannon.

JM: It wasn't Culp?

AM: It was Culp.

JM: Was it? Okay.

AM: Jimmy Culp.

JM: Yes, okay.

AM: Didn't North Little Rock have a kid named Bobby Vint?

JM: Yes they did.

AM: Okay. I remember he was . . .

JM: Big kid.

AM: Big kid. Big tall kid.

JM: That's V-I-N-T. Yes. Okay.

AM: Yes. I remember them playing, and boy they were competitive at that time. They

were great. They played one night at North Little Rock, and I covered the game. Culp was—he absolutely—he just bordered on going nuts. He ranted and raved all night. I'd watch him when somebody would call timeout and Vint would come over. He was all over Vint all of the time. I guess my view was that he was doing things that I didn't think that high school coaches should be doing and setting that kind of example. I came back the next morning, and I had written a story that was critical of him and any high school coach who did what I saw take place that night. I wasn't sure about it. I just put it on Keady's desk, and I said, "Look. This won't be very popular. In fact, we'll probably get criticized for it. Maybe I'm wrong." But I said, "You know what? He was out of line, and I don't think he's a good example. I think we ought to take a stand on it." He read it, and then he walked around the corner of the building to the other side. I'm sure he went to see Mr. Herrington. They ran the story.

JM: Yes.

AM: They ran it. I probably got more complimentary letters over that story than anything that I ever did.

JM: Yes.

AM: I've always kind of really felt bad about it, because you know coaching is a tough job.

JM: Yes.

AM: That's a tough job, but he was out of line. He was flat out of line. But anyway, that's just one thing that I remember about—you asked me about Keady being good—in my mind he took a stand.

JM: Yes. Culp—I might mention here—is C-U-L-P. One of my favorite stories about

Culp—he was a heck of a basketball player and a great outside shooter. They started playing AAU ball with a big guy named Bernis Duke.

AM: Oh yes. Yes.

JM: Do you remember him? Well anyway, Bernis told me one time he said, “Jimmy why have you never passed me the ball?” Jimmy said, “Bernis, if you want the ball, you get it off the backboard.” [Laughter]

AM: [Laughs] I think I’ve heard that story.

JM: Yes.

AM: [Laughs] That’s right. It’s a great story.

JM: Okay. Jack, of course, did not cover the Razorbacks like Orville did.

AM: No, not at all—completely different approach to it. In fact, I covered several Razorback events. I did a lot of dressing room stuff, and then I covered them—two or three times. I guess that was coming into a time when Jack didn’t want to travel as much. I covered the Cotton Bowl that year—you know the 1964 Cotton Bowl. I’m not sure—you know, I’m getting my years mixed up. It was the year that Arkansas beat Nebraska. My wife and I went to that, so it won’t have been that first year. It would have been my second year.

JM: Yes. That was probably the 1965 Cotton Bowl after the 1964 season.

AM: 1965 Cotton Bowl after the 1964 season—that’s right.

JM: Yes.

AM: I remember . . .

JM: Yes. I was there too.

AM: Were you?

JM: Yes. Yes.

AM: Okay. Okay. Well Orville didn't want to go either.

JM: No. Orville was there. I was doing a sidebar.

AM: You were doing a sidebar.

JM: Yes. Yes. You wrote the game story?

AM: I wrote the game story.

JM: Okay. Okay.

AM: Which, again, was for me was a nice assignment.

JM: Yes.

AM: I stayed in a big hotel down there in Dallas [Texas] with my wife. We'd only been married a few months. It was a nice trip. I remember going to that famous steakhouse there in Dallas. I forget what the name of it was. [Laughs] Having one of those big Texas steaks for the first time.

JM: Yes. Yes.

AM: Jack was a good man, and he was great to work for. He paid attention to detail. He caught a lot of stuff. I felt like he was a good editor. He was very conscious of the environment we were in—the competitive environment. He was always talking about, “You got to have an angle. They're going to report the news, and we . . .”—and you know that's kind of funny now that I think back about that. Most everything happened at night, as you know, so the first story was always in the *Gazette* the next morning.

JM: Right.

AM: So the only way we could do something was to lean toward the feature side of the business, I guess. We would report the score, but there is no sense in just rewriting the *Gazette*. We always had to work hard for angles. I remember Jack was

good about—was good at preaching that and pointing that out to me. “You have to find something different, because they are going to take care of the nuts and bolts. They’re going to take care of the basic story, and they’re going to take care of basic quotes. So you have to find something different, and you have to make yours better than theirs.” I recall that, and I think that helped me. That helped me look at things differently. As a result, later on down the line, I think my strength was what we used to call—I don’t call it that anymore I don’t suppose—but what we used to call feature writing. I enjoyed that part of the business more than I did just the straight nuts and bolts reporting of a sports story. That’s one of the things I remember. I also remember being down at that building at 5th and Scott—I don’t know if this happened when you were there or not, but I’m telling you, man, that was the slowest elevator on the face of the Earth.

JM: [Laughs] Yes it was.

AM: You go into the first floor. You get on that elevator just to go up to the second floor and it seemed like it would take you ten minutes, because that was the slowest moving elevator. I don’t know why that sticks out in my mind, because I should have been bouncing up those steps anyway.

JM: Yes. What was the *Democrat* building like at that time? Do you recall much about it?

AM: You know, I don’t guess I recall a whole lot about it. In the sports department, it was old furniture. It was fairly Spartan.

JM: Yes.

AM: Pretty much the same way on the other side—on the news side of the building. I think it was fairly typical of a newspaper. I recall the furniture being well worn,

but there wasn't anything bad about it. It was just kind of old. You know, I guess that's pretty well typical of newspapers. Later in life as I did other things—I went down to Alabama and worked with Charley Thornton down there as his assistant and saw a lot of newspapers from that side of the business. I remember going to the Birmingham paper when Benny Marshall was the sports editor there, and one of my favorite guys—the late Benny Marshall. Their newsroom at the Birmingham paper—they had a morning paper and an afternoon paper. The *Birmingham News* was the morning paper, and the *Herald* I think was the afternoon paper.

JM: Yes.

AM: I remember going in both of those, and they looked the same. Also, the Tuscaloosa paper where Charlie Land was sports editor. So I don't know. I guess I was never in a new newspaper building. [Laughs]

JM: Yes. What do you remember about the two papers at that time that you were there at the *Democrat*? How did the *Democrat* and *Gazette* compare in your mind?

AM: I probably knew—was aware that the *Gazette* was I suppose a better newspaper in terms of the—I guess the quality of the people the *Gazette* had—you know, on both sides. At that time I was strictly into sports. I didn't pay a lot of attention to the news side, and never really cared much about the news side of the business. I remember the *Gazette* had some pretty top-notch guys. I don't remember all of the names, but I know there were some good people there who were long time people—also, in the sports department. I would say that if you were a newspaper guy that was going to stay in Arkansas or in Little Rock anyway then certainly the *Gazette* was the destination. That was the destination paper. It was where you

wanted to be.

JM: They seemed to—this is my recollection—they had less turnover.

AM: Yes, certainly. Certainly. More long term people. I mean, you know, I don't know how long Adcock and Pattillo were at the *Democrat*, because I remember reading about them. But at my house growing up we always took the *Gazette*. You know? It was the one we always took it. I didn't see a *Democrat* until—I don't know—maybe I was in high school and everything. I even remember the years where I was in high school. That's when I first remember seeing you and knowing who you were, because you covered Little Rock Central. Riding down the street one day—I was walking down the street one day with a boy named Bobby [Holloway?]. I don't know if you don't remember. He was a fullback at Little Rock Central. He was a second team fullback. He apparently knew you, because you were driving down the street and you waved and called him by name. I said, "Who is that?" He said, "That's Jerry McConnell. He is the *Gazette* guy." That's my first recollection of you. [Laughs]

JM: Yes. Yes. Yes.

AM: I would have been a junior in high school when that happened.

JM: Yes. Okay.

AM: But anyway, yes, the *Gazette* was a destination paper. It was clearly a paper of more reputation than the *Democrat*.

JM: What do you recall about the *Democrat* staff at that time? I mean does anything particularly just stand out about what kind of guys—I mean what kind of workers they were, or what characters, or anything unusual stands out in your memory about the people you worked with?

AM: Well, you know, not—I guess on the sports side—I guess not really anything in particular. Keady was a very quiet, really kind of shy guy actually. Didn't stick it out there socially at all. Wasn't really comfortable in situations like that. I remember Adcock was—you know, he was full of fire all of the time. Had a lot of energy. Pattillo, he was—he tried to be a little bit analytical about things. He was kind of a funny guy I thought, but Jim Pattillo was a good writer. I remember thinking in reading some of his stuff that he did a good job as a writer. And, you know, he just moved on and went in another direction though.

JM: Yes. Yes.

AM: But I remember . . .

JM: Have you heard anything out of him recently? Someone told me they thought that he had died recently.

AM: You know, I do not—I have not heard anything about that.

JM: Yes, okay. I'll try to run that down. Okay.

AM: I don't remember anything about that.

JM: Okay.

AM: I remember how hard it was to park. When you came to work you had to park about three or four blocks down the street. I got there between 6:30 and 7:00 every morning. So it wasn't that big a deal, but you still had to park three or four blocks down the street on 5th street and walk to work.

JM: Yes.

AM: I remember having to do it in the rain. You know? [Laughs]

JM: Yes.

AM: I remember if you had to leave and come back you were likely not to find a park-

ing place. I remember that.

JM: Yes. Do you remember anything about—we've sort of mentioned the salaries and everything—do you remember anything else about the *Democrat* in the sense of fringe benefits, or if they had any? [Laughs]

AM: My goodness, Jerry, I don't think I recall. I don't remember if they had medical or not. As a young guy, I just didn't think about stuff like that. I don't think fringe benefits were part of the pay package at the *Democrat* during those times. At least, I don't remember them.

JM: Yes. I didn't think so.

AM: That didn't work—Mr. Engel—the story goes—now that we are talking about this—is that—and I'm not sure you can even do this, but this is the story that I recall. Keady could tell it better and other people could too. Mr. Engel was strictly first a businessman.

JM: Yes.

AM: He was in the newspaper business to make money. I'm told—or my recollection is that the way we determined how much space we got was that Mr. Engel would check ad revenue, and then he would lay the pages out himself. I don't know if he did that just on some kind of notebook, and said—but anyway, I clearly remember having more than one person discuss in front of me and or tell me that Mr. Engel laid that paper out, the number of pages everyday. He made that decision based on ad revenues. Now, that may or may not be true, but I have that recollection.

JM: Yes. [Laughs] That's possible. Okay. So you stayed at the *Democrat* until when?

AM: Until July of 1965.

JM: Okay.

AM: I was there almost two years.

JM: Okay, so what did you do then?

AM: I left the *Democrat* to go to work for the University of Alabama for Charles Thornton. I was Charley's assistant—Charley Thornton's assistant. He is a former—as you recall—a former *Gazette* guy too.

JM: Yes he was. Yes. He had worked in sports at the *Gazette*. Why did you leave the *Democrat*?

AM: Why did I leave?

JM: Yes.

AM: I wanted to become a Sports Information Director at the college level. I knew Charley Thornton when I was at ASU. He was the news bureau director, before he went to work for the *Gazette*. He left the *Gazette* to become sports information director at Tulane. They played in a basketball tournament at ASU and during that tournament he told me he wanted to hire an assistant and would I consider the job. I jumped all over it, flew down there, and was going to go to work there in August of 1963, after I completed six months of active military duty. Well, while I was in the army at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, Charley called me and said he was leaving Tulane to go to work for the NCAA in Kansas City. I lost the job before it started, but Mr. Keady had always told me I could come to work for him at the *Democrat* any time. So I called him and asked him if I could come to work. He said sure, so I started full-time at the *Democrat* in August of 1963.

JM: Yes, okay.

AM: Well that's kind of how it happened.

JM: Okay. Charley worked for the NCAA for a while, and then went to Alabama?

AM: He went to Alabama, and went to work. Yes. That's right. I went down there to be his assistant in July of 1965.

JM: He was the sports information director at Alabama under [Paul] "Bear" Bryant, right?

AM: Coach Bryant, right.

JM: Yes, okay. Was Benny Ellender there at Tulane when he was there?

AM: No. No. I don't think so.

JM: Yes, okay.

AM: He was still a high school coach in Louisiana at that time. Yes

JM: Yes, okay. At any rate, you went to Alabama and worked for Charley Thornton. As I remember, Charley had—the *Gazette* had maybe hired him away from Arkansas State to be a sportswriter for a while.

AM: Yes. I think that must be right.

JM: He worked at that. Then he left and went to Tulane.

AM: Tulane.

JM: And then wound up at . . .

AM: Then went to NCAA, and then went to Alabama, and was of course—you know, stayed there for several years.

JM: Yes. He was there a long time.

AM: Yes he sure was.

JM: I know he was still there when Bear Bryant retired. So how long did you work at Alabama?

AM: I really was at Alabama only for a year, and then the sports editor's job at the *Jonesboro Sun* came open, and I heard about it. Believe it or not, it was for quite a bit more money than I thought was possible.

JM: Okay.

AM: I liked Jonesboro. I had gone to school there. I liked ASU. So I went to work there, and was there for about three years. And then, Don Floyd got the full-time position of sports information director in the athletic department at ASU and asked me to come and fill that job. And I did. I was at ASU for—I don't know—ten or eleven years.

JM: Okay. So you went to Arkansas State then as their sports information director.

AM: Yes. I really was the first full-time information director at ASU.

JM: Okay. And then, Don Floyd was the athletic director?

AM: The athletic director. Yes. Yes.

JM: Yes. Okay. Okay. All right. Don Floyd—Don is deceased, isn't he?

AM: No. No. Don is still alive and healthy. I haven't talked to him in a while, but I talk to him—you know—once a year or so.

JM: Yes, okay. Don was from Charleston [Arkansas] originally, but I remember that he coached in Stuttgart [Arkansas] for a while. Later on, went to Arkansas State.

AM: Yes, that's right. And then, went to Arkansas State as an assistant football coach.

JM: Yes.

AM: Then became an assistant A. D. [Athletic Director]. When coach Tomlinson retired he became the athletic director, and then that's when I went to work for him at ASU.

JM: Tomlinson is T-O-M-L-I-N-S-O-N, right?

AM: Yes. Yes.

JM: Yes, okay. And his first name . . . ?

AM: It was Ike.

JM: Ike. Okay.

AM: [J.A.] “Ike” Tomlinson.

JM: Yes. Okay. He’d been there a long time.

AM: Yes. He was there for his—virtually his entire career. Yes, that’s right.

JM: Yes, okay. So you were the SID [Sports Information Director] at Arkansas State for ten or eleven years, is that right?

AM: Actually, I was at Arkansas State for eleven years, but I was the S. I. D., and then I was assistant Athletic director. We built the stadium during that time.

JM: Oh, okay.

AM: We needed—I took over as the assistant AD sort of in charge of tickets and promotions. Then, when Ross Pritchard came to ASU, he wanted a full-time public relations director. That was a better job, so I got that job. And then, I later started the development office at ASU under Carl Whillock. He came to Arkansas State as president and promoted me to the director of development.

JM: That’s W-H-I-L-L-O-C-K. Is that correct?

AM: W-H-I-L-L-O-C-K, right. Carl Whillock.

JM: Okay.

AM: Carl Whillock.

JM: He was the man who was connected with—what am I trying to say—electrical . . .
.?

AM: Well, that’s right. At the time, when he came to Arkansas State as president, he

had been the vice president for external affairs—or vice president for governmental affairs actually at the University of Arkansas.

JM: Yes, okay.

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]

[Beginning of Tape 1, Side 2]

JM: Okay, Andy. This is side two of this tape. We were just talking about Carl Whillcock, and he came to Arkansas State. Take me on from there.

AM: He came to Arkansas State as president, and was there really only a fairly short period of time I guess before he became—I guess it is president or general manager—or perhaps president and general manager—of the Arkansas Electric Cooperative. When he left ASU, I sort of lost track of Carl, but I think he ended up in Washington [D.C.] working in the Clinton administration.

JM: Could have. I know he was closely aligned with [Bill] Clinton.

AM: Yes.

JM: You—as the SID, at any rate, at Arkansas State—so you had lots of contact with the newspapers. Had a lot of—I'm sure—contact with the *Gazette* and the *Democrat* too, as well as a lot of other newspapers—*Memphis Commercial Appeal*, and [*Memphis*] *Press-Scimitar* and everything. Did you have any particular reaction to how those newspapers handled things at that time?

AM: Well, yes, as a matter of fact I did. I remember when I became the SID at ASU one of the reasons that that job was needed at that time was that we were trying to improve our situation in terms of intercollegiate athletics and the school was growing also. I just—I spent the first week or two just out on the road going to visit people. I remember going to the *Gazette* and visiting with Jim Bailey, and

taking him out to dinner, and explaining what we were doing at ASU, and what I was going to try to be doing and all that. Same thing at the *Democrat*, and same thing at the *Commercial Appeal* and the *Press-Scimitar*—all of which were targets for carrying ASU stories. So anyway, I recall that the—you know, it was always tough at the *Gazette* if it didn't have Razorback on it. You know, if it was Razorback, it was pretty much *carte blanche*. If it wasn't, it probably went through some kind of filter, which was understandable. It was understandable. I didn't particularly like it, and I thought maybe I could help overcome it. But it was true.

JM: Yes.

AM: I recall that Orville, you know, he always had the reputation—and I think deservedly—that the University of Arkansas was the big story, should be the big story and that pretty much anything else was just secondary news as far as he was concerned. I think that's true. That's my perception. I bet if I went back, and we measured headlines and stuff, and the news value of stories, I bet you I could prove that there is a lot of truth to that.

JM: Yes.

AM: Anyway, that built readership and it was a good marketing decision. But he was always nice to me. Orville was nice to me. In fact, I should have told you this—maybe or maybe not, it doesn't matter.

JM: Go ahead.

AM: We were on the tour together, and we were on the Frito bus. I don't know something came up. We were sitting on the back of the bus—Orville and I and several—two or three other writers and stuff. Something came up and I said some-

thing. Somebody said, “Well you better do something, or you wouldn’t have a job with that paper anymore.” I said, “Yes. I know it.” Orville said, “Well it doesn’t make any difference. He can come to work for me anytime he wants to.”

That was a compliment I felt.

JM: Yes. Yes. Yes.

AM: Anyway, we talked about it. In fact, I ran into him one day downtown Little Rock, and we talked about it. I said, “I thank you very much, but I’m happy where I am at this time.”

JM: Yes.

AM: But Orville was great. Jim Bailey provided what little coverage Arkansas State got. I dare say, I bet you never covered an ASU story of any type in your career at the *Gazette*, right? [Laughs]

JM: Yes I did.

AM: Oh did you really?

JM: Track.

AM: Okay. Right. [Laughter] It was barely intramural quality at ASU for a time.

JM: Yes, but it got better.

AM: Got better. It sure did.

JM: I remember—it seems to me like maybe that I went up there when Thomas Hill was running the hurdles.

AM: Okay. Well, if you did, you caught it at the very best.

JM: Yes.

AM: That’s right.

JM: No, I never covered ASU football or basketball that I recall. I did cover some high

school stuff at Jonesboro, but that was different.

AM: Yes, right.

JM: Did Bailey do much coverage of . . . ?

AM: Bailey—what coverage ASU got, Bailey did.

JM: Yes.

AM: They always made sure that he covered a game or two every year.

JM: Yes.

AM: He covered—we were in the Southland conference—he'd cover a game or two.

Jim—it was great. I do remember though—I have to tell you this story, and Jerry Schaeffer can vouch for it.

JM: Okay.

AM: Do you remember Jerry?

JM: Oh yes.

AM: Were you there when Jerry was there?

JM: Yes. He worked for the *Gazette* for awhile too.

AM: That's right. He was one of my kids. He had worked for me at the *Sun*. Anyway, he was there, and he told me one time he said—we were in—we had won the national championship and were really doing a great—things were going good. Basketball was going good. Thomas Hill was doing good in track. You know, it was a lot of stuff. We were hanging pretty good on the news front. We went to Southern Illinois the third game of the year after the undefeated season, which would have been the fall of 1971, and Southern Illinois beat us. On that same day the University of Texas lost to end a long winning streak, and I remember Jerry telling me that Orville came bouncing into the room and said, "It's a great day—

Texas lost, Arkansas State lost, and the Hogs won.” [Laughter] Jerry Schaeffer can vouch that that comment took place.

JM: Yes. Yes. Okay. What kind of—there could be a reason there—but did the *Democrat* give you any coverage?

AM: You know, to tell you the truth, I don’t really believe the *Democrat*’s coverage was any better than the *Gazette*’s coverage. I never—I don’t know that I ever felt that way. I do know that in the second year or so after we had that success that when Fred Morrow was the—that was his name, is that right?

JM: Yes. Yes. That’s right. Correct.

AM: He was the sports editor, and he stepped up coverage for us. I’ve always wondered if Fred did that as much as anything out of spite for the fact that he probably didn’t have the front seat like Orville did on the Razorback . . .

JM: There might have been a little something to that, too. I know Fred, because he worked for me for awhile. I think [Gene] Foreman hired him at the *Democrat*—Gene Foreman. But, of course, he came from that corner of the area. He came from southeast Missouri, and, in fact, I think a friend of his who was going to Arkansas State helped him get a job at Pine Bluff. This guy told him, “We saw a note upon the bulletin board or something that they got a opening for a sports-writer at Pine Bluff.” Fred applied and went down there, and was sports editor down there for a while. Then, he came up to the *Democrat*.

AM: Oh that’s right. I remember now, because I think that’s where I first got acquainted with him when he was at the *Pine Bluff Commercial*.

JM: Yes.

AM: By the way, they gave us pretty good coverage I recall down through the years

there. Yes, he came to the *Democrat*. Anyway, for whatever reason, I felt that we got quite a bit of stuff—I tell you where else we got great coverage. I can tell you where we really got great coverage. That was KATV.

JM: Was it? Okay.

AM: Bud Campbell. Yes sir.

JM: Okay.

AM: Yes sir. I can guarantee you he told me one time. He said, “Listen. You guys are doing a heck of a job.” This was during the Thomas Hill [era], and the national championship stuff, and the basketball team was doing good. He said, “Whatever you got that you think is newsworthy—whether you do or not—you send it to me.” I remember somebody saying, “Man, you’re getting a lot of coverage on KATV.” I thought, “Well that’s pretty good.”

JM: Yes. That’s good. Of course, the *Democrat* did not have the circulation out in the outlying areas like the *Gazette* did. So, if there was anybody who was going to cover it, it should have been the *Gazette*.

AM: We were—the truth of the matter was we were not a statewide university.

JM: Yes.

AM: We wanted to be.

JM: Yes.

AM: I’m glad I got to be part of the first step process of that taking shape, but you’re right. We were not a statewide story. As a publicist, I looked at it from the standpoint of how can I tell the story? How can I get equal billing? How can I—not equal billing—but how do I get better billing? [Laughs]

JM: I understand it. I don’t know if this has any relationship to it or not, but I know

that I have heard over the years that Mr. [John Netherland] Heiskell envisioned the *Gazette* as being a statewide paper, but that he—at onetime, I don't know how long this lasted—he sort of conceded everything on the other side of the White River to Memphis. He didn't try to cover stuff the other side of the White River like he did the rest of the state. He thought they were in the Memphis orbit. I remember—and I know this came up but—that during the integration crisis the Memphis paper—one of the Memphis papers, I don't know which one—wrote a really strong editorial about the Little Rock situation which he didn't like. He said, “Those people are getting out of their territory.” [Laughter] They weren't supposed to touch west of the White River, and he wasn't going to do east of the White River.

AM: Wasn't going to spend much time—you know, I expect that did sort of set the footprint. As you talk, it makes sense.

JM: I also know that Orville was so wrapped up in covering the Razorbacks, and of course that sold a lot of papers. Then, of course, he got very close to it and everything else. So I understand that situation. I just wondered what it was like from your side too, because you know we used to get that reaction a lot from just high school coaches who would say—you know all the AIC coaches would say, “Gee, why didn't Orville ever write anything about us? You know he never writes anything about the high schools or the AIC. He never writes anything about the AICs.” Bailey and I related that to him a time or two, and Orville said, “Why should I write about that? Bailey knows more about the AIC than I do. Jerry, you know more about the high schools than I do. So why should I . . .?” Well, I'm not sure that was a good argument.

AM: Well, in a sense it does make sense. You know, Orville became synonymous with *Gazette* sports.

JM: Yes. Right.

AM: So you just automatically assumed that, if Orville covered it, it was bigger and better than ordinary.

JM: Yes. Yes.

AM: He created that situation, because he was covering the big story all of the time-- exclusively.

JM: You're right. I think you're absolutely right.

AM: You know, down through the years we used to talk about this.

JM: Yes.

AM: Jim Bailey—we used to say—was the most gifted writer at the *Gazette*. I mean he just had a real gift, you know.

JM: Yes he did.

AM: He had an ability to write. It wasn't that he was the best reporter or he was this, that, or the other, but you know he just—but anyway, I remember now that you bring that up that I realized that situation when I was at the *Democrat*. That I started covering AIC sports—particularly AIC basketball—in order to see if there wasn't a void there that would help us and build some relationships there. Anyway, those were fun days and I enjoyed my time and enjoyed all the—really people I knew including you and Bailey and Orville, and also the guys over at the *Democrat*. It was an interesting time, and of course those times are gone from us.

JM: Yes. Yes.

AM: I don't guess there are any afternoon papers to speak of left in the county.

JM: Not very many. I think maybe somebody told me there were five major afternoon newspapers left in the country, but I'm not sure about that. Now, you left Arkansas State when?

AM: I guess it was in 1980 or so—yes, around 1980—and went to work in private business in sales and marketing.

JM: Okay.

AM: I've been in that area ever since.

JM: In what kind of marketing?

AM: Well for the last twenty-five years I've been in the lamp business. Table lamps and floor lamps that we sell to the major chains like Wal-Mart, and Target, and Lowe's, and virtually all the big chains.

JM: As I recall, you said that maybe that you handled the Target account. Is that correct?

AM: Yes.

JM: Yes.

AM: For many years. I'm really now not doing it. I have a young man who took my place, and I work for him. I handle logistics for him.

JM: Okay.

AM: But up until last—up until this year actually—I handled for about eight years or so—handled the Target account. It's fun to handle one of those big dogs like that.

JM: Yes, I bet. Are you semi-retired, or are you still working full time?

AM: Actually, I'm still working full-time. I'm trying to cut back on travel. I don't travel much anymore. I just sort of look at the business, and as I said handle logistics and sort of trouble shoot for the young account manager, who is doing a

great job. In fact we just won our—for the third straight year—just won the “vendor of the year” award in the home décor area. I don’t know if any lamp company has ever done that three times in a row or not—pretty heady stuff.

JM: How long have you lived in Austin [Texas]?

AM: Oh, I’ve lived here eighteen years now.

JM: Do you like it?

AM: Oh, yes. I love it. Great place to live.

JM: Most people that I know who lived around Austin are just crazy about the town.

AM: It is funny. You know, my wife says that too. You know, I couldn’t dynamite her out of Austin. [Laughs] Anyway, I hope there is a cheaper place to live when we get older, because you know it’s [expensive]—but it’s a great place to live. Something going on all the time. Keeps you young you know.

JM: I understand.

AM: God knows I need that.

JM: Okay, Andy, anything else? Any memories that you have of your days at the *Democrat* and your relations with the news media in Little Rock?

AM: Well, no not really. Of course, the longer you go the longer you can think about it, but you know I was lucky in that I was in high school at a time when Little Rock Central had its great football teams—as you recall because you covered them.

JM: Yes.

AM: And then, even after that high school sports in Little Rock was really great, because you got to see a lot of good athletes—a lot of great athletes—a lot of good things. It was a lot of fun. But, no, I guess not. I have enjoyed visiting with you,

and I hope there will at least be a few contributions. [Laughs]

JM: Well, I really enjoyed visiting with you again, Andy. I really appreciate you taking the time, because we needed some input in this particular area that we're trying to touch all the bases—you know, what the *Democrat* was like, and over the years, and how it got to the point—and I'll ask you one more question.

AM: Sure.

JM: Invariably, I've never had—I think I know what stance you are going to be. In all those years that you were active and involved with the two newspapers in Little Rock and everything, if somebody told you that only one was going to survive, would you have ever believed it would be the *Democrat*?

AM: Absolutely not.

JM: Yes, okay.

AM: Of course not.

JM: Yes. Yes, okay. Yes.

AM: You know that's the—what took place there is the stuff of business, and not of journalism.

JM: Yes.

AM: It's the stuff of dollars. You know on a larger scale, Jerry, you have seen it take place in the national media. On the national media scene with the people like Rupert Murdoch and others of his level who just buy and sell these instruments of journalism because of one reason and that's to make money.

JM: Yes, and that's the bad parts. Those people and even their shareholders and everything they demand that they make money not that they be a great newspaper.

AM: That's true.

JM: They demand that they make money.

AM: That's exactly right. I remember thinking when I was a young sportswriter—I thought, “Well, Mr. Engel if you didn't have this great sports department down here, man, you wouldn't be doing very good. You need . . .” [Laughs] He didn't give a crap about that sports department, you know. He was interested in one thing, and it's all moved that direction. So maybe he was just there ahead of his time, you know. [Laughter]

JM: [Laughs] Yes, possibly. I wasn't too happy about it either. But at any rate . . .

AM: No. I agree. I agree.

JM: Andy, I appreciate it. It's been great visiting with you. I want to thank you again. When you get up this way give me a holler. Maybe we will run into each other in Little Rock sometime. On rare occasions I get to Austin, so I may give you a holler next time I'm . . .

AM: Man, if you get to Austin, you need to give me a call now.

JM: I'll do it.

AM: I wish you would. I appreciate it, Jerry. It sure has been good to visit with you.

JM: Well thanks a lot, Andy.

AM: Bye bye.

JM: Bye bye.

[End of Interview]

[Transcribed by Geoffery Stark]

[Edited by Jason Pierce]

