

PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
BIPARTISAN MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH:

The Honorable Carl Nelson (D)

2nd District

York County

1959-1960

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY: Heidi Mays, House Archivist
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Transcribed by: Erin Miller

Heidi Mays (HM): Good afternoon.

The Honorable Carl Nelson (CN): Good afternoon.

HM: I'm here today with Carl Nelson, who served between the years 1959 and 1960 from York County. Thank you for being here with me today.

CN: It's a pleasure to be here. Thank you very much for inviting me.

HM: I would like to begin by asking you about your childhood and your family life and how those influences shaped you.

CN: Oh. Well, I was one of those people who grew up during the Great Depression. I was born in 1923, so, obviously, I was one of those people who knew an awful lot about the Depression. And I grew up on a little farm in Northern York County in Monaghan Township. My dad had worked in the steel mill, I'm sorry, he worked in a silk mill, and then when that closed because [of] the Depression, he worked among the farmers, and wherever he could pick up a day of work. And then, luckily, he managed to get a job with Harrisburg Steel, and he stayed there until he retired from that facility many years later.

HM: Did you come from a political family?

CN: My family started being political after, or I guess during, the Depression. They had voted for [Herbert] Hoover [United States President, 1929-1933] who had promised “two chickens in every pot, two cars in every garage,” and instead, we ended up with two families in every garage instead. My mother became a committeewoman back, I think, about the first time they started having women serving in that capacity, as she stayed in that role until she died, and controlled things, pretty much, in our township. It became, at that point, kind-of a Democratic stronghold because she worked at it almost every day. She greeted people who moved in, and took care of whatever problems they had. Our committeeman happened to be a plumber, so if people moved in and the pump and, you know, the well wasn’t working, she could call the committeeman, and so, that’s when we became political. And when I was in grade school, I had a fantastic teacher in the one-room school by the name of Harold Starry, and it was then that I believe I got the urge that someday I wanted to serve in the House of Representatives.

HM: Would you say those experiences led you to become a Democrat?

CN: I’m sorry; I didn’t hear that.

HM: Would you say those experiences, being from your family, being a Democratic family?

CN: Oh yes, very, very definitely. I think so.

HM: Okay. Could you discuss your education and your career before coming to the House?

CN: I went to a one room school, Filey's School, in Monaghan Township. From there, I went to Mechanicsburg High School. I lived in York County, but in those days there was no high school, it was part of that township, so we could go wherever we wanted to go, and the township paid the tuition for us, and I had cousins who went to Mechanicsburg, so I chose to go there. After that, I served in World War II [1939-1945], and while I was in the military, I was able to go to such facilities as Grinnell College in Iowa, the University of Chicago, and Texas A & M. I decided if I could make it at those institutions, I could make it at Millersville or Shippensburg or Penn State, which I did.

HM: Could you talk a little bit about your career? You mentioned that you were in the Air Corps.

CN: The what?

HM: The Air Corps.

CN: Oh. I was in the Air Force to start off with, the Air Corps as we called it in those days, and while I was there, they sent me to Camp Crowder¹ to be trained as a teletype operator, and while I was there, I was interviewed and accepted to go to ASTP², which

¹ Near the city of Neosho, Missouri; established as the US Army Signal Corps Training Center

² Army Specialized Training Program

was the advanced – I forget what it was actually the initials stood for –and that was where I went to the University of Chicago, and the deal was that we were supposed to be learning things that would help the military and a college education. My brother was waiting in England to land on the beaches. I decided I was not helping the war effort to any great extent, so I wanted to go back to the Air Corps, and they said I couldn't do that unless I could get into the Aviation Cadet program. I applied for that and did the four days of tests, passed everything, and then was back in the Air Corps. And that's when I was then sent to basic training all over again, and then from there I went to Texas A & M for the college training, as part of that training. I never did get finished with my training. The war ended, they had too many of us, and we had a choice of staying in and getting commissioned, or we could decide to go home, and I came home and took a 1,400 dollar a year teaching salary.

HM: And where were you a teacher?

CN: What?

HM: And where were you a teacher?

CN: My first teaching experience was in Monaghan Township at Andersontown School. There were four schools in that township, and that's the only building that's been torn down, which might tell me something. The other three buildings are still in existence. Two of them are private homes, and the fourth one belongs to my home church.

HM: Well, you talked a little bit about your political aspirations at a young age.

CN: Oh, I guess, I don't know, I guess it was because of the teacher that I had, and I always liked history, in fact I majored in it, among other things, and decided that someday I wanted to serve in the House, and I managed to get elected. I'm sorry I did not get a chance to stay, but I think I wanted to make a difference in the lives of people in the Commonwealth, and that might sound idealistic, but it's the Gospel truth that I really thought I might be able to make a difference.

HM: What were the circumstances in your first political run?

CN: The first political run I decided it was time to run, well, in fact, before I ran – two years before that, I had decided I wanted to run, and the Party sent a representative to me and said they had somebody else in mind, would I wait, and that person lost, so then two years later, it was my turn, and, believe it or not, through my first Primary and General Election, it cost me a total of 425 dollars, and I had an opponent in the Primary, a young, struggling lawyer, who didn't really care if he won or not, but he needed to get some publicity, and running for office was a good way for a young attorney to get to be known by people in the community.

HM: And the first year you ran was in, what was –

CN: That was the Primary in, what, [19]58? Yeah, November [19]58, so, I served and I was elected and then took office in January of [19]59 to [19]60.

HM: What were the issues that you ran on?

CN: I guess I ran on the issue of being a liberal Democrat who ran on fiscal responsibility, and obviously with my background in education, I felt that I had some great concerns about that. I wish I'd been able to serve on the Education Committee, but maybe we'll get to that a little bit later, but education and the financing of it. The Commonwealth, even back then, was not furnishing the amount of money to the school districts that they should have been obligated to do.

HM: Did you have name recognition because you were an educator in the community?

CN: No. I don't think it was any particular problem with it, and in the area that I served as an educator, I carried those districts real well. Maybe they wanted to get rid of me, but anyway, I did well in those areas. People knew me, and where people knew me, I did well.

HM: Could you describe your first campaign? Do you recall anything about it? Was it hard to campaign because you were trying to unseat – ?

CN: I enjoyed campaigning. It's hard work; I did the door-to-door type thing, and I think that's about the only way you can really get elected. Of course, these days with all the media, you can appeal to people. Everybody knows some of the major politicians in the United States. They've never met them, but they see them on television every day or every other day. I didn't have that advantage, so I knocked on doors and spoke to the various groups. Senator Seyler [Harry; State Representative, York County, 1949-1954; State Senator, 1955-1962] and I did the Saturday morning coffee klatches. We would contact people and ask them to invite 10, 12, 15 of their friends, Democrat, Republican, Independent, into their house, and then on Saturday morning we'd stop for a half hour at this place, then go on to another place, and we got to meet hundreds of people in that way, and we could find out what people were interested in, what they were talking about, and we could also present ourselves and our ideas.

HM: Did your family get involved in the campaigns?

CN: At that point, yes. I was not married, at that point, but my mother, being a committeeperson, was obviously very much involved, and my sister was always a very good supporter, also.

HM: Did anyone else help you get started?

CN: I guess one of the questions that might come up is, “who was my mentor?” I think that Senator Harry Seyler and his wife Eloise were two dear friends, and they helped me an awful lot, politically.

HM: Okay. I wanted to ask you about the political affiliation. Is it more important to be – at this time – was it more important to be a candidate, or was it more important to be from a particular Party? Because, whenever we were looking at our research, I think the same year that you served, all four people from York County were Democratic.

CN: I think in York County, at that point, it was more important to be a Democrat than it was to be anything else, and at that point we controlled all four members of the House, we controlled the State Senate, we had all of the State Senators, we had all the row offices except the ones that, by law, have to go to a minority person, we had the Mayorship of the city of York, so we pretty much controlled everything. We, the Democratic Party, controlled pretty much everything in York County, at that point. We fell on hard times after that.

HM: I was going to say that Governor [George] Leader [Pennsylvania Governor, 1955-1959] was also a Democrat from York County as well.

CN: Right. And Governor Leader, by the way, I think, was chairperson of one of my campaigns when I was running for reelection. His name is on the brochure and has always been a good friend, and when I was Principal of Dover High School, his farm was

probably less than a mile away from the high school, and periodically, when he would come down to visit the farm when he was having a problem, I would go out and chat with him.

HM: In your own words, can you describe what your District was like, specifically the area?

CN: My district was called the Second District of York County, and it stretched from Dillsburg to Wrightsville and everything in between, including 14-4 of the city of York that has since been gerrymandered to make it a safe District for the other Party.

Representative Bruce Smith [State Representative, Cumberland and York Counties, 1981-2006] has part of it, Bev Mackereth [Beverly; State Representative, York County, 2001-2008] has another part of it, and of course I don't have – that District has no longer has any part of the city.

HM: What were the people like? Where were they employed?

CN: The people, at that point, mostly middle class people, many people were employed in the large industries that we had in York, in York County, and the people in the northern end of the county, Fairview Township, Monaghan, Carroll, came to Harrisburg to work in the industries, and many of those smokestack industries are gone.

HM: How did you communicate with your constituents?

CN: With whom?

HM: With your constituents.

CN: Well, at that point, we didn't do much communicating with them. We had nothing available. We did not have a secretary; we did not have an office; we did not have a per diem allowance; we did not have any of this marvelous equipment that you have now. And what I did a lot of was speaking at various organizational things: fire companies, churches, and so on, and I had a lot of contact with people through those speeches that I did. And just living in the community.

HM: Did you write your own letters?

CN: Oh, yes. I had to write my own letters.

HM: What would you say about your district was unique, or was there anything unique about your District?

CN: I don't think it was much different from the other rural districts in York County or in other counties in the Commonwealth. The city people, obviously, had other concerns; if they were from Philadelphia or Pittsburgh or York or Allentown, obviously their concerns were different from those of mine.

HM: Would you say the area has changed significantly from the time that you served?

CN: Oh, very definitely. First of all, everything has grown up, the farms are gone, and they're now turned into developments. Many of the industries that employed those people are gone. They're more people now working in service industries than in manufacturing. This morning when I looked at my telephone, I saw it was made in China. Almost everything that we look at these days [is] made in China or India or some other place.

HM: Would you say your seat was a swing seat, or was it a solid Democratic seat?

CN: Oh no, it wasn't. I defeated a Republican incumbent in my first, and he turned around and defeated me in the [19]60 election, but no, it was not a safe district, obviously, and it had had Democrats and Republicans. It kind-of alternated, much like the Governorship. You know, we have a Governor for eight years, and then we get one of the other Party, and then it goes back-and-forth.

HM: Okay.

CN: That district was pretty much like that.

HM: So how did Mr. Gross [Stanley H.; State Representative, York County, 1957-1958 and 1961-1964] defeat you after you were originally elected?

CN: In 1960, the only concern that people had in York County, many of them, was the fact that Jack Kennedy [John F.; United States President, 1961-1963] was a Roman Catholic. Some of the conservative churches, the ministers spoke out, mentioning me by name, and told people [not to] vote for me. I went to see some of them. One gentleman in particular I remember; I had asked him why he was saying – And he said “You’re as bad as Kennedy, because you’re on the ticket with him.” And the day after the election, I had enough people call me and say “Carl, I didn’t know that you needed any help; I voted straight Republican ticket because I was not going to vote for Kennedy, and I’m sorry I didn’t split my vote,” and I lost. One of my good political friends on the other side of the aisle said, you know, “How could you lose the election?” And I said, “Because people like you didn’t vote for me.”

HM: Did anything surprise you whenever you first came to Harrisburg as a Representative?

CN: I don’t know if there was too much that surprised me, other than – maybe we’ll get into this a little bit later – but, the same year that I was elected, a gentleman by the name of K. Leroy Irvis [State Representative, Allegheny County, 1959-1988; Speaker 1977-1979, 1983-1988] was elected, and in 1959-60, Mr. Irvis was not allowed or was not welcome, in many facilities in the Harrisburg area. And my wife and I had him out to our

apartment in Dillsburg, where we lived at that point, and I found him to be one of the most intelligent, articulate persons that I've ever known in my life, and we bonded for the rest of his life, and I was fortunate enough to be invited up here, what was that, two or three years ago, when he was honored, and we were part of that entourage that day. Is that when this building was dedicated to him? But he was certainly a fine gentleman. He stayed in the House and became the Speaker. I went back to work.

HM: Did you maintain any other close relationships with former Members?

CN: I had a number of good friends sitting right next to me. It was Joe Wargo [Joseph; State Representative, Lackawanna and Wayne Counties, 1949-1984] and Mike Needham [Michael; State Representative, Lackawanna County, 1947-1956 and 1959-1966] from up in the coal region, one from Scranton, and one from, what? Olyphant, I believe was the name of the town. Marion Munley [State Representative, Lackawanna County, 1947-1964], in front of me. On the other side of the aisle, one of my best friends over there was Jack Seltzer, [H. Jack; Lebanon County, 1957-1980; Speaker 1979-1980] and that name is still well known in, at least, in the Lebanon area, but Jack was one of those legislators that could cross over Party lines for friendship and for things that he believed in. It didn't matter whether his Party believed in it or not, if he did, then he voted with us.

HM: Now, tell me again, who did you say you felt your mentor was?

CN: What?

HM: Your mentor?

CN: Oh, Senator Harry Seyler and his wife Eloise.

HM: Okay. Did anyone else help you along the way?

CN: Well, our county chairperson, a gentleman who at one point served in the U.S. Congress, N. Neiman Craley³, and there were many other people, obviously committee people. We had strong organization, and we controlled patronage in those days. All the people, or virtually all the people, who worked on the highway owed their job to the Party in power, and if the Party in power lost, they either changed their political affiliation, or they were out of a job.

HM: Would you say that there was camaraderie between the Members at that time, or was it more partisan?

CN: I think it wasn't nearly as partisan as what it is now. I think we went out to eat together; we went to some of the social events together. I don't think there was near the bitterness that, apparently, there is up here now. I'm not on the scene here; I don't know,

³ Nathaniel Neiman Craley, Jr. had been a member of the 89th Congress from 1965-1967, but was defeated in the subsequent election. At the time of Nelson's election in 1958, he was the treasurer of the York County Planning Commission, director of the York County Council of Community Services, and director of the York County Council for Human Relations.

but I thought we got along much better than what people seem to be now, if what I hear in the media is accurate.

HM: How did you get along with the York County Delegation, specifically John Gailey, [State Representative, York County, 1957-1968], Howard Perry [State Representative, York County, 1959-1960], and Harold Rudisill [State Representative, York County, 1955-1970]?

CN: They were very fine people. Mr. Perry sat next to me. He was a farmer, and was able to advise me an awful lot on farm legislation. The other two gentlemen were attorneys, and I could go to them, and did, to get advice on legal matters that would be coming up before us.

HM: Did you have a good relationship with the media?

CN: In York County, very definitely. Mr. [Josiah] Gitt⁴ had the old, what was then called the *Gazette and Daily*, and he was a very liberal-minded person, and he always, in every election that I was in, he endorsed me, whether it made any difference or not, but I had a good relationship with the media down there. In Harrisburg, the media was not very evident; they just weren't here. I don't know if I ever talked to a reporter in Harrisburg. I talked to reporters back home, but I don't think I ever did in Harrisburg.

⁴ Josiah William Gitt published the *York Gazette and Daily* newspaper for almost half a century. The newspaper consistently opposed American post-war foreign policy and was known for its free-thinking editorials.

HM: When you came to Harrisburg for Session, since you're relatively local, did you commute?

CN: Oh, yes. I lived in Dillsburg, I was, what, 12, 15 minutes away from the Capitol? And since we didn't get a per diem, we didn't get an allowance, I obviously commuted.

HM: What was the social scene like in Harrisburg? Like, whenever you were in Session, you said you went out to dinner with or had people back to your home.

CN: There was a restaurant right across from the Capitol – I've forgotten the name – and one down on South Second Street, and of course we went to the hotels, the Penn Harris and the, what was it? The Penn Harris – but anyway, we went to the hotels for dinner and, probably on our salary, we brown bagged it once in a while.

HM: What was the salary?

CN: The salary was 3,000 dollars a year. Not a week, not a month; a year. In addition, there was a 3,000 dollar expense account for which you did not apply. You automatically, each month, you got a check that represented that, and that was to take care of all the expenses. So actually, our total amount was 6,000 dollars, and only 3,000 dollars of that was actually salary, but the other 3,000 dollars you didn't have to account for in any way.

HM: Did you run a District office out of your home?

CN: I had an old typewriter at home, and it wasn't really an office, but it was a little table in my bedroom in my parents' home at that point, and that was my office. There was no office furnished by the Commonwealth.

HM: What was it like serving as a rank-and-file Member in 1959-1960?

CN: Can you say that again?

HM: I'm sorry; what was it like to serve as a rank-and-file Member, just as a regular member, in 1959?

CN: Well, the rank-and-file Members, all we had, we had the desk on the Floor, and we had a cloakroom where we had a steel cabinet locker like in high school, and that's where we would hang our coats. And without any help. It was a difficult job to look after the concerns of our constituents. If someone had a problem with their automobile license, you didn't have an assistant you could turn to, you didn't have somebody here on the Hill who could run over to the automotive department and get the problem solved; you kind-of had to do everything all by yourself. And maybe that's one way that we learned a lot about how government works.

HM: Did you have a phone?

CN: I had a phone at home, paid for by myself and my parents; not by the Commonwealth.

HM: I guess you didn't have an office in Harrisburg, either?

CN: No. All we had was the desk on the Floor of the House. That was it. And I've talked with current legislators or those who have gone after I was in, and they can't believe that we didn't have an office, even here in Harrisburg. All we had was that desk on the Floor.

HM: What if you needed to make a phone call?

CN: Then you went to the back of the hall, back of the House of Representatives, and there were a couple of public phones back there, and we didn't even have to put money in those that were, I think it was in the, like, the cloak room or something or the post office, I think was where the phones were located, and you could use those.

HM: Times have changed, haven't they?

CN: They certainly have.

HM: So, you didn't have an office staff or anything like that either because you had no office, obviously.

CN: Right, we had no office, no office staff.

HM: Would you be able to comment on the differences between the House in which you were elected and the current House? Do you know how – I mean, I’m sure you read in the paper how things have changed and you’ve visited Harrisburg.

CN: I have visited the House on some occasions back when Mr. Irvis was the Speaker. I know I was in a couple times then, and I was pleased a couple years ago when the Speaker of the House started the “House Comes Home.”

HM: Reunions.

CN: And had a chance to visit the House. But when I see that, we didn’t have the electronic voting. There were 210 members, and they did it in alphabetical order. “The Clerk will now call the roll.” Arlene was the last name of the first person, and I think Yatron or Zimmerman were the last ones, and sometimes they didn’t read all the names if it was a consent calendar where everybody was going to be recorded as voting 210 to 0. Then they would only do a couple of names, and then the Speaker would announce that the vote was 210 in favor, or to 0 in opposition, and once in a while there would be someone who would say “No, I don’t want to go that way,” and then that person would be recorded. Now it’s all electronic, and I hear occasionally that people flip each others’ switches. Have you heard anything like that around up here?

HM: Okay.

CN: You just never know.

HM: Well, would you say that you were a full-time legislator or a part-time legislator?

CN: Oh, I had to be; on that salary, I had to be a part-time legislator.

HM: Okay.

CN: When I was first elected, I was Principal of Northeastern High School, and I gave up my seat there, or my job there, in February after being elected in November, taking office in January, and then that summer, I was contacted by the Dover School District, and they asked me to fill in for a gentleman, a Principal, who was going on leave of absence, so during that summer of [19]59-[19]60, or that school year, I then served as the interim Principal at Dover High School, so I had another income other than that wonderful 3,000 dollars a year.

HM: What about other Members? Were there Members that actually did this full-time, or was everyone pretty much a part-time legislator?

CN: I probably knew of only one Member who did it full time, and that was his only income, and that is a funny story. One night, we had a consent calendar. We were going

to have the midnight Session; I'm sure that everybody listening knows that you have to have three—the bill has to be on the calendar three days before it can go to final passage – and we went to the restaurant across from the Capitol, and Democrats, Republicans, the handful that stayed for the midnight session. And the Majority Leader, Steve McCann [State Representative, Greene County, 1953-1962] asked this gentleman “Don't you do anything but being a Member of the House?” and the gentleman replied “Well, right now I'm picking up a few shellbarks⁵ on my dad's farm.” Well, would you believe he got a nickname of “Squirrely” from then on?

HM: Was seniority a big issue at the time you served?

CN: I didn't hear you.

HM: Seniority. Did that play into maybe who your leaders were? The seniority system?

CN: Oh, yes, the seniority system was certainly in effect, and some of that was a problem, also. For instance, the chairperson of the House Education Committee was only in her second term when I was elected, and she would invite me to go out to dinner with her on occasion and show me the educational bills and ask me my opinion, so although I didn't get on that committee, which was one of my first requests, I did have a lot of influence, kind-of behind the scenes; of being able to look at the legislation that was being considered, and could give my opinion.

⁵ North American Hickory with edible nuts.

HM: What was a Session day like?

CN: We started Mondays at noon time. I don't know; do you still do that?

HM: One o'clock.

CN: We started at noon time, and even if it was two o'clock, the Speaker would announce that, "The hour of twelve having arrived," he would bang the gavel, and we'd be in Session. And then Tuesdays, we started a little bit earlier than that sometimes; sometimes it was twelve o'clock. Wednesday was a little earlier, so that the people from out of town could get home, and rarely did we meet more than those three days.

HM: Did you have – I think you mentioned you had midnight sessions as well?

CN: Yes, when we had deadlines to meet, when bills that had to be passed, whether it was an appropriations bill for something or other, we would have those sessions, which would be the third day. If a bill got introduced on Tuesday, and we voted on it on Tuesday and Wednesday, then we had to be here Thursday morning at 12:01 [am] in order to have another day to vote on it.

HM: So, maybe the budget or sine die⁶ or something like that.

⁶ Latin term meaning "without day"; often refers to legislative bodies terminated at the end of Session.

CN: No, the budget would have been too much of a controversial deal. That was never a consent calendar. The opposition had never wanted to go along with what the Governor was proposing or what we had worked out.

HM: So, those were some interesting, maybe, debates on the House Floor?

CN: Oh, very interesting. And occasionally, some of the debate was really not debate; it was people talking to hear themselves talk or to get in the record to show back home. “I want you to know that I spoke against this bill,” or “for this appropriation,” and they would clip that out of the record and mail it to their constituents or to the newspapers back home.

HM: What would you say your focus was on your legislation? What major issues were you involved in?

CN: I guess my major issues revolved around the field of education, and I was on the Agriculture and Dairy Committees, and there was much legislation that I was concerned about there. There were some things going on, some of the farmers were being cheated out of money by people to whom they sold their, for instance, the milk. There was a dairy in Philadelphia that was buying milk from the farmers, paying them for, I think it was called, Class D milk, and said they were shipping it to New Jersey as Class A milk, you know, the bottled milk they would put on the doorstep back in those days. I was interested in those deals, and two of the bills that I was proud to have introduced as a

Member of the House. One was to have the Department of Education furnish school building plans, and it was a new idea, I think, then; since that time, other people have introduced such legislation. And another one that I didn't have any cosponsors on was a bill to – a tax, a two percent excise tax on your federal income tax return. Our Constitution does not allow a graduated tax, so it was a flat two percent tax, but it was on something that was already graduated, and that never saw the light of day, and I could not get Miss Alpern⁷, who was the Attorney General, to give me a ruling. She said unless it went onto the Floor and was out of committee, she would not rule on it, so whether that would ever have passed, well, I don't know, but it was almost a painless way to raise an awful lot of money, and based on people's ability to pay, not on property taxes, which happens to be killing an awful lot of people these days, people who are on fixed incomes, retirees, they're living on a valuable piece of property, but that property is not earning any money for them, and it makes it very difficult.

HM: Well, I think the current legislature is certainly struggling with that issue, and I think they're going to continue to as well. You also served on Game and Conservation Committee and also the Insurance Committee.

CN: Yes.

HM: Did you have any involvement in those?

⁷ Anne X. Alpern was the Pennsylvania Attorney General from 1959-1961. She was then appointed to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

CN: Yeah, I've been a hunter most of my life; in fact this afternoon, I'm taking my 12 year old grandson fishing when I get out of here, and Harris Breth [State Representative, Clearfield County, 1941-1942 and 1949-1962] from Clearfield County was the Chairperson, and the Committee, of course, did not have a Secretary. So I, a Member of the House, became the Secretary for that Committee, and had the responsibility of keeping track of all of our bills. I especially liked that committee, and the Insurance Committee, I didn't have that much to do with that, and that, those two years we had very little legislation that pertained to insurance. I'm sure there's been a lot more since that time.

HM: Were there any memorable events during your House term?

CN: Many memorable events. I don't know if I can single out any particular one. I can't think of a single one thing that stands out. It was a wonderful experience; it was something I wanted to do, and I did it. I was happy with it.

HM: Well, whenever you think about the House, do you have a favorite story that you'd like to share?

CN: Well, I told you the one about the gentleman who was picking up shellbarks, and I guess more things, funny things, happened in Caucus. The Democratic Party is a Party that has many diverse groups within it, and there would be many strong arguments, and there would be people from certain areas, telling Steve McCann that, "No, they can't go

with him on this,” and he’d, you know, yell at them and why they couldn’t, and they’d tell their reasons, and it just, I think there were more funny things happened in Caucus than happened on the Floor.

HM: Was there a class clown, would you say?

CN: A what?

HM: A class clown, somebody that was –

CN: No, I don’t think there was a – I don’t think there was anyone who was particularly funny, maybe to the media or the general public, some of us were clowns, but I don’t think so.

HM: Okay. Do you recall the relationship between the Legislature and the Governor at that time?

CN: Well, at that point, the House was controlled by the Democrats, and Governor [David] Lawrence [Pennsylvania Governor, 1959-1963] was our Governor, and we had a good relationship with him, and one of the things that he did that I appreciated very much, he would periodically invite two or three or four of us for breakfast in the, we called it the Governor’s Mansion back in those days, it wasn’t nearly as grand as the Governor’s home now, but it was nice to be in that wonderful old building down on Front

Street and have breakfast with the Governor and have a chance to tell him things I was concerned about, and I gained an awful lot of respect for Governor Lawrence by having him listen to me, and later on he supported legislation of things that I was much concerned about.

HM: What aspect of your job did you like the most?

CN: I guess I liked the idea of being in a place, this is going to sound egotistical, a place of power; a place where things were happening, where we could make a difference in the lives of people in the Commonwealth. Governor Leader did so much for the people in the institutions, like the Harrisburg State Hospital and other state hospitals, and later on, by the way, I did serve, I think, 12 years, on the Board of Trustees at the Harrisburg State Hospital, and Governor Leader started that, and I think that was continued, and to this day, it's continuing to be an improvement. Many, many years ago, people who went to an Institution such as that, stayed there till they died. Today, the average person going into one of those facilities is only there a few months, and with the drugs and therapy they are returned back home, not always successfully, but [it] certainly made a difference.

HM: What would you say you liked the least?

CN: The negative? I guess the being criticized for things that were, in my opinion, right. Probably someplace up in my attic I still have a letter from a gentleman who lived on Route 74 in York County, and he had pages and pages of handwritten messages, what a

criminal I was by voting for taxes, and then when he was done with that, he wanted to know when is the State going to come through with more subsidies for the school district? When is the State going to fix Route 74 that goes by his farm? When is the State going to give a subsidy for the dairy farmers who are having a hard time making a living? And I told him, as I told all the people in my district, “there’s no free lunch; we don’t print money in Harrisburg. If you want benefits, you have to pay for them,” and that was probably my downfall. People liked to hear, “I’m going to increase the benefits for you, or we’re going to cut the taxes,” and it just can’t be done.

HM: How would you like to be remembered as a State Representative?

CN: How would I like to be? With today’s perks, I think I would enjoy it. I think that the salary, the automobile, the insurance, the office, the per diem payment, all of that, I think that would be wonderful, but I’m not sure that I wouldn’t lose sight of what I really would want to do for the Commonwealth. I think you have to be dedicated, and I think that almost all of the people who served back in my day cared about what happened to people in the Commonwealth. I hope that the Members of the House now, now they’re not 210, what are they? 206?

HM: 203.

CN: Whatever. I hope that the majority of those people still care about the Commonwealth and what happens. I wish that there wouldn’t be quite as much bickering

between the two Parties as there is, and maybe someday they'll come to a little more agreement.

HM: As someone that's been involved in the education field for your entire life pretty much, what educational experience did you take away from serving in the Pennsylvania House?

CN: I guess one of the educational things would be the diversity of the people and of the Commonwealth. The coal region is different from Pittsburgh; Pittsburgh's kind-of a coal region also, but soft coal. The northeastern part, the Pocono area, Philadelphia, York County, Perry County; it's all so different, and there's such a diversity of people, and each area has its own concerns, its own problems, and it's hard to get people to work together to solve the problems of those individual areas.

HM: Have you remained active in politics?

CN: I don't know how, quite know how to answer that question. Let's go onto the next one.

HM: Well, we saw from the information that you provided to us that you were Principal of Dover Area School District as well as serving as a Research Analyst for Senator Charles Weiner [State Senator, 1953-1968].

CN: Weiner.

HM: Weiner. Okay. How were you able to take on both of those responsibilities at once?

CN: Well, I did take on both those responsibilities at the same time.

HM: Okay.

CN: After I lost my seat in the House, I took a job in the Department of Education; there was a vacancy there, and I was on that job just a couple of months, and then Mrs. Seyler, Senator Harry Seyler, contacted me. Mr. Seyler, Senator Seyler, was in the Senate, obviously, and Senator Weiner, who had become the Majority Leader, a Democrat from Philadelphia, asked them if they knew someone who had political experience and who had enough whatever-it-would-take to work in his office. So, he interviewed me and decided that he wanted me to work with him, and there are some unusual stories of that experience, too. He was probably one of the most intelligent people who ever served in the Legislature at this or any other Commonwealth, or legislative body. When I was first on the job, he called me in one day, and one of my jobs was to research the calendar and tell him who was in favor of it, how much it would cost, what the problems were with it, if there were needed to be amendments because of some problem that was there. He had two secretaries. He called me into the office, and he said “Carl, go over the calendar.” “Senator, the first bill on the calendar today is Senate Bill 213, and it-,” and he started

talking. I stopped. “No, keep going, Carl.” He was dictating to the two secretaries and listening to me, and I gave him the facts and figures, and he was apparently listening, and when he was done with me, when I had gone over the calendar, I went back to my office, and then when the Session started, I went down to sit on the side right back of the Majority Leader’s desk, and during the debate, he quoted exactly the facts and figures that I had given him verbally while he was talking. I never encountered anyone else who could do that sort of thing. He later on became a Federal Judge, and I don’t know where he is now, whether he’s still living, but he had a law office in Philadelphia, and it was a wonderful experience to be in that position. I loved that job, and then when we lost the Senate, I lost my job.

HM: So, what else can you tell me about what have you done since you left the House? That was one example.

CN: Okay. After that, I went back to education. I went back to the Dover Area School District; they asked me to come back, and I did, and I stayed there until I retired in 1983, having served a total of something like 37, 38 years in education, military, and my House experience, all of them added together, I think about a little less than 38 years of service.

HM: That’s pretty remarkable.

CN: I’ve now been retired since 1983. If you were to ask my wife whether I’ve gotten everything done around the house that needs to be done, the answer is no.

HM: Well, what have you been doing since 1983?

CN: My wife and I are very active volunteers. We volunteer at the Strand-Capital Complex in York; we volunteer our services at Hershey Park for the benefit of New Hope Ministries. They get the money for our labor. In fact, we're going there again tomorrow, and next week we're working four double shifts over there. I'm still active in my political Party, I'm active in my church, I enjoy my grandchildren, and try to help out with many, many different things in the community, including my Lions Club, and I'm on the Board of Trustees at the senior center in our area.

HM: That's great. When you read the paper or watch TV today, and you see information being disseminated about the House of Representatives, what do you think?

CN: I talked a little bit awhile ago about the partisanship, I don't think I called it quite that, with the great division that there seems to be in Harrisburg and in Washington [D.C.]. The Parties have so, you know, split, and there're always these splits within the Parties. There're really right-wing people, moderates, and there're the left hand group and moderates, they are all over the place, and each little group has its own agenda, and they're not going to hold still to listen to the other people talk.

HM: When you come back to the Capitol Building after being gone for almost 46 years, what are your thoughts?

CN: Oh, it brings back a lot of memories. I have very fond memories of some of the people that I served with. One of the people that I especially love to mention, Marion Munley, awhile ago; Mrs. Munley was very down to earth; she was a very sweet lady. I didn't agree with her sometimes on legislation. For instance, one day she handed me a bill, and she said, "Carl, sign this as a co-sponsor," and I started to read the bill, and she said "Oh, don't bother reading it, just sign it," and I said "Marion, I will not sponsor legislation I haven't read," and then I started to read it, and it was a bill to grant a one day liquor license to churches for their church picnics and carnivals, and so on, and I said, "Marion, in York County, they'd kill me for that." She said, "Well, they all serve beer and liquor now at their festivals." I said, "In York County they don't." Well, I found out later on up in the coal regions that that was not unusual.

HM: Do you have a fondest memory of serving?

CN: Of ?

HM: Of serving. Do you have a fondest memory?

CN: I don't know if I have any particular fondest memory. The whole thing is just a great experience. I have enjoyed my career in politics, which was very short. I enjoyed my career in the field of education. Everything I've done, I've enjoyed. We've done a quite a bit of traveling. I've never been to a place I didn't enjoy. I guess, maybe – [in]

the field of education you look forward, and when you get to be as old as I am, many people do nothing but look back. I think I'm still looking forward. I know I'm still looking forward to what I think is going to be a change for the better in education and the environment, in the economy, and in world peace, and maybe that's probably because of education, maybe, I don't know what it is, but those are – Is that a memory? But it's that kind-of thing.

HM: Well, along those same lines; do you have any advice for our new Members?

CN: The advice that I would give to new Members is to be completely honest with themselves and their constituents; win, lose, or draw. When you are out of Office, and all terms end one way or another, and you look at yourself in that mirror, you can always say “I did the job to the best of my ability, and I was honest in every way, shape, or form in everything that I did,” and I would encourage them to first of all, be honest to themselves, and then to their constituents.

HM: Thank you very much. Do you have anything else you'd like to add today?

CN: No, I thank you for having me here; it's been a pleasure to do it, and when that light is off that means we're off camera, right?

HM: I think so. I appreciate you taking the time. Thank you.