

Interview with Stan Cowan

Interviewed by for the Heritage Education Commission

Stan Cowen - SC

Janet D. Gallagher - JG

JG: This interview is with Stan Cowen, 3306 Village Green Boulevard, Moorhead, MN. Stan was involved in the communications field in Moorhead and Fargo from 1921 until 1967. This interview is taking place at the Moorhead State University Recording Studio on April 24, 1985. The interviewer is Janet D. Gallagher, Audubon, MN, representing the Communications Committee of the Oral History Project sponsored by the Heritage Education Commission.

Stan, could we start the interview by having you tell us when you were born?

SC: Yes, I was born December 27, 1901 in Minneapolis.

JG: And where did your parents come from?

SC: My father was from Ottawa, Canada, and my mother from Shrewsbury, England; and she was of English descendants; and my father was Irish.

JG: And during your time of communications, what was the area you were involved in?

SC: Well, I was in newspaper work practically all of that time.

JG: And what were the dates?

SC: Well, I started with The Fargo Forum in 1921 and continued with them until 1927 when I resigned to start up a weekly newspaper in Fargo at the request of an insurance man who put up the financing because he wanted another newspaper besides The Forum's editorial views, etc. Well, he was a Nonpartisan Leaguer, but I had a strict understanding with him I was not going to play politics with the newspaper. But we started it out and I solicited the advertising and Edna, my wife, was the bookkeeper; and we had all the big department stores, the bigger accounts, etc. We distributed the paper which, like the Midweek is distributed nowadays, to both Cass and Clay counties. So we had a pretty good circulation going, but very little of it paid. And that continued until 1929 when, bingo, the stock market crashed. All my advertisers began disappearing, and finally we had to close up shop. We had \$2800 on the books; my wife, Edna, went out and collected all but \$19 of it. [Laughter] So that was my lone experience as a publisher. In the meantime, luckily, Wayne Peterson, who was publisher of the Moorhead Daily News, called me and asked me to come over to be the City Editor, which I was very happy to do. That was in 1930, and I was with the Moorhead News until 1938. Then I went back to The Forum and continued there until I retired on January 1, 1967.

JG: Now, when you first started out, you were an editor with The Forum.

SC: No, when I first started out, as a matter of fact, I had moved to Fargo with my parents in 1916; and I was then 15 years old. I had only an eighth grade education, and I held a series of jobs all the way from a grease monkey in a little garage back of the Fargo House to meat market delivery boy, and I even sold piece goods at deLendrecie's and Moody's. And I was an errand boy for an insurance company. Well, I got kind of tired of that and looking around in the want ads, I saw a want ad--The Forum wanted a messenger boy. So I went up and saw Happy Paulson, the editor, and he said, "Well, are you sure you want this job? It only pays \$1 a day." And I said, "Well, Mr. Paulson, is there a chance to learn something around here?" [Laughter] He laughed and he said, "Come to work Monday morning." And that's the way it started. Of course, I wasn't a reporter to start with. I was an errand boy, a copy boy is what they called it. We were in the old Forum building, across the street from the present building; and the News Department was on the top floor, and the mechanical floor on the bottom floor. My job was to carry news copy downstairs to the Print Department. Incidentally, the principal source of our news from the Associated Press at that time was Roy Johnson sitting at a telegraph desk with the telegraph box next to his ear and typing news coming over the telegraph wires out of Minneapolis. And, of course, you remember Roy Johnson. He and I got to be real buddies; we worked together for many years and, of course, everybody knows Roy Johnson's history of the Red River Valley. So, from that messenger-boy thing--that continued until 1926 when we moved into the new, present Forum building. In the meantime, they had me calling up to get the markets, for instance, or calling up the morgues, as we called them--the funeral homes--to get the obituaries on people who had died, and little things like that that gradually developed where I learned more and more. As a matter of fact, my whole newspaper experience has been one of learning; every day I learned something new and that in my mind, what made up for my lack of formal education was the education I received working in the news field.

JG: You had an eagerness to learn, and then you instituted the Business Section of The Forum, did you?

SC: Yes, that came later. My first reporting job was as a cub reporter assigned to Moorhead to cover the Moorhead beat. Incidentally, that's where I met my wife and married her in 1924. And from then on it meant a number of different jobs. I became Night Telegraph Editor, for instance, editing copy that came over the wire and writing the headlines for it; in other words, sending out the telegraph news. Also, later, I became State Editor--I received copies of all these North Dakota newspapers--weeklies and dailies--went through them for news stories that we really hadn't covered or received and I wrote from that. And then my interest in aviation, of course, sort of led to my being the so-called Aviation Editor. I wrote stories about aviation in Fargo. I was present at the dedication of Hector Field back in 1931 and had always maintained a very great interest in aviation, and I still do.

JG: It was because of that interest that Herschel Lashkowitz [spelling?] gave you a proclamation, I believe, for your outstanding--

SC: Oh, that was concerning covering the meetings of the Fargo City Commission. I did that for many years, including when Herschel Lashkowitz was Mayor, and it was a resolution that he offered to the Commission naming me an honorary member of the Fargo City Commission--the only such person that I know of that received such an honor, which was very pleasing to me, which showed that my coverage of the Commission was unbiased, was fair, and this is what the citation was all about.

JG: Now, you had handled so many areas at The Forum; do you recall how many employees they had even at that time, as compared to today?

SC: Oh--

JG: Was it a handful? Or was it a fairly good-sized operation?

SC: Back in the 20s, it was a handful, absolutely. And then it grew until today--I think there are something like 250 employees at The Forum.

JG: Then, the working conditions, as far as the building, were always pretty good; and then you moved into a new building in the 20s. So the working conditions, as far as materialistic, that was pretty fine.

SC: They were adequate for the time. And, of course, over the years, mechanically and otherwise there have been improvements constantly. For instance, since I've retired The Forum has switched to the photo-engraving type of instead of--

JG: Offset--instead of the hot-lead press.

SC: Instead of the battery of linotype machines back in the back room, now they stand around pasting up stuff and the reporters sit at a computer and write their stories. I'd be completely lost; I wouldn't know the first thing about writing a story for The Forum today. I'd have to sit down at my old mill and crank out a story on that rather than--

JG: Were you one of the one-finger typewriter experts.

SC: I was. I was a hunt and peck, but I got so I was pretty fast. I was as fast as some of these touch-typists.

JG: So, you've seen a lot of changes since your retirement in 1967. Do you still go back up to The Forum and keep in touch with--?

SC: At times. I don't go up too often.

JG: You've been there since they've remodeled and seen the difference. They did restore a few of the pieces of furniture that you must have sat at a few years.

SC: Oh, my goodness, yes, it's altogether different now. The reporters have little separate rooms now; before we were all gathered together--clatter, clatter, clatter--you know. The working conditions now are so much more pleasant. I attended the Open House and talked to Bill Marcil, the publisher, and remarked to him how the working conditions had been so much improved over the years.

JG: How did you happen to get started in this field? Would you say it was just good luck that you ran into somebody and they said "Come to work" or do you think you--

SC: It was answering the want ad in The Forum for an errand boy actually; that's what started the whole thing.

JG: It would be pretty hard right now to go into that field without a degree from one of the area colleges, wouldn't it?

SC: I should say so. And as a matter of fact, I don't think The Forum hires anybody who didn't graduate from a university or college in journalism. Surprisingly, and surprising to me, too, I was asked to go up to Grand Forks at one time and give a talk to the journalism class; and my topic was the practicality of newspaper work rather than the educational college experience. We had, and they still do have, interns from the university, for instance, come to The Forum and work in the summertime to get the practical experience. And I have to say that most of them, in fact 90% of them, had no idea what the practical aspects of getting out a newspaper were. [Laughter]

JG: You've seen women and men taking over different roles in the newspaper business, probably, over the years.

SC: Oh, yes, yes. Women, particularly, have become much more prominent in the news field than in earlier years; and that's all to the good because now the newspaper appeals to all aspects of the population. And The Forum has some great writers, both men and women.

JG: The Forum did a facelift--the entire newspaper is quite different. Did you find that was a good change?

SC: Yes, I liked it. I still do. It not only adds a little color and more interest to the paper, but it departmentalizes the paper so that you know where to look for regional topics, entertainment, family life, or sports, or what have you.

JG: Or corrections--they must have had a few complaints over the years that people couldn't find a correction the next day; and I think they are putting that pretty much in one area, are they not?

SC: Well, they are making it a little more prominent anyway, putting a headline "Correction" on it so that people will recognize it as a correction.

JG: You held a number of different positions and different duties and did the salaries change quite a bit?

SC: Oh, that was a gradual thing. I'd get a raise every once in awhile because I did a halfway decent job, I guess. [Laughter]

JG: That was one of the reasons you switched jobs once, wasn't it? Because of an editor asking you to take a cut in pay.

SC: Yes, I was with The Moorhead Daily News for eight years. I was City Editor, as I said, and more or less, lone reporter and what have you. I was being paid the princely sum of \$50 a week and the publisher asked me to come out and sit on the curb with him one afternoon and wanted to reduce my salary. I said "No way," so I quit and went back to The Forum. [Laughter]

JG: Would you consider that that was a low point in your career? Or did that maybe turn out to be to the better?

SC: Oh, I would imagine that was probably the low point because everything seemed to be onward and upward from there, not to any great extent, I don't mean that; but at least my responsibilities became greater and I was able to do more things with my profession. For instance, I started out covering City Court and I wound up covering City, County, District, and Federal Courts and reporting on the many very important cases, which I consider was a fairly decent achievement.

JG: Did you find that the Business Section was really what you would say was your baby and something that you were really interested in?

SC: Yes, as a matter of fact, the reason I started that was back in 19, I think it was 1949, Mabel Pierce was an advertising saleswoman in the Advertising Department. She and I were talking one day and she said, "Why doesn't The Forum handle some business news. Are they afraid they're going to put the advertiser's name in the paper or something?" So I rather agreed with her. So I submitted a few paragraphs one day to the Editor and he said, "Yes, go ahead." Well, that was the start of it, and it finally wound up where I was the Business Editor and on Saturdays we had as much as three pages or more of Business News in the Saturday edition; and I wrote the business column interviews--the economy, etc., and it became really popular because I really didn't have to solicit any news from the business people; they swamped me with it.

JG: And you didn't have to exchange any favors in favor of a large ad. That was never part of the deal on this; it was strictly a separate--

SC: I made that an absolute no-no. As far as I was concerned, I would not write a news story based on the amount of advertising a firm did. I gave them all good reason to understand that. I didn't care how much they spent on advertising in The Forum; if their little story was news, I'd write it.

JG: You must be pretty proud when you look downtown Moorhead because you were advanced in your years. You said "If we don't do something with downtown Moorhead, you're going to lose the businesses." And now are you pretty proud of what you see?

SC: Well, it's come back an awful long ways and it still has a long ways to go. I'm happy to see that the Moorhead Center Mall is succeeding and I think much more so now that Herberger Department Store has come in--a large department store--which provides a good anchor for the rest of the businesses in the Center Mall. And the remodeling they did not only to the building but to the area, the driveways and parking lots, etc.--it has made the Moorhead Center Mall quite an attractive place and they are enjoying a much greater business. I have to say this, though, that the Holiday Mall and the (what's the one across the street; I've forgotten)--the two residential shopping centers--have not been doing well. They have a movement afoot to finance a rejuvenation of the Holiday Mall and the Brookdale Mall shopping centers (that's the one I was thinking of) and they need remodeling and they need something to attract the traffic. I think they will finally succeed.

JG: I was surprised they didn't put that medical center down in that area. It just seemed to me that that Coast to Coast went out of that shopping center at Holiday Mall--I think it was Coast to Coast--not Coast to Coast; it's still in there.

SC: Apco, I think was the name of it.

JG: And so you walk in, and it's this bleak building now. But I thought, too, that there should be a medical center. They've done that at West Acres.

SC: I think that's a possibility although I think they are building a new Clinic area on 8th Street and 12th Avenue South--right near Concordia--there's a new building going up there.

JG: You've certainly seen Concordia and Moorhead State grow, haven't you?

SC: Oh, yes, that's tremendous. The people of Fargo and Moorhead can be very proud of their colleges. It's a tremendous asset to both cities.

JG: You saw not just one tornado in your history of the newspaper world, and maybe you want to tell us about that first one.

SC: Well, you asked the question "What was probably the most memorable event in my newspaper career?" and I would have to say that at least right up there at the top is the wreck of the Empire Builder back on May 27, 1931. A tornado swept across southeast Moorhead at 4:30 p.m.--I researched this at the Library so I'm sure of my dates [Laughter] and time--but this tornado actually tipped this train over on its side which was, of course, going ahead full speed. It was about 8 miles southeast of Moorhead, and we learned later than one man had died and there were 54 people who were injured. I was alone in the office and my wife, Edna, was substituting for the Society Editor--I'm not sure who that was. Now, Doris Eastman was Society Editor of the Moorhead Daily News for quite some time,

and then there was a Margaret Mayland, so I'm not sure which one. Anyway, they were on vacation, so I asked my wife to come down and fill in for her and answer the phone and call up the Music Club or what have you [laughter] to get some society news. Well, we, of course, monitored the police radio and we heard this report of the tornado over the radio, so my wife and I piled into the car and we drove out there. It was along what is now old Highway 52 and we looked over the wreckage and so on and talked to some of the officers and got as much information as we could and then started back to Moorhead by car and by that time the traffic was so tremendous that we could hardly make it back. Incidentally, they sent a rescue train from Fargo out to the wreck site and they loaded the injured and other passengers on this train and took them back to Fargo and distributed the people to the hospitals and so on. The train, which was the crack Great Northern train of the time, was carrying 170 to 175 passengers. Well, we got back to the office and I sent Edna, my wife, over to St. John's Hospital to interview a woman who was among the injured. So she did and she came back and in the meantime I had written a story for the United Press--we were the correspondent for United Press at that time--whereas The Forum was carrying Associated Press. I wrote the story and wired it into United Press; in the meantime, Edna wrote her story and I put a byline on it and sent that into United Press and her story with a byline appeared throughout the United States and she had never written a news story before in her life [laughter] so we were pretty proud of that incident. The United Press called us and said that we had beaten the Associated Press, which meant The Forum crew, by over 20 minutes with our story into Minneapolis, which made us rather proud. That's what's called "news enterprise," I guess. [Laughter]

JG: What part did you play in the 1957 tornado?

SC: Perhaps luckily for me, but otherwise not so lucky, I was on vacation; and we were driving home from Minneapolis and stopped at the Rex Cafe in Moorhead for dinner and all of a sudden we got the warning "Everybody into the basement." Well, that was in June 1957, when a tornado tore through northwest Fargo--in the Golden Ridge addition out there. We would peek out the door--this was in Moorhead--and we could see debris flying by the door even in downtown Moorhead; and the devastation on the northside of Fargo was something to behold and I'm not sure to this day how many people really were killed in that tornado.

JG: It seems like about 12; does that sound right, or was it more than that?

SC: Somewhere in that vicinity. So I called the office and asked them if I could help and they said no, they were pretty well taken care of. So I went back to the office the next morning and proceeded to write follow-up stories and so on. But the result was, not having been on the staff covering the thing, I missed out on participating in the Pulitzer Prize that The Forum won at that time for its coverage of that tornado, which incidentally was simply magnificent, the way those people went out into that wreckage and interviewed people and generally covered that tornado.

JG: During your career, you covered and saw many interesting people; and I think you even got into the act with Paul Harvey, didn't you, on his appearance?

SC: Well, I wouldn't say it was on the same program with Paul Harvey. But he was the speaker at a Chamber of Commerce banquet and somehow or other somebody got the idea that some of us who played organ--it would be nice to get a quartet of organs playing at this banquet. Well, the only thing I knew about playing organ was that my wife had taught me the chords, so we picked out some music that had the chords written above the music lines and that's how I got by playing the organ.

JG: You had played a tuba at sometime in your life, though.

SC: Well, when I was a kid in Minneapolis I joined the Minneapolis Working Boys' Band, which was sponsored by the Minneapolis Daily News. They provided the instruments and the instructors and they had rehearsals on Saturday afternoons. Well, a friend of mine in the neighborhood had joined the band so he urged me to go with him. So, on Saturdays we went down and they asked me what instrument I wanted to play and I said I wanted to play the slide trombone. Well, they didn't happen to have a slide trombone, but they would let me play the tuba and then when they got the slide trombone--well, it never happened; I was stuck with the tuba [laughter]. But I played in numerous bands--the Fargo Park Band, the Elks, the Shrine, Ninth District Legion, and then I played for dances for several different dance bands. In those days, it was the big band deal, so the tuba was all right. That continued. I played dance jobs for 20-25 years; then the tuba began disappearing. The string basses came in to take their place. So I knocked it off; I sold my horn to the Moorhead Board of Education.

JG: Your wife, Edna, played a part in the music.

SC: Yes, she's a graduate of the Dakota Conservatory of Music. That was sponsored by Concordia College; and she became a prominent pianist, accompanist, and organist; and at one time she was teaching something like 125 students, children and adults, in organ. She had a studio in the Wiley Piano Company on Broadway. So she taught organ for about five days a week. But before that she--incidentally, she played for silent movies at the Garrick [phonetic] Theater which was on Broadway at the time. This would be back in the 20s [laughter]. If you've ever seen a silent movie with the piano accompaniment, it is something to behold.

JG: They're bringing those back downtown Fargo.

SC: Yes, at the Fargo Theatre, which is great. Then Edna was the accompanist for the Moorhead Rotary Club for 30 years. They would have the singalong, you know. The boys would request a number. She never took a sheet of music with her, but she never missed a tune.

JG: How many years of marriage do you count?

SC: It will be 61 years this June 4. We were married June 4, 1924.

JG: And how many children do you have?

SC: We have four children.

JG: And you have James, who is a journalist?

SC: Yeah, Jim is the eldest; he's a graduate of the University of Minnesota Journalism. And he's still in the news business in California. He's semi-retired now. And then, well he was born December 25, 1925 in Fargo; that's a Christmas present. Six o'clock in the morning, incidentally. Betty, our next oldest, is a daughter. She is a lawyer in Los Angeles. And she was born March 13, 1930. Don is the next oldest; he was born June 21, 1932; and he's been a high school music instructor in Wichita Falls, Texas, for 25 years. Incidentally, he took his high school choir on a tour of Europe this last year--last summer--and they appeared in some of the most prominent cathedrals in Europe. They sang a particular song at St. Paul's Cathedral in Rome and he dedicated the one number to me the choir sang; I thought that was kind of nice. And then Nancy is the youngest and she was born April 18, 1940; and she is a contract representative and trainer for Hazeldon, the treatment center for alcoholism and drug abuse, etc. And they contract with corporations to develop programs for employee assistance, so Nancy has traveled all over the country conducting these meetings and showing how the company can deal with this problem with the employees and the treatment that is available to them.

JG: Your education was through the eighth grade, and it sounds like all your children have got a college education. Did you influence that; did you feel that was important?

SC: Yes, yes, I did.

JG: You didn't want them to go down that tough road that you--

SC: Well, the college of hard knocks--no, I really didn't.

JG: Getting back to the newspaper just for a minute. Do you recall any newsprint shortages, or if that ever affected you during the war years or maybe the depression?

SC: There were shortages, yes, but The Forum was fortunate; I don't think--I'm sure we never missed an edition because of a shortage of newsprint. I know that we did run low at times, but we managed to get newsprint.

JG: The prices jumped considerably on a ton of newsprint, I believe.

SC: Oh, yes, tremendous. I'm not acquainted with what the prices were, but during the war some of our staff, of course, went into the Armed Forces, including the City Editor; so I became the City Editor for those couple years during the war.

JG: You saw some of your friends go to war and not come back, I believe.

SC: I was a member of Battery F, the Moorhead unit of the Minnesota National Guard. It was a anti-aircraft company, and Slim Nemzek, former MSU coach people remember, was

the commanding officer of the company. In 1940 Battery F got a call to go to Camp Hawn [phonetic] at Riverside, California, for a year's training, so-called; of course, the war was brewing and Slim asked me to go with them and by that time with four children, and I was Supply Sergeant, I couldn't see going out there on a Supply Sergeant's salary, although he said I would be promoted, and so on. At any rate, I declined; so I saw them take off in 1940 for Camp Hawn and quite a number of them never came back. They never did get through with their training; they went from there to up around San Francisco and then the unit was split up and some of them went over to the invasion of Italy, Anzio, etc. where some of them were killed. So I was fortunate in not having to go through that.

JG: You did serve with Civil Air Patrol and National Guard.

SC: Yes, I enlisted in Company B of the North Dakota National Guard in Fargo in 1922 and spent 6 years with them. Well, then, in later years I spent 11 years with the Civil Air Patrol. Again, my interest in aviation--they asked me to join and so I did and I became the Public Relations Officer on the North Dakota Wing Staff and I was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. Along with aviation, I was chairman of the Fargo Chamber of Commerce Aviation Committee for about 15 years and we were instrumental in the planning for the present and future terminal buildings and bringing in of North Central Airlines, which is now Republic, and so on. So that was quite an experience.

JG: You know, over the years of working in the business affairs, you worked with the Moorhead Chamber of Commerce and apparently at one time you had a disagreement with the Chamber Secretary, Robert (is his last name Siegel?).

SC: Oh, Bob Siegel, yes.

JG: But he said, "Cowen has been very fair in handling Moorhead business news."

SC: We didn't always agree, but like he said, I tried to be fair and that held true in my entire career. I made it a point to be fair with anybody I dealt with.

JG: How did the definition of news change over the years?

SC: Well, I'm not sure that the definition has changed so much, Jan; news is news and whatever happens is news; but I think the interpretation of whatever is news has changed considerably. Now, maybe that's the emphasis that is placed on different aspects of news--I'm not sure. But I am sure of this--that coverage of the news is so much greater today than it ever has been. Of course, that's due, too, to the influence of radio and television. When radio came in, they thought the newspapers would die. When television came it, that was the end of the newspapers. Well, it has turned out that each has its own particular field and well, they compete. The result is that the public is getting a much more thorough coverage of what's happening around the world.

JG: It's more thorough, and do you think that journalists are more careful now? Do you think that maybe they put anything into the newspaper before that was public knowledge, and now they may be a little more careful about it? Is there more of a fear of lawsuit?

SC: Well, it depends on who you are talking about, I guess. Some of the columnists really take a lot of liberties; and as a result, there have been libel suits. But on the whole, I think newspaper reporting has been--I can't say more fair--but at least--it depends again on what newspaper you're talking about because as you know some are sensationalists and others are more conservative. It depends on how you look at how they handle the news.

JG: You have a lot of memories. What memories do you cherish from those who taught you?

SC: Well, you're right there, I have many memories. I'd have to say that the man who gave me my first newspaper job, Happy Paulson, the editor of The Forum, probably had more influence on my career than anybody. He sort of nurtured me along and picked on me unmercifully sometimes, too, to the point where one time I told him to get off my back and stay off my back [laughter]. But we got along fine. He was the greatest influence in my career; he was a great newspaper man, incidentally. I had an awful lot of respect for him.

JG: You gave Lloyd Sveen his first job?

SC: [Laughter] Lloyd often mentioned that, particularly after he became Executive Editor of The Forum and I was still the Business Editor. Yes, that was when I was City Editor at the Moorhead Daily News and Lloyd was a senior at Concordia College and so I hired him as the college correspondent for The Daily News and he did a good job, naturally, and in later years, he climbed the ladder and I was glad to see it because Lloyd was a good news man and he knew what he was doing and he had the educational background to carry him through.

JG: You retired officially from The Fargo Forum in 1967, but you didn't leave communications; you went out and did a newsletter called You Name It with the Moorhead Plastics.

SC: That was Silverline Boat Company. I started up--it was to be a monthly house organ--and I gathered news from the various departments, etc., and so I started a contest among the employees--You Name It--to pick a name for it. That continued to go for a couple of years until I finally left that job.

JG: Those years saw the beginning of snowmobiling in this area, and didn't they start the T-Bird Snowmobile? There was a photograph in that one newsletter that showed the first T-Bird Snowmobile.

SC: It could be, Jan, I don't remember the name actually; but, yes, they manufactured snowmobiles for some time.

JG: I haven't seen that T-Bird, so I don't know how long they manufactured it.

SC: They finally discontinued the manufacture of snowmobiles because the competition was getting so great that nobody was able to sell enough to keep their head above water, I guess. But Silverline Boats were the main product of the company. Incidentally, each spring I'd get a new 18-foot, 120-horse, inboard/outboard motor boat to take down to the lake with me and play around with it all summer long and bring it back to the factory without any cost [laughter].

JG: Larry Levold [spelling?] got his start there; he must have been an extremely young man. He's not very old now and he's been there for many years. He's still in the boat business--that would be '67 until present.

SC: Is he a dealer someplace?

JG: I think he might be with the Lund Company.

One of the things that you did as a newspaper man that we didn't talk about was this in-depth research you did on the Uniform Commercial Code; and it affected all business places. You put together a series that's complicated to read--it must have been quite a job to put together.

SC: It was, and starting out I had no idea in the world what a Commercial Code was. But the Legislature had adopted this new Commercial Code and nobody seemed to know just what the thing contained, what its ramifications were, and so on. So I started out talking to different people who were responsible for forming the Code, like Judge Burdick in Williston, Supreme Court Justice, lawyers, a lawyer in Philadelphia who was responsible for a similar code in Pennsylvania; and I traveled all over North Dakota interviewing different people on different aspects of this thing and finally got my facts together sufficiently so that I wrote this series of articles. That Commercial Code to this day is what governs the conduct of business in North Dakota; and as you say, it had tremendous on all types of business because it had certain requirements. The details I've completely forgotten.

JG: You must have enjoyed investigative reporting.

SC: I did, I did very much.

JG: You still like to go back into the library and do a little research? You did a big project for Thomas W. Miles.

SC: Oh, yes, um huh. That was, um, I'm trying to remember now. I've got it in my file. It was a Moorhead man who had purchased stock--I'm not completely clear as to what that was.

JG: Did The Forum release you to do that for awhile, or was that done during the time--?

SC: It turned out that I covered the trial of this Moorhead man who was charged with fraud in connection with this stock sale, and

JG: They paid you \$25 an hour and you did that job for \$200. What do you suppose that would cost today for somebody to spend that time on it.

SC: Oh, goodness sakes, I don't know. It took quite a bit of research and this was a man in Washington, D.C. who was doing a book on stock frauds or some such thing as that and wanted to know about this particular case, so I went back and researched it for him.

JG: Are there any other memories that we should talk about that you cherish of all the--I know that Governor Guy wrote to you and he had read your columns as a farmer back in the 60s.

SC: Well, my 80th birthday, my daughter wrote to everybody she could think of, including Senator Young and then-Congressman Mark Andrews, former Governor Guy and former Governor Link and what have you; in other words, about fifty different people, asking them if they would send her a letter recalling their experiences or friendship with me, etc. Then she put it all together in a album and presented it to me on my 80th birthday.

JG: Your children played an important part in your life--you and Edna.

SC: Oh, yes, they have.

JG: You were the first president of the Senior and Junior High PTA in Moorhead and the first president of the Moorhead PTA Council. You have a lot of memories.

SC: I should say.