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JUNIOR LEAGUE OF CEDAR RAPIDS
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH: WILLIAM ELLWOOD
INTERVIEWED BY: LINDA BURDT
PLACE: CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA
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Mr. William Ellwood was born in Cedar Rapids in 1909, the son of Gertrude Prescott Ellwood and Floyd E. Ellwood. He attended Washington High School and the University of Iowa, and graduated from the Iowa Law School in 1933. Mr. Ellwood's father was employed at Martin's, a downtown women's clothing store, for many years. Mr. Ellwood's first job out of college was as a special agent for the FBI from 1935-1945, when J. Edgar Hoover was its director. He returned to Cedar Rapids to practice law in the mid-forties. Mr. Ellwood's memories include old Washington High School and community life during the teens and twenties.

JUNIOR LEAGUE OF CEDAR RAPIDS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

LB: When were you born?

Ellwood: 1909.

LB: How long have you lived in Cedar Rapids?

Ellwood: All my life except for a period of ten years.

LB: When was that ten years?

Ellwood: The ten-year period commenced in 1934 and ended at the end of 1944.

LB: Can you tell me what your parents' names are?

Ellwood: Gertrude Prescott Ellwood and Floyd E. Ellwood.

LB: Where did you go to school?

Ellwood: I went to the Cedar Rapids public schools, graduated from the old Washington High School, then went to the University of Iowa where I took liberal arts and received my B.A. in 1931, then graduated from the Iowa Law School in 1933, when I received my J.D. degree.

LB: Mr. Ellwood, are you married?

Ellwood: Yes, I am.

LB: How many children do you have?

Ellwood: Three sons.

LB: How old are they?

Ellwood: That's a difficult question. My eldest son is 48 years old.

My next eldest son is 45 and my youngest son is 42.

LB: The first topic that I would like to address is the business and the economy in the early 1900's. When I talked to you earlier, you said that your father was in the retail business of Martin's, which was a women's store. Can you tell me what his position was in the store?

Ellwood: He was a department manager.

LB: He didn't own the store then?

Ellwood: No, he did not. He had an ownership interest, but he was not the owner of the store.

LB: I recall that it was right next to Armstrong's, right?

Ellwood: Next to the present Armstrong's sports building on Second Avenue, yes.

LB: Can you recall any competition between Armstrong's Women's Department and Martin's?

Ellwood: There was very little at that time because at that time Armstrong's did not carry women's clothing at all. Not at all. They were primarily a men's store and were located on the corner of Second Avenue and Second Street SE in a different location from where they are now.

LB: How about later? How long did your father work there?

Ellwood: Oh, for a great many years. He retired in, I think, about 1948, but I don't know when he started.

LB: In the meantime, during that whole period, Armstrong's didn't carry women's clothing?

Ellwood: They may have started to carry women's clothing about that time. Of course, Killian's was the large women's store during all of that period. They were perhaps the dominant women's clothing store in Cedar Rapids.

LB: Can you remember the ages of the women and perhaps the income of the women that the store accommodated to? Was it just the average or was it kind of an upper class?

Ellwood: I would say that perhaps the customers were largely women of the upper class who were able to afford nice clothing. Martin's never attempted to compete with the large department stores in that way. They handled nice clothing but not in as great a volume as the department stores.

LB: Is there anything else that you can remember about Martin's that might distinguish it and could perhaps account for its success?

Ellwood: Martin's did not do a great deal of advertising. Perhaps this, in the end, may have lead to its demise.

LB: You had mentioned that you have some memories of some restaurants in the early 1900's. Do you have memories of any in particular, perhaps a favorite restaurant?

Ellwood: I can remember when I was in high school there were two cafes, strangely enough, both called the Virginia Cafe. One was located on Second Avenue and one on Third Avenue. They were places where we went and had something to eat. They were nice small cafes. Of course, Bishop's had a downtown store at that time and many times we would go over to Bishop's for lunch from Washington High School because Washington High School had no cafeteria or any facilities of that kind.

LB: When you were in high school, did you most of the time go out for lunch or did you sometimes take a sack lunch?

Ellwood: I went out always.

LB: Could you tell me perhaps a little more about the Second and Third Avenue Virginias?

Ellwood: Well, they were small establishments with booths along the side and a counter. I believe they were both operated by persons of Greek heritage and they were always very accommodating. If you didn't happen to have any money that particular day, you could always put it on the tab and pay them the next day.

LB: Was that mostly the age group that they catered to?

Ellwood: No, they kept open late at night and people would go in the evening for snacks and all sorts of things. No, their customers were of all ages.

LB: You said that they were Greek owned. What kind of food did they serve?

Ellwood: They served regular American food. They didn't attempt to serve Greek food as some of the Greek restaurants now do in Cedar Rapids.

LB: Do you have memories of any other restaurants? What was the Bishop's like?

Ellwood: Bishop's was a cafeteria, of course. It was very nice. They had excellent food and a very modest price. It was always a busy place. They always had a good business.

LB: Is it comparable to the Bishop's today? The same type of thing?

Ellwood: The same type of thing--very much less expensive, of course, in those days. They attempted to serve a good, well-prepared food at low cost.

LB: You said that for lunch you usually went out. Did you live far enough from school that you couldn't go back home for lunch, or you just preferred to go the restaurants?

Ellwood: Well, I lived out on the southeast side, so it was not practical to try to go home for lunch.

LB: You had mentioned when I had talked to you earlier that you had some special memories of the mud roads. I think one in particular had to do with an Iowa game. Could you tell me a little more about that?

Ellwood: Yes. The road between Cedar Rapids and Iowa City was what I would call a mud road. It was not even a gravel road. I can well remember many, many years when I was just a youngster, I went with

my parents to a football game at Iowa City. It had rained. It was all right going down, but it had rained very hard and many people were stuck in the mud trying to get back from Iowa City. As I recall, we didn't get back until the wee hours of the morning.

LB: What was the means, once you were stuck, of getting out?

Ellwood: The means were to get a farmer to come and pull you out; I can't remember with a tractor or with horses, I suppose. You couldn't call a wrecker because the wrecker couldn't come clear down from Cedar Rapids.

LB: Were there some farmers who did this to make money then?

Ellwood: Yes, you paid them. They were accommodating, too, and they were a real help.

LB: Was it expensive to get pulled out of the mud?

Ellwood: I don't know. I was too young to know.

LB: Mom and Dad did that, huh? You also mentioned that you remember newspapers and people selling extras. Did you have any friends who were newsboys or perhaps relatives?

Ellwood: No, I really didn't have any friends who were newsboys at that time, but I do remember that when some important national or local happening occurred, instead of having it flashed immediately on the radio or television as at present, the newspaper would get out an extra. The newsboys would go around the town calling,

"Extra! extra!" and everybody would rush to buy the newspaper.

LB: Was there a daily newspaper also?

Ellwood: Yes. The Cedar Rapids Gazette was very much in existence at that time and it was a daily newspaper.

LB: Were these extras sold just like in the business downtown area?

Ellwood: No, they would go out into the residential areas, too.

LB: Did you always rush to buy them, you and your family?

Ellwood: My family did. I was too young, I guess.

LB: I'd like to ask you a few questions about old Washington High School when you said you were there. One thing that I found particularly interesting was that you said you were in the Alpha Rho fraternity. I'd like to ask a few questions about that. First of all, how many boys were involved in this group?

Ellwood: Oh, to the best of my recollection, I would say forty or fifty. There were other high school fraternities, too. There was Kappa Phi Tau, which was another boys' fraternity. There was another one whose name I can't remember, but the fraternities were quite good to belong to and they competed strongly with each other.

LB: I'm in a sorority today and most sororities and fraternities are stereotyped. Were there some stereotypes of those fraternities in high school?

Ellwood: Oh, I shouldn't think so. This would be the first fraternity experience for a young high school boy. I would say it was from

all income classes and so forth. It didn't seem to make any difference what background the members had if they were considered to be the type of people that they wanted in the fraternity, they were asked to join.

LB: Were the fraternities hard to get into? Were there certain requirements you had to be to be, for instance, an Alpha Rho?

Ellwood: No, just wanted by the others, that's all. Just wanted by the present members.

LB: What kind of activities did you engage in?

Ellwood: The fraternities had an annual debate, which was very interesting if you were interested in it. I think this was one of the reasons or justifications for the continued existence of the fraternities. There was also a tenth grade fraternity called--I can't remember the name, but this was supposed to be a debating society. Really there were more fraternities than debating societies.

LB: What was this annual debate about?

Ellwood: Well, what ever subject might be of current interest, controversial subjects and either side--there were many arguments on both sides. Those were the kinds of debates they had--issues of national interest and so forth.

LB: They were mostly national interest rather than local?

Ellwood: Yes, oh yes.

LB: Were there also sororities for the girls?

Ellwood: Yes, there were, but I didn't know so much about them so I won't comment on them.

LB: How did the high school fraternity differ from your college fraternity?

Ellwood: It differed greatly because we had, as I recall, monthly meetings in the evening and we sat together at the student assemblies. We had very infrequent contacts, where in a college fraternity, you saw your fraternity brothers all the time. In those days, most fraternity members lived right at the fraternity house, which I did.

LB: In your high school fraternity, did the boys ever get together and do anything obnoxious?

Ellwood: I'd rather not comment on that.

LB: To get away from fraternities and maybe just talk a little about school life in general--how long was your average school day? How long did you go to school?

Ellwood: As I recall, during my high school days, the schools were very crowded, so they had what was called a shift system. You might go to school rather late, at ten o'clock in the morning or ten forty, something like that and not get out until four or four thirty. Others would go at eight and they would get out at two or two thirty. Those were generally the hours. I don't think they differed too much from the present hours.

LB: How did they determine if you took the later shift or the early shift?

Ellwood: Well, you were assigned. You had no choice.

LB: Did you have any kind of college preparation courses in high school?

Ellwood: Oh, yes, yes--mathematics, English, foreign languages were really a necessity if you were going on to college. Those are the kinds of courses you took, plus science. Whereas, if you were not going on to college, you were more apt to take courses of a more business nature that would perhaps fit you for going out and getting a job right after high school.

LB: How many of the students went to college?

Ellwood: What proportion, you mean? I really don't know. I would guess that maybe 25 or 35 percent.

LB: Where did most of those students go? Did they mostly go to Iowa?

Ellwood: No. They went to many colleges: Coe, Cornell, many colleges out of the state of Iowa, and of course, Iowa State University as well as the University of Iowa. They were pretty well dispersed.

LB: Can you remember any high school traditions, such as dances or homecomings?

Ellwood: Oh, yes. Homecoming I don't remember much about. There were, of course, fraternity dances and school parties and so forth, but I can't remember anything out of the ordinary about them. They were just parties.

LB: Did you have competitive sports?

Ellwood: Yes, we did, yes. As a matter of fact, Washington High School had very fine football teams in those days and had the state championship several times in football, as well as track and basketball. The varsity sports were very good.

LB: Were you involved in any of them?

Ellwood: No, I was not. I never made the team.

LB: Were the state tournaments held in Des Moines?

Ellwood: I can't remember.

LB: How about intramural sports...did they also have them?

Ellwood: Not on a very great basis, as I recall. No.

LB: Did most high school students hold a part-time job while they were in school?

Ellwood: I would say it was rather rare at that time that high school students held part-time jobs. At least the people I knew really didn't. You'd try to get a job in the summertime and sometimes you could get a job and sometimes you couldn't. It was not like it is now where so many students are holding a part-time job.

LB: What kind of summer jobs would students do?

Ellwood: Oh, construction, road building, running errands, anything they could find to do.

LB: How did you spend your free time when you were in high school?

Ellwood: Having fun, I guess! And studying and doing things with my friends and so forth.

LB: What did you do for fun?

Ellwood: Well, I guess we just got together with our friends and went to somebody's house. Got together and talked and had a good time.

I really can't recall.

LB: You had mentioned to me earlier that you had worked as a special agent in the FBI from 1935 to '45.

Ellwood: Yes.

LB: Was this your first job out of law school?

Ellwood: Yes, it was.

LB: Was there anything in particular that made you decide to take this job rather than go into the legal profession as a practicing attorney?

Ellwood: Well, I did start out practicing law for a while, but this was the tail end of the Depression. The demand for a twenty-three-old lawyer at that time did not appear to be very great. It was a matter of economics. I took the examination and went into the FBI, which paid a regular salary. At that time it seemed to me to be quite good. That's why I did that.

LB: Can you tell me what your perceptions were of J. Edgar Hoover?

Ellwood: Mr. Hoover was a rather austere person. I can remember going into his office, which seemed to me to be about fifty feet long. He had a great big desk at the end. You had to walk the entire distance and shake hands with him. He was pleasant enough, but he did wield very strict control over the FBI at that time. FBI agents were required to look neat--no long hair like these days, no flashy dress. One was supposed to look conservative, like a businessman. Everybody looked that way.

LB: What were your feelings about President Roosevelt?

Ellwood: I thought that President Roosevelt served a very important function when he came into office in 1933. I think that his personality itself was something that buoyed the country up, which at that time was in the depths of the Depression. I think that some of the things that he advocated and got done in those early years was very beneficial to the country. I did feel that, in later years, he went too far in establishing social programs, which I'm afraid we're paying for right now because they are very expensive. Other than that, I do think he was what the country needed at the time he took office.

LB: Do you have any memories of any of the actual projects that he endorsed?

Ellwood: I can remember the Make Work projects, which he initiated, where they had people working on highways, dams, parks and that sort of thing to give them employment and give them some income and also to improve public facilities, which I think was very good. Things of that nature, yes.

LB: How did people that you knew and people as a whole--how do you think that they viewed these projects?

Ellwood: I think generally people approved. I do. I think they thought it was good for the country to keep people busy and also to make some permanent improvements in our roads, public parks and so forth.

LB: Do you have any friends or relatives who had to fight in World War I?

Ellwood: No, I really didn't. I was too young really to know much about that.

LB: Do you recall any type of patriotism that flourished in the Cedar Rapids area at the time?

Ellwood: Yes, I do. I can remember some parades of the soldiers going off to war. I can very well remember Armistice Day in 1918--November 11, 1918, when it was a great big holiday. Every store, every school, everything was closed and the people congregated downtown. There were speeches given and there were parades and just a general celebration. Everybody thought that we'd finally put the end to war permanently, but, of course, we were wrong.

LB: What kind of people gave these speeches? Were they community leaders?

Ellwood: Yes, and public officials.

LB: What can you remember of the Depression?

Ellwood: One of the things that I remember most clearly about the Depression was that I was in college then and my allowance started to diminish. Several months, it didn't come at all. This was just a personal thing. At that time also, I happened to be treasurer of my fraternity. We had money in one of the Iowa City banks, and one of our alumni, whom I'm sure was much more knowledgeable about what was going on, advised us to take the money out of that bank and put it in a safe deposit box so that we would have enough to run our fraternity house for a few months, which I did. I can recall, also, that as treasurer and steward, I had the job of ordering the food for the dining room service. I made an arrangement with Witwer Grocery Company here to furnish the food to us wholesale, so we saved quite a bit of money during that period.

I'm sure that taking the money out of our bank account and putting it in the safe deposit box was pretty hard on the bank, because a lot of people did that. At least it got us through the time when the banks were closed and you couldn't get any money anywhere.

LB: What about Prohibition? I'm not sure how old you might have been. Do you recall any ways that you, or perhaps others, tried to obtain alcohol during this time?

Ellwood: Oh, indeed I do. Yes. I was in Iowa City at this time at the University and there were many sources for obtaining alcohol-- just pure, straight alcohol from various bootleggers which was used to put in nearbeer. Nearbeer is beer without any alcohol in it, but you could add the alcohol and then drink the nearbeer with the alcohol added and secure the desired effect.

LB: So you had the straight alcohol that you obtained?

Ellwood: Yes.

LB: Now that we're talking a little more about your law school, I'd like to ask just a few questions. Was it hard to get admitted at that time?

Ellwood: Not nearly as hard as it is now. If you had a decent undergraduate record, you were admitted quite automatically. No it wasn't nearly as difficult to be admitted as it is now. It was a little difficult to stay in law school because, in those days, about one-third of the freshman class didn't make it. They flunked out. Now they are very careful, you know, to take only those that have the

ability. There's not nearly as much attrition in flunking out and that sort of thing.

LB: Approximately how many people were in your law school class?

Ellwood: As I recall, about eighty-five.

LB: What was the financial commitment? Was it very expensive?

Ellwood: No, it was not, but a little more expensive than the tuition for liberal arts. I can't remember what it was, but it was not very great.

LB: At this time, what were others, like the general perception of law students? Were they set aside, kind of looked up to?

Ellwood: I wouldn't say that they were particularly looked up to, but they were. They studied together; many of them lived together in law fraternity houses and dormitories. It so happened that I did not live in that way. I lived at my social fraternity house because I was treasurer and steward of the house. I received my room and board that way. So I lived in my social fraternity all during law school.

LB: What interested you in the legal profession?

Ellwood: That's hard to say. I knew very little about lawyers. There were no lawyers in my family, but I was interested in English; I was interested in reading. I read a great deal. I thought this would be an interesting thing to go into. Then there was the real problem that about the time I graduated from liberal arts--was to graduate from liberal arts, at least, there were

very few jobs available unless one had a family business to go into, which I did not.

LB: What type of reading did you do?

Ellwood: Oh, I was just an omnivorous reader. I read novels, historical things, any book that came to hand I'd sort of devour.

LB: You mentioned liberal arts education a few times. From my experience, I realize that it sounds like liberal arts was kind of pushed then, and then it seems like maybe has dwindled away for a while. Now it's kind of making a comeback.

Ellwood: Well, that may be true. I think that it's always been a very good preparation for anything that one wants to do. It certainly doesn't teach you accounting and it doesn't teach you skills of that sort. It gives you a good general knowledge and a background to undertake the beginning of your life.

LB: To switch to a different school. What can you remember of Cornell College?

Ellwood: I remember Cornell particularly because my mother went to Cornell College. We used to go out there and I always thought it was a pretty campus on top of the hill and so forth. Strangely enough, about 1970 I became a trustee of Cornell College and served in that capacity for nine years. I finally asked not to be reelected. It's a fine small school, as is Coe, of course.

LB: You said your mother went there. Did she also graduate from there?

Ellwood: No, she did not graduate. She left before she graduated and took a job teaching school.

LB: To teach school, you didn't have to finish college then?

Ellwood: No, you did not.

LB: What kind of education did you have to have? What kind of training?

Ellwood: You were supposed to have a college degree, but in my mother's case, she didn't have a college degree and she still taught school.

LB: Did she teach grade school?

Ellwood: She taught eighth grade, I believe. She taught algebra.

LB: Weren't the teachers required to have some kind of license?

Ellwood: Not as I recall. I think you just became a teacher.

LB: I have one question about life style. It has to do with life before air conditioning. What were your means to keep cool during those hot rigorous days?

Ellwood: Of course, there were electric fans, which were very helpful. In those days, many people had sleeping porches which could all open up with only screens, you see. So, in effect, you were sleeping out in the open air although you were surrounded by a screen porch. A lot of people slept in those porches in the summertime. Then there was always the cold bath that would cool you off and so forth. We all seemed to survive quite well.

LB: Were there any public swimming pools?

Ellwood: I don't recall that there were at that time.

LB: What about the effect of the hot temperatures on businesses and schools? Did they ever close?

Ellwood: I don't recall their ever closing, no.

LB: Do you have any memories of any immigrant families?

Ellwood: Only that I knew that there were many people of Czech descent in Cedar Rapids. It was not uncommon to hear people talking Czech and the Czech language. I really don't have any recollection particularly of that, no, except that there were a great many of them here.

LB: You mentioned that you were a member of the Westminster Presbyterian Church.

Ellwood: I was then, yes.

LB: How often did you attend church and did you have Sunday School then?

Ellwood: Yes. There was a Sunday School. I went quite religiously to Sunday School, but I'm afraid that I drifted away just a little bit as I grew older.

LB: What kind of chores did you have to do around the house as a child?

Ellwood: Make some effort to keep my room in reasonable order, I guess.

When my mother would wash the dishes, I was always selected to dry the dishes. This was before dishwashers and dryers.

LB: Did you have any other types of duties?

Ellwood: Not very much, no.

LB: You had mentioned that you kind of remembered the Community Theatre. What sort of contact did you have with that?

Ellwood: The Community Theatre has, of course, been going a great many years--over fifty years. They gave their plays for some period of time at one of the high schools or junior high schools. I can remember particularly one play given at the McKinley Junior High School in which my aunt, Frances Prescott, was one of the persons in the play. It was a very vital thing then. People were extremely interested. They didn't have a home or anything. They had sort of a series of directors who would come in and work for a while, but the job didn't pay very much so they didn't stay very long. That was what the Community Theatre was like in those days.

LB: You attended the production that your aunt was in, right? What was it like? Was it professional?

Ellwood: It was very well done. It was called Outward Bound. All the people in the play were supposed to have died and they were outward bound. It was very interesting.

LB: How long did the productions last then?

Ellwood: I can't remember whether they just played for one night or whether they gave several productions. It isn't like now where they give a series of three productions on weekends for several weeks in a row. They gave very much fewer productions.

LB: What were the props? Were they similar?

Ellwood: They were very handsomely, very professionally prepared.

LB: One last subject area that I'd like to touch on would be Grant Wood. In what capacity did you know him or have recollections of him?

Ellwood: Grant Wood was my art teacher in eighth grade at McKinley High School--McKinley Junior High School. As I recall him, he was a very, very interesting man. He never taught me much art because I don't have the ability, but he had many, many projects going. He was wonderfully friendly, kind, humorous individual. He was not much of a disciplinarian. His classes were apt to become a little visity. People talked quite a bit and he didn't like to discipline anybody. He just wanted you to be interested in what he was trying to do. I knew him particularly well because my aunt, Frances Prescott, was the principal of McKinley Junior High School. They were great friends. He was sort of an unpractical individual. Now and then he wouldn't be there when school started, so someone would come to my aunt's office and say, "Miss Prescott, the students are raising the dickens down in Grant Wood's room!" She'd go down and settle them. Very often she'd get in her car and go out and get Grant to bring him in.

LB: What was he doing?

Ellwood: He'd have problems, like his car wouldn't start or something like that. He was really very--he wasn't the type of person that was going to be there ten minutes before school started every time. He made up for it for the wonderful work that he did with the students. He painted some wonderful things, along with them, when he was at McKinley High. As a matter of fact, during that period, a gentleman by the name of Hood was the janitor or custodian of McKinley School. He was also a good friend of Grant Wood. Grant used to work late and he'd get all covered with paint and so forth. He'd like to take a shower and so did Mr. Hood. They had a shower down in the basement of the McKinley Junior High School. Grant finally decided that it should be appropriately painted. He painted that shower stall--Hood and Wood, their shower--and so forth. He also made for my aunt, a very bumpy bench that was in her office so that the students who came for discipline would have to sit with lack of comfort. That bench is still in the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art. On the back it says, "The way of the transgressor is hard."

LB: You had mentioned that he had many projects going on. What sort of projects do you recall?

Ellwood: Do you mean Grant Wood? Of course, he was, I think, by that time living at Turner Alley, which was a little place behind the Turner building. He was doing all sorts of painting there. He was doing portraits for people in the city here. He was painting during the summer, of course. He had his Stone City art colony going then. He was a very busy man and his paintings are still showing up. I read in the paper the other day that they found one in the old

Martin Hotel up at Sioux City that he'd painted--a mural up there.

LB: Did you ever get to go to Turner's Alley where he painted?

Ellwood: Oh, yes, I've been there.

LB: Did he take his classes there to see?

Ellwood: No, he didn't take classes there, but if you stopped by, he'd welcome you.

LB: Did you have a pretty good relationship with him, or what made you stop by at that time?

Ellwood: Well, yes, through my aunt I knew him quite well. I used to stop by occasionally.

LB: Do you recall anything about local businessmen sponsoring a trip for Grant Wood to go to Europe?

Ellwood: I know that this happened. I don't know how the money was raised and so forth. I know he went to Europe and did some very interesting painting while he was there. I know that this occurred and I think it helped Grant's abilities in painting very much to be able to do that.

LB: Before I ask my one final question, are there any topic areas that I might have missed that you might think of in particular that you'd like to comment on.

Ellwood: Oh, I think Linda that you've covered everything quite thoroughly. I can't think of anything that I'd have anything interesting to say.

Just one other thing. I do remember the Douglas Starch Works explosion in 1919. This occurred, if I'm not mistaken, about dinner time and it rocked the city. It really did! It was a tremendous blast. Many, many people, including my family and I, went down near it, downtown, to watch the fire and so forth. It was very frightening occurrence. Many people were killed. One of the things that we don't like to think about.

LB: For a final wrap-up question, how can you compare life then and life now?

Ellwood: Life then, it seems to me, was very much more simple. Maybe I look at it that way because I was younger then and I was not burdened with the responsibilities and the obligations that I seem to have now. I think that there were much fewer opportunities, fewer means of enjoyment, but at the same time, I think people made their own fun and did not have to have very much in the way of organized things so that they could have recreation. Of course, we have now so many groups that organize recreation. We had golf back then. We had golf in the city. We had one country club and a couple of public courses, as I recall--two or three. There was tennis and all that sort of thing, but it was much less organized than it is now.

LB: Thank you very much.

END OF SIDE ONE - END OF INTERVIEW

INTERVIEW TOPICS
CEDAR RAPIDS: THE EARLY DECADES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

I. PERSONAL LEAD-IN QUESTIONS

- 1 --When were you born? Where?
- 1 --How long have you lived in Cedar Rapids?
- 1 --What are your parents' names?
 - Where did you go to school?
- 1 --Are you married or single?
 - Did you raise a family? How big?
 - What has been your occupation (career) during your adult years?

II. COMMUNITY TOPICS

A. Technology in the Community

1. Transportation

- Railway travel (Union Station, trips to Iowa City on Crandic)
- Trolleys (the Interurban)
- Horses and First Automobiles
- 5 --Mud roads and the seedling mile
 - Hunter Airport and the first planes
 - Cedar River (ferries, floods, dams)

2. Communications

- 7 --Newspapers
- Radios
- Advertising
- Telephones

B. People in the Community

1. Amusements/Recreation

- Motion Pictures
- Cedar Rapids Parks
- Dances
- Carnival Week
- Chautauqua
- 20 --Community Theater
 - Little Gallery
 - Symphony Orchestra
 - Circus
 - Greene's Opera House
 - Amusement Parks (Alamo)
 - Camps
 - Community Centers (YWCA, YMCA)

2. Famous Characters

- Cherry Sisters
- 21-23 --Grant Wood
 - Carl Van Vechten (The Tattooed Countess)
 - Marvin Cone

3. Lifestyle

- 18 --Life before air conditioning
- Winter Activities
- Holidays (Memorial Day, July 4, Thanksgiving, Christmas)
- Clothing
- Toys
- Saloons/Taverns
- Farm Life

4. Family Life

- Household Help
- Women's Roles
- Childrens' Activities/Behavior
- Sunday activities (Church life, Sunday Blue Laws)

5. Ethnic/Minority Life

- Immigrants (Czech, Greek, German, etc.)
- Indians
- Segregation of Blacks
- Jobs Available

C. Organizations and Institutions in the Community

1. Education

- 1,4,7 --Cedar Rapids Schools
- Coe College
- Mount Mercy College
- 17 --Cornell College

2. Government

- City Services
- Streets/Roads
- Relationship with Marion (Courthouse Dispute)

3. Medical

- Hospitals
- Patient-Doctor Relationship
- Broken Bones
- Polio, TB, Debilitating Diseases
- House Calls
- Home Delivery of Babies

- 4. Business and Economy
 - Local Factories (Douglas Starch Works, Quaker Oats, etc.)
 - Local Brewing Companies
 - 2-3 --Retail Businesses /Department Stores
 - Professions
 - Banking and Finance
 - 4 --Restaurants (Greek Restaurants in 30's)
 - Businesses that no longer exist (old groceries, drygoods, icehouses)
 - Farmers Market
 - Mills on Cedar River
 - Buildings Erected
 - Manual Labor/Types of Jobs
 - Companies (Labor Unions, Strikes, Pay)

- 5. Attitudes/Values
 - Children/Discipline
 - Sex/Petting
 - Charity
 - Divorce
 - Work
 - Working women, Voting Rights for Women
 - 13 --Patriotism (World War I)

D. Historic Events in and Outside the Community

- 1. Catastrophic Events
 - Clifton Hotel Fire (1903)
 - 24 --Douglas Starch Works Explosion(1919)
 - Bank Closings (1933)
 - Lyman-Stark Building Collapse(1913)
 - Public Library Murder(1921)
- 2. National Historic Events
 - Womens' Suffrage
 - 12-14 --World War I
 - Roaring 20's
 - 15 --Prohibition
 - 14 --Great Depression



Ellwood's ethics will be recalled

By Dale Kueter

Gazette staff writer

William P. Ellwood was a well-known corporate lawyer in Cedar Rapids, colleagues and friends say, but he will be remembered for his gentle manner and dedication to ethics.

Ellwood, 89, died Wednesday at his home after a short illness. (See obituary, page 2B.)

He was a partner in the law firm of Simmons, Perrine, Albright, Ellwood & Neff, where he practiced for 48 years before retiring in 1992. Even after that he came to the office at least twice a week until crippling arthritis curtailed his mobility.

Dee Brown, his secretary for some 34 years, said he was greatly respected for his ethics. She said the pipe-smoking Ellwood loved to travel and play golf until poor health interfered.

"I think he was the most even-tempered person I ever met," said Darrel Morf, board-of-directors co-chairman at Simmons, Perrine. "He always had a sense of poise and good humor."

"I think his mild-mannered demeanor struck everyone," said Sutherland Cook, Ellwood's brother-in-law and sometimes business associate. "Ethics were important to him, not only in actuality but in appearance."

William P. Ellwood, 89, died Wednesday, Dec. 23, 1998, in his home after a brief illness. Memorial services: 3 p.m. Monday, Grace Episcopal Church, by the Rev. Richard Osing. Private family inurnment will be in Oak Hill Cemetery before the service.

Surviving are three sons, Scott and John, both of Chicago, and Sutherland of Baltimore; nine grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

He was born Sept. 5, 1909, in Cedar Rapids, to Floyd and Gertrude Prescott Ellwood, and married Doris Cook on March 26, 1935, at Grace Episcopal Church, Cedar Rapids. She died in 1994.



He graduated from the University of Iowa and received his A.B. degree in 1931 and J.D. in 1933. He was a special agent for the Federal Bureau of Investigation from 1934 to 1938, with postings in Washington, D.C., Boston and Cedar Rapids. He then did graduate study in federal tax law at Harvard Law School from 1938 to 1939. He was formerly associated with the Clark, Klein & Beaumont law firm in Detroit, Mich. He joined the Trewin, Simmons, Perrine & Albright law firm in Cedar Rapids in 1944 and became a partner in 1948. The firm became known as Simmons, Perrine, Albright, Ellwood & Neff. He retired in 1992 from the firm now known as Simmons Perrine Albright & Ellwood Plc.

He was past president and trustee of the Cedar Rapids Art Association and was formerly president and served on the board of directors of the Cedar Rapids Country Club. He also served on the board of directors of the Cedar Rapids Chamber of Commerce. He had been a trustee with Bruce-more, Inc., John Ben Snow Foundation and was a life trustee of Cornell College. He was a member of the Linn County, Iowa State and American bar associations and Grace Episcopal Church.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Cedar Rapids Art Association or Grace Episcopal Church. Arrangements by Turner Chapel East.

12-25-1998