

Interview with Sheriff William Lennox

(3/26/80)

(at Walter Phillips' home)

It's difficult to know where to start because of some of the questions I'm sure that you want answered. However, I must say at the very start that I was not in politics. I was free of all politics. In fact, I'd not been a committeeman, not a ward leader. I had been business manager of intercollegiate athletics at the University of Pennsylvania for many years. And this, of course, due to the interest people had, and still have, in Pennsylvania athletics, had much to do with the tickets for the football and basketball games. And in this way you came in contact with many of the distinguished alumni and friends of the University, and those who were followers of the University. And in this way, I suppose I became rather more-or-less identified or well-known...whatever the word might be... for such a thing.

I'd also been interested in the Big Brother Association, in the Men of Malvern, the retreat movement here, where I was executive vice-president for many years, and in the Knights of Columbus. From 1946 to 1948 I was state deputy of the Knights of Columbus in Pennsylvania, which means... the office of state deputy is the top Knight of Columbus in Pennsylvania. This is an elective office, by all of the Knights of Columbus or their representatives throughout the state of Pennsylvania.

The following year...no, that same year...1946, I was elected to the Supreme Board of Directors of the Knights of Columbus. As you know, this is an international organization with great fraternal insurance benefits. And this brought me in contact with many people, not only in Pennsylvania but throughout the nation.

I mention this because I suppose this was some of the background that led up to my selection, or proposed selection as a candidate for sheriff in 1947. In 1947, the summer of that year, I was in Wildwood on my vacation and I received a telephone call from the then chairman of the Democratic City Committee, the Honorable Michael J. Bradley, who'd been a former congressman and collector of the port, and had held many positions in Philadelphia and the government, with a great deal of distinction and honor. He was serving then as chairman of the Democratic City Committee and he asked me to be their candidate for the sheriff of the city and county of Philadelphia.

As I mentioned before, I had not been identified in any way, except as a Democratic voter, with politics...in the organization as such. However, he called me...and I was complimented, of course, and elated...but at the time I had just been recovering from a rather extended illness, and I thought about it very seriously. In addition to that, Sheriff Meehan, Austin Meehan, who in my opinion was quite a fine gentleman, was to be a candidate for re-election. And this meant that for the first time in the history of Philadelphia, a sheriff would be permitted to serve a second term. Prior to that time, a sheriff could serve but one term...as the sheriff of Philadelphia. This extended from over a period of many years...I suppose since the very formation of the city itself. Mr. Meehan was to be a candidate for re-election.

I talked it over with my family and with the folks at the University, and they advised me against being a candidate. And I so informed Mr. Bradley...complimented as I was, I realized that, under the circumstances that I've just stated, I could not carry on such a campaign and be a candidate for public office.

In 1949, the Democratic City Committee came back to me again and asked me to be their candidate for register of wills of the city of Philadelphia and county of Philadelphia. Again, after a great deal of thought and consideration, I decided against being a candidate. And this caused a stir with the Policy Committee because they had already selected me for the job and had decided on it, and evidently, they got my word too late...which meant that they had to go back into caucus again to make another selection...at which time they selected Joseph Burke, who was elected as register of wills, and later became a judge of the Orphans' Court. That was the second time that I had turned them down.

(WMP: There were two Joe Burkes; one was a labor leader.)

Well, the Joe Burke that we talked about a few moments ago was quite different. These are two people; two different people. You may remember Joe Burke was a tall, rather distinguished-looking man, who was a member of the bar, and later became a judge of the Orphans' Court. But that election in 1949 was a good one, and of course, it just proved that the Democrats were on their way up. The party had been revived. And of course, with the influx of Mr. Clark and Mr. Dilworth, who were ^{then} serving in the capacity of city controller and city treasurer, respectively, at that time... so ended that period of political activity, as far as I was concerned.

Again, in 1950...now this is the third time the committee came back to me and asked me to be a candidate for City Council. There was a vacancy in my particular district for City Council. The holder of the office for which I was to

be a candidate was a Mr. Charles O'Halloran, who'd been a councilman for a number of years, and had died and left the vacancy. So I really considered this. This meant that I could be a councilman, if elected, and retain my job at the University, which I was anxious to do because my family was still young...the children were in school...and I just didn't want to take on a responsibility of resigning from a job which was rather secure and take something which could or could not prove...for any length of time. But I could be elected to Council, retain my job at the University, and go on.

I said, "yes", because I figured well, how long and how coy can you play this game. Here comes the third time and you've just got to stop this nonsense and stop fooling these people and make up your mind for once and for all. And I said "yes". And I was elected.

Now I was elected, I suppose, quite handily, because in that particular district, prior to my election, there was another Democrat elected a few years previous to that, to Council, Harry Norwith, by name.

(WMP: Harry died, didn't he?)

He has since died. He has a boy living, Bernie...

(WMP: Oh, Bernie Norwith...)

Yes, he was in Washington the last I heard of him. I believe he's an attorney with some governmental agency in that area.

(WMP: He went down there with Joe Clark, didn't he?)

I believe so...I believe you're right...yes. Well, my selection by the Policy Committee...and it was quite evident from the policy at that time of the Democratic City Committee, at least as I reckoned it, was, Mr. Dilworth and Mr. Clark, Mr. Finnegan, who were then in control of the party, decided that this vacancy was not to be filled by a ward leader or anyone that did not seem to measure up to what they thought they were trying to do in reviving the Democratic Party with giving it a new look and giving it some strength.

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Well this infuriated my ward leader, who was Lewis Mongaloosa. He had been the ward leader of our ward, the 40th Ward, for a number of years, and a good one. He did an excellent job for the party; he was a hard worker and did an outstanding piece of work year-round. He wanted the job; he wanted that nomination. Well, the powers-that-be said that he couldn't have it. This infuriated him and his ward committee. I remember so well, at the time...it was in the fall of 1950...and I went out to the University of California with the University of Pennsylvania football ^{team} where we were playing a game in the

stadium at Berkeley. And while at the hotel, I received a long night letter from the chairman of the ward committee, who in session had met and denounced my candidacy and said that they thought that I was not the man for the job and whatever, and that they were not in support of me and that they had their own candidate. None the less, I filed that telegram and went on to win that year and went into City Council and served approximately thirteen months. I was the last man elected to the old Philadelphia Council...of twenty-two men. The following year, when my term expired and that Council's term expired, the new Council, as now constituted, went into effect...of seventeen members; ten from the various districts throughout the city, and seven at large. In the old Council it was divided up into districts...here it's clearly outlined in this little booklet which is called the City Council Manual.

So I served in the Council for thirteen months. And at that time, the Council was composed of three Democrats; Harry Norwitch, a man who had been in there but a short time before me, Max Seidman from South Philadelphia, and myself. That made three Democrats and nineteen Republicans...so we were a very effective force, as you can imagine!

However, I had been in Council but maybe two weeks...three weeks...when Max Seidman goes over to New York on a visit over a weekend, and dies in a hotel in New York! And this brings our number down to two! And if we needed to caucus we could go right behind the shade in the City Council room and do so without very much effort. However, there was very little, if any, occasion for that.

Each week before the Council meeting...and the Councilmen at that time, of course...it was not a full-time job...it was a job that you could do your business with; there were lawyers and real estate men, and men of other various occupations and businesses were members of City Council. However, the president at that time was Mr. Garman, Fred Garman, and the chairman of the important finance committee was Clarence Crosson. They were very powerful people and we did not really reckon for much...that is, I'm speaking of Mr. Norwitch and myself.

I well remember my inauguration in the City Council. It took place...I forget the exact date, but it was early in December, after the November ballots had been counted and I had been declared a winner...and I was inaugurated at a regular Thursday session of Council. After my inauguration and the people had left..all the families and friends... Council went into session. And the first vote on the agenda was a vote to override Mayor Samuel. There had been a bill introduced and passed by the City Council, that policemen and firemen could not work at any job outside of their occupation as police officers and firemen. And if this bill had passed, this would have outlawed their participa-

tion in any other but their stated employment with the city.

This bill, I suppose, had been brought about because of the labor leaders...several of them had complained that firemen were working on a job as plumbers and other tradespeople and skilled workers at a job at Broad and Lehigh that was being renovated. And the mayor, Mayor Samuel, had vetoed this piece of legislation. He thought that the firemen and policemen should be barred from work. And lo and behold it came for a vote. And my vote overrode the mayor's veto...my first vote! I voted to permit these men to work because in my capacity at the University, I had occasion to employ many people on a part-time basis, as ticket-takers, and sellers and other occupations around the campus in our particular domain, and I had always found that the policemen and firemen had done an excellent job. And I had great admiration for people who were ready and willing to make some extra money to support their families, if that was their wish, rather than just to do something else. Rather than say, taking money from number writers or doing many other things that police officers and firemen should not be doing. So I overrode Mayor Samuel's veto. I think the City Committee was a bit annoyed with me at that. However, I must say they never spoke to me; nobody had briefed me about this...that it was coming up... I didn't know! But I felt that way about it and I voted my conscience; I voted what I felt was correct! They were a little bit annoyed, but not too much annoyed at me. So, however, that was my first introduction into Council.

When we used to meet on Thursdays, Harry Norwitch and myself would meet in the city controller's office...Joe Clark then... meet with Michael Byrne. We'd try to figure out what legislation was coming up. There was advance notice of bills that were pending and were going to be voted on, and we would be prepped a bit as to how we should lend our efforts or be against them or whatever. This we would do with a great deal of regularity. And so this was an interesting experience, though I must confess that as far as a lawmaker, or proposing or bringing into effect any worthwhile legislation, I don't think Mr. Norwitch or myself could take too much of any credit...because we were such a minority in the group, which at that time was nineteen Republicans and two Democrats, with one vacancy.

(HMCM: I just have one quick question. What year was it that you were elected to City Council?)

1950...serving one month, December, in '50, and in '51 for the entire year. The term of the Council that I was a member of expired in January of 1952, at which time Mr. Clark took over as mayor, and the brand new Council, as elected the previous November, went into effect. As I said, the Council constituted a seventeen-member group, such as the Council as it is today.

We go on into the year of 1951...I attended my committee meetings whenever they were held; I was on several committees, as listed in this Manual of City Council...and on Thursdays dutifully went down and reported with Mr. Norwitch to Michael Byrne...then into the Council session, but as I've said, of no great moment. There was a great deal of talk at that time, of course, about the new Charter going into effect, and Mr. Clark was the candidate for mayor, and there was a great deal of enthusiasm...on our part. I'm speaking now as a Democrat, because we saw a new day coming and while we were pretty much in the doldrums in '51, as far as the Councilmanic effort was concerned, we had bright thoughts of a future to come.

In the spring of 1951, I had not talked to Mr. Finnegan or to any members of the party. The primary was coming up; people were taking out various papers for election..to be the various offices...all kinds of councilmen to be elected...the sheriff was to be elected...the register of wills and the recorder of deeds and the county commissioners. They were all to be elected you know. But I had not paid too much attention. One day at the University, I received a call from Mr. Finnegan. And he said, "Bill, I want you to know that we haven't forgotten you...that we are working very hard. We have quite a problem." I said, "I recognize this Jim. And this is the very reason why I did not bother you...because I knew that you had many problems and that there were many people seeking office, and I did not wish to add to the burden. Whatever you do, or whatever the committee decides to do will be perfectly all right with me. So, please, let it go that way." That's the way I left it with Mr. Finnegan and the committee.

He did not get back to me...time went on. Then one day I received a call from the Democratic City Committee, to come in to the headquarters in the Bellevue Court building...you remember...and asked me would I please come in and sign my nomination papers. I said, "Yes. What am I running for?" They said, "You'll find out when you get in here!" So, I had to put that aside and I went in. And they had two sets of papers made out for me; one for City Council and one for sheriff! "In my presence," they said, "would you please sign these?" These were the petitions for the office of sheriff. I signed them. And in my presence they tore up the petitions that were made out for City Council.

So I was a candidate at that time, for sheriff.

(WMP: By your own choice?)

No. They wanted me to sign for sheriff. Now, the reasons I'll explain. The new Council was divided up into ten districts. Mr. Norwitch, who was my predecessor in Council, and had experience in Council...was a senior member as far as our party was concerned...senior of the two of us...and he was quite impressive. He had done a good job, and he was a highly

intelligent man. And at that time he was a very active and potent force in the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, which was his strong force. He not only brought a great deal of their money to the party, but more importantly in those days, he brought man-power...because they manned the polls with workers from the Amalgamated and other unions. But he was principally concerned with the Amalgamated. So he had the choice to take what would be my district or....we both lived in the same district. Naturally, he had preference over me.

Then another reason, I might well have been elected a councilman-at-large. But, the chairman of the party, Mr. Finnegan, wanted to be a councilman-at-large. And we lived also, in the same district. So, it would not have been possible for me to go into Council under those circumstances. Mr. Finnegan wanted to be elected, and rightly so, I suppose...for bringing about this renaissance and heading it up, certainly he ought to have had some choice in matters. And that was that he wanted to be a candidate, at large, for City Council. Now Norwitch and Finnegan were both elected. And you may remember, Mr. Finnegan became the president of the City Council...the first president of the new City Council, as then constituted.

If I had had my choice of the matter, I would have preferred to stay in Council. But under the circumstances, I had no choice. Here again, there'd been a great deal of fuss about the office of sheriff..and the candidate for sheriff. As you must know, Mr. Meehan was a great target. Personally, he was a wonderful man...as a person; he was a delightful man. But he had the uncanny ability of associating people around him, who tied themselves up with him, a great number of creeps!...to be honest with you. They really did him harm...because he himself was a splendid man...in my opinion. And I had a great deal of regard for him.

You may well remember the debate that he had with Mr. Dilworth, in which, of course, he was just slaughtered!!! I had interceded, with some friends of his, to ask him PLEASE not to debate...because I felt that he would be humiliated. He could not stand up, toe-to-toe, with a man like Mr. Dilworth who was an experienced trial lawyer, and had a great deal of moxie. It was pretty hard for anyone to go, toe-to-toe, with Dick Dilworth. You know, he was very quick with his words and had a very agile mind. He could go like this![click of fingers] and destroy you!

And so, I was the candidate to take on the spot that was held by Mr. Meehan. Mr. Meehan was not a candidate for reelection. I was to be the candidate on the Democratic ticket, and of course, this was to the dismay of many of the ward leaders, and many of the other people who wanted this particular spot. However, here again, Mr. Dilworth and Mr. Clark and Finnegan and those people...their feeling prevailed. They did not want a ward leader in this sensitive spot, because the office of

sheriff had been the target of a great, great hue and cry. There had been alleged abuses of all kinds, and whether true or false, they did a pretty good job of blackening the office of sheriff.

And so, I was the candidate for sheriff. And in those days, you'll remember, we did a great deal of street corner campaigning...Mr. Dilworth, Mr. Clark...Marshall Shepard was the candidate for recorder of deeds. He had been the recorder of deeds in Washington, D.C., appointed by Harry Truman to that particular job. He was the Reverend Marshall Shepard. You remember him, Walter...a black fellow, a very wonderful fellow...very comical...a great campaigner. Of course, our candidates for county commissioner were Tom McHenry and Maury Osser. Incidentally, have you interviewed Maury Osser?

(WMP: No, I missed him.)

He's out of jail, you know.

(WMP: Is he?)

Oh yes. He went to jail, you know, for that bit with something. But I still hear from him. He's served his time and it might be very interesting to have him come over. He's a nice person; he has been disbarred, you know.

(WMP: Where does he live now?)

I'll give you a call. I have his address; he lives over in the Northeast. He was elected, on that ticket with Mr. Clark and Mr. Dilworth, to the office of county commissioner, as it was then called. It later became city commissioner.

In the election of 1951, the entire Democratic slate, Mr. Clark and those of us on what used to be called the row offices...the City Council...were all elected to office, and we came into office in January, 1952.

For my part, upon assuming the office of sheriff, I immediately start on the procedure of firing all the Republicans in the office. This did not last too long because I was stopped, and thereafter followed a long law case, which is quite public today, called the Lennox-Clark decision. It has to do with the Civil Service, the contention being that these people, in the various row office, were brought into the city under the Charter, and were city employees, Civil Service employees, rather than political employees. It was my feeling and understanding that they were Republicans and were political appointees, and therefore, subject to removal, which I proceeded to do immediately.

And this brought about the law case which I previously cited. And we were reversed; we had to hire some of these people

back, with the idea that they were indeed Civil Service employees. But in the meantime, many employees who were politically motivated and had belonged to the Republican party decided that they wished to maintain their identity as such and to resign from office of the sheriff and be in politics, which was all right with me and allowed me to replace them with our faithful people.

Of course, our people then had to take the examinations; some were oral examinations and some were written and oral combinations combined. But from that point on, the office of sheriff became an office in which the employees were Civil Service. So often you hear, even today, that the number of jobs involved...really the number of jobs involved as far as the sheriff is personally concerned consists of one person, his secretary. He's allowed to appoint his secretary. The other people are Civil Service employees. It might be, in some instances...I'm not certain of this....that he might appoint a chief deputy sheriff, but all of the other positions are Civil Service.

And so we were set back. In assuming the office, since there had been so much furor and contention about it over the years, about some of the mishaps in the office, or alleged mishaps, we decided that we would try, to the best of our ability, to re-organize the office with the proper personnel, giving them the proper compensation and giving them the kind of security, since they were then under Civil Service, which they deserved.

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One of the things that we started out to do had been rumored... facts in this instance are always hard to come by...that in the work of the deputy sheriffs, that in order to get any kind of service, that it was incumbent upon the lawyers to pay something to the deputy sheriff to see that his writ was served, that he got any kind of service at all. Failing in that, he would not get the service which his writ deserved. We tried to, and we succeeded, we think fairly well, in stopping this practice, because we made it a point that all fees to be paid to the sheriff's office would be paid to the cashier in the office, and a receipt for that money would be given to the person. And this was sufficient evidence that they had paid the posted fee for the services that the sheriff would render. This, of course, took some doing. We tried to see to it that our people put in the hours they were supposed to put in, and we immediately set about a process of seeing that they were compensated according to their responsibilities and their duties. This took a little doing and took some time. But over the years this was brought about, and eventually, the deputy sheriffs, the guards and the other peoples employed in the sheriff's office had the same dignity and the same standing as other city employees, Civil Service-wise.

It was my contention that the men did not have to prostitute themselves; no man in a job should have to go out and sell his

services over again. He was being paid to do a job and he should do that job. And he should not be dependent upon or demanding from people doing business with the office of sheriff, extra money to do the job well and to do it as it should be done.

Over, the years...and I served in the office of sheriff for twenty years, having been elected five times to that particular office, the status and the position of deputy sheriff was raised, the men had some dignity and could carry on their work without interference, and with supervision that would do the job.

(WMP: Bill, I just want you to underline this...they're under Civil Service, are they?)

The Lennox-Clark decision pointed that out very definitely; that these were Civil Service employees. My position in that matter was that they were not...that they were political appointees and therefore subject to be fired. I was overruled of course, by the courts. This went on and on; there's a lengthy trial on this, and much discussion, and it's quoted quite often. Even today, the Lennox-Clark decision, or Clark-Lennox, whichever way you say it, is still quoted in Civil Service matters.

So, in serving in the office, we found a great deal to recommend it. We made it a point to be of service to the lawyers and to the people involved. We tried to carry out the duties of the office of sheriff. It's not a popularity contest. The office of sheriff is not a policy-making office, and it's not a job that you do something for people. It seems that all the things you do, you do against people. You serve a jury notice on a person. You might serve it at 5 o'clock at night. The sheriff might have gotten it at 4 o'clock. But still the person rises up in righteous wrath, as they say, "Well, why wasn't I served this morning with this?" They're blaming someone for being dilatory and taking it out on them, giving them a little bit of a hard time.

But everything we do...we serve a writ, we levy on a piece of property or levy on household goods...all of these things are against people. And this is difficult. So you try to do the job with as much compassion as you possibly can. And this is what we constantly tried to tell our people...to be mindful of those people that they were working with, and had to take action against...to be compassionate and considerate of them. It did not always work out that way; back in 1955 we had a great row. The Inquirer had published for weeks a series of articles against the sheriff and the sheriff's office. But in the end, we fired the people who were involved in that, and later we had to take them back with back pay because they were found not guilty...and that they were doing the job! However, all of the bad publicity that the sheriff personally got

and the deputies too, that were involved...this just went on.

But it was exactly that kind of a job, as I've said, that you never do anything pleasant for people; it's always against them. We made it a practice, as an example, to service the lawyers in a proper and efficient way...not to keep them waiting...not to have people hanging around, waiting to be served while people would chat and make light of things. And we were able, we think, to establish the office of sheriff in such a way that it would regain the position that it should have. As a law enforcement office, it has certain responsibilities because, by the very nature of things, you know, the Charter or the state constitution spell out very clearly that the sheriff is the chief law enforcement officer of the county! Now, this is not me saying that; this is the constitution of the state. This means that he has precedent over the commissioner of the police. He's the chief law enforcement officer in the county...there're no ifs, ands, or buts.

Now, of course, in a city like Philadelphia, the sheriff with his small staff could never hope to do the things that the sheriff's supposed to do, without taking on the responsibility of the law and order of this great city. We had, even in those days under Commissioner Tom Gibbons and the commissioners who came after that, Leary and Bell, and later on Frank Rizzo... the sheriff could not carry on his job without the co-operation of the Police Department. And from every one of these commissioners, Commissioner Gibbons and Leary and Bell and Commissioner Rizzo...we always received the fine co-operation and splendid help. As I said previously, we could not carry on our job without this kind of help.

I think I've covered most of the office of sheriff. However, from time to time there were problems. As an example, we always had great difficulty with our budget. We could never, through any of the administrations that we served, get the amount of dollars and the personnel that we needed to do the job...because the legal work, paper work involving the work of the lawyers increased, and is still increasing dramatically. The number of judges increased, and the number of prisoners to be brought down...and this is the responsibility of the sheriff...to bring down the prisoners from the House of Detention up near the Police Academy, from Holmesburg, andwhat used to be a short haul, from 21st and Fairmount...and then, of course, from Moyamensing Prison at 11th and Reed. But when the prisons moved to greater distances, like the new Detention Center, this made the trip a great deal longer than the short one of old days. And of course, we required more equipment, more personnel. And each day, hundreds of prisoners are brought down...and must be safely brought down and back, because while they're in, leave the prison, and then back down into the court, they're in the custody of the sheriff. And he has the responsibility for that.

Same way with going to Graterford. Those who are to be brought down for trial must be brought down by the sheriff. They must take the prisoners to the Western part of the state, oftentimes, if they're committed there originally, from the counties here. They go up the state to Farview...to the criminally insane prison, and to the other institutions up at Dallas and Camp Hill...throughout the state. These are all trips that, in my day, the sheriff had to make. And we had several times, as they've had recently, we've had breakaways from us. We had unfortunately, a rape of prisoners in the cell room, because the cell room on the seventh floor, until it was built over again and renovated, was just a hell-hole. It was a bad place, but no money could be found or nothing could be done, it seemed, to remedy that situation. Result being that we carried on for years with inadequate transportation, busses,

Remember the hue and cry and the publicity received, even in one of the busses going to the prison, a prisoner was raped. This is because of the type of vans we had, where there could be no surveillance as to what was going on in the bus, until we got the new busses, which allowed the guards to supervise...to stand in the back of the bus and look out over the entire bus and see what was going on...and none of this other nonsense that was so prevalent.

But these were things that were brought about. Unfortunately, there never seemed to be enough dollars to carry on that responsibility. Even the present sheriff...he finds his load is constantly increasing. As an example; take the responsibility of moving these MOVE prisoners back and forth. You see, they're in his custody; he's responsible for them. Then, bringing down the prisoners...they're coming down from I-95...the bus breaks down! And something happens. You're loaded up with prisoners in there. The judge calls the sheriff. He's screaming!! "Where are my prisoners????!!!" What can the sheriff do about it? Can he go up there and carry them down on his back? But you know judges...they can be very unreasonable. They want to know, "Where are my prisoners???" Nine o'clock, ten o'clock. You can't tell them, "Your honor, the bus broke down"...or "The bus is caught in a traffic jam on I-95."

"Don't tell me that! Bring the prisoners in!!!" What are you going to do? Have them fly over like angels? But judges are that way, you know, most of them...or many of them, unfortunately. Once they put that robe on, look out! Right? You know what they are.

(WMP: Remember Judge Parry?)

Who? Parry...wore that little hat with the glasses? And Kun?

(WMP: Yes, I worked for those two guys.)

Was it Parry that wore the eye-shade?

(HMcM: Even in the courtroom?)

Yes, he sat on the bench with it on...to shield his eyes! Oh, he was a cantankerous old buzzard, wasn't he? And Kun wasn't much better, was he?

(WMP: No, he was as bad.)

Oh, those judges! This is why men like Bok and Leventhal and Flood were such a light on the bench. Court Number Six, when that came into being, and I well remember...up to that time you'll remember, there were five Common Pleas Courts. But when they came on, it brought a new era! A dignity...and the judgeship had some standing. Wouldn't you say so?

(WMP: Right.)

Some of the judges certainly conducted themselves like they were....well, most of them are dead now; we'd better be kind to them.

But the office of sheriff, even today, Sheriff Sullivan, with all of his responsibilities and his increased case load of prisoners being brought to the courtroom, is finding it very difficult. And, of course, City Hall itself, prisoners being transported or carried about from the various courtrooms, you know, in the hallways...it always has been dangerous. Prisoners have one idea in mind...just one idea; get away...get out of here! And many of them are determined to get it. Just one other day...a fellow coming down on the bus took a paper clip and picked his handcuffs. When he got to City Hall, he made a dash for it. Well, there you are.

But that, about the office of sheriff, is as far as I can go...without boring you. But if you have questions, I wish you'd give them to me, and I'll try to answer them.

(HMcM: One thing that we wanted to ask you...since you had such a wide range of people in City Hall, especially sitting at the mayor's desk, perhaps you'd like to comment about them... speak about the contrast between one administration and another.)

Well, I think you'd have to, in all honesty, praise to the highest degree, Mayor Clark. The renaissance that he brought about in the city of Philadelphia...I think anyone that had anything to do...or even to be a citizen of Philadelphia, immediately recognizes the contribution that he made. To my mind, he was one of the greatest...Joe Clark. Followed by Dick Dilworth, an entirely different person. Dick Dilworth was different but no less aggressive, and no less dedicated to the job than Joe Clark. But his programming and his manner of doing it was entirely different. They were two different personalities, but two great men. And I think Philadelphia today is a

better place to live in because of these two men. We used to say, in campaigning, that our idea and our goal was to make it a better place to live and a better place to work in. And this is what these two men did.

Of course, let's be honest about it. The city had only one way to go...when they took over...it had to go up! Don't you think so?

(WMP: That's right.)

It could only go one way.

(WMP: How much time did you spend before Clark and Dilworth?)

Only the year in City Council, that one year that I told you about.

Now, you go on to Mr. Tate. Mr. Tate's a different type of person altogether. Jim Tate, I think, was an honest, hard-working mayor. But, I say this kindly, I don't think he had the problems to rectify, because many of these had been taken care of. Jim Tate, in my opinion, did not have the imagination...would that be the proper word?

**** Interruption in the taping ****

The word that I would use for Jim Tate is that he did not have the imagination that Clark and Dilworth had.

(WMP: He was an honest guy, I think.)

Oh, I think he is as honest as a man could be. And I would fight to the end to uphold his honesty and integrity. Now, many of the things, his manner of doing things would maybe not be my way of doing things, but after all, he had the responsibility; he had the job to do. And I am sure he did the job as he saw it had to be done. Now you can't blame a man, or find any fault with that kind of attitude. This was his way of conducting the office of mayor. My only fault with Tate, of course, and with Dick and Joe Clark was that we never got enough money in our budget in the sheriff's office. This was our constant cry and I suppose it will always be with offices....those offices like county commissioners and the former row offices...are always a little left out of things when it comes to budget. It's the mayor's departments that get the attention...recreation, police, fire, public health and all of these things. Naturally, they serve a large number of people too; I'm not complaining about that. But they get a lot of staff attention...would be my observation of the other offices, because they're not given the consideration, and not given the in-depth study....what are these people doing. And there's nobody there at budget time to say, "Well, now, this isn't fair! These people are getting in-

creased work-loads and they ought to have increased finances to do the job that they're supposed to do."

Rizzo, of course, I needn't tell you...I never worked for Mr. Rizzo. I had the experience of working with him, and as I said before here, he co-operated splendidly with the office of sheriff when he was police commissioner. I've had no experience with him in his job as mayor. Of course, it's a matter of public record, I think, that, as you pointed out, Mrs. McMahon, a few minutes ago, just how the people idolized him. And he's still held in high regard with many people. I dare say that even today he could run for office and be elected, because he has that kind of charisma. That, I suppose, is an over-used word, but this spells out what he had. Some people think that he's done a great job. My observation would be that it's been mediocre and not in the terms of Dilworth and Clark. You dislike to compare, but one who has lived through those things, you like to think about it.

I see you had that fellow here, Ed Bacon. Well Bacon was an imaginative guy...maybe he was up in the sky sometimes, but by and large, he was a terrific man in so many ways.

A fellow like Sam Baxter. Sam Baxter was terrific. You know, you had great men. And maybe the Rizzo cabinet had such men but they were not allowed the latitude or given the go-ahead that men like Baxter and these other people we're talking about.

For example, in your first administration, Freddy Mann brought on Bob Crawford from San Francisco, California, to head up recreation...where he still is!! Prior to that time, they said that the recreation was just sand lots and the swimming pools were but large bathtubs. Remember, these were the terms that were used. But the whole new concept of recreation... the whole thing was turned around by Commissioner Crawford and these people...in my opinion.

(WMP: Crawford did a very great job.)

Yes, and you know there were other men.

(WMP: You have to give Freddy Mann credit for bringing in Crawford.)

Oh, there's a lot to recommend Freddy Mann. No doubt about it, there's a lot to recommend him. It's difficult to analyze him. I don't know what kind of a job I would be in a position to compare...what was his job? City representative. He's something else.

Anything else we should cover?

(HMcM: Would you like to say something about the history of

* "The Practice of the Office of Sheriff
and Undersheriff"
By John Impey - 1835- 16.

and charge, and ought to be Favoured in law, before any private person; the sheriff's office.) and the King cannot abridge his power"

The office of sheriff that you speak about, of course, comes down to us from the English law. And there's a book that I have at home in which the writer describes the office of sheriff and the office of coroner. This is a book printed in England. The office of sheriff says in one part...and I'll send you the quotation in full....it says that even the king cannot abridge his power. The shire was the lands owned by people, and the sheriff was the person in charge of the land. And he had complete control. And even today, the sheriff....you read the other day, or last Saturday I believe...do you ever read Father Greeley in the Inquirer, the columnist? He talked about the pollsters. He said that they should talk to the sheriffs in the counties. There're some 3100 sheriffs in the United States, if there be that many counties. There's a sheriff for every county. And some counties like Saint Louis and, I believe, Baltimore, they have a different set-up. They have the city and county the same thing. But the office of sheriff in the United States is the law enforcement officer. In many parts of Pennsylvania, even today, he's the custodian of the jail. He lives at the jail in many of these counties in Pennsylvania. His wife does the cooking for the prisoners.

(WMP: Really?)

Oh yes. These are small counties, now. You know, some counties may have a jail population of six people, or twelve people...you know, Pike County, where Dilworth, you'll remember, said the bears were...up on the northern border...which lost his election for him.

An example: Sheriff Pitchess of Los Angeles. If you go to Los Angeles...if you drive down from San Francisco, it seems you're halfway down the state when you see "Entering Los Angeles County". Well, that's not Los Angeles city, but Pitchess has about 3200 men who work for him. And he has every form of apprehension...airplanes, helicopters, boats, horses. Many of his men are still mounted on horses in those hills of the county. And he contracts, as many sheriffs still do in Florida, throughout the United States and the parishes of Louisiana, they contract to various communities. For instance, Montgomery County, with Ambler...instead of having a police force, they would contract with the sheriff of the county to provide police protection for that town.

Now Pitchess in Los Angeles, the last time I was privy to the information, he was doing work for some 35 communities in Los Angeles county. So you see, the sheriff is the law enforcement officer, has the jail, has the apprehension of the prisoners. And the National Sheriffs' Association...I happened to be president of the National Sheriffs' Association for a year. I was also president of the Pennsylvania State Sheriffs' Association for a year. So when I was national president, I naturally got to know many of the sheriffs from all over the United States.

And when I was Pennsylvania president, I naturally got acquainted with the **sheriffs** in Pennsylvania in the various counties. But it's a very important office. And of course, the hard-riding and the Matt Dillon-type...Matt Dillon, by the way, was United States marshal...this is an office of the federal court. We have one in Philadelphia, where the judges in the federal court commission ~~the~~ marshal to carry out their particular orders.

orders
The sheriff is an officer of the court. He carries out the officers of the court. If the judge in Common Pleas Court is going to issue an injunction, he doesn't give it to the chief of police or to Solomon* to serve; he gives it to the sheriff. The reason he gives it to the sheriff is because they're the arm of the court. They're to carry out his dictates.

(WMP: You're talking about a subpoena now.)

Yes, a subpoena or an injunction. He says, for instance, "There'll be no picketing at the Atlantic Refining Company." I go way back to the Whitman Park thing. Even in my time, Judge Sporkin had that. And I remember the lawyer for the contractor was Arthur Littleton, junior. You know young Arthur Littleton; you probably knew his father.

(WMP: I remember his father, all right.)

Yes. And young Arthur Littleton was the lawyer and he represented the people who were about to build Whitman Park.

Now, the sheriff could not, himself...he would not have enough deputies to carry out the injunction, for instance, at Whitman Park. But he does have the order, and it's his responsibility. Now he can call the police, and the police help him. He reads the injunction; he reads the riot act! And you know, for instance, in the old days, if the sheriff reads the riot act, the case of the General Electric out at 69th and Elmwood, when they brought the horses and rode the people down. Do you remember? That was about 1949. This caused quite a clamor. Chief Deputy Sheriff Bill Morrow issued that. When he reads the riot act, everything comes under the jurisdiction of the sheriff...to maintain law and order. And for that purpose he reads the riot act. He can solicit the governor, and by his solicitation the governor will call out the National Guard to maintain law and order.

For instance, you're sitting as a judge, and you're short... you can't get a jury. You want to get over the trial. Call the sheriff, issue subpoenas..."I want twelve people here within the next hour!" The sheriff can go along Market Street and put his hands on you. "Come with me!" He takes you into court and you're a juror. And failing to do that you're in contempt of court.

Now, rarely do they do that, but this is an important office and important responsibilities. It's not used as much here as

*~~Martin~~ Solomon, presently Commissioner of Police in Philadelphia.

it would be in many of the other counties, where they have many responsibilities. And here again, the office of sheriff has gone into great disrepute, because many of them had used the office to better themselves, to be elected for four years...get as much as they could in four years, and bye-bye. You know? This was because the sheriff, in most of the counties in the United States, could not be elected to the second term. One term only. And this was true in Pennsylvania and Mr. Meehan was the first sheriff to ever serve the second term. The law was re-enacted in 1944. And that allowed Mr. Meehan to succeed himself. And he was the first sheriff in the history of the city to ever do that.

And, of course, John Nixon was the sheriff of Philadelphia in the time of the Revolution. It was John Nixon who is credited with first reading to the populace the Declaration of Independence! So the sheriff comes down to us...as the Pilgrims and people came over from England bringing the law with them, it brought the various offices with them, like the sheriff, because they realized the importance of that particular job to do what must be done by the courts.

Getting back to the sheriffs, they prostituted the office. They sold it down, many of them. And now they're trying...and have been trying...through the national group and other groups, to bring it back. Example: many of the prisoners up the state here...a sheriff in a county, a small county, by the county commissioners he's given \$1.75 a day, let us say, to feed the prisoners. We're using that as a round sum. He feeds them for 40¢ and he keeps the rest. Bills the county for the limit, and he pockets the money. And these are some of the things that they did! Shame on them, but they did it! The result was that people lost respect for them, and rightly so! You don't have respect for people who are robbing poor souls that can't defend themselves. But thank Heavens, the office of sheriff is regaining the kind of stability and respect that it should rightfully have. And this is to their credit, thanks to the groups like the National Sheriffs'. Now the FBI furnishes them with training, and they do all kinds of things. They have their own academy, where they pay for sheriffs to go to school to increase their knowledge of the job. And most of the sheriffs departments today have classes for the deputies, or send them to some institution nearby where they can be brought up to date on what they're supposed to do.

(WMP: Bill, you've got a lot of background on this sort of thing.)

When I was in office I used to go out to the University, or the papers, or wherever they would want me to go, and do this very thing...talking about the office of sheriff. More importantly, I always felt that...I'm not so good at going on talking; if people ask me questions, I can answer them..I can get back to them pretty quickly...because I think this makes for a better contact. If you can speak with people, rather than at them, if they have an opportunity to question you, you always can do better.

They might say, "You bum, what'd you do down there? You stole this or what?"

Dilworth, you'll remember, was so excellent at that. I remember in South Philadelphia, a friend of mine was a councilman...Joe Milligan, by name..he's since dead. And Dilworth was going down there and he was at that time raving and ranting against Eddie Cox, who was vice president of Atlantic Refining but president of City Council. He was raving about and all, and this friend of mine was a councilman down there and he said, "You're going to go hear Dilworth?" He said, "I am not! He's going to rave and rant!" And he said, "No skin off my tail, what he might say about Eddie Cox!"

(WMP: Is he still alive?)

No, he's dead. Cox is dead and those people. But, of course, Dilworth...you know, you remember downtown when they threw the fruit at him...down in Little Italy when he called them "greasers". Remember that incident?

(WMP: He really got himself in trouble that time.)

Oh, he got in so much trouble. Then he goes on that Andrea Doria, that Italian ship, and saves people's lives and the Italian government awards him some medal. Remember? But in addition to that, you know, if you disagreed with Dilworth he would go down off the platform and go out and search you out! Oh, he'd fight you!