William A. Schnader, a Pennsylvania Dutchman, was born in Bowmansville, educated at Franklin and Marshall College, and originally intended to become a school teacher. In fact, he taught English and other subjects at a preparatory school in New Jersey after he graduated from Franklin and Marshall, but he had a leaning toward the law and he decided he would change course and he won a scholarship of some sort to the University of Pennsylvania Law School, where he graduated with honors and made a great friendship with William Draper Lewis, who was then Dean of the law school and was the founder of the American Law Institute. Lewis had many connections in high places and that included political life to some degree. I am fairly confident that it was partly through that connection that Mr. Schnader had an opportunity to go to Harrisburg under Governor Pinchot as a Deputy Attorney General. This was in the early '20's. Before that he had practiced law with Thomas DeWitt Cuyler and later with the firm of Thomas Rayburn White. He later became a partner in that firm -- in fact, the name of the firm became White, Schnader, Maris, and Clapp. But I believe before that full partnership developed he had an opportunity to go to Harrisburg as a Deputy Attorney General. As you know, the Governor could only serve one term in those days and after Pinchot's term Fisher came in. Governor Fisher promoted Mr. Schnader to the Attorney Generalship and when Pinchot came in for his second term after Fisher, Pinchot reappointed Mr. Schnader Attorney General. And I suppose it was particularly the fact that Mr. Schnader won Mr. Pinchot's affection and admiration that much of his later political life originated.

Pinchot was an unusually active man in many fields as well as politics. He was one of the first conservationists in America. He served under Teddy Roosevelt in the Department of the Interior, and it was Pinchot who originally was instrumental in setting aside the Marin County redwood forest north of San Francisco, and if you visit there you see plaques to Gifford Pinchot. So aside from his political life and other things he was a very unusual man and he appreciated people with special abilities, which Mr. Schnader
 obviously had.

Pinchot was a great reformer and he wanted to bring the government of Pennsylvania up-to-date. One of his assigned tasks to Mr. Schnader was to redraft the administrative code of Pennsylvania which was the controlling statute in regard to all government bureaus, which Mr. Schnader did. And Mr. Schnader participated in a number of other reform legislative acts which are on the books today: Workmen's Compensation is one of his, and it was one of the first workmen's compensation.

(WMP: In the country?)

Not in the country. One of the early ones. And this was somewhat symptomatic of Mr. Schnader because although he was a Pennsylvania Dutchman with the conservatism that you associate with that background, he was also a tremendous forward-looking man who vigorously believed in the reform of the law to make life better for the people. And I would say conservatively that half of his professional life was dedicated to that kind of work. There was an interim there -- Pinchot served and then I've forgotten who came in after Pinchot's first term. You couldn't serve two terms together but you could serve interrupted terms. Somebody interfered there -- and it just could be that I have Fisher and Pinchot reversed and it was Pinchot, Fisher, and Pinchot. But I think it was Fisher, Pinchot, blank, and Pinchot. Pinchot was reelected in '28 and served until '32 in the second term. And during that period Mr. Schnader, became the Attorney General in Pinchot's second term. He was one of the few attorney generals in the Commonwealth who really participated in the courts of appeals. In fact, in his period he argued more appeals in the Supreme Court of the United States than any attorney general in the country. And his great gift -- one of his great gifts -- was in argumentation at the appellate level. He was never a trial lawyer. But he had great experience and he was a tremendously persuasive speaker. He was the kind of a lawyer who was very down to earth and there was no nonsense. He was able to epitomize the case in a short pithy way and get his points across.

After that experience he decided he would try for the governorship of Pennsylvania and that was in '39. Of course, the Roosevelt regime had come in, the Depression was on, and the whole world was topsy-turvy. Mr. Schnader, representing the conservative economic views that were his birthright in a sense, opposed the Roosevelt regime at that time. Although I think later on he changed much of his views.
In that early period he was vigorously public in opposition to Roosevelt. And he ran for Governor and was beaten -- and not by a vast majority. I've forgotten what it was, but the Roosevelt landslide simply carried George Earl into office. It was a tough defeat for him because he had been sufficiently in the public eye as attorney general and as a very prominent one, and like everyone who gets into the public sphere you are reluctant to get out of it once you are in it. You've had some experience yourself. So it was a bitter defeat and -- but he was a tough Pennsylvania Dutchman. He took it all in the end pretty well, but he didn't have very much money left. He was just about busted. He borrowed money for his campaign and friends had helped him and he was heavily in debt. But he decided he would no longer go back with Mr. White in that firm of which he was still a partner. Not because of any disaffection with Mr. White -- they were always excellent friends. In fact one of his dearest friends was George Perry, who at that time had become a common pleas judge. So it was a friendly breaking, and Mr. Schnader simply felt the time had come for him to do it on his own if he was going to do it. So he established a firm with his old friend, Francis A. Lewis, who was I think then with Duane, Morris, and Hecksher. And part of that combination was because of old friendship and also because I think he felt that in Philadelphia at that time it was important to have a prominent Philadelphia name in your firm. And Francis A. Lewis had all the criteria and status of social prestige. They formed a partnership and the first employee they had was Bernard Segal. I step aside a minute to say a word about that because the lines of these men -- Bernard Segal and William A. Schnader -- were so much intertwined with what happened thereafter. When Mr. Schnader was attorney general, drafting much reform legislation, he called on the then Dean of the law school, Dean Goodrich, to send up some bright young men to Harrisburg to help out with his work. And the Dean sent up half a dozen Gowen Fellows and among them was Bernard Segal. And Mr. Schnader interviewed them and this story has been many times told in the firm but is significant of the man. All the interviewees were Protestants and Bernard Segal was the only Jewish applicant. And after he interviewed them all he apparently was taken with Bernard Segal's qualifications so he called him back and said he was going to select him. At that time there was no Jewish member of the Justice Department in Harrisburg -- even employees let alone lawyers -- which fact Bernard Segal was very sensitive to. And so when he was told this -- he said to Mr. Schnader, "You know I'm Jewish." And Mr. Schnader looked at him and said, "And what difference does that make to you, Mr. Segal?" It made no difference to him what race, color, or what you were if you were a person of quality and character. And he carried that out all through
his life and when he formed his firm it was the first firm in Philadelphia to combine Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant members. And that was intentional planning.

So he formed the firm and the first famous case he had was the Dorrance case, which is a big tax case that is still on the books. He had been influential as Attorney General in having the Dorrance estate taxed in Pennsylvania because Mr. Dorrance was in fact a resident of Pennsylvania. He lived there, his family was here, he had a big estate on the Main Line. But Mr. Dorrance, for tax reasons, because death taxes in Jersey were much less, maintained a fictitious residence in Jersey. He had a home in which he spent one night a week, and kept careful documentation of each visit he made. Mr. Schnader brought action and recovered the tax for Pennsylvania. The estate was hundreds of millions of dollars -- there was then a 2% tax, but it still amounted to something like $10 million in tax which was a tremendous thing for the Pennsylvania budget at that point in the Depression, when nobody was paying taxes and everybody was broke. So it was a great feather in his cap, and after he went back into private practice Mrs. Dorrance came in -- and she was a very abrupt lady -- she was brought in actually by George Perry, who was related to her by marriage, -- and after introductions she said "you're the so and so who got my husband's estate taxed in Pennsylvania -- and maybe you can now get him free of the Jersey tax." Because Jersey was also taxing him. So that was the Dorrance case and Mr. Schnader spent five years in all the courts of America but failed in that effort, and as a result Dorrance was taxed in both Pennsylvania and New Jersey. That changed the law because after that statutes were passed that made it possible where there was a conflict of jurisdictions for the two states to come to an agreement as to what compromise tax will be paid to each.

He hadn't been long in private practice before he became much more interested in the American Law Institute and another organization which he had been a member of for some time called the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws. The National Conference of Commissioners had been established back in 1915 or thereabouts by the statutory acts of the various states. Every one of the 50 states has that statute which provides that there will be a representative of the state, paid by the legislature, to represent the state in this National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws whose purpose is to draft statutes that will make more uniform the law in the various states. And we all know how diverse, for instance, the divorce law is in different states. The Commissioners have failed in that area because of strong political and
and religious prejudices to get their uniform divorce law adopted very widely. It has been adopted in a few states. But I merely cite that as an example. But they drafted laws in many areas. And Mr. Schnader was very active in this organization, which was again a reform organization. He'd been active since the '20's. And as he started his individual practice and became more active, he became the president of that organization — and the first thing he put on the books was to provide a statute that would make uniform commercial transactions around the United States. In other words, when you drew a check in Philadelphia to be cleared in San Francisco the same laws would apply as to endorsement. Of, if you have a bill of sale for personal property the same law would apply in all the states, or if you pledged your fixtures in a store in Philadelphia the same laws would apply in New York and other places to create the liens on the fixtures. The whole field of commercial transactions had different laws in each state. It was confusing to business people and of course business was getting more and more interstate. He worked on this — he got top legal brains from all over the country and through the American Law Institute, in which he was also active, they produced the Uniform Commercial Code which was then adopted by the National Conference of Commissioners and approved by the American Bar Association. And Mr. Schnader worked for twenty years to get it adopted. And it has now been adopted in every state except Louisiana.

(WMP: Did they have any outside funding for this?)

Oh yes. There was foundation funding from several sources paying for the law teachers and research people who did the work. But he was the guiding spirit of it and he was the one who got it through, got it adopted, and then worked on the lawyers in the different states. Of course, he had tremendous contacts through his position as Attorney General and his other public activities. He was widely known throughout the country. And he would call on his lawyer friends in California or North Dakota or Tennessee, or whatever, and put the pressure on them to get this statute passed. And he spent hours and hours on this kind of thing. And really he did get it passed almost in every state. And everyone considered that one of his great contributions to the public field of the law. He was awarded the American Bar Association gold medal for contribution to the law for this work and while that was going on through the '50's and '60's he was also taken into the drafting of the Philadelphia charter, now much under attack. He was the chairman of the drafting committee. He was one of the lawyers most instrumental in getting Dilworth and Clark to agree to create a charter
commission and get that reform going. Because the charter was a very antiquated terrible document -- the 1919 charter. And the issue now so much under scrutiny about the two terms limitation for mayor was one that was bitterly debated, and Mr. Schnader would bring these debates back to our family circle in the law firm. He was one of those proponents of the strong mayor. He vigorously believed that should be the set-up. But he also believed that there should be some curtailment on it and that would be effected by the eight-year limitation. So the two went hand-in-hand. There were many opponents, of course, of the strong mayor, but it was accepted at that time largely on the basis that there would be an 8-year limitation. And that was the whole theory of it. He spent many hours on that while he was still working on the National Conference of Commissioners Uniform Commercial Code project. And that was all barely through before he became involved with the Pennsylvania constitution. It had not been substantially revised for seventy-five years and again it was a very antiquated document. There had been three attempts, as I recall, to amend our constitution. There had been one or two constitutional conventions called, which never could agree, and they simply disappeared. And there was another effort made through a referendum, which failed. And people had sort of thrown up their hands. But Mr. Schnader became President of the Pennsylvania Bar and he was using that as a base of operations and he started his as usual effective lobbying of people that he was so able to do -- he knew the right people to hit and he knew how to put pressure on them and keep after them and convince them. And again largely because of his efforts there was a constitutional convention called. As you know, they passed the new article 14 setting up the new judiciary system, which was a much needed reform.

One thing they couldn't touch and that he was careful to make sure they couldn't touch was the taxation clause because this has always been a terrible bone of contention. And the reason all the other efforts to reform the constitution failed, I think, was because the people simply were always fearful that they would knock down this limitation that taxation in Pennsylvania has to be the same rate on all classes. You can't have a rated tax in Pennsylvania. Many of us think this is a drawback, but there are those who very much favor it because it keeps down the rates of tax on wealthier people. Therefore, every effort to get into the constitution had been defeated pretty much because persons were afraid that was going to be eliminated. Mr. Schnader, being a political fundamentalist and also the pragmatic kind of man he was knew that if he got into that he would never get anywhere. So his idea was to take a half a loaf and make it clear that that article, the taxation article, would not be touched but
other areas could. And so some reform was obtained and at least something was done which improved the judicial system.

Well, that achievement came right at the end of his career. In fact, he died just as the legislature finally passed the amendments. He just lived long enough to see it pass. But it was a life — and I've only hit some highlights of it — that was much dedicated to reform in the law and the public sphere. He was active in many educational institutions — Franklin and Marshall was his alma mater. He not only served it as a trustee — he was an interim president. And he was the first one to raise an endowment fund. He raised many millions of dollars for Franklin and Marshall. He was one of those who founded the inter-racial organization of Christians and Jews. He was very active in that. And he was head of that at one time. He received all kinds of plaques and awards. But his whole life was so much dedicated to this field of reform and the basic principle of equality among men and women regardless of who they were and where they came from if they had the stuff to do it. His life was an inspiration to those who worked with him. He had a tremendously warm personality and a very direct way about him. From the minute you met him you knew whether he liked you or not. And that was one of the things that made him such a much-loved man.

......While this was going on he was also a member of the Commission -- the tri-state commission between New York and Jersey and Pennsylvania -- appointed I guess by President Eisenhower?

(WMP: I think it was an inter-state agreement, but it was not a compact.)

He was very active in that and the flow of water through the Delaware was the big issue in that -- how much New York could take out of the head waters and so on. I know he was active in it, but I never really got too much of the details of that activity.

(WMP: You'll be interested that after we spent six years, I think it was, negotiating a new compact -- Incodel was not a compact; it was never ratified as a compact. It was an agreement. Compacts had to be approved by the federal government. And when Ed Hopkinson, who was very much interested and raised a lot of money for the effort to get the Delaware properly managed and had gotten an agreement between the top governors and the people in water resources -- the last thing that Ed Hopkinson did to nail it down was to go see Bill Schnader. And Mr. Schnader was very pleased.)
He was a close friend of Ed Hopkinson and through his activities he had good friends everywhere. Friends who respected him because he was such a totally honest man. He never fudged about things -- spoke right out, told you what he thought, worked for what he thought was a good cause, and did it forcefully and effectively.

There is another area in which he was involved that came to my mind just a minute ago -- there were so many community things he was involved in. His actual activities in the field of political campaigns always seemed to be ill-starred. His own was. And somewhere back in the '50's he decided that we ought to get a mayor in Philadelphia who would show up Clark and Dilworth on the Republican side -- he picked up the Rev. Poling. Poling was a great friend of his and he induced Poling to run for mayor!

Schnader's father was a very important clergyman. The Reformed church was the very first Protestant church. His father became the head of the Reformed church in Pennsylvania. I never knew him because he died before I became a member of the firm, but Mr. Schnader had a picture of him on the wall of his office. A very holy looking man. And of course in those days church began on Sunday at 7 o'clock in the morning and went through the day, and Mr. Schnader always said that by the time he was 12 years old he had gone to church more than anybody else did in his whole lifetime. But he remained loyal to the Reformed church and he supported it.

(WMP: How did he happen to take in Earl Harrison to the firm?)

One of the policies he had was to build the firm at both ends -- he wanted to build it from the top and from the bottom. Young people and prominent older people. And he knew Earl Harrison very well and Earl Harrison had become Commissioner of Immigration during the war. He had left the Saul firm, and after his government experience, Earl became Dean of the Law School. Earl had fully expected, and had had promises from prominent trustees that when Mr. Gates retired he would have a shot at being President of the University. They double-crossed him and brought in Stassen, which was a dreadful failure for the University. And at that point Earl was so chagrined and disappointed that he decided he would leave the University. Gil Oswald, our partner, was a longtime friend of Earl's. They both came from Frankford. And so Gil went to see him and he came with us. He was a very successful lawyer, as you know, and a great asset to our firm, and his early demise was a terrible tragedy. I actually was with him the day before he died -- he was going on a vacation. He always was a great athlete -- playing tennis
and a great guy for the outdoors. And he and Carol, his wife, were going to their Canadian hideaway -- 25,000 miles from any point of civilization -- and that afternoon he left and flew up there and the next morning he went out fishing in his canoe and had a heart attack. And of course had he been in his office I'm sure he would possibly be alive today -- they probably could have brought him back -- but he was totally away from any medical help.