

28 Feb. '84

Dear Martin--

Whichever god watches over thesis writers has been on the job for you. I have nothing to do with the Bellingham Herald and never have had, but a friend of mine was filling in on the copy desk there, somehow got hold of the letter you'd addressed to me, took it home and re-enveloped it and sent it along to me.

I've done what I could, through the mists of 20 years, with your questions about Lindsay-Schaub. My main impression of L-S and my time in Decatur is in my book This House of Sky, pp. 263-66, which Mark may have a copy of. I tried there to convey the extraordinary role of Dave Felts, protector and nurturer of those of us on his editorial-writing staff. Dave himself is the best source I know of on editorial attitudes, etc. A second good source is Ralph H. Johnson, now of the Toledo Blade, who at the time I was there had been lured back to L-S as Dave's second-in-command and L-S legislative correspondent; Ralph may have more detailed memories than I do, but try him in a hurry as he's won a Pulliam Fellowship and I think will leave Toledo for the Far East for several weeks, about mid-March. His address: 2518 Orchard Road, Toledo OH 43606.

The other editorial writers during my L-S stint were Jim Miller, who moved to a job in Washington, D.C., and a greatly gifted Swede named Lars, whose last name Ralph Johnson can probably supply; and Fred Pearson, who is at a U. of Chicago institute--Institute for Policy Study?--and Douglas McCormick, 5050 Riverside Dr., Columbus OH 43220. Fred and Doug would be good thoughtful sources.

Best of luck.

300 Shelbourne Dr. #99
Normal, IL 61761
309/452-8834

Feb. 8, 1984

Mr. Ivan Doig,
The Herald,
P.O. Box 1277
Bellingham, Wash.

Re: Thesis, Lindsay-Schaub

Dear Ivan,

Mark Wyman tells me that he is a friend of yours from back in his own newspaper days. In fact, I believe he may already have mentioned to you that I might be getting in contact with you. I am presently completing work on my M.A. in History and am writing my thesis on the subject: The Editorial Policies of Lindsay-Schaub Newspapers in Illinois, 1931-1978: Sources, Presentation, Impact. Mark is first reader on my committee.

I am using a lot of oral history interviews and correspondence for primary sources. I have interviewed Ed Lindsay twice and am trying to arrange either an interview or correspondence with Dave Felts, who is not very well. I will also have interviews with Bob Reid, Dick Icen, Roger Hughes, Gary Minich, and a few other people who are still in this immediate area. In addition, I am trying to contact other key people, such as yourself, by correspondence. Knowing that you are probably busy enough without having anything extra loaded on you, I would be most grateful if you would take the time to consider the questions enclosed with this letter and answer those appropriate to your experience with Lindsay-Schaub. Should any occur to you, I would greatly appreciate any anecdotes which might help illustrate any of your answers.

Also, would you please sign the brief release on the question sheet authorizing us to use your answers for scholarly and educational purposes. I will certainly appreciate any assistance you are able to give me in this project. If nothing else, I would like to put something on record which I believe is an important part of Illinois history.

Best regards,

Martin

Martin W. Fitzpatrick

P.S. I have just learned from Mrs. Felts that Dave had a stroke Mon., Jan. 30. No paralysis, but speech problems. Doctors optimistic. *WLF*

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Brief biographical data about yourself, including dates and titles for your Lindsay-Schaub organization years.
2. As you recall, how were major editorial positions determined at Lindsay-Schaub Newspapers during your years there? (Endorsement of candidates, for example.)
3. How were day-to-day editorial views determined and how was it decided who would write the editorials?
4. Did Lindsay-Schaub editorials writers also function as news reporters? Was that helpful or harmful? In what way?
5. To what degree do you think the ownership of Lindsay-Schaub Newspapers asserted itself in editorials positions decisions? What effects, if any, do you think this had on editorial integrity and on staff morale?
6. To use a couple of shopworn labels, did you consider Lindsay-Schaub to be "liberal" or "conservative" in their views as expressed editorially? Was this reflected in the selection of staff members?
7. In your time do you recall any instances where local editors refused to run any Lindsay-Schaub editorials? If so, on what occasion(s)? Do you recall the reasons given?
8. Do you recall any time when the editorials staff was asked to defer to the wishes of advertisers in framing an editorial position? If so, what were the occasions? What reasons were given?
9. Do you recall any time(s) when an editorial position or statement had to be framed a particular way in deference to the other business interests of the owners? What were the occasions?
10. Did the labor affairs of Lindsay-Schaub Newspapers ever affect the framing of editorial positions or statements? If so, on what occasions? How?
11. How do you assess the impact of Lindsay-Schaub editorials during your time with the company? Can you give an example of a particular editorial effort which aptly illustrates your assessment?
12. Compared with other newspapers or newspaper groups with which you have had personal experience, how would you rate the quality of the editorials staff personnel? Of the editorials research? Of the editorials themselves?

Date 25 Feb. 1954

I hereby give and bequeath to Illinois State University as a donation for such scholarly and educational purposes as the University may determine, my attached answers to the questions above.*
*provided that I or anyone writing a biography of me shall have an unrestricted right to quote from my answers.

Signature

Walter D. Oig

1. I'm attaching a current author's bio done for my publisher. My L-S stint was as an editorial writer, April 15 '63--about July 1, '64.
2. Ralph Johnson would have better information than mine. My memory is that Ed Lindsay would consult with Dave Felts and Ralph, on candidate endorsements--or rather, on the course of candidate's campaigns, as I was gone from Decatur by the time of the '64 general election. The rest of us did at least have a crack at the candidates: I seem to remember Gov. Kerner coming in for a session of questions with us, and I have a clearer recollection of some candidate (maybe Sherwin Willens, whatever it was he was running for) lodged into a booth with the gang of us during our coffee break at Rango's bar. But my guess is that Ed Lindsay wrote major endorsements, or Dave Felts wrote them in accordance with Ed's decision.
3. Day-by-day we sorted topics out according to common sense and particular interests. I was the only one of us still entangled in a military obligation--I was in the Air Force Reserve--and so the draft and ~~about~~ military spending fell to me, perhaps at Dave's suggestion. Dave and perhaps Doug and/or Fred wrote on ~~local~~ city council matters, I think. Ralph wrote on state politics because of his second hat as legislative correspondent. We did have a brief daily meeting, at least when there were enough of us in the office, to talk over possible topics. Dave led these, quite informally, going over lead stories ~~in~~ the Herald or off the wires. Ed Lindsay might come down to these sessions, though I think he was not on hand a majority of the time. These tended to be civilized discussions--anything convened by Dave had a high degree of civility--and I remember no real arguments, though opinions of course were exchanged.
4. Yes, we did a little reporting, or at least some of us did. Ralph at the legislature, most importantly. I was assigned to the meetings, probably monthly, of the State Teachers College Board, which oversaw the lesser 4-year state schools such as UIU, WIU--I don't know about Illinois ~~Max~~ State at Normal, I can't recall. It was helpful in that it got me out of Decatur, which was the stodgiest and most boring place I've ever lived, and that it enlivened the job a bit. The drawback was that, reporting on a part-time basis, I never got on top of that College Board beat; never could give it the time and attention it should have had.

There was one other task of L-S editorial writers which was a major aggravation: filing the L-S wire on Saturdays. This was a strange warp in the L-S organizational structure, otherwise quite benign: it was a management insistence, over efforts by ~~both~~ I think both Dave and Ralph to get it changed, that we 6 editorial writers (Dave's eyes weren't good enough, and I believe part of his agreement to be editor of the editorial pages was not to be included in this wire room shift) share the two Saturday L-S wire shifts. (The regular wire editor had that day off.) Thus every third week, a person's turn came around. The news room was no happier with this than we were, I believe, and I can recall being unhappy both with the wire shift--it is a taxing, relentless job, especially when you do it only every 3 weeks--and with the newsroom editors. The editor of the Sat. afternoon Review naturally in the shift wanted his major stories filed late, to have the most recent updates in them; but as the wire editor could provide copy faster than his filer could type it into the machine, there was always a backlog of copy between what was issuing out of the wire machine and what the copy editor was working on.

Tricky timing, to hold a story long enough for updating yet feed it to the filer soon enough that it would come out the wire machine before the newsroom's deadline. The Sunday editor, on the other hand, had a penchant for front-paging interpretive or other non-breaking stories; so with him, you might get a call late in your shift asking for some enormous NY Times wire piece which you had set aside for the regular wire editor to handle on Monday, there being no time value on it. Life would have been happier all around if the newsroom rather than us had handled that Sat. pair of shifts, I'm convinced.

5. I suppose we all realized, in the great Liebling's words, freedom of the press is for the man who owns one. We rarely--see answer 9--were called on the carpet for anything we said in the editorials we wrote, and ~~in~~ the endorsements and such that Ed and/or Dave did, were regarded by me at least as the publisher's prerogative. The L-S management, as personified by Ed Lindsay, was upstanding and decent enough for me to work for in comfort, though not in absolute bliss.

quite

6. Liberal; given the political tone of its area, ~~spick~~ liberal indeed. Which is to say, our editorial pages were moderate ~~in~~ politically, strong on civil rights, committed to providing the readership some information and opinion about international matters; in a Downstate climate of Republicanism that produced Paul Powell and some of the more retrograde members of the state legislature, I think this added up to liberal. ~~But~~ Ed Lindsay, in my view, held a gentlemanly attitude; he was something like an intelligent, concerned squire. Dave Felts in turn was a reflection of Ed's attitude, and the rest of us were hired because we were pretty much attuned to those two. The staff view, overall, I think could be said to be liberal in that we were more concerned with decency than with creed. I recall ~~that~~ Ralph Johnson, who had more fizz than the rest of us, once saying "There ought to be a right not to be miserable." I've not yet heard it said any better, and I do not think you'll hear a conservative say it.

7. My memory is that, because we were writing editorials for both the Herald and the Review, there were always more editorials filed on the L-S wire than the local editors had space for. Thus, they had some choice. I don't recall any snits about them refusing to run a particular editorial.

8. No.

9. No.

10. Not to my knowledge, but I was rather oblivious to labor matters then.

11. I entirely believe that L-S furnished Decatur--I don't know enough about the other L-S newspaper towns to say--more enlightened editorial comment than it had to, and probably more enlightened than the city deserved. The drawback, as I see it in retrospect, is that our editorials so largely were comment, rather than bold argument. Not without rue did I read somewhere that

the editorial writer stays aloof on the high ground until the battle is over, then comes down and shoots the wounded. It was deliberate on the part of the L-S editorial writers, in keeping with our moderate but enlightened stance, to write many editorials which furnished more information than they did leadership. I can't recall the actual words of Dave Felts, but I remember him saying something to the effect that every editorial doesn't have to be a cavalry charge. That ~~is~~ is certainly right, yet I wonder if we shouldn't have tried to ambush the conventional wisdom oftener than we did.

An example of our sober, responsible policy: defending the right of free speech in the case of a U. of Illinois professor who was an outspoken John Birch Society member. My memory is that our editorials, running in the Champaign L-S paper, may have had some affect with a U. of Illinois administration which wanted to dump the professor.

12. Hindsight may have intensified this view, but I think the editorial writing staff was the class act of L-S, at least of its Decatur operation. (Again, a reflection of Ed Lindsay's sense of responsibility and noblesse oblige, I believe.) The news side did not seem to me particularly enterprising. Perhaps a comparison can be found, gauging the careers of the news side against those of us on the editorial side: Ralph Johnson having gone on to head the Toledo Blade editorial page, Julius Duscha making his reputation in Washington, Fred Pearson in his academic career at the U. of Chicago, Lars leaving L-S for the Toronto Star, Doug McCormick becoming a Scripps-Howard correspondent in Ohio, my own career as a writer nominated for a National Book Award--these, just from among the editorial writers of or near my brief time at L-S. My memory is that the NY Times then had a staff of 7 editorial writers, just as L-S did; I would doubt that many other papers, except perhaps the Washington Post, showed such a seriousness toward its editorial responsibilities.

The research was pretty good, given how much we wrote; I often wrote 2-4 editorials a day, besides laying out one of the edit pages. I can recall going off to the Decatur library (besides using the L-S morgue) for hours at a time, to do some research before writing. We were quite scrupulous citizens of the newspaper world, it seems to me.

The editorials themselves were defter than they were deep. I learned a lot about writing pretty well pretty fast, at L-S. Almost all of us were good wordsmiths, good enough to have made our livings at it. There often was a nice sheen on our editorials; where they lacked greatness, of course, was the speed with which we had to write, and the youth of our staff. None of us equaled such editorial wizards as Alan Barth or Meg Greenfield of the Washington Post--though with the right circumstances, a couple or three of us by now could be extremely good editorial writers, I believe, and Ralph Johnson in Toledo probably is.

9. I nearly forgot to include this, after alluding to it in answer 5. The only flak I can recall our group of editorial writers receiving was after Fred Pearson (please check this with him) wrote an editorial titled "Not All Invited to the Feast," which as I recall pointed out the statistics of how ~~many~~ few people were stockholders, in America. I can't remember who protested to Ed Lindsay--it must have been stock brokers or his friends at the Decatur Club--but he got enough heat that he inquired to Dave about the editorial. Dave in turn asked us, and it turned out that while Fred had written it, another one of us had copy-edited it, another one had put the headline on it, and yet another (I think me) had run it on the edit page he made up. I.e., at least 4 of the 7 of us on the staff had blithely handled the editorial, seeing nothing wrong with it--whereas the protesters to Ed L. saw it questioning the capitalist system. Nothing much came of this, except for us being nonplussed and Ed having had to resort to a rare note or phone call of inquiry. (Again, check with Fred, but I have a lurking memory that Ed may have heard a squawk from some of the Schaub's about that editorial.)

--from David V. Felts, Ivan's editor at Decatur



Lindsay-Schaub Newspapers

EXECUTIVE OFFICE DECATUR, ILLINOIS 62525, PHONE 422-8531

December 6, 1969

(How about these --both sheets --for
Nostalgia ?)

Dear Ivan ,that is, Dr. Ivan

Of course I read your Lincoln story in the Illinois State Historical Journal, as the enclosed tear sheet --unless I forget it --will testify. Once upon a time I was director and VP of the state historical society, but that was when I was more mobile, as well as more flexible behind the ears.

I ^{enjoyed} ~~enjoyed~~ the article, a useful footnote to thy wondrous story, Illinois.

Perhaps you have run across Simeon Francis in your readings of history of the Northwest. Francis, editor of the Sangamo Journal, predecessor of the Illinois State Journal at Springfield and a close friend of Lincoln and his wife, was also the founder of the Portland Oregonian. Lincoln had sent him NW as army paymaster, or some such political post. Copley Newspapers might be interested in a piece on Francis, since CP owns and publishes the Ill State Journal, for which I wrote edits and a column just before I came to Decatur. (1928-1935)

I have now ^Eben retired for almost three years, but keep busy and solvent with a contract for edit page material which I

manage under Social Security regulations. Quite flexible.

HERALD AND REVIEW
LINDSAY-SCHAUB NEWSPAPERS, INC.
DECATUR CHAMPAIGN-URBANA

METRO-EAST JOURNAL
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CARBONDALE, HERRIN, MURPHYSBORO

(2)

Dorothy and I could not travel on pension and dividend income, although we could live comfortably. We were in Europe 33 days last summer--Holland, five days on the Rhine, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, ~~Swen~~ Norway and ~~Denmark~~ Denmark. Real good. In 1970 we shall restore the crumbling house, inside and out, and stay home, except for perhaps some modest See American trips. We have been abroad in 1965, '67 and '69. Odd numbered years 1971 Who can tell? My health has been OK, since the Thrombosis, save for a kidney stone deal. I will be 70 next month. Dorothy is spry. She would leave tomorrow for another tour.

All the family was home for Thanksgiving, at the dinner table at one time. I was a patriarch. Carol has two daughters and Bob has one daughter, the child of his wife who had been previously married. Bob lives here in Decatur. He works in the trust Dept of the Citizens bank, and has a home, --a CPA -- mortgage and dog in addition to wife and child. We will spend Christmas at Geneva Lake, Wis., with Carol and her family.

I guess you would be a stranger on the third floor. Ralph Johnson teaches journalism at Bowling Green U., Bowling Green, Ohio. John Zakarian, his successor, as ed of edit pgs, leaves soon for a new and high-pay edit page job in Boston. Zakarian was a Nieman Fellow last year. Doug McCormick no longer writes edits for the Dayton papers, but is their legislative correspondent. Bob Reid is ME at the Southern Illinois an, Carbondale. Paul Samuel is reporting at Baltimore, with a black beard. Treacy and Erickson and Mecklenburg are teaching journalism. McTaggart has been swallowed up in civil rights, but is out of jail at the last ~~word~~ word.

Date _____

Page _____

20

1								19
2								18
3								17
4								16
5								15
6								14
7								13
8								12
9								11
10								10
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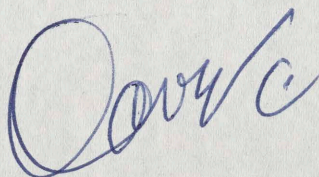
GEE--page ~~3mm~~ 3 ?

Ed Lindsay has a 4th floor office but spends a lot of time as member of the Board of Higher Education. He is L-S VP for Planning, and RD Schaub, Fred's son, is assist VP for same thing, so that's a portent. Neither Ed nor Fred has retired. Fred is ^{L-S} Bd Chairman, and near ⁷⁰ Ring 70. Uncle Frank Lindsay, 89, is not too br⁷sk, but in Florida as is his use and custom. Merrill Lindsay is Presidnet of LS Newspapers.

I can't spell the name of the editor of the Herald and Review. Robert Hartley is Editor of L-S Newspapers. He ~~was~~ came up--and fast--from East St. Louis. Bob Merris ~~Wash~~-R edit br⁷fly. Dick Brautigam is Review ME and Jerry Parsons, Herald and Sunday ME. Forry Kyle and Fallstrom still handle sports and Aggie the library.

This will be your Christmas Card, so Dorothy and I sent best holiday greetings to you and Carol. If EVER you come this way, make a joyful noise.

So, in the bond



G O D

Good Old Dave