Robert R. Paunack

Interviewed by Lorraine Orchard in 1985 at an unknown location.

Oral history tape number: 19

... 1985 for the oral history project of Madison history. We will be talking with Robert Paunack, of Madison. My name is Lorraine Orchard. Do you mind if I call you "Bud"?

No, no.

All right. That's how I know you. I already introduced you as Robert, but let's say Bud. Can you tell me something about your family: when did they come to America and where did they come from? And anything, like why did they come or what did they do? Anything. It would be good to get that background.

My Dad's name was August Oscar, Jr. His father, of course, was August Oscar, Sr., who came over here from East Prussia, presumably in 1848. A. O. Senior was presumably also born near Koenigsberg, East Prussia. We were never able to find out the exact name of the town. Maybe some day I can get back over there and talk to the Russians and we'll find out. A. O. Senior's wife, Johanna, came from Saarbrucken. I've been over there several times, but I don't find anybody by the name of Fahrenbruch, which was her maiden name, still listed in Saarbrucken, which is a town at least as large as Madison.

On my mother's side of the family, my other grandmother was Scotch-Irish and lived in Milwaukee. Her father was a skipper on one of the commercial sailing boats out of Milwaukee. Her name was Ida, Ida Leigh. She was married to Charlie Rinehart, whose parents originally came from Stuttgart, in Germany. Charlie Rinehart owned and operated a mitten factory in Milwaukee at the corner of Fourth and Clybourn, which is now the place where the interstate comes in from Madison and heads up downtown.

When did they come to America?

I don't know at the moment when my grandmother and grandfather from Milwaukee and their folks came to the states. In my Dad's case, he came over here, my grandfather from Madison, I mean, came over here from Prussia in 1848, and Grandmother Johanna Fahrenbruch arrived sometime after that.

Did they come right to Madison then? Somebody went to Milwaukee. And how did they get to Madison?

I really don't know. We tried to piece all this information together when my aunts and my Dad were still alive. They never put any of this stuff down on paper, typically, so we haven't been able to do much tracing back. Before they passed away, the only information that we could garner was that A. O. Senior and Johanna came directly to Madison. Why and how, I don't know, except that probably that particular boat must have had some special excursion that wound up here in the capital city.

As I recall, and I was too young at the time to appreciate what the situation was, but based on my Dad's stories, apparently A. O. Senior brought over with him from East Prussia a cousin or young nephews. The older of the two was Eddie Paunack, who was a basically a stone mason. Fred Paunack, also, the other, I believe he was a cousin, was not only a stone mason but a builder. Fred constructed what is now known as the Plough Inn, on outer Monroe Street, I suppose you would say, what is now Monroe Street and the Verona Road, which was the main stagecoach line coming in from Mineral Point back in those days.

The Plough Inn, as well as the still-in-existence red brick building right across from the springs, up around the corner near the intersection of Verona Road and Monroe Street, were two of the major stop-over places back in the middle nineteenth century for people traveling between

Mineral Point and Madison. The masonry building business and the consequent building and use of Madison sandstone for a time was originated through the use of stone from what is now the White Park Quarry.

At that time, back in the 1850s and 1860s, and I don't know really how long it continued, Eddie Paunack either owned and operated or at least operated the quarry. The stone was blasted out of the quarry and then hauled in chunks by oxen and horse team down to what is now University Avenue, to the stone yard, which was located back of the present Milwaukee Road depot and the Washington Hotel. At the stone yard, the raw stone from the quarry was cut into various sized blocks and was a major ingredient in the construction at that time. Of course, in those days, there was no cement factory that made block or any type of other building material. I don't know for sure, but the old Barnard Hall that stood at the corner of Park and University Avenue was typically built of this type of stone, as is the Grace Episcopal Church on the Square. The Chi Psi fraternity house at 150 Iota Court and many other buildings that are still standing all used either stone from that quarry or similar stone from other quarries that were opened after that time.

After A. O. Senior passed away, and incidentally, I never knew him; he died before I was born, my grandmother lived in a house just next to the corner of Park and University Avenue on the east side of the street. The building on the corner I thought used to be a pharmacy, as I recall back when I first remember going down there.

I thought it was a drugstore there, too, as I remember.

There on the corner my grandmother owned the house right next to it on Park Street and she took in students from the university for room and board. Going down the other way on University Avenue, the first building next to the drugstore was the Mautz Building. As I recall, Bernie Mautz and his parents lived upstairs and there was some kind of commercial establishment on the ground floor. Next was a small home that was occupied by Fred and Minnie Bremmer. Minnie was A. O.'s oldest sister. Fred Bremmer used to operate a tavern up on State Street which was either in or next to the former Hausmann Brewery there at the corner of State and West Gorham Street.

Getting back to University Avenue again, next to Minnie's house was where – I always called him "Uncle" – Eddie Paunack lived, the fellow that operated the stone quarry. I remember him because he had a big backyard and we always had a lot of grapes back there. Next to him was a Chinese laundry. That's about all I can remember from that area down there. Freddie Paunack, who was apparently about the same age as A. O. Senior, also passed away before I ever found about him or knew who he was.

When my sister Jean and I were born – she is a year younger than I am – A. O. and my mother, Marian Rinehart, were living in the second-floor apartment in one of two nice three-story brick apartment buildings on West Washington Avenue on the site of what is now the Wisconsin Power and Light Company building. I don't remember those days, of course. My memory goes back to 2103 Madison Street, where A. O. and my mother moved apparently when we were probably four or five years old. We lived at that location until 1930, when my Dad bought the Otto Toepfer farm out on Mineral Point Road at the corner of Toepfer Avenue and Mineral Point Road.

Where that lovely red brick house is?

In the big red brick house.

Oh, that's a beauty.

Back in those days, Westmorland consisted of the Westmorland golf course on the west end, where the Queen of Peace Church is now, and it ran from there east to what is still the municipal golf course next to the cemetery. The red brick house that Otto Toepfer had built at the corner of Toepfer Avenue and Mineral Point Road was the only building there at the time. Otto Toepfer had owned all that property that faced on Mineral Point Road and ran all the way south to the railroad tracks, bordered on the west, of course, by the Westmorland golf course. Otto had platted out the whole area and put in streets.

About the only thing that I recall from when we first moved out there was an abandoned concrete water trough about half-way down to the Illinois tracks, and everything else was vacant. When the Depression came along, almost as soon as we moved out there, A. O. was trying to sell those lots and he couldn't give them away. He sold one lot to Uncle Fred Bremmer for $450. I forget, it was about two blocks down on Toepfer Avenue. Then Ben Backus, who was working at the bank at that time, bought a lot in back of us and built a home there. Things gradually started to move along. But when we first moved there in 1930 it was very quiet along the real estate market.

Do you remember much about your life on Madison Street? I remember your house. I went to birthday parties there, Jean's parties.

Wingra Park in those days, of course, was a relatively new suburb, and Madison Street was quite an active area because of all the kids in the neighborhood. We lived at the corner of Madison and Lincoln. Going west was Professor [Leslie] Van Hagen, whose sons were Bob and Charlie, who was in school with us, and his daughter Jean. Then next to them were the William Polk Seniors. Young Bill was a classmate of mine. He just recently retired just outside of Philadelphia, where he was employed for many years and involved with the transportation developments on the outer area of Philadelphia, the railroad lines particularly.

Then next to him were the Callahans, Gary and Marion. Gary was one of the older boys and so we didn't associate with him too much. Marion was in school with us and, of course, went on to become quite a famous golfer, both in Madison and in the state. Then there was a vacant lot. On the other corner, the corner of Edgewood Avenue and Madison, lived the Coxons. [Eleanor] Louise married attorney Tim Brown, who later became the [Supreme Court justice].

The Collbohms lived across the street. They moved west back in, it must have been, the late 1920s. Mrs. Collbohm, was a widow with, I think, four kids. My Dad was helpful in getting Franklin, the oldest boy, a job with the Douglas Aircraft people. Of course, at those days the airplane business was just getting off the ground. Franklin later became quite well known on the west coast and remained with the company, as far as I know, all of his working life.

The Collbohms' contribution to the neighborhood excitement was a seven-passenger Stanley Steamer. When Franklin would get ready to go somewhere, he had to go out and start the kerosene boiler in the car and get the steam worked up. He then would cruise up around the neighborhood with the radiator cap off so that the thing looked like a steam engine puffing around the area.

Howard Weiss and the Weiss girls lived up on the corner of Monroe Street and Madison. Howard was quite well known as one of the founders... in fact, I think he did invent the batteries that Burgess Battery started manufacturing here. Down on Madison Street, again, shortly before we moved out to Westmorland in 1930, the O'Malleys moved in there. Bob, who is now president of the United Bank, appeared on the scene at a rather late date.

Going east on Madison Street were the Smiths. I forget what the father's name was. Next to them were the Kelleys. Louie Kelley was a neighbor of ours. Then Barney Burch and his sisters all lived next to them, and then the [James] Johnsons lived next to them. Emily subsequently married Walter Heller. They moved to Minneapolis, after leaving school here. Walter, of course, became and is still known as quite an economist. Beyond that, that was all Indian country down there. We didn't associate with those people.

When we left that area and moved out to Westmorland, we got out just in time to open up West High School, in 1930. I was in the class of 1933. At our fiftieth reunion two years ago, we had quite a turnout. It must have been a couple hundred people back for the big function. Some of the better known alumni are people like Betty and Jim Geisler, Dick Bardwell, and Bob and Evelyn Grady, just to name a few.

Did you play in Vilas Park very much when you were a child? Or did you stay on your street?

No. The only time we had much occasion to get involved with Vilas Park was in the wintertime, when the big activity, of course, was sliding down the Madison Street hill from Jefferson Street. The Bloodgoods [Francis J. and Jane G.] – Reverend Bloodgood used to be the pastor at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church – lived about halfway down the hill. We used to zap down there, not worrying too much about traffic, because there wasn't much. We used to take our flexible flyers and zoom off the embankment down at the bottom of the hill and see how far we could belly-flop without crashing down at the bottom.

When I think of your family, I think immediately of the Commercial State Bank. Would you like to tell us something about the history of the bank? I know it has been very close to you, too, and I associate you with that, of course. Or is there something else you want to talk about first between the stone quarry and your family's history and the bank?

No, nothing at the moment that I can think of. When my Dad got out of high school, with four other brothers and sisters and Grandma Paunack taking in boarders to support the whole clan, he didn't feel it was propitious for him to try to go to the university. So he got a job as a... well, previous to that time he had been working part-time as a messenger at the Bank of Wisconsin, which is now occupied by the M&I Bank on the corner of Monona Avenue and Main Street. That was a natural course to take and so he stayed on there for a while.

Finally he had an opportunity to go down to Milwaukee and work in what was then known as the Second Ward Savings Bank, which the First Wisconsin Bank at that time had purchased and was operating. A. O. spent several years down there, learning the business. While he was there he met my mother. The Rinehart family lived up on Milwaukee Street, which was just several blocks from that general area, which was basically Water Street between Wisconsin Avenue and over by the Schlitz Brewery and all those outlets up along the river basically north of Wisconsin Avenue.

When A. O. decided to come back to Madison, he thought it was timely to try to start another bank in town. At that time, the First National was in business at their present location, and the Hobbinses were running the American Exchange, which at that time was known as the German-American Bank. I don't know, there was probably another bank somewhere up on the Square. I think it might have been the old Capital City Bank.

Anyway, when A. O. came back, he was looking around for someone to help him put the thing together. He had gotten involved quite extensively with the La Follettes, who were held in high esteem, of course, at that time. Bob, Senior, had started the Progressive movement. A. O. was quite taken with that aspect of the political scene. He felt that the Republicans were too

overly conservative and that the Democrats were too overly liberal. The Progressives seemed to fit right in between, so he was quite involved with the Progressive movement.

In that way he got acquainted with a fellow by the name of Sol Levitan, who came to be one of the local characters. Sol's background was such that, I guess, he emigrated from Russia. I don't know exactly where he came from, but he was quite a picturesque character, as I recall him. He was kind of a short man. By the time I got to know him and could remember him, he was probably in his seventies and had developed a kind of characteristic at that time of being a well-known politician. I think he served for eight or ten straight terms as treasurer for the state. He was also deeply involved with the La Follettes.

Sol had started out as a peddler who literally had a one-horse shay and peddled trinkets and clothing, starting down around New Glarus. I think that's where he landed when he got over here and got off the boat. He didn't speak any English, as I understand it, when he first got here. As his territory expanded, he gradually worked his way up to Madison and got acquainted with politics. He was quite a talker, a very glib talker, and with his accent and he developed a Van Dyke beard – all of that kind of set him out from the crowd.

He developed quite a rapport with many of the farmers in the area. That was his principal trade, selling to the farm community which, in those days, was the way business was done. In order to come to town, a farmer would typically have to hitch up the team and spend probably a day getting into town and then spend all night or most of the next day getting back out. So when the traveling salesmen came through, it saved everybody a lot of time and money. Sol was, of course, well known in the area.

When A. O. was looking around for someone to work with in developing credibility and a source of funds to sell the capital stock in the new bank, he enlisted the efforts of Sol, who agreed to serve as the first president. Some of the other people at that time were Adolph Menges, who was well known in town, a very well known druggist, who had a drugstore at the corner of North Carroll and East Mifflin, where the Thirty on the Square building now stands. I've forgotten some of the original stockholders.

I don't know how long it took A. O. and Sol to round up all this money. Of course, back in those days the capital requirements were relatively negligible and the regulatory agencies were more or less non-existent. It was a matter of developing a rapport and going around and selling stock in relatively small blocks, like Bill Evjue was doing, or did shortly thereafter, when he set up *The Capital Times*. So back in 1907, A. O. and Sol basically, and their organizing group, had raised enough capital to open the Commercial National Bank at that time.

They set up business on a permanent basis in what was then a new building known as the Madison Building at the corner of 102 State Street. The bank occupied that location until we subsequently joined the Marine Corporation in 1980 and that building was sold and what had been the Commercial State Bank, which was a successor of Commercial National, which came about during the Depression, in 1933, the building at 102 State Street was sold. The bank then moved down to the building that had been occupied by the Madison Gas and Electric Company at the corner of North Fairchild and East Mifflin, in order to provide larger quarters and more facilities, such that we could put in a drive-in and bring our operation up to date.

When did you join the bank?

When I got out of school, out of the university, in 1938, my first job – and I was lucky to get a job back in those days – was with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the president of which was Leo Crowley, who lived over on Edgewood Hill. He was a great compatriot of Franklin Roosevelt, so when the FDIC was first established, Roosevelt called on Leo, who had

considerable experience operating the Bank of Wisconsin back here in Madison. Leo went down to Washington and set up the FDIC in, 1933, I believe it was.

So I had a chance to go down to Washington as an accounting clerk with the Corporation in 1938 and stayed down there for three years. In 1941, I wanted to leave Washington. I was getting fed up with the place. I had a chance to switch over to the U. S. Engineer Corps, which at that time was about to embark on developing airfields around the world. One of the fields to be developed was Trinidad and Barbados in the British West Indies. I had a chance to join the Engineer Corps as a civilian accountant. The bases were being built on a cost-plus fixed fee and the government, through the U. S. Engineer Department, was supervising the construction of these bases.

I got down there in September of 1941. On December 7 of that year we were down taking a sight-seeing trip through the Caromey, which is down in Trinidad, a very large swamp full of flamingoes, a lot of flora and fauna. When we got back to dockside that afternoon, we heard that war had been declared, on December 7. The Americans who were there were required to stay there for the next two years. Finally, a year and a half after war was declared, the government decided to build an airbase over on Barbados and so I volunteered to go over there. I went there and we got the place built in six months.

Then I decided to come home. I got drafted in the Army and spent seventeen weeks in basic training down in Fort McClellan. I then shipped overseas as a replacement in the infantry, landed in Naples around the first of April of 1943, and finally wound up in the 88th Division and left from there. I got wounded in Italy and then spent the rest of the war up in France at the headquarters for the supply operation for the Seventh Army.

I was discharged at Camp Grant on New Year's Eve of 1945 and immediately returned to Madison and started working at the bank. When A. O. passed away on June 6, 1954, I was elected president of the bank and stayed there until we joined the Marine Corporation in February of 1980.

It might be interesting to note that during the war, after I got out of the General Hospital in Rome, I was transferred over to the Continental Advance Section for whom General Ralph Immel was the second man in command. I joined the Advance Section after it had gotten up from the landing beach at Marseille up to Dijon. Dijon was the home of the original Dukes of Burgundy and is quite a picturesque town. It's about 235 miles due east of Paris. By that time it was getting into winter of 1944, so that was basically the winter line.

While I was in the headquarters section there, the statistical section, part of the program that the Red Cross set up for all the GIs, particularly those who were stationed in town, was to develop a liaison with as many of the French civilians as they could get to volunteer. There was another guy in the headquarters outfit with me by the name of Johnny Graves-, and he and I volunteered to join the program. We were assigned by the Red Cross office to a couple who ran a butcher shop. Of course, as you might appreciate, food was in rather short supply for civilians back in those days.

The couple's name was Gaston and Marie Meunier, real typical Frenchies. We were invited every Saturday night to the Meuniers for dinner, which consisted of the usual seven courses and, although probably not as elaborate as it would be these days, it was nevertheless a very nice place for Johnny and me to spend Saturday evening. One of the main problems was that the Meuniers did not speak any American and we didn't speak any French, so we gave the dictionaries a real work-out. Neither Johnny nor I smoked, being good American boys, so we took our tobacco rations and other goodies we could procure from the PX – coffee and some

candy, peanuts, things like that – along with us. We left these things with the Meuniers, especially for Gaston. He was the typical Frenchman who was an inveterate smoker and who had really nothing but pretty stinky tobacco to work on back in those days.

So we spent the winter there. At that time the Meuniers had two children; a third one was born after we left. We moved on in the spring of 1945. I went over the Rhine at Mannheim on the pontoon bridges about a day after the infantry went through. Mannheim was a town about the size of Milwaukee. It was pretty flat. No buildings standing. We moved on and were stationed out at the SS barracks out at Secondheim, which is on the Neckar River about halfway between Mannheim and Heidelberg. I still have a wall clock here that I found in one of the rooms at the SS barracks that I shipped home to my sister. She kept an eye on it for me until I got home.

Well, to get back to the Meuniers, I kind of lost track of them after the war, except that I used to write them Christmas cards occasionally. Then I started to get involved with skiing. Bob Fish and I got out to Aspen in 1953, when there was hardly anything in town. One thing led to another and finally back in the 1960s I started to spend some time skiing overseas. As a result, I had an opportunity to renew my acquaintance with the Meuniers in Dijon and always used that as a place to stop over when we finished skiing either in Switzerland or Austria or France. We developed quite a rapport. I usually spent two or three days with the family. Gaston and Marie had never learned any more English and I hadn't learned too much more French, but we still maintained our acquaintanceship.

Gaston left his widow in good shape financially. She occupies now a third-floor apartment in downtown Dijon which, as you can imagine, in these older French buildings that were built a thousand or fifteen hundred years ago, have been updated as best they can be. We find out, after several visits, and admiring all of her antiques, that she apparently came from a fairly well-to-do farm family. Her mother and grandmother were great aficionados of Louis the XIV, I think, artifacts of one type or another. Her apartment is well loaded with bronze lions and tigers and other juicy Louis XIV artifacts, furniture and things like that.

When Arlene and I made our first visit some seven or eight years ago, Marie decided to make a major function out of the operation. She had the three kids and all their families and children over to one of the local better known hotels for a Sunday afternoon soiree. By this time, Rene, the oldest of the three children, is now forty-five years old, and Zet, the second oldest, about a year or two younger, and then Dee Dee, the youngest of the kids, who has gotten married and has a couple of kids of his own – they were all there with their families, so we had quite a reunion.

Every time we go back there now, we always stop in to see Marie, who likes to have company. Zet and her family live up in Lyon and the other two boys live in town, but Marie is now probably seventy-nine or eighty years old and doesn't get around too much any more. About three or four years ago, she insisted that she wanted to come over and visit us, which we were happy to accommodate. Lo and behold, on my birthday, October 15 of 1982, I believe it was, Marie arrived on an airplane from Dijon. This was her first time in an airplane and her first time out of France. She spent a couple of weeks with us here. We took her to all the football games and bought her a Bucky Badger hat. She thoroughly enjoyed herself.

She now calls us periodically, at least once every week or two, to give us an update on the weather and everything else in Dijon, and we always make it a point, whenever we get overseas, to visit her. She and all the older people in Dijon are still quite outspoken and very faithful to all of the GIs who came over to liberate them, the country. The younger kids don't pay too much attention to the GIs any more, I don't think, but the older people still like to see us over there.

As a result of our skiing, we have also developed some fine friendships with a couple from Nance who just retired but have a condominium up at Valles d'Air. Also our German friends from Munich that we ski with and come over quite often. We all ski together and have quite a time.

I think you're ambassadors of good will, with those ties with Europe. When I think of your family, I think of civic contributions, too: you and your father. One thing I think of is the Capitol Theatre, which is now, of course, our Madison Civic Center. Didn't your father have something to do with the Capitol Theatre?

After A. O. and Sol had gotten the bank started, back in the 1930s, they had also become involved in the moving picture business. At one time they jointly owned and operated the Strand and the Parkway and the Madison Theater. Subsequently they felt that State Street could support one more good theater and so they were instrumental in building the Capitol Theatre.

Excuse me. Will you remind us where the Strand and Parkway were? I think people don't know.

The Strand is still in its present location. The Parkway was located right next to what was then the City Hall, at the corner of Wisconsin Avenue and East Mifflin Street, where the present Woolworth dime store exists. The Parkway was part of what is now just about where the Brathaus II is located. That was the site of Al Jolson's first talkie movie back in, I think, it was 1928, or 1926, somewhere along there.

The Capitol Theatre was completed just before the Depression hit. In fact, it opened in 1928. I remember being in the front row in the balcony on opening night. 1928 and 1929, of course, were very prosperous years and then the roof fell in on everything. As A. O. told me later, he sold his interest in the Capitol Theatre. I don't know how much it was. I don't know if it was fifty percent, or maybe somewhat less. When things got really tough in 1930 and 1931 and 1932, he sold his interest in the theater for a buck and walked away from it.

But at that time they were the Saxe theaters, which was a chain operated out of Milwaukee, and the Orpheum was really quite a structure. The architecture at that time for theaters was big on Moorish architecture. Of course, it's all, or most of it, is long gone now, but everything in the theater, all the tile and the fountains and everything, all had to come from Seville, Spain, which really was supposed to impress the customers. It was really a shame to see all that stuff eliminated when the building was remodeled as the Civic Center to combine it with the Montgomery Ward store, but that's the way things happen. That was the glorious end for the Capitol Theatre, and it's really been put to very good use.

That makes me think of State Street. During the 1960s, when there was so much disturbance – civil disobedience, I guess one calls it – on State Street, how about your bank? I realize it was nearer the Square than a lot of it, but were you affected by any of that?

We didn't have too many bad encounters at that time. The kids and the war zone were all on the lower State Street area. Even with the window trashings that went on for quite a while, we weren't affected until finally near the end of the whole thing. One night we got each one of our main plate glass windows on State Street... all five of them got a rock through the window. That's when we put up the screens to cover that situation. That was the only incident and certainly after that the whole thing blew over. We, of course, enjoyed the marches up and down State Street from time to time, but really nothing ever happened. We had pretty good, very good rapport with the students. A lot of them cashed their checks with us and carried accounts with us. We've always treated them as adult people who are supposed to know what they're doing and

we've never really had any real problems with students, either then or later.

Just as a brief summary: some people might remember some of Dad's brothers and sisters. Dad was the oldest boy in the family. The number two boy was Willie, William Paunack, who became quite an architect. In fact, he and his co-partner who designed the home which has been converted into the shop for Bethel Lutheran Church, have their names on a plaque out in the front yard there.

Willie, whom I never knew, was quite a sportsman, along with my Dad. Since they lived at the corner of Park and University Avenue, it was very handy for everybody in the neighborhood, the Mautzes and everybody else, to keep their duck and fishing boats moored down at the end of Park Street where the Union is now. Picnic Point, of course, was a great canvasback point. Anybody who knows anything about duck hunting, of course, all know what canvasback are. It was standard procedure back in those days for A. O. and Willie, and, I guess, the Mautzes and the Hobbinses and all the rest of the big shooters around town, to go duck hunting on Fourth Lake, better known now as Mendota. Of course, one of the prime shooting areas was Picnic Point.

Well, it so happened, according to my Dad, that one day in November he and Willie – and I don't know who else was with them; I think Rip., the youngest brother, hadn't gone to Annapolis yet – were out shooting cans off of Picnic Point and somebody knocked down a big buck can as a cripple. Willie volunteered to take the duck boat and go after him, which he did. He got the bird all right. But just about the time he got back into shore, why, the boat swamped. It was pretty cold and windy, but he was able to get ashore all right. They started a bonfire to try to warm up a little bit, because the water was pretty cold. They finally all packed up and went home. But Willie contacted pneumonia and it was not too long after that that he died from the pneumonia that he contracted from chasing that old canvasback out in University Bay.

The younger brother, Rip, after whom I'm named, Robert R., wanted to go to Annapolis. He was kind of tall and skinny and he couldn't pass the physical. They were very GI in those days about being the proper weight for your proper height. I think it was Bob La Follette, old Bob, who had arranged an appointment to West Point for him. After two or three examinations, the situation had gotten rather desperate. One of A. O.'s favorite stories was telling how he fattened up Rip. on bananas and milk. The day he went down for his third and final weigh-in at the armory somewhere and for two days before he went down, Rip ate nothing but bananas until they came out of his ears. They finally went down and passed the exam and so Rip finally entered the Naval Academy, where he became interested in aviation.

We buried him. a couple of years ago. He was going to be ninety-three on July 4, which was his birthday, but he missed that by about two weeks; he was ninety-two, almost ninety-three, when he passed away. Arlene and I went down and attended the funeral in Pensacola. He's buried on the grounds down there. He was very active in early Naval aviation and was the first executive officer on the U. S.S. Langley, which was the first airplane carrier. Also in the Naval Air Museum in Pensacola, they have his picture there and the first graduating class of naval air cadets.

Rip. spent a lot of time with dirigibles back in those days. One of his favorite stories is one time they were flying over Washington, D. C. in a two-engine dirigible and one of the motors caught fire. He volunteered to climb out on the rigging with a fire extinguisher and put out the fire. They gave him, not the Medal of Honor, but some kind of a medal for doing that. He served twice as the commandant of the Pensacola Air Base. He then retired but was called back out of retirement for the big war. He married a girl from Pensacola and spent the remaining years of his

life down there, after he got too old to go hunting and fishing out west on the Klamath River in Sun Valley.

The girls all married local people here, except my Aunt Ida, who never did get married.

I guess about the last thing that A. O. would have wanted to see was the way State Street tapered off after the shopping centers went in. I think it was 1963, I guess it was, wasn't it? Or was it 1973 when the shopping centers, East Towne and West Towne, went in and drained all the activity from downtown Madison. Things have started to turn around, hopefully, with the new State Street and the mall and the concourse. We're now seeing considerable activity downtown again. Hopefully the trend will continue. The Square, from a commercial point of view, is still a pretty bleak area. State Street itself shows lots of signs of activity and new vim and vigor. Maybe this trend will continue up around the Square. If we have enough staying power, maybe this will all come back to the days when downtown Madison was the center of activity. We are hopeful that we can regenerate some of those days again.