



Oral histories on work and daily life in the Brandywine Valley 1970.370

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Audiovisual Collections

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Wilmington, Delaware 19807
askhagley@hagley.org
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Summary Information

Repository:	Audiovisual Collections
Creator:	Eleutherian Mills-Hagley Foundation
Title:	Oral histories on work and daily life in the Brandywine Valley
ID:	1970.370
Date [inclusive]:	1954-1990
Physical Description:	5 Linear Feet
General Physical Description note:	189 sound cassettes (90 min.) : analog. ; 83 sound tape reels : 3.75 ips. ; 29 sound tape reels : 1.875 ips. ; 1 sound tape reel : 7.5 ips. ; 2 sound cassettes (120 min.) : analog. ; 1 sound cassette (30 min.) : analog. ; 5 sound cassettes (60 min.) : analog.
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	The collection comprises approximately 200 oral history interviews with 152 individuals conducted by museum staff between 1954 and 1990. The majority of the individuals interviewed had either worked at the DuPont Company powder yards on Brandywine Creek during the yards' final decades of operation or had lived in the surrounding communities, although the collection also includes interviews with those who worked in other local industries. The interviews are largely biographical in nature covering a period from about 1900 to 1960 and address a wide range of subjects relating to daily life and work in the Brandywine Valley.

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Historical Note

Museum staff conducted these oral history interviews between 1954 and 1990. The staff primarily spoke with individuals who had worked at the DuPont Company powder yards on Brandywine Creek during the yards' final decades of operation or who had lived near the Hagley site as spouses or children of DuPont Co. workers. The interviews address the time period from approximately 1900 to 1960. Others interviewed included Luther D. Reed (1885-1975), the first museum director, as well as former employees or acquaintances of Louise du Pont Crowninshield (1877-1958), the last owner of the Eleutherian Mills residence. Finally, other interviewees were selected for their connections of local historical significance, including a journalist, early broadcaster, and former employees or executives

of Hodgson Woolen Mill, Lobdell Car Wheel Company, the Longwood estate, Hoopes Brother & Darlington, and Joseph Bancroft & Sons. The interviews were conducted to support the museum's programs and interpretation as well as to collect and preserve first-hand accounts of work and daily life in New Castle County, Delaware and Chester County, Pennsylvania in the first decades of the twentieth century.

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Scope and Content

The collection comprises approximately 200 interviews with 152 individuals. Some individuals were interviewed on multiple occasions over the course of months or years. The interviews are largely biographical in nature and address a wide range of subjects relating to life and work in the Brandywine Valley during the early twentieth century.

Amongst those with direct ties to the DuPont Company and its Brandywine Creek powder yards, common interview themes include the landscape of the yards, wages and hours, explosions, daily work responsibilities, camaraderie amongst employees, employee recreation, and their relationship with their employers.

Aside from the work life at the DuPont Company, the interviews address the social and cultural lives of those living in the following communities surrounding the mills on Brandywine Creek: Breck's Lane, Charles Banks, Chicken Alley, Free Park, Henry Clay Village, Long Row, Rising Sun Lane, Squirrel Run, Wagoner's Row, Walker's Banks, and Upper Banks. The interviews delve into the community life and identity of the interviewees, touching on such subjects as holiday traditions, medical care, local colloquialisms, courtship and marriage, immigration, childhood, education, religion, mercantile shops and merchants, transportation, and recreational activities such as sledding, swimming, ice skating, sports, local clubs, and church events. Some interviews mention the impact of specific local and national events, such as explosions at the powder yards, political elections, and Prohibition.

The interviews also provide detailed descriptions of the domestic labor of all members of the interviewee's household, including meal preparation, sewing and other handicrafts, shopping trips, laundry, soap making, gardening, sanitation, and maintenance of hygiene. The interviews further include descriptions of furnishings and interior and exterior household architecture.

The former employees of Louise du Pont Crowninshield interviewed include a former secretary, carpenter, groundskeeper of Eleutherian Mills, a gardener who had worked for the Crowninshield family in Massachusetts, and a chauffeur who had worked in both Delaware and Boca Grande, Florida. Their interviews describe their work and include perceptions of their employer. Interviews with Crowninshield's niece and a cousin by marriage focus largely on their relationships with Crowninshield.

In his interviews, Luther D. Reed, the first director of the Hagley Museum, recollects events surrounding the formation of the Eleutherian Mills-Hagley Foundation and the original construction of the Hagley Museum. He also describes his earlier career with the Dupont Company in multiple roles at

various locations, including Gibbstown, New Jersey; Hopewell, Virginia; Arlington, New Jersey; and Wilmington, Delaware.

The collection also includes interviews with individuals connected with other local industries. This includes interviews with two former executives of Joseph Bancroft & Sons, Co., whose textile finishing plant was located downstream from the DuPont powder yards on Brandywine Creek. They primarily discuss management strategy and decisions between the 1920s and the company's sale to Indian Head Mills, Inc. in 1961. Other interviews address the work environment and corporate history of the Lobdell Car Wheel Company, working life at the Hodgson Woolen Mill, and the manufacture of wagon wheels at Hoopes Brother & Darlington in West Chester, Pennsylvania. In his interview, Willard S. Wilson details his career as a radio personality and broadcast journalist in the Wilmington area. An interview with a local journalist, Frederick K. Reybold, describes the newspaper business in Wilmington.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Audiovisual Collections

PO Box 3630

Wilmington, Delaware 19807

askhagley@hagley.org

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Use Restrictions

Copyright held by Hagley Museum and Library.

Existence and Location of Copies

Interviews and transcripts available online in the [Hagley Digital Archives](#).

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Related Materials

Related Material

Photographs of oral history interviewees (Accession 1970.035), Audiovisual Collections Department, Hagley Museum and Library

Separated Materials

Oral history interviews (Accession 2026), Manuscripts and Archives Department, Hagley Museum and Library.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Oral histories
- Gunpowder industry
- Weapons industry -- Employees
- Explosions.
- Dwellings
- Social history
- Community life
- E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Company. Brandywine Works

Collection Inventory

E.G. Ackart, 1961 September 14

box 1

reel 1

Scope and Content

Interviewer: Norman B. Wilkinson and unidentified participant

E.G. Ackart recounts his working career at DuPont in his interview. He discusses anecdotes from high school, differences in working for DuPont vs. other companies, the Barksdale plant, and the structure of the engineering department and its consolidation in 1916. He also describes the company during wartime, his various colleagues

throughout his working career, the development of industrial engineering, and the relationship between DuPont and General Motors. He also discusses the development of nylon, rayon, and other important materials, including how DuPont's chemists and physicists utilized ideas they found working abroad to create them. He recounts building new plants and his interactions with members of the du Pont family.

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W. Stewart Allmond, 1969 June 10 July 3

box 2

reel 31

Existence and Location of Copies:

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[Transcript available.](#)

Biographical Note

William Stewart Allmond (1891-1973) grew up in Newark and Wilmington, Delaware, and educated in mechanical engineering at Delaware College, later the University of Delaware. He eventually became the vice president of Lobdell Car Wheel Company, the family business on his mother's side.

Scope and Content

Interviewers: John Scafidi and Faith Pizor in Newark, Delaware

Allmond's interviews detail the work environment at the Wilmington plant site in the early 1900s until the 1940s; various markets for car wheels; the expansion of the company and acquisition of Morton Poole Company and Nazel Engineering Works; and the effects of the Great Depression on Lobdell, which led to the company's purchase by Walter Lippincott and the United Engineering and Foundry Company in the late 1940s.

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Walter Aurand, 1981 May 14

box 4

Tape 87

Existence and Location of Copies note:

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[Transcript available.](#)

Biographical Note

Walter Aurand (b. 1891) was a chemist at the Experimental Station from 1915 to 1917 who worked making tracer and incendiary bullets.

Scope and Content

Interviewer: Dorothy Tremaine in Wilmington, Delaware

Influenced by his high school teacher and educated in chemistry at the University of Delaware, Walter describes life in Wilmington during the early twentieth century. His interview details a work atmosphere at DuPont, a powder explosion that killed three women, testing the bullets in New Castle, and safety in the workplace.

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Edward Bader, 1956 November 23

box 2

reel 32

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[Transcript available.](#)

Biographical Note

Edward Bader (b. 1872) was a machinist at Hagley, hired directly by Francis G. du Pont, who was impressed with his looks and his drive. Bader helped to build Centennial Gate in 1902 as well as the gasoline locomotive.

Scope and Content

Interviewers: Joseph P. Monigle and Norman B. Wilkinson

Bader's interview offers details on many aspects of workers' lives in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including pay rates, the workers' homes, and the conditions in the laboratory. He recounts many different explosions, including the 1906 explosion that killed "Buck" Buchanan, the 1908 Press Room Explosion, the Packing House Explosion, one that occurred in the mill, and another that occurred in 1915. His interview also details his impressions of various members of the du Pont family, including Francis G., Lamot, Alfred I., Pierre S., Alexis, and Francis I.

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Charles A. Baldo, 1984 July 18

box 4

Tape 88

Existence and Location of Copies:

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[Transcript available.](#)

Scope and Content

Interviewer: Dorothy Johnson in Wilmington, Delaware

Charles A. Baldo describes the company house rented for \$3.50/month in Walker's Banks in which his grandfather, Giacomo ("Jockamo") Baldo (b. 1885), a powder mill worker, and his wife, Mathilda de Loretto Baldo, lived. The Baldos were immigrants from Rome, Italy, and they never learned English, but had congenial relationships with their neighbors. Baldo describes the garden and its herbs and vegetables in detail, as well as the layout of the house, including the shed and outhouse outside, the coal and wood burning stove, and the dirt floors in the cellar. Baldo describes his childhood visiting his parents, including sledding and playing ball and tag with other kids at the mill and swimming and fishing in the Brandywine. He details the daily life of workers and their families during the twentieth century.

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Charles A. Baldo, 1984 July 18

box 4

Tape 89

Scope and Content

Interviewer: Dorothy Johnson in Wilmington, Delaware

Charles A. Baldo continues description of his grandparents' company house in Walker's Banks. This second part of the interview covers Brandywine floods, home remedies for illnesses, camaraderie among the neighbors, and various organizations that his grandparents belonged to, including the Sons of Italy, baseball teams, and St. Joseph's Church. Baldo also discusses his father, who was a chemist at the Experimental Station.

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[Transcript available.](#)

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Harry Barry, 1974 May 1

box 6

Tape 245

Biographical Note

Harry Barry was the gardener for the Crowninshield family in Massachusetts, a position held by his father and grandfather.

Scope and Content

Interviewer: Mary Sam Ward

The relationship between the Barrys and the Crowninshields began around 1871. Barry describes his first meeting with Mrs. Crowninshield after her honeymoon in 1900. They relocated to Wilmington in 1910, where he was present for the restoration of Eleutherian Mills. His interview details his impressions of Louise du Pont Crowninshield, including her discouragement during the redecoration process and philanthropic activities in Boca Grande, as well as her general disposition and enjoyment of flowers and antiquing. There is also a short three minute interview with a former gardener of Mrs. Crowninshield who is unidentified.

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Elizabeth Beacom, 1967 May 29

box 2

reel 33

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[Transcript available.](#)

Biographical Note

Elizabeth Beacom (b. 1891) was born into an Irish family who lived in Squirrel Run, near the DuPont Company Hagley Yards area. Her father worked in the DuPont refinery, and later as a watchman after he was injured in an explosion.

Scope and Content

Interviewers: Norman B. Wilkinson and Joseph P. Monigle in Wilmington, Delaware

Ms. Beacom recounts details about her father's work, life in Squirrel Run, an 1890 explosion, memories of Louise Crowninshield, and her own education and career which included work as Mrs. Crowninshield's secretary.

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Elizabeth Beacom and William H. Buchanan, 19581967

box 4

Tape 91

Scope and Content

Beacom recounts details about her father's work, life in Squirrel Run, an 1890 explosion, memories of Louise Crowninshield, and her own education and career which included work as Mrs. Crowninshield's secretary.

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W.J. Beadle, 1962 June 19

box 1

reel 2

Biographical Note

W.J. Beadle attended MIT for chemical and electrical engineering and then worked for DuPont following graduation and after serving in World War I. He chose the company after a successful internship with another company in the Wilmington area.

Scope and Content

Interviewer: Norman B. Wilkinson

Beadle describes his career with DuPont in the paint operations division, and later the development department and the treasury department. He also describes DuPont's relationship with General Motors, how DuPont acquired different companies and expanded in the 1920s and 1930s, and the motivations of the management, including the trajectory of development within the corporation. He describes the beginnings of DuPont International, his movement to the financial aspect of the business, his impressions of du Pont family members, and developing pension and trust plans.

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Chandler Becker

box 3

reel 59

Biographical Note

Chandler Becker was the supervisor of ground maintenance at Eleutherian Mills.

Scope and Content

Interviewer: Mary Sam Ward in Wilmington, Delaware

Becker describes how he was hired as the assistant superintendent of Eleutherian Mills and how Louise du Pont Crowninshield took an interest in him and asked him to be the groundskeeper. He describes the unkempt state of the grounds when he arrived in 1928 and his plans to improve them, as well as how his job has changed over time. He also discusses his impressions of Mrs. Crowninshield, his home along the Brandywine, improvements made to the house throughout the years, and preparations for going to Boca Grande.

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Ferdinand D. Bickel, 1959 February 201959 February 27

box 1

reel 3

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[Transcript available.](#)

Biographical Note

Ferdinand D. Bickel (b. 1892) was a design engineer with the DuPont Company beginning in 1929, later transferring to the explosives department in 1930. Originally from Wisconsin and a graduate of the civil engineering program at the University of Wisconsin, Bickel worked for a steel corporation as a civil engineer and then with the Oliver Iron Mining Company for 13 years before accepting a position at DuPont.

Scope and Content

Interviewers: Norman B. Wilkinson and Joseph P. Monigle in Wilmington, Delaware

Bickel details different developments in the explosives industry, including the development of Duco and Nitramon, the company's explosives training, the DuPont Company culture, and the relationship between branches of the overall organization. He ultimately transferred back to Wilmington in 1944.

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Emily Peoples Blackwell, 1970 July 6

box 1

reel 4

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[Transcript available.](#)

Biographical Note

Emily Peoples Blackwell (1887-1979) was the daughter of a powder mill worker, Robert Peoples, and his wife, Mary Ann McElhinney, both immigrants from Ireland. She grew up in a company house in Squirrel Run with her six brothers and sister.

Scope and Content

Interviewers: Jackie A. Hinsley and Mary Sam Ward

Blackwell details various childhood experiences, including playing and sledding in Squirrel Run, paddle boating in the Brandywine, attending Christ Church, and studying at Alexis I. du Pont School and Beacom's Business School. She also discusses interactions with members of the du Pont family, including Alfred I., Bessie G., Madeline, and Louise Crowninshield. Her interview provides details into daily life at Squirrel Run and of powder workers' families.

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Emily Peoples Blackwell (duplicate), 1970 July 6

box 4

Tape 92

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Emily Peoples Blackwell, 1973

box 4

Tape 93-94

Scope and Content

In the second part of her interview, Blackwell discusses her family history, work as a stenographer at Hagley, and Christmas traditions in Henry Clay Village, including decorating the tree, baking and cooking, and attending church. She also recounts a brief history of the du Pont family as well as how she met her husband.

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E.K. Bolton, 19[61] September 14

box 1

reel 1

Biographical Note

E.K. Bolton began working at the Experimental Station in 1915, primarily working with propane and acetone.

Scope and Content

Interviewer: Norman B. Wilkinson

Bolton describes his working career and research in the chemical department, studying organic chemistry in Germany at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute, and the company during World War I. He also describes various colleagues during his career. He also discusses the state of the industry during his career at DuPont, both in the United States and abroad.

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Franklin W. Bradway, 1958 February 13

box 1

reel 5

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[Transcript available.](#)

Biographical Note

Franklin W. Bradway (b. 1890), born to a father who had worked for DuPont at Carney's Point, graduated from high school at a young age and began working at Carney's Point himself in 1905. He was transferred to the laboratory and became the assistant chemist at the smokeless powder plant DuPont intended to build in Brazil in 1911. He saved money and attended college at the University of Virginia for chemistry, but was recalled to work in the smokeless powder plant during World War I in 1915.

Scope and Content

Interviewers: Norman B. Wilkinson and Joseph P. Monigle

Bradway details DuPont's contract work with the Allied governments during both world wars and the Korean War, the development of the plant at Old Hickory, and the rise and fall of the sporting powder business. He eventually became a manager of the smokeless powder division and later the vicechairman of the Board of Benefits and Pensions.

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Franklin W. Bradway, 1958 February 27

box 1

reel 6

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[Transcript available.](#)

Scope and Content

Interviewers: Norman B. Wilkinson and Joseph P. Monigle

Bickel's second interview details DuPont's contract work with the Allied governments during both world wars and the Korean War, the development of the plant at Old Hickory, and the rise and fall of the sporting powder business. He eventually became a manager of the smokeless powder division and later the vicechairman of the Board of Benefits and Pensions.

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John Gilbert Braun, 1973 April 17

box 3

reel 60

Biographical Note

John Gilbert Braun was a powder mill worker at the Belin Works in Moosic, Pennsylvania who eventually became a foreman on the powder line.

Scope and Content

Interviewers: Robert A. Howard and James B. Akerman

Braun's interview describes the changes in the equipment that have occurred since his time working and when the interview was conducted in 1973. He also describes his experience as a black man working for this company, workers' behavior after an explosion, the most desirable positions within the organization, and different elements of the powder mill process, including clean up. The second part of his interview discusses the place of the workers in the community, maintenance of various machines, and testing of the finished powders.

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Ralph Beech Brown, 1981 April 28

box 4

Tape 95

Existence and Location of Copies:

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[Transcript available.](#)

Biographical Note

Ralph Beech Brown (b. 1900) began working at Hagley Yards beginning in 1916 in the box shop where cans that held the powder were manufactured.

Scope and Content

Interviewer: Dorothy Tremaine in Wilmington, Delaware

Brown's interview details his childhood in Newark, Cecil County, and Wilmington, his experiences as a carnival worker, the working environment and explosions at the powder mill, and his experience as an electrician at the Playhouse Theatre.

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Eugene Bruno, 1981 March 12

box 4

Tape 96-97

Existence and Location of Copies:

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[Transcript available.](#)

Biographical Note

Eugene Bruno (b. 1915) was the son of Frederick and Margaret Bruno, a powder mill worker and his wife; he was born in Squirrel Run and lived there with his family until he was five.

Scope and Content

Interviewer: Dorothy Tremaine in Wilmington, Delaware

Bruno's interview details his childhood in Wilmington, Delaware. He describes the homes in Squirrel Run, how the children used to spend the weekends there after the move having picnics and watching the adults play bocce ball, and his job working at Hodginson Brothers Woolen Mills. He also describes Wilmington in the early twentieth century, particularly the area of Little Italy, where he grew up.

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Eugene Bruno, 1984 June 11

box 4

Tape 98-99

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[Transcript available.](#)

Scope and Content

Interviewer: Dorothy Johnson in Wilmington, Delaware

Bruno's second interview goes into greater detail about his early childhood at Hagley. He describes details such as his father's winemaking hobby, his mother's housework and food storage, and traditions and customs observed by workers' families at Squirrel Run.

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William H. Buchanan, 1958 August 7

box 2

reel 34

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[Transcript available.](#)

Biographical Note

William H. Buchanan (b. 1892) grew up in Rising Sun Lane and Breck's Lane near the Hagley area; his father worked in the DuPont black powder yards.

Scope and Content

Interviewers: Norman B. Wilkinson and Joseph P. Monigle

Buchanan's interview touches on many subjects including details of his father's work, his reminisces about home and social life in the community, his memories of Alfred I. du Pont, and details about powder yard explosions.

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William H. Buchanan, 1974 July 25

box 6

Tape 246

Scope and Content

Interviewers: Norman B. Wilkinson, Jackie A. Hinsley, and James B. Akerman

Buchanan describes his father's career, the layout of the powder yards, functions of various equipment, and the working environment at Hagley.

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Dennis Buckley, 1975 January 10

box 6

Tape 247

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[Transcript available.](#)

Biographical Note

Dennis Buckley (b. 1899) had a mother who worked for Alfred I. du Pont, and grew up in Mount Airy, spending much of his childhood with the mill children.

Scope and Content

Interviewer: Mary Sam Ward in Wilmington, Delaware

Buckley's interview details his impressions of the du Pont family members, his job in the mailroom of the company, working for the Diamond Ice and Coal Company, and running a liquor store.

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Joseph M. Campbell, 1957 August 15

box 2

reel 35

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[Transcript available.](#)

Biographical Note

Joseph M. Campbell (b. 1880) began working for DuPont in 1898 at Hagley in the Packing House, Mixing House, and Coal House. He also worked at Winterthur for Colonel Henry du Pont and for Miss Evalina du Pont. He became an electrician and later worked at the Experimental Station.

Scope and Content

Interviewers: Norman B. Wilkinson and Joseph P. Monigle

Campbell describes the working conditions at Hagley and at the Experimental Station, attempts to unionize, his interactions

with the du Pont family, and moving into the neighborhood at Squirrel Run, including the various nationalities that lived there and what the workers would do for fun.

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James Cammock, 1984 April 9

box 4

Tape 100

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[Transcript available.](#)

Biographical Note

James Cammock (b. 1895) was born to Irish immigrants David and Katherine Cammock in Breck's Lane. His father was a powder mill worker who was killed following an explosion in 1906. Following the death of his father, Cammock mowed grass for his neighbors and delivered papers to make ends meet, and Lammot du Pont furnished his brother with a job. Cammock began working for DuPont in 1911 in the mail room.

Scope and Content

Interviewer: James Bond in Elsmere, Delaware

Cammock describes daily life on the Brandywine for families of mill workers; celebrations for the Fourth of July and Memorial Day; and general descriptions of the mills and his home at Breck's Lane.

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James Cammock, 1984 July 9

box 4

Tape 101

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[Transcript available.](#)

Scope and Content

Interviewer: Al Paine in Elsmere, Delaware

Cammock details his experience growing up at Hagley, including games the children would play, various details about his mother's housekeeping, and the community life at the mills. He also discusses nightlife and entertainment in Wilmington (including the movie theaters and the Blue

Rocks), the growing prevalence of automobiles, and other day-to-day activities.

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James Cammock, 1984 July 24

box 4

Tape 102

Existence and Location of Copies:

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[Transcript available.](#)

Scope and Content

Interviewer: Karen Perkins in Elsmere, Delaware

Cammock provides many details about how he tended to his garden at Breck's Lane, including the procurement of seeds, various equipment used, standard gardening clothes, different types of fruits and vegetables and flowers planted, fertilizing practices, and the harvest and storage of crops. He also discusses maintaining a chicken coop.

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James Cammock, Herb Devenney, Edward Devenney, and Jim Kindbeiter, 1984 May 9

box 4

Tape 103-104

Existence and Location of Copies:

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[Transcript available.](#)

Scope and Content

Interviewers: Frank McKelvey, Jill MacKenzie, and Linda Harris

Herb Devenney, Ed Devenney, James Cammock, and James Kindbeiter, sons of powder mill workers, reminisce about growing up at Hagley in this group interview and tour of the museum grounds. Some topics of discussion include daily life of the workers and their families, identification of various families and their living spaces, schedules and duties of the powder mill workers, and various changes that had occurred in the last century.

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A.D. Chandler, 1962 June 21

box 1

reel 2

Scope and Content

Interviewer: F.L. Battan

A.D. Chandler describes his relationship with P.S. du Pont and Mrs. du Pont, both of whom he met in 1922. He describes his personality and interests, including history and book collecting. He also discusses his family life, political views, and social contributions. He also describes du Pont's involvement with the anti-prohibition movement. He also talks about how DuPont's management style changed throughout the years, and how it acquired various other companies. Chandler touches on Mr. du Pont's interest in sports and music. He also describes his interactions with other du Pont family members.

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Catherine Cheney, 1964 April 3

box 2

reel 36

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[Transcript available.](#)

Biographical Note

Catherine Cheney (b. 1905) was the granddaughter of Irish immigrant James Cheney and the daughter of George Cheney, both guards and watchmen for the DuPont company. Her father became the janitor of Christ Church and later a tax collector when the powder mill closed in 1918, and the family moved to Free Park.

Scope and Content

Interviewers: Norman B. Wilkinson and George Gibson

Cheney describes the family home in detail, taking the trolley into town, how the family used heat, gas, and drinking water, her interactions with members of the du Pont family, and various ways that the children would entertain themselves.

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Catherine Cheney, 1981 January 29

box 4

Tape 106-107

Scope and Content

Interviewer: Dorothy Tremaine

Cheney discusses various household items her home contained and how they have changed. She also discusses baking bread, an explosion that caused her family to move, making soap for laundry, healthcare, her family's relationship with the du Pont family, her education, and her growing up years along the Brandywine, including chores and entertainments.

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Catherine Cheney, 1983 December 19

box 4

Tape 108-109

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Scope and Content

Interviewer: Frank McKelvey

Cheney gives a detailed description of the houses and neighborhood and how it has changed. She discusses growing up in Free Park, and the various activities in which the children would engage, as well as the garden and her education. Her interview also gives specific details about life in Free Park, including toilet facilities, water sanitation, and waste.

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Catherine Cheney, 1984 January 23

box 4

Tape 110

Scope and Content

Interviewer: Karen Perkins in New Castle, Delaware

Cheney discusses gardening in the community, the layout of the Brandywine villages, the chicken house, and fear of explosions. She describes her family's garden in detail, particularly various types of crops planted.

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Catherine Cheney, 1984 February 15

box 4

Tape 111

Scope and Content

Interviewer: Karen Perkins in New Castle, Delaware

Cheney details gardening at Hagley, including using fertilizer and lime on plants, food storage during winter, gardening tools, and using the moon to determine planting cycles. She also discusses laundry, cooking, and various other household chores.

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Catherine Cheney, 1984 March 26

box 4

Tape 112

Scope and Content

Interviewer: Karen Perkins in New Castle, Delaware

Cheney provides details of her life at Free Park, including fear of typhoid in the water supply, delivery of groceries and other items, her sibling dynamic, She details gardening at Hagley, including drying and storing herbs, what kinds of plants were chosen for the garden, different gardening tools, and composting.

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Catherine Cheney, 1987 February 3

box 4

Tape 113

Scope and Content

Interviewers: Dorothy Johnson and Sally Wright

Cheney discusses details of her childhood in Free Park, including the family's canning traditions and chicken coop, how they made their clothing or shopped in Wilmington, parties and events at Hagley Community House, an explosion that injured her foot, and her education, and later teaching career, at Alexis I. du Pont School. Her interview details various Christmas traditions during her childhood, including how the tree was decorated, baking cookies and cakes, gift exchanges, the candy and orange that the children received

from Henry Francis du Pont, and how homemade ornaments were created.

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Catherine Cheney, 1987 October 2

box 4

Tape 114

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Scope and Content

Interviewers: Dorothy Johnson and Sally Wright in New Castle, Delaware

Cheney discusses some of her family's Christmas traditions as well as those of Hagley in general. Moreover, she details childhood memories of everyday life in Free Park, including the games the children played, chores, and various childhood illnesses. Her interview also discusses her teacher training at the University of Delaware and her later teaching career.

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Edward B. Cheney, 1958 June 5

box 2

reel 38

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Biographical Note

Edward B. Cheney (b. 1888) was the son of Irish immigrant James Cheney, who worked at a watchman and storekeeper for the DuPont company as well as sexton of Christ Church, and grew up in Squirrel Run.

Scope and Content

Interviewers: Norman B. Wilkinson and Joseph P. Monigle in Wilmington, Delaware

Cheney describes the neighborhoods at Squirrel Run and Wagoner's Row and the families who lived there. He describes

how the du Pont family arranged for his brother to learn Greek because it interested him. He also notes how conflicts were resolved among workers and their families. He also includes poems about his childhood. His interview details his education, interactions with du Pont family members, including Mrs. Crowninshield and her Sunday School class, an accident concerning his brother George, and his later career with the company.

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Edward B. Cheney, 1958 June 13

box 2

reel 39

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Scope and Content

Interviewers: Norman B. Wilkinson and Joseph P. Monigle in Wilmington, Delaware

Cheney describes the neighborhoods at Squirrel Run and Wagoner's Row and the families who lived there. He describes how the du Pont family arranged for his brother to learn Greek because it interested him. He also notes how conflicts were resolved among workers and their families. He also includes poems about his childhood. His interview details his education, interactions with du Pont family members, including Mrs. Crowninshield and her Sunday School class, an accident concerning his brother George, and his later career with the company.

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George M. Christ, 1969 July 23

box 1

reel 7

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Scope and Content

Interviewers: Norman B. Wilkinson and Joseph P. Monigle in West Chester, Pennsylvania

George M. Christ, a worker in the blacksmith shop at Hoopes Brothers and Darlington, describes his career manufacturing wagon wheels. In his interview he details the wheel-making process, various types of tires, the rate of production of wagon

wheels, and how the workers utilized the shrinker machine to make wheels.

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William T. Cloud, 1958 March 31

box 2

reel 40

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Biographical Note

William T. Cloud (b. 1892) grew up in Wilmington, Delaware, studied stenography at Goldey College, and utilized his degree to do clerical work in the explosives department for DuPont beginning in 1908. He later became the secretary for T. Coleman du Pont, managing his road and engineering aspirations. He transferred back to the explosives department and later to the byproducts section of this department. By 1917, he had accepted a position as assistant superintendent at Wayne Black Powder Mills during World War I, ending his career as acting superintendent at Brandywine.

Scope and Content

Interviewers: Norman B. Wilkinson and Joseph P. Monigle in Wilmington, Delaware

Cloud describes T. Coleman du Pont's road project in Sussex County, including interactions with the farmers; the political climate of the early 1900s in Delaware; the function of the byproducts section; and the dynamics, exports, and events at the Wayne Black Powder Mills and the Brandywine Plant.

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William T. Cloud, 1958 April 7

box 2

reel 41

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Scope and Content

Interviewers: Norman B. Wilkinson and Joseph P. Monigle in Wilmington, Delaware

Cloud describes T. Coleman du Pont's road project in Sussex County, including interactions with the farmers; the political

climate of the early 1900s in Delaware; the function of the byproducts section; and the dynamics, exports, and events at the Wayne Black Powder Mills and the Brandywine Plant.

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William T. Cloud, 1958 April 7

box 4

Tape 120

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Scope and Content

Interviewers: Norman B. Wilkinson and Joseph P. Monigle in Wilmington, Delaware

Cloud describes T. Coleman du Pont's road project in Sussex County, including interactions with the farmers; the political climate of the early 1900s in Delaware; the function of the byproducts section; and the dynamics, exports, and events at the Wayne Black Powder Mills and the Brandywine Plant.

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Mary Hazzard Collins, 1974 March

box 3

reel 63

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Biographical Note

Mary Hazzard Collins (b. 1893) worked as a foreman at Hagley and later in the DuPont building in the city of Wilmington.

Scope and Content

Interviewer: Mary Sam Ward in Wilmington, Delaware

Collins describes her first job as keeping track of the time slips and her second job working operating the elevators at 10th and Market. Her interview details the explosion of 1918; various interactions with du Pont family members, including Irene, Lamot, T. Coleman, and Miss Sybil Ward; and a car

accident that cost her her sight in one eye. The interview also features Mr. Collins, her husband.

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Oliver Collins, 1973 July 19

box 2

reel 57

Biographical Note

Oliver Collins owned Collins Mill Sawmill in Anselma, Pennsylvania.

Scope and Content

Interviewers: James Akerman and Howard McKelvey in Anselma, Pennsylvania

Collins describes different kinds of turbines, wheel diameters and their various usage, and other industrial machines essential to his business. He also describes his family history and the running of the millrace, as well as overcoming problems such as rot. He describes the environment and wildlife in the area and also discusses his other interest in cutting hair.

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Oliver Collins, 1972 July 6-7

box 6

reel 284

Scope and Content

Interviewer: James Akerman

Collins describes how he was trained as a miller, how his business expanded, the different crops ground at his facility, the process of grinding corn and wheat, different grades of flour produced, and explosions that occurred in the mill business. He also discusses the role of grain elevators in the mill process.

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Katharine Collison, 1954 September January 1955

box 1

reel 8

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Biographical Note

Katharine Collison (b. 1870) was the daughter of the chief bookkeeper for the DuPont company and lived in the Belin House for over twenty years.

Scope and Content

Interviewers: Norman B. Wilkinson and Joseph P. Monigle in Wilmington, Delaware

Collison describes the house itself and the hardworking maids who lived there; how the children played and entertained themselves at the powder yards; various explosions and the reactions of the families; the cultural and social makeup of the community; and Collison's relationship with members of the du Pont family, including her friendship with Sophie du Pont.

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Joe Costello, 1973 April 17

box 3

reel 64

Biographical Note

Joe Costello worked as a black powder operator for Belin Works and also worked in the office. His father had worked in the powder mills for 43 years.

Scope and Content

Interviewers: R.A. Howard and J.B. Akerman

Costello describes the various responsibilities of his job, the different jobs that made up the powder yard, and typical wages. He also describes his work in the office and changes throughout the company over the years, most of which have reflected safety concerns.

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Jasper F. Crane, 1962 June 21

box 1

reel 2

Biographical Note

Jasper F. Crane describes his impressions of members of the du Pont family. He details his working experiences in the

mechanical industry at the Arlington Company and how his job changed when DuPont bought Arlington.

Scope and Content

Interviewer: J.L. Battan

Crane details the management style DuPont brought to the company. He also discusses impacts of various antitrust laws on DuPont. He also describes his experience working abroad, his work on the business advisory committee, and his advice for a happy life.

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William Craven, 1986 June 11

box 4

Tape 122

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Biographical Note

William Craven, Jr. was the grandson of a powder worker; his mother, Margaret McDade, grew up in Free Park in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Scope and Content

Interviewer: Frank McKelvey

Craven describes the significance of various artifacts and photographs. He also details swimming and playing in the summer time, various stories about the neighbors, what happened to certain buildings after the mill closed, home improvement projects, and his family's history in Ireland. He recounts different stories attributed to each house in Free Park.

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William Craven, 1987 July 31

box 4

Tape 123

Scope and Content

Interviewer: Frank McKelvey

Craven describes the layout of the houses and the neighborhood as well as the significance of certain artifacts from his childhood. He also details his grandfather's

friendship with Alfred I. du Pont and the family's history and immigration from Ireland.

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**Willard B. Crichton and Patsy Crichton, 1985
March 6**

box 4

Tape 124-125

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Biographical Note

Willard B. Crichton (b. 1918) and his family moved to Free Park in 1924, renting the Belin House from Mrs. Charlie Copeland in exchange for renovating it.

Scope and Content

Interviewers: Frank McKelvey and John Mayer in Wilmington, Delaware

Willard Crichton describes the state of the house after the move and the surrounding area in detail, as well as the changes made to it by the Crichton family. He also describes the surrounding area and the gardens. His interview details family history, the changes to the area following the opening of Hagley Museum, and briefly refers to a career with DuPont.

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**Willard B. Crichton and Theodore Pyle
Crichton, 1990 October 27**

box 5

Tape 177

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Biographical Note

Brothers Willard B. Crichton (b. 1918) and Theodore Pyle Crichton (b. 1927) and their family moved to Free Park in 1924, renting the Belin House from Mrs. Charlie Copeland

in exchange for renovating it. They note that Belin House was referred to as "Skunk Hall" because in spring the skunks would gather around the surrounding plant life.

Scope and Content

Interviewers: Peggy Bennett and Sally Wright in Wilmington, Delaware

The Crichton brothers detail their father's career with DuPont and his grandmother's friendship with Mrs. Copeland. The interview describes the property around Free Park, changes the Crichton family made to their rental home, various vegetation in the neighborhood, family dining customs, Christmas traditions, and the accomplishments of both Willard and Theodore.

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T.C. Davis, 1962 June 20

box 1

reel 2

Biographical Note

T.C. Davis began his career with DuPont in 1934.

Scope and Content

Interviewer: Norman B. Wilkinson and unknown interviewers

Davis discusses the development of the DuPont Company, including the modernization of the company and the family members who contributed to it. He also describes the changes in the market, budgeting and financial issues, interactions with government, the hierarchy of the management, and other business practices.

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Edward Devenney, 1984 March 27

box 4

Tape 126

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Biographical Note

Edward Devenney (b. 1897) was the son of a powder mill worker who grew up along the Brandywine in the different villages, and he worked in the machine shop at Hagley Mill.

Scope and Content

Interviewer: James Bond in Wilmington, Delaware

Devenney recounts various explosions, daily life in the community, games the children would play, and social activities and courting practices among the youth.

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Herbert James Devenney, 1984 March 15

box 4

Tape 127

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Biographical Note

Herbert James Devenney (b. 1912) grew up in Henry Clay Village, the son of an Irish immigrant powder worker.

Scope and Content

Interviewer: Louise Meyers in Mendenhall, Pennsylvania

Devenney describes the daily life of the children in the village, including mealtime habits, playing sports on various teams throughout Wilmington, and everyday chores.

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Herbert James Devenney, 1984 April 2

box 4

Tape 128

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Scope and Content

Interviewer: Louise Meyers in Mendenhall, Pennsylvania

Devenney describes in detail the family Bible, religious divisions within the community, and his family's home and furniture.

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Herbert James Devenney, 1984 April 19

box 4

Tape 129

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[Transcript available.](#)

Scope and Content

Interviewer: Louise Meyers in Mendenhall, Pennsylvania

Devenney describes the typical dress of the workers and their families, married life for young couples, and the layout of his family's house and the possessions inside.

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Martin P. Dillon, 1969 July 28

box 6

reel 287

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Biographical Note

Martin Dillon (b. 1892) worked with his father hauling willows to sell to customers, including the DuPont Company, until his father's death in 1902.

Scope and Content

Interviewers: Faith Pizor, Norman B. Wilkinson, and John Scafidi in Wilmington, Delaware

Dillon describes in detail the process of hauling willows, including cutting them down, peeling them, tools and techniques used, and caring for the horses. He also describes farm life at the turn of the century, including the business aspect of farming.

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Martin P. Dillon, 1969 July 28

box 2

reel 31

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Scope and Content

Interviewers: Norman B. Wilkinson, Faith Pizor, and John Scafidi in Wilmington, Delaware

Dillon describes in detail the process of hauling willows, including cutting them down, peeling them, tools and techniques used, and caring for the horses. He also describes farm life at the turn of the century, including the business aspect of farming.

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Thomas E. Doremus, 1958 January 10

box 1

reel 9

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Biographical Note

Thomas E. Doremus (b. 1874) was the grandson of W.R. Swift, the founder of Swift Powder Mill and Schaghticoke Powder Company in New York. His father, the bookkeeper, had married Swift's daughter. The company was eventually acquired by DuPont in 1902 after they purchased much of the interest. He attended Rochester Polytechnic Institute for civil engineering but did not complete his degree. He joined DuPont in 1905 after being heavily recruited by the company. In 1919, he opened a branch of the company in Shanghai, and his sales manager, Mr. Trubnikoff, was found to be a Russian spy charged with stealing DuPont secrets.

Scope and Content

Interviewers: Norman B. Wilkinson and Joseph P. Monigle in Wilmington, Delaware

Doremus describes in detail his father and grandfather's powder mill business, his meeting with Mr. T. Coleman du Pont and the Remington Arms Company in New York City, his role in the development of the DuPont trademarked oval, the role of the company in World War I, the relationship of Annie Oakley to DuPont, his job in China, his impressions of various du Pont family members, and his world travels.

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Thomas E. Doremus, 1958 January 16

box 1

reel 10

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Doremus describes in detail his father and grandfather's powder mill business, his meeting with Mr. T. Coleman du Pont and the Remington Arms Company in New York City, his role in the development of the DuPont trademarked oval, the role of the company in World War I, the relationship of Annie Oakley to DuPont, his job in China, his impressions of various du Pont family members, and his world travels.

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