

Lloyd Hollister

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The pages that follow constitute the transcript of an interview conducted as part of the Wilmette Public Library District's Oral History program, started in 1975 by a committee of the Friends of the Wilmette Public Library which has been chaired since its inception by Rhea Adler, a resident of the Village of Wilmette since 1932.

A copy of the tape on which this transcript is based is available for circulation, and may be obtained by checking with a Reference Librarian concerning circulation procedures.

This program would not have been possible without the cooperation of the many long-time residents of the Village interested in helping to preserve particulars of a fascinating past, and the patience, energy and effort of a small but dedicated group of interviewers, transcribers and typists who share the belief that the past is too important to be forgotten.

Richard E. Thompson

Director

ABSTRACT

Interviewee: Lloyd Hollister

Interviewer: Rhea Adler

Date of interview: Fall and winter, 1975

Introduction to Wilmette

Mayor Ed Zipf - Mayor 7 years - established accounting practices for village of Wilmette

Earl Orner - Village Clerk, 1905-1924
Mayor, 1925-30
Village Agent for Northwestern Railroad

"Judge" Otto Falk - Police Magistrate - Volstead Act - Prohibition - "Home brew" - Backyard burial of cases of liquor

Dave Nelson - Nelson Laundry - an early Model T (Ford)

Emil Nord - tailor - Schultz & Nord Cleaners

Lloyd Hollister - Hollister Press ~ philosophy of local newspaper publishing ~ Rotary chartered 1924 - Charter members mentioned - Lloyd Hollister only surviving charter member living in 1975 - Rotary International Headquarters to Evanston ~ Student program here - became world wide ~ Community Chest started by Rotary-

Repartee between Lloyd Hollister and Rhea Adler

Lloyd Hollister

LH: Mrs. Adler has asked me to think back a Little and tell her a few stories about my activities during the last fifty years which might be of interest to some of our Wilmette historians at some future date. I can assure you listeners that I tried to get a "No" in but Mrs. Adler told me she only wanted me to tell something about individuals who were active in Wilmette in the olden days, so here goes.

My introduction to Wilmette was unexpected. It happened about sixty years ago. I had a job with the Bowman Publishing Company in Evanston. This company published a daily newspaper in Evanston and a weekly newspaper, the Lakeshore News, which was circulated in Wilmette, Kenilworth, Winnetka and Glencoe. My job was to call at homes receiving the Lakeshore News, if for some reason the folks had forgotten to send a check to pay for the subscription. My job was somewhat difficult, but I earned my pay, which was \$13.65 a week. One very cold day I got off the "L" train at the Linden Station, and started walking east. My first call was at a deepish red stone home on the east side of Sheridan Road, where the Bahai offices are now located. I rang the bell and an elderly woman opened the door. Before I could say a word the lady said, "My dear boy, you look like you're nearly frozen. Come in and have a cup of tea." I agreed

that I was cold and I accepted the tea. That was my welcome to Wilmette, and I shall never forget it.

Now I'll try to limit my remarks to telling something about people I've known in Wilmette. One man that I have a good recollection of is a man by the name of Ed Zipf. Ed Zipf lived up on Lake Avenue. And he was in business in the Zipf Brothers Coal Company down in the Rogers Park area. Ed was an aggressive individual, critical if he thought someone was doing - - not knowing exactly what they were doing. Ed was also a golfer, and he liked to play at Westmoreland Golf Club. At one time he sponsored me for membership, a membership which I still hold in that club. Ed was very familiar with figures, by that I mean, really figures, not ladies. And when he was elected President of the village, which office he held for seven years, 1917-1924, Ed, the first thing he did, was to put in an accounting system, so that we'd have a better idea what we were doing financially as far as running the village. I can assure you that the seven years that Ed Zipf contributed to the village as President was most valuable and that at the end of his length of office, he had very definitely made a change that was felt for many, many years, and even today I should say, in how to run a village.

Now while we're talking village management of one kind or another we had a fellow by the name of Earl Orner, who served Wilmette as Village Clerk from 1905-1924. After

that he was President of the village from 1925-1930. Earl's business was agent for the Northwestern Railroad Company at the Wilmette office. I would rather take a chance that Orner knew more people and could call their names than anyone who ever lived in Wilmette. He was liked by all and was a good servant for the village.

While we're talking about people who served Wilmette in a political way, I think of Judge Otto Falk, who was a Police Magistrate, well - way back as far back as I can remember. At least I know that he was Police Magistrate when the Volstead Act was put into effect. Now most of you folks would not know anything about the Volstead Act. But that

happened quite a few years ago and it was when

we went into the depths of giving up our drinking liquor. Now as a lot of people may know that drinking liquor was fairly well done many years ago and however, the Volstead Act made us look at - - made us serve under the law of no liquor. Now I've had a rather close friendship with Judge Palk and I had a little, what I might say, a pleasant hour with him and his wife Gussie, each Saturday on my way home shortly after noon. Gus didn't like the Volstead Act. He didn't think it was good. So he made his own beer and I can just see the Judge with a saucepan filled with beer, on Saturday afternoon, enjoying it. A little later on, the Judge decided that he would make some wine of one kind or another. I dropped in there one Saturday afternoon and Gussie met me at the door and said, "Go

down in the basement and see Otto." Well, I went down in the basement and here was Otto sitting on the floor with a rubber hose into a barrel and bottling whatever he could get out of the barrel. Of course he'd have to suck the hose to get the wine started and then when it got stuck . there were raisins in there and that made it kind of difficult for him. But they would get stuck in there every once in a while and Otto would have to take a good pull on the rubber hose and try and get the raisins out of there. About the time I got there Otto wasn't feeling so good. He'd had so many times that he had to stop and try to open up that hose by sucking on one end of itō that it didn't work so good. Well, he smiled at me- he knew he was under the influence of it a little but I left immediately and went home because I didn't want Otto to feel that he had to serve anything to me. There's one other little thing about Otto that may be; of interest to people nowadays. He saw this matter of the Volstead Act and Prohibition going into effect, so he thought he should have some liquor of one kind or another to fall back on if his own liquor didn't turn out too good. I haven't any idea how many cases of liquor that the Judge had but I do know that he would dig up holes in his back yard and bury a case of liquor at a time in various spots. Now the sad part of that was that several years later when Otto wanted to get some drinking liquor he couldn't remember exactly where he had planted

it. And I haven't any idea at all but what the people who moved into Otto's home at a later date were quite surprised when planting this, that or the other thing, to find something that looked like a box planted there - but I know that if they followed through that they found the box with some rare old liquor. It belonged to Otto but he'd forgotten where he'd put it and they moved away later on. The whiskey was still buried in his back yard.

RA: Where did he live?

LH: Oh, he lived out on Wilmette Avenue between the Ridge and Hunter Road. Today, right near Hunter Road. And I don't know who it was who bought his place. Nevertheless they have - - might have had - - a surprise if they dug in the back yard.

I think I'd better get off the matter of our Judgeship and follow up with the story about one individual whom I have a lot of respect for or did have during his life and a rather close friendship sprung up. It has something to do, too, with liquor. I'm thinking about Frank Meier who had the Wilmette Ice Company located on Green Bay Road between Central Avenue and Washington. I am proud of the fact that I had a friend in Frank Meier and I used to stop in occasionally just to chat with him when I was going by his office. I have a vivid recollection of one Monday that I stopped in there, I can't tell you a date. But Frank was kind of mad. And I kidded him a little bit. Finally he

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says, "Well, I tell you what is wrong. Some people, even if you are doing a good job they have no brains at all as how it should be done." He said, "I went to church yesterday, as I always do on Sunday and they put the men on one side of the aisle and the women on the other side. And we men usually are a pretty good size. Well, a lady came in and she was late for the service but they - the usher brought her down and indicated that he wanted us men to squeeze in a little bit. Right across the aisle was plenty of room in a pew there. But no, did they put the woman in with those other women? No, no, no! They made us squeeze in and it was most uncomfortable." I always think of that story nearly every time I pass the old place. By the way, Frank had some connections with a brewery and for quite some time during prohibition Frank would make it possible for some of his friends to get a case of beer occasionally, if they so desired.

There is one man who will always have my respect in spite of the fact that he is not with us anymore, and that's Dave Nelson who ran the Nelson Laundry, on the corner of where our First Federal is located now. Dave worked hard. He was an honest man. He had a fine group of people working for him and they knew that Dave would do anything for them if they needed it. Many things I could tell you about Dave, but one thing I want to tell you because it shows the make-up of Dave Nelson. I was a young kid at that time.

I'd just taken over some of the newspapers that were published by the local news, in Wilmette, and I didn't have any money. I had to borrow some money at the bank and they wanted to know if I had any collateral, which I didn't have. I told Dave about it. Dave was a director in the bank so he says, "You come back tomorrow and I'll have you some stock that you can use as collateral, as long as you need it." Well, I did need it, and it was a long time, but the stock was returned intact, after I'd built up a little confidence among the bankers that I'd pay my bills. One little story that I want to tell you about Dave. Dave had a Ford automobile. A very old-time Ford with half a dozen pedals and things of that kind and Dave used to use it to go down to the Davis Street office when necessary. Dave was always a fellow who had to go in a hurry. He couldn't slow up at all. But he got in the Ford. He was going into Evanston, and he pressed down on the pedal and started down Green Bay Road. Everybody was passing Dave. And he was getting madder every minute, 'cuz he couldn't get any more speed out of that Ford. The truth of the matter is, he was, I think, he had a foot on both the pedal for speed and also the brake to stop it, so he cussed it out all the way to Davis Street and coming back he got his feet on the right place but he told me the story and laughed like the devil, because it was something that he had never had happen before,

and he couldn't help but laugh about it.

Of course Walter Nelson, Dave's oldest boy, died last year in Arizona. And Harold, the other boy, is still living - I can't tell you just where, but somewhere in this area. It was a good family.

Now there is one other fellow that I want to mention and that was Emil Nord who had the Schultz and Nord Cleaning establishment. And Emil, of course, was a capable man at making any kind of clothes that you wanted. But he had a lot of fun, too. I'll just give you one little thing that I remember - one little item that I remember from Emil. He said this many, many times and he laughed about it because of his accent. He says, "I work, and I work, and I work in learning how to pronounce the word 'yelly' and now they call it 'yam'." (Laughing in background) Oh, I guess I got all I want out of that.

RA: You mentioned the fact that you mentioned newspapers. Can you remember some of the people who worked for you or with you.

LH: I hope you will not consider me a braggadocio. Now that's not the word to use here, but I might give you just a first hand report on some of my business activities. I started in the newspaper game in 1912 and I really didn't get to a point where I was taking over a good bit of the stock that was then the Lakeshore Publishing Company but I did pick up control shortly after my return from service in the First World War. I was very fortunate. Fortunate in many ways,

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but primarily in being in business in communities, such as we have here on the North Shore. You don't realize what an opportunity there is in this area to publish a newspaper primarily on the - primarily dealing in what's going on in the village so people can enjoy and know what is really going on. We had a lot of wealthy people, there's no question about that. And they as a whole are the best citizens you can have in any community. I don't mean because they have money, but, they've made their money by working for it, and they are always anxious to help someone else. First of all, they think of their community, their living. I have often said, that there are a few principles for publishing papers in these communities which must be followed or should be at least, and one is, people are interested, primarily in just three things. First of all, the schools. Second, I would put the churches. And third, the municipal activity in the village. It is amazing at times how people can get worked up about some change that's going to be made in the village that they don't think is proper. Sure, sometimes they're right, sometimes they're wrong. I don't think I want to try and give you a lot of information about my activities here in addition to what I have already told you. But I started out in a rather small way. We had a little print shop. And we had the editorial and advertising departments in our papers. Now when I tell you that immediately upon my return after the First World War we had six people employed.

It was steady employment by our company - three in the office and editorial department and three in the mechanical department, and we all had to pitch in and help in any department that needed our help, if we were going to be successful.

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RA: Would you like to name some of those people?

LH: Well, there are two that come to my mind immediately. One is Mike Weber, who was editor of our papers for a good long period of time. A quiet- individual. Maybe he had an extra drink or two once in a while but he was told by some body that he shouldn't do it when he was supposed to be working. And Mike followed, the thought without any question. Another one is Jean Ten Broeck, who was head of our social department - social publishing department, for many years and who retired just a few years ago. By the way, Mike died several years ago, so we are living in the past, as far as he is concerned. Mike was a bachelor. He was always a bachelor. But he had a little apartment over in the Nelson building on Central Avenue, east of Wilmette Road, ah, Wilmette Avenue. The only thing that he had in the - well, now I can't get the words that I want right here - you'll have to change this - he had a dog and the dog was named Gin, G-I-N. Probably he was well named. I could tell you lots of things about Mike. He had the welfare of these villagers in his mind all the time and I know that I am greatly indebted to that man for the fine job he did in his early years with this company. Then the other one is Jean Ten Broeck.

RA: And the third?

LH: I beg your pardon? Did I say something about her? Well, alright. I repeat a little that Jean was a lady that knew more people in clubs and in social circles in this area than any other person. Jean is retired, of course, and now living at the Mather Home in Evanston. She comes in to the Wilmette Life office a couple of days a week just to help out and she's the one who can answer the questions that come up about years ago.

RA: You mentioned that third person?

LH: The other one that I might - the other person that I might speak of - it was Fred Favor. Fred took hold and when Mike died Fred was top boy for our papers in the editorial end for a number of years. And he did a good job. He now lives out on the West side of Chicago in the suburban west area. And I don't know just where he could be reached. All in all, let me just say this. I have had a very fine life to live in these communities, and I'm going to try and finish up my life here too. God willing.

RA: Well, that is very interesting. But I do know that you have been a member of Rotary International for a good many years, and I would like to have you speak to that briefly, if you would.

LH: Well, about forty years ago, I can't tell you the reason how it happened, but someone from the Evanston Rotary Club did a little survey and decided that we ought to have a Rotary Club in Wilmette, and as a result of the work of the Evanston Rotary Club the Rotary Club in Wilmette was chart-

ered in 1924. That was a good thing for this community, I am sure. I had a little hand in trying to form the organization and I was a charter member.

RA: Who were some of the other charter members that you recall?

LH: Well, some of the charter members of course - -

RA: Would you like to talk about J. Rob Harper?

LH: Well, my goodness, if I start thinking back on what happened - - D. Alien was charter member and I think "Doc" Alien, as we always referred to him was secretary of the Wilmette Rotary Club for a number of years.

RA: Is he the present David Allen's father? Was he? Who is with the Wilmette School system.

LH: No. No, he had no relatives to my knowledge. But just to pick out a few charter members that I remember - A. B. Van Deusen, who had a grocery store on Central east of the tracks; John Hoffman, who was with Hoffman Coal and Material Company for many, many years, following of course his father and his uncle who Started it. Bob Johnston, real estate man down on Fourth and Linden, and Clarence Rennecker, druggist; Dan Stiles, he was president of the Wilmette Bank when we Started Rotary and he was very influential in getting Rotary started in this town. Erwin Weber was also a charter member.

RA: That's Mike.

LH: That's Mike. Yeah. I say not willingly, but I am the only charter member of the Rotary Club of Wilmette who is still living. I am trying to do a little bit more too,

before I toss in the sponge. My activity in Rotary has been quite interesting. Among other things I served my club as a President second year of our Rotary. Later on I served the district as a District Governor and after that I was elected as a director of Rotary International serving two years in that position. It was quite an honor too, and I appreciate it because it gave me an opportunity to meet men from all-over the world serving on the board. Those two years were extremely interesting and after having served as director I was elected as Treasurer of Rotary International. At that time we were growing all the time and I suppose we probably had, during my term of office, maybe at least 10,000 then - I think probably close to 15,000 members in Rotary serving in 125 countries all over the world.

RA: Did you have anything to do with Rotary International Headquarters being established in Evanston?

LH: Well, I have never said much about that, but, yes, Ed Ladd, who is the publisher of the Evanston Review, was the man who was really responsible for bringing Rotary to Evanston. I didn't do anything that would hurt the Headquarters in Evanston. Maybe I did a little few things that kind of - might have helped. The 15 years that I served as Treasurer of Rotary International was most interesting. It gave me and my wife, too, a chance to attend the International conventions, 15 or more and

we had an opportunity to meet people from various parts of the world. In about 1948 we started in this district an International Students committee where we brought a student from some other country to Northwestern University for a year of graduate study. It was my good fortune to be rather closely identified with this work for a number of years and as a result we have a friendship which is just unbelievable. My wife has just started Christmas cards a few days ago and I don't know exactly how she did it, but she managed to find over 400 families that we knew rather intimately and we sent them a Christmas card. And we are continually having occasion to meet some of our former students or people that they send to us.

RA: Since then I believe the International Student program has become a very wide - -

LH: Oh yes, it - that's true. The foundation of Rotary International was established many years ago, moved slowly, but in the latter part of 1948 it established a district - not a district - but a fellowship program which was patterned to a large extent on the same plan that we used in our district, which we are very proud of. And now since that time over 8,000 boys and girls - young men and young women - have received scholarships or fellowships from Rotary and they - I think they will make a good contribution during their lives to promote international understanding.

RA: Is there any other program that the local Rotarians were responsible for in the village?

LH: Oh, yeah, that is something we get a lot of kick out of in

the Rotary Club. We started the Community Chest and we did a lot of work on it during the organizing term but later, of course, it became a part of the Community Chest, world-wide know, not world, country-wide organization. - I am proud of the fact that we at least brought it into Wilmette.

Now I think I've given you more than I should. It's been a pleasure to be interviewed in this way because it brings back a lot of memories that are interesting and I'm so happy to have you bring them to my mind. And you are responsible. '

RA: Not at all, but would you like to tell us where you now live and the village and give your name so we will have it for the records?

LH: My name is Lloyd Hollister. My wife's name is Josephine Hollister.

RA: And you live where?

LH: We live on Sheridan Road, 1420 on what some of the old timers would refer to as No-Man's Land. We have a nice apartment there. No children, but we have a lot of grandchildren. By that I mean nine students who are the results of our boy and girl, that's got to be I'd say - and I want to tell you one little thing that bothers me quite a bit but I know that there are other men probably in the same position that I am. I don't have the solution. But the story is this - I am retired, you know. I'm not supposed to be working. I have a nice office at the Federal Savings and Loan Building in Wilmette, where I've

been a charter member for forty years/ but I got too old and they kicked me out - but the board, they did say that. Now I have a cataract and I don't see - - I don't see any possible change in it. I'm three months older than my wife and I've always been taught to respect my elders and I frequently bring that matter up to Jo, but I'm not getting any cooperation from her. I suppose I'll just have to go along with it. I do get respect, I notice, from many young people, but Jo doesn't think it's quite the thing for her to be obliged to show me anything, that is a little bit out of the ordinary. So I'll try to work it out.

RA: Being a women's libber for Jo is a little ahead of her time, and I agree with it thoroughly.

LH: Don't you think that I should have a little bit of, well, just nice things said to me once in a while, because I'm older than my wife? I think she should do more of that. Oh, she does some now.

RA: I know how she treats you, so I'm afraid. Holly, you won't have any sympathy from me.

LH: OK.