

An Interview with  
**Don Ginnings**

at the offices of the Index in  
Hermitage, Missouri

**01 May 1997**

interviewed by Ray Brassieur  
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**[Tape meter, 003. Begin Side One, Tape One of Two. Begin interview.]**

RB: We'll go ahead and start.

DG: Okay.

RB: Don, what is your full name?

DG: Name's Donald Edward Ginnings.

RB: That's a kind of unusual spelling for the name we hear as "Jennings."

DG: It is. It's all related and a lot of my family [members] have that same spelling. There are just variances for the historical... Deviations.

RB: Is your family from around here?

DG: Generally in this area. My family came in around the Bennett Springs area on the corner of Laclede and Dallas Counties, and then just spread out from that area. There's a Ginnings Cemetery there where the early ones are buried from the Civil War era on.

RB: So they've been here since before the Civil War in Missouri.

DG: About the Civil War time. They discovered this area during Civil War duties, and then came and settled here.

RB: They thought it was a beautiful country, and it certainly is when you drive through here.

DG: It is. My favorite place.

RB: Right. Where exactly where you born?

DG: I was born in Eldridge, which is in Laclede County close to the Camden County line. But I moved here to Hermitage... Moved actually over around Urbana when I was one year old, and then came on over this way [in] my fifth grade year. I went to school here sixth grade year and on, at Hermitage.

RB: Let's see now, what was your dad's name?

DG: His name was Charles Edward Ginnings. He was a farmer and had a large family. One of those typical Ozark type of things where he quit school in fourth grade. His father had become injured, and so he just... Nothing but hard work and World War Two and a large family. There were eight kids. We grew up out here on Crane Creek. Just the usual backcountry type of family with ten in a small house and none of the modern conveniences.

RB: So you had a large family, too? And your brothers and sisters, how many did you have?

DG: I have two brothers and five sisters. And from a large family. There were twelve kids in my dad's family, and twelve in my mother's and twenty-one in my grandfather's!  
(chuckles) So there's a *herd* of us.

RB: And what was your mother's name?

DG: Her name was Grimes, Evelyn [sp?] Grimes.

RB: Is she from here?

DG: She's from around this area. Her family, they were all Fundamental preachers. My grandfather was a preacher. Several of my uncles were preachers.

RB: Now, which religion would you...?

DG: It was Missionary Baptist. In that early era, the [groups] we call Fundamental Baptist, Fundamental Methodist, were all just interchangeable, as were some of the Fundamental Christians and even the early Pentecostals. They just all basically had the same belief before some of the people began to take each of the denominations farther away from the

others. But at that time the denominations just focused on one central theme, and everybody agreed to it and they didn't worry about the little details.

RB: So the first preacher in your line that you know of was who? Now, was that your grandfather? Farther back than that?

DG: No, even farther back than that. I still go to church over close to where I was born. It's a forty-five mile trip over there, near Camdenton, in the little community of Decaturville. My grandfather had preached there a little, not as pastor. And my great-great-grandfather had preached in that church as a Fundamental Methodist. It's now [a] Fundamental Baptist church, but it...

RB: In the same church [building]?

DG: Same church.

RB: Is it still around?

DG: It's still there.

RB: And what's the name of it again?

DG: It's Decaturville Missionary Baptist Church.

RB: So the church itself must be quite old, huh?

DG: Yes, the building is. It's probably at least -- the old part of it is -- probably close to a hundred years old or maybe older.

RB: Yeah, it sounds like it... If it's your great-grandfather preached there, [the time period would be] pushed back. But now you yourself, a young man... When were you born?

DG: I was born November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1945. My dad was in World War Two serving in Burma and India. My mother and her sister were both expecting, so they moved into the little town

of Eldridge from out in the country in Laclede County, and stayed there until they gave birth to their children.

RB: Uh-huh, yeah, and he was gone...

DG: Mm-hmm, he was gone, but came home a short time after. Just a matter of months later, short months.

RB: And he was in the army, was he?

DG: He was in the army.

RB: Army. That was a tough conflict, Burma.

DG: He was in the construction battalion that built the Burma Road back in the jungle. He had all these stories about eating owls, and all the strange critters, and the problems with the...

RB: Doctor [Melvin] Bradley from M.U. [University of Missouri] tells me that there were a lot of mules used to help build that road.

DG: That's right. I think their jungle was so dense. There was some mechanized construction effort, but there were a lot of mules, I understood.

**[Tape meter, 050]**

And he also had a lot of stories to tell about the famine and what in India and the starving people there. Some insights into some areas I hadn't heard about and it made us feel very blessed and privileged to have what little we had. We never thought we were poor. By today's standards -- it's a typical thing -- you'd say, "Very poor family, ten people, three room house, no this, no that." But by comparison to everybody around us and the generations that preceded us, we didn't notice any...



RB: You didn't notice you were suffering.

DG: No, we didn't think so, because everybody was in the same situation. Everyone we associated with in that community all were basically living the same lifestyle with the same set of circumstances, problems and challenges.

RB: Was he more or less a general farmer, or what would you say was his main...?

DG: More laborer. He grew up hacking ties on the Niangua River down in Camden and Laclede Counties, and floating them down. And cutting stave bolts and logs and posts and wood. And then he continued that. We had a little acreage, and we milked cows and raised some small crops, but most of the time we bucked hay bales and cut logs and worked in the timber.

RB: And you would be working for other farmers, too, as labor.

DG: Right, as a group. I had a brother who's two years older than I, and a sister who's a year younger. So he had his own built in crew. My sister would drive the truck. He would throw hay on, and my brother and I... I started out driving the truck when I was four. My dad was the *only* laborer. My brother was six and he'd be up on the truck, and my dad was the only... He'd throw the hay on, and my brother would kind of drag it around [and] stack it the best he could. My dad would place it as close as he could. Then we'd go to the barn. My dad would throw it [the hay] up in the barn loft, and we'd drag it back and then he'd climb up there and stack it. Then we'd go get another load. So he wasn't paying any labor. It was a hard way to make a living, but it was a way. We didn't know it was hard on him.

RB: You didn't know it was hard at the time! (chuckles)

DG: No, and we didn't realize he was working so hard. He was just in his twenties then. It was just work to do!

RB: But now by the time you were five, you say, you moved to...

DG: In the fifth grade. We'd moved around through various small communities, but we settled out here in early April 1956, and bought a hundred acre farm on Crane Creek. That became what we called our home place. We stayed there and my parents owned it for several years after that.

RB: And you were in the fifth grade, and you went to school...

DG: Started here. The last school I went in fifth grade was a little one-room school down in... It was called Zion. Down in Laclede County. And then I came from there to here, and started just as the school year ended there in April. They got out early in the little one-room schools. Then I came here, I think it was April 7<sup>th</sup>, '56. Then we had the summer off, and then I started that fall. Started my sixth grade here at Hermitage, and finished the rest of my high school.

RB: And Hermitage School at that time, it *wasn't* a one-room, it was a...

DG: No.

RB: Did they divide the grades up?

DG: They split them. There was a room for first and second, one for third and fourth. There were three [rooms for] elementary grades, and fifth and sixth together. Just still a very small school, but it was large compared to the rural schools that were winding down at that time.

RB: And you finished school there, then?

DG: Finished school here at Hermitage.

RB: So that school went all the way up to the twelfth grade.

DG: Right. It was one of the *first* high schools in the area. There were three in the county early on, and this was probably the third one. Now there are four, but at that time there were only three.

RB: Did you continue to work sort of summer jobs or...?

DG: Worked for my dad up until starting my senior year, and then the [U.S. Army] Corps [of Engineers] built the [Pomme de Terre] dam out here. There was a job available then for working to build marinas and as a dock boy. My dad had injured his back in the efforts that he had for the physical type of work he had. He had to have some vertebrae fused, and so he was down and was unable to do any manual work. So I would milk of the morning and then go to school and back. We basically lived off of the milk check for a while. Then I would work out that summer just before my senior year, and then after my senior year worked out on the marinas, building them and then operating them, being a dockhand, dock boy, and then a dock boy supervisor.

RB: So that marina and that construction of that dam and all that, that did increase the, I guess, possibilities for local employment.

DG: Right. It brought some jobs here.

**[Tape meter, 100]**

My brother, he started working on it, running a chainsaw to help clear the land for the lake [Pomme de Terre Lake] in about '60, '61. So he started working away from home when he was about sixteen or seventeen.

RB: Did you have an inclination to go to college at first?

DG: Not on my own. No, I had some really super teachers. Had a superintendent and an English teacher combination. In those days, the superintendency was something you did on the side. You got paid a little bit extra, but you continued to be a classroom teacher. And Otis Jackson was the superintendent here, and taught history and English and psychology and sociology and a variety of other courses. I was really in awe of his knowledge and his teaching ability. For my last two years I had another English teacher, Ruth King, and she also was a super, super teacher.

The first thought I had was that... The superintendent just told me I needed to go to college. And so I *hadn't* really given it much thought. I don't know of *anyone* in our family who ever gone to college before. There weren't more than maybe five Hermitage graduates that I had ever *known* who had gone to college. So the concept of going to school beyond high school was sort of a new thought for me. One day he just presented me some paperwork [and] said, "Here's your enrollment for Central Missouri State College" (then, before it was University) "and here's the application for the NDEA [National Defense Education Act] loans, and all you need to do is sign these and see if they're okay and get your parents to sign them, and you're off and going!" So I thought, "Well, maybe I will." And one of my best friends from the previous year's graduating class had gone to college, so at least it made it a thought that I could at least grasp and had some concept of what was happening. I thought, "Well, if he can do it... He's from up here at Pittsburg, back in the country. Maybe I can do it, too."

RB: So what year was that that you graduated?

DG: Graduated in 1963.

RB: Now, Vietnam was starting to be a whisper, I guess.

DG: Vietnam hadn't become much of a concern. It was just starting to be of concern. I had never given any thought to being drafted. In fact, I'd never even applied for any sort of a classification. I just became eighteen, I signed up for the draft, and never thought any more about it. Thought, "Well, if they call me, they call me." My dad had served in the war, and my (at that time) girlfriend's father -- who's Earl Jenkins, here -- he had served in World War Two in the campaign in Germany and France. So it was not a foreign -- to use the term in both ways -- it was not a foreign thought to me, nor nothing I expressed any concern about. They both had instilled such an idea of military patriotism in me that I had even *seriously considered* it my duty and obligation to go *sign up*, just so that I would be a U.S. American veteran. But I didn't.

I went ahead and signed up for college, and then as I started my sophomore year my high school sweetheart Kathy, she was also going to school there, and we decided that we'd just get married. Since she was living in one dorm and I was living in another one, and we were both there, we might as well just get married and move to the married students apartments. So we were both eighteen. Had graduated *fairly* young, because we were college sophomores at eighteen. Then in the summer between our sophomore and junior year -- that would have been '65 -- we had a daughter born. That was in June.

Then in July, President [Lyndon B.] Johnson announced the major change in the draft and in the lottery system for classification, and there would be no deferments. So I didn't apply for or never had a deferment, but when that all happened in July of '65, I

was already married and already had a daughter. So I was class 3-A, so it kept me out of the direct line of draft activity to send people to Vietnam.

**[Tape meter, 150]**

Then the draft really became an issue for a lot of people my age. Became a serious consideration. The war really became serious from '65 on through early '70s. But at that point I was already married and had a child, and had [you] might say slipped through a crack of some sort without ever *intending* to do it.

RB: Sure, you just happened to be born at that time... It was after Korea and a little bit before [Vietnam.]

DG: Don't remember Korea. It was when I was real young, wasn't old enough to be interested in world affairs. It wasn't discussed in any area that I ever paid any attention to. So I was born after World War Two and not old enough to remember Korea War and got my family started early enough to miss Vietnam. So I just kind of fell in a gap.

RB: So you met Miss Jenkins here, now?

DG: Mm-hmm.

RB: \_\_\_\_\_ did you meet her?

DG: When we started school together in the sixth grade, or when I came here. She had gone her whole career here, and then I met her in the sixth grade. We didn't seriously date until our junior year. Actually, it was on a Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, April 1962 when one of my friends -- the one I was telling you [about] in the class ahead of me, who went on to college -- he had a steady girlfriend, and he had said, "If you'll ask Kathy out, we'll go to the athletic banquet together." We had an athletic banquet every spring to honor the

students who had participated and earned letters and other special honors in athletics. So we were both involved in athletics, so -- as the two girls were, they were both very athletic -- so I said, "Well, I'll just ask her." Really, it was my first serious date. I had been places with girls and gone to the show and things like that, but it was the first time I had seriously dated anyone for any amount of time, beyond just one here and one there. And then we just started hanging out together.

RB: While you were going to high school, she didn't rope you into work at the newspaper? She was working at the newspaper, wasn't she?

DG: Yes, she was coming up after school and working in the summer and doing various things. I would come around just out of curiosity, or mostly coming of course to see *her*, and just saw it. And [I] was somewhat fascinated by it, but [I] never gave it any thought as such. My first actual connection was after we were married in early '64. Oh, I had helped out. I had been here just, you know, when... The whole family was working here. Her father, her mother, and she were working here, so when I was here and there was work to be done, [I would help.] She would ask me to help move paper, carry this, put this over there. I would stuff papers if there were two sections, or just for the fun of it would help run an addressing machine or whatever. But mostly just it was happening and I was there, so rather than be in the way, I'd try to do a little something.

RB: Right, because you all dated then in high school until you graduated...

DG: The rest of my junior year and all that summer, and then right on through 'til we were married.

RB: Now, when you went to college, what was your interest there? What was your [field of] studies?

DG: English. I wanted to be an English teacher just like the two high school teachers I admired. I just held them in such high esteem, I thought if I could ever achieve something of that level, that status, that that would be something I could be proud of, because I was so in awe of them and of their knowledge and of their influence that I aspired to be in the position that they were in.

RB: Were you interested in literature or any particular...? English, American lit?

DG: Both. Literature and just basic English, but not so much in writing.

**[Tape meter, 200]**

My interest in writing never came until I was a college senior. So I went through the normal routine four years of college. And at the time I was a senior I was still feeling somewhat inadequate. I was thinking, "I'm going to be thrust out into the world and this is all the training that I have, and this is all the knowledge and ability I have, and I supposed to be training students and I don't really feel like I'm up to the task or equipped to the task." Then I took a senior composition class, at CMSU. Taught by a young lady probably twenty-three, twenty-four years old. And she was a *real* fireball! Don't even remember her name, but she had been a speechwriter for [the] governor and [other] state officials, and wrote for contract and by demand at Jefferson City. She taught me more about writing and got me more enthusiastic about writing in one semester than everything I had done up to that point. I then began to understand what [made up the] writing [process] and organizing topics and organizing your thoughts and organizing your written



presentation. Began to understand what that was about. Began to see it in my mind, and it began to make sense. And she *made it* make sense for me, and so I was really needing that, wanting that. It filled a void for me. At that point I began to be a little more interested in writing rather than just in the literature and in the mechanical functions of grammar.

RB: Now, what was Kathy studying at the same time?

DG: Business education. She was taking typing and shorthand and business management and business operations.

RB: But she wasn't interested in -- I wonder why -- in taking journalism.

DG: It's just that she never had any interest in it. In fact, she had grown up in the newspaper. To some extent, while she liked the newspaper, there was I think somewhat of a little resentment. Because as an only child... And her mother was here six days a week, and her father was here six days a week, then they were here two or three nights a week. And there was always something to do, and if you wanted to be with family, you went to the jobsite. So the job was always something that interfered with family. It was nothing she ever wanted. It was nothing that I ever had an interest in. After we were married, a fellow who worked here quit to go to Kansas City to take a job at an auto manufacturing [plant.]

RB: What role did he have here?

DG: He had performed just basic mechanical functions. He ran the presses; he used the old metal hand set type. He didn't do any proofreading to speak of, or didn't do any writing or anything. It was just a dirty hands job!

RB: Would call him a printer?

DG: He was a printer, or a printer's helper. He had some responsibility along that line. Press maintenance and that sort of thing. So when he left...

I was working nights at college. I had my schedule so that I could go to work at noon at a burger joint, and I'd work from noon 'til midnight. So my classes were all like seven, eight, nine, ten, and eleven o'clock of the morning, then I could get in my full twelve-hour shift. I did it on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and then some on Sunday night.

**[Tape meter, 250]**

So I was free to come home on Friday night. We came home every Friday night after my shift ended, which then was about one o'clock in the morning. We'd drive back home.

RB: How long a drive is that?

DG: Oh, it's sixty-five miles, something like that. So every weekend for four years -- we never missed but one weekend, I think, in the four years we were there. But I would be back home late on Friday night or early Saturday morning, so I started working... They had said something or somehow we came to an agreement that I would work on Saturday and Saturday night. Work here all day Saturday and late Saturday night, and I could do... We had the old lead type that went through the linotypes. You had to fire up the melting machine, and we had to throw down hand type, put it back in the type cases, and just clean up, and melt and put things away, operate [the] perforator and the punch. Do just basically physical stuff. So I started doing that on Saturday.

RB: That had to be done once a week, right?

DG: Right.

RB: The melting of the lead from the week before and then the recasting of it.

DG: Right. Had to get it ready for Monday morning. The printing schedule then was that they finished up the paper on Thursday night and started the press and ran up the county subscription list on Thursday night. Then they came back in on Friday morning and finished the rest of the press run. It was a *slow* cumbersome old press that just took all day to get any progress at all. Then they would stuff the papers and mail them out on Friday, and then Friday afternoon do what commercial printing was needed, and on Saturday do commercial printing. They worked six days a week then.

RB: How difficult was it to learn that linotype business? Who was it that taught you that?

DG: We had a couple of good linotype operators during my career, not at the same time. But it's a very sensitive machine. It has a million clunking, moving parts with cams and levers and *all* sorts of devices to release those mats, and get them aligned and spaced out. So one of the fellows who was here... Had been here for a few years. He was fairly young. He was in his late twenties, but had about eight or ten years of experience...

RB: Already!

DG: Already. He started right out of high school.

RB: What was his name?

DG: Jim Gargus. Jim lived right here at the south edge of town, and he was [a] very, very intelligent person. He was super-intelligent. Later went on to become the manager of a milling company in Springfield and a large agriculture-related business. He was just a super-intelligent person. So he showed me the basics. And Earl had some basic -- well,

even beyond basic; he had quite a bit of familiarity with the machine. So I just learned. He bought another one after a while. We had two. For a while we just had one. So just started learning. First I learned the hand type and I ran an old pedal press. The very first press I ever ran was one that I had to operate by my *foot*.

RB: Is that that one that's in the front?

DG: It's the one up front.

RB: Pedal press?

DG: Yes, the one that we refurbished.<sup>1</sup> It's a pedal operated, foot-operated printing press.

RB: And you were using that to produce what?

**[Tape meter, 300]**

DG: Oh, tickets or anything. We would set up flyers. Commercial print jobs.

RB: It's not the newspaper...

DG: No, not the newspaper. Newspaper press is a big old huge press that took up half the room. Big slow cumbersome thing by today's standards.

RB: And the linotype was just a separate machine altogether?

DG: Right, it was a separate machine. It was the one that produced the lead lines of type. If you were looking at a rubber stamp today, that's what type looked like then except it was metal. Every letter had to be cast from a brass mat, and cast one line at a time. And if you didn't have linotype type of the right size or the right typeface, you had to go into the type drawers and pull out hand type, one letter at a time and then one space at a time, and then space out the whole line with leads and slugs and thin spaces and brasses and

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<sup>1</sup> Referring to an 1895 Golding and Company press. See C3965 Missouri Newspapers, a.c. 9, interview with Earl Jenkins.

coppers. They were all different thicknesses, and you just filled out the line by stuffing thicker and thicker spacers in each line.

RB: So that's a kind of a hand set technique. But the linotype machine, though, operated with...

DG: With keys. It was with a mechanical keyboard. Basically it was the same thing. Instead of setting it one metal piece of type at a time, it put together a mat or matrix that had the letter mold in it. So you'd strike a key, a brass mold would fall in place that had the... Like the letter on it, a "T" and then the "H" and then the "E", and they'd line up. And then a space would fall down. So it was a machine that put in space or in a certain space and put in place and in the right order -- (chuckles) usually the right order -- the letters that you wanted, and then it would cast and squirt hot metal into a mold, and then kick it out. And then you would have a hot metal line there that was lead -- a form of lead, lead alloy -- and it would have the reversed letter on it.

RB: But you could add to it then by hand setting?

DG: Right. Display lines or fancy lines of type or whatever. So you'd set your basic lines on the linotype, and then you'd go... And then we'd have a million pieces of hand type of all -- some of it's lead and the larger was wood; up to six or eight, ten, twelve inches even, wood type. And you would space that out and put it all together and lock it up and level it.

RB: You had to decide, as the linotype operator, about line length and the number of words that could fit on that line, each individual line, I suppose?

DG: Right. And then you had to go back, and if it didn't fit right, you had to pull things out or else just go ahead and cast that line and say, "Well, this one's bad [and] won't fit. Cast it and pitch it aside, and go again."

RB: If you had a mistake up the column somewhere...?

DG: You go up and just change the one line.

**[Tape meter, 350]**

*Unless* you had two or three words extra in it. Then you had to go back through and reset everything 'til the lines fit. Back then it was a... At that time it seemed like it was a mechanical *marvel*, because it was saving *all* of that hand set time! But by today's standards, it would be extremely crude and cumbersome!

RB: And tedious!

DG: Yes.

RB: So what years was that, now again? That would have been...

DG: I started here in fall of '64. And we kept working linotypes going until about 1980. They weren't a primary machine, but there were things that we could do with them while they were here. They were of no value to anyone else. [There were] several of them around just everywhere, and nobody was buying them. Everybody was trying to get rid of them. They were so good we hated to just junk them, but eventually we did. We just eventually came in and took them apart and hauled them off to a salvage yard. Separated the steel from the cast iron and from the brass. It was sort of a sad end to an era, but they had been in the way and had gathered dust for five or six years, and had not been turned on.

RB: In the '80s you did that?

DG: We did that.

RB: So when that technology went out... I mean, there was just no salvaging of that. There was no...

DG: The only thing it was good for and the only thing that anyone can use it...

**[Tape meter, 377. End Side One, Tape One of Two.]**

**[Tape meter, 001. Begin Side Two, Tape One of Two.]**

DG: You can still find... I think there's one place in Springfield where it's a print specialty shop. He uses a linotype, and what they call a Ludlow machine which casts much larger type than the linotype. The linotype had a keyboard and you'd strike the keyboard. The Ludlow machine, you would set the molds by hand and then place them in the machine, and then it would cast the line. For things like occasionally wedding napkins or foil stamping where you have to... The machine heats up the metal type and then it melts a strip of foil into or onto a piece of paper. So that's the only function that I know of anyone using.

RB: Which company is that, by the way?

DG: It's ACS Printing in Springfield. It's owned by a fellow the name of Larry Hetrick. He used to do all sorts of printing, and now he has a printing specialties business. He has salvaged a couple of the best of the old letterpress machines, and he uses them for what letterpress uses are still around, and for creasing and scoring and things that you don't find anywhere. Most printers will run into a need every once in a while where something has to be done, and there's only one way to do it and that's the old technology. So he does that.

RB: That's an interesting niche, there.

DG: Mm-hmm. And that's what he's aiming for, is to be the contractor to printers. He doesn't deal that much with the public. He deals with printers all through south Missouri and northern Arkansas.

RB: So you say the linotype was still in use here up until about 1980. When did it start changing?

DG: Well, we switched -- I believe it was in 1976 when we... It was. We started in '75, but by early 1976 we had put together enough of what we called an offset system. We bought two Compugraphic typesetters that used phototypesetting paper. It was photo-sensitive paper. It was an early computer driven typesetting system.

Before that the only computerized systems were those that were designed to... ATS systems were tape-feed systems for linotypes. Or there was the type of system that was just [a] glorified typewriter where you typed it in one column on the left, and then the machine automatically spaced it out and then you typed the exactly the same right, same line on the right column and it spaced it out right. So if you had an error, you had to go back and type it twice. And there was no way of correcting. You had to be perfect. If you saw you had a wrong keystroke, you had to just back up and start that line again. And then you had to type it twice correct, perfect. So it was quite a system.

But the Compugraphic system was the *first* computer driven phototypesetting system that was available. It revolutionized printing and publishing. So we bought in early '76 and set up here.



We were one of the last to switch, but the reason was we had two extremely good linotypes. We had [a] *really* good printing press. We had two engravers we had bought in the fall of 1971. We had two engravers: one for photos and one for line art. So we were producing a pretty good quality letterpress product because we were able to buy some of the good equipment that people who already converted to offset were getting rid of. Things that [normally would be prohibitively expensive.] One of those engravers cost fifty-some thousand dollars and the other was almost a hundred thousand dollars [when new.] We bought *both* of them for five hundred dollars. So we were using a ton of technology in the letterpress engraving just because it was becoming cast-off of the mid-size dailies like Rolla and Sedalia and Columbia. So we were able to pick that machinery up and stay in the letterpress business probably five or six or seven years longer than we really should have. But it worked for us and we didn't have any problems with it.

RB: But now by the early '70s, you're talking about as things were changing then and you started getting some of these other machines, but by that time you were already here and working. Now, how did that happen there, where you actually came to the Index?

DG: Well, that sort of worked [out that] it was either fate or God put me here or *something*. I started teaching school after I graduated in '67 from college. I started teaching school at Camdenton High School. Because of my background *here*, they were starting a journalism department *there*. So they placed me as the composition instructor, which I liked, teaching the writing. I found that [to be of] interest. And literature appreciation. And then their new... They called it "publications" then, because I wasn't certified.

And the state actually wasn't certifying journalism instructors as such. MU had a kind of a lock on journalism, and it has the world's oldest school of journalism. So the state legislature had some -- I call it -- "hedge" legislation that prevented any other college in the state from offering a degree in journalism.

**[Tape meter, 050]**

"If there's going to be journalism taught in Missouri, it's going to be taught at MU." So you could get other *related* degrees, which in the long haul was sort of to their benefit anyway, so the state colleges started offering mass communications, which included newspaper, TV, and radio. As it turned out, the electronic journalism was a booming business. While MU was concentrating on preserving its journalism department, the other colleges, by being forced *out* of the journalism business had been forced *into* mass communications. Which was the becoming the hot department anyway. So I had a *little* bit of experience there. I'd worked my last two years in the college print shop where we produced the newspaper, and I became familiar with the latest computer technology because anytime some new machine became available to teach kids in mass communications about it, the college had it. So I was taught. In my last two years I was using that equipment to produce commercial printing for the college and to produce the college newspaper and other publications there within the system.

RB: So let's see now, you were teaching, but you teaching high school?

DG: I was teaching high school.

RB: But you were working...?

DG: No, I sort of got out of sequence there. Before I started teaching high school, [during] my last two years [of college,] my experience here had sort of got me a job out of the burger frying into the college print shop. And there I became exposed to modern methods of publication and printing. And then *that* exposure caused the school where I went to say, “Well, you need to be our publications teacher.” And it worked well and so I then...

RB: So the print shop though at the college was quite a bit different than this operation here.

DG: Yes. Primarily it was letterpress also, as everything was, but it did have its offset department. During the two years I was there, which would have been in '66 and '67, was when it was making the big switch into the offset method. So I was there during that switch. They had some small offset presses already, but they really gearing up toward the new computer system. So that exposed me to the offset technology while I was in college, and that got me into publications instructing in high school.

And then my interest... I decided, “Well, I want to be a teacher. I want to be a college teacher. I want to be at a higher level.” So I started working on a Master of Arts in Mass Communications and Public Relations. It had to be a co-related field at that time. So I did three summers plus a little more of graduate work at CMSU. And my last summer there I was a graduate assistant and taught the journalism classes, and was the faculty advisor to the college newspaper. They had a real super college newspaper that had won several nationwide awards. So I sort of had that under my belt, and enjoyed that and that's where I was going.

Then when I decided to leave Camdenton I was offered a full-time position at CMSU to teach -- couldn't be journalism -- but to teach mass communications and

newspaper writing, editorial writing, and to be the faculty advisor to their college (I'm still wanting to call it journalism department) newspaper department. [I] was offered a similar position at SBU [Southwest Baptist University] at Bolivar. So we leaned toward the SBU for a couple of reasons. Her parents were sixty-two or almost, and we said, "Well, we need to be close to them so we [can] sort of watch out for them." And we liked this area. We just wanted to be back here. So we said, "Well, we could move to Bolivar." And I tried twice. They made me an offer and I thought it sounded good. I was going to go talk to them about it. I went to Bolivar twice to try to sign a contract and the man I needed to see was not there. And twice he came to see *me* at my home in Camdenton, to bring the contract, and I was gone to Warrensburg for night classes, graduate courses. So he missed me.

And then along during that time, one week Kathy's dad just called and said, "If you're ever wanting in the newspaper business, better make up your mind now because if you want to buy we'll sell it to you because I've priced it." He priced it cheap. Said, "I've priced it to the owner of the Bolivar newspaper, and he's interested in buying it and have his son run it." Who had a journalism degree from MU. And said, "He's supposed to come back Friday and talk to me about it."

**[Tape meter, 100]**

RB: Who was this, now, from Bolivar?

DG: This was Jac [W.] Zimmerman. He was a partner with Jim Sterling. Jac Zimmerman had the money and had the experience. Jim Sterling was fairly young man who was just getting started. He was active in the MU journalism and had worked for Missouri Press

Association and as an ad salesman for a couple of fair-sized dailies. And he was getting into community journalism. So Jac Zimmerman formed a partnership with Jim and said, “We’ll buy the newspaper and you run it and we’ll make this thing go.” And then he needed another one for his son Dan who was just graduating from journalism school.

So we told Earl we weren’t interested. Kathy had never... Said, “That’s one thing I’ll never do, is get in the newspaper business. I’m going to stay as far away from that. It’s not a good place to have family.” Since we had two kids by then. She said, “I don’t want to ever subject my children to the stresses and pressures and work demands of a newspaper. We’re doing just fine in teaching. You’re home, you’ve got some summers off, you’ve got holidays, and all of these things...”

RB: What was she doing at the time?

DG: She was not working. She was taking care of [our] kids. Well, she did baby-sit some for some neighbors and some teachers, but she was not working out[side of the home.] She never came to work away from the home until our last child, our third child, started to school.

But then for some reason just out of -- we don’t know what -- we just told him, “Well, why don’t we come and we’ll move over there.” And they said, “We’re going to start drawing our Social Security. It’s not much, but we think we can get by on it. That, and the sale of the newspaper.” So we said, “Well, why don’t we come over there and I’ll finish...” I needed, I think it was six more hours or something. Nine hours, maybe, to finish a Master of Arts degree. Said, “We’ll stay over there and I’ll get my graduate

degree, and we'll run it 'til you're sixty-five and then you can sell it. And then [I'll] see about going to Bolivar or wherever I want to go from there."

RB: You were still pretty young.

DG: Came here when I was twenty-five. So that seemed to be a pretty good deal. We worked out a type of a partnership. We said, "We don't want to buy it because we don't want to make a career out of this, but we will come and we'll run it." Or I would. I said, "I'll do the writing and editing."

And actually all the time I was at Camdenton, I was coming over two nights a week and writing the hard news. Kathy's mom never really relished what we'd call the "front page news." She liked social items, and community correspondence stuff, and the weddings, and the announcements of engagements, and that sort of thing, and obituaries. She loved to take care of all of that, the people sort of thing. But she didn't like to write about school boards, and city councils, and community activities, and county government. She did wrecks and tragedies and sort of thing. So I would come over on Tuesday night and Wednesday night. For all three years that I was at Camdenton, I was coming over two nights a week and writing the hard news, and when I was here on Saturday if necessary I would write news, or sometimes she'd send me the notes. We'd take them home with us on Sunday afternoon if we were over here. I'd sit down at a typewriter and type up the news stories at Camdenton, and then mail them over or bring them back with me. So I was still volunteering and working two nights a week. Just as a volunteer. I didn't get paid and didn't expect it. It was just a family type of thing. I said, "Well, I'm doing that anyway, and if she'll stay on and do the community

correspondence and the social news, I'll write [the other news.]" So that was basically our agreement when we came here.

RB: Mr. Jenkins wasn't doing much writing?

DG: He never has. He's never written a word as far as I know in his entire career. He's probably the only publisher who never has written a sentence for a newspaper. Never did write. He didn't like writing. Never tried any, he really didn't have any talent along that line, and didn't even *want* any. It was not his interest. He liked business management and operations. And that was his agreement with his wife when they decided to buy the place. He said, "Don't know anything about running a newspaper." And she said, "I'll do the news part if you'll do the business part." So he took care of the accounts receivable, and the payroll, and the postal reports, and all the other millions of sheets of paper that have to be filled out just to keep a business running.

RB: So you all had been coming down anyway and writing, you say, and then you decided then to come and run it for a while? Is that it?

**[Tape meter, 150]**

DG: The basic agreement and the understanding was -- and it wasn't to any special time, as far as three years -- but we just basically understood that if they waited 'til they were sixty-five to draw their Social Security, they'd draw more Social Security. And that'd give us time enough to sort of get a home built here and get established, and I could do that last bit of work I needed on my Master of Arts degree. Then I would be better set to go to... I wouldn't have to rush into this job at Bolivar. I could look it over and if it was really what I wanted, then I could take it. And if not, we'd go somewhere else or we'd look

around in the area. So that was the plan. I think I'm now in my twenty-sixth year of a three-year program here in the newspaper. (chuckles)

RB: (laughs) So during that period you all decided, then, or at some point you decided that this would be your...?

DG: Well, it just evolved. We never really made a decision to do that. (chuckling) It was just by failing to make a decision we ended up here! Her mother had been ill and under quite a bit of stress and pressure, and she became better in some ways and life became a little better for them. And we liked it here. We liked the community, and things happened at the newspaper.

They hadn't been able to do much pushing or promoting, so soon as I came I talked them into looking for those engravers when we spent the \$500 to buy \$150,000 worth of machinery. Soon as I did, the local advertiser went to a full-page ad. I got a full-page ad every week out of one at Humansville, and a new three-quarter page ad out of Weaubleau MFA [Missouri Farmers Association] and one out of Urbana MFA, and another one down at Bolivar. Next thing you know, we went from eight pages to fourteen, and then had sixteen occasionally.

Business boomed a little. The area was starting to grow around the lake, and so I started a lake news tabloid, and some of the other things. They were all fun and exciting. I enjoyed seeing them grow. The community was growing. The business was prospering and they were enjoying, you might say, a flush of new excitement in the newspaper as well as the financial success of it. It had several pretty good years compared to the years prior. There were years probably that Earl and Willa Mae made more money in a single



year than they had in any previous decade. So it created some new excitement for them also. They had never really produced much money. And it *still* wasn't a lot of money by most people's standards, but at least it was getting by.

RB: Now, what was your role then? You say that they were still involved, so what would, say, your job title [have been]?

DG: They called me "Associate Editor and Advertising Manager." Willa Mae never cared for titles, and she didn't *want* a title. And neither did I. I said, "Everybody knows me. This is a small community. You can call me what you want to, and everybody knows I still run around and take pictures and sell ads and write stories and do what I do. And what I call myself is not going to change a thing. We enjoyed seeing them enjoy themselves. So for the first time in their lives, they had a space of time where they were able to sort of relax and enjoy it. The pressure was on somebody else, but it was a shared pressure. Earl took the pressure of the financial management, and she took the pressure of the daily grind of dealing with all of the community correspondence and the social news, and I got the hard news. And we had a booming advertising base at that time. So it was working.

RB: Did Mr. Jenkins ever have any difficulty relinquishing control over any particular part of it?

DG: It never really came up, because when I came here, I guess the thing that I tried to emphasize...

**[Tape meter, 200]**

I think at first he was a little leery, because when it started going real well and booming, it looked like... If I had come in and tried to take over, it would have reflected

negatively on what they had done the previous four or five years. So I tried never to let that situation evolve. I consulted him with every decision, even with things that I *knew* what was going to happen, I *knew* which way we had to go. It was always give him the bottom line, yes or no. Because I never expected to be here *very* long. I just wanted this thing [to succeed.] We were having a good time, and we were having some success with it. I was enjoying the success, and *he* was enjoying the success. So as long as we were sharing it... You might say I tried to be politically correct in everything and not usurping authority from either one. And so Willa Mae was quite relieved just to give up anything that was creating pressure for her. I think it was a little more difficult for Earl, but he did relish the success, and he did enjoy it. Everybody likes to be associated with something that's successful. And so as long as he was publisher and he was there in the forefront and it was fine and even... Things that he knew were getting beyond his ability to relate to, it was always "We're doing this, and we're doing that. Come and see this." He was proud of everything that was going on. He really enjoyed it. So it didn't create any animosity of the sort, it was just we had to be careful how we went so that we *didn't* create any split along the way. He was always a part of every decision, whatever it was. And whenever it went, he was proud of it.

RB: And that's one of the interesting aspects, I find, is that there's so much about Missouri -- especially [the] rural newspaper business -- that has to do with family. It either goes down in the family or else it's in-laws. Just like yourself. Mr. Jenkins took his position as an in-law coming in, as you were an in-law coming in.

DG: That's right. His wife's family and my wife's family are one and the same. It's that passage through the family... The last three family owners have been women and their spouses.

RB: Their spouses ended up having control, positions in the paper. How about the ownership now? Who owns the paper now?

DG: It's in a trust, actually. It's half in Earl's trust, and half in his deceased wife's trust that is now owned exclusively and administered by my wife. So technically, the two trusts own it. One of the details that we never really worried about -- and there was no need to worry, we didn't feel. She was an only child, so we didn't have to document who's going to get how much of what. There was never any concern "that I work here twenty years and then her brother, who's never been here, is going to get half, and he's never done anything." There was *none* of that ever come up, because as an only child she was in line to inherit whatever there was. Along the way they had offered to sell it to us, but I said, "Financially it just doesn't make good sense." Because he had only paid \$10,000 for it. "And whatever we pay you for it, you'll have to pay capital gains on, and Uncle Sam's going to get it."

**[Tape meter, 250]**

"So if you turn around and sell it to me, then all we're doing is taking my money and giving it to you and Uncle Sam's going to take it. And I'll have to come back and I'll have to pay an inheritance tax on it." So I said, "I'm not interested. Financially, mechanically, it doesn't matter to me. I'm just interested in running the newspaper and getting it done. We will not sweat the small details, because there's no..." I didn't want

to be like, you know, a feeding frenzy to see how much I could get in my name. So everything that came up, we said... They put our name on real estate and that sort of thing, but we just said, "As long as..." Even when Willa Mae was unable to come to the newspaper, I still insisted that her name be carried as Editor. "She's *always* been Editor." As long as she was alive, she was *Editor*. I felt that she earned that, deserved that. Even in months and months where she couldn't even come into the newspaper or whatever. I thought, "She's earned her right to be newspaper editor, and I'm not going to change a thing by changing my title. I'm going to do what I'm going to do. And the same with [the title of] Publisher."

RB: But at the same time, you have a respect for those titles. In the newspaper business, the title of Editor is... I'm still learning about how that goes because that is an occupation and it has those certain places. So the publisher would be the one at the top.

DG: Right. He is the CEO [Chief Executive Officer,] but the basic function of the content of the paper is primarily the editor. And Willa Mae never wanted me to be Assistant Editor. She had the same sort of respect. She didn't want *anybody* to ever think I was her assistant. I was not working for her and she was not telling me what to do! That's why she insisted that I be Associate Editor. She wanted to know that I was going to take care of some of it and she was take of some of it, and we were associates. So I started here officially as Associate Editor. And I was never an assistant. So we've never really worried about job titles. We just knew what work had to be done and who was responsible for doing it.

RB: But you had some successes -- to go back just a little bit -- through the '70s, and then into the '70s. By the '80s you still had your linotypes, but you were switching over there, what, in the early '80s?

DG: In 1976 we converted the newspaper entirely to offset production. The reason we were so slow is we hated to give up the independence of having it totally done in our shop. We disliked tremendously having to go to Bolivar and have Jim Sterling print our newspaper! We just loved Jim Sterling. We think he did a great job up there and no one could have ever treated us better, but it still... It was sort of something [of] a compromise, we felt, in that we were unable to produce the entire product here. So then we set out with a plan to build this addition that we're sitting in right now. Part of it we had trouble with because we couldn't get clear title to part of the land back here behind us. We *finally* got that, built this addition, and put our press in in 1985. Our first edition off our own press was the Valentine's Day issue in 1985.

**[Tape meter, 300]**

So for almost nine years we drove back and forth to Bolivar every week. And they treated us royally. They gave us high quality printing and just worked around our schedule, and did everything as they did for all their other customers. I have a tremendous...

RB: During the offset period.

DG: Right. When we *had* to take our publication there to be printed. But even then, we set out... We bought our own camera and our darkroom. We started taking our own negatives. And then we bought our own plate maker and we took our own plates for their

press. Because we were just getting one phase at a time. We were going to implement a process whereby we'd be ready to go when we got our own press. So there were two phases: the darkroom phase and the plate room phase. We implemented those one step at a time, and then just took our plates down there.

RB: What did employees do at that time? Because here you have a situation where a *complete* change in technology has taken place. Whatever the employees were doing with linotype, [did they] have to be retrained?

DG: Right.

RB: Or else they had to leave or something?

DG: And both of those things happened. Jac Zimmerman of Bolivar had told us, said, "Now, you've got all men employees except for your secretary up front. In ten years you'll have all women." He told us that.

And so we started retraining the linotype operators, and they were pleased and quick to grasp the Compugraphic type system. They were very glad to get done with that linotype and move on to something that was far more productive. Nobody wanted to go backwards! [They'd] rather drive the combine, learn how to run the combine or cotton picker, rather than get out in the rows and do it by hand! So there wasn't any *fighting* the technology.

They relished it, but we did have some employee changeover where some of those young men went elsewhere. One of them who was working for us got a job with [the Missouri] State Highway Department. He left, and the other one went to Springfield and got a job with this... I believe it was MFA Milling Company. So we lost those two.

And we did, we replaced one them with a woman and the other one with a young high school graduate, our secretary's brother.

RB: Why women? What that change? Why was it inevitable that it would go toward women?

DG: Well, I really don't know, other than the fact that most of the work now had changed to becoming more clerical in nature. It seemed to be easier to find women who were good and accurate typists. You were needed to be a machinist [when operating a linotype.]

And we had a woman linotype operator. Of the last two linotype operators that we had, one was a woman. Our most, you might say, dependable, our most productive linotype operator. And they had had women linotype operators even when Earl bought the place. There was a woman...

RB: What was her name?

DG: The last one here was Betty Murray.

**[Tape meter, 350]**

Then we replaced her with Kenny Steward when she left to move to Kansas City to take her family up there. And then *he* was the one who stayed the longest here as a... He worked both ways. He worked in letterpress. We bought a Heidelberg Automatic letterpress Press, and we had offset presses. He was learning both of those. And then we needed somebody just to help him with the typing, so we hired Marilyn Powell... I guess actually we hired ?Jill Lynn? first, and then she moved into our layout and design, and then Marilyn Powell, who's still with us. She's been here fourteen, fifteen years.

RB: Was there a lady by the name of Blue?

DG: Yes, Claudia Blue. She's been here... She had several years experience around the Kansas City area working letterpress printing, offset printing in the suburban publications. Her husband retired from a union job and came down. She was like forty-something years old; he was fifty-three or four. So then she was looking for a job, just something to fill her time. So she had the tools we needed and the skills we needed. She's still working here also.

RB: Right. So at that transition there, in offset, I suppose you were the one that would train? There was some training that had to go along with...?

DG: Right. With every machine you bought from Compugraphic, you were entitled to so many hours of training, usually over a two or three day period.

**[Tape meter 377. End Side 2, Tape One of Two.]**

**[Tape meter, 001. Begin Side 1, Tape Two of Two.]**

RB: What we were talking about: You were taking training, and you were training because it was a matter of a change in technology taking place there.

DG: Right.

RB: You had some knowledge of photographic skills, and that was part of it, wasn't it?

DG: Right. I had worked in the print shop darkroom, which was adjacent to the photo department up at Warrensburg, so again I was experienced in basic photography from college. We set up a darkroom at the high school at Camdenton. Then on evenings that I wasn't working over here doing something else, I worked for Brayley Photo in Camdenton. Worked some nights down there. And we covered some conventions at Tan-Tar-A. We'd go out and shoot conventions of an evening and then come back in



about ten o'clock. He'd develop the film, see that it was good, and then he'd go to bed. And I'd print the photos. He'd get up at six o'clock the next morning, take them down there and have them on display for the convention people to buy the next morning. So I had some basic photo skills that I had come by through... As I said, my skills that I needed, from writing, printing, offset exposure, and photo exposure, just sort of came about accidentally. I never set out to get these skills. They all came in somewhere by my exposure, and by my working part time here, and my working over there and my working somewhere else.

RB: But you couldn't predict how the technology of [the] newspaper business would change.

DG: Nor was I even interested in the newspaper business. I wasn't going into the newspaper business! But it just worked that I did. And then when we started getting the Compugraphic equipment, I started taking the training in the basic computer-generated and photoset typesetting. The workers here, the associates here would put it to work and really would learn more, but I had the basic training. And then I had the training in how to repair and maintain and work on the circuit boards. It was my job to do all the computer repair, as much as possible.

RB: That offset process is one which produces a whole *sheet* of paper, is it?

DG: It works from a photo image, and it's called offset because... The letterpress is called letterpress because the metal letter actually presses into the sheet. It's like a rubber stamp except it's a metal stamp. You have a rubber roller [that] runs over that raised letter type, and then that raised letter presses into a sheet of paper. So it's a physical, mechanical

forcing of the type and the ink that's on it into the sheet. So it's called letterpress because the letter presses on it.

But then an *offset* reproduction, it's worked with a system where the water and ink don't mix. It's a water and oil principle that they just don't mix, so you have a photo image that's developed on an offset plate. And you can see it. The developer that's used is an oil base, so that if you were to take a washcloth and rub across that you would see the... The water would adhere to the non-printing area, but it won't adhere to that image where it's supposed to print because that oily developer is on there. So first the water roller goes over it, spreads the water, it adheres to the non-printing surface. It's followed immediately by an ink roller, and that oil-based ink then adheres to the area where the image is on the plate. And it's not a raised plate, raised image. It's just that water repels, and oil attracts oil. But then that's not printed onto the sheet. It's printed onto a rubber printing blanket, and then from the printing blanket it's offset onto a sheet of paper. So the offset process is called "offset" because it's a two-step. It prints from the blanket to the plate, and then from the rubber plate onto the sheet of paper.

RB: So then when you add the actual type to that and the letters and whatever, that was again done by a keyboard?

DG: Right. It was done by keyboard. Once you got it to the way you wanted to reproduce it, then you took it into the darkroom and shot a large negative. And [then you] developed the negative and then exposed with an ultraviolet light of sort through the negative onto the plate that was photosensitive. And then you rubbed up your image. So instead of being a mechanical function, it was more of a photo transfer system.

RB: A lot of effort in the linotype, in the hand set type business, a lot of effort was in done in creating the actual letters, but in this case that part of it was much easier.

DG: Simplified. One person could set more type in a *day* than a linotype operator could set in a week. Plus the correction was so much easier.

Then in about [the] late 1980s -- or I guess actually in the mid-1980s -- someone out in some little rural Montana community had a computer and decided he was going to jockey around someway and produce his newspaper off a computer. And he became a source of interest nationwide in publication.

**[Tape meter, 050]**

Somebody saying, "Look! Somebody's just got a regular computer. They're using a word processor and they're producing type! And they're using it and reproducing it, and it looks like type." But it was just as big a change for us to change from Compugraphic typesetting to what we now use, computer typesetting, as it was to go from letterpress to phototypesetting. Because the first generation was a machine designed for only one function, [to] set type. It was not a computer. It was designed to [make typesetting] easy. You turned it on, and you set this size type, that size type, this style, and it's done. You didn't have any other computer functions. There was no software that we worked with or anything.

RB: You didn't compose on it, for instance. You wrote out... Or did you type...?

DG: Well, we typed it in. We did, but you didn't see a screen. You just saw a line. The type just showed up on one line. It was more like an electronic typewriter, but it had a photo

imaging system built inside it. So there wasn't a lot of computer functions other than just enough to generate type.

In about 1990 then, we switched to the MacIntosh composing systems. That was a big shock to our systems, too! We had to do that. We adjusted to it. Now we just relish it.

I was taking bids on new equipment yesterday, and we're going to get a second scanner in. We digitized this year. We have a digital camera that we've had in operation for about three months. We've only developed one roll of film in about three months 'cause everything has been on the digital camera. We just take the pictures. We can get up to about seventy on a disc -- have a four MB [megabyte, pronounced "meg"] disc -- and we can get up to seventy high resolution photos on it, just download them directly into the computer, run them through a Photoshop editing and modification system, output them, and paste them up or do whatever we need to, switch them through the network from machine to machine.

RB: So these photos print, then... I mean, once they're digitized, then, you can use them to...

DG: In the paper, right, to print from.

RB: And what about the quality of the image in the paper as opposed to the earlier photographic methods?

DG: It's better than the early methods. It's not as good as the method we were using, *but* the only reason it's *not* right now is because our printer doesn't have high enough resolution. Three weeks ago I bought a higher resolution -- an 1,800 by 1,800 dot [per inch] -- printer, but it didn't produce satisfactory photos. So they're going to come and take it

back and they're going to bring us another one, one that they *know* works because it's in operation now in several of the newspapers. It's only 1,200 by 1,200 [dots per inch], but it seems to produce photos better than that 1,800 by 1,800 for some reason. So that's one of the things that I'm doing. So we *hope* within the next couple of weeks to get... We're getting good enough pictures, [is] about the best I can say. They're highly mediocre, but we'd like to move on a notch higher than that. The next would eventually be to have some sort of direct imaging system.

Also our commercial printing -- last March 17<sup>th</sup>, we installed a digital press. It's the only one I know of in the area... Well, it's not now because I called people at Buffalo and people at Humansville and said, "You've got to come and see this thing! It will revolutionize your commercial printing. It'll take ninety-nine percent of the stress and effort and dirt and dirty hands out of it. You've got to have one." And they each bought one. Basically, you generate the master copy on your computer. You can either download into it, or you can print out a sheet and then have it scan it and then just program it for the color and the size of paper, enlarge or reduce, how many you want, and walk away and leave it and everything else is automated. It runs 8,000 an hour. We've run an average of eighty-four print jobs a week through it, every week since we've had it. That's commercial printing.

RB: What's the name of this machine?

DG: It's called a Risograph. It's all self-contained. You don't have to clean up ink.

Everything is pumped and monitored inside out.

RB: It's not a very big machine, is it?

DG: No, it will take up to an eighteen-inch sheet. But it will handle most of the posters. We do business cards, letterheads, envelopes, sale bills, posters, carbonless forms, just about everything that we do here. We have to run an average of two to three print jobs a week through the regular commercial printing presses, but everything [else is on the Risograph.] That's been the next revolution; has been to digitize the darkroom, digitize the printing.

**[Tape meter, 100]**

RB: Can I ask you one question, now? I know you've been writing for a long time now, and throughout all of these technological changes there's been... What about the composition of your work? Has that changed? How'd you start out writing?

DG: I used to sit down and write it out by hand. I'd type it, and then pass it on back for somebody else to type [set] it. Now I compose at the computer, because I can go back and edit, make changes *so* easily, and then do spell check, and see if I've duplicated words, or it will do several checks for me.

**[Tape meter, 107. Unidentified person enters room, incidental conversation omitted. Interview resumes, tape meter 110]**

DG: But I now compose on the computer, and then when I'm done with it I pass it over to Pam Jenkins by network and she follows up and proofs it. Then she prints it out on a sheet of paper, and somebody proofs it on the sheet then before it's pasted up. So it's been a *world* of relief for *me*!

RB: And it's a relief for everyone...

DG: It really has [been]!

RB: ...because you pass them the finished product.

DG: I used to have to type it and then go back and make pencil editing marks, and then give it to the typesetter who then had to try to decipher all of my strikeovers and write-ins and all of that. Then they had to typeset it, and then somebody else had to proof it, and then we had to paste up corrections. Now we just go back and edit or correct, and put a whole new corrected [sheet.] If we need it divided into columns or whatever, just go ahead and do that.

**[Tape meter, 118. Long pause, apparently an unidentified person had entered to room giving a silent signal that Mr. Ginnings was needed to set up sound equipment at an event on the town square. Small portion of incidental conversation omitted. Interview resumes, tape meter 121.]**

RB: We're going to have to end up our interview, I'm sure. (laughs) In this segue to what's going to happen on the square. That's a pretty new bandstand over there, isn't it?

DG: It is. That's a community project. Actually, it's one that I suggested. It's one of the little things that I'm kind of proud of. I thought we needed one. Used to have an old bandstand over on the *other* side of the square, and so we said, "We really need one." So I went to the Lion's Club. They didn't have any money at that time, but they said, "We're in favor of it." So they sort of sponsored it and found a lady here in town, and she said, "Well, I'll go around and we'll make this an octagon shape. We'll just find eight local sponsors." And the Index was one. We said, "We'll just pay for it." So she collected enough money in an afternoon to pay for that. We got a contractor to build it. We built it with some degree of permanence so that it would be a historical item. It's all concrete and metal up to the top.

RB: How about the design of it itself? Who...?

DG: We found a catalog that had lots of gazebo designs in it.

RB: Was it influenced by the earlier [bandstand] in design and shape?

DG: No, the other one was just square. But we wanted something that was attractive, and we wanted to move it over to that side of the square where people drove by that main road, they'd be able to see it. And we use it at all the community events.

RB: Does your group sing there sometimes?

DG: We have. We've sung there several times.

RB: How long have you been in gospel music?

DG: Well, my mother sang with a gospel group. She and her sisters and my granddad did. And then my sisters, they had a gospel group. I sang with them. We sang with.... Our neighbors up the road sing, and they had two or three generations of singers and pickers. We performed down here on the square when I was a young teen in talent shows and in public things. We've just always done it! And then when my kids came along, they were with us. We had a little community volunteer-type group, so they started. And the next thing you know, we had our own family group and we were traveling almost every weekend to some community or some bluegrass festival.

RB: Is that how it is now?

DG: No, they've grown up now. My youngest son's graduating college in two weeks and [my] daughter's married (my second daughter). And the other kids who were neighbors' kids that were in the band, they're also grown. So we get together just once every great once in a while. But we went a lot of places there for a while.



RB: Are your children going to be the in newspaper business?

DG: I don't know. Was asked that question yesterday. None of them at this point have expressed any interest in it, so we're not making any decisions.

**[Tape meter, 150]**

We're going to stay here and do things just the way we're doing them right now with plans to just keep up with the technology and move ahead until something causes me to make a decision to do otherwise. Then if any of the children are interested in it, then so be it. If not, we don't know what we'll do. Got no immediate plans to do anything other than what I'm doing right now.

RB: Well, gosh, I'm going to have to let you go. I know it's time for you [to leave.] I really appreciate this nice long interview but it hasn't seemed like very long chat. (laughs)

DG: It hasn't for me either, but [when you] go through the many technology changes that I've gone through, it...

RB: Do you have a role, by the way, in the church, Don, at this moment?

DG: I'm a deacon and a Sunday school teacher there. I've taught the adult men and women for as long as I can remember, since I was in my late twenties, I guess.

RB: And which church is that again?

DG: It's Decaturville Missionary Baptist Church.

RB: Real close here in Hermitage?

DG: No, no. It's south of Camdenton. It's forty-five miles away. But a lot of my cousins, second cousins, my mother's relatives, my father's relatives go there. And it's where my great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather had preached. Just more of a sense of

historical connection. I was teaching school at Camdenton and started going there, and made *lots* of friends there. So when we moved back over here it was just difficult to ever change, and we said, “Well, let’s drive back and forth for a while.” It’s one of those open-ended decisions we made such as going into the newspaper. It was a temporary thing that’s been going on forever! (chuckles)

RB: A long time!

DG: That’s right!

RB: (laughs) So you still have your religious roots there in that old home place.

DG: Right. And still see lots of distant kinfolks down there every week.

RB: Yeah! That’s very interesting. Well, Don, thank you very much for your time.

DG: Well, you bet! Enjoyed visiting with you. I’m sure you’ll enjoy Jim Sterling, too. He’s a wealth of information.

RB: Uh-huh, I’m looking forward [to it.]

**[Tape meter, 174. End Side One, Tape Two of Two. End of Interview.]**