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Interview of John J. Seydow, Ph.D.

John J. Seydow

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Frank Hopper

La Salle University

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Field Notes

Interviewee: John J. Seydow, Ph.D.

Interviewer: Frank Hopper

Interview Date: June 26, 2009

Interview Location: La Salle University - Professor Seydow's Office,
Olney Hall, Philadelphia, PA

The Interviewee:

John J. Seydow was born and raised in Olney section of Philadelphia. He was educated in Philadelphia's Parochial School System from kindergarten through high school. He graduated from Cardinal Dougherty High School in June of 1959. He attended La Salle College on a full time basis from September 1961 through May 1965. He majored in English at La Salle and received his Bachelors degree in May of 1965. The following September he began a graduate fellowship at Ohio University where he earned his Masters and Doctorial degrees in English by May of 1968. In August 1968, he returned to La Salle College as a professor in the English Department. He has taught at La Salle for the last forty-one years and is currently a Professor of English.

The Interviewer:

I, Frank Hopper, was born and raised in Camden, New Jersey. I am a retired State of New Jersey administrative employee after thirty-two years of service. Since my retirement in 2001, I have received a Bachelor's degree with a major in history from Penn State Abington in May, 2007. Currently, I am a part-time student in the Graduate Program in History at La Salle University and enrolled in History 650: Oral History: Theory and Practice for the Summer Session 2009.

Preparation for the Interview:

I viewed the videocassette, *Finding a Place...making a name: the history of La Salle University*, written and produced Tonya S. Ellis to obtain a general understanding of the history of the Christian Brothers and the evolution of La Salle University from its founding in 1863 to the present. I reviewed a pictorial history book of La Salle University written by Jeffrey LaMonica published in 2005 by Arcadia Publishing which contributed to my awareness of significant campus happenings over the years. I read one of Dr. Seydow's scholarly articles published in the *Hemingway Review*, 1:1 (1981: Fall) entitled "Francis Macomber's Spurious Masculinity" since I had previously studied Hemingway's novella, *The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber*, at Penn State. I

visited the La Salle Archives and obtained from Archivist Bro. Joseph Grabenstein copies of several of Dr. Seydow's articles that he wrote for the *La Salle Magazine* over the years as well as some pages from the 1965 La Salle Yearbook. I received general guidance for the interview from Dr. John P. Rossi of the History Department who has been Dr. Seydow's friend and colleague for over forty years. From these sources as well as materials provided in History 650, particularly Paul Thompson's *Life Story Interview Guide*, I prepared an outline for the interview that contained more than 130 questions.

Description of the Interview:

I arrived at La Salle University on bright and sunny Friday morning, June 26th at 10:30 and met Dr. Seydow at his office in Olney Hall. His narrow office was decorated with two Hemingway Society banners on one side wall and two mounted shelves filled with books on the other side wall. The room received a great deal of natural light from the large windows at one end. In summary, the room provided a pleasant environment to hold the interview. We discussed briefly the scope of interview and La Monica's book of photographs on the history of La Salle as well as some pictures from the 1965 La Salle Yearbook that I had brought. Dr. Seydow was relaxed and casually dressed after having driven up from his home at the Jersey shore. He was friendly and upbeat. He indicated was not pressed for time since he had no other commitments for the day. In short, he was primed to tell his story of his life and of his long association with La Salle. The interview began immediately and lasted nearly three and one half hours with only one short rest break.

Follow-up:

On June 29, 2009 I emailed Dr. Seydow and informed him that the audio recording of the interview was good and the transcription process had begun. I estimated that it would take approximately two weeks to complete.

On July 13, 2009 I emailed Dr. Seydow and told him the raw transcript was finished, and the editing process had begun. I asked for his help in spelling sixteen names of individuals that he had referred to during his interview.

On July 18, 2009 I mailed Dr. Seydow a copy of the transcription of the interview and a copy of these field notes.

Note on Recording:

For recording, I used my Sony IC Recorder model ICD-UX71 on battery power. I did not use an additional microphone. After the interview was completed, I connected the Sony recorder by USB port to my Dell Inspiron 600 laptop and uploaded the audio files for storage in wav format. I burned them to a CD in wav format as well. I formatted the CD as a data disk so that I could store a transcript, a list of questions, and field notes on it, in addition to the recordings. I used NCH Express Scribe software to slowly play back the recording while I transcribed it. Then I played the entire interview again at normal speed in order to edit it.

Editing the Transcript:

My editing decisions included:

- 1) eliminating repeated words, unless the words were repeated for emphasis
- 2) eliminating most false starts, unless the false starts seemed significant
- 3) placing information about pauses and visual cues or nonverbal sounds in brackets
- 4) using empty brackets [] to indicate inaudible words or phrases
- 5) providing limited additional explanation in footnotes
- 6) placing a time indication at or near the top of each page and at the beginning and end of each recording session
- 7) usually eliminating transitional words such as “and,” “so,” and “because” in order to make sentences shorter and easier to read
- 8) using a dash to indicate an awkward transition in the middle of a sentence
- 9) using a period to show a sentence that was not completed and a dash to show a sentence or question that was interrupted
- 10) capitalizing and using hyphens between letters of words the interviewee spelled
- 11) using **bold** to indicate emphasis
- 12) using quotation marks to indicate reported speech
- 13) using the Baylor University Style Guide for Editing Oral Memoirs regarding issues of grammar, punctuation and general presentation