

ORAL HISTORY SERIES - NUMBER ONE - 1997

ELBERT N. CARVEL



DELAWARE HERITAGE
COMMISSION



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Oral History Series
Elbert N. Carvel

by Roger Martin

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A Delaware Heritage Press Book

First Printing, August 1997

ISBN: 0-924117-08-7

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 97-68733

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820 North French Street, 4th Floor
Wilmington, DE 19801

About the Oral History Series

An oral history is different from a biography, although it is a biography of sorts, perhaps closer to an autobiography. But it is not that either. It is a combination because it melds interviewer's questions (perhaps the beginning of a biography) with the very personal responses and interpretations of those questions by the interviewed or the subject.

Reading this oral history will be a new experience. First, you will find that the interviewed person's conversational responses are very little changed. So the flavor of the history is conversational and informal. There are repetitions and interjections which are part of the Governor's personality and they definitely add a spontaneous spark to the history.

Second, what you get in an oral history is the story the interviewee feels is important about his/her life. Questions like what was your greatest mistake? and what are you proudest about? help the reader to know the interviewed person better. You'll get some surprises.

Third, this is not the whole story. The definitive biography of the subject has yet to be written. There are parts of the life which will not be told in this oral history. For example, the stories of the spouse and children which make up the complete picture of the whole life are not here.

The Delaware Heritage Commission hopes that you will enjoy your meeting with Governor Carvel contained within these pages. You will certainly feel you know better what he stood for and worked toward and will have a glimpse of his Delaware.

About the Author

Roger Martin was born in Delmar, Maryland, grew up in Laurel and graduated from the University of Delaware with a B.A. in German and Political Science and an M.A. in German. He was a member of the Delaware State Senate from 1972 to 1994 and Democratic Majority Leader, 1977-78, and again in 1994. Although he has just retired from a career as a history teacher from Middletown High School, he is, of course, busier than ever.

His published works include: *A History of Delaware through its Governors, 1776 to 1984*, and *Tales of Delaware; Delaware's Medal of Honor Winners and Memoirs of the Senate*.

Introduction

Elbert Nostrand Carvel was elected Governor of Delaware in 1948. Having served one term as Lieutenant Governor in the preceding four years he was, in several ways, an anomaly. He was not from an old line of Delaware business or political leaders (he had only been in the state twelve years when he was first elected); he was one of the youngest governors at thirty-seven; and he was only the second Democratic governor in Delaware in the twentieth century. Indeed, had it not been for a fatal split in the state Republican Party in 1936 that caused the election of Democrat Richard McMullen as governor, he could well have been the first such.

Carvel took office after our World War II troops had come home to shed their khakis and continue their educations with an eye on that new home in the suburbs. It was a time of social upheaval and population explosion. Carvel, with his youthful enthusiasm, met the challenges with alacrity so much so that he sometimes got too far out in front of the people, such as when he called for taxes to cover teacher pay raises without public input. He said afterwards that he thought it was obvious to everyone that teachers needed a raise. His intrepidity ruffled not a few feathers in his own Democratic Party when he named Clarence Southerland, a brilliant legal mind but a Republican, as Chief Justice of the newly formed Delaware State Supreme Court.

During his second term in 1960 old racial barriers began to fall as segregation in schools ended and old Jim Crow laws tumbled. Attitudes on capital punishment wavered and became quite pronounced in his home county of Sussex when this principled governor dared to veto the bill to bring back capital punishment after two vicious murders occurred right in his home county. These same principles guided the

young chief executive to rid state government, particularly in the highway department, of waste and corruption.

Today, Elbert Carvel remains in his home on Clayton Avenue in Laurel, still very busy in his twilight years and fully confident that, like his hero and mentor Harry Truman, history will prove him right in the course he chose for his ship of state.

This, then, is Elbert Carvel's story based on oral interviews conducted with him between 1976 and 1997 by Rebecca Button (July 1976), Henry R. Horsey (January 1993), John Paradee (April 1993), Annette Woolard (March 1993), and myself. (The Roger Martin interviews were December 1996 (1M) and January 1997 (2M))

Roger Martin



*Regarding the book's format: author's comments are italicized—*Carvel's responses are in regular type face. It is illustrative of one of the techniques used in Oral History interviews.

The footnoting system to be used at the end of each quote includes the interviewer's initials and a page number such as (B3) meaning Button, page 3. In the case of the author Roger Martin for whom there were two interviews, the identification will read (1M17) for first interview Roger Martin, page 17, and likewise (2M4) for second Roger Martin interview, page 4.

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"Crafford" 1995
House Portrait by Betty Carvel Palmer.

Biographical

Physically, Carvel is a very imposing man. One can never forget the massiveness of his handshake upon meeting him.

I'm sure I look like a mountain to the average person. You see, I'm six foot six and when I see a man just as tall as I am he looks big to me because I'm used to looking at average people. (B22)

Carvel is also very personable. He is so approachable, friendly and responsive, a newcomer might assume he was a relaxed native Delawarean. Not so. Son of Arnold Wrightson and Elizabeth Nostrand Carvel, he was born on Long Island, New York, where his mother's family hailed from, but his father's family, the Carvels, had roots in several sections of the country settled earliest by Europeans.

To begin with the Carvels came over with Lord Baltimore in 1634. Of course Lord Baltimore, Lord Calvert his name was, was the original settler of Maryland in St. Mary's county and he had a grant from King Charles the First. Of course, King Charles the First was trying to help his Catholic brother-in-law, his wife's Catholic brother, to find a new place in the new country because they were being somewhat persecuted over in England. But at any rate the Carvels stayed in Maryland for about three years. And they went down to Virginia, picked up six hundred acres of land in Virginia and stayed there for almost one hundred and fifty years and came back to Maryland in 1780. This was my great, great, great grandfather, Edmund Carville. (B1)

At first Edmund Carville bought a small piece of land near Annapolis but then exhibited interest in a larger tract called Crafford just across the Chesapeake Bay on Kent Island on Maryland's Eastern Shore.



Opening of Chesapeake Bay Bridge.
Courtesy of the Carvel Collection, Historical Society of Delaware.

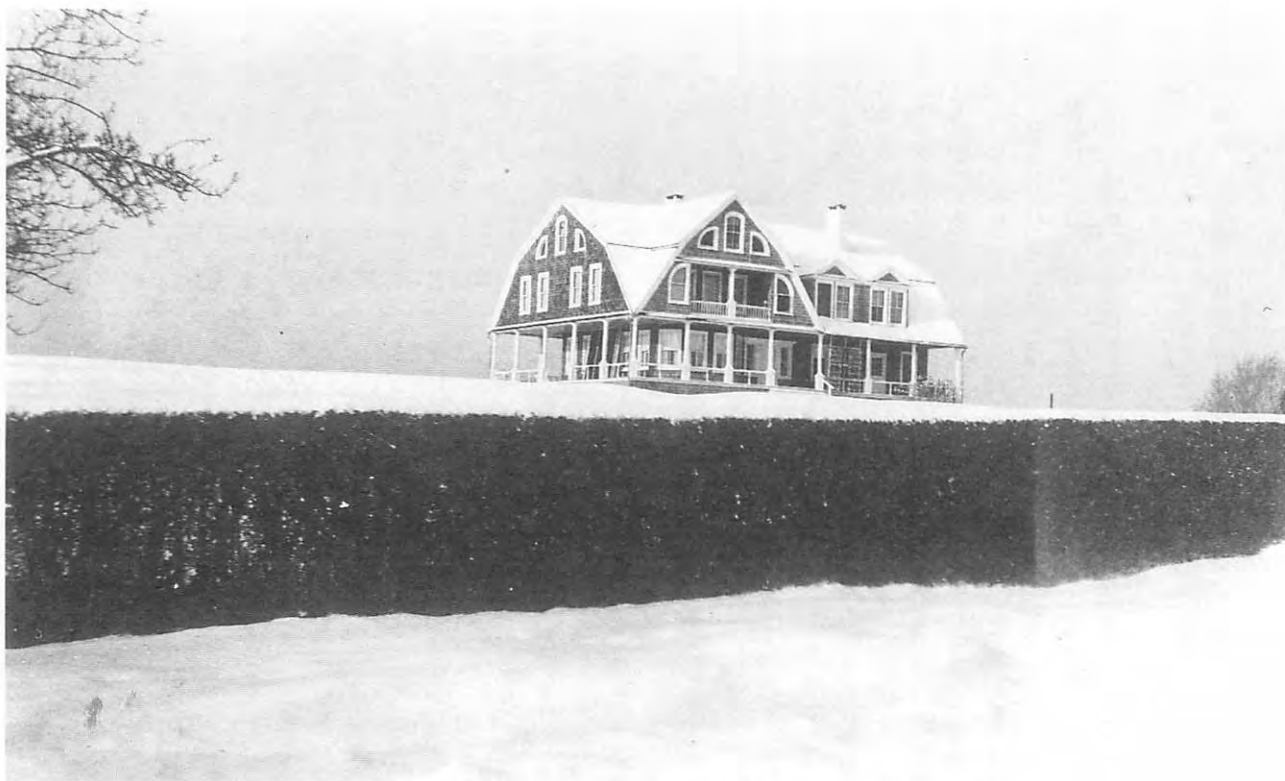
This tract had first been settled by William Claiborne in 1631 a few years before the arrival of Lord Baltimore.

Well, at any rate, my great, great, great grandfather bought this property in 1799 for seventeen hundred pounds current money and there were three hundred acres in the farm at that time and about six thousand feet of waterfront on the Chesapeake Bay. . . . The reason he bought the farm here was because it was about a mile away from a public landing on Shipping Creek and, of course, in those days there was only one way to get rid of your grain, to send it to the terminals in the city, and that was to ship it by water. And so this made this a very valuable farm. Not because it was on the Chesapeake Bay but that it was a mile away from a public landing where they could haul their grain and have it taken out on a barge to sailing vessels and shipped to Baltimore. (B2)

Over the years parcels of this tract have been sold but its staggering real estate value has been enhanced today not so much because of its shipping potential on Shipping Creek but because of its bay-front location.

We're about eight miles southwest of Annapolis at this point, and I've often thought that the Carvels have watched many things across the bay. For example, when the Naval Academy was being built and perhaps when they built the Naval Sending Station (towers) . . . and they watched the building of . . . the Chesapeake Bay Bridge because I was one of the ones who helped to dedicate it. I was governor at the time. (B1-2)

Carvel's maternal ancestors were equally prominent and, like the Carvels, had been on this land practically from its early settlement by Europeans.



Nostrand Family Home, Shelter Island, New York, winter 1958.
Courtesy of the Carvel Collection, Historical Society of Delaware.

Now my mother was a Nostrand, and she was a descendant of the early Dutch settlers of New York who came over to New York City in 1639. My great, great, great, great, eight times great grandfather was Hans Jansen Van Nostrand. He came from Rotterdam in the Netherlands and so all of our family on both sides are either Dutch or French or English and have been settlers in this area for a long time. It was just by chance that they didn't get to Delaware until 1936 when I arrived here. (B1-3)

My great grandfather had about a thousand acres on Shelter Island (on eastern Long Island) with about seven miles of waterfront which he planned to develop. He started this in 1883, and everything went fine until 1895 when they had the gold depression. And what happens when you're a developer, you have a whole lot of property and taxes and interest at the bank and you don't have any sales. The operation never did improve much after that, although many lots were sold. Today, of course, the place is all developed. . . . My grandfather had a house on Peconic Bay, on Shelter Island. Shinnicock Hills was about ten miles across the bay. (W1-2)

I was born out on the east end of Long Island on Shelter Island in 1910, February the 9th, at this house. (P1)

Long lines of established ancestry aren't restricted to Carvel's side of his present-day family. His wife, the former Ann Hall Valliant of Centerville, Maryland, can boast of durable lineage herself.

And of course Mrs. Carvel was a Valliant. She was a descendant of French Huguenots. . . . I think John Valliant came to Bellevue (Talbot county, Maryland) back in 1641. (B2)

Our family came to Baltimore in 1916, and I attended public schools there. . . . I was an ardent student of history. I did better in history than in mathematics. I was impressed by all the things that were done: founding the nation, how our people stood up against

great odds to found the nation, what Washington, Jefferson, Adams and Benjamin Franklin had all done to cause this nation to get underway. And I thought this was the thing I wanted to do. So I went to law school planning to go into politics. (w20)

And although the Great Depression in America was to intervene, Carvel pursued his dream.

(I) went to Baltimore Polytechnic Institute. Then I went to the University of Baltimore Law School. . . . I studied at night while I worked during the day and this was from 1928 to 1931 and those who remember those days will remember that (in) 1929 we had the terrible crash. I graduated during the depression. . . . I was married three years later in 1932 and they closed the banks about two months after we were married. That was a rough time although I was holding a job at the time in the Baltimore Gas and Electric Company. (P1)

I was the chief clerk and later became a sales engineer for the Gas Heating department. But the point was that, although I attended law school because I thought some day I might want to go into politics in Maryland, I tried to make as many contacts as possible while I was going to law school. I had a good job with Baltimore Polytechnic as a shop instructor. I had a good salary, short hours, six hours a day five days a week—that was only thirty hours and it worked in pretty well with night sessions at the law school. (w20)

That interest in meeting people caused Carvel to switch jobs.

And I gave that up because I thought I could do better at the Stewart & Company Department Store as a section manager which was really a service manager on the first floor. I was six foot six inches tall and of course everybody could see me. I thought I would

meet a lot of people this way and maybe gradually get to be known. (P2)

In '32 at the rock bottom of the depression, I had a job when thirty percent of the people in Baltimore didn't. And they never cut my salary in the department where I worked; they cut the salary of everybody except the head salesman in this department. I was the chief clerk. And they didn't cut my salary because I was the only one there that could do the job full time, so I was lucky. As a matter of fact when we were married in '32 they gave me a \$3 raise. I was getting \$25 a week and they gave me a raise to \$28 which was tremendous at that time, better than ten percent. (W21)

As energetic and active as he was in establishing himself in Baltimore, romance did not escape Elbert Carvel.

I had a friend of mine who was going to Strayer Business College, and he met these people from the Eastern Shore, these two girls. He was having dates with them. So he introduced me to these two girls and I guess I was kind of a cocky sort of a chap and I would tease them and they thought they knew a girl over in Centerville who was my match. . . . They called me up one Sunday and asked me to come over so I met my wife at that time and she really attracted me, there wasn't any question about it. I met her in '28 and we married in '32. The engagement only lasted for three or four months. We had a lot of differences over the years but I always seemed to come back and we've been married now for sixty years (sixty-four at the time of publication). (W20)

In the depths of the Great Depression Carvel and his new bride struggled to make ends meet just as anyone else.



Valliant Fertilizer Company, c. 1930s.
Courtesy of the Laurel Historical Society.

Things were really rough in those days but we really did quite well. We had an apartment that cost \$20 a month, a third story apartment. We didn't have an electric refrigerator. We had one that had an ice box. I remember one time the water ran down the steps. We made out very well on the salary of \$28 a week. The apartment with heat and electricity (was) \$20 a month. That was really a good deal for us. It's unheard of today. (W21)

But that didn't work out (quite as planned and we) came to Delaware in 1936. After I had been with the Gas & Electric Company for about five years, I became the treasurer and general manager of Valliant Fertilizer Company with offices in Laurel and Milford. Later, the next year, we set up a company in Milford as the Milford Fertilizer Company. (P1-3)

So we're very happy to have come to Delaware and we came here because Mrs. Carvel's uncle, William E. Valliant, had started a fertilizer company back in 1914. I left a good job in Baltimore and came over here at a low salary because I thought Delaware was a land of opportunity. Of course at the time that I arrived, it was right after the depression, there were few houses that were painted. (B2)

Carvel put aside his political aspirations when he came to Laurel for now he had a wife and growing family and had to contend with an established business which was floundering.

I came here under very adverse circumstances because it became necessary for me to fire both the president and the bookkeeper, because of shortages in the company's assets. Doesn't sound like much today, but there was a shortage of almost \$100,000 and that was a lot of money back in 1936. . . . When (the bookkeeper) got cash he would use it for his own account, and of course we eventually settled. We had an amicable settlement with him but it was difficult to come to a state where I didn't know anyone.



"Howdy Pardner" Dinner. Carvel Family, 1954, left to right: Elbert, unidentified gentleman, Barbara, Ann, Edwin, Betty. *Courtesy of the Carvel Collection, Historical Society of Delaware.*

I think my wife knew Mortimer Price who was the Agricultural teacher at a school . . . who came from Centerville, but that's about all. (P2-3)

So I took over as the general manager of the company and later became president, in 1943. And I became chief stockholder in 1945 of both Valliant and Milford. . . . I sold out to Bob Fischer (of Milford) in 1973. (P2)

During WWII in America when most young men were wrestling with the decision about whether to join the service, Elbert Carvel sought the advice of an uncle in Massachusetts, who was a Colonel in the U.S. Army.

I went to see him and talked to him about it. At that time I had three children and I was married and running the fertilizer company. I made a special trip up to see him at the beginning of WWII, 1941. I was 31 years old. And I wondered what he thought about whether or not I should enlist and it was sort of a toss up as far as he was concerned. He wondered whether I wouldn't have been just as well off if I stayed in the fertilizer business, which was very important at that time. And the funny part about it was the board here in Sussex county automatically deferred me so I never really had a chance to go. In 1941 I had a daughter who was seven and a son who was five and a half and another daughter who was three. Besides, the fertilizer business was relying on me. (W8)

Carvel has lived more than sixty years in Laurel, Delaware. They have been busy, eventful and happy years. Not given to drink but a smoker of cigarettes until his early years of elected office, he has had to contend with an ordinary number of other medical problems.

I did have blood pressure problems when I was going to law school. I was working eight hours a day six days a week and going to law school and breaking into new jobs and I thought I could do anything, and that's when my blood pressure started to elevate. And they say that the way to be able to handle heart problems is to have problems with your heart when you're at an early age and do something about it. I did have problems with blood pressure. It was never too high because I was able to control it fairly well. But my blood pressure has been a problem all through my life. Right now (December 6, 1996) it's probably running around about 140 over 80. Sometimes (my blood pressure is) 130 over 70, which is still better. (1M30)

At the end of my second term my blood pressure was unusually high. I had been trying to do too many things at that time. It's a good thing that I wasn't elected to the senate, although this is something I had looked forward to when I was just a youngster nine or ten years old. So I got to be governor but never got into the senate, which was just as well. (P23-24)

I take medication for fibrillation. I take digitalis and I also take some medication for sleeping and relaxation, which is related to the blood pressure situation. (1M31)

What with family, politics, and business obligations tugging on his arm, Carvel did have some modest pastimes.

I liked to play contract bridge. (1M27)

I started playing golf when I was nine years old. But I was never a very good golfer because I always tried to knock the hell out of that ball. And the net effect was I never knocked it the way I should have. Now, right before I was governor the second time I had a pretty good game. But then when I was governor, and I wasn't as relaxed probably as I'd been before that, my game went to pieces.

But I had a pretty good game before I was governor the second time. (1M31)

Even today Delawareans mispronounce his name. More often than not, they will even do so in mentioning the state building named after him in Wilmington. But an acquaintance of his father asked permission to use the family name for an ice cream business. And that has helped along the confusion about pronunciation.

This man Carvel (accent on the second syllable) was a Greek and his name was Anastopolis, or something of that sort, a great big long Greek name, and my father knew him. You see my father was in the business of selling flavors to ice cream people so he knew him because of the fact that he was probably trying to sell him some things for . . . ice cream and he asked my father if it was all right for him to use the name Carvel. My father said yes, sure, go ahead. He proceeded to use our name, then mispronounced it. I'm constantly telling people don't confuse me with that ice cream man. (1M19)

Character

Carvel's interests and actions often point to a moral fibre unique to himself. First, he believes in the importance of history and in the belief that each of us is part of that history.

I'm the vice president of the Historical Society of Delaware . . . and one of the things I tell people when I go various places throughout the state is that "you are part of history". . . . For example in the general assembly one month I urged them to support some of the programs of the Historical Society of Delaware. I said, "You know, this is a running situation that takes into consideration everyday events which will eventually become the history of the

state. So remember . . . what the Historical Society is doing is keeping a record of this and helping future generations understand what happened.” One of the things that I always felt was important was the saying that “those who do not observe the mistakes of history are condemned to repeat the mistakes of history.” (2M21)

Second, Governor Carvel is a Christian who seems to know his Bible and sometimes quotes it to underscore his point. But he also tries to live a Christian life. And he has had the nerve to stand up against corruption and disagree with members of his own party.

Lyndon Johnson used to quote Isaiah in the Old Testament, “Come let us reason together.” And this has always been my basis (of operation). I’ve always tried to work for the things that I believed in but in addition I haven’t hesitated to raise issues with my own party. When they, for example, ripped the highway department and I was state chairman in 1955, I resigned because I opposed what they were doing. I also opposed my party in 1964 when they tried to put a lopsided levy court or county council act through and then whereby they had thirty-three thousand in one district, thirty-two thousand in one district, thirty-three thousand in another district. These were Republican districts and then, in the Democratic district, they made one district with nine thousand and one district with five thousand. This was wrong. I opposed it. I vetoed the bill. I didn’t hesitate to oppose my party when they were wrong . . . and support them when they were right and naturally the art of democratic self government is a matter of trying to get together many different views and trying to see if you cannot compromise or harmonize their views and bring out some good answers. (B16-17)

He doesn’t like bribes.

This particular job only paid five thousand but (a) man came in to the governor's office. I had never seen him before in my life, and he offered me two thousand dollars as a bribe if I would give him that job. I said, "If you don't get out of here in thirty seconds, I'm calling the Attorney General and I'm going to prefer charges against you." I don't even remember that man's name but he never came back. (B18)

He tried to run his administration without corruption.

We can have honesty in government and I'd like to point out that during my second term as governor we must have spent a half a billion dollars in construction of highways, bridges, bought some ferries, built hospitals, university buildings, school buildings, public buildings of all kinds. There was not one breath of scandal about how that money was spent and what I want to say is that I believe that if the proper leadership is given, we don't have to have corruption or scandal in public life. (B50)

Carvel asserts that, although one may lose a race for a particular office, one has to appreciate the fact that he was well enough respected to receive the nomination from the party. This is gracious and putting a good face on a disappointing situation.

So, I did run for the senate against John J. Williams in 1958. I got the nomination. As a matter of fact, my party has always nominated me and I've run for office six times and been elected three and it's always an honor to be nominated whether you're elected or not. I think most people don't realize that at least you've had the opportunity to take a shot at the job and not everybody gets nominated. (B35)

The governor couldn't stand unbecoming behavior from persons in public positions.

I had a case on the Family Court, (a) justice during the time (I) was governor in the second term. The Justice was from a very powerful Democratic family in Wilmington. He was Roman Catholic and he had a lot of friends in the priesthood who were (family members). I'd say he had four or five hundred votes in his family. He had been acting very offhand and I thought making a lot of comments that were unnecessary and especially to women and things of that sort when he was on the bench. He made many uncomplimentary comments not becoming a judge and I was aware of this. When it came time to reappoint him, I refused to reappoint him. And I'm satisfied. I lost maybe a thousand votes because of that situation, in 1964. (P20)

Human beings must be accountable.

I took the position when I was governor (in 1948) that, number one, as a Democrat I could help bring Democrats into the government. You see, Democrats hadn't been in government for a long time and then when they were in with McMullen they were only in there for two years and then the McMullen administration promptly lost the highway department . . . because the Republicans ripped it away from them. So they were hungry. The Democrats wanted recognition. Now, the thing I told the Democrats was this: number one, as a Democratic governor I could be helpful in providing opportunities for Democrats in our administration but, number two, they had to hold their jobs . . . and they had to be responsible for the way they held their jobs. That I couldn't hold their jobs for them. That if they were dishonest or incompetent that

I could not keep that job for them . . . and this happened time and time again. I did knock heads together. (B17)

It wasn't easy to be level headed.

I've had people who I thought were trying to work against me . . . I never tried to wreak any vengeance upon them. Many times I tried to be helpful and tried to do things to help them . . . this caused them to be more shaken up than if I'd tried to wreak some vengeance upon them but . . . I realized what Kennedy used to say, "Don't get mad, get even." But in politics I never tried to get even. I always tried to follow what was a pretty good basis for returning evil with good and you'd be surprised how this confounds your enemies. . . . (B54)

In fact it is imperative to stand up for what you know is right in spite of opinion polls.

I think one of the important things as a governor or as any person in public life, this is one of the things that Harry Truman stood for as well and why I admired him so much, that you have to stand for the things which you believe are right. This is what Lincoln did, for example. He was a very despised man in office but he's proved to be one of the great heroes of history. The important thing is to be able to face up to the problem and not to hesitate to take a position. What I don't like about a lot of the people in public life today is what they do is read the polls and then they do what the polls say the people want done whether or not this is right or wrong. They just act as the puppets for the people instead of getting up there and being statesmen and providing strong personal leadership. (2M21)

Governor Carvel firmly believes that it is important to do what you can to make society a better place.

My father told me it was important to stay busy. I have permanent interests. I stay busy. And my desk stays piled up and I try to get rid of it and more stuff comes in. But it's important to keep busy and that keeps you going. I hope to reach the year 2,000.
(P24)

Education

Carvel's work in the fertilizer business took him all over the state and he interacted with many Delawareans. He frequented the Duval Tea Room in Dover where he conversed with lawyers and politicians. His law degree from the University of Baltimore gave him much in common with these fellows. He became vocal about the issues of the day, one of which was education. School buildings had been neglected for years and teachers' salaries were low. When he was asked to run for lieutenant governor under Governor Walter Bacon, he acquiesced because he was always hoping to get into politics. While lieutenant governor his constitutional duties of presiding over the senate and heading up the Board of Pardons provided excellent lessons. When he became governor in 1949, he attacked the education issues head on.

The education system in Delaware had been neglected . . . during the war . . . They couldn't do much about taking care of decaying buildings and things of that sort, and the war was over for three years and still they hadn't done some of the things they should have. And so one of the issues that we made during the campaign of 1948 was the fact that we wanted to see education given better consideration and . . . the school teachers' salaries raised and we

urged that be done. That was one of the first things we did, and we had to raise taxes which proved to be very unpopular. And I called for raising taxes instead of appointing a commission to study the matter and make recommendations and get the public prepared for it. I lost a lot of popularity the first three or four months that I was governor. But we did get the school teachers' bill passed and we did get the taxes raised and we did build schools. (P14)

A bill provided by the State Board of Education at the time Carvel took office called for a \$28,000,000 bond issue for the construction of schools whereby the state paid for sixty percent on the construction and the local areas would pay forty percent.

We were able to build—probably all the schools that were needed to be built at that time. . . . You know P(ierre) S. duPont had built many (of the Delaware) schools in the past and given them to the state and he still had two men who had been with him and who were helpful to us in the disbursement of these funds. We provided that each school should be approved by the governor and we had hearings for all the schools and they came before the governor in his office to present their case and we either approved or disapproved them. At that time, particularly, one man, his name was Alec (I can't think of his last name) but he had been with P. S. duPont over the years and he was helpful to us in making the decisions as to the type of schools which would be built and the size and so on. (2M2)

Building schools with a bond issue was one thing. Raising teachers' salaries was another. This latter element required raising taxes upon the citizenry to obtain sufficient monies for the raises and was particularly unpopular the way Carvel went about it.

The mistake I made was, if I had been more knowledgeable about the job, I should have appointed a state-wide committee to study the need and gotten the people of the state involved in the problem. But I assumed that they were well aware of the fact that we needed to raise teachers' salaries and I went right ahead and asked the Republican general assembly to raise taxes and they only raised them for a period of two years because we had a session every two years at the time. They knew it would be necessary, if we needed more money, to raise taxes again and they wanted to put the governor on the spot whereby he had to raise taxes. This turned out to be unpopular because the people weren't prepared for it and the press proceeded to make a big issue about raising taxes. I didn't handle it the way I would have handled it had I been more experienced. (2M5)

Governor Carvel, as a prosperous business man, used good management skills. He remarks that he wasn't a genius at management but he was "experienced" in the business field. It eventually became evident that if new schools were to be built, someone had to know how to take care of them and provide the necessary maintenance.

Well, to begin with, the maintenance of the schools at that time was not a uniform operation. So we set certain guidelines for maintaining the schools and Calvin McCullough was designated to see that these guidelines were fulfilled. In other words it was a matter of janitorial operations and so in these guidelines we provided that each school should have certain responsibilities for maintenance and other janitorial problems. (2M4)

Governor Carvel was incensed that African American students in Delaware were second class citizens. One of the actions he took



Shortledge Elementary School flower girls greet Governor Elbert Carvel,
as he arrives dressed as George Washington in Wilmington, May 12, 1987.
Courtesy of the Delaware Heritage Commission.

was to see that more high schools were provided for them in his administration.

You know one of the first things we did was to build good high schools in Kent and Sussex county for the black students. That was a time when they were segregated. It wasn't until 1954 that Brown versus School Board (Topeka) changed the segregation pattern. But in 1948 to '52 we saw that there were good facilities, that there were equal facilities which had not existed for many, many years for the black people of our state. For example, in Sussex county, you could only go to the tenth grade in two schools. I think one was in Laurel and one was in Seaford and then, if you were black, you had to go to Delaware State College where they had the last two years of high school. This was very unsatisfactory because they had high schools for white students in practically every town in the state. So this was taken care of and, of course, when the issue of Brown versus School Board, (Topeka) came up Boggs was governor and he did a good job making the transition. (B20-21)

Governor Carvel had some advice for the president of the University of Delaware during his administration when he began to foresee the development of the community college movement, but his advice was not heeded. Elbert Carvel was a trustee of the University of Delaware for forty years beginning in 1945, and he was looking out for its interests with this suggestion. Now, even though the University of Delaware has a presence in each of the counties, a prosperous community college system with a technical emphasis has developed through the state and has been very successful.

One of the things that happened was that the popularity of the community college was demonstrated at the Southern Governors Conference and I observed that this was spreading all over those

various states. When I talked with the president of the University, John Perkins, about this, I was on the board at that time, I said: "I think this provides a real threat to the University of Delaware and I urge you to urge the board," and I spoke of this in one of the meetings as a trustee, "to take action to put a division of the University of Delaware down in Sussex county," which they did not do. When Terry came in that's one of the first things they did. Well of course they have the Parallel Program now in the community colleges but that's not what I was talking about. I was talking about the university's putting a division . . . in Kent and Sussex county. (2M9)

During Carvel's second term, 1961-65, there were other issues and problems which arose. Although the state's teachers had been delighted with the salary increases during the first administration, they were in disagreement with some of his actions this second time around.

At the end of my second term, not the teachers but the administrators wanted to get this bill passed which increased the amount the state would give to administrators—a tremendous amount—and the DSEA (Delaware State Education Association) apparently supported this and I did not sign the bill. I was running for the U. S. Senate in 1964 and the DSEA sent telegrams to me. Probably I received over a hundred telegrams from the various teachers' groups all over the state urging me to sign and apparently I must have lost some teachers' support during the campaign of '64 when I ran for the U. S. Senate. Later I signed that bill in part and vetoed part of it because I think I vetoed a bond bill which I thought excessive and, as a result of that, the whole thing was declared unconstitutional and the bill fell by the wayside. But the point was that the DSEA was supporting the administrative

increases and they were, I thought, higher than they should have been. (2M6)

But let me say one thing, when the teachers get a salary increase right away the secretaries and the janitors all go to the board and they get an increase, and I don't think this should necessarily be tied to the teachers' increase. I don't think that every time the teachers get an increase that we should be thinking about the custodians and the secretaries, because education is one thing and service employees are another one. (2M11)

In the early '90s the general assembly passed House Bill 85 which required that violence and attacks against other students, teachers, or administrators within schools must be reported to the state police. Carvel responded:

I was shocked about what happened on the occasion when the student touched the teacher on the buttocks (an incident involving an elementary school in Middletown in the winter of 1997). I thought that was given undue publicity by the paper and also it was an unnecessary exercise in publicity. I know that one of the problems in schools today is . . . violence by some of the students. I thought about that and I thought how fortunate I was when I was governor that this was not a problem. But today it is a big problem. I have talked to teachers about it and it's really a tremendous problem to some teachers. (2M12)

To the assertion that school is not for everybody, Carvel commented:

I agree with Thomas Jefferson. I think it should be for everybody. (2M13)

One of the innovations in educational technology Carvel felt should be made available in Delaware was educational television. He thought it could be of great help to teachers and during his second administration he tried to bring it into the schools.

We tried educational television, but it wasn't very popular with the teachers. The teachers opposed it. They feared it. They thought it was competition. We thought educational television would be a fine thing to broaden the curriculum and the availability of important facts to the students of the state. But the teachers themselves were strongly opposed to it. So it never did come to fruition (2M8)

An additional technology the governor likes is the computer. He sees the computer as part of a better educated student body.

I think that computers are a number one priority for the educational program and that they should be a strong part of the learning programs for the schools. I really feel that the information age is spectacular. This is one of the reasons the country is as prosperous as it is today is because of its advanced position in the computer area. Certainly this is something that we have to pursue. (2M12)

In the 1960s the general assembly implemented a program whereby state aid was given to private schools for bus transportation of school children. When asked his feelings regarding such activities Carvel responded:

My children went to public schools and later to the University of Delaware. I supported the concept of public schools and still do and think it's a mistake to try to issue vouchers for education. I think this destroys the whole concept of the public schools. . . . There



"A Bright Smile for a Bright Future"

Children's Dental Health Week, 1963

From left:

Dr. Peter K. Schaeffer, Maude Bilbrough, the Governor and Mark Schaeffer

Courtesy of the Delaware Development Office Collection,

Delaware Public Archives, Dover, Delaware.

was a strong demarcation between religion and state and it is not one of the things I believe we should encourage. (P28)

Getting back to school transportation, one of the things we did when I was first governor was to step up the school bus service to the children. I think this was a mistake to pick up children within three-quarters of a mile of the school. I don't think it would have been too bad for children to have walked that three-quarters of a mile but I think we picked up children within half a mile of school and it seems to me that this was a mistake to provide that service because I think walking is a very good exercise for children. (2M9)

To the issue of whether local school board members should be elected or appointed, Carvel once again takes the democratic stance.

Presently they are elected in Sussex county and I think this is appropriate. Who would appoint them? I'm in favor of electing local school boards. The fact is I was elected to the Laurel School Board when I was lieutenant governor. (2M10)

Should school boards be able to raise taxes for their districts without a referendum from the voters of their district?

I think that the referendum is important. That's why it's done now, I believe. Yes, that's something that should be continued. It gives a forum for those who are in favor of it and those who are opposed and gives them an opportunity to debate this before the referendum takes place. I've always, in my particular district, come out strongly in favor of raising taxes to provide for the necessities of the education of our local students and I've always participated in this forum. (2M10)

Many people feel that the richest areas get the best schools because there is a greater tax base in those areas. Those schools can afford better teachers and materials and extra for their students. Should equalization funds be made available to schools in poorer districts?

I think that the equalization fund is entirely proper. (2M11)

When the cabinet form of government replaced the commission form in the late 1960s by Governor Peterson, the Department of Public Instruction was left out for certain reasons. It continued to be responsible to the state school board even though it was appointed by the governors. Now in the spring of 1997, Governor Carper has proposed a Secretary of Education to be brought into the cabinet directly responsible to the governor. Carvel is in agreement with this notion.

It brings politics into this situation but, even though it does this, you've got to realize that the state spends the greater part of its budget on education and the state is entitled to have a position in this expenditure. I think education is the number one priority of the state's responsibilities and we can well afford to do it. (2M11)

Environment

Perhaps nowhere else was Carvel more farseeing than in conservation, and in the state's need to plan and save its 2,000 square miles of existing lands. It has been a growing problem in practically every administration since that time. Now, Governor Carper is beset with doing something about this very complex situation—preserving greenways and planning sensible growth in the lands we have left. Planning is never easy because of the

groups tugging on each of the environmental opposites—development and preservation.

When I was governor the second time, we tried to set up a planning commission so that we could develop things in an orderly manner and not have a lot of clutter, but I don't think that lasted too long. But we tried. And it really was zoning. That helps some but it gets to be a big hassle with the people who want to develop. And we ended up with zoning and then we ended up with a lot of exceptions. (W4)

The government can only do what the people want it to do, and the people have to respond to leadership. And if you have the right people with the right vision providing the leadership, I think there's a lot you can do. For example, we are doing a lot right now about recycling of trash and things. That's important. (W4)

The Delaware Wildlands was founded by Mr. Ted Harvey (Edmund H. Harvey, 1911-1978) and it was, I thought, an excellent conservation situation and I had been strongly in favor of conservation when I was governor. (1M19)

During my term some of the landmark legislation was . . . the water pollution law which was a real step forward in the state of Delaware and a law that has helped to clean up the various rivers and streams of Delaware because we had a law with some teeth in it. It stopped the dumping of industrial waste and raw sewage in the streams of our rivers. I think this was a good step forward. . . . (B22)

Another important act that we passed was the Delaware Geological Survey which was passed in 1950 and had my sanction. And for the first time in the state, we had a real working geological department. . . . Most people realize more and more the need for good, clean, pure water as a number one priority, and I think this has served quite well in working with the University of Delaware. . . . (B22)

In the post-war era an oil refinery was established at Delaware City which brought ancillary plants as well. Later, in the late 1960s, there were further designs placed on Delaware's shoreline by the Shell Oil Company and Carvel was out front exhorting the necessity of preserving these lands.

I almost stopped the Shell Oil deal from going through . . . there was a Coastal Zone law that they wanted to pass. And I wanted to support that but, because of Max Terry's opposition to it, he urged me to stay away from it. He was representing, I think, the Shell people. He was also chairman of the highway commission and so reluctantly I didn't take a position on that. And so when Governor Peterson came in, he supported the Coastal Zone law which was passed and I thought it a good law. (1M19)

Emily duPont, (Mrs. Henry Belin duPont) and I were co-chairmen of a committee known as the Delawareans for Orderly Development and we opposed the positioning of paper mills, steel mills, or oil refineries on the coast. We got that all passed. Peterson supported the law and I supported it. It was opposed by the state's big wigs. Many of the labor unions were opposed to me on it; (they) walked out on me one time. They had been friends of mine and helped me get elected but they walked out on me because I supported it. (B53-54)

We want to keep the coast in its primitive condition and use it for recreation, for ecology reasons and not have it just a bunch of oil spilling and paper manufacturing plants that cause pollution and things of that sort. Emily and I succeeded in keeping the general assembly from changing the Coastal Zone Act, not once but three or four times. So (even when) I was not governor I was able to give some leadership to things which I thought were important. (W22)

Not only were oil companies eyeing Delaware's coast line but the state's burgeoning population was looking to the beaches for recreation—so were the real estate developers.



Lt. Governor and Mrs. Carvel sledding on the "big hill" in Laurel with daughter Barbara. 1946.
Photo courtesy of Louisa B. Jones, Laurel.

One of the things that came up during my second term was the fact that many people wanted to start selling some of the land that Delaware had started accumulating over a period of years. For example, we had the beautiful oceanside area down below Lewes which goes all the way down to Fenwick Island. I think the state owns about twelve miles of waterfront there. Well, we had numerous people who were saying, "well, what we ought to do is to sell a lot of this to people and get taxes from it and we'll put a lot of money in the treasury," and so on. And I would say, "No. Instead of selling land while I'm governor, we're going to acquire land." (B55)

As a matter of fact, I didn't want one single square foot of land sold while (I was) governor. I served notice on the real estate people who were anxious to make a big profit in doing some business with the state and selling land. What we wanted to do was provide for the welfare of the people. The people of the state of Delaware should have that land on the Atlantic ocean for their benefit and their welfare and I'm glad to say they still do and I hope that they will continue to hold on to the land. (B55)

I must . . . tell you that of this thirty-five million from the divestiture fund from the DuPont Company that over half of it was spent in buying land and at very reasonable prices for parks for the people of this state, and I think this is very important. Incidentally, during my first term, the first real state park was started at Trap Pond. We took it over from the federal government and got the Park commission to operate this for the benefit of the people of Delaware. This was a very popular thing also. It's really as Mr. duPont (Henry Belin) said, "You can't make land." There's just so much land and when you realize that we're using millions of acres of land for athletic fields, for arenas, for roads, for buildings, for houses, for almost everything you can think of, it's very important to conserve land for future generations. (B56)

Early in his second term Delaware's fragile beaches were assaulted by one of the worst storms of the century. Almost single-handedly Carvel alerted the press and state's authorities to the damage that was occurring at the time.

A tropical storm (actually an extra-tropical depression) hit Delaware March of 1962. Six people died and I was here in my home listening to the radio and saw how bad it was. So I drove my car over to the coast, and observed just what was happening, and I called the *News Journal*. They had no idea of how bad the situation was. I said, "Look, the waves are just coming up on this shore and just battering and knocking houses down. That's how bad it is." They hardly would believe what I was telling them. They didn't know how bad it was down there. (1M16)

I went over to Ocean View and, just about two miles before I got to Bethany Beach, the water was two or three feet high in the road. It was a devastating (storm). At that time Kennedy was president. I put Elisha Dukes (Secretary of State) in charge of all of the business of cleaning up and restoring the sand to the beaches and all the contracting. We got a lot of federal money for that purpose, and we rebuilt the beaches and the boardwalks and things of that sort. The insurance companies were not responsible for high water damage. They don't take responsibility for floods. They don't provide any flood insurance. I don't think we did anything about private property. (1M16-17)

On wastefulness that seems to be endemic to Delawareans as well as all Americans:

We're the most profligate nation in the world today. We waste our resources more than any other nation. Where we pay \$1.15 per gallon for gas, foreign nations pay four or five dollars. In other words, they put some tax on imported fuels and the result is that

the people have to use efficient automobiles. They become more efficient because they're forced to. Instead of passing laws to do this we should be putting taxes on our gasoline which is imported from outside the western hemisphere and we then would do two things. We'd cause people to use energy more efficiently and we would also encourage the people who are looking for oil and gas in this continent and South America to prospect for oil and find it. We would then have a more efficient utilization of energy. But we are just sold on the idea of having cheap gas and see people riding along the roads today and they're coming downstate doing sixty-five to seventy miles per hour. If they were paying three or four dollars per gallon, they'd be a little more careful. (ws)

Crime and Corrections

When the euphoria following World War II's end had worn off, Delaware, along with the rest of the nation, began experiencing growing social problems, problems that had been dormant during our efforts to win the war. Government noticed that the crime rate was going up and realized that in order to deal with law breakers, punishment and corrections needed to be reevaluated and perhaps changed. Governor Boggs appointed a state-wide, seven-member Board of Corrections in 1956.

One of the first things I did when I became governor the second time was do something about the correctional situation. I appointed a fifteen man committee to look into that problem. We ended up changing the correction laws of the state and also in authorizing the facility at Smyrna because our facility at the Wilmington area (Price's Corner) was very unsatisfactory and was outdated. Russell Peterson also took an active interest. He was head of the 3-S campaign when I was governor. I brought him into the picture

because this 3-S campaign (was) sponsored by the Kiwanis Club. Russell Peterson was a Kiwanian. (B53)

Ironically, as social problems were surfacing during this time, there was also a renaissance about attitudes toward punishment of offenders. Governor Boggs signed a bill in 1958 abolishing capital punishment. This would become perhaps Carvel's most controversial issue during his terms in office. In the early 1960s there were two very brutal murders in Sussex county, one right in Laurel. The latter was a situation where a farm couple, Lorenzo Whaley and his wife, were killed.

We had a very vicious murder in Sussex county right next door to where I was in Laurel. When I say next door I mean within five miles or so from my home place in Laurel and the general assembly, which had passed a law against capital punishment about three or four years before, promptly passed another law to bring capital punishment back to Delaware which I vetoed. This was another situation I'm sure Sussex county didn't like too well. But then (Sussex county representatives) overrode my veto and they only overrode it in the house by one vote. But they did override the veto. I considered capital punishment not the answer to the problem. As a matter of fact, I have served with a committee of governors, former governors, to support the repeal of capital punishment before the Supreme Court and we have been fairly successful with this committee. (B53-54)

Carvel had run against incumbent U. S. Senator John J. Williams of Millsboro in 1958 and again in 1964. In the first race Carvel lost by 10,000 votes and in the second during the Johnson landslide, he lost by 5,000 votes. It is obvious his veto of the capital punishment bill had something to do with his defeat in the latter election, particularly in Sussex county.

The fact that I vetoed (the bill) lost a lot of votes in Sussex and probably New Castle county, probably hurt me a great deal in the election of '64 against John Williams. Because this was a racial situation and John Williams didn't say a thing. I just had taken a stand which I thought was right. Boggs had had the bill passed before and he had eliminated capital punishment. I gave him credit for that. I wasn't about to change what was going to happen. But we now have capital punishment again. (P23)

As far as I was concerned capital punishment was an outdated and barbaric punishment. I went along with what Boggs had done and I thought we should maintain that position (1M7)

... I was satisfied that (capital punishment) was not the way to bring about good law enforcement because as a matter of fact, when we had capital punishment, we had more murders than when we had repealed the law. I thought if we were ever going to stop murders, capital punishment was not the way to do it. As my secretary of state, Elisha Dukes, said on numerous occasions, many times an innocent man may have been killed or harmed just because somebody made a mistake and this is always a possibility. (B54)

Well, (although) it may have cost me my future political life, it may well have been the reason why I'm still here. Because if I had pursued political life further, I think the pressures would have been so great that I wouldn't be here today. You know as a Christian I believe everybody can be saved. It's a matter of being able to get down to the basis of what the problem is and to understand what causes people to be the way they are. (2M19)

The whipping post was still being used when Carvel took office. For centuries, Delaware had used it as punishment and had suffered nationally. Once, in 1935, a photographer for the Philadelphia Record newspaper had taken a picture of a whipping and

the general assembly passed a law making it illegal to publish a picture of such proceedings.

Of course when we're talking about capital punishment let's not forget that Delaware has had the whipping post for a good many years and as governor occasionally I'd receive letters from outraged people throughout the country wondering why we had such an outmoded punishment as the whipping post and, of course, I was very glad to say that during my (first) term as governor it had never been used. Now . . . one of the justices of the Superior Court, Stewart Lynch, provided that certain persons should be given fifty lashes and I got in touch with the Delaware Pardon Board and urged them to place the case before me. You see the governor cannot . . . give a pardon unless the Pardon Board recommends it. So, I urged them to come before me. (The lieutenant governor is president of the pardons board. There are five other members.) (The) secretary of state is a very important member of the Pardon Board, (the others are) the chancellor, the auditor, and the treasurer. One of the advantages of the Pardon Board is that a matter can never be before the governor unless (the Pardon Board) places it before him . . . I urged them to promptly . . . place the question before the governor and make a recommendation of clemency and I promptly stopped the lashing during my (first) term. No lashes were ever applied. (B55)

The use of illegal drugs is rampant in our society today. Carvel was asked what he would do if he were still in office or had the power to change things.

As far as the drug problem is concerned—and I mentioned this on television when all the past governors were present some years ago. They were being interviewed I think by (the) Salisbury Educational Television station—I pointed out that I thought that

we should be legalizing drugs. We haven't learned anything from prohibition. All this crime that's going on in the nation today is the result of the fact that the people are so strong about trying to make the use of drugs illegal. As a matter of fact there are more people being killed by smoking cigarettes than there are by people who are using drugs. (2M17)

Personally I was very strong, especially during my second term, for rehabilitation. I thought this was something that should have been given a lot more attention. And I think one of the great mistakes we're making today—I noticed in Delaware they spent all this money, I think it's \$100,000,000, to build jails. I think that's ridiculous. We should be spending \$100,000,000 to build hospitals to take care of the drug problems we have in this state today. I think the drug problem is one of the big problems. There is so much incentive with high profits being made in pushing drugs and so much incentive to push drugs that people are pushing on our children and causing them to be hooked. And they're trying to go out and commit crimes and get enough money to pay for their drug habits and causing other children to go ahead and push drugs. I think (that instead of) putting these people who are drug users in jail, we ought to be putting them in hospitals. (2M17)

I think the whole drug situation should be placed in the hands of the medical profession rather than trying to make it a crime. (The Volstead Act) was a mistake and we found it was a mistake. And there were thousands of people who were killed and crime was rampant because of prohibition. You know it's an interesting thing one of the political parties has a strong position against people not being able to use drugs—one of the minor political parties, the Libertarians, I think. (2M17-18)

I think the people who are really committing crimes, vicious crimes, should be put in prison. But I think efforts should be made to try to educate and rehabilitate people. But the drug situation . . . I think Mayor Schmoke of Baltimore is on the right track on this. I

support his position. He says that we should legalize drugs and then we should not be pursuing the present policies that have been pursued all over the United States today. Also (William Buckley) is opposed to the drug situation as it stands now. I support him. I don't like a lot of what Buckley does but this is one case where I think he is right. (2M19)

Two months after Carvel left office the Prisoner's Aid Society of Delaware presented to him the William A. Brooman Award in recognition of his unselfish devotion to community service and his valuable contribution to the prevention of crime and the correction and rehabilitation of offenders.

Court Reform

One of Carvel's greatest triumphs during his two terms as governor was the formation of an independent Supreme Court. Heretofore, there had been one of sorts but it was served temporarily by judges of other courts in addition to their other duties. Attempts to create an independent Supreme Court went back to 1931 and for a period of twenty years various efforts were made but they were sidetracked for one reason or another. Finally, in 1949 the first leg of a Constitutional Amendment was passed which would provide for a Supreme Court. In 1951, the second leg of the amendment to the Constitution (Constitutional amendments must be passed by two separate legislative sessions by a two-thirds vote each time) was passed and opened the way for Carvel's appointment of a chief justice and two associate justices.

Mr. Robert S. Richards, Sr., was an outstanding lawyer from Wilmington's Richards, Layton and Finger, the outstanding law firm in Delaware. Mr. Richards was very anxious to get this Court

authorized and (Lex Bayard, the lieutenant governor), I didn't realize at the time, was a member of the firm. I'm sure he worked with Mr. Richards very closely. Incidentally Richards was Frank Jones's brother-in-law (Jones was Carvel's fertilizer company attorney). Frank Jones married his sister. Frank Jones' niece is now a judge on the Court. She's Bill Roth's wife, Richards granddaughter. (P15-16)

And so when this matter came before me, I strongly supported it because I saw the importance of having an independent Supreme Court which was independent of the lower courts. In the past the Supreme Court consisted of members from the Superior Court and the Court of Chancery. I felt this would be far better to have a Supreme Court independent of these other lower courts. I think that Justice Terry who was in the judiciary . . . was effective in helping to get this (reform) done in Kent county. I know that Lex Bayard worked very hard in the senate and probably in the house to get them to pass this bill the first time. So (with) the Constitutional Amendment you have two-thirds of a majority, the elected majority of both houses, and it must pass for two consecutive terms. And when it did pass the second time, we all said "hallelujah". (H14)

(This bill provided) for a new Supreme Court with three justices, two of whom should be of one party—the major political party—and the other of the minor political party. It's important that we maintain a bipartisan stance within the state so that no one can accuse our judicial system of being in any way partisan. (H3)

This bill also provided that the whole judicial system of the state of Delaware should be balanced so that there was never more than one person in the majority of either party, whether the Democrats or the Republicans were in power. This was a very intelligent concept, and it appealed not only to the general assembly when we presented it to them, but it also, I think, appealed generally to the court and the people of the state. Because it certainly does preserve non-partisanship within the courts. (H4)

Getting this legislation passed was hard enough. But then Carvel had to hurdle a couple of obstacles that had to do with partisanship and judicial personalities.

Now when the bill passed and I had to appoint three justices to the court, there were two people who were very close to me in the Democratic party. One was Daniel F. Wolcott, whom I appointed to the Superior Court and later made chancellor of the state, and he was interested in becoming chief justice; and (the other) James M. Tunnell, Jr., the son of U. S. Senator James M. Tunnell, who was also interested in becoming chief justice. He was from Sussex county. And Wolcott was from New Castle county, but his folks had been from Kent county. Well, it developed that neither Wolcott nor Tunnell was willing to serve on the court if the other was appointed chief justice. And I regarded these two men as highly qualified to be judges, justices of the Supreme Court. (H4)

There was a sort of dilemma which I properly resolved through the thoughtful intervention of E. Ennals Berl of Wilmington. Ennals Berl was the Democratic national committeeman of the state, but also a tremendous renaissance person. Politics were important to him but the state of Delaware was far more important than politics were. So Ennals Berl talked with me at a meeting in Wilmington we were both attending, and suggested that a man that would be a great chief justice of the Court would be Clarence Southerland, a Republican who at one time had been Attorney General of the state of Delaware under a Republican administration. He was the head of the firm Southerland, Potter, and Berl. And (Berl) suggested that Clarence Southerland would be outstanding, but wasn't sure whether he would serve. He suggested that I have a talk with him. Well, I called up Clarence Southerland and told him that I was interested in talking with him about becoming chief justice of the

state of Delaware, and asked him to meet with me for breakfast in the Hotel DuPont in the Green Room. (H5)

So we sat there, alongside Market Street at a table with a window that faced Market Street in the Green Room, and I told Justice Southerland that Colonel Ennals Berl had suggested that he would make an outstanding candidate for chief justice of the state of Delaware. And I also said that I thought that if he would agree to grace that court, that we would have one of the greatest Supreme Courts in the United States because I thought that we could get Daniel Wolcott, and Jim Tunnell, Jr. on the court if he would serve. And I said, "I think this is going to be an important factor in the judicial process in the state of Delaware, and we'd like to see if we can get off to a great start. You would help to provide for that greatness." He seemed to be impressed that we were so anxious to have him and he said, "Well, I must think about this and study the matter, talk with my family, but I'll be back to you shortly." Well, about a day later he called me up (and) said, "I'm willing to accept and will serve if I'm appointed and confirmed." Well, that was good news to me and I expressed my deep appreciation for his willingness to make that sacrifice, which indeed it was. Because of course at that time the salary of the chief justice was probably only about \$15,000 a year, as I recall it, probably less than that, probably \$10,000 a year. Because the governor at that time was only getting \$7,500. And so I expressed my thanks because I knew he was probably making over \$100,000 or more a year in fees—remember, this is 1951, not 1993. Of course it would have been an entirely different situation as far as his fees are concerned today. But the sacrifice still would have been a great one, and I indicated to him that I was fully aware of the sacrifice that he was making. But I think he was prepared to, having done well at the Bar, settle down and be the chief justice. (H6-7)

Carvel didn't know it at the time but Southerland had been the attorney in a very important but protracted court case, Guth v. Loft, litigation that had been going on for several years. Southerland represented the winner of the case on a contingent fee basis and reputedly ended up making one of the largest law fees in Delaware history up to that point. Told about it later, Carvel still maintained it was a sacrifice.

So I went to see Dan Wolcott and I told him that I decided to appoint Chief Justice Southerland and that I wanted to appoint Dan and Jim Tunnell as the associate justices. I said, "I think with you and Justice Southerland on the court, this will be one of the great courts in the United States." They both agreed to serve and I was delighted, and I appointed the three men to the Supreme Court: Justice Clarence Southerland; Chancellor Daniel O. Wolcott; and James M. Tunnell, Jr. They, to my recollection, were unanimously approved by the Delaware Senate. Later I was approached . . . by a number of partisan Democrats who were up in arms to think that while we had a Democratic governor, we were not going to appoint a Democratic chief justice. I said, "Well, the whole situation is that we rise above partisanship on appointing these people to the court." Now the law provides that we shall have no more than two on the Supreme Court who are the same party, and I said I have appointed them to the associate justiceships and I've appointed one of the great legal minds of the state of Delaware as chief justice. I think that history will support my position if we have done what is considered to be the proper and right thing for the state of Delaware. (H9)

And of course the awful thing that happened was Judge Terry (Charles L. Terry, later governor) who had been a friend of mine — I never talked to him about it. He just assumed that I was going to put him on the Supreme Court. This was a great shock to him and when I told him who the people were going to be in my office he

didn't say a word but he turned pale and I wasn't sure whether he was going to faint or what. But I knew that he was in shock because I didn't put him on. He and I had been friends for years. I also knew his mother. (P18)

Carvel ran into a buzz saw when he attempted later to name Daniel L. Herrmann as chief justice.

I made a mistake in not consulting the senate in 1964 by recommending to the senate the name of my dear friend Daniel L. Herrmann . . . to be chief justice. . . . But you see that's just another case, like Bacon who tried to reappoint Layton (Daniel J., as chief justice) without consulting the senate and the senate never would confirm Layton even though the governor had the majority in the senate, let's see—eleven to six, seventeen votes. The Democrats had the six and the Republicans had the others. And yet they were able to stop it because the three Republicans . . . would not vote for the confirmation of Judge Layton. That was quite an involving one, too. I was presiding over that situation when I was lieutenant governor, president of the senate, and, boy, it was high drama in the state of Delaware. . . . You'd better consult. And I made a very bad mistake. I should have known better. . . . (P20)

In politics memories linger and often provoke grudges that are held for years. Such was the case, Carvel thinks, when Governor Bacon refused to appoint Richard S. Rodney, a Democrat from New Castle to the bench. He goes on to explain why Governor Bacon could not get Judge Layton confirmed by the senate in August, 1951.

There was a time, you know, when Governor Bacon would not appoint Judge Rodney to the bench because they had this big imbroglio about reappointing Justice Layton. The Democrats were

against it. They were never even allowed to bring a bill up in the senate. (P32)

. . . But at the time Justice Layton was being recommended by Governor Bacon—Governor Bacon sent his name down three times. The first two times he was turned down and the third time when he was turned down he decided not to send his name down anymore. At that time the citizen opponents were Senator Tunnell, Dol Short and John Isaacs . . . and they and their Milford brethren had opposed the chief justice appointment. I don't know why but it was all those things. He had done something and they didn't like it, and Judge Morris (Hugh M.) had come down with the former Congressman from Sussex county (he was a Republican). They both spoke against the reappointment of Judge Layton because (Layton) had allowed his son and brothers to appear before him without recusing himself as chief justice. And so they raised that issue. I always felt badly about the fact that nobody ever spoke on behalf of the chief justice because he at least was entitled to somebody up there speaking in his behalf. And finally he was turned down by Bob Yerkes (Houston Republican) who was majority leader of the senate and he voted against him . . . and that's when Bob Richards (agreed) with Isaacs and Short and Jim Tunnell to appoint James Carey to the Superior Court as well as reconfirm Sudler Richards to another term. (P32)

So Governor Bacon held it against the Democrats. He did not appoint Judge Rodney to the bench. Judge Rodney was a good friend of mine too. He was a great judge and a great billiard companion. We used to play billiards up there in the Old Hall at the University of Delaware. . . . But Governor Bacon did not reappoint Judge Rodney who, incidentally, was Dan Wolcott's father-in-law, because of the Democratic opposition to the reappointment of Chief Justice Layton. My company did business with Judge Rodney. We sold him fertilizer for his New Castle farm. (P32)

Although he failed to get Chief Justice Daniel J. Layton confirmed, Governor Bacon did succeed in getting Sudler Richards confirmed. Carvel speculates about one other reason why Layton couldn't get enough support.

Houston Wilson and young Jim Tunnell had been put down numerous times publicly in the court by Justice Layton and had been embarrassed by his heavy-handed attitude toward them and that helped to contribute to his downfall as well, I think. (H30)

Carvel, along with other important leaders of the state, knows how important the Court of Chancery is and what an unprecedented reputation it enjoys. This reputation accounts for Delaware's pre-eminent position in corporate franchises and taxes. In short, the more the corporations pay in taxes, the less the citizenry will.

I've always tried to support the judiciary, what they're trying to do . . . and I've urged the general assembly to appoint the necessary judges because this is so important to Delaware's obtaining the important revenue we get from the franchise tax. I think it's \$360 million . . . the budget is a billion two and this is a fourth of the budget. It's highly important that the courts be properly staffed so we can service this important business that we get from all of the nations all over the world. (P17)

The Judicial Nominating Commission in Delaware serves the function of selecting candidates for the state courts. The governor then makes the final decisions.



Elbert Carvel in the office of the Valliant Fertilizer Company, 1976.
Courtesy of Richard B. Carter.

I served as a member of the Judicial Nominating Commission . . . (from 1976-1986); the commission was first put together by Governor P(ierre) S. duPont IV and it was a bipartisan commission of nine members, and five were Republicans and four Democrats. I suppose, when the present Governor (Carper) comes in there will be five Democrats and four Republicans. But it's a well-conceived commission and it's a good concept, and I think it's done its work well. (H46-48)

Transportation

The Delaware State Highway Commission was formed primarily to build the DuPont Highway (Route 113) the length of the state in 1917. By 1935 this commission took over control of roads from the counties and assumed responsibility for those throughout the state. Subsequently, political battles ensued in the management of the commission within the general assembly until matters came to a head when the first Democratic governor in this century, Richard McMullen, was elected in 1936.

The Democrats hadn't had any jobs in the highway department for years, and they fired all the Republicans and put Democrats in their place. Then in 1938 the Republicans got enough members in the general assembly to override the governor's veto. And so they passed a bill to rip the highway . . . (rip) means to take the running of the highway from the Democratic party which was the administration in power at the time. They put extra Republicans and weak Democrats on the commission who would go along with the Republican philosophy. (1M8)

Frank V. duPont (1894-1962), son of T. Coleman duPont, had been associated with the highway department almost since its

inception and when Carvel ran for governor in 1948 he realized duPont was a source of controversy in the department.

Coleman duPont had spent millions of dollars building Delaware highways and Frank felt he was the heir apparent and should always be on the highway commission and he thought the state owed him the right to be chairman. (P14)

So (the Republicans) added additional members and fired all the Democrats that were in there. (Then they) put Republicans back in and the Democrats blamed Frank duPont because they said he was the architect of this bill. Governor McMullen had reappointed Frank duPont as chairman of the highway department. So when I ran for governor in '48 I said, well, I will not reappoint Frank duPont to the highway department. I made it an issue. The Democrats were really up in arms about Frank duPont. They hated his guts. I must tell you that when we were in Harrington at a meeting during the campaign, we were at the Century Club in a little vestibule . . . Allen Frear brought down this information. He had gotten it from Gordon Smith who was a Democratic member of the highway commission, who got it from Frank duPont. And as I say we just absolutely had no money during that campaign, only enough to buy one billboard. The message was if we would stop making Frank duPont an issue, he would make a nice contribution to the campaign. Well, the candidates knew how broke we were and how much we needed money and it finally came around to me and I said I will not discontinue the issue of Frank duPont as a member of the highway department. . . . I will not reappoint him and I don't think we should accept one cent from Frank duPont. And we did not. After I was elected, he wrote to me and he wanted to know what I was going to do about reappointing the chairman of the highway department. I said, "Mr. duPont, when that time comes we'll give you proper notice of what we're going to do." But you know he still wanted to be reappointed chairman and when I didn't

reappoint him, you know what he did? He moved over to Maryland and subsidized a yacht club and golf club for the people of Dorchester county. (1M8-10)

I have to add a footnote to that. My wife's nephew Edwin Valliant married Frank duPont's granddaughter about three years ago, and I'm sure he's rolling over in his grave (laughter). But he was a better man when he left Delaware. He just thought that he was the crown prince and had been ordained because his father built all the roads. He thought he should continue to be the chairman of the highway department whether or not the Democrats or the Republicans were in power. I found out later that there were a lot of Republicans on the highway department that hated his guts because he was such a pinch penny chairman. The department was not giving its employees enough money to really live on. All those supposedly good jobs in the highway department were not that good. (1M8-10)

For years before the introduction of the Cabinet form of government under Governor Russell Peterson around 1970, the highway commission, needless to say, was a very prominent instrument for jobs and power and was incessantly fought over by the two political parties.

The highway commission ran the state police and the Safety department as well. There were seven members on the highway department and they were dispersed all over the state. I think there were probably two from Sussex, two from Kent and three from Wilmington and New Castle. It was a bipartisan group too. There had to be four of one party and three of the other party. So they did have the input from the local people in each county. The commissioners weren't paid, but it was a much sought after position because it provided all these jobs all over the state for the various people in the Republican or Democratic parties. (1M8-10)

The J. H. Tyler McConnell Bridge over Brandywine Creek leading to the duPont Experimental Station in Wilmington was built during Carvel's first term and we hear here an amusing anecdote as to how this bridge came to be named.

Tyler McConnell was chairman (of the highway commission) during the first term. I had supported (McConnell's) appointment as chairman. He succeeded Gordon Smith, who was a Democrat. Jack Hazzard, who used to be one of the great supporters and sponsors of the Democratic party, brought Tyler in the party figuring that he might help to bring some money into the party, which he didn't. The purse strings of Willie duPont (William duPont, Jr. 1896-1965, McConnell's father-in-law) were pretty tight. Anyhow, Tyler McConnell had become chairman of the highway department with our help and he came to me. We had just built this bridge at the DuPont Experimental Station, and he said, "We'd like to name this bridge after you." I said, "Tyler, as governor I don't have anything named after me. I don't think it's proper for me as governor to exert my influence in this way. I don't want anything named for me as governor. After my term is up, it's up to the people, but not while I can control the situation." "Well," he said, "how about if I get them to name it for me?" (Smiling) And, my God, you know they named it after him, and there were two editorials in the duPont newspaper which they controlled at that time, *The News Journal* and *the Morning News*, really berating Tyler for naming the bridge after himself (laughs). (1M21)

Though J. Caleb Boggs was governor between 1958 and 1960, Democrats controlled the general assembly. Republicans tried to make an issue of corruption in the highway department and pin it on the Democrats. Meanwhile, the Democratic legislature ripped the highway department, as Republicans had done under Governor

McMullen and Carvel, momentarily out of office. They took advantage of the situation.

I had an operation for a hernia and I was down in the hospital in Salisbury and the leadership (of the Democratic general assembly) called me up with great glee (and) informed me that they had ripped the highway department (from the Republicans). I had appeared before the senate and house and urged them not to do it, but they wouldn't listen. They were "gung ho" to do it. This is the way Delawareans are, you know. They're going to get even. (laughs) (W8)

During the campaign of 1960 when I was the Democratic candidate for governor, one of the things that happened was that the Republican party, especially including Senator Snowden (James H., Republican, Wilmington), was trying to make an issue of corruption in the Delaware state highway department and the attorney general had made an investigation and they tried to get me to call for the results of his investigation and I said, "Well, number one, I did not ask for the investigation. . . . Governor Boggs is the governor and it's up to him if he wants the results of this investigation to be made public. Let him call for it because he is the governor of the state." Well, Boggs never did call for it and I also pointed out during the campaign very effectively that I had resigned as state chairman (of the Democratic party) in protest to the Democratic legislature ripping the highway department and believe me this was very effective as far as the people in the state were concerned. But I also said that I will appoint a blue ribbon committee to investigate the highway department's situation and make a recommendation as to what to do and then I would try to follow the results of this blue ribbon committee. This became almost the most important issue during that campaign . . . the issue which the Republicans had made of corruption in the highway department and with some justification because I know in one case there were overruns in just one job of

about a half a million dollars which were not even authorized by the highway department, just authorized by the chief engineer. So we very well laid out the rest. (B47-50)

Carvel called for changes in order to clean up the department.

I did appoint the commission after I was elected governor. The commission did make several recommendations. I followed those recommendations out except for the fact that instead of appointing seven members to the commission, I appointed eleven. This gave a broader representation all over the state and after this commission was appointed and, after we took over the highway department early in my term in 1961, I banged the table month after month indicating that we must have inspections and must make the contracts of our highway department viable. We must bring integrity to their contracts. That we must not have overruns unless they were justified and that effect was that within a year our underruns exceeded our overruns and our overruns were running into the millions of dollars. The point is . . . that we can have honesty in government. (B47-50)

Despite efforts, it was not easy rooting out all vestiges of previous corruption and change the way things had been done in the past in the highway department.

Now we had many cases where corruption raised its ugly head. For example, we had a chap over in the highway department who was the right-of-way man who was buying up property and while he was doing it he was also buying up some very nice property for somebody that wanted a gas station and of course we ran into a situation; this chap was very powerful politically in the Democratic party and the highway department found out about it and relieved him and he appealed this to the governor. We had a hearing and I

said, no way, you're not going to hang on to this job. And when I was governor the second time we had roads built where you had politics running rampant. You had people being bribed, (going) to Atlantic City and gifts and things of this sort. People who inspected, they were given special attention. Therefore, (there were) roads they were not putting in; they were not living up to the specifications provided and these inspectors were not doing this and this got to be a big scandal. (W13)

As with other areas of state government, Carvel had a much better idea in his second term how to handle messy situations and the highway department was no exception.

I insisted that inspection be made absolute number one, just as Ford (Motor Company) says that quality is number one. Honest inspection was number one and I drilled this into the highway department for months after I was governor the second time. We eliminated all of this corruption that occurred . . . under the Democratic administration. This is one reason I didn't want to see the highway department ripped because you see they were not responsive to the governor. They were responsible to the general assembly. A lot of politics going on there. (W13)

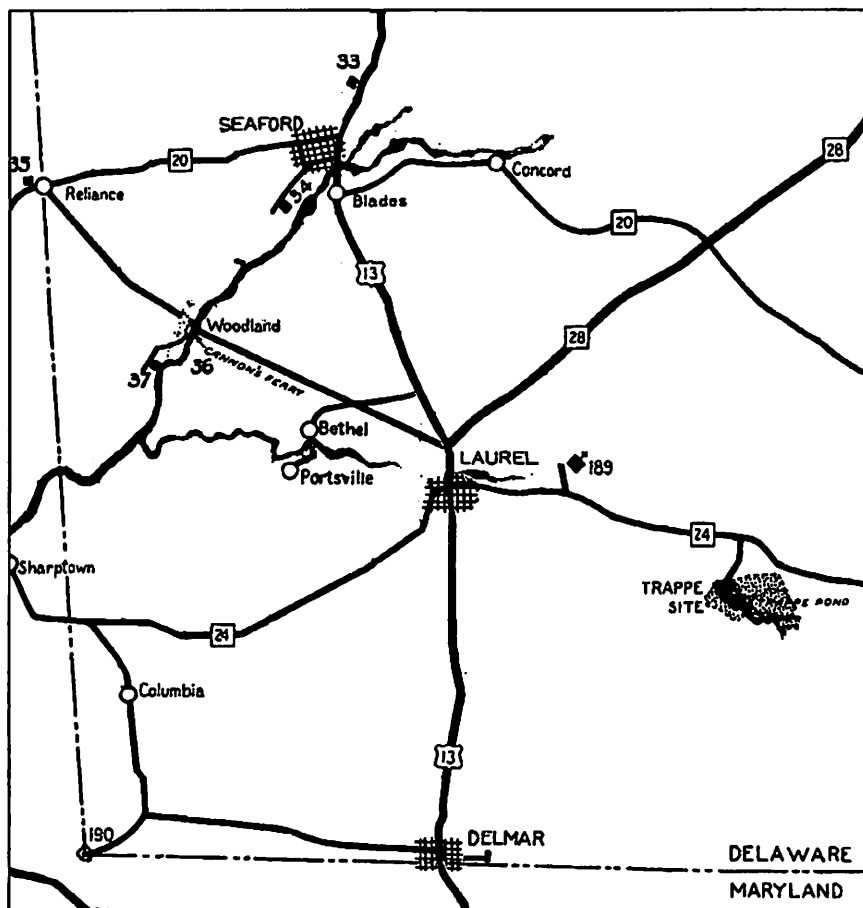
Delaware's difficulties with highway corruption caused reverberations in Washington, D. C. and, for a while, matching funds from the federal government were slow in coming until a solution was found in what was called a concurrent audit.

We almost lost a lot of money from the federal government matching funds because we weren't doing the job. . . . In the past, after we built the highways, then we had to go to the federal government and get the matching funds. What they would do, they would audit the whole thing and, if they found it was appropriate,

they would give us the matching funds. That's where the holdup occurred in 1958-60 because they were holding up about four or five million in matching funds because of the irregularities in the highway department. And what we affected along with Bill Hopkins, who was a Republican on the highway commission, and a first class man. . . . with his help and the help of the whole highway department we got from the federal government what was known as a concurrent audit. In other words we got the money as we spent it, saving the state millions of dollars in interest and uncertain government matching funds which were not provided if they weren't satisfied. We had a concurrent audit whereby the government went right along as we spent the money. They knew exactly how it was spent and then they had confidence and we got the money immediately. (W13-14)

Many of the downstate dirt roads in Kent and Sussex counties were still unpaved. One clear way constituents could see their senator or representative was doing his or her job seemingly was to get these backwoods roads paved. Though Governor Carvel indicates that dirt roads are not such a problem anymore, road building and paving, upstate or down, is still perceived by legislators as a good sign to their constituencies that they are doing their jobs.

One of the things we started to get done in those days was to encourage the paving of dirt roads. Most of the roads in Delaware were dirt roads at that time. Now they're all paved. . . . This did a lot to help the school buses and people in the country to bring their produce to town so these things just sort of came about because the people wanted them done and the people told me they wanted them done and little by little we got a dirt road program and now practically all the roads are paved in Delaware. (B6)



Works Progress Administration Federal Writers' Project Map, 1938.



Laurel, c. 1930s, when Elbert Carvel and his wife came to town.
Courtesy of the Purnell Collection, Delaware Public Archives, Dover, Delaware.

Economics

Carvel was the first governor to do anything meaningful in the area of economic development. He created the old Delaware Industrial Building Commission, which had the authority to issue bonds to provide incentive financing for industries locating in or expanding in Delaware. He introduced the concept of central purchasing by state agencies. He pioneered the practice of the Five Year Advanced Capital Budget, requiring all major state agencies to plan future budgetary expenditures well in advance. Modern financial management techniques in state government did not escape him either. He created the concept of a state comptroller to place into effect financial checks and balances before state monies were spent rather than, as the auditor had done, after the fact.

When I left as governor the first time, there was a cash balance. I left a cash balance. But when I came into my second term as governor following a Republican, he left me a deficit. Again I had to raise taxes. . . . So, I may be sounding like a Republican but, I can tell you this, I've heard a lot about the Republicans talking about balanced budgets but all I ever saw from Republicans was unbalanced budgets. I left balanced budgets. (85)

During my second administration, the first problem we had was we inherited a two and a half million dollar deficit from the former Republican administration. That administration had estimated that in . . . 1962, we were on a two year basis then, that we'd have a deficit of seven and a half million. Well, we promptly faced up to our problem. We raised a few taxes, mostly income taxes and a few



Governors Driscoll of New Jersey and Carvel of Delaware
at the opening of the Delaware Memorial Bridge.
Carvel collection, courtesy of the Historical Society of Delaware.

others like corporation taxes, and we promptly balanced the budget within a year. At the end of my term we had almost twenty million dollars surplus and thirty-five million dollars in the divestiture fund which came from the duPont divestiture of General Motors. I think that this was an indication of serious responsibility as far as our administration was concerned. (B50)

Carvel's mind was like that of a juggler. While he kept the balls of everyday government operations bouncing, he was constantly on the alert for newer ways to promote the state and its welfare.

Also, as I say, we went ahead and either built or authorized to be built a half a billion dollars' worth of construction at that time. During our administration we authorized the Delaware Memorial Bridge, the Lewes Ferry and there was a lot of criticism about the Lewes Ferry because they said it wouldn't ever pay. Well, I can tell you that, at that time, I said, "Even during the colonial times they sent missionaries over here and they spent a little money to try to encourage the future and this is what I was trying to do for Kent and Sussex counties here." Well, I notice that here we are in 1976 and I understand that the Cape May-Lewes Ferry is now in the black. (B52)

But . . . the Wilmington newspapers criticized me severely because we put the Lewes-Cape May ferries in. On the other hand, I said this is something we need to help develop, Cape May county and Sussex county, and I'm glad to see that our vision has been justified in this matter. Of course, even when the Cape May Ferry was in the red, it was not costing the taxpayers of Delaware one single cent because you see revenue bonds were issued to build the second Delaware Memorial Bridge which was authorized during my term as well and if the ferry was losing a little bit of money, the bridge was making a great deal of money and the taxpayers didn't pay one cent for building the bridge. The bridge was paid for and

the Cape May Ferry is being paid for by the people who use that facility and eighty or ninety percent of those people are from out of state. So you see that does indicate that this was a good effort and a chance to not only develop Sussex county but Cape May county in New Jersey and I think the people in New Jersey felt the same way. (B52)

In his endeavors to look ahead, Carvel was quick to induce prominent citizens to help him in his efforts.

During my second term we built many schools. Where we thought we'd spent a lot of money for schools during the first term, we spent probably three times as much money to build schools in the second term. We probably provided a great deal of funds for highways. We started the new dual highway over on the eastern side of Sussex county from Selbyville on north and we authorized the Kennedy turnpike. We authorized the thruway through Wilmington. We had a terrible time trying to get Republicans to go along with that but we finally got that job done because what was happening . . . they hadn't authorized the contracts . . . the people in the contracting business were about going bankrupt right and left because there was no business and the Republicans were holding this up. (I got) the help of Henry Belin DuPont, who worked closely with me. (B52)

I appointed him to the planning department and encouraged him to participate in public life and he was, in my opinion, one of the outstanding Delaware citizens of his time who was really public spirited about many things. Mr. duPont was very much interested in land planning. He realized there was just so much land. I also put him, incidentally, on the Goals committee. But when we put the planning department into effect, this was approved by the general assembly by unanimous vote on both sides, and he was delighted to see this. He and Chief Justice Daniel L. Herrmann were most helpful in making that a very successful operation. A Goals committee was instituted at the

suggestion of Justice Daniel L. Herrmann, . . . Mr. Belin duPont, Justice Herrmann, . . . Mildred Tunnell . . . Max Terry and Otis Smith were among the ones who were on there. I think Mr. William Carter who became head of the Delaware Community College complex was part of that operation. And because we were looking for a critical viewpoint, Russell Peterson was a member. (B53)

Any governor worth his/her salt is going to be mindful of Delaware's franchise taxes brought in by the incorporations of many of the nation's most influential companies in our state. It's the goose that lays the golden egg and Carvel was no different. When a problem arose, he wanted to make sure the golden eggs kept coming.

When I was governor the second time we were running into problems and we were losing business in the franchise area. At that time we were only getting \$15 million a year but it was still a big deal. It was \$15 million out of maybe a \$150 million budget. It was maybe a \$100 million budget, I don't know. So, I got the legislature to approve 25,000 dollars and appointed a committee of outstanding people all over the state—and they hired a man from Illinois to study the problem we were having. They made the recommendation to cure it. . . . For \$16,000 we cured a problem that is giving the State \$60 million. This is the way we operate. We are able to communicate. We are able to talk with each other without making anything too complicated. (P29-30)

In the daily operations of running the state, Carvel was eager to avoid any improprieties whether in his office or not.

When I was governor I had all these reports coming to me and I was alerted whenever there was any problem going on. For example, in the treasurer's office, when Belle Everett was treasurer, there was a woman who hadn't balanced the state checkbook for two years, and I said to Belle, "Belle you've got to balance the checkbook, because the

rest of us have got to know what you're doing." Belle said, "I don't have enough help to do it." I said, "Well, I'll take care of that." And I got a CPA to go in there and go into this whole business of balancing the checkbook and we found out that there was a person who had embezzled \$15,000 at that time. So I mean that this just goes to show you, this person was immediately let go, how the audit situation works. . . . The governor has the power to ask questions of anyone in the government whether he was elected or not. (P37)

I asked questions of the Insurance commissioner, Harry Smith . . . and it developed that he was getting a lot of input from people who were insurance companies and I made him say just what he was getting for his campaign funds. This stopped a situation which could have been embarrassing. So the governor has the power to ask questions and that (is) a very important power. I don't care whether you have a cabinet or you don't have a cabinet. The governor has as much power as the people are willing to give him in a democracy. (P37)

Racism and Gender

In his first term, the old bugaboo of racism was still being used as an excuse in political campaigns to keep candidates from office.

But you know when I ran for governor the first time . . . one of the things that the Republican party right at the end of the campaign said, "Carvel's going to put black people into the white schools." That was one of their campaign cries and, of course, that was not done until Cale Boggs was governor. That's when that all happened. That's when the integration took place. (1M18)

In that first term, it was almost "business as usual" regarding the Negro's position in Delaware society. Carvel was a member of the Board of Trustees of the University of Delaware when the court case,

Parker v. University of Delaware, was introduced confronting the racist policy of the university. Negro students were applying to study at the University of Delaware for the first time and Carvel found himself in an awkward position.

It was my recollection that Judge Hugh Morris, who was the chairman of the Board of the University and from Greenwood . . . he was one of the outstanding lawyers in Wilmington and (a) judge, who helped us look at the issues in this instance. I think that we were willing to accept whatever the courts decided. I think that's how we felt about it, that this was a matter for the courts to decide. I think this is the way Judge Morris put it, that we should follow the dictates of the (vice) chancellor and that's what we did. I don't think we were strongly opposed to the integration situation. I think we just said we'll leave it up to the courts. He (Collins Seitz) had made that decision before I reappointed him. (1M5)

After Seitz ruled in the affirmative for the plaintiffs in Parker v. U. D., Carvel found it tough sledding to get him confirmed by the state senate as chancellor in 1951.

I knew that there was a lot of opposition in the senate to Collins Seitz because of the racism which existed in the state at that time. And I had the highest regard for (him). I urged the senate to confirm him and they did. I think it was a pretty close vote but he was confirmed. . . . I had nominated Collins Seitz in spite of the fact that there was all this opposition to his decision in the University of Delaware case. (1M5)

Despite the acrimony of the times regarding racism, society was changing to the extent that William Winchester, a Republican from Wilmington, became the first Negro elected to the general assembly the very first year Carvel became governor. Toward the end of



Presentation of a 12,000 signature civil rights petition. From left: Isaac Thornton, Mrs. Jean Jamison (President NAACP), Rev. R. E. Horsley, George A. Johnson (Principal, Howard High School), Father Thomas J. Reese, Father M. Murphy, Governor Elbert N. Carvel, James Brown, Miss Gertrude Henry, Rev. Richard H. Bready.

Courtesy of the General Collection, Government and Politics, Delaware Public Archives, Dover, Delaware.

Carvel's second term, the day after President Kennedy was assassinated, Herman M. Holloway, Sr., a Democrat from Wilmington, was the first Negro elected to the state senate.

In 1875, Jim Crow laws had been passed by the general assembly that restricted Delaware Negroes' movements in train stations, hotels, restaurants, etc. But before he left office, Carvel presided over another milestone in race relations when the Public Accommodations Bill was signed into law in December, 1963.

One of the things that happened when I was elected the second time was, I had all these black people come to Dover and they were campaigning for an Equal Rights law. And so one of the first things I did as governor the second time was to appoint a committee on Human Relations and they recommended a law to provide for equal . . . public accommodations. In those days black people could not even get a drink of water in a filling station. And they couldn't use any facilities. They were just outcasts. I appointed a Human Relations committee which was a bipartisan group of people representative of the whole state. They recommended the Public Accommodations law and of course we got that passed. (1M17)

Having a Human Relations commission to recommend legislation and getting the general assembly to pass it are two different things. Carvel had to, as he called it, "knock heads."

One of the interesting sidelights was in the senate where we had nine Democrats and eight Republicans. We had talked to Cal McCullough (Democrat, Holloway Terrace) for I think two or three hours trying to get him to go along with the bill. In the meantime the Republicans were providing five votes of their total number for the bill. The bill needed nine votes at that time (there were seventeen members in the senate). And so Cal agreed to go along with the bill. In the

meantime Curt Steen (Democrat, Dagsboro) had said he was going to vote for the bill. He had many black people in his district. And he was the majority leader in the senate. (1M17)

Well, we sent the bill down for passage after we finally got Cal to agree and we had two votes from Wilmington to begin with. John Reilly (Democrat) was one of them. We had another Wilmington Democrat who voted for it. And we needed Cal McCullough and Curt Steen. All right that would be nine votes, five for the Republicans, four for the Democrats. Well, I'm up in the balcony watching the vote and the vote comes up and Cal McCullough votes against it and Elisha Dukes (Secretary of State) is with me. I said, "Elisha, go down and talk to Cal and find out what's wrong with him. He said he was going to vote for this bill." So in the meantime I go down to the first floor, into the lobby of the legislature, and Elisha went in and talked to Cal. Elisha came out and said, "Cal says that he had promised somebody that when it came up he was going to vote against it but next time it comes up he'll vote for it." I don't know what that was all about, but this is the way it was. So, I'm still there about to go upstairs and out comes Curt Steen. And remember we had worked for hours on Cal to get him to agree to vote for this bill and Curt Steen who said he was going to vote for it . . . who was the last man to vote because he was the majority leader in the senate . . . came barreling out of there. I said, "Curt, where in the hell are you going?" He looked at me and he didn't expect to see me there and he says, "Governor, if I vote for that bill, they'll hang me when I get back to Dagsboro." And I gave him a withering look and I said, "Hang and be damned!" And I turned around and walked upstairs. Curt turned around and went in and voted for it. . . . Curt Steen got the message immediately, "If you don't vote for that bill you're done as far as I'm concerned." (1M17-18)

In 1964 Carvel ran into a beehive in Kent county when he tried to nominate Daniel L. Herrmann of Wilmington for chief justice. While it

was a lesson in politics, there was, according to Carvel, also a hint of anti-Semitism involved, since Herrmann was Jewish.

I had learned that it really helped to consult with the senate. And I made the mistake of coming out in favor of Herrmann for chief justice before consulting with the senate. And I realized then that I had opened up a can of worms because Kent county was strongly in favor of Daniel Wolcott for chief justice and even though I appointed him to the Supreme Court, I'd appointed him chancellor, appointed him to the Superior Court, I was overlooking him as a candidate for chief justice. And that was a sad mistake because when I sent his name down (Herrmann's), he never could get more than eight votes. . . . The matter of fact was, they refused to confirm him. In fact, I think the last time his name was sent down, they just refused to even consider it. And so the mistake was made that I did not consult. And there was a certain amount of anti-Semitism in lower Delaware, opposing the concept of having a Jewish chief justice. But that was not the overriding situation. The overriding problem was that Kent county opposed (him), and I think (the opposition) was supported by Justice Terry (Charles L.) and numerous other leaders in Kent county and probably Sussex too. Kent and Sussex refused to give the majority to Justice Herrmann. So therefore, when I realized this was the way it was going to be, I pulled the name back and then asked Daniel Wolcott if he would serve as chief justice and he was, I think, unanimously confirmed. I then appointed Daniel Herrmann as associate justice and he likewise was confirmed. (H31-32)

Now some years later, when Sherman Tribbitt was governor of the state of Delaware and Daniel Wolcott died, the chief justice office became vacant again and at that time I urged Governor Tribbitt to appoint Justice Herrmann to the Supreme Court. Governor Tribbitt did appoint Justice Herrmann as chief justice and he was confirmed. (H31-33)

The cause of women received attention from Elbert Carvel also, years before it became fashionable to think of women in high public offices.

There's one more thing during my first term which is of interest. For two years running, I received a recognition from the Women's National Organization (NOW) . . . for appointing more women per capita to public office than any other governor in the United States. I didn't even know that there was such a medal to be given. I just went ahead and started appointing as many women as I thought would accept public office because I thought at that time women should be recognized. So, I received this medal, two years running in 1949 and 1950, and it was called the Women's National Organization or something of the sort. I have the medals at home and they were fine bronze medals. I had twice as many women per capita in Delaware government as any other state in the union. (B35)

Labor

Downstate Delawareans have never been as receptive to organized labor concerns as upstate people. The Republican Bacon administration didn't do labor any favors either when it passed legislation repugnant to its cause. Carvel was confronted with this situation shortly after taking office in his first term and defeated the legislation in a most extraordinary way. What he did was not illegal, but it probably had never been done before by a governor.

One of the things we did was to repeal a very bad anti-labor bill which the previous administration in their peak had passed. They were really anti-labor and they passed a real mean anti-labor bill . . . and they were getting ready to put some local labor leaders in jail because of this and we were able to accomplish the repeal of that with quite a lot of maneuvering. What happened was that we got the House to repeal this

House Bill 210, the infamous anti-labor bill. Then we had another bill which was passed in the senate but we couldn't get them together. Mr. Lawson (Harvey H., Republican House Speaker from Millsboro) wouldn't go along with us on this and so we knew the identical bills had passed in the house and the senate but they were never certified to my desk by the speaker of the house or by the president of the senate. So, what I did . . . I recognized . . . that both bills had passed and they were identical and therefore we prepared a duplicate bill which I signed and placed into law. I don't think this has ever been done before or since because it wasn't certified by the clerk of the house or by the clerk of the senate or the secretary of state but I knew that as a matter of record they had both passed both houses. . . . It was never questioned . . . the matter was never questioned in the courts in the state of Delaware. That bad anti-labor legislation was then hereby repealed and it was a very simple thing. All it says . . . in effect I think . . . resolved . . . House Bill 210 . . . whatever the name of the law was at the time . . . is hereby repealed. That's all. It wasn't any long law. It was a very short sentence. (B8-9)

The labor community negotiated a wage rate that was thought equitable; one where construction job wages would be standardized throughout Delaware. Getting the lower end of the state to go along with it was a problem.

The labor people were very anxious to have what is known as the negotiated wage rate (c. late 1940s). This was a wage rate which was negotiated by the builders and the labor people and they wanted this to apply to all of the construction by the state throughout the state. There was a lot of opposition to this down in the lower counties but we put this negotiated wage rate into effect throughout the state and we built millions of dollars worth of schools and colleges and hospitals when I was governor at that time and this was very helpful to the working people of our state . . . it was the wage rate for public construction just

as it's done on the federal level . . . that provides that all the buildings built by the federal government shall have (a) . . . wage rate which is uniform to apply to the construction of these buildings. The downstate people tried to say, well, it doesn't cost as much to live down here, but what we said was this, if you had the negotiated wage rate then you have a lot more competition in the bidding, and the people of Delaware were better served because their construction rates in the final analysis were really cheaper than if they let somebody get in there who had no competition. Where, for example, if organized labor weren't bidding, this gave people a chance to go higher and get better prices for themselves to the disadvantage of the state. So, we supported the negotiated wage rate. (B10)

Near the end of the first year in the first term, Carvel involved himself in a Wilmington bus strike.

One of the big problems I ran into was to get involved in the bus strike in Wilmington in 19 . . . I think it was probably in December of 1949. I intervened and suggested that we do certain things, charge for a transfer and make the fares ten cents straight instead of perhaps four for thirty five. That raised a lot of hackles at that time. That was a very bad mistake to have raised the transfer. The other would have been all right but that upset a lot of people. But we did get the bus strike settled and what concerned me, why I wanted to get the bus strike settled was because, I was afraid we'd have lot of snow and people would be very much inconvenienced with a bus strike and there might be a lot of loss of life and things of this sort, and so I tried to do what I could to settle the end of the bus strike. (B21)



In the Governor's office.
Courtesy of the Carvel Collection, Historical Society of Delaware.

Press

Among the many facets of daily operations that came under Carvel's purview, he did not overlook the fourth estate, the press.

Do you know when I was governor the first time, I opened up the governor's office to the press. I didn't realize that the governor hadn't encouraged the press to come to his office and I had press conferences regularly. . . . I thought it was important for the press to be participating and to be able to ask questions they wanted. Thomas Jefferson said an independent press is essential to democracy. (B35)

I think (relations with the press) have improved greatly. Of course, one of the problems was I was pretty antagonistic towards the Republican party when I was first elected governor and you almost had to be because Democrats were regarded in those days as being in a very low position and if you were going to be anything in Delaware in 1948, you were supposed to be Republican. A Democrat wasn't even regarded as a human being and it was unthinkable that any Democrat could get elected governor at that time and of course I used to make some pretty harsh comments about the fact that the Delaware press was very partisan and that you couldn't get a very fair shake. And they didn't hesitate to come right back at me and give me as hard a time as they could and we sort of had it back and forth during my first term. (B35)

Communications were much better during his second term. In fact, at one point, during a holiday press conference, the late and noted News Journal columnist Bill Frank dressed as Santa Claus. For a moment, Carvel got the better of the press as his six foot, six inches, 285 pounds, frame sat on the diminutive Frank's lap as he attempted to ask Carvel what he wanted for Christmas.

Incidentally during my second term I took the Delaware press into my confidence and we got along a whole lot better because every time that I'd have something of interest to talk about I'd call a press conference. As a matter of fact, we had a press conference every two weeks and we started our press conferences in Delaware early during my first term. But during my second term we had regular press conferences every two weeks and used to have crullers and coffee and they were homemade crullers and everybody seemed to enjoy it. We had a fine group of people and a fine relationship. Also about every two months I would get together with the editorial staffs of the newspapers, sit down and lay the cards on the table and talk about the problems which existed in the state and so, as a result, the second term we had much better press relations than we had during the first term and I think that they've even improved since that time. (B35-37)

Electoral Reform

Carvel made his political debut into politics by espousing electoral reform. Though he brought to light in 1941 what many people in the Republican and Democratic parties knew at the time were corrupt practices, reforms did not come about until the mid-1950s.

I sat on the U. S. Grand Jury in 1941, right after the election of 1940. It was investigating numerous things, including the election of 1940 where it developed that 5,000 dead people (that is, their names had been voted illegally [w5]) had voted in that election and it also gave me a real education about what was going on with regard to how the elections were held in Delaware. They were issuing five paper ballots for every person who was registered, 100 of which went to the voting booth, 100 of which went to the Democratic party, 100 of which went to the Republican party, and 200 went to the clerk of the peace in case they ran out of ballots. . . . And I thought, well, this is really a

conspiracy about trying to buy an election. The way they would do it, they would mark the ballots (both Democrats and Republicans did this). It was a big game with them as to who could buy the most votes and they'd give a person they could purchase . . . a marked ballot and then asked them to bring a clean ballot from the voting booth. Then they would pay them off. So this situation I thought could be cured by having a registration whereby a person could be identified by a signature, and therefore, when a person registered he'd have to sign the registration book and then, when he came in to vote, he'd have to sign again. This would eliminate voting dead people and race horses and whatever came to mind. (P3-4)

I thought this was a great miscarriage of justice and miscarriage of democracy and I began to express myself about the viewpoint. I had the chance to talk to various clubs, service clubs such as Lions and Rotary clubs and groups of that sort, and I would indicate what I thought was needed to have reform in our election laws. And so the first thing I knew in 1944 the Democratic party had four candidates they were considering for lieutenant governor . . . I happened to be one of the candidates. Norman Collison, our (fertilizer) agent in Bridgeville, was responsible for my being that candidate, and he later became collector of Internal Revenue. . . . There were two people from over around Selbyville who were being considered, elderly people. There was Dr. Manning and there were two McCabes. One was from Selbyville and one was from Ocean View, (Senator) Thurman Adams's father-in-law. The party selected me as their candidate. I got a chance to talk about the election laws and I urged the reform of these laws at that time indicating that, number one, we should have identification at the polling booth. That would eliminate dual voting or quadruple voting, whatever. (w6)

Carvel bided his time in order to do something about electoral reform. Then, in 1948, when he won the gubernatorial race, he attempted to implement reform but ran into an old political maxim—you don't



Delmarva Chicken Festival, Dover, 1950. Loockerman Street and Governor's Avenue.
Courtesy of General Collection, Local Events, Delaware Public Archives, Dover, Delaware.

allow a governor of the other party to capitalize on an issue if you control the general assembly.

During my first term as governor we didn't have a Democratic legislature. We put the bills in but the Republican controlled assembly refused to pass them. . . . (1M4)

The Republicans had the majority of one in the senate and the house the first time, and they would not allow these reforms to come before the legislature. I called for it, but they wouldn't do it and then the next time the Republicans had a majority of three in the house and a majority of one in the senate, they still wouldn't do it. (P11)

When Cale Boggs ran in 1952 and was elected, one of the first things they did was to take care of election reform . . . (In 1953 the Republicans finally passed that election reform legislation and as far as I was concerned I was delighted. [1M3-4]) But where the whole picture is concerned, I made the issue and the Republicans finally had to respond. (P11)

For years since the Civil War, Delaware became increasingly politically mal-apportioned. Powerful interests in Kent and Sussex counties denied New Castle county and the city of Wilmington their rightful geographic representations. One example was the fact that, of twelve governors who served from the Civil War to 1900, ten came from the Democratic party which was based downstate in Kent and Sussex counties. Unfortunately, the only two Republican governors during that time died in office. The lower counties would not allow the more populated New Castle county and Wilmington its fair representation. Carvel realized and spoke about this monopoly by the downstate counties—fifteen years before anything was done about it!

I urged in 1949 before a group of women that we have one man, one vote, in the general assembly in the lower house. I thought the senate ought to stay as it was but I thought the house should be as it is

in Washington. Of course this didn't please my Sussex county or Kent county friends because they had the majority of the votes in the general assembly at that time and this meant taking power from them and of course we never did get that job done until 1964 when the (U. S.) Supreme Court made that decision . . . I did have the privilege of setting up the first arrangement in Delaware to provide for the one man, one vote, concept in the general assembly. (B35)

This rankled Carvel—that upstater population was not fairly represented in the general assembly.

Why, you can't believe that people in Kent and Sussex have twenty votes together in the house and New Castle and Wilmington only have fifteen, and New Castle and Wilmington had seventy-five percent of the population. So this was not right. I pointed this out when I was first governor. I said this is not absolutely correct. This was done in the Constitution of 1897. That's the way it was from that time forward. This (change came) when the Warren Court (U. S. Supreme Court) decided on one man, one vote, and this happened probably along about 1960-61-62 in through there. And that's when we did the reapportionment, in the election of 1964. . . . I'll tell you who was very important in helping to get this (reapportionment in Delaware) worked out was Earl McGinnis who (was) a rather bright person and who at that time was my administrative assistant. He was very helpful in working out the compromise among the members of the house. . . . (P12)

Currently the issue of term limits is hot—whether a public servant may be allowed to serve as long as he can be re-elected or whether term limits should be set.

I don't think we should have the limitation of two terms for governor. Delaware has a constitutional provision that says the

governor of Delaware shall only be elected for two terms . . . period. In other words there's no third term, concurrently or intermittently. But in Maryland you can serve two terms, and you have to be out four years, but you can come back. Because I think it's too bad that the governor usually takes the greater part of his first term learning how to become governor. The idea is that if you're out four years, it gives somebody else a chance to come in and, also, if you can be elected for a third term you have an experienced man or woman who knows what to do. I think that's very important because you have the bureaucracy and they go on forever. They just laugh at governors. They say, well, he'll be here for four years and we'll teach him and then he'll go. Or, he'll be here be here for eight years and that's the end of him. But we're here for thirty or forty years. I think that we should have in the congress and in the legislature a provision that says you can only serve twelve years and that means you could serve for two terms in the U. S. Senate and you could serve for six terms in the house, and then you have to stand out for four years and then you can come back. This gives someone else a chance to come in because the power of office is tremendous and it's very difficult to upset a man who's been in twelve years, especially if he knows his business and does an outstanding job. But I think it's important to bring in new blood from time to time and then let these fellows come back in again if they have enough power and enough vision to be re-elected. The same thing applies in the house or the senate in Delaware. We have cases where some people don't even run. I would say that 30 percent of people running for the house have no opposition. . . . There should be a limitation whereby you serve for twelve years and have to stand aside for four years, and then you're allowed to come back. That brings in new interest and new blood and also it gives the chance for those who are adept and experienced to come back and run again. (W11-12)

In the mid-1960s there was a movement afoot to revise the 1897 Delaware State Constitution. After all the work had been done,

somebody brought out the fact that it hadn't been advertised properly in the local newspapers. Changes were made, passed by two consecutive sessions as required, and thrown out. Consequently, the work on the new constitution fell by the wayside and was not resumed. Carvel was part of that effort.

I was head of the Constitutional Revision commission which the general assembly appointed and they never passed the thing. We had a provision in there that the governor could run for two terms and then have to be out for four years before he could run again. But the general assembly just disregarded that whole constitutional revision. . . . (W13)

The transition from the old commission form of government to the cabinet form of government took place later during Governor Peterson's administration. Carvel was involved and helped to bring it about.

I was chairman of the commission (to study the issue) and we had a Republican senator (who) was on that commission, and the recommendation of the commission was for the cabinet form of government. This commission which was set up to study the whole outline of government of the state of Delaware recommended the cabinet form of government. (1M10)

Politics and Campaigning in Delaware

Carvel's approach to being governor without any previous experience (and, as he said, nobody ever gets to practice before the election) was to keep his eyes and ears open in the office and at home.

And then of course I would see anybody who wanted to see me without an appointment. They would come in and sometimes wait an

hour or so before they could see me but they always got in to see me and tell me what they wanted to present to the state. So I would hear all these problems and, therefore, people wonder "Where does a governor get all his ideas?" Well, when you're available in this fashion, you get your ideas from the people. What really happens to the governor, if you're available as I was, I was available not only because I had a listed phone, but also when people called day and night even when I wasn't there, my wife would answer the phone. She acted as my secretary and also she would listen to all of the problems of the people who called. She was really a great help as far as the governor was concerned. (2M4)

Whether it is good business practice to have a publicly listed telephone when one is governor of a state is debatable. Carvel tells how he handled it.

The only thing was—my bedroom was up in the southeast corner and the cellar over here is in the northwest corner. It's about sixty to seventy-five feet away. I put the phone bell down in the cellar with the door closed. We could hear the bell during the day but at night we couldn't hear the bell. Many times people would call us at night and we never heard the bell. . . . Sometimes people would call here at 10 or 11, 12 at night and usually somebody was at a bar and he was drinking and he'd say, "Oh, the governor is a friend of mine. Let's call him up." Once in a while I would get those calls and I would take short action. I wouldn't talk to them. If I knew they were drinking, I'd just hang up. (2M5)

The Campaign of 1932

Soon after Carvel came to Delaware, he made the acquaintance of a man nearby who taught him an extremely important lesson.

When I became lieutenant governor I had known a chap down here in Bethel, Portsville, a place right here on the water, who was a judge in the Supreme Court of New York, Judge Edward R. Koch. And I'd gone down there, somehow I'd met him some place, and he invited me down and (we) had a big old time. He had a bar there and (we would) drink beer and sing songs and so I got to be one of the family. He liked Sussex county and he thought it was a great place to be. He liked Delaware. So he gave me some advice when I was first running for governor and lieutenant governor. He said one of the most important things you must do is that you must spend as much time in Wilmington, New Castle county and Kent because that's where seventy-five percent of the votes are. You must get known by persons up there and he was one of the persons who was helpful in giving me advice on that situation. . . . (P26)

Judge Koch's advice had been proven before Carvel came to Laurel in a case where another downstater tried to run for governor.

Mr. Layton (Landreth Layton) ran for governor in 1932 when Roosevelt was first elected president and he went to the canal (C & D) that year with a majority but Mr. Buck (C. Douglass, Sr.) defeated him because the majority of Republican votes north of the canal were enough to defeat him. (B13)

Campaign of 1936

Carvel began to make his mark in Delaware.

(When) I came to Delaware I was concentrating on building a company and getting things in shape here but I did have friends who were involved in politics—Norman Collison was a fertilizer agent in Bridgeville, Delaware, and he and I used to talk a great deal about politics. He knew I was interested. Frank Jones, our attorney, . . . was a

Democrat and was connected. He was a fine gentleman of the old school. We used to talk about public affairs and politics. So the first thing I knew I was on the Grand Jury in 1940-41 and this was in Wilmington. I had to make a real sacrifice. Mrs. Carvel wasn't too well at the time, and I almost tried to get excused but it looked as if it was going to be quite hard to be excused. So I decided to continue up there in Wilmington for about two months during the winter. (That) was pretty good (timing) because this was not during our busy season in the fertilizer business. (w3)

In the meantime I had been very active in Delaware, up and down the state, selling fertilizer. I met many leading citizens of the state and had a chance to sit down with them and have dinner at . . . the old Duval Tea House which was a great place to meet people. I remember when I first came to Delaware . . . I used to have lunch there and they had the greatest food and the best desserts I think I ever (had). The soup was wonderful. It was (the) place to eat. Mrs. Shorb ran this operation. (It) was next door to the theater on State Street. (w6)

We had (fertilizer) agents. For example, Senator Frear was one of our agents. We had a salesman up there and I used to work with the salesmen and get to meet all the folks around Dover. When he died, I didn't replace him. I did the thing myself. I also handled the sales up in New Castle. I had gotten to meet a lot of influential folks of that time which was helpful later on. (w7)

Democrats had not had a governor in thirty-six years and it may have even been longer had the Republicans not committed political suicide that year.

The Republicans had two parties at that time. They had Dolphus (Isaac Dolphus) Short who thought he had been promised the nomination and, when he didn't get the nomination in the Republican party, he and friends formed another Republican party. He ran against Mr. Cannon, Harry Cannon, (the) candidate in 1936. And I think

Dolphus Short received somewhere between four and five thousand votes. And, if he hadn't been on the ticket probably Cannon would have won (over McMullen). . . . (P9)

Governor McMullen was elected in 1936. He was elected by four thousand majority that year and of course . . . Roosevelt as you remember carried the state by a big majority. Now, I'm not sure how the subdivisions were split up at that time but it was great. . . . The Democrats were very happy to have elected a Democrat and that was the time when the Republicans in the second part of his administration ripped the highway department away from the Democrats because they had enough votes in the general assembly to override the governor's veto. (B14)

Campaign of 1940

MacCollum (Dr. Isaac) was a Democrat. Dr. MacCollum was elected and Governor Bacon (Republican) was elected, so this was not an unusual situation to occur (a governor and lieutenant governor of two different parties). . . . (P4)

Campaign of 1944

First thing I know, the Democrats wanted me to run for lieutenant governor, which I did in 1944, and won by 503 votes against Clayton Bunting who was the father of the former secretary of state. . . . (P4)

Governor Walter Bacon was elected by 1,300 votes and I think at that time . . . I think President Roosevelt carried it by about 10,000 votes. And I think we elected several Democrats into the house of representatives. And we elected an auditor and a treasurer at that time. (W6)

Well, as lieutenant governor, I had two constitutional positions—president of the Delaware state senate and chairman of the pardons board. . . . As a member of the Delaware state senate I was paid the

munificent sum of \$12 a day, plus expenses. So the lieutenant governor at that time got \$720 every other year plus about \$500 expenses. . . . I got \$12 a meeting as a member of the pardons board which took place about half a dozen times a year. (P6)

Campaign of 1946

And I found out that the lieutenant governor was a very pleasant spot to be in. He didn't have a lot of responsibility and yet you were next in line for the governorship. (P5)

I became the state chairman at the request of Senator Tunnell (Sr.). I served as state chairman of the Democratic party in 1946. I only served for about four months and told them I was not going to serve as state chairman while I was presiding over the senate. I didn't think they were compatible so I resigned . . . right after the election of 1946. (B7)

Campaign of 1948

According to Carvel, the major issues in the campaign were registration and voting laws, education, the highway department and Frank duPont.

I raised the issue of building more schools and also that we ought to be doing something about the infrastructure, the roads and the buildings, of the state—State hospital and things of that sort. And so this was our issue during the campaign of 1948 when I ran for governor and the point is that I don't think we had over \$10,000 in our kitty, in the Democratic party, for expenses. We just didn't have enough money to do any promotions but we had issues. (1M4)

In preparing for the 1948 campaign, Delaware politicians in one faction had to learn an age-old lesson not to dictate what another faction might want or think with regard to candidates.

We go back to the election of 1948. And the question was "who was going to be the candidate for the U. S. Senate?" It was already decided at that time among the leaders of the party that I was going to be the candidate for governor and Lex Bayard had agreed to run for lieutenant governor. But the candidate for senate was open to discussion. And we had a meeting in one of the back rooms of the Wilmington Club up on Market Street north of 11th Street. And those present were Bill Potter, Jack Hazzard (former Democratic party chairman who preceded Carvel), Harris McDowell, who was the state chairman at that time, Bill Potter had been the national committeeman, and I think Ennals Berl was there. He was the national committeeman. . . . There were about six of us in the room. It may have that the city chairman was there as well . . . and Frank O'Donnell. He was the county chairman and also a lawyer. We decided that Vernon Derrickson who was a well to do person would be helpful in bringing financial support to the party and should be the candidate. Vernon Derrickson was from Kent county. So we sent an emissary from Wilmington down to Kent county, and he was intercepted by Willard Boyce (chairman of Kent county Democrats) on the way to Vernon Derrickson's house, and Willard Boyce said, "We understand that you are all supporting Vernon Derrickson. We don't want Vernon Derrickson in Kent county. We want Allen Frear." And so, therefore, it was decided then that Allen Frear would be the candidate because Kent county was so strongly in support of Allen Frear. Well, at that time . . . of the convention, Allen Frear was out at a Sigma Nu convention. And he would not say whether he would run or not. And it was kind of up in the air, and he acted sort of uncertain whether or not he'd like to be the candidate. . . . He was ambivalent about it. He didn't know whether he wanted to be associated with the Democratic party. . . . And of course, this was during the (state) convention when we nominated these people. Well, we finally did nominate him and of course he was elected

and he ran against Douglass Buck. Allen Frear won by 4,500 votes in that campaign. . . . (H35-37)

In 1948 my opponent was Hyland George who was a well known contractor and a very fine gentleman. He was from Kent county of the firm of George and Lynch. . . . (B15-16)

When I ran for governor in 1948, I received about seven thousand votes in Wilmington, (a) majority, about fifteen hundred in New Castle, (a) majority, which was very good because New Castle was a strong Republican area. I received a majority of about a hundred and fifty in Kent county and about a thousand in Sussex county. So, I had a majority in all four political subdivisions. . . . (B13)

I won by 10,300; Lex Bayard won by 9,000, Allen (Frear) by 4,000. Carl McGuigan, state senator from Wilmington, ran against Cale Boggs and Carl lost by about 2,000 votes. . . . (Boggs) put out this fireman's thing. He had a postage stamp commemorating the volunteer fire departments all over the United States. This made him very popular with the volunteer firemen of Delaware and they deserved all this recognition to begin with. . . . They really appreciated having Cale Boggs root for them, but that was doubtless what helped Cale Boggs get elected. . . . (P9-10)

Carvel recalls his euphoria the night Harry Truman pulled off the big upset in 1948.

We were really delighted when we found out that after we'd been elected we thought he had lost (the presidency) because everybody was saying that Dewey had won that night and the next morning after we came to Wilmington with a big group of people. . . I think we started with about twenty-five cars out of Laurel at about three o'clock in the morning and by the time we'd gotten up to Wilmington we must have had about one hundred and fifty cars. We had a long line of cars and we all came into the Hotel DuPont about six o'clock in the morning



Opponent Hyland George at the Sportsman's Club, Rehoboth, 1948. First row from left: Hyland P. George, George Short Williams, Ruly Carpenter, Bert Carvel and Congressman Boggs. Second row from left: J. Storey, Senator C. D. Buck, Henry Claus (city editor, *Morning News*), Elias Tingle and Senator Williams.

Courtesy of John J. Williams Papers, Special Collections, University of Delaware.

and had breakfast there. We used up the whole downstairs . . . the basement of the DuPont hotel where they have the . . . Grill. I guess there must have been two hundred fifty, three hundred people there and we had breakfast altogether and then we went to bed; . . . Mrs. Carvel and I had been up all night and we slept until about twelve o'clock in the afternoon and then we got the news (of Truman's eked-out victory). . . . (B27)

Campaign of 1952

Well, as a matter of fact, Lex Bayard did run for the U. S. Senate and I ran for governor and of course Eisenhower was the candidate of the Republican ticket for president and he won in a landslide and John Williams defeated Lex Bayard by fifteen thousand votes. And Cale Boggs defeated me for governor by seventy-two hundred votes and so we had a change of the guard. (B31)

After that, however, I had to make the budget up for the state of Delaware and at that time . . . you know today the budget is made by the department of Finance I believe . . . at that time the governor and the Budget commission made the budget and we held hearings and people came in and told us what they wanted. Then we sat down long hours, sometimes until two and three o'clock in the morning, and pared the budget down to where we thought it should be. It was a long drawn out affair and of course it's very difficult to do this thing after you've lost an election. But, we presented the budget to the people, to the general assembly. . . . (B31-32)

Campaign of 1954

You see, I had lost the election in 1952 to Governor Boggs and at that time the Democrats did the same thing to the Republicans. They ripped the highway department away from Governor Boggs and the way they ripped it was by adding more people, more Democrats to the

highway commission. They couldn't fire the ones that were on there but they added more Democrats. I opposed this concept because I thought this was irresponsible. I saw no reason, just because the Republicans had ripped the highway department in 1939 under Governor McMullen's term, why we, as Democrats, would turn around and be just as mean as the Republicans were. I thought this was irresponsible government. I think the governor has to have some control over the situation and I was proved right because there was a lot of criticism about how the highway (department) was run. (B14-15)

I took over as the state chairman in '54 to help get the ticket elected because Harris McDowell asked me to. . . . It's most unusual to have a governor serve as state chairman after he's been governor but I thought I could help the ticket and I wanted to see this ticket elected and we (did it) in an off-year election by an overwhelming majority.(B33)

Back in 1954 when Boggs was governor, they had the big question about integration, Brown vs. School Board, and Delaware elected Allen Frear by twenty thousand majority and Harris McDowell to the congress by fourteen thousand which was most unusual for Democrats and we elected an overwhelming amount in the senate and the house in the state legislature and I was state chairman at the time. (B14)

According to Betty Palmer, Governor Carvel's eldest daughter, the Governor believed in the importance of public speaking as a communication technique. It is possible that the persons in the facing photo were employees of the Valliant Fertilizer Company.



Governor Carvel taking a Dale Carnegie Course.

He is top row center, the tall fellow.

Courtesy of the Carvel Collection, Historical Society of Delaware.

Campaign of 1956

I also came back as state chairman in 1956 for the campaign. That didn't last. I only stayed on for about four or five months that time. (B15)

I was asked in 1956 by the party leadership if I wanted to run for governor there and I said, "No, I don't want to run for governor." We talked about who would be the proper man. I said, "Well, there's a man in the state who served as chairman of the highway department during my last term, J. H. Tyler McConnell from Virginia, a Democrat and a man who comes well supported by the establishment in the state. I think he'd make a good governor. So, they asked me to serve (as chairman of the state Democratic party). I had resigned, you know, because of the ripping of the highway department in 1955. Mr. Lyons (Garrett) who became the chairman following my resignation had a heart attack and they asked me if I would step into the breach and serve. For the third time I became chairman and worked on that campaign and Tyler McConnell lost by . . . about sixty-five hundred votes and Harris McDowell who also ran for the congress lost by about sixty-five hundred votes and of course Eisenhower won in Delaware and he won in the United States. It was a pretty hard thing to buck a Republican landslide in a Republican state and I thought Tyler McConnell and Harris McDowell both did quite well. (B34)

Campaign of 1958

I ran against John Williams in 1958. We had a strong campaign and he knew that he had opposition, I can tell you that. Incidentally, we had help from John F. Kennedy who came to Delaware in 1958 and campaigned for me. Hubert Humphrey (U. S. Senator, Minnesota) and Lyndon Johnson (U. S. Senator, Majority Leader, Texas) both did television spots with me and did some tapes for me and interestingly enough these three men several years later became candidates for

president and two of them were elected president. So I did pick the right people to support me at that point. . . . (B35)

Campaign of 1960

After his defeat for the post of U. S. Senator against incumbent John J. Williams in 1958, Carvel saw the opportunity to run again for governor in 1960 but the way wasn't exactly clear. He had to get the nomination first. That wasn't going to be easy. There were other candidates who were interested. Complicating matters at the convention was the need to select a new state party chairman and Carvel had his eye on an upstater, not a Sussex countian.

Garrett Lyons then was the chairman (state Democratic party) and he died suddenly and Elisha Dukes was his assistant and I felt that Elisha was too much influenced by Mr. Lyons so I supported a man from Wilmington, John Conway, for the state chairman. Now, Elisha was from Sussex county and I had to have Sussex county to be with me if I wanted the nomination. . . . I opposed Elisha and they made me go on record. I was a member of the state committee and . . . (Elisha) came to me and he says, "Now Bert, are you going to run for governor this time?" "Well," I said, "If the party wants me I'll run." He says, "Well you'd better take a different tack than that because if you don't let the party know that you want the nomination somebody else is going to get it and I know of half a dozen people who are out to get this nomination and if you want it you'd better go after it." I said, "O.K., Elisha. Starting today, I'm going after it." (B38)

So, I went out and called on every committeeman and committeewoman in . . . Sussex county and I said, "Now look, there are three people from Sussex county who are talking about running for governor; there's Harry Smith who was Insurance commissioner. They called him "Landslide Harry" as you recall because he did win in the off year election of 1958 . . . Senator Hoey (Walter J., Democrat,

Milford), we called him "Doc Hoey", was another candidate and he was a very conservative chap, and I was the third candidate. But the man who was the real candidate was J. H. Tyler McConnell who had been the candidate for governor in 1956 and that was what the leadership in that area (New Castle county) wanted. Now, on the other hand, Harris McDowell was in the congress and he'd just been elected by about fifteen hundred votes in 1958 . . . very small margin and (McDowell) thought if (the people in Wilmington) were going to support McConnell that (the New Castle county Democratic leadership) were going to dump him because I think he'd had some differences with some of the leadership up there. So, I knew that Mr. McConnell was encouraging "Doc" Hoey and Harry Smith to run for the nomination for governor. I knew that if one of those got it down here that New Castle wouldn't pay any attention to Sussex. They would then call for it up in New Castle county because they had the majority of the votes up there and . . . they would go with Tyler McConnell and so would Kent county. (B38-39)

Carvel took the bull by the horns and went to work on his Sussex county brethren.

So, I did all I could to talk to the people of Sussex and I said, "Look, for the past nine governors, eight out of the nine since John Townsend have been from New Castle county and Wilmington, both Republican and Democratic. Now, we don't need to help them get a governor. They've had eight out of nine. And who was the ninth one? It was Bert Carvel back in '48 as you remember." And I said, "Now let's join together. If I can get the nomination from Sussex, Kent county has endorsed me. They haven't endorsed anybody else from Sussex but they've endorsed me and the executive committee with Harris McDowell's help had endorsed me in New Castle. Now if I can get this job done down here, we'll have a governor from Sussex county. . . ." (B39-40)

The people asked me from the newspapers . . . Dick Rinard who was city editor of the *Evening Journal* and Cy Lieberman, the night before the convention. They said, "Well, how many votes do you have, Bert?" I said, "Well, honestly," . . . we had sixty votes from Sussex county in the convention. I said, "I have forty votes, but if I have forty I'm sure I've got at least fifty," because I knew that there were some (people) wavering. If I got the majority, they'd go along. Well, they just laughed at me. They didn't think it was possible and they didn't know what I had known, that I had made personal contacts with everybody and things were coming along quite well. So that day, the *News Journal* published, . . . the day before the convention, a two-page article about Tyler McConnell's wife, Willie duPont's daughter, and all the things that she had done. I don't know whether they thought that would help any or not but wasn't that quite a coincidence that they would publish a two-page article in the society area to help give him major prestige? (B40)

J. H. Tyler McConnell wasn't sitting out on the sidelines. He had his people out at the convention, also.

I talked with some of the people that day at the convention and they said, "Well, such and such a chap," who was a red haired chap . . . "used to be with the *News Journal*." Fact is, I think he . . . was working for Tyler McConnell at the convention. They said, "He's got a roll of bills big enough to choke a horse." And I thought to myself, "Well, I wonder how much money I have?" I looked in my pocket and I had three dollars and twenty-seven cents. I didn't even have enough money to buy a delegate a dinner. But as a matter of fact, I'd been all over Sussex county having lunch and dinner and maybe I took one or two out to dinner during that time but (I was) mostly talking to farmers and people around there. I figured to get that nomination in 1960. I spent seventy-seven dollars and that was spent for postage, printing and stationery where I sent position papers out to delegates all



Jane Mustard and Governor Carvel at the Delmarva Poultry Festival, 1952.
Carvel collection, courtesy of the Historical Society of Delaware.

over the state and that's the only money that I really spent during that campaign. So, when people say that you have to spend a lot of money . . . I say, it isn't money you necessarily have to spend. It's ideas you have to convey to people. That's the only way that I think that you can really, truly, sincerely get a nomination and do it the way it ought to be done. (B40)

Then it came time to count the votes as the skullduggery continued.

At any rate, when the roll was called, it happened the way I thought it would happen. We came to "Doc" Hoey . . . Senator Hoey came to me and told me he was going to give me his full support. He knew he couldn't make it but Harry Smith thought he could so I came half-way through Sussex county with thirty out of the sixty votes. Not a single one voted against me on my side of the county. So, as we got over to Curt Steen's area (eastern Sussex) where it was a little uncertain, all of his people came along. The only people who voted for Harry Smith were I think five . . . four . . . six people who were all right over in his district and the district next to him. (B41-42)

Now, as a matter of fact, the chairman of Sussex county, Democratic chairman of Sussex county (Raymond West), did everything he could to try to get a secret ballot so I wouldn't get these votes. . . . We voted openly for an open ballot and he as chairman declared that we'd have a secret ballot so we had to override him. We had to override his decision and I couldn't get up and speak because I wasn't a delegate, and the man that I had asked to get up and make the motion seemed to be glued to his chair and he wouldn't get up to make the motion that the chair be overridden. Finally (I said to) Bill Gordy who was from my home town and is now a representative up in the general assembly: "Bill, somebody has to get up and make a motion that this secret ballot be overridden or that decision is going to stand." And so Bill got up and made the motion, which carried, and the first opportunity I had I appointed Bill as a member of the Industrial

Accident Board and he was one of the finest members they ever had to serve on the board. But the man that I had asked to do this, to get up and make a motion to override the chair, was a graduate of a college. Bill Gordy wasn't a graduate, but he had the guts to get up and make the motion. (B42)

We came out of Sussex county with fifty-four of sixty votes. Kent county stayed with us as they said they would, (and) most of New Castle. As a matter of fact the whole thing went together at that time. Harry Smith thought he was going to get some support out of New Castle. He didn't get any support. All he ever got was the six votes and so Tyler McConnell never did surface. (B42-43)

So, that's how we won that nomination in 1960 and it was one of the most delightful things that I've ever had happen to me. We ran against John Rollins that year and he was well financed. He was a big millionaire. John Rollins had all kinds of people dressed up in uniforms going all over the place. He had a Rollins wagon and I think he spent thousands of dollars on the campaign. Again, we didn't spend very much. . . . Now there's some campaigns where I've put up five thousand dollars. I put up five thousand dollars to run in 1948. I put up five thousand dollars in 1952 and in 1958, but I don't recall putting up any money in 1960. You see I had lost two elections and therefore the party didn't press that too much. In the meantime Elisha Dukes who(m) I'd opposed for chairman, did all he could to help me win the election and I made him secretary of state. He was an excellent secretary of state. . . . (B43)

Somehow or other when I ran against John Williams I felt like Elisha wasn't as supportive as he might have been. But I may be wrong about that. (1M30)

Now the lieutenant governor in 1960 was Eugene Larnott and he had been mayor of Wilmington. He was put on the ticket at my request because they had defeated him in the primary for the second term of mayor in 1960 and I wanted his support. So, I urged him and urged the party to put him on the ticket as lieutenant governor. . . . (B15-16)

His nomination secure, Carvel went to work on the campaign trail as Republicans tried to pin the highway mess on him.

There were a great many (financial) overruns in the Democratically controlled highway department in 1958 and '59 . . . the Democrats of course were in the majority in the general assembly and the governor was Governor Boggs but there was a lot of criticism about the highway department and by the Republican leaders of the general assembly who tried to make a big issue out of it. I resigned as chairman of the Democratic party in protest when the Democrats ripped that highway department . . . I resigned as state chairman so when I ran for governor in 1960 they tried to make an issue about the cost overruns. I said, "Well, I couldn't agree with them more." I was totally opposed to it and I resigned because of it (spring of 1955) and I believe I won the election in 1960 because I had taken a statesmanlike attitude about the ripping of the highway department in 1955. (B15)

Campaign of 1964

In his second bid for the U. S. Senate against incumbent John J. Williams of Millsboro, Carvel's chances were far better than in 1958, but Williams' stature had also grown not only within the state but throughout the nation. He was a formidable foe. However, the Democratic President Lyndon B. Johnson was enjoying exceptional popularity and all the Democrats running hoped they could ride in on his coattails. Carvel, in a very tight race, was no different.

I urged the Kent county people to run Terry (for governor) and support him . . . and he only won by 5,000. I lost by 5,000. And Johnson won by 40,000. . . . Harris McDowell also won for

representative. I think we elected people for the offices of the treasurer and auditor. (P18)

Carvel reflects on what did him in in his opposition to incumbent John Williams for the U. S. Senate.

I was governor in 1963 when I vetoed capital punishment . . . also I couldn't get Chief Justice Herrmann confirmed (as chief justice). It probably hurt me . . . the fact that I'd appointed him. Down in Sussex county there is a lot of prejudice. . . . And another thing I did when I was governor was to withhold the signing of a legislative bill which would have spent about 15 million dollars unnecessarily on putting a whole lot of administrative (education) jobs into effect in the state of Delaware. And I refused to sign the bill saying I was going to have a hearing after the election. I got about three or four hundred telegrams urging me to sign the bill, and I'm sure I lost 1,500 in the educational field because of that. So all those things mitigated against me being senator and I guess I wouldn't be here today if I had been elected. (P23)

Democratic System of Government

Gerrymandering (drawing a district's line to insure victory) does not always work. Many politicians agree that getting a good candidate for a race is half the battle.

For example, this district here has always been a strong Democratic district. And yet, about ten years ago we elected a Republican to the house and there's been a Republican in the house ever since. And we also have a Democrat, (Robert Venables) for the senate. We still elect Republicans for the house in a district which is supposed to be a Democratic district. So it doesn't always

work out when they conspire to work up a district so the Democrats and Republicans can get elected. And the first thing you know the other party's getting elected and they thought they re-apportioned them out of the place. So, it's very interesting.

Carvel believes in the blessings of liberty and democratic government.

Democracy all over the world today is helping people to attain their aims and their desires and improving their lives. I think it's a great idea whose time has come and over the past three or four hundred years you've seen kingdoms and empires and dictatorships dissolve and become democracies and the general effect has been for people to enjoy a better life and better conditions (2M14)

Lessons that even the august and venerated George Washington learned are worth heeding.

I've been listening to some of the things that happened to George Washington when he was first president. Of course, Washington had certain ideas. And he soon found that in a democracy he had to pay attention to what was happening in the senate (and) the house and this came as a shock to him. But this was a very important democracy that Washington faced when he was president. It was a great learning opportunity for him as well. He wasn't very happy about some of the things that happened to him but he soon learned that as president he wasn't the king and he had responsibilities to the people that were provided in the Constitution and in a democracy. (2M14)

Sometimes good ideas are slow in catching on.

It was given to me the opportunity to be the governor of Delaware for two terms and I did the things which I thought were going to be helpful to Delaware and for future generations. I fought for strong education, for parks for people, for good roads, and mental health improvement, for better conditions in our penal system. I fought for things that I thought would help to build a stronger Delaware, a stronger nation. Strangely enough, even though the legislature time and time again would say, well, when I introduced a bill, he doesn't think he's going to get that passed. Six months, a year later or two or three years later, the bill would be passed because it was good, because it was right. The general assembly by and large is a cross section of people who are honest, intelligent, dedicated people but you know they're so crowded with problems that when somebody brings a new idea to them, they dismiss it immediately because that's one more problem that they don't want to cope with. But after they become familiar with it, they pass it and so you've got to have confidence in our system of government. It's slow, it's cumbersome, but in the final analysis it works. (B58)

Carvel believes in Delaware.

There's so much we can do in Delaware. We communicate so well. This is why we have such a great franchise tax, and why we do so well here (is) because we communicate. The legislature understands what has to be done, although we're a little slow on raising the judges' salaries. But they understand this is an important factor. (P29)

On politics and winning—Carvel recalls that old adage of FDR that all the latter wanted was not a homerun everytime he came to the plate but a good batting average.



"Must be Campaign Time!" Apron Bazaar, People's Church, October 29, 1952. From left: Mrs. J. Tyson Heather, Mrs. Mattie Hopkins, Mrs. Robert E. Heather, Mrs. J. D. Williams and Mrs. J. E. Teat.

Carvel collection, courtesy of the Historical Society of Delaware.

Delaware politics are great. . . . We enjoy politics I think all over the state, especially downstate. . . . Well, you know it's a matter of winning. It's just like in anything else, you want to win (laughter). You want to win the football game, basketball. And I have batted 500—been elected governor twice and lieutenant governor once, and I ran for the U. S. senate twice against John Williams and I lost those two elections. I ran against Boggs for governor and I lost that. So I batted 500. (W10)

Money, the oil that greases political campaigns, was not much in evidence in Carvel's career, at least not in the Democratic party.

We've never had any money in my campaigns for governor. We had one time when I was chairman for Senator Tunnell. I think we had around about \$25,000 that came from the Democratic national committee in Washington for him in 1946 when he ran against John Williams and I was lieutenant governor and I had become chairman of the Democratic party. And that situation helped me get to know a lot of people too in the party and that helped me when I ran for governor in '48. But we did have money from the Democratic national committee in Washington at that time. In 1960, there was a lot of labor money against Senator Allen Frear. Allen Frear was on the ticket and Boggs was his opponent and labor's motto was "Get Frear this year." Now in 1964 when I ran for the senate against John Williams we had plenty of money. (1M14-15)

The nature of the beast politics is a game of partisanship.

It's all political and of course if the Republicans are in trouble and the Democrats can make hay, they climb right aboard and vice versa. If the Democrats are in trouble and the Republicans can make hay, they hop aboard. (W14)

Past governors' expertise has helped incumbents, regardless of party.

The burdens of the governor are many and I just sympathize with them. I talked with Governor Carper when he became governor. (I) talked to him about the problems that the governors have and how to handle them. . . . When Governor duPont was in and Governor Castle, they didn't hesitate to discuss problems with me when they needed help. I was glad to be of help to them. Governor Tribbitt as well. . . . (W17)

Party discipline isn't what it used to be.

By and large the way our election laws work today and the way our voting machines and so on work, the people give expression to what they want to do. And it isn't always the state party line anymore. As a matter of fact, I observed in the last fifty years since I've been in Delaware (56 years), it used to be that the party had a lot of clout and if they sent word down from the Republican high command, well that's the way it went. Not so much with the Democrats. Nowadays the party doesn't have as much command of the situation. The people are independent in their thinking. I think that's happening all over the country. . . . (P12)

Reminiscences

Woe be to the state official who gets the members of the general assembly upset about an issue. Carvel recounts how he witnessed a firestorm of controversy when the state police superintendent decided to make some moves that ruffled not a few feathers. Finally, the senators brought the government to a standstill until Governor Bacon signed a resolution forcing the superintendent out

of office. As Carvel remarks, the Democrats, being in their lowly minority positions, sat back and loved it when the Republican senators had it out with their own governor, Walter Bacon, over the state police superintendent whom he was supporting.

Well, this is a situation that took place when I was lieutenant governor of Delaware and presiding over the senate. And Governor Bacon was governor. Frank duPont was chairman of the highway department and he, of course, was over the state police. He had brought a man in from the FBI to be superintendent of the state police. I think his name was Haviland, but I'm not sure, but he was from the west. And he was an excellent man and things were very sharp and he had the state police really snapping to attention and acting like a real sharp outfit. . . . (H38)

This was in nineteen hundred and forty-seven. And Haviland, as the head of the state police, decided without any conference that he was going to close, in order to save money and with the support of the governor, Penny Hill's police station and Bridgeville police station, which would leave mainly the one at New Castle and the one at Georgetown and the station in Dover. And he thought in the interest of saving maybe thirty or forty thousand dollars that he'd close these two stations. So they were going ahead with that and, by George, the senate, it was a Republican senate by eleven to six, eleven Republicans and six Democrats. And the Republican senate, with Senator Phillips (Raymond B.) of Brandywine Hundred, where the Penny Hill police station was located, and the senator from Sussex county, who was also a Republican . . . from Bridgeville (Leon Bulow), this man was a canner and had big farming operations around Bridgeville. They got up in arms and got three or four more of the senators in the state senate to go ahead, and they resolved Mr. Paul W. Haviland out of office overnight. They did it at night and the next morning Haviland did not know what hit him. . . . Frank duPont couldn't keep him in there and Governor Bacon

couldn't keep him in there. And the senate resolved him right out of office in no uncertain terms. . . . Bulow and Phillips were up in arms and they were marching around there and acting so upset, you can't believe how upset they were. But this just shows how Delaware operates, how democracy can work and how bipartisanship gets going. Of course, every time the Democrats could do anything to upset the Republican leadership, why they were glad to do it because they were in such minor positions in the state that they never had a chance to say much about what was going on. (H39-40)

Carvel played an important role in nominating Adlai E. Stevenson for president.

In 1952 . . . when I was at the Democratic Convention in Chicago, I was chairman of the delegation from Delaware, and I thought having known Adlai Stevenson that (he) would be an ideal candidate (for president) and so I sent telegrams to all of the governors who were in the delegation, all the Democratic governors who were representing their states, at the Democratic Convention in Chicago. I sent telegrams by Western Union and asked them to meet me in the basement of the Convention Hall at the Chicago stockyards. We got I suppose thirty of those governors together. . . . I said, "Let's not be split up the way we are, let's get behind Adlai Stevenson. He's the best chance we have to elect a president." And of course at that time we still had the south all split up on the segregation issue. Governor Shivers was there, and he did tell me that he thought Adlai Stevenson was outstanding as far as a governor was concerned, and he turned around and during the 1952 election he headed up the Democrats for Eisenhower. So he didn't stay very long with Adlai Stevenson. (W18)



Carvel with Adlai Stevenson, Governor of Illinois, at Democratic National Convention, 1952.
Courtesy of the Carvel Collection, Historical Society of Delaware.

But at any rate, Delaware was about 5th or 6th in the roll calls. And so the governor from Indiana . . . had decided he was going to nominate Governor Stevenson. Well, the word got around that I was also going to support him and then the members of the Democratic national committee and groups like that got in touch with me and said, hey, how about getting Delaware to put this name into nomination? Because at that time instead of having to wait for Indiana, which would have been about 20th, Delaware was around 5th or 6th. . . . They did this not according to how you entered the union, which Delaware was first, they did this alphabetically. So I went ahead. (W19)

One of the things I did was to call Adlai Stevenson. They had said he didn't want to run. I called him up and talked to him for fifteen minutes and I found out that he was itching to run. He wanted to be drafted. He wanted to run. I talked with him personally. The Illinois people told me where I could reach him . . . and I reached him. And this was important for history, the part Delaware played there. So he let me know . . . that he was ready to run for president. So that meant I went to work immediately, wrote my speech and then the question was about . . . whether or not (the governor of Indiana) was the one who wanted to nominate him. So I said, tell you what we'll do. Normally we have one nomination and several seconds. We have thirty minutes allocated. How about letting him take the first fifteen minutes because he's 65 years old. At that time I was 42 years old so I was by far the junior. I had my future ahead of me and his future was not too great at that age. So I said let him go ahead and do the nomination. We'll jointly nominate him. I'll give the second part of it. Well, he gave the nomination and then the Stevenson people were all ready to parade and I had one heck of a time. It took me five minutes out of my speech trying to get them to listen to the nomination. Of course I had the microphone up on the dais there. And Sam Rayburn (Democratic

speaker of the U. S. House of Representatives) was later quoted as saying that I ad-libbed ten pages and threw fifteen pages away. (w19) Well Delaware did get our chance to nominate who we thought was going to be the next president. (w20)

Delaware Rooster Gets a Booster.

I remember one time they asked me to present . . . a chicken to the Mayor of New York and I went up in an airplane with one of the Sack Brothers (of Selbyville). Well, we were trying to publicize Delaware poultry. I got on the front page of the *Sunday New York Times* presenting this chicken to the mayor of New York (1M20)

During World War II southern Delaware, particularly, experienced labor shortages in getting in the crops. Carvel's fertilizer business was a little better off.

We had a time in this area trying to find enough people to work in the factories. I had old people, cripples, women working the factories. What would happen was during the day we would just put out as much fertilizer as we could and at night I'd go and look around the area and find people who worked in other jobs. You see, you were limited by the U. S. government as to what you could pay people. I would pay them overtime rates based upon the fact that they were working overtime as far as their other jobs were concerned. And I would get people to come in to do the work on that basis. (w8)

In fact, some of these people had formerly worked for us and so I was glad to be able to get them to do the job which had to be done. But it wasn't easy. At that time we didn't have as much materials-handling equipment as we have today. The front-end loaders for example were just starting to be developed. You'd handle all these tons by shoveling, shoveling into these Georgia



Presentation of a Delaware Chicken to New York's Mayor O'Dwyer,
January 1950. *Carvel collection, courtesy of the
Historical Society of Delaware.*

buggies into the mill. . . . You didn't have the equipment in those days so you had to depend upon labor. (w9)

Delaware got a windfall during his second administration.

One of the things that happened while I was governor was that the Christiana Securities was dissolved and they wanted to distribute this money without having to pay the long term capital gain tax. . . . I think the federal government alleviated that, but it probably would have been about eight percent. And this involved about forty or fifty million dollars. And so Irving Shapiro and I worked together on this situation. I didn't sign the bill. The Democrats were very much against it, but I wanted it to become law. And it did pass and the money was distributed and Delaware at that time did get about sixty million dollars or something like that. So it was a fair thing to have done and I had no objection to it. But I worked with Irving Shapiro on that. (w22)

Sometimes you're up and sometimes you're down.

I remember one chap I used to sell fertilizer to was Harry Neese and I went to his farm around Dover. He knew our neighbors next door here. He had a nice big farm and I went to see him, and I said: "Harry, I'm running for lieutenant governor (he was a Republican, too), but I'd appreciate anything you could do for me." And Harry said, "I'll give you my vote. I vote 'em in and I vote 'em out." I went to see him again when I ran for governor in 1948 and I asked him for his support and he said, "Yeah, I'll support you. I vote 'em in and I vote 'em out." So in '52 when I went to see him, I was running for re-election against Cale Boggs, I asked him for his support. "Nope, I can't help you now. I vote 'em in and I vote 'em out." (w7)

Carvel was a workaholic what with his involvement in so many things. It left little time to really relax.

You know what I used to do during my first term, during that last night of the general assembly? I don't know whether you remember Sam Fox or not. Sam Fox was a very active politico up in Kent county and he was a good friend of mine. He was also the man that ran the state boat and he and I would play gin rummy while the general assembly was winding down. We'd sit up in the governor's office and play gin rummy to round about one or two or three o'clock in the morning. (1M32)

There were times when the chief executive did get away from the hurly-burly.

Once in a while (I would take off and) go to Florida and relax, but I'm not sure that this was after the general assembly closed. (1M32)

About the only trips I took were to the governors' conferences. I'd go to the National Governors' Conference and then in 1950 we joined the Southern Governors' Conference and I went to that twice and four times when I was governor the second time. But the Southern Governor's Conference was a whole lot more productive, I thought, than the National Governors' Conference. I got a lot more out of that. . . . (1M20)

Well, you know, at the time I was . . . governor I was also the president of the Valliant Fertilizer Company. And incidentally while I was governor the second time I was master of the Masonic lodge here in Laurel. I was potentate of Nur Temple the last year I was governor. I had all those things on my back as well and my blood pressure did go up after the campaign of 1964. And after that campaign . . . the Alliance for Progress that President Kennedy sponsored with South America and Central America was launched.



Nur Temple Dance.
Courtesy of the Carvel Collection, Historical Society of Delaware.

The Delaware Panama Partners was formed as an arm of this movement. I went down with a group of people to Panama and we went all over Panama and found out what their problems were, and that relationship still exists. And then after that I went down to South America and spent about a week in Venezuela. (1M32)

Being governor is not like it used to be.

Do you know that when I was governor I commuted fifty thousand miles a year. And I had only one trooper. They have three now. When I went to Wilmington it was ninety miles up and ninety miles back. If I had lived in Dover it would have been fifty or forty-five miles up and forty-five miles back. I had no governor's mansion at that time. I always say it's the people who live in Wilmington who think it's twice as far from Wilmington to Laurel as it is from Laurel to Wilmington (laughter). It's not often people come down here. They usually expected me to go up there. (W4)

A good man is hard to keep down.

It's almost worth your life to drive up and down the state especially north of Dover. I'm looking forward to the time the new dual highway is completed and then it's going to be a big improvement. I stopped doing those things (going up and down the state) because at my age, 83, that's not too easy to do. But I attend meetings of the Historical Society. I attend meetings of the Beneficial National Bank. I'm the emeritus chairman of that board. Maybe two or three other operations I belong to. I do get up and down the state—Delaware Triple A and Delaware Motor Club and the Safety Council. I'm vice president of that. So I do try to attend those meetings. (W17)

During the Bicentennial of the American Revolution in 1976 Carvel took part in the ceremonies of the recreation of Caesar Rodney's ride to Philadelphia to break the tie for independence.

Oh, that was excellent. Incidentally, it was a lot of pleasure to me to be at the old Dickinson mansion at five o'clock in the morning on July 1st when Caesar Rodney was given a fine send off by people from all over the state and all over the country. Television and everything else recorded the occasion. I don't usually get up that early in the morning unless I'm going duck hunting or goose hunting but this was an occasion. I think I got up at three o'clock that morning. (B19-20)

Speaking of hunting . . .

I did go shooting with Governor Terry on several occasions up in Kent county and of course we have blinds down on Kent Island (Maryland). I have a blind here on the farm and we have some down on the lower farm. There's a farm down on the lower end of Kent Island which my great grandfather bought in 1876 and we still have that farm and we have quite fine facilities for ducking and goose shooting down there. (B20)

Carvel recalls the pay rates of members of the old commission form of government.

Of course when I was governor, most of the people on these commissions didn't get any salaries. They just got a nominal *per diem* for serving. I think if you were on the board of education, you'd get \$25 or \$50. The highway commission members received no pay. (P34)

On certain personalities he's known . . .

Judge (Hugh M.) Morris . . . was . . . an important factor in my life because he was chairman of the board of the University of Delaware and he was very helpful to me when I was lieutenant governor and governor, and he was a Democrat. Judge Morris was a very wise person. He was one of the judges of the District Court and one of the outstanding lawyers of the state. He was very helpful to me from time to time. (P20)

Then there was another one, Mr. Edward Davis, E. C. Davis, who was an engineer, civil engineer, and he made a couple of million dollars out at St. Louis. And he had this place up at Seaford, the Governor Ross Mansion, which he had bought. And I got to know him because I sold him some fertilizer. So when I was lieutenant governor we used to talk a lot about what to do. . . . He was (Ned Davis's) uncle. . . . I think he left most of his money to the University of Delaware, which Judge Morris got him to do. . . . (P30)

One of the things that I was sad about was that Chancellor Harrington (William Watson, 1938-50) had been a friend of mine. I'd known him when I was lieutenant governor and he was on the pardons board as chancellor and had been very helpful. And he was a fine person and, when I became lieutenant governor, I got him to swear me in. . . . (He) swore me in as both lieutenant governor and governor and when I got a chance to reappoint him he was in his seventies and I just didn't think I should reappoint him. That really hurt me badly that I couldn't . . . because he had gotten to an age where it wouldn't have been proper . . . He would have been 83 or 4 by the time his term was up, maybe 88. . . . (P31)

Jim Quigley (New Castle, Democrat) was . . . an Irishman who really knew how to play politics. And he had this place (snake pit) down in the basement of the general assembly where he got everybody liquored up. One time, I must tell you, I was having problems with Jim and some legislation that he wasn't voting for

and I asked him to come up to my office and I cussed him out up one side and down the other, like he'd never been cussed out before. I mean I really used some choice phrases on him. And he looked at me and he said, "Governor, I thought you liked me." I said, "Jim, I love you, but I don't always like what you do. And I certainly don't hesitate to let you know." But Jim was a free spirit and he was . . . a tough nut. . . . (1M33)

Of Presidents of the United States

Harry Truman, President, 1944-53

Carvel remembers how and where he first saw him.

I could tell you a lot about President Truman, which I think is very important. I knew him the first time at the Hotel Mayflower at the Electoral College dinner when I was lieutenant governor and he was vice president. And the electors were all there and so I was invited to that. I met him in the men's room of the Hotel Mayflower but I never said anything to him. But I saw him there. He was the vice president but, being a young fellow 35, I was a little bit bashful about going up and saying hello to him which I should have done because he would have been a man who said hello. (P37)

The first time I really got to know (him) was at the Democratic Convention in 1948 when I was running for governor that year. I was a delegate to the convention and there was a lot of controversy about Truman. The southern people were upset because they thought he was interested in eliminating segregation. And Alabama and Mississippi and South Carolina walked out and, as you know, Strom Thurman ran on the Dixiecrat ticket against him and also George Wallace ran on a leftist ticket that year. And they didn't think Truman had a chance with all these people who were Democrats running against him. The Dixiecrats . . . and George

Wallace was a very different kind of guy and here was Harry Truman at that convention. He was present the last night of the convention. He got there about two o'clock (p.m.) and he had on a white suit, double-breasted white suit, with his glasses, and he was in a room behind the dais where you all get to talking and the men's room was beyond that. And I walked by there several times and there was Harry Truman all by himself. There wasn't a single secret serviceman near him and he waited in there ten hours to get to speak to that convention while Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama, and South Carolina were in the process of walking out and finally making the decision to nominate him in person and they didn't until 2:30 in the morning. And he got up there at 2:30 in the morning and he said, "I'm going to call the awful 88th Congress back into session on August 30, which is Turnip Day in Missouri." Imagine that? Here's an old farmer talking about Turnip Day in Missouri. . .

. (P38)

He called them back and of course he won that election. I rode with him (from) Washington in a private car up to Wilmington when he spoke at the B & O Station to about 10,000 people and he told me he'd have a secret serviceman bring me in after he passed the Susquehanna River. He and his wife and his daughter were eating breakfast (it was early in the morning) and, (he) said I want you to meet the folks. He said, "This is Margaret," and referring to Mrs. Truman he said "This is the Boss." We talked about the situation in Delaware, and I said, "No, you're going to win this election in the United States." And he said, "I had this experience. I ran for the senate in the Democratic primary in Missouri and everybody said I couldn't beat the machine," and he said, "I did beat the machine. I admit that I did talk to people all over the state and they thought I'd win the election." And he did. (P38)

And by gosh, he did exactly what he said he was going to do. And he won that election. You know Randolph Hughes. Do you remember him? He was the Banking commissioner. Randolph told

me he knew Harry Truman because he was on Senator (James) Hughes's staff (1937-43) at that time. He knew Harry Truman and he said he went all over Missouri with Harry Truman and he campaigned with him. (1M25)

And after he was elected I called President Truman and congratulated him. We didn't tell him he lost by 1,500 in my state, but I think if he'd another couple of weeks he'd have carried Delaware and I was sorry about that. But I re-congratulated him and I had Mrs. Carvel talk to him. Her father had been a Democrat who always voted for Republicans . . . but she voted for Harry Truman and she talked to Mr. Truman and congratulated him . . . it was awful nice of him. He didn't have to take my call. (P38)

Carvel found Truman very accessible.

When I was governor and Truman was president, I went up to see him several times and he was living over in the Blair house across the street from the White House. . . . They took every bit of the material from inside the White House out of the front door of that White House and when I went in there the first time there was nothing except some wood and a lot of trash down where the cellar was. No floors, no nothing and you could see where the fire had scorched the walls in the War of 1812. And then I went back again and they had . . . everything . . . just like an office building . . . they had steel girders in place just like an office building. The next time I went to the White House, reinforced concrete was in place for all of the flooring. . . . There was a bathroom for every bedroom and I got to see the whole business when the White House was being rebuilt. Not too many people in the country know about how the White House was being rebuilt at that time. There are plenty of things that Harry Truman did that people didn't know. He stayed across the street in the Blair House. There's where they kept the



Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner, 1956.
From left: Dean Acheson, senator from Florida, Elbert Carvel and Harry Truman.
Courtesy of the Carvel Collection, Historical Society of Delaware.

distinguished company. That's where the five Puerto Ricans tried to shoot Truman. (P41)

Why did I go over to see the president? Well, I went to see him because we had different things that we wanted to talk about. For example, one time we wanted him to put a housing office in Delaware. We were one of forty eight states . . . that did not have a housing office at that time. So, he did promise to put one in for us. But, I remember talking to the president one time and we were discussing interest rates and at that time all of the banking community was trying to get interest rates raised and Harry Truman was doing everything he could to keep them stable. At that time we could borrow money as a private corporation. I'm president of the Valliant Fertilizer Company and we could borrow money for three percent. The federal government was borrowing money for two and five-eighths, two and a half and the state of Delaware was borrowing money at about one and one-quarter percent because there were no taxes on that money and the income tax was very high at that time, up in the ninety percent bracket. Well, at any rate, . . . we were talking about the business of interest rates being so low and the fact that the financial community was trying to cause them to be raised and Harry Truman looked at me and he said, "Governor, it's very simple," he says, "We're right" and he banged the table and said "they're wrong." And why he said this was because he knew that if he raised interest rates . . . that it would be a burden on the states as well as the federal government. It could be a burden on the householders and he was doing everything he could to keep them down. Now, the financial community was saying, well, the president's using artificial means to keep them down and all the president would have to say about that was, what do you mean artificial means? Isn't money an artificial medium? So therefore, why not control the situation to the benefit of all concerned. And this is the way Harry Truman was. If he believed in something, he didn't hesitate to make the decision and I think he

was a great president and (I) said so. I said so while he was president and said so many times since and I was very proud to be associated with him. (B28-19)

Without being pressed, Carvel can easily list Truman's actions which were to him the most admirable.

Harry Truman was a great president. He did great things. He supported the Marshall Plan to help to rebuild Europe. . . . Harry Truman was an American unafraid to take strong measures to do what he thought was right. He deserves a lot of credit. He dropped the atomic bomb. A lot of people criticize that today. I don't criticize him. He saved hundreds of thousands of lives of our soldiers by dropping that bomb. The Japanese weren't about to pay attention otherwise. They were going to fight to the last citizen. There would have been a bloody thing if he hadn't dropped that bomb. I give Harry Truman credit for making some very difficult decisions because during his term the United Nations became important. He supported that and he made a lot of decisions. He made the decision to isolate Russia. (P41)

(The Cold War) lasted a long time, but Harry Truman's the one that took the first step. He told me that he had talked to Stalin. . . . I think he said Stalin had told him that the Russians had lost ten million people during World War II. So, you see, Harry realized that Russia had made the greater sacrifice and he understood that, but he wasn't going to put up with Stalin trying to grab land the way he was trying to do. They tried to stop people trying to get into Berlin, because Berlin was in the middle of the Russian sector. You couldn't just go from the western sector into Berlin. You had to go into the eastern sector about one hundred miles to get to Berlin. So he flew into Berlin to stop the Russians from trying to seal in Berlin totally. So he stopped communism in Italy and Greece by sending in support to help them. He stopped communism there.



Speaker Rayburn's donkey says "Hi, Harry."
From left: Elbert Carvel, Allen Frear, and Speaker Sam Rayburn.
Courtesy of the Frear Collection, Special Collections, University of Delaware.

He never got much credit for it. When I was governor I went up to New York to speak on television, a national program. I indicated that I thought Harry Truman was an outstanding president and a good president. I could hear people back in the projection room cussing me out because I was taking up for Mr. Truman. (P42)

Incidentally I used to send a Christmas card to him every year and I'd get a letter from him every year thanking me for my Christmas card. And then when he died I sent a Christmas card to Mrs. Truman and I got a letter from her thanking me. But it's interesting. They were just nice people. They were people down to earth. They were the kind of people who in a democracy should be encouraged. (P42)

In 1951, Truman relieved General Douglas MacArthur from command because he felt the latter was usurping the authority of the president. Carvel recalls those days of acrimony across the nation.

Well, Truman gave me courage to stand up for things in which I believe and, I don't know, I have strong views too. And I agreed with his views. I only made one mistake, when (Truman) fired MacArthur. I thought he was one hundred percent right. I was about to say so. George Sylvester, my administrative assistant, who was also an army man, a member of the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, was very strong for MacArthur. So I didn't say anything about it. I wish I had. (P42)

I think the reaction in Delaware (with the American Legion and the Veterans and all the people who had been in the war) would've been negative. They thought (MacArthur) was a big hero. You cannot have the army dictating conditions to the state. This is what happens in republics down to the south of us. The army dictates and, if they don't like what the presidents do, they kick them out.

You can't have that. It's something you have to watch very carefully. (P43)

Lincoln took terrific abuse and also Harry Truman. When I was governor, Harry Truman was president, and people vilified him. They just talked about him as if he was scum. The worst of human beings. And Harry Truman with all of this just blithely went along and said history will prove that I did the right thing. (2M14)

But (Truman) established the power of the citizenry over the military. And one of the things Harry Truman told his wife, he said, "At my funeral, don't let the military take over my funeral." Guess what happened? They did. (2M15)

John F. Kennedy, President, 1961-63

Carvel's relationship was not as harmonious with Kennedy as it had been with Truman.

Well, I first met John Kennedy . . . when I ran for U. S. Senate in 1958. Of course he was the U. S. senator from Massachusetts at that time and Lyndon Johnson was senator from Texas and Humphrey (Hubert) was senator from Minnesota and that's when they did the tapes for me. And when John Kennedy came to Wilmington in '58 . . . he created quite a sensation. He just came down the main street and . . . just in short order hundreds of people started gathering around on the main street of Wilmington when they heard he was there. . . . He had a very magnetic personality. There wasn't any doubt about it. (B37-8)

In 1960 at the National Democratic Convention in Los Angeles, Carvel, as a delegate and candidate for governor, found himself in an impossible situation regarding John F. Kennedy's bid for the Presidency.

And here was Kennedy (who) had done a number of things that Sussex county didn't like and here I'm a candidate and things are very tenuous in Sussex county and the nomination out in Los Angeles was two weeks before the nomination for governor in Sussex county. The people in Sussex county were very much opposed to Kennedy. Now remember, . . . they were opposed to him mainly because of the religious issue and because of prejudice. . . I had made a survey and I knew they were opposed to him. So, what had happened was, I had been importuned by Jack Kennedy several times and by his administrative assistant . . . Theodore Sorenson, very strongly, to support Kennedy but I had never given my consent because I knew how Sussex felt. Remember this, I had to get my nomination, first of all, from Sussex county. If I didn't get it from Sussex, I would have lost Kent and New Castle. But if the Kent and New Castle people knew that the Sussex people were behind me, they were going to support me. (B44)

Carvel cites further reasons why his brethren in Sussex thought he was suspect.

I had opposed the man Sussex Democrats had wanted for state chairman who was their own Elisha Dukes. I had supported one man, one vote, back in 1949 and continuously. . . . I talked about it in the election of 1958 and this is something Sussex didn't want. They were bitterly opposed to one man, one vote. This meant they'd lose power. I had opposed the ripping of the highway department. Sussex wanted that so badly they could taste it and, also, I had been in favor of the negotiated wage rate for building and the people in Sussex didn't like that. I'd done all these things that Sussex didn't want and, if I'd gone ahead and supported Jack Kennedy before my nomination, they'd of just wiped me out. (B44)



Elbert Carvel, Lyndon Johnson and John F. Kennedy at the Kennedy Inaugural.
Courtesy of the Carvel Collection, Historical Society of Delaware.

The Delaware delegation supported Senator Stuart Symington of Missouri until he dropped out. Then they went with Senator Lyndon Johnson of Texas until he too lost out.

I would like to have supported Jack but I couldn't do it and so when we went to the convention, it was Cliff Hall's vote and my vote that made the decision to support Johnson, and Kennedy never forgave me for that until . . . about a week before he was assassinated. (B44)

During the 1960 campaign we invited Senator Kennedy . . . to come to Delaware and he obliged. And again, interestingly enough, Harris McDowell was then running for congress and I was running for governor, and so . . . Kennedy invited us to come to Washington, (to) meet him at the airport. We flew up in his private plane first to New Jersey and then back to Delaware. Well, in the meantime we were at the small airport in Washington which was right next to the national airport and he had a private plane which was owned by his family and his wife was there and she . . . Jacqueline was most concerned about his welfare and how he was getting along. At that time she was pregnant with John-John and everything seemed to be very cordial between the two and she was most solicitous about his well being. Then we took off and went to New Jersey . . . I've forgotten the name of the town but we arrived there late and left there even later so that when we came over to . . the Wilmington airport I guess we were an hour late. But the thing that really gave us the tipoff as to what was going to happen, there must have been thirty-five or forty thousand people at that airport and Jack Kennedy was really quite well received. I said there was a time down in Sussex county . . . when there was a lot of prejudice because of his religion against Jack Kennedy. But we did something about this prejudice and one of the men who was so very helpful in this area was Houston Wilson, a very active Episcopal Church member who raised the issues that everybody was prejudiced about

and then proceeded to knock them down in a very fine fashion and very Christian fashion. As a result, Jack Kennedy almost carried Sussex county. He only lost by six hundred votes and I won by a majority, I think at that time, of two thousand votes which was pretty good, but this just goes to show you how Sussex county can be. (B47)

Thereafter, a chill settled over the relations between Carvel and Kennedy for almost the entire term of the latter. After all, Kennedy had come to Delaware to campaign for Carvel when he ran against the stalwart Senator John J. Williams in 1958.

And I knew that eventually Jack would see that I was his friend because . . . on numerous occasions I went to Washington. I appeared before house and senate committees in favor of legislation that he wanted. I supported his program and he knew I was on his side and he knew he had carried Delaware but he never did forgive me for voting against him for the nomination until just about a week before he died. (B46)

Carvel vividly recalls his hour of redemption with Kennedy.

He always called me "governah". He never called me by my first name. Of course he was about eight years younger than I was and . . . I think he felt the difference in the age because he knew I'd been governor before. But he was always sort of at arm's length. He was never too friendly. But he came to the dedication of the new interstate highway which we built from 1961 to '63 and completed it in November the fifteenth of '63 and we had invited him to come, Governor Tawes (Millard of Maryland) and I. It was a joint project and we welcomed him. He came in by way of helicopter. We were right in the middle of Delaware and Maryland (between Newark and Elkton, Maryland), right on the line there and there's no way to

get there except by automobile or by helicopter and the automobile situation was all tied up because there were at least ten thousand people coming by automobiles and some of them had to walk three or four miles to get there because the cars were all parked on the highway. (B44-45)

Well, at any rate, he came in and we gave him a fine welcome . . . I always made it my purpose to not only give a distinguished visitor a greeting, governor or president or whoever when he came to this state, but I always saw that he had a farewell. Governor Tawes was all tied up with his people, politicians talking and so on, and he missed that fact that the president was getting ready to leave. So, I escorted the president back to his airplane. I said to him, "Mr. President, this is a fine, enthusiastic crowd and I know you're concerned about whether you can be re-elected or not and I can tell you here that these people came from all over the country to see you. Some walked two or three miles, and I think it indicates that they're going to support you wholeheartedly without any question. It's not going to be a close election next time. You're going to win in a landslide." Well, he seemed to like that and, as he got aboard the airplane, for the first time in his life he said, "Well, so long Elbert." (B46)

Well, I knew then (at the opening of I-95) that maybe he'd forgiven me and I never did try to explain to him why I couldn't support him in 1960. Because I'm of this school. It's not necessary to explain. Your enemies won't believe you and your friends don't need an explanation. (B46)

JFK really never understood and I didn't tell either one (Kennedy or Johnson) of the reasons why I went with Johnson on that occasion. I had no opposition to Kennedy as far as religion was concerned but Sussex county did. Politically I had to take the position that I didn't support Kennedy. I don't know if he ever understood that this would have cost me my nomination if I had

supported him. This would have been the straw that broke the camel's back in Sussex county. (2M21-22)

Lyndon Johnson, Vice President, President, 1963-69

Relationships with Johnson were minimal and somewhat apathetic, according to Carvel, especially when Carvel went into his second battle with Senator John Williams in 1964.

I saw (Johnson) several times when he was vice president. He was the most unhappy man I ever saw. He'd lost all of his power, you know . . . at the Governors' Conference when he was the main speaker, he just acted like he was an unhappy man. When he was the majority leader of the senate, he was a very powerful man under Eisenhower. And he and Eisenhower had passed a lot of legislation together that was needed. Eisenhower thought very highly of him. Johnson was a very powerful man. He wasn't accustomed to being vice president and, John Nance Garner (vice president under Roosevelt) said that the vice president got no respect (laughter). I knew Johnson wasn't happy. He came to Delaware to the 350th anniversary (of the settlement of New Sweden, Wilmington, Delaware) and when he came I met him at the plane and I saw that he was taken back to his plane, in early 1963. (P39-40)

He was about six foot four inches. . . . They had a big reception over there, the man from the Madagascar Republic. . . . They had a big dance and I noticed Johnson was out dancing and he was off at the side somewhere and he looked up and he was sort of sulking away. I think he did a lot of good things and he tried. (P41)

Kennedy never invited me to the White House but Johnson did. We went there. We slept on the second floor in the Queen's bedroom because there was a bed about seven feet long and big enough for me. And the other two governors who were there slept on the third floor. We were on the main floor and it was quite an

experience, around 1964, Johnson was president and of course (he) wasn't about to give me much support. Bill Potter . . . was national committeeman and we had understood we were going to get a reasonable sum from the national committee for our campaign (against John Williams). . . . There was an article in the newspaper in the *Journal Every Evening* saying that they'd taken a poll and Carvel and Williams were running neck and neck. Well the previous poll had shown Williams running about eleven percent ahead of me. Johnson paid a lot of attention to the polls. Well I went down to Washington . . . and I showed Johnson's administrative assistant this headline. And I said, "Look, about Johnson's not coming to Delaware and (our) not getting any support from the national committee . . . this is a Republican paper, not a Democratic paper." . . . I said to this chap, Mr. Johnson's administrative assistant, I said, "it doesn't look like Mr. Johnson cares whether I lose or not. I know I'm going to defeat John Williams. I want you to know I've got a long memory too and, if I don't get the support, I can sure remember it." And he looked at (the newspaper article) and (Johnson) came to Delaware and . . . spoke in Wilmington and in Dover. But it didn't help. It didn't get me elected. (P40)

In retrospect, Johnson owed Carvel for what the latter did for the Texan's candidacy at the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles in 1960. But according to Carvel, there wasn't much evidence of it later.

I don't think he ever realized what we did for him. . . . (2M21)

Richard M. Nixon, President, 1968-74

(Nixon) did some constructive things while he was president. I think recognizing China was a very important step and I supported him when he did that. (B47)

Of Other Delawareans

Walter W. Bacon, Republican Governor, 1941-49

Bacon shepherded the ship of state through the grueling years of war. As the following excerpts will show, he was austere, a very partisan Republican and yet a very compassionate human being.

You see, my predecessor, Governor Walter W. Bacon, a very nice person, . . . had been sick for several years and as a result . . . things were not on the drawing board that might have been there if the governor had been in better health and more aggressive. So when we came about saying that we wanted to build schools and we wanted to do the things that would be helpful, we had a lot of cooperation from agencies. (B6)

Carvel recalls that in 1947 Walter Bacon was not in the best of health.

Governor Bacon was quite old when I was lieutenant governor and they thought he was going to pass out a year or so after I was elected, . . . I was amazed at the treatment I received when I went to Wilmington. They were sure that he had one foot in the grave, but he managed to live out his term and died about five years later. He had cancer of the prostate, and it was considered pretty serious. (P5)

My main relations with Governor Bacon and also Frank duPont were when they tried to get the bond bill passed for the Delaware Memorial Bridge. . . . (1M2)

I did everything I could to help Governor Bacon get the votes in the Democratic party for the passage of the Delaware Memorial

Bridge authorization. At the time the ferries had waiting lines four or five miles sometimes to get across the Delaware River and we thought it was important to build the (bridge) which in some ways opened up Delaware to commercialization such as we never had before. (W11)

(Bacon's Administration) needed Democratic support in order to get that done. They needed (a) three-fourths majority and they didn't have that . . . in the house or the senate. So I talked with the caucus of the (Democratic) party and I said, "now look, here's what we should do. We should try to get together with the governor," and at that time the Republicans were so partisan they wouldn't even let any of the Democratic bills in the senate come out of the committee. The fact is that they wouldn't even have committee hearings on them. They just bottled them up and that was the end of it. That's how partisan they were. So I said, "now you all have some bills that you'd like to get passed. I suggest that we talk to the governor and suggest that we'll go along with this bridge if they'll let the Democratic bills come out of the house or the senate. And if we can do this, they may be willing to say, well, we'll sign them." (1M2)

The following anecdote indicates just how partisan Governor Bacon and the Republicans were.

Warnie (Warren) Allen went to see the governor, and you know Warnie Allen is a multimillionaire. . . . He was a representative from Seaford. He wanted to get a road built in his district, and the governor said, "Uh, let's see now, you're a Democrat, aren't you?" "Yes," he said. "When you're a Republican you come and see me and I'll try to get you the road built." And so that was the end of that. I mean there wasn't any question about it and Warnie never forgot that. (1M3)

So that was my relationship with the governor, and we worked out a deal whereby he agreed to sign a few bills and also they agreed to let the bills out of committee. . . . I thought my party was making a big mistake just trying to stop the building of the bridge just because they couldn't get a few of their bills passed so we worked that out quite well. (1M2)

The railroad wasn't very happy to see what was happening because they knew that the New Jersey turnpike and the Delaware Memorial Bridge were immediate competition to them and I'm sure they weren't very happy to see (the bridge) come at all but you can't stop progress. (B12)

Frank duPont (who was father of the Delaware Memorial Bridge) . . . sent me a telegram after the general assembly was over and said that people may not know the part you played in helping get the bridge passed but I'm aware of it and appreciate what you've done. (1M2)

Incidentally, one of the things that really impressed me about the governor was a lot of times he would bring a brown bag for lunch . . . over in the secretary of state's office on the table that they had there next to his main office. They had a refrigerator there where the governor would have cheese and grapes and things such as tomato juice or orange juice. That was all over in the secretary of state's office in the north side of his main office which was right opposite the governor's office. (2M3)

Despite Bacon's spartan existence, he could, on occasion, exhibit the milk of human kindness.

When my mother came to see me while I was lieutenant governor, I asked the governor's secretary if I could bring her in to meet the governor and of course she said, "Oh, yes, we'd be delighted." So I took my mother in to meet the governor; . . . she died about a year later, she had a tumor of the brain. At her funeral

the governor sent a magnificent basket of white flowers. Today they would have cost about \$100. At that time probably around \$25-30 but it was a beautiful basket of white flowers, gladiolus, and summer flowers. It was a magnificent gesture. (2M3-4)

Alexis I. duPont Bayard, Lieutenant Governor, 1949-53

Another man I'm thinking about is Alexis I. duPont Bayard who served as my lieutenant governor who was a very capable and helpful person in that office. He served as president of the senate and lieutenant governor, as president of the pardon board and he supported our program wholeheartedly. (B7)

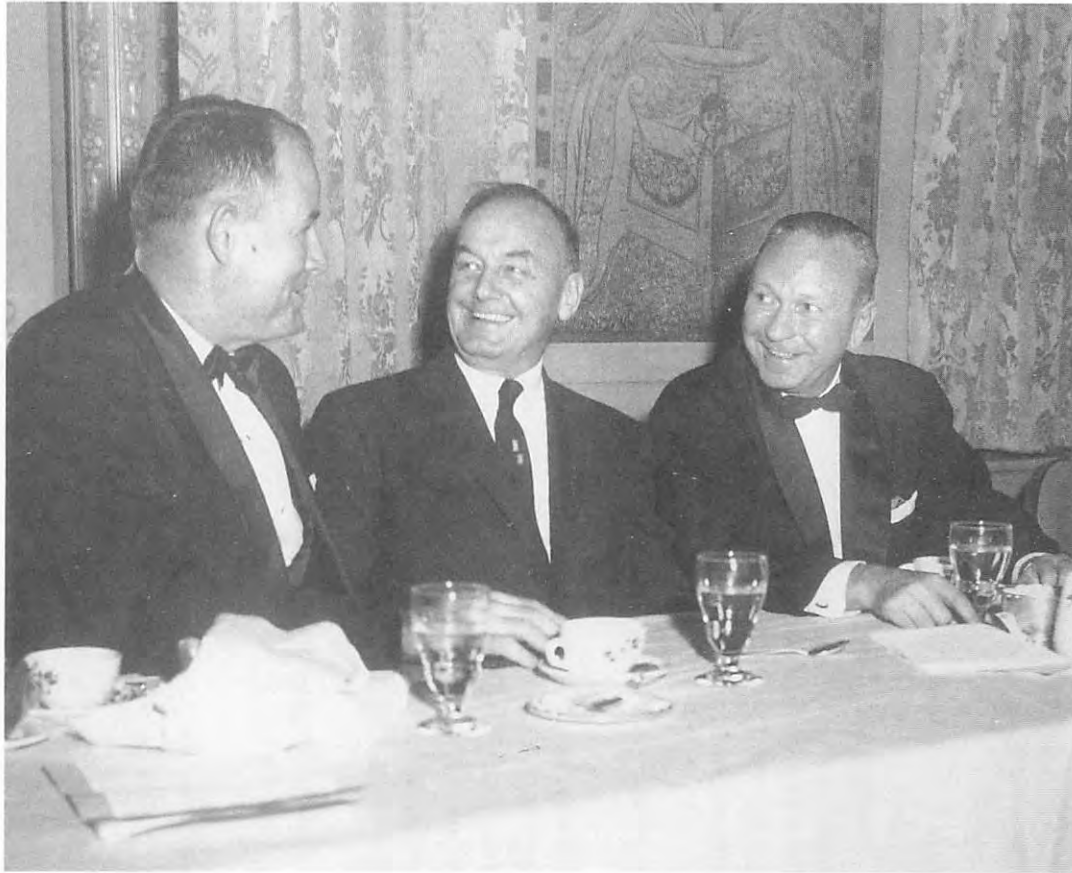
Joseph R. Biden, Jr., U. S. Senator, Democrat, 1973-

Well, frankly, you know Biden came to me when he ran against Boggs for U. S. Senate and wanted to know whether I was going to run. And I had run as you know in 1964 . . . he felt that I might want to run again and I said, "No, Joe, I tell you, I've had enough of politics." . . . And I said, "You know, you're a young man. You might have a chance against Boggs. You go ahead." . . . (1M37)

J. Caleb Boggs, Republican Congressman, Governor, U. S. Senator, 1947-73.

Carvel was no fool. When he created the Supreme Court, he tried to lure Boggs, a possible future rival, but Boggs didn't bite.

When I had a chance to appoint the members of the Supreme Court I tried to get Boggs to be on the court, but he was too smart for that and he said no. He was in the house at that time, in the congress of the United States, and he said no, he didn't think he



Elbert Carvel, John J. Williams and Cale Boggs at a National Council of Christians and Jews Banquet March 5, 1963. *Courtesy of John J. Williams Papers, Special Collections, University of Delaware.*

could serve. He'd like very much to do it but he didn't think he would do it. (1M11)

It's remarkable that Carvel had the misfortune to run against two of the most popular vote getters (Boggs and Williams) in all of Delaware political history.

Well, Boggs had a history of being a veteran of WWII. I made him a general in the National Guard when I was governor the first time, and he was a member of the legislative group, not only as a senator but as a representative of congress. He was a judge of what was originally the Orphans Court, turned out to be the Family Court, and he was a general in the army, so he ended up being in all areas of the state and I don't know of anybody in history who's ever covered the whole spectrum of politics the way Cale Boggs did. He was also the governor in the executive mansion for two terms. But he was a very popular man and he got elected and re-elected.(1M12)

Despite their political battles, Carvel and Boggs remained friends for the rest of their lives. Like Carvel, even after he was out of office Boggs remained active in civic affairs almost to the end of his life.

It's remarkable how the former governors . . . how friendly they are, Democratic and Republican—Cale Boggs, for example. He asked me to be on the board of the Triple A after my term was up. He was on the board of the Delaware Motor Club. And, later on, I asked him to be on the board when I was chairman of the Beneficial National Bank, and he served there until he died. When we meet at Delaware Day (December 7) at Buena Vista, it's amazing how friendly everybody is. And they're all shades and parties. (W14)

C. Douglass Buck, Republican Governor, U. S. Senator, 1928-37; 43-49

I just had a passing acquaintance with him. I knew him and he knew me and one time when I first came to Delaware we'd sold him fertilizer and I called him up to try to sell him fertilizer again and got a short answer. Of course I was just a newcomer and he didn't know me. But I did know him and I think one time he suggested we come up and play bridge. He knew . . . I liked to play contract bridge. . . . (1M27)

Thomas R. Carper, Congressman, Governor, 1983-93; 93-

Carper and I did very well . . . I urged him to run for the house when Tom Evans was congressman . . . I urged Carper, who was then treasurer, to run. I thought he'd get the job done. He always did very well and when the time came to run for governor, I said, "Tom, this is a great opportunity." And he had the courage to fight to eliminate the corruption that was going on in New Castle county Democratic party. In the end . . . the New Castle county chairman was involved in a situation and (Carper) saw to it that he was unseated. It took a lot of courage at the time and I give him credit. That's what you should do. (W17)

Vera G. Davis, Republican Senate President Pro Tem, Dover (1949)

There was Mrs. Vera Davis with whom I had served in the senate because the Republicans had nine votes and we had eight votes. So, we just provided our eight votes with her one vote and elected her president *pro tem*. So we had quite friendly people in leadership of the houses even though the Republicans had a majority in both houses and we were able to accomplish eighty

percent of the platform that we had put forward to the people . . . so we made some progress there. (B8)

J. Allen Frear, Democratic U. S. Senator, 1946-61

Allen Frear, when he was a young man, would come in his office and he'd be singing all the time . . . a free spirit . . .

He was elected in '48, when I was elected governor (and) he was re-elected in 1952. Well, again, many of the party came to me and said, "Well, look, we've got a situation's going to tear the party up. How about you being a compromise candidate and run?" I said, "No, I cannot be a compromise candidate because I have given my word to Senator Frear that I would not run and my word is my bond and it means as much to me, means more to me, than running for the U. S. Senate," although I had hoped one day to run for the senate. Well, we came down to a situation where, in the convention, Allen Frear was running against James Tunnell for the convention votes in Sussex county. As I recall it, there were forty convention votes. And I decided that even though Jim Tunnell was my friend and supported me for governor in '48, and lieutenant governor . . . in '44, it was important that we continue with the present leadership in the U. S. Senate and I supported Allen Frear in Sussex county and I went all over Sussex county with . . . him to various people, various committee people, various delegates who were going to be at the convention. And I think the result was that, even though Jim Tunnell got a majority in the caucus for Sussex county, I think Allen Frear carried about forty percent of the Sussex vote. Allen Frear was nominated by the Democratic party in convention for the U. S. Senate. (P8)

The last day that I was governor in 1953, January the nineteenth, Allen Frear came into my office just to pay me a courtesy visit and we talked for a bit. I said, "Well, you know, Allen, I just want you to know that I will not be a candidate for the

U. S. Senate in 1954. I knew from experience that if I didn't burn a few bridges the first thing I knew I would have been a candidate and I wanted some rest and relaxation. I wasn't unhappy that I lost. I wanted to win of course but I kind of welcomed the opportunity to have a breathing spell and those who are not in public life and who yearn to be in the public eye don't realize what happens when you're in the public eye. Publicity is fine but after a while it begins to wear on you and you begin to yearn for privacy and this is the way I was beginning to feel. I'd like a little privacy. So, I told Allen so he would know I wouldn't be running for something that I wasn't too anxious to run for. I knew he wasn't too popular with some of the more liberal people—Democrats in Delaware and of course the administration as you know had been a liberal administration. He said, "Well, Bert, I didn't ask you whether you were going to run again." I said, "I know, Allen, but I'm telling you so you'll know. I want you to know that I'm not going to be a candidate." Well, what happened? As things unfolded in 1954, even though I didn't agree wholeheartedly with how Allen Frear operated, competition began to develop against Allen Frear. James M. Tunnell, Jr. came off the Supreme Court to run for the U. S. Senate in the primaries and this upset me that James Tunnell would leave the Supreme Court because Boggs was governor. That meant Boggs would appoint a Republican to the Supreme Court and that would give the Supreme Court over to a majority of Republicans and I couldn't conceive that this would be done. But Jim thought this was what he wanted to do and of course he was the son of an illustrious father who was also a U. S. Senator. So Jim went around and campaigned against Allen Frear and I went to see Allen Frear and I said, "Now Allen, I want to know if you're still serious about staying in here or not because I'm having a lot of pressure put on me to be a compromise candidate." And Allen Frear said to me that, "Yes, I intend to stay in there." Well I said, "If you stay in there the word that I gave you in 1953 is still good and I will abide

by my word in what I told you." So, I came out in support of Allen Frear for the U. S. Senate and I worked in Sussex county and all over the state to help get him nominated and (he), I think, won something like a hundred and twenty-five to seventy-five, something like that, for Tunnell, and I'm satisfied that I helped him get the nomination for the U. S. Senate at that point. (B32-33)

In 1958, when I ran against John Williams, Allen Frear would not say one word on my behalf. He would not support my candidacy for U. S. Senate. And I really felt that after I had done what I had done for Allen Frear that he wasn't very responsive. There wasn't any *noblesse oblige* there. (1M24)

On a trip to see President Harry Truman in late 1952, Carvel headed a Delaware congressional delegation to Washington to get a federal agency in the state.

We took Harris McDowell, the secretary of state, and Allen Frear, a Delaware senator, with us. Now, Allen Frear at that time had not been getting along very well with the president because he had not given the president the kind of support the president thought he should have. As a matter of fact, Allen Frear was working very closely with the southern Democrats and they were not very helpful with the president's program. So, we thought we should take Allen along because he was our U. S. Senator and we wanted him with us on this effort and of course he was willing to go. So, we sat up there and the president agreed to give us this special office in Delaware. He said he would do everything he could to be helpful and so later on we did get the office established as the president said it would be done. He then asked us, "Well, who are you going to run for the position of United States senator against John Williams?" And I said, "Why Mr. President, we're going to run Alexis I. duPont Bayard who comes from a long and

established line of Democrats in the state and they've been statesmen and held positions of ambassadors and senators and representatives in the congress ever since revolutionary times." "Well," he says, "Fine, I'm glad to hear that. I hope you'll send somebody down to the congress who's going to support the president more than one time out of ten." And Allen Frear hopped up and said, "Oh, he will Mr. President, he will." (B30-31)

Walter J. (Doc) Hoey, State Senator, Democrat, Milford, 1954-64

When he ran for re-election in 1962 he and I didn't always get along too well together in the senate. But I went up to a very important meeting that he had with the black people up in this area, and he didn't have a very good record with them. But I supported him and backed him up and I think that helped him to get to be re-elected to the senate. . . . (1M34)

Harvey Lawson, Republican Speaker of the House, Millsboro, 1948-50

In the house, when I became governor, we had eighteen Republican members and seventeen Democratic members. But we helped Harvey get elected speaker of the house. . . . He wasn't the choice of his party but he was a friend of ours and we wanted to see (him) in there. We provided the votes to overcome the Republican majority along with Harvey Lawson's one vote. (B7-8)

He tried, when I was lieutenant governor, . . . to get the senate to overrule me and he tried for days. He finally got the job done and that was the end of it. . . . He was one of these down-to-earth watermen from the east side of the county . . . and George Edmonds was the majority leader of the senate when I was



Left to right: Harry Truman, Allen Frear, Harris McDowell, Elbert Carvel.
Courtesy of the Carvel Collection, Historical Society of Delaware.

lieutenant governor. George Edmonds married Natalie duPont and he was from Massachusetts and he used the broad "a". He used to be president of the Wilmington Trust. George would get up and say, "Mr. Chairman, on behaaaf (broad a) of the Finance committee I wish to present a bill." Old Harvey Lawson got up one time and he said, "Mr. Chairman, on behaaaf (mimicking broad "a") of the Fish, Oyster and Game commission, I wish to present a bill." (laughter all around). So you see we had a lot of rapport going on. (1M36)

Dr. Isaac MacCollum, Democratic Lieutenant Governor, 1941-45

He was a very pleasant guy but he wasn't much of a speechmaker. He didn't do very well speaking and I remember they had a big political meeting up in Wilmington one time and so he found this card in the Hotel DuPont, the American Creed, and he took this card out for the speech here and read this American Creed to this group of people, about 500 people, and that was his speech. (Smiles). But he and Mrs. MacCollum were very nice, down-to-earth people. (1M28)

Harris B. McDowell, II, Democratic Congressman, 1955-57, 1959-67

(Former Congressman Harris B. McDowell) became secretary of state and after I resigned as state chairman (of the Democratic party in 1946) . . . I encouraged him to become state chairman and he served . . . all during my term and also as secretary of state. (B7)

At the time that I was running for lieutenant governor, he was chairman of the New Castle county committee, and I appointed



Governors' Conference, Gatlinburg, Tennessee. (Smoky Mountains) 1951.
Courtesy of the Carvel Collection, Historical Society of Delaware.

him secretary of state. Of course when I ran for governor in 1960, Harris was very helpful to me in delivering the support that I needed in New Castle county because he didn't want Tyler McConnell on the ticket because that was kind of a challenge to him. If you get too many people from New Castle it might mean that somebody else might run from Sussex. . . , and the fact is they were running from Sussex for congress and Harris didn't want that. . . . I know when I was first governor we were working late. We used to work sometime till one or two o'clock in the morning on the budget, and Harris would say, "Well, it's about six o'clock, it's party time, time for a drink," and I just never had any experience of drinking, socializing at five o'clock. I didn't hesitate to take a drink maybe on occasions where you'd have a big crowd or so on, but I never was in for this five o'clock deal. And I said, "Harris, I'm not going to start that." . . . I usually drank either beer or scotch. I haven't had a drink, I guess, for ten years. The doctors said you're just as well off without it. (1M30)

Richard M. McMullen, Democratic Governor, 1937-41

I knew him slightly because I used to see him in the old Duval Tea House in Dover there on State Street. And he used to come in there to eat lunch. You see the governor had no place to go. That's where he went for lunch and I used to go sit back there with the lawyers. . . . (1M27)

Charles L. Terry, Democratic Governor, 1965-69

I knew Charles Terry. He was a friend of mine and so was Max, his brother. . . . I appointed Charles Terry as chief justice after Southerland's term was up. I had also appointed Charles Terry as associate justice on the court. . . . Then Justice Terry decided to run for governor. . . . But he made so many bad mistakes. I tried to

consult with him and he wouldn't listen to anybody. He was a Democrat so there you are. Sometimes you get along better with the Republicans than you do with Democrats. (1M26)

He proposed a license tax on small cars (in 1968) the same as the Cadillac cars and the Republicans made a big issue of that, and I urged him to get off that line. I said you're going to hurt yourself on this, and he said, "I'm not going to do anything of the sort. I'm going to do just exactly what I'm doing." He didn't hesitate to tell me and he was really nasty about it. Somebody also tried to tell him the same thing so they went ahead and passed this tax which increased the vehicle tax on the small cars which affected ninety percent of the population. The Republicans made a big issue of it and he lost the election the next time. (1M26)

Chester V. Townsend, Jr., Republican Speaker, 1944, Ocean View

Well, Chester Townsend was another free wheeler . . . and he was speaker of the house when I was lieutenant governor and . . . I bought a lot of cars from him . . . right after the war because I was a state official. I could get cars and I guess I got about ten cars from him for different people, ten Fords. I got a car for Pierce Ellis (in Laurel) who had just come back from the war and was a doctor at that time. And he needed a car and I was able to get a car for him. I got a car for myself. (1M36)

John G. Townsend, Governor, U. S. Senator, 1917-21; 1929-41

I didn't know him too well. I have a picture of him where I think I went to his 85th birthday (1956) and Nixon was there as well and we have a picture of him there. But I didn't know Townsend very well at all. . . . I knew his son. . . . He talked to Elisha Dukes at the time and Elisha was secretary of state and he

lived in Selbyville too and he said, "Elisha"—at that time he had been in the motor vehicle tax department collecting taxes there when I appointed him secretary of state. He said, "Elisha, I see you're secretary of state." "Yeah." "How do you like it?" "Oh, I like it pretty good, Senator." He says, "Well, stick around. They'll get ya after awhile." But the Senator knew because he'd been gotten to. He lost to Jim Tunnell. (1M26-27)

Sherman W. Tribbitt, Democratic Governor, 1973-77

Sherman and I had a good relationship when he was speaker of the house and I was governor. He was very helpful to me in getting my programs through in the house and I was very glad to support him when he ran for governor. . . . (1M37)

James M. Tunnell, Jr.

In 1954, more liberal factions of the Democratic party in Delaware were not satisfied with the performance of the conservative incumbent Democratic U. S. Senator J. Allen Frear. As a result, former Adjutant General Joseph Scannell and several other lawyers tried to induce Tunnell to leave the Supreme Court to oppose Frear that summer in the state convention. Carvel was horrified.

Well, it got to the point where we were having a convention and we were afraid we were going to tear up the Democratic party at that time. And when Jim Tunnell indicated he was going to run for the senate, I called on him and I said, "Jim, I think you're making a mistake coming off the bench at this time. You have Caleb Boggs as governor and he's a Republican, and he's going to appoint a Republican in your place." (H17-18)

A similar situation occurred in 1921 when Democratic U. S. Senator Josiah O. Wolcott resigned his seat and was appointed chancellor by Republican Governor William D. Denney. This left the way open for T. Coleman duPont, a Republican, to be named to the U. S. Senate. As chancellor, Wolcott replaced a Republican Charles M. Curtis. The event produced a volatile situation in both parties. Carvel did not want history to repeat itself.

And I reminded Jim of the fact that this would be a mark against him if he resigned his present situation and allowed a Republican justice to be appointed in his place. Well, Jim Tunnell, all he could see, and he had stars in his eyes I could see, is he wanted to run for the U. S. Senate. And he didn't listen to me one minute. He wasn't hearing what I was saying. . . . (H19)

John J. Williams, U. S. Senator, Republican, 1947-71

After my term as governor was up I ran for the U. S. Senate against Senator John J. Williams and I lost by about 5,000 votes. . . . (He served four terms.) But he had a halo and a white horse. And he was very difficult to defeat. And of course deservedly so because he had served the state with great integrity and had cleaned up a lot of corruption in the United States and he was known as the "Conscience of the Senate". (H21-22)

He'd been (the subject of) a lead article in *Reader's Digest* and *Saturday Evening Post*, which were very popular magazines at that time. And of course Williams had the benefit of the Bobby Baker scandals in Washington and the IRS investigation. . . . He had been the lead man in all of these various magazines. . . . I lost Sussex county. But I think I carried Wilmington. And I lost New Castle I think I lost by about a couple of thousand votes (in Sussex). . . . He didn't run the next time (smiling). (IM15)

Love of Delaware

Carvel recalls old Sussex when he first came to town in 1936.

I had been to Delaware many times. As a boy I came to the Hotel duPont when it first opened up and I remember being taken through there and shown the Green Room from a balcony and everybody was oohing and aahing what a beautiful spot this was, and I had an idea about Delaware, the way things were in the northern part of the state. But when I came to Sussex I wasn't too familiar with that. Oh, I'd say that only about one-third of the streets and roads around Laurel were even paved at that time. And this was right after the Depression when most of the houses, I'd say eighty percent of the houses, needed to be painted. And it was kind of a shock to me to see things not quite the way I envisioned. But nevertheless I burned my bridges. I resigned from my previous position as a sales engineer at the Gas and Electric company in Baltimore and we came here with two children and not under what you'd call favorable circumstances because we had to fire the head bookkeeper and the president of the company who had taken over for Mr. Valliant. And they had a lot of friends and I'm not sure those friends appreciated their being fired. But I found out later they didn't have as many friends as I thought they did and things developed quite nicely at the time. (w2-3)

When I came to Delaware it was just such a beautiful spot—practically no commercialization between the towns, no buildings at all, no advertisement. It was just a lovely, pastoral, agricultural area, south of Wilmington, and you went south of the bridge (over the river at Wilmington) and there was nothing. . . . (w2-3)

And of course the New Castle commons were all there and they had farms there. There just wasn't any development south of Wilmington. . . . Delaware has so many beautiful old historic

homes, brick homes all over the state, had many old churches and it was at one time just a joy to be there. You went from Dover to Smyrna and everything was farms. There wasn't a gas station or anything else. The gas stations were in the town. (w2-3)

Carvel acclimated himself very well in his adopted state although it is debatable to Sussex countians when, and if, an outsider could ever be counted as "one of them." Now, after sixty-one years and two terms as governor, it would seem someone would have named him "Honorary Sussex Countian."

You see, Delaware accepts outsiders. Of course I always used to say when I was elected governor I wasn't even a citizen of Delaware. You have to live in Delaware twenty years to be a citizen of Delaware. When I was elected governor I'd only been here twelve years. (P27)

Governor Tom Carper asked me to make a few remarks in the town of New Castle the day he was first inaugurated. I began with "Delaware has a motto—Delaware—Small Wonder." I then said, "my motto is more appropriate. It is Delaware—Wonderful, Wonderful Delaware." It's not a small wonder. It's just one of the greatest places to be. I've talked a lot of people into coming to Delaware and they're just amazed by the way they're received by Delawareans. . . . (P30)

Carvel recapitulates his belief that party discipline has fallen by the wayside compared to what it was and Delawareans elect whom they like.

I remember once when (Sherman) Tribbitt was running. They voted for Nixon. They voted for Joe Biden. They voted for Pete duPont. They voted for Tribbitt. They voted for (Eugene) Bookhammer, back and forth. They voted for (F. Earl) McGinnis

for auditor and a Republican for president . . . zig-zag back and forth. Look what happened with Tom Carper. He won big last time. Delaware is this way. They vote for individuals, some of them are liberal at that. (P10)

Carvel firmly believes that in the end it's honesty, being above board, and assuming responsibilities that count in successful political careers—not money.

One person can do a great deal if he's in a position of power. I believe that the president of the United States can do a great deal in a constructive fashion and in a negative fashion. We've seen examples of that in the last fifteen, twenty, thirty or forty years. . . . We saw what Roosevelt could do, what Truman could do, what Eisenhower could have done but didn't do although he adopted a statesmanlike stance when he was in office . . . what Kennedy for example tried to do and what Johnson did do and then made the mistake of prolonging the war in Vietnam. And we see . . . the negativism of what Nixon did although he did some constructive things while he was president. But the important thing is that in this land of the free people, where we can express our views and where we can contradict what somebody else expresses, and where we can have a difference of opinion, one man can make a difference; one woman can make a difference. It's important to realize that you can be elected because you have good ideas, because you have programs that people believe in and that you espouse, and that's more important than all the money in the world. To run a campaign that publicizes a lot of Madison Avenue froth doesn't mean a thing. I have seen for example during my experience running for governor in 1948, we were just as poor as we could be. Of course we knew the other side had more money than they knew what to do with, but we won the election in 1948 on ideas . . . 1960 I ran for the nomination and I didn't spend any money but I had ideas which I

presented to the people and the party and money didn't make any difference even though I knew a multi-millionaire many times over was a possible candidate. I knew that ideas were the most important factor. I've often heard people say, you know, if I were just president of a company or if I was just a senator or governor, I would do thus and so. And it was given to me an opportunity to be the governor of Delaware for two terms and I did the things which I thought were going to be helpful to Delaware and for future generations. (B56-58)

Family

The Carvel children are grown now. Elizabeth (Betty) is now Mrs. Charles L. Palmer and lives in Millville, Delaware. Edwin lives in San Francisco. Ann, Mrs. David House, lives in Baltimore, while Barbara Carvel Krahn lives in suburban Wilmington. It is his wife, the former Ann Hall Valliant of Centerville, Maryland, to whom he gives credit during those trying years when he was often away from home.

Well, I have to give a lot of credit to my wife. She's been very supportive all the time. Today the governor's wife has a secretary. The governor has a mansion. I had no secretary, no mansion. My telephone was listed the whole time I was governor. My children went to public schools and later to the University of Delaware. . . . At any rate my wife was there, answering the phone, taking messages, talking to people, commiserating with them. . . . She was very supportive the whole time and did everything she could to be helpful. She raised the children even though I wasn't home the whole time. That's one of the sad things about being governor when you are only thirty-five and you have little children three and four and ten and twelve years old. I was going 50,000 miles a year



Brooks Studio portrait of Mr. and Mrs. Elbert Carvel.
Carvel collection, courtesy of the Historical Society of Delaware.

all over the state from Laurel, not from Dover . . . I have to go up the state and down, and was out three and four nights a week. But she was very supportive the whole time and I owe a lot to her support. And she always gave me good advice. Whenever she thought things ought to be done, or shouldn't be done, it'd turn out to be pretty much what people were thinking. (P28)

A Final Thought

I would like to be remembered as the governor who voted for education, who got the election laws improved in the state, and the governor who did not allow any corruption in either one of my terms . . . the governor who was willing to follow in the Delaware tradition. (P36)



Illustrations

- Cover. Sketch of Elbert Nostrand Carvel.
- opp 1. “Crafford” on Kent Island.
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