



ACT Heritage Library Manuscript Collection

Engineering Heritage Canberra
Queanbeyan Age Project



Interview with Peter Neuss



HMSS 0269 Engineering Heritage Queanbeyan Age Oral History Project

http://www.library.act.gov.au/find/history/search/Manuscript_Collections/queanbeyan_age_project

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Interview: 26 May 2012.

Time	Subject
00:25	December 1965 joined the Queanbeyan Age after seeing ad in local paper for apprentice printer.
1:00	Five year apprenticeship which included attending Technical College in Canberra in addition to on-the-job training. Describes how his training differed from the Government Printing Office
2:15	How he learnt to do specific jobs. Family atmosphere and mentored by people on the job. Recounts Jim Woods experiences of being mentored.
3:30	Describes his day as an apprentice at the newspaper office . Hand and machine compositor on Linotype/Ludlow/printing – what that involved. Moved to Linotype after four years.
4:50	Explains how a Linotype machine worked.. Required skills were handyman, operator and scholar
7:15	The Age was a local business and a personal paper. Local staff and personal local knowledge very important
9:00	Talks about colourful characters on the staff and special mentors (Jim Buckley and Bill Johnson).. Story about a table used by Jim Buckley
10:45	Speaks in detail about the family-run style of management and personal assistance encouraged staff to become long term employees. Tempted to join The Canberra Times for more money and better facilities but preferred benefits of The Age family style business
14:45	Outlines improvements to equipment . Explains how the hot metal press worked and associated health problems for operators. The Age a leader in the industry in country NSW by using the most updated equipment. Describes Jim Woods' method of purchasing equipment
16:45	Describes the types of equipment he used . Hand composing and the Linotype and how that worked. Describes his experiences in operating the Ludlow and how that worked. Offset system of printing – the American News King and colour introduced . As units were added, still setting on the old Linotype equipment . Introduction to computerisation and explains punch tape
19:45	Details introduction to computerisation in the 1980's and 1990's Explains what punch tape was. The Age one of the first in country NSW to embrace computerisation. Other country papers, church papers and university papers printed by the Age
22:00	Talks about the improvements to equipment after that which included general updates to programs, storage, colour
24:15	Describes how the paper looked in the later stages of his career. Tells story about a reader's comments about the paper's smaller size. Outlines changes following introduction of the internet and sale to Rural Press . Discusses other reasons why circulation decreased
30:15	Some interesting stories printed that maybe should not have been . Story about his mistake on the Linotype and an angry Local Member . Story about apprentice being rejected for employment and becoming apprentice of the year elsewhere. Explained Jim Woods' unique way of choosing apprentices
35:30	Provides detail about Jim Woods' unique management style based on his own experience as an apprentice – he knew the business from the ground up. Talks about the Age's reputation as a leader in country NSW. Talks about success stories of apprentices who came to The Age for experience and went on to succeed in careers elsewhere. Describes the family atmosphere of the business and camaraderie of staff
39:30	Discusses incidents where strikes delayed the paper and how staff worked together to get the paper out on time
41:15	The most significant change over the years was from hot metal to computers . Tells how staff adapted and the extent to which their jobs changed
43:15	Memorable occasions provide special news and the paper also contributes to country events in the area. The Age is the 7 th oldest paper being produced in NSW. The Age celebrated 100 th anniversary in 1960 and received letter from the Queen The Age recently celebrated the 150 th anniversary with letter from the Queen which also acknowledged the Printing Museum



44:30	Describes how the concept of the Printing Museum came about and its inception. Talks about how premises were found, adapted and funded. Outlines the experience visitors receive at the Museum and talks about the volunteers who run the Museum
48:15	The machines that are housed in the Museum include a very early press similar to the one used by John Gale called the Alexandra. Tells the story about how the Alexandra got its name. Talks about a small pedal machine . The most modern machine is circa 1960
55:00	The one thing that contributed to the success of The Age during his career was local news, local interest. Expects The Age will continue as it has 150 years of experience behind it
56:15	Final comments



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