

Interview with
MILO CIRIL KNIGHT

October 3, 2018

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Final editing was completed in 2019.
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MILO CIRIL KNIGHT

Milo Ciril Knight was interviewed by Randall J. Bunn on October 3, 2018 at the Southern Utah Veterans Home in Ivins, Washington County, Utah. He related his military experiences. Brady Fronk also participated.

RB: We are here to talk a little bit about Milo's military experience. He [said] that he served about twenty years [in military service]. I want you to tell little bit about your life, you mentioned that you were born in Sigurd [Sevier County] Utah [March 16,] 1920 to Alma and Agnes (Anderson) Knight.

MK: That is correct.

RB: You had eight brothers and sisters, [so] you were one of nine children?

MK: Right.

RB: Your father was a bee keeper and —

MK: Among other things.

RB: — farmer. What do you remember about growing up as a young child?

MK: Pretty much a lot of it. It was a lot of growing up. We lived in one of the finer homes in Sigurd. Then a crash came in the bee business. We moved to a large farm where there was nothing, but rattlesnakes and jack rabbits. [It was] in [Salina in a] place called Tipperary [Sevier County, Utah]. I guess we had over a hundred acres.

RB: What was that like growing up in kind of a farming area in a rural part of central Utah?

MK: I [have] thought about that a lot. Just go along with the days and the nights.

RB: Did you like it? Did you have a good childhood growing up?

MK: Yes, I loved life. We didn't have a lot to eat at times, but we managed.

RB: What did you do for fun growing up? Did you play games with your siblings?

MK: I was mostly alone until I [started] school. Then we had a little more association with that kind of fun. Mother would always see that we enjoyed ourselves. Dad

[and mother] both were terribly hard workers. But mother was a motherly kind. Dad was a fatherly type. [Laughter]

RB: Was your mom a good cook?

MK: Yes.

RB: What do you remember about some of your favorite meals or recipes that she made for [the family]?

MK: Pretty much all [the] common [dishes]. We never made anything sophisticated, but what she [cooked] was good.

RB: Did you fish and bring some fish home to eat?

MK: Occasionally, but it was very occasionally. It took time. It was more of a holiday [meal] than anything else. You had go to the mountains, stay on a creek, put up a tent, catch a few fish and eat them.

RB: [Laughter] Did you have chores around the house?

MK: Always had chores to do!

RB: What kind of chores did you have to do?

MK: [The chores were] different [for the] places we lived.

RB: Did you milk cows?

MK: Oh yes! We always had a cow herd.

RB: Did you have to take them out to graze?

MK: I took them out to pasture in the morning and brought them back [in the evening].

RB: [Did you have] any goats or sheep.

MK: No.

RB: How about chickens?

MK: [We] always had chickens. Always had [a] big chicken coop.

RB: Did you have to go out and collect the eggs?

MK: Yes.

RB: [Did you] feed them?

MK: Yes. Chickens, chickens, chickens!

BF: [Laughter] How many chickens did you have?

MK: I think we had sometimes, around 300 or so.

RB: Wow! That was a lot!

MK: We would eat a lot of chickens! [We] sold a lot of chickens.

RB: Did you have to kill chickens to eat?

MK: Yes. We had to kill them to eat we them. We all ate chicken.

RB: But was it one of your chores to take care of the chickens?

MK: Sometimes. But it was mostly [the number of chickens] down to where we just kept [some] for eggs.

RB: What kind of crops were growing? [Was it] corn?

MK: No corn. We never raised corn. We had alfalfa. [That] was a big [crop at] the first place we lived. From then on it was just catch a little there and a little here.

RB: Did your mom grow a garden?

MK: Always

RB: What kind of things were in the garden?

MK: Everything!

RB: Tomatoes, cucumbers, squash and all [of] that?

MK: All of that. We always had [a] big garden.

RB: [Were there] any fruit trees where you lived?

MK: [We] only had [a] fruit tree one time, apricot. It wasn't on our [land], but was on the part of the land that we used for awhile. [We had] apple [trees].

BF: Did you learn how to drive at a young age — like eight, nine years old?

MK: I don't know about that! [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter] When did you learn how to drive a truck or a car?

MK: I think I was in high school. It was before I was sixteen [years old].

BF: Do you remember your first car?

MK: [It was a] Model-T truck.

RB: Is that right?

MK: It was just what we could afford to [make] a down payment on. [Laughter]

RB: If you were born in 1920, the crash took place when you were about nine years old. Then The [Great] Depression [was] into the 1930s and your early years as a teenager. What do you remember about the Depression? Did you even know you were in a depression?

MK: Not really. Our life was just about the same.

RB: Just living off the land?

MK: We had money. We didn't put it in the bank and leave it [there].

RB: Did your family own a radio? Did you ever hear the radio when you were growing up?

MK: The radio [was] in the Salina [Sevier County, Utah]. I was very young, but I remember driving down to see it was a Maser radio.

RB: Do you remember listening to [programs]? Any shows or music or anything on the radio?

MK: I guess we had to listen to about everything, *Amos and Andy*. I guess we listened to about everything that came on.

RB: Did you ever have a movie theater at all? Did you ever see any movies?

MK: [There was] a theater in Salina. I moved there for — [I] must have been not much over six [years], I guess until I left.

RB: [Do] you remember seeing some of the movies?

MK: Oh, yes!

RB: Shirley Temple?

MK: Shirley Temple was *on the good ship lollypop, it's a sweet trip*. [Singing] [Laughter].

RB: [Laughter] she was a cutie!

MK: She was! We used do get to a movie. My brother just older than me, and I, worked all summer for a man for a horse. He worked for a man who couldn't pay [him] so he gave him a horse. That was all he got was a horse.

RB: All summer long?

MK: Nothing to eat, but anyway we rode it on Saturday nights.

RB: To go see the movies?

MK: [We would] steal eggs out of our own chicken coop! [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter]

BF: [Laughter]

MK: [Laughter] Get enough for the show and a candy bar. [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter] That is good! Who would you go with? Which one of your brothers?

MK: My older brother

RB: Donald or Howard?

MK: Howard [Knight].

RB: Tell about your [education and classes] at Sevier High School. What were your high school [years] like?

MK: It was good. I loved high school. I was in all the plays.

RB: You were a theater man?

MK: Yes, I was never too smart! [Laughter]

RB: Did you sing at all?

MK: Yes, not very good, but it was good enough

RB: [Did you participate in] any sports?

MK: I participated in some, but I was never on a team.

RB: What was your favorite subject in high school? [Did] you have one?

MK: I never thought about that! [Laughter] I liked every [subject] I took.

RB: Did you have some agriculture classes?

MK: No. No algebra, no, I took all the easy ones! [Laughter]

RB: Any favorite teachers you had in high school?

MK: I don't remember. I had one teacher that I had trouble with. In fact, [there were] two [laughter], but otherwise —.

RB: Any girlfriends in high school?

MK: She [became] my wife [Madge Zufelt, May 14, 1922 – April 9, 2016], finally.

RB: You had a high school sweetheart that became your wife?

MK: She lived in Aurora [Sevier County, Utah] and I lived in Salina. We got together. Beautiful, lovely girl.

RB: How did you get involved in the military? When did that happen? Was it before World War II started?

MK: No, it was just after.

RB: Do you remember [when] the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor?

MK: Yes. I was living with my wife in Oakland, California. [We had] moved down there.

RB: You married about 1939, [do] you think? [They were married on August 24, 1939, Salina, Sevier County, Utah]. You said you were nineteen [years old], and you moved to Oakland? There was nothing in Salina?

MK: Standard Oil Company was trying to recruit people to work their service stations in California. I applied and [went] to California.

RB: How did you travel to California? [Did] you take a bus?

MK: We had a car, a 1934 Plymouth Coupe [laughter] and we drove out.

RB: Very good. [Laughter]

MK: We enjoyed it. We had a pretty good time.

RB: So you moved to Oakland and was working [for] Standard Oil?

MK: Yes. The war began when I was there.

RB: How did you hear about the beginning [of the] war?

MK: [I] woke up [the] morning when they bombed — Pearl Harbor happened. Oh, my goodness, we said] we will kill them! We will go bomb those S.O.B.'s!

RB: Wow!

MK: I [went] into [military] service.

RB: [Did] you enlist then? Or [were you] drafted?

MK: I didn't stay out to long. I didn't make any notes of my life — that was kind of stupid.

RB: Is it hard to remember back?

MK: I [remember] snips of it, but it is hard.

RB: [Then] you enlisted then in the [United States] Army?

MK: In the Army.

RB: Was that in Oakland?

MK: No, that was in Salt Lake [City, Salt Lake County, Utah].

RB: You came back to Salt Lake [City].

MK: We came back to Provo [Utah County, Utah] and drove cabs for awhile. The war was going on. They finally called me [and] that was when I started [my] military [career].

RB: You enlisted in Salt Lake [City and] they processed you there.

MK: No, my goodness.

RB: Did they send you to basic training some place?

MK: California.

RB: Back to California?

MK: Fort —.

RB: Fort Ord?

MK: No. What was that Fort? After I finished basic training I stayed on [as] a corporal and trained others [who] came in. My life was pretty good

RB: [Did your wife] join you in California when you were in the military or did she stay in Utah?

MK: She followed me where ever I went

RB: Do you remember where basic training was?

MK: Camp Roberts [California].

RB: Over on the coast?

MK: Yes.

RB: You said you had basic training. What did they train you to do?

MK: We had to do special training in camouflage. [They] put on a few shows for people to come watch, but I never got into that. [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter] Were you kind of a trainer?

MK: I did for awhile. If I had had any background, which I didn't have, I could have gone further.

RB: Sure.

MK: [As] it was, I think I was treated pretty well

RB: That is good. You stayed in the Army. Did you ever go overseas?

MK: No, [I] never went overseas.

RB: Did you stay in California the whole time?

MK: No.

RB: Where you go? You said you went to Georgia at one point.

MK: Yes, we were in Georgia for awhile

RB: [At] Camp Stewart?

MK: Camp Roberts.

RB: No, Camp Roberts is in California

MK: Camp Roberts is in California! [Laughter]

RB: I forget the —.

BF: Fort Bragg?

MK: No, that was [in] North Carolina.

BF: Wow!

RB: [In] Southern Georgia there was a big Army base. That is alright.

MK: I'm going to be lying in bed thinking about it!

RB: [Laughter]

MK: The war was over not to long after [that].

RB: When the war ended did you get out of the Army?

MK: No, I decide to stay in.

RB: But you transferred to the [United States] Air Force?

MK: Yes.

RB: They had created the Air Force, I think, [in] 1947.

MK: They may have separated.

RB: Yes, when it was open. Then —.

MK: I went to Cedar City [Iron County, Utah]. I learned to fly. My brother [Donald or Harold Knight] owned the airport in Cedar City. He was there in another area. I had [a] solo license for a quite awhile, [but] couldn't do anything with it [and] couldn't afford it. [Laughter]

RB: Yes, it is expensive.

MK: I can still fly.

RB: Yes? When you joined the Air Force, what did you do?

MK: The same thing you did all services, I guess. You know after that nothing [special] comes to mind.

RB: From that time?

MK: What I do? Whatever they asked me, I did a pretty good job. I was never a stand out, but I always had good jobs [and] good promotions.

RB: What rank did you finish up?

MK: My [final] rank was after staff sergeant, [no] tech sergeant [Technical Sergeant].

RB: Tech Sargent?

MK: I never made master.

RB: E-6? [Enlisted Grade 6]

MK: [I was an] E-6 I taught ROTC [Reserve Officers Training Corps at the] University of Pennsylvania [in Philadelphia] and I transferred to a couple others there.

RB: [Were you] working with college students [in] ROTC?

MK: Yes, mostly. St. Joseph College [Philadelphia, Pennsylvania], especially. I was friends with all the teachers

RB: Did you like that?

MK: I loved it! We got along so good. I was Mormon [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints] and they were Catholic. We got along so good. [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter] The Korean [Conflict] came. [Do] you remember anything about that period? Did you go to Korea?

MK: No. I never [was] in any actual action, mostly it was training back in the States. Then the whole conflict was over.

RB: Do you still have your discharge papers? Anywhere?

MK: Yes. I don't know where they are, but I sure do.

RB: Not here, but maybe with your [children] or somewhere?

MK: My wife had them. She died some time ago [2016]. I just don't have any idea [where] all these important papers [are now]. I guess my oldest daughter [Nancy (Knight) France] probably has it, [but] she is in Alaska now.

RB: You spent twenty years between the Army and the Air Force? You retired about, when would that be?

BF: [In] 1960.

RB: 1939 to 1940, 1959, 1960 — [in] that time period? No, early 1960s, 1962, 1963?

MK: Ridiculous! What was I when I retired? [Laughter] Time has taken its toll! [Laughter]

RB: It is alright — don't worry about it. [I was] just trying to —.

MK: I never tried to think about it, I guess.

RB: Yes, by me asking questions [about] your long term memory, you are trying to think back. You are trying to recall and it is hard because, right now, if you were born in 1920, you are about ninety-eight [years old]. Is that right?

MK: [I am] ninety-eight [years old].

RB: I think you deserve the opportunity to let your brain have a rest.

MK: So many things come to mind [that] I forget about things [and] the time period gets worse.

RB: I know and I am asking specific [questions], but really the things in your memory are not necessarily important about the specific [questions], but the general feelings you had. What you are telling me, I guess, [is] that you enjoyed your time in the military?

MK: Very, very much.

RB: What did you like about it?

MK: I was in the military and at the same time I was working in a —. [Laughter] I always had a second job.

RB: You did?

MK: When I was in the military I was working in ROTC, so I had a lot of time.

RB: You had a second job? What kind of things did you do?

MK: [For] one [thing], I love reading. I am trying to think of it, the name of the place, it was only one or two in the world, well, the country, [the] Franklin Institute. We had to pay a huge [planetarium] that depicted the earth.

RB: Ran the lights or?

MK: No. I was — [laughter].

RB: That is in Philadelphia?

MK: Yes.

RB: I been there before. My son took an eighth grade class [to] the Franklin Institute.

MK: Is that right?

RB: Yes, I went as a chaperone with the school [students]. I was living in —.

MK: [At the] Franklin Institute?

RB: Yes, I am looking it up right now. It is a big museum in Philadelphia.

MK: Yes, right.

RB: So you worked there?

MK: When I was still in the service.

RB: Was it kind of a part-time job when you were off duty?

MK: Yes.

RB: What do you remember about the Franklin Institute? [Did] you like that place?

MK: Oh yes, I loved it! I loved those people. I got along very [well].

BF: When you were training ROTC students, did you have any [who] were your favorites? Did you have any problem students in ROTC?

MK: No, no, I never [did]. It never happened.

RB: Did you ever live on a base when you were not doing ROTC? Or did you always live in the community?

MK: When I entered the service I lived on the base for awhile. My wife joined me and we rented a little room down in California. Many of [the fellows] did that. She stayed with me.

RB: What do you remember about raising your three [children]?

MK: Three children, two girls and a boy. The two girls are still [living], the boy died, I guess he committed suicide.

RB: When he was a child or an adult?

MK: As an adult.

RB: I am sorry to hear that.

MK: I won't get into that. He got into a [bad relationship] with a neighbor.

RB: Nancy lives up in Alaska?

MK: Yes.

RB: Where does Pamela live?

MK: Pamela lives in — I keep saying Michigan, but it isn't near Michigan. I am a horrible father, aren't I?

RB: No.

MK: I went back to see her, [but] she wasn't there.

RB: You said your wife died, where is she buried?

MK: She is buried here in St. George. I have a [burial] space right beside her.

RB: In the cemetery downtown in St. George? Not far from [St. George] Boulevard?

MK: Just on the other side of one of [Dixie State] University buildings.

RB: Yes. After you [were discharged from] the Air Force, what kind of work did you do?

MK: [Laughter]

RB: You would have been about — if you were born in 1920 you would have been about forty, forty-two or forty-three [years old]? Still a young [fellow]. Were you drawing your pension?

MK: I always worked. I just seem to go from one thing to another.

RB: Yes, different kind of jobs?

MK: Yes, anything that was —.

RB: Did you come back to Utah? After you [were discharged from] the military, where did you live?

MK: I [lived] in Pennsylvania for a long time. We never did come back to Utah. [I] had a good job. [Laughter] Time is catching up with me? [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter] Don't worry about it.

BF: Yes.

MK: I remember so many wonderful things.

RB: What are some of the things that you do remember?

MK: Almost everything I did.

RB: Yes, tell me.

MK: In the Franklin Institute, one of my jobs was to stand in the dome of the planetarium and do a little pf the light show for the people that were watching down below. They could see me.

RB: That sounds fun.

MK: Yes, it was! I enjoyed it very much.

RB: What are some other good memories you have of your life? What comes to mind that you are particularly proud of, or [that] made you happy in your life?

MK: This is crazy. You [have] wore me out! [Laughter]

RB: You said you had a pretty good wife. What did you [both] enjoy doing? Did you dance at all with her?

MK: Yes, we loved to dance.

BF: Did you ever do competitive dancing?

MK: No.

RB: Did you just go to dances?

MK: No, I was barely getting by [with] the two-step. [Laughter]

RB: Did you like to travel at all? Did you go to the beach?

MK: We went to the beach a little. I guess I controlled, pretty much, everything we did.

RB: What is your memory of your wife? What do you think of when you think of her?

MK: Right now, I think of her because of her picture on the wall. [Laughter]

RB: You have her picture in your wallet.

MK: Yes. She came from a little small town next to Cedar [City]. Smaller than my town of Cedar [City].

RB: What was that town again? I forgot. I think you mentioned it.

MK: Her dad was a horseman. He loved horses [and] was good [at] racing [them] as he got older. He had one brother [who] was the leading rider in the race business for a year or two. Then he [was killed. He] got too fancy, I guess.

BF: Was the town [where] your wife was born, Aurora [Sevier County, Utah]?

MK: No, she was [born] in a town next to Cedar [City].

RB: [Was it] Glenwood [Sevier County, Utah]?

MK: No, Glenwood is way up north.

RB: She was from Richfield [Sevier County, Utah]?

MK: Yes, she was [from] north of Richfield. No, she was from —.

RB: She was [from] north of Sigurd?

MK: Actually, [it was] next to Cedar [City], just a little bit.

RB: Not Salina?

MK: No. Salina was a big town. [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter] Next to Sigurd is the Rocky Ford Reservoir?

BF: Yes.

MK: I was on the back side of their home, quite a ways back. She used to ride her horse now and again.

RB: Yes? You knew her in high school?

MK: Yes, that was when we got together.

RB: How did you meet her? Do you remember?

MK: I guess it was through her brothers. It had to be because I knew them before I knew her. I think she had a family of thirteen [or] fourteen.

RB: Oh, [a] big family!

MK: I think there were five jockeys at the same time. None of them were very good. Ferril [Zufelt, 1924 - 1971] began to be world-known then he began drinking too much. They couldn't get away with that riding horses.

RB: Next year you are going to be ninety-nine [years old]?

MK: Yes.

RB: You have lived a nice, long life. What is a secret of living so long, [do] you think?

MK: I enjoy life. [Laughter] I think it is a wonderful thing. I keep thinking how nice it is that God gives us this opportunity to come to earth. Here I am talking to you two. What is it all about? [Laughter]

BF: You were married to your wife from about 1939 to a few years back. That is seventy [or] eighty years, isn't it, Randy?

MK: Yes, until she died.

RB: If you [were] married about 1939, 1940 or so.

MK: [We were married] before 1940. We were very young.

RB: That alone is almost eighty years.

MK: She has been dead a long time. I have never [to] this day looked at a girl with any thought of marriage.

RB: No?

MK: Never, no. I keep wondering about it.

BF: What was your secret to long lasting marriage?

MK: We loved each other. I have no idea why she died early. You just have to enjoy life.

RB: Your wife passed away in 2016. That was about two years ago?

MK: No.

RB: No?

MK: I don't have anything in my pocket that tells me. [Laughter] [Inaudible]

RB: Is this your wife?

MK: That is my wife. [Emotional] [Randy Bunn showing Milo Knight a picture on his cell phone.]

RB: Beautiful!

MK: She was beautiful.

RB: This was her obituary that I am [looking at]. It says: "*Madge (Zufelt) Knight, 93, a long time resident of St. George passed away April 9, 2016. She was born in Vermillion, Utah —*"

MK: Vermillion [Sevier County] Utah.

RB: "*— to Valentine Richard and Sarah Elizabeth (Robinson) Zufelt. On August 24, 1939 she married Milo Ciril Knight —*"

MK: [Laughter] How about that?

RB: "*— in the St. George, LDS Temple. She was the sixth of fourteen children. From the first through the third grade she traveled to school in a covered wagon.*"

MK: That was true.

RB: "*She graduated from Richfield High School. She was a rare gem and a stunning beauty.*"

MK: What do you know? [Laughter]

RB: "*She lived in Utah, Pennsylvania, Alaska, Georgia, Maryland and California.*"

MK: [Laughter]

RB: Is that right?

MK: That is right.

RB: *“She was a lifelong member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and served as a temple worker in the Washington D.C. and St. George Temples.”*

MK: That was when we both worked there at the same time.

RB: You worked in the Washington D.C. Temple?

MK: Yes. I opened it. That was when it opened.

RB: [In] 1974?

MK: Yes.

RB: *“She was an amazing artist and loved to paint. She took great pride and love in her children. Her grandchildren love to spend as much time as possible with her. She is survived by her loving and adoring husband, Milo Ciril Knight,”*

MK: [Emotional]

RB: *“of St. George, daughters Nancy Lee (Knight) Miles France and Pamela [(Knight)] Smith, brother Gary [Zufelt and] sister Peggy —.”*

MK: The first two are mine and the other two were her siblings.

RB: Yes, that was her sibling. *“She was survived by her children and is also survived by her brother Gary and her sister Peggy [Zufelt] Susanj. Also by nine grandchildren.”* You have nine grandchildren?

MK: Yes, but she was [from] a family of —

RB: It says she was one of fourteen.

MK: — fourteen, yes.

RB: You have twenty-four great-grandchildren and five great-great-grandchildren.

MK: [Laughter]

RB: *“Her son, Milo Ciril Knight II.*

MK: He died this past year. [He actually died on March 14, 2006. He was fifty-three years old, having been born, on September 2, 1952. He died at Valdez, Alaska and was buried at Palmer, Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Alaska.]

RB: *“— proceeded her in death. Her great-grandson, Jordan Taylor Rust, and a-son-in-law, Allen Smith, also died and seven brothers and three sisters.”*

MK: Allen Smith died not too long ago. He was pretty big in [the] General Electric [Company].

RB: Is that right? That was his brother?

MK: Left his wife in pretty good shape — beautiful home.

RB: Very good. You said you just [started] living [at the Southern Utah Veterans Home] recently?

MK: Me?

RB: Yes. How long you been here? You said a couple weeks. Has it been more than that?

MK: That's about right in this place.

RB: Were you living at another senior living place?

MK: [Laughter]

RB: I am testing your memory again!

MK: You are testing your memory!

RB: [Laughter] I think that [you have had] a pretty good life. [It] was nice to read about your wife.

MK: Nobody ever met her that didn't love her.

RB: I can believe that. You were very lucky to —.

MK: [Laughter] She was a little funny, too.

RB: Why [would] you say that?

MK: Because she liked to make me angry.

RB: Did she have a good sense of humor?

MK: Yes.

RB: [Laughter] [Did] she tease you?

MK: Yes. [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter] That is good in a marriage — keeps you on your toes.

MK: Yes, my son just died. [I] can't believe it... only one.

RB: That must have been a sad day for you.

MK: I didn't know for quite awhile [later]. He was out on his own.

RB: Yes?

MK: We couldn't keep track of him. [Emotional]

RB: Yes, that is sad when that happens.

MK: Yes. He was a very brilliant [fellow]. Kind of, I don't know, awkward, [too].

RB: Is there anything else you want to add before we close?

MK: No. [Laughter]

RB: No? Okay.

MK: [Laughter] Nothing I can think of.

RB: Alright, it has been really fun.

MK: [We talked about] part of my life.

RB: It was very nice to hear about your life. You traveled all over and you had some experiences way back in World War II which I was very interested to hear about. We will close. I want to say thank you for telling me your story.

MK: Thank you very much for [selecting] me.

RB: Absolutely!

[END OF RECORDING. END OF INTERVIEW.]