



Nebraska History posts materials online for your personal use. Please remember that the contents of *Nebraska History* are copyrighted by the Nebraska State Historical Society (except for materials credited to other institutions). The NSHS retains its copyrights even to materials it posts on the web.

For permission to re-use materials or for photo ordering information, please see:

<http://www.nebraskahistory.org/magazine/permission.htm>

Nebraska State Historical Society members receive four issues of *Nebraska History* and four issues of *Nebraska History News* annually. For membership information, see:

<http://nebraskahistory.org/admin/members/index.htm>

Article Title: War Correspondents in Person, Part 2

Full Citation: "War Correspondents in Person, Part 2," *Nebraska History* 25 (1944): 146-147

URL of article: <http://www.nebraskahistory.org/publish/publicat/history/full-text/NH1944WarCorrBio2.pdf>

Date: 9/3/2013

Article Summary: This article contains brief biographies of five Nebraska war correspondents featured in the magazine: William H Lawrence, Robert Bellaire, Elmont Waite, Dougald Werner, and Murlin B Spencer.

War Correspondents in Person — II

WILLIAM H. LAWRENCE was born (1916) and educated in Lincoln, and held his first newspaper job on *The Lincoln Star* while still in high school. After brief experience on the *Omaha World-Herald* and Associated Press he went to Chicago as a United Press representative. In the strike wave of 1937 he covered the big motor plants of Michigan and made his reputation as a labor reporter. As such the UP transferred him to Washington in 1938. Turning to politics, he covered the national conventions of 1940 and remained with Willkie during his campaign. He resigned as head of the UP Senate staff to join *The Times* staff in 1941. In 1943 he was with Roosevelt on his inspection tour of Army and Navy camps throughout the United States, and in the early summer was assigned to Moscow. (From booklet, "Thumbnail Biographies," of twenty-seven members of the foreign staff as issued by *The New York Times*.)

In a September issue of the *Lincoln Daily Star* we read that "Billy" had accompanied five senators on a trip to some of the big bomber and fighter fields which the United States Army operates in England; also that he was to go with Sir Stafford Cripps on a tour of London's aircraft production plants. "Corn on the cob costs eighty cents an ear in London, but an American is glad to pay for it now and then for a little touch of home. A peach costs about \$1.50, and oranges and lemons are almost unknown here. You do, however, get enough to eat, and considerably more potatoes than you want," he wrote. Lincoln is his home.

ROBERT BELLAIRE, to our regret, is not one of our own. He was born in Le Mars, Iowa, in 1914, and lived with an aunt in Omaha while attending Central High School. Due to his residence in the state he was reported to us as a Nebraskan, and his report on Japan was included here. His work at Central prepared him for Columbia University, where he earned a livelihood by writing, tutoring, and assisting with instruction in the Department of Government.

In 1936 Mr. Bellaire started a trip around the world, but in Shanghai joined the United Press and in 1938 became its bureau manager there and later in Tokyo. Touring battle-scarred Chungking during the Japanese air raids, twice he narrowly escaped death, only to face a fate almost worse than death when, for six months after Pearl Harbor, American correspondents were interned in one of Japan's foulest prison camps. Unable to force him to broadcast false propaganda to the United States, his captors subjected him to barbarism of the lowest order. Only by sheer strength of courage and hardihood was he able to endure the tortures until released in exchange for Japanese nationals. Since then, by lectures, broadcasts and writings, he has converted those experiences into dynamite that is awakening complacent Americans to the diabolical cleverness, the genius for planning, that we face in Japan.

ELMONT WAITE is a native of Lyons and graduated from the State University with honors in 1931. After six years with the *Kearney Hub* he removed to Kansas, soon arriving at Topeka as city editor of the *Journal* and later joining the AP at Kansas City. He remained with the AP until called to join the Foreign War Correspondents.

Waite's assignments have been chiefly with the Central Pacific forces. He has accompanied the expeditions from Pearl Harbor. The struggles for the Gilberts, the Marshalls and the Marianas are his stirring theme.

DOUGALD WERNER, a member of the United Press staff in London, made his start in the newspaper business at an early age. While still in high school he became a correspondent for the Omaha and Lincoln dailies; later, during vacations, he worked on the *Times-Herald* of Alliance.

When Werner entered the University of Nebraska in 1930 he was seventeen. Two years later he transferred to the school of journalism at the University of Missouri. His work there won him election to Sigma Delta Chi—the Phi Beta Kappa of journalism.

On leaving college he spent some time in newspaper offices both as reporter and editor; later, directed publicity for the congressional campaign of Harry B. Coffee, and finally gave up both politics and publicity to become copy reader for the *Omaha Bee-News*.

In 1937 Werner joined the UP as a member of the staff at Des Moines and soon became night manager. Four years later he was transferred to the Washington bureau, thence to the cable desk in New York, and in 1943 to London which is still the field of his labors. He is a native of Bladen, Nebraska.

MURLIN B. SPENCER was born at Fort Morgan, Colorado, in 1909, graduated from high school in 1927 and entered the University of Colorado that fall. After two years at Boulder he came to the University of Nebraska, graduating in January 1932; returned to Fort Morgan for news editing on the *Daily Times* until 1936 when he joined the staff of the *Chronicle* at Spokane. The following year he became connected with the Associated Press at Salt Lake City; later was assigned to Sacramento, San Francisco, and in 1942 to the Southwest Pacific where he began his war reporting from Australia. Only once since then has he been able to come home for two months, during which time he lectured for the AP in Des Moines, Chicago, New York City.

Though not Nebraska-born, the place of Nebraska and her boys is warm in his heart, as evidenced by the dispatch reprinted earlier in these pages.