

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

YSU Historians Project

Biography

O. H. 460

SIDNEY I. ROBERTS

Interviewed

by

Donald E. Hovey

on

May 13, 1975

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

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INTERVIEWEE: SIDNEY I. ROBERTS

INTERVIEWER: Donald E. Hovey

SUBJECT: education, academic achievements, professional life,
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DATE: May 13, 1975

H: This is an interview with Professor Sidney I. Roberts for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, by Donald E. Hovey, at Professor Roberts' office in the History Department, on Tuesday, May 13, 1975, at approximately 10:00 a.m.

What I would really like to ask you to do today is to go over the course of your life, if you could, initially, and just tell me the things that have happened to you that seem particularly interesting and that you felt were significant.

R: All right. I was born on November 24, 1929, which, I suppose, was not a particularly good time to be born because my early childhood memories in a small, rural community--Mineola, New York--were of poverty and depression. These were hard times. I remember, on many occasions, that we had to eat stale bread that we were able to buy from a bakery at a discount, soaked in warm milk. My early memories are memories of poverty and a father unemployed. My father had a combination of employment. We raised chickens--poultry farm--and eggs. And my father, at the same time, was a house painter. Chicken farming wasn't very profitable and house painting was very seasonal, so that every winter the finance company appeared and took away the radio, the sofa, and the car.

I distinctly remember that we were a family that always had a new car every year, because we never kept a car for more than a year because of the finance company coming and taking it away. We, on occasion, would take trips into New York City. Roads being what they were at that time, this meant that we would leave in the middle of the night. My sister and I would

be bundled up in the rumble seat of the car. We would travel for hours and hours and hours. We would have to take food along with us to eat. We would arrive in the city in the morning and the family would do clothing shopping and then we would always take in the theater in the afternoon. We would eat out. Always a fantastic occasion to be able to eat out at a restaurant. And then we would spend the entire evening and night driving back to get home.

My parents both died when I was rather young--my mother when I was eight. This broke up the family and from that point on I moved around a good deal. I lived, first, with an older sister, then with an aunt in New York state; then I moved to New York City and lived with a brother there, so I had moved around a good deal as a youngster.

Apparently--though I don't remember this too well--I had done well in elementary school because by the time I was living in Boston with an aunt I was admitted into Boston Latin School, which was, at that time--I understand it still is--a highly selective high school. It admitted only students of a certain academic caliber. Although, as I said, I have no memory whatsoever of what I ever did to get in. I do have a good deal of remembrances about Boston Latin. I had to travel to get there. There was this elitist attitude among the students that we were better than anyone else. We had to wear ties. I distinctly remember that they had a demerit system. If you received seven demerits in a week for bad conduct they kicked you out. If you got twelve demerits in a month you were expelled from this high school and you had to go to your neighborhood high school. You could get demerits for all sorts of things, such as coming to school without wearing a tie, or arriving late, or not addressing the faculty as "Sir". All kinds of things of that nature, which, at this stage of the game, apparently, were designed to reinforce this elitist sense of the students who went there. Most of the students who went to Boston Latin, it was expected, would then go on to Harvard.

Instead of going on to Harvard, I moved out of Boston in my senior year and went to live with a brother who was living in New York City. Actually, I was on my way to join the Navy. It didn't occur to me that one could run away and join the French Foreign Legions. I was going to join the United States Navy, and my brother in New York, when I went to visit prior to enlistment, convinced me that I would be better off finishing the last year of high school. So I attended a high school in New York City.

This , too , was a select high school, in that there were, at

that time, about four of five high schools in New York City that specialized, unlike the neighborhood high schools to which, generally speaking, people with no specific interests attended. So, for example, there was Music and Art High School, which is famous for preparing people in the field of performance in music and creative arts. There was Brooklyn Tech and the Bronx High School of Science, both of which specialized in sciences. My senior year was at Stuyvesant High School, which specialized in the liberal arts curricula. These high schools that I'm mentioning to you now were all high schools designed for students who planned on going on to college.

Although I made no conscious decision at that time to go on to college, my brother had gotten me into Stuyvesant High School. He was an official in the public school system in New York City and, apparently he pulled some strings to get me into Stuyvesant. The next thing I knew, I was in a high school that was designed for college bound students only.

My only memory of Stuyvesant High School is that the one and only course I ever flunked, I flunked at Stuyvesant High School. It was in jewelry making, which is rather humorous in view of the fact that two years later I was to earn my living making jewelry in New York's Greenwich Village, along with a friend who also went to Stuyvesant High School. He specialized in silver and gold and I worked in copper.

It may be of some interest to you to note that it was my senior year in high school that determined that I was going to go into the field of history. What happened was not an intellectual or conscious choice, but rather that the first day that I attended a history class at Stuyvesant High School. . . . This was my senior year and I had made no decision then as to what I was going to do. The only decision that I had made was that I was going to go to the Navy, and that didn't work out. The very first day that I attended a history class at Stuyvesant High School, the history teacher, whom I can picture, though whose name I cannot remember, appointed me the attendance monitor. My job was to take the attendance. Somehow or other, his giving me this responsibility of taking attendance made me feel somewhat important in history, and I demonstrated my gratitude for this responsibility by studying history harder than any other subject. The result was that I began getting good grades and recognition in history. And the good grades and the recognition reinforced themselves and so I became more and more interested in history. So, to this very day, I think I can attribute my present plight to the fact that I was assigned to take attendance in a high school history class.

The fact that my brother was in the field of education in the New York public school system probably contributed to a decision on my part that what I wanted to be was a public schoolteacher. That, plus the fact that psychologically there was deeply impressed upon me the necessity of finding some kind of work that brought in a steady income. With the background where my father was occasionally unemployed, I thought that the ideal thing to go for was not overnight wealth or fantastic sums of money, but a good, steady income where you could depend upon X number of dollars every month.

From this background, then, I applied to a number of colleges in New York City. I had absolutely no money of my own, and in order to go to college I would have to go to what was, in effect, a free college. There were, at that time a number of major colleges in New York City, each of which was of a different academic level. I applied for two of them--City College, New York and Brooklyn College, New York. It generally was assumed that if you couldn't get into City College you could get into the other colleges. I'm not sure whether I applied to Brooklyn College as a safety valve or because of the fact that the young lady I was then dating was going to Brooklyn College. But, at any rate, when I was admitted to City College of New York, that was the school of my choice. It was the better college. Admission into it was highly selective.

I remember of my college education that for the first three years I spent as much time working to earn a living as I spent in school taking classes. I did not question, from the very outset, that history would be my field, but there was some doubt as to which aspect of history would be my field. It was always American history, but initially I thought that I would go into labor history. Labor history was a big item in my college. It was primarily a working class oriented student body. Labor history was a big item at that time, just as , for example, feminism is now and Black history was a few years ago.

In the college, two things happened to me of some significance. One was that I was selected to enter into the university honors program. This was a program designed to pick a handful of students from the various colleges and allow them to take a special program and then they would graduate after the special program in honors. The honors program put a good deal of emphasis on reading major works in a number of fields-- history, political science, government, science--a wide variety, and analyzing these books. This, I think, was a significant turning point for me because it was really then that I discovered books and ideas. But even more significantly,

I discovered a facility, on my part, to analyze books and come up with their theses--again , ego reinforced with a sense of achievement, a sense of ability.

The second major event that occurred to me in college was that I was appointed by the history department to serve as an assistant in the department on graduation. There were two selected every year--one in American history and the other in European. I was selected in American history. This gave me an opportunity to lecture before a few classes. Whenever the professor of the class was absent. . . I would get, sometimes, fifteen minutes notice, sometimes an hour notice to go in and lecture to that class.

I performed my graduate assistantship while I was attending Columbia University, pursuing my master's degree, while, at the same time, teaching in the public school system on a substitute teacher basis. The other assistant in the history department--the one in European history--and I worked out an arrangement whereby one week I would work three days, he would work two and then the following week I would work two and he would work three. On those days that I was not working at City College--I had to be there in the office--I would be substitute teaching, earning as much as \$18 a day in the public school system teaching. All of my graduate classes at Columbia University were in the late afternoon and early evening, so I was able to engage in these three activities. The assistantship at City College paid my tuition at Columbia University for my master's degree, and then I got a few extra dollars here and there and the other place from Columbia university to help me pay some of my expenses. In one instance, I recall, I got \$119 to pay for a dental bill that I had at that time, from some fund.

All this time I had been living first with my brother, then I moved out in an apartment of my own and had gotten married. While at Columbia University, I came across an individual who still ranks high up as one of the, if not the, most brilliant people I've ever come across, Professor David Donald. I was so impressed with David Donald that, unlike other students in pursuing their master's degree in history who spread themselves out and took a variety of courses under a vareity of professors, I specialized in Professor David Donald, taking every course that he offered, including courses that he offered only to Ph. D. students.

Now, up until this time, it was my intention to get a master's degree in history and to go into the field of either elementary or junior high school teaching. At that time, any man who went into elementary school teaching was destined, within three

or four years, to become an elementary school principal. Our sexist society, being what it was, men were made principals and women remained teachers. This was my assumption, but David Donald got to me and almost insisted that I go on for a doctorate. I had no intention of doing so whatsoever. To get David Donald off of my back I said all right, I would apply to three institutions, and if I was accepted and was given financial aid from any one of these, I would go.

I applied to the University of Chicago, University of Wisconsin, and Northwestern University--University of Chicago because of its reputation as an academic institution, University of Wisconsin because of the reputation of its history department, and Northwestern University because a friend of mine, who was one year ahead of me, who a year before me had entered City College from Stuyvesant, who a year before me had gone to Columbia, who a year before me had had the assistantship in the history department at CCNY, who a year before me had gone to Northwestern, suggested that I apply there. I was accepted in all three of these schools. Northwestern University offered me the largest amount of money and, obviously, that determined my choice.

I went off to Northwestern University with the full expectation of staying only a month or two. It appeared that I was about to be drafted into the armed forces, and I went feeling that I had to start the scholarship program to guarantee that the money would be available to me after my service in the military.

I graduated high school in 1948. I graduated college in 1952. I got my master's in 1953.

H: So this was the Korean War?

R: Yes. I fully expected to be drafted. I had had an exemption as being married, then that was removed. I had an exemption as being a student, and there was some question as to whether or not they were going to exempt graduate students. They were exempting physicians and dentists, but not Ph. D. candidates. So I went to Northwestern with this general feeling that I wasn't going to stay there any length of time.

After I was there a few weeks, I also had this feeling reinforced because I was fully convinced that I did not have the academic background--that I was not as good as the other students, that I was not, to use the phrase we frequently used at that time, "Ph. D. material." All the other students there were students who had done their undergraduate work in history, as well as their M. A. work in history. My undergraduate work--although as a history major--was in education. My

degree was in education. I simply felt that I simply could not compete with this highly select group of students.

Northwestern University was a school whose history department was on the make at that time, which meant that they hired only the most prominent historians. By way of illustrations, at that time, among their faculty they had Ray Billington, the foremost authority on the frontier; Richard Leopold, an authority in the field of diplomatic history; and Arthur Link, Woodrow Wilson, and Twentieth Century American scholar Clarence Ver Steeg in colonial history. Now, they were paying top notch money for these faculty members. Moreover, they were paying top notch money for graduate students and their Ph. D. program had only nine Ph. D. candidates at a time. We, as graduate students, when we sneezed we knew the entire faculty was aware of what we were doing, when we were doing it, and how we were doing it.

I finished my classwork at Northwestern University, again excelling in the areas of reading books, analyzing book content, coming up with ideas; by this stage of the game the ideas of history really fascinated me. I was somewhat unique among the Ph. D. candidates in history in that we were supposed to offer four fields for the doctorate. I offered only three in history; my fourth field was in sociology, not history. This was the influence of David Donald at Columbia University, who was primarily concerned with motivation--why people did what they did, as they did it. He interested me in combining sociology with history. I took my minor field in sociology. I was just as much a stranger to the sociologist as I was to those graduate students offering four fields in history.

I did not think that I was ready for my qualifying examinations but one of my professors insisted. Indeed, this was the professor who was the greatest taskmaster of all, Richard Leopold. He insisted that I was ready. I kind of copped out by saying, "Well, I won't take my qualifying examinations until after I pass my second language exam," feeling that I was safe. I was offering the language of French and never had had any French, but I was memorizing French vocabulary. That was the bargain we struck. To this day I think he may have had some influence in getting me a passing grade in my French language exams. I don't remember very much about taking the examination and I certainly have no idea how I passed it, since I don't remember a word of French at the moment. I do remember that I never shaved in the morning without seeing vocabulary cards scotch-taped to the mirror so that I could learn French vocabulary. One day when we were engaged in this conversation of his suggesting that I take the qualifying exams, I said to him, "Well, I can't take it till I've passed the language

exam." He said, "I just got notification this morning that you have passed it so we're scheduling you for your qualifying exam on such and such a date."

H: What were the qualifying exams like? What kind of experience was that?

R: Well, they were academic and emotional. I say that because one of the distinct memories that I have of that qualifying exam is the difficulty of them. As I suggested earlier, you had to have four fields. The way the program worked at Northwestern University at that time was you offered two minor fields and had to take a five hour written examination in each of those minor fields. Then you had to take a two hour oral examination in your two major fields. You could not take the orals until you had passed the writtens. If you flunked any one of those four fields you flunked the whole exam. I spent most of my time, as did all the other graduate students in the history department at Northwestern University, playing a game called "pre-lims." We would ask each other terrifying questions which we couldn't answer and this would paralyze us into all kinds of fears.

I spent most of my time studying with a student by the name of Namon Woodland, from Baton Rouge, who I had selected to study with because he obviously knew more history than I. We took our written exams about the same time. He was scheduled to have his oral examination in the morning, at 10:00. It was to go from 10:00 to 12:00, and my exam was to go from 2:00 till 4:00. All the time that we were studying together I really was worried, because every time a question came up in this game of "pre-lims" Namon knew the answer. He knew the book. He knew the source. He had the citation. And I didn't. When the day arrived and Namon went off to take his examination, he lasted, in the exam, only for an hour. After he left, word spread across campus like wildfire that Namon had failed his examination; he had failed his qualifying orals. When I heard this I knew that I didn't stand a chance. If Namon, who knew more history than I, couldn't pass, how the hell could I, coming up at 2:00, hope to pass? This came as a terrible blow because, on the preceding day, still yet another colleague of mine had failed his qualifying examination. This fellow definitely appeared to be among the more brilliant there was.

So when I went in for my oral examination, I was quite terrified. I vividly remember that my chair in this lounge was half on and half off a rug, and so as I shook the chair began making noises on the floor. (laughter) There were four examiners there, and the first question that was asked of me

was asked by the examiner in colonial history. Two fields that I was offering were American history to 1815 and American history to the present. The first question was in the colonial period, up to 1815, and the question was: "Trace all the instances of border conflict, warfare, sectional outbursts, and revolution from 1607 to 1815." I did so. I think my major source was Curtis P. Nettles, who emphasized that a good deal. When I had gotten all the way up through the Whiskey Rebellion and the Hartford Convention and the War of 1812, the examiners all burst out laughing, for although I had detailed every minute border conflict from the Regulators on up, I had omitted the American Revolution of 1776, which they thought rather humorous. (laughter)

The examination lasted for two hours. I remember one other question, and that was to discuss the historiography of the 1920's, which, it seemed to me, I had done quite well on, but after the examination this professor, whom I've mentioned before, Richard Leopold, whom I thought was the most critical and demanding of all the faculty at Northwestern University, went over the question with me and pointed out certain areas that I had neglected to discuss.

After taking the qualifying examination we began applying for jobs. The job market at that time was even worse than the job market is now. Very, very few of those who had just passed their qualifying exams and had their dissertations to write were getting jobs.

H: Had you started on your dissertation at that time?

R: I had applied for a fellowship that would enable me to stay in Chicago and spend a year doing research. I had gotten that fellowship and moved from Evanston, Illinois to Chicago, so that I could be close to the Chicago Historical Society where most of my materials were. I had applied to a number of institutions for a job. Texas A & M offered me a position as an instructor teaching American history. The state legislature of Texas had just passed a law requiring--in order to make the citizens of Texas more patriotic--that everybody attending college take American history before they could get a bachelor's degree. Shows you how stupid they were. The legislature certainly should have passed a law, if they wanted to make people patriotic, saying that they could not take history in college because the most unpatriotic thing of all is to know anything about your own history. History is always more patriotic on the elementary school level than it is on the college or graduate school level.

At any rate, Texas A & M offered me a job at \$2,800 a year,

as instructor, to teach American history, and I refused to go at that salary and all the other graduate students who were looking for jobs told me that I was crazy for not accepting that job offer. But I insisted I wasn't going to go to work for \$2,800. Texas A & M came back and offered me \$3,000 and I took the job and I went off to Texas.

While at Texas, teaching, I began to recognize that I was somewhat out of the mainstream of my colleagues, because everybody was telling me that what I should do was to spend my time writing the dissertation, and get that out of the way rather than spend my time writing lectures. But I felt that it was my primary obligation to teach, and so I would spend hours upon hours every day writing and preparing lectures that I felt to be my primary responsibility.

I did write my dissertation under some difficulty. My mentor, Arthur Link, was in England at that time, Harmsworth professor, and I was in Texas. This provided a physical as well as psychological gap between myself and my mentor. I wrote the dissertation. I certainly was pleased with it at the time. I have no ambition whatsoever to go back to it. The dissertation gave me an opportunity to publish about thirteen articles. The dissertation gave me the opportunity to discover that I got greater ego satisfaction out of teaching, communicating, and playing with ideas than I did out of seeing my name in print.

One of the major crises in my academic career came when, after teaching at Texas A & M and after writing my dissertation, I had to take my final oral. At Northwestern University the final oral was not an examination on your dissertation. There was a committee that accepted or rejected your dissertation. Your final oral was a two hour oral in your major field--in my case, American history 1815 to present. I was assigned a date to appear. I had to take a train from Texas, the Texas Chief. In order to get it I had to drive from my town, Bryan-College Station, Texas, to North Zulch, where the train was flagged down. I had not done any work at all. I had not done any reading to speak of. I had not done any studying. I was employed full-time. I boarded this train at North Zulch, twenty-five hour ride to Chicago, with the expectation that I would be able to study these bibliography cards that I had packed in a file cabinet and carried with me. I got on the train and sat down next to a guy with a white mustache and embroidered socks who hummed for some 500 miles, who was replaced by an elderly woman who insisted upon telling me that all the members of the armed forces were seeking to rape her. She was replaced, 800 miles later, by someone who wanted to know what I was doing and then explained that he had lived through the New Deal and could tell me all about it.

When finally, I had the seat all to myself, they shut the lights off in the car, so I couldn't even see my bibliography cards. (laughter)

I arrived in Chicago fully convinced that I was now about to waste the time of my examiners. I got on the elevated train from Chicago that went to Evanston, Illinois, arrived an hour and a half too early, was perspiring while at the same time was freezing to death from the cold of Evanston, Illinois, trying to figure out how I could tell Arthur Link that I wanted to call the whole thing off. When it was time I went up to Arthur Link's office and was going to tell him this, but before I could say anything he started complaining to me about the problems that he was having with his back, and the fact that he had to quit smoking, and that the world was really very terrible, and all of his difficulties. While he was complaining, and as I kept trying to interrupt him with, "But, but, but. . ." the other faculty members who were going to be on my examination all appeared and, lo and behold, before I could say, "Let's call the whole thing off, it's ridiculous. I'm not ready," they were all gathered and the examination had begun. I owe getting my degree to a fluke.

While I was traveling on the Texas Chief up to Evanston, Illinois to take my exam, I kept saying to myself, "What the hell are they going to ask me? What can they ask me?" And of all the questions I kept posing to myself, the one question that I thought was really a great, great question was the question that went something like this: "Well, Sid, it's been five years now since you've taken courses. You've gone off and written your dissertation and you've been teaching. What new, if anything, has taken place in the field of American history in the past five years?" I thought that was a decent question. When the examiners gathered, they turned to Professor Leopold to ask the first question, and he said to me, "Well, Sid, it has been five years since you have taken courses here. You've gone off and written your dissertation and been teaching. What, if anything, new has taken place in the field of American history in the past five years?" If they would have asked me any other question, if they would have asked me where we were, I would have flunked. But, because they asked me that question I answered the question. And as I was answering the question, out of the corner of my eye I spied Professor Leopold, the taskmaster, nodding approval to Professor Link, and I knew from that point on that I was doing all right. Indeed, I even had the audacity to argue with one of the examiners, who was a visiting professor at that time, from whom I had not taken any courses. This is a man who is now an authority in intellectual history, a man by the name of

Warren Sussman at Rutgers University.

The examination was supposed to last two hours. They take a break at the end of an hour. The candidate goes out, wanders down the hall, gets a drink, and comes back. I went out to get my drink after an hour, and had no sooner had this drink and was about to walk back when Arthur Link appeared from the office and came up to me and said, "We have all agreed that it is absolutely ridiculous to continue the examination." When he said, that, for a moment I thought I had failed. But when he started shaking my hands, or patting me--I'm not sure whether it was on the buttocks or on the head or what--I realized that what he meant was that I had done well enough that they were not going to continue with the examination for two hours. Indeed, because the examination lasted only an hour, I was able to get back on the elevated train into Chicago and get back on the Texas Chief, that I had just arrived on, that they were now cleaning up and getting ready for the return trip, and travel all the way back to North Zulch!

My son, who was then quite a youngster, had been primed by his mother to congratulate me on getting my Ph. D. degree when I got off the train. But my son could only think of. . . Although he had been tutored and primed and told what to say, the greatest thing that he could think of one becoming at the time. . . So when I got off the train he congratulated me and called me "Sergeant!" (laughter) To this day I'm not sure that being a sergeant is less significant than being a Ph. D.

In the same vein, if what we're talking about is professional history, then, while teaching at Texas A & M a number of faculty members--as a matter of fact, the number was exactly sixteen--became very, very much upset with, and unhappy, with an event that occurred on campus. Students were all required to attend a performance of a film put out by the House on American Activities Committee. It was a propaganda film, and the other side of the picture was never presented. So sixteen faculty members--most of us were either in economics or sociology, so I think perhaps we had a greater awareness than our colleagues in petroleum engineering or agricultural products--wrote a letter of protest to the school newspaper on the topic of the showing of this film, and the letter of the faculty members is that.

This is the first time that, on a professional level, I publicly had to take a position that was contrary to the mainstream. Indeed, very shortly, the outcry from the alumni, from the student body, from the conservatives--Texas A & M was a compulsory ROTC institution at that time--the outcry from the

citizens of the state of Texas. . . The issue was picked up by every major newspaper in the state of Texas. This was the first time that I had publicly taken a position that was an unpopular one. I had previously, on a private basis, taken positions. For example, I told you while my colleagues all told me to work on my dissertation, I was working on lectures. That's kind of a private decision. Here I had taken a public position.

H: What made this so unpopular with the people of Texas?

R: Well, you must remember that Texas still, to this very day, has a frontier mentality, and Texans are always more patriotic than anybody else. They assumed that if one questioned not only a film, but the compulsory attendance of a film produced by the House on American Activities Committee, if one questioned that you were questioning a sacrosanct item--I mean, the litany is flag, motherhood, apple pie, and the committees of the United States Congress--one simply did not, in the conservative atmosphere of Texas A & M question these things. What was significant for me was the conviction that, notwithstanding all of the furor and, indeed, unpopularity in certain circles, that I had taken the right stand, the right position--that my training, my position, required that I speak out. It would have been more uncomfortable not to speak out.

H: What was going on in the country about this time?

R: Of course, this was the time of the cold war. This was, after all, 1960. This was a time of a good deal of unreasoned hysteria. Subsequent to the "Operation Abolition" film, and the position that I had taken, I began looking for a position elsewhere. The acquisition of the degree--the Ph. D. degree. . . The "Operation Abolition" film occurred simultaneously, and I knew that I was only going to stay at Texas A & M during this period of time while I was writing my dissertation and getting my degree. I had no plans on staying beyond that point anyway.

The department was a traditional department where they had a number of faculty members who had been teaching certain upper division courses for X number of years, would continue to do so until they retired. Upward mobility would have been extremely limited there, so I knew that I was going to go elsewhere as soon as I had acquired my degree. Indeed, I attended a convention immediately after getting the doctoral degree, where I had met and spoken to--on the introduction of my mentor at Northwestern, Arthur Link--the chairperson of the history department at the University of Connecticut Storrs, Connecticut, and was told that a job with them would be forthcoming.

In as much as I was now at the convention with the promise of a job, and a friend of mine from graduate school was looking for a position, I met two faculty members from Youngstown University, David Behen and Al Skardon, who were looking to hire somebody. I was not interested in the job, but I wanted to talk to them on behalf of my friend Joel Tarr. Because I was not the least bit interested in the job, apparently my conversation with them made something of an impact, because they kept saying, "Well, we would like to hire you." And I kept saying, "Well, I've got this other thing. How about my friend Joel Tarr?" Several days after the convention ended I received a phone call from Behen in which he offered me the job again; but, more significantly, offered to pay my moving expenses from College Station, Texas to Youngstown, Ohio. I told them I would call them back.

I discussed this with my wife. We observed that the offer from the University of Connecticut was only a verbal offer. It was not firm. It was contingent upon the state legislature allocating money to the University of Connecticut. If Youngstown was to pay my moving expenses, they would have to move all of my paraphernalia. At that time I was doing automobile tune-up work in addition to teaching college, so there was all of my shop equipment, automobile ramps, table saws, jacks. There was the fact that I had young children, and although they say that all infants need is love, we had basinetts, cribs, strollers, walkers, toddlers, and all of that kind of equipment. The offer to pay my moving expenses was, in effect, an offer of almost \$2,000 in salary.

H: They were going to pay the whole thing?

R: That's right. So, I finally decided that I would come to Youngstown State University for a year. It would be cheaper to move from Youngstown elsewhere.

H: What sort of impression did you have of the history department here from Behen and Skardon?

R: The most significant impression that I had was that I could teach any course that I wanted to teach, any way I wanted to teach it. Specifically, I was promised that, if I came, the Twentieth Century U. S. history courses would be mine, and that was the reason why I came.

H: You wouldn't have to show House on American Activities films?

R: Well, that never came up. My first year here at Youngstown was

one of those peculiar years. Just as everybody, on occasion, gets into a period where, no matter what they do, they're always stepping off on the wrong foot, I got into a period where, no matter what I did, I always stepped off on the right foot. So, by way of illustration, the first student social affair I attended as a chaperone, I got involved in a discussion with a man who came in about half way during the course of the evening. I assumed he was a faculty member, I didn't know who he was. We got into a rather lengthy discussion about the obligation of a university toward offering tutors and additional academic help to the members of the football team. I did not realize at the time that the fellow I was talking to was playing the role of devil's advocate. Nor did I realize that the person was the president of the university, Howard Jones, who completely agreed with me, and who, from that moment on, thought highly of me.

Indeed, one of the characteristics of President Jones was that once he thought highly of you, it was impossible, or difficult, for him to change his mind. Similarly, if he disliked somebody, it was virtually impossible for him to change his mind by subsequent action that the person was basically all right. Indeed, it got to the point in my relationship with President Jones that I was getting huge Christmas bonuses, that he eliminated the requirement that I summer teach, that he would put his arm around me and refer to me as a "Christian gentleman" which I thought rather humorous. (laughter) But he meant it in the right way, and that he was soon to tell Professor Behen, who relayed, indirectly, to me the statement President Jones made, "I don't care what you do, but keep Roberts here." So I stayed, indeed, notwithstanding a significant offer to teach elsewhere--an offer which, if I had accepted, my career would be totally different today. I stayed at Youngstown State University.

- H: Could we backtrack a little bit here? Now, just in general, was your position, as far as philosophical or political position, on the question of aid to athletes, was that a general sort of agreement with Jones?
- R: Yes, my position was that university athletes probably returned to a university greater value per dollar invested in them than public relations offered, and that, in as much as athletes spent four or five hours a day practicing during spring training and practicing during the year in which they were playing, that there was little wonder that these students could not compete with the other students. They were tired, their time was rather limited, and so I felt that the university should provide student employees as tutors to help athletes. Now, I say that because, as an

undergraduate, I earned a major letter in football, and as a graduate student at Northwestern University I received a huge sum of money to tutor football players in history. So the position I occupied was not so much a philosophical one as well as it was a position based on experience.

H: These other job offers that you had, did it look to you like it was being offered there really to. . .

R: I had been offered a number of positions, but two positions that I turned down that every once in a while, occasionally, I look back and play the game of "what would have happened if. . ."; two positions really are significant. I was invited to Wayne State University, to come up and deliver a lecture, with the idea that they would look over my credentials, they would listen to my lecture, and they would decide whether or not to offer me a position. I went up and gave a lecture, had dinner, talked to a number of faculty members, and was very, very much impressed by the aggressive and professional nature of the history department there. It was a faculty dedicated to publication. It was a faculty concerned with ideas. It was a faculty very, very, very much in the mainstream of historical developments, professional events. So, the day after an issue of a professional journal would be out, the faculty members would be debating and discussing and arguing some of the articles in that issue. This is an activist, dynamic, professionally oriented department.

H: Was that different than here?

R: Obviously, the tape recorder cannot record my smile here, but I think it a rather naive question. Youngstown State University, and Youngstown University at that time, had many, many unique, distinct, and positive characteristics. Professionalism, as I'm describing it here, is not one of them. It is not now, was not then. When I got back to my own campus, the offer here at Youngstown State University to become the assistant dean of the university. . . This would be the third highest ranking position in the university. There was a president, President Jones. There was the dean of the university, Dean Smith. And I would be the assistant dean of the university. I thought about the two positions and my ego was won over to the position of assistant dean of the university. I thought that I would, here, be able to make a major impact on policy, on development, at the university.

As I recall, in that role of administrator, I made three significant decisions. One, the sanitary napkins in the women's restroom would be free. Two, a faculty member who

got \$1 parking fine ticket for parking on Bryson Street would have that ticket paid for by the university. And three, that we should hire, of all the prospective candidates for the presidency of Youngstown University, Albert L. Pugsley.

H: You made that decision?

R: Well, I was one of a group of four people who made that decision, and, indeed, I argued in that group that we should ask Pugsley to come to Youngstown.

H: How was that significant?

R: How was it significant! Well, the subsequent history of the university. He did come. He was president, and he was here at an important time for the university. Obviously, I felt that was significant. You asked me if it was significant. You didn't ask me whether I subsequently think it a wise or an unwise, a good or an ungood, decision. I think it was significant.

H: Do you feel it was a wise decision?

R: Yes and no. Albert Pugsley did more for the administrative organization of this institution than anyone else had done. The organizational structure, the line staff procedure, the orderly policy decision making processes, were certainly desirable things. You must understand, we were a rather informal institution before President Pugsley. Howard Jones would be going down the hall one way, I would be going the other, we would meet, stop, make policy, and then continue in the directions we had both been going. Pugsley, with his administrative background, changed the whole structure, the whole organization, of the institution.

Interestingly enough, Pugsley and Jones were completely different individuals--as different as could be. Jones was superb at dealing with individuals on an individual basis, but poor in dealing with groups. When you went into Howard Jones' office and he talked to you, you came out converted. If you were in a large audience that Howard Jones spoke to, you objected. You did not agree. Indeed, you were very disappointed, not happy with what Jones had said. Paul Cress, who was chief of security and "file" keeper here at Youngstown State University, went into Howard Jones' office one day to be interviewed for the job of chief of security, and Cress came out of that office saying, "By God, damnit, that son of a bitch talks to you so much you don't know whether you come out with your pants on or not! He can convince you of anything!"

Pugsley, on the other hand, could not deal with individuals. He couldn't look individuals in the eye. He could speak to large groups. He could win people over to the cause of the university. He had an excellent, an excellent, public personality.

H: You worked for both of them?

R: For both.

H: In what capacity did you work for Pugsley?

R: I was assistant dean of the university. I was able to serve President Pugsley in the transitional period, the first year of his presidency. I worked for the friend that he brought in to be the dean of the university, John Coffield who is no longer with us.

I served as assistant dean until I discovered several things: One, that I was not making significant policy decisions; two, that I did not have the necessary personality to be an administrator. Administration requires a certain ability I did not have. I had none of the tact, none of the diplomacy, none of the patience. I suffered the problem that I brought problems home with me and woke up at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning trying to solve problems that I couldn't solve. But, most significantly, I had to accept what other people did for me, and I felt that other people were handling situations in an incompetent way, or, at least, they weren't doing them as well as I wanted them done, or they weren't doing them as well as I thought they could be done if I did them personally. Of course, as an administrator, you cannot do everything, and you must be willing to accept what other people do. This convinced me that administration was not for me.

Now, just as I had arrived at that conclusion, chronologically, at that point, I was invited to a dinner where I met a rather interesting man and his wife. I had an enjoyable evening. We discussed education, educational philosophy, the purpose of universities, the role of education in society. When the evening ended, this man told me that he was chairman of the board of trustees of a college in New York state that had just become part of the state system, that they were going to convert the college from a two year to a four year liberal arts college, and they wanted me to come as president. He would have no difficulty whatsoever in convincing the other members of the board.

H: How did you feel about that?

R: My ego was absolutely elated at the time. I thought, My God,

this is one of the nicest compliments that anybody has ever paid me. It really was terrific. But the fact of the matter was that I had already concluded that I was not an administrator, and that I couldn't live with an administrative position. But, my approach to it was such: they simply couldn't close the door. So when we began discussing salary, and it ended up my saying to them, "Look, \$5,000 here or there doesn't really make that much difference. The important question is, can I bring in my own dean of faculty? Will you agree to that?" In reality, I knew that this was not. . . I just simply don't have the ability to do what a college president needs to do.

I think, again, it goes back to what I said about administrators. You've got to accept the fact that you can't do everything. Somebody else has got to do something. You've got to accept the quality of the work that they do. You must be diplomatic. You must be tactful. You can never come out and occupy a losing position, even though you know it's a losing position. You must always occupy a winning position. As president of a university you must always be "on". It's like being a clergyman. You're always "on". You can never be just an ordinary person. A plumber, at the end of the day, is no longer a plumber. He's a person. A university president is always a university president, twenty-four hours a day. It's the Rotary on Monday, the Kiwanis on Tuesday, the Odd Fellows on Wednesday, the Board of Trustees on Thursday, the faculty on Friday. On Saturday it's golf with a number of potential contributors to the university, and on Sunday it's tea.

H: Was this pretty much Jones' schedule?

R: President Jones, here, was a twenty-four hour president. Don't forget, he lived on campus. One of the things that Pugsley, when he came here, refused to do was to live in the president's house on campus. Indeed, he moved into the Ohio Hotel and had a suite of rooms there. He was determined as he put it, not to be on campus because if he lived on campus, any time a bulb went out they would ring his doorbell to change the bulb. He lived in miserable Ohio Hotel until they bought this house on Colonial Drive and he moved into it. I don't know exact time, but I think they lived in Ohio Hotel for a year. He just simply refused to move on campus.

H: Were you in the running for the president's job at Youngstown?

R: No, never.

H: When Coffield left, you weren't still working for him?

R: No, I had resigned as assistant dean of the university a year before. I always felt that my resignation was beneficial

to Pugsley, because both he and I had discussed the university organization. I should point out, interjecting here, that when I was made assistant dean of the university I insisted upon going to a number of in-service institutes and seminars for university administrators, and learned a good deal. One of them was one that lasted for several weeks at the University of Michigan. I learned a good deal and certainly one of the things that I learned was that the organization of Youngstown State University was bad. What we needed was not a dean of the university, but what we needed was a vice-president for academic affairs. There were a number of other administrative changes that needed to be made. So my resignation enabled the elimination of that position from the organizational table, and I think it contributed or made it easier to reorganize the university similar to what it's reorganized like now.

Shortly after I resigned as assistant dean of the university, David Behen resigned as chairman of the history department, and the position of chairman of the history department was offered to me. It had been voted unanimously by the members of the history department that I be chairman. President Pugsley had actually written a press release announcing my appointment, and I went in and argued with President Pugsley that department chairmen should not be twelve month employees and that department chairmen were faculty and not administrators. I would not take the position unless it were a nine month position. Just prior to my going in and saying that, Ward Minor had resigned as chairperson of the English department because he wouldn't work twelve months, and the chairperson of the sociology department, who is no longer with us, resigned as chairperson of sociology because she wouldn't work twelve months.

H: Was this something Pugsley brought in, the twelve month concept?

R: Yes. This was the Pugsley position. I refused to take the position. Indeed, a stalemate resulted and we actually went out and conducted a survey at a historical convention of the number of chairpersons in history who were on twelve month contracts. In only one instance was the chairperson working summers. Ironically enough, it was Texas A & M. (laughter) We had the president in a stalemate position. Nobody in the history department would take the chairperson position--nobody. We had him over a barrel. At that point Hugh Earnhart volunteered. He went to the president and he volunteered to serve as the temporary, or acting, chairperson of the history department because David Behen simply refused, under any circumstances, to serve beyond that semester as chairperson of the history department.

- H: Sid, you have covered some of the things you did at Youngstown up until the time you resigned as assistant dean and refused to accept the chairmanship of the history department. I wonder if we could go over some of the other experiences that stand out in your mind since coming to Youngstown up to the present.
- R: Fine. Do you want to ask me a specific question?
- H: In addition to the things that you've done here at the university, I understand that you also have been involved in various kinds of activities in the community.
- R: One of the beliefs, I guess, or philosophical commitments, that I think faculty members should have, particularly if their discipline is--as mine is--in history, if they're in the social studies, sociology, psychology, economics, so forth and so on, is a sense of service to community. So one of the things that I did a great deal of during my first several years here was to speak before various social and cultural groups who invited speakers to come in. I delivered a number of high school commencement addresses, I spoke before any group that had a dozen people and didn't have a speaker and they invited me and so forth and so on. But, at the same time, I also engaged in a good deal of civic activity.

Most of the civic activity that I engaged in was official civic activity in that I was appointed by university to represent, or to be the university's representative, to a number of civic committees. There is a phenomena that is familiar in the world of business that also takes place in the realm of civic affairs. You know, in the world of business, if you're the member of a board of trustees of a corporation, you get to know certain businessmen and they serve on another board and they're looking around for somebody to serve and they know you so they mention your name. So people begin to travel in similar circles. Once you are appointed to, or begin to serve on a board, it never ends up as just one board, but gets to the point where you're appointed to this, that, and every other. Indeed, one time, before I consciously started reducing these activities, you couldn't shake a civic committee that I didn't fall out of a tree. I kept meeting the same people all the time, and, indeed, we could have stayed there and had any one of a number of a dozen different board meetings without changing the personnel. For example, I served, at the request of the university, as the member of the local Federal Anti-poverty Agency. As a matter of fact, before the Anti-poverty Agency was actually formed, I was part of the group that went through the process of applying for and establishing the local Anti-poverty Agency. I served first as a board member and then chairman of the board of the

Anti-poverty Agency.

H: Roughly what time period was this?

R: I don't have the specific dates. I have to look them up. But, from the very beginning of the Anti-poverty Agency until the present time, it was about 1964 and, recently, after having served as chairman, I then served, just again, as a board member. When the Anti-poverty Agency in Trumbull County ran into a good deal of difficulty, and the federal government was going to withdraw funds from the Trumbull County Anti-poverty Agency because of corruption and mismanagement and bad board participation, the Chicago regional office of the Anti-poverty Agency asked if I would take over that Anti-poverty program, establish a new board, hire new personnel, so forth and so on, and that led to some very exciting things.

I was sued by all of the employees of the Anti-poverty Agency because one of the first things that I did was to fire every single last one of them in reestablishing that agency. I did reestablish that agency and we did get continuation of operational funds. I had promised the regional office that I would serve in that capacity for one year. I finished my year out, resigned, was replaced. At the present time, the federal government is again threatening to withdraw funding from the Trumbull County Anti-poverty Agency because they have gotten back into the same kinds of problems that they had been in initially.

I served on the mayor's Human Relations Commission. I served as university representative on the Health and Welfare Council. I served on the mayor's Police and Community Relations Commission. I served in the capacity of co-chairman of the Civic League's Committee to revise the city charter. We did a marvelous job, but it was not submitted to the voters. After the committee had worked months rewriting the city charter--it's a marvelous charter--it was never submitted to the voters.

On and on and on, a number of these activities. . . Now, these are what I'm calling civic activities. I'm not discussing with you my personal, non-university related activities. So, by way of illustration of personal activities, I had been very, very active in local politics, on a policy making level, and I have been even more active in terms of campaign policy decisions. In, oh the past half dozen years, I've been one of approximately six people who have been conducting local mayoral campaigns. I've not mentioned the personal, private activities such as I can remember of the American Civil Liberties Union and the board members of the local chapter of. . .

had been the delegates to the state Civil Liberties Union. But that's not in an official capacity. That's only in a personal capacity.

H: What was the general atmosphere of the town, here in Youngstown during the period? Was it pretty much. . .

R: What period are you referring to?

H: The period of 1964 when you were particularly active in these various groups. Was there some particular thing going on that brought about this activity? Was it just a routine sort of thing?

R: No. It's a pretty routine sort of thing. The problem with this kind of activity is contained in something I said to you a few minutes ago. I started talking about this and I said, "I am the university's representative to. . ." Now there is a difference, and I am not sure whether there is a clear distinction or not, but to my mind it's an important distinction. You can be the university's representative to a civic group. If you are a university's representative, then your input into this group is the position, the view, the attitude of the university. Or you can be a member of the university serving on a civic committee. This presents something of a problem to people who serve in a civic capacity because what you need to do is to make clear to your colleagues on these boards whether what you're saying is the official position of the university, or whether what you're saying is your personal opinion as a member of the university.

So, by way of illustration, on the Anti-poverty board, I was instrumental in bringing to the university a federal program known as Upward Bound. In that instance I acted as a representative of the university in obtaining the contract. Indeed, there may be something unethical in that I also, as chairman of the board, signed the contract and voted on behalf of the contract. But, in other instances, on the same agency, I was taking positions in terms of poverty and participatory democracy that were only my own point of view. Whether it was an enlightened or biased, a correct or incorrect point of view, it was my own point of view and I was not speaking. . .

H: What was the point of view?

R: Oh, there were lots of. . . I mean, what we had to do here is to go through an entire history, and then you have to name that specific organization. So, for example, when I served on the Charter Revision Commission our position was that there should be nine wards in the city and not seven.

Now, I never checked with the president or with the vice-president of business affairs whether the university had a position on seven or nine wards. Interestingly enough, while I served on the Charter Revision Commission, one of the representatives to it from the Chamber of Commerce was Attorney John Newman, who subsequently became the chairperson of the YSU Board of Trustees. John and I disagreed on about half a dozen items in the proposed city charter, but I don't think he was serving as a representative of the board of trustees any more than I was serving as a spokesman of the university.

H: When you were active in all of these civic affairs. . .

R: Well, I'm still active in a number of civic affairs. But I'm not as active now as I had been at one time. So, by way of demonstration, apparently I am a member of the board of directors of the--well, let's take one case--the Youngstown Playhouse. I am on that board. The other university member on the board is Ben Yozwiak, Dean of Arts and Sciences.

H: Are you. . .

R: No. I am chairperson of the front of the house. That means that I am responsible for ticket taking, getting the ushers, the volunteers lined up, arranging for the curtain to go up, so forth and so on. I am not qualified, nor am I interested in, getting on stage. I have been active in doing electrical wiring, working on the PA (public address) system. I have been instrumental in the set, I've been a participant in set construction at the Playhouse, and for three years I ran the Classic Film Series at the Playhouse. I bought all the equipment, I ran the films, I ran the projector, I collected the money, I sent out the programs on the film series. But that's the extent of my theatrical. . .

H: You're not interested in acting?

R: No, I don't think I could speak to a group of people that didn't take notes.

H: How about directing?

R: I have no talent in that area, never had any experience.

H: At the time that you were representing the university, there was a lot going on in the world. There were student protests at various places in the country. Was there any sort of thing like this going on at Youngstown?

R: Oh yes.

H: Did it have any impact on what you were doing in the community?

R: No. Often times what happened here at the university required that I do something downtown. As I said earlier, I'm a member of the Police Community Relations Committee. In one instance a student at the university was arrested for blocking traffic in part of a demonstration. I went down and spoke to the judge who was going to handle the case and got the young man released from jail so that he could take scheduled final examinations. In another instance, I calmed down, or stepped in between a number of armed, riot, helmetted policemen and some of our students.

H: What was that episode?

R: Again, to really understand this, you're going to have to have a different kind of background and rather lengthy explanation. Youngstown State University students--people--became aroused over a specific event, namely the termination of the contracts of two faculty members. Other groups on campus used the students who were aroused over this item to press their own point of view and their own position. So there developed here, on our campus, a move, for example, for more students participation in university policy making. There developed here on our campus a move for a Black studies program, or a Black student center. In other words, there occurred here what occurred on every major campus across the nation--absolutely nothing different. A specific issue arises, it arouses the students, everybody else jumps in on this bandwagon. One group becomes more dominant on one campus and another on another campus. The student protest movement on this campus was, at best, a most modest and a most conservative one.

Again, there are a lot of reasons for the form that it took here on the campus. Certainly one reason that the administration, in the form of President Pugsley and the faculty, in the form of about a half a dozen faculty members, played a role of trying to get these students to channel their activities in a more creative direction. My role was a difficult one because I was not only trying to calm down a number of students, but at the same time trying to calm down a number of administrators who wanted to respond by adding armed guards stationed in the executive office building with rifles and so forth and so on.

One evening a student gathering at what was Ecumenical Coffee House was taken over by the Afro-American students. The Afro-American students in Youngstown, in their rabid, fanatical, revolutionary approach to life, decided that they were going

to cross back and forth Wick Avenue and that their crossing Wick Avenue back and forth under the traffic sign that says, "Traffic must yield to pedestrians," would back traffic up and get for them some publicity. So you see what I mean about how really radical and innovative and dangerous the students at the university were. But when they decided to do this, attending that gathering of students was a member of the Youngstown Police Department who I recognized because I know him and who the students recognized because he was the only one carrying a briefcase. The briefcase contained a tape recorder.

While the students were having a peaceful gathering on the lawn in front of the president's office, President Pugsley came out and addressed them and did a superb job of indicating to the students what was what. While that speech was going on--and it would have ended right then and there because in addition to the president's speech, the fact was that it was about 1:00 or 2:00 in the afternoon on a tremendously hot and humid, sunny day, and the students were all sitting down on the grass listening to the president speak over the PA system--they were becoming lulled and were about to take naps. It was just a beautiful, idyllic, pastoral situation.

Just at that point, one of the students leaving, getting tired of the president's speech, walked across the street from the president's office and discovered that behind the then arts and sciences office building, there was a huge group of policemen that had come in unmarked cars, had parked and had gotten out and put on riot uniforms, and were waiting in readiness. When this students saw this, he ran back across the street, told all the students who were there about the policemen being there, and that immediately converted the whole situation into a very volatile situation. At that point, a number of faculty members actually went around and placed themselves between the students and the police. Only two students were arrested when they started moving in on a police cruiser. They had arrested the students; they put the students in the cruiser and stayed there instead of immediately driving off. Well, students walked back and forth. . .

- H: Were there any other incidents during the period up until the time, well, up until the present?
- R: Well, yes, I've had others. I'm not sure of what direction in which you want to go. There are certainly a number of interesting things that have happened.
- H: Anything of biographical nature?

- R: I have always had the opportunity within the history department to offer courses that I thought would be desirable. So, by way of illustration, I offered an honors program course and became the director of the university honors program. We established it as a colloquia reading and writing seminar. I offered a number of courses in the history department that are known as "problems" courses dealing with specific issues. So we gave a course on history of students protest movements, history of radicals, history of feminism, racism in America, these kinds of courses. I have been continuing to teach the upper division courses in Twentieth Century U. S. history. I have written a number of book reviews that have been published. I wrote a section in an article of an encyclopedia. But most importantly of all, being back in the history department, as opposed to being in administration, has given me the thing that I desire most, and that is the time to read. That's the most notable thing that I'm doing. I am reading.
- H: What are you reading?
- R: During the regular academic year I read works in the field of history and contemporary problems--whether it be sociology, psychology, so forth and so on. Whenever a vacation comes along, then I permit myself to read mystery stories, which I do not permit myself to read during the academic year because once I start a mystery story I can't put it down till it's finished.
- H: Specifically, what sorts of things have you read in the last couple of months?
- R: The last couple of months I've read about twenty books. I guess of the significant volumes that I have read, two volumes that come to mind, because they deal with something that I'm currently interested in, is Schlesinger, Jr.'s The Imperial Presidency and Halberstam's The Best and the Brightest and Theodore White's Presidential Election 1972. Most of my current interest in my reading coincide with my current interests in teaching, that is, I'm primarily interested in the uses of political power.
- H: Are you doing any research at the present time?
- R: Currently I'm going through a process of indexing the Kirwin papers. When we acquired the Kirwin papers, I was unable to get any cooperation from the university librarian to index those papers, and so it had to be done by the history department. Primarily, it's being done by graduate students who are on graduate assistantships. They are dealing with the problem of indexing the Kirwin papers.

Most of the Kirwin papers are falling into the area of correspondence with voters in the 19th Congressional District who want special service. It looks as if the Kirwin material is not going to be sufficient to justify a biography of Kirwin, whether or not Kirwin himself is historically significant enough to justify a biography. This is also most questionable. I think that there are probably three good articles that will emerge from the Kirwin papers. I've already delivered a couple of talks and speeches on Kirwin that indicate that two, three, possibly--questionably--four articles. So, let's say that about three articles will be forthcoming. None of these will be earthshattering. None of these are going to stand the profession on edge. But they will be good, small articles.

If I would work four hours on the university campus, I would work ten hours as--I spent eight to ten hours--representative of the university on civic committees. Of course, that also coincided with the time that I served on university committees as well. Indeed, it reached a point where I had to carry with me a rather large appointment calendar to know where I was supposed to be and when I was supposed to be there. It got to the point where if I had two meetings scheduled at the same time I would choose which of the two I preferred.

H: Sid, you started to talk about the relationship between your political activity, your activity in the community, and your work as an historian. What was the connection?

R: I don't remember exactly what I said, but it seems to me that closely allied with the interest that I have in my discipline, history, is the interest that I have in political and civic events in the community. That is, I am largely interested in human motivation--why people do what they do when they do it, so forth and so on. If you try to deal with this in your disciplines and try to convey some of the factors that make people do what they do or determine how they're going to vote and you yourself have never been in this kind of a situation where policy is made, where issues are decided, where votes are sought, then it's difficult for you to convey into the classroom how these events occurred in the past. So it's not an esoteric interest, but rather a vital, necessary component.

Whether I actually do convey this to the students or not--this excitement--is another question. But you're not going to know. How are you ever going to talk about political deals? How are you going to talk about how votes are garnered, how special interest groups are appealed to, unless you've been part and parcel of that kind of activity? How can you talk about a party organization if you've never seen one in operation?

- H: Dr. Roberts, how does this fit in with the writing of history in relation to teaching in the classroom?
- R: The writing of history and the teaching of history should be motivated by the same objective--communication. You want to communicate. You want to communicate ideas. You want to communicate developments. Unfortunately, the prime motivation for a goodly number of my colleagues in the field of history for writing is for bibliographical rather than communication purposes--to be able to cite X number of articles, to be able to claim authorship of this, that, or the other.
- H: What sort of things do you want to communicate?
- R: Well, again, I think the question that you're asking there is both a complex one and at the same time a personal question. In my teaching of history I am not interested in the "one goddamn thing after another" approach to history. I'm interested in communicating things that are somewhat "vague" than the fact that the United States purchased Alaska in 1867 for \$7.3 million. I would like to think that as a result of taking history that students develop a sense of suspended judgment. I would like to think that students, as a result of taking history, are somewhat more cosmopolitan in their view, and less ethnocentric, provincial. These are some of the more important reasons for teaching history, but, certainly, among those important reasons is to convey to people that events occurred not on a simple, one to one, causal relationship; if events in the past did occur on that basis, it would be erroneous to think that events in the present occur on a simple, monocausal relationship.
- H: Do you think that the student who understands the complexities of the past is, maybe, more aware of the complexity of the present?
- R: That's the hope; that's the goal. You see, there's not a particular skill that the historian can give to students. Indeed, if students would just purchase a textbook and keep it, then whenever they needed to know a specific fact they could look it up. So why should I convey to the students facts for them to memorize, then they regurgitate it and give it to me on the test, and then two weeks after the quarter is over they don't remember the facts, and four weeks after the quarter is over they don't remember my name! Some of them, a year later, don't remember whether they've had history or not.
- H: Where does the concept of "problems" in history fit into this?

R: I'm not sure I know what you mean by the concept of. . .

H: You were telling me that you had organized some "problems" courses in history. You apparently had been concerned with some questions in history. This was for your doctoral dissertation. Do you feel this was simply a description of what was going on?

R: No. Again, you've got two questions going on here. Let me see if I can deal with the last question that you asked me right now. My doctoral dissertation was conceived by me in terms of what I and a number of other people at one time thought that doctoral dissertations were supposed to be--namely, a thesis. You take a problem and try to prove or disprove a thesis. I had done so for my honors papers as an undergraduate. I had done so for my master's essay. And I had done so for my doctoral dissertation. Specifically, what my doctoral dissertation did was to question the Robber Baron concept.

At that time that I was writing my doctoral dissertation the field of entrepreneurial history had just begun and historians were beginning to question the traditional Robber Baron approach to the businessmen of the post Civil War period. You know what I'm speaking of here, that is, that businessmen are motivated solely by the self-interest dictates of their pocketbooks. Now, I had suggested, in my dissertation, that what we needed to do was to carefully examine the Robber Baron thesis rather than talk about it in vague terms and that one of the ways of carefully examining this thesis was to isolate a specific community and examine what the businessmen in that specific community were doing in the Gilded Age. So I took Chicago. I took the time period 1870 to 1900. I went in and examined the part played by the businessmen and I came up with conclusions with reference to the Robber Baron thesis.

H: You said, at the time this was your concept of what a dissertation was supposed to be about. It was the concept that other people had, that it was supposed to be proving or disproving a thesis. Do you still feel that that's what a dissertation is supposed to be about?

R: I think that's what it should be. I think that we have gotten to the point, for a number of reasons--apparently one being the number of students who are pursuing the doctorate degree--where a good many dissertations. . . If you look at the list of dissertations in progress, you'll see that a good many of them are dissertations and not theses. That is, they're accounts of a specific event, historical research, in primary and secondary sources, detailing an occurrence

rather than evaluating a thesis.

H: Do you feel that it should be. . .

R: I prefer the thesis approach.

H: Rather than the description approach.

R: Yes. Narrative history is very important in the field. I don't think that it is as important for the Ph. D. There's nothing wrong with it. It's necessary. It's the tool of history. It's the essence of the crafts.

H: You're probably familiar with this concept of paradigms as used by Thomas Kuhn and universally recognized scientific achievements that, for a time, provide model problems with solutions and practitioners. I was wondering if, in your field of history, you feel that there are any such achievements that tend now, or tended when you were in graduate school, for instance, to set the problems to be investigated and determine the kinds of solutions that were acceptable.

R: Can you rephrase that question in another way, Don? What is it that you're asking me? I think I suspect what you're asking, but I'm not sure. Ask it in another way.

H: Are there historical models? Are there. . . Are you conscious of "the right thing to do" to constitute history, or the right kind of problem to look at as opposed to what isn't really the right kind of problem?

R: No, I'm not. One of the characteristics of history, notwithstanding the objections of people who write historiography texts, is the present mindedness of history. There is no one writing history, researching history, teaching history, who is not affected by his or her background, perspective, point of view, at that given time. This is present mindedness. So at one time, the right approach for a given individual would be one thing, and for a given individual at a subsequent time it would be something else. In my own very, very intense awareness, over periods of time I have adopted different approaches and I have different heroes and have subsequently discarded them.

One of the joys, indeed, one of the liberties, of teaching history, is that you don't have to stick with one interpretation, with one approach--that you can be flexible and adapt to change. So, by way of illustration, at one time I was an intense follower of the liberal school of historians. Vernon Louis Parrington at one time was my idol. The nicest

thing that ever happened to me was many, many years ago; somebody gave me as a gift a book that I loved and kept checking out of the library--in one volume they gave me all three volumes of Parrington's Main Currents. It was my bible! I thought it was great! I thought it was fantastic! I thought it was incredible! One of the first articles I wrote was an article on Parrington. That's how much I idolized that historian. Right now, I've changed. . .

The essence of the article was to clearly indicate to the reader why it was that Parrington wrote what he wrote in the way in which he wrote it. But I was not critical of his conclusions . Now, I still praise Parrington for writing history the way he did. You recall he begins by saying, very clearly, in the introduction, "Look, my point of view is Jeffersonian and not Hamiltonian. My point of view is liberal and not conservative. Let the reader beware, this is the approach that I am taking." I think that's the way history should be written, where the reader or the student or the person being communicated with clearly understands at the outset where the historian is coming from.

Now my position about Parrington is completely reversed! I no longer have Jefferson as a hero. Hamilton is my hero! Harmilton was right, Jefferson was wrong! I'm urban! I'm urban oriented. How the hell does a guy like myself come to idolize the farmer? The farmer is not the hero of America! He's the rube! He's the hick! He's the hayseed! All cultural intellectual progress in the United States has come from the city. The city is the generating center. It doesn't come from the dung heap.

Historians are still teaching history from the old rural perspective and rural point of view. We haven't changed! As a matter of fact, those few historians who are changing have gone, I think, unnoticed because--I think we went over this in one of the classes we had together--historians are so slow to change that now historians are beginning to teach urban history when the most dynamis force, political power block, moving force in the country today, ever since 1970, is the suburb! The crabgrass brigade! We went over this. We're slow to change. The point I'm making is this: at any given time the historian not only has the liberty, but has the obligation to view history from a given point of view provided that he or she constantly keeps in mind that, as historian, that point of view can change.

H: I'm very interested in how this point of view changed, and when. You sort of have the endpoints of this. Were you at all consciously aware of how this shift took place from. . .

- R: Well, you're talking about this shift. What I'm trying to suggest to you is that in the past ten, fifteen years, or twenty years, I am constantly shifting, constantly changing, and that the shifting and the changing is viewed by me as not only a positive thing, but it's viewed by me as a vicarious form of entertainment and glee and excitement. If I pick up a book and that book causes me to change the point of view that I had previously held or to question a point of view that I had previously held, then the book has been a worthwhile activity. If I read a book and I am the same person after I've read the book as before I read the book, then the book contributed nothing. I've had no dialogue with the author. I've had no arguments. I've had no discussion. I've gotten no ideas. I've not played with anything. I've not savored, or tasted, or rolled different points of view around in my mind.
- H: Have you ever had the experience of being fearful of writing history or of teaching history, that you would be ridiculed or your ideas might not be accepted?
- R: You say have I ever been. I am always.
- H: You are now?
- R: Of course! Always!
- H: The other side of this involves the question of courage.
- R: I don't know that it involves courage. What I think, it simply involves is a professional commitment. If you establish what is important to you in your profession, if you clearly understand what is your obligation as a member of the Historical Guild, then you act accordingly. The reason why I am in history is because I love ideas, because history is exciting! Now, that somebody may ridicule my point of view or disagree with my point of view, has got to indicate to me the same thing that I had just said a few moments ago-- that somebody is reading me and is actually evaluating or thinking about what I am saying. What could be wrong with that?
- H: Is there any possibility of you being "read out of the profession"?
- R: In view of the members who are in the profession, that doesn't seem like a possibility, does it?
- H: Have you done anything in your work as a historian, as a teacher, which you know required real courage?

- R: That's hard to define. Sometimes, when I get up in the morning and go to work, I feel this requires courage. My position has always been, in the classroom, that I want my students to know that I am going to say a number of things, some of which are factual, some of which are opinions--some of which are opinions that I actually believe and some are opinions I don't believe. I tell students over and over and over--more so in upper division classes where we tend to be more interpretive than in lower division classes. But even in the lower division classes I point out to students that history is not a science, that historians are, above all else, eclectic, and that what they're getting is history a la Roberts, and that I don't have the word. If I had the word, I would be sitting on high, passing out the word! I would be looking for Moses to carry the word down, you know, in the form of a scroll or a tablet! I don't have the word.
- H: History is not a science.
- R: No!
- H: That's how some historians. . .
- R: I don't! The key item here--if you can change my point of view on this, I'll change my mind--the scientists can predict $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$; two parts hydrogen, one part oxygen = water. The historian cannot predict. The historian is not a scientist.
- H: Well, you were telling me that by studying the past, you could understand. . .
- R: You said that. There is nothing that I have said that by studying the past you understand the present. I have said that if you will study history, one of my hopes is that you will be better prepared as a citizen, that you will be able to make better decisions, that you will develop a sense of--what did I say--suspended judgment, that you will get away from some ethnocentrism--"Gee whiz, he's so glib"--and so on. But I am not saying that if you will study the past you are better able to understand the present. It may help you understand the present, but it is no guarantee. This is no piece of equipment that you plug in, flip the switch, and it does the job. I'm saying to you that society is so complex, there are so many factors, so many considerations, that by the time that you get down to studying history, you may know some history, but you may not understand the present because it is complex.

As long as I'm studying history I still. . . I'm not even

an authority on history! My point of view keeps changing, my factual base keeps changing, my ideas keep changing. But one thing I'm sure of is that I'm not a scientist. The proof of that is that I'm not getting paid the same thing that scientists are getting paid. I'm not valued as a scientist. I'm not a scientist. Members of the craft aren't scientists. Occasionally, they can use scientific trappings. Historians of late have discovered tape recorders. So we're all running around, gung ho, with tape recorders and are convinced that, "Gee, aren't we great." Historians have discovered quantification, so they're beginning to put things on cards and programming it and coming up with statistics. That is the trappings of science. It's not a science.

H: What would it take to make history a science?

R: Prediction. Scientists can predict, but historians cannot. Some historians use the scientific method, but they're not scientists. Indeed, the basic point that I am so anxious to communicate to people is that no matter what I uncover, no matter what I say as a factor that contributed to a specific event, there are factors that I have not uncovered, there's information I don't have, there's material I don't know. I want to leave myself the flexibility of changing my approach. I do so by telling students history is not a science, by telling myself that I have an obligation as a historian to constantly challenge my concepts by new ideas, new approaches.

By way of illustration, the past several years the field of history has witnessed the development of what's known as "New Left" historians. The "New Left" historians should really be dealt with on several levels. The "New Left" historians are political creatures, and we can deal with them as political creatures. But at the present moment it's recognized that because of their background, because of their given political point of view, the "New Left" historians approach history by asking of past events different questions than those of us who are "old" historians. "Old Left", "Old Consensus", "Old Conflict" historians, or just "Aged" historians did not ask questions, did not have the perspective to raise the questions that they are raising. So they are performing a very important and vital function for all the entire field of history by the questions that they are asking. They are developing an awareness in certain areas we have not had heretofore. So they're making contributions, and I will say, notwithstanding the fact that I don't agree with their political position, that their contribution to the field of history is a major contribution.

H: Here's a well-known quote from Turner, Frederick Jackson, 1891. . .

R: You're bringing up a pawn.

H: I know. "Each age tries to form its own conception of the past. Each age writes the history of the past anew, with reference to the conditions uppermost of its own time."

R: Yes. Exactly. A better illustration than Frederick Jackson Turner, a more contemporary illustration, is Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. He writes history the way he votes, and he votes the way he writes history. Every generation of historians rewrites history.

H: There is a kind of a position of total relativism, that there's nothing fixed or real or firm about the past.

R: Right. Isn't that beautiful? The past occurred. We don't know all of the reasons why. History is, among other things, a search. And the things we look for are rather, largely, determined by our perspective at any given moment. Now, for some people, this creates anarchy and chaos. But for people who enjoy reading, enjoy ideas, for people who understand that history is an analytical give and take process, this is the essence.

H: So history can't, for instance, be written from the point of view of the contemporaries of the event once and for all.

R: Absolutely not, by virtue of the fact that history is often defined as a trick that living people play on dead people who aren't here to defend themselves anymore.

H: It's a bag of tricks.

R: Yes. Here's a good illustration, if I may. I am currently, in one of my classes, talking about President Woodrow Wilson, and I am relating to the students the specific steps that Wilson took, vis a vis German submarine warfare. Each and every one of those steps, whether it was the Falaba or the Sussex or the Lusitania, each and every one of those notes moved the United States closer and closer and closer to war. William Jennings Bryan--who certainly is not one of my heroes--is secretary of state and he sees what's going on and he resigns and he tries to convince people that what Wilson is doing is wrong.

H: Woodrow Wilson asks Bryan to resign?

R: Yes. Now we could teach this in one way. But you can only teach it one way until the time of Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers, because now when you say to your students that the Democratic Party in the 1916 presidential election ran up and down the countryside yelling, "He kept us out of war!" he kept us out of war because Germany, at least momentarily, was willing to back down when, in reality, Wilson brought us closer to war. Thus, Wilson, taking a position of strict accountability with Germany, sending Germany notes saying, "If you continue submarine warfare we will view this as an unfriendly act," takes positions of "brinkmanship". Now, you could deal with it one way, but now that we have had--what I said a moment ago--Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers, now that we have had Jack Kennedy and the "brinkmanship" of the missile crisis, you've got to go back and look at the way you are talking about things, in terms of, not changing the events--that's false, that's lying--but in terms of presenting the events in a way that is meaningful today, meaningful to the person writing, meaningful to the person analyzing, meaningful to the person who is a citizen. Does that give you an illustration of what I'm trying to suggest?

H: Yes. You don't feel that is constortion?

R: Of course, it does! Everything I'm saying to you over and over, every historian. . . Who can write history without. . . I'm telling you, nobody can! I'm telling you there is not a single individual who writes and teaches history from a pure, unbiased, uneffected point of view. We have got faculty members in the history department of Youngstown State University who are using the ideas, some even the notes and lectures, of their professors. Is that not a bias? Is that not an eclecticism?

H: We have faculty here who think that they are writing history that has no bias in it?

R: I don't know. You would have to ask them. I don't know, I'm biased. I am not a scientist! I am a historian! By virtue of the fact that I am a historian, I deal with what I deal with. And as long as my students know that mine is not the word, as long as they know that their ideas are important, valid, then what I'm doing is perfectly legitimate and acceptable.

H: What were you referring to as the "problems" of history?

R: Everything! I don't understand what you mean by, "What constitutes a problem?" Everything is a problem! Any event that involves interpretation, evaluation, reevaluation

is a problem.

H: So the world is just one huge problem?

R: Of course.

H: You have deliberately taken up some of those and not others?

R: Right.

H: Have you been aware of, you know, "I'm going to look into this problem," a deliberate kind of thing?

R: Of course. By way of illustration of that, I can only teach history X number of hours to X number of students, which means that I can take a period of time and only teach that period of time from certain angles and not others. Right now I'm teaching an upper division course, History of the United States, 1920's and 1930's. I am not taking, and do not take, the legal approach to that history, and one could. That is, one could spend hours discussing the role played by the Supreme Court, by the legal profession, in the developments--political, social, economical--of the 1920's and 1930's. Now, the court moves from the position that it takes at the very beginning of this period of time, in the children's hospital case, saying that the court will not regulate the number of hours worked per day, to a position that it takes when Roberts and Charles Evans Hughes join Cardoza, Brandeis, and Stone, and say the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Wages and Hours Act, are constitutionally valid pieces of legislation. One court decision reflects the New Era, the other reflects the New Deal. I don't deal with those for a number of reasons: One, it doesn't excite me; two, I don't know too much about it; three, I don't have the time.

I acknowledge the fact that the historian is eclectic. How can I, in X number of meetings of the class, deal with the history of two decades? It obviously took two decades to occur!

H: There takes a great deal of explaining. . .

R: Oh, there is, but I have to sit down and say I can only deal with certain things. What things am I going to deal with and what things am I not going to deal with? Now, if in class a student asks me a question about this, obviously I'm going to reply. But certainly it's not going to be the same kind of an approach as it would be if I sit down ahead of time and say, "Okay, let's write three lectures on the evolution of the Supreme Court." This does not mean that others are less significant or less important.

- H: Do you think the general understanding of what happened to the court. . . Is it correct to say that the understanding of what the Robber Baron was all about. . .
- R: No, probably not. It is a problem, but I can only pick certain problems to deal with.
- H: What about the Robber Baron?
- R: What about it?
- H: This was for your doctoral dissertation.
- R: All right.
- H: What really got you going on that one?
- R: Well, as a student, undergraduate and graduate students, before I went for my doctoral dissertation, I was primarily interested in why people acted the way they did. My love for history is based on--I'll use your term--the problem of human motivation. I want to know why. Some people want to know what, I want to know why!

While I was going to college, I worked as many hours as I went to school. I had to send myself through college and I worked in a textile factory and I came across a guy who has got to be one of the most fascinating people I ever met. He's incredibly, fantastically wealthy. He was the owner of this place. As a child, he came over with his family to this country. He has the kind of family background where his father would charge all of the children pennies for an extra piece of bread, an extra pat of butter. They were entitled to a certain amount. If they had anything extra they had to pay for it. He grew up in this kind of an environment. Emphasis was put on achievement. Emphasis was put on materialism. And the guy, although extremely wealthy, has not had one moment of leisure in his entire life! He spends his lunches, with sandwiches, at the broker's office watching the latest quotations. He is the first one to open up the factory in the morning, until he hired me. He is the last one to leave. He goes around in the garbage cans pulling out spools of thread ripped off by the workers because they were getting down to the bottom of the spools and they didn't want to have to stop in the middle of a garment that they're working on to respool. He keeps saying things like, "This is a waste, this is a waste of money." But if he sees me doing something that he doesn't see as productive, he says to me, "Time is money ." Now, I became excited by this very concept, this economic point of view. His attitude toward social life, culture, his very

existence the way he treated his family. . . One son followed his footprints identically. The other son was far more intelligent and questioned and challenged, was a failure. I was fascinated by this. So I became interested in businessmen. Why do businessmen do what they do when they do it, how they do it?

H: The "whys".

R: Ultraconservative, anti-union.

H: Did they fit the stereotype?

R: Yes. But then, I want to know, what is the stereotype? I want to know, when does an individual depart from the stereotype? Why does an individual depart? By way of illustration, while I was working for this guy I started in an honors program as an undergraduate. I was interested in one particular phase of American history. I noted that the Marxists were all--and one of the leading historians who was doing this was a Marxist, a guy by the name of Frederick Aptheker--coming about imperialism and how imperialistic the United States was. Obviously, if the United States was imperialistic, it was American businessmen who made the United States imperialistic. Well, I didn't know. I wanted to find out. I wanted the why. So, as a project, I examined the Anti-imperialist movement. There was a huge movement in the United States--1898, 1900 Anti-imperialist movement. There were within the ranks of the anti-imperialists some of the leading Americans. And there were a huge number, a huge number of businessmen who were anti-imperialists. Why? I followed that up and went on to a dissertation. Why is this a stereotype?

H: And you concluded?

R: Well, the conclusion isn't that simple. For X number of businessmen, they participated in the form of politics and in the form of activities because of their religious background which said that as Christian gentlepersons they should act in a given way. Some were reformers because they felt that the only way that business could exist, thrive, and prosper was if they had a good, decent community in which to function. Some were reformers because they were a member of a club and the person that they sat next to at lunch, a member of that club, was on a board of a reform organization and submitted their name to serve on that board in that organization. Some activated themselves into the form of politics because they hated or were opposed or disliked some other businessman and they figured the way to get him was to support the reform aimed at him. So, by way of illustration of that

latter point, Marshall Field, the mercantile giant in Chicago, detested Charles T. Yerkes, owner of the Chicago Street Railroad. Marshall Field was one of the most active supporters of public ownership of street railroads.

H: He really tried to find complicity.

R: Exactly.

H: How do you feel about Marxian historians?

R: Well, I feel about Marxian historians the way I feel about any other group of historians who approach history differently. If you approach history with only one point of view, you're going to ask only one set of questions, you're going to come up with only one interpretation, and, I tell you, it won't work in history.

H: Do you know anybody who legitimately looked at all of the activities of these men and traced them, ultimately, back to some economic. . .

R: Sure. I've said it before, and I'll say it again. I say to you that Marxist historians, because of their frame of reference, raise certain questions. It is important that these questions be raised. It is equally important that those of us who read what the Marxist historians write understand that they are writing history from this point of view, and that there are other points of view. That's all. We've called them Marxist historians, let's realize that we're not only talking about dialectical material, but we're also talking about economics as a factor, a force, in human motivation. We can be historians concerned with the role and impact of economics without being Marxists.

H: Without being Marxists, operating as an individual?

R: They can, yes. An historian can conclude that a given individual was motivated to act in a given way because of economic motivation, yet that historian need not be a Marxist.

H: In the course of working on that particular project, which, I gather, was in some form or another really the center of your activity for a long period of time, the Robber Baron, you wrote a number of articles based on it.

R: I was actually commissioned to write a history of the civic activities of the Chicago Union League Club for its seventy-fifth anniversary, and did do so. I did some of my nicest research there because they gave me an office in the Union League Club. They served me coffee at 10:00 and at 3:00 in

a pewter mug and a pewter pot. I lunched in the Union League Club. I even had lunch with Herbert Hoover at one time.

H: At the Chicago Union League Club?

R: Yes. He was present, though not while he was president.

I'm an "old" historian, but not a "major" historian.

H: When you were working on the Robber Baron, did you have the experience of feeling that you were on a wild goose chase or that you were going down the wrong track?

R: No. Because I would not have gotten deeply involved in the project without having some suspicion or indication that there was something here to be done.

H: Did you ever feel that you were at a dead end?

R: Well, the dead end was that when I concluded that businessmen were reformers and businessmen were reformers for eight reasons, the dead end was that I knew damn well there would have to be at least another eight, if not another twenty, but that I didn't have the tools, I did not have the ability, to analyze human motivation.

H: Did you ever start with any particular motives?

R: Yes. I was frustrated by not finding proof of that and could only, then, write in the tentative way of saying, "Now, this is a possibility, but I have no proof of it. The reason that I make this possibility is because of A, B, and C. But I can find no documentation."

H: Had you ever had the feeling that the interpretation that you had, the understanding that you had formed, was now clearly wrong?

R: Yes. I am sure that the interpretation that I had formed, opinions that I had, are now considered wrong by some people. I consider some of the opinions that I had now wrong. But, my emphasis is that I am now, at this time, viewing what was at that time--at that time, there was no such thing as wrong or right. It was an interpretation, a point of view. I never said, "This is the interpretation, this is the point of view, this is the sole explanation." If I had ever occupied a position saying that, then, indeed, I would be terribly embarrassed, very chagrined, and I think that I'll go back to what you asked me in the beginning. I would not have the courage. But if at the outset you know that you're a

scientist, you can take a position. If at the outset you know you're not a scientist, that you're dealing with interpretation, points of view, and you come to your conclusion that this is a point of view, then you have the feeling of taking stands.

H: Why would you be embarrassed about something that you did then?

R: Because, I would be embarrassed if I had posed as an authority. I do not pose as an authority. Had I posed as an authority and said, "This is the only way," I would be embarrassed for having taken that stand.

H: Why?

R: Because it's a violation of a principle that is most apparent. I don't know the answers. I never want to pose as a person who knows the answers.

H: I wonder, Sid, if you could tell me something about your habits at work. You're working as an historian. Do you work to a schedule? Do you keep a journal? How do you work?

R: Well, I think my habits as an historian have changed. At one time I had a pretty firm schedule of spending my days on teaching and associated activities, and it was only in the evenings that I permitted myself the luxury of either doing specific research for a specific project or reading what I wanted to do. I call it "fine reading". In other words, reading historical works because they're there and because I'm interested in the topic and because I could read it on a different level than the materials that I would go through during the day for lecture writing, the creation of lectures. That was my original approach. That approach has had to be modified and changed depending on what is happening at a given time. So I find, for example, that during different periods of time, I will read rather avidly, materials in a limited field.

Several years ago, when Black studies, Black history, Black liberation were key items, I collected a tremendous number of books on the subject. As a matter of fact, I have at home in my library what I call a "black shelf". Actually, it's three shelves of material, and I would read intensively and intensely in this area. I would go to hear speeches and would attend institutes and programs because I was interested in the subject. For example, at one point I went to Wayne State University and attended a Black Studies Institute that lasted three days, and I went with my tape recorder and I taped some of the meeting spokesmen in this particular field. I went to Kent State University and took

a course with August Myer at one point, because he was teaching Black history. I traveled a distance to attend a speech given by, and taped the speech by, Charles V. Hamilton. Hamilton is the political scientist who worked with Stokely Carmichael and they published the book Black Power. It was famous for a period of time. I underwent a similar kind of frenzied activity more recently when feminism became important, not only politically, but important historically. So, I read a good deal in the field of women's history and the literature on women's liberation. In a number of instances, this kind of reading is helpful to me subsequently when I am teaching a course. So, for example, at one time I gave a course in Black liberation. It was a problems course in American history. The work that I had previously done, the reading that I had previously done, obviously was a tremendous help, but that was not my intention at the time.

H: Did you intend this for a course?

R: Not specifically, no. I did the reading and I was interested in the subject because I felt it a vital subject not only in American history, but in contemporary life. After all, if I allegedly teach Twentieth Century American history, theoretically I should know something about these movements though I'm not going to teach a specific course on them.

H: You were specifically preparing a piece of research or planning to write a history of the movements?

R: No. Often times what I'll do while reading something is to write comments in the book. I frequently have these arguments with the author, and because the author cannot respond and I'm the only one who's throwing stones, each and every one of these arguments are victorious arguments. Then if I have to go back to a source, I can often times flip through a book and, because of my comments, I can generally tell what's in a book. This is a significant change from what I used to do. At the time when I was a graduate student, I never picked up a book, or read a book, that I didn't sit down and type up a bibliographical card and a book summary. I had a huge file. I no longer need to do that.

I've discovered the literature of history is something that, for some reason or other, I'm quite familiar with. I do a good deal of reading and I keep up with major developments in the field of history, and, as a result, do not keep the same kind of organized file on material. I will often times write notes to myself about material. This is very helpful. As a matter of fact, one of the things that I have found extremely helpful over the years is that when I write a lecture, the first page of my lecture contains notes to myself about the

lecture, and one of the items on the first page is a bibliography. It's a citation to me as to the sources of that lecture, and if I am dealing with a specific topic and a student will ask me a question about it, or suggest to me for reading a book, I've always got that material because the first page is a bibliography.

H: How do you go about writing a lecture? What's involved there?

R: I don't know that I can answer that until I know specifically what kind of a lecture it was that I was writing. In rather general terms, however, I try to do several things, and as a result of my awareness of attempting to do these things, I like to think that my lectures are good. One of the things that I attempt to do, before I sit down and write a lecture, is to ask myself, "What is the purpose of this lecture?" I am not interested in replacing a textbook, so my lectures are not designed to be the source of student's factual information. But rather, it is my hope that the lectures are interpretive, or analytical, or critical, of a specific event. So that, at the very outset, I always ask myself, "What is it that I am trying to achieve?" And once I have that clear in my mind, then it enables me to better write a lecture.

I try to, secondly, ask myself, "What is the thesis, or points of view, that I want to convey in this lecture?" So, again, if you approach a lecture from a problem point of view, rather than dissemination of factual material, that will give you some kind of organization in the research for the lecture. Then I always, always go through my lecture and obtain from my lecture an outline of the lecture, and I put that outline on this first page that I was telling you about, and put that outline on the blackboard for students when I give a lecture. Now this results in clearly indicating to me, at the outset, what is important and what are the highlights--what it is that I am trying to do. Then, around that, I approach the factual material, not as the reason for the lecture, but the factual material then goes in to act as examples, as illustrations of, supportive of, the point of view.

I have found that I am always better off if I organize not only a lecture, but a whole series of lectures and, indeed, a whole course, under certain major themes. If I organize under major themes it makes it easier for me to write lectures, and it makes it easier for the student to understand what it is that I am doing. This may be nothing more, nor less, than a continuation of pretty much what I had done, and what I had tried to do, in terms of the nature of history when I was writing and researching history, thesis, problem, solution, the gathering of facts to document, support,

illustrate, and raising the question, again, of why. Why?

I've never said this before, but just listening to myself it's conceivable that mine may well be the problem approach to history. I never thought of it as such because we've had too many publishers produce books that are called "Problems in American History"--the problem this, the problem that. But I suppose, now that we're having this conversation, you could call it the "problem approach".

H: How have your lectures changed since the days when, say, you were at Texas A & M? Have you noticed. . .

R: Well, some of the lectures that I gave at Texas A & M have not changed significantly, though they may have changed in terms of content. I am constantly compelled to discard lectures because they go into too much detail on topics that are no longer important. Don't forget, I've been teaching now for over twenty years and what was important twenty years ago is not necessarily important now.

H: Could you give me a for instance?

R: Let's see, what have I discarded recently? In the survey class, I at one time spent a good deal of class period on the culture of the 1920's. I was interested in popular cultures. I no longer do that because I'm interested in other things that occurred during the 1920's, to discuss with my students in the survey class, and, as a result, have discarded some material which, incidentally, may very well, now, be significant and important for inclusion. We're going through a period of time when there seems to be a huge nostalgia kick for the 1920's and the 1930's. Tiny Tim and Bette Midler keep marching through my lectures. And maybe, you know, now that Hollywood is reviving interest in fashions, reviving interest in--television is engaging in this as well--it may be that I might want to revive some of that material. I used to go into detail on the suffering that people experienced during the crash and Depression of 1930's, because students of mine, at one time, were the children of people who actually went through the Depression. That's no longer true, so I don't go through that in detail anymore. So they constantly change. In other classes, I am discarding lectures because I no longer agree with the interpretation that was contained in that lecture. In upper division classes, I find myself getting disgusted enough with a lecture that I throw it away.

H: Disgusted with the interpretation?

R: No, no, the lecture; I throw it away. I know if I keep it

- I'll use it the next time the course comes around. So I throw it away.
- H: You mean you destroy it?
- R: Throw it away, yes, discard it, throw it away.
- H: So you can't. . .
- R: Can't use it. If I had it, I would pull it out of the file. I've got lectures that I've gotten keyed and tabbed. For example, here, you see this lecture here, I've got a little white tab over the title of the lecture with a paper clip. That indicates to me that this was a bad lecture and needs to be revised before I give it again.
- H: What made it a bad lecture?
- R: Okay, now you're going to get into one of my irrationalities. I teach pretty much the same way I drive an automobile. I can feel, in the seat of my pants, whether or not an automobile is driving well. I feel it. On certain days when there's a certain amount of dampness, moisture in the air, an automobile will drive better than at other times. I can go into a classroom and I can tell you within three minutes of any given lecture whether the lecture is going to go over or flop, whether it's going to be a good lecture or a bad lecture. It's not because I can point to any one specific thing, but rather, because of the way I feel. I try to read--no, that's not correct. I don't "try" to read. I automatically read. I wish I didn't. I detect, without any conscious effort on my part, how the students are receiving and perceiving what I am saying. Indeed, there are many days when I feel the same way the students feel. We both wish we weren't there because it's a disaster. And, although it's a disaster, I'm stuck and I have to keep going for fifty minutes. It's a horrible feeling.
- H: Do you think that when you have a good lecture you get some bad response?
- R: No, because if it's a good lecture I get good response. If it's a good lecture I leave the classroom with the feeling of a high.
- H: Have you ever had a lecture that got a good response from one group and from another group it didn't?
- R: Yes. That's due to whether the sun is shining, whether it's raining, whether a student in the class has antagonized me, whether I have done something or said something to antagonize

the class, whether I have just announced that we'll have an examinatoin next week, whether the students have something exciting that they're about to do, whether a guy is mowing the grass outside--factors over which I have no control. These also affect the lecture.

H: That wouldn't cause you to throw a lecture out?

R: No, because I am consciously aware of certain other factors.

H: When you say that some of your interpretations that you have in your lectures, earlier, that you wouldn't hold to today. . .

R: That's correct.

H: Could you give me some idea? You already mentioned that you're no longer Jeffersonian. Would this be the sort of thing?

R: Just along these lines very quickly, let's take something that you're familiar with. Now that the 1970 census has shown a shift of political power to the suburbs, I no longer, in my upper division classes, emphasize the political role and significance of suburbia. I no longer discuss or emphasize the conflict role between the city and the down state in state legislatures.

H: I'm not sure that I understand that. If you're discussing, say, the 1920's and there was that. . .

R: Yes. In that class, in the 1920's, I would talk about the rise of the city. But I would be quick to point out, where I had not heretofore, that even this was transitional, that this no longer applies, which gives you a different approach than what you had in the 1920's. In terms of actual and changing points of view, my interpretation, for example, of the steps that led to our participation in the First World War have changed considerably. At one time I blamed Woodrow Wilson, Walter Hines Paige, for America's entry into the First World War. I no longer take that interpretation of the events that led into the First World War. At one time, I was overwhelmingly, incredibly, a supporter of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Roosevelt could do no wrong! And historically, I have changed drastically my point of view of Roosevelt, and that requires changing lectures.

H: Is this change mainly an evaluative one, as to whether what they were doing was good or bad, or is the difference the perception of what they were?

R: I think the change is the product of two things. It's a product of one, additional information. That is, as time

goes on I read more about, and allegedly learn more about but definitely read more about, the New Deal. If you're constantly reading more material, then there is new evidence or, if not new evidence, evidence that is new to you. So that's one thing. And secondly, there is a change because of a change in evaluation as well.

H: Because your values have changed?

R: Yes, my values, my perspectives have changed.

H: So then, the principle one that you spoke of was shifting from the Jeffersonian. . .

R: Oh! Yes, all right, that's one of them. But, you know, when we talk about Roosevelt, it's hard to talk about Roosevelt as a Jeffersonian. As a matter of fact, with Louie Howe and Harry Hopkins, Roosevelt had the Jeffersonian verbiage with Hamiltonian action. No, let's take concrete illustration with reference to the New Deal. When you talk about the New Deal, from the perspective of, let's say, the 1940's or the early 1950's, then you can talk about the New Deal as being a response to the problems of society. Poverty, unemployment, one third of the nation ill housed, ill clothed, ill fed. Writing from, or lecturing from, or analyzing the New Deal from the perspective of the 1940's and 1950's would compel one to view the New Deal as being largely successful. But if you will view the New Deal from the perspectives of the 1960's and the 1970's, from the perspective of there being more unemployed people now, of there being more hungry people, more disadvantaged people, more uneducated people, where the aged, the unemployed, those who live in Appalachia, those who live in the city ghettos are just as bad off now as they were during the Depression days, then you're going to have to question, "What did the New Deal actually do? Did Roosevelt give us a New Deal? Or was Roosevelt merely setting up the situation where we were going to tread water until the economy could right itself? Did he restore middle class American and ignore every other feature of America?"

Now that we're into the 1970's and we're beginning to see that the stock market is not stable, we begin to see that, once again, depression is possible. Now we have to evaluate the anti-depression measures that the New Deal took from a different perspective. Now, I'm not saying that we've got to, of necessity, change our point of view, but I'm saying that we've got to reexamine our point of view.

H: You wrote a review of Frederick Louis Allen's Big Change. The last paragraph of that was rather eloquent philosophy.

That was written in 1953. Would you write that again today?

R: Living in an age of anxiety and insecurity, I would accept that. But this anxiety and insecurity cannot be removed simply by advancement in the field of materialism. I would restate that, yes. I would restate that our industrial system alienates individuals from each other and from society, the cog in the huge wheel. I think we have a greater use of social security numbers now, for identification purposes, than we did when I wrote this. I think people are still being deprived of meaningful roles in society. I think that we have a passive society. I suppose I would basically concur with the things that were written then, in terms of conclusion.

H: Would this suggest to you that you look at things pretty much the same way now as you did then?

R: No. I might suggest that I come to the same conclusion, but I haven't approached or arrived at the same conclusion the same way. That's possible too. There is absolutely no reason why the field of history, by discipline, should require consistency in conclusion, or in the processes. Consistency is necessary in methodology and the approach, but it is not a virtue in the teaching or interpretation of history.

H: You're Emersonian.

R: Well, I hate to think that.

H: It's one of my favorite quotations, "Foolish we are for consistency."

R: Yes, hobgoblin.

H: With little minds. You're familiar with the various stories of sudden insight, such as Newton and the apple, Archimedes bat and the eureka of experience.

R: Yes, I believe it.

H: So, can you tell me. . .

R: Every time I read a book.

H: You've had that experience?

R: Oh, yes! Because when reading a book or talking to somebody, discussing history, listening to a paper, if it's a worthwhile activity, does not only give me the sense of sudden

insights, but it gives me also a sense of anger and frustration and unhappiness. I am always saying things to myself like, "By God, that's great! That's fantastic! Now why the hell didn't I think of that?" or, "Yes, thought of that but I never stopped to put it down on paper," or "I never said it that way." You know the way some people are turned on by the use of a good phrase? I'm turned on by somebody who discovers a new approach, a new idea, a new interpretation. I think I said to you, in a previous interview, that reading a book in my field is an active and not a passive process, that it's an ongoing debate. If the book is any good, it's a bigger debate. If the book is a bad book, then it's just a dull, uninteresting process, and I don't engage in it.

H: What do you see yourself doing ten years from now?

R: Not teaching.

H: Do you have any idea of what you would like to be doing?

R: No, I just have a feeling. I have a feeling that I have been teaching too long. I have a feeling that it's important for an individual to do more than one thing during his or her lifetime, that it's essential for somebody to approach their work with a constant sense of challenge and excitement and ego reward. I think that if I stop teaching and go into a new field, a completely different field, that I will recapture a good deal of that excitement, of that emotionalism. And, because it's a new field, I will work much harder at it than I am working at the present time in my own field. I think that you reach a point of diminishing returns, where in the classroom your experience, your maturity, your previous exposure to classroom situations, where that crosses another point, and that point is, "You've done this before." That point is where the joy, the sense, the reward, the ego satisfaction, the feeling in the seat of your pants, isn't as great as it once was.

I'm still turned on by a good lecture. I'm still excited by the view of students who are moved. I'm still challenged by history. But there are some mornings when it is difficult to go to work. There are some days after I've been at work that I can honestly say to myself, "I have not made an impact." I earned a hell of a lot of money that day, but I haven't made an impact. And I kind of feel that there's something else out there. I don't know exactly what it is at this stage of the game. It's just, at this point, just a vague feeling. It may never come to pass, but when you ask me what am I going to be doing ten years from now, I have the feeling that it will not be teaching. I have the idea that I am going to

leave teaching and do something else while I still have the ability to try something else. It won't be the field of gynecology, which holds a certain fascination for me. I'm too late for that kind of activity where I have to go back and spend ten years getting training and education. But it may be in something that doesn't require that. It would have to be in something that did not require capital. because capital is something I don't have. Income is what I spend to enjoy the good life. Capital is something you put aside deferring the good life and I do not defer the good life.

H: Would it be something in business?

R: Yes. I say, I really, honestly just do not know. I have no idea.

H: One of the other questions about the department, aside from your teaching, what sort of role did you play in the development of the department, of the history faculty here at Youngstown?

R: That's a difficult question to answer, probably the most difficult of all, because the role that any individual plays in the department is multi-faceted, to begin with. Secondly, one's own view of the role that they play is different from one's colleague's view of the role that you play. On just the simple, barefaced, statistical or objective approach to the department, the fact of the matter is that I have been here a long period of time, that I am a full professor. This means that over the years there have been a number of policy situations where a handful of the faculty, not the entire department, has gotten together and made policy decisions. Without being too specific, there are a couple of faculty members who are no longer with us because of that kind of policy decision. There are a number of people here at the university who are here because of the part that I played, along with others, in the interviewing process and deciding, "Yes, let's invite so-and-so to come here. This is an individual we would like to have as a colleague." In the field of less tangible developments in the department, I like to think--I don't know that my colleagues would support this--that I have a commitment to the ethics, to the standards of the profession. I like to think that I am, whenever possible, bringing before my colleagues consideration of the profession. Now, how they review this is different and, indeed, maybe in order to have what you're engaged in actually be a meaningful activity, I think maybe you ought to ask my colleagues that question rather than ask me.

About the nature and approach to history, it should be, might be, could be, apparent in the conversations that we've been having. It would be interesting to find out if one's approach to a discipline is pretty much the same thing as their approach to a series of interviews. Is there a separate mind that works in the classroom, that works with a discipline? Or is there a mind that permeates all activities?

H: That's interesting.

R: If, for example, I approach a lecture by presenting a problem and then illustrating the problem with a point of view, do I do that in interviewing? If I say to you that it's perfectly okay for an individual to change his point of view and his opinion, and I change my point of view and my opinion over the series of, you know, how many weeks we've been going with this thing here. . .

H: Yes, that's a fascinating question.

What I'm concerned with is your work and thought processes as a historian. One thing that is quite apparent is the medium with which you work, the lecture. The lectures are prepared much as one would an article. The styles of your articles that I've read tend to be very similar to the style of your lectures. In both cases the feeling that I get is that the product is essentially a work of rhetorical art. The lecture combines the talents or approaches of the trial lawyer. What seems to be involved is a preconceived picture that you want to convey. The idea is to persuade the audience to accept this interpretation. What do you think?

R: I certainly do not know of a specific model-pattern and then could say to you, "The model-pattern is such and such." I do not know nor have I consciously attempted to achieve a specific model or pattern and follow it. I'm trying to say in a number of ways that the really important thing, unifying force with me, is the desire to communicate. This may sound a bit fanciful, but I think that I have a higher regard for matters of the mind, for thinking processes or analysis, for evaluation, than I have for most other human activities. Accordingly, I feel that one of the important things for me to do is to communicate, to communicate in such a way as to compel individuals to respond to ideas, to challenge, to stimulate, and to question. Frequently, I'll occupy a position which I do not necessarily support, or a position in which I am not as enthusiastic as my conversation would suggest, in order

specifically to get this kind of stimulation. I have used certain lecture techniques to achieve this, just as in seminars and colloquia I become the devil's advocate. What I am primarily concerned with is this communication and the stimulation of thinking processes.

I have come more and more to believe that the subject of history is not important, that I would want to communicate anyway, and I probably would use some other discipline as a medium. You used reference to art and then artists. For a long period of time, for artists who used oil, painted in oils, the oil was merely the device for delivering the pigment. It may well be that history is merely the subject matter for delivering what is important, and that is the ideas or the compulsion to require other people to think. I might be just as much at home in the field of political science or the field of sociology, or in a social relationship, given the opportunity to communicate.

I am required by profession to communicate with my students and with my colleagues. Socially, I frequently find that I am convinced that there is no communication, that a given person cannot contribute to me. I easily become bored and go either into isolation or go into a kind of withdrawal process. I become very, very frustrated by the amount of time I spend with people who cannot contribute to me.

H: Contribute to you in what way?

R: Compel me to think, to analyze, to reexamine. If we're talking about the significance of matters of the mind, I'm suggesting to you that frequently in nonprofessional situations as well, that I become frustrated, bored, resentful of time spent with people who deal with me in cliches and contribute nothing to me, nor do they make me challenge my already preconceived notions.

H: Is that how you feel now?

R: Now at this moment? Yes, at the present moment this entire process of tape recording my observations, as I told you at the outset, is something that I did not look forward to doing, but that I had no choice. I was compelled and required to do it if my basic philosophy and belief in communication and history and students was true. What I'm saying now, the time that I'm spending communicating with you, is for me a non-productive, nonlearning experience. It does not in any way, shape, matter of form contribute to my ego. It doesn't give me a vicarious thrill. It doesn't in any way contribute to my knowledge or education. How do you perceive this to be a positive thing for me?

H: It's a good question.

R: Unfortunately not all the activities that we as human beings engage in are productive activities. They have to be done.

H: Right offhand I honestly can't say how this will benefit you or if it will benefit you. I think it will benefit me; I think it will benefit people who are interested in how a real person who is actually working with history does things, the kinds of things that interest him, how he operates, and so on.

I think I have a very different notion about what got people turned on in history than I had since talking to several historians. Part of this is what I mean by this whole problem-solving notion. There seems to be a much more aesthetic sensation and kind of involvement in history than one is at least led to believe occurs in sciences, for instance, and so on.

R: I think, again, the analogy that history is the medium for delivery may be a valid one. Some people express themselves through history lectures. Some people communicate through performance of their musical instrument. Some people communicate through an experiment in a chemistry laboratory. I am most happy when I am exchanging ideas. Too frequently I do not exchange ideas but merely communicate; it's a one-way street. That is a compromise that is acceptable because communication is important. It's just that I like people to communicate with me as well. I cannot grow if I stay with all of my present knowledge and all of my ideas and opinions, prejudices, and interpretations. I can only grow by evaluating contributions that I receive.

H: Could you ever imagine yourself doing something like Darwin working on barnacles for eight years exclusively?

R: No. As a matter of fact, that is probably one of the reasons why I do not put any emphasis or value on publication. I am interested in ideas. If I go in and research something and come up with ideas, observations, and can make certain hypotheses of that motivation, I have satisfied my intellectual desire. Why now spend time writing it up?

H: But you do write it up for your lectures and so on.

R: On the other hand, I do a good deal of investigation and research into areas that never appear in a lecture in the field of history. So by way of illustration, I spent a good deal of time with Mrs. Roberta Messerly, who was the administrative assistant to Mike Kerwin, in an attempt to understand Mike Kerwin's motivation, how he functioned, why he functioned that way. Once I was able to gather enough information to arrive at certain conclusions and observations then my research process

was satisfied. Why spend X number of more years or months reconfirming what I've already achieved? I become easily bored. I don't think a barnacle would enthrall me for eight years.

H: The notion of doing everything on some figure like Woodrow Wilson or something like that, a thorough, systematic, detailed digging out of every little piece of . . .

R: It's essential and it's an important task. It needs to be done. I do not put down those people who do it. I simply say it's not for me. Let's go back to something we've previously discussed. I think that administration of a university is essential. I think that certain people have to be administrators. That I do not have the personality to be an administrator does not mean that I do not appreciate the necessity for, nor the work of administrators. I do; I simply say for me, it's not what I want.

H: That is exactly one of the ~~iniquities~~ ^{iniquities} that struck me in this whole series because you obviously are a very political person. You get a lot of kicks out of political involvement. You have a lot of interests . . .

R: I hope you understand that the reason for that is that at this stage of my development I am interested in power and the use of power.

H: This is purely an intellectual concern.

R: My participation in politics is not for ego; it is not done for emotional satisfaction. I am not myself pursuing politics. I do not want to hold an office. I have no desire to hold office; I have no desire to be a public official in the rubber chicken, buckshot pea circuit, Rotary on Monday, Kiwanis on Tuesday, Elks on Wednesday kind of thing that we talked about. I am interested in both observing politicians and their use of power, and moving politicians to accepting positions.

Let me see if I cannot give you a specific and complete illustration: I don't know whether you and I have gone into this heretofore. I, at the present time, am called upon by the local Democratic party organization as a policy-maker participant in campaigns. I am in now about my fifth mayoralty campaign. The party's present candidate for the office of mayor is a man by the name of George Vukovich. George has sixteen years of practical political experience in Youngstown. He is a good vote-getter in a number of areas. He, for example, can obtain the organization vote and he can obtain the ethnic vote. I as one of three policy makers have told George that I am far more liberal than he, and that I am more interested in ideas, and that I am going to spend all of my time and my efforts moving him closer to my position in the campaign so that when

he becomes mayor he will be committed to certain programs and policies. He must always remember that in the last analysis he is the candidate; he is the guy who is going to suffer from any negative features in a campaign. He must pass judgment on all of my suggestions and it becomes a dangerous game when there are only three policy makers. George is one of them and I am the other, so he must weigh everything that I say. In this period of time I am working now both on concepts, and speeches for the candidate wherein if the candidate accepts my concepts and accepts my speeches, then I'm going to be able to sit back and watch a man win office by appealing to people on a number of issues. I will feel that I have made a contribution. This is a superficial analysis and should only be taken as superficial. George Vukovich ran in the primary on one issue, and one issue alone; and that issue was that he was a family man. That was all right for the primary, given the opposition, given the party structure, and given the nature of primaries. Hopefully, and there is no guarantee here that I'm going to be successful, hopefully in the election campaign itself Vukovich is going to come out publicly for certain things such as a gun control--Saturday night special--local ordinance. Beneath the surface, not publicly, he is going to make certain concessions to certain political power blocks in the community. He will make specific concessions that I want him to make. I think this is both desirable for the party and desirable for the minority group, and desirable for the city. Obviously a candidate cannot publicly promise an individual a job if elected, so I'm not going to go any further in this conversation.

H: Do any administrators have any real power? Are they able to influence and control?

R: This was one of the observed phenomena, namely that people who are supposed to have power in reality do not have power. I spent a good deal of time with and became very close to former president Pugsley. Although I had spent more time with Howard Jones when he was president, it was never as productive or meaningful to me as the time that I spent communicating with Pugsley. Pugsley was without doubt a man of tremendous personality. Opinionated, self-centered, egotistical, often times dictatorial, but Pugsley was never dull; he was never a bore; he was never pusillanimous. He always was a man searching for information, wanting to communicate. He was a doer; so almost by definition this is a person I'm anxious to be with and spend time with in hope that maybe some of it will rub off on me, or just the observation of it will give me joy. Indeed, I enjoyed spending time with Pugsley when a third party came in and Pugsley would question him or her about certain things. Even with Pugsley, the time that he was president of the university constituted a period when he did nothing because he was a new president and realized that to take any action would make

people insecure and uncomfortable. Then after that period of time he began to exercise power, only to discover that his exercise of power was restricted by the fact that major policy decisions were being made not by him, but were being made by the state legislature, by the governor, by the board of regents, by the executive director of the board of regents, by the board of trustees of the university, by the comptroller, by finances, by organized labor, by organized faculty. In reality, he had all of the responsibilities, all of the headaches of an administrator where power resided, and very, very little of the power.

- H: In this situation was the power just so diffused that no one has much power?
- R: You could say if individual X had power and if individual X had my value system, then that would be good, and that would be the solution to all of our problems. But if individual X doesn't have all the power, or if individual X doesn't have my value system but somebody else's value system, then we've got trouble.

Interestingly enough, it may well be that power resides in the individual faculty member who has confidence in his or her ability in the classroom. If you can control your daily activities, if you are the one who determines what happens and what does not happen in your classroom, maybe in the entire academic community it's the lowly instructor who has more real power. It may well be that power resides in that individual who knows what his or her value system is, what his or her priorities are, and then who can live constantly approaching, approximating that value system and that priority system.

The phone has never rung in my classroom. I do not have to, because of external pressure, change what I am doing. I do not have to genuflect or be nice to people whom I do not like. When I want to get out, I leave. When I want to participate, I participate. If I don't want to deliver a speech, I don't. If I don't want to smile, I don't have to. Maybe the classroom instructor has more power than the university president.

- H: Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW