

**Oral History Interview of
William Tydeman**

**Interviewed by: David Marshall
November 29, 2017
Lubbock, Texas**

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Transcript Overview:

This interview features William “Bill” Tydeman as he discusses his academic life and careers. In this interview, Bill recounts his high school years and interest in basketball and baseball, as well as his pursuit of a higher education beyond a bachelors degree.

Length of Interview: 01:02:06

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David Marshall [DM]:

The date is November 29, 2017. This is David Marshall interviewing Bill Tydeman at his house in Lubbock, Texas. And we were talking yesterday. You were talking about Roosevelt. Gave a good background on Roosevelt.

William “Bill” Tydeman [BT]:

Right.

DM:

But I wanted to talk a little bit about your high school experience and the athletics and the academics. If you can just touch on that some and how you came to be a double scholarship athlete at Syracuse.

BT:

Well to talk a little bit about high school, the—I guess I didn't really start. I was thinking last night, you know, when did I get involved in sports? And I was, you know, definitely from—I can recall—ninth grade, the playing. Learning to shoot or, you know, mess around. But before that, we had a group of kids who all lived on the same street. Hudson Avenue. Each street happened to be named after a historical figure. This group of figures were steamboat captains, like Fulton and a succession of names. But we played softball and we played softball on the street and we played softball at the local school, which had a field. We'd make the neighbors angry when the ball would go in their yard. We'd have a race with Mrs. Eckhart to see who's snatched our ball first. “You kids stop playing that game.” [Laughing] So it wasn't organized. This is a long way of saying we played, but it was playground kind of stuff for the most part and kids would get together. You know, at that time, I mean, I think of the current Orion [Society] signature. You know, no child left inside. We were personifications of that. We were never in the house. I mean, it was suburban area. It was all the homes, but we were outside. We were playing catch. We were playing softball or just kind of pick up things and didn't start playing any organized sports until I think it was the seventh—we started seven through nine, but I only have memories going back to starting with ninth grade and playing on a freshman level. So the—we played a schedule of other freshman teams that were connected with high school. So Freeport High had, you know, an eighth grade team and a ninth grade team. In the summertime—so I messed around with that not knowing really what I was doing.

DM:

Baseball and basketball or?

BT:

This was basketball and then baseball, yeah. We played ninth grade baseball. In the ninth grade, I remember playing, but it was all—it wasn't particularly well organized. I mean, it was organized

play. We had uniforms, but we had a coach that didn't know anything about baseball. You know, that kind of stuff and so we were involved in that. Involved and trying to make up for Mr. Hairforth, who didn't—who confessed to not knowing the game and the other P.E. teacher who was hacked off that he wasn't chosen as coach and so there was all that dynamic going on, but the thing with the kids was that there was six or eight kids all within a year of each other. So it wasn't hard to get up a game, you know? And the no child left behind wasn't a part of our slogan, but it was part of our day to day actions, particularly in the summertime, when the sports tended to be baseball. And it tended to be—the police boys club was very active. They provided the moneys to field teams to play other police boys clubs in baseball. And so, there was that going on in the summertime. There was summer leagues in basketball, but that didn't start until later. Playing summer league, I think that would be more an activity that we started in ninth grade, maybe tenth grade. I was a big baseball fan. Lived and died with the Dodgers and a couple buddies down the street were Yankee fans and they were always clobbering the Dodgers in the world series in that time period. But I recall the first time I tried to pitch and I was definitely a side armer, so instead of the three quarter or overhand, it was a side arm. It was a player by the name of Yule "The Whit" Blackwell. And Blackwell practically scraped the ground when he was—

DM:

Was he Dodgers?

BT:

He actually wasn't. He was—I think he was with the Pittsburgh Pirates for a long time.

DM:

Oh okay.

BT:

And he was a relief pitcher before they had the complete specialization for relief, but he didn't usually start games, but somehow, I latched onto him as a role model, somebody that I really liked to be able to throw like Yule Blackwell. So we played PBC ball and played that all summer long. We played, as I said, basketball on an organized basis. When we got to high school, so that was the equivalent of tenth grade, ninth graders had played—we ninth graders had played Freeport, one of the options for high school. Or played Hempstead. I think I mentioned that dynamic before. At the end of the Hempstead game, the varsity coach from Freeport came up and said, "Well where are you going to high school?" And I said, "Well I think I'm going to Hempstead. My parents went to Hempstead and a lot of kids around our area are going to Hempstead." He said, "Well you really ought to think about coming to Freeport." And so from that point on, there was a rather regular contact with the varsity coach who thought that Freeport

would be a better fit. Actually, it probably was. It was broken down like it is in Texas with a freshman team, a junior high team, and a—not a junior high, but a—

DM:

Junior varsity.

BT:

Junior varsity and a varsity team. So baseball was a thing for the summer. We played basketball in the fall and the football coach, Bill Ashley, was a legend. He had been coaching for twenty or thirty years and winning teams, winning state championships. The championship competition was generally just county wide, but what you have to factor into that was there were thirty-two—sorry— sixty-two high schools. So that was a lot of activity. A lot of play. And very competitive. Occasionally, we would play pre-season before the league season started. We played New York City teams.

DM:

This is football?

BT:

This is still basketball.

DM:

Okay.

BT:

But football with Ashley and a winning tradition that went back decades was the sport. And so I heard from Ashley on a regular basis that he wanted me to play football. And come to realize, that, you know, you're tall so you can catch—you can play and you know how to catch. But I didn't want any part of it. It just didn't appeal to me. My parents weren't overly excited about it. So I passed on football and carried on with baseball through high school. I carried on with basketball all through high school. Played—didn't—was on the varsity team as a sophomore, but only at the end of the season when we were going on to play for league championships and things like that. Or the county playoff system, but didn't get a lot of playing time as a sophomore. Junior year and senior year, it seemed to come together and I had—oh, it wasn't an overwhelming amount, but probably ten or twelve offers from different colleges. All the local schools had chimed in.

DM:

Were these offers for both sports or did one prevail over the other?

BT:

On a high school basis, you know, played both. As it got closer to graduation, it became basketball and that's where I was putting my time so these were offers that came from colleges and universities for basketball and they were—it was a pretty rich deal. You got room board tuition, books, covering all your expenses. And the—you know, I was—I had in mind a couple of schools, but they were mostly Ivy league schools and to be honest, my grades were okay, but my college boards were marginal. So it meant that schools that had been cultivating me, I guess, didn't think Dartmouth, Columbia, weren't—scores were going to make it problematic. So the other thing that was interesting is like the basketball powers at the time. This was back in the day before you had 6'8 guards and 6'5 guards playing against 6'8, which was rare and unusual to encounter that kind of height and ability, but the big powers, several of them made it clear that “Now, you understand if you come to North Carolina State that you're going to major in physical education.” I said, “I'm not so sure.” And so I wasn't very interested in the North Carolina State or a couple of the ACC [**Atlantic Coast Conference**] schools because it was so restrictive.

DM:

What was their logic on that? That you would be a coach?

BT:

No, that you would—you could take a class called the theory and practice of intercollegiate basketball. You could have, you know, participate in the summer camp.

DM:

So your curriculum would be about basketball as well as your—yeah, okay.

BT:

Right. So I mean, it was an interesting process. I never got into visiting a lot of schools. I mean, I knew all the Long Island area schools and coaches that talked to me. My varsity coach, the one who had talked to me when I was a freshman, was a Syracuse grad. So he thought that Syracuse would be a pretty good fit for me. Of course, you know, his bias was for the orange men, but at the same time, Syracuse had a pretty decent academic reputation. There, it was challenging enough academically that it didn't seem like they were trying to steer you in any one particular direction. But that was kind of how it shook out.

DM:

What about a major? Were you interested in an academic major? You mentioned yesterday that you really wanted to play in the NBA.

BT:

Yeah.

DM:

Like so many athletes would look at a possible professional career, but were you looking in terms of something else for your curriculum?

BT:

Yeah. I was—we had a next door neighbor, Bernie Schwartz. Bernie was the richest guy in the neighborhood because he owned his own import, export business and had a knockout for a daughter, Harriet. I used to talk to Bernie quite often and so what I decided to do was well I'm going to be like Bernie Schwartz. I'm going to make a lot of money and I'm going to see if the international trade or—I don't know what the—I guess Syracuse called it the closest they could get. They were a little confused about how this guy was talking about these more esoteric kinds of majors. But I settled on marketing so it was a business curriculum my freshman year, which at Syracuse, if you were in the business college, you had to take a year, two semesters, of each course. So you didn't have the option of changing majors at the end of your fresh—beginning—mid-point, after you finish one semester. And I was—I could still remember James B. Way was my advisor and he was definitely a strict coat and tie man. Helped you with—select your courses. And I knew at the end of the—middle of the semester that this was not for me. I just—the courses were Marketing 101, Production Management, Accounting. I hated it. I mean, from day one.

DM:

That's one way to find out.

BT:

I found out really quickly. But here I was, knowing that these thoughts of mine were not very, very well thought out and that is not material that I related to very well. I was memorizing the United States Supreme Court decisions. It was that kind of stuff, but I had to take the second semester. I was on probation the first semester because I didn't attend class as regularly as I should. You know, didn't like the assignments and so by the end of my freshman year, I had just squeaked by. You know, I was solid C's. And you know, carrying on with the boys. I mean, we had quite a significant number of athletes who were all housed in the same areas. You know, so Scott Cottage had twenty scholarship athletes and Watson Dormitory had twenty-five or thirty and so it went, you know, they could keep tabs on you. We're in these Victorian homes that passed as dormitories, but I decided, you know, the one course that does interest me in this whole group is history. I didn't go and take a lot of history courses then, but I knew it was something I liked for high school. So I went to the chair of the history department during his office hours. The Russian historian, Warren B. Welch, who was not a friendly sort of guy. He basically said, "Why would we want someone like you to be a history major?" I said, "Well you know, I think I've finally found my way and I really like—well I don't know.", "We see too many of these guys and I'll do this. I'll sign it and okay your major, but I don't think—" You know? It was one

of those conversations. I basically thought to myself, Screw you. But it was a discovery for me, that was the right choice because you asked early on, well were there any indications that you wanted to be involved in history and historical investigation or history major and the answer was yes, because of the subject matter. And I didn't know that there was such a thing as how was a course described? Life and Culture of—American Life and Culture. And so it was a course on cultural history, basically, taught by a rather prolific historian in the Maxwell school, which had a strong history department. A strong emphasis on U.S. history and Western history. So I managed to get by with B's and an occasional A and make my way through undergraduate school as a history major. Basketball, we got caught in a trap in the sense that the head basketball coach, Marc Guley, was an alcoholic. And it was innumerable tales about Guley staggering around in the gymnasium. You could smell alcohol on his breath. He made really stupid remarks, and so kids filtered in and out. I mean, we lost a lot of games. We didn't have a particularly strong team. Guley was, "What the heck, fellas? I don't understand why we're not doing a better job out there. I showed you how to do two hand passes."

DM:

How long would that fly in the NCAA today?

BT:

Yeah, it's like boom. But he was buddies with the athletic director who was near the end of his reign as well, Lou Andrews. Guley had played basketball at Syracuse twenty or thirty years ago and so he had—

DM:

Homeboy.

BT:

Yeah. Kind of connections. But he was fired, I guess, the second year I was there. It was only freshman eligibility. So you couldn't play varsity basketball. Your freshman year you played a freshman schedule, other freshman teams. And that was kind of dumb. They changed that a couple of years later. And then the new coach brought in all his people and basically showed the door to the rest of us. Told us that the chances of us playing are slim to none. Didn't see much point in trying to carry on when you weren't going to get any playing time and you really should think about what you want to do. So I thought seriously about transferring because I had three—I guess sophomore year, Guley was still there. So I had two more years of eligibility. But then I thought, well I like the place. I like the guys we hang around with. Getting started somewhere else just didn't—I was ambivalent about it. I just took no action. So that by our senior year, Fred Louis, who wasn't a particularly nice person either, but he did some terrific recruiting and recruited one of the top prospects in the nation, Dave Bing, who subsequently went on to become a NBA starting guard for Detroit and was a fabulous ball player. Was the best player we'd ever

seen, but he brought along with him three or four other kids that were kind of nationally sought after. I mean, you can see his point, to rebuild and do things, but it was never done with a sense of concern or any feelings at all for the previous group that had been there. I think one kid wound up making the transition and so I was going to play baseball. I played baseball my freshman year in college as a pitcher and we had a so-so team. Win one. Lose one. Win one. Lose one. It got to sophomore year, I guess it got to be sophomore year, but I'm a little confused about the eligibility status there. But in any event, played the one year and then I just kind of gave it up. No explicit reason. I didn't feel—the other coach was a hard-nosed guy, the baseball coach, but tried to have his interest of players and to work with them and so we played the round of schools in upstate New York. The Niagara's and the Canisius's and the Rochesters and places like that. I got to know some of the baseball players, but just didn't have much of a commitment to it anymore. We had some pretty good baseball teams. We had at least three guys in my time slot that went on to at least play some in the majors and we took a southern swing every year. Went to Florida when the snows were still flying in Syracuse. So it was a decent program. But had stayed with the academics through graduation, no major regrets.

DM:

Stayed as a history major?

BT:

Stayed as a history major.

DM:

Did you keep a scholarship at all?

BT:

Yeah.

DM:

Your athletic scholarship through the four years?

BT:

Yes.

DM:

Good.

BT:

I did. But we did it with the understanding that he didn't want to see our faces, you know, as juniors and seniors.

DM:

So you still got your scholarship, but you weren't playing?

BT:

Right.

DM:

And that was basketball and baseball?

BT:

Two years of baseball. Or one year. I guess it was freshman and sophomore. Two years of baseball and three years of basketball. But mostly, the last year, was sitting on the bench.

DM:

Sure glad you got your scholarship, though.

BT:

Yeah. That made a difference.

DM:

Now, how was this? As you were losing interest in baseball and this thing happened in basketball, were you becoming any more interested in your major?

BT:

Yeah. I started to think seriously my junior year about okay, what am I going to do? I'm a history major. I loved the material on social and cultural history. Blake was a good teacher, good lecturer, but what am I going to do? And I don't know how I arrived at the decision, well teaching school might not be a bad alternative.

DM:

Public school?

BT:

Public school. So I had been—I had known my wife since she was an eighth grader.

DM:

What was her name?

BT:

Patricia Carrigon [0:28:12].

DM:

Carrigon?

BT:

Uh-huh. Carrigon was her maiden name. And so we were in junior high school together. She lived just down the street. And so all through high school and college, she went to Elmira College for women. It was a women's school at the time. It went coed a couple of years later, but a good academic school. Well run. You know, had a good reputation on the Southern tier of New York. So she and I were a couple for all through high school and she was a year behind me so we had made up our minds to get married after she graduated from college. Elmira was ninety miles from Syracuse and I had cut a deal with my father that if I got any scholarship support that he would buy a car for me. So I did get scholarship support and I did—what the initial conversation was for a Thunderbird, but I wound up with a Chevy Impala convertible, which was pretty hot stuff on campus.

DM:

That is pretty cool.

BT:

And so I could get back and forth, you know, maybe once every four weeks. To New Yorkers, anything more than twenty-five miles seems like a huge undertaking.

DM:

By the way, what was that? That's a very different part of New York from where you grew up. What are the distinctions?

BT:

Yes. Elmira was, for a time, one of the homes of Mark Twain and I think his wife was from Elmira. The college had Mark Twain's study. It was a replica of the steamboat, but it was—well it wasn't a replica. It was a steamboat. A captain's—what do you call it? Steering wheel?

DM:

The stern wheel.

BT:

Stern. Yeah. The paddle wheel or whatever it might've been. Was largely a suburban, semi-rural, or semi-suburban, I guess, town.

DM:

Mostly Caucasian population in that area, which was also different for you.

BT:

Yeah. So you know, we wrote letters back and forth and called on the telephone and went to visit. She had a roommate. They were real fond of each other. They got along really well. Became close friends. So you headed south. You got on the state road. You were pretty much there in two hours, but I said well if I'm going to teach, I need to have a license or some kind of accreditation or something so I looked into that and sure enough, you could do like you do here. You get a—do graduate work in education, that would get you certified. So I came back home my, what would've been fifth year, and enrolled in education courses in an education curricular major at Hofstra University.

DM:

Where's that?

BT:

Which is on Long Island in Hempstead where the high school was and was—I don't know what the enrollment was, but it was fairly—mostly Long Islanders. Mostly kids from the area. Had some good teachers, but for the most part, I thought the curriculum was a joke. I didn't think it was very rigorous or very self-satisfying. It caused me a lot of doubts as to do I really want to do this? And I know I like history, but there's no way around it. You got to take these classes and get certified.

DM:

I've seen that before. This coming off of a history major that was fulfilling and then having to take education courses and it was a real downer.

BT:

Yeah.

DM:

Seems to be pretty common.

BT:

Yeah. A lot of the kids that were majors were just after certification or after, you know, knowing they had to do it. Like it or not. I think I made a stupid move. I was so put out with the curriculum, you know, that I didn't—I disdained for education courses only grew, and I never bothered to take the qualifying exam you had to have. For a master's, you had to have thirty-six hours and it had to be social studies education. The history of the junior high school. You know that sort of stuff. But the culminating event was passing the master's exam. I just never took it.

DM:

You had finished the course work?

BT:

I had finished the course work. I had done everything else, but that was basically it. I kind of holding my nose up in the air thinking I'm a lot smarter than these folks, are and so I found—I practiced taught. That was one of the requirements. You had to have X numbers of teaching. I did that. Had a real good practice teacher and got to know enough of the teaching faculty that I was offered a job where I was practiced teaching. So that seemed fine. It was just the next town over. Merrick, Long Island, New York. I think we mentioned Kennedy High School. That turned out to be a very good experience. Good kids. Good students. New school.

DM:

High school.

BT:

High school. New curriculum. I got to teach. Originally, they would schedule for the worse classes because you were the person with the least seniority. So you'd get—in those days, they homogeneously tracked all the kids so you had regular regions track, which was you had an exam at the end of the school year that was pass or fail. You know, if you didn't get a sixty-five, you were out of luck. So it was called the regions exam. We had those exams for students in the—well I mean, for the kids that took them, they were what we call the dumb heads. You know, you could just about write their name. There weren't too many of those kids. Most of them were college bound. Many of them came from very prominent Jewish families in town. And so I did have one of those classes, but then had other classes that were, in time, became quite a joy to teach. Was able to teach advanced, kids with high IQ's, for American history and then was able to teach an elective in anthropology. I did that for five years after getting everything squared away for what I was going to do. This seemed fine until about the fifth year, and I was bored with it. You know, it wasn't—I had good kids again, so it wasn't so much the kids themselves as it was just I looked in the crystal ball and couldn't see myself doing this for the next twenty or thirty years. That was the reality. I didn't want to be a principal.

DM:

How about a coach? Did they want you to coach?

BT:

Yeah. [Laughter] So the first crack out of the box, Mike Laurel, who was then the varsity coach, asked me if I was interested in coaching because his assistant coach, Willy Mills, was a driver ed. teacher. That was one of the allowed jobs. You throw a driver ed. There were two or three former athletes that taught driver ed. Wills was one of them. He was retiring so he asked me if I

was interested and I was. I said I was interested. At Calhoun High School, where we taught the first year, was going to be open, for the first class would be the following fall. I said, "Yeah. I'd like to do it." And so I became the assistant coach. I did that all of the four years. Nothing the first year, but did it for four years as assistant coach baseball and basketball.

DM:

Oh wow.

BT:

And that was a lot of fun. I mean, I enjoyed it. We had kids who weren't always the strongest or the most athletic coming from real diverse backgrounds, but they were good kids. Tried hard. We had some good victories along the way. But it was interesting. When we got our assignments, Mike had been a career teacher. Laurel, the head coach. He also coached baseball. I got my assignment. It was a job. Okay, that looks good. But it was at Calhoun High School, where they were continuing what they were doing otherwise. So I told Mike, I said, "It doesn't look good." Yanarello, Mr. Yanarello [0:39:30], the principal, said, "I need to talk to Donny." Said, "Give me this thing." So he takes the—I show him the sign. He kind of huffs off and comes back not too long after that. "Well you're going to be at Kennedy. You're going to work there." I said, "Great." That's even better news because things were new and they were less entrenched. Some really good teachers. These two members of the department had done everything except their PhD and were kind of following a model of we're probably not ever going to go back and get a Ph—finish my dissertation. But you know, in the fur trade. New York State. The Revolutionary Period. But we're a fountain of knowledge and information. I mean, this strong informationally or as prep-wise as any teacher you want to encounter. And so Herb Camens, now, the late Herb Camens was kind of my mentor. He taught all the advanced placement classes so they were teaching advanced placement US History. And they got, you know, like they do now. It's become much more common, but then, it was fairly rare to teach with the advanced kids. These kids would break their neck. Herb gave them wonderfully creative assignments and challenged them all up and down the line. He had them doing, you know, as initial students or practitioners, he had them doing conflicting interpretations of the American past. You know, all the stuff they could really sink their teeth into. So all that happened over a five-year period. Pat and I got married. She got a job from the social security administration so she took the train every day into New York City and was basically doing casework judging people's eligibility and prospects for social security payment. And we didn't buy an apartment, but we found an apartment in Freeport, so I didn't have far to go to work. Merrick was another town over. I stayed with that, as I said, for five years. When I was feeling kind of disaffected and would get phone calls from my high school buddy, Dave Goldman, who had gotten married a year after we had married, and became the treasurer and vice president for Aeronomic Corporation, which built altimeters and were the largest manufacturer, I guess, of altimeters at that time. This would've been late sixties, early seventies.

DM:

Is this for aircraft?

BT:

Yeah, this is for aircraft. But the head honcho owner and creator and builder of patented altimeters was his wife's father. So he immediately moved into a slot. He was the boy from New York that was given this job by his father-in-law. But he would call me up and say, "You got to come to Florida." They were living in Clearwater. Herb Frank, the father-in-law, was you know, if not a lifelong resident in Clearwater, pretty close to it. So I figured, you know, what's to lose here? I might as well check this out. I'll go to Florida. I had an interview. Dave set up an interview with one of the—with Herb, the father in law, for me. And then for the athletic director, for me as well, and so I said yes. We moved lock, sock, and barrel to Clearwater. We found a place. Found an apartment. It was a bit of a shock because I had no clue where Floridian instruction and you know, how they handle their curriculum and what was going on. It turned out to be an absolute nightmare. They were trying, experimenting, with an open classroom. So you had every student who needed social studies was together in one large lecture and then they'd breakout for individual classes. So but I mean, leading discussions, supposedly, and immersing themselves in social studies. So it was bad. They had just desegregated the school that year. I think I may have touched on that. The desegregation meant that for the first time, black teachers were working with white teachers. And so again, I was given sanction to work with the black teachers because I came from New York. The conversation with the athletic director turned out that what they really needed was not so much a new coach or an additional coach because they had been there. A coaching staff was pretty stable, but they needed a tennis coach. So I became the head tennis coach for three years and we had terrific tennis players. I mean, these were kids who had been taking lessons from age six and playing in all regional tournaments and traveling the country. So you basically tossed out the balls and waited to see who won the matches that you had set up into squad matches. That would be the first five. There were one or two kids who were consistently winning who also had their own tennis coaches and everything else. So it was a pretty easy gig just getting all the players together and we had pretty good spree décor and I had good challenging games with local other high schools where kids were achieving some notoriety in local tennis circles so that—but I was driven to distraction. I mean, I'll tell you. Are we going too long here, David?

DM:

No, no, no, no. Doing fine.

BT:

The best example I can give you of the climate that existed at Clearwater High School—it's a big school. It was probably close to a thousand kids. But we had teacher orientation and this guy comes up to me, one of the teachers, and gosh. I'm not going to remember his name. It will come

to me in a minute, but he said, "Well we caught a break here. You're interested in doing some social studies teaching and it looks like you might get a class. Come on down to my classroom, I'll show you something." So I go down to his classroom and he takes out a notebook. You know, three hole punch with dividers. He said, "Look, first thing you need to do is make sure you get this textbook because they're about to get rid of it and you don't want to lose anything with the new textbook coming so let's go back." I put aside about eight or ten of these and there's a few more out by the dumpster. "Let's go out and get those and bring them into the classroom so you'll have a base to call upon. What you want to do is take notes and outline each chapter." He said, "And if you do that, you can stay a chapter ahead of the students that you're assigning reading to." He said, "Look here." He said, "See all these pages? Now, they're dated. So every day, I've got to break down of the class that's being met and what needs to be taught."

DM:

That's why he wanted to keep the old textbook. He already had it all done, huh?

BT:

And he said, "Look here too." He says, "this"—he said, "See these dates? That's the date for the test and he said, we have a test once a week on Fridays. You know, and that's marked all the way out for the entire semester." Dan. Dan. What was his last name? I said, "That's great, Dan. Man, you are really organized." That's really—"Well if you need any help, just come and let me know because we've got it all right here." [Laughter] Oh shit. And then there was a course that they taught by a person of Greek extraction, who was a 100 percent American, called communism—no. Communism and I forget. Americanism versus Communism.

DM:

That's the name of the course?

BT:

That's the name of the course. And so the required reading material was J. Edgar Hoover. [Laughter] The thieves among us or some other conspiratorial stuff. Steve Jarakas [0:50:32] was his name and Jarakas would get up, "Hey now, in 2001, we're going to see this thing happen. We're going to be on the alert because they're everywhere." [laughs] That was the kind of major lecture that would be given to a couple hundred kids who were—had to have that course to graduate. It was symptomatic of the teaching was just abominable. They were probably two, maybe three of ten or twelve teachers that were working to provide a background in education. Kind of civics and things, but I knew I had to get out of there, so I was good for two years and what I figured my strategy was well the—it didn't look like there were many history jobs for anybody who didn't have a PhD.

DM:

The perennial problem.

BT:

There you go. And the prospects of finding work in the university, seemed to me that was the time where worse than it has been that you'd have four job openings in American history that you have coming here. So I hit up on this idea of well, maybe I could get a library degree. If I got a library degree, I could probably get into some college or some university. At least, be in a setting where that was academic rather than the nonsense we're putting up in high school. So I decided that's what we're going to do. We moved from Clearwater to Tallahassee, which was the only accredited library school in Florida at that time. I tried to get out of there as fast as I could because it was pretty much a repetition of, at least as far as content goes. Not content as much as I don't know. Just not as real.

DM:

Just that level. Was it like the education courses?

BT:

Yeah. I mean, there were one or two interesting people and did a good job communicating their interests and their discipline, but it was course and reference sources, that course, and the history of education and major American libraries. You know, that kind of stuff. So I got out of there and I couldn't get it done completely in two semesters so it took me three semesters.

DM:

Is this MLS [**Master's in Library Science**]?

BT:

Yeah. To get an MLS. I had hooked up with several of the graduate students who were pursuing PhD's in library science. One was the head librarian at Davidson getting a PhD. There were two or three others, including one, James Wyatt, who was getting a PhD from Alabama as library director. And so Wyatt said, "Well I'm about to leave Morris Hill. Why don't you look into Morris Hill and I'll make a couple of phone calls for you," and he did and slam bang, you know, I had an interview. Liked the people I met. It was a pretty good group.

DM:

Is this for a library position or professorship?

BT:

Yeah. It was a library position that was director of libraries. So it was kind of unusual to move to that position without any previous library experience, but for whatever reason, it didn't seem to

be a big impediment given the recommendation by several people. So I got the job at Morris Hill. About that time, a year or so earlier, Pat was pregnant with Bill. Was a real tightknit faculty. The wets and the dries. I think I've told you the wets would hide their wine bottles so the dries wouldn't know.

DM:

[laughter] This was Baptist, right?

BT:

This was as Baptist as they come. Francis Nelson, the assistant to the president for over thirty some odd years, an assistant to a president. Had only served two presidents in over thirty-five years. She said, "Well now, what religion did you say you were?" When I went to the interview.

DM:

And what did you say?

BT:

I lied like a rug. I said, "Oh, Methodist." I had grown up in the Methodist—my mother was the treasurer of the Methodist Sundays, the Sunday school. Francis went, "Well, we can put up with a few of those." [Laughter] Welcome to the world of Baptist higher education. When the orientation, at that time, they'd spend a day or two before school started. Brought in a person who, at that time, was head of the Southern Baptist Convention, who indicated that our objective and indeed, the objective that he's established is to bring the message of Jesus Christ to every person on earth.

DM:

Starting with your students.

BT:

Every person on earth. He was very clear that that's where they were headed. And so, you know, there was this cabal of faculty who just couldn't—went nuts with this stuff. A couple dozen that would give me the baton and the banner and I would be glad to march for Jesus anywhere you want.

DM:

So there were some faculty that were gung-ho like that, huh?

BT:

Yeah. There were.

DM:

Were most of them?

BT:

No. I would say it was probably split fifty-fifty. There were really some really good teachers. I mean, better teachers than I had had anywhere. Dedicated, hardworking. You know, even the department of religion, they were totally schooled in multiple perspectives in the history of the church and really solid all the way through.

DM:

But all laboring under this administration. This denominational administration.

BT:

Right. Separate campuses for male and female students. A deadline set for how long, you know? Deadline for—I forget what.

DM:

Curfew.

BT:

Curfew. Thank you. You know, curfew. You had to be in by ten or whatever it was. Dancing had just been kind of given the sanctification the year before. But then also there were these hardworking, you know, hardworking instructors doing really well with their students in the classroom and trying to do everything they could to show them that there are other worlds out there.

DM:

Mostly a classroom—a teaching university, not a publication.

BT:

Right. Not publication driven. Although, you know, you had instances where it was probably a dozen faculty, maybe more, who were publishing as much as anybody in the university setting. They were particularly involved in community studies and working out working relationships with the townspeople so that there was a sense that they were leading to improvements in social welfare and things like that. So really, most of them sociologists and most of them in the department of religion.

DM:

This is back country North Carolina, as I recall, so it's mostly white.

BT:

Correct. White. Largely a—the population was southern in its origins. Western North Carolina had been the demonstration of the brother's war in so far, as the western counties, which were not slaveholding counties for the most part, but were tobacco. Burley tobacco, in particular. Made decisions, you know, brothers went south and others went north. So it had been fairly prosperous. If you look at the travel accounts and the records that begin somewhere in the 1820's, 1830's, outsiders were quite complimentary of the prosperity of the southern farms and how well they were being maintained. But once the war came and it split allegiances and then when Reconstruction finally came to an end, so the Reconstruction was to put them under northern control and to make sure that the participants in the war—if you, I mean, once Reconstruction last fifteen years, something like that—they were punished because they had picked the wrong side. They were—they were, you know, rebels. And so, it was—

DM:

But it was the state had picked the side.

BT:

Yeah, because it—and it never had—the power of the slaveholders was never as great as it was in the other southern, more traditional states. And so with restoration in the end of Reconstruction, they took, you know, as bad as you could possibly get. No monies. No distribution. Force labor. The nose dive that the entire economy took was totally consistent with the ups and downs of the war so it was pretty interesting history and there was a group called the Appalachian Consortium. Consortium. The Appalachian Consortium consisted of the schools in Western North Carolina who were trying to promote traditional cultures to bring in the legacy of the past and the traditions of the past to light, to encourage local projects, everything from chair making and traditions that went back seven generations.

DM:

So this is like the Foxfire Series.

BT:

Foxfire. Grows exactly out of the same kind of sensibility and Eliot Wigginton was a big name and doing a hell of a lot to—you know, everything from the Rockefeller Foundation got involved toward the end of the nineteenth century. And so there was all—you know, a lot of energy going into culture building and rehabilitation.

DM:

That's interesting. What years were you at Morris Hill?

BT:

Let's see. I think I finished library stuff in '80—no, in '90. Well that's a good question.

DM:

We can reconstruct that.

BT:

I was at Morris Hill from '73 to like '70—well when would I?

DM:

Bill was born during that time.

BT:

Bill was born in '69.

DM:

Okay.

BT:

So I think I was there—we were there through '73, and then things had changed dramatically in that time. I went through a divorce. Kids—Douglas was born in '72, and I figured after, I guess, close to five years, '72 to '78, if I was ever going to get in higher education in teaching or research mode, time was fast slipping away.

DM:

Did you teach at all at Morris Hill?

BT:

Yeah. Every semester, I generally taught one course in American History.

DM:

Did it appeal to you?

BT:

Yeah.

DM:

That's what prompted you to say, "Hey, I want to get a degree and teach in history."

BT:

Right. Right. So the—what was I going to go with that thought?

DM:

Well you were going towards your higher education.

BT:

Oh. So I looked around and looked at schools. I was very interested in the colonial period for a while. Thought seriously about finding a place to do a dissertation on American Colonial History. I was competitive. Columbia University of Virginia had some strong courses and teachers, but I had, at Morris Hill, gotten increasingly interested in photographic—well documentary photography, for want of a better term. And the kind of logic of that was that you could—you'd document the history and culture of an area through discovering its photographic productivity or who was photographing at a particular time. So we did a lot of digging around, going to different places. Libraries. North Carolina had, at Chapel Hill, a real strong collection on southern history. The Southern Historical Association had offices there, but tons of really good photographs and none of them had been systematically analyzed so you had people named like William Barnhill, nobody's ever heard of and nobody's heard of him since, for the most part. But did documentary work among the Appalachian Polar.

DM:

Wow.

BT:

Doris Ulmann, who was a gifted photographer, spent years documenting the—I don't want to say suburban. What do I want to say? I guess the—again, it would be the—

DM:

Back country?

BT:

Back country, yeah.

DM:

Are you talking early century?

BT:

Yeah. Talking—oh, 1920, 1930. She was a wonderful photographer and she got some notoriety, but the larger point is here, by gathering that material or copying that material or becoming

aware of that material. Where it was scattered, how it was collected, how it was organized. It began to see a window into a culture that didn't necessarily have been documented or paid much attention to. I realized that the one place in the country where you could get that kind of background and training was the University of New Mexico because it had had the only—there were only two universities that you could get a degree in effect in the history of photography. But as it turned out, you could—the history of photography, in order to do that, you'd had to get a conventional art history degree. So you would wind up majoring in art or art history and then could kind of parlay that into something that was art history or historically created and there was one guy there who was the world's, and I use that term carefully, the world's leader in education of photographic history, Beaumont Newhall.

DM:

At UNM [**University of New Mexico**]?

BT:

At UNM. And so I looked into it and then I realized, well if I went in American studies, I wouldn't have to take all those prerequisites. I'd be free to make a decision about what I wanted to do with dissertation. And that seemed a reasonably quick, but thorough in that you could make choices with your advisor about this is what I want to take, this is what I want to do, this is what I'm after, and have full support. No games about dissertation topics or anything else.

DM:

You haven't taken Medieval Art History yet. You can't continue until you—

BT:

Right. Exactly right. So that was terrific. I mean, we had great instructors. Four or five of them were considered leading educators. We had a program that was already in place where people had graduated from and gone on to jobs. Had support. Wonderful support from Newhall. A couple of the other instructors there. And since I had a library background and had worked five years as a library director at Morris Hill, I was probably by the second semester I was there, accosted by the library types, who said, "You could come and do some work for us." So initially, it was a temporary, kind of, adjunct deal, where the person who was head of special collections was going back to school and going to get his PhD and they were looking for some kind of fill in. You know, some kind of transition. And so I decided that would be a good experience and something I was very interested in. They, too, had photo collections. Interesting. And interesting personal papers and literary manuscripts. Decent, still is. Not always the best run and organized, but you know, terrific collections. So that morphed into a full-time search for a permanent director, in which I was successful. So from Morris Hill to North Carolina, UNC [**University of North Carolina**], to University of New Mexico and took about—I took my time. Had a good

job. Was decent salary for the time. Plenty of control or people interested in doing good work and could work together and build projects and got a lot of grant money.

DM:

Were you able to acquire any more photo collections?

BT:

Yeah. The—what we did is corral a number of current photographers, whose work was in the tradition of documentary. Contemporary documentary, but were wonderful photographers. And that became a core group. Something a kin to what we did at Tech when we had, you know, the photographers and the historians kind of searching things out. But we eventually got copies of the Barnhill material. We had two or three people who were constantly scouting for photographic collections, and we also built a small museum that was traditional pioneer artifacts. That was spoke—what do I call it—spoke something, where you carve and build agricultural instruments of one kind or various handmade plows. Became quite a nice, small museum. I had to purchase some of it. But found monies and things to do that.

DM:

It's on UNM campus?

BT:

Actually, it turned out to be the—it became on the UNM campus—no. That happened before UNM, so it was like my last year at Morris Hill when the museum was put into place, but building collections for the museum—it's Tech. The University of New Mexico Museum is one of the best college photograph collections in the country. Still is. That was largely the work of Newhall and Van Deren Coke, who wrote a book called *Photography and the Photograph*, or something like that. But showing how much conventional artists had relied on the photograph as a means of cultural expression and understanding what was going on. So that was an interesting time.

DM:

When did you—you got your PhD in UNM in what year?

BT:

Ninety—I want to say ninety-two, but I'm not sure that's right.

DM:

I know you came to Tech in '97.

BT:
Right.

DM:
Did you—when you got your PhD, did you leave University of New Mexico and go to Idaho or were you still there at UNM for a while?

BT:
I was with UNM for a couple of years. [Coughs] But left UNM after several years as Head of Special Collections to go to Idaho to become the State Archivist for the state of Idaho. Largely, because Sandy Shackle was in Idaho.

DM:
Boise.

BT:
She was in Boise and got a job at Boise State. So there was about a two year period there where she was in Boise and I was in Albuquerque.

DM:
Did you meet her in UNM?

BT:
I met her at UNM. She was a grad student. Worked well along on a PhD at that time and also was the editor, co-editor, of the *New Mexico Historical Review*. And very interested in women's history and was—she always knew she wanted to go to New Mexico. I mean, permanently. And she did it, much to her credit

DM:
What did you think about this? This was a different part of the—you'd been on the eastern seaboard pretty much the entire time. So, as far as the culture? As far as the environment?

BT:
Yeah. At Morris Hill—

DM:
At UNM.

BT:
UNM. I liked it. The chair of the department was a Syracuse grad, Sam Gurgess [1:17:58].

Literary criticism. American literature. But we got along famously. I mean, a lot of the idiosyncrasies that other people resented, you know, the brash New Yorker, to me, just seems like—

DM:

Like home. [Laughter]

BT:

Just like it always was, you know? So I got friends. The—before, I guess—yeah. Before, Sandy and I got together, I was spending time with Shelly Armitage and she was a publication machine. Still is. But is, you know, emeritus now. So she can work on whatever she chooses, I guess, which you could do for a while. And, but there were a good group graduate students. People writing on interesting topics like the literature of Louis L'Amour from the significance in construction of American baseball stadia. That was quite a diverse group, but they were all well-grounded in their backgrounds, which was the nice thing. I mean, people had come with a degree of expertise already and then were given carte blanche to pursue their—what was become their major interest and you know, we had good parties and good esprit de corps, and people got along pretty well with a couple exceptions. The director of the special collections had his own idiosyncrasies, but as we all do, I guess.

DM:

Albuquerque has always had kind of a cosmopolitan flavor. It seems like.

BT:

Right. Right. Yeah, we liked Albuquerque. When the kids got settled in school, we had, as I said earlier, several years there and made a lot of good friends.

DM:

Well how did that compare to Idaho?

BT:

UNM was a place where a lot of the faculty fully embraced New Mexico culture and were sold a hundred percent on diversity and legacy. There was a minority that, as one of them once said to me, "I can never get over having to settle for UNM." Wanted me to have him serve on my dissertation committee because I could learn a lot. Needless to say, that didn't work out. [Laughter] But yeah. I mean, in a sense, New Mexico was an extension of Morris Hill in so far as the collecting interests and photography and materials on local culture.

DM:

You had selected it for that reason?

BT:

Yes. Yeah. For work with Newhall. To work with the material. To get a sense of growth and change and cultural activities. The government played a big part in promoting. You have—New Mexico is often talked of as a tri-cultural place. Anglo, Spanish, and Native American. And that's true to a degree, but it's also even right today, tremendous tensions in different areas. So yeah, that was a marked change, but as far as the library work or the research work was concerned, the material was similar.

DM:

Okay, okay. By the way, I can't remember what your dissertation topic was at UNM.

BT:

It was an analysis of photographic writing and cultural criticism and the evolution of photography as works of art. I forget exactly what the title is, to tell you the truth, but it was a look at all the writing that had been done about the nature of photography and its place in the pantheon. Art from—well actually, it looked at mostly twentieth century work.

DM:

So it was strong on historiography.

BT:

Yes, very much so.

DM:

So then, off to Idaho.

BT:

Right.

DM:

And the difference there was much more conservative.

BT:

Yeah. Quite profound. The historical society had collections that, again, weren't particularly well used, but had interesting cultures. Had a Native American presence, Shoshone and the other large group was Bannock. A lot of early exploration. Oregon Trail. The establishment of—similar in some ways, I guess, to—well the outgrowth of settlement pioneer. You know, the myth of the pioneer and the hardy—hardy—so—

DM:

Did it focus—did the historical society focus on the Snake River? Like, in New Mexico, they focus on the Rio Grande. Was it that same kind of thing?

BT:

Yeah. Very much so. A lot of writing on the—lot of research. A couple of really good books on the snake. You also had the world center birds of prey, which is the largest collection of raptor in the North American continent. Actually, the leading biologist investigator of raptor behavior lived right across the street from us in Boise.

DM:

Well that must've pulled—drawn on your childhood love of ornithology. Had it continued over the years?

BT:

Yeah.

DM:

In North Carolina and Florida, did you pursue it?

BT:

North Carolina, did a lot of trapesing along the Blue Ridge.

DM:

Wow.

BT:

And looking at the small agricultural activities that went on. Subsistence Agriculture, which supported a certain predator group. There were lots of Swainson hawks to be seen. I guess, once or twice along the way, I went to Hawk Mountain, Pennsylvania, which was one of the principle—two or three fly a ways from migrating hawks and so that was—kind of fit in among those other things. But having the birds of prey there, there's enormous canyons and they're situated in such a way as to take advantage of, or to ameliorate the effects of sunlight so the number of nesting, nesting raptors, are staggering.

DM:

You're talking about in Idaho?

BT:

Yeah. Hundreds of them. And that was only, maybe forty-five minutes from Boise.

DM:

Wow.

BT:

And you could see the—I mean, you could see across the canyon to the nesting sites. You could arrange for boat transportation down the snake, with knowledgeable guides, so they knew where the nests were. This one county, Owyhee County, was bigger than the state of Rhode Island, so you had a real sense that when you entered the Owyhee's and some of the natural areas, that this was real stuff. I mean, you could very quickly be out and about without, you know. I mean, here, we know we got a ways to go to get to our next site or next locale. There, I could walk out of the backyard of the house and from here to the street, and be on a mountain trail as far as I wanted to go.

DM:

Well that's a perk.

BT:

Big perk, yeah. And you could float the river and there was no problem. Or if you wanted to rent a canoe and float, you could do that. Inner tubes float down the river. And you could go twenty-one miles, I think it was. It's gotten longer along the bike trail that ran parallel to the river. You could fish right on campus. The river went right through the campus. So Boise's a great place, but it's the best in of liberalism in the state of Idaho. That's the only place you're going to find any liberals. The rest are either Mormon or you know have taken up a rejection of the lifestyle of consumer—what's the right term? Consumer out of doors activities or something. There's a lot of wannabes.

DM:

Was there much activity of these snake valley people up in upper Idaho? Because I know the roads seemed to run more east west across upper Idaho than they do north south.

BT:

They run east to west and that's about the only choice you got. There's one highway, one state road, and that's it from Boise heading north to Coeur d'Alene. So that's a north south traction.

DM:

Wow. And it's a state highway.

BT:

And it's a state highway and it's impossible. I mean, about every thirty, forty miles, there'll be a pullover to let the trucks go by and everything else.

DM:

And very mountainous.

BT:

Very mountainous.

DM:

Oh my goodness.

BT:

And we did a—you know, we spent a fair amount of time hiking around, doing—you could fish, for one thing. Great trout fishing. The—we went into the—what's it called? The Frank Church "River of No Return" Wilderness. And it's where I saw my first—I guess it wasn't the first time I've seen bears up close, but there were bears to be seen right across the creek.

DM:

Is this where they were trying to pop your window up? Or did pop your window up?

BT:

Yeah. I think that was—that actually happened in New Mexico on the—anyway, it was a hawk flyway and then we camped overnight. You know, tent camping, car camping.

DM:

Incredible.

BT:

But there was all—you know, we ought to—I mean, it's not that far. We ought to organize a trip and go for the spring migration.

DM:

Wow.

BT:

You know, we'd see hundreds of hawks.

DM:

That would be cool.

BT:

And it's very accessible. I mean, it's just going through Tijeras and instead of turning to go to Santa Fe, you turn in the other direction and it's five or six miles.

DM:

Wow.

BT:

And easy enough to get to, you know?

DM:

Yeah. So Idaho, the state archives, were they associated with the university? Were they separate?

BT:

Yeah, they were separate. So they were associated with—the state archives were part of the state historical society. Well the historical society was—let's see what the lines of authority were there. The state archivist supervised the state archives. Okay, I'm repeating myself. But the archives, state archivist reported to the state historian, who in turn, had responsibilities up line for—kind of like New Mexico, the cultural resources people. So there were—there were statute responsibilities. By-statute. For collecting the records of municipalities.

DM:

Were there local groups? Were there county commissions?

BT:

Yeah.

DM:

I just—it just kind of seems to me that you were probably part of a more conservative bastion there with—correct me if I'm wrong—but with the state archives, the state historical society, the local historical groups, not directly tied to the university.

BT:

The university actually had a special collections area and a special collections librarian, **Alan Verde** [1:34:25], who's since retired. And several collections that were noteworthy, but the reporting line there would've been from the special collections librarian to the director of libraries at the university. And the history department, was—has some good folks and did have a couple of the, like myself, a couple of the full-time faculty were very involved in public history and that was part of their—there's at least two individuals. One had taught exclusively public history and they were into interesting projects. But you're right, overall, it would've been a good

deal. More conservative than—not so much within the historical society itself. Although, they had a couple of clunkers who didn't—you know, typical state employees. We know that breed.

DM:

Well was this a place you liked?

BT:

You know, I had known, rubbed shoulders, with David Murrah a couple of times and had a fairly good idea of what the scope of the job was like here.

DM:

How did you come across Murrah?

BT:

At conference. Conferences.

DM:

Library conferences.

BT:

Yeah. Archive conferences, I think. I mean, not that we were bosom buddies or close friends, but we certainly talked. Chat to each other at cocktail parties or whatever else it was. The—it was a bit of a change. Maybe more than a bit of a change. I think Lubbock is a place, and West Texas is a place that kind of grows on you.

DM:

Yeah.

BT:

You know, when you've been here a while.

DM:

That's funny. So many people say that. People that I've interviewed at Texas Tech, they say, "Oh, boy. We were not happy when we first came to Tech, but we ended up retiring here." [Laughter] For one thing, the low cost of living, maybe.

BT:

Right. Right.

DM:

Other factors. But what was it that—why don't we save Lubbock and Texas Tech for another time. I'd like to talk about some of your big projects and your big visions here, but so that's going to take some time. But what is it that—were you ready to leave Idaho in 1996, I guess it was when you applied for this position?

BT:

I wasn't particularly discontent with being here. I don't know it was so much I was ready to leave. It certainly put strains on Sandy and I's relationship, which eventually, just distance became insurmountable. But I was—I, for a time, if you'd ask me where I'd want to be or where I'd want to live, I would've probably said Albuquerque. So it was going back to a place that I knew was culturally alive and lots of interesting stuff going on.

DM:

Going back to that region you knew.

BT:

Yeah.

DM:

That's good.

BT:

I think Arizona and New Mexico are probably my top choices. I mean, given health's considerations, this may be the final resting spot.

DM:

This is good for health concerns because it's got a good medical region.

BT:

Right, exactly. It has all the supported specialties and all the good health services.

DM:

Is there anything else you want to add about Florida, North Carolina, UNM, at this point?

BT:

You know, David, I think we've covered the broad outlines.

DM:

If something occurs to you between now and the next time, just jot it down and we'll fill in.

BT:

Yeah. I will.

DM:

I'll go ahead and turn this off for today.

BT:

Okay.

End of Recording



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