Oral History Interview of
Robert Lyle "Bob" Rouse

Interviewed by: David Marshall
July 14, 2009
Lubbock, Texas

Part of the:
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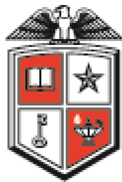

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Transcript Overview:

This interview features Robert Rouse as he discusses his life story. In this interview, Robert describes getting his college education, joining the Air Force in World War II and the mission he flew, and how he got a position as a professor at Texas Tech University.

Length of Interview: 02:14:16

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David Marshall (DM):
The date is July 14 of 2009, and this is David Marshall, along with H. Allen Anderson, interviewing Robert Rouse at my office in the Southwest Collection at Texas Tech University. Dr. Rouse, if we could just begin with a little information on your date and place of birth; full name, things like that.

Robert Rouse (RR):
Well my name is Robert and my middle name is Lyle. Robert Lyle Rouse. I was born on a farm, northeast—northwest of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Close to a town called Urbana on May 24, 1922. I grew up on that farm until I went to college. Subsequently, my third year in college, I went into the armed services and then pursued my career after that.

DM:
Well, let's talk a little bit about your family and the farm. How did your family come to be in Urbana, or near Urbana, Iowa?

RR:
I think that my forefathers—I had a grandfather—a great grandfather that moved there from Indiana in about 1845 or 1850. His name was Samuel Lockhart, and he developed a farming enterprise there. Subsequently, to that, he, then—his daughter married a man by the name of John Calvin Rouse. That's a good name, who was my great grandfather, and then my grandfather and my father came from that family and all of them were farmers in Benton County, Iowa.

DM:
Was it all corn farming?

RR:
It was basically corn, hogs, a little bit of livestock. It was general farming. General farming prior to World War II was a whole family exercise. I remember, I—that we had more—I would say fifty to a hundred hogs. Seventy-five to—no, not that many. Twenty five to thirty head of cattle, including about seven milk cows of which we milked by hand. About two hundred hens. We grew corn, oats, and then porridge crops such as, timothy and clover.

DM:
Um-hm. Did you have garden crops as well?

RR:
Yeah.

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DM:
Nice. So, this was a fairly self-sufficient—

RR:
Self-sufficient farm, and one that's entirely different because I grew up during the transition from horse power to mechanical power. So, I spent a lot of my youth behind a team of horses, beautiful animals, belt [?] [00:03:13] and roan, but they didn't like each other, and I can still remember that situation [laughter].

DM:
You were having the anecdotes with them about that?

RR:
Well, I would probably have to talk about 4th Street. Gosh. It may be my language—one things that's good that just should have been when they reacted to each other.

DM:
Did you go to tractor farming before that?

RR:
My father resisted tractor farming until the last. In fact, the first tractor that he had was primarily due to the fact that he had no one else, but himself to do the labor during World War II and he finally bought a tractor. He was of the opinion that mechanization was a passing fad and would not continue, so he was basically one that believed in the real horsepower.

DM:
Can you tell me about some of the—specifically, about some of the chores that you had as a child?

RR:
Well, I think probably the first chore was to gather the eggs from—oh, approximately, two hundred to two hundred and fifty hens. And then, as I grew a little bit older, when I became—oh, I suppose, about ten or eleven, I preceded to enter into the milking and all that. That became a chore that lasted while I remained on the farm. And then, of course, there were the problems of feeding the hogs, and feeding the horses, and that type of thing.

DM:
How much time would say you spent doing farm chores as a child, every day?

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RR:
Oh, well that's hard to say. I would mention my time—by the time I was six or seven, I was probably spending thirty minutes or so a day. In grade school, it increased until when I was in high school. Particularly, in the summer, I was a full-time worker in agriculture.

DM:
I like to ask that question because things have changed so much between the actual—

RR:
One of the interesting things, I think, from my point of view was when I was in high school, why, the neighbors all had what we called, 'the threshing ring.' That consisted of, probably, represented youths from ten or twelve farms. And so, we took the threshing machine and you could go into Iowa, or Minnesota, or North Dakota and South Dakota, you'll see the old threshing machines that are there. And so, I participated in those threshing rings. One of the most interesting things was how the men always encouraged the ladies to feed them the best. They complimented them for the food that they provided until the ladies got a little bit savvy of the situation and started asking the men to go to town to eat at the restaurants.

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DM:
The threshing machine was used communally, then? Is that right?

RR:
It was a communal affair. Of course, you went from one farm to another and the whole procedure probably took two or three weeks to complete.

DM:
Was the equipment rented?

RR:
No. There would be one person that had equipment. He had the tractor and a threshing machine and he contracted it out to each of the farms; so I don't recall what the payment was. Having to relate that story [?] that he made the living, somewhat like the columbines that moves into wheat harvest until present time, you know?

DM:
How many acres do you think your family had? Your immediate family?

RR:
Well, my dad farmed ninety acres, but the typical farm was about a quarter of a section. And so,

we had a little bit smaller operation than the typical one. Although, most of the land was under cultivation.

DM:
Did the Agricultural Adjustment Act affect you during the Great Depression?

RR:
I'm sure that it did. I was not privy to the financial errors. That was handled by dad. I don't even recall ever talking with him with respect to that. I do recall, sometimes, during the Depression that we were very short of cash and that he was wondering where we were going to obtain the necessary amount in order to meet the taxes that there was on the property.

DM:
This one that I'm referring to is where government officials came out and actually had you plow under part of your crop.

RR:
We never were involved in that. That never occurred with us. It was all under cultivation.

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DM:
Okay. What about other activities besides working on the farm? Childhood activities? Of course, you had your—

RR:
Well, I was—I went to a one-room schoolhouse for five years. First five grades was there. That was an interesting experience. If you ask me, what was the most important year of my education? It would be the fifth grade in a one-room schoolhouse. The reason was that the school population was declining. There were only three students. I was in the fifth grade. We had a girl that was in the seventh grade and a boy who was in the eighth grade. Now, Iowa required—and I think it was a very significant requirement and very good requirement—that all students in the seventh and eighth grade pass a state examination. So, the teacher prepared the seventh grader and the eighth grader to pass the examination. Well, I was able to keep up with the seventh and eighth grader at the fifth grade and as a result, I, in fact, at the fifth grade, was getting an education that was—so when I, the next year, went to the sixth grade in the town school, it was such a breeze. I had kind of developed some ideas, some healthy attitudes, about too much work, but at any rate, I always appreciated that. I was the—I was the last son, had two older brothers. One was thirteen years older and the other was fourteen years older. Both are deceased now. I came along and my mother told me I was always supposed to be a girl. My name would've been Ruth if I had been a girl, so some of my friends sometimes speak about the Ruth Rouse that never showed up, and mention about it. In effect, I was raised alone, and summer times were somewhat lonely in there

because there were not too many children in the neighborhood. We didn't go to the town, or the big city, like Cedar Rapids, very frequently. So it was a lonely period. It was during that period that I developed a love for reading. Anything I could get my hands on. It was during that period that my mother, I think, indicated that to meet her desire of that daughter that she never had, I should take piano lessons, and voice lessons, and all that type of thing. So that, generally, was the case as I grew up. Now, later, when I was in high school, most of the summer was spent working in the fields. So that, basically, was what occurred.

DM:
High school was in Urbana?

RR:
High school was in Urbana, but it was relatively small compared to the present times. My graduating class consisted of seven people, two girls and five boys. The last I saw of many of the group was at our fiftieth high school reunion, but I just recently received word that one of my classmates passed away in Yuma, Arizona, and there are only two of us that survive that particular period.

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DM:
Did you have favorite subjects in school?

RR:
Yes, I suppose that I did. Although, I don't think I had any one. I enjoyed history very much. I enjoyed social studies. We didn't have an economics course, per say. I enjoyed some of the business subjects, such as—it was called bookkeeping in high school. I suppose, because of the teacher, and I can't remember her name, but she had a definite influence on me. When I was a sophomore in high school, I enjoyed Latin and found it has been extremely helpful, down through the years, to me because of the—so many of the English words have their Latin roots and helps with a lot.

DM:
Did you develop any interest in teaching? As you were a student in the public school, did you think, one day, you might want to be a teacher? I do realize that you develop that more, later on, that teaching [?] habit.

RR:
No, I didn't. In fact, I seldom gave it a thought. I would assume that if I had any career objectives while I was in high school, it would probably be the law, to be a lawyer. Now, that was my experience. I didn't have the interest in the physical sciences, to prepare to be an M.D. or

a doctor. The law always interested me. Frankly, if it had not been for World War II, I might've pursued that as my career. World War II changed those things quite a bit.

DM:
Does your later life interest in economics stretch—reach back—to that early period? Or can you [inaudible 0:15:13]?

RR:
Oh yes. One of the things that I've always been interested in—the evolution of agriculture in this country. I suppose, I might've been an Ag [**Agricultural**] economist, but that didn't turn out to be the case. See, I came along right at the transition. And so, was enabled to observe the transition of Iowa agriculture from that of a small organization towards a major—that, in economics, we call because economies are stable. You had, in general, a large amount of land, a warrant, the expense of some of the machineries that we have at the present time. And so, as a result, when you go through Iowa, you'll probably note that agriculture is going in two different directions there. There's the huge farm, maybe four or five thousand acres, where the entrepreneur has a lot of machinery and he loads it on his truck and takes it to various places. Or there's a small forty acre farm, where the person works in the city during the day and farms during the summer and after hours. That's kind of a development at the present time.

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DM:
That's a second income for them?

RR:
A second income, yeah. And so, many of my rather distant relatives, now, you'll find both the husband and the wife work. Many of them, in Cedar Rapids or Waterloo, which were industrious cities. And then, when they're through with work, during the summertime, they will come and maybe, canned a few cows and raised a little corn, to supplement the income they have.

DM:
Do you also know people who have sold out their smaller farms to these larger operations?

RR:
Oh yes. That's commonly going on. The result is likely to be a—a house, or buildings that are occupied by people who do not farm. They moved there to utilize the physical facilities and they work in the larger cities.

DM:
And what has happened to Urbana, as a result?

RR:
Urbana was about 450 when I graduated from high school. It's now about eighteen hundred. The reason is that they constructed an interstate between Cedar Rapids and Waterloo, and it cuts right through the northeast corner of Urbana. Well, the result is Urbana has become a bedroom community, much to the consternation of the citizens that had lived in the other one because they have different objectives and different views, with respect of the—so I always _____ [00:18:40] when I would go back and see the destructions of how those people that were moving into Urbana.

DM:
And so, there is still significant group that sees it as an agricultural town, while the rest [crosstalk 0:18:56]?

RR:
That generation will pass away, so the younger ones that will forget it entirely.

DM:
By the way, you mentioned later, you went into the army air force. Let me ask, do you remember barnstormers coming through that part of Iowa?

RR:
Occasionally. That was previous to it. I don't have any specific memories, other than our house seemed to be a natural passageway between Waterloo and Cedar Rapids. We had, even during the pre-World War II period, lots of planes going over our houses, small planes, the early helicopters, and that type of thing.

DM:
Was there anything about aviation that inspired you at that time? Or did you—

RR:
No, not particularly, other than the interest. My interest in aviation came, basically, from my classmates in college, who had the air force, and so I just went along with the group. That's basically how I chose the air force. My buddies did.

DM:
I noticed in your document—and let me give the title of that, unless one of you knows it off the top of your head, but I need to put it on the recording here, so that someone who listens to this recording will know that this is in the Southwest Collection. It's called, *World War II: The Defining Event in my Life*, by Robert L. Rouse, November 2003. In it, you talk about these piano

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lessons and voice lessons that you participated in as a youth and you tend to travel some distance, it seems like, to do that.

RR:
Generally, in Cedar Rapids, well, piano lessons—there was a music teacher who travelled from house to house. And so, I did not have to travel to take piano lessons. Voice lessons, however, necessitated I rode to Cedar Rapids, which I did, most every Saturday during the course of the year. I took voice lessons under a professional vocal teacher there. His name was Ralph Leo, a very fine individual.

DM:
It sounds like your parents really cultivated this idea. They encouraged it. They helped finance all of this?

RR:
Uh-huh. They looked after that particular thing, and in a sense, it proved to be very valuable to me because _______ [0:21:58] I was never expected to be a professional, but its provided a lot of enjoyment. And then, I think, as I say it in the—my description of my experience in World War II—I think the voice lessons enabled me to develop my voice and provided me the ability to use it for long periods of time without becoming hoarse.

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DM:
They came in very handy when you were teaching?

RR:
Incidentally. It's a matter of breathing. They teach you to breathe down deep rather than to speak out of your throat, which proves to be very beneficial as far as—and it was not until about fifteen years ago that I ever had a case of laryngitis. I don't know why that was.

DM:
Okay. Did your parents also encourage a college education?

RR:
Yes.

DM:
Okay.

RR:
There was a period of time. My dad had remarkable foresight. Even though he resisted the

mechanical revolution, he realized that Iowa's major export was probably going to be its children, for some people, which has proven to be the case incidentally.

DM:
Did they have the same attitude towards your older brothers? Or had they developed it along the way?

RR:
I can't—see, they were thirteen and fourteen years older. My oldest brother had a two year college education at what is now known as Northern Iowa University. It was, then, Iowa State Teachers College. My middle brother only had a business college education, but he was a man that was driven. And by debt of hard work, he became the chief executive officer of a major insurance company in this country, and lived in New York City for many years. So I always point to the fact that as one of my colleagues, or my successful brother [laughter]. He used that term a lot.

DM:
Well, I thought it was interesting that your father was a farmer and they seemed to encourage these things. Did he have any college education himself?

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RR:
No.

DM:
Okay.

RR:
They both—I would say this—that both my mother and father were born, probably, seventy-five years too soon. They both had interest in academic and things. If they had been born subsequent to World War II, I'm sure they would've had college educations. They would've wanted it.

DM:
Now, in your document, your World War II account, you mention that you had decided you did not want to be a farmer, and I can think of reasons why, but I'd like to hear from you why you chose not to follow.

RR:
Well, there are really three or four reasons. The first reason was that I think the opportunity in agriculture, as I viewed it, was not particularly attractive. Although, obviously, some people have made it quite attractive, but it didn't appeal to me. The second is that I never really enjoyed all of

the practices, or all of the tasks that was associated with farming. It was somewhat drudgery, so that was a major reason. A third reason was that I had served my brothers and it seemed, to me, that they were having a more interesting life because most were working in the cities, and so that appealed to me. And I guess, the fourth reason is that my mother and father said it's probably the time that you should prepare yourself for some other kind of activity. They really encouraged me to.

DM:
Did the uncertainties of farming ever seem to bear on them? Did you see—

RR:
What?

DM:
The uncertainties of farming, did they ever seem to bear on your parents?

RR:
Yes, they did. I grew up in the Depression. Of course, the uncertainties of the price in agriculture, but I have a great love for the powers [?] [0:27:05] that farmers have. Weather is one of the principle ones. Iowa does not have irrigation, so there was not that. But Iowa does classify, generally, sufficient green and a very productive soil. So there was a lot of risks associated with farming. I can remember a hail storm came through and destroyed our old crop one time and how distraught my father became as a result of that because he lived the land. He was what you would call a true farmer. He would've not been happy, I think, in other things, given his education.

DM:
So you graduated from high school in Urbana in 1939. Went directly to Coe College.

RR:
I graduated on May 17, 1939, and I entered Coe College in September of that same year.

DM:
That's C-o-e, Coe College.

RR:
C-o-e. It was a small—the nearest college in this Texas Tulia [?] [0:28:27] and that're somewhat similar would be Austin College, in Sherman. It's that type of college.

Doctor Ralph (Dr. R):
Where is it located?

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RR:
Hmm?

Dr. R:
Where is it located?

RR:
In Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

DM:
And you went in with a specific purpose, or just a general education in mind?

RR:
A general education in mind. If I had a tutor, perhaps with those remarks, [?] [00:28:53], I came off a farm and somewhat naïve. Most of the students—or not most—but a good share of the students were from upper scale suburbs in Chicago, Illinois [0:29:09]. And they taught me that the city life was different than the rural life. [Laughter]

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DM:
They were promoting the urban life?

RR:
Not particularly. Yes, I think. Before I was called into the service, so from that point of view, it was satisfactory that—let's face it, I didn't make the most productive use of my time in academics during my undergraduate education, and my grade point probably reflected that. That's why, I guess, later in life, I always pleaded the cause for what I called, 'academic bankruptcy.' If you went to college and flunked out the first year, you ought to be able to declare bankruptcy and start over again without having to overcome that big set of problems.

DM:
This is a bit of a digression from chronology, but since you brought that up, let me ask, did you happen to see—in teaching all of these thousands of students that came through your classrooms—did you see a period of maturity after they'd been in a year or two?

RR:
Oh yes.

DM:
Okay. What's the age where most of them turn it around and they start becoming serious about their work?

RR:
Well, I don't know that there's a particular age, but there's one experience that I note as subsequent to—when I first entered in the teaching profession, I oftentimes had students that didn't do well when they were in their freshman or sophomore year. Went to the armed forces. Came back in two, three, four years and suddenly, become honor students. It was a matter of willing. It wasn't a matter of their lack of brainpower. It was a matter of their willingness to apply themselves. I always said that. Of course, age would have something to do with it. I think as they threw off the part of their childhood and now, came more maturity and it became necessary to make a living and this and that, they became more serious with respect to it.

DM:
Okay. You also went into the ROTC [**Reserve Officers' Training Corps**] at Coe College?

RR:
Yeah.

DM:
But not the advanced?

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RR:
Oh man, I had to keep it in both remarks that I made. That may have been to my advantage because the class that I was in became the major source of second lieutenants in the D-Day. The casualty rate among the second lieutenants in D-Day, because they were the leaders that they sent, there were a large number of my classmates that didn't survive World War II.

DM:
This was some of the—but you kind of had a little of foresight here. It sounds like you decided to go into the—actually, to enlist rather than draft.

RR:
Well, I didn't want to be in the infantry. You know, that didn't have a—and so, I had several buddies, one or two of them were—boy, they were all eager to become pilots in the light [?] [0:33:02]. I was searching around for some way that I could beat the draft, so to speak, so I enlisted within the air force.

DM:
Now, if we're talking about the years 1939, 1940, just from the perspectives you had at that time, would you say that most guys your age were more interested in army air corps, or navy, or—

RR:
I don't recall, particularly, anything. One would have to have been, perhaps, I did see this [?] [0:33:42]. I was raised in the section of Iowa that a man by the name of Verne Marshall—I don't know whether you've ever heard of him. Prior to World War II, Verne Marshall was very anti-war. And so, he had, through—he was an editor of a newspaper, the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*. He had a lot of influence on the people there, so it was not a military oriented community that I grew up in.

DM:
They were isolationists.

RR:
They were more isolationists. Incidentally, if you study the history of Iowa, you will find that there has been a pretty sizable isolationist trend in that state.

DM:
Okay. Did that affect you as you entered the—as you enlisted?

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RR:
Not particularly. One must recognize that the situation of Pearl Harbor had a dramatic impact, just not only on young people, but the whole citizenry. If there was anything that could unify a population, that one thing was that particular item.

DM:
That's right. You enlisted after isolationism had already died.

RR:
Yes. That's right. So I didn't—we didn't think about isolation at that time, yeah.

DM:
It sounds like the timing for your bachelor's degree was very good. You were able to get this thing finished before you went off to war. I've talked to so many guys that had it split.

RR:
Part of it was—I don't know if it any of it was foresight, but I always managed to take about three more hours than the normal student did. I don't know why I did because I didn't do particularly well, but that's what I did. It paid off because when I was called into the service, I was in my final semester in Coe College. Fortunately, allowed it, even though I was only two or three weeks into the semester. Gave us credit for that and that graduated me, much to my

pleasure since I was taking an advanced math course that was pretty rough. I don't know how well I'd done on it.

DM:
But you were able to—you had enough course credit to leave at the time you finished?

RR:
That's right. And so, they granted my degree, which I was everlastingly to their—I was privileged to receive that sort of thing.

DM:
How did that affect you, by the way, as you entered the military? Already having a bachelor's degree, that seems like it would have some impact.

RR:
It did give me an advantage. But one of the things that may be reflected in that—when I took the entrance exams, I did well on them. When I went to basic training, they located me in the office rather than have to go out and do basic training. So I didn't have to go over the obstacle course, or do all of that marching of the line. I hung out [?] [0:37:36] in the office and recorded grades and this and that sort of thing.

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DM:
So there's an advantage right there. [Laughs]

RR:
Yeah. That was an advantage. That was investments ______ in Missouri [?] [0:37:47].

DM:
Allen, before we delve in to a bit of his military background, do you have anything to ask or add about the early, early years? Are we doing okay here?

H. Allen Anderson (HAA):
No, I think you pretty well covered it.

DM:
Okay. How about you, Dr. Ralph? [0:38:04]

Dr. R:
Did you ever listen to FDR's fireside chats?

RR:
Oh yes. I listened. He was marvelous on that. Oh, there are a number of things that, if you had time, would be interesting of the life in Iowa during that period.

DM:
If you'd name one of the things, sure. [?] [0:38:29]

RR:
Just that one that comes to mind, all of the families were one-car families. And so, you had to get on the list as to when you got the car. But Saturday night was off the list because that was the parent's night when they would do the chores, as we said, early. Get in the car and go to town and find a parking place, which just incidentally, laid between one beer parlor and a second beer parlor halfway down the block. And they'd sit and visit and watch the inebriated go from one beer parlor to the other. That was Saturday night.

DM:
Big entertainment.

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RR:
Big entertainment for my parents.

DM:
Was this in Urbana?

RR:
This was in Urbana. There are a lot of those little anecdotes that are interesting.

Dr. R:
Was there a movie theater? An outdoor theater in Urbana?

RR:
No, we didn't. Out theater was in a town about ten miles from Urbana. The county seat, the town of Vinton. Of course, Sunday night, it was date night. The usual date was, then, to pick up the girl, go to the show, and that type of thing.

DM:
On Sunday night?

RR:
On Sunday night. That was my night. I got the car.

DM:
Okay. [Laughs] Let me ask you another question about that time period. How about weather events? You mentioned the hail storm that destroyed at least part of the crop?

RR:
I spent a lot of my early days in the center of the house because my father was very apprehensive about storms. Of course, they didn't have the meteorological information that we have now. So any time a cloud appeared—basically, storms moved from the northwest to the southeast in Iowa. Any time a cloud appeared in the northwest, his eye was out and as it approached, and the lightning, he'd lead us all down into what we called the cellar [?][0:40:45].

DM:
And the biggest fear was tornadoes?

RR:
Yes. Tornadoes, lightning. Lightning was severe. High winds, and the lot.

DM:
But the biggest real problem proved to be what? Hail? Flooding? Wind?

RR:
Hail, or occasionally, heavy rains. We had a tornado one time that occurred about two miles and we watched—it was in the afternoon—we watched that develop. But that was amazing. Weather was an important thing. That's why any time you talk to a person who was raised on the farm, he's going to be interested in the weather because the weather was so important. That's been the kind of—that's been the way all through history, you know, because it depends on whether your crops are successful or not.

DM:
For most of your life, you have remained, right, at least, on the fringes of tornado alley, too, haven't you? Just as it turned out. Well, let's go to San Antonio to cadent training in 19—May of 1943, then, if that's okay. Can you tell me a little bit about this big transition? And so, you enter the army. You're living in a different place, away from your family. Can you just give me a description of what that was like?

RR:
Well, there are three memories. First, I was never in such a continuous heated environment as I was in San Antonio. And incidentally, that led to one prejudice that I have. When we got to San Antonio, they put us in shorts, khaki shorts. As a result of that experience in the heat, I have never wanted to wear shorts. Even at the present time.

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DM:
Just a bad thought?

RR:
Right. But it was not too comfortable [?][0:43:02] a period. One other reason was that there were just a sheer mass of young men in San Antonio, inverted aspects of armed service training. So when you went to town, the Gunter Hotel was the central activity. It just seemed like waves of service personnel moved down one side of the street and back up the other, presumably, just to get away from their service activities.

DM:
And this was due to—there were several training bases here, as I recall.

RR:
San Antonio had a large amount. I went to what is now Lackland. It was called SAAC **[San Antonio Aviation Cadet Center]** at that time. It was next to Kelly Field.

DM:
Kelly? Randolph was there at that time?

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RR:
Randolph was there. And then, of course, the army training centers and fourteen youth camps, I guess. There was huge recruitment. There were probably more service people in San Antonio than any other major city in the country.

DM:
A number were army air corps?

RR:
Yeah.

HAA:
That's why we had that station [?] [0:44:24]. SAAC, is it?

RR:
SAAC, it was called, yeah.

DM:
And then you—but you went up to pilot training in Oklahoma, then back down to navigational school—

RR:
Additional school. There was a transition. I went to pilot training. I had had a waiver to go into pilot training because of my depth perception. But the army, apparently, was very—they had a scarcity, so they put me in pilot training anyway. It's probably good that—from the point of view, both my safety and the air corps' safety that I washed out because I had trouble judging my distance and that sort of thing. But then, you might recall—I may have mentioned this in the book—my aptitude was for navigation school, really, and that's where I should've gone in the first place because I probably _____ [0:45:27]. One of the major problems in a war such as this is—and such as that was—is the flow of people from one thing to another. Sometimes, you don't have vacancies in line so flow charts are extremely important.

DM:
So even though your aptitude was better in navigation, they had more—

RR:
They had more vacancies in pilot. Put me in there. And then, when I washed out, there was a vacancy in navigation. I had no problem there.

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DM:
This proved to be something that was your cup of tea?

RR:
Well, I—it was my—I didn't have to use that part of my physical ability, my depth perception, as a navigator.

DM:
I find it very interesting that you picked up on a little bit of celestial navigation using a series of _____ [0:46:35] and other navigation stars, and that you really enjoyed that.

RR:
I did.

DM:
Did you ever go back to that after the military? Did you ever mess with that?

RR:
No. Incidentally, my wife—that's when we were here at Tech—spent—after our kids were raised—she became associated with the Tech Museum. One of the things that she did for many years was give tours over in the—stars, over there.

DM:
Planetarium?

RR:
Planetarium, yeah. And so, she and I studied the stars again, with respect to that. Really enjoyed it, and so she became quite adapted for leading planetarium tours and telling the kids all about the planets, and the stars, and solar systems, and the Milky Way, and that type of thing.

DM:
Were you ever called upon to give any kind of presentation after the war about your navigational skills and celestial navigation?

RR:
Yeah. I was—not to compete—I was called on several times to talk about my experiences in the war. Probably, the last time, and I may have mentioned this I don't recall—is that they had a symposium down in Midland on World War II, say, maybe, ten years ago. Associated [inaudible 0:48:25] confederate air force thing. I was invited and gave them a paper on my experiences in Switzerland, and that aspect of my career.

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DM:
That was after this? No, that was about the time that this was written, I guess.

RR:
Somewhere around that. Maybe a little bit before. If you'd asked me—I don't have a record here—if you'd asked me when I'd came to that paper, I'd say, somewhere around the year 2000.

DM:
Okay. So that information is probably—

RR:
Now, if you recall, I talked about some observations about Switzerland at one place in that.

DM:
You also developed an interest in cartography, as you'd mentioned. Did that carry on beyond your military pursuits?

RR:
No, not particularly.

DM:
Involved there, okay. It's interesting how your military training took you into Texas, and back out of Texas, and back into Texas, and out again. You ended up in—well, you flew over West Texas, you mentioned. You at least saw it from the air and I know you landed occasionally and relatively, you mentioned. I don't know if you ever landed in Lubbock or not.

RR:
Never in Lubbock. I did at Hobbs, but not in Lubbock.

DM:
Was your honest impression of flying over this very brown, dry country?

RR:
I landed in Amarillo during the brunt of an order. I thought I was in—even in Amarillo—I had been in thirty-seven below weather in Iowa. I thought it was about as cold a place as I'd ever seen. We talked about nothing between Amarillo and the North Pole, but a barbed wire fence, and so that was our installation associated with that. I had no particular love for the panhandle or plains. I had been stationed at Pyote, and I certainly had no love for Pyote.

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US:
Oh yeah. Thought it was the end of the world. [Laughter]

DM:
Why were there so many training bases and training flights over West Texas? It seems like they had more than their share. Would you like to speculate?

RR:
Well, I'm sure that it was a matter of weather, cartography, the need for vast spaces. For example, one of the things, when we were in base training in bombers, we needed to provide training for the gunners. You don't provide training for gunners in inhabited areas. And so, one of the places about Pyote is that you could go about any direction from Pyote and you were in uninhabited area.

DM:
Okay. So you had bombing ranges and you had straight ranges?

RR:
Bombing ranges, gunnery ranges. I think the wide spaces, plus the fact that if I were making a decision in the air corps, the fact that you could take a look at the number of days that you could

fly here as compared to what you could in the state of Washington, or the otherwise. There's no question in coming here.

DM:
Now, what about the howling winds in the spring? Was that a deterrent? Or was—did you not—

RR:
It wasn't particularly, to me. Now, it may have been to some. The dust storms may have caused some problems for people that were stationed here. Although, I've never run across any information about that.

DM:
In some of these training flights, did you ever have any mishaps?

RR:
No, not that I recall. No, I don't think we did.

DM:
Okay. Well, you went back down to the San Marcos area and met your wife, Elta. I think it's interesting that she came from kind of a similar background. It was poultry farming, correct?

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RR:
She was poultry farming and—

DM:
From Yoakum? Yoakum? From Yoakum?

RR:
Yeah. It's a town about thirty miles, thirty-five miles, northwest of Victoria. Victoria is the principal city in that particular region. One of the major industries during that period—agriculture for cereal crops, and the like, is not good down there. The soil's not good. So, basically, they turned to cattle raising and poultry farming. There used to be some truck gardening. Yoakum was a tomato growing center. Every year, they still have what they call, "The Tom-Tom Festival," even though there are no tomatoes growing there. But it is an area which has benefited greatly in the post-war period. Yoakum, particularly, the surrounding cities from the oil and gas boom, has been a major area of natural gas production in this country.

DM:
Did this agricultural background give y'all a common ground?

RR:
Yes, it certainly did. It was—we had—even though we were raised thousands—twelve, fifteen hundred miles apart and in a different kind of environment, there were a lot of things that we had in common. She knew which side of a cow to sit on to milk, as I do. [Laughter]

DM:
Had she been somewhat involved as a child in that whole process?

RR:
We went to Branson last year. They called this musical on Noah. The first thing I noticed is that they had a scene where someone was milking a cow and they were sitting on the wrong side of the cow. [Laughter] And that bothered me the rest of the time.

DM:
You just don't forget a thing like that, do you? [Laughs] You have a pretty good description of when you met, and so I won't ask you any specific questions about that, unless you want to add anything. Should we go on?

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RR:
_____ [0:55:35] pretty well. It's like two ships passing at night. Most of the time, they move on. We stayed. It's amazing how you can get all sorts of interpretations of it. Elta has an aunt that is a firm believer in providence and as a result, it was destined to be. I'm more of the viewpoint that there was an opportunity and we seized the opportunity and there we went.

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DM:
Let's talk a little bit about your becoming a member of the crew of the B-17, and this happened in Pyote, I believe.

RR:
Pyote.

DM:
Now, you talked in here about how the B-17 was a survivable plane. Can you explain that a little bit?

RR:
Well, there was a—it could take a lot of placement. I'm not sure aerodynamically why that was, but it become known that it was far superior to the B-24 when it had been under attack. Maybe, it was due to the wider wing. I don't have any idea. The major problem with the B-17, as I saw,

was that you had ten people in a very small space, who carried a bomb load. When you were in the air for twelve, thirteen, fourteen hours, it was extremely exhausting.

DM:
You mentioned that, actually, and that was interesting. The fact that you never knew if you were going to have to fly another mission the next day.

RR:
That's right.

DM:
That didn't happen often, though, did it?

RR:
No, you never knew.

DM:
Oh okay. Let's get to that here in just a minute. I won't really spend any time on the later part of your training, or getting over to Europe because you covered that very well. But I'm curious to know, here you are, then, flying out of England in B-17. You get up early in the morning. You're quickly—what's the word I'm looking for? Prepared for this mission. You jump in the plane, take off. How do you prepare yourself for something like that? This is something that Allen or I never have experienced and never will.

RR:
I've often wondered about it. As I reflect on it, I probably developed a mindset where I purposefully didn't think about it. That is one of the things I think army and the air force training is designed to do. And so, you tried to just put yourself immediately on getting ready for the mission and it didn't allow you to think about what the results of that mission might be down the road.

DM:
Now, the purpose of training and doing these things again and again before you actually face it is a bit mechanical.

RR:
That's correct. It just comes natural to you. Even though—and there's nothing like a bomb run, to shake you up. But you know what you're supposed to do and you do it, even though if you allowed yourself to think about it, you'd be scared to death.

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DM:
And so the next factor is the actual activity? The constant activity?

RR:
Yeah. There's so many things going on, you never had time to think about that sort of thing.

DM:
Right. You had time for a quick prayer? Was this a religious experience?

RR:
[crosstalk, inaudible] [0:59:56]. There's no way you could stop a bomb run, if you couldn't go and do that. [Laughter]

DM:
How many missions did you fly in?

RR:
It was eleven, the eleventh one that we were shot down.

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DM:
Okay, the eleventh. Five over Munich, which, I seem to take as some of the worst missions because it was a heavy missile [?] [1:00:23] area. Is that—does that—

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RR:
Only five times to Munich. Sixth mission, to Peenemünde. Peenemünde was the rocket center, the research center, for that and it was one of the most well protected targets in there. But one thing about Peenemünde, is that you approached Peenemünde through the Baltic, and so you didn't have the problem of running into unexpected anti-aircraft fire, or air craft, because you were over the ocean most of the time. And came into the target from the Baltic Sea, and so you were not over the target over, what? Five, ten minutes, maybe. But Munich was—you had to take a diverse pattern to get to Munich, charging this way and that way. It was a was a heavily protected target too.

DM:
This is because intelligence had determined where the anti-aircraft stations were?

RR:
Yes. But oftentimes, they moved the anti-aircraft. So you could not always depend on what intelligence had told you on that. And so, you had to continually be on the alert.

DM:
Did you guys have any idea of the importance of Peenemünde when you were going to—along this place?

RR:
No. It was just a strange name to us.

DM:
Later, then, you found out?

RR:
We had some idea. When I was on leave, I knew of the experience V-1 and V-2 were rockets. V-1 was by far the more scary because you could hear it and then, when the motor died out, you knew within a few seconds that there was going to be an explosion and you hoped you weren't going to be in that explosion. The V-2, which was a rocket, you didn't know until it exploded. I was in the Regent Palace in January of '45, and found myself on the floor. V-2 had hit in the vicinity, but I didn't think too much about it. I went back to bed, as I recall [?] [1:03:00].

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DM:
You'd already been in combat. You might've had advantage over some of the— [laughs]

RR:
Yeah, that's right.

DM:
Well, you wrote about your experience, getting shot down when coming into Switzerland. But if you don't mind, I would you to at least say a little bit about that so we have it recorded in your own words, vocally.

RR:
As we came off the target, we had dropped our bombs—we were leaving the air force that day. It was a period of time, in which, Germany's capacity for air defense was being just used to the maximum. So the planes that were hit, usually hit only either the leading formation, or perhaps, what we'd call, "tail-end Charlie," [?] the last formation. But since we were leaving the air force, they hit us right after we came off the target. We had two engines shot out and a third was quick. We only had one good engine left. We had one person killed and one, two, three—three others wounded, including the pilot. And so, it became immediately apparent that we could not make it back to England, or even to—since this was in July of 1944—even to the lines, American lines, in western France, because they had not had the breakthrough yet. So our pilot called and received permission to try to Switzerland. We're only about fifty or sixty miles from

Switzerland. So even though we were losing altitude rapidly, it was so that we could come over the Lake Constance, and we were in Switzerland, and then, were able to land. Northern Switzerland is relatively flat before you get to the Alps. From Zurich, north, into Germany, is relatively flat land, so we were able to pick a place, which is probably an auxiliary field of the Swiss Air Force. It was flat and able to land.

DM:
It seems like in one instant, the navigator, who is all living [1:05:45] important, becomes not all that [?] important because—[laughs]

RR:
Navigation is an obsolescence art on planes now because of the thing, but it was important during that period of time.

DM:
Did you have landmarks? Did y'all mark landmarks along the way? If you were making a run to Munich, for example, were there—or especially down in more mountainous countries?

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RR:
Well, most of the time, there was an under cast, so, knowing the river system [?] [1:06:18]. Since we were in a formation, we didn't have the benefit. Some of the—the lead plane in the formation, I think, if I recall, was called the pathfinder, had the radar, which enabled him to even more supremacy [?][1:06:36], enabled him to know where we were. We sort of followed his lead, so really, navigators were not particularly important, unless you had to either go to Switzerland, as we did, or return alone, as we did one other time. Then, it was very important for the navigator to be able to ascertain, then, where we were and what headings we should take.

DM:
Okay. It wasn't really helpful to know the bends of the rivers and things like this because you didn't have that kind of vision?

RR:
Not usually, no. Although, we were trained in that. There was a case in that. For example, when we went to see Switzerland, it was obvious that within a few miles, we came on Lake Constance. There were some anti-aircraft fire there, of course. Then, we knew when we were over Lake Constance, we were in Switzerland, and sure enough, here comes a Swiss plane coming to make sure, I guess, that we aren't going to bomb their city.

DM:
A welcome sign.

RR:
Yeah.

DM:
You ever have times, flying in these formations, that you're B-51s just disappeared? Or you lost your escort somehow?

RR:
Well, of course, they had to return when they ran low on fuel. So, but generally, it was staggered in such a way that you, most of the time, had—when I was flying, most of the time, you had escorts. Now, if I had been a year earlier—the P-51s, or I don't think they were even in England at that time. The other planes, the 38s and the 47s, which were used, couldn't go any. They didn't have the range, so you had to fly three or four hours without any escort.

DM:
And rough hours.

RR:
Um-hm.

DM:
You got into Switzerland. You were there a little while and back to London. Is that correct?

RR:
Well, the answer is yes and no. When we were in Switzerland, of course, the first thing was a relief that we'd made it. Of course, we knew when we found out that one of our waist gunners was killed, we realized that we'd taken quite a bit of placement. But as we went through our river [?] [1:09:16] in turns, our period in Switzerland, when we were in journeys [?] [01:09:22], there was psychological attitudes, "What are we doing here in this life, when we ought to be back pursuing the war?" And so, I guess, maybe, it was kind of an unconscious guilt complex. And so, as a result, we began to think more and more of, how can we leave Switzerland? And that was very—we noticed, from time to time, there would be people who showed up missing, so we knew that they had left. We never knew whether they were safe or not. But my co-pilot and I decided—and this was around the time of New Years' 1945—decided that we would try and we were able to get to Zurich, and we went to the American Council in Zurich and he took care of the rest of the arrangements to get us out of Switzerland, which incidentally, involved going across to Lake Geneva at about midnight in a snowstorm in a rowboat. If I was ever in danger of not surviving, that was probably even more of a hazardous expedition than any of the missions that I flew on.

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DM:
Why was that? Why'd you row across Lake Geneva?

RR:
It wasn't—it was—if I said, "a rowboat," I mean, a little skip. It had a little—about a two horse power motor, you know? A little putt-putt. We were out in the middle of the lake and that motor went out. I thought, we had had it. Thankfully, we started again and sure enough, we could see as we approached the land, a red light and it was a representative of the free French, which had been alerted there. He met us and took care of us.

DM:
Okay. Well, were you—basically, had snuck out to the—

RR:
Yeah.

DM:
Oh okay. Okay.

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RR:
Which you might do up there, because sneaking out like that, they treated this as prisoners of war. They came to be a benefit later in my career because as that, we had certain privileges that other people—one, was we could select any base in the country we wanted to go to and that is not that bad a privilege to have.

DM:
So at this point, you went from free France, back to London? Is that correct?

RR:
We went from a rest and rehabilitation close to the Embassy of France, back to London. Spent ten days in their R&R in Embassy, and then another ten days in London, and then got back into this country somewhere around February 1, 1945. And of all of the great feelings that come to people, once you land again from combat on the home tour for the United States, you have experienced one of the great feelings in life.

DM:
At that point, returning to the U.S., was there any thought that you would be back over in your life?

RR:
I didn't think about it. Although, later—see, the European war ended in May of 1945, and then all attention turned to Japan. The wisdom that we had was that was going to be a very serious challenge and would, no doubt, resolve in millions of casualties. That's why you will find very few World War II veterans, and I'm certainly not one of them, that would question the dropping of the atomic bomb. It was extremely popular.

DM:
Could you envision yourself flying missions over Tokyo?

RR:
I could. In December of '45, before the atomic bomb, that gets you [?] [1:14:10] with respect to Elta and me, would I have to go back overseas? We just didn't know.

DM:
Okay. As it turned out, you were married in late August? And mustered out in October? Is that?

RR:
Yeah.

DM:
Okay, okay. But at this point, by this time, you had already taught in some navigational training.

RR:
Right. When I got back to this country, they sent me to Miami, Florida, for what we would call refresher training, I guess. And it was there, I got my option, or my opportunity, to select the base. Of course, I selected San Marcos because I was in a courtship situation with my wife. She was in her final year, and the navigation school stuff was no difficulty for me going to San Marcos, you know? So that became—I was assigned as an instructor and sent Ellington Field for a briefing course on instructing, and then went to San Marcos and became one of the instructors of the last group of cadets that went through San Marcos on the airfield.

DM:
Could that have worked out any better? [Laughs]

RR:
Couldn't have worked out better, no.

DM:
That's outstanding.

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RR:
Worked out well for me.

DM:
It wasn't long after this teaching experience at San Marcos that you went back to grad school, University of Iowa.

RR:
Yes, it was about nine months. I graduated and I was mustered out in October of '45. And on the same day that I was mustered out, my wife's father died of a heart attack. Well, they hastened my—they took me through individually. I'm always thankful to the Red Cross for arranging this. I only spent a half a day of being mustered out and so I could fly to the funeral. Immediately, there was another need for me—to enable her mother to adjust because she had had absolutely no experience. He had run everything, all the farm. It became necessary for her to take it all. She didn't even know how to drive a car. So we spent from October to the following August—this would be August of 1946—helping her. By that time, I had made up my mind to go back to school. Since my roots were in Iowa, I decided on the University of Iowa. But one thing that I had decided, it wasn't—in preparing for teaching, I would go the secondary route rather than the university route. In fact, I had even no thought about being a university teacher. So we went back of September of 1946. I enrolled at the University of Iowa and took one economics course, in which the professor became sort of my mentor. Before the conclusion of the semester, he approached me about becoming an instructor and going into the DHD program, which was financially attractive to me, and so that's when I decided to become an economist and a university professor.

DM:
Well, this is a pivotal point. Do you remember this man's name?

RR:
Oh yeah. His name was _____ [1:18:35]. He's since been gone, but he was very important in my life.

DM:
Well, a lot happened, there, in that year. You were in the military. You were married.

RR:
And I had a family tragedy. We had the birth of my daughter.

DM:
A lot happened.

RR:
Yeah, a lot of things happened during that period of time. And then, I went back to school and the first thing that I noticed when I went in that economics class, I was ill-prepared compared to my peers in that class, but that caused me to really get down and around that course any harder than I did that first course, which I think paid off because I got to know the instructor and he became my mentor for the remainder of my college career. It was probably—I had one other period of time there that was, I guess, very stressful. Within a period of two weeks, in 1949, my father died. This was a period of two weeks. My mother developed mental problems and was chronically ill for the next twenty-two years. I took my PhD comprehensives. I think that I probably got through because they felt sorry for me. Once that was over, the rest was a breeze.

DM:
How did Elta do moving away from her mother after her father died?

RR:
It was hard, for a time, but my wife has a marvelous ability to adjust. And so, we—she became a firm supporter and we had no difficulties from that point.

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DM:
Iowa was now the colder climate?

RR:
We tell the story that she was used to fresh air. She raised a kitchen window somewhere in late October and November and never got it closed the rest of the winter. [Laughter] No sleet or rain storm came in. We thought we had fresh air all winter, but if I recall, we never had any colds either. [Laughter]

DM:
When you got into the program at University of Iowa, you were a grad instructor somewhere along the way. Did that happen almost immediately or later?

RR:
No. I went one year. That one year was financed by the GI Bill, my savings. But I would have never been able to complete it, had it not have been the instructorship that came available, which enabled me to finish my doctorate without incurring any debt. And that—

DM:
Does that ever happen anymore? [Laughs]

RR:
I don't think that probably happens anymore. So that was a very beneficial situation.

DM:
Did you develop a specialization along the way? What would say that your special interest is in the area?

RR:
Well, my mentor was economic theorist, which basically, was a good foundation for—when I came to Tech, because of certain needs here, I was more in the area of the monetary economics, but I had, then, sufficient training to enable me to make that transition. My mentor was also an Keynesian economist, so I was trained in, basically, Keynesianism, which I have departed somewhat from since, as other—lots of pieces have been developed. I have no regrets about the training I received. I think it was very good.

DM:
It was—there was enough—general nature, there, to allow you to be adaptable?

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RR:
Yes, and that was one reason I did not have a highly specialized PhD as some do. Since I was chair of the department for a number of years, I became aware of how I was specialized in that degree. So I was adaptable and Tech was a good place because, as a result of my training, as a result of my interests, I developed not only my professional career in economics, but also in finance, so I was associated with two departments and later, two separate schools here. I always said I had tenure in two different schools.

DM:
[Laughs] How did the position at Texas Tech come about? Or how did you agree to that position?

RR:
My mother, as I said, no longer lived in Iowa. She lived in New York, and so the only thing we had in Iowa were an aunt and a few first cousins. My wife was from an extended family in Texas, and so it was obvious to me that she loved that environment. I was never privileged to be in an extended family, you know, where I think she has dozens of first cousins. Doesn't even know some of them. I was kind of fed up with the winters that Iowa City had, so we decided to come to Texas. Well, at that time, academic recruiting was very primitive. They didn't fly you in

and wine and dine you, as they do now. You did it by mail. I wanted to go to the University of Texas. The University of Texas did not have a position that they—if they did, they didn't offer it to me, although I inquired. I had two opportunities. One was Southern Methodist and one was here. And strange through all things, [?][1:26:06], this one at Tech was temporary. So I said, "Well, I think I'll take the temporary one because that will force me to look around and decide where I really want to go since there will be some pressure on me to do that." Well, as it turned out, the temporary turned into permanent, and here I am fifty-nine years later.

DM:
So you moved out here. This is—it's back to Texas, but it's not back to San Marcos. It's—you know, it's a very different kind of the state. What did Elta think about moving out here?

RR:
She was—instead of being 1,250 miles from her home, she was less than five hundred. That was—[laughter]. She had no difficulty whatsoever. Although, as many people do, she hated the first year or two because dust was a major problem. But then again, we acclimated ourselves well to this place. The people were so friendly to us, and the like, we soon developed a resource of benefit from the people we knew and it turned out that we decided to stay here.

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DM:
Well, up to this point, your timing had been impeccable, as far as the military career is concerned. But you arrived here just in time for that drought. You know, the drought—

RR:
Also, the other thing was right in time for the Korean War, I didn't even have to go because the Korean War started in the summer of 1950, if I recall correctly, and so that had some—we didn't know what that was going to be and there was a lot of apprehension about becoming involved in a war with China, and perhaps, even the Soviet Union.

DM:
You still were in the reserves, huh?

RR:
I was still in the reserve. When I left the service, I signed up for a five year period, but was not active in the reserve. And so, as soon as the five year period was up, I was gone.

DM:
When you were out here in 1950—I guess it was still the fall of 1950. Does that sound right?

RR:
Yeah.

DM:
Fall of 1950?

RR:
Fall of '50.

DM:
Were there still a lot of GI Bill students here?

RR:
Oh yes. That continued for three or four years.

DM:
And here was a professor with combat experience.

RR:
Oh yeah.

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DM:
That's kind of interesting. How did the students take to you?

RR:
Well, I don't know particularly. I never did too much difficulty with them. One of the things that I did notice, there were a lot of returning veterans. Of course, the Korean War came along, so I think until a period about 1955, or '56, we had lots of returning veterans in the class, which incidentally, proved to be very valuable from the point of view of the professor and they set higher standards in the class. That resulted in the students that didn't have the ____ [1:29:44] were probably working harder than they would otherwise because there was a benefit in that.

DM:
You were an extremely young PhD.

RR:
I was twenty-eight. I finished my PhD in four years, from a Bachelor's to a PhD. I went back in the fall of '46, and graduated in August of '50. No it was—

DM:
That's young on any account, but especially, since people of your age often had their careers interrupted by the war.

RR:
I was very fortunate.

DM:
That was good timing.

RR:
Good timing.

DM:
And so, as you arrived at Texas Tech, what were your responsibilities? Was it all teaching at first?

RR:
Um-hm. I think it was. If I recall, went to—I guess they wanted to size me up a little bit and so one of the things, perhaps, that first semester involved that I was assigned a night class. Well, that was pretty valuable because the night class had a lot of students from Reese Air Base there and they were eager. And so, that was a good situation. One of the interesting facets I had. But that, generally, was what was involved.

DM:
Do you remember how heavy the teaching load was in those first—

RR:
Twelve hours.

DM:
Twelve hours of teaching? Twelve classroom hours?

RR:
That's correct. And we also had Saturday classes, and those were a pain because young instructors usually had the benefit of teaching one of the Saturday classes. So, it's kind of like pulling out teeth to get the students there on—it was a Saturday morning.

DM:
Well, were these three-hour classes like an evening class?

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RR:
All that I taught were three hours class, and mostly, they were the beginning course. I don't recall precisely what other courses, but they were all undergraduate courses.

DM:
Do you remember there ever being a Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday schedule at Tech?

RR:
Yeah, there were.

DM:
There was?

RR:
There was—the Monday, Wednesday, Friday was much like I think they do at the present time. In the morning, the Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday was very similar to the Monday, Wednesday, Friday, but the afternoons featured one and a half hours session and that proved to be successful, so when they dropped Saturday class, they essentially moved the one and a half hour classes to the morning, which was—made scheduling pretty easy. As I observe it, we pretty well got rid of the Friday afternoon classes, too. If we don't have it, the students have gotten rid of it.

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DM:
[Laughs] Do you know when the Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday schedule went away? About what year that might've been?

RR:
It was in the fifties, but I'm not sure what year it was. No, I couldn't tell you.

DM:
Can you give me a general idea of the major courses that you've taught undergrad? I guess, undergrad and the basics, but especially—

RR:
Well, yeah. I can. Early on, and this would be, like, the spring semester in 1951. I had taken a master's degree along the way to the doctorate there, in the field of insurance. Well, that attracted the attention—because, if I recall, my thesis topic was investment policies of selected life insurance companies during a certain period of time. Well, finance courses were and continue to be very popular at Tech. Through the finance department, have come some outstanding students and some leaders alike. For example, Kent Hance was a finance major. I

had him in probably five classes. So in about spring of 1951, there was help needed in finance, and so they'd asked if I would be willing to do it and I started teaching finance courses in the summer of 1951, and so developed that interest in different areas.

DM:
Okay. Now, what about graduate courses? Did you teach?

RR:
Well, I didn't the first year, but within a short period of time, I began to teach graduate courses. If I recall correctly, when you taught a graduate course, your load was reduced to nine hours. So I think that was the situation. I seem correct on that.

DM:
Okay. These were seminar type courses? Graduate courses? The evening seminar?

RR:
Yeah. Usually taught them on a seminar basis. I don't recall particularly the courses, but during the 1950s, essentially, one other professor, Dr. Vernon Folder [?] [1:36:08], whom Allen would remember. I taught most of the graduate work in the department of economics. We didn't have a doctorate at that time, although, we acquired the opportunity to offer a doctorate in the 1960s. [inaudible 1:36:38]. That lead to what we call the ____ [1:36:41] building, which later, kind of an English department. It was that kind of stair step—

US:
A poor excuse of an English building.

RR:
Yeah. Then, we went to the current business building. And then, economics went to Holden Hall. So I, basically, during my tenure at Tech was in four different physical locations. However, since I was a professor in economics and finance, we had a—I had an office in the business building, too.

DM:
At what point did you become chairman of the department?

RR:
I became the chairman of two departments, now. It was not one department. It was not economics and finance. It was always structured as two separate departments. Had two separate budgets. I sent—because I had interest in both departments. The dean asked me if I would chair both departments and this would be in the fall of 1958.

DM:
You chaired both at the same time?

RR:
Both at the same time.

DM:
Oh okay.

RR:
So I had to recruit two different kinds of faculty. Of course, they were relatively small at that time.

DM:
Were they growing, though?

RR:
Growing? Yeah. Well, the period of growth really occurred during the mid-to-late sixties.

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DM:
Like so many other things on campus, it sounds like, the physical campus itself. It was the Grover Murray administration.

RR:
Yeah. There was a lot of seminal events. Incidentally, Allen, you may be interval. A lot of seminal events occurred at Tech in the decade of the sixties. It was a very productive period. Probably due to not only some increase improvement in the center of Tech, but to the activities that such persons as Preston Smith and George Mahon, and other situations in Texas. From my point of view, of course, I can't observe what's happened in the last decade. But from my point of view, probably, the sixties was the period in which Tech emerged on a different course than it had been, in which it became more than just a regional college. It kind of became a state university.

DM:
Can you delineate some of the specific landmarks that it met in the 1960s?

RR:
Oh yeah. Let me think. One, we would start with—and I don't know where it proofed, particularly [1:39:52]—there's no question that Tech's acceptance into the Southwest Conference was a major event. There's no question at what the political power of such persons,

as George Mahon and Preston Smith, had an importance. There's no question at what delay Texas A&M had in going co-ed, had some importance in that situation, which they—once they way the saw the way the writing was on the wall, they corrected it quite carefully. So it was a vital atmosphere. It was something that you'd like to be associated with.

DM:
Okay. How about research monies? Did they increase at the same time? Was there a work for [1:40:48] that researched?

RR:
Nothing except a few limited areas. If I recall correctly, the areas in which there was probably more research activity than others would be in some of the engineering departments, particularly, electrical engineering and chemistry. And back, it was not a research oriented institution at that time. It was emerging more and more into research, but it was still primarily a teaching college.

DM:
Okay. Now, you became chair of these two departments in 1958, and this lasted how long?

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RR:
I continued as chair of the finance department for eleven years. In 1969, I relinquished the chairmanship of that department. And continued as chair of the economics department until 1977, so I was nineteen years chair of the eco-department. By that time, I had decided that my tenure should be interrupted and I should return to what I consider the best position in a university, as a full professor with tenure.

DM:
I didn't know anyone stayed in the chairmanship for that long. That's quite a feat.

RR:
Well, it was a challenging situation. In some ways, I enjoyed recruiting and I think we developed, in both finance and economics, a very—a good faculty. And so I enjoyed the challenge.

DM:
You were in both of these departments at a time of great transition. Can you talk a little bit about the major events in the development of both of these departments during your chairmanship?

RR:
As far as the economics department is concerned, the acquisition of a doctorate was probably one of the major events. That one occurred in a—I'm not certain as to the specific year, somewhere

in the late sixties, early seventies. We developed a concept knowing that Texas would appreciate efficient use of resources. I said, "Well, what I think we should do is to combine the resources of the ag-eco department, or the eco department because they had some very competent professors over there. We prepared our application for the PhD, involving the use of the faculty in both departments, involving courses in both departments. It went through just like that. They had no difficulty in receiving authorization. That would probably be one of the major events. The second event that occurred was in a somewhat controversial period of time, involving a being that decided that he wanted the business school to be after the model of Harvard and Stanford. Jack Stevens [1:45:09], the dean at that time. And the model of Harvard and Stanford did not involve the economics department, so that was the transition of moving the economics department to the college of arts and science. One reason I stayed in the economics department was to help in that transition, at least, I thought that would be the central entrance. So it's a little bit difficult to move from one culture that would be associated with the business college to a second culture that's associated with arts and sciences. I was trained—the University of Iowa has the economics department in the business school, but it's about half-and-half throughout the country. Sometimes, they're in the liberal arts area. Sometimes, they're in the business area.

DM:
It seems to me that more of the dangers of straddling two departments might be the administration says, "Hey, we need you as an assistant—as an associate dean." How did you not go into it?

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RR:
I remember—I hadn't thought about that.

DM:
Did you have any aspirations in that direction?

RR:
I thought I did at one time. Sometimes, I went on the bug and decided that maybe I wanted to aspire to higher administrating in circles. So in assisting, I said, "Well, here I am, trained in finance, as well as economics." I think the root that would probably carry me to a present day request [?] [1:47:11] would be as a financial vice president. And so, I interviewed for—to be a financial vice president at a couple institutions. One was Buffalo, the University of Buffalo. And decided that I would continue in my first love, which was teaching because some of the apparent problems associated with financial vice presidents weren't too appealing to me. But I suppose, one would say that I might've had proved the credentials for it on paper, at least, to serve that would train in finance and an academic background.

DM:
No one is in the more enviable position than you. To look back at presidential administrations at Texas Tech and say which were beneficial. And if you felt like it, saying which were not beneficial, or making the judgements. Compare the judgement.

RR:
There were a difference of that. I thought Grover Murray was a—had a great deal of ambition and perhaps, he had—there were certain things that would be in these administrative skills. I thought that Dr. Cavazos had lots of difficulties associated with the apparition, but certainly, he was a logical choice because of his Tech background and his ethnic situation on the line. So I don't know. I don't have any particular things that I would say with respect to it, just had the greatest progress that was made during the tenure after Murray. But I would also hasten to add that it was not necessarily solely due to Dr. Murray. It just happened to be a very favorable period of time at Tech.

DM:
It seems that most people agree, at least, on the time period. Well, and also on Grover Murray's administration, but in particular, the time period of the 1960s as being kind of a golden age.

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RR:
Yeah. That was when Tech emerged.

DM:
Well, you've been here at the university for quite some time. Can you make some comparisons between how students were in 1950, as compared to how students were the last time you taught?

RR:
[inaudible 1:50:15]. I think, first of all, when I first came to Tech, the habit patterns of students was much more towards regular attendance in class than it developed in later years. Incidentally, as you know, in my career, I also taught at Lubbock Christian. I would point out that there is a major difference between the attendance pattern of students at Texas Tech and at Lubbock Christian.

DM:
You guessed my next question. [Laughs]

RR:
Yeah. I don't know what all was the reason, but there is an attitude there that you go to class. There's an attitude here that, you know, we'll go, or not, or some sort of. That is one of the things that has occurred. The second thing that I think has occurred is at least, during my

career—I can't answer for the last ten years—but grade inflation became a more serious problem as time went along. Whereas, I had no difficulty when I came here, of giving what I considered to be a bell _____ [1:52:00] grade distribution, which may be involved ten percent flunks, and so on, and so forth. It's seriously doubtful that sort of thing has been maintained now during the course, or I think that is. The third thing—and I get that I am older in my career, I have lots of contact with students. Two separate times, I was a sponsor of what, then, was the student council and later, became the student senate. I was the sponsor of Mortar Board. I was even a faculty advisor to the Phi Omega sorority. So I had a pretty good feel on the part of students. From the point of view, the basic aspects of students, I don't think there's much difference in 1990s and the 1950s. They're probably a little more open. That sort of thing, but still, the same generally. Here, at Tech, generally, the same sort of basis—same sort of ethical normal basis all through the years.

DM:
Okay. What about student faculty relations? Were they closer in 1950 than they were 2000?

RR:
I never had any difficulty with the student—I suspect, they were a little closer in the fifties, but it was more education. That probably occurred more to—we were—see, when I came here—we were, forty-eight hundred to five thousand students. That's a way of a lot of a difference than having thirty thousand, you know? A whole different kind of environment. Even in the early sixties, we only had ten thousand.

DM:
That's why you're a good resource for us. You've been here for a span of time and you also were here, as well as at LCU [Lubbock Christian University]. You can compare the large university to the small university. That's interesting. So what about LCU, in this same question? Faculty relation?

RR:
Well, I think—make several comments—I have great deal of respect for the faculty at LCU because they are not very well paid, but they give their all to the students out there. I think the students, as a whole, receive a very excellent education at LCU. In fact, I noticed, at least two or three instances, where in order to get what the person thinks is the best reading that they will send their students to LCU to take—for example—a certain course. The second thing I would say is that in terms of the statistics of student's performance, Tech is much more a bell shaped curve institution and LCU is much more of a binomial institution. You have some absolutely outstanding students at LCU and some that really shouldn't be in—I presume there's a lot of difference with respect to that.

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DM:
Right. That's interesting. Well, there are a lot that go there because of the affiliation.

RR:
Oh, I had a lot there for religious reasons. I suspect, down through the years, LCU's probably had more merit scholars than Tech. That's hard to prove, but it was always the possibility that I had a couple of national merit scholars in class at LCU. You wouldn't think so, but—

DM:
Can you tell me about developing that program with the—was it a department of finance?

RR:
Yeah. I had taught classes at LCU. Basically, I helped them out for—since probably the earlier middle sixties and I had gone to the administration here and said, "I'd like to have this privilege of teaching out there." I did it on a volunteer basis, in order to help them out. That was sort of what you—you know, that type of thing that you do, where it didn't cost me anything, other than my time and the like, but it was a big help to them. And so, when I began to teach down at Tech, which was in the middle of the 1980s, the president at LCU said, "I think we ought to put in a finance program out here. Would you be willing to come out and do it?" I said, "Well, let me think it over." And so, I thought it over for several days and I said, "Well, I'm still in pretty good shape and I feel good and all that." So I agreed to do it. And so for a period of eleven years, I taught, really, full-time at LCU and half-time at Texas Tech, and it was one of the more rewarding periods of my career because if not many people had the opportunity at eleven o'clock of having a class at a major university and at one o'clock, going five miles and having a class at a private small school.

DM:
Small classrooms.

RR:
Small classrooms.

DM:
Would be nice.

RR:
Eight or nine students, always there. And so, it was—for my talents and my interests—was a very rewarding experience. I would've continued, had it not been for my hearing because that became a major problem. Otherwise, physically, I was—would've continued for some longer period of time.

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DM:
That was a problem because of the classroom—

RR:
Yeah. I always believed in encouraging as much feedback from students and when you can't hear a young lady in the backrow asking a question, you have to say, "Repeat that again and again." It's not good.

DM:
So you taught until 1985, full-time at Tech, and then were a part-time at Tech until when?

RR:
Oh, I was—well, that's hard to say.

DM:
Another eleven or twelve years?

RR:
I think the last time I was in the classroom was probably—oh, 1998, I would imagine. But I did continue doing work in distance education until August of 2000. Part of that was so I could say I had fifty years on the payroll.

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DM:
Do you know of anyone else?

RR:
Yeah. There was one other person in the history of Texas Tech that has fifty years. That was John Powers in mechanical engineering.

DM:
Golly.

RR:
I don't think there's another person. I don't whether I said anything _____ [2:00:28] whether or not I take pride in it.

US:
Who was the—when you first came—who was the dean of the school of business?

RR:
When I came? Heather. George Heather. Yeah, and he continued to be the dean until mid-1960s. He and Dr. Murray didn't see eye-to-eye, and so he left and went to Omaha, as dean up there. And then, he had health problems and was never even in the service, but he had a very early death. If I recall, it was in Indianapolis, Indiana, where he passed away I don't know how many years ago.

US:
Yeah. Actually, he sounds familiar.

RR:
He was after—

US:
Who was after him?

RR:
Well, _____ became ______ [2:01:34]. And then that's when Jack Steele came then. He shook up things considerably until he was—left. I guess you could say, relieved of his duty. He was—he was something else.

US:
Yeah, I remember Jack Steele.

RR:
Yeah. And his wife, incidentally, did teach in what is now the human sciences and after they divorced, she married Kenny Hobbs. She's now, I think, still a professor down at University of Tennessee, still. At any rate, that was _____ [2:02:25].

DM:
Well, I have to ask, how was Kent Hance as a student?

RR:
Gentlemen C's. [Laughter] It was obvious that Kent's interest was more in the political—well, of course, I think—I'm not making any comments one way or the other, because I don't know enough to do it. From the point of view of what I consider a chancellor needs to do, Kent would probably be an ideal choice because he has an amazing ability to raise funds and he has a some political background. Now, I'm not going to comment on whether he's controversial or not. [Laughter] I'm just simply talking about—I'm sure he has these problems.

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DM:
Allen, I have exhausted my questions. Do you have some questions.

A:
No. I just—I sat here. You pretty much covered it. I remember some time, you—I remember one time when you were on some kind of a local program, or PBS.

RR:
You want to talk about some of the other things I have done. During the decade of the seventies, I had—well, until a period of about thirteen, fourteen years, I had a monthly program on KTXT TV. I think I did about a hundred and twenty or thirty set programs, none of which are still available because they didn't have the resources to preserves the tapes. They had to tape over them again. There may be one or two in the engineering department. I did find one on the engineering faculty on technology that they used for purposes of getting—using—teaching their freshman students. So that was one. I did a lot of public speaking because I felt that was one of the major duties. Now, I never got on the—I never hired an agent or anything. I did it simply by word of mouth, but I—probably during the hay day—and I would say that would be about from the late-fifties to the mid-eighties, I probably did an average of thirty to forty speeches a year at various city clubs and the statewide organizations. For example, I spoke at the New Mexico Institute of Banking and such things as that. I also did a lot of work with insurance people and banking people here. I did a lot of extracurricular activities in that. As a result, I would—I was more—I did research, but I was never a—what you would call a primary researcher, although—

A:
More of the one that did the quality of publications.

RR:
Yeah, quality of what I did. I'm not at all speaking about that at all, I think at least a sufficient quality. It was just more my interest and more of what I was led to do. I was also a prime target for committee activities. For example, I served as chairman of the steering committee of the self-study in 1960s. That might be—when you go look at the decade of the sixties, you might want to pull that report out because it has some significance. I also chaired for the university, the self-study in the 1980s, which was a monumental task associated with that. So those were some of the—I had a very interesting career, with respect to something that, you know, I just look forward to. Spiritually, wait to get at it. When I had all sorts of energy, I guess, it didn't hurt me because I seemed to survive pretty good. But I had all sorts of energy. I just looked forward to it, all that type of thing.

DM:
Are there any surviving tapes from your KTX—

RR:
Not that I know of, I don't know. Mechanical engineering, at one time—and it was Clint Kehoe that had it. Used it for an introductory class. But Clint is—I think he's in Carillon house out here and he's probably out of it now, so I don't know whether he still has a copy of it or not.

DM:
How about any notes from your presentation? Things like that?

RR:
I did most of them off the cuff.

DM:
Oh good.

RR:
That was one thing that I had trained myself to do. Most of the classes, I never used notes, and so, I used—you develop a pattern after that. I used to prepare, but I never took much sleep. I'd wake up in the morning and lay there half an hour to an hour and think, what do I want to talk about today? What do I want to accomplish? What are the points? Am I a little rusty on some of them? And so what do I need to do when I get to the office to catch up on them? That proved to be very valuable.

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DM:
Are your extra-activities, your presentations, and your work at KTXT, are they reflected in your resume, by any chance?

RR:
I probably mention my—this is—

DM:
Oh, you have it? Okay.

RR:
You'll find it somewhere in there. Here's what I say, "Numerous speeches to local areas. Stayed in regional meetings at various organizations. Examples in the past few years would be Texas Associate of School of Business Officials, Texas Bankers Association, Texas ____ [2:10:00] Association, Texas Independent Cotton Givers Association, New Mexico Bankers Association, New Mexico Sand and Gravel Association." I go on and on, with respect to that. [Laughter]

DM:
Can we get a copy of your resume?

RR:
This one is all over in connection with it. You might ask the department or proofread, if you want to make it. I've scribbled over it.

DM:
It doesn't matter. We just would—it's in good—

RR:
I have run off a copy of that.

DM:
All right. You have a good written record of some of the things you've talked about.

RR:
Yeah. Some of the things that I did.

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DM:
Okay. Very good. I'll make a photocopy here in just a minute.

RR:
You might want to look through and see if there's anything that you want to look at.

DM:
Okay. Do you have any questions, Allen?

A:
No. I just think it's a real good overview. One thing I always remember about sitting together at the football games—

DM:
Tightened that grip?

RR:
Oh yeah. I had some interesting anecdotes about being on the athletic department. [Laughter]

A:
Since 2008.

RR:
Not for publication. I was fired twice from the athletic department. [Laughter]

DM:
That's a compliment, I'm sure. [Laughs]

RR:
Yeah. To the faculty, it would be. [crosstalk, inaudible] [2:11:40].

DM:
Well, this is still running. Can you talk about it? Or should be turn it off?

RR:
I don't mind too much. But the athletic council didn't agree with the president about the extension of the football contract for a coach. The board didn't agree with the president, so it wasn't extended. So as a result, I wasn't reappointed to the—[laughter]. I'm glad there are all of those things that happen during the course of a career. You find out when you're on the athletic council, you're on that area where it's not only incidentally—

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DM:
Sounds to me, like, venturing into dangerous territory.

A:
Well, football games, all of us sitting on the fifty yards.

DM:
Have we left out any major areas that should be discussed?

RR:
I don't—I think we've covered pretty well, all sort of things.

DM:
It might be that we think of other questions, or that you might think of something that we really should've covered, and if that's the case—

RR:
No, I don't ball pin think of any particular thing at the moment. I guess that would give you sort of a picture of what I've done and all of the sort of things that I would call, you know, I was very privileged to be in the transition from Tech as a smaller West Texas college to a major university. That's a dynamic environment, and one that is better than if you're going the other

way. You know? As some institutions are. So in that way, I was fortunate during the course of the years. I always enjoyed my experiences.

DM:
Well, I'm going to go ahead and turn this off, then, and then—just get this thing.

End of Recording