

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS ALLAN SCOTT

CONDUCTED BY DEDE YOW

EDITED AND INDEXED BY JAN HEIDRICH-RICE

for the

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Location: Dr. Scott's Office, Pilcher Building, Room 255

DY: I went to your Web site, which is very interesting, and I got some basic information about when you came to KSU. But let's go back behind that just a little bit, if you will. Just tell us about your background.

TS: Okay. Well, I was born in 1943. My parents were from West Tennessee, but they had moved north like a lot of people did in the 1920s to try to improve their lot. Right out of high school, my father [William Hubbard Scott] went to Chicago and my mother [Wilma Plant Morris Scott] went to South Bend, Indiana. They kind of reacquainted up there and got married. I was born in Oak Park, Illinois, in 1943; that is where Frank Lloyd Wright and Ernest Hemingway came from. When I was one year old, they moved back to West Tennessee, and we stayed there until I was about four. Then we moved over to Knoxville; so I grew up in East Tennessee in Knoxville.

DY: Where in West Tennessee did you live?

TS: The family originally was from the northwest corner of Tennessee up not far from Reelfoot Lake in Obion County. My mother came from a little town called Rives, and my father lived right outside of Union City. My mother's father [Williamson Plant Morris] farmed. He also had a broom factory in Rives and wrote a prohibitionist column for the Union City paper and the *Nashville Banner* that would appear once a week or something like that. It was one of those Bill Arp or Lewis Grizzard type columns—not that humorous necessarily—but the folksy life where he'd write about the children. He wrote under the penname, John Barleycorn, and they were the Little Barleycorns. I guess I came from a background that valued education and was literary to some degree.

DY: I see all the branches that are the tributaries that have flowed and gotten in the river that is you; there are your rural roots.

TS: Right, right. Of course, I grew up in Knoxville; I never lived in a rural area, but my father did, and he was a wonderful storyteller. Whenever he was telling a story, everybody would stop what they were doing and gather around to hear the story. He had all these great stories about his youth in West Tennessee on the farm and the fights between his brothers and all that. I've got an uncle [Robert Ewing Scott, Sr.] who has just turned 96 who says that I probably ought to take all these stories with a grain of salt because my father had a way of fabricating.

DY: That's what makes a story good.

TS: I suppose so. He also had all these great stories about Chicago and all the people that he met up there. I think he had a ball the twenty years he was up there. You know all the ethnicity of the city; I think he just loved it all. His best friend was an Irish Catholic named Burns. My father came out of a Protestant area where there weren't any Catholics. He'd never even met a Catholic, I don't think, before he went to Chicago and got to know Burns.

DY: Scottish gentleman name.

TS: Yes. And he stayed in contact with Burns' widow for years. My father lived for a while in the YMCA in Chicago, and he actually had a cousin up there whose name was Pauline Klein Gerald. Her mother was a Joyner, and my father's mother [Margaret Jane Joyner Scott] was a Joyner. My father's mother's sister married a German named Klein who, I think, was a traveling salesman or something that came through West Tennessee. Their daughter Pauline was the village manager for Oak Park.

DY: And a woman was doing that?

TS: Well, a clerk, I guess is the term they used back then. Like a lot of secretaries nowadays, a clerk ran things even though she may not have been paid that highly for it. But she had a lot of contacts: She had banker friends and all of that. So I think once she discovered my father was up there in Chicago, she helped him out a little bit and even helped him find a job with the Public Service Company of Northern Illinois.

DY: About your own ethnic identity, if you came back to West Tennessee when you were a year old, I suppose you identify as a Southerner then.

TS: Yes, I did. My brother [Charles Paul Scott, Sr.] was sensitive about all this because he was four-and-a-half years older than I was, and apparently he had a little bit of a Yankee accent.

DY: He picked up an accent and brought it back with him!

TS: Right, and so I think when he started school in Memphis. . .

DY: They made fun of him.

TS: They made fun of him. He was sensitive about that, but he lost it in a hurry, I think.

DY: When he started school in Memphis?

TS: Well, that's where we were at the time, Memphis. My father started out reading meters for a Samuel Insull Company, the famous character that got into some trouble for securities fraud in the Depression era, although he was acquitted of all charges. My father always thought highly of him. Samuel Insull owned a bunch of utility companies, and one of them was the Public Service Company of Northern Illinois. So my father just kind of moved up. He never got a college degree. He had a little bit of college, but he kind of moved up from reading meters to becoming an engineer by trial-and-error and

working with engineers. So he got a job as an engineer for the utilities company in Memphis and then got a job for TVA. That's what took us to Knoxville.

DY: Yes, I know you've talked about TVA in class.

TS: So he worked for about twenty-five years until he retired from TVA.

DY: I think it's interesting that he went to college coming out of a rural background. When did he go to college?

TS: A couple of years after high school, 1926-1927, after working a while at various odd jobs in Chicago. This was before he worked for the Public Service Company. His father was a little different in that he valued education. He didn't make his boys work on the farm if they would stay in school. His parents had a little bit of money before the Civil War, and it was kind of the *Gone with the Wind* story: They owned a few slaves and all that, and, of course, they lost everything. My grandfather's parents [Benjamin Thaxton Scott and Lavisa Josephine Foster Scott] died a few years after the Civil War in March 1879 of pneumonia. My grandfather [Josiah Marshall (Hubbard) Scott] was still a teenager at that time, and the family story is that he and his siblings were cheated out of everything by his uncle who was the guardian.

DY: That's what happens if the Yankees don't get it!

TS: I suppose so.

DY: A relative does.

TS: Anyway, he went from Middle Tennessee to West Tennessee and was actually a sharecropper for his father-in-law after he got married. Robert Hatten Joyner was a prominent landholder and had property in Union City as well.

DY: Have you ever looked at the records about the slaves?

TS: Yes, I did. The family myth was that there were all kinds of slaves. There were six that my great-grandfather, Benjamin Thaxton Scott, had. Thaxton had to be a family name from back somewhere because his father was John Thaxton Scott. But he had six slaves in the 1860 census.

DY: That would put him—what—in the middle class?

TS: Yes. That would definitely be middle class. He was born in 1832 and still in his twenties at the time of the 1860 census. It looked like there was kind of a family compound with the family that he married into. So the myth about the number of slaves may have been inflated because there were several families living right there.

DY: Oh, I see. So it would have been a pool.

TS: Yes, a pool. That's the way, I think, it probably happened. Of course, they lost the slaves. Then when they died, I guess that's how the uncle, the mother's brother, would have ended up with things. If that's true; I don't know whether it's true or not.

DY: I wonder if they were foolish enough or loyal enough to buy Confederate bonds?

TS: I don't know. [chuckle]

DY: Don't you wish you had one of those!

TS: But I guess in terms of middle class, my great-grandfather, Benjamin Thaxton Scott, was a first sergeant in the Confederate Army with the 10th Cavalry of the Army of Tennessee. I guess if he had been a little higher in the social order, he would have been higher up in rank. I don't know.

DY: So he would have had to take the Amnesty Oath to be able to vote?

TS: He would have afterwards.

DY: Yes, after the War.

TS: And my mother's grandfather [John Morris]—my great-grandfather on my mother's side—was a prisoner of war. He was captured at Fort Donelson up on the Cumberland River near Nashville in February 1862, early in the War. He was taken prisoner of war and taken eventually to Rock Island Prison [in Illinois], which was one of the more notorious Union prisoner of war camps.

DY: I believe that's where Ashley Wilkes was. I will have to look it up in *Gone with the Wind*.

TS: Well, it could be. They were probably roommates up there. At any rate, that particular great-grandfather was freed in a prisoner exchange later on and was allowed to come back home. My grandfather—my mother's father, the one that did the newspaper column—wrote an account of his experiences in the Civil War and about his father as well. But he said it was a fictionalized account, so I just don't know how much of it is factual and how much he just embellished for the children.

DY: Maybe he was an honest historian.

TS: Well, I don't know, but honest enough to say he fictionalized the account.

DY: Right. [chuckle]

TS: But, you know, that particular grandfather was fourteen years old by the time the Civil War ended. He was born in 1851, and so he was old enough to have some pretty vivid memories.

DY: What a time to come of age.

TS: Yes. [With] the Union Army coming through and occupying Tennessee. And my father's father was born on 12 October 1860, so he was about four and a half by the time the War ended. He had some Civil War memories too. One of Grandfather Scott's earliest childhood memories was lying on a high bluff and watching the Union troops ford either the Duck or the Buffalo as they entered the family property. The Scotts had a farm in Humphreys County right where the Duck and the Buffalo Rivers came together in Middle Tennessee, not far from the Tennessee River. Apparently, it was some really good land. I went back there years later, and the old farmhouse was still there. I was expecting a *Gone with the Wind*-type mansion, and so I was kind of disappointed as a teenager to see it because it was a pretty plain house.

DY: That myth has really taken hold in our consciousness, hasn't it?

TS: That's right. Although this could be the house they built after the War because some family stories say the Yankee soldiers burned the house and fields when they marched through near the end of the conflict. So maybe the ante-bellum house was larger. But I guess the house I saw was substantial enough. I think somebody was still living in it when we went back through. It's probably long gone by now. My great-grandfather Joyner was also a Confederate veteran of virtually all the campaigns of the Army of Tennessee. He was in Tennessee's 9th Infantry in Cheatham's Division during all the battles of the Atlanta Campaign, including the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain.

DY: It's interesting that you have this very, very rich background in Tennessee—Civil War in Tennessee—and yet your scholarship is focused on Georgia history. Your dissertation was even on Cobb County.

TS: Well, I've been a Georgian since 1968. And I wasn't even really that interested in local history back then because I guess I just thought, well, if it was local, it wasn't important. I needed to know something else. But certainly I heard all these stories all my life. I guess it was an advantage, in a way, that my parents were so old and their parents were so old. The grandfather that was born in 1851 had thirteen children; my mother was the thirteenth, so he was fifty-six by the time she was born. She was born in 1907, so she had a fifty-six year old father and a forty-three year old mother; it's almost like you skipped a generation there. And then my mother and father were in their late thirties by the time I was born. Let's see, my father was [born in] August 1906, and my mother was November 1907; I was born in September 1943, so they're like thirty-five and thirty-seven by the time I was born.

DY: That's interesting. And what are you in the birth order?

TS: I'm the second of two. My brother is four-and-a-half years older. He was born in 1939, my brother Paul. I always had the oldest parents in my class. To me, the Civil War was very, very immediate because I actually remember my Grandfather Scott. He died when I was five years old, and so I do remember him. My Grandfather Morris on my mother's side was dead before I was born.

- DY: I think you need to tell some of this when we're reading *Gone with the Wind* or when we're reading *Jubilee*. I think this is a fascinating story. I didn't know this. I didn't know this about your background and these connections.
- TS: Well, I think there were enough people that lost it all either in the Civil War or shortly afterwards to make the story of *Gone with the Wind* seem very true to them.
- DY: Yes, very plausible. People who had something to lose.
- TS: I think in my case, too, that what really gave me a sense of history early on was hearing all my father's stories. I realized at a very early age that the world he was describing was very different than what I knew growing up in East Tennessee. I just have vague memories of West Tennessee and no memories of Oak Park.
- DY: And with that realization, what did that make you want to do or be?
- TS: Well, it just made me realize that there were worlds out there that I didn't know anything about that I wanted to know about. They were very interesting, and they were not my world. I think maybe that's why I didn't really focus on local history to begin with; I thought I knew about that, and I really wanted to know about these things I didn't know about.
- DY: When did the preservation component come in—realizing that yes, they are “gone with the wind,” but we want something of them to remain?
- TS: Yes. Are you talking about historic preservation?
- DY: Yes, I am, that sense....
- TS: Well, in terms of the material culture, there's absolutely nothing in my background that stuck with me to prepare me for that. Nobody that goes through a standard history program gets anything in the way of preservation. I think it's sad that they don't, but we didn't. The only documents that we dealt with were paper documents that you find in archives. The idea that a building has a history was not part of my formal education. If I'd paid more attention to some of my teachers in public schools, I might have felt differently about it. I know the history teacher I had in junior high school worked for years as a volunteer at the Blount Mansion in Knoxville. Blount was the territorial governor of, I guess it was called the Southwest Territory, and he had the first frame house west of the Appalachian Mountains. That's in Knoxville; the house still stands, and it's a house museum today. Growing up, I would have never thought to go there for a visit to see what the house looked like. It's just an indication of the limits of my imagination, and nobody really encouraged me to do that.
- DY: Or, knowing the kind of work you do today—the scholarship and your teaching, too—it seems to me you were fascinated by the power of the word.
- TS: Yes.

- DY: To tell the story. The story makes itself manifest when we tell it; and the books you write, the stories you tell, and the stories you're interested in are what, it sounds like, captured your imagination then.
- TS: Yes. I think I was the poorest writer in the family.
- DY: Oh, dear! You must have had some very fine writers!
- TS: That's probably a little extreme, but my brother can write a hundred times better than I can; I mean, he's just natural. He always was. He could just write beautiful prose without even trying, and my prose was very, very awkward, to say the least. I've worked hard to improve, and I think I have improved over the years.
- DY: Well, certainly your textbook [*Cornerstones of Georgia History*], the student feedback on that—the clarity is one of the wonderful elements of that book.
- TS: Well, I appreciate that. I think my brother probably got it from our grandfather and my aunt. My mother's sister [Margaret Ruth Morris Woody] would write poetry, just beautiful poetry. My aunt and mother wrote letters to each other at least once a week for a lifetime, and both of them were artistic. So I didn't inherit those gifts.
- DY: Well, you got that Southern gene for storytelling; you've got that Southern gene for appreciating storytelling.
- TS: Well, a little bit. My father was twice as smart as I am, and he had that ability. Yet, he was just a natural engineer, too. I mean, he could look at a blueprint once, and it was embedded in his memory forever. He wouldn't ever have to go back and look at it again.
- DY: Well, as I recall, you did very well on the math SAT or GRE too. So you got some of that along the way.
- TS: Yes. I think that was my brother's doing. You know, the people that are really great musicians tend to be those that started when they were two years old. My brother and I loved baseball; in fact, he had me out playing baseball when I was four years old. It made me a better athlete than I really was because I started earlier than everybody else. But when we couldn't be outside in the summertime, we would play this table baseball game, and then he'd have me calculating the averages of all the hitters and the earned run averages of the pitchers. So I was doing so much math every summer when I was ten years old and what-have-you; that's why I had those good scores on the math tests.
- DY: What you're talking about is some really wonderful mentoring.
- TS: Yes.
- DY: And you don't think about mentoring as coming from an older brother who makes you calculate batting averages, but there you go! So in the informal education and in the family, you had really good mentors.

TS: And we wrote a baseball book back then, a novel. I wrote it, and he edited it. I would tell the story, and then he'd tell the story so that it sounded good.

DY: What'd y'all do with it, do you know?

TS: I think I've still got it. I think I found it in a box down in the basement in my parents' house when we were cleaning out the house. I'm not sure where I've got it right now, but I've got it somewhere.

DY: Did y'all write on tablet paper?

TS: We bound it in some kind of folder, and I can't remember what kind of paper we wrote on. It was lined paper, I'm sure.

DY: What about your mentors in terms of the formal educational system, your teachers that you had? Have you got any of those you can pluck out from early or later days?

TS: Yes, we had some really good teachers in my high school. It was a public high school, but we had some good teachers in English, math, civics, and so on. I was steered toward the sciences back then; people thought that was more, I guess, what you were supposed to do or something.

DY: If you were a boy?

TS: Yes, maybe so. I think they thought I was too shy to be a lawyer and what-have-you, and so maybe I ought to go to medical school or something like that. So they kind of steered me that way, and I actually majored in Zoology when I went to the University of Tennessee. I majored in Zoology and ran on the track team.

DY: So you have a B.S. in Zoology?

TS: I've got a B.S. in Zoology. I had a good grade point average and all that, but I knew pretty quickly that sciences were not my cup of tea; I really didn't like the sciences that much.

DY: How did you know that, or when did you know that? I mean, you went ahead and got the B.S.?

TS: I got it because I was just stubborn, and once I started something, I wasn't going to stop it. But, well, I was just a very poor lab student. The textbook stuff was one thing, but, I don't know; I never could make an experiment work right. I think it might have been [that] my eyesight's not exactly 20/20. I wonder now if maybe where the line really was on the beaker was not where I saw the line because nothing ever worked right. If anybody was going to blow up a lab, I was the one that was going to do it, I think.

DY: Well, we're all the richer for that in the humanities! We have benefited!

TS: Maybe so. But you know, I think the biological sciences were things that could interest me for a few hours a day but not twenty-four hours a day. I minored in history, and I was much more interested in the history courses that I was taking. So that's what I ended up with in graduate school was the history. Because I really didn't take that many history courses, I didn't really have anybody in the History Department that was a mentor as an undergraduate. And I can't think of anybody in Zoology that I was that close to. But my track coach was a mentor in college. His name was Chuck Rohe. He was as intelligent as any professor that I had, and he was a wonderful motivator and a wonderful recruiter. He probably wasn't the greatest track coach in the world in terms of technique—the science of running. But he brought in some great—I wasn't one of them—but he brought in some great athletes. When I started at Tennessee, I went there not to run track, but, you know, that was the state flagship college I wanted to go to. I went out for the track team, and the track team was just awful my freshman year. They fired that coach and brought in Chuck Rohe. He really built a track program there and brought in some incredibly good athletes, at least by southern standards. The South wasn't the center of the track universe at that time; California and Oregon were. But he brought in really some of the best in the South to Tennessee.

DY: So his mentoring was sort of about life skills?

TS: Yes. And every time we'd go on a trip—we only flew to one track meet the whole time I was there. I mean, we were the low-rent kids in the athletic budget, so we drove everywhere. But that meant that we had conversations everywhere we went. If I wasn't in the back of the station wagon using the little taillight to read a book—which I was most of the time—we were having discussions. Chuck Rohe is very knowledgeable about current events, very knowledgeable about what was going on in the world. He could hold a discussion about anything. So we had some pretty intellectual discussions for a bunch of track athletes when we were traveling around. I ran cross-country, too, so it was nine months out of the year that we were doing this.

DY: I guess that sport is not stereotyped as others are.

TS: Well, maybe not. Maybe it should be. We had some good student-athletes; well, all sports have athletes that are really good students and others that aren't. But I remember when we were traveling as a cross-country team. We'd go into some little town on the way at dinnertime, and he'd have us stand in front of the plate glass window while he'd go in to negotiate the price of a steak dinner! [chuckle] He'd say, "We've got ten hungry boys out there. What kind of deal can you give us on a steak dinner?" He could have made a million dollars many times over if he'd gone into the business world!

DY: But he chose to teach.

TS: Yes, he did. And that's exactly what he was doing. I have tremendous respect for coaches. They put their theories on the line every time there's a game or a meet. The rest of us can come up with a harebrained idea and probably get tenured and promoted for originality. They come up with a harebrained idea, and they lose their job.

- DY: Well, probably not at Kennesaw State University. It takes more than that; it takes a whole lot of hard work.
- TS: Well, I stayed at Tennessee, and it was almost like going to a new institution since I changed over to history and really got to know the faculty there. Actually, Tennessee at that time had a lot in common with where we are at Kennesaw right now, I think. It was really a relatively small program. I mean, I look back, and I just can't believe that we're as big as we are here with 18,000 students. I thought Tennessee was so big when I started there, and I think when I started there were only 7,000 or 8,000 students at Tennessee. The history program . . .
- DY: And this would have been in . . . ?
- TS: Well, I started in '61 as an undergraduate and then [as a] graduate in '65. They were really upgrading at that point, adding new faculty. The baby boomers were getting ready to come to college, and so they had money to hire new faculty. The job market was so wonderful for faculty back then that they were actually bringing in people that didn't have their Ph.D.s yet to hire.
- DY: Oh, just like at Kennesaw. Your same situation here.
- TS: Yes, right. They had had a Ph.D. program for a long time, but I think they'd gone something like eighteen years without granting a Ph.D. in history, until 1965. So for all practical purposes, they were really just getting the Ph.D. program geared up. I guess my Number One mentor was the department chair there whose name was LeRoy P. Graf. He was from Ohio—had gone to Oberlin, which was a fine liberal arts small college. It had a strong reputation going back to anti-slavery days and what-have-you. And then he got his Ph.D. at Harvard. He was about two generations removed from Frederick Jackson Turner in Harvard. I mean, his professor was a Turner student.
- DY: Student of Turner.
- TS: Right.
- DY: Interesting that you get a Harvard Ph.D. there in your graduate program at Tennessee.
- TS: Right. Well, their faculty generally came out of the elite institutions. Harvard or Yale or Berkeley—practically all of the ones I remember from that period came out of Ivy League schools or the premiere institutions on the West Coast. I guess it's an indication of the job market before the '60s; it was very tight. I don't know why they ended up in places like that, because I think Graf always felt away from home in East Tennessee. His wife certainly did; she moved back to a little retirement community at Oberlin after he died. First I knew of him, of LeRoy Graf, he was being smeared all over the headlines of the *Knoxville Journal*, which was a local right-wing newspaper. In the '50s and '60s, their cause was to root out communists wherever they could be found. There were quite a few in East Tennessee and eastern Kentucky that were far to the left—whether they were communists or not—working among miners in Kentucky, organizing and that kind of stuff. There was a school in Knoxville called the Highlander Folk School. I don't

know whether you've ever heard of it or not, headed by Myles Horton. Well, Myles Horton was a next-door neighbor to Graf, and so he would invite Graf over to speak at the Highlander School. Well, Martin Luther King had been through there, and Eleanor Roosevelt had been down to visit the school and what-have-you. But it had a reputation of being soft on communism, if not part of the Communist Conspiracy. So Graf went over and talked to a group of the kids that were going from the North down to Mississippi in 1964 for the Freedom Summer. And knowing Graf—this was the way he told it to me—he was basically telling them pretty moderate stuff about getting to know the local people and not acting like they were better than everybody else and all that kind of thing—what you need to do. But the very fact that he had spoken at the Highlander School . . .

DY: Is what got him in the paper?

TS: Got him in the paper. And right about that time they had made him department chair, and so, you know, you can imagine what they're saying in the paper: "What's going on with these liberals over at the University of Tennessee that they're hiring communists to head the history department and corrupt the youth?" Well, he wasn't anything like that at all. He was an old-school liberal, involved with—oh, what was the group of Christians and Jews? There was a famous organization from that period, the National Conference of Christians and Jews [now named the National Conference for Community and Justice]. He was a Unitarian, and he was involved with efforts to bring people together. There was absolutely nothing that was abrasive about Graf. He was very paternalistic in some ways, but [there was] nothing that was harsh about him.

DY: What about his teaching? Clearly you're drawn to him intellectually in the classroom. Was he your mentor in teaching style?

TS: I don't think so. He was a good teacher but a standard lecture teacher; he'd sit on the side of the desk and lecture.

DY: So it had to be the content that grabbed you.

TS: Well, once I started, particularly when I was teaching down here and going up to Knoxville on the weekends to work on my dissertation.

DY: You came to Kennesaw in '68?

TS: Yes, and it was '78 before I got my Ph.D.

DY: Did you take that time off? From 1970 to '71, you took a year off.

TS: I did. I took a leave of absence to go back and finish up my coursework.

DY: Oh. But you were commuting, though, after you had come here to Kennesaw, you're saying?

TS: Well, I came here in '68, and I didn't do much of anything for two years other than teach my classes, which was great preparation to finish a graduate program.

DY: Indeed! You had to really have a firm grasp of all that basic material because I assume you're talking about what we now call History 1101 and History 1102.

TS: Yes, whatever we call them now; 2111 and the 2112 are our numbers nowadays for the U.S. History.

DY: Oh, okay.

TS: But yes, that's exactly that. It was the survey classes in U.S. and survey classes in Western Civ. I literally spent every waking hour preparing for class, grading papers and talking to students. I mean, everything was teaching for those two years, and I had taught a year in North Carolina [Western Piedmont Community College] before I came here. So there were three years that I kind of took off from graduate school and did nothing but work on my classes. Then I took the leave of absence and went back to Knoxville for a year and had a TA [teaching assistantship] up there during that year.

DY: Oh, you did have a TA up there? And you finished up your coursework for the Ph.D. then?

TS: Yes. Right. Finished up the coursework. I'd had a year beyond the master's before I got out of graduate school the first time. [I] went back and finished up the coursework, came back here and continued to teach heavy loads, and took another couple of years before I took prelims—that was '73.

DY: How in the world did you find time to study for prelims? You just carved it out, I guess.

TS: Well, I did. I took the summers off; then I spent about four and a half years, I guess, writing the dissertation while I was teaching full time here.

DY: Who was your dissertation director?

TS: Graf.

DY: Graf was your dissertation director?

TS: Yes. That's what I was going to say; I'd go up to Knoxville every weekend it seemed like, or at least once a month. I'd go in and we'd talk all morning in his office on Saturday mornings. Nobody'd be around, and we'd discuss everything in the world. He'd take the time—I don't know how he had the time to put up with me, but he did.

DY: Oh, I'm sure he found you a wonderful student!

TS: And he was always that way. I always just loved to talk to him, and he spent the time. His claim to fame at Tennessee was that he started a project, got one of the first grants that anybody had gotten around there to edit the papers of [President] Andrew Johnson.

He and another faculty member—Ralph Haskins—got this grant. They gave them a room over in the basement of the library, so they started this project. It took them nine years before they turned out the first volume because they were teaching full time. Graf was department chair and still teaching a heavy load while they were—sounds like Kennesaw, doesn't it?

DY: I can sure see some modeling there for your work ethic. But you are exceptional in that your teaching is so excellent but also your productivity and the quality of what you've produced, too.

TS: Well, it's just kind of built over the years, I think. I always felt like teaching [comes] first, and then once you get the teaching down, you've got time to do the other things.

DY: But then what you're teaching gets you interested in taking more into the classroom.

TS: Exactly. And, you know, Graf is a good model because he was a good teacher and he cared about his students. Again, there was nothing really memorable about the way he taught his class, but there's a lot that's memorable about him as a person. He'd get involved in the community; I mentioned that group of Christians and Jews he was involved in, and [there was] the East Tennessee Historical Society and all of those things. So he was a presence in the community. He went to his Unitarian church regularly and was involved there, and then he was doing things in scholarship. It took him forever to come out with the first volume, but then they came out on a pretty regular basis, producing another volume and another volume. All their editing work was highly acclaimed in terms of the book reviews that it received, the acceptance in the academic community. The reason it took them so long is that anybody that was mentioned in any letter to and from Andrew Johnson, they had to know who that person was. So that took research to find out who is he writing to and who is writing to him.

DY: Maybe for our readers you need to tell us: Andrew Johnson—he was the only US president to get impeached, is that the one?

TS: Yes, before Clinton. Well, while I was around there, they weren't even up to his presidency yet. But yes, Andrew Johnson was from East Tennessee—born in North Carolina but grew up in East Tennessee—and, of course, became president. He was elected vice president with Lincoln in 1864, and then when Lincoln was assassinated, he became president. He was very controversial during Reconstruction, and the Radical Republicans impeached him. They put him on trial in the Senate, and he came within one vote of being removed. Graf was not a fan of Andrew Johnson; Andrew Johnson was about as different in personality from Graf as you can get in that Johnson was very abrasive. That was part of his problem—very bull-headed, but also a man of principle. You might not like his principles, but he had them. When they brought all the impeachment charges against Johnson, they threw the kitchen sink at him. But there's not a single charge of corruption, which is a pretty good indication that he was as honest as the day is long. I mean, they had trumped up charges where they had passed a law that prohibited him from removing Cabinet members, and he went ahead and fired [Edwin] Stanton anyway, his Secretary of War. One of the charges against him was the violation

of the Tenure of Office Act. But, I guess, he was unimpeachable in terms of character: literally, unimpeachable in terms of character. Johnson had a very poor education; in fact, his wife taught him. His wife was a school teacher, and she taught him how to read and write after he was an adult. He was a tailor. He came up through the working classes, and that was why he stuck with the Union because of class. He blamed the aristocracy for everything. As governor of Tennessee, he started the public school system in Tennessee and had a lot of meritorious achievements to his credit in Tennessee politics.

DY: I can see what might interest Professor Graf here in this bio.

TS: Right. And so the whole time I was there, they hadn't even reached [Johnson's] presidency; they were doing the early career. But they were doing it very meticulously and very thoroughly, and I guess that was a good model, too. Then the other professor that really stands out in those days was way out of my field; he taught the Renaissance and Reformation. His name was Richard Marius. We still use a book that Marius wrote, *A Short Guide to Writing about History*, in the research class.

DY: Because he's a rhetorician, isn't he? A rhetorician writes about writing. Doesn't he direct a writing program?

TS: Well, he did. He died in 1999 when he was still in his sixties. He had pancreatic cancer and died very young. Richard Marius was born and grew up about twenty miles from Knoxville in a little community called Lenoir City. He went to the University of Tennessee as an undergraduate. He was one of these cases, if you're extremely smart in one area, you're probably going to be totally stupid in another. He couldn't meet the math requirement to get into Tennessee, so they let him take French instead. I think they knew how brilliant he was, and French to him was something that you just picked up in a snap, unlike math, which he would never learn. But at any rate, he graduated from Tennessee. He came from a Catholic background in East Tennessee. I forgot what the ethnicity is, but at any rate, he was going to be a priest at one point.¹ He didn't like the way that they talked about the Reformation at the Catholic seminary, so he went to a Southern Baptist seminary and became a Baptist minister. He was very popular. I'm sure he preached great sermons. Somewhere along the line, he decided he didn't believe what he was saying anymore. He dropped out of the ministry and went to graduate school. But he was still interested in religion, and so he went up to Yale.

DY: To their theological school?

TS: No, it was the history department. But they had religious studies in the history department.

DY: That's what we need here, you know.

TS: His major professor wrote *Here I Stand*, which for a long time was the standard on Martin Luther by Roland [H.] Bainton. I remember in class it took me years to get the pun, but I finally figured it out. It was a time when people were getting interested in psychohistory. And there was a

¹ [Editor's note: This story, in fact, is not true. Marius grew up in a Baptist church. The story remains in the interview because it is what the narrator believed for many years. For a biographical sketch of Richard Marius, see Nancy Grisham Anderson, ed., *Wrestling with God: The Meditations of Richard Marius* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2006), xxi-xxx.]

psychologist named [Erik H.] Erikson who wrote *Young Man Luther*, where he psychoanalyzed Luther, and Bainton's comment in one of his publications that we read was that there are grave difficulties in psychoanalyzing the dead. I can still see Marius chuckling over than comment, and I didn't really know what he was chuckling about for years.

DY: [laughter] A pun, a pun!

TS: Well, it took me forever to figure out the pun, but, at any rate, Marius came back to Tennessee.

DY: Did you have him as a teacher?

TS: I did. He was in his early thirties when I was starting graduate school; so I took the Renaissance and Reformation courses, and I took a readings course on Erasmus and Thomas More. Marius was a More scholar; he wrote his dissertation on Thomas More. And after that, he wrote a biography of More and then wrote a couple of books on Martin Luther during this career.

DY: What did you like about him? It sounds like his classroom presence was really engaging.

TS: I don't in any sense think that I can match up in any way with Marius, but my style of teaching has probably been more influenced by him than anybody else. He would just walk into a classroom and with seeming ease, with maybe a three-by-five card at most up there on the podium, just deliver these absolutely wonderful lectures.

DY: That's what you do.

TS: Well, I try to.

DY: Having team-taught with you for ten years, that's exactly what you do.

TS: Well, I'm sure that's my model, and he always did it with good will. He had very strong opinions, but not to the extent that he intimidated others who had different opinions.

DY: And would invite their expression.

TS: Absolutely. Everything with good will; I never knew him to express . . . well, he did not like John Calvin. I don't remember him ever talking in lectures about John Calvin. He taught a whole course on the Reformation without John Calvin, I think. Of course, that's my background as a Presbyterian—Calvinism, John Calvin and John Knox. But to Marius, they were so intolerant and narrow-minded. Marius actually was very fond of Erasmus. Erasmus was one of the big names of the humanists, the humanist scholars that really prepared the way for the Reformation with their criticisms of the Catholic church. Erasmus was pretty strong on the criticisms of the abuses in the church; but, when the Reformation came about, Erasmus didn't go along with it. He didn't approve of what Martin Luther did with the break with the Catholic church. He was a reformer and believed you ought to stay inside the church and work from within to reform and not to destroy, not break away.

DY: He wasn't a revolutionary.

TS: He wasn't a revolutionary. Of course, like a lot of moderates, he gets condemned by the revolutionaries because they think he's a wimp that doesn't have the courage of his convictions. But actually, he's following his convictions; his convictions are we ought to stay inside and reform instead of breaking away. You know, one of the Catholic criticisms of what's going on is that you've got two churches. Is it going to stop there? And, of course, it hasn't. We've continued to splinter and splinter and splinter ever since. In Marius's last book on Martin Luther, he does this wonderful book on Luther, very sensitive to what Luther's going through. But Marius is very much like Erasmus; he didn't approve of Luther, and so he can write about somebody without agreeing with him, and he can write fairly, objectively about somebody. He says in his introduction to his Luther book that he thinks Luther is the worst thing that ever happened to western civilization for what he did to destroy the universal church and bring on centuries of religious warfare. Marius in the '60s was a friend of all the campus radicals, but he didn't like the barbarians at the gate that wanted to destroy everything and who didn't have an appreciation for the past and appreciation for the institutions that had been built up. So Marius would stop short of occupying the president's office or blowing up the ROTC building or any of those really radical things. He had utter contempt for those extreme, intolerant left-wingers that wanted to destroy it all. So that was Marius. Let me tell you one other thing about him, too. While I was there, he started writing historical novels, and he became a very good novelist. I've still got the first one that he wrote, but I never could get him to talk about those books. Once he wrote a novel and he was on to the next book, he absolutely would not discuss the first one. If you started a conversation, he'd get up and go somewhere else. But he started writing novels, and everybody wanted to recruit him away from Tennessee. He said, "This is my roots, and I'm not going anywhere." The one thing that eventually recruited him away is that Harvard wanted him to head the first year writing program. They offered him the job. He didn't have to apply for it; they offered him the job of heading their first year writing program. I think maybe just the neatness of a historian heading up what you think of as an English job is what appealed to him.

DY: But there's all that history of rhetoric and understanding rhetoric that he had.

TS: Yes. So he spent, I guess, the last fourteen years of his career before he retired heading up the freshman writing program at Harvard.

DY: Lucky freshman. Where I wanted to jump to is something you said about Marius which is the highest compliment, I think, you can pay an historian—you can pay a scholar at all—and that is to be able to write with fairness about something that you may have strong emotional responses to. What I'm real curious to know is, in your research and all the writing that you've done, if you could come up with a couple of persons or incidents that you had to step back and be fair and just, I don't know, be sort of Hebraic about it and also merciful?

TS: Yes. You know, I think the best way to learn something is to take a position that you're strongly opposed to and try to understand why those people thought the way they did. I

think Puritanism is a good case in point. By the time I got through graduate school, I was not fond of the Puritans because all the literature it seemed like was sort of anti-Puritan.

DY: It's still hard to get students to care about them.

TS: No, I mean their reputation. I guess going back to H. L. Mencken—that Puritanism is the haunting fear that somebody somewhere may be happy.

DY: Having a good time!

TS: Yes. And just reading things like Edmund S. Morgan's *The Puritan Dilemma* and coming to an understanding that the Puritans have received a bad press and that, in many ways, Puritanism is the root of modern liberalism.

DY: You've helped me see that; you helped me very much last semester when I taught the survey course after a hiatus in teaching Puritanism. Now I'm going to read more Morgan into it.

TS: Well, when I started reading things like Morgan, I was not prepared for what he had to say. I was expecting him to criticize the Puritans for being a bunch of bigots and intolerant because they ran Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson out of Massachusetts and all of that. They did, of course, but that's not Morgan's take on it. He really makes them more mainstream moderate.

DY: He makes them like you and me is what he does.

TS: Yes. I mean, to Morgan, the extremists are the Roger Williamses and the Anne Hutchinsons.

DY: Who are threatening a community.

TS: Yes. And I guess when Morgan is writing, if you want to put it in context of the '50s and McCarthyism, that's where the liberals are distancing themselves from the left. And they're getting bashed from both sides. They're getting bashed by the right, which is trying to paint them with, I guess, red strokes; but they're also being bashed by the communists because they're not communists. They're very mainstream Americans.

DY: All right. I'm going more specific; I want to get to a little piece of ground here since you are the Scholar of Cobb County. Your dissertation is on Cobb County, right? Socio-economic study, 1880-1900—that was your dissertation. And now you have since written your book on Cobb County.

TS: Yes.

DY: What's the full title of that book?

TS: *Cobb County, Georgia and the Origins of the Suburban South*. And the subtitle is *A Twentieth-Century History*.

DY: Okay.

TS: Everybody's been condemning me for having too long a title! [chuckle]

DY: No, no. Your title is fine. You have to have a colon, but your title is quite fine even without your colon, before the colon. What in your writing—what in your looking at Cobb County history—did you find the most, well, how are we going to say this?

TS: Surprising?

DY: Surprising. Or let's just say, difficult to deal with, as you said before, with good will, objectivity and fairness.

TS: Well, you know, I guess, I started out years and years ago from a standard liberal perspective looking at Cobb County. The standard liberal perspective is pretty much the perspective out of Atlanta—you know, out of other areas—that only the bigots move to the suburbs. Kind of like the Puritans, only the bigots move out there who want to put stickers on evolution in the textbooks in the school, pass anti-gay resolutions and get away from the blacks. It's a horrible stereotype of suburbs throughout the country of a bunch of conformists who are materialistic and who want to get away from the problems of society by running off to their little half acre out in the countryside. I think, first of all, it's not the suburbs today. I mean, suburbs today throughout the country are remarkably diverse and, I think, are America nowadays. The majority of people in America live in the suburbs nowadays. There must have been some reason why they came here and why so many black people, Hispanic people, Asians and what-have-you want to move to the suburbs nowadays. So the suburbs of today are quite different from the suburbs of, say, thirty years ago. But even then, there were reasons why so many people moved to the suburbs, especially after World War II, throughout the country. Most of the reasons make perfect sense in terms of the American dream and what we want. Why not move to a place where land values are more affordable, where taxes are lower, where there's less crime? With the automobile, people didn't mind traveling twenty miles to get to work even if they had to get stuck in traffic jams to do it if it meant that their children could go to good schools and grow up in safe neighborhoods and you could have that half acre of grass out there to mow. People didn't move to the suburbs to get away from blacks, although some maybe have.

DY: They moved for a better life.

TS: They moved for a better life.

DY: Well, these are the sons, grandsons and great-grandsons of the immigrants who settled this country, too. That's the same impetus, isn't it?

TS: Right. You look at what Levittown did on Long Island right after World War II. It allowed people who grew up in the tenement apartments of New York to go off and fight in World War II; then, when they came back home, they didn't have to go back to the tenement apartments. Levittown had to fight like mad with the local zoning boards because they didn't have basements. The local zoning boards on Long Island thought

that these houses are just going to be shacks and run-down, substandard housing in no time if we let them in. It was the veterans that packed these meetings and said, “We want these houses.” And won the day.

DY: And they were going to own those homes, too. They weren’t renters.

TS: Yes, they were going to own these homes because the Levitts mass built them. But the Levitts were a Jewish family up in New York. When they first started building houses on Long Island, they couldn’t even live in them because they had restrictive covenants to keep Jews out, if you can believe that! [chuckle] But they mass produced these houses after World War II, and I think the liberal critique, where it goes astray—the liberals of the post-World War II wanted everybody to live in public housing. I mean, they thought that was the government’s role, Roosevelt saying a third of the nation’s ill-clad, ill-fed, ill-housed—well, they thought the country ought to provide housing. The taxpayers ought to provide housing for that third of the country that was at the bottom—have public housing for the masses. That was kind of the liberal vision coming out of the New Deal, and they quite frankly got beat in the late ’40s by conservatives, by the Republicans who believed in private enterprise to provide the housing. They got beat by things like Levittown that were showing that you could mass produce houses economically and sell them at a price that ordinary people—you know, working middle-class people—could afford to pay. And then what the government did in the ’40s that was ingenious is that they helped the housing industry and helped the homeowners by allowing people to write their mortgage interest payments off of their income taxes. If you can imagine the debate: “Are we going to have public housing where the government—you know, Big Daddy—is going to provide all the housing for everybody? Or are we going to do it privately and let people buy the houses they want but make it affordable for them?” Because in those early years of their thirty-year mortgages, they’re going to be able to write practically everything off their taxes that they’re paying. So we went, I guess, the conservative, capitalist enterprise route.

DY: But you went into this with the myth or the stereotype of the white flight and all of that?

TS: Yes. And to some degree, I don’t doubt that some people moved out of Atlanta because they didn’t want their kids to go to integrated schools. That was a factor; it’s just not the only factor, and it’s not the major factor. I think if the housing hadn’t been cheaper in Cobb County than it was in Atlanta, they wouldn’t have come here. If taxes hadn’t been lower, if crime hadn’t been less, if the schools hadn’t been good, they wouldn’t have come. You’ve got to put all of those things into the equation to get the full picture. Then you’ve got a county like Cobb County that votes very much like Atlanta, like in 1954 when the governor, Herman Talmadge, was trying to close down the public schools to avoid integration after the *Brown* decision. We had a statewide constitutional amendment giving the governor the power to close the schools. Well, Cobb County did not vote for that amendment; it lost in Cobb County, and it lost because middle-class people valued schools more than they valued segregation. They valued keeping the schools open to give kids opportunity more than they valued segregation, which—they were horribly racist in lots of ways, but they also recognized that change was inevitable. They weren’t going to stand in the schoolhouse door if it meant losing the school. So

they don't fit the stereotype, I don't think, in lots of ways. Nothing about the growth of the Republican Party really fits the stereotype in Georgia, I don't think. What happens with [Howard H.] Bo Callaway in 1966: why somebody like [future Democratic Governor] Roy [Eugene] Barnes, for instance, would have been a supporter of Bo Callaway in 1966 and spoke at his rally in Cobb County because of Barnes' utter contempt for Lester Maddox, who was the candidate of the Democrats. So the Democrats were the segregationists back then.

DY: It seems like in your books, and certainly in your teaching, too, one of the things that you do very successfully is you bring students to look at all sides.

TS: Yes. Well, I grew up a Democrat. My father worked for TVA [the Tennessee Valley Authority], and sometimes it seemed like I was the only Democrat in a classroom of Republicans in East Tennessee, which is staunchly Republican and has been ever since the Civil War. So—to your original question—when I started looking at these questions of suburbia and the growth of the Republican Party in this area, I didn't look at first at these things as good things.

DY: Yes. You brought your own biases into it.

TS: I brought my own biases. But, you know, you've got to be open to the facts and let the facts change you when you're wrong. And doing all these oral histories that I've done over the years and hearing people's stories, you eventually come to the conclusion that either everybody's wrong but you, or you're wrong.

DY: And the oral history—let's see, I was looking at your vita online. The first upper level classes were offered at Kennesaw in 1978, and you first offered Georgia History in '79.

TS: Right. That's the first year it was taught.

DY: But you headed the oral history project in '78, right?

TS: I started it just as soon as I finished my Ph.D.

DY: Okay.

TS: And that was another coming-from-the-left approach at that time. Everybody, I guess, back in the '60s and '70s, wanted to tell history from the bottom up. That's what I tried to do with my dissertation; that's why I had all those punch cards. I had 60,000 punch cards by the time I got through. My wife Kathy [Kathleen Sherlock Scott] and I coded all these coding sheets of census data of everybody in Cobb County in 1880 and 1900 and everybody in the tax digests in 1880, 1890, and 1900. Back in the primitive technology of those days, I had 60,000 IBM punch cards that you had to run through these machines to come up with all this statistical data. But in the absence of oral history—and, of course, it was too late to get those oral histories from the nineteenth century—the only way really to get the story of ordinary people was through this government-acquired statistical data. You know, the records that governments had acquired about ordinary people: how much property they owned, how much taxes they paid, whether they paid

their poll tax, whether they were literate or illiterate, how old they were, how many children they'd had and how many were still living, whether there were any lunatics in the family—all those kinds of things that you got out of the census and tax digests back then. That was a way to tell history from the bottom up, to use that statistical data. Well, by the time I got through with that project, I was of the opinion that I never wanted to do anything statistical again. [laughter] It kind of fit in with my math background, I guess, because I had to learn all this statistical methodology in order to do the dissertation. But by the time I was through, I didn't want to do that any more, but I still wanted to tell history from the bottom up.

DY: Well, there's your storytelling background.

TS: Yes, that's where oral history comes in.

DY: Exactly. There's your grandfather and your father and all of that.

TS: Exactly.

DY: But the truth resides in, many truths reside. . .

TS: So at any rate, I remember going and asking Dr. [George H.] Beggs if it was okay if I started an oral history project. He was the division chair at that time, and I asked him if he could help me make contacts with some of these people in the community. He did a little bit, but then I took over . . .

DY: And you did this in addition to your teaching load?

TS: Oh, yes, but this is what I wanted to do. The first interview I did was with [former Cobb County Commissioner] Herbert C. McCollum, as in McCollum Parkway and McCollum Field. He had been quite young when he had been commissioner, so I guess he was in his sixties when I interviewed him. I called him up, or I sent him a card, I believe, to begin with. I was kind of shy; I sent him a card in the mail.

DY: No e-mail.

TS: Yes. I sent him a letter with a card in it that he could send back—a stamped, self-addressed card—if he would be willing to be interviewed. He was great. He had all kinds of stories to tell and all kinds of records. Of course, he had been kind of repudiated when he went out of office. Ernest Barrett came in and replaced him and was there for twenty years. So [McCollum] kind of wanted to get his story out, and I was green as all get out. My wife, Kathy, had to tell me what questions to ask him; I didn't know that county governments dealt with zoning and those kinds of things. I didn't know what they did, and so Kathy kind of filled me with questions to ask him about zoning and things of that sort.

DY: Talk about teamwork!

TS: Yes. Well, her field was public administration, so she knew what governments did, if I didn't. But I did an interview with him; in fact, we videotaped it. And then I did Shuler Antley after that, who was former principal of Marietta High School and then superintendent of Marietta City Schools. Actually he was my third interview. My second was with M. J. Woods—Marion J. Woods—who was the principal of the black high school in Marietta, the Lemon Street High School. I went out to his home and interviewed him on his couch, so that was my second. Then Shuler Antley was the third. So, that got me started. I did all those in '78.

DY: For the record now, you know, how we like to look at these things—in 1978 you begin the oral history project. But then it's twenty-five years later, I think, in 2003, when you're directing the Center for Regional History and Culture. Am I right about that?

TS: Yes, I came in 2003.

DY: In 2003 you became director?

TS: Yes. That wasn't long ago, now. That's right.

DY: Not too long ago. But it seems like a long time.

TS: Yes, basically Randy had headed it until I finished my book.

DY: That's Randy [Randall L.] Patton.

TS: Randy Patton. He had other projects and I'd taken over, although we're going to co-direct it again now, I think.

DY: Good.

TS: But I took over for a while.

DY: And you've got your Symposium on Jewish Life; you did that last year.

TS: Yes. I've got the second one coming up in February.

DY: And also this Civil War . . .

TS: New Interpretations of the Civil War. That's this week.

DY: This week, which is January the 28th. I guess what we need to do is back up a little bit and see why you came to KSU? What brought you here? First of all, you had to leave the great Volunteer State.

TS: Yes, well, I'd already left there.

DY: Oh, you went and taught for a year. Where did you say? North Carolina?

TS: Morganton, North Carolina for one year. It's in the Piedmont area. In fact, the school was called Western Piedmont Community College. I had finished my master's in '66 and kept going, kept taking courses. When I finished, I guess it was December of '66, you know, you don't get a job in the teaching world in January; you get a job in the fall. So I started applying for jobs, then took the winter, spring and summer quarters at Tennessee. That allowed me to get a year beyond the master's by the time I started teaching. But quite frankly, I wanted to teach, and I didn't even know whether I could because I never had. So I wanted to get out and do something.

DY: See if that's what you wanted to do.

TS: Yes. To see if I was capable. Before I invested in a Ph.D. I wanted to make sure I wasn't going to get through a Ph.D. and find out I was incompetent for the job.

DY: It's funny; they don't ever talk to you about that in graduate programs.

TS: No, they don't. You don't get anything in graduate school that prepares you to teach. Content, I guess.

DY: Yes, I think now, there are programs for graduate students. I know, at least at Georgia in the . . .

TS: And those are actually coming in by the early '70s, I guess, but nothing that I ever took. So I had never had an education course, and [my] teaching was very limited. I ran on the track team going through the University of Tennessee and would work doing a summer job, maybe doing a little coaching for a youth program or something like that. But that's not real teaching.

DY: Well, a lot of people would say it is.

TS: Well, I mean it is, but it's . . .

DY: Look, you named your coach as one of the most important mentors in your history.

TS: And he clearly was. But I needed to get out and see whether I could do it.

DY: Engage others with your subject and you.

TS: Exactly. So I applied, and I went to Western Piedmont because they offered me a job. They were the first ones to offer me a job, and so I took it. It was a brand new school; it had only been in business a year or two when I got there. In fact, they didn't even have a campus when I first got there. During that year the campus was completed, and we moved into it.

DY: Gosh, you've got a history of that, don't you?

TS: Yes. It was just a little town in North Carolina, and I think we were operating out of an abandoned elementary school for that first quarter before we got into our new facilities. I

got in on the ground floor and had an excellent department chair that I still keep in touch with named John Palm. He's retired military; he'd been in the Navy and had been a commander or captain, I'm not sure what his final rank was.

DY: Was he an historian?

TS: He had been in Navy intelligence. He retired when he was 43 and went back to graduate school in both political science and psychology. The department was Social Science.

DY: That's a scary combination.

TS: You would think so, I guess, but he was rebelling against his military career at that point. Not the military career, per se, but the culture of the military. He had gotten a divorce, and he moved in a different direction, away from everything that he had had before. They hired him, and he was in his, I guess, late forties at that time. They had actually hired him to teach; he had not come to be a department chair. Then the department chair left suddenly; the one that hired me left. All the administrators that hired me left before I ever got there. [chuckle] Which was scary in itself. But John Palm was the department chair to begin with. And I was wondering about this guy with his military background that sounded very military sometimes, but he was—he's still—a very passionate, liberal person. You know, he wants me to go down to Tampa where he lives now and explain to him how George W. Bush got elected president—why anybody in the world would vote for him. He became very anti-war. He had a son who was killed in Vietnam. He was an officer in the Army and got killed on some mission to take some hill that they were going to evacuate the next week anyway, I guess. You know the way Vietnam was. And so he was very anti-Vietnam, and he's still very anti-war.

DY: Well, if you can go down there and explain that to him, you've got a best seller.

TS: Well, I probably can't explain that to him.

DY: At least in the blue states [that typically vote for liberal Democrats].

TS: Yes. But at any rate, he was my department chair, and he actually got fired that year as department chair and faculty member. He didn't want to be an administrator to begin with, but he took the job. We had a president there whose name doesn't need to go into the transcript, who was the most next-to-nothing, wimpish president that you could find anywhere. There were some problems on campus. This is '67-68, and even in a school of a bunch of working class kids in a poor area of North Carolina that had a lot of furniture industries, textile mills and that kind of thing. It was one of these communities with a handful of super-rich people and not much of a middle-class, and a whole lot of working class people.

DY: Those working class people are the ones who are going to get drafted.

TS: Yes. But even in a community like that, at a community college, we had a handful of students that were attuned to what was going on in the world and had opinions. Particularly, there was one girl that was very liberal that grew up in that community in a

very poor family. [Palm] was the mentor for this, I say, girl; she was eighteen or nineteen years old, and she didn't need him to make her into a left-winger. I mean, she came by it naturally, I think, but he certainly encouraged her to think for herself. At any rate, it's hard to believe now, we're just thirty-six or seven years removed from this, I guess. But we were integrated in North Carolina at that time; we had black students. And the Dean of Students called this girl into his office one day and said, "Look, I've got to protect your reputation. You've been seen loitering around the water fountain talking to these black men—black male students, black boys—and so I'm going to have to discipline you. We're going to have to take some kind of sanctions against you if you don't stop it." So she went to John and told him what happened. John had grown increasingly frustrated that year by an administration that exercised little leadership and seemingly knew nothing about academic freedom or basic human rights. So he went in and banged his fist on the desk of the president and said, "It's time for you to do something; I don't care what you do, but do something." And what they did was to fire him. So this was right at the end of the school year, and it was just a matter of weeks till they sent us out our contracts for the next year. As soon as I got my contract—I wanted that letter that said they had offered me a job for the next year—I turned it down and said, "Given the atmosphere of intimidation here and the way you've treated my department chair, I'm not coming back."

DY: Great for you.

TS: And so I quit without a job in sight. I started applying feverishly everywhere. And I think a lot of places—well, the worst thing in the world anybody with just one year of experience can do is to resign, because everybody's going to say. . .

DY: That's right, because everybody's going to say, "What's happened to you?"

TS: That's right. What's wrong with you? That's why I waited to get at least the contract so I could show people that I had the letter. They offered me the job, and they offered me an attractive raise, and I think they were kind of buying me for another year too. But I didn't have any family. I didn't have that much to lose, I guess.

DY: You could live on principle.

TS: Have principle. I didn't have a mortgage payment, and so I guess I could afford to have principle. And some on the faculty couldn't afford to have principles, and they stayed and were miserable for having stayed. But it was the best thing in the world that ever happened to me. I was very candid everywhere I applied. I said, "Look, I've left this job, and this is why." I just figured at the time that if they didn't want to offer me a job for that reason, I didn't want to go to that institution anyway.

DY: Right, right.

TS: And I think the one person that was impressed by it all was George Beggs, who was the division chair here. He thought it was kind of humorous, I think, and he said, "Well, I'm going to have to check you out." But he said, "Don't worry about it if it rings true." So I got the job here and, yes, I came in for an interview. Back then, all you met with was the

division chair, the dean and the president. I never did see a faculty member here before I showed up the first day.

DY: And the landscape, when you came out here, first of all, there was no [Interstate] 75, obviously.

TS: No, no, you got here by Bells Ferry.

DY: You got here by Bells Ferry, and you drove by cow pastures.

TS: I had gone down to Florida to visit John Palm, and Beggs got a hold of me down there. I told him I'd stop by on my way back to Knoxville. I had gone back to Knoxville, moved back in with my parents until I had money again. I'm sure they loved that, and I think they did—

DY: I bet they did.

TS: But, at any rate, I was determined to get a job. For one thing, I was imminently draftable at that point. I was twenty-four years old, and this was right in the middle of Vietnam, 1968. You could get deferred if you were teaching in a college or teaching in a public school, but I needed to find a job before the draft board found out. And I did. So at any rate, Beggs offered me a job, and a junior college in Texas called me up the same day that was ready to offer me a job. But I was very lucky to get the job here.

DY: And were we. So you came here, and you have clearly built a sterling reputation as a teacher, scholar, center director—throw that in. So the next question is, why did you stay?

TS: Have you ever heard my story of Dr. Sturgis trying to fire me?

DY: NO!

TS: You didn't know that?!

DY: Dr. Sturgis.

TS: Right. Horace W. Sturgis.

DY: He was the president of Kennesaw Junior College when you arrived.

TS: Right. A fine man, and I grew to have a tremendous amount of respect for him. But I didn't at the time!

DY: Let's hear this story.

TS: You know, I did a ten-hour oral history with him; we did it over several months.

DY: I reckon it's bound in the history center, is it not?

TS: It is. I've got a copy of it up here.

DY: That's another thing I'd like to comment on for the record. When you come in Dr. Tom Scott's office, be you student or oral history interviewer, and a book comes up, he'll have it on his shelf.

TS: Well, maybe so. I don't usually keep my oral histories in bound form. We place bound copies in the library/archives at KSU and in the Georgia Room of the Cobb County Public Library System. I've got many of them, unbound, in my file cabinet. But I wanted to keep a bound copy of this one, and it really is a good interview. I think we learned to have respect for each other as time went on.

DY: Yes, the more you know about somebody, the better you understand them.

TS: Yes. [To] anybody who understands me now, I guess it's kind of a shock, but I guess I was kind of a young radical on campus back then. I was very sophomoric in the sense that I went off the deep end after my experience in North Carolina, and [I was] very judgmental about everybody that didn't agree with me, I guess—or wasn't far enough to the left.

DY: That's not always a bad thing, if you're right.

TS: But somehow you've got to grow up eventually and learn to respect other people's opinions, too. We actually had a Kent State rally on campus in 1970 after the Kent State incident in Ohio when the students got killed up there by the National Guard. We had a little—well, you probably remember they closed down the whole university system for several days to kind of prevent any kind of mass demonstrations or violence on college campuses. But there were about eighteen people that gathered around the flagpole, and in the process, I made some comments I shouldn't have made about the administration here. There was a reporter from the *Marietta Daily Journal* that covered it all, and so I was on the front page of the newspaper the next day bashing our administration!

DY: Give me an example of a comment.

TS: Shoo!

DY: Any of the rhetoric of the '60s?

TS: Yes. I learned a lesson from all of this, and that is that humor doesn't always translate into print. I was basically saying that people on campus ought to make their issues local; we had some real problems on our campus here that ought to be addressed. Students were upset about parking back then. That's parking in the lot that we think of as the faculty lot where your car is parked today—out here outside the English building. Back then, the first row was reserved for faculty, and then students could park anywhere else in those lots. They had to walk about fifty feet to get to the buildings, I guess, but those that were affected by the radicalism of the times thought that it was very elitist for faculty to have privileged parking spots.

DY: Let me inject this because it's really amusing: Linda [G.] Niemann was at Berkeley getting her Ph.D. about this time, and she said [that] was the biggest issue for students at Berkeley—parking!

TS: Things don't change do they? Well, it was very direct, very at home, and I was involved in a movement to take away faculty-reserved parking spots. Of course, we all were young and could walk back then. A little different story now, I guess! [laughter] I'd fight to preserve our reserved parking spots today.

DY: Yes, isn't it funny the difference that time makes.

TS: Of course, nobody had to walk far back then anyway. You know, in the original buildings, we had these faculty bathrooms in the Social Science building—that's why there are four bathrooms in the Social Science building on the first floor. If it had been ten years earlier, I guess we would have had black and white; but we had faculty male, faculty female, student male, and student female. And the same students that thought the parking situation was very elitist thought that the reserved bathrooms were very elitist, too. So I made some kind of comment about the students ought to occupy the faculty bathrooms. I didn't expect anybody to take it seriously because I certainly didn't mean it seriously. But when it appeared on the front page of the *Marietta Daily Journal*, it looked very serious, to say the least! I had actually at that point received a leave of absence already to go back to Tennessee to finish up my graduate work the next year—this is May of 1970. Dr. Sturgis went down and took his administrative assistant—Ms. Wrigley, Audrey Wrigley.

DY: What did they do?

TS: Dr. Sturgis and Ms. Wrigley went down to the Board of Regents in Atlanta, and they went into the office of the vice chancellor of whatever, academic affairs, I guess. They took the letter out of the file that Dr. Sturgis had signed for my leave of absence and brought it back to campus here. He got a call from the vice chancellor after that—I guess they called them vice chancellors back then. [He] got a call saying, "Do you have the support of your division chair and your dean?" And he didn't.

DY: Good for that vice chancellor!

TS: And so the vice chancellor said, "Get that letter back down here." And so Dr. Sturgis had to take the letter back down. Of course, the division chair was George Beggs, and after that, of course, I have had undying respect for Beggs. He's one of my mentors, too, because he was a person who would always stand for what he believed. He didn't believe in fighting losing battles. Once a policy decision had been made, he would support it, whatever it was. But until the decision was made, he would fight it. And when it was a personnel issue, he would certainly fight for people that he believed in. Derrell [C.] Roberts was the dean of academic affairs at that time and had been Beggs's high school teacher. He was an historian, and they both backed me in this situation. I think they knew that . . .

DY: Also, was it Gene [Eugene R.] Huck?

- TS: No, Gene Huck didn't come until '73, and so this was still our first dean. Roberts left after that year to be president of Dalton State College, but he was our original academic dean. He was a very fine person, very conservative; his writings were very much influenced by E. Merton Coulter, who was his major professor at the University of Georgia. They backed me in that against the president, all this behind closed doors. Nobody in the world knew about it but them. But they backed me. And I didn't know about it at the time; I was blissfully up at Tennessee, not even knowing that they were having this controversy.
- DY: Something that I thought might really be nice is for you to read—I read it last night, isn't it the oddest thing?—your dedication in *Cornerstones*. You mention [Beggs] in that, and I think that would be nice to have in this oral history.
- TS: Yes, I mentioned him and my father and LeRoy Graf, my professor at Tennessee.
- DY: You sure do. It's very short; why don't you read it to us. It would be nice to have it in the transcript, I think.
- TS: This is from *Cornerstones of Georgia History*.
- DY: Which is a book bought now by thousands of Georgia history and literature students, by the way.
- TS: Good. I just said, "To the memory of my father, W. Hubbard Scott, a master storyteller, who awakened my interest in history; and to the memory of LeRoy P. Graf of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, my mentor of graduate school days; and for George H. Beggs, dean emeritus at Kennesaw State College, who taught me what it means to be a professional."
- DY: That's a lovely dedication.
- TS: Thank you.
- DY: The fact is that there are a number of teachers who are going to go out into the world having had this course, having not just read that book but learned it and taken quizzes on it and passed quizzes on it. I guess maybe we ought to pick up with why you stayed here. You mentioned the loyalty there. Like so many others, you went back and got your Ph.D., picked up your Ph.D. because many came here not with a Ph.D.
- TS: Yes. And I don't think anybody goes to a place with an intent that you're going to make a whole career there. Maybe they do nowadays since the job market is what it is, but certainly back then nobody did. But I think the main thing that's held me here all these years is that you never get bored on this campus. We've been constantly evolving. We are not the institution that I came to in '68. In fact, we've been several different types of institutions. This place has been perfect for me in terms of my own intellectual maturity in that, when I started here, the focus was entirely on teaching; that's exactly what I needed to do and wanted to do at that early stage of my career. I put every spare moment that I had into improving my courses or just coming up with enough material to teach the

next day, sometimes. J. B. [James B.] Tate, a former faculty member here, used to talk about staying a step ahead of the posse. All of us young faculty members felt that way—we just felt the students were going to get us if we got embarrassed because we ran out of material or whatever—it was a constant struggle in those early years just to learn the material.

DY: To teach.

TS: I guarantee you I learned far more from preparing to teach than I ever learned [as a student] in the classroom. I think that's probably the experience of a lot of people. It makes you wonder about why we have graduate training the way that we have it when everybody's got to get out and teach before they really learn it.

DY: Exactly. You do.

TS: But that's what we were at that time; we were a teaching institution. The only scholarship was to finish your Ph.D. because very few people had a Ph.D. Then, by the time I finished the Ph.D., we had become a four-year school; I finished the same year that we started offering junior-senior level classes. That put us in a different phase. We had to decide what upper level classes we were going to teach. It was wonderful to be here at a time where we could divide the upper level courses: "You take this one and I'll take that one," and "I want to really develop a field in Georgia history so let me have this course." That was the way we did it. We decided we weren't going to have any fights. If two people wanted to teach the same thing, we would just share the time; one person would get to teach it this quarter, and the next time it was offered the next person would get to teach it. So we spent a tremendous amount of time again with teaching in the late '70s and early '80s, preparing for these upper level classes. Back then, you would hear students almost in shock saying, "That teacher was so good in the survey class, the general education class. How come they're so awful in this upper level class? They just don't seem to know the stuff, and we thought they knew everything." Well, the truth was we didn't know the stuff; we were just learning it in the more detailed specialties. But then, I think the other direction we went in the '80s was toward service; that was certainly a major emphasis of George Beggs. Of course, everybody had to be on a lot of committees, and that was something new. That was one of the problems I had with Dr. Sturgis way back when—that he didn't really trust the faculty to run the institution; we didn't have any committees or, if there were committees, the faculty were appointed to them instead of elected.

DY: I was certainly appointed to committees when I came in 1982.

TS: Yes, but things were changing.

DY: Still prevailing. Indeed they were.

TS: So there was service on campus, but also Beggs was especially interested in service in the community. That's where my interest was, and so with the oral history project and making speeches all over creation . . .

DY: Which you still do.

TS: I still do. For the last twenty years, I've averaged over twenty speeches a year in the community.

DY: That doesn't even count Sunday school.

TS: Oh, no.

DY: Which I would call speeches sometimes!

TS: Oh, yes. You don't get credit for [service with religious institutions] around here, but I've averaged about two speeches a month in the community for over twenty years. You'd think you'd run out of groups to talk to after awhile, but some of them invite you back. I've talked to all the service clubs and schools that invite me. And seniors groups.

DY: Oh, you have a big following over there at Lenbrook.

TS: Yes, for awhile I did a program seven times a year at Lenbrook Retirement Community in Buckhead, and before that, to a group of ladies in Buckhead that would hire a professor each year to teach them something about history. I was actually the third from our faculty to do that group. Howard [E. Howard, Jr.] Shealy was the first, and then following him, Gene Huck. Then Gene Huck got me involved with them, and I did it for about four years. Then J. B. Tate did it for a while, and then I think Fred [S. Frederick, Jr.] Roach may have even done it for about a year. We kind of monopolized that group. Howard actually got it away from Emory. They had been hiring an Emory faculty member each year, and somebody stood them up. They needed a replacement real quickly, and they called Jake [Judson C.] Ward at Emory. He was originally from Cobb County, but he had retired as dean down there and vice president of something or other; and he recommended Howard. That's how we got the job, got that connection with Buckhead. So Howard did it until he ran out of material, then Gene did it until he ran out of material and then I did it until I ran out of material. [chuckle]

DY: Who's doing it now, do you know?

TS: I don't think anybody from Kennesaw is doing it any more. I did the Lenbrook Square for a whole bunch of years, and then David Parker did it for about a year. Then that was about the end of that, I think.

DY: Now we had a student in our class this past fall that you came and spoke to her DAR [Daughters of the American Revolution] group?

TS: Yes, I do all the DARs. The DAR gave me a history award in 1994 from the Fielding Lewis chapter that meets over at Pinetree [Country Club in Kennesaw].

DY: That's right.

TS: They gave me an award. They've got a history medal, and I've got it in my desk here somewhere.

DY: How nice. That's on your vita, I think. I saw that on your vita, and I was kind of wondering what in the world that was they gave you. You're just going to have to wear these; you're going to have to get you a coat and stick them on it.

TS: Well, there's one woman, it seems like everywhere I make a speech she's there, and she'll give me a hard time if I don't have my medal on. [At this point, Dr. Scott finds and takes the medal out of his desk.] Yes, I've got my little history medal that they gave me.

DY: Oh, well, how lovely. Don't be like John Kerry and throw that away.

TS: No, I'm not going to throw it away. It says "NSDAR Award, History."

DY: It's quite lovely. You can wear it on your lapel.

TS: Yes, I talked to the DAR and the SAR, the Sons of the American Revolution, and groups like that. Sons of Confederate Veterans ask me out occasionally to talk to them. Whoever asks me, I'll go talk, and so I've stayed busy doing that. So that was kind of a new phase, like a new college.

DY: This is the service—teaching and then Phase 2, in the '80s we start service and community outreach.

TS: Yes, and I had grown to the point where I didn't have to spend twenty-four hours a day preparing for the next day's class by that time. So it was a natural progression to go from teaching students on campus to teaching people in the community who were interested in history.

DY: Let's for the record note, too, that you put a tremendous amount of energy into your teaching still. Like learning the WebCT.

TS: Oh, yes. It's just that it wasn't the desperation that it was back in those early days.

DY: You're not driven by desperation; it's refining and honing.

TS: Well, like today I didn't have a spare minute to prepare for class, but I didn't have to worry about it because I've done this course now since 1979. I've kind of got it down, and so I know what to say in the class without a lot of preparation any more. That's wonderful to move to that stage where you've got the time.

DY: But you're never canned. You're never canned because I've team-taught with you for ten years, and we never know what's going to happen when we get to the Civil War, for example.

TS: That's right.

- DY: Of course, that's because you've got students, and you never know what they're going to say.
- TS: Students are great in that regard, yes. They can ask a question, and you go off on a different direction. But at least I know enough to go off in a different direction nowadays.
- DY: You can go down the pig paths now! [laughter]
- TS: Yes. You're much more rigid when you're a new faculty member because you only know so much. You get embarrassed after awhile, after the twenty-fifth time of saying, "I don't know, but I'll look it up." But that's changed, and so it was like a new institution. And then, I think, as we got university status in '96 and actually started graduate programs as early as '85 in some areas. I taught my first graduate class in 1986, the local history. It's called Local History Research and Resources for the Master's in Education program. You can't teach in a graduate program without doing more scholarship, and so as we've developed graduate programs and became a university, we've moved more toward scholarship. When I first came here in my first job interview when I sat down with Sturgis, Beggs and Roberts, I told them flat out that I was not going to be a researcher—that I wanted to teach. That's the way I felt back then, but it's not the way I feel anymore. I mean, to me, scholarship is kind of what keeps you academically alive nowadays.
- DY: It keeps you alive in the classroom, too.
- TS: I bring in a tremendous amount from what I do into the classroom.
- DY: Oh, I know. I've witnessed it. Yes.
- TS: So it all was intended to be woven together into one fabric—research, scholarship and service. I sometimes think we get the cart before the horse in that people coming out of graduate programs want to be fine researchers and write a lot of books right off the bat. I really think you've got to get your teaching down. The teaching's got to be first before everything else, and if you're no good in the classroom, you might as well quit and be a banker or something, find another career that you can be good at or that you're interested in. That's the way I feel about it. I'm just happy that I've been here to go through these progressions with the institution. I would hate to come in as a new faculty member right now at Kennesaw.
- DY: All right now, Phase One through the '80s, and then in the mid-'90s when we began to offer graduate courses . . .
- TS: Really as early as '85.
- DY: Yes, as early as '85, and then this shift. When, then, do you see the shift as moving to scholarship, or were you going there?

- T:S Oh, well, there's not much of it in the '80s. There's nobody that you can talk to that really feels like they're under pressure to do scholarship in the '80s.
- DY: It was creeping in, though; I remember that because I came in '82. Just creeping in.
- TS: That's a good way to put it. Starting graduate programs is when the creep begins, I think, in '85. Then we get university status in '96, and all the other state colleges did at the same time. There's no money behind it so it doesn't necessarily mean a whole lot, but you do eventually live up to the expectations of what you're called. It's kind of like grade inflation; there's been name inflation in colleges and universities, but gradually, if you're going to call yourself a university, you want to act like a university. Faculty members that are hired after you become a university come in with a certain expectation. So it really starts picking up with '96 when our name changes from Kennesaw State College to Kennesaw State University; I think that's the change. But at the same time, not only are we offering more graduate courses, but for a long time a lot of people treated Kennesaw like a junior college. They had come here for two years and gone elsewhere, and we didn't have that large of an enrollment in the upper level classes. We didn't get to teach many of them, so we continued to teach a very heavy load of what we now call general education courses. As long as you do that, teaching clearly is going to be the focus, and not scholarship. But if you're going to be the professor for an upper level course, you need to be a scholar in that field and have a reputation off campus for what you do in that field. If you're going to teach the Shakespeare course, there better be some Shakespearean scholars somewhere else that have heard of you before. Not that you couldn't teach well without a reputation off campus, but you really need that intellectual stimulation.
- DY: Of course you do. And exchange, too, of ideas. Going to professional conferences, papers, essays.
- TS: Right. And so it's just a product of staying up with your field to be doing things in that field, whether it's at the minimum—becoming an officer in a professional organization or writing an article or making a speech. It's not that hard to get on programs for some of the regional conferences to do a paper. It's a whole lot easier to do a paper at a conference than it is to get something published in a journal, but those are the kind of progressions that we went through.
- DY: Right. And then after you do so many conference papers, then you get ready to sit back and to write, and you really sort of want that—what? You want that time to do that.
- TS: Right. And I've been really lucky in my career in that Kennesaw has always honored what I was doing when I was doing it. In the early days, scholarship would not have been terribly honored, although some people did a little bit of it; but the focus clearly was on teaching. Nowadays there's a heavy emphasis on scholarship; but still we're not Harvard, and we're never going to be and don't want to be. We're not going to be an institution where you get rewarded in tenure and promotion decisions solely based on your scholarship as they're going to do at a Harvard. So when I say we're not a Harvard, we don't want to be a Harvard where that's all that matters is whether you've won the

Pulitzer Prize or not. But what I enjoyed here, or what I've benefited from, is I basically took my teaching into the community with community service. I think I've integrated service, teaching and scholarship together in my writings, too. I mean, *Cornerstones of Georgia History* . . .

DY: That's a perfect example!

TS: It was written for a class. My book on Cobb County was written with footnotes and all the paraphernalia of scholarship, and it is a scholarly work. But the real audience is the educated general public that maybe isn't even terribly interested in history unless they're reading about people they know and things they know and what-have-you. So that's the audience that I've really wanted to reach and, I guess, wanted the praise of. It's just nice if you go to a civic club and somebody says, "Well, I'm reading your book. I remember Ernest Barrett, and I remember Bell Aircraft coming here; I'm enjoying reading this." So that's who I'm writing for now. I think that's who academics ought to be writing for. I think that a large part of the scholarly community has become too removed from the public. I don't see any great purpose in writing a book that only five or six people are going to be able to read.

DY: And only five or six libraries are going to buy.

TS: Exactly. Yes, who has to read all these books? It's the graduate students that are required to read them.

DY: You've done so much in all these areas; you've done outstanding work. My question is this: In your eyes, what are your most significant professional accomplishments? If you would like to say an area or if you would just like to say overall.

TS: I hardly even know what to say.

DY: Do you want to think in material terms? A book?

TS: I guess so. I mean, I don't really think in those terms.

DY: No, I know you don't. As I was listening to you talk about the phases and stages of growth and development of this institution and how they've paralleled your own, I immediately thought of Scarlet in Atlanta. I'm teaching *Gone with the Wind* and how Atlanta is the metaphor for Scarlet. And Kennesaw is the metaphor for you in your work. I mean, I think that you stand as a wonderful, perfect shining example of the Kennesaw State University professor in all that you do.

TS: I appreciate that.

DY: Well, you are so, by nature, humble that you don't just want to pop out with an accomplishment. Maybe if I say it this way: What gives you the most joy?

TS: Teaching, certainly. If you have a reaction, if your audience is with you—whether it's a group of students or a club that you're speaking to in the community—if you can see

you're holding your audience and you're talking about something that they're interested in. I think one of the things I learned real early in my teaching was to trust my own instincts; if it was something I was interested in to research, students would be interested in it when I took it into the classroom. And to me, learning new stuff was fun only when I could teach it or tell it to somebody else. If there's not an audience to tell it to, well, what's the purpose of learning it?

DY: And that's when you really learn it, too. I think once you teach something, you know it; you internalize it.

TS: That's right. And we've gotten this in some of our oral history interviews with people saying, "Well, after I taught this for the twenty-fifth time, I finally understood it. Finally something dawned on me; a light went on, and I saw it in a new way." I think that's true about teaching. I think the nice thing about teaching is that we do get to start over constantly and do it over again and over again because it's not the same each time. You're learning new things, or you're seeing it in a new light. Or a student will say something in a classroom, and a light will go on in your head; you'll see things differently because of what the student has said. Then the next time you teach the course, you can present that idea as your own. You've incorporated it into your way of looking at things now, so you can at least throw it out to a class. Sounds almost like plagiarism, doesn't it?

DY: No, we do learn from our students, and they change. I think that's another aspect, too—that as the institution has changed and grown; our students have changed. I mean, in the early '80s, our predominant population was the older returning student. Now when we walk into our classroom, we could be any university anywhere, just about.

TS: Right. They're getting younger. They're still not as young as the traditional, dormitory campus, although we've got the residence halls, and that's changed our culture here. We're having to adapt to a different type of student as a result. But I think the neat thing, too, from what I understand, [is] there are more and more graduating high school students in this area where we're their first choice. They're coming here right out of high school. For awhile there, the reason we had these older students—first of all, people moving in from other areas and coming back in their thirties and forties, but also people that had started elsewhere and discovered us after they had spent a year or two away from home and then wanted to come back home. They didn't like Georgia or Georgia Southern or whatever and came here. But, you know, I guess in terms of accomplishment, it sounds sort of self-centered, I guess, but I've often thought about those actors, wonderful actors of two hundred years ago or a hundred years ago. Everybody said [they] were so great, and yet nobody recorded their performances, so we now only know by hearsay. Well, in a way, writing a book is a way of teaching to audiences that won't know anything about you, but, hopefully, will be reading your books after you're dead and gone. And still will know that somebody at Kennesaw was writing these things and that it can be a reflection of what we were like at Kennesaw in the early years of the twenty-first century. I mean, that's crazy, isn't it?

DY: No, no, I think it goes full circle back to the storytelling and your interest in that, which was beyond you—worlds outside of you. Your book then becomes one of those worlds outside that somebody can pick up and enter, and so you became what you loved when you heard those stories from your father. That's good. You may get the prize for the best answer on that one. Okay. Intellectual climate on the campus. That shifts, as does everything else.

TS: It does shift, but...

DY: Talk about that just a little bit.

TS: Okay. I have always thought that our intellectual climate was what it ought to be at the time that it was. I was very impressed with the faculty here when I came here in 1968; I probably was the least prepared faculty member we had when I came here in '68. I mean, most people had finished their coursework and were at the dissertation stage. Some of them never finished but were what we referred to as ABD [All But Dissertation], just about had it. I hadn't even finished my coursework when I got here, so I definitely started at the bottom of the totem pole. I just thought we had some marvelous teachers in those early days here, and I still think that they were marvelous teachers. Maybe we weren't as good as we thought we were at the time, but . . .

DY: Name some people that you're thinking about.

TS: Well, J. B. Tate.

DY: I think J. B.'s a wonderful teacher.

TS: He's a wonderful teacher, and he did a good deal of scholarship without ever getting a doctorate. He was the one that was doing the local history stuff in his community—Cherokee history, Civil War history and things of that sort. He was just marvelous with students. I never could be as good a teacher as he was in terms of just turning a class on, I think. Let's see, in those first years, Bob [Bobby G.] Demonbreun taught Western Civ and was a good teacher. The guy that I replaced here, R. Dale Smith, had been a child evangelist. You know, one of these guys that had gone out and . . .

DY: A little child that gets up at a tent revival and gets people all stirred up.

TS: Yes. So the stories about him are that he'd jump on top of the desk over in the Social Science building and scream and holler and rant and rave. Sometimes he wouldn't get beyond the Hebrews in the first Western Civ course. [chuckle] I don't know how Dr. Beggs tolerated that, but maybe that's why he left here after several years. I was his replacement. Fred Roach was in the department back then, and he was right at the prelim stage. He'd just finished up, I guess, and was ready to start writing his dissertation when he came in, so he was ahead of me at that time. People like that. We had some good faculty members. The intellectual climate was great in that the people here believed in scholarship; although they weren't producing scholarship, they appreciated the intellectual life, and they tried to convey it to classes of students. So just because we

weren't doing scholarship to any great degree back then doesn't mean that there wasn't an intellectual climate around here that you could admire.

DY: Oh, I agree. I remember coming in 1982 and just having so much fun in the Student Center over there. And we were small enough then that I remember eating lunch with Fred and with J. B. So, yes, we saw each other.

TS: Yes, there was a lot of collegiality because we knew everybody.

DY: Judy [M.] Holzman and people from foreign languages and other disciplines.

TS: Right. I think I've been here longer than anybody that's currently on the faculty now, but Judy came in pretty early—in 1972. It was Judy [A.] Myers back then. By mistake, I referred to her as Judy Myers the other day. [chuckle] She got married—we all got married—after we'd been here awhile.

DY: What do you think about today? How would you evaluate the intellectual climate on the campus today?

TS: I don't know that I've got the feel campus-wide that I used to have. So I'm not sure that I can answer the question for the whole campus. Let me just say this: I know when the University of Tennessee moved big time into scholarship, teaching suffered immensely as a result, particularly in the general education classes and to some degree the undergraduate upper level classes.

DY: Well, you have TAs going in and teaching those classes.

TS: Yes, that was the problem. And I worry that, to some degree, we've gone down the same path with those classes where all the students encounter the English program and all the students encounter the history program—in that we use so much in the way of part-time faculty nowadays. I hardly ever teach a general education class anymore.

DY: I know you don't, and that's a shame for students. You don't have the time, though, and I think it's a matter of how is the program going to be best served. In the way you teach and what you teach, it's going to be best served by you teaching upper level classes and graduate classes.

TS: I love the survey classes, but I don't love the large numbers of students.

DY: Well, that's a problem right there: Our class sizes have grown too big.

TS: The class size is too big. It's always been big in those classes, but back in the early days, I didn't think about it so much, I guess, because my whole focus was teaching. But right now, to have 47 in a class or more . . .

DY: It means having to keep up with that many.

TS: Yes, grading papers is just overwhelming.

- DY: Yes. And you have students write, so you have to read their writing.
- TS: Exactly. If you're going to just do multiple-choice tests, they might as well put a million in the classroom. But if you want to have any relationship with students, you need to keep the classes reasonably small, and so I worry about that aspect. But by the same token, with our history majors and the people that take our upper level classes, we do maintain the old atmosphere of the junior college days. I think the faculty do care about their students—maybe not the masses in the survey classes but certainly the upper level classes.
- DY: And we have the opportunity to mentor them into graduate school sometimes, which is really fun to see.
- TS: Right, exactly. We've had a number of those out of the History department. I think the way the climate is changing is that as we hire new faculty members, we're putting a major focus on scholarship. If they haven't published, we're not hiring them. And consequently, when the people come in, they expect to do scholarship when they get here.
- DY: They find the course load and the teaching load and workload intense.
- TS: I think something that I've realized my whole career from the time that I was a student is that the job description demands more than people can normally deliver without cutting corners. Basically, our areas are teaching, scholarship and service. If you're doing a lot in all three areas, you don't have time to live a normal life. And that's just the way it is.
- DY: If you're doing a lot in two areas you don't.
- TS: That's true. That's exactly right. And so the job description really demands more than a normal person who wants to have a family and have time off and those kinds of things can do. I think we've always had large numbers of people who weren't normal in that regard around here. I'm one of them that doesn't mind coming in seven days a week and putting in the time. Our young faculty who are doing the scholarship are not necessarily cutting corners with their classes, although there's a temptation, but they're working themselves to death weekends and in the evenings. Fortunately, we're hiring people that have enough experience teaching when they come in that it's not like they're starting from scratch like I was way back then. So they don't have to spend twenty-four hours a day wondering what they're going to say the next day in class.
- DY: Often, though, when they come in, they're teaching upper level classes for the first time. They come in, as TAs a lot of them; they've taught general education classes, but to teach [upper level classes] takes tremendous prep.
- TS: And you just wonder how they do it.
- DY: Yes. I watch our new hires, and I think sometimes they're absolutely going under. What I see is lost is our little lunches in the Student Center; people don't have time for that.

- TS: Right. Well, something's got to go, and that's part of it. So we've lost a lot of collegiality on this campus, I think.
- DY: Yes, particularly [the] inter-disciplinary that we had because we were all housed together at one time. So we make our ways, like you and I have done.
- TS: Right, exactly. So I guess in terms of intellectual climate, I think we're maturing as an institution. We've got more and more faculty who are gaining reputations far off campus among other academics—and reputations in the community. I think we're becoming exactly what a public university ought to be. But there are costs, and I think we've oftentimes had administrators who haven't understood what the costs are. They're not in as great a touch with faculty as they think they are or ought to be.
- DY: Or haven't had experience in classroom and scholarship themselves.
- TS: That's right. As long as we reward administrators for service and don't expect them to produce in other areas, that's what we're going to get. As long as we hire administrators because of their great record as a department chair or as a dean instead of their great record in scholarship, administration and teaching, then that's what you're going to get.
- DY: And then you've got to add on fundraising.
- TS: Yes, and fundraising. We're very lucky that Betty [L.] Siegel had success as a teacher and had won distinguished teaching awards before she came here as president. [She] has done scholarship and understands those things, although once you're out of the classroom for twenty years, you get somewhat removed from the reality of the moment of what's going on.
- DY: Yes, people tend to get a sort of a pastoral vision of the classroom once they're out of it for a while. It's wonderful to walk in there and wow them, you know.
- TS: Well, that's the nice thing about speaking in the communities. You don't have to grade their papers; you just can kind of breeze in and breeze out, hopefully wow them and leave them to their devices.
- DY: And then say whatever you want to about them in your local history books.
- TS: Well, I've tried to be fair to everybody.
- DY: I know you have, and I know that that's been a good connection for you. The fact that you have served and gone out in the community—that's the way that you've made your way.
- TS: Yes, and I think getting out in the community makes you aware that there are some mighty intelligent people out there that have something to say—and just because it's not the culture of the academic world.... I think of my church and teaching Sunday school class; it's a different culture. Probably 90 percent of the people in my church voted for Bush, and probably 90 percent of my colleagues here in the liberal arts voted for Kerry

this last election. But I learn from both groups, and I think if I didn't have the other group, I would be imbalanced. The two different perspectives keep me in balance. And I think the Presbyterian church is very moderate, and it's not fundamentalist; I don't think I would ever make it in a fundamentalist church. [Those in my Sunday school class] are certainly interested in biblical scholarship. They're interested in intellectual things, and they're interested in spiritual things; so it's a good balance from the strictly academic.

DY: The secular and the spiritual.

TS: Yes, I suppose so.

DY: I've always thought of history as that . . . and literature.

TS: Yes, exactly. I don't think we ought to separate the two.

DY: All right. I think I have run through my questions here. What, if anything, do you want to close with? Do you want to say anything about writing the history of Kennesaw State University?

TS: Well, we're going to work on that.

DY: Your next project. Our next project.

TS: I think we're going to document what I've mentioned here. There's a tremendous amount going on here on this campus.

DY: And we're finding it out.

TS: We're finding it out.

DY: By talking to people.

TS: By talking to the real hard workers on our campus, I think, who have been doing these things. I think by picking the ones that have won the distinguished awards we're picking a representative group that represents the whole faculty. I think the whole faculty is highly accomplished. In a way, I wish we didn't have the awards because, I mean, the people that have won the awards have deserved them. But there have been three or four people each year for each award who were just as deserving as those who got them, or more.

DY: Well, we live in a meritocracy, right?

TS: Well, I guess. I don't know, but I just think our whole faculty is. . .

DY: I agree with you. But I think we're going to get a very nice, as you say, representative sampling. Thus far, the people that we've talked to in our interviews have shown, well, we have some very consistent values that keep coming out. Teaching.

TS: Well, teaching still to me is the central thing. Every day, driving up the road to get to school gives me time to meditate, and I just try to be grateful every day for the opportunity to teach. It's just a wonderful gift to be permitted to teach, to have a job to come to. [I'm] grateful for my colleagues; I've learned a lot from my colleagues. And I'm grateful for all the students that I've had, so I try to pray for my students as well as for myself.

DY: This was wonderful last semester when we started out. We saw that they were coming in, and they really weren't thinking about what we had hoped they'd be thinking about, and you said, "When you're driving in your car, here, think about these things!"

TS: Well, we all need to be grateful for what we've got, and so I'm very happy that I've had an opportunity to be at Kennesaw all these years. And hopefully for a few more.

DY: And Kennesaw is very happy to have had you all these years! It's wonderful that you're not going to retire any time soon. Right?

TS: Correct. I've enjoyed us doing the Georgia History/Georgia Literature together, and I think we've both learned a lot from each other in teaching that course and growing in that course. It's going to be fun writing the history of Kennesaw State.

DY: I think it is, too. I think this is going to be one of the best interviews.

TS: Thank you.

DY: Thank you.

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