

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH EUGENE R. HUCK

CONDUCTED BY THOMAS ALLAN SCOTT

EDITED BY JOSHUA AARON DIX

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Location: CIE/CETL House at Kennesaw State University

TS: Gene, I want to start with your background and just ask you when you were born and where were you born.

EH: Well, I'm a displaced Yankee, Tom. I'm from Pennsylvania. I was born and raised there and stayed there until I came into the army at the tender age of eighteen.

TS: What year were you born?

EH: January 24, 1928. That's a few years ago.

TS: Not too many. [chuckle] Let's see, that would put you right after World War II, I guess, that you went into the army then.

EH: I missed getting into the big war by five months. I went into the army in January of 1946, so the war ended the preceding summer. By five months, I was able to avoid it. I enlisted for three years. I was in the Air Force.

TS: Really?

EH: Well, actually it was the Air Corps.

TS: Army Air Corps?

EH: Army Air Corps.

TS: What did you do in the Army Air Corps?

EH: Well, a number of things: I chased mosquitoes in Florida for a year. We were working with aerial dispersal of DDT, and it's a wonder I didn't die when I was in my twenties in handling all that stuff. We sprayed it from the airplanes. But most of my time, I was a medical lab tech. I did hematology, blood work of various types.

TS: What kind of planes did you fly in?

EH: The first was an A-26, which was an attack bomber left over from World War II, and it was the first airplane ride I ever had. The nose was plexiglass, and when we came in for a landing, I thought we were going right through the ground because of its tripod-landing device. I was up there, very close to the ground, when we came in. I thought my time had come.

TS: So I guess you got the GI Bill then?

EH: I did, as a matter of fact. It was the GI Bill that sponsored my undergraduate and my master's degree. I was able to milk that thing by not taking all of the "furloughs" that they gave that they paid you for, if you took them. I didn't take them. It gave me more time at the university that way.

TS: Well, just doing the math, if you went in in '46, and you went in for three years, I've got down that you graduated in '52. You must have gone through in record pace when you got to college.

EH: This is true. I started college in January of '49 and graduated in June of '52. So yes, I felt I needed to kind of catch up. In those days, we used to think that you had to graduate with your class; of course, I had to miss mine, but I was still, whatever the math is, twenty-four.

TS: Right. You'd still be a traditional age student nowadays, but you must have felt older than everybody else in the classroom back then.

EH: Well, I did in a way, but we had a bunch of GIs that I kind of palled around with. It was a question of being with your compadres.

TS: You're really the first non-traditional students then, I guess.

EH: Sounds like it, yes.

TS: You went to Temple University, which would be in Philadelphia. So you stayed in Pennsylvania, then to go through school. Did you major in history?

EH: I did. I majored in American, as we called it then—now call it United States history.

TS: Right, right. So not Latin America yet, at that time.

EH: I don't think I knew where Latin America was.

TS: Well, one of the things that we've been doing with these interviews is to ask people about how they got interested in what they got interested in, and who influenced them to go—in your case, to go into the field of history. Were your parents or professors or high school teachers—anyone along the way that stands out that particularly had an influence on you?

- EH: Yes. Ben Weaver taught my high school class, when I was graduating from Marietta, Pennsylvania.
- TS: Marietta, Pennsylvania?
- EH: Marietta, Pennsylvania High School. He influenced me because I thought his delivery was excellent, and we seemed to learn an awful lot. I was inspired early on. I knew pretty much I was going into history, but had no idea of doing anything about Latin America until graduate school. Then, like most students, I had one slot on my class schedule where I needed to fill in a class, and there was a Latin American class—this is University of Alabama. I took it just because the time was right and got converted. I learned a little bit about Latin America, and got associated with a professor named Alfred Barnaby Thomas, a rather glorious name. He was the teacher of Latin American History, and [he] had written several books that I became enthralled with.
- TS: Did he convert you or was it the subject, do you think?
- EH: Well, it was hard to say. It was his delivery as well as the subject. Having grown up in Pennsylvania, we thought that the English were the only folks who came to the New World. We finally learned that that was not the case. So I was converted by him, and by the fact that there was so much Latin America down there.
- TS: Right. How did you get to the University of Alabama having grown up and had all your education in Pennsylvania?
- EH: Well, I think it had to do with two things: one, the army, since I was stationed in the Air Corps mostly in the South—Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi. Secondly, I married a girl from Montgomery, Alabama, who had grown up in the Air Corps. She was an army brat, her father an officer, and so Alabama seemed a natural for several reasons.
- TS: So you met Marie at a military base?
- EH: Yes, I did. I was the medical lab tech at the hospital there, and she lived only a block away. It seemed inevitable. I don't believe marriages are made in heaven, but this was a nice, fortuitous meeting.
- TS: All right. And you didn't have any desire to major in hematology or anything like that when you . . .?
- EH: No. I still shudder a little bit at the sight of blood, but nothing serious. You learn to do what you have to do.
- TS: Right. You got your master's at the University of Alabama, and then there's a little gap before the Ph.D. I assume you got out and taught for a while.

EH: Yes and no. I had to make money to support a wife and a child, and I became Air Force historian for almost three years. I worked at Craig Air Force Base in Selma, Alabama, and then I worked at Gadsden Supply Depot for, in each case, about eighteen months.

TS: Was this a civilian job?

EH: This was a civilian job. I was able to make enough money and get my GI Bill cranked up to go back and continue.

TS: So you actually got some writing done, then at the Air Force base.

EH: I did. My first article I published had nothing to do with either the Air Force, hematology, or meeting a new bride. It had to do with a young man who put together a band, a marching band, at the high school. I called the article, "Music from Nowhere." I think it was published in *Army, Navy, Air Force Bandman*. So I did a little bit. I was writing the history of those two installations, technical stuff, not anything that anybody would read for pleasure.

TS: Well, I've read some things written by a historian for Marietta's Bell Aircraft Division that were in the Air Force Historical Research Agency Collection at Maxwell Air Base in Montgomery, Alabama—and it was actually pretty good. Although, it was kind of a chronology of what happened from day to day, or at least big event to big event.

EH: Right. It's not exactly what you call light reading for just entertainment. Maxwell is the repository of much of the Air Force historical material, and that's where I was stationed.

TS: At Maxwell?

EH: Yes. I spent two years when I was in hematology at Maxwell in Montgomery.

TS: Oh. Well, too bad you didn't get to do some historical work at that time.

EH: I know; it's a shame, but it wasn't in the cards.

TS: So you went on and got your Ph.D. in 1963 from the University of Alabama. What was your dissertation on?

EH: Well, like so many dissertations, it's not exactly a spellbinder either. It had to do with economic interests of the United States in Colombia, South America, between 1820 and 1850.

TS: Wow. Must not have been much of an economic interest in those years, was there?

EH: Well, we were just getting underway as a nation; we had hardly been started, and Colombia was an established nation, but it was still trying to get independence during that period.

TS: So what did you conclude?

EH: Well, we were not favored in Colombian economic things. Great Britain was, largely because Simon Bolivar was pro-British and anti-US; my interest turned to an antagonist of Simon Bolivar who was pro-US.

TS: Was it because the US was so close that Bolivar was . . . ?

EH: It was because we were more of a democracy, and allowed people to have a little more choice than maybe they did in England. [Francisco de Paula] Santander, the man I was particularly interested in, was very fond of the United States. He spent some exile time here. [Santander] eventually became president of Colombia after Simon Bolivar. He was Simon Bolivar's right-hand-man for a long time.

TS: Okay.

EH: No one knows of him; I've got three-quarters of a biography written on him that will probably never see the light, but at least it's an attempt to get US readers familiar with him.

TS: It sounds very interesting. Maybe you ought to finish that.

EH: I probably should. I've been told I should.

TS: Were you doing any teaching while you were completing your graduate work?

EH: Yes. I taught at Huntsville, Alabama, at the University of Alabama Center there when Wernher Von Braun was at the missile base. We didn't meet each other. And when I was in South America, I taught at the Bi-national Institute. But, there, I taught English rather than anything related to history.

TS: How long did you stay in South America?

EH: I was [there] one academic year.

TS: And that was in Colombia?

EH: That was in Colombia. That was '58, '59.

TS: Oh, so you were actually researching your dissertation and teaching down there?

EH: I was. The teaching provided me the financial wherewithal to keep going; the Fulbright Scholarship didn't pay enough to make ends meet.

TS: Right. But you did have a Fulbright scholarship?

EH: I did. I was indebted to Fulbright and all of the associates for helping me out on that, and [I] probably wouldn't have gotten to Colombia without it.

TS: Did you take your family down there with you?

EH: I did. I had a three-year-old son, that was all of the family I had other than my wife; it was kind of a major adventure. Everybody I knew thought I was crazy, but it seemed to work out.

TS: Which son is this?

EH: This is Jon Huck.

TS: Okay, so you're down there for a year, then you come back, and you continue to teach a little bit, primarily at military bases, it sounds like.

EH: Well, my military time was civilian time. I didn't do so much teaching as writing of Air Force history related to those installations.

TS: So you didn't have a whole lot of teaching when you got out then, I guess.

EH: Not a great deal; just kind of pickup work and graduate assistantships. I had those all the way through my graduate work, which helped financially.

TS: Now, was Thomas your mentor all the way through?

EH: Yes, he was. As soon as I got converted to Latin American history, Thomas was my supervisor and friend. I never did teach under him as a graduate assistant, but I did keep close touch with him.

TS: Once you got out in '63, what did you do next?

EH: Well, let's see, by '63, I was already employed at West Georgia College teaching. When I came back from Colombia in 1959, I was hired by West Georgia. I stayed there for fourteen years. During that time, I did a number of things that younger professors do, and was able to work my way up through the ranks.

TS: I know you were department chair when you came here; I mean you were department chair at West Georgia before you came here.

EH: Well, that's true. I started there as an assistant professor, and made the usual promotions, and then became department head of history there. Then, they were on a system that was a division chairman. I became division chairman over social sciences, which were four or five disciplines.

TS: So you went from history department chair to social science division chair.

EH: That's right. I stayed there until just before I came here.

TS: Did you still have a teaching load while you were chair?

EH: I did. I had a minor teaching load; I always felt it was important to be in the classroom for a number of reasons: not only for self-gratification, but also for finding out what's going on. You can find out a lot about your colleagues and about what's going on by just being in the classroom and talking to students.

TS: Right. West Georgia must have been about four or five thousand students at that time?

EH: Exactly. The reason I got over there is because I had a graduate school friend who had been a member of their faculty, and coming back from my Fulbright, I was technically unemployed. He was able to get me a job and attract me to Carrollton.

TS: I think while you were department chair, you must have been the one that was responsible for hiring Newt Gingrich to go in there, and I can't let that pass. You'll have to tell that story.

EH: This is true. This is true.

TS: See, it's all your fault, isn't it? [chuckle]

EH: I have been blamed for that many times. Newt and I do not share the same political outlook, but Newt was a very good faculty member, very bright, somewhat controversial on campus and since that time. But yes, I did, I hired Newt Gingrich. And although Newt Gingrich came to speak to the retreat at Kennesaw College right after I became dean, I did not bring him here. He was brought by a committee, much to my surprise.

TS: [chuckle] Yes, it was Newt and Daryl Somebody, I think. A psychologist?

EH: Yes, that's true.

TS: Yes, that was one of the . . .

EH: Daryl.

TS: Daryl.

EH: You were here then.

TS: Yes, I was here. It was the most disastrous retreat we ever had, I think.

EH: I think so. It was called the "Newt and Daryl Show" by many of us.

TS: Right. That was the one where Charley Dobson stood up, and said, "I'm taking over the meeting."

- EH: Charley Dobson and Carl Johnson, two of the most timid faculty members we ever had were the most offended by what happened in that retreat. [chuckle]
- TS: So in '73 you came to Kennesaw, and of course, you came here as the academic dean, at the time that the academic dean is essentially what the vice president is now, over all of the divisions, and over all the academic programs.
- EH: That's pretty much true. That was when we had really only one dean. We had a dean of students, but instead of having many with that title, we had really just one.
- TS: Right. We had had a little bit of turnover by that time; you were the third one that came in—Derrell Roberts was first, and then he went to be president of Dalton College, and then Bob Akerman, and I guess he went to the *Atlanta Journal* from us, back to his journalism career. Did you know any of these guys before you came here, by the way?
- EH: Yes, I knew Derrell Roberts, and I didn't find out until about eight or ten years after I arrived that it was Derrell Roberts who recommended me to take the deanship here. I had not a clue as to how my name got in the pot. I was grateful that it did; I had a happy career here of ten years as dean—but it was Darrell Roberts who had recommended me. He had known me through history channels in the state of Georgia.
- TS: Right. How did a search work back then? I don't remember search committees and all of that. We must have had some kind of search committee, but I don't remember how it worked.
- EH: Well, I interviewed with several people. I know Ed Bostick of Biology was on the committee and Toby Hopper of Physical Education, but I don't know the maneuvering of the committee. I think it was probably part of the good ol' boy system; President Sturgis was very fond of Derrell Roberts, and he took Derrell Roberts' recommendation to heart. I was fortunate enough to be the one who was on the receiving end.
- TS: What was your impression of the intellectual climate at Kennesaw when you came here in '73? Or what was the institution like when you came here?
- EH: Well, we were a junior college, as you know, and so most of the classes that we taught were the basic two years. The first two years and most of our students went from here to one of the bigger four-year institutions. So although the faculty was a marvelous faculty and very friendly—I was very pleased to notice that—we did not have a lot of people who had reached high ranks or high positions in either scholarship or academic credentialing. So it was a nice group of people—I guess we had sixty faculty members, perhaps, when I arrived.
- TS: And probably at least half of us didn't have our degrees at that time. I didn't have mine at that time.

EH: It was true that probably half of them were somewhere in the process of getting their degrees. I know that Sturgis was always anxious about everybody getting their degree, and maybe leaned on people when maybe there was a better way of doing it, and drove some of them off, like Charlie Dobson that we mentioned, a little while ago, never did get his degree, and decided, I'm told, that he threw his paperwork in the trashcan after Sturgis had hounded him more times than he would have liked to. So, yes, the intellectual climate was not heavy, but it was always a pleasant faculty. My personal goal was to spend five years as dean; I figured that's about the average life of a dean before he gets unhappy with his faculty, or they get unhappy with him. When I finished five years, I thought, "Well, this faculty has been so pleasant and so supportive, I think I can stay a little longer." So I stretched it for another five years. So I was here as dean from '73 to '83.

TS: And of course, we had a transition of presidents during that period, and Betty Siegel came in. I kind of feel like maybe you were the odd man out when she came in, but maybe that was my impression from afar.

EH: Well, that was probably the impression of many; it was not an actual accurate impression, however, because I remained. I was the acting president for about six months. I didn't do much of anything but sign papers, so it wasn't a matter of running a lot of presidential-type things. But when Betty Siegel came, I was her dean for three years. This particular Christmas came by, must have been '82, and I told her that I think that I'd had enough of deaning, and I would leave the job come the end of the academic year. And, happily for me, she endorsed my staying. If there was any feeling out there among the faculty that it was a new leadership coming in needing to clean house, it really didn't happen that way because I was asked to stay on. But, finally, near the spring she decided that she would accept my resignation, and it would be time for a change. It was time to go. Ten years was enough.

TS: And then you went back to the history department and just fit in beautifully, I thought, with everybody in the history department.

EH: Well, I enjoyed my colleagues in the history department, still do. I keep in touch with a few of them. But, yes, it was marvelous. I was given an interesting office down on the first floor of the Humanities building, which was an art department office. I was sandwiched in-between Tom Salter and Barbara Swindell, and so I didn't have as much history contact as I would have liked, but I had a marvelous view with great, huge windows of the campus, and that was an interesting interim, until I got up to where most of the historians were, or some of them. Now, it looks down over the gazebo, I think.

TS: Yes, probably with our new English building, you're looking out at the English building across the way right now.

EH: This is true.

TS: But you had a better view back then, at least, before another building was built.

EH: That's right.

TS: So you came back, and you won the Distinguished Teaching Award in '89, so you were back in the classroom six years by that time. You retired not too long after that, didn't you?

EH: I retired in '90. I didn't set the goal of winning the Distinguished Award, but I was very honored having done so, and it was just one of those things that I didn't particularly think about; I was just doing my job, and getting the classes met, and the papers graded, and all those other fun things that we do. When the award ceremony was being conducted, I was sitting in the student center having lunch, and one of the faculty members from the English department came down and sat with me, and I thought, "Well, this is very unusual." Because, although I know her, and we're very fond of each other, I gather, we didn't have much social interaction, and I thought, "Why is she sitting with me at lunch?" But we chatted, and she said, "Don't you think you ought to go up to the ceremonies award?" I said, "Well, I'm not particularly interested in this; I'll find out the results later on." So she convinced me very judiciously and cleverly that I ought to go up and find out. When I did, I was honored, and surprised to find that I was a recipient.

TS: Do you remember who that was?

EH: Yes, Karen Thomson. But I knew her as her other name.

TS: Was it Moore?

EH: Moore. Yes, Karen Moore. She was the one.

TS: Well, that's a good story.

EH: Well, it's a factual one, and I almost missed it. It's kind of like a fellow missing his own wedding, I guess.

TS: Well, yes, I guess so. Well, you know how rare that is nowadays for someone who gets into administration to go back to full-time teaching on our campus at any rate.

EH: Well, I think that's probably true because administrators are not normally viewed as teachers. I'm pleased to think that some of them thought enough of me as a teacher to give me the award, but the administration is one of those things on many campuses that you get because you are a good teacher, and sometimes when you're an administrator you stay as an administrator, and never get back in the classroom. But I was happy to get back in the classroom.

TS: Could you talk a little bit about your teaching philosophy? Philosophy is too fancy a word for what I'm really looking for, but how you conducted your classes and your attitude toward students, and so on in learning.

EH: I'd be pleased to talk about that because although everybody has different techniques and approaches, I'm sure mine are not particularly unusual. I always felt that the student was important, and I felt it very important for me to know everybody's name. This was a bit of a chore sometimes when we had "the double sessions," as many as eighty students. But I called the role—I never made a seating chart, ever, in my teaching career because that to me was a technique of assigning numbers to people. So I always called the role until I learned everybody's name, and then after learning everybody's name, I didn't feel it was important to call the role because if they had to miss, there must have been something important for them to attend. So if they missed my class, it was no great situation. One of the things that I did in my class, I always conducted, I think without fail, a weekly quiz, and they were always announced; I always hated, when I was an undergraduate, the concept of the pop quiz. I thought that was one of the most atrocious things that faculty members could impose on students. We've got enough surprises in life to deal with, so I never did pop quizzes. I always announced quizzes, and they were always once a week; they had the dates. They didn't always come on the same day of the week. I have to cover a particular amount of material. So learning the students name and treating them as individuals was important to me, and giving weekly quizzes also let the students know where they stood. I always hated, as an undergraduate, to wait until the end of the course to find out whether you're passing or not. Some instructors did it that way, and so my weekly quiz always kept the students aware of what their average was. And they knew how the quiz fitted in to their overall average, so they knew where they stood.

TS: Were we still meeting five days a week?

EH: We were pretty much meeting five days a week. We changed somewhere along there, near the end of the 1980s. I had one faculty member, while I was dean, who would virtually come and visit me every week or two to give me a new schedule that he had worked out so [that] we didn't have to meet five days a week. I always liked the five days a week because it kept the faculty in front of the students. When you have only three days a week, two days a week, sometimes the students hardly know the faculty members, and they come, and they hit and run, and the faculty members sometimes take on other work obligations. So that was always a problem. I never did change, as dean, from the five day a week kind of arrangement. Let's see, other things that I like to do: weekly quiz was important, knowing the students was important. I always felt it was also important for me to get to the class as early as possible. Usually, when the bell would ring to dismiss the previous class, I was ready to walk into the new classroom, and that gave the students usually ten minutes to ask any questions: "I didn't understand this; why did you do this?" So on and so on. Any questions. And then I always felt it was important to dismiss class on time. So many

instructors through the years that I've had or that I've known about will say they don't reach their crescendo until three minutes after the class is supposed to be over. Well, by that time, the students have already grabbed up their books, tightened their belts and their collars, and are ready to go. They've turned you off, if you have anything important to say at that time. So, those are techniques I used.

One of the things that I remember that I did in all of my teaching was the question of dates. So many times, history teachers cover students up with a myriad of dates; you have to remember these. Always reminds me of grade school when you have to learn every capital of every state in the United States. How many times in your adult life do you ever get asked, "Is Eugene, Oregon the capital or is it not?" And who cares, unless you happen to live in Eugene, Oregon. The same I envision in dating history. I always taught my classes by explaining or reviewing the question of generations. That it's important to get people in their generations. You may not know how old your grandmother is, but you know that she's two generations before you. That's got to be about forty years. It's important for the student not to learn specific dates—I always tell them they're going to learn a lot of dates by osmosis—but they won't have to slavishly work at them. I never asked, to my knowledge, "in what year did so and so happen?" What does it matter whether Columbus discovered in 1492 or '91 or '93? To me the approximation and what's going on in the world is the important thing. Those are the few of the things that I tried to follow.

TS: What's your definition of a master teacher?

EH: A master teacher. Well, a master teacher has got to identify with the students. I guess a master teacher cannot pontificate and deliver a sermon. [A master teacher] has to relate to what the students can absorb and can identify with other things in their lives. I guess a master teacher has to be not only someone who has some knowledge of what he's teaching, but can also get it across, and tie it in with existing ideas of what the students have. Hopefully, some of those ideas get changed over the years as we all change our ideas. Master teachers, I think you have to be personable so that the student doesn't feel you are there to lecture to them in the sense that they have been bad little boys and girls. They've got to learn the real way. But I think friendliness in any kind of situation works better than the opposite.

TS: I remember a student telling me once that she thought of you as Mr. Chips. Do you remember that old movie, *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*?

EH: I do!

TS: [chuckle]

EH: I do. I can't remember who that student was.

- TS: I don't know. I can't remember now, either, but she said she thought of you as kind of a Mr. Chips.
- EH: That was a nice compliment because I remember the movie very well. I guess Robert Donat played Mr. Chips, and he was beloved by many. I was honored that this student thought of me as Mr. Chips because I tried to devote as much time as I had to students and subject matter.
- TS: Did you continue with your scholarship at all after you got into administration?
- EH: Yes, I did. When I left West Georgia College, I was editing three different journals. One of the journals was a *West Georgia Review* so that naturally had to stay there, but I brought with me a Latin American journal to Kennesaw College, which I continued to edit all the while I was dean, and it was a journal that included articles written and delivered at a Southeastern Conference on Latin American Studies, which is what SECOLAS means; that was the name of the journal, the *SECOLAS Annals*.
- TS: Southeastern Conference on Latin American Studies.
- EH: I was pleased to have started that journal at West Georgia College, and that was one of the things that I requested the West Georgia College administration to do when I left: to let me bring that to Kennesaw. I continued with that, plus giving a few little papers at historical societies. I did that occasionally.
- TS: Right. And so you continued that after you got back to full time teaching too?
- EH: Yes, I did. Back at full time teaching, I was able to crank out a few more articles because I had a little more wiggle room time than I did when I was dean. I was also able to start that program of taking students to Mexico as I got back in the classroom.
- TS: Studies Abroad.
- EH: I guess we call it Studies Abroad. I used to call it the Student Exchange, but it was a misnomer to call it a Student Exchange because no students came back from Latin America to Kennesaw College. Every year, for six or eight years, I would take anywhere from twenty to twenty-five students to Mexico for the first summer session of five weeks. To my knowledge, that thing still goes on.
- TS: It does, and it's amazing how many different Studies Abroad programs there are now. We've had students going to Russia and going to, you name it, Nigeria . . .
- EH: Nigeria?
- TS: Let's see. Dr. [A. G.] Adebayo took a group to Ghana, and I'm sure they ended up in Timbuktu somehow or other. I guess they didn't go to Nigeria this year, but

- they went to Ghana. We had exchanges with Africa, and exchanges with Europe, of course. Our students, at least, were going to Latin America.
- EH: Well, that's very good. I didn't know the widespread nature of that thing. I can't claim any credit for it getting started, but I guess my Mexican program was probably one of the earliest if not the earliest.
- TS: I'm sure it was.
- EH: And I understand now that instead of going to San Miguel they go to Oaxaca, in south Mexico.
- TS: They've been doing that for some time, I think.
- EH: Yes.
- TS: So San Miguel?
- EH: San Miguel de Allende is where we went, and the reason we went there is not only because I knew the city, but because they had a famous art institute there. That was one of the courses that we got the program started there.
- TS: By the way, how did you gain your language abilities, your abilities in Spanish?
- EH: Well, as I mentioned, when I left Pennsylvania, I hardly knew where Latin America was. I had studied language in college at Temple three years, three full years of French. So Spanish was absolutely foreign to me. I guess the way I learned it was through osmosis, and through the fact that I was housed in graduate school—my office was in the area of classical languages department, and one of the members of the department was not only fluent in Greek but in, of all things, Spanish. And so when I got converted to Latin American studies, he took me on as a Spanish student. So every lunch hour, we'd eat our sandwiches and speak in Spanish. It was a lot easier to pass the Spanish language exam with his training than it was with three years of college French in passing the French exam. And then really, when you get to the country, [that] is when you learn the language because you learn the idioms, which are the important kind of getting around bits of information. I learned a good bit of my language just being in Bogotá, just getting out, and rubbing elbows with people, that kind of thing. And reading, of course. Once you get interested in Latin America, you've got to read a little bit of that language to find out what's going on, among the people who are the movers and shakers. It worked out. I'm losing it now that I don't keep my contacts as much as I should, but I'm still reading a little bit of Spanish. I still go to Mexico frequently.
- TS: I guess you went in July or June.

- EH: Yes, I spent two weeks in June which has been pretty much a standard thing with me; renting a house down there, and just kind of absorbing what's around, getting out and talking with people.
- TS: I guess it came back when you were doing that.
- EH: It does. After a day or two, the most important things seem to come back.
- TS: I remember years ago, as an example of your teaching, I think it was Judy Holzman's class. I think you showed up in uniform as a Latin American officer, and you had these students going for the whole class period.
- EH: Something like that. I didn't have much of a uniform, but I did try to carry them high as representing a Latin American general. Yes, I had forgotten that pretty much. Judy Holzman was very gracious in letting me do that.
- TS: I understand that you had the students persuaded throughout the period.
- EH: Well, I spoke a little Spanish to them. Since I was just back into the classroom about that time, the students had no idea who I was, that I had been the former dean for the most part. A couple of them did, and I could see them in the back. [Professor Holzman] introduced me with a Latin American moniker, and I spoke to them. [I] tried to tell them some things about my country, which was absolutely fictitious, and we went from there. It was kind of fun.
- TS: Did you ever use any kind of technology in the classroom? We didn't have any technology back then, I guess.
- EH: No. I always told them about the advent of the Xerox machine and a little bit about the evolution from what we called the onionskin reproduction *Thermofax*, it was called back in the early 1960s, through the mimeograph.
- TS: From onionskin to mimeograph machine.
- EH: The onionskin is absolutely unknown to most adults this year, but it came out in I guess the 1950s. We used it early in the '60s, and you had to take a sheet of paper about as thick as onionskin paper that you would write airmail letters on. You'd put it into a machine, and it would reproduce the one that you put on the cover of it. So you had a sandwich of the two pages. And it would spit it out, would be warm, and it would read all right for about two or three weeks. Then the writing would fade, and you couldn't read it. It was like the hectograph of the 1930s and 1940s. So we used that for a while, until the mimeograph really took over.
- TS: By the time I got to Kennesaw, we had mimeograph machines.
- EH: Yes.
- TS: But you'd get it all over your hands, all that ink.

- EH: It was terrible. And if you get those masters a little bit crooked, it was pandemonium because they would put a crease across your copy. It was not easy to work, and not easy to use.
- TS: So it was easier just to write things out on the board.
- EH: Well, that's true. My high school mentor, Ben Weaver, would write his outlines on the board. I always put an outline on the board for all of my classes before I had a decent kind of reproduction process. And once we got the mimeograph and the Xerox, I always would make copies for every one of my students, so I didn't have to write on the board. I would write on the board all of the names that were difficult to spell because when you're teaching European and Latin American history, you've got a lot of unusual spelling. I always wrote names on the board, many times covering up the whole board. I'm sure that's not an unusual thing. But students need to have the visual to be able to help tie in to whatever they're trying to understand.
- TS: So nowadays, you'd be putting that on PowerPoint.
- EH: I don't know what that is! [laughter] I'm afraid I'm still back a generation or two in the reproduction thing.
- TS: Well, it's just a step beyond what you were doing. It's where you can just put it on a disk, and stick it up on a screen. They're doing some nice stuff too with photographs now. One of our instructors has put together a huge collection of photographs on European history. If you want to show them what the Coliseum looked like, or maybe art work from the fifteenth century or whatever, you have those audio-visuals on PowerPoint; it's on computer. A number of our classrooms now are wired—they call it—where you can just stick your disk in, and it comes right up on the screen. You can do a lot with artwork now.
- EH: That's amazing because, as I was in the classroom, I would always have to pass around certain books, particularly those of the Renaissance art and other things that the students did not have pictures of in their textbooks. So this is a major breakthrough.
- TS: Well, nowadays, you could scan them or get someone else to scan those photographs and produce--I said a disk—but produce a CD Rom, and just take it right into the classroom with you.
- EH: Well, as Peggy Lee, the song bird, said during World War II, she said, "Everything is moving too fast"—one of her favorite songs. So it's moving too fast for us old history professors to keep up.
- TS: Well, if you were still here they've got a lot of people to help us with these things nowadays. We don't need to know much to do it, except to push the right button.

EH: Well, that's marvelous because we had some antiquarian slide projectors, during the earlier days.

TS: We've still got slide projectors that some people still use.

EH: I bet you a good many of them are gathering dust in somebody's closets.

TS: Probably so.

EH: I'm old enough to remember a recording device called the wire recorder. Is that a familiar thing to you?

TS: I think I've heard of it, but I don't know anything about it. I've never seen one.

EH: It was a device that came out after the war. It must have been the late 1940s, and it was a wire on a spool, like a spool of thread, and the spool would move up and down as the wire would spin itself onto the spool. But it didn't last very long because, once you got one of those spools off of there and that wire got away from you, you had one spring going across the room. You lost all of your recording. So it was not successful.

TS: Yes, we've come a long way.

EH: Yes, we have.

TS: Well, talking about coming a long way. You described what Kennesaw was like in '73, as a young junior college, when you came here. That was a big change for you I'm sure, going from a four-year school to a junior college; it's a move up to be dean, but on the other hand you're going from a four-year school to a school where you've got a very young faculty, many of whom didn't have degrees. What would you say the intellectual climate was like by the time that you retired in 1990?

EH: Oh, much improved because we're talking about a span of twenty years, and during that time, all of those people who were in the pipeline had already pretty much gotten their degrees and we were able, because of our reputation, a strong reputation, to hire strong people already with credentials, not only degrees but with experience and publications. By 1990, the intellectual and academic climate was much, much improved. It was a little step, as you started to imply, coming from West Georgia College, which had graduate programs, to a junior college. It was true that it was a little bit of a step down because you couldn't teach any kind of specialized class; there were no Latin American classes here to be offered. But at West Georgia College, I had come from teaching graduates. We offered the master's degree in history. I always felt I needed to be in the classroom. So when I came to Kennesaw, I stayed in the classroom at least once a year so that I'd have that feeling. But leaving West Georgia graduate program was kind of a readjustment to make. I'm happy to report that you mentioned that I went to Mexico in June this year for two weeks; I was able to take with me, I was going to

say a young man, but now he's in his early sixties, who was a graduate student of mine at West Georgia College. He spent a week or so with me in Mexico—we keep up with some of them. But I was reminded that I talked about Latin America a little bit more than perhaps I did when I came to Kennesaw College.

TS: So in '73, it's pretty basic at Kennesaw.

EH: Pretty basic, pretty basic. But it was nice to be associated with a pretty congenial and cohesive kind of a group. At that time, we had a faculty group that had dinners at people's houses. They had a name for this group, and I attended several of them. I guess anybody could come who wanted to. It was more of a family atmosphere with the faculty. One of the things that I did when I was dean here that I'm right proud of—although some of the faculty members took it with some trepidation—every year, I visited each faculty member in their office, just to find out how are things going, what's going on, what can we do to help you and so forth. You can't do that if you're sitting in the dean's office and invite them to come in and see you. First of all, nobody takes an invitation. If you ask them to come—a command performance—they're on edge and you don't get a good view. I remember going to one lady's office, and she took it as an insult because she thought I was spying on her, when nothing could have been further from the truth. I was trying to bring them out to find out what they had on their minds.

TS: It sounds to me from what you're describing as though you see that as part of the job of the dean back then is to maybe mentor faculty members that wanted to be mentored.

EH: I think that's a good statement, since so many of them did not have a terminal degree; since the president of the college was so anxious to have everybody have degrees—I was not all that tight on that. I felt that faculty members needed encouragement, and that was one of the reasons I always stayed in the classroom, at least one class a year until I went back in the classroom, so that they would know that I have to put up with ringing bells and late students and all of the situations in the classroom. Someone said many, many times, “No substitute for experience”; and if you're out there doing it with the faculty members, they say, “Well, he knows what goes on.” That was part of the reason that, as dean, I spent a fair amount of time in the student center. My wife always said, “You spend more time in the student center than you do in your office.” I felt that going to the student center and having students sit down and have coffee with you was one way of my keeping a finger on the pulse of what's happening. You can find out who the good teachers are and the bad teachers are by talking with the students in an informal kind of way. You don't even have to ask who are the bad teachers. You ask who are the good teachers, and they're willing to tell you what they do. You don't have to ask about the bad teachers, but their name is never mentioned. So you find out on both sides of the fence. So keeping touch with both students and faculty personally, I think, is very important. I like to think that's what I used to do.

- TS: What do you consider your major achievements as dean?
- EH: Well, I don't know. Surviving maybe.
- TS: What are you proudest of?
- EH: Well, I think one of the things I'm very proud of is the conversion of the college from a junior college to a senior college. I'd like to think that I was in many ways a major role in getting that transition made. It came around in 1976-78, I guess, and we graduated our first class maybe in '80. That's I think one thing I'm very proud of because I had a fair amount of involvement with that, riding herd on committees and schedules and programs and all of that. That took a fair amount of shuffling.
- TS: That was an elaborate process, wasn't it, because it was over two years that we did that.
- EH: Yes, it was. And of course, the Board of Regents was not eager to make us into a four-year school. Our students were the ones who protested the fact that we should have a four-year school out here and having met with the Board of Regents at that time—back in the 1970s—used to meet on various campuses, and they came out here and met in our student center. Always, when you have a Board of Regents of twelve or fifteen members, each one has two or three aides. We had forty or fifty people here; they covered up most of the floor of the student center. You were here then; you may remember that the students—perhaps your wife was involved—
- TS: I think it was a little after that.
- EH: They came out waving flags and banners and demanding a four-year institution. I think that probably had a good bit of a role in convincing the Board of Regents that maybe we ought to do it.
- TS: Were you involved at all in the politics of the conversion to four years?
- EH: I don't think so, not really. Mostly, just the academic aspect of getting the courses lined up, the programs, hiring the faculty, and doing that stuff. Politics with the Board of Regents was not something that I did. I went to every Board of Regents meeting for budgetary reasons; we did this once a year. But the president's job on any campus is to intercede with the community. In this case, the Board of Regents and the dean's job at that time—and since the vice president's—is involved in running the school's academic programs. So no, I didn't really have much involvement, any real involvement in the politics.
- TS: Were you involved in the decision to just have seven majors—I think it was—when we started out? To keep it simple and to keep the number of courses few to begin with? Was that Dr. Sturgis's doings or was that coming from your office?

EH: I don't remember much about this. The old expression "keep it simple, stupid" comes to mind, and it may have been that that was something that I was involved in, in not starting off too big. It's kind of like starting a company; you don't want to start with the most advanced technology, when you really can't afford it. I'm sure [it] entered my mind, but I don't have a large recollection of that.

TS: Did it become easier to hire faculty, when the announcement came that we were going to be four years? Or did we get different types of faculty as a result?

EH: Yes, we got better types. We got more credentialed people, and people figured, "Now we've arrived, we can compete." I was never strongly in support of part-time faculty. I had some bad experiences at West Georgia College with part-time faculty members, so I was never willing to hire part-time faculty members except in absolute emergencies. With part-time faculty members, you get part-time allegiance, and they make their classes if it's convenient. I just got full-time faculty members. So yes, I think we got better faculty members, and we stuck with full-time employees.

TS: Did you consider yourself philosophically in tune with Dr. Sturgis or did y'all have differences?

EH: We had differences. I'm afraid I was not as serious about things as maybe Dr. Sturgis was. He was a good man in many, many respects, but I think I probably would have done several things—had I made the decision—differently from Dr. Sturgis. For example, I don't think that faculty members have to have to degree to be good teachers. As a matter of fact, as we all can probably point out [that] some of our worst teachers were those who were credentialed with Ph.D.'s. They were so impressed with themselves or their minutia of information that they couldn't identify with the students. Dr. Sturgis felt that everybody had to have a degree. I knew that the statistics were such that you were not able to get 100 percent Ph.D.s, even if that were your goal. I was pleased that we were able to boost the number of Ph.D.s up to about 70 percent during my deanship. I was also very pleased to get a mix, a gender mix on campus. When I left the deanery, we had over 50 percent female employees. I mean, society is fifty-fifty, more or less. Why not expose the students? So that was important to me. It was not important to Dr. Sturgis. Allowing a little bit more relaxed attitude on campus would have been my stance, had I been making the decisions. Dr. Sturgis was very formal. I'm not sure that I would have required coat and tie in the classroom, although I wore them myself. One of the things I often think about every time I think about Dr. Sturgis is the fact that one does not have the use of first names; it was always you were expected to be called Dr. So-and-So or Dean Huck. Maybe this was because my joining the Rotary Club where everyone speaks to each other in first names, I would have endorsed that. It wasn't until Dr. Sturgis retired, and he said, "I'm retiring now. You may start to call me Horace." I felt, I'd rather break my leg than call you Horace! I didn't tell him this of course, that he always insisted that he be called President Sturgis or Dr. Sturgis. So yes, we had philosophical differences. Although we felt that a strong

academic program was very important, and we were both very pleased with the way the Regents' report came in which always seemed, at that time, to bring us in at the top three of the thirty-four university system schools in the Regents' tests. Each time those reports came out, English tests, the proficiency of our students, we had a flurry of activity around saying, "Oh, are we first, second or third?" We dropped out of those first three categories occasionally, but infrequently. I don't think the Regents' test is a big function any more. But yes, we had some philosophical differences, nothing that we couldn't live with. Like everybody else, you have to compromise in some situations. But Sturgis was a good man and got us off to a good start and built a good foundation.

TS: What about with Betty Siegel? Were you philosophically in agreement with her?

EH: I am today, and have been pretty much on the whole. I don't think I'm quite as loose as maybe she is. I wish I were, but I'm a very strong admirer of her. We don't have a lot of contact now that I've retired because she's got her hands full running this institution, but I had no problem when I was her dean for those three years. We'd have our staff meetings, and I would disagree with her if I had to. She would tell me to shape up or something, if she had to. We got along very well and still do. She usually calls me or I call her on our birthdays. We happen to have a mutual birthday.

TS: I was going to say that I thought they were pretty close together.

EH: Well, they are. January 24 we were both born. She's a couple of years younger than I am and looks two decades younger, but we usually exchange birthday cards or usually telephone because it's a chance to find out what's happened. I keep up more or less with what's going on. I get the publications, although I don't visit the campus as much as I would like. I got lost here a year or so ago, and I wasn't sure how to get in here when I came, even though I used to live right over here in Pinetree.

TS: Yes, we've changed a lot in recent years. Well, in terms of the intellectual climate, what about the balance between teaching and scholarship and service? How did that change, and do you think it changed for the better or for the worse during your time and maybe from what you know since you retired?

EH: Well, I think during my time it changed for the better because I think we needed to have more scholarship. Every small school in the world can have the greatest teachers, but if they don't have some reputation as scholars, their fame stays local. We are now getting people, I read with great interest in the publication that comes from the college, about who's publishing what and who's speaking here, and who's going there, and that's always encouraging to know that scholarship has picked up. But we can't lose track of teaching, which is what we're really in the business for. I think scholarship supports teaching as business. One of the things that Dr. Sturgis did not like was to have a faculty member, say, in business or in science doing [consulting] on the outside. I disagreed with that, not that I could

make that decision, but I did, in an indirect way, by hiring people who had outside commitments. Because if a businessman loses touch with the business world, what's he teaching? He's teaching stuff that's antique, and out of phase with the reality. The same is true of science people. We need to hire people who have been in industry, who have had a little bit of experience in General Motors or General Electric or whatever, so they can say, hopefully not to ad nauseam, "Well, when I was with General Motors, we did it this way." But they need to tell what they used to do. It's a tie-in with the real world. I don't think Sturgis was ever strong on that.

TS: And that really kind of fits in with service too, professional service, its role in the mix. If you're talking about consulting work, I guess it's scholarship; but, it's mainly service. I suppose.

EH: Yes, it is service, and the same is true of service to your community. Just as the businessman who teaches business classes has to know what's going on out there in the world, we also have to know as the general classroom teacher what's going on in the community. You cannot divorce yourself from the community and still expect to carry the day in the classroom. You've got to know what the city government in Marietta is doing, so that you can identify if you're going to live here or you're just going to be here as a transient. You've got to know what's going on. "No man is an island," I think John Donne said, and I think that applies to service.

TS: You must have been happy with the emphasis toward globalization in programs on campus.

EH: Well, I am. That's why I was particularly glad to hear that we're getting our students into other countries because you need to do that. One of the criticisms that I got on the Mexican program was that, "They don't teach as we do at Kennesaw State. [The students] are not going to learn from the book that we have here at Kennesaw." Although they were tested and expected to conform to that. I said, "They're going to learn a lot more being in the country than they do from one hour from time to time in the classroom looking at the printed page."

TS: Right. Well, what kept you at Kennesaw until your retirement?

EH: Well, what, did I stay here from '73 until '90; that's something like seventeen years? I found a home here; I raised four kids, all of whom came to Kennesaw. We had a sort of informal agreement, never spoken in our family; if they would go to two years where dad teaches or is located, then they could go off to where they wanted to. That pretty much worked out on most. All of them went about two years, some a little bit more, some a little bit less, but they all either went to or graduated from another institution. Two went to the University of Georgia, one from Southern Tech and the other one is now finishing up, a little belatedly, at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia.

- TS: You mentioned Jon. Who are your other children?
- EH: Jon is my oldest; Jonathan is his real name. He was born in '55; so golly, that makes him almost fifty now. My next oldest child is Susan. Jon is an electronics engineer with Phillips Electric, an international company. He is here in the Atlanta area, and Susan is public relations at a big children's hospital in Ft. Worth, Texas. My third child is Julie; she lacked two quarters of finishing her degree here in Georgia; so now she is at the Old Dominion University. She's in Norfolk, Virginia. Ben Huck is my baby; it's hard to believe he's forty-three. He is holding the chemistry laboratories together at the big Kennesaw State University as the Chemistry Laboratory Coordinator. He has twenty or twenty-five students that he hustles around. And I'm proud of all of my children. They're all successes in their own way, and a lot of their training, I guess, came from Kennesaw Junior College. They all got a start here.
- TS: So Ben can keep you up-to-date on what's going on on campus.
- EH: Ben keeps me posted. I don't get all the gossip that I used to get, but I do find out pretty much what's going on.
- TS: Tell me about your retirement group. I know you meet the first Wednesday of every month.
- EH: The first Wednesday of every month. When Tom Salter, Inez Morgan, Toby Hopper, Laurelle Hampton—a librarian—and I retired, the five of us discussed whether or not we ought to get together for breakfast occasionally. So we set up the Kennesaw Retirees Breakfast. This was 1990, so it's been going on about fourteen years.
- TS: Oh, I didn't know that you started it.
- EH: I did. I can't remember in which restaurant we first met. We've changed two or three places. We now meet the first Wednesday of the month at the Shoney's next to the Big Chicken down there in Marietta.¹
- TS: That's a very appropriate place because that first quarter [in 1966], you know, when we didn't have the campus finished, and they were at Southern Tech—this was before I got here too—but that was kind of the hang-out for people like David Jones, was over at Shoney's.
- EH: Okay. I hadn't realized that. They were over at Banberry, which was right around the corner pretty much, about a block away. That's true; I hadn't thought

¹ At the time of the interview (26 August 2004) the retirees were meeting at Shoney's on Cobb Parkway. That restaurant closed near the end of the year. When the interview received its final editing in January 2005, the retirees had moved to Clell's Restaurant on Roswell Street in Marietta.

about that. We turn out about anywhere from ten to fifteen, eighteen people, and when we started this thing, since we had all had enough of committee meetings and time schedules and all that, we decided we would have no agenda, no speakers, no attendance requirements, that type of thing. So it was just going to be relaxing. If you wanted to come, you came; if you didn't, that's your choice. So we've kept it up, and we're getting a few newcomers, people who have just recently retired. And we don't want it to only be associated with teachers or only with administrators or only with staff people. We like to have a mix, and so we do have a pretty good mix. The most recent person who joined is a fellow named Hal; I don't remember his last name. He was from Plant Operations. Maybe you know him, nice man. But he just joined us last month. And we have about an equal number of regular classroom teachers and former administrators. George Beggs always attends; I always try to attend. Tom Salter always tries to attend, Roger Hopkins. But we've got intermediate folks like Bowman Davis.

TS: Right. I think Ed Bostick showed up a time or two.

EH: Ed does occasionally. But he has to come from Cartersville now. He was here, I guess, two or three times back, and showed us about the fire in his house. But it's always good to get a good mix. You don't always get the same people, although we have a sort of nucleus of five or six of us.

TS: And you meet at nine o'clock?

EH: We meet at nine o'clock, and nobody worries whether you're two minutes early or two minutes late.

TS: I'm going to have to show up some time.

EH: You should, and we don't want to necessarily be for retirees. Occasionally, somebody who's thinking of retiring or who just wants to come and check on all of the old timers, they show up. Jim Fleming comes about every six months or so and gives us an update. But most of them are retired. Some of them are regulars. We've lost a few of them. Toby Hopper, who was one of the original five, has moved to the mountains. She's up near Ellijay, Talking Rock, so we don't see her.

TS: Well, what should we have talked about that we haven't talked about?

EH: You are a great interviewer. I've known that for a number of years, and you've covered all the bases that I can think of excepting some of the crazy things that we did on campus and that maybe . . .

TS: Do you want to talk about some of them?

EH: I think maybe they ought to wait till another time.

TS: We'll have our secret history of Kennesaw?

EH: The secret history. After you publish the first one, then you do the secret history.

TS: All right. Well, maybe you ought to be writing those things down at any rate so we'll have them.

EH: Well, you'll need Frank Wilson and a few of the others to fill in those. Carol Martin has moved back into town incidentally.

TS: Has he?

EH: Not into town, into Cartersville.

TS: Carol Martin is spelled C-a-r-o-l, but it's a male and he was dean of student affairs or whatever we called it back then. I guess we could have talked about some of those division chairs. By the way, were you involved in the process—I know you were involved in the process of the conversion to departments—were you in favor of that from the division standpoint?

EH: I would have been in favor of it, but I was not involved in that.

TS: So that was after you left as dean?

EH: Yes. Betty did that, and I think we may have been talking about that as I was winding down my role as dean for her. It was inevitable because the division chairmanship thing was really obsolete by that time. Departments were growing, and you were getting more than one person teaching a particular discipline. After you get a couple [or] three people, you need to do departments. I think there probably is a maximum size of departments before you need to split off. But yes, we needed departments. That was important.

TS: Your division chairs would have been Herb Davis by the time you got here; I guess. You didn't hire him did you?

EH: No, I didn't hire any. Herb was here and George Beggs was here.

TS: And John Greider.

EH: And John Greider. All three of them were here. I don't think we had a division chairman of business, until we hired Bill Thompson. Maybe there was. I don't think we had enough business subjects.

TS: In '73 I don't think we did. I think they were still in the Social Science Division until maybe late 1970s.

EH: That sounds about right.

TS: And then Bill Thompson, of course, had been here all along, but was hired as the first division chair?

EH: Yes, he was.

TS: And the same thing with education when Bob Driscoll came in.

EH: That's right.

TS: I guess you hired Driscoll. Didn't you?

EH: I did. I also took several administrators to Mexico with me. That's another story. We spent two weeks rattling around down there, in 1975. I was new on campus. That's another story. It went well. One of the interesting things, I will mention this about it, is that I had five additional faculty members, administrators to go with me, for two weeks in the Yucatan, eastern Mexico, and Guatemala. Other than our airline tickets, I made no reservations in any hotel, and we were going to play it by ear, which we did. I was gratified first of all that they would be willing to go on such a carte blanche kind of thing, not knowing where they were going to end up, and whether or not I could get them home again. But we managed to do it all the way. Studdard was one of them who went along.

TS: Tom Studdard who was plant operations head.

EH: Right. The only thing is that Studdard felt he had to get home for the Alabama-Georgia football game, so he abandoned us early on. But it went well.

TS: Wasn't there something about you had some military people that had intelligence clearance, and they got into some kind of hot water down there? I guess Tom Rogers and George Beggs?

EH: Well, it was Tom Rogers. We got involved in a series of photographs in a little, bitty old town in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Mexico. We were now riding on the bus. We rode on everything except El Burro, I guess. But we rode the bus on this particular thing. We had flown some; we had flown here; we had taken buses; we had taken trains; and so we went into this little old town. There must have been sixty or seventy people demonstrating in the main plaza. They were demonstrating against the central government in Mexico. They had a big banner that said, "Like Emiliano Zapata: we oppose the Central Government." Tom Rogers had to have a picture of that; he was an old army, marine colonel, had to have a picture of that.

TS: And he was our registrar at the time.

EH: That's right, he was the registrar back then. So he got his camera backed up against the wall, and took a picture of that, and pretty soon all fifteen or twenty people came out of that for him for that camera, and they got a hold of that camera, and it was a tug of war between Tom, and two or three of them. They finally got the camera. My Spanish either failed me or I didn't use it, but I yelled "Momento!" and I guess I yelled so loudly that everybody stopped. I was able to bargain with the guy, "Give the camera back; we'll give you the film, and

everything will be all right.” Well, rationality prevailed on both sides. Tom got his camera back; they got the film, which they shook in the air and walked away. At that point Tom said, “Do you suppose if I had shown him my military credentials that we could have solved all this thing earlier on?” I said, “No!” But anyway, we both survived it; we went to the little chapel down the road, and said a few words of thanks. Then Tom, in his inimitable style—he was quite a humorist—he and I had done this, we left two guys, Roger Hopkins and one other back in the bus station, and so when we got back there, after taking a bite to eat and Tom Rogers told the others, “Hey fellows, get your cameras, go down to the square, get a picture of that banner!” [laughter] And it was only after a few words of explanation that I got them not to do that. So anyway, yes, that’s true and I’m sorry to belabor it.

TS: No, that’s a good story to have. Well, I think I’m out of questions.

EH: Well, you’ve done a marvelous job. I notice you do something here, Tom, that’s great on the interview; you always mention, like Tom Rogers was the registrar and that’s for posterity. That’s great historical work. You can always tell a good historian who wants to get it documented. That was good.

TS: Well, I appreciate that, and I appreciate the interview.

EH: Well, Tom, you did a good job, and thank you for having me.

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