KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS ALLAN SCOTT

CONDUCTED BY TAMARA LIVINGSTON

for the

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Conducted by Tamara Livingston
Tuesday, 10 December 2024
Location: Kennesaw State University Archives

TL: My name is Dr. Tamara Livingston, director of the University Archives and Special Collections, and executive director of the Department of Museums, Archives, and Rare Books. I have the distinct privilege today of interviewing a longtime friend, colleague, and dare I say, founder of the KSU Archives, Dr. Thomas Scott. The date is December 10, 2024, and we are here in the Sturgis Library in the Archive suite. I am joined by my colleagues Christian Kelly, our digital archivist and oral history videographer, and Dr. Kate Matheny, our outreach archivist.

Before we begin, I'd like to give a little background on Tom and read a little bit of his biography. Tom was a full-time faculty member at Kenesaw State University for forty-three years, 1968 to 2011. His specialties are Georgia history and oral history, and he has also taught seminars and graduate classes on local history, the history of suburban America, and the history of American higher education. He earned a PhD in history from the University of Tennessee in 1978 with a dissertation entitled "Cobb County, Georgia, 1880-1900," and I happen to have a copy right here.

Tom is the author of three books, *Cornerstones of Georgia History*, published by University of Georgia Press 1995, *Cobb County, Georgia and the Origins of the Suburban South*, published by Cobb Landmarks in 2003, and *Kennesaw State University: The First Fifty Years, 1963 to 2013*, published by KSU Press in 2013.

In retirement, he continues to lead the KSU oral history project which documents and preserves the memories of a diverse group of Cobb Countians and North Georgians, as well as faculty and friends of KSU. Over the last half century, Tom and his students have conducted close to one thousand interviews, many available online through the KSU Archives. He has also conducted approximately eighty oral histories for Save Acworth History Foundation's video history series, beginning eight years ago with an interview with Nancy Smith Maxwell.

Among his honors are the Kennesaw State College Distinguished Teaching Award, 1994; the Governor's Award in the Humanities, 2004; the KSU Foundation Distinguished Professor Award, 2008; And lifetime achievement awards from the Georgia Historical Records Advisory Council in 2018 and the Georgia Association of Historians in 2020. In 2020, he also received an excellence in Historic Preservation Award from our friends at the Liberty Hill Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Tom has served on a variety of community boards and over the years has talked about local history to numerous community groups. Tom and his wife, Kathy, a 1974 Kennesaw Junior College graduate, live in a ninety-year-old house they restored in the Atlanta Street, Frasier Street National Register Historic District. I hope you'll get to hear more about that. So let's start at the very beginning like most oral histories do. I'll ask you about, when you were born, where you were born, and a little about your parents and your home life.

TS: It requires an explanation. I was born in Illinois right outside Chicago, Oak Park, but my family was not from the North. They were from West Tennessee, and like a lot of people in the early 20th century, they didn't see much future in the South. My grandfather [Josiah Marshall (Hubbard) Scott was criticized because his kids graduated from high school, and a lot of people thought that was a waste of time, and they need to be out working on the farm. But my father [William Hubbard Scott] went to Chicago when he was 17 years old out of high school. And my mother [Wilma Plant Morris Scott] went to South Bend, Indiana, where her sister Margaret [Morris Woody] had already moved with her husband Owen.

My parents were in the North for some twenty years, and my brother [Charles] Paul was born there. My brother was born there in 1939, and I was born in 1943. So I lived in the North for one year and six days. Then we moved back to Tennessee. My father had worked for the Public Service Company of Northern Illinois for years. He had a little bit of college, but not too much. He went to the University of Tennessee for a quarter and Bethel College [McKenzie, Tennessee] briefly. So he had about a year of college.

TL: So what did he do for the company?

TS: He started out reading meters and what have you. It was a time when it was possible to become an engineer without a college degree, and the lack of a degree always held him back. So he always insisted that his children were going to college. My brother had some disagreements about it when my brother wasn't so excited about going straight into college. Eventually, my brother got a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and worked for the Federal Highway Administration. He became an expert on utilities along the side of the interstate highways and how to put them all together without taking up too much space and all that kind of stuff and getting the state agencies and companies to cooperate. My brother was very smart and eventually got his degree, but he needed a little time in the military first. So he played around in college for a few years, and then went into the army for two years, and after he came out was determined to get through and had a little graduate school as well.

At any rate, my father worked his way up and became an engineer. When he came back to Tennessee, he actually ran a grocery store for a short period of time in Jackson, Tennessee. He absolutely did not like that and went back to engineering, over for the utility company in Memphis and then got a job at TVA

in 1947 and moved to Knoxville. The family stayed another nine months in Memphis and joined them after he had time to find a house for us and what have you. So I really grew up in Knoxville, Tennessee.

TL: Okay.

TS: So a Tennessee background. But, I think, something that I found along the way is that there are not a whole lot of people in America that stay the same place very long. Each generation tends to go where the jobs are, go somewhere else. So that's my family background. We were about the only Democrats in our neighborhood in Knoxville. You know, East Tennessee is as hardcore Republican as you can get from back in the Civil War when it was on the Union side. The congressional district—I think I'm correct on this—elected its first Republican to Congress in 1856. That's just two years after there was a Republican party and consistently elected Republicans to Congress to this day. So they've never elected a Democrat since 1856.

TL: How do you account for those views? I mean, why did your family…

TS: I think a lot of it is just that East Tennessee had a lot of plain folks, no aristocrats, and they saw the Civil War as a war for the plantation owners to preserve their slave property and what's in it for them. They had a lot of patriotism about them, a love of the Union. There were some Confederates in East Tennessee, of course. John Fowler wrote about this, you know, in his dissertation. He was a former faculty member here at Kennesaw who was the first head of the Civil War Center here. He wrote about all of that.

At any rate, it was very, very interesting to be in a community where everybody was conservative Republican, and yet what really built East Tennessee was the federal government's most socialist experiment ever in the Tennessee Valley Authority, a publicly owned, federal owned utility [created in 1933 by FDR's New Deal] that built all those dams in East Tennessee and provided cheap electricity to everybody. At any rate, we were among the handful of Democrats around at that time growing up in East Tennessee. Nobody held it against me, I don't think. But whenever there was going to be a debate over, say, Eisenhower versus Stevenson, I had to defend Adlai Stevenson because nobody else did that I knew. Looking back on it, I think Dwight D. Eisenhower was a very good president, actually. But, Adlai Stevenson may have been too.

TL: So your father, was William Hubbard Scott, right?

TS: Yes.

TL: Did he go by…

TS: Hubbard.

TL: Hubbard. Okay. I know that there's a dedication in your *Cornerstones* book to him, to the memory of your father. And you call him a master storyteller.

TS: Oh, yes.

TL: He made you interested in history.

TS: Yes.

TL: Could you tell us a little bit more about that?

TS: Sure. According to one of my uncles, I shouldn't take his stories too literally.

TL: But that's a good story, right?

TS: He may have had a way to embellish a little bit. But I guess, really, I've had an interest in history all along, I think, because of listening to these stories. Regardless of how accurate everything was in the story, they were funny. And he had all these stories about growing up on a farm. I knew nothing about farm life but very early on I understood that the world I was living in was not the way the world had always been. I had a sense of history from a very early age just by hearing all these stories about the shenanigans of the Scott kids.

TL: So that piqued your curiosity.

TS: And then he had these great stories about going to Chicago. I mean, in the South at that time you were either white or you were Black. There weren't any ethnic groups to speak of. There were white people, and there were Black people. When he got to the North, his best friend was an Irish Catholic by the name of Burns. So he'd go to the Catholic church with Burns sometimes, and he had some funny stories about the churches he went to and, you know, the different ethnic groups. Most of the stories, I think, were clean enough to be told to any audience, but nonetheless, he, I think, thoroughly enjoyed that life in the North. And it was also very obvious from his stories that Chicago was just as racist as West Tennessee ever was. They may not have had slavery up there, but they had a race riot [July 27-August 3, 1919] just a few years before he moved up there in 1923. He was born in 1906. And, they'd had a race riot right after World War 1.

As I remember, there was a Black kid [17-year-old Eugene Williams] just floating out in Lake Michigan. Just having fun floating along in the water. And he crossed over an invisible line that divided the white and the Black section. And my father said there was also a separate Jewish section. The Jewish kids couldn't swim with the rest of the white kids. Anyway, they started stoning the kid, and he drowned. But at any rate, that provoked a riot in Chicago that in large part was a result of the Great Migration and Blacks moving into some formerly all-white

neighborhoods and creating tensions when people had to move out. [By its end, some 38 people were killed and somewhere between a thousand and two thousand people, mostly Black, were displaced from their homes]. And, I mean, that was still going on in the 1950s and 1960s, Blacks moving into neighborhoods and whites going further out toward the burbs and selling out; and it's not just Atlanta where those kinds of things happened, blockbusting and all of that.

So, anyway, he had all these stories that he would tell, and it was a world that I knew nothing about. And it was very, very interesting. The kind of thing you wanted to know about. I felt pretty, what's the term for it? I had a pretty boring life compared to all of that. And so, I think that's probably where my interest in history came from. It took me a while to realize that there was even a career possible in history. But, if I had followed my druthers from the beginning, I probably would have been in history. I didn't major in history, but I did have a minor. I had to have a minor in something, so I picked what I was interested in. I was a Zoology major, got my degree in Zoology, did pretty good in the courses. But it's kind of like, what we were doing was interesting for a few hours a day, but it sounded just terribly depressing to have to do this kind of stuff all day long. Whereas history, I can say I was interested in history all day long. It just took me a while to understand all of that. I did great in math and science in high school, and everybody wanted me to go to medical school.

TL: Was there an expectation from your parents that you should go into the sciences?

TS: I think so, yes, into medicine. They wanted me to. I should have known very early on, if I had any sense at all and really cared about medicine, I would have been working in a hospital when I was 18 years old. I didn't want to go anywhere near a hospital. And so, that should have been enough of a warning for me. So it took me a while to figure it out, but finally I did. And that minor I had in history, I had a great professor. His name was [Lawrence F.] Silverman. He was Jewish. I think he had Eastern European roots, and he taught Russian history. [Silverman was born in the Bronx, served in the Army Air Corps in World War II, had a PhD from Harvard, and taught at the University of Tennessee from 1954 to 1970. Later, he was the first chancellor of the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs from 1971 to 1977]. UT was on the quarter system, and I took all three courses, nine hours of Russian history. I guess I always thought that Kyiv was part of Russia from those early days at the University of Tennessee, and the Orthodox Church and all of that. But I had some great history courses.

TL: Let me ask if you don't mind a few more questions about your family. Your mother [Wilma Plant Morris Scott], I understand, had a lot of siblings.

TS: Well, she was the 13th child of her father [Williamson Plant Morris]. Her father was married twice. The first wife [Ella Trotter Morris] had cancer and died [in 1893] at a relatively early age after having eight children, and then he married again [in 1895]. The second wife [Elizabeth Caroline Whiteside Morris, 1864-

1955] had five. So I had parents who were in their mid-30s when I was born who had even older parents. My grandfather Morris, my mother's father, was born in 1851 [June 27]. My mother was born in 1907 [November 14].

If you do the math, he was 56 by the time she was born. So he was always grandfatherly in age while she was growing up. He lived to be 89 years old and died in 1941 [January 13], a couple of years before I was born. At any rate, he was a great writer. I can't say that I inherited his great writing skills. My brother [Paul] did.

TL: Speaking about writing, I want to ask you about that because you mentioned that your brother was also writing.

TS: Well, I've improved in time in writing, but it was difficult for me to be a good writer. I don't know how much you want to talk about these things, but my brother was four and a half years older than I was. Despite the age difference, he spent an immense amount of time with me. I was very blessed in that respect, and I think my math skills came from the fact that we played a baseball board game that you played indoors. We played it all summer. We got the lineups of the major league teams, and we would play games where we calculated the at-bats and hits of the various players. We wrote that down and at least once a week, we would calculate everybody's batting average. So we were doing all this math all summer, and it's like I was maybe nine years old and all summer long doing all this multiplication and division. I always just aced the aptitude tests on the math side. I mean, I'd be way up in the 90s percentiles on the math side of those tests. And I think it was because, if we'd had to go to classes and do all this all summer, we'd have thought that it was total torture. But we did it ourselves. And then we also wrote a book. I wrote a book about baseball. I wrote it, and my brother rewrote it. But we did a book on baseball.

TL: About the history of baseball?

TS: No, no. It was a novel about a baseball player. But that's kind of the way we spent our summers. And my brother also got a paper route, when he was 13 and I was 9. He got the morning route because you got paid a penny more. The paper was $0.40 if somebody had a weekly, every day, subscription. We had to deliver and collect, and we got to keep $0.14. If you carried the afternoon paper, you only got to keep $0.13. So we got up at 4:30 every morning. For several years, we would go to bed at 8:30, get eight hours of sleep, and get up at 4:30. We would go out and deliver the paper in the predawn hours, be back home by 6:00, go back to bed for 30 or 45 minutes, and then be off to school. That probably taught us a whole lot about reliability…

TL: Absolutely.

TS: And my poor mother, I don't know to this day whether she got any sleep at all while we were wandering around. I mean, who would let a 9-year-old go out in the predawn hours to wander all over creation?

TL: Would she be up when you would come home?

TS: She knew when we got home.

TL: Mothers do.

TS: So at any rate, that was my upbringing.

TL: Well, those are some good memories of you and your brother. We've already touched on your undergraduate work. So I guess at age 18, in 1961, you entered the University of Tennessee at Knoxville?

TS: Yes, still 17 when I started in the summer of 1961.

TL: And now were you living at home or did you live on campus?

TS: Well, I lived at home for those three years. I graduated in three years.

TL: Right, I noticed that.

TS: I was taking classes in the summertime too. I started with an academic scholarship, but I walked on to the track team for cross country in the fall of 1961. The track team was just awful at Tennessee. The whole athletic department had declined to where the football team was mediocre and all the sports teams were mediocre. My brother and I, by the way, sold pennants at the football games while we were growing up. We got inside before 9:00 in the morning, before they locked the gates usually, or we'd climb the gates if we had to get inside. We'd sell pennants until the game started, and then we'd watch the game. Towards the end, we would sell them as people were leaving. Particularly if the visiting team beat the University of Tennessee, we were out there where the visitors were seated, selling the pennants for their team as they walked out of the stadium.

At any rate, I had a freshman academic scholarship, but also very quickly received a track scholarship as well. So I never paid tuition to go to college. I think the first time I had to pay tuition was for dissertation credit while I was writing the dissertation. By then I was teaching at Kennesaw, and I wasn't on campus anymore.

TL: Different world today, I guess.

TS: I guess so. But tuition back then was only $75 a quarter. So it wasn't exactly like it was going to break the bank for anybody. But at any rate, I never had to pay

tuition while I was going to college, so I didn't have any student debt, to say the least. But I ran on the track team. The president, [Andrew David] Andy Holt, and the athletic director, Bowden Wyatt, at a certain point, got so embarrassed that the program was so awful that they started bringing in some decent coaches. And so, they brought in a humdinger of a track coach named, [Charles H.] Chuck Rohe in 1962. I had a freshman year where I basically coached myself. The coach was also an assistant basketball coach, and he could care less about the track program.

I saw him in the fall for cross country, and in the spring, I don't think I ever saw him. I just coached myself that freshman year. Then we got a really good coach in Chuck Rohe. He was a fabulous recruiter, and so he brought in all these fabulous athletes. His first year at UT, 1962-63, was a wonderful year for me because I was a sophomore that year and I was eligible to compete on the varsity. Freshmen were not eligible to compete in varsity sports. So we had all these great freshmen, and the freshman team could have beaten all the other teams in the SEC by themselves, but they couldn't because they were freshmen. But they pulled me along with them, and I got really good for a while. I mean, they were all more talented than I was, but I got pretty good. So, I was second in the SEC in the 880-yard run in the SEC outdoor championships in the spring of 1963.

Then the fall of 1963, we swept the SEC in cross country—took the first five places,and also 7th and 10th. We had a perfect score of 15. You know, if you come in first in cross country, you get one point, second, two; third, three. You add them up for your first five finishers, and the lowest score wins. And the lowest score you can get is 15, one plus two plus three plus four plus five. And so we swept it. I was third of our first five finishers.

TL: Now, were you captain of the team?

TS: I was.

TL: That's great.

TS: Well, again, we had some very interesting guys in the track program before that time, but none of the other distance runners from my freshman year were willing to stick around for very long doing all the hard workouts demanded by Chuck Rohe. I mean, the workouts became ten times harder than anything we'd imagined before. I remember that first cross country season, within a few weeks, I had twenty-three blisters on my feet at the same time. But somehow, I said, I'm having too much fun doing this. So I stuck it out. And I must say, I'm a firm believer in athletics. Far and away the best experiences I had as an undergraduate were on the track team. Our track coach was extremely brilliant. I learned a lot just riding in the car with him on the way to track meets listening to him talk. He had opinions on everything and knew a great deal about everything. So he was a

good mentor. We still have reunions of our old track teams. He died just a little over a year ago [October 3, 2023] at age 92.

He wasn't that much older than us. But we've had reunions for a number of years, and a lot of those guys did extremely well in life—you know, lawyers and dentists and teachers and very successful business people and what have you. When we get together, we just sing the praises of our coach. When we meet, the standard greeting is "what a day!" Because that's what our coach would say day after day. For those living in the athlete's dorm, the morning run for the distance runners was as early as 6:00 AM. Some of them tell horror stories of hearing him coming down the hall back when the athletes actually had their separate dormitory and the track team was on a separate floor. He'd be coming down the hall hollering, "What a day! You ought to pay to run on a day like today!" So that's what they still say.

TL: How did you get into track, out of curiosity?

TS: Well, my brother ran track. And…

TL: That explains it.

TS: Another reason why I should never have even remotely considered medicine is that I've never had good eyesight. I've had amblyopia all my life. They discovered it in the first grade, and that was too late to do anything about it.

TL: And that is?

TS: It's a lazy eye, where my left eye doesn't work when the right eye is working [the brain doesn't recognize sight from the left eye and favors the right]. If the right eye doesn't work, the left eye will. But it's not 20/20. It's more like 20/100 or something like that. So I've never had good eyesight. It took me a long time to figure this out. But I always had trouble in chemistry classes because my experiments never turned out right. And I think the reason was that where I saw the line on the beaker wasn't where it really was. It was off 5 percent or whatever. So I was messing up everything and didn't know why. And, you know, the same thing with ROTC. Everybody had to take ROTC for two years back then. All the males did. We'd have target practice inside. I never could hit the target if I shot where I saw the target. So I'd always have to calculate about 5 percent to one side or the other and figure out where the target was. But one thing about running track, you don't have to have good eyesight. Other sports you do.

TL: And maybe not the hand eye coordination that say baseball would take…

TS: Yes. I was pretty good at baseball for a while because my brother had me out shagging fly balls when I was four years old. So I was way ahead of the other kids. I was a pretty good pitcher. But at a certain point, it catches up with you.

In Little League, the pitcher's mound is not that far from home plate. As the mound kept moving further out, it became harder and harder for me to see where the ball was going. My brother used to say he couldn't understand why I always swung late because I didn't see the ball until it got to a certain point. At any rate, you don't have to have good eyesight to be a historian, and you don't have to have good eyesight to run track. So there were some things, I guess, that just worked out.

TL: So I would imagine, all of this work in track with your coach, you probably had a lot of self-discipline.

TS: Oh, yes.

TL: But were there some other life lessons that you learned from him or your colleagues?

TS: I think just a positive attitude and no excuses. Just do it! He would coach track at the University of Tennessee for only about ten years [1962-1971] and then moved on to other things. He was the president and general manager of the Houston Texans in the old World Football League. And then [from 1974 to 1980] he was administrative vice president for Pace Management Corporation, booking events into the Astrodome. Then [from 1982-2002] he became the person in charge [executive director] of what originally was called the Tangerine Bowl, that became the Citrus Bowl, that became the Capital One Bowl. He built that bowl into a major sporting event. Later, he worked for Nike [as National Director of the Nike Coach of the Year Football Clinics]. If you notice the coaches along the sideline of a football game, they've all got shoes on with a Nike symbol or an Adidas symbol or whatever. They're getting paid big bucks to model the products of these companies. So they pay these football coaches. Not that they're underpaid, but they pay them a lot of money to work for Nike. And the only thing they had to do was to show up occasionally to talk to high school coaches' clinic. Coach Rohe was organizing these Nike clinics all over the country. Well up in age, he was doing all of that. And so, he was a model of "Don't think you can't do it; don't make excuses; live in the present and treat every day as a marvelous gift; and go out and do it. Just do it!"

TL: I think that's a Nike slogan, isn't it?

TS: Yes. Yes.

TL: "Just do it."

TS: "Just do it." That's exactly right. And so, those were the kinds of lessons that we learned from him. And then he worked twenty hours a day. He got by on four hours sleep. There's a story about him and Bowden Wyatt, the athletic director at the University of Tennessee. Bowden Wyatt called his home inviting him to

come to Tennessee for an interview. He called his home at, something like 10:00 at night. And his wife said, "Well, he's not home from practice yet. He's still working at the office." So Bowden Wyatt calls back at 6:00 in the morning. "Well, he's already gone to the morning run [for the distance runners]." I envy those folks that can get along on four hours sleep a night because I never could. But it sure helps getting through graduate school, if you can get along without sleep.

TL: Well, going back to your education, you started off in Zoology but, you were minoring in history and eventually you switched…

TS: Yes. I did love the ecology courses I took. I took several of them. In fact, one of those courses involved an all-day field trip right after the SEC outdoor track championships in May 1963. I had to run on Saturday afternoon in the SEC championships [in Birmingham, Alabama], then had to get back to campus as quick as I could because the following Sunday morning, the class was all going into the Great Smoky Mountains to look at plants at different elevations and see how they changed at different elevations. So after the SEC championships, I spent a night virtually without sleep getting home to be out there at 8:00 in the morning to spend a full day walking all over the Smoky Mountains. And that was tougher than the races I ran in.

TL: So you did end up with a Bachelor of Science degree in Zoology?

TS: Yes.

TL: And then, your next degree is a Master of Arts in History.

TS: Yes.

TL: So you were leaning toward history, right?

TS: Somewhere along the line, I made a decision that I ought to do what I wanted to do.

TL: Now there was a quote from you that you weren't necessarily even that interested in local history back then because you thought that if it was local, it wasn't that important. Do you want to talk more about that?

TS: I think that was the general thinking at the time. All the courses I took as an undergraduate were in European history.

TL: That was the real thing.

TS: The closest thing to world history is, somewhere along the line, I took a course, and I can't remember whether it was in undergraduate or graduate school, but I

took a course on the British Empire. So we learned a lot about Africa and what have you in in that course. But for the most part, it was European history. When I decided I was going to get a master's degree in history, I had never taken a U.S. history class in college. So I had to go back and take the survey classes before they let me take the upper level classes. But in graduate school, one of my all-time favorite professors was Richard Marius, and his field was Renaissance and Reformation. I took everything that he taught. He was a wonderful teacher, but he was also doing a good deal of scholarship, and he arranged his schedule to teach at 8:00 in the morning and get all his teaching done early so he could go to the library for the rest of the day. When you take somebody's class on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday mornings at 8:00, you've got to like what you're learning in that class.

So I took Renaissance and Reformation and all those courses and some advanced graduate classes. I knew all about Erasmus, and Marius was a Thomas More scholar. He did his dissertation on Thomas More. And Thomas More is another inspiration for me. The movie version of *A Man for All Seasons* came out [in 1966] about the time that I had gone to my first teaching job. I was over in Morganton, North Carolina [at Western Piedmont Community College for the 1967-1968 academic year]. And I just remember how wonderful I thought that movie was. Was it Paul Scofield who plays Thomas Moore? That movie, I think, is one of my favorites of all time because it teaches the philosophy that you do what's right and you don't worry about the consequences. And that was Thomas More. I mean, [as Lord Chancellor] he did his best to keep Henry VIII happy, but only so far. He was not going to agree to the king as the head of the church. And that's eventually leads to his execution.

TL: Right.

TS: He did his best to work within the system, but there were limits how far he was willing to go. And I just thought that was a life lesson that everybody ought to follow. Put up with the system as long as it's possible, but at a certain point, you've got to say, "I'm not going to do this."

TL: There are lines you won't cross.

TS: Yes, lines you won't cross. So that was one of my favorite movies of all time. And so I knew a lot about Thomas More. I read More's 1516 classic, *Utopia*, and all that. But basically, I focused on American history from that time on. And somewhere along the line, I got interested in local history too. I wasn't so much interested in Knoxville history for some reason when I was growing up there.

TL: That's interesting. Maybe it was too close to home.

TS: Maybe so. I don't think I took the Tennessee history classes. Dr. [Stanley J.] Folmsbee was a fine teacher who taught Tennessee history. I can't remember even whether I took those courses, but it wasn't a thing that I was interested in.

TL: Now in your *Cornerstones* book, you also dedicated that book to your mentor during your graduate days.

TS: LeRoy [P.] Graf?

TL: Yes. Maybe you want to talk a little bit about that?

TS: Sure. He went to Oberlin College [graduating in 1936] and then went to Harvard for his doctorate in history [received in 1942]. I think by the time he got to Tennessee [in 1945], he thought he was in the boonies in Knoxville. But a very fine person. This ties in with the paper that we delivered, which was a right-wing paper, the *Knoxville Journal*, the morning paper. I don't think the news policy was slanted, but the editorial page was pretty right-wing back then. They actually went after LeRoy Graf at one point. My memory is not what it used to be anymore, but there was a school that was very much involved in the Civil Rights movement called the Highlander Folk School, and it was in Tennessee [in Monteagle from 1932 to 1961, when the State of Tennessee revoked its charter in part because of its violation of segregation laws by bringing whites and Blacks together on a basis of equality]. The school moved to Knoxville [under a new charter and name as Highlander Research and Education Center], and the head of the Highlander School [Myles Horton] was a neighbor of LeRoy Graf.

So Graf was invited over to Highlander School to speak to all the kids from the North who were coming south in 1964 for Freedom Summer. They were on their way south to Mississippi. I don't know what he told them, but the very fact that he spoke at the Highlander School got him into hot water as far as the *Knoxville Journal* was concerned. Particularly when he became the department chair [in 1965, serving until 1980], they wondered about all these woke types—that term didn't exist at the time—but all these woke university types who are putting all these radicals in charge of things. LeRoy Graf was an old-fashioned liberal, and a very tolerant liberal. I think he probably thought I was a very conservative student, and I probably was in some ways at that time. But that wasn't anything that he would hold against me or anybody else. He was a Unitarian, I remember. I was amazed that the Unitarian church in Knoxville would take the summer off. That shows how liberal the Unitarians were, that they didn't have to go to church in the summertime.

But at any rate, along the line he became a co-editor of the papers of Andrew Johnson, who became president after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. Andrew Johnson was from East Tennessee, and he was a Democrat. The reason he was on the ticket is that Lincoln, for most of 1864, didn't think he was going to get reelected and realized he had to reach out to War Democrats. Johnson was a

War Democrat. He supported the Union in the war, but he was a Democrat, whereas most of the Democrats didn't support the war or at least were ready to make peace with the South. That's how he got on the ticket, but nobody ever saw him as presidential material. He was one of the worst presidents in our history. There are some others that I could put in the same category probably, but he certainly didn't reflect a philosophy that LeRoy Graf approved of. Nonetheless, he edited those papers. And, of course, editing presidential papers means a lot of research. If you include a letter somebody writes to the president, you've got to find out who that person is. For whatever volume you're working on at the time, you've got to explain who all the people mentioned in the papers were. And so it took a tremendous amount of research. I think it took them nine years to put out the first volume of the Andrew Johnson papers.

TL: Now were you familiar with that work as a graduate student?

TS: I didn't work on the project, but I knew exactly what they were doing and where their offices were in the library and what have you.

TL: Because I know the constraints on historians, the ones who engage in primary sources and produce edited volumes. I don't know if it's a dying art but…

TS: Oh, really? You think so. Nobody wants to edit papers anymore?

TL: It just doesn't seem to be…I don't know, but I know your first book was essentially an edited work of primary sources.

TS: Yes.

TL: So I was wondering if that maybe inspired you a little bit.

TS: It probably did. I hadn't thought about that connection, but yes, it makes sense. At any rate, he supervised my master's thesis on people who migrated from Tennessee to other places and were successful in other places. I won't say that it was the greatest work in the world, but that's basically what I wrote about. And, of course, that was our family history too. No generation stayed in the same place they were born. They moved on. I forgot to mention earlier on when I was talking about my mother's father and his writing ability that he had a newspaper column that appeared in the Union City paper and the Nashville *Banner*. It was kind of folksy, like the Lewis Grizzard [writer and humorist whose columns appeared in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 1978-1994] type thing. He was a prohibitionist also. He was probably as conservative as a human being could be, but he was involved in Populist and pre-Populist causes and also was a prohibitionist. He'd write about his children in these columns, and they were the Little Barleycorns in his columns. He did that for a number of years. I was at a conference a few years back. I forgot whether it was the Southern Historical Association maybe. It was over in Birmingham. I attended a session where

Connie L. Lester was speaking. She received her PhD from the University of Tennessee in 1998 and I think she was teaching at Mississippi State at the time of the conference. [Her first book, based on her work at UT was entitled *Up from the Mudsills of Hell: The Farmers' Alliance, Populism, and Progressive Agriculture in Tennessee, 1870-1915* (University of Georgia Press, 2006]. Anyway, her paper was on the pre-Populists of Obion County, Tennessee, and that's where our family was from, Obion County. I was just sitting in to see what she said about Obion County, and she started talking about my grandfather. He was one of the pre-Populists. I told her afterwards, I thought he was about the most conservative human being in the world. And she said it's a misconception that the Populists were liberal. A lot of them really were very conservative. They were trying to preserve things the way they were before big business grew and the country changed so much.

TL: Yes.

TS: And so it made sense.

TL: Gave you some insight.

TS: These Populist types really could be prohibitionists and what have you later on.

TL: All right. So you received your master's degree. Then, did you decide that you were going to continue for a doctorate?

TS: I did. Yes. It was a fall quarter [of 1966] before I finished the master's thesis. So this is, like, December. What do you do for the rest of the year? You keep taking courses. So by the time I got into a teaching position, I had basically a year beyond the masters.

TL: So you'd already gone down that path?

TS: Yes. At a certain point, you've got to ask yourself the question, "Can I be a good teacher?" I mean, you don't want to go too far in a PhD program before you find out you can't teach.

TL: It doesn't seem to stop a lot of people.

TS: No, it doesn't. Later on, when I took a leave of absence from Kennesaw Junior College [for the 1970-1971 academic year] and went back, I probably gave LeRoy Graf a tough time about what you're just saying: "The graduate program is of no benefit to most of the people that are going out teaching in junior colleges like Kennesaw Junior College. We're spending all of our time teaching classes, and you're doing absolutely nothing to prepare us to teach. It's all about research, and we don't have time to do research where I am." It went over deaf ears that I would say those things. But nonetheless…

TL: Speaking about teaching, so you applied for a teaching position?

TS: I was ready to go anywhere that would take me, and there was a job [for the 1967-1968 academic year] at Western Piedmont Community College in Morganton, North Carolina.

TL: Which is a little bit east of Asheville?

TS: Yes, it's east of Asheville, not too far, [some 56 miles]. There was a very radical history in that area that I knew nothing about until after I left there. But the communists were going in and organizing workers [in the 1920s into the National Textile Workers Union] at Gastonia near Charlotte, and also in 1929 a major strike occurred in Marion, which is twenty miles down the road from Morganton [where six workers were killed when deputies fired into a crowd of strikers]. There were these radical organizers [especially Fred Beal in Gastonia], and I knew nothing about it at the time and only found about it later on. People that survived all that didn't talk about it anymore, and so I knew nothing about that that history.

TL: So you accepted the position and kind of walked in?

TS: I walked in. That was crazy too. The people who hired me in the spring when I was applying for the job were all gone by the time I got there in the fall. The department chair was gone. New people were in those positions. So I had a new department chair, and that was kind of alarming.

TL: What do you remember about the classes that you taught?

TS: Oh, I taught Western Civ and U.S. History.

TL: How did you feel about teaching?

TS: I enjoyed it, but I had to spend all day and all night just getting prepared for the classes the next day. I was well aware of how unprepared I was to be a college teacher. I mean, I may have some credentials but knowing what we're talking about in class tomorrow—and the classes met five days a week. So you had to be prepared every day. [Kennesaw professor] J. B. Tate had an expression for this of staying one step ahead of the posse.

TL: Yes, I think anyone who has taught probably has got that mantra.

TS: So I stayed one step ahead of the posse. But I had absolutely no social life. I had no time for anything other than preparing for the next day's classes. I was very naive in lots of ways, but I enjoyed working with the students and I enjoyed teaching. The first day I walked into a classroom, I discovered that if I was

excited about what I was talking about, the students were too. And so I actually enjoyed being up there [in front of a class].

TL: It's kind of a rush, isn't it?

TS: I think that first year, I had all my notes written out, and I was reading from the notes. It took me about one year to get away from that. The teachers that I really admired, like Richard Marius, didn't use notes. He might have something on a note card just to remind him he was supposed to talk about Erasmus somewhere during the lecture that day or whatever. But he would just get up and talk. So very quickly in my career, I got away from taking any notes at all into the classroom. I remember reading a book somewhere along the line before my teaching career. It was written by one of the big shots in the Catholic Church in America. At any rate, I read his book, and one of the things he mentioned that stuck with me is that he said he was sitting in the pews, listening to somebody else up reading his sermon. And this woman next to him, after the sermon was over, turned to him and said, "If he can't remember it, how does he expect us to remember it?" So I went by the philosophy that if I couldn't remember it, students weren't going to remember it either. I had to be organized enough to remember what I was supposed to say that day. And if I did that, I didn't need notes. So I might spend ten hours preparing, but when I got into the classroom, I didn't need the notes.

TL: So it sounds like you learned quite a bit about teaching during that year.

TS: I guess. And, you know, again, I learned it on my own. I absolutely believe to this day graduate students who are going to go into teaching need to be taking classes on how to teach. It's crazy that they don't, but the assumption is if you know it, you can teach it. And [KSU archivist] Kate [Matheny's] facial expression back there is telling me no, that's not true. And [digital archivist and videographer] Christian [Kelly] also, his facial expression says that's not true. But that's basically what I've learned by doing. And I learned it because I just was panicking that I would not be prepared for that next day.

TL: Right. So it sounds like you had a good experience there, but unfortunately you did not stay long.

TS: No, I did just that one year. I got along with everybody there. I liked the president. I liked all of our administrators. I got along fine with everybody. Everybody got along fine with me, and I would have been happy to continue there longer. But my department chair got into a controversy. I guess it's worth mentioning. I think I may have been conservative. That area I was in was super conservative. Sam Ervin [of Watergate fame] by the way, was a U. S. Senator and was from Morganton. I fact, I went to the same church where he was supposed to be a member, although he was up in Washington the whole time, so I don't think I ever saw him in that Presbyterian church in Morganton. At any rate,

it was a community where there were a handful of really wealthy people and a whole lot of people who were pretty poor, but, you know, pretty conservative at the same time. And, we had one radical student on campus. I remember her to this day.

TL: Just one?

TS: I think she was the only one. Schools were integrated by that time in North Carolina. So there were a number of Black students. Some of them may have had more liberal views than others, but she was the only white student, I guess you could say, who had some radical views about things. At any rate, she would reach out to the Black students. She wanted to talk to them, to be with them, and what have you. The dean of students saw her spending all this time with these Black students and called her into his office. I'm hearing all this secondhand now. I'm hearing it from her and from my department chair. But I have no reason not to believe that he called her into his office and said he was worried about her reputation. She'd been seen spending too much time around the water fountain talking to Black boys, and he threatened her somehow that he was going to have to take some disciplinary action if she was seen spending so much time with those Black students.

So she goes running to my department chair, and he blew his top. I don't know whether I ought to put any of these names in the interview. She was Cathy Bannon, and my department chair was John W. Palm. He was retired navy. He went to Annapolis, spent a career of twenty years in the Navy, and then had a midlife crisis and decided he really wanted to teach political science. So he comes out of the Navy. He had been in intelligence work and all kinds of stuff. He'd been stationed in Moscow for a while after World War II and had KGB agents following him around everywhere he went. But that was his background. Now he wanted to teach political science. He eventually got a doctorate, but he didn't have it at the time. But with that kind of background and after the department chair had just suddenly left, he became the department chair. And he was a fine department chair. He was very militaristic, I guess you could say, but I actually enjoyed that kind of leadership. I probably don't need to go any further than that. But I like somebody to be in charge and somebody who you can trust. If they say they're going to do it, they're going to do it. If they say it's not going to be done, it's not going to be done. That's George [H.] Beggs too, when I got to Kennesaw.

TL: Yes.

TS: Nonetheless, he just found [the dean's threat] intolerable. He goes to the president's office, beats his hand on the desk, and says, "You've got to do something." The president, who again was a very fine person in lots of ways, became totally intimidated. One of the things I learned at this point too in North Carolina, each of the junior colleges or community colleges they were called, had

its own board of regents, board of directors, whatever. I found that the Georgia system was a whole lot better where you had one board that had to deal with the University of Georgia, Georgia Tech, Georgia State, and all the junior colleges as well. It was very protective in Georgia to have regents who understood that the academic world is different than the business world. You don't interfere with some things at the University of Georgia, and maybe you shouldn't interfere with them at Kennesaw Junior College either.

It was helpful, I think, to have a chancellor for the whole system as opposed to a local board of regents who are basically the owners of the textile mills and lumber mills running the local college. The way they resolved the problem was to fire my department chair. At that point, he had to go, but we went all over the state of North Carolina meeting with teachers' associations and civil liberties associations. I had never heard of the ACLU before that time. I don't think. But we were meeting with the ACLU, which wasn't very helpful in this particular case, but meeting with groups like that.

TL: So you've got drawn into it?

TS: I got drawn into it. And John Palm was very concerned about pulling me in. He thought I was a conservative faculty member, I guess, and didn't want me to do things I didn't want to do. But I was pretty bent out of shape over it all too. At any rate, I did have sense enough to understand that the stupidest thing in the world is for a person in his first year in the job to leave the job. Because everybody is going to think nobody wanted you or you wouldn't be going. At least I had sense enough to wait until they offered me a contract in writing for the next year. I forget what it was, but it was a pretty good raise in salary for the next year. So they obviously wanted me back. Then I had to walk in and tell them I wasn't coming back.

TL: It's been a difficult time.

TS: I'm sure that the president thought I had been manipulated by John Palm. I hadn't, but I'm sure that he thought that I had been persuaded to do things that clearly were not in my best interest. I tell you how naive I was at that time. I was invited to deliver a paper on my master's thesis to the Tennessee Historical Society over in Nashville. I had to travel over there to do it. So I had to ask for permission to miss a class and go over there. It's a long way from Morganton to Nashville and back, and I remember when I went back and I was filling out the forms, I said, "Well, I didn't spend as much on gas as my reimbursement is going to be." And I remember the president saying, "You're putting wear and tear on your car. You take it anyway." But I was naive enough to think, you know…

TL: That wasn't right.

TS: Yes. This isn't right. I'm getting too much money for this trip. And you know what? I was naive enough to be surprised that they really valued that I went to make a speech on an academic topic where people would know the name of Western Piedmont Community College. It was like a light goes off in my head: "Oh, yes. People admire that." I was only 24 years old at that time.

TL: Wow. So you made the decision that that you were going to leave and, at that time, are you sending out applications?

TS: I send them to everybody in the world.

TL: Everybody in the world?

TS: Everybody [all the junior colleges in the South] that had an opening. I was just extremely lucky that Dale Smith was a faculty member here, and he got a job at Northern Michigan University. And it was like July when they gave him the job. So he left and all of a sudden, and Kennesaw had an opening. I guess they were pretty desperate at that time. I know pretty much who my competition was for the job. I don't want to name names, but they were well known folks locally. I was down visiting John Palm in Lutz, Florida when George Beggs called and said, "Can you come for a job interview?" I was about to go back to Knoxville to stay with my parents after a summer quarter at the University of North Carolina. I was looking for a job, and my alternative was finding a job or getting drafted into the military, which wasn't very exciting to me. So…

TL: In 1968.

TS: Yes, 1968. At any rate, George Beggs called and asked, "Can you stop for an interview?" So I stopped, and just as soon as I pulled into the campus, we only had eight buildings at the time, but I thought, "This is a pretty campus!" Nobody was here. This is August, and the fall quarter wasn't going to start until the middle of September. So nobody was around. Summer quarter was over, and the campus was deserted, but I was thinking, "This is just such a pretty campus. I'd love to be here." Anyway, I talked to George Beggs, and I told him exactly why I left Western Piedmont. For a lot of people, that ended any interest in me whatsoever. But I wanted them to know because if they couldn't handle it, I didn't want to be there anyway. But when I told George Beggs why I left, he just chuckled. He said, "I'll check it out." And he did. He called the president [of Western Piedmont] and got his side of it all. Then, we went over and saw [the academic dean] Derrell [C.] Roberts and President Horace [W.] Sturgis together.

They interviewed me. And again, if you want to know how stupid I was at the time, I was sitting there in the office, and I said, "What I'm really interested in is teaching. I don't care about all the scholarship stuff. I'll get my dissertation; I'll finish the degree; but teaching is what I want to do." And, actually, it must not

have been a bad thing to say because that's what we were at that time, a teaching institution. At least they knew I cared about teaching.

TL: And we were proud that we were teaching institutions.

TS: Yes. Absolutely.

TL: That's who we were at that time.

TS: Absolutely! But by the time I got up to Knoxville, the phone was ringing, and George Beggs was calling, offering me the job. Then two hours later I got a call from a college in, I think it was Tyler, Texas, a junior college, where they were going to offer me a job sight unseen. They must have been really desperate down there. And I said, "No, I've already accepted." And I couldn't have done better than I did, I think.

TL: Well, here you are, a testament to that.

TS: Yes, I'm here, still here.

TL: So, yes, you obviously really resonated with Kennesaw Junior College at that time, as the perfect fit for you.

TS: It was. And I would say too that for a lot of other people, it was a great fit. I think that the people who weren't here at that time probably don't understand just how great the pride was in the institution in those days. Our goal was to do the best job of teaching freshman and sophomore courses of anybody in the State of Georgia. And I think we did do the best job even if we didn't have a whole lot of experience. Everybody was young, practically. I mean, anybody in their 40s was an old codger on the faculty back then. Most of the faculty were in their twenties. George Beggs was eight years older than I was, so if I was 25 when I started teaching here, he would have been 33. Dr. [John C.] Greider, the head of the Humanities division, was about ten years older than that. But we had a lot of young folks, faculty members in their 20s. We were all starting our careers at that time. Nonetheless, what we heard in every faculty meeting is, "Don't cut any slack with anybody. We want students who are prepared to go on to a four-year school for a bachelor's degree. We don't want them to be held back because they got an inferior education." So, basically, the philosophy was, "If you've got to flunk them, flunk them. We don't care how many you flunk. We're not going to hold it against you."

TL: It's got to be rigorous.

TS: Yes, it's going to be rigorous. We would have faculty meetings where Dr. Sturgis would bring in slides where he would show how our students did when they went elsewhere. We had all of those statistics of what their grade point average was

their first year at the University of Georgia after they left Kennesaw or Georgia State or what have you. And, basically, if they went to the University of Georgia, they were going to do at least as well, grade point wise, when they got there, as they did at Kennesaw. If they went to West Georgia, their average was going to go up about a half a grade point. If they had a 2.5 GPA here, they were going to have a 3.0 grade point average at West Georgia. Georgia State was about a wash like the University of Georgia. Georgia Tech was the only place where grade point averages would go down a little bit. There wouldn't have been a large sampling, I guess, to pull from that went to Georgia Tech. But we did have some that were going on in math and science and what have you. Elaine [M.] Hubbard was in one of my first classes and I think she was about the only woman in her classes at Georgia Tech. Then she comes back and teaches math at Kennesaw for a career. But our students did very well when they transferred.

TL: Tell me a little bit about the student body at that time because there was a comment that you had made in a previous interview about the number of international students, which you found fascinating.

TS: Yes, yes we did. At that time, we had a lot of Palestinian students and a lot of, they called themselves Persian students. They were from Iran, and they were proud of being Persians. We had a number of students from Saudi Arabia. We had a number of those Middle Eastern nationalities. Of course, they were top of the class in math and science, and they were the ones that were going to go on to Georgia Tech or Southern Tech or whatever. So they were fabulous in the STEM fields, but language was a problem for them because English was not their first language. And they had absolutely no background in American history. So when I was teaching American history to these students—and it only took a few years before we got specialized to where you taught either American or World History but not both—so I didn't have to teach World History anymore, gratefully. I feel for the students who took my European History classes because I realized my limitations.

At any rate, they would have problems understanding all this material because they had no background. They didn't know anything about the Civil War or the American Revolution—just mostly superficial knowledge. So I would hold extra classes for them. After class was over, they'd stick around, and we'd talk about the material: "Did you understand what we're talking about here?" And so on. We'd spend about another hour after class…

TL: Wow!

TS: Just going through the material with them. And I learned a lot from them as well. They invited me to their parties and what have you. So I enjoyed doing that. You know, I just felt it was part of the job. We're going to have tough standards, but you do everything you can to help people reach them. And if they don't want to

do the work, that's their problem. But you do everything you can to help them and make it as interesting as possible for them.

TL: I know that you have mentioned and others have mentioned in the very early days of Kennesaw that there really was a kind of a different spirit happening. There's a lot of pride, a lot of flexibility maybe amongst the faculty to pitch in and do things. We had delays with the campus and all of that, which you've documented in your book.

TS: The delays with the campus opening?

TL: Right, exactly, but, what are some things that you think that KSU today can learn from its…

TS: I would say this, and I don't want to go too far because I haven't taught a class since 2013, and I retired in 2011. So I'm out of touch with a lot of things. But from what I can see, if somebody wants to get hired here nowadays, they've got to have a research agenda. And that's probably more important than how much they care about teaching their classes. I don't want to go too far with this because I think teaching is still valued here, but I worry sometimes that if faculty members only have so many hours in the day, and you've got to make a choice between learning a little bit more about something that might enrich your class tomorrow or just pull out your old notes and put your time instead into whatever your research project is, the tendency is to think, "If I'm going to get tenured and promoted, it's going to be on what I publish. It's not going to be on what people thought about my teaching."

And I worry about that. I worry about the fact that when we were a junior college, we put our heart and soul into teaching core classes because that's all we had, and that's what we did. We wanted to be the best at teaching those classes. But just as soon as we got upper-level classes, people wanted to teach the upper-level classes. If they could get out of teaching the survey classes, they were going to do it. And then when we had graduate programs, they wanted to teach the graduate classes. And if they could get out of teaching the undergraduate classes, they were going to do it.

TL: Right.

TS: If they have a choice, they'd rather teach the graduate classes. Well, we've got PhD programs on campus. We've got some people who don't do much other than teach PhD classes nowadays.

TL: Right, and then we wonder why we have problems retaining freshmen students.

TS: Exactly. Adjuncts are teaching a lot of our general education classes nowadays. And I don't want to put down adjuncts in any way because many of them are

starting their careers and are putting their heart and soul into teaching those classes. So I don't want to be critical of that, but we used to be able to say the reason we're so good at teaching is we've got full-time faculty members teaching all these classes. They're not being taught by graduate students. They're not being taught by adjuncts. They're being taught by full-time faculty members. And we just had a handful of adjuncts. So that was our calling card.

TL: Yes, and you can do that because we were small at that time and now we are…

TS: Right, and I think throughout my career—and maybe it's a good thing I retired when I did—but I always put teaching first. You do whatever it takes to teach your classes as best you can. And I say this despite the fact that I was getting reduced teaching loads pretty quickly in my career, so that for the last ten years or so, I only taught two classes a semester, and they were not typically survey classes. I taught Georgia history. I taught the research class for a long time. I've taught some graduate classes. So I say this realizing I was compromised somewhat too. But still, I felt you should take all the time it takes to do your classes right. That's your first objective. Spend as much time as it takes grading those papers. I always believed you had to have essay exams, you had to have term papers, you had to do all those things, and you had to grade them. And if you had thirty or forty students in a class, it takes a long time to grade them. And I've always said, nobody ever had to pay me to teach a class, but you've got to pay me to grade those papers and deal with the students' problems and what have you.

When I was over in the Social Sciences building a little bit earlier today, I ran into a guy over there saying, "I'm going off to grade papers." And I told him just what I said. And he was saying you've got to deal with them coming in afterwards and wanting to know, "Why did I get a "B" on this paper?" So I never enjoyed the grading part of it all. But I always felt that teaching was first. You do that first regardless. Service was second, then scholarship was the time you had left over. That's the way I did it for my whole career.

TL: I have two more questions on this section. I think maybe we'll take a brief break since we're already, at an hour and a half.

TS: Oh my goodness. Well, I didn't mean to talk so much.

TL: No, I've got plenty more.

TS: Okay.

TL: I did want to go back to to Dr. Beggs, Dr. George Beggs, and have you talk a little bit more about him because this is the third person you dedicated your *Cornerstones* book to. And you credit him as a mentor or someone who taught

you what it means to be a professional. I thought that was a wonderful, wonderful thing to say.

TS: Yes. I won't say that he was universally loved. A lot of people felt intimidated by him, including department chairs when he became the dean. Up until 1983, he was the division chair over all the social sciences, and then he becomes dean of one of our original schools. I can't even remember what we called ourselves to begin with [the School of Arts and Behavioral Sciences], but it was the humanities, the social sciences, and the arts altogether to begin with. Music and art and all of that were part of whatever we call ourselves at that time.

Not everybody understood him, I think. But to me, he was very easy to work with. You just had to understand how to work with him. He did not like to be surprised in a committee or faculty meeting with somebody bringing up something that they hadn't discussed with him ahead of time. You could bet if you brought up something that he wasn't prepared for, he was going to be against it. So that was lesson number one in dealing with him. The best way to deal with him was to go into his office, close the door, tell him what you were thinking, what you wanted to do, and you would get an immediate answer. This was Military 101, I guess. But you got an immediate answer. He was either supportive or he wasn't. If he wasn't, you might as well forget it. Find something else to do with your time because it wasn't going to happen. But if he was supportive, what you could count on is that he was going to back you until a final decision was made right down the line.

I'm not going to name any names, but I know some other administrators on this campus who would tell you one thing to your face in private and stab you in the back in a committee meeting the next day when they found out that the president didn't like it or somebody else they were kissing up to didn't like it. He was never that kind of person. He was absolutely honest, absolutely trustworthy, I thought. When people understood that I think they got along very well with him. But there were a number of people who didn't know him well enough, I guess, and felt intimidated by him in lots of ways because not everybody cares for that military background. I don't know why I do. I'm probably as close to a pacifist as you can get. And I don't know why, but…

TL: Perhaps you appreciate the structure and the order. Let your yes be yes and your no be no.

TS: Yes, exactly. It was very seldom that he wasn't totally supportive of anything I wanted to do, and he would back me all the way. Like the oral history project for instance. I just went into his office and said I wanted to start an oral history project. And he said, "go for it" or something to that effect. That wouldn't have been his term, but something to the effect that he was very supportive in any way that he could be. I guess the biggest problem with the oral history project was figuring out how to pay to get these interviews transcribed. I always had support

from the library in terms of the binding of them. Certainly, with [Robert B.] Bob Williams [director of the Sturgis Library from 1986 to 2009], just total support. As many as we produced, he was going to get them bound for us. Transcribing cost a little bit of money, so some of those interviews were done by the Social Science Division or the School [of Arts and Behavioral Sciences].

I learned very quickly how to be entrepreneurial and go out and get people to support the project. I'm very grateful nowadays to the Archives for taking over the paying for transcriptions. Before that, for a number of years, CETL, the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, paid for them when [G. William] Bill Hill [IV] was in charge. I'll tell a quick story on that. I applied for a little grant on campus. I think I asked for enough money to transcribe the interviews of five people who had won the Distinguished Teaching Award. That may have been all we had at that time. I'm not sure. But I applied for this grant, and I got turned down by the campus committee. I didn't get any feedback except, I guess, notes from one person who said, "Why do you think the people that won the Distinguished Teaching Award are the best teachers?" My answer, of course, would be, what else are you going to go by? Somebody at least judged them to be good teachers.

By the way, in the old days, I used to like the way we did the Distinguished Teaching Award. They don't even call it "distinguished" anymore. It's "outstanding" teaching award now. But I like the way we did it for a number of years. [President] Betty [Lentz] Siegel established that award in 1981-1982. She was flabbergasted when she got here and found out there were no awards for the faculty, and she started the award. But the way the award worked is that you had to be nominated by a student before you could even be considered. They had to put it in writing why they thought you were a good teacher. It's not that way anymore. Students are not involved in it at all anymore. And I just thought if students don't nominate, you probably shouldn't be doing it. I've lost my train of thought. Where were we going with all of this?

TL: You were talking about oral histories and the early days, but I did want to ask you one more thing before we take our break.

TS: Oh, I know where I was going. After I got turned down for the award, Bill Hill called me up and said, "We've got money in CETL, and we administer the awards. So do all you want and do all the awards." So that's when we started interviewing people who got the service awards too. There were two kinds of service awards at one time and one was strictly community service. The other could be committee meetings, what have you. At any rate, Bill was certainly one of those people that I'm very fond of because he said, "We'll pay to transcribe the interviews for any of the awards that you want to do." So we did that for a number of years.

TL: Do you want to tell the story about our rally on campus in which you took part in 1970?

TS: Sure. Let me just say that I have changed my opinions on lots of things over the years, and I am kind of embarrassed nowadays by the things I said back then, some of them. But in 1970, it must have been May [May 4] where the incident took place at Kent State [University] where the [Ohio] National Guard—some poorly trained National Guardsmen—fired on some students [who were protesting the expansion of the Vietnam War into Cambodia] and killed several [four] students [and wounded nine others]. They were doing diddly squat, just in the wrong place at the wrong time. And campuses nationwide just exploded over that. Not that they weren't exploding every other day over something or other anyway. But, the University System [of Georgia] closed down for three days just to try to prevent student protests at UGA and Georgia Tech, or you name it. Kennesaw didn't have a whole lot of radical students. It was a commuter campus, and they were either students living at home or they were people already out in the work world with families—the nontraditional students coming back to school beyond the traditional age. And these were pretty pragmatic students who wanted an education and didn't care a whole lot about a whole lot of social issues.

We had some [radical students], but not a whole lot on our campus. But we had our own protest around the flagpole outside what used to be the library, now the Pilcher building. There were eighteen people who showed up to protest. Of course, they had to come out here on the day the campus was closed. The administration opened up what today is the Pilcher building. There was a seminar room in there where people could gather after the protest to talk about things further. But there were some speeches around the flagpole, and there were a few administrators around that were trying to make sure we didn't burn down the campus, I guess. People made speeches, but they were civil, law-abiding speeches. There was a reporter from the *Marietta Daily Journal* there, writing stuff down. I guess one thing I learned is don't try to be humorous when there's a reporter in the room, because if you say something that's supposed to be sarcastic, it's going to look like you literally meant it when it appears in the paper.

I made a flippant remark. Students were already occupying faculty parking spaces, because they thought it was so elitist for faculty to have their own parking spaces closer to the buildings than where the students parked. What the parking lot was at this time is where you all probably are parking out here now, and where the Student Center is. That was all parking. Then out in front of the English building where the lot was that used to be there until a year or two ago. All of that was the student parking and faculty parking. The faculty and staff had the row closest to the buildings, right next to the sidewalk. That was all that you needed. You could get about forty people in the seminar room, and that was big enough for our faculty meetings when I came here. Anyway, there was one student I know who had something like forty tickets because he persistently was going to park in a faculty spot just to make a political point about how elitist it

was. And when we were in our twenties, it wouldn't have been that hard for us to walk a few more feet from where the students were parking. We had a few older faculty members that probably needed a handicap spot at that point. But, anyway, I was supportive of the students and their protest against the faculty parking spots.

But I made the flippant remark as well that, "You ought to also occupy the faculty bathrooms while you're at it." We had separate bathrooms for faculty at that time, you know, faculty women, faculty men, male students, female students. It was almost like the old days of segregation where you used to walk around and they would have "Colored" signs on the bathroom doors. And so I make that flippant remark. I wasn't being serious, but when it appeared in the newspaper, it sure looked serious. At any rate, Dr. Sturgis was not happy. So I almost got fired over that. By that time, they'd already approved a leave of absence for me to go back and finish my course work, which I did the next year, totally innocently not knowing anything that transpired. But while I was gone, Dr. Sturgis went down to the Board of Regents, to the chancellor's office, with his secretary [administrative assistant], Ms. [Audrey J.] Wrigley, and they pulled my file out of whatever file it was in down in somebody's office where the chancellor holds forth and brought it back to campus and was going to squash it.

Anyway, the attorney for the Board of Regents called Dr. Sturgis and said, "What happened to the document? And do you have the support of your academic dean? Do you have the support of the division chair?" He didn't. They knew nothing about it, and they backed me. There's another reason I am very fond of George Beggs over the years and Derrell Roberts. Derrell Roberts went on from here to be the president of Dalton Junior College. And [Robert H.] Bob Akerman came in after him, and then [Eugene R.] Gene Huck, the only three academic deans we had in those junior college years. But they both back me. Derrell Roberts had been George Beggs' high school history teacher down in Tifton, Georgia. So they had known each other for ages. They backed me, and I knew nothing about it until the next year. Dr. Beggs called me up and said, "We haven't got your contract yet." They sent me a contract, but I hadn't signed it yet and hadn't got it back in. I was debating whether I really wanted to go back yet or just go ahead and get the degree over with. I was thinking about having another year of leave of absence.

Dr. Beggs said, "If you're thinking about [returning], get the contract back to me immediately within the ten-day period." So I came back after one year and hadn't even taken my prelim exams yet. That took several more years while I was teaching full-time. I will say one thing about George Beggs that might put him in a humorous light. While I was getting near the end of my dissertation, he gave me a course release one quarter. We taught three five-hour courses, fifteen contact hours a quarter. It's hard to explain to people in the public, but that's a lot to teach fifteen hours a quarter when you're grading papers and doing all these other things. But anyway, he gave me a course release, so I was only teaching ten hours. So that was my release to help me finish the dissertation and get

everything finished up. However, he decided at that point, since I had so much more free time, I could have more students in my classroom. While I had been teaching three classes of forty, all of a sudden I was teaching two classes of sixty. If you do the math, that's no time saver. You still have 120 students. At any rate, I did it and eventually [in 1978] got through.

TL: Now we are in 1970. You've taken a leave of absence to finish your coursework. Then you worked on your dissertation for a number of years. Tell us about the dissertation and all of the work that went into even preparing the data for you to analyze.

TS: By this point, I really was getting interested in local history, and I wanted to do something on Cobb County. I mentioned earlier, LeRoy Graf didn't teach southern history. Back in the day that I was going through graduate school, the University of Tennessee was in transition into really becoming an R1 [Research 1] in lots of ways. The faculty was expanding too [and becoming more specialized]. [LeRoy Graf was there from 1945 until his retirement in 1985]. At one time he taught colonial American history; he taught social and cultural history; he taught courses in the Western movement. Southern history certainly wasn't his background. But he was editing the Andrew Johnson papers and learning about southern history doing that, I guess. At any rate, he was willing to supervise a dissertation from just after the time-period of the Johnson project that was not just local history but, to put it on a broader perspective, a case study of the Upper Piedmont that runs through several southern states.

It's the area of red clay just south of the Appalachian Mountains but north of the plantation country [of the Lower Piedmont] where the soil is considerably better than it is around here. The idea was to do Cobb County in that broader context. What does it tell us about life in this part of the country where there actually was some Unionist sentiment at the time of the Civil War because you didn't have large slaveholders. You had plenty of small slaveholders, but it was different. Farm sizes in general were smaller. At any rate, the idea was to make this a case study, if you will, with Cobb County.

The other thing I was interested in is there was quite a movement at the time to do quantitative studies in history, cliometrics type history. What I did is that I took the 1880 census and the 1900 census, the raw census data, and we also punched in the data from the 1880, 1890, and 1900 Cobb County tax digests. We punched these IBM cards, 60,000 of them by the time we got through, where I was entering all this data that came from the raw census and raw tax information for every taxpayer.

TL: So you had to do that to be able to analyze it and do anything with it.

TS: Exactly! If you think after the Civil War, that's basically what I was studying. The 1870 census is not a very good census. Reconstruction was going on. They

missed a lot of people in the 1870 census. The 1880 census is much better. I learned a whole lot about the limitations of the census working on all this because, basically, it's a census taker going door to door back then. And maybe a 14-year-old answers the door and nobody else is around and that one has to give data for everybody else. So, "How old is your mother?" "Oh, I think she's around 85 years old" or whatever. One of the things you can quantify is that in the census data from that era, there are a whole lot more people who were 20 years old than were 19 years old or 21 years old, which is evidence that oftentimes, "Oh, she's somewhere around 60 years old." And that is what gets recorded.

TL: The estimated age, yes.

TS: And then the fives also—lots of fives. A lot more fives than fours and sixes.

TL: Interesting.

TS: And so that's just one of the limitations. The person giving the information didn't always know how old everybody was. So you round off in cases like that. But I went through the census, and my wife Kathy was instrumental in doing all this. She helped a lot in writing down all this data. [The dissertation contains an appendix of about thirty pages detailing the limitations of the census and tax digests].

TL: My mind can't comprehend having to do that level of very detailed work to even get the results and then you can begin to analyze. Was it not a daunting task for you?

TS: Oh, we spent a lot of time down at Georgia State in their computer room. We didn't have anything on the Kennesaw campus available to faculty to punch the cards, so we went down to Georgia State to punch the cards from the hand-written sheets we prepared from the microfilm. And I remember going through stuff up in the archives in Washington and College Park, Maryland, as well as at various places. I'm trying to think now. This is 1973 to 1978 that I'm working on the dissertation. There's a 75-year rule, I believe, before raw census data is released. So the latest census that was available was 1900 at that time, and we had to go initially to the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland to see it and then to the National Archives branch in East Point at the time. The 1880 census was generally available by this time, and we were able to access it in the Kennesaw College Library.

The 1870 census wasn't any good. The 1880 census was fine within limits. The 1890 census didn't exist. It was destroyed in a fire in the Commerce Department on January 10, 1921. So all that raw data was gone. You had the statistics, but nothing else from 1890. Then the 1900 population census. And there's also an agricultural census for 1880, but not for 1900 for some reason. So I had all that

agricultural data from 1880 and industrial returns for 1880, and we went through that. And the other thing was the tax digest. The tax digests had their limitations too because it was self-reported. Somebody would go down in the spring of the year [between April 1 and July 1] to the tax office and would tell, "I have this much personal property. I have this much real estate."

Now they're pretty accurate on how many acres of land they have. But when you start asking about the value of real estate or personal property, everybody underestimated how much it was worth. But the way the system worked is that it's self-reported, but it all goes to the grand jury. And if the grand jury thinks that someone is cheating on his figures that he's turning in, they can come up with their own evaluation, and that becomes what you pay taxes on. And then you pay taxes toward the end of the year. There's one other thing too that was unique to the South in that period, and that is that somebody might not own any property at all, but if they wanted to vote, they paid a dollar a year. That's their poll tax.

TL: Right.

TS: So you could go through and see a whole lot of people who were only there because they paid the poll tax. It doesn't sound like a whole lot, but if you're only making $200 a year, a dollar going for a poll tax might be enough to persuade you not to care who gets elected governor of Georgia this year. And you know what? If you didn't pay this year, nobody's going to come out and get you. You just can't vote. But the next year, if you want to vote, you've got to pay the back tax as well. So it can start mounting up. All of a sudden, you don't want to vote for Donald Trump, but now you owe $25 if you're going to vote this year.

TL: Yes.

TS: And nobody's going to do that because they're only making $200 a year. So, anyway, we did that and got all that data. Then I had to take it up to the University of Tennessee to their business college up there. They had the one computer at Tennessee that was available to me to run all this stuff through. I have all those computer sheets in storage now. If our guys [in the KSU Archives] ever want this stuff, I've got it. With the data I'd ask a question, for example, comparing white and Black farmers on how much land they owned or if they didn't own any land at all. How many pigs they had or…

TL: So you create these queries to take the data and analyze it.

TS: And then compare different groups of people or different parts of the county and what have you. I had all this data and that was the basis of my dissertation. And when I got through with it all, I was very happy to get the dissertation. But I also felt very strongly that most everything I concluded is what common sense would have told me before I ever got started. Black people were not doing as well as white people. Well, duh. What did you expect in this period? But I learned a

whole lot about sharecropping and the different kinds of renting. You had the fixed renters who would agree ahead of time, my rent this year is going to be $25 or $50, $100, whatever, regardless of how much I grow. So if I have a bumper crop, I'm going to make a lot of money. But if I have a terrible crop, I've still got to pay what I promised. Even if I only make $101 this year, I've still got to pay the $100 I agreed to. That's the fixed renter. Generally, people wanted to be fixed renters if they could. There's more risk but also more rewards because the rents were generally lower that way.

Then you had the thirds and fourths. It is individual contracts worked out with every tenant and every owner. But basically, if you own your own mule, you've provided part of the capital to pay for what you're growing, and your rent was, typically, a third of the corn and a fourth of the cotton. It could be vice versa. Or I found out later from [Acworth area farmer] Harvey Durham, it could be sugarcane on which you paid rent instead of cotton or whatever. So there's infinite variety in it all, but generally speaking, your rents are going to be less if you're only paying a third and a fourth. Then you can grow all the turnip greens you want and that's not part of the system.

But then you have the half-croppers who are the really poor people, who don't own a mule, don't own anything. All they provide is their labor, and they grow their crop, and they pay half of the cotton and half of the corn as their rent. And I guess maybe one other thing too, given the fact that they didn't use fertilizer very much back at this time, is that the crop yields were terrible. Half a bale of cotton was normal back then. Thirteen or fourteen bushels of corn per acre was normal. I mean, they grew over a hundred bushels within just a few years, but not back in that period. So they could have really used some agricultural extension agents, which didn't exist until about 1914, for these crops that they were growing. They did the best they could with the knowledge they had, but they were a long way from doing as well as they could.

And the seed they had was simply setting aside part of what they grew for the next year. So the quality of the seed was nothing like what it is nowadays for farmers. So anyway, that was my dissertation, and I got through, and I guess part of my motivation in doing this kind of dissertation is that I wanted to do history from the bottom up. That was also big on college campuses in that period. All those hippies running around and what have you. You know, we didn't want to write about the elites. We wanted to write about the people at the bottom. How did all these things affect them? And so this was one way to do it. And so, I finished my dissertation in 1978. [Its full title is "Cobb County, Georgia, 1880-1900: A Socioeconomic Study of an Upper Piedmont County."]

By the way, I should say that I found some really interesting things in this study that you wouldn't have found otherwise. There's a guy named Isom Gresham, G-R-E-S-H-A-M. But I am told that everybody, white and Black, around here at that time pronounced it G-R-I-S-S-O-M. Isom Gresham was a former slave. His

wife Millie Grissom was a former slave too. They started out with nothing, apparently. Now, Fred [D.] Bentley [Sr.] tells me that they were enslaved by one of his ancestors, and that this ancestor gave them forty acres of land after the war. I have no reason to doubt that Mr. Bentley was telling the truth, but I've never documented it either. But regardless, they by 1900 had 600 acres of land in North Cobb County [on Shallowford Road between Bells Ferry and Canton Highway]. They were remarkably successful somehow or other. In old age, they moved into Vine City in Atlanta [Chestnut Street], and they had just a huge number of rental properties down there. Kathy went down to the probate court in Fulton County and found their wills. They were both illiterate. So here in an age of the worst segregation imaginable, you have this couple who maybe started with forty acres but greatly increased their holdings over the years. How did they do it?

One of my early interviews was with Alfred Jackson. If we can get into oral histories just a little bit, you know where Marlow's Tavern is down the street off Chastain Road? That's about where Mr. Jackson's house was. He owned all that property where the shopping center is now. I used to go down there and sit on his front porch and talk to him and did an oral interview with him a couple of times [1986 and 1987]. One of his relatives worked in food services here [at Kennesaw State] at one time. I got to know her a little bit too. But I would talk to him. His family owned a fair amount of property even though they were sharecroppers before they moved to Cobb County. And he was a janitor at Lockheed. So his formal education was limited, but he was really, really interested in history.

He'd tell me all the Black history of this part of the county. This is the first time I had heard about Henry McNeal Turner owning property in Kennesaw. I remember he pointed out to me once where the property was, and I have been able to document that in the Cobb County Deed Room that he owned well over 100 acres of land here. Turner Chapel AME Church in Marietta is named for him. He started a whole bunch of African Methodist Episcopal (AME) churches in this area and throughout other parts of Georgia as well.

Turner was in the [Georgia] legislature for a while [during Reconstruction] and became a bishop in the AME church [in 1880] stationed in Atlanta. It appears that he would bring AME people out of the big city [Atlanta] to have a retreat on his property. So I learned all that. Isom Gresham was a member of the Mount Zion AME Church up at [4163] Wade Green Road in Kennesaw. Isom Gresham gave them three acres of land for the church, and the state took away part of it for I-75 in the 1970s when I-75 was built. I think the church lost two of their three acres at that time and got paid a little bit, but nowhere near what the property was worth to them, I don't think. But at any rate, Mr. Jackson knew all about the history of the [Mount Zion AME] church. So we talked about those things. And Isom Gresham—I know exactly where his farm was. There's a Gresham cemetery that's right across the street [Shallowford Road] from where his six hundred acres were. And so…

TL: Is this where Mr. Bentley is buried?

TS: Yes, Fred Bentley is buried in that cemetery. And Isom and Millie are buried in the back of their own cemetery.

TL: I didn't know that.

TS: I mean, talk about segregation. That's the way it was. Back of the bus, back of the cemetery, even if it's your own cemetery. That doesn't make sense, does it?

TL: Nope.

TS: There are so many things in my lifetime that I look back now with amazement at how I could have been so stupid that I never even thought about some of these things at certain points in my life. I went through segregated schools all the way through high school. When I got to the University of Tennessee, they had a handful of Black students. But Black students couldn't be on the track team. Black students couldn't participate in any of the extracurricular activities. All they could do was go to class. Does that make any sense?

TL: No.

TS: I should say about Chuck Rohe, my track coach, he was also the head recruiter for the football team when Doug Dickey became the head coach [1964-1969]. And he integrated the athletic program at Tennessee. He recruited the first Black football player [wide receiver Lester McClain] and the first Black track guys, Audry Hardy and James Craig, in 1967, which was after I graduated about three years. He actually brought in a second football player [Albert Davis] and it's one of these things that seems so flabbergasting nowadays, but they didn't recruit just one Black player. You had to recruit two so that they could be roommates in the dorm. I've done a number of interviews for our Rohe Track Era website. One of them is with the first white guy [Gerry Eddlemon] to room with Audry Hardy, after Hardy and Craig didn't want to room together. So Coach Rohe found a white guy who was happy to room with Hardy. It's so crazy nowadays.

I should say another thing too that is totally embarrassing to me nowadays. I did not once think all the way through my athletic career that there wasn't a track team for the women at UT [prior to 1969]. Now Coach Rohe also, brought in the first female performer at the University of Tennessee, Terry Hull Crawford. She wanted to run track, and he took her under his wing. She trained with the boys, and Rohe would find her meets to participate in all over the country. Then she became the first women's coach at University of Tennessee later on [1974]. But I look back now and it's not that I tried to defend a segregated system. I never thought that there was any other way to do things. And that's despite the fact that my mother played basketball in high school. She was one of these Bloomer Girls, when they had to wear all these clothes to be out on the basketball court. And,

with that I mean, how could I have been so stupid? This is what I often ask myself these days. But I think we've made a huge amount of progress in this country.

TL: Obviously, exploring the world through local history, as you mentioned from the very beginning, this idea that you don't know everything about it, but you're hearing these stories, and they make you curious.

TS: Yes.

TL: I did want to ask you since you said you had to create all these punch cards, all sixty thousand.

TS: Yes. Kathy did a lot.

TL: The other your partner would be your wife, Kathy [Kathleen Sherlock Scott].

TS: Yes.

TL: I wonder if you could tell us just briefly a little bit about her and about how you met. I know she was a student here at Kennesaw Junior College at that time.

TS: Yes, she started here in Winter quarter, January 1972.

TL: I know she was president of the SGA in 1973 and 1974, and I know her family moved to Marietta.

TS: The family was from Buffalo, New York. Her mother Alice [Ryan Sherlock] had all kinds of health issues, and they wanted to get away from those steel mills and what have you for healthier air. They moved south to Marietta in 1955 from Buffalo. They were a couple of blocks away from Lake Erie in suburban Buffalo. Kathy's mother's sister, Fran [Frances Elizabeth Ryan] Youngs, was already down in Cobb County by that time. So they moved down near family. As Kathy's stories make clear, it was like going to another planet to come down to the South. Marietta was very much a closed society at that time. All the Catholics in this area at that time had vivid memories of the Klan marching around the square in Marietta and the Klan marching down US 41, the Four Lane Highway. The Klan was as anti-Catholic and anti-Jewish as it was anti-Black.

Kathy came down here and went to Saint Joseph Catholic School. She wasn't part of the public schools, which also isolated you from the other kids. I kid you not that she tried to go to the Clarke Library, the public library in Marietta, to check out books on one occasion. She was in her school uniform, and whomever was working in the library that day wouldn't let her check a book out because she was Catholic. She has a vivid story. There were four Sherlock girls. Kathy was the oldest, then her sister Mary, and then Pat and Eileen, who were the youngest

ones. They were born in 1951. So they were pretty young at that time. When they were going to school, they were riding their bicycles through certain neighborhoods that I won't name in Marietta. The two older sisters would ride on the outside to protect the sisters on the inside while kids were throwing rocks at them while they were on their way.

TL: My goodness.

TS: That's Marietta back at that time. It was a closed society in lots of ways. Maybe that's enough to say on that, but Kathy on a more positive side started her college career at Shorter College, which is a Baptist school. The Catholic students were treated very well at Shorter. In fact, they even provided a bus to take them to mass on Sunday mornings. I thought that was pretty liberal for a Baptist school in that period. She went to school there for a short period of time. Then she heard about a program in North Carolina. There was a governor of North Carolina named Terry Sanford [1961-1965], and he started a program [North Carolina Volunteers] that was a forerunner for the VISTA program, VISTA, Volunteers in Service to America. That's what VISTA stood for. President [John F.] Kennedy started the Peace Corps [in 1961], sending people [to developing countries] all over the world to help local communities. Then Kennedy envisioned a domestic equivalent, which started under President [Lyndon B.] Johnson in 1964-1965. Anyway, the precursor to it was North Carolina Volunteers. Kathy graduated from high school in 1963. So this would be about 1965 when she was over in North Carolina. She went over there and was in Wilmington, North Carolina, and she had the Klan following her everywhere. There were two Catholics in the group, and the other was a Black male. They were riding to church together on Sunday morning, and the Klan would follow. I mean, a Black guy and a white woman in a car together, how…

TL: Scandalous.

TS: How scandalous can you get? She was still getting threats for years afterwards from the Klan over all of that. There's a book recently about Wilmington and its checkered history [David Zucchino, *Wilmington's Lie: The Murderous Coup of 1898 and the Rise of White Supremacy* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 2020-2021 Pulitzer Prizewinner in general nonfiction]. She saw it first-hand. Anyway, she did that for a while. She worked for Allstate for a while. She also was in the Navy for 183 days. There was a history of intestinal problems in her family, and she developed ulcers; so her Navy career ended after hospitalization at Fort McPherson in Atlanta. She came home to Marietta to recover, and that's when she was going to Kennesaw. She was one of these non-traditional students who was attending Kennesaw.

When you talk about quality, we have wonderful students at Kennesaw from the beginning, and a large part of it was these nontraditional students. But even the traditional-aged kids were oftentimes just fabulous students because they might

have been traditional in age, but they weren't traditional in their lifestyle. They all had jobs. [President] Betty Siegel used to ask at commencement each year, "All of you who held down a job while you were going to school stand up." And virtually everybody in the graduating class would stand up. They'd sit down, and then she'd say, "Those of you who held down at least two jobs while you were going to school, stand up." And half the class would stand up then too. So if you're working and going to school, you might be 19 or 20 years old, but if you're paying the bills yourself…

TL: Got it. So you understood responsibility.

TS: You wanted to get your money's worth.

TL: That's right.

TS: So they're not there to play. They're not there because mama and daddy said you need to go to school. They're there to learn something. And by golly, they want faculty to teach them something. So I think that it's a mistake to judge the quality of a student body by what they did on the SAT test or the graduate records exam or anything else. We had a whole lot of students who were just fabulous in history classes, great writers, great everything, simply because they had a few years of experience that they could bring to the classroom and had some influence on the other students as well. Now, I should say that people in math had a different perspective than we did about some of these older women coming back to school. They were a whole lot better in English and history than they were in math. And so we had a huge developmental studies program. Just like some of those international students, for instance, they may have been taking some developmental studies courses. A lot of these women that came back to school were taking developmental math and males too. So the math people had a little bit different perspective on just how good these non-traditional students were.

TL: At least they wanted to be here.

TS: And Kathy had to take some developmental math courses. She loved Micah [Y.] Chan. Micah Chan was the closest thing we had to an integrated faculty when I started here. He was Chinese, from Macao off the coast of China. We had no Black faculty when I started. We had Black students always at Kennesaw, but no Black faculty when I started. One Black staff person by the time I got here in 1968 [Charles Williams] was supervisor of food services, which was one little line that people could go through to order a sandwich. And that was about the size of it. So we had some progress to make, and George Beggs was one of those pushing to make progress and bring in faculty and staff people. In 1972 Kennesaw hired its first two Black faculty members. One was in Biology [Karen P. Maples] and one was in Economics [Ruth Rundles]. And there were a handful of staff people. Terri [Ferguson] Thomas was one of them. Terri Arnold, nowadays, was one of them. She came in 1971, and she worked for the dean of

student affairs and then as administrative assistant for [Controller] Roger [E.] Hopkins too for a long, long time. We've interviewed her father [Charles Ferguson] because he was involved in integrating Lockheed way back in the 1950s and early 1960s…

TL: Right.

TS: Back to Kathy again, she came back to Kennesaw while she was recovering from all her ailments. She never took any of my classes, fortunately.

TL: Was she interested in history or what was her major?

TS: Yes, she was interested, but her major was Criminal Justice. Then when she went to Georgia State she majored in Public Administration, and so that was her interest. At that time, for criminal justice Kennesaw didn't have any faculty members, but a faculty member from Georgia State would come out here and teach classes. So she was in there. We had a whole lot of police officers from Marietta and Cobb County who would be taking these courses, and she was taking the courses along with all the police officers. She did an internship with the court administrator for Cobb County Superior Court. Then she went on to work for the Administrative Office of the Courts, the Judicial Council for several years after she got through at Georgia State.

+TL: It sounds like she was pretty engaged if she was part of the Student Government Association.

TS: Yes. When she was the SGA president, she decided that the faculty adviser to student government wasn't doing his job to her standards. So she fired her adviser. She went to George Beggs and asked him to recommend somebody, and he recommended me. So that's how…

TL: So that's how you actually met?

TS: Well, she also worked as a student assistant in the Social Science Division Office, so I knew her from that, but really got to know her through student government. And I should say that it probably got me in trouble with some faculty members, but there's one huge accomplishment from student government in those years. There was, and I guess there still is, a Student Advisory Council to the Board of Regents. She was on it. One of the things that this advisory council was working on was student evaluation of instruction. This is another thing that seems very, very weird to me nowadays, but I never once evaluated any professor I ever had in a class. They just didn't do it back then. I mean, they were the gods up there, and no student was going to have an opinion on how well they did their jobs. I know that when students didn't like a faculty member, they went straight to the division chair, because I remember a faculty member or two that were in constant

hot water because so many students were upset about their teaching for good reason. So I know that that always occurred.

But, still, to have any measurement of how people were doing, it didn't exist. So our student government at Kennesaw actually played a big role in pushing student evaluation of instruction throughout the system. I remember when we first were starting to write the instruments for our campus here, it was controversial with faculty. Nobody likes anything until it's established, and then it becomes routine, I guess. But we got it established, and I still feel that you can learn a lot from what students say about you in a student evaluation.

TL: That's fascinating. I've never heard that detail of KSU history before. So that's fascinating. But it rings true with what you were saying about the priorities on teaching.

TS: And I think the other thing too, back in the old days before computers, before people had smartphones or before the Internet, the way that you evaluated is that faculty members would step out of the classroom, and another faculty member would have to come in and administer the instrument. And you didn't get the results until after you turned your grades in after the quarter was over.

TL: Yes.

TS: But the good thing about this is that all the students were sitting there, and they didn't have any choice. They were going to fill out the form. The way I understand it now, they only fill it out if they like the instructor or don't like the instructor. And otherwise, you don't get the results from a whole class where everybody expresses their opinion.

TL: Right.

TS: I think they were very helpful to department chairs in counseling faculty members when for whatever reason, students don't seem to like what you're doing in the classroom. So that was one of the things we accomplished in those years.

TL: Let's move ahead and actually begin talking about oral history.

TS: Okay.

TL: I know that the first official oral history, if we want to put it that way, was done in 1973. Is that correct? Your first interview was with…?

TS: It was with Guy [Haynes] Northcutt. Now the first interview—Kathy arranged these first interviews, by the way. We weren't married at this time, but…

TL: Already a partner.

TS: Well, yes. And she knew these folks. I should say I was about the shyest person in the universe. Nothing to this day is harder for me than to get on the phone and call somebody up out of the blue. So I was very shy about arranging things. So she took the ball and ran with it. The first interview we did was with James J. Daniell in 1973. There's a J. J. Daniell Middle School now [in Cobb County]. But J. J. Daniell had worked in the textile industry in the front office [as vice president] and had done a number of things over the years and then had become a probate judge [officially called an ordinary]. That was back in the time when there was only one county commissioner [in Cobb County]. There was an advisory committee to the commissioner, and the probate judge [ordinary] was one of them. So J. J, Daniell was a pretty important person both in what became Holeproof Hosiery [after 1937] where all those condos are now in Marietta where the old mill used to be. He was important in running Cobb County for a number of years and a very kind, very nice person from all I understand. There was another politician in Cobb County who sarcastically called him a "Sunday school teacher," implying he saw the best in everybody but didn't understand how politics really worked, that kind of stuff.

At any rate, he did not want us to record it. He was 94 years old, and he didn't think his mind was as sharp as it used to be even though it sounded pretty sharp to me in doing that interview. He was in a nursing home right across Tower Street from Kennestone Hospital. I can't remember what it was called back then, but he was in a nursing home. His wife was there too. She had Alzheimer's, and she was in an advanced stage. She was out of it. He was there, and he didn't want to record it, but he let us interview him. So we had a nice long discussion with him, and, unfortunately, we didn't get to record it because I think it really would have been valuable if we had. But while we were doing the interview, one of the front office folks from Holeproof Hosiery back then named Guy Northcutt came in to visit. So we met Guy Northcutt, and that was going to be the first official interview. Afterwards we set up an interview with Mr. Northcutt.

The Northcutt family had owned the mill [originally named Marietta Knitting Company] for a while [from its second year of operation in 1897 until in the late 1920s [1927] they had sold it to a company called Champion out of Chattanooga. So it becomes a bigger firm at that time. And then Champion sold it to Holeproof [from Milwaukee in 1937], and so it becomes part of a national firm. But Guy Northcutt and J. J. Daniell were still working in the front office of the company. And Jennie Tate Anderson [Jennie Tate at the time] worked over there too [as personnel director]. She kept all the records for the company [and was responsible for hiring and firing]. Her future husband, James T. Anderson owned Anderson Chevrolet, and Jennie Tate Anderson was one of the founders [in 1974] of Cobb Landmarks an Historical Society. She worked at Holeproof too in those years.

Anyway, we got to interview Guy Northcutt [on March 30, 1973] and there were a number of interesting things that came out of that interview. It's still worth reading, I think. For one thing, the reason Northcutt Stadium is named Northcutt Stadium is he was a member of the Marietta School Board at the time, and he supervised the construction of the stadium for Marietta High School. They did it with WPA labor. So he talks about the Works Progress Administration and how he'd have to run out there every now and then and tell the workers to slow down because the city only got so much money from the government [$9 worth of cement and supplies for every 100 hours worked by WPA employees]. If they worked too fast, they needed to tell him to slow down because they were getting ahead of the supplies. The wall around the stadium is built out of fieldstone. He talks about going out to all the farmers around Cobb County and collecting all the fieldstone from their fields and bringing it in to build that stadium. [The stadium was named for Mr. Northcutt at its dedication in October 1940].

But I also was interested in the workers. I only got his side of this, but it sounded like he thought very highly of the workers, that he enjoyed the company of the workers, and that he was actually embarrassed that the wages were so low. [At the start of the New Deal in 1933, Champion paid most of the workers] ten cents an hour, and they were working 56 and a quarter hours a week. So you work 56 and a quarter hours and what do you get? About $5.62? Yet, he was saying, even though we would have liked to pay them more, we couldn't because the industry was so competitive. If they raised wages and nobody else did, they would be out of business before long. So he says he was a great believer in the New Deal with Franklin Roosevelt. I really appreciated getting how it worked on the ground level.

Under the National Recovery Administration, each of the industries would get together, the bosses of each of the industries, and they drew up a code that would govern their industry. Then the NRA would have to approve the code. Some of the most important things in the code were what you paid the workers, what the minimum wage was, and what the maximum work week was. For the textile industry in the South, the code set the minimum wage at $0.30 an hour, three times more than they were paying, and set the work week at 40 hours, which was sixteen and a quarter less than they've been working to this time. Before they were getting about $5.60 for a humongously long work week. Now for what we think of as a normal work week, they're making $12, more than double as much money. He says in this interview, it didn't hurt the companies one iota because they all did it at the same time. So nobody had a competitive advantage. And what's more, these workers now had more money to go out and spend. So if you translate this to the whole national economy, a whole lot more is being bought than ever before. And this goes back to the liberal theory of the cause of the Great Depression. It wasn't because industry wasn't able to produce more; it was because the people weren't able to buy more.

TL: Right.

TS: And the best way to get out of the Depression was to put more money into people's pockets.

TL: Right, so they could spend more.

TS: I mean, this is the opposite of Ronald Reagan's supply side economics. This is demand side economics. You create more demand by giving people more money to spend. One thing you can count on is all these poor people are not going to put the money in a savings account. If they're poor, they're going to spend it, and that stimulates the economy. So anyway, I thought, "Wow! This is fabulous. I need to do more interviews like this."

TL: I see. So it was the just realizing how rich these stories were and the different perspectives, and…

TS: Yes. Plus, the other thing, regarding quantitative studies, [historian] Arthur [M.] Schlesinger Jr. said at the time that they weren't proving anything that you couldn't have figured out already without these quantitative studies. Nothing that was really important that you wanted to know.

TL: Just confirming maybe.

TS: Yes. It doesn't answer the real questions about how people feel about all of this. So that's the nice thing about oral histories. You find out what they thought about it all.

TL: Right.

TS: I mean, you were asking me, what did I think about Kennesaw Junior College.

TL: Right.

TS: I thought it was a fabulous school and that we were doing a fabulous job. So if I was not going to do those quantitative studies anymore, how do you do history from the bottom up? The other way is you go out and talk to people. You get a microphone, and you go out and start interviewing people. So that's the roots of the oral history project to try to collect as many stories as you can to find out how people are thinking about what's going on.

TL: Well, it seems very clear to me that you were bitten by the oral history bug very early on and never looked back. So you started doing oral histories, even while you were working on your dissertation. This is in the early 1970s.

TS: Yes, but while I was doing the dissertation, I didn't have time for it. So I skipped from 1973 to 1978.

TL: Okay. So 1978 is when you get going for good.

TS: Yes. It's winter quarter of 1978 [March 1978] that finally all the paperwork was in, and I got the dissertation out of the way. But the timing was perfect for me. I really grew up with Kennesaw College. I mean, every time I was ready to move to a different stage in my career, Kennesaw was already there.

TL: Yes.

TS: It was moving there right about the same time. What better luck can you have? And so, as I look back on it, I think it took a little bit of courage for me to leave my job at Western Piedmont. But in the end, I was much better off at Kennesaw State University.

TL: It certainly did seem like a happy fit for many, many years.

TS: It was. I couldn't have been luckier. I don't know whether there was a divine purpose in all of this or not, but somehow or other, I ended up where I should have been, I think. And Kennesaw—there wasn't any question we were going to grow. The whole area was growing around here. We could have been awful, and Kennesaw was still going to grow. But I don't think we were ever awful. I guess another way of putting this is that I got through the dissertation right at the time that Kennesaw was becoming a four-year school. The conversion was approved in 1976, and then the Board of Regents said, "You take two years to get ready."

We had to decide what courses are you going to teach, and who's going to teach them. All kinds of things had to be decided quickly. We were given two years before it was going to happen. It was the fall of 1978 that we actually started offering upper-level classes. And at this time, I think, the whole university, the whole college, not university yet, was moving big time into another stage. In the early days Dr. Sturgis didn't really like faculty members on committees. He had a few administrators running about everything, which was fine with me for the most part. We did have an administrative council and an academic council and student advisory council. So I would go to student-related meetings as the advisor to Student Government Association. But going to committee meetings is one of those other things that they would have to pay me for. It is not anything that I particularly enjoy. But Kennesaw was moving to a stage where we were going to be evaluated on far more than teaching.

Especially after Betty Siegel gets here in 1981 and [Edwin A.] Ed Rugg comes in shortly afterwards and replaces Gene Huck as the chief academic officer, the standard becomes notable teaching. Everybody was still expected to do a good job in the classroom. I think Ed Rugg coined that term "notable teaching." Everybody was expected to be able to document that they were notable teachers. Student evaluations, by the way, were very helpful with all that. If you got good

student evaluations, you could bring them in, plunk them down, and say—the administrators already had them, of course—but you could say, "I'm a pretty good teacher." So I always believed in student evaluations. But the standard was notable teaching and then you had to be strong in either service or scholarship. You didn't have to be strong in both.

You should be doing something in both. It didn't have to be strong in both, but it had to be strong in one. So basically, what I did at that point is first of all, I put together a slideshow on Cobb County history. And fortunately, thanks to Cobb Landmarks and the Georgia Archives, there was a huge collection of 800 historic photos in what's called the Vanishing Georgia project for Cobb County alone. The archivists set up a little shop outside where the Marietta History Center is nowadays, the old [1850s] hotel building. They had a van out there, and people would come in and bring their photographs, and they'd copy them while they were there. So we had that collection, and I put together a slideshow. I went out and started talking to anybody who wanted me to speak. I talked to all the civic groups, and a number of schools would invite me out. A number of former students who were teaching eighth grade Georgia history might want somebody to come out and talk a little bit about these things.

So I was talking all over creation. I talked to every Daughters of the American Revolution chapter that existed, I think, in this area, and Sons of the American Revolution. So that was basically my service. I did my best to concentrate on community service. I was on the board of the Marietta Welcome Center, and Kathy and I together were on the board for Cobb Landmarks and Historical Society. I was the historian for the Downtown Marietta Development Authority. This was a time back in the 1980s before the tax laws changed under Ronald Reagan about 1986 [Tax Reform Act of October 1986]. Before that time, there was a system set up where local businesses that wanted to improve their storefronts could go to a bank and take out a loan. Then the bank would actually make the loan to the Downtown Marietta Development Authority, and the DMDA passed it through to the businesses. By doing so, you didn't have to pay federal taxes. So that would allow the bank to give a lower interest rate to the business taking out the loan. So the loans were very desirable.

The Downtown Marietta Development Authority was trying to preserve the downtown area the way it was late 19th and early 20th century, the historic downtown as a way to bring customers back because they'd fled to Cumberland Mall after its creation in 1973, and after Town Center opened in February 1986. When all those malls opened up, that was the place to go at the time. When I drive by nowadays, it doesn't look like there's very many cars in the parking lot, but at one time, all the kids hung out there. All the old folks went there before they opened in the mornings because they could walk inside and stay out of the weather. So they were the place to go. And so, the Downtown Marietta Development Authority was trying to bring customers back, you know, get

businesses back downtown. It was almost dead downtown for a few years after Cumberland Mall opened up and the other malls were opening up.

So that was the way they sold it by preserving the history. So if people wanted to renovate their buildings, and they got these pass through loans, they had to go before the Downtown Marietta Development Authority for approval. When the DMDA met as a Historic Board of Review, they added an historian and an architect to advise on historic authenticity. I probably didn't know a lot specifically about preservation, but I was asked to replace [Dr. Philip L.] Phil Secrist on the board of review when he went on to other things [including service as chair of the Cobb County Commission from 1988 to 1992. I interviewed him for the Cobb County Oral History Series in 2001].

We spent an inordinate amount of time on paint colors, whether those colors were historic or not. I guess philosophically, I think if people are taking all the risks themselves, they ought to be able to paint their building any color they want to within reason. But I was supposed to be giving some historic advice. So I did that for a number of years and got to know Joe Mack Wilson because he was on the DMDA, and a whole bunch of businessmen I got to know pretty well just by being on there. [Robert E.] Bob Flournoy [Jr], who became mayor and then was a judge, was on the DMDA and also involved in Cobb Landmarks. So those are the kinds of things that I was doing for service.

TL: Right.

TS: But the other thing was to go out with a tape recorder and start interviewing everybody I could find. [For the Cobb County Oral History Series, I also interviewed Representative Joe Mack Wilson in 1988 and 1992 and Judge Flournoy in 2001]. And so, I…

TL: And you are still doing it today.

TS: Still doing it today. I think maybe I've told you before that to begin with, I was so shy that I would send them a letter to ask them if I could interview them. I wouldn't call them on the phone. I'd send them a letter. And I put a self-stamped envelope inside, where they could mark yes or no. "You want to be interviewed? Well, send it back if you do." So then I felt free to call them up. And so that's how I got started. And the first one when we got started back [in 1978] was [former Cobb County Commissioner] Herbert [C.] McCollum.

TL: I have it right here.

TS: Oh, you've got the interview?

TL: One of the things that's so distinctive about this is that you included photographs.

TS: Yes, he gave us all those photographs.

TL: Just absolutely fabulous.

TS: Herbert McCollum was the one-man commissioner from 1956 to 1964. Then after his eight years, I think people were sick and tired of the one-man commission system. They weren't always happy with what was going on. That's when Cobb moved to a five-member commission, which we've got to this day, a commission chair and four regional commissioners. Originally, two were in the east and two were in the west, and now they're in four different districts. The county set up that system, and Ernest [W.] Barrett came in and was immediately hugely popular in Cobb County. He was a Cobb native. I interviewed his aunt and uncle, the Cantrells [Walter H. and Edith Barrett Cantrell], whom he lived with for a while in his youth. They were farmers down near the McEachern High School area. The football stadium is named for Walter Cantrell at McEachern High School. I interviewed them early on [1984]. I never had a chance to interview Ernest Barrett. He died one month after he left office, and he was so busy while he was in, I didn't want to bother him. I was going to interview him as soon as he left office, and he just didn't last after he got through. But I think that Herbert McCollum felt like he had been forgotten after his term was up and that people didn't remember his accomplishments.

Well, we've got an airport name for him, and he did a whole lot while he was in, and he really wanted it to be documented. So I had a chance to interview him, and he invited me out to his home. Back then, I was just lugging that tape recorder all over creation, going into people's homes and doing the interviews there or wherever they wanted to meet. My impression at the time was he obviously didn't get rich off being county commissioner. He had a nice East Cobb home, but no different than anybody else's. So that's how the project got started. I think that somebody in the library did the transcribing for me of that first interview.

TL: Interesting.

TS: And I don't know whether we recognized that person. I don't think we did. But one of the secretaries got the job of transcribing it for me, and then the library had it bound.

TL: Right.

TS: And so that's how it started. Then the next one I did, I was determined from the beginning that this wasn't just going to be a bunch of old white folks that I went out and interviewed. I wanted to make sure we had a fair sampling of African Americans even though, as late as 1980 African Americans made up only 4 percent of the population of Cobb County. This county was as white as you could get. It was 96 percent white when I came here and probably got down to 3

percent Black by the mid-1970s. Then it was growing again by 1980 all the way back up to 4 percent. People out in East Cobb could literally spend weeks without ever seeing a Black person unless they traveled into Atlanta because there weren't any anywhere around where they were living. So I really wanted to make sure that we didn't skip them. M. J. Woods was a long-time principal of the Lemon Street High School. He came here in 1929 and was high school principal until 1960. Then a couple of years later, he became the principal of Wright Street Elementary, which was a Black school at the time. Then he retired before it became integrated.

TL: Were there any challenges arranging oral histories with any members of the Black community who might be distrustful, or…?

TS: Oh, yes, there were some. One of them was Terri Thomas Arnold's uncle, Lewis Scott. He was a history teacher at Lemon Street High School and was at Tuskegee for a while. He knew all about the Federal Writers' Project of the 1930s. The Federal Writers' Project was designed to do for middle class workers what the WPA did for ordinary workers, give them jobs. The people who maybe were more educated but still didn't have a job. So the Federal Writers' Project was for writers. One of the things that they did under that project was to interview all the former slaves that they could find. Slavery ended in 1865, and this is 1935, some seventy years later, that this project begins. So anybody they interviewed had to be a person well over 70 years of age who had been a child during the time of slavery.

Many of the people who were going out and doing these interviews were really the elites of their community. Even though they didn't have a job, they were from prominent families. So there is no question that a lot of the former enslaved people that they interviewed were very cautious about what they said to any prominent white family in their community. It could be very harmful to them in many ways if they said what they really thought. So there's a certain bias in that project, and he was very much aware of that. So he didn't ever want me to interview him. I'm sure there were others too that had that kind of concern. But I didn't get turned down by a whole lot of people ever with the project.

TL: I guess most people felt that it was an honor to have their…

TS: Yes, I think so. I taught the oral history class for a number of years, and in fall 2009 I had the class work with the Cobb NAACP. [Cobb NAACP president] Deane [T.] Bonner was very supportive of this. We did a civil rights project, which became more than civil rights. We did over forty interviews in that class, which is not bad for one semester.

TL: Yes.

TS: I should say the way that we got them transcribed, this is before the [KSU] Archives had taken over the oral history project. You were very generous at a certain point in offering to pay for the transcripts. But this is a little bit before that point. I won the [KSU Foundation] Distinguished Professor Award in 2008. Thanks to [former Foundation chair Thomas M.] Tommy Holder and the Foundation, he put a ton of money into those awards. The award that year was $17,000, and $8,500 went to me to spend any way I wanted to, but the rest was supposed to support my research. I said at that point, "A big part of my research is doing these interviews. I'm going to use the money to transcribe interviews." So all those forty plus interviews got transcribed with my money, thanks to Tommy Holder, the Foundation, and the Distinguished Professor Award.

TL: Wow.

TS: We were able to get them done really quick that way too. I had two students—[Jason Christopher] Jay Lutz was one of the students and Stephen [M.] Briggs—who did internships with me the following semester to finish up some of the work. A lot of the interviews never got totally edited [during fall semester] after the transcripts were back. People passed the course and moved on to other things. So we had these students doing internships, finishing up the editing, and getting all those interviews in final shape.

That's a good example, I think, of a project where we had a class of fifteen students maybe. They each had to do four or five interviews, and at a certain point, I realized some of them were never going to get them done by themselves. So they would do them together to get up to their five interviews. All of the students who signed up for the class were white students. And as a reflection, even as late as 2009, of what the campus was like and how far we have changed in diversity, we're a majority minority campus now, but not then, and certainly not in the history department.

Almost no Black students were majoring in history. They were in the Coles College of Business. They were going to make some money when they got out of here with their degrees, or they were in the Bagwell College of Education or whatever. They were not going to make a lot of money in Education, I guess. But they were in those fields. A history major wasn't practical, I guess. It's the way that many of them thought about it. And history was painful for many of them. So we had a whole bunch of white students going out to interview a whole lot of Black people, and it was instrumental to have gatekeepers. We had all kinds of activities to prepare the students and the public for the interviews.

[Matthew C.] Matt Jones did an internship the semester before I started all this [in Spring 2009] and helped set up some of the interviews we were going to do and did the groundwork for the course. We did some programs over at Zion Baptist and did all kinds of things to try to build a trust level. But we also had these

gatekeepers. I mean, Deane could say a good word for us. There were several others. The Walkers, Louis [C.] and Josetta [O.] Walker, were gatekeepers for us.

TL: Helping make those bridges between the communities?

TS: Yes, exactly. And Felecca Wilson Taylor was one. In part of our preparation before the students went out and did any interviews, we took them down to Lemon Street and started in Old Zion [Heritage Museum of Zion Baptist Church, Marietta]. The Walkers gave them a tour of Old Zion [built in 1888] and talked about all the history of the church and the Black churches of the area. And then we walked as a class down Lemon Street, past Cole Street, Baptist [built 1889-1890], and on down by the housing project [Fort Hill Homes, built in 1941]. A few of the students may have been a little leery about going by a housing project, but you had to walk by the housing project to get to the Hattie Wilson branch library, which was in the old Lemon Street Elementary School, which had not been a school since 1971. It hadn't been used for classrooms, but it was the branch library for the housing project basically…

TL: Right, right.

TS: For the Black community.

TL: So that was the kind of education that students probably were not expecting to get.

TS: Right. I used to go over there way early on just to visit with Hattie Wilson and try to understand things a little bit better. And we've got some great student interviews with Hattie Wilson. [Kathryn A.] Kitty Kelley did one of the interviews with her. We've got all that history there, and Felecca is her daughter. So Felecca met us over there and talked to us about everything. She was a great gatekeeper. And there were some others around the county as well that would be willing to say a good word for us about, "They're okay to talk to." And the students were fabulous in that class. I mean, we did sensitivity training. We had somebody from the conflict management program [Linda M. Johnston] come and do sensitivity training for the class, just to tell them that not everybody thought the same way and how to stay out of trouble in what they said, I guess.

TL: Yes.

TS: So we did all kinds of those background things beyond teaching the course, and I think for a number of the students it was an experience of a lifetime to go through that class.

TL: No doubt.

TS: But it goes back to your question. We had to overcome a lot of doubts about it all. And the more interviews we did, the more people that would say a kind word for us, and at that point, a number of people wanted to be interviewed. Mary [Ward] Cater down in Mableton was one we interviewed, she and just about all of her family, I think [sisters Susanne Henry, Gwendolyn Dillard, and Miriam Culver].

TL: Yes.

TS: They were part of that generation of the integration of the schools…

TL: Right.

TS: In Lindley Middle School and what have you. I think it's Mary Cater who talks in the interview about [white supremacist] J. B. Stoner being there, and Governor Lester Maddox was out protesting in the parking lot the first day she went to school at Lindley Middle School. I guess this was under the freedom of choice plan where her parents had decided for her that she was going to go. And she said she was sitting inside the school room. She didn't even want to be there that day, and here all these people were out there protesting because she was there. So we've got those kinds of interviews that came out of that project.

TL: It's very powerful stuff.

TS: And it was. Then we had a really nice program here. You may remember, right outside the [KSU] Archives where we invited back all the people that…

TL: Celebrating all the people that you all interviewed.

TS: Yes, and a number of the students were here to pass out the [bound copies of the] interviews that they did, and Deane Bonner and state NAACP officials were there.

TL: Yes, that was nice. Well, I wanted to jump ahead a little bit now. In the 1990s a lot happened. In 1994, you won the Distinguished Teaching Award, which sounds like it was a very proud moment.

TS: It was indeed.

TL: You published your first book, *Cornerstones of Georgia History: [Documents That Formed the State*: University of Georgia Press], 1995.

TS: I was an old person by that time. I was 51 years old.

TL: And then Kennesaw State College matured and became a university…

TS: Yes.

TL: All in the 1990s [1996].

TS: And I think that in terms of the progression, at the time we were inclined to say, in becoming a university, "We already are acting like a university. No change." But in fact, it was a huge change. This is really where focus on scholarship became far more than it ever was before.

TL: Right, right. So I want to jump, if you don't mind, to the 2000s…

TS: Yes. But if I could just make one other comment on that.

TL: Oh, yes. Please, please.

TS: When the *Cornerstones of Georgia History* came out, there were very few faculty members who were producing books at that time. So it was a big deal on campus…

TL: Okay.

TS: Just to write a book, I mean, even an edited book because I did a lot of writing for the introductions to those chapters and a lot of documents collection. For the University of Georgia Press, John [C.] Inscoe [professor of history, University of Georgia] was one of my readers. [The other was Lee Formwalt, a professor at the time at Albany State University, who later became executive director of the Organization of American Historians (1999-2009) and after that executive director of the Albany (Georgia) Civil Rights Institute]. They were supposed to be anonymous, but I knew pretty quickly who they were. I could tell from their comments who they were.

TL: Right.

TS: And they fessed up eventually. They were kind in their reviews and made some very positive suggestions too of how to improve the book. But…

TL: Now the *Cornerstones* book is documents that you had used in teaching.

TS: Yes. That's the way it really began, developing these documents for teaching. And I think, quite frankly, it goes back with what you were asking earlier about whether Black people would want to be interviewed or not. I remember the day when we had very few Black students on our campus. And you could bet when you walked in the classroom that you knew where they were going to be seated. They were not going to sit in the front of the room where they had their back to everybody, where everybody was looking at their back. They were going to be over in the corner of the room…

TL: Wow.

TS: If they could possibly find a seat over there where they had a wall at their back because of their insecurity in being in the classroom. Yes. I remember very well early on. I did my best from the beginning, if students had any problems at all to come visit me, and let's talk about it. I remember very well a Black student—this was probably 1968 or 1969, before my leave of absence, right at the beginning of my time here, sitting in my office and very calmly saying, "My parents fear for my life every time I walk on this campus." I never thought about that before. There were never any incidents I was aware of like that. But here are parents who had a long history, who were worried about a teenager being on our campus.

Terri Thomas [Arnold] will tell you this, that she never once thought about getting a job at Kennesaw; that wasn't for Black people. And I forgot who it was that approached her. "They've got jobs there. They're trying to hire Black people. Apply for a job. They're trying to correct their ways." But she'll tell you that for a long time, she never once thought about [working at Kennesaw]. I mean, she thought that was for white people out there. So I knew from the beginning, students didn't want me to get up there and pontificate about anything. You could see Black students just wanting to disappear, crawl into the wall somewhere, when a white professor started talking about slavery in the classroom or segregation, any of that.

And, you know, I would do my best from day one to be as sensitive as possible and include Blacks in American history, not just that they were victims, but they had lives of their own. There are some fabulous books like *Roll, Jordan, Roll:* [*The World the Slaves Made* (Pantheon Books 1974)] by Eugene [D.] Genovese that really talked about Black life and the Black church and how Black churches understood Christianity better than the white churches did. You know, they understood all this stuff about Moses leading the children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt and how it applied to their lifetime. So I tried my best to include all this in my lectures, but I also realized it wasn't working the way I thought it would work. So I thought, well, maybe if people just read the documents, like there are interviews in that Federal Writers Project with formerly enslaved people that are pretty good. There are some that are not so good, but you can at least analyze them.

TL: Right.

TS: What's Georgia Baker [a slave of Confederate vice president Alexander H. Stephens] really thinking when she says this? I mean, you could almost read her mind who she was buttering up by what she was saying and some of the things that she was saying and how it was just the total opposite of what she really believed. Students can figure that out just by reading the document if you give them the document to read, or there were a handful in that collection that are really, really critical of slavery [such as Leh Garrett from Richmond County]. So

let them read some of those things and come to their own conclusion about what slavery was about and what Black people thought about slavery, let alone white people in that period.

Or if you want to know why Georgia seceded from the Union, you don't have to get up and pontificate whether it was slavery or it was states' rights. Let them read what Georgians said at the time when Georgia was having a huge debate over whether to leave the Union. And you had these Unionists around like Alexander H. Stephens. He was racist as all get out and a slaveholder, but he was a Unionist. What did he say? So let him read. They can come to their own conclusion. So that was the purpose of the book—let them figure it out by actually reading what people said at the time.

TL: And that perspective is only strengthened by all the oral histories that you ended up carrying out…

TS: Yes, yes. And I included a bunch of oral histories in the book. But that's how the book came about. I wanted it for my own classroom, but I figured other people could use it too.

TL: Yes, absolutely.

TS: It's still in print.

TL: Yes, that's been nice.

TS: And it has been thirty years now.

TL: That's amazing. Okay. So again, lots happening, and this whole time you've been teaching, you were carrying out oral histories, and you were also working on your next book, the massive Cobb County book, *Cobb County, Georgia and the Origins of the Suburban South: A Twentieth-Century History* [Cobb Landmarks and Historical Society]…

TS: It's for weight training.

TL: Published in 2003, which really is the go-to book for any questions we ever have. And so I know this book maybe started with your dissertation because your dissertation only focused on…

TS: Yes, that would be the 19th century.

TL: Right.

TS: And this book starts in 1900.

TL: And I would imagine that all the oral histories probably informed quite a few things of that book.

TS: Oh, absolutely. And I really want to say in this interview that there were fabulous interviews that students did. I was really impressed with their ability to go out and find people that they wanted to interview and do really good interviews. You want to know what farmers were thinking in the 1930s about these agricultural programs [of the New Deal]? We've got some fabulous student interviews that are talking about what rural life was like in that period and what life was like throughout Georgia history and Cobb County history. So I was able to use a number of those interviews plus term papers that students wrote. For a number of years, the history research class was a local history class. Previously, the department chair taught the course as a 300-level course. And students often hated it, I must say. Then we turned it into a 2275, I think was the number on it. So we dropped it down to not an advanced course, but an introductory course, and made it a local history class.

This again was before the Internet. It's a whole lot easier to do research nowadays than it used to be. It was very, very difficult for, say, somebody who taught Russian history to teach that class and employ their own knowledge. I mean, where do you got to go to find your sources to write something on Russian history? It would be almost impossible locally. But local history when I was teaching that class, we were doing all kinds of field trips. We would go down to the Martin Luther King Center in Atlanta and Randolph Scott, who was the superintendent of the National Park Service on Auburn Avenue, would take the students on a walking tour through the King birth home and all those sites along there. And we would go to the National Archives when it was in East Point, and they would introduce the students to those records. So students knew where to go if they wanted to write a paper using National Archives records. We'd go to the State Archives when it was in downtown Atlanta and get an archivist down there to talk about their holdings. So we would go to all these different places, and we had students out there doing all kinds of work. So I was able to use a lot of that work in the book.

TL: And we're delighted to have those in the Archives as well.

TS: Yes.

TL: Speaking of the Archives, I would now like to ask about the creation of the KSU Archives. As we know, it was not created until 2004, which is exactly when I came on board.

TS: You've been the only one who has been in charge of it.

TL: Could you talk a little bit about the circumstances of its creation and your involvement in that?

TS: Yes. I think Bob Williams deserves a lot of credit for what happened. There were a lot of archival records going into the Bentley Rare Book Room because there wasn't anywhere else to put them at that time. But there were several early collections that I had a role in.

TL: The Atkinson-Floyd, the Blair, the Bowling C. Yates, the McAdoo family papers, and the Treville Lawrence papers?

TS: Yes. Do we have a date on B. C. Yates's papers?

TL: I don't have a date on that.

TS: Was that before you came [in 2004]?

TL: Yes.

TS: Okay, I was thinking it was. All those papers resulted from contacts that I had. What else do you have on your list there?

TL: The ones I was going to ask you about were about the Lawrence collection and the Phil Secrist papers. And the Cobb NAACP collection came about when I was already in the board. I had a major hand in that. I think the Blair, the Atkinson-Floyd, the Bell Aircraft, I can't remember when that came in.

TS: Bell, okay. I can talk about all of those. It was probably in the 1990s [1998] that the Bell Aircraft collection came in. It had to be because the Cobb County book came out in 2003. Which one do you want to start with?

TL: Well, any of them. So people would give you or you would become kind of a community?

TS: Yes, and all the collections have a history of how they came about, how I knew the folks. Let's talk about the Bell collection.

TL: Yes, yes.

TS: Let me think. It was somebody over at Lockheed.

TL: Hugh [M.] Neeson was, I think, the…

TS: Hugh Neeson was the one up in Buffalo [director, Bell Aerospace Operations, Lockheed Martin Tactical Defense Systems].

TL: Right.

TS: But somebody at Lockheed, Brian Johnstone [Director Public Affairs] at Lockheed Martin, was a childhood friend of Kathy's. He called me and said, "They're closing the plant in Buffalo, and they've got all these records up there. Would you like any of them?" And I said, "Sure." And so, next thing I knew, Kathy was all for going up to Buffalo, and we were on a plane flying up to Buffalo. That's where Hugh Neeson comes in. He was closing down the plant. And so, he was instrumental in getting us these records. So we went up there. We toured the [almost empty] plant. We saw all they had and said we would have loved to have these records. And he shipped them to us. I can't remember how they got here, but somebody paid to get them down here.

I did a couple of oral histories up there too. One was with a former president of Bell Aircraft named [William G.] Bill Gisel. We interviewed in his home up there. He had married a local girl [Katherine (Kay) Lee Gisel], secretary to the original general manager of the Bell plant in Marietta and daughter of a Marietta city councilman]. So we've got his story in our collection. At any rate, I did a couple of interviews while I was up there, got to know those folks, and got a ton of their records that were shipped down here, a ton of photographs, I know.

TL: That was the primary collection.

TS: That was a neat collection to get, to say the least. During the pandemic, so it hasn't been that long ago, I had a call from the engineering association up there who wanted me to speak about Bell Aircraft and the Marietta plant to their group. We did it by Zoom.

TL: Wow.

TS: So I still had some contacts up there in relatively recent years.

TL: I have to say for the record that when the Archives was created, the backbone of our job was the university records first and foremost, but then our special collections area was really established by the materials that you had already brought in.

TS: We had some *Bellringer* magazines too [the corporate magazines of Bell Aircraft from 1944 and 1945 featuring the Marietta plant].

TL: Yes, and we used that as the foundation to begin to develop. Again, you're working a community and then bringing these and seeing the value of these records.

TS: The Atkinson collection—Treville Lawrence is associated with that, too. Do you want me to tell that story?

TL: Sure. Or I remember you also mentioned something about the papers we didn't get, the Ernest Barrett papers. Any of those stories. The Lawrence collection is certainly one of the collections we use all the time.

TS: Sure. Again, we got it with help from others. Treville, Robert de Treville Lawrence III, was a fascinating person. He grew up in Marietta. The home he grew up in still stands on Whitlock Avenue in Marietta. His sister, Helen Lawrence Vander Horst, lived there for a number of years after he'd gone away. He got involved in journalism [earning a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism from the University of Georgia in 1937] and did reporting [as Public Relations Officer for the Air Transport Command] during World War II from the Far East [Kunming, China] and was involved for years to come in a lot of important work [in Greece, Vietnam, and South Africa with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United States Information Service (USIS)]. And I don't know how much, if any, he was involved in CIA type things or what have you, but I suspect he might have been involved in a little bit of that too. But he was a world traveler to say the least and knew a whole lot about the Far East.

He lived outside of Washington in an affluent community called The Plains, Virginia. The Plains was horse country. A lot of people had big ranches with horses and whatever. But also it was wine country. He grew grapes, and he made his own wine up there. I've still got some bottles of it. I've never drunk them. He gave me some bottles, and if the Archives ever wants them, they're sitting …

TL: They're aging very nicely.

TS: Yes, they're sitting on a shelf in my house, waiting for the Archives. They ought to be good for a museum display sometime. At any rate, I went up there. Kathy went with me. Our traveling in the old days was we saw the country by going to historical society conventions. Either the AHA [American Historical Association] or OAH [Organization of American Historians] was meeting up in Washington. So we went up there and went out to visit him one day during the convention. He had a beautiful old house that dated back to the 1700s that he lived in. Beautiful old mansion! Well, one of the stories about Treville is that he wanted to build a stone wall around the fields where he was growing his grapes. He would come home from work, and every day he would spend one hour out there laying the stones in place until he had that whole wall built, which I thought told a whole lot about his character that he had that kind of perseverance to do all that.

We had a wonderful day going out to visit with him. The way that I learned about his collection in the first place is that he offered it to the University of Georgia. And John Inscoe, the historian at the University of Georgia who was editor of the *Georgia Historical Quarterly* for a number of years, said, "We'd love to have it, but it really needs to be in Marietta. That's where the Bell plant was. That's where you grew up. That's what a lot of the papers are about." So John called me and said, "Are you interested?" And I said, "Sure." And that's how we found

the papers, and so he gave all the papers to us. I think I did all the cataloging, maybe, of those papers to begin with [in 1996]. I had absolutely no training. Didn't know what I was doing. You probably think it was a lousy job that I did.

TL: No, you knew what you had to do. You had to organize them.

TS: And then the Atkinson, papers…

TL: Atkinson-Floyd.

TS: Atkinson-Floyd, yes. Those are some prominent names in Georgia history. [Treville Lawrence is also our benefactor for these papers. They are his relatives. We have the genealogical connections posted on the Archives website.]

Another small collection, the McAdoo papers, came through another faculty member and founder of Cobb Landmarks, Dr. Florence (Florrie) Fleming Corley]. There's a house out Powder Springs Road, and there's a Kroger store right in front of it. Right behind Kroger, there's a street, and you can see the house from the parking lot of Kroger. It's called the McAdoo House. [and also known historically as Melora]. It's an antebellum House, and William Gibbs McAdoo II, who became the Secretary of the Treasury in the Woodrow Wilson administration, was born there.

His parents were from East Tennessee, from Knoxville and nearby Clinton [where William Gibbs McAdoo I was affiliated with the University of Tennessee, but they refugeed down to Georgia [after Knoxville was occupied by Union troops during the Civil War. Mrs. McAdoo, the mother of the future Secretary of the Treasury, was a Floyd, which explains why they refugeed down to Cobb County]. It was 1863 when he was born. I'm going to say about the Kroger store, the shopping center they are in took all the front yard of the house, but Kroger has some beautiful pictures inside the store, including one of the McAdoo House. At any rate, I cataloged the papers as best I could.

There might have been some students helping with that, but I think I did a lot of the work. For the B. C. Yates papers, Mary Ella Engel played a major role in cataloging the collection. That's how she found out about…Mary Ella went on to get a PhD from the University of Georgia after she left here and was department chair for a while at Western Carolina University—but she wrote a dissertation and book about Mormon missionaries in Northwest Georgia. The title of the book is *Praying with One Eye Open: Mormons and Murder in Nineteenth-Century Appalachian Georgia* (University of Georgia Press 2019). I think I gave a copy to the Archives.

TL: Yes, I think we have that.

TS: Anyway, she found out about this history of the Mormons coming through that area and how they were mistreated when they came through from the B. C. Yates papers when she was cataloging those papers. [She tells the story in the Acknowledgements to her book on p. xi]. So students learn things from these papers that can help with a whole career later on.

TL: That's fantastic.

TS: Phil Secrist, of course, taught here for a while. I've known Phil Secrist as long as I've been in Cobb County. He taught at Southern Poly way back when and then taught here after he'd been commission chair in Cobb County. That was the biggest upset in Cobb County history when he was elected. Everybody thought Earl Smith was going to get reelected, so Earl Smith didn't even campaign. He just wrote off a historian running against him. No chance. And he was out actually campaigning for several district commission candidates. He wanted to keep people who were supporting him on the commission. So he got beat by Phil Secrist. Then Phil lost to [William J.] Bill Byrne the next time around [1992]. After that he taught here for a while and gave us a lot of his papers.

Ernest Barrett papers, one of the commissioners was absolutely opposed to us having them. We actually had the Ernest Barrett papers on campus here. I interviewed his secretary for the project at about this time. I had a student who was cataloging those papers. We were pretty well through, and this particular commissioner just found out about it and went berserk. I don't know whether he was afraid of what might be in these papers or what his problem was. But they went back to un-airconditioned storage, and I guess they're still rotting away in Cobb County to this day.

TL: Oh, my.

TS: But we were going to take good care of them, and like I say, I had a student who was really making good progress until they sent their trucks out and carted them off.

TL: Wow. I wonder if they still are in existence.

TS: Well, maybe we ought to try nowadays with the current commissioners and see if anybody is interested in letting us have those papers. Maybe we have more reputation now that we actually have an archives. And the B. C. Yates papers, his daughter [Julia Yates Maloney] had been in my class at one time [and she donated the papers to KSU in 1998].

TL: Yes. Just a couple of things to wrap up. A lifetime of oral histories and teaching and scholarship. Then your third book, *Kennesaw State University: The First Fifty Years, 1963-2013*, published in 2013 to celebrate our fiftieth anniversary by the KSU Press. Then, of course, in 2015, we had the consolidation happen.

TS: If you look at the timing of all this, I wrote the book, we had a big celebration in October of 2013, which was perfect time because we were chartered on October 9, 1963, and within a month the Board of Regents announced that they were consolidating Southern Poly and Kennesaw together.

TL: Yes, yes.

TS: I should say about oral history that the consolidation got me into action. We went down to Southern Poly and interviewed everybody under the sun.

TL: Right, which is why I wanted to mention that because I know that that was a very difficult time, but yet that opportunity was going to slip by, so…

TS: Yes. I interviewed one dean while he was packing his belongings in his office. He was gone within a week after I interviewed him. Most of them moved on to pretty good jobs. Zvi Szafran, who was vice president of academic affairs [and professor of chemistry, 2005-2014], became president of State University of New York at Canton, a college very much like Southern Poly. He had a regular newsletter, and I got his newsletter for ages after he moved up there. So I used to keep up with that school that he went to.

TL: I know amongst many of the folks at Southern Poly, anyone from KSU was the enemy of the school.

TS: I guess. And sometimes for good reason. But Lisa [A.] Rossbacher: If anybody had a reason to be angry about it all, she did. When we interviewed her, I think she already had the job lined up at [as president of] Humboldt State University. So she moves to another college presidency too. We interviewed her in her office not long before she was going to leave. But she tells a story that she gets invited down to a meeting at the Board of Regents with the chancellor. He doesn't tell her why she's meeting. She comes down there, and according to her account, they chit chatted for five minutes or so, you know, "how's the family? Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah". And then he says, "Okay. I've got some things to tell you. First of all, we're consolidating Kennesaw State and Southern Poly. Secondly, the name is going to be Kennesaw State University. And third, the president is [Daniel S.] Dan Papp. And have a good day." Yes. That's basically it.

That ends the meeting. And I think she deserves as much credit as anybody for making the consolidation work because she put her feelings aside, and she did everything she could to make it as smooth a process as possible. Nobody on that campus knew before the announcement was made. The department chairs got informed the day of, an hour or two before the chancellor made the announcement, and they had to be hot under collar and wondering about their jobs. Ken Harmon [Provost and vice president for academic affairs, 2010-2018] tells me that they were very suspicious about a consolidation on the Kennesaw

campus just from the questions that the chancellor's office was asking about overlapping of programs.

TL: So maybe it was suspected even if it wasn't officially…

TS: They were suspicious. Ken was in a position to know what they were asking. I guess the hint was, "We don't need overlapping programs." You don't need overlapping programs only if you're consolidated together.

TL: Right.

TS: So there were some suspicions, but [President] Dan Papp didn't know until a little bit before. I learned about it while I was at a historical convention. I think I was in St. Louis for the Organization of American Historians, and John Inscoe again said, "Have you heard the news?" And I said, "No, what news?" "You're consolidated with Southern Poly." But I did get some good interviews with leaders at Southern Polytechnic State University. Some students were involved in some of those interviews, especially Kathleen Harper did several of the interviews, and several SPSU students were interviewees (Austin Clayton, Randy Brown, and Daniel R. Silver).

We interviewed [Stephen R.] Steve Cheshier too, who was the first president before Lisa Rossbacher [1980-1997]. You know, Southern Tech was part of Georgia Tech until 1980. Cheshier was president there for seventeen years, and then Lisa Rossbacher until the time of the merger [1998-2014]. Two SPSU faculty members, Laura Beth Daws and Mark K. Stevens, helped arrange a number of interviews and sat in on several of them. So we got some good interviews, I think close to twenty altogether. We had a separate Southern Polytechnic series for a while. But at a certain point, we were one institution, so it didn't make a whole lot of sense to keep them separate. At any rate, it was perfect timing for the consolidation to come after the book was totally out of the way. Then somebody else is going to have to write the consolidated history.

TL: That's right.

TS: As far as I'm concerned, there's still too many painful memories and too many things I can't document. What really happened to Dan Papp, for instance [why was he asked to take early retirement?] And for that matter, I've always been an admirer of [Samuel S.] Sam Olens [president of Kennesaw State University, 2016-2018]. And I just think that he was very naïve [about academic life], and a lot of things happened that shouldn't have happened, but he never had a chance, I don't think. The very fact they didn't do a national search just totally undermined any chance he had of getting faculty support from day one.

TL: Now did you interview him like…

TS: Yes. In fact, the interview that I did with him was about one week before he announced his retirement. [The interview was conducted on December 1, 2017, and the announcement was issued officially on December 14.]

TL: Right.

TS: And my understanding is that he doesn't even mention on his resume that he was ever at Kennesaw State. I mean, it was a very bad experience for him.

TL: Yes, yes.

TS: And all that about the kneeling cheerleaders and what have you. So I really don't think I want to write that history. And I've heard all the conspiracy theories about what happened to Dan Papp and why Sam Olens was chosen as his successor. I've heard them straight from the horse's mouth. You know, some of them. And if I can't prove it or unless Governor [Nathan] Deal fesses up, I don't know how some of these things are going to be proven if they're true.

TL: Right.

TS: And so, somebody else is going to have to write that next history of Kennesaw State.

TL: Right. Well, on that note, I think we've covered pretty much everything I wanted to cover today. I wanted to ask you if there's anything that we have left out that you would like to mention. It's a lot.

TS: I can't think of anything right now. It's been a great career for me to be here, and I'm very appreciative of you and Catherine Lewis for the fact that I've got an office over here [in the Sturgis Library near the Archives] and it's a very nice office. I used to have to, at a certain point, report to Ken Harmon about what I was doing. And I was saying, "I think I better document how much I'm doing." He said, "Is anybody trying to push you out over there?" I said, "No, nobody's trying to, but I think I still need to be doing something to justify my office." And so, I've just been happy that I can keep doing these oral histories and the things that I really like to do.

TL: Well, it's been wonderful to do this interview with you and hear some of the stories I haven't heard before. And also to thank you for all of the years that you have put in and really the foundational role with the University Archives Special Collections and the Bentley. You and Bob Williams probably are the two in terms of collection development and creating what we have. And we're indebted. Absolutely indebted and are very spoiled having you nearby because whenever we don't know anything, we just run across the hallway and ask you, and you fish it out of your memory bank.

TS: Well, I'm spoiled too. I was asking Maggie [Thomas] for help on something today, and she got Andrew [J. Bramlett] involved finding the answer for me while we were down here doing the interview.

TL: Well, thank you. Thank you so much for doing this interview. It's been a pleasure.

TS: You're quite welcome.

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