Henderson, Earl Wallace “Wally”
Interview and memoir
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UIS Alumni Sage Society

Henderson, retired architect, discusses his experiences growing up in Vincennes, Indiana, St. Louis, Missouri, and Springfield, Illinois. In early tapes he focuses on his hobbies of aviation and sketching, his education at the University of Illinois, and his experiences in the United States military. In later tapes he speaks about the architectural offices he worked for and the projects he played a major role in, specifically the Old State Capitol and the Lincoln Home area in downtown Springfield, as well as buildings at the University of Illinois at Springfield. Additionally, he reminisces about his family (wife Brynn) noting specifically his children: Rebecca, Katherine, Kirsten, Earl, and Timothy.

Interview by Cullom Davis, 2011
OPEN
Collateral file
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Appendix


Assignment of Rights for Earl Wallace Henderson, Jr., FAIA – Oral History Collection, Archives/Special Collections, University of Illinois.
Narrator: Wally Henderson  
Date: April 7, 2011  
Place: Wally’s House  
Interviewer: Cullom Davis  
Tape One, Side One

Q. Wally why don’t you say a few things to make sure your voice...

A. Is your tape recorder one of these voice activated type recorders?

Q. It is, but I don’t use that.

A. Oh, really?

Q. Because I don’t want anyone to feel they have to...and I have to introduce each tape so that whoever is working on them can tell. This is an oral history interview with Earl Wallace “Wally” Henderson, On April 7.

A. Junior.

Q. Junior, excuse me.

A. I’m a junior.

Q. I know why you’re called by your middle name because I’m the same thing.

A. Ok.

Q. On April 7, 2011. We’re in Wally’s home and this will be a basically a life history. Let’s begin with that. I take it you were called Wallace or Wally from the outset to save confusion in the family?

A. Yes, I was never Earl. I was always Wallace. When my mother, when she wanted to be very assertive she would come up with Wallace.

Q. Yes, right.

A. Otherwise, it’s Wally.

Q. Yes, ok. So that was just because your father was Earl I take it?

A. That’s correct.

Henderson
Q. Ok. I think that you just said that you were born in 1931?

A. April 5, 1931, which was an Easter Sunday and was born at my Uncle Claude’s residence; he was a minister of the Nazarene Church. My folks were relocating from Chicago to Vincennes, Indiana.

Q. Ok, so that’s where you were born, in Vincennes?

A. No, I was born in Mishawaka, Indiana. Halfway through he had his little congregation up there and I’m told all these things but my mother was always proud to say that the Fitzsimmons, who apparently were big baseball players, their mother was my wet…whatever it is, wet nurse or the lady who was there when I was born.

Q. Your Uncle Claude, that name is with an “E” at the end?

A. I think it was, yes.

Q. He was the minister.

A. Yes, Claude Henderson, Nazarene minister.

Q. So your family was living with him?

A. Oh no, no, they were passing through. This is the depression remember.

Q. Oh yes, of course.

A. My folks had…I was conceived, at least if I have counted, if I counted backwards it has to be in Chicago. They had been there five years, married and then decided that they had to leave Chicago because it wasn’t good times. So they were in transit and stopped at my uncle’s house on the way down.

Q. They were on their way through to Vincennes?

A. Yes.

Q. Where your father had hopes of a job, maybe?

A. That’s where he was raised and his family was down there.

Q. Oh, ok.

A. He came from a family of, I can’t give you exactly the number but I’m going say six, seven or eight along in there some place.
Q. Wow.

A. I think they had a single girl and the others were all boys. So in any event, so he was going down and his family was there and my grandmother and father were still down there, lived there.

Q. So they were a good support system for hard times?

A. As far as I know, yes, oh yes, exactly right.

Q. What sort of work did your father do?

A. He had never finished high school. He was a good mechanic and he also...well I remember when he got to Vincennes, he ended up working on the straw board, which in those days they took hay out of the fields and they made – I don’t know – feed or I don’t know what they did with them. But they made these stacks of or blocks of hay is what they were.

Q. Bales.

A. Bales of hay are what I was trying to say. That’s how we got along at that time. Lived very near a railroad track but in those days, and this is an interesting I think in my life at least. I remember as a little kid living in 1931 everybody didn’t have gas stoves or electric stoves. We had a little wood burning stove in the house we lived in, and we lived right by or near the railroad track. In those days, they had the hobos that rode the rails.

Q. Yes, especially during the depression.

A. Yes and that was a lot of them there. My family, I’m talking now about my aunts and uncles and so forth who were all Southern Indiana, Southern Illinois. My mother was from there and they met when she lived in Bridgeport, Illinois. That was just twenty miles away over the Wabash River to Vincennes. Any event, so straight ahead Southern Illinois hospitality and I guess go back up to that, my mother even was Southern. She was born in Kentucky, Somerset, Kentucky, so she knows some of that southern hospitality type thing.

Q. What was her first name?

A. Lida.

Q. Lida?

A. Lida. L-I-D-A, Middle name Mae, M-A-E, Gibson, G-I-B-S-O-N; she was very proud of the fact that her dad was—they had moved from Somerset, but the Gibson’s in Kentucky were all law type people, chasing the revenuers. Several cousins and so forth were in different towns and she could even tell me at certain times they had a statue quo. They’d shot a couple of them up
or something, but he was the constable, which was the single person in Bridgeport, Illinois who maintained the law.

Q. Interesting.

A. She lived on a site; I mean they didn’t own a house, of course, but down there they were pumping oil in those days.

Q. Yes they were.

A. The house that they built was little with a little berm around the house and pumped oil right in and she had to walk over a plank to get into the house. [laughter] I can’t even imagine what that’s like.

Q. I can’t either. I happen to know Bridgeport.

A. Oh, do you? Ok.

Q. Well, my first wife’s father, who was a wonderful guy and a surgeon in Peoria, grew up in Bridgeport. His mother, named Whittaker, continued living in Bridgeport, so I visited that little town.

A. Really?

Q. Yes, small world.

A. Bridgeport gets back involved in my life in another very interesting way and I’ll explain.

Q. Alright, I’ll make a note of that.

A. Sure.

Q. Ok. So after your birth in Mishawaka, in a hospital or a...

A. No, no my...was whatever...

Q. Your aunt.

A. Whatever they call it. The parson.

Q. Oh, the wet nurse, yes, ok. But you must have been pretty hardy because that was fine and they continued their trip. Did they stay with relatives in Vincennes?

A. No, no we had a house.
Q. You had your own house.

A. Individual house.

Q. But it was on the railroad tracks.

A. Yes, and the reason I remember that so much is that the hobos would come and knock on the back door, they wanted something to eat. We weren’t hobo heaven by a longshot but apparently and there were markings in the old days. My dad is, a matter of fact...when we...and this is...what I’m twelve years old in the next part that I’m telling you now, my dad says, maybe before 1941 so anyway I’m whatever age, ten or so, and he said, “Let’s get in the car. We’re going out and I’m going show you something.”

We drove down one of the roads out of Springfield going east and drove off into the weeds and here were a gang of men trying to keep warm and the whole bit with a coffee pot and a big thing burning and so forth. Everybody’s getting along well. My dad could talk to them back and forth like it was...and he let me go in there and see this. These were people who just couldn’t get a job. It was amazing.

Q. They’d ride the rails for a while.

A. Yes, and they’d say, “See that house, got that mark on it, they treat you well there.” We had a mark on our house my dad told me later on. They’d come off, knock on our door, always courteous. My mother would give them coffee and a sandwich or something.

Q. Did they do a little work for you?

A. Not that I ever remember.

Q. Just give them a little food and go on.

A. It was just a generous thing.

Q. It was.

A. Hospitality, the old southern hospitality.

Q. Yes, exactly. Ok, so you started school in Vincennes?

A. No.

Q. No, you moved.
A. No, my dad, I can’t tell you how long we lived there because I don’t remember; we ended up in St. Louis. My dad was artistic in a sense, but I have no idea where it came from. He could sketch and he learned the Palmer method of writing and he thought he was Dr. Palmer himself because, I mean...

Q. Beautiful.

A. Perfect handwriting and he would always embellish anything. I remember my mother and I would take a trip to some of her relatives who were down in Oklahoma and my dad wrote a letter down to her. It had a lion drawn on the side and all kinds of things that were kind of very artistic, very neat stuff. That impressed me; it always did. He ended up moving, we, all of us, we moved to St. Louis and he became the chief window decorator for F. W. Woolworth.

A. Oh, my gosh.

Q. Their central, regional store. The background on that is, and this is something that again is part of history that nobody even knows what F. W. Woolworth is anymore. It was the five and dime store.

A. Sure, oh I remember, yes.

Q. Downtown in St. Louis they had a square block store. I can’t remember how many windows they had but it was twenty, thirty about. But he was the chief window trimmer; all the windows were designed to have a specific layout; I mean he did the layout. But the little stores, like in Springfield, I think we had five windows in our store when we came to Springfield and there was a five and dime. Any event, he would put together the master design, which they could literally measure and they’d send the photographs to these smaller communities. They didn’t have to have anybody who could do anything other than pick up that piece or thing, and put it in that location. It was interesting because this was the Veiled Prophet Parade you may have heard of that name.

Q. No. Sales...

A. Veiled Prophet...

Q. Oh Veiled Prophet...I sure have, right.

A. This is celebrating the season for marketing and all that kind of stuff. For the parades we would go down and be on the second floor at F. W. Woolworth where nobody was, except where they kept their storage and that kind of stuff. But my dad’s windows, on a couple of occasions, won awards.

Q. Really?
A. Which I mean that was just...he was speechless.

Q. Well, of course, he was a celebrity.

A. Yes and he was in here with no background of any kind other than he was pretty good. He could do it.

Q. Did they tend to be seasonal displays or particular products?

A. Products, always products. I always remember, it’s been so many years but I remember the window, one of them that he won was J & P Coats, which is a thread company.

Q. Of course it is. That’s right.

A. It’s plain with lights, this is where you could put dimmers and so forth and I remember seeing one window that was, was very impressive. Is that you...keeping moths, killing moths or protecting them, and by changing lights you’d see a piece of fabric that had moths on it and all the sudden you change where the light was and the moths disappear.

Q. Disappeared. That was dramatic.

A. It was like using a transformer. Anyway, my dad was...when the war was on, well he ended up wasn’t drafted because he was too old at that point. He was in his forties and they weren’t drafting at that point, but he ended up as one of the supervisors for the air supply base on the fairgrounds.

Q. In Springfield?

A. In Springfield, yes. They took over the fairgrounds completely and all the warehouses, which were weatherproofed and the rails came right into the fairground. In those days because they literally loaded everything to do with aviation, which was the Army Air Corps, it wasn’t the Air Force but he was one of the superintendents and...

Q. So there he was kind of like an inventory person or what do you call that?

A. He was the man, he was chief. All they need, there was just three people, but he was one of them. He knew the organization, got that from five and dime store. He knew how to organize things and store them and bring them out. Yes, they were trying to advance them in that and with my mother in by this time, which we’ll, I don’t know if you want to get to my mother yet or not.

Q. We will, we will.
A. Our time in St. Louis was great fun at that point. We lived [laughs] the address is, well it was, because it isn’t there anymore, 4127 DeTonty, D-E-T-O-N-T-Y, “D” with a lowercase “E” Tonty, which was the east end of the Hill. We lived in a quadruplex. The one on…we were on the ground floor and the adjacent one to us was an Italian family. Nobody spoke any English. They’d get into fights and the kids were older than I was; I was a little kid, hadn’t gone to school yet because my first school was Mullanphy Grade School. I think I went to kindergarten at Mullanphy.

Q. Mullanphy in St. Louis?

A. In St. Louis, which, well it’s very close to, in those days they called Shaw’s Garden, but now it’s Missouri Botanical Garden. But that little park there...

Q. Yes, I know it.

A. That’s where I learned my colors. My dad would take me out and they had colored lights on the water and he taught me that’s a red light, that’s a blue light, and so forth. My dad was creative.

Q. He really was.

A. When he, when we were in Springfield the time the war was going on, he decided that because they were saying that they didn’t have a Norden bombsight perfected at that point he decided he was going to design a bomb site. [laughter] He made kinds of drawings. He also was a believer in lighter than air. He said instead of cars we can do the same thing.

Q. So he thought ahead?

A. He made sketches. That’s the other interesting thing is…I mean he would draw, he drew but he wasn’t taught to draw; he just did it, and it was good stuff.

Q. Did it tend to be architectural like; was that what he was good at? Lines and...

A. He could do anything.

Q. Not sketches of people though?

A. No he never took on…well he took on animals but really he rather live action type stuff. If he had a picture, he could draw that as well.

Q. That is remarkable. So, he developed a real career and a reasonably rewarding one out of the dust of the depression unemployment.
A. Well, you see what we don’t understand, and this was when they trained in the army, even as late as 1941, some people when you got from some of the southern states, or West Virginia there, they tied straw on one leg and hay on the other, and if...hay foot, straw foot, hay foot... not left, right, left, right.

Q. Hay foot, straw foot. [laughs]

A. But it was an educational type thing. So my dad quitting school, he quit simply because somebody had to help. But he did have a [laughs] I can’t...it always sounds like so much B. S. when I tell things like this but he had his own orchestra. [laughter] He also knew, Walt, not Tom, but Red Skelton, Red Skelton.

Q. Oh, Red Skelton. Red Skelton, of course.

A. Red Skelton was from Indiana. Dad had his own band, and we had instruments in our house in Illinois, I don’t really remember in Missouri. We were there until 1938 and I can’t remember when we came over from Vincennes but we lived there for...well we eventually got started and we migrated this direction.

Any event, my mother ended up with a job because the state democratic chairwoman was Blanche Fritz who happened to be...I mean she was state, she was the number one lady in the state, who happened to be her Sunday school teacher in Bridgeport, Illinois. [laughter] We had to get things worked out there and she got a job. My dad came and he didn’t have a job but the war just got started so...

Q. So she was able to work for the family and make some money.

A. For a little while.

Q. Some kind of local political government job.

A. Sure, she worked for the Secretary of State.

Q. Oh Secretary of State, of course.

A. For a hundred dollars a month and they kept that salary for years and years. Then even change in administration was a hundred dollar a month stop, but she worked there for thirty-some years I think it was.

Q. My heavens.

A. My dad, when he came from St. Louis, he didn’t go into the five and dime he went to an auto mechanic. He took cars apart and put them back together there.
Q. Isn’t that amazing.

A. I mean he had more talents that...what I tell it...I’ve always been extraordinarily surprised and proud of him, but he was quiet guy and my mother was feisty. I mean she would take on anybody that wanted to get at, not in an insulting way.

Q. No, of course.

A. She just didn’t take anything.

Q. She had a mind of her own.

A. My dad always, because he didn’t have a high school education, always got a little sensitive when I went to school and it was father’s day weekend. He said, “Well I don’t know if I’ll fit in there.” I said, “I’m the president of the fraternity, you’ve got to fit in there. They got to let you fit in.” I mean but it...

Q. He was that way. I understand that.

A. I was the fortune generation to the point that they hoped they could get me two years of college. That’s what they thought. Of course when I reached that point which I ended up...well I...I used to, when I was little kid, my mother insisted I be a Cub Scout. She was the Den Mother, and from the Cub Scouts of course you got to be a Boy Scout.

Q. A Boy Scout, right.

A. When I was a Cub Scout, this had to come from my dad because I can’t account for it any other way. We lived over on Seventh Street and as a little kid I could walk and take a nickel and go to south movie theater and see Flash Gordon.

Q. Oh, of course.

A. Now Flash Gordon wasn’t “Flash” in what were used to that term meaning now but it was this rocket ship guy.


A. Yes, yes. I ended up learning to be able to draw rocket ships. I’d go to a Cub Scout meeting and all the other little kids would say, “Draw me a rocket ship, draw me a rocket ship.” So I was sort of identified as the Flash Gordon artist in our little Cubs group. But from there I got interested in aviation, and so I did ok in high school.

Q. Let’s pause a minute here because this is fabulous and I want you to keep your train of thinking. But I want to back up a little bit on a few topics that we have covered.
A. Sure.

Q. In your younger years, you’ve talked about your schooling. Were you an athlete in grade school or high school?

A. Not in grade school, in fact I was a little shy. My dad, by the way...going back to my dad, I have to do this because he was a first baseman baseball player – sort of like a semipro thing but got spiked and permanently disabled on that thing. I think he had high hopes for me, and so he taught me how to catch but I couldn’t hit. I couldn’t hit if you put it on a stick.

When I was in grade school, which was Hay-Edwards, we played sandlot ball. When it came to choosing baseball player or softball player, I wasn’t first by a long shot but at least I was on a team. But I’d play in the outfield and I could catch the ball and then I’d say, “Does somebody else want to bat for me?” That was the way I played softball, but I did play football in high school.

Q. You did?

A. Yes. I don’t know why because I didn’t know anybody who played football.

Q. This was at Springfield High School?

A. Yes.

Q. You played a back or a lineman?

A. Lineman, left guard.

Q. Makes sense.

A. Got three years of lettering and my freshman year...

Q. So you were a pretty good athlete?

A. Yes, I thought so until I ripped my leg off me and that slowed me down.

Q. You mentioned Boy Scouts, I was going to ask you about that. What about summers between school years? Did the family travel, particularly when you were a young child, or did you work on the farm or did you just?

A. We never lived in any agriculture. Of course we visited back and forth to Vincennes and St. Louis. We may have even taken a few trips, I can’t remember. We stayed in touch with my Uncle Claude; he continued as a minister. Then we had an Uncle Ralph who was up in Baraboo,
Wisconsin, and we visited up there occasionally. Apparently my dad had an uncle, a brother Leo who was, my mother always would say an aside, not with my dad there, “You’re dad changed when Uncle Leo died,” before I was born, but they were still dating, my mother and dad, “was killed down on a country road.” It was a highway then, but we’d call it a country road today, “when a Greyhound bus lost control and he pulled his car off to the side and the bus hit right through there and the steering wheel went through his hands.” My dad was never the same because apparently these two guys were as close as you can get.

My uncle Leo was one of these clowns that the Wabash River was always sort of a stomping grounds for them. They’d dive off the bridge into the Wabash River. Stories they told...now my grandmother actually rode across the river in a flood because you had to do that to get to whatever was going on there. The big trick was you also patrolled the river because those people from Illinois would come over and well-up your side of the river to drain... to take the pressure off their side.

Q. In flood time.

A. Yes, yes. So those are the quick family inserts, didn’t mean to interrupt.

Q. No, that’s great stuff. What about in your immediate family, religious practices? Did you go to church?

A. Yes, my mother was Methodist and I went to Methodist Sunday school religiously; she had me baptized. My dad didn’t belong to any church at all. When my Uncle Claude would come and visit us, he didn’t preach to us in anyway at all, but the Nazarene’s are an evangelical group. In those days, and I think it’s probably still the same, jewelry was forbidden, make-up was forbidden, dancing was forbidden.

Q. Alcohol was certainly forbidden.

A. Oh, yes, Lord yes and which, this is really an important statement that I’m making now, we didn’t have any alcohol in our house. Well, I’ll take it back, I mean in other words, there wasn’t any beer in the refrigerator or anything else, but we had probably a bottle of whiskey of some kind, big bottle that lasted my whole life until I went away to the fraternity house.

But they would have what they called what was really just adventuresome but it’s a celebration on New Year’s Eve. They would have a whiskey high ball which to them was Coca-Cola and a little stronger stuff. I mean that was daring. But no, we had no alcohol in the house. Then I go off to the fraternity house and think, how are my fraternity brothers going to think about it? Well, we still didn’t have any alcohol.

Q. Oh, really?
A. No, it took me to go out and move out on my own and that was different. No, we just, that was the family. But you’re asking about the religion part of it. But the Methodists didn’t believe in alcohol either but they just weren’t this thing about...

Q. They weren’t too fanatical.

A. Yes, right. When I got to be 12 years-old, for some reason I decided that I wanted to pick a church, which sounds a little crazy but I wanted to. They said fine go, but I never went to a Catholic church of any kind, never went to a Jewish temple, but I went to Protestant churches. I went to seven or eight of them here in Springfield, and contrary to what everybody else ever did, I would always sit in the front row, which nobody sits in the front row.

Q. No, of course not.

A. I didn’t know that but I was 12 years-old and just thought somebody was going to join me, but I know now differently. But so I really experienced the churches, and it was a combination of conveniences I suppose, I ended up joining Westminster. But let’s see, at 12 I guess I was in the Boy Scouts.

Q. Was it then that handsome building that it is now?

A. Oh yes, oh yes. They hadn’t put that little second...

Q. Yes, right.

A. On whatever that street is behind it.

Q. It still had the...

A. Oh, yes, that was built back in the 1920s by a famous New York architect. In fact, it’s still carried as the church beautiful. They just celebrated, I said twenties, no they just celebrated 175th year of the church in Springfield but not that building.

Q. Not that building.

A. I think they celebrated 100 or 75.

Q. Close to there. But you liked that church?

A. Well, I liked the minister but also I lived on Edwards Street, and it was three or four blocks up the street from me. I visited the Christian churches, Baptists churches, Lutheran churches, and this one’s without a doubt…but my Boy Scout troop, I don’t remember when I joined the Boy Scouts before then or since then but I’d been a Cub Scout but they didn’t have a Cub Scout at Westminster. But they had Troop 11, I belonged to that.
Q. Which was part of Westminster?

A. Yes, yes, unfortunately they don’t have the troop any longer, but I thought it was a good thing for the church and it was a good for me.

Q. How far did you advance in the Boy Scouts?

A. [laughs] One of these things I always regretted. I ended up as a life scout with 21 merit badges. I did not have life-saving and could not qualify for Eagle. I don’t know why I didn’t have life-saving other than it’s, we didn’t have access...my dad taught me to learn to swim at the YMCA that was right next to the Presbyterian Church downtown. My dad would take me down there and taught me to swim but the life-saving thing I never got.

Q. Yes, took a little more than just basically knowing how to swim.

A. Yes, yes, of course.

Q. Yes, my, had an identical experience. I loved scouting until I discovered girls. But while I was in scouting I was a life but for some reason the bird-watching, the bird identification which for some reason I had to have and that was my excuse.

A. Oh really?

Q. So we’re, we’re in a similar situation.

A. Well it’s funny; I’ll also add too, I lost my interest in scouting and a lot of other things when I got playing football. My freshman year I remember going to the first dance all the football players, we didn’t know what to wear. You had to put your arm around a girl? Oh my goodness. This was really...

Q. Special.

A. Oh yes. We talked about it to ourselves. Oh, how do you hold a girl? [laughs]

Q. Yes, right, yes.

A. My freshman year the last game of the season of course, I guess, I was playing center as a freshman so it means you’re in the backup as a linebacker during, on the defense. Somebody got loose on the other team, over in Hillsboro, last game of the season was Hillsboro, and I took off after the guy. I was playing linebacker because I was the center, I was oh whatever side it was, anyway, caught up with the guy and got a hold of his shoulder pads right at the neck and brought him down and ended up breaking my right wrist.
Q. Oh, gosh.

A. Now you got to remember this is 1945 and the war had just finished but when they took me to the hospital the jersey had to come off, not cut it off, like today they cut the sleeve off or something. My arm was going...it was a different ballgame.

Q. Excruciating.

A. But from there, but to produce what you just said about the girls because now I’m going to class with a sling on and got my forty-niner or whatever it was you get as a freshman, with my sling.

Q. You were a hero.

A. Oh my goodness, oh my goodness.

Q. Became a chick magnet.

A. Or at least I thought I was, right? [laughter] But that, now I know I wasn’t about to quit football. She thought that would end my interest in football but it just built it up. But I went on through but the first game of the last year and I was started the other years, or at least certainly my junior and senior year. I think I was a starter as a sophomore, too. In any event, maybe it was Hillsboro, no Hillsboro’s the game I’m telling you about now.

It was my senior year and this particular date I’m playing guard. But I got into a pileup, and people were down below me and my leg was hanging out. Somebody jumped on it from Hillsboro and tore the cartilage in my knee. That one really did me in. I didn’t have the operation on it, but I wore a brace the rest of the time and played just enough to make a letter.

Q. That’s too bad. That essentially ended your football career.

A. Oh yes, well I weighed 150 pounds and was five foot eight. Well, I don’t know where I played. I played at a junior kid’s league or something with some of these big monsters in there but I held my own at the time.

Q. Sure. Did you have hobbies as a young boy?

A. Yes. Well, I say now this is a natural take-off again, maybe. I met Homer McLaren, who was from Springfield.

Q. That name is familiar.
A. I can’t remember the other gentlemen’s name, I want to say Rhodes was his last name, anyway, the three of us would pal around together and we liked model airplanes. I also have memories from St. Louis of my dad taking me out to the airport, Lambert Field.

Q. Lambert Field, sure.

A. Always on the Fourth of July, and I’ll always remember this, the swastika, because the Germans were big in aviation and they had a glider pilot, or some damn thing out there. I always remember the swastika. I mean this was a terrifying thing to a little kid.

Q. Sure.

A. I mean whoa, what is that? But it bored in my mind and they flew them at night, too, and have that spotlight on this thing and we were out there. Me and my dad would bring the car right up to the gate. But I was crazy about aviation. So when I came...

Q. Did you build models?

A. Yes I had little balsawood.

Q. Balsawood and glue.

A. Did you ever do that?

Q. Of course.

A. I mean we got the three of us, we could build because we could build. It’s the only way to say it, and you could build these things for a dime. They had all the things, you had to cut them out we had all the equipment to cut them out and just glue them together and put the paper on there. By the end of the day, and I know when 206 West Edwards and 410 West Edwards both of them had second stories.

We rented one on 206 West Edwards...I guess we, yes I guess we rented the upstairs out as an apartment. We didn’t own the house but that’s how you get rid of that second story. Any event, we’d go on the back porch and with rubber-bands, because that was the engine and set the tails on fire and fly these things out. I mean just destroy them after we spent all that time making them.

Q. But it was worth it; you were experimenting.

A. I love it but what it also taught me, and I try to tell this to kids these days, I could read the blueprint. I used a blueprint, not technical like a building, but all the sudden they mark an “A” this sheet, it was “A” on that sheet and relate it and get those things on. So that was, I think, a very important element. But we also sketched, I continued to sketch things and it turns out
that Rhodes, I think it was Rhodes, or McLaren, one or the other ended up working for Disney. I mean all three of us sketched, too.

Q. Isn’t that something?

A. He worked literally in Disney in California.

Q. My god. Now your sketches, were they pencil, pen? Did you use color ever?

A. They would always be pen. I mean not pen, always pencil; I know that. I don’t remember, to be honest with you. I think I saw one that was done in crayon that would be way back when because you don’t use crayon except to bother somebody. [laughs]

Q. [laughs] That’s right. So this was a consuming hobby? The building of model airplanes.

A. Yes, oh yes. I did that in fact, I finally got into the gas thing but never flying them. I ended up having building models and of course models go into architecture and we could build...as a matter of fact, one of the key things when we opened up Ferry and Henderson Architects, nobody...when we opened up we had this, you might have read it, we were egotistical enough, or at least I was, to say we’re not competing with anybody. We’re getting in to bringing architecture to Springfield because it was pretty dull. But one of our competitive things was that we built models, which nobody else was building a model.

Q. They weren’t bothering with a model?

A. No. We figured and then we were exactly right because right now...well of course the architecture has changed a lot in the last twenty years. But everybody in town started to copy our models. Not only copying, he would use right down to the same materials, would use the same colors. I taught them because they...you had to read that and someplace I’ve written it down, that when we opened up there were a dozen architectural firms.

Q. Yes, right.

A. Thirteen.

Q. Long-standing, but you’re right, pretty conventional.

A. Oh, absolutely. Bryant Hadley was the, Hadley & Worthington, the architects, the old-timers, a lot of respect. Bryant Hadley happened to go to Westminster and Worthington was Catholic and that was their religion. But we came in and opened with this model type stuff and wow, this is amazing.

Q. Plus both partners had architectural engineering backgrounds.
A. Absolutely, that’s exactly right.

Q. Yes, I read that.

A. You see we also did models in college at the university except that...well in the office I did with Bill Muchow, that was a turning point in my life. That’s when I was with Bill Muchow.

Q. Yes, yes we’re going to come to him. [laughter]

A. He’s not Chinese, it’s German. Any event, so the thing that’s sort of unnatural and maybe I ought to give a little credit to Hay-Edwards grade school and art teacher. Her name was Claire Nelson.

Q. Alright.

A. Miss Nelson took me aside time and again and said...she might have used the term architecture. I didn’t know it. I’m just a little kid.

Q. Who knew what that meant?

A. But it turns out that Claire Nelson, who was single when she was at Hay-Edwards Grade School turns up marrying Bill Roe, who was the, R-O-E-G-L-I-G-H, how about? Bill Roe, was the football coach at Springfield High School.

Q. Oh my gosh.

A. So, I mean I seriously believe that...and they got married sometime, when, I don’t know, she was always Miss Nelson to me, but when they got married I end up over there and I think she was probably speaking nicely of me. I didn’t deserve it. I didn’t know a football from a grapefruit when I went over there, but I mean pretty soon I am playing on it.

Q. In remember in grade school taking a short course, it was part of the curriculum, in mechanical drawing. Mostly it was learning how to do the proper block printing more than actual sketches but I loved it. [coughing] I loved that sort of thing. I don’t know whether that was part of your grade school curriculum.

A. Not in grade school. You could get mechanical drawing in high school [coughs] and there was a whole course in electrical, how you could wire things up and that kind of thing. So, I knew what a T-square was and a few things but not [inaudible 39:05] at all.

Q. So you, in retrospect, can look back on these interests of yours and encouragements as pointing you long before you ever consciously knew it, toward a career in architecture.

A. Yes, but we had to make a quick right turn before we got to that point.
Q. Yes.

A. But yes, I was nutty about airplanes. When I finally get the chance, I graduate from high school. Oh, by the way, in those days we had graduating classes in mid-year, too.

Q. Yes, right.

A. So I graduated January 1949. I stuck around because I wanted to learn a little bit more about transistors and so I sort of took a graduate course in high school in transistors. So I learned how to build radios.

Q. That was another interest? You weren’t interested in hand radios were you?

A. Well I could’ve been.

Q. But you weren’t. You liked to build radios.

A. I was always interested in electricity and so I finally...but this was back in the days when it was tubes.

Q. Oh, was it ever?

A. I said something to somebody the other day. My dad could fix that, too. That’s amazing. He would come in not knowing a damn thing about a radio and start tinkering with it and make this thing work. He was a blessing to me because he made me believe that anything you think you can do, you can do.

In fact, I passed out a little handout that we’ll talk on another day about, about confidence that I’ve given so many people. It’s a good poem about “If you think you are beaten, you are. If you dare not, you don’t. If you’d like to win, but you think you can’t, it is almost certain you won’t,” and it goes on from there.

Q. Yes, it’s about determination.

A. Yes, you just lock into it, and I really believe that. It’s proven. If you don’t think you can beat them, you can’t beat them, that is all.

Q. That’s right.

A. The other guy thinks if he can beat you, he’s going to do it to you.

Q. Of course, yes. So you had a competitive streak, too?
A. Yes, yes, yes I guess so. I can’t really, I don’t know where it came from because again as I say my dad was very soft-spoken.

Q. But he sure worked hard to find a career that could feed the family, it seems. Maybe I’m mistaken.

A. Oh yes, yes, yes, yes he did. Well in those days I guess every...well like I say when he took me out on that road, and at this point he’s working as a mechanic. But he wanted me to see this. They were guys that were healthy people, nice guys, nothing wrong with them at all because everybody was...I think what he wanted to say was if they tell you somebody’s a bum, it doesn’t mean he’s a no-good. A bum in those was a guy who rode the rails. But anyway, it gave me a lot of respect for a lot of things, and I have a couple of turning points like that, that you learn things. I learned more with the Army.

Q. Yes and I want to get to that. But I don’t want to overlook the fact that while you were in grade school and high school the big war was underway.

A. Yes sir.

Q. How did that affect you? You said your father didn’t serve directly, but he did help out at the camp here, Camp Lincoln?

A. No, no, no. It wasn’t Camp Lincoln.

Q. Oh, at the fairgrounds.

A. Depot. This was an Army Air Corp Depot, which was one of the big ones. As a matter of fact, when there was a period for, I want to say a period of two weeks when my dad literally did not come home from the fairgrounds because they had orders to ship out these crates, and he couldn’t discuss what it was. He was also, what he, as a manager he, [laughs] I can’t even remember the name of the thing but it always...he always had to fill out a form that was an insurance company, somebody would...insurance company. I never understood it. It was the CIA. [laughter] I mean they...

Q. Then called the OSS but, yes.

A. But you had a letterhead and everything and there was this, well I just got this report and he was writing. They expected it and you turned it in every week. He was one of the, whatever the officer was.

Q. You think they were mostly shipping products from Springfield, like from Sangamo Electric?

A. No, no, no, no, no. This was a storage base.
Q. Oh, ok.

A. When that two week period...

Q. Quartermaster.

A. Yes, exactly right. As a matter of fact, I went out with him, I learned to drive. He had his Jeep and when I was 11 years old I’m out there driving a Jeep for my dad. It was an old stick shift, a real live Jeep. But all those buildings were full right to the rafters with crates and all kinds of things, which were all ready for shipping and this was...and trains would come in. There was a lot of action out there. The only people who were stationed in the military out here were Chinese. The Chinese I remember seeing them on the streets on Sundays. I never saw them at that base, I think they were at Camp Lincoln but the depot was all men too old to work, to be in the service.

Q. Interesting.

A. But that two weeks, they loaded these boxes out here, and two weeks later they landed in Normandy. I mean these crates were full of gliders. My dad told me that later on.

Q. Full of what?

A. Gliders.

Q. Oh gliders, they were disassembled gliders.

A. Oh yes, they had the wings and all that in there.

Q. Well they must have been parts...well this was a place where parts were shipped to Springfield and then they assembled them and boxed them and shipped them overseas.

A. I never got into know what all the details were, but I knew they left here ready to go someplace. But that was, of course, we hadn’t named the landing yet, and so you couldn’t forecast that. My dad didn’t come home and say that something was up. When they headed to Normandy that was it, the gliders were over.

Q. Now were you, other than through your father’s work, engaged in any hobbies or interests or volunteer work during the war effort? Collecting tin cans or anything like that, do you remember, for the school?

A. No. In the very beginning I sold Liberty Magazine though.

Q. Ok.
A. The *Liberty Magazine* sold for a nickel. Just on the site job training, I remember going to a lady’s house, right on the block where I lived at 410 West Edwards. It was an older big house set on the other side of the street and down a little bit. I knocked on her door, and the elderly lady answered. I said, “Would you like to buy a magazine?” She said “No,” and something, and I said “Well thank you anyway.” I turned and walked away, and I put my magazine in my bag. She said “What did you just say?” I said, “I said well thank you anyway.” She said “Come here give me that magazine, I’ll buy that magazine.”

Q. Just because you were so polite.

A. Exactly right. I mean that was one of those…I learned something.

Q. Bingo.

A. The lady’s name was Mrs. Pasfield.

Q. [laughs] Oh my heavens.

A. I didn’t know who Pasfield was. Steve Barthoff, who is a Pasfield, is a dear friend of mine and he said yes that’s his aunt or grandma or something.

Q. We have got to stop a minute here to change the tape.

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE

47:05
Q. An oral history interview with Wally Henderson on April 7, 2011. Before we turn to your college years, two things I need to wrap up. I neglected to ask you whether you had any siblings.

A. No, I’m an only child.

Q. You’re an only child.

A. Depression had an effect on me.

Q. In fact I was, too. That had a way of controlling families for a while.

A. Thank goodness. If you can’t afford them, you don’t have them.

Q. That’s right, exactly. Ok, that settles that easily. I do want though to ask a few more questions about your high school years here in Springfield. Were there any special friends or teachers other than that football coach you mentioned who have stood out in your life as long-lasting relationships?

A. Boy...

Q. You know them all. You probably were very popular.

A. Well, I never thought... the football team sort of hung out together. They did have a thing they called the six period gym, which all it was was the guys got together. In those days the women didn’t have the same luxury of sports. But no, there were certain friends that I did hang out with. I can’t pull them out of the air, these are miscellaneous names: Bill Farley comes to my mind, Bob Bramlet comes to my mind, certainly Joe Gibbs.

Q. Oh sure.

A. Yes, Joe and I still hang out together.

Q. Do you? How is he? I haven’t seen him.

A. He’s in and out of Florida.
Q. Yes, of course, right.
A. Ron Thunman.

Q. Yes, of course. Were you classmates?
A. Oh yes, oh yes.

Q. The second one you mentioned was Bob someone.
A. Bramlet.

Q. Sure I can spell that, ok.
A. I’m not putting them in order of preference. Did I say Bill Farley to you?
Q. You did, first one.
A. Yes, these were all on the football team.

Q. Ok. You were real pals? Were your neighbors at all? Did they live in your neighborhood?
A. No, we were pretty much scattered around. I lived close to the high school.

Q. Yes you did. But you lived in a pretty nice, middle-class, residential neighborhood.
A. Oh yes, oh yes.

Q. It was a two-story house.
A. As I explained to an 11 year old in Korea, ten blocks from Lincoln’s home. It wasn’t exactly too shabby though. Lincoln’s home neighborhood wasn’t too...was shabby.

Q. It was shabby in those days.
A. You bet.

Q. It sure was. But you said your parents rented that house?
A. Rented that house. The one on 206 West Edwards and the war ended and everything started to move along. We ended up moving two blocks further west to 410 West Edwards.

Q. Ten West Edwards.
A. 410 West Edwards.

Q. That you bought or your parents bought.

A. My folks bought it.

Q. Ok.

A. They converted the upstairs to apartments, two apartments, which was...and the reason we were that close to the state capitol is...again when we moved there, again, you didn’t have two cars and all this kind of stuff. My mother didn’t want to take the bus and all this, so she said I want to live...when we first came we lived out on, everything was built around their only son. Because Stuart School was thought to be a real good school, we ended up at the 1100 block of South Seventh Street.

Q. Ok.

A. Which was very close to Stuart School.

Q. Of course it was.

A. But we lived in one of the apartments upstairs. My mother again had to get back and forth; she was the bread maker at that time. So we ended up first of all moving, and 206 is right at Spring and Edwards.

Q. Yes, that couldn’t be more convenient.

A. No, you could just walk right there. My mother who also was the den mother, she took us on top of the Howlett Building, nobody got up there. She got permission to take her Cub Scouts to the roof, so we could get a good look at the state capital. Now she went all out. She wasn’t going to be just a den mother; she was going to be something else.

Q. She was something.

A. Sure, and then we moved down to 410 West Edwards.

Q. Still close enough for her to walk.

A. Oh sure, sure. That was a good location and we took off from there.

Q. It wasn’t inconvenient for your father, but the point is it meant you were very convenient for you to go to high school.

A. Oh sure. Sure I could get there.
Q. So that meant, I’m sorry what was your final grade school was before high school?
A. Hay-Edwards.

Q. You mentioned that.
A. Which was the back door of my house practically; over on Lawrence, it’s Lawrence, Cook, and Edwards, two blocks.

Q. Didn’t that legendary woman who knew Vachel Lindsay live in that neighborhood?
A. No, but I had her...

Q. She was the caretaker of the Lindsay home, remember? She was a real character.
A. I think you’re talking about...we named a school after her.

Q. Well no, not that one. But I know who you mean and I can’t think of her name. Susan.
A. You’re talking about Susan Wilcox right there.

Q. No, it was a later one. When they opened the Vachel Lindsay home to visitors, she used to be kind of the curator there.
A. Ok.

Q. It was a strict old English school teacher like many of them were at Springfield High School that had a reputation for excellent English...it doesn’t matter.
A. Oh yes, the one. This is awful because I mean, I swear to goodness she taught, she really taught me something. What I’m trying to remember and now this is awful. I’ll call you later.

Q. As soon as you leave, or call at 3 o’clock this morning.
A. Yes I will because it’s impossible I could forget her name.

Q. Was there any other teachers by name who made an impression? You didn’t take mechanical drawing I guess.
A. Oh yes, that was...that name is out of me at this moment too, sorry.

Q. It’s alright.
A. I did have an interesting, Bill Schnirring, who you know here in Springfield.
Q. Of course.

A. It used to be his sister; he went to Hay-Edwards at the same time I did, used to be his sister we would go to the same church with, Westminster. Anyway, he ran into Miss Bartels which...

Q. Miss Bartels.

A. Who was a grade school teacher. I think that’s right, yes. Anyway, Miss Bartels, after all these years, I ran into her in St. Louis. She had gotten married but she was Miss Bartels in those days. Anyway, her background, what she did was amazing; hooking up with people in Washington, D.C. and all that stuff. But it was a name I always remembered. You have other people you remembered. I liked the math teachers.

Q. You did?

A. I really did.

Q. Well, you were good in math by then.

A. Well, yes. And Beulah B. Bareck.

Q. Beulah Varick?

A. Beulah B. Bareck, otherwise known to us as “B cubed.” [laughter] She was a math teacher, and there was a Miss McNutt, who at Hay-Edwards Grade School was a librarian I think she was. I am kind of getting my schools mixed up now.

Q. No, I understand, right.

A. But those names stick with me. I want to say that I was in the music room with Miss Sutton and I’ll be right on this, at Hay-Edwards Grade School when I was at Hay-Edwards and they brought us into the music room so we could hear Franklin Roosevelt declare war on Japan. I remember that distinctly. But it wasn’t a television set.

Q. Of course not.

A. It was a radio.

Q. The day that will live in infamy.

A. That’s right, that’s right.
Q. Where were you when the war ended in August or September of 1945? You were still in high school, weren’t you?

A. Well, let me think.

Q. You were just starting high school.

A. Yes, it was 19...

Q. 1945?

A. 1945. Let me go to where I was when the war started. It was a Sunday, here in Springfield. My mother was at work in the Secretary of State’s office.

Q. On a Sunday?

A. On a Sunday, working overtime. There were no unions, no nothing. [laughter] But they had to get the work out. So I’m at home with my dad and, of course, they had decided that we needed an army bank out there then. He was a mechanic so he helped. My mother called us up on the phone because there was a little hand-held thing and said that the Japanese had just bombed Pearl Harbor. Nobody knew where Pearl Harbor was. I mean they didn’t know in the Secretary of State’s Office; we’d never heard of Pearl Harbor. That was bizarre.

Q. So, you remember that directly?

A. Everybody’s looking for a map. Show us, tell us where Pearl Harbor is. Where’s the Hawaiian Islands? [laughter] We knew there were islands but we didn’t...

Q. Didn’t have any idea how far they were.

A. No, no, no.

Q. That’s funny.

A. When the war ended, I remember going downtown with my bicycle, and it was nighttime. I remember we had, there were, I think there were seven or eight movie theaters downtown. I remember getting on Monroe Street where the old Senate Theater used to be and everybody yelping and screaming and all that kind of stuff. It was just a big turnout.

Q. I remember that too as a kid. I’m a little younger than you but it was a major emporium when I grew up. It was a major downtown, kind of spontaneous crowd.

A. Will you?
Q. Oh sure.

[tape paused]

Q. I think we’ve covered high school. Let me see, did you win any awards?

A. I was class president, senior class president.

Q. My heavens.

A. It’s funny because I was looking up some material for preparation of this and somebody had sent me a program from my graduation and the speaker, Wallace Henderson, class president. [laughs] I had to laugh.

Q. Good for you.

A. I hadn’t seen that thing in how long – 50, 60 years.

Q. You were very popular. It was a popularity contest essentially, wasn’t it?

A. I didn’t have any bankroll to pay anybody off.

Q. No, I meant, that’s right. The job description was a little petty, but you were a very popular student, obviously.

A. I got along fine, I think.

Q. Now your parents had hoped that you could go to college for maybe a couple of years.

A. That’s right.

Q. Of course, finishing high school itself was a significant achievement within your family.

A. That’s correct. Now my mother did graduate from high school.

Q. She had? Ok. Did you consider schools other than Illinois?

A. No, nobody I knew had been to college so we’ll take it. My friends that I played football with were all going to the University of Illinois. In Springfield, and this by the way, is one of those dots that brings back because we had no higher education here other than Springfield Junior College. In later years I lived in two state capitals that had universities, and that would have been Colorado and Indianapolis. We didn’t have higher education here because one of my first goals when we came back was to get a higher education; I was in that first group.
Q. I know you were, yes.

A. It was so important. Thank goodness we got it.

Q. It’s doing very well.

A. You bet, you bet.

Q. Ok, I think we’ve wrapped up your high school years and the war years. No excuse me, the war ended during the high school years. So you decided to go to the University of Illinois starting the following fall?

A. Yes.

Q. You knew you wanted to do architectural and the engineering option?

A. No.

Q. Oh, you didn’t? Ok.

A. No.

Q. But engineering you knew?

A. I’ve given you a clue but you haven’t gotten my clue yet.

Q. Alright, architecture.

A. What would a guy that’s spent his life with *Flash Gordon*.

Q. You wanted to be in aviation or art maybe.

A. I wanted to be, and this is, everybody thinks this one is a big joke but it wasn’t. In 1949, everybody...well, I’ll put it this way, I went into aeronautical engineering. I went into aeronautical engineering, and the first semester I got a strong “B” average and now we are in the second semester. I’ve only been there for one semester. It’s Easter of the second semester. My folks said, “Hey, our sons coming home from college.” So they have a group of people over and so everybody was saying, “What do you study, what are you studying?” I said, “Aeronautical engineering.” They said, “Oh, you want to design airplanes?” I said, “No I want to be the first man on the moon.” [laughter]

Now see, to me that is what I wanted to be. That’s why I went there. Everybody leaves and my mother, my gentle mother and father, my mother said, “Sit down here son. I want to talk to you just a minute. It’s ok to say that to your dad and me except everybody else thinks you’re
crazy.” In 1949, they did. They thought that was cheese floating around up there. Nobody even talked about it except and I don’t know why I talked about it except that it sort of broke my heart but for two reasons. You’ve mentioned the same thing, sort of.

I was sort of social, I got over into a fraternity over there that was right on campus and at that time this was the last of the military guys, World War II guys were seniors. I’m in there as this little kid, and you couldn’t get a date. Hell, there were nine guys to every girl. So you saw them bring one of the girls from home if he could get her to come over for a dance or something and that worked out. But on the other side of that thing was, if you got a date, and nobody had cars in those days, they were forbidden unless you were 21 or some. No it wasn’t 21, it was more than that because everybody was 21 except us guys but to get a date was on a weekend, Saturday night or something like that. On the other thing the laboratories, in those days the wind tunnel was a little box and they blew smoke over a profile of the wing...

Q. Fairly primitive.

A. Oh yes, it was just the beginning of the whole thing. We, as freshmen, could not get to it except on Saturday night. I mean they let the freshmen come over, and I’m thinking that’s date night. I mean so this is really kind of getting me. It’s a heck of a long walk over there in the wintertime to the engineering school, and then my mother says and everybody else thinks you’re crazy. I thought, maybe I am crazy and I went right from that weekend off to the counselor and said, “What course, in the whole University of Illinois will take what I’ve just gotten through?”

Q. That was smart.

A. They said, “Architectural engineering.” I said, “That’s what, well I’ll do that.” I didn’t know any different.

Q. You didn’t want to lose credits that you just earned.

A. That’s right which at that time those credits; they would have fit any school. I could have been a brain surgeon or anything else because it’s beginning college, that’s all. But I didn’t know any of that stuff.

Q. You probably could have been an aeronautical engineer, Wally.

A. Oh, yes.

Q. Without necessarily having to go to the moon, I mean you could have been because those were golden years for aeronautical engineering.

A. Oh, yes. Well, it proves how dumb I am. If I would have stuck with aeronautical engineering I would have been on that thing. When Neil...
Q. Armstrong.

A. Armstrong stepped on there, my heart stopped a beat. I felt it, it was just it could have been me.

Q. [laughs] I’m sorry I’m laughing, but it is funny. But then also it was a great time to go into architectural, I mean in retrospect because of the pent-up demand of construction.

A. Oh, exactly right, exactly right.

Q. Its timing was expletive.

A. Well, it was an opportunity for all of us. You see, the war ended, and my folks always said thank goodness for FDR, and I don’t doubt that. World War II was what stopped the depression. All of the sudden prosperity reigned because everybody needed bullets, and so you had to hire somebody to make bullets and whatever that might be. But you don’t have to have a war to have success, too.

Q. That’s true. None of your family, immediate, even cousins or uncles served in World War II.

A. Oh yes. My dad’s youngest brother, who after World War II, came and lived with us for a little while; his name was Carl Francis, F-R-A-N-C-I-S, Henderson. Interesting thing in my dad’s family, all the boys, I think there were, I think we did this before, maybe a half dozen boys. Anyway, they all chose their own middle names. My dad chose “Wallace” and my Uncle Carl was “Francis.”

Q. Francis, that’s interesting.

A. For a little while, we weren’t all living exactly at the same time, but my grandpa, my dad’s father, lived with us after his wife had passed away. I don’t remember whether my dad ever said it to him personally, but they called him “Billy T.”

Q. Who, Billy T.?

A. “T”, his middle name was “T.” I can’t remember what the “T” stood for, but I always when any of the family got together, “Oh what did Billy T. have to say about it?” He was a frail, frail guy, a little man, and shrunken and just a sweetheart of a guy. One day, well I won’t tell that story that’s...forget that.

Q. Ok. Well, you know, the families, I remember, were multigenerational families. I lived with my grandfather and my uncle because my parents had lost jobs and all. They all had to get together, and they lived in my grandfather’s house.
A. That’s exactly what I was talking about.

Q. Yes, it was common. Well ok, so Uncle Carl did serve in World War II?

A. Yes he was in Karachi, India, navigator on a B-24.

Q. That’s interesting.

A. Which just I loved that one of course. I mean, I was still building model airplanes. I have in this basement, they’re hard to find these days but, balsa models I’m going to build yet. I love those little models.

Q. You know when you get to the point that you can’t even move, you can always build a model.

A. Because it only takes a razor blade and a little glue and all that.

Q. I was enthralled by the airplanes, military airplanes of all sizes and I had an airplane spotters handbook, which showed you the silhouettes. So I could spot a Messerschmitt or Japanese Zero and I used to think, “Oh, should I be searching the heavens to see these?”

A. Exactly. You’re talking my language. [laughter] I got the same thing and right now, as a matter of fact, we’ll watch some of these wars things, and granted I’ll, because I’m still a war nut and I’d say that’s a [laughs] well…push the button.

Q. Go ahead, it’s alright. You don’t want to have this word recorded?

A. No, not the next one.

Q. Alright.

[tape paused]

Q. Alright. Wally just talked about one legendary German fighter plane, whose name, even in English we will not bother recording. Thank you, Wally. [laughs] I don’t think it will take much imagination.

A. It wasn’t a junker.

Q. The junker, too, right. Ok, so you lived in university housing when you moved?

A. Fraternity House.

Q. Fraternity House, of course. This wasn’t an aviation fraternity?
A. Oh no, no, no, just a social fraternity.

Q. What was the name of it?

A. Phi Kappa Sigma.

Q. Phi Kappa Sigma.

A. It was the second oldest on the campus. Sigma Chi was the oldest.

Q. It was in that row of fraternity houses?

A. We were at Fourth and Chalmers. We were surrounded by fraternities and sororities. That played on answer to my decision to go to architectural engineering. Architects, because they decided they weren’t getting enough education, I was in the first class of architects that required five years at the university.

Q. I noticed that, yes.

A. Which of course was, for my folks who hoped for me to get two years, I didn’t know how to break that to them but it worked out interesting enough. Now here’s an interesting part of this. I always want to give a lot of thanks to Bill Horsley who was a state senator at the time. I think it was through the Boys Scouts or something in that period of time, I became acquainted with Bill Horsley and he gave me a legislative scholarship.

Q. Legislative scholarship.

A. Which was $50. That was tuition. [laughs] I got myself a meal job in my own fraternity house, and I am on my way.

Q. So you had free meals, basically, and a little money maybe from your meal job.

A. No money, just...oh, and housing.

Q. And housing, of course.

A. I got room and board and tuition’s paid for so the other part is for anything I might need.

Q. Well that made it a lot easier on your parents, and on you.

A. Sure, sure, sure. I didn’t go my whole career dishwashing. I ended up working for the university architect.
Q. Yes, I see that there was another job. Your grades were good that first year and you stayed in the fraternity all five years?

A. Yes.

Q. You were probably the president of that, too.

A. Twice.

Q. Twice. Ok, now within the architecture and engineering schools were there again, any notable and motivating professors who stick out in your mind?

A. Because I seriously have memory loss, there is a professor that, well two actually, one was...I can’t think of either one of them.

Q. That’s alright.

A. One was an Oriental, Japanese. I always remember him because he was so dedicated to the fact that...I’m sure it was practiced in your education, too. When a professor didn’t show up for class you gave him ten minutes. After ten minutes, you left.

Q. Right.

A. Well, this professor, and he did this more than once, but the first time he did it we couldn’t believe it. He came in with nine minutes and we’re about ready to go. He almost went bananas apologizing for us and in Japanese.

Q. In an Oriental...

A. He said, “We will do an extra hour for this.” We’re going sheesh. [laughter] You don’t have to, professor, you don’t have to. Nobody said it but it was like...don’t be so kind to us. But he was dedicated. He was going to teach it, and he did.

Q. He was pretty good?

A. Oh, he was good and whether requested it, this is what you, I suppose we all hoped our kids get but I had one that did that. The other gentleman who...today architects cannot get a license unless they have a master’s degree; you can’t get a master’s degree without going six years to college.

Q. Oh my gosh, ok.

A. So now they’ve stretched this damn thing on it, when you get an associate’s degree, that’s what they call it, you can’t take the test.
Q. You can work in an architect’s office, but you can’t be a registered or licensed architect.

A. You can’t draw the bigger money. Architects are probably the lowest paid of any just because they’re stupid, I mean they just keep working because you’ll criticize it more than the client does. But the engineers are smart enough to say and part of my experience has been with other people, and I’ve sat in on the engineer’s office if you’re an architect. But they’ll go through this whole list of things they’re going to do for a building.

Then somebody will say, “What’s the fee?” So you give them the fee. Immediately they say, “Well, that’s too much,” because the engineering fees generally are significantly more expensive than the architecture. In any event, and the response to well what don’t you want us to do? This is after you have explained it carefully. You don’t want us to inspect the building? You don’t want us to make preliminary drawings? I mean, it’s a trap; it’s a marvelous trap, I was never smart enough to catch that one. But engineers know what they’re doing.

Q. Weren’t you also qualified to test to be a certified engineer?

A. Structural engineer, exactly.

Q. Yes, of course.

A. It never, in fact, Ferry and I both had the same degrees.

Q. Yes right. But you weren’t automatically licensed. Do you need a license as an engineer?

A. Oh yes, oh yes.

Q. But you weren’t a licensed structural engineer?

A. No, no, no.

Q. But you had the degree...

A. We could have.

Q. You could have taken the test.

A. Probably if I would have just practiced the engineering more, I don’t even remember what the requirements were. But my experience with Mr. Muchow, when we get to that point, who was, he was right on the top of the hill as one of the United States’ best architects.

Q. Well, we’ll get to that soon.
A. He had worked under Eiel Saarinen, which everybody now knows.

Q. Yes, you mentioned that, up at Cranbrook, which I know a little bit about, not a lot. Ok, you talked a little bit about social life. You dated. Were there any dates that were pretty serious or were they all serious?

A. If you were lucky enough to get one, it was a success story. [laughter]

Q. You had a date.

A. There were social coffees as they call them so the sororities would come to your house and they’d go back and forth. Then people who were dating and many of the seniors found the lady they were going to keep but they lived in a sorority, and we’d go over and serenade them. It was social contact. I was pinned to a girl from Springfield before she went over and [laughs] she found somebody else and gave me my pin back.

Q. You don’t want to tell me who that was?

A. Nope. [laughs]

Q. That’s fine, that’s fine.

A. She’s passed away now, too.

Q. My impression is when you got to the U of I campus, it was probably teaming with students who didn’t have housing, right? I mean there were these Quonset kind of buildings.

A. The parade ground units, they called them. That was where they used to march the band. Except that it was filled up with housing made out of wood; it’s a big parking lot now on the west side of the stadium.

Q. Right, but it must have been really crowded. The classes were crowded.

A. Absolutely.

Q. As you say, a lot of guys three or four years older than you.

A. We had guys in the house who had been the commander of a destroyer at 21, maybe still 20, 19 or 20, and one guy who was pilot of a B-17.

Q. It’s that amazing?

A. I mean these were kids with big toys.
Q. Right, they were. So they had done well in military service and now through the GI Bill, they were getting a degree they certainly were qualified.

A. Wouldn’t have gotten by without the GI Bill.

Q. Exactly. That was an amazing law.

A. I got my master’s on my GI Bill.

Q. Did you? After Korea?

A. My Korean time. But the interesting thing is and again with the fraternity and I resent it to this moment every time I hear it on the radio I shut it off, well he’s a frat boy. The abbreviation is what turns me way down. Because that fraternity, they taught me, well my mother was a southerner, too. I learned to say, “Yes, Ma’am” and No, “Ma’am,” when I was three years old and still do it here.

I guess that makes me old but I mean that was part of my upbringing. My mother never smoked; my dad smoked three packs a day, practically. But they taught us that when a lady is present and she comes in, you stand up to greet them, you light their cigarettes, you greet people at the door when they come in. Courtesy was everything. If you didn’t do it they...

Q. Learn your manners.

A. Another thing that was an experience but I tell it to people and they say, you have got to be kidding. We had like 50 people in our fraternity and the big area, everybody would sit in a circle. Everybody in the whole fraternity had one night sitting right in the center of that circle. When you faced everybody and they’d say to you just what they thought about you.

Q. Oh my heavens. Kind of like an intervention.

A. Well, it was a chance of, if we’re brothers I can say to you just exactly what it is because I get my chance at you, too. But there wasn’t an effort to put people down, it was to say you why don’t you...you look slovenly, get your hair cut.

Q. It was constructive.

A. Quit picking your nose at the dinner table. Things like that. It was like, the fraternity was a great thing and when I go back. As a matter of fact, one of my fraternity brothers called me about my birthday just the day before yesterday.

Q. Oh it’s that nice.

A. Eightieth birthday.
Q. Oh gosh.
A. He said...he’s down in Florida but he’s still around.

Q. He called you, sure.
A. It was good days, good days.

Q. So I’m guessing close to you as a classmate in engineering at Illinois was Al Reyhan?
A. Al Reyhan was in school at the same time I was in a different fraternity. One I almost joined.

Q. Really?
A. Yes.

Q. But he was there then and in engineering as I recall because I’ve interviewed him.
A. Yes ok, yes we’re parallels on that someway, but I didn’t know him in that extent. The engineering...it’s a great engineering school so they had multitudes of classes.

Q. Well of course, they’re huge, I mean it is very large. I think the architecture department is pretty big, too, isn’t it?
A. It...yes, I don’t know where it stands these days, but yes, it was one of the best.

Q. Ok.
A. As far as percentage of people going, practicing architecture, it’s easy to get a degree and not practice it, but they had a pretty good, great turnout.

Q. Did you do any extracurricular activities?
A. Well, in the fraternity they encourage all those kind of things. Water polo was something I got involved in with the fraternity but it was...

Q. That’s co-ed water polo, right?
A. No.

Q. I’m kidding (laughter).
A. Well they had it; I mean I think they had it.
Q. I’m just being silly.
A. Good idea if they don’t have it.

Q. [laughs] Alright.
A. We had different sports going on, too; we had a fraternity council.

Q. Intramurals.
A. Yes.

Q. Did you play some of those without, growing up with the football?
A. Oh yes, yes, yes. Of course we all had big gatherings, group parties, and there was a lot of social activities that were sports oriented.

Q. It wasn’t that hard to get alcohol in Urbana was it? Champaign?
A. No, it was not at all.

Q. What was the favorite haunt?
A. Tumble Inn was one.

Q. Tumble Inn?
A. Yes.

Q. So you could walk in there and have a beer without much trouble or you had to go with somebody older.
A. Without any trouble and on Sixth Street I can’t tell you...

Q. There was another famous one...
A. How would I ever forget? Yes. This guy’s name...

Q. Yes.
A. How could I ever forget those places?

Q. I know. You spent a lot of good time there.
A. You bet, you bet. I’ll always remember that my dad just after the war and now he’s working for the supply group of glassware and that kind of stuff for restaurants. He was educating me and he showed me one time while I was down he said, “See this seal on the bottom of this thing? That’s unbreakable glass.” Really? Ok.

So now I’ve learned this and I’m over at this particular bar drinking with my buddies… [laughs] this is a true story, drinking with my buddies and I was looking into that glass. I said, I looked at it and said, “Look at this; this is an unbreakable glass.” I had been drinking beer, too, so I’d reached that point. They said, “That’s a lot of bologna.” I said, “Well, look.” I threw it up in the air and it smashed. I was grabbed by two guys, and they threw me all the way out into the street. [laughter] I mean, that was the end of my…when I got home, for whatever time it was, to see my dad the next time, I said, “Dad, can you break those glasses. I almost broke my leg again.” That was too fun.

Q. Great story, great story. Were you and your dad, I mean you said he was quiet, but were you close in any way?

A. Very close. Now in high school, we had one car so I’d drive the family car somewhere, but my dad who, today, Brynn’s got one...what do they call them...wife-beater shirts, undershirts.

Q. Oh yes.

A. That’s what Brynn calls them, wife-beater shirts. My dad always had and he smoked Camels. He’d just smoke two full packs and plus, and so he would wait up for me.

Q. In his undershirt.

A. In his undershirt and boxer shorts, and he’d sit smoking just in a position like this and then he’d say something. Of course, I was the smart-aleck high school kid and whatever he’d say, I had to correct it or something. We would start into these conversations. Well, I might have to be home at midnight and it is one o’clock in the morning here comes Lida, that’s Mom, in her chenille bath robe saying, “Boy, you go to bed. It’s past midnight.” I’m saying, “Of course I wasn’t home until midnight.” Anyway, she’d come in and find my dad still bawling me out, “Just shut up and go to bed.” It wasn’t like dog-fighting; it was like we did this.

Q. Banter or bickering?

A. Yes, this was the production. Of course, in those days we didn’t have a shower either, we had a bathtub, which I don’t know why I fought that other than today I’m good for jumping out of the shower, so the bathtub was the place. Of course, my dad sometimes when I was taking a bath, he would come and talk to me about football so he’d sit on the water closet and smoke. I remember that hunched over position was his favorite.
Q. Did he live to a full, old age?

A. No, he got leukemia.

Q. Oh man.

A. The smoking had a lot to do with it. When they diagnosed that one, they said he had a year to go. My mother said, “He’s got to stop smoking right away.” The doctor said, “Leave him alone; it’s one of his pleasures.”

Q. So when was this? Maybe in the sixties?

A. Yes. Well, I can almost tell you. He was 69 years old; he was born in 1898.


A. Yes, and that’s exactly right because my dad had...he was interested in the Old State Capitol, and he passed away before we finished it.

Q. Oh yes. He would have loved to have seen your handiwork.

A. It had gotten a lot of good publicity.

Q. Oh sure. The construction site was fascinating, and you could show him some stuff.

A. Yes, he died two days before the New Year.

Q. Your mother outlived him.


Q. Ok so she lived a pretty full life.

A. She had lost her sight mainly. She got some of it back when they took her cataracts out, but she would not leave her home, that 410 West Edwards, lived by herself. One of the worst Christmas day dinners I ever had was probably when I went over and had Christmas day with my mother and we went home. It was just a sad thing. That was one of the last ones.

Q. A little bit tough. Ok, you graduated in 1954?

A. Yes, sir. That’s right, in July.

Q. With good grades. Had a pretty good GPA?
A. Yes, well I didn’t think it was that great.

Q. B’s maybe?

A. B’s and C’s. I wasn’t sure of those. The reason I wasn’t sure because I wasn’t a record-breaker by a longshot.

Q. Well, I wasn’t either.

A. When the story comes out we can talk about how I ended up going to get the graduate degree.

Q. Yes.

A. That will sell you.

Q. We’ll have to get that. We may have time to pick up your first job which was in Indianapolis, I believe. Am I right about that?

A. Yes. Now, my Aunt Sally who was my mother’s baby sister, no, my mother was the baby, so it was her sister who, just the next...again this large family also on my mother’s side of the family, married a gentleman named Georges LeChance. Now he’s French, right?

Q. I’ll say.

A. Well [laughs] I have a story where this one is. Georges LeChance is an artist, a painter, a portrait painter. As a portrait painter, again times got tough in Chicago and he was part of the whole group up there. He came down in sort of like a...what is it when you follow a trail...you’re on a journey.

Q. Yes, ok. They were looking for work.

A. They were looking for a place to establish an art colony and found French Lick, Indiana.

Q. Oh, French Lick.

A. He was one of the early founders of the artist colony in Nashville, Indiana.

Q. Oh, Nashville, Indiana, which I know well.

A. French Lick is right outside the door.

Q. Yes, right.
A. Well, if you know it real well do you know Herman Welles, Herman B. Wells?

Q. Of course.

A. Herman B. Welles...I met Herman B. Welles because he lived across the road from my uncle.

Q. Isn’t that, what a great man he was.

A. Did you know him personally?

Q. Oh yes.

A. Oh well, alright then I can talk about this one.

Q. Well, because he was so outgoing. He was no longer president. My first job after PhD at Illinois was at Indiana University.

A. Really, ok, so you...

Q. I loved it. It’s a great university.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. He was a legendary figure but he was no longer president, and he deliberately didn’t interfere. But then when the then president resigned, took another job, Herman Welles served briefly as the chancellor at campus before he died. He was old and of course huge.

A. Oh yes, yes, yes, yes.

Q. But he made a point, and at that point I was an assistant professor but also had an administrative job. He made a point of meeting all the new people on the staff for a large university, and he could not have been nicer to you. We had one mutual acquaintance, and I felt like a million bucks. So I did know him. Not well, but I’m proud to say I did. I knew Nashville because I lived in Bloomington, had a place in the country in Brown County, too.

A. I didn’t know you went to IU.

Q. Yes, well I didn’t go, I taught there.

A. Well, the interesting thing is that’s where my mother had hoped I would go. That’s what they were sort of thinking. I had visited my uncle in 1948, I think it was. Yes, when I was in high school and I went down there with my cousins from Arizona to meet Uncle Jack.

Q. Beautiful place but no engineering school.

Henderson
A. Well I wasn’t...

Q. But at that time that didn’t register on your meter.

A. Well, I wasn’t even thinking...that was the only other campus I had seen in my life. My Aunt Sally had the honor, who was a sweet, petite, little lady...But again they had no children and they lived in a log cabin on this side of the road, and here’s the road going up in there to Indianapolis or Columbus and right across the road was Herman Welles.

Q. Oh my heavens.

A. They turned out...she turned out to be his hostess. Every time he had an event.

Q. That’s right he never had a wife.

A. They bought their dishes together, and so Herman Welles is the first guy I met.

Q. What a neat coincidence. Well, you really did know him then.

A. Yes, well I knew him from that event. Of course, she passed away and my Uncle Jack stayed down there. They were there when I came through with my first job, and then I’d go down to see my Uncle Jack. As I see Uncle Jack he says, “Well, you got to meet,” and he names the architect’s name I could have told you yesterday and today I can’t...was doing a lot of work. He says, “We are going up to Indianapolis.” I was going to see a fraternity brother who had met one of the GI’s who had played in...who’s the band leader who got shot down over Germany?

Q. Oh, Glenn Miller.

A. Glenn Miller. He played in Glenn Miller’s band, and he was a fraternity brother of mine. He played the bass.

Q. My heavens.

A. That was probably my entertainment on a low scale, but we’d have Coke dates with him. These girls come over and here’d be Harry Swanson with [inaudible 45:01] [makes musical sounds]. There was always somebody who could come up and play the piano a little bit, so we had a bass and piano, big grand piano. In any event, so I was going up to see Harry Swanson, but I go through and I’m told by my Uncle Jack and Herman Welles, “Oh you’ve got to see so-and-so who has this office in Indianapolis.”

I go up to see him because I am sort of looking for a job and I had my pin girl with me, I mean not the one...the later one...senior, senior pin girl. Anyway she was along, we had to stay some
place because in those days you didn’t shack up [laughter] honest to God, and so we were staying with people who were legitimate hosts.

Q. Escorts, chaperones.

A. Chaperones. Thank you, that’s the word I was looking for. In any event, the end product was, was that I go up to see this gentleman and the first thing that he tells me...

Q. This is LeChance now you’re talking about?

A. No, no, Jack has already told me go up and see this architect.

Q. Ok. Alright, and he’s one of the guys in the firm?

A. No, no, not Harry Swanson. No, Harry Swanson’s working for Standard Oil or somebody. He’s not in the music business unfortunately, but he was the guy. In any event, he was in PR for Standard Oil. I go see the architect. When I see the architect, I was telling him all about my degree and so forth. He said, “What kind of money do you want? Yes, what kind of money do you want?”

I said, “Well, $350 a month,” which I had been told that. He opens the door like this and says, “See that guy?” Here he has a big conference table with one of these piano legs or elephant legs centerpieces, and the guy’s in there dusting. He said, “Well, he’s got a degree from Harvard and he’s getting less than $300.” I thought you...I’m going to stay in Indianapolis even though I had no intention of wanting to be in Indianapolis. I got a job with an engineer who needed an architect.

Q. Just a second, we have to stop it here.

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO

47:20
Q. Continuing an oral history with Wally Henderson on April 7. This is the second tape, and you’re talking about engineering.

A. Third tape.

Q. Did I say second?

A. You said second tape.

Q. Second tape, third side.

A. Oh, I’m sorry.

Q. We flipped sides.

A. Oh, ok I didn’t know that.

Q. No, I’m glad you did it. So continue the story about how Harry, the Harry Swanson story.

A. Yes, well I searched and got a job on 38th Street with Lennox, Matthews, Simmons, and Ford.

Q. Just a second here I got to, ok. I’m sorry I got ahead of myself there. Tape two. A job with Lennox, I thought I wrote this down.

A. You had it there for a second.

Q. Matthews, I thought it was?

A. Matthews, Lennox is the first name, Matthews, Simmons, and Ford. Al Ford was the only architect in that group; the others were all engineers.

Q. Ok and they were on 38th Street?

A. Thirty-eighth Street, Thirty-eighth and I can’t remember what the main drag was, but if you go into Indianapolis, everything radiates like a spoke.

Q. This was a pretty good sized firm?
A. Yes, one of, one of the good ones, politically hooked up. The big project that I got involved in was to design a bent. Now a bent is a, it replaces a truss. It is a beam or a built-up beam that actually spans and it’s an arch and there was the longest arch that they had ever done. I was just out of school so I got to work on this long arch that spanned...it’d be like our horse arena or something like that only it replaces. It is a solid piece, all of our storage barns and stuff like that are like that.

Q. Oh, so these are wood.

A. No, no, no they’re steel.

Q. This is steel.

A. This is steel.

Q. Bolted, I mean riveted or bolted.

A. That’s right.

Q. But not in one piece, not bolted but fabricated.

A. Yes, you put them all together and they got gusset plates and all that.

Q. So what’s the span?

A. Oh, I forget but it was a big one. I mean it was the biggest one they had there. It was kind of exciting to do it.

Q. Well, of course it was.

A. About that time I was the guy by the way, I had gone through ROTC. I had a commission offered, which was really nice and the only thing I had to give them was four years of my life. [laughter] I didn’t really care for being in the Army Air Corps that long at that time. But I get drafted, and so I’m only there from well, whenever it was, I think six months, less than that and they got me in November.

Q. Ok you were drafted in November.

A. November.

Q. November of 1954.

A. Yes, so I’m there from June to November.
Q. Excuse me; the “bent” is the arch that you were helping construct or design.

A. That was the project I was working on, yes.

Q. Yes, right.

A. I wasn’t sealing it, I mean I wasn’t...

Q. I understand you were involved as a junior...

A. Oh yes, I will always remember Al Ford who was, he was the joker, engineers are serious people most of the time. But he was, he was the guy who would yell out, “Ok, Wallace.” [laughs]

Q. [laughs] Just like your mother might say, Wallace. Ok, Wallace. So you enjoyed that?

A. Oh I enjoyed that.

Q. You would have stayed?

A. Oh sure. I was enjoying it much, and I had met a lady at Butler University as a matter of fact.

Q. Oh my gosh.

A. But my pin girl didn’t know that.

Q. [laughs] Well, you know. There were so many letters to write in those days.

A. Got to stay ahead of the crowd.

Q. So you got a little serious with her.

A. But when I went into the Army, I went back to the other lady. We had a good relationship as far as letter writing.

Q. Yes, but you were being shipped all over I know of.

A. Yes.

Q. We’ll get to that. So you were drafted into the Air Corps?

A. No, no, I was drafted into the Army.
Q. Army, ok.

A. But no if I had a commission it would have been in the Air Corps.

Q. That’s right, excuse me, U.S. Army.

A. Because I’d done that, done all the marching.

Q. Sure, sure, right. Then you were drafted as a PFC or a private, buck private or whatever they’re called.

A. You bet. It’s called an E1. [laughs]

Q. E1.

A. That means your shirt hasn’t even got a hole punched in it.

Q. It is essentially a buck private?

A. Oh absolutely.

Q. Your monthly pay was?

A. It was less than, I want to say less than $40.

Q. Yes, that was my impression during the war at least. I used to hear that it was $23 you’d get.

A. Well I started at say $21 and that, that doesn’t seem right.

Q. But it wasn’t a lot.

A. No.

Q. But free room and board, Wally. [laughs]

A. Free transportation. I even got to go to Asia, paid expense. [laughs]

Q. Alright. Now your basic training was at Fort Chaffee?

A. Fort Chaffee, Arkansas. Initial training was, not training but this was...I tell the story because it’s very important. This is one of these changing events in my life.

Q. Ok.

Henderson
A. I now have a five year architectural degree. I’ve had a job and I’ve been drafted, but by god I’m smart.

Q. Yes, of course you are.

A. I get on the bus with everybody else that’s going that way, which by the way at the time I didn’t know he was Adlai, one of Adlai Stevenson’s sons. Don’t forget Adlai Stevenson, while I was in college, ran for president.

Q. That’s right, that’s right.

A. From Springfield, Illinois.

Q. Right.

A. So there’s, I have a little respect certainly because I had met Adlai Stevenson through Blanche Fritz. Blanche Fritz was with me all the way. I met Lyndon Johnson through Blanche Fritz.

Q. Really? Isn’t that interesting? She was a figurehead in the democratic politics.

A. She kept telling me I should get into politics. I said...

Q. Well you did but not too much involved in politics.

A. Well I ran for park board once...

Q. Did you? Ok.

A. Lost and that was enough for me. Can’t stand to lose. [laughs] Started to tell you about...so we’re down there and they take us to St. Louis, whatever, Jefferson Barracks.

Q. So that was kind of the mustering point or something?

A. Yes, Jefferson Barracks. We all get out of our bus and you’re carrying just a little bag, one of these gym bags I think you call them. Any event, we’re standing in line and here’s this guy littler than me, which you can’t imagine that. I’m only at 5’8” and you got line, and there was everybody. Do you know what Pachuco is?

Q. I’ve heard the name but I don’t.

A. In those days they, they were, I believe, basically Hispanic people.

Q. Oh, of course.
A. Black hair and they had, I mean the Pachuco people would take a pen and scratch on one hand L-O-V-E, scratch it into their skin, and H-A-T-E in this hand, and then take a ball point pen and give themselves a tattoo. So now here we’ve got a tattoo that can’t go away.

Q. This is a tough guy.

A. Well, to me he was, I didn’t want any closer. I was watching every place, every step I took. Also and it’s loaded up and I would never pressure my mother. She was from the south but she wasn’t, she wasn’t picking cotton. But so it’s a mixed unit all the way through, and of course, the first thing we get off the bus and he says, “Ok girls, drop your—drop your gear, panty bags,” or something.

Everything was belittling. Every night in those three weeks or two weeks we were down at Jefferson Barracks, it was three o’clock or four o’clock or four-thirty in the morning they’d wake you up with that horn blowing then we got to DI the barracks. Every night we poured water all over the floor and scrubbed the floor, all the guys in there. All of the sudden, you hate the whole idea and all the guys with you, including the Pachuco, including the black men, the white men, anybody.

Q. Hate them all.

A. They just made a big point that you’re just one individual and you’re not much of an individual to start with. You understand? They raised the bar...everything is like that.

Q. But I’m a college graduate. [laughs]

A. Boy, did I milk that one. [laughter] If I would’ve said something like that, they would’ve thrown me in the bucket. I mean my own guys would have thrown me in the bucket because you were with survival. That’s what the Army taught me and I absolutely maintain today. I made, just recently I taped something on this Marianne Manko who, Channel 2, she had the keys to success.

She had...I forget...what, a three minute interview with me asking some of the questions you asked me. At the very end of there I made a comment about I don’t know if living on the eastside how you could ever get out of the eastside. I mean just the circumstances and what got me there because I’m saying it, you’ve got to get that railroad out of there not, run more trains through there.

Any event, she said to me and it was on tape but then they ran it, “How do you think they can get out of there?” I said, “The Army can do it.” After we got off the tape I said, “I’m sorry I didn’t say the military.” It was not the Army, but I’m saying that what was taught there and I have more stories when we get later on in this thing, about the Army teaching me about this, about how you got to deal with the circumstances. Respect is the first thing that the Army teaches you. What they teach you in the toughest way possible. They belittle you to the point
that you almost just want to slug them, but you know you better say, “Yes sir,” to them. You better say it politely. If they say wipe that smile off your face, you better wipe that one off, too. Anyway, I have the highest regard for that whole system.

Q. But do you think it was genuinely good for you? Not that you were cocky. You weren’t cocky were you?

A. No, no.

Q. You thought you had a whole professional career ahead of you.

A. I haven’t got time to play with you guys. Whoa. I learned at the fraternity house from the same source, it was still the military coming down through that fraternity house. We didn’t have rowdy, beer parties that broke windows and stuff. Every time I hear somebody say “frat,” it bothers me. Somebody would say, “What did you learn to be a killer?” No, I learned by golly that other people have opinions and they learned to express them because somebody else said this is the way you better express it. So I back both the fraternity system and the military system.

Q. So now at the time you probably didn’t appreciate this lesson you were learning.

A. No. [laughter] No, I couldn’t

Q. I’m not being facetious, but you resented it.

A. I resented it to the point that I thought I knew everything to start with. Now these guys are insisting that…well at least I knew that, “Yes, ma’am and no ma’am.” I mean, I wasn’t about to miss that. The “Yes sir,” was a little change, but I knew exactly it meant. No I did learn from that, and I never went very far in the Army because I wasn’t a trained killer. I could shoot a weapon about as well as most of the rest of the guys but I was not going to be a sharpshooter.

Q. But you did learn to follow orders?

A. You bet.

Q. And stay in line?

A. You bet, you bet. It’s so doggone important because as they and of course, everything was a vocabulary that I can’t imagine. I don’t know what they do when they bring women on board except I’m ready for universal military training as part of our nation’s education and saying men and women and you have to respect the women differently. But in those days and we didn’t have women in those days in there, but every other word was a swear word, every other...

Q. It wasn’t swear, it was obscene.

Henderson
A. Every other song you’d sing had inference to sex or some other things, but it wasn’t like, oh my goodness. So I did learn words that I had never heard when I got into my unit in Korea. It did shock me, and I said that to people. They said, “You hadn’t heard that before?” No. No, I hadn’t. But anyway, my point being that you average down they’re going to have to average that vulgarity down to something that is acceptable but women get pissed off.

Q. Yes.

A. I mean, they say that now.

Q. Sure, of course.

A. So let’s quit playing like we’ve never...

Q. They go through, they go through serious training.

A. Yes.

Q. They have to be able to cope with the authority. You did.

A. Sure.

Q. So what do you think, in retrospect, the value of that was? You didn’t need humility to be an architect or a citizen or you didn’t need obedience. What was it that was so good about that? The ability—your ability to deal with that environment, maybe? To cope with it?

A. It just made me understand people in a completely different depth. In other words, it’s not, well, he screwed up so bring me my food. People say to this day I say “Thank you,” when I’m served. I’ve had people say, “Well, why would you thank him? That’s his job.” I said, “Because I appreciated it. Don’t you?” [laughs]

Q. So you learned manners that your mother also had taught you but under stricter circumstances.

A. Sure. Fraternity house, when I was house president, nobody could leave the dining room until I left the dining room. If they had to, they had to ask permission. What a fruitcake thing to do. [laughter] Except that’s just another one of those steps. You have enough respect for everybody else that you just don’t get up and say, I’m done eating. They were done eating when I was done eating, and you don’t make a fool of yourself.

Q. Humility.

A. Sure. Get yourself averaged down to a normal person.
Q. So it took some of the gas out of your self-importance?

A. That’s right.

Q. That was good for you because...

A. I think so, I think so. I have no regrets. I would be different if...

Q. I’m not challenging you I’m just trying to tease out and I understand very much.

A. As I get older I don’t regret the occasions when I just said that’s as far as I’m going but, you try to analyze it in a completely different perspective when you know the other guy you got him in a disadvantage. At one time...I know you got anybody at a disadvantage is when all of a sudden they start yelling. As a matter of fact, I’m diverging here, my little dog, who I love dearly, but I’ll teach anybody’s dog to be like that dog in a completely different sense.

If you think about it, because to all of us...now if I start, of course we can’t tape it, if I’m whispering, but if I’m whispering, you’re listening. Now that machine’s listening, but it isn’t going to say anything. But if all of a sudden you and I are getting angry and I’m whispering to you, you’re now paying attention to what I’m saying, when all the sudden you’re shouting and I don’t give a damn what you’re...dogs don’t either.

All of a sudden you yell at that dog, that dog...you don’t have to do much more than that. But if you treat other people like you want to be treated, I can deal with anybody. If a guy loses it, he just lost the game, no matter what the game is.

Q. Great lesson.

A. Philosophy.

Q. Great lesson.

A. Thank you.

Q. So that’s a real turning point? Those six months or six weeks, or whatever it was at Fort Chaffee.

A. Oh that was an eight-weeker and then, then we went off and I carried groceries for officers at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Q. Yes, that was next. So that’s in Virginia. I wasn’t sure about Belvoir.

A. Right outside of Washington.
Q. Ok, and that was for advanced training so to speak or?

A. They call it second eight weeks.

Q. Oh, ok, still basic training basically.

A. That’s, yes, exactly right except that again I decided they weren’t going to teach me anything. So I got, ended up working in a grocery store, carrying groceries for the officer’s wives, which was sort of a…well, being myself. Then after so much of that, I didn’t want to stay there but I did in a way. I have a little side-story, did I tell you about...

Q. No. You met a girl.

A. I met a girl at the Stage Door Canteen in Washington, D.C. [laughter] She lived in Division Heights, Maryland, and I lived at Fort Belvoir. Well, I could get off work, get off base for supper and things like that. So she lived with her sister who had a little son and they both worked. I could catch the bus downtown Washington, D.C., ride the bus with them out to their house, and get back to my base on time at night. So it was kind of a nice hook up. I kind of liked her. Shoot, now see her name is out of my mind, too. But I liked her enough that I wanted to stay in Washington.

Q. I was going to say, Fort Belvoir looked better then. [laughs]

A. Looked much better. As I, now at this point I get some orders, I’m going to be shipped to Fort Hood, Texas. Well, I’m thinking, well by this time, the sister’s little boy has got measles. [laughter] I am now plotting how I’m going to stay in Washington, D.C. So I just smooched the heck out of this little boy with the measles [laughter] thinking, boy when I break out they are at least going to put me in the...

Q. Isolation.

A. The hospital. Well, you know they got that hospital thing, and they wouldn’t let me off base I knew that. But here came the orders and nothing happened.

Q. [laughs] Damn kid.

A. That’s right. Well he wasn’t that prolific in passing his dots on. Any event though, three of us take the train, and you didn’t fly in those days, took the train and I think it was three days or so. The second day at Fort Hood, I come down with the measles. [laughs]

Q. [laughs] A little too late now.

A. I mean we were close but missed it by about five days.
Q. Now where’s Fort Hood? In San Antonio?

A. Killeen. Killeen is...

Q. K-U...

A. No, K-I-L-E-E-N

Q. Oh “K.”

A. It is north, I think of Austin.

Q. Pretty god-forsaken place?

A. If you saw the movie, yes the movie High Noon.

Q. Yes.

A. Gary Cooper.

Q. Yes, right.

A. Standing out there with gun belts, standing on that rail that went forever?

Q. Yes.

A. That’s Killeen, Texas. [laughter] I mean, you get...it’s that railroad station where you get off and it’s just a little hot, but you look down that track and it just goes forever west. It’s just two rails, or at least it was in those days, but that’s where I got off the train.

Q. So this was a specialty fort in some way. You were still in part of training.

A. We were part of the Fifth Armored Division, I think, which would have been artillery.

Q. Ok.

A. But now this is an interesting little trick, not trick, I’m saying that too many times. I’m just unhappy with relating this.

Q. Of course, I love it.

A. I’m, I’m in there and I report and, of course, your records go with you. Here comes this guy, fresh from Chaffee, Arkansas or from Belvoir, his completed his second eight weeks, and he’s
got an education. So I’m called in, I’m assigned to, first of all, I’m assigned to S-3 Section, which is an engineering and drafting people and stuff like that because that fit. But I’m called in and I’m told that they want to appoint me as the PIO, the “O” stands for officer but that wasn’t it. It was public information...

Q. Yes, public...PIO sure that’s a, that’s a common term in...

A. For the battalion. But now that doesn’t mean I would get a rank. I’m just going to get something that was very beneficial for this part of it now. Because I’m assigned S-3 and that’s where I’m working except that I have to be prepared to present every Saturday morning, read the newspaper of the week’s news to the full battalion. So I’m in front of all these guys...this is like LaGuardia or whoever it was...

Q. Fiorello LaGuardia reading the funnies, right.

A. Yes, only I was reading the news to the battalion.

Q. Some of them were illiterate you think? Or no they just wanted them to get the news.

A. No, some of them, as a matter of fact while I was there, the master sergeant of our unit who was...had been in World War everything... [laughter] I mean he was an experienced old guy and he’d never been to third grade. But he had gone up and he had all the lockers at his disposal. Out they come with this dictum, wasn’t something you could discuss with anybody. If you didn’t have a third grade education you couldn’t, you were out of the Army.

Q. Oh, really?

A. They took him out of the Army after thirty-some years.

Q. That’s sad.

A. Oh god...

Q. He had a wealth of knowledge.

A. He knew more about the Army than the guy who wrote that order.

Q. That’s so arbitrary.

A. Well, but that’s what happened. But so there, there could have been, well at least the sergeant’s up there, but that doesn’t mean he couldn’t read, he just didn’t have an education.

Q. Let me get this right, you were standing in front of this group.
A. Four hundred people.

Q. Four hundred people with a microphone I assume.

A. Yes.

Q. You were all standing while you read the news?

A. No, no, no, no, no. It was like a gymnasium.

Q. An auditorium or gymnasium. So you, you read the local newspaper.

A. I would go down. This is where the thing was really neat, because I had to go down at least once a week or, I don’t remember, but I got to know all the guys at headquarters, Third Corps headquarters, which is where all the orders came in. They became my friend. I still don’t have any stripes or anything, but I’m down there because I’m PIO.

They got the teletypes and all this stuff, and they would really give me the materials to read so I didn’t have to find the paper and turn the pages. I just got a whole stack of it, so I read them the news. Well every time I did go down there I’d say, “Get me out of this place.” Because I had down my Air Force ROTC, my summer camp was in Texas. I had been to the Air Force base up at...well now my heads going bad. What was that Air Force...Where’d they just, not just, that guy who had that crazy bunch of people down in...Waco, Texas?

Q. Waco, yes.

A. It was at James Connally Air Force Base.

Q. Ok.

A. They flew F-80 jets and B-25s out there and that’s where I spent the summer and got to fly in a B-25 and F-80 jet. Any event, but I’d already been in Texas so when I’m down on base I’m saying, “How do I get the hell out of Texas?” because I wasn’t as much of a Texas fan.

Q. No.

A. So I go down one day and, and picking up stuff. They said, “We just got your orders for you.” I said, “What do you mean?” They said, “We’re getting’ you out of Texas, you wanted out, didn’t you?” I said, “Yes I did.” They said, “Well, you’re going to the Alaskan Air Command. You’re going to Alaska.” [laughter]

All this happiness belted on me because one of the last things I did with my fraternity brothers the summer before we graduated went up to Wisconsin fishing, and the mosquitoes picked me

Henderson
up and flew me away. I mean, these things were so big and bit and all that. I'm thinking, “I don't want to go to Alaska because if this is...”

Q. [laughs] They’re even bigger up there.

A. Oh Lord, and I said exactly that. The guy was really disappointed; he was happy because my orders had been cut. He said, “Well, we’ve already cut them for the European theater.” He said, “Well, but nobody’s going to Korea. Far East Air Force, you’ll go on.” So these were Air Force orders coming out of an Army base. SCARWAF, which I...

Q. SCARWAF, what’s that?

A. Special Corps of the Army Reassigned to the Air Force.

Q. Ok.

A. Special Corps, in this particular case, the Air Force did not have communications if you can imagine that. They didn’t have...what is it, communication...engineer, engineer.

Q. Oh engineer. Ok. That is strange.

A. Yes. They didn’t know their own bases or anything and so they needed...

Q. They needed it, sure.

A. Engineers to back it up. So that’s how I started and so but nobody’s going to Korea, so I thought, “Ok, that means I’m going to Japan, that’s good enough for me.” Well so, I follow the orders, Travis Air Force Base airlift orders. I go to Hawaii and then the next hop is going take me to Asia by way of Wake Island and on to.

Q. Oh, ok.

A. So I’m there, and you had to get up every morning and go check out the board at 6 A.M. to see if you’re scheduled on a flight that day. This lasted for two or three weeks, and my $21 ran out or however much it was. But it was funny because now it’s summertime. This is June and it is summertime in Hawaii, but the girls that I knew from the University of Illinois, some of them are on the beaches of Hawaii. That’s all I had to do was look at that thing and if I wasn’t ready to go, I could go anyplace I wanted to. So hell, I’m laying on the beach with these girls I’d gone to college with.

Q. You took a quick flight to Honolulu.
A. No, I took the flight, Travis Air Force Base I was shipped out, right after that I almost read my last PIO thing. Then they shipped me from Travis to Hickam Field, Hawaii, which was bombed by the Japanese. Bullet holes were still all through the thing.

Q. Alright, but I’m confused, I thought you’d been on to Wake Island?

A. No, that’s later.

Q. That’s later, ok.

A. Because now I’m there, I’m in a barracks. The only thing I got to do is to get up in the morning, and go read that board.

Q. If you’re not assigned...

A. If Henderson doesn’t show up...

Q. Meet the girls at Waikiki.

A. Those weren’t orders, they just happened to be lucky. [laughter] But then I’d go down there and that was it, but I ran out of money, completely out of everything. So I finally said to the...again if you get...no one, everybody, like if you get a buddy, the buddy is going to give you the tip or two and I got ready my report in there and got to screw around in there a little bit.

I said, “You got to get me out of here. I can’t live this way.” He said, “Well, ok we’ll have you on the next flight,” or some damn thing. Anyway, I was on the next flight, which was by way of Wake Island.

Q. Ok, on to Japan?

A. On to Japan.

Q. I think we’ll quit it there but that’s a great story.

A. It is.

Q. Are there any other touches to that? That wasn’t a turning point that was just funny experiences in your career as an Army soldier.

A. That’s right. Wake Island was...

Q. But you knew you were assigned to the Air Force when you reached Japan?

A. Well, yes, yes, yes. I—I wasn’t sure what that meant. They didn’t, didn’t explain it at all.
Q. Because of your engineering skills.

A. Sure because the S-3 Section was going to take me over.

Q. Yes right, S-3 engineering, right. What a day. This has been great Wally.

A. Well, terrific.

END OF TAPE TWO

29:45
Q. This is an oral history interview with Wally Henderson on April 11, 2011; the interviewer is Cullom Davis. Wally, I thought we might pick up a few things that we couldn’t think of last week to start. One of them is you had talked about your father’s secret work at the fairgrounds and under what pretense that was.

A. Well, it wasn’t exactly secret work. What his position was, was one of...they were going 24 hours a day at this depot, which was located at the fairgrounds. The whole fairgrounds was taken over, as a matter of fact, by the Air Corp. But part of his job as superintendent was to turn in a weekly report that had some kind of a cover-name, Woodmen of America, or something similar to that which I didn’t, it wasn’t even meaningful. He did the work at home but my mother didn’t know about it. It was a mailing that he had to put in every week and it went for the whole duration of the war. Later on he told us it had to be doing with security and personnel and so forth, activities on the base.

Q. Ok, it wasn’t like an inventory of shipments?

A. Oh, no, no, no, no, no.

Q. It was security issues or concerns.

A. Absolutely.

Q. Of the personnel.

A. Yes, yes.

Q. So he might identify some worker who he was a little suspicious of because they were lurking around.

A. Always expressed concerns. It was somebody collecting them on the other end, nobody was writing back to him he was always just filling out the forms and sending them out.

Q. But faithful to his job, he didn’t report this until the war was over.

A. Report it, no, I mean...

Q. To you, to defend.

Henderson
A. He did discuss it. I remember we’d thrown away some of the stationary or something, and that’s how the subject came up. But we had those activities but we, the United States, organized quickly because they had to. As I pointed out before that was an old depot, but it was so good because they had railroad tracks came right on to the fairgrounds themselves, lots of buildings where they were out of the weather. They could store things, and it was really a storage depot for the Air Force.

Q. Yes, good, ok. Then there were a couple of, I guess we’ll call them joints during your years at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign that you occasionally frequented.

A. [laughs] Well, they’re sort of campus hangouts.

Q. Yes, that’s right.

A. One of them was located, oh about a half a dozen blocks from the, where I lived was Kam’s, that was on 6th...

Q. That’s “C” isn’t it? C-A-M-S or “K?”

A. I don’t...I never looked up. I’m not sure which it was. I think it was a “C.”

Q. Ok. I’ve heard of it.

A. There’s Bidwell’s over in Urbana, which was less frequented. But the sorority houses mainly were over in Urbana, so where your heart took you, you could spend more time in either one of those places.

Q. They probably maintained pretty late hours. Probably get a little noisy. Were they noisy late at night?

A. Since I was part of it, I don’t know. (laughter) It just seemed like it was standard, standard, normal decibels. I don’t...yes, of course, they were very noisy.

Q. Ok, well, I know that we have covered most of your childhood and college years and the campus at UI during your college years, but we haven’t talked at all, in my opinion, about all of your military experience.

A. I think we left off at Wake Island.

Q. Yes, you were on Wake Island.

A. Well, I wasn’t there yet but I was coming.

Q. You were contemplating that.
A. But very excited to go there because again we’re flying in military air transport but left Hickam Field, Hawaii for Wake Island for Japan, Far East Air Force. Wake Island is a little bitty island, and of course, there was a movie out during the World War thing which was Brian Donlevy, I always remember that.

Q. Oh, of course, right.

A. Was the actor and what was exciting is that this was a Pan American Airways, apparently seaplane anchorage before the World War became a fighting place. But that was what you had was just a runway a little bitty island that was a couple of square miles at the most. It was just above the sea-level; it wasn’t like there were any hills. Once you got off the beach you were still on the beach because there wasn’t any shelters. They had a few huts that they had built when the Japanese occupied it and there were ships that the Japanese when they landed were still there. I mean they had just pulled up onto the sand and were just rusting hulks.

Q. Oh my gosh. There was no port really then?

A. Well, there was a little, there was a little, little area that would protect a boat but not a ship.

Q. Ok, yes, right, right.

A. That was just a little something.

Q. Most of the planes actually were seaplanes or was there enough of a runway to land.

A. We had built a runway.

Q. Ok, right.

A. We built the runway that the Japanese came in and captured because we were trying to build a runway when they came in and surrounded it, but Midway Island was further away. This was an intermediate stop, so we were just there for a few hours, but it was a truly historic place as far as I was concerned.

Q. Sure. Your destination though was Japan.

A. Japan, yes. I think we went into Tachikawa Air Force Base but that’s, that’s my memory trying to catch up with me.

Q. Which was north of Tokyo?

A. Can’t even tell you.
Q. I don’t know either. I mean, I don’t know enough about Japan. Doesn’t matter but it was a Japanese or American Air Force base I guess.

A. I guess. I’m trying to...one of the amazing things that struck me, and of course, we’d been debriefed ahead of time. When we got off the plane though it was a military plane and everything else, we had to be on military base. The side story on this one was that it was the first time I go to the restroom because I got off the airplane and I’m standing at a urinal and behind me is a lady putting her lipstick on in the mirror. [laughs] It was incredible but we shared it. The same thing with the, I mean this doesn’t mean every place I went in Japan had public toilets but, but it had, weren’t necessarily surprised to walk in and find a shared restroom.

Q. Or what do they call it now? Unisex, I guess.

A. Call it anything you want to.

Q. [laughs] But it kind of startled you.

A. Yes and I, but once you get used to the idea you might as well get there. I remember being once in a, they have much like they do in Europe, floor to ceiling water closets. In other words you’re in a little compartment. I remember utilizing one of those once upon a time, and this lady was on the other side of the door just beating on it telling me to get out of there in Japanese, I knew. I didn’t know if it was Japanese, but what she was saying, the intention was getting me out of there because she wanted in there. [laughs] Anyway, these are unusual things that to guy a from mid-America...

Q. They are. That’s right. This is a strange...and of course the flights were really long.

A. Oh, you bet, yes. Four engine planes but they were very long.

Q. Did you actually have seats or were you just strapped into webbing or do you remember?

A. I don’t frankly remember.

Q. A lot of those planes could take cargo or people.

A. Oh and this was exactly that. I flew the cargoes all the time; I’m just trying to remember the first one because I was interested in aviation. Of course it wasn’t all GIs, it wasn’t; it had women and everybody else there and we just could wander around the plane, got to set up with the cockpit with the pilot.

Q. Sure, sure.

A. It was a fun thing.
Q. Were they DC, DC-3s do you think?

A. No these were four engines. I can’t tell you what they were.

Q. Oh, ok. Well that’s ok.

A. I should be able to tell you. They had a very round nose, because they do on all airplanes in those days, very round but about the size of a B-17.

Q. Oh, ok, large plane. Well you were based in Japan then or that was just a stopping point to get to Korea?

A. Well, that was something to think about. I didn’t even know I was going to Korea. I had been told at Fort Hood, Texas nobody’s going to Korea. I said, “Well, either way just get me out of Texas.” So I took the Asian Air Force or Asian orders, and when the plane, when I got on the next plane, which was a C-124, which has a triple-deck seating capacity. It was a big ship; they can move 300 air corpsmen, but the mouth of the airplane opened up like a...

Q. Yes.

A. You could drive vehicles in it and all kinds of stuff.

Q. Sure, sure.

A. Well, three of us had come on these orders and not many more than that got on that plane. Now it’s seems like maybe I came over with some of those Australians because I remember somehow I...yes, we took the B-17 or the C-124 and when it landed at K-55 [Osan Air Base], Korea and the prefects came at Korea and then 55 was the number of the Air Force base. This was the biggest U.S. base in Asia. I mean it was big-time stuff and you could fly anything in and out of that one.

Q. Well, it must have been well south of Seoul then because you were...

A. About 40 miles south.

Q. Oh, is that right?

A. As a matter of fact, I was assigned...first of all we landed our airplane and because of the way they fertilize their food with the leftovers from all their, restroom is the improper phrase for, for what we had over there. They fertilized all the rice patties and so forth, so when the mouth of that airplane opened up you were like you were in an outhouse, seriously. It was just like, whoa what happened here? But that was the way it was in those days. Much has changed now obviously. But no we were, I think it was about 40, maybe 50 miles south of Korea.
because we are, the MSR, main supply route, coming from Seoul, which went all the way down to Pusan that’s the full length of the thing.

Q. Right.

A. Which was not a highway, they didn’t have finished highways. The people who, on either side of the road repaired, that was the taxes. So the MSR was a dirt, some kind of a road but it was not like asphalt or concrete or any of that.

Also, just...I was startled because I saw just recently a showing what had happened in Korea from the 50 years that had passed. When I was in Seoul and, on different events, the one tall building there was the 14-story Bando Hotel. That was the only high, multistory building over six-stories or anyplace down there.

Q. Everything else had been leveled.

A. No, they had never been built.

Q. Ok, this was...

A. There was only one high-rise.

Q. Ok, it was, it was...

A. It was the size of Chicago, I mean this, Seoul is no small town.

Q. Right but it was just spread out, no height, they just didn’t have the construction techniques.

A. Well, and didn’t have the money to do it, didn’t have the interest to do it, it was just sprawled. When I first moved to Seoul the bridges were all down they’d gone, the war had blown them up. So you got the river and we had intermediate pontoons to hook them together, but all the lights were out in Seoul. They had people, and I’m saying not our GIs but police and Korean soldiers standing at the intersections with flashlights at night because there weren’t any lights. In the shops they would have candles. There wasn’t any power in Seoul in those days, but that was just progress. Anyway, our base, our hill was up above K-55; we were about a half a mile or so away from it.

Q. That Osan?

A. Osan, Korea. Today I’m told that Osan, Korea, which is still K-55 as far as our designation is concerned, has a development that’s made up of GI families. You see we still maintain, I was part of 37,000 that when they agreed at Panmunjom that we would maintain it. They’ve maintained that for 50 years. In that 50 years, they now have moved families over there. Osan,
which it, when I was there was a little tin can village that didn’t have anything but a little group of people who worked anyway they could to make a living.

Q. Sure, sure.

A. It’s now 10,000 people. 10,000. I pulled up the Google maps trying to see what it looked like, and they’re all fogged over. I mean they won’t, won’t show them.

Q. Today they won’t?

A. Yes.

Q. Because it’s a delicate matter of...

A. Well because that Air Force base is the, that’s hot shot.

Q. Ok, it still is a large Air Force base?

A. Apparently, so.

Q. Under U.S. control.

A. Yes. We still have 37,000, think of that, 37,000 troops for 50 years. I was there in 1955.

Q. Yes I was thinking, it was what, the summer of 1955, maybe you got there?

A. I got there in the summer of 1955, I got off that plane they met us with a deuce and a half, that’s a big dump truck sort of and drove through this...

Q. What do you call that, a goose-neck? The dump truck?

A. I don’t know...

Q. Ok

A. I’ll give that a...

Q. Ok.

A. It’s a deuce and a half.

Q. Oh deuce, D-E-U-C-E.

A. Yes, yes.
Q. Ok.

A. Which is another name for a truck. Any event they picked us up and then drove through an area just as you’ve seen in M*A*S*H, which anybody who has seen that show knows that they’re eight man tents and they’re a village. We had, our battalion again was Special Corp of Army Reinforced or Reassigned to the Air Force. We were doing engineering work for the base down below, so we had equipment and all this stuff and we were put in the eight man tents.

Well in a…well jumping around completely here, I report in and, well they drove us through the area where all these tents are honking the horn like you are celebrating newlyweds and they were yelling “Newcomers, newcomers.” We were the first replacements to that battalion in almost a year. There were just three of us on the truck, but everybody was coming out cheering because they thought this meant a whole bunch of replacements were coming. But so we showed up and as I point out we were on Caucasian only orders, which told a story that they were bringing in some more replacements. So we’re in and so they sort of celebrated that thinking this was going to be pretty hot stuff. You get into the eight man tent, and we couldn’t have been eight dissimilar guys in the world except that I think in that case, well I, we just, we had all the religions, we had everything all covered, all different ways. But one of the guys in there was in charge of the base operation, which, and one of them was the battalion photographer. They just kind of mixed you up.

Q. Sure, sure.

A. There you had little stoves to keep you warm and there’s no insulation in those tents. They had rigged up some fuel tanks, oil that pumped in that you would light them at night. This of course, I arrived in summer, didn’t know this until the wintertime but somebody had to have stove duty because you actually lit the oil. It burned in the stove right up the chimney until it got up to the canvas area, which had a little plate in it. If you didn’t turn it off, the metal plate would turn to white and hot and burn the damn thing down. So we were burning them down like once a week over there. It was just incredible because somebody would go to sleep on their job. Anyway, that’s, they all had.

Q. No, that’s good. No, I’m following it. I just was checking something out. So you were stationed there for how long?

A. About a year, just short of a year.

Q. Ok, ok, summer to summer.

A. Yes, pretty close to that. It turned out again that degree thing helped me. I think we discussed this earlier and I didn’t want to lose track of that thing and I also, maybe I put another little side back fact that goes in. I talked about how I walked in being drafted and thought I was the smartest animal in the world.
Q. Yes, you told me that.

A. Scared to death of the Pachuco which was a...well the Pachuco and I along with all the rest of the newcomers walked through to get our heads shaved, which they do in the Army. It’s a cute little device but it’s a razor, electric razor with wheels. It cuts you within about an eighth of an inch of your head, and I go through there. Of course, the Pachuco had that long hair and I had just a...but I’m looking around because I just don’t want to get too close to these were dangerous people, I thought.

Well, I walk out on the other side and I don’t see this person that I was walking very close to. I kept looking around and I didn’t see him. I happened to look down and there was L-O-V-E and H-A-T-E, and I looked at this man for the first time in the face. He didn’t have any teeth, he was young, he had obviously had never had been to a dentist, anything like that, it was like...I felt sorry for the guy. From then on my whole attitude and everything, your state of mind starts to change. I think it’s so important, that we sometimes make decisions just by looking at somebody and say, “Well you know, this guy, I don’t want to associate with him.”

Q. But this is a poor guy who had grown up probably in the sticks.

A. Yes, had no opportunities to do anything and had a completely different culture, which he had survived. He was drafted just like I was drafted. I survived on a different level and so, but the one thing that I pointed out the last time and I’m trying to make this point again. The Army averages you, the military averages you down to what the military needs, which is courtesy, respect, and commitment to your, to your job. Your job is helping that other guy just like he’s got to help you.

Q. The fact that you had a college degree didn’t mean squat.

A. Nothing. That’s exactly right, it didn’t. Not because, our issue wasn’t there to do pictures and stuff like that. It’s to be, well first of all to get along with each other because the getting along might mean your life or their life.

Q. Now were there any African-American soldiers in your unit at that time?

A. Well in the, and then whole battalion, but we were, had a headquarters company, which is the, headquarters company is where the different things goes out of it. Of course, this is every issue and whatever goes in. So, there were a few blacks in there but not in my particular tent. Digressing here going back maybe on the other way around, when I showed up again it was noticed that I had a degree by the battalion commander, which was a great way to start. He looks up but his clothing, first of all, they washed their clothes in the river over there, which was, was pure clay. These green uniforms, which were the unusual uniform because SCARWAF, being, being an Army unit assigned to the Air Force got Air Force pay, no got Army pay but Air
Force duties and so forth. Our management was through Air Force, but our uniforms were independent of everything.

Q. Oh, ok.

A. So we sort of stood out like policemen and often guys were mistaken for that. I think that’s where part of my problems came a little bit later on. I report in and saluted in my bright uniform from the States all pressed from the cleaners back in Fort Hood and saluted, “Private Henderson reporting, sir.” He looks up and he had a growth of beard and he was in this river-colored outfit that I was about to find out is where mine was going to be not too long after being washed in the river twice. He just looks up and he said, “Henderson if I had your time, I’d shoot myself.”

Q. [laughs]

A. Which is like, yes, sir. I got you.

Q. Henderson, if I had your time?

A. In other words, and I’m reporting and he knows I’ve got a year ahead of me.

Q. Ok, right.

A. Going be in Korea. If I had your time, I’d shoot myself. [laughs] Had I been called in...

Q. That was a measure of sympathy for you.

A. Well, you can think of it that way because he pulled another one on me, too. After, I think I’d been there about three weeks but we had S3 section, which is where you would do drafting and those things. That’s what I was signed up for. He said, “I been looking at these orders and I see that you’ve got this college degree.” He said, “I’m assigning you to the enlisted men’s club, you’re going run it or you’re in charge of it,” he didn’t say run it, “you’re going be in charge of it.” How did he say this to me? He said, “It is $4,000 in the hole and by god, I’m not going be extended. That’s your problem.”

You don’t argue with the guy; you just got to know what this is. The whole story there, which is an interesting story, the guy before me was not a graduate but a...I don’t know how long he was in school but was from Boston University. It was a Quonset hut and when they say enlisted men’s club this wasn’t a party house by a longshot. It was a metal building that anything that you had, we had no cooking facilities. We had jars of pickled sausages occasionally.

 Anything that you wanted to drink we had, which included everything from, not iced tea, we had Coca-Cola, and we had everything. But everything was in cans...no, I should say bottles, bottled beer, but we had the cans. I don’t know what the cans bought because a lot the
villagers would collect any can we had and nail it together for places to live in it. But the
interesting thing is here we had Crown Royal or any kind of booze you could think of but a
nickel is all it cost.

But over in those days, at least when you’re in an army area then and maybe still, in order for
American money to be ordered in a foreign space we usually used monopoly money, I call it
monopoly money. So everything except a penny was taken away from you. You turn it in for
military payments, MP, MPCs.

What they do with this military payment certificate. Anyway the MPC was a nickel, a dime, a
quarter, a half a dollar, or a dollar. Here I have my enlisted men’s club and the enlisted men’s
club had tables. All the guys would come in, and they came from not just headquarter’s
company. This is unit’s area, so here I’ve got a great mixture of people. I’m saying it’s a black
unit so I mean the group was black, and of course, the guy before me was a white guy from,
from Boston. Apparently there was a lot of ruckus going on and you had to sleep in the
Quonset hut. They pulled me out of my tent at that particular point.

Q. Ok, to stay there.

A. So I’m sleeping there with, with the safe [laughs], and you slept on a cot. Just to get the
picture now, this is a little side space in this Quonset hut, which is for the manager to be, big
deal manager. You sleep on a... you slept on a cot with a mosquito net around you because the
mosquitoes would get to you, with your .45, which is because the safe is right next to you.

So it’s a little unique space and it does have a telephone in there and a desk. What happened is
the guy before me, if I would get into some kind of problem, all you had to do is just, if you
knock the phone off the hook, the MPs from the base down below, half a mile away could come
roaring up in their jeep and jump out. He would point to somebody and they were off to Pusan,
which if you’re in the jail in the Army, you’re not like in the Army. So you’re put in three
months at Pusan now you still got your extended tour.

Q. Oh extended duty so...

A. Your tour isn’t reduced; just your life there has been extended. So he had this reputation
that, what kind of a guy he was. So now I’ve taken over and I didn’t know anything about it
other than I know it is $4,000 in the hole, and I’ve got to sleep with this damn .45 that’s like
sleeping with a cannon. All my buddies are down in my tent.

Q. Right.

A. I guess I will skip, but I’ll finish this one first. Any event the...I go, I’m sitting there my first
couple weeks in the space and here’s a bunch of enlisted personnel, all blacks. They had
different ranks, but they had no sergeants. I was a private nothing, I didn’t even have one
stripe but I’m the manager, which counts in the military. If you’re in charge, you’re in charge.
The Choson, that’s another word for the Korean women we call them and these were poor little kids, I mean, not kids but women but they’re small people. $16 a month is what they got paid which is 8,000 won which is a hell of a...it’s two stacks about nine inches high.

Q. Gee.

A. It used to be, but so they’re working for this $16 a month.

Q. Working in the...

A. In this enlisted men’s club.

Q. Ok.

A. They would...

Q. Clean up and bartend or...

A. They would clean up and serve the Polish, well they just, you got to just grab their hands and pull those things out of the pickle jars. That was it. I mean this was a booze house, but we had two jukeboxes. Boy these guys can dance, I’ll tell you. They are so coordinated that you just wish you could do as well. My job is to try to just keep the place going. So I’m watching this service happening and this is within my first couple of weeks and... I have two [birds] mating. One’s a male and one’s a female. There are two little cardinals out there.

Q. Yes, beautiful, yes.

A. The Choson had just served, put their things out - beer bottles and whatever on the table and whatever else. This one man, he was a sergeant, took one of, a bill, one of the military payment certificates and just threw it on the floor, but he had torn it in pieces. So the Choson bends down to get the pieces, which again if it was even a nickel it’s a lot.

Q. Sure.

A. But there’s a quarter it might have been, could have been a half dollar, whatever it was. She’s down there picking up the pieces and this guy reaches out and starts goosing her and whole bunch of other things. I walked over and I said, “Hey knock that stuff off,” and turned and walked away because I wasn’t getting in an argument with a table full of people. But I said, “Knock it off, we don’t do that in here.” I started walking away and somebody at the table threw a beer bottle at me and I was from here to the wall, which is about 10 feet; just whistled passed my head and busted all over the wall. I just kept on going with my tail between my legs, to say the least, back into my little hole.

Q. Got on the phone.

Henderson
A. Which is where the phone is, but I didn’t. I sat down and it had a little screen door, I mean a door, regular door. I just sat down, and I got to think this one over. Just a few minutes later, and I’m saying a few, I don’t know how long it was, the guy opens the door, knocks on the door and opens the door and he looks me right in the face. It wasn’t the guy that threw the bottle; he says it was somebody at the table. He said, “Did you call the MPs?” He just looked me right in the face, and I said, “No.” Praise the lord, I can die in the East and put words in my mouth. He said, “Why not?” I said, “Because he missed me.”

Q. [laughs]

A. That’s all, that’s the only thing I had to say. and he walked out. From then on, I swear to god, I could walk in and say, “You, get out of this club, you’re not doing the right thing.” They would get up and walk out.

Q. Isn’t that remarkable?

A. It was that, it was like, you’re not gunning for me. The guy…what they used to say about the guy that that went to Boston was like if we get him, if we ever see him in Boston, we’ll dunk him in the river.

Q. Yes.

A. But no, it was amazing. But believe me, it was not bravery on anybody’s part it was like...

Q. Well, it was instinctive on your part.

A. Yes really, I wouldn’t have made the call either if he’d hit me. [laughs]

Q. So they were used to racism do you think on this or they were used to being sent to Pusan which is like a death certificate.

A. Pusan, oh Pusan. I think that’s it. No I don’t think the racism was strong, no I really don’t.

Q. They were used to immediate penalty for something like that, and you decided you were in charge. You didn’t have to do that as long as they didn’t hit you.

A. Well yes, boy, I mean, the whole idea, Pusan, and I’d seen just enough of Korea that I didn’t want it any worse than what we had. We by the way, you asked an earlier question, I think we we’re about 40 miles south of Seoul at K-55, maybe more than that. There were a couple of Air Force bases, K-6 [Pyeongtaek] was a few of miles away and K-13 was Kimpo, [K-14] which was close to Seoul. But where the road, the main supply route came and did a little jog, there were foxholes that were dug when we did our first shots in 1950. This is 1955, our foxholes were still
there, but it was still a dirt road, too. That’s where they had set up to do the first shots back at them.

Q. But when you were there, the truce had already been signed so that their encouragement now and then MacArthur’s landing at Inchon and then pushed back and then it turned into a long slugfest.

A. Yes, yes I think that...

Q. Right, ok. Before you arrived.

A. Panmunjom, I think is September of 1953.

Q. Yes, ok.

A. So then I got there in 1955.

Q. Eisenhower was president by then.

A. But they had made a big deal that they were going to keep 57,000 troops there. They were trying to restore things, but you didn’t want to be on this one. Another little aside while I still lived in my tent, this created havoc for me. One of my fraternity brothers, I’m going all the way back to that, was a captain in the, oh what the hell do they call it, the helicopters that came down and picked up, emergency people and all kinds of things. It was the military...hospitals.

Q. Yes.

A. Anyway, he’s stationed up in Seoul and he said, “Well I’ll come down and bring you up to Seoul or something.” I said, “Yes, that’s great.” One of the tents had been burned down right next to my tent. I had described the location and here one day here comes this pop, pop, pop, pop, pop. I mean we had made the arrangements because I had talked to him on the phone back and forth.

Q. Sure.

A. He flies in and lands right next to the tent. I walk out like that and I get in there and it’s like...what’s the...MASH...

Q. It’s like a MASH unit.

A. MASH unit, that’s what he was in. It was a MASH unit. He takes me away and as I look down here comes from the base, I mean from our battalion commander’s location. He is coming down finding out what the hell is going on. When I land, when we came back and
Henderson landed, what the hell is going on? I’m just trying to explain this thing to him. That wasn’t good enough because everybody wanted to ride in a helicopter.

Q. Oh, of course.

A. And the wounded...

Q. How come you were so lucky? Yes.

A. Yes, I just explained it to him but this was, I just got lucky except that then the orders are following me back to, they don’t follow you as fast as they need to be. So I’m called in by the battalion commander after this stunt on the helicopter. He says, “Henderson, are you CIA?”

Q. [laughs]

A. The CIC I guess it is, intelligence. Well, it meant intelligence in the Army; CIC because I put in trying to get out of Fort Hood, Texas. I applied for this and had an interview with the CIC. I don’t know whether I said this before but when I had that interview trying to get out of Fort Hood, Texas the people wore uniforms like we wore but no, anything on them. You didn’t know whether you were talking to a general or a private or anything else. They interviewed and they asked me different questions and I hadn’t heard anything back from them. It was the Counter-intelligence Corps is what that stands for.

Q. That’s…ok, Counter-intelligence Corps.

A. The guy asked me a question. He says, “Well, what do you think about communism?” I’m trying to, hell I think it will work as a matter of fact. If you, if everybody works for a thing, you get paid because you work and so if you do this. I thought afterwards, I thought, “Oh man, did I just screw myself up?”

Q. [laughs]

A. But it made sense to me and...

Q. Looks good to me.

A. If everybody pulls their weight you got a good working system. I didn’t flunk the course because when, this is, now I had been in Korea at least a month and the same major who said he’d shoot himself, he calls me and he says, “Henderson, are you CIC?” I said, “No, sir, I,” I said something “I applied.” I said, and he says, he says, “Explain this,” and he throws this Telex, TWX which meant telegram.

Q. Yes.
A. It says very clearly, it says, “Private Henderson, so-and-so, Fort Hood, Texas.” It doesn’t even say Fort Hood, Texas. It is just, “Orders to report to the Counterintelligence Corps, Fort Halliburg, Maryland by such and such a date.” Then there was some place in there is this, “If no longer in the continental United States the orders don’t count.” Well, I’m not in the continental United States, so I can’t get there. I said to him, I said, “No, sir, it says right here.” I tell him the story about how gave the application. From then on he didn’t trust me, and of course, we had congressmen...

Q. Because he thought you might be kind of spying on him even?

A. Well...

Q. Who knows? You surprised him with this.

A. Well and I had a captain come down with a helicopter.

Q. Oh yes, that’s right.

A. I’m just getting nailed every place I turn around. I did go to the Easter in 1956 it must have been then. I guess maybe we changed commanders or something. Any event, Klassen came down and picked me up again out of Seoul, and I went to Easter service. [laughs] I tell these stories and it sounds like I’m lying because I hardly believe them myself, but I did them. Klassen flies up to the MASH unit up in Seoul and we...

Q. What’s his name again, Klassen?

A. Jack Klassen with a “K.” K-L-A-S-S-E-N. His dad was the, the head of the department of, not head of conservation, sanitary engineering here in...

Q. Oh yes, of course.

A. He was world known.

Q. I knew him, yes.

A. He lived about six...

Q. I remember...anyway, I know who you mean.

A. He lived about six blocks from where we’re sitting right now.

Q. Interesting, ok.

A. Jack Klassen had a twin sister who’s...

Henderson
Q. OK.

A. Any event, so Klassen picks me up, we go up to Seoul and buzz over to the chapel on his base, and of course, we’re late. First of all, there’s no place to sit except in the front row. Here are three or four general officers and Jack Klassen and Wally Henderson.

Q. [laughs] Oh god.

A. I mean, this is like, oh man. [laughs]

Q. Whoops.

A. But we’re in church and there’s exactly rank isn’t supposed to count because...

Q. In the sight of god so...

A. I’ll be talking about all these circumstances that are wonderful to think about, but at the time I’m going, what am I going to do now?

Q. If that had gotten back to your officer.

A. Oh lord. I just don’t admit it. I was warned a couple of times because again and because in my capacities at the enlisted man’s club I had reasons to go down to the base where we’d get our food.

Q. Sure.

A. You couldn’t eat food that was grown in Asia.

Q. Right.

A. You had to get it flown in. The airplane, they had this big hover. This 124 was regular service and when the weather was bad, food shortages were a little different. The airplane would circle right over our base, and so we’d know we’d got it in. Our battalion had an area chalked off in some of the storage area, and they would pick up their food because I had it on our own base. Well, I would go down there for my business and walk in there, and here I’d see all the foods and so forth. I just started writing it down because that is what we really got up in our area.

Q. Yes.

A. What does that mean? Well, the long and the short of that one is, is that the food was being tossed over the fence and they knew this thing. Well, I’m carrying this piece of paper and
writing this food thing down. Again I’m called in and then we got congressmen are coming from overseas inspecting these bases. Now remember there’s no war going on, but they’re still visiting.

Q. Right.

A. One from Illinois was, was due in. This battalion commander asked me, “What the hell was I doing with that notebook in my pocket?” Now I had never seen him but the people down there had seen me, probably scared them a little that I had been writing that stuff down.

Q. Like shortages of supplies?

A. Just what was coming in. I wasn’t, I was just writing down what we were getting, I mean what we weren’t eating up there. He said, “If you, if you talk to that guy,” now he didn’t say exactly these words. In other words if you relay some of these stories to this congressman, you will never leave Korea alive. I didn’t misunderstand. I took this notebook and I just flipped it over his desk, and that was it. I’m not being the world spy that I’m not.

Q. [laughs]

A. Anyway, that’s the long of all of those things.

Q. So he never did warm, warm to you?

A. No.

Q. Didn’t trust you?

A. No, they started, can’t remember what got me transferred. There was something strange that happened, and I never have understood this thing. I was transferred out of that job up at running the enlisted men’s club, down the main base PX. Which the main base PX was like a little department store, but it also had food service.

Q. Sure, yes.

A. If you were a GI on the base, you could walk in and order breakfast if you wanted to if you were off duty. I always had to be there to light the fires. That was part of my job is to be sure we had the stoves lit. But this was a big, big thing and they had, they had tables and everything. I would get down there and do the same thing; I watched what food was coming in there and said something once to, and I was friends with... We had Korean nationals working there and this one Papa-San I’m observing and stuff, we’ve got canned bacon, everything was in a can.

Q. Right.

Henderson
A. This stuff was disappearing. I’m saying to this guy I said, “Some of our guys, we got some crooks.” He took me aside and he said, “You got six more months or three more months here and you’re leaving. We got to live here.” He said, “You know if you blow the whistle on this one,” he said “somebody’s still got to live here.” I mean they wouldn’t have a job and this was the best job probably in that part of the area.

Q. That wasn’t a threat was it?

A. No, no, no, no.

Q. He was just advising you...

A. This was like a...

Q. Bottle it up.

A. It was just like a wholesome, think about this.

Q. Yes.

A. He got my attention, he truly did. They had done such things that...the black market was screwing everybody over. They would grab anything that they could, and they were throwing it over the fence, this concertina wire.

Q. Yes.

A. Well, when I ran the enlisted men’s club, the area around our base because our hill was not attached to the main base, so we had our little control points with our own little walk-in guard area. If you want, we’ll shut that down for a second that you will really think is interesting.

[Tape pauses and begins again]

I had walk-in guard duty and before you started, if you go the motor pool for example, the motor pool’s got all your equipment in there. The guy who organized it tells you where to go. He said you, “You understand if somebody comes in here and steals a distributor out of one of those trucks,” you’re probably assigned to one of those trucks because there were 20 guys per truck, to be pulled out in case you had to run, in case we had to get the heck out of there. So they said, “If a distributor’s missing or they’ve taken spark plugs out or something, you may be one of the guys that doesn’t go. So you don’t hesitate. You give them the warning and then shot them.”

Q. Geez.
A. I was convinced at this point I wouldn’t shoot them and kill them, but I’d sure as hell shoot them in the leg.

Q. Yes.

A. So anyways, that’s...

Q. Let’s take a break here. I’ve got to change the tape, ok?

A. Sure.

END OF TAPE THREE, SIDE ONE

45:41
Q. This is continuing an oral history interview with Wally Henderson on April 11. You had talked about your work both in the local, not the PX the, but then also you’d worked at the main base PX?

A. Yes, right in the enlisted men’s club.

Q. So you had become a specialist in entertainment or whatever you call it.

A. I never thought of it that way. I was behind the cage at the…this was interesting…at the PX. In other words, they had a little caged room, a little bit like a banker but…

Q. Right.

A. Up walks a, I guess he was a lieutenant. I look at him and here’s one the guys I went to school with in ROTC at the University of Illinois.

Q. Oh my gosh.

A. He said, “Gee, Henderson, it’s really good to see you.” Now at this point I got one stripe, I’m PFC Henderson, but I was in the cage. He’s cashing in some money or something or whatever it is. Any event, he’s just newly arrived, and he said, “Gee, it’s really great, how do you like it in Korea?” I said, well I was almost like this major that I told you when I came into the battalion. I said, “Well it’s, I’m sort of a short-timer now.” I said, “How much time do you have?” He’s say, “Oh, just two years.”

Q. [laughs]

A. I couldn’t tell him that if I too had two years, I too would shoot myself. [laughs]

Q. You didn’t have the heart to repeat that?

A. Oh no, no, I had six months.

Q. Oh that’s really good.

A. Oh yes, it was too much.
Q. Tell me about, you told me in affect about the desperation of the Korean civilians.

A. Oh, yes.

Q. They were starving and homeless and would resort to anything. They were constantly preying on you to steal things or get stuff.

A. Yes, they were...there’s no doubt in my mind about that they were getting help someway from a GI.

Q. Sure.

A. In order to be able to get access to some of the foods and things. You had to feel sorry for the people.

Q. Well, of course.

A. The facilities, the huts they lived in, were made out of, and I said I thought that they were all beer cans, made out of metal cans bent together with straw roofs. They had nothing, zero as far as clothing was concerned or anything else and so to be able to work on a GI base was really good stuff.

Q. Of course.

A. But then the GIs, who I’ve already mentioned to you before that VD was prevalent.

Q. Right.

A. Unfortunately for the GI, you’re warned that before you leave the States and you’re warned when you get there on the base. But if you don’t control yourself and just make some good judgments, you could catch some of the stuff that frankly the Army could not clear you of.

Q. Right.

A. I ran into a couple of circumstances in our battalion with people who couldn’t get reassigned back to their own families in the United States because it was a kind of disease that was tragic.

Q. And dangerous.

A. Well, the unfortunate thing is they would steal, I would say steal, they would get for some trick GI robes, doctor robes. What do you call the jackets that doctors wear, the little white coats?

Q. Oh, ok, yes.
A. So it was a doctor. The GI would go into the village and say, “I have got such and such.” They would give him a shot. The shot was Mennon’s aftershave cream, lotion.

Q. Oh, no.

A. That was green and was the whole damn thing, but it was insane stuff. The coat all of a sudden said, “He’s a medic of some kind.”

Q. Oh god.

A. But so you always had to be on your alert what was going on.

Q. Everything was happening.

A. Now on the plus side, I think I told you, I became the chaplain’s assistant.

Q. Oh, ok.

A. For our battalion and the battalion again, and this is interesting because we’ve all seen them probably in our churches where we’re going to send something overseas to people or to orphanages or so forth. Coats and so forth would arrive; these people were so handy, crafty or sewing, seamstress outstanding. They would receive coats from America that somebody had decided wasn’t fashionable or some damn thing but still a good coat. They would take that coat, and all of the sudden you’d see six little kids with these bright red coats because one adult coat would make this.

Q. Amazing.

A. Bare feet in the snow. I mean, they didn’t have shoes but they had those little coats. Then they’d wrap them with anything they could, but they appreciated all that stuff. Our battalion had adopted an orphanage. You’d go down there and bring them supplies. I’d go with the chaplain, but we’d also take a weapon along just because sometimes you’d need it sometimes.

They insisted at Christmas time, by the way, they would pick up because fuel...the houses were built in an unusual way. They lived in a house and they had an animal. The animal and I’m saying a cow or anything else lived right in house with them; it was one room. They built it so that the fireplace was on the one side of the room and the chimney is on the other side, and the smoke goes under the floor and heats the floor. So it’s kind of an interesting arrangement, but that’s what you get used to housing. I’ve lost my track on what was I trying say about it.

Q. The orphanage.
A. Oh yes – in the orphanage. So we’re up there and and in order to heat, by the way, everything, and this is how I got on the sidetrack. In order to have that fireplace, they didn’t have forests to cut down, but every leaf that fell they would pick up. The leaves were literally picked up and put into the fireplace and carried through there. You had the one space, but everything meant something to them including like an apple or a pear and all this kind of stuff. We’d bring something down; well they had to treat us. They felt like this. At Christmastime we had a Christmas tree only it wasn’t a tree, it was a bunch of sticks that were kind of glued together with leaves stuck to it.

Q. Stuck to it.

A. I mean the leaves that they had picked up and put on with a Scotch tape or anything else that was like...as I tell the story it’s sort of exhausting. Then they say, “Well, but you have to dine with us one meal,” or whatever it is, doesn’t make any difference. They offered us pears or an apple or something like this and they would only steal...they’d see an egg a month maybe, and they wanted us to eat them.

Q. That’s remarkable.

A. We couldn’t, it would choke.

Q. They were grateful?

A. Grateful and wholesome as can be and always very respectful. Never pawing you and begging you in that way. If you turned them down, you turned them down.

Q. What was there widespread evidence of warfare destruction?

A. Not in our particular area, of course, this is a full year after the real shooting had stopped. We had taken above Seoul long before that, so there’s time to repair it.

Q. The 38th is it? The 38th parallel?

A. I guess it is; I guess it is.

Q. Ok. Excuse me, go ahead.

A. Which was north of Seoul. Which I did flew up with my friend, Klassen, and he took me up to the DMZ [Demilitarized Zone].

Q. Oh, is that right?

A. But he was very cautious. He said, “You go over there they’ll shoot you down.”
Q. That’s right.

A. So you don’t want to go there sightseeing and end up as a casualty. So everybody still had a lot of tension.

Q. Were there ever at your base, alerts to possible infiltration?

A. No.

Q. No.

A. No. No, I always had to carry because I carried money from the PX to, we had a little bank down there. But I always had to carry that thing and .45. Made me, made me a westerner or so. I never shot it but that’s...

Q. Never shot it.

A. I always remember the elderly...gosh, maybe because I was in my 20s he was probably in his 40s who had taken out, had gotten out of the Army and went on with the Department of Defense. He was sort of a professional, not GI, an ex-GI, who was giving advice to how to the certain manager was run. But he would get it there and I think he was [inaudible 9:21] fella and he would stand there because I was first in in the morning trying to light the fire so that the PX would get warmed up. So he’s there and I’m there, and we were sort of got to be a habit.

We’d walk to this one place out there right outside this big Quonset, and he looked off toward the sun. He’d say, “Every day and every way, things get better and better.”

Q. [laughs]

A. That was how we started the morning until the fires are lit. [laughs] Oh, man.

Q. One of the things about World War II and Korea and it’s true of other wars, I remember is terrible cruelty, violence, barbaric attitudes, and yet some of the greatest comedy has been written about it. I mean \textit{M*A*S*H} was spectacular. Did you find nuggets of truth in the kind of experiences that people had in \textit{M*A*S*H}?

A. Oh, yes. Oh, yes, I didn’t have exactly those experiences/

Q. Rang true.

A. But yes the similar well just exactly like I said. In my eight-man tent.

Q. Yes.
A. I mean, we’d lay there and we had one Christian Scientist, I was Presbyterian, we had a Catholic in there, and Jewish, we had...I can’t even tell you some of the other. That was only the religious thing, but guys who had interests so far apart from each other that you couldn’t even believe it.

Q. Of course. Have you ever seen or read Catch 22?

A. Catch 22, oh yes. Many times.

Q. Sure, sure. That was a classic example of graft in the Army.

A. Exactly, oh yes.

Q. That must have also rung true a little bit because people were on the take.

A. That’s exactly right. I can’t explain exactly a good example of it.

Q. Yes, ok.

A. I could but I won’t. [laughs]

Q. Ok. [laughs]

A. You could stop.

[Tape pauses and begins again]

Q. Back on tape. I was trying to think what else. Any other military experiences that stand out either as humorous or fateful or turning points? We talked about the earlier turning point of being treated the same.

A. Well I think...no, first of all I got me into...I had put in because I had been communicating with this lady over the whole time, but I was trying to get closer to Springfield. I put in for Fort Leonard Wood, which nobody ever put in for that. They sent me to Fort Carson, Colorado instead.

Q. Oh, ok.

A. Which is a good base and that’s where I think I’d reached that point about how I got...no...yes. Where are my notes? Oh, coming back from Korea, they flew me into...what am I trying to say...San Francisco.

Q. San Francisco, yes.

Henderson
A. Well, they didn’t fly me in, I’m telling stories now. I came in on a ship. Now I want to get this one straightened out.

Q. Ok.

A. Oh there was a…I told you the story of being in Osaka, Japan?

Q. No. Osaka? I don’t think so.

A. Yes.

Q. No. No, was this on leave?

A. Well, it was what they call Open Mess Management. Open Mess was enlisted men’s club. I fly over with, with a group on a C-47. Now this was over the China Sea and we’re going to Nagoya, Japan.

Q. D-A?

A. Nagoya, N-A.

Q. Oh Nagoya, of course.

A. N-A-G…I will even show you a little picture of Nagoya.

Q. Oh we can see it later.

A. Yes, well it’s a sketch of me.

Q. So this was part of your assignment because you’d had experience in managing.

A. Well this was in training.

Q. Yes.

A. Sort of but really it was a break is what that was. The officers were there, but you asked me on that airplane seating. In this case it’s benches.

Q. Oh, ok.

A. You just sit with your back to the outside of the plane.

Q. Right.
A. We flew from K-55 to Nagoya. But in the process we go across the China Sea and get caught in a hell of a storm.

Q. Oh, brother.

A. To the point, that the pilot and everybody’s getting’ sick including the pilot. But the pilot comes back and tells everybody to put your “Mae Wests” on. We may be going in, which it gets your attention to say the least.

Q. [laughs]

A. When we flew out of it and finally landed in Nagoya, they pulled the plane out because the dihedron of the plane had been affected by these down drafts. I mean, that plane flew everything except upside down. I mean we were getting knocked around, but when the pilot comes back and says...

Q. Prepare for ditching.

A. He was expecting it. Anyway and so I think we took a different airplane back.

Q. [laughs]

A. But the different airplane after they open this management school, I’m taking pictures of the China Sea; I had been photographing out the window.

Q. Just for fun?

A. Yes, just...you got a camera and you got nothing else to do. My buddy who runs the photo shop he’s going to develop them for free so that’s alright.

Q. Yes.

A. So I’m up there taking pictures and the camera sticks or something like this. I turn around and I’m on a bench just like this and I bend over. I didn’t realize it but I was up against a hatch that opened up. I go over this way and that freakin’ hatch goes pop.

Q. Oh no.

A. I could’ve have been launched out of it. I mean it, to this moment, that one even scares me. I just got out of this and crawled onto the floor and stayed that floor until we landed back in...

Q. So the whole hatch fell off?

A. No it flopped up.
Q. No it just flopped up.

A. It’s on a hinge. I guess before I got flopped on that floor, a couple guys grabbed me, because again we’re all on benches.

Q. Sure.

A. They’re holding me by each leg and I got to catch the rope that’s out there hanging, not hanging but being blown and pull that hatch back in.

Q. That was scary.

A. But they said probably somebody that was cleaning the plane when it was on the ground opened it up for ventilation and didn’t latch it.

Q. Didn’t bother latching it.

A. The fact that me leaning against it apparently was holding the latch in place until you took the pressure off of it.

Q. So they didn’t blame you it was just...

A. Oh, shit no.

Q. [laughs]

A. No, but then I got laid down on that floor and didn’t want anymore...I’d had all the...

Q. But you were being trained then as kind of a restaurant, storehouse manager.

A. I was getting different treatment, that’s right.

Q. I thought you went over to build airfields?

A. That’s what my thing was. But again I had the degree was carrying me, but it was carrying me in a different way.

Q. Ok.

A. Made them look at me differently. I mean I got, I’m not justifying it. I’m only saying is that I was getting a lot of consideration that I didn’t necessarily deserve.

Q. Sure, ok. But you never came close to using your engineering skills or architectural skills?
A. No, sir.

Q. In Korea.

A. No.

Q. But you did advance in restaurant and bar management.

A. [laughs]

Q. I’m not being facetious.

A. That’s only if your bar doesn’t take anything except nickels.

Q. That’s right. No, you were responsible for managing money.

A. Oh, yes, oh, yes. By the way, that $4,000, it wasn’t in the hole. He had receipts for this, but they were locked in the safe and it was one of those things.

Q. I see. So it wasn’t really a scandal?

A. No he just, he was saying everything he wouldn’t of shot himself. He would have shot me first then himself.

Q. [laughs] But you were, well you were always eager to leave military service, but you got to leave a little early, no you got sent back a little early because of the...

A. A little early but not because I was on those orders. Those orders then took me to Fort Carson, which after I had driven to Indiana to see the lady who had written to me every single day and waited until she got home on her date until midnight. I got back in the car and came home because it was...she was nice enough to write me every day but that was as far as that was going.

Q. Ok, so she had found another guy.

A. Oh yes well, which was logical.

Q. Sure.

A. We’d had a year.

Q. There were a lot of “Dear John” letters in the Army, yes.
A. But she didn’t do that.

Q. She didn’t do that; she didn’t write you?

A. No, no. That’s like I told you, the time span between the time her letters could reach me and I could read it, they’d done all that crap, so she didn’t even know what my responses were. So it didn’t make any sense.

Q. So that ended that.

A. My folks were surprised because I didn’t even tell them I was coming, but I was on a ship. That ship was the General Matthews as a matter of fact. It took like 1,500 of us, came over on that ship to San Francisco. Then I flew back and my mother was totally surprised to see me, but I then just…I think I stayed one night. Then I went over and drove through Indiana and back through and reported early out to Fort Carson.

I didn’t report to Fort Carson, but I wanted to go out to Colorado, I had never been to Colorado. I went to a chapter of my fraternity out there, and it was kind of an interesting thing. There I had two weeks leave or something and so before I reported to Fort Carson I went to the fraternity house. One day one of the guys said, “Oh yes, I’m going to Fielders to Colorado,” which was Boulder, Colorado, “Do you want to go?” I said, “Oh, sure.” So we drive around there. But the girl that I had been pinned to at the University of Illinois was a Kappa, and which, Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority.

Q. Sure.

A. Well, we’re driving along here’s this beautiful house setting up on a hill in Boulder, Colorado and it was a Kappa, Kappa Kappa Gamma house. I said to this young fella driving me, I said, “Stop the car.” He says, “You know somebody there?” I said, “No, I’ll go up and get us some dates for lunch or to go swimming or something.” All of the sudden after you’ve been overseas and all this, you got all kinds of attitude that you can do anything, right?

Q. Of course, right.

A. So like a jerk, I go up to the house and I walk in the door and first thing I run into a young lady. She asked if she could help me and I said, “Yes I’m looking for two, single, short, unattached girls to go swimming this afternoon.” She said, “Well here’s the telephone directory.” She was about six feet tall herself.

Q. [laughs]

A. Said, “I’ll give you some names.” She gave me four different numbers there and I pushed the button. Here comes this cute little blonde girl in short gray short…what they all used to call hot pants and her brother’s ROTC shirt hanging out.

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Q. Ok.

A. It was finals week and barefoot, and a year and six days later I married her. She was...

Q. Sally.

A. That was Sally. I met her and she didn’t, we didn’t go swimming, we...I did have a Coke date, but it just happened Sally; Sally Vicary was her name V-I-C-A-R-Y.

Q. Vicary, yes.

A. Lived in Colorado Springs, about two blocks from the Broadmoor Hotel and about a mile and a half from Fort Carson, Colorado where I’m now assigned.

Q. That was a piece of luck. She was just finishing exams? This was in like May of...

A. I’m reaching into June; it would have been May or June.

Q. Of 1956 or seven, 1957 I guess.

A. I guess.

Q. Ok.

A. So I’m now stationed at Fort Carson.

Q. Yes.

A. I got six months duty time left or something. They say we’re going send you to Camp something [Camp Hale]. Going make a ski trooper out of me.

Q. [laughs]

A. This, now this is a very important piece of story here, this ski trooper thing. First of all, I now have a lady friend.

Q. Yes.

A. The lady friend is not Asian or anything else. I’m now enjoying round eyes and all these things again.

Q. [laughs]
A. When I got these orders that I’m going...Fort...what the hell was the name of that place because that’s where the 10th Armored Division.

Q. Yes it’s a famous detachment...further into the Rockies.

A. Yes, this is where they’ll get it. Boy, senility has reached me. I’m getting senile, no question about it. Any event, we ought to look that name up because it’s important. A lot of people would have jumped at that except I jumped the other way.

I went to the chaplain and I said, “Chaplain, I’m just in from Korea and I’m engaged.” I was lying because I was just dating. I’d been only maybe a month and I’m on these orders. I said, “I don’t want to go up there. I want to stay right where I am. How do I get off these orders?” He said, “There’s no way I can, I can’t tell you.” He says, “You’re in it, unless you were going to college.” [laughs]

Q. [laughs]

A. Well, I had no plan, never thought about getting a master’s, never thought about it. But I went right straight back to the barracks, and I wrote a letter to the University of Illinois applying for acceptance to a master’s course. Now I was an average student, maybe a hair over average but not much. I was just hoping they were going to take my application. Boom, I get the answer, “Approved.” I put in and got it immediately on the GI Bill.

Q. Yes.

A. Off I go to the University of Illinois.

Q. For the Fall Semester?

A. Yep.

Q. And a...

A. Leaving behind this...

Q. Must have been 1957, right ok.

A. Leaving behind this lady.

Q. Yes, Sally.

A. Who I write to.

Q. Was she finished with college, yet? No.
A. No, she was just finishing. She’s going back and I... let’s see now where am I on this? Well, I went all the way until next January. Now we’re in January...what year is that? 1958?

Q. 1958, I guess.

A. Ok January of 1958; I can’t just keep writing back and forth I have got to make this, get this serious. I buy the diamond ring and already thinking that we’re going to get married and went back and proposed to her in February of that year. She was still going back and forth to school. Well I, of course, I got a job, and that was the turning point right there.

Q. That’s with Muchow?

A. Bill Muchow. That’s what I came back is when I got with Muchow.

Q. Which will be probably a whole another topic. I know that is what you mean when we get into it. So, you left Illinois after six months or so, one semester?

A. That’s right, one semester.

Q. But you started your master’s in architectural engineering?

A. Yes, sir. Which I had my, my undergraduate was engineering as well.

Q. Yes, right. You’re doing well. I mean, your grades were...

A. Oh, this is, this is the big turning point, really big turning point. Yes, I am trying to be sure I get the sequence right. I go into a class in the engineering. I was, still it had architecture involved but there were certain specified ones in engineering with a class of about 30 people, 30 guys. Twenty-nine of them and me or maybe one other were military officers.

Q. Yes.

A. Captains and majors. Did I tell you this before?

Q. No, but I’m not surprised.

A. Ok, so we’re studying very particular parts of engineering, which had to do with, well structures, unusual structures, I don’t remember what they called them in those days. Any event, I met these guys and palled around with them the whole bit. I could’ve been maybe with because I go back and finish my master’s.

Q. Yes.
A. Maybe it was that one. One of these circumstances this story needs to be told. That’s where I met these guys.

Q. Yes.

A. We got to be good pals. Well, at this point, I’m working with Muchow’s office, could have been on either side because I took a leave of absence from Muchow’s. Any event, I get a call while I’m now at Muchow’s office from one of the guys in there. They said that they are putting together a special unit, Air Force unit that requires a civilian head. It’s for the instillation world-wide of the ICBM, Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles. They said, “We have a lot to say and you’re frankly the only civilian we know that knows anything about what we’re talking about.”

Q. Wow.

A. We’d like to recommend you. He said, “Your rank will be a GSA-14 or 15,” which I think he said was a General, Brigadier General or something.

Q. Yes, that’s a major level.

A. Yes, and he said you’ll get your…now this was the hook in the nose. This almost brought me here. I don’t know if you remember the B-47?

Q. Yes.

A. It was a three compartment plane that we made a little bit bigger. Its wings drooped when it sat on the runway, but when it got going it was a bird. They knew the hook for me. You’ll be assigned your own B-47 to inspect the installation world-wide.

Q. Good grief. What a plum.

A. Now, at this point, I got to believe, I believe Sally; we were married.

Q. Oh, you already were married.

A. I guess I must have been. Any event, but now I got everything that’s going there. Well, I go in, my mouth dropped, and I, not immediately from that call, I guess I called him from home, but I hadn’t talked to anybody until I sat down. Now Bill Muchow, I’ve tried to say, is one of the most Christian, nicest human beings that I have ever known. He was one of these people that when you looked him in the eye and said a story, he was listening all the time. When you said something, it came back with exactly the same level that you give it to him in.

I said to him, just, I told him stories just like I told you. He was a pipe smoker, and he’s been looking me in the face all the time. He got this pipe in there, and he looks down and just kind of looks at me and says, “That sounds like a terrific opportunity, but you’ll never be an architect.”
Oh man. Just now when I just said that story to you, the same thing happened to me then. Because now all of the sudden I’d start to enjoy architecture but boy if they had said that.

Q. It was a plum appointment. There would have been complications in your marriage because you’d be travelling overseas a lot but it was a great salary.

A. Oh yes.

Q. And exciting.

A. It got me as close to the moon as I was going to get.

Q. Yes, that’s right. But he was right of course.

A. Of course he was right, but there’s that turning point there. But the turning point, literally, you see it’s a double turning point. Muchow is the turning point; that’s where I’m always going to keep on going back to Muchow because his influence was so great for me to not take advantage of...if that invitation would have been before I met Muchow, I would have gone in a New York minute.

Q. Yes.

A. Because it was architecture remotely.

Q. Well, yes.

A. I would have been practicing engineering, that’s what that was about.

Q. Yes, but they’d be building these silos, is that right?

A. That’s exactly right – in the ground and all the rest of these things. It was distinctly and so that’s another justification for Muchow’s influence.

Q. Wow. Well, I want to get into him more, but that’s a great story. Our chronology has gotten a little complicated here. When did you and Sally marry? Do you remember the year?

A. I’m going to say...oh when was it? August...

Q. Maybe 1958? That’s ok.

A. If you just, we can fill that in.

Q. Ok.
A. I’ll look up something that will tell me the truth.

Q. Ok, I’m sorry.

A. Boy am I embarrassed because I can’t remember my own wedding.

Q. Well that’s a...

A. There was a lot going on in this period of time.

Q. Pardon?

A. A lot going on.

Q. Well of course, there was. Well of course, there was. You were living in Denver then. Why?

A. I was living in Denver.

Q. Before you married.

A. Yes.

Q. Somewhere close to Muchow’s office? Or an apartment? Or what?

A. Let’s see. Before we got married, where did I live? No I...yes well I can’t answer the question.

Q. Ok. You were in Champaign-Urbana...

A. Yes.

Q. In 1957 and you studied for a while but then left to work for Muchow.

A. Yes, and I got that job with Muchow. Oh I’ve got a... oh boy is this awful?

Q. That’s ok, that’s alright.

A. Because I’ve got to to think this whole thing through because the timing is important.

Q. Yes, yes.

A. I will work on that one a minute.

Q. When you were courting Sally, was she still up in Boulder or was she at home?
A. No, she was in Boulder.

Q. Ok.

A. She had Perry Como on every Friday. Perry Como was the joy of every sorority girl at the Kappa house. I would go pick up Sally, and he would be on the television as they would gather in this big room, watch Perry Como sit on a stool and sing.

Q. Oh Como, of course, yes with his sweaters.

A. With his sweater, exactly, exactly. I always had a Friday night going up there, me and all the girls and all this kind of stuff, but yes, she was up there to finish school.

Q. Well that’s great and we’ll have to sort out the timing, which doesn’t matter now but maybe you can put a little thought into it and we can reconstruct.

A. I will.

Q. You can talk about Muchow. I’d like you to describe him and his office a little more thoroughly. By the way, one of the partners was a guy named Severns?

A. John Severns was a fraternity brother, fraternity brother in architecture.

Q. Oh I’m sorry that was at UI.

A. That was Richardson, Severns, and Scheeler.

Q. Was he related to Penny Severns from Decatur?

A. I don’t think so, no.

Q. Ok.

A. He was related to the gal who was the mayor of Champaign.

Q. Oh.

A. But it wasn’t Penny Severns.

Q. Ok, well I just wondered. She was a famous...

A. Yes.
Q. And much admired person. Ok, yes, I was back, yes, I was back to U of I. Oh and I guess you also, you did work for a while at the U of I with this Richardson company didn’t you?

A. Richardson, Severns, and Scheeler.

Q. Yes, right.

A. Yes.

Q. Ok. That was before you took up with Muchow?

A. That was the summer that I was working at Richardson, Severns, Scheeler when I was going for that first semester of my master’s.

Q. Yes, right.

A. I would work in the mornings for them.

Q. You were doing architectural design work?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. Yes, right. Were they in commercial or residential or a little bit of everything?

A. Ambrose Richardson was the president and Severns and Scheeler were partners. Ambrose Richardson had a history of working originally with...he always said he was the fourth man in Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill and went all the way back. I think I told you a side story on him, maybe I didn’t. I would go to [laughs] these are the days that at least they always in advertising talked about the grey flannel suit.

Q. Oh sure.

A. The three martini lunches.

Q. That’s right.

A. This was the era that I am back starting on my master’s degree but not rich enough either for the grey flannel suit or three martini lunches.

Q. [laughs] Three martinis.

A. But Ambrose Richardson was.

Q. Oh, so he was kind of a real gentleman.
A. Oh he was. He had the experience. His background again, he was like the fourth man at Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill. This is when the Tennessee Valley Authority started. This goes back in the early days before the war and during the war that they were putting up power plants and all kinds of stuff, and Skidmore was big into that thing. Well from there...there’s going to be a follow up story on this thing...and so Richardson, I worked with him in the morning.

We would go to lunch together with maybe somebody else from his office always at the same Chinese restaurant in Champaign. We’d go up the stairs, and they would bring immediately a drink to Ambrose Richardson, which was a martini and a sandwich and something else. He’d never eat the sandwich. He would always drink the martini and another martini and another one. I’d drive him down, and he had the first class of that session that I was going to, which during some part of that event, he was the first class in marketing.

Q. Yes.

A. The story I told, which I’ve used so many times and believe it to this day as being one of the enlightenments to me about marketing. He said that he used to put together the brochures for Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill.

Q. Yes.

A. The brochures were oversize, legal size but oversize that with their covers were real calfskin. In other words, animal like...

Q. Oh calfskin.

A. Calfskin, with the hair and everything on. He said, “They would put their materials in there.” This is bewildering to a bunch of freshmen sitting there. He said, “The point being, they were oversize. They were too large to put away in a filing cabinet, and they were too pretty to put in a basket.” So they laid it on the desk of the person.

Q. What a brilliant idea.

A. He said, “Part of the whole show was, in marketing, people would say well gee what is this?” They’d turn the page and that thing said Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill on the front cover but they had, they had to see.

Q. Isn’t that interesting.

A. I’ve told him that’s a way that’s so obvious.

Q. Yes, sure.
A. I repeated this thing in a different fashion when I was working on a fundraising campaign for Paul Simon, and he was running against Dan Walker for governor.

Q. Right, in the primary, right.

A. Yes. I remember leaving my house after looking at the morning paper that Dan Walker had walked from Metropolis to some place down in southern there. I then walked into a fundraiser for Paul Simon and they’re saying, “Well we want to get on half a page on page five that’s going to cost us $500 to a $1,000 or something.” I raised my stupid hand and said, “Has anybody read the paper this morning.” They said, “Well, not yet.” Well, I said, “When you do, what’s free is on the front and it is news, Walker Walked. We’re paying a $1,000 and he got it for free.”

Q. He’s on the front page.

A. In other words, big news.

Q. Yes.

A. It’s the cheapest thing you can do. Do something that’s positive. That’s trading, I mean… I’m lecturing about stuff that I believe, that’s all.

Q. No, that’s quite true. You were dead right.

A. If we start thinking… but again that came from people like Ambrose Richardson. Ambrose also was very influential saying to me, “If you’re going any place in architecture or the American Institute of Architects, you want to get on to their national committees.”

Q. Yes.

A. I took that and I got involved in the RUDAT [Regional Urban Development Assistance Team], and it’s been a beneficial thing all the way through. But Ambrose Richardson, after their partnership…it broke up when he became the head of the architectural department at Notre Dame.

Q. Oh, ok.

A. But you asked me a question I’m answering now.

Q. No, that’s wonderful. He has a very aristocratic name. He may not have been.

A. Ambrose Richardson.

Q. Ambrose, that’s a…
A. Yes, there’s something in there that...

Q. Yes, that’s right.

A. That I haven’t quite...

Q. Of course, there was a famous architect named Richardson.

A. I never put that together.

Q. In New York, yes.

A. I never gulped into society.

Q. No, right.

A. At least unfortunately I’ve never taken autographs either. I’ve had so many opportunities to have presidential autographs and things.

Q. Yes, but you just didn’t do it.

A. It never hit me for some reason.

Q. Yes. I always felt it was a little bit of an imposition if it’s a social event, but I haven’t had as many opportunities as you have.

A. Well it’s not quantity, it’s just never occurred to me.

Q. Right.

A. So important.

Q. So you did some of the TVA work?

A. No, no, no. That was Richardson. That was just his history. He had apparently done some of that. But what Richardson’s office did was the dormitories, several dormitories.

Q. Oh sure, of course.

A. At the University of Illinois.

Q. Any classroom buildings?
A. I’m sure there were, but I can’t name them, I can’t name them.

Q. Sure, that’s fine. But they were building a lot of dormitories. There was still this shortage of housing even then from World War II.

A. Absolutely. Yes, they still had the parade ground units, which is those huts out there. They finally got rid of those.

Q. Can’t remember. There was a new housing unit for graduate students…Orchard, Orchard Lane [Orchard Downs] or something.

A. That could’ve been on the south side some place.

Q. Ok. Anything else you want to say about the Richardson firm and your work there, which was only about, what, six months or so while you were a student?

A. Something close to that, yes.

Q. Ok. Then you were in Denver, at some point getting married.

A. Yes.

Q. But you were working for Muchow.

A. That’s right. Muchow’s…see I took a leave out.

Q. Yes.

A. Ok, I came…I left Muchow’s in 1961, if we take four off of that it’s going to take us back to what?

Q. 1957. That’s when you went to Denver, I think, yes. 1961 back four years is 1957, and that’s what my notes were as to when you moved to Denver.

A. Ok, ok, that’s correct. Ok, my first semester I lived with three other guys in an apartment on Springfield Avenue on the west side of Champaign.

Q. Oh, ok. They weren’t architecture engineering students or maybe they were? Just trying to help.

A. No. At that point I was working with, maybe I was going full-time then. That’s probably when I ran into the Air Force guys.

Q. Oh, ok. That early, ok.
A. Yes because we were...

Q. But you had never been an officer in the Army, had you?

A. No they knew my attitude about the Army.

Q. [laughs]

A. No, I told them I said, “I was at war with the Army from the day I started.” I wasn’t...I believed in...well I’ve said it, you and I agree, universal military service would have been terrific but it was sort of annoying at the same time.

Q. Right. You know what? We have run out of time. So, I think we’ll end it there and pick up Muchow and marriage after you’ve kind of cleared your thinking about that.

A. Put those martinis down and started thinking. [laughs]

Q. That’s right. But this has been very lively and wonderful on your experiences in Korea.

A. Well, it was fun times when you look back at them. It’s really...I wouldn’t change them, wouldn’t change them.

Q. Well everything you are consists of what you were in one way or another.

A. Everything you eat is what you are, right?

Q. Yes.

END OF TAPE THREE, SIDE TWO

45:03
Q. This is an oral history interview on April 14, 2011, with Wally Henderson and the interviewer is Cullom Davis. Wally, we’re at that point in your life story when you have a romantic engagement with your wife, Sally, and you are also living in Denver working with William Muchow. Did you say you got married in Colorado?

A. Colorado Springs.

Q. Springs?

A. Episcopal Church in Colorado Springs, yes.

Q. Right, ok.

A. [clears throat]

Q. Any of your family or friends make it out?

A. Oh, yes. Yes, I think it was the first time my mother had been on an airplane. She flew out there with my dad, and one of my fraternity brothers was my best man.

Q. Oh, ok.

A. We had several other people that I had known. I lived in Denver a while.

Q. Yes, right, ok. She was an attractive young lady, for sure.

A. Oh yes.

Q. She qualified for your height criteria.

A. Oh yes. Yes, she was a little cutie is what I was going to say.

Q. She was a little cutie is a good way to put it. My recollection, she also was effervescently social. I mean she enjoyed company and to laugh.

A. Yes. She took that directly from her dad who was a joker constantly. As I was courting her living at Fort Carson, Colorado, where I was stationed and she just lived a few miles away, so I
saw her practically every day. They were right at the foot of the Rocky Mountains there at the Broadmoor Hotel area. Just within two blocks of the hotel. But her dad was forever joking around.

Always remember when someplace along the way he pulled one of these things where the cup was glued to the saucer, but I didn’t know this thing. All the sudden I picked it up and the cup comes up with the saucer on the bottom of it. I about choked because I thought the thing was going to fall off there. He just doubled-up laughing. He was forever doing that.

Q. [laughs] So he was a prankster.

A. Oh yes, yes. He had his own business. He had gone to Brown Business College here in Springfield.

Q. Oh.

A. Or, I said Springfield, I think it was Peoria area. Brown’s Business College, I think.

Q. So he was from Illinois?

A. Oh yes. They were all from Illinois. She was born in Peoria.

Q. Oh.

A. The family was from Illinois, the Vicarys, V-I-C-A-R-Y. He ended up going to Brown’s Business College and learned how to do bookkeeping and accounting. As a result of that was his education, again going back into that period when everybody just hoped to get a job, let alone get an education. But he got this and he worked for a couple of people who were creative and ended up when these people were just happy to be designers, creative type things, and had his bookkeeping had taken patents in lieu of out of payment. He had several patents, one of them being a four-wheel-drive that was used by Willys-Overland.

Q. My heaven.

A. The other one, which was really interesting, is he had…every place, in fact, every funeral director for a while, everybody knew John Vicary because he was the guy to go to all the conventions and things. That was one of these folding gates, in the old days at least they don’t do it so much at recent funerals I’ve been to, but to display the flowers they could pull this gate apart; it had hooks on it and so they could hang all these bouquets of flowers.

Q. Simple idea but it was, yes.

A. That was called the IXL or XL something. In other words, XL but it meant excellent.
Q. Ok.

A. That was his company, so he had the patents.

Q. That was based in Peoria?

A. It originated there but my, his wife, my mother-in-law, Mildred Vicary, who again was a super lady whose family’s also from that area, but she was terrified by tornadoes. This was a tornado alley almost. When they had an opportunity, they moved to Colorado. He set up his business there making these XL gates and so forth. Then he took on side contracts from there, so when I met them he was making, oh some kind of a...well making the hubs for Willys-Overland.

Q. Yes.

A. Aluminum die-cast machine. When I was visiting their house, at least on a Sunday sometimes, we would go down to the plant to be sure that the ingots of aluminum were going into the machine, which ran automatically. It was one of these wonderful machines that you didn’t have to tend it, just be sure you could feed it.

Q. [laughs]

A. It made all this equipment. But he had a business and very successful.

Q. Pretty successful.

A. Yes and it was clear. She had a brother who didn’t live at home anymore and wasn’t interested in the business. I think he was terribly disappointed because he had a very profitable business. Like I say, the Broadmoor Hotel, which he didn’t own the hotel but all of his neighbors were part of the hotel and he was well invested.

Q. So they were, they were definitely and an upper-class family.

A. Oh yes, oh yes. Like I say, you’d never known knowing John Vicary. He was, he was the town clown.

Q. [laughs]

A. But not in a joking way, not a foolish way.

Q. Yes, right. Did he speak to you about possibly getting to that business?

A. Yes, as a matter of fact. Not one of these serious talks because he never would bear down and crowd you or anything like this. But yes he said, “You do know that I’ve got a good
business?” I said, “Yes, John, I do, but I’m an architect.” That was it. He was satisfied that we were on our way. I think they were heavily disappointed when I elected, which is later in our story, of course, when we elected to come back to Springfield.

Q. Yes.

A. Which when I left Springfield, to go to college, so long sucker because I’m never coming back.

Q. Ok you didn’t want...you at that time, you had no interest in returning to Springfield.

A. No.

Q. So the assumption on the part of your in-laws was that you probably would settle in Colorado?

A. Yes, yes. Matter of fact, I bought some property up there.

Q. Oh, in the Denver area?

A. [laughs] Yes, we’ve already discussed about the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile story.

Q. Yes, right.

A. I had bought a piece of property, which was on, was south Denver. At that time if you know the territory, the Rocky Mountains are to the west and everything is flat on the eastern side of the mountain. I was on the east side of the mountains but at the south end of what was Denver proper then. It was a development. It was somebody put a road in there and so forth. I bought ten acres, which was the leftover from some other purchases that the people had made. Part of the reason I got it at a pretty good price is because I was on a hillside that went up. The reason that nobody wanted it was because the hillside was the top of a titan missile hole.

Q. [laughs]

A. I mean, the thing, the thing was there and I didn’t know it. If they ever pushed the button, it might turn your grass brown from the flame.

Q. [laughs] Oh, Wally.

A. True story. But it was still a hell of an investment because you have 10 acres is a lot of territory.

Q. Sure, sure.
A. You can get pretty far away from it at the time.

Q. It’d be exciting.

A. Well, it was part of the story. The last time I was in Denver to go see my 10 acre site. I couldn’t find it because it’s way into Denver now.

Q. Yes, yes.

A. I don’t know what they ever did with that rocket but, that was it. So I was closely related, still going into space. That’s right, I could’ve caught a ride right there, couldn’t I? [laughs] Just if I had had my right timing.

Q. Ok, so that was the assumption that you and your bride and her parents, maybe even your parents, had that you would settle in the Colorado area.

A. Sure.

Q. That’s why your relationship with Muchow was particularly important.

A. I had, I’m telling you honestly, we’ve already built the story about how I got out of aeronautical engineering and into architectural engineering, but it never occurred to me to have my own business, never even thought about it. I can’t explain that. I’m an architect, so I’ll go to work for somebody.

Q. Ok.

A. So that’s one of those points of turning again, a couple of events that happened while I’m in Colorado.

Q. Ok. We’ll get to that. You have talked about Muchow, but I don’t know exactly what it was. Was it his design ideas and relationship with...who’s the famous?

A. Eliel Saarinen.

Q. Yes, Eliel Saarinen.

A. He studied under Eliel Saarinen at Cranbrook.

Q. Yes. Was that a major, I mean, was that a profound impression on you that you were dealing with really modern, contemporary architecture?
A. Well, the answer is yes, I guess because he and I, we had a good architectural school. I was very happy with my bachelor degree, so I had the background to work in any architect’s firm that you wanted to work in and was going to do architecture. But the design elements, nobody got really poured on heavy.

Again, the Beaux Art School as they used to call it was just going out of fashion when I got my degree. Talked about what they did in the old world was really terrific type stuff, and then you had the people who were the Bauhaus bunch, they followed. The Bauhaus group was, form follows function. The function was to keep the weather off of you, so a box is a fine thing to live in and so you didn’t worry it. Mies van der Rohe was teaching at IIT [Illinois Institute of Technology] in those days.

Q. That’s right, he was.

A. I was told, I never saw it, but the students, all of them had to carry bricks around with them during some part of their education. I mean, like carry them to bed with them just so they’d get used to what a brick was, which was basic. But that was that form of teaching. Muchow’s was a completely different thing. Now Saarinen was, of course, from Finland.

Q. Finland, right.

A. Brynn and I went and saw his home and so forth in Finland. It was exciting. That’s many years later but Bill Muchow had...well first of all, his family had settled in Denver and he was well known because I think his dad was in the masonry business. I’m talking about making bricks.

Q. Yes, right.

A. As a result, when they had a fire in Denver, like every town did once upon a time, they made some kind of rule you’re not going to build any wooden houses. So that was a completely different thing.

Q. A nice business for a mason.

A. Oh yes, it was. But now there you got the son that comes along who is putting buildings together, and he’s good into stone. But with Saarinen, it was a different touch. But again, I didn’t go to Muchow because he had gone to Saarinen. I didn’t even know where Cranbrook was, as a matter of fact.

Q. Right.

A. But when I got the job with him it was that Bill Muchow, I always want to call him Mr. Muchow because he just commanded respect not demanded it.

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Q. Yes.

A. He was just one of these nice people, who never, never raised his voice, never, never seemed to be perturbed about too many things, never making any cutting remarks about anybody. Good guy, who really said you should do your best and your best wasn’t just get into a Sweets Catalogue, which is where all designs of architecture come out of.

Q. What kind of catalog?

A. It’s called Sweets, S-W-E-E-T-S. That’s the company name.

Q. Oh.

A. The Sweets Catalogue was a series of books that you could see in any architect’s office in those days, which had a green backing and they all were broken down by material.

Q. Sure.

A. If you were looking for glass or you were looking for metal or some of these other things or different already manufactured items, windows, they would be in a certain catalogue. But you could know nothing if you wanted to except that the laws say that you had to have for public health and safety, an architect’s license on public buildings, public and most buildings of commercial.

Anything other than private residence, residence didn’t have that. But in any event, but I end up going to work with a guy who said but the real responsibility is to solve the problem of the client who trusts you that you know more than he does and he’s going to get his monies worth. Whoa.

Q. [laughs]

A. I mean nobody’s ever said that before. It was just get a job if you can and here’s a rendering and this is what it looks like. You usually studied it pretty carefully, but sometimes you let some of the things go because maybe the back was facing something that didn’t count.

Q. Sure.

A. At least in our judgment today it didn’t.

Q. Yes. But Muchow set the standard much higher.

A. Oh yes, yes, yes. There were 11 in the office most of the time that I worked there. That’s not a very big office except that the jobs we got were the biggest jobs in the Rocky Mountain region. We just got them for anybody and people were starting to become sensitive about
design. But they, when they came to Bill Muchow, they knew that’s exactly what they got because we had a string, Muchow had a string of great success nationally.

Q. Downtown office buildings.

A. Yes, in fact while I was there one of the buildings that was...I can’t remember if it was on the board or we just didn’t get it finished. It was the big bank in Denver, right downtown Denver.

Q. I see, ok.

A. Now I got to admit that his dad was on the board of that bank, too, so it didn’t hurt getting it. But it was one of the principle things there.

Q. Very modern in design?

A. Oh yes, oh yes.

Q. Glass and steel.

A. Well, in this particular case a lot of stone and glass as well. In fact, it was interesting how he hired us. I told you about my accident that come back and say I can run the mimeograph machine. Other people would come in and say well I work for so and so, or I admire your design and all this, this stuff. But the people who came while I was there and ahead of me as well, came from highly acclaimed design schools: from Harvard, from Yale, from a...what am I trying to say...Pratt Institute.

Q. Yes.

A. Good friend of mine, Pratt Institute, his name was...oh let’s see. Am I correct there? Jim, I want to say Ream, but that may not be right. [clears throat] We’ll correct this later on.

Q. Ok we’ll do it later on.

A. Anyway but, ended up going out to California. He’s just passed away recently. Read about him. But his uncle was Whizzer White who was a Supreme Court justice.

Q. Oh, of course, from Denver.

A. Yes. I mean, I guess. I don’t know.

Q. Yes he was at least from Colorado and a Harvard friend of John Kennedy, I think.

A. Yes, yes.
Q. Alright.

A. In fact, John Kennedy, that’s a story I’d love to tell a matter of fact because I’d been working at Muchow’s office on 16th Street, which is right down from where the, I think it was the a...one of the hotel chains. It’s right there at that triangle but within walking distance of our office. Well Jack Kennedy is there running for, I guess he was running for the presidency.

Q. In 1960.

A. Yes he was. 1960. Well, I’m making my few hundred dollars a month and I’m married now. I take the bus to work and all this stuff, but I wanted to hear Jack Kennedy. So I walk into the downtown area they had for selling tickets. I said, “I would like to get a ticket to the luncheon.” They all looked at me like nobody walks up and says, “Can I buy a luncheon ticket?” So I got it for 25 buck, and I decided I wasn’t going to be late because I was in walking distance. It wasn’t the same day I bought the ticket ahead, but they weren’t assigned seats like in a lot of places. I walked in and I sat down at the table, right dead smack in front not more than this distance from the podium. It was five feet away from Jack Kennedy and his sister who was right next to him.

Q. Isn’t that amazing.

A. I was so impressed with that man. I mean it’s the way he spoke, he was so casual. He’d adjust his tie and he’d say something. Then he would sort of laugh like, almost like our conversation is. It was just, it was friendly in the way he was approaching the whole audience. His sister would do this, she...I mean she’s focused on him, and obviously she knows all the things about him except she’d get one of these smiles on his face like that was a dumb thing to say or something.

Q. [laughs]

A. But I was so impressed that today, even today, I believe, it couldn’t be told I’m sure. I think Nixon probably voted for him even though he was...

Q. Oh no.

A. I mean he was, he was overwhelming. In other words, I think he wasn’t competing with him he was so damn impressed with him. You couldn’t help but be impressed. Jack Kennedy was something else.

Q. I agree.

A. Just something else. Great thrill. But anyway, that was just a little side story.

Q. Took a moment off from your job to listen to the future president.

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A. Oh yes, oh yes.

Q. Which sister was it, do you suppose?

A. I want to say Eunice but I can’t believe that. I mean, I don’t know why I just remember those names.

Q. Ok.

A. I remember there was another chance I got to ask for autographs. I never collected them so it’s sort of dumb. But every time he shows up or I hear that “don’t ask what the country can do for you” thing, oh boy. Go ahead.

Q. That’s a great experience. So you lived modestly but in a successful law firm or architectural firm. Did you work directly with Muchow much or basically one of his people?

A. No, no, no. He would, he trusted everybody there. It was funny, we’re all young guys. We’re under 30, most of us, and Bill Muchow was 10 years older. I mean it’s a very young firm. The consultants that he hired mechanical, electrical engineers, structural engineers were people just like him. Some of these names or whatever don’t come to me again and I’m sorry I can’t think of them.

Q. That’s ok. But these were a young construction firms, relatively new, or on the edge or ambitious?

A. All of us trying to do better. I mean, in other words, he didn’t just pick up anybody who…I’m a structural engineer, here’s my license.

Q. Yes, right.

A. A group that he worked with and some place along the way I’m going to get that name to you because it is very important. They were great guys. One was a professor who was older and the other guy was young like Muchow. They went to thin shell concrete, which is doing forms that are six inches thick but do great big spans because of the way they’re designed. They’re structurally helping themselves.

Q. What are they called again?

A. Thin shell.

Q. Oh thin, or fin?

A. Thin, T-H-I-N.
Q. Yes, thin shell concrete.

A. It’s funny because it, this was a big down in, a great deal in Mexico. They had a couple of Mexican architects who had made the paper, or not paper but the magazines and so forth. It’s always funny how they tested their buildings is that the thin shell, they would take the workmen and the workmen would put on these sombreros at least in these pictures. They’d all be standing on top of this arch, which is just proof that they didn’t think this was going to fall down.

Q. [laughs]

A. Any event, we did several of those or Mr. Muchow did.

Q. These weren’t, these were arches.

A. Oh yes.

Q. What length maybe, maximum?

A. I can’t even tell you but they were ridiculously...

Q. Six inches...

A. Yes, a ridiculously big span.

Q. Wow.

A. But that wasn’t a specialty by a longshot. We did buildings that took a lot of imagination, different forms and things. I don’t know whether you’ve ever seen the building I used to have for my office over on South State Street. It’s got some arches that go up and so forth.

Q. Yes, right.

A. I had just finished working on that, the building in Denver, Colorado before we came to Springfield. It was the Women’s Club of Denver and it was...I got to admit this is a...took it right from there and the arch that sprung from our building three years later was the Women’s Club of Denver had exactly the same detail.

Q. Sure. Well, we always do that from our work.

A. Sure, I mean it works and makes lots of sense. But no, Muchow was always continuously doing things but he always looked for craftsmen who could help him. I mentioned to you that later on we ended up getting a weaver who was also from Cranbrook.
Q. Yes.

A. It wasn’t just somebody who said, “Hey, I can sew.” She actually had her loom setting over in one corner in one area of the office.

Q. Is it for tapestries or ornamental...

A. For fabrics that might be useful in whatever project.

Q. Interesting.

A. We did church work. We did the family YMCA. We saw...can’t even remember the name of what we call these, today everybody does it. When we came back, Ferry and I got into it because of his work with healthcare. The whole idea of bringing somebody because of the church group who was elderly and so forth, total living; these were condos and this kind of stuff. I did a number of developments like that. Muchow was highly regarded that way.

Q. Yes, so he was a maybe not celebrated, but he was a popular on the go, on the way up architect.

A. He was celebrated.

Q. He was celebrated?

A. Oh I, I mean I’d go to a meeting of architects and they would always say, “Who are you working with?” When they’d ask me I’d say, “Bill Muchow.” Every time they’re mouth would drop, “How did you get in his office?” I mean it was a point of real respect.

Q. That’s great.

A. I’m very proud to say it now. At the time I was, well ok. [laughs]


A. Exactly, exactly right. That’s sort of the way it was going because it was our everyday affair. But it was interesting because all of us together would have lunch in the office. I mean we could go out on the street. We had a delicatessen and a whole bunch of things. But we would sit there at noon and argue about architecture. Now when I say argue meaning, what’d you think about such and such a building?

Q. Right.
A. Here you’d get opinions from Harvard and Yale and Pratt Institute, and it goes on and on and on.

Q. So it was a great growth experience for you?

A. Yes. Before it goes out of my mind, the gentleman I’m telling you about who just passed away is Jim Ream, R-E-A-M.

Q. R-E-A-M. He was the one with the Pratt Institute, I think?

A. Yes.

Q. Yes.

A. He went to San Francisco from there. I was told, married a TV commentary lady and got his own office going, but just as I say passed away but with a very nice writing on the Google.

Q. Oh.

A. R-E-A-M.

Q. Yes, thank you. Ok. Well I’m having, I have to assume that this interlude in your professional career was very exciting. Now, of course, having your own firm and we’ll come to that, was also exciting.

A. Sure.

Q. But you were among some bright, aspiring architects.

A. Yes.

Q. There was no unique, singular stamp that the firm designed. But it leaned modern.

A. Oh yes, absolutely. I think people came to the office because of both the reputation and didn’t know modern from anything, but or who were looking for someone modern and would get recommendation. The way it would actual work is Bill Muchow, again I’ll give you just the character of the man because I went with him. Towards the end I travelled with, not travelled, we didn’t go far from Denver.

Q. Right.

A. But some of the interviews and so forth, I accompanied him. I’ll always remember one because it was a school board, and we’re meeting in the office, in our office in Denver, his office
and the board people are in the room. One of them says...the reason I’m hesitating...It was in
their office because that’s kind of an important point.

Q. Ok, yes.

A. They said to Mr. Muchow, “Well, why did you do such and such on this particular job?” He’s
got this pipe in his hand and I’m sitting by the edge of the table [laughs]. Boy, this is going to be
a good answer. He’s sort of sucking on the pipe and looking down. He sets it down and he
says, “I don’t know.”

Q. That takes self-confidence.

A. Oh yes. This question was, “Why did you do that?” He says, “I don’t know.”

Q. [laughs]

A. I about fell under the table, and we were hired to get the job. I mean, he was honest. He
just he didn’t suddenly say, “Well, I remembered being in Italy.”

Q. Yes, right, all that kind of stuff. Isn’t that funny?

A. It was. He was just a person that you could totally trust, but when you got it out of there.
Now here’s another precision type thing. He would do all the designing. In other words, there
wasn’t any out of the 11 of us who did any original design and said here is the floor plan. He
would lay it out as he wanted it, and particularly the elevations. He would draw them, draw
and delineate them. In that delineation, he wasn’t just arbitrary. Where the lines were, you
could measure them at an eighth inch scale.

Q. Wow.

A. When you, whatever you measured, you’d better turn up. I had the experience early on
again when I was working with him. I was standing up, I think I told you, to catch up I would
literally because I’m now assigned a job...that is what you asked me about, “Was it a team?”
No, it wasn’t teams. You’d get an individual projects. Our job was he’d walk in and in this
particular case, I forget what that my job was, but it was a church or something.

I would make these little sketches how it would all go together and then go back to sleep at
night because I had that pad of paper and then put it down there. I had laid this whole building
out and Mr. Muchow comes walking through the office, which he was...we’re all there. There
wasn’t any private offices and all that stuff. He walks along and he looks at my table and stops
and says, “Let me have some of your tracing paper.”

He laid it over and he made some lines and came back. He said, “Well try this.” I looked at it
and I thought, what’s going on here except that when I overlaid it with his original drawing it
was exactly the same thing. The difference is, is that I had gotten, in my mind, how to put the windows together and because we had a lot of glass in this area. Well, it had come up four inches wide when I put all of the pieces together. He had made the drawing two inches wide.

Q. [laughs]

A. Now an eighth inch scale, this is just almost the width of the line drawing. But if you look at those windows right there that we’re looking at, if that centerpiece was, which is what I would have detailed, that detail, and you wanted it that much less, it’s a different picture completely.

Q. Exactly.

A. He didn’t jump up and down. He said, “Try that.” One of the other guys comes over and he said, “Don’t you get it? This is what he wants. He wants two inches.” That’s that lesson again about the watch, I told you earlier.

Q. But he was gracious about it. He didn’t make a scene.

A. Yes, right. That’s because I’ve wasted his time drawing something else. Once you got that in your mind when he said something, when he said, “I don’t know,” he wasn’t about to starting BS-ing around with this group.

Q. No, no.

A. When he made a drawing, he wasn’t kidding. He meant this isn’t just a window. This is a window that’s divided by this particular mullion at that size.

Q. What a wonderful character.

A. Oh man. It was. He was part of Eliel Saarinen’s team that won the arch at St. Louis.

Q. Yes.

A. I... [coughs]

Q. So he worked on the arch?

A. He was part of the team. Yes, he was a student at that time. He put a team together to have drawings.

Q. Yes.

A. He actually got out, I saw, 20 years before they ever talked about building that arch.
Q. Yes.

A. He pulled the drawings out. I looked them. I thought, “That’s a heck of an idea.” He described how that they had gotten...you can’t build the Eiffel Tower over again, but it will make a statement as the opening to the west. That’s what they were trying to say.

Q. Brilliant, brilliant.

A. They built it. When they built I went, “Wow. That was fabulous.”

Q. So, I would have thought it would be difficult to leave him.

A. It was, yes. There’s a story behind that.

Q. Ok.

A. Alright, I’m assigned to a church. The church is a nondenominational church in the first range in the Rocky Mountains. Now Bill had done the interviews. I don’t think I was on that particular interview, but it was my job to get it done. Well, it was on the side of a hill in lichens, which is this green moss that grows out of rock was the back end of the church area. What we had done is built it right into the church itself.

Q. Oh.

A. I mean built the church right into the stone so this was the back of the chancery or the sanctuary.

Q. Wow.

A. I was going back and forth. Now, Bill didn’t get out into the field very much. I’m going up there as we...first of all, I helped make the presentation on what it was so I knew what all the elements were. But the minister and I got along rather well, so I drive the 30 miles up in that first range. It got so personal that the minister would call me when it was raining at three o’clock in the morning and tell me that...but the church isn’t finished, what can we do? [laughs] Pray.

Q. [laughs]

A. I didn’t say that obviously, but there wasn’t anything I could do.

Q. Sure, sure.

A. But at least I had established a good relationship. It worked out well, and the building turned out fine. It was oriented so that it faced to the... the alter was on the west end of the
church, which was in all glass behind it. So you’re looking at the second range of the Rocky Mountains with snow on them most of the year. So it’s all glass. It will all be with a drape that goes across the area and the pulpit is right there at the side.

Well, the dedication comes and I...remember I’ve been working on this thing for six or eight months with the minister, and we got it built. It’s dedication day and Bill Muchow says, “I’ve haven’t been up there for so long, I’d better follow you up.” So he and one of his kids get in the car and follow me up. We’re sitting in the back of the church up against the lichen wall I talked about. We know what’s going to follow because of the way it’s designed.

The minister can say we owe all the beauty to our Lord, push a button, the drapes open up, and you’re looking at the Rocky Mountains. I remember, Sunday morning the sun is in the east, and so the mountains are lit because they’re west of us. It was quite a cool thing. It opens up exactly this way. The minister is up there and he says, “We owe all this beauty to God,” and he pushes the button, “and our architect,” and I stiffen up a little bit because Bill Muchow’s sitting next to me and my wife’s there, “and our architect, Bill Muchow.” That’s right, that’s exactly right.

Q. Yes.

A. My wife nudged me and she says, “You’re leaving.” Three weeks later I was gone.

Q. Yes.

A. Now but it was right, it was exactly right.

Q. No, it wasn’t. It was right to acknowledge both of you.

A. Well, it never even entered my mind, now previous to that, which was 1961, Thanksgiving of 1960, which by the way, Jack Kennedy got elected in 1960. That’s an important part of my attitude, too, I guess. Any event, Jack...on Thanksgiving, now Don Ferry’s working with the Department of Public Health; he’s a hospital architect.

Q. In?

A. In Springfield.

Q. Ok.

A. In Springfield. He had called me....His brother-in-law was my best friend in high school, Bill Farley.

Q. Oh.
A. I think Don had transferred from Bradley [University] to the U of I, and I think with one of his children or something I had been a blood donor while he was in school.

Q. Oh.

A. So we had known each other. We we’re in touch.

Q. But you weren’t in the same classes?

A. No, I was one year older.

Q. Ok, right.

A. So we weren’t in any class at the university.

Q. He’s a native of Springfield?

A. Oh yes.

Q. Ok.

A. Prairie Roofing and I’m not sure, I’m not sure exactly what his dad did, but he had a company. [clear throat] But the…I lost my train of thought.

Q. I’m sorry. He contacted you.

A. Well, he contacts me and he says, “There’s a job opening here that you may be interested in.” I said, “No, I’m not, I’m doing fine with Muchow.” Anyway something triggered back and forth, so I took the train back over Thanksgiving to see Don Ferry and to see my folks, of course.

Q. Sure.

A. But it was just a one-way trip back and forth. There wasn’t much else going on. I went over to the office, and he showed me what it was. The salary sounded pretty good and was over in the Stratton Building. It had a green, flyspeck design as I describe it now in my enthusiasm. Green, flyspecked walls and very, very “state-ish,” I guess the state type occupancy. I said, “Don, I understand what you’re saying, but I don’t want to do that. I’m fine where I am.” Now this is Thanksgiving and we’re now into springtime, and it had stuck. I had said, “Don, I’m not interested.” But we had stayed in contact and now we’re into February or March, whenever it was. It was February when I’m up in that mountain there.

Q. Yes, that’s right, opened the curtain. [laughs]
A. When the minster says that, “We owe all this beauty to our God and our architect, Bill Muchow,” and that’s when Sally nudges me and says, “We’re moving.” Three weeks later, which was... my mother always sent us... no we didn’t open the office... I was back in Springfield. We opened our office officially on the 16th of March so it was sometime in March.

Q. Wow, so you acted pretty quickly?

A. Oh yes.

Q. But it tells me, and I’ll test this on you, is that you had had enough good experience in Indianapolis and now Denver and in college and in architecture school that you felt confident you could do the work and that while Muchow was a great influence, it was unfair and it was time for you to get credit for work.

A. I, well, that’s rational. I never thought all that stepping in there some place along the way, but I was clearly disappointed.

Q. Sure.

A. But I still say he created the enthusiasm for anybody to do a good job to help him. So I happened to be the lucky guy that he was making enthusiastic to do it at just when they threw out the couple of flowers at the particular event; the timing, all those things all the sudden fell together: boom, boom, boom.

Q. Was it difficult to tell him that you were leaving? Do you remember?

A. I don’t have any recollection of the conversation. But he wished me well, and we did stay in touch and so forth.

Q. Did he ever visit you and see your work in Springfield?

A. No he didn’t. He passed away early... gee I can’t even tell you what year he passed away. He passed away of prostate cancer.

Q. Oh.

A. In his 50s, which was too bad.

Q. Yes.

A. But I will always say that he inspired everybody in that office, and certainly from the writing that I told you was in Google about Jim Ream.

Q. Yes.
A. Jim Ream had followed through as well.

Q. Ok. Well it’s a great story and it’s a great, more than an apprenticeship but a very important step in your professional career.

A. Yes sir, oh yes sir. I think I tried to pass some of this on in a...without thinking about it every time, but any young person that ever came to our office, I wanted to see, just wanted to see them. I’d sit there and talk to them.

I’d ask them, “Why do you want to be an architect?” Well, invariably many of these young people who were not yet in college said, “Well, I want to be an architect but I’m not very good at math.” I mean, for some reason math is like a big devil, but I went through architectural engineering and this went into every kind of convulsion of calculus.

Q. Yes of course. You had to know your math, right.

A. But interestingly enough and I’d say this to them, “But here I am practicing as an architect and I haven’t ever used any of it.” But that’s because I didn’t go into the engineering part. We didn’t...architects you see, until we finally got into all the specialty type things, you had to either know somebody who could glue that building together for you or with luck, the contractor knew how because they didn’t make detailed drawings.

Thomas Jefferson never put steel beams or even arches together with studying out would they’d stand up or not. It’s funny is, I had made trips to see buildings in Europe, a couple of cathedrals fell down twice before they figured out that...

Q. Trial and error. [laughs]

A. Yes. Just fortunately only a few people were killed. [laughs] It was like, I, yes I think it was Chartres was one of them that fell down in a rainstorm or something and it was a big disappointment to the community in the sense of it was sort of what the community was built around. [laughs]

Q. There’s one other element of that episode that I’d like to probe. That is that Sally knew you well enough, or sensed the situation well enough to nudge you and say, “We’re leaving.” Was that the kind of marriage you had where you two fell along the same lines?

A. She was just a sweetheart in every sense that we didn’t argue about a lot of things at all. We didn’t know a lot about anything other than each other. It just...she had lived in Denver. She was from Colorado. I mean that’s where she got her education since she was like 13.

Q. Yes.
A. I didn’t know anything about Colorado either, so I mean we were spending a great deal of time with each other.

Q. Of course you were.

A. So that was the way it was.

Q. You had talked work and future and family.

A. Sure.

Q. She wasn’t a bit averse to moving to Springfield.

A. No because again she did have relatives right up in Peoria, was the town right next to Peoria but that’s... Peoria is what they called it. But Bill Muchow, she was familiar with Bill.

Q. Sure.

A. He came to our wedding, he and his wife and a bunch of the guys from the office. We had some kind of event at Red Rocks, which is got a sort of country club or something like that up there. But any event, that’s where we were married.

Q. Now you didn’t take long at all to decide this has to end, the Muchow work.

A. No.

Q. I mean, because within six weeks or so you were in Springfield.

A. Yes, pretty close to that.

Q. You had a little apartment in Denver?

A. Yes we did, as a matter of fact. It was on the east end not too far from, well it was Colfax and I can’t remember what the other street was. But it was part of the hospital complex on the east end of Denver and not too far away from Cherry Hills, which was a nice area that Bill Muchow had his house, which was a big A-frame that had made architectural news because it was a big A-frame. That was one of the first ones that somebody ever took into being a house. But it was, it was featured.

Q. It was some house.

A. Sharp.
Q. Ok. So we are now in the year...and at some point in there you had returned to Champaign to finish your master’s degree, right?

A. Yes. Yes, and it was when I was with...I came back after the first one. I didn’t work for Muchow...I was coming back from...I worked for Muchow after I came back from the first semester.

Q. Ok, yes, right. But then you...

A. Took one semester off.

Q. Yes.

A. When we came back to Champaign...

Q. Yes.

A. With...let’s see did we have our...no, we had our baby down there.

Q. Ok Kirsten.

A. No, that was...no Becky was born in Denver. So I guess we came back with, yes, we came back with a baby and had another baby in Champaign.

Q. So your first child...

A. Was Becky.

Q. Becky, ok.

A. That was in, that was in Colorado.

Q. Right.

A. Then we come back in a snow storm in mid-year and chased through snow all the way to Champaign. This was a great disappointment because I thought that I was, I lived in, that I could say I was the state personally but I’m from out of state. I said, “I’ve always had an address at 410 West Edwards.” The lady said, “Where did you pay your taxes or where did you vote?” Or some damn thing whatever it was? Anyway, they pinned me with being from Denver.

Q. Oh my gosh.
A. Which ok I’m from Denver, which meant I was going to pay $300 for tuition. I wasn’t ready for that one. It was going to be...anyway, little disappointments.

Q. Of course.

A. But we ended up in an apartment living on, well, off of campus of course but...and that’s when I was working for Richards, Severns, and Scheeler.

Q. Yes.

A. Going to get my other part. We’ve just never really been able to relate, which one was...the Air Force was this time that I went back.

Q. Right.

A. So I’m back getting the rest of the master’s and getting it with those military officers.

Q. Right. Ok, that helps. I think this was, maybe mid-1959, I think, according to my notes. Doesn’t matter, it isn’t the date that’s important, it’s the sequence and I think we’ve straightened that out.

A. Yes, I think I’ve got it now.

Q. Ok. So you...and you came because you and Don Ferry had agreed you would form a partnership.

A. Yes. Now let’s see, here’s how we didn’t even think the thing through. Now I just quit the job and was going to find a place to have an office. He said, well, he said, “I’ll keep my job while you open up.” I said, “Wait just a minute we’re going to do this thing. We’re going to get it,” because we had no work.

Q. Right.

A. Now see this is...but they never said...

END OF TAPE FOUR, SIDE ONE

47:31
Q. This is continuing an oral history with Wally Henderson on April 14, 2011. The interviewer is Cullom Davis. We have you basically reaching Springfield in, I guess it was the late spring?

A. Early spring.

Q. Early spring of 1961.

A. Election is just over and just dedicated a church. The snow is still falling but...

Q. You have two daughters by then, or three, maybe? You mentioned two.

A. I’ve got two, maybe three. No, just two.

Q. Ok. Kirsten was born.

A. Well now, let’s see. Kirsten was born in 1961, and that’s when we opened our office.

Q. Yes, right. You had been in touch with Don Ferry. You hadn’t made a lot of detailed agreements.

A. No, no, it was one of these...well, ok I’ll pick you up on it. I didn’t probably spend too much time explaining why I had suddenly got an interest in it. But when we had our initial meeting, I remember sitting there over at his house and talking about things. Well, what do you name this thing? I think he was surprised when I said obviously it should be Ferry and Henderson.

Q. I wondered about that.

A. He said, how’d you come up with that? I said, alphabetically. “F, H.”

Q. [laughs]

A. He thought immediately I was going to do something else. It never occurred to me.

Q. Is that right?

A. No, just Ferry and Henderson. I never intended to have my own office. Never thought about it for a New York minute, never did. As a result here we got somebody who is wanting to
have an office, I’ve got a reason to leave there and the poll was going. Maybe even politics was starting to get me because I don’t know what I was thinking, I really don’t.

Q. But you weren’t thinking egotistically, that’s for sure.

A. No, no, no, no. Ferry said, “Well, I’ll keep the job in public health while you open the office.” I remember that was a little trigger. I said, “Wait a minute, wait a minute, we gamble this one together.” He agreed to quit his job.

But we had, what I started to say to you on the other tape was that they always told you in architectural school that open up...have a job to start with... and then you do it, it should be at least $100,000, which today isn’t a good floor sweeping. But in those days a $100,000 project was a pretty big project. We didn’t have anything, but we did go looking for a place to open an office. It was on Jackson Street. They’ve torn the building down and moved this building that is... it is on the corner of Eighth and Jackson.

Q. Ok.

A. Not Eighth and Jackson, that’s Lincoln’s home.

Q. That’s right.

A. Seventh and Jackson.

Q. Seventh and Jackson.

A. It used to be a doctor’s office and they moved this building in there just last year. I can’t remember, the food people from downtown...835 they run that inn.

Q. Oh, that’s the one that, the Conns?

A. Yes.

Q. Yes.

A. That’s the location of it.

Q. Oh my heavens.

A. But they tore the old building down that we were in.

Q. No plaque, there’s no plaque there signifying your original office site?

A. Not unless, unless there’s somebody trying to get even with us, (laughter) I don’t know.
Q. [laughs] I’m teasing.

A. The room we got was not as big as this kitchen, on the second floor, one room. No equipment, no anything.

Q. Ok, so it didn’t take a lot of capital to start?

A. We never thought about capital.

Q. [laughs]

A. I’m really telling you seriously, we didn’t think about it. We knew we had to get some things in there, and we’re going to do it and without drafting tables. I ended up going to an auction, a state auction and in the beginning we didn’t even have that. We just had...I don’t even know how poor we really were. Not poor, but ill equipped. We had a couple of chairs. We had at least one drafting stool. We had to buy the table to start with.

Q. Sure.

A. The table I got at the public auction. I offered $120 for it, and I got it. Everybody, I mean, they didn’t tell me this, SOBs that were standing around me; everybody else got theirs for $20.

Q. [laughs] You paid what it was worth but you could’ve gotten it for less.

A. Well see, in Muchow’s office we designed our own drafting tables, which was kind of cool. But this was just a...in fact, I don’t even know if the one I still have left is the original one I bought or not, but it was once stupid move. We didn’t have any work and I’m reading in the newspaper...see I can see the moment now, reading in the newspaper that they’re going to build a new revenue building in Springfield.

Q. Right.

A. That’s located over on Adams and...oh what’s that street? Pasfield, maybe it is Pasfield. Anyway, and the revenue and the owner is a builder out of Minneapolis. Well, I’m smart enough to know or we’re smart enough to know that if you’re in Minneapolis, you can’t build a building and get it done right so they need help. So I sit down and Ferry, I mean he’s in the office, but we have nothing to do really, getting our Sweets Catalogues lined up is all, which you could get those cheap because they’re trying to open to architects.

Q. Sure.

A. I’m sitting, I got on my, I’m sitting in a chair and the stool now is a little higher than the chair, and I’ve got a portable typewriter that I brought with me from Denver. I sit there and I type
this whole thing out, which at least I can type. Saying we’re new architects and interested in working with you on this thing. When the guy calls back, I was like, “What?” He said, “I want to talk to you.” I said, “Well, I’ll meet you some place.” I didn’t want him to show him I didn’t have anything. Anyway, it turns out the guy, it’s an engineering firm, not an architecture firm.

Q. Oh, ok. Up in Minneapolis.

A. In Minneapolis. But we’re licensed architects both of us and so that’s fine. So we’re meeting the code. That’s what he needed was an Illinois architect.

Q. Right.

A. So could we make a deal? I think it was $1,500 to do the inspection for that particular job. That first year, that’s what we made. I mean we, there was some other stuff that came in but $1,500 was a hell of a bunch of money. We obviously spent it on rent and all the other things. But from that, where we walk the beams and all that stuff because it wasn’t, it wasn’t our job. We didn’t have our name on that one.

Q. Right.

A. But from there on we...

Q. You say that was a revenue building on...

A. Used to be called the “Purple Goose.” I mean, that’s what we called it because it had panels on it.

Q. Ok.

A. I mean, you’ll recognize it whenever you go down Pasfield going north. It’s a big building and it has windows with panels right below the windows.

Q. Ok.

A. Panels, when the color came down, they’re making the decisions up there. They said, “Make them this color.” It was purple. I thought oh god, what’s this? I discussed it with them, and no that’s the decision. It’s got to be because it’s got to do with revenue or something, some stupid thing. Any event, it’s now sort of a yellow, tan or some other color but that was our first experience at the firm.

Q. You two each have some possible contacts with the state?

A. Oh yes.
Q. Were there companies in town that might consider building?

A. Well, Don Ferry was now working as the hospital architect.

Q. Yes.

A. I may have told you that story. But Thanksgiving, it might have been, yes it could’ve been 1961...Thanksgiving 1961 we didn’t get to have Thanksgiving dinner, that’s all we have is Thanksgiving dinner. The reason was, is because Kennedy was caught in the same kind of crossfire that Obama is now, make work. In other words was a depression type thing.

Q. Right, right it was.

A. Which is sort of my justification for coming. There’s got to be an opportunity. If nobody’s got anything, then you got to bring something fresh. That was our presentation, my presentation over, and over, and over again. We’re not competing with anybody. We just aren’t. We’re bringing design to Springfield.

People, it’s sort of a smart ass remark; nobody ever said well what do you mean by design? I couldn’t have told them, [laughs] but it’s the fact. Springfield can do better than it is doing. So we’re by the seat of our pants in answer to your question is yes. Don Ferry was well affiliated with his church. One of the members of his church was Murphy...Crawford, Murphy, Tilly was the firm. It was not Crawford...Pat Murphy.

Q. Pat Murphy?

A. Pat Murphy belonged, I think it was, to Don Ferry’s church.

Q. Ok.

A. They needed an addition, oh nice. So they’ve got a little addition started there. We got to be the one... well, it’s the once that’s out there. It’s the precast or cast in place concrete with gothic arches and so forth. Any rate, that was Douglas Avenue...

Q. So that was one of your first designs contracted.

A. Yes, yes. One of the questions we were asked and I remember Pat Murphy, I think it was Pat Murphy, was on the building committee, who said, “Is there any way you could work? We’re interviewing? What if you guys don’t stick together if the partnership doesn’t last?” Well, we assured him that we had no intentions of splitting up, but it was funny question. It was like he doesn’t think we’re going to make it either.

Q. [laughs]
A. But anyway, it was asked and we stayed with it for 25 years so...23 years, actually.

Q. Do you think your relationship with him was complimentary or competitive or...your working relationship, did you two work together well?

A. Very well, as a matter of fact. I mean from the standpoint, he sort of tolerated me. I’ll acknowledge that because he and I had a lot of opinions. But he had a respect for, in fact he had said on a couple of occasions he said, “Boy you had a good fortune of working with Muchow,” or something.

He came directly...he went to Bradley. He went to U of I. He came straight down to Springfield with work for...well, I won’t go into who it is. But they were people that in our practice we never thought that they could compete no matter how well I get started. But it was an experience, and so he sort of acknowledged that. So I would because again he made the suggestion, join the Sangomo Club so you could get more contacts and so forth. That turned out to be a good decision.

Q. Yes. What about your church? Did you join?

A. Oh, Westminster.

Q. Ok that’s right. You’d always gone there.

A. Same church, I just went back home.

Q. Right. Any civic clubs that you two agreed you should join?

A. Yes. I think I belonged to Rotary for a while but I didn’t have too much interest in following through on it.

Q. Right, ok.

A. But so, no. Anyway, you asked about our compatibility.

Q. Yes.

A. It wasn’t difficult, it wasn’t difficult at all. The difficulty came in later when we got the third partner. That really caused a problem.

Q. That’s right, and we’ll get to that.
Otherwise we got along pretty well. As I say, I would meet the clients and Don Ferry would seriously take the work and improve the designs and the details. He was the workaholic and I was a play-aholic sort of. In other words...

Q. You were marketing. You were the “Mr. Outside.”

A. Outside and usually put together the preliminary plans.

Q. Ok.

A. Except for health-type work.

Q. Where he...

A. Nursing homes and that was especially done. Ferry literally brought in, after we got started...again, our church work, another big step forward in that first year I told you, or was starting to tell you about Kennedy came up with this thing. So you’re looking for...what was Obama’s term? Carpenter ready or something?

Q. Oh...shovel-ready.

A. Shovel-ready. Well, Kennedy didn’t use that expression. If the drawings were ready for bidding by such and such a date, they could improve money and make it forward. Don Ferry, from his work at the state, was aware that the Carlinville area hospital was trying to build an OB/GYN wing or whatever it’s called. That means that they need to have it, but he knows that they would like to have it but has done nothing about it. We put together the idea to go down and tell them if they still want this and they will hire us, we’ll get the drawings produced within this timespan and be able to take them to Washington.

Q. Qualify.

A. Qualify.

Q. Interesting. You did?

A. We did but we did it by going through, working through Thanksgiving. Like I say, we worked night and day because a whole set of drawings is a whole lot to ask, but that’s what made it shovel-ready. In other words, it was bid-able ready.

Q. Right, right.

A. They got their OB/GYN thing. We made additional contacts in Carlinville. Again, I think it was one of somebody at Don Ferry’s church or I don’t remember how we got into it, but Christian Nursing Homes came to visit us.
Q. Ok.

A. It wasn’t called Christian Nursing Homes then; it was six ministers or six people. One of them, George Parland, was one of the ministers from Lincoln, Illinois. We talked and laughed about since, when they came into the office and sat there and interviewed us, I sort of remember…this is an honest statement that’s why I can justify what I said.

Anyway, these are six ministers and they’re talking about how they’re going to do a nursing home and maybe more nursing homes and were we interested in working with them. I said, “Yes.” Don Ferry and I both said yes because we’re being interviewed together, but the other issue was that I asked. I said, “Who is providing the funding or something?” I was asking a financial question.

Q. Sure.

A. Immediately they said, “God will provide.”

Q. [laughs]

A. Oh man. I mean that was a blow. Of course, I was expecting Marine Bank or something, but it was that God will provide, which he did by finding it humorous that I didn’t laugh. It scared the hell out of me, but God did provide. That’s all there is to it. We took the job on.

Q. Then they...

A. They built the nursing home in Lincoln and six more, and we just built a whole town. After we broke up, I had to finish doing the planning for one in Missouri. I mean it was a very profitable relationship. Now one of the members, you might have been here when there was sort of a hatchet murder or something over on...

Q. Oh yes.

A. One of the members of that board was...was on South Grand and something I can’t remember the name of it, but it was amazing that a....

Q. So they floated bonds or something?

A. Yes.

Q. That was their problem, but God was behind them.

A. Exactly and they did a number of them. I don’t have my list, but Lincoln was the first one.
Q. Yes.

A. We expanded it even.

Q. These were one level, all?

A. Well, a nursing home has to be accessible.

Q. Yes, right. No but I mean they were the modern style of kind of one level.

A. Yes, yes, yes. But we built…but that expanding now we go back to my Denver experiences where they had additional added units, which were independent housing. Now the Christian Nursing Home name still follows out on right now on end of what street is it…Monroe going out west here of town?

Q. Or Washington.


Q. Oh yes.

A. Christian Nursing Home there, one of the members of the church gave a triangular piece of property to the Christian Nursing Homes in Lincoln, Illinois. We did that one out there as well, which if you go there it’s a whole village.

Q. Is it Lewis?

A. Lewis Memorial. That was very late in the game because we had done a half a dozen before then.

Q. So you became, thanks in part to Don’s hospital connection, you became very busy in the retirement home work.

A. Oh totally. Yes we did. To the extent, that again because Don Ferry knew the techniques and all the things with it, many of the standards that developed and they still are using, were standards that we built into the Christian Nursing Homes first. They came along and said, “Boy that’s a good idea.” That was it. Yes, it was very beneficial.

Q. Lucrative and maybe it was your largest single piece of business for a few years. As you think of all the separate units that you built.

A. Yes, yes, yes. There’s a span of time when we hooked up with, in 1963, a contact that really gave us a big, big start, which was the Old Capitol.
Q. Yes. Now what’s that contact?

A. Well the contact...now we’ve got to jump back to Denver.

Q. Ok.

A. My new bride and I because we had nothing to do but on Friday nights, I was still carrying my war stories around, which was not fighting it was just being in Korea.

Q. Right.

A. At least I had learned to appreciate the Japanese and the Korean cultures. There was a Japanese town in our area in downtown Denver. I mean there still is as a matter of fact. But we would get our pillow. I had gone down and bought the ink and so forth, stick ink and on Friday nights there would be on the public television, which was the round television, how to paint bamboo. I mean these were art lessons in Japanese, for Japanese painting.

Q. Bamboo? Or is that the name of the painting or mean the material?

A. No, how to paint watercolors.

Q. Oh, I’m sorry, ok. That’s call bamboo?

A. Well that’s the way...I’m just saying they’d say it on...here’s how you paint bamboo. I mean bamboo is what they were saying.

Q. Ok.

A. It was fun for my wife and I to get...we would sit down on a cushion. Here I got this stick ink, which you mix up and just paint it. Well, immediately following that was a group called the Chicago Drama Quartet, who were four gentlemen who were in their 40s or 50s along in there, some white hair but not as much as we exhibit these days. They would be in white shirts with garters on their sleeves and a string tie usually and really just with the script in their hand, like this, microphone right there in front, no pretense of background or music or anything else, they would read a story. The story is from...now remember, 1961 is the centennial of the Civil War.

Q. Yes.

A. Ok, so they’re reading about the Civil War and when this one gentleman, [Wood Stracky] was his name, and he was famous in Old Town, Chicago. I met him many times after that but he did the... but when he reached into his pocket and pulls out this cigar and stuck it in his mouth, that’s General Grant.

Q. Oh, of course.
A. That's General...you know when he reached that pocket...and General Grant [inaudible 22:49]

Q. [laughs]

A. It was marvelous. I got excited about that. Did I tell you about my military payment certificates in Korea, right?

Q. Yes.

A. I told you about finding a penny and this little boy telling me more about Lincoln?

Q. Yes.

A. Ok. This now has got me. I come back to Springfield, Illinois. I read in the paper that the Chicago, or that, well that the Chicago Drama Quartet, now we got to go to Ralph Newman. Ralph Newman was one of the founders of this thing. I didn’t know Ralph Newman from anybody either at that point. But Ralph Newman had formed, because his bookstore is right up there in Old Town area, had formed the Civil War Roundtable.

Q. Yes.

A. Which was a national organization by this time. I mean not organization, but it was where usually older people getting together, I mean older men getting together and telling stories of the Civil War.

Q. Right.

A. Here I’d come back to Springfield, and I don’t have anything else that’s competing with a lot of these things. I read in the paper Civil War Roundtable to be, meeting to be held at Oliver J. Keller’s over on Williams Boulevard, public welcome. I walk into this meeting. I don’t know anybody and everybody there’s got grey hair except me; I had dark curly hair, black hair in those days...maybe two others. So the majority is older gentlemen.

I go over and sort of mingle, looking for somebody. I didn’t know anybody, so I walked towards where these other guys about my age were, at least closer to my age, and plunked down. I don’t know whether we got talking at that very first meeting, but there was another meeting. It was very early in the game this one gentleman asked me, he says, “What do you do?” I said, “I’m an architect.”

In the course of that conversation he said, “Well what do you know about restoring old buildings?” There’s one of those another answers like I told you about the beer bottle being
thrown. In this particular case, the good Lord put the words in my mouth. My answer was, “As much as anybody.”

Q. [laughs]

A. Which was exactly right because nobody else was studying it, they didn’t teach it. So from there on...

Q. A good salesman.

A. Well, I was... (laughter) I’m falling into these things that happen. Maybe meeting you is just another one of those events. I’m not sure. But from there obviously I asked him. “What do you do?” Well, he was the state historian.

Q. Bill Alderfer?

A. No, no, Clyde Walton.

Q. Clyde Walton.

A. Yes he was.

Q. Right.

A. Now what really impressed him...maybe he didn’t ask me...maybe I had told him the story of...yes I think he asked me, “Well, what are you doing here?” I tell him about the kid in Korea.

Q. Ok.

A. The 11-year-old who taught me more about Lincoln because once I talked about Lincoln, then came his questions about, “What do you do?” Then I...because he was looking for a historian or something but what they were really doing was trying to find an architect who would do or could do a feasibility study on that capitol building. Well, it wasn’t until 1963 but we got it. But it had to be in 1961 or well it was close to 1961 when I met Clyde.

Q. Well, you’re establishing relationships and credibility that paid off.

A. Sure.

Q. That wasn’t just inadvertent. You describe it kind of as a chance, but you were the kind of person who made connections comfortably. You didn’t go to that event looking to meet him.

A. Oh no, no, no.
Q. But, when you met him you thought, “Well, this could be advantageous.”

A. Yes and I wasn’t working him. I mean that wasn’t the...

Q. Oh no, of course not.

A. That was...you’re exactly right. I do things because I like to do them.

Q. Yes.

A. That’s fortuitous.

Q. Yes, that’s the right word. So you met him in around 1961.

A. 1961 or 1962...

Q. You got a contract for the feasibility starting in 1963.

A. Yes, that might have been not in 1962 but the start of 1963.

Q. Now in that case you also probably had to have an engineering firm involved in that with it, no? You did it? You both were...

A. Yes, the feasibility study was...you see the whole history of that building was when it was after it was raised...was a hell of a big idea to raise it but nobody said well because...the actual vision of the people in the city of Springfield, that’s the old capitol where Lincoln gave the “House Divided Speech.”

Q. Right.

A. Now it didn’t make much difference to them that the building had been torn apart on the inside and so when they said and this is... you go to the room where he gave his “House Divided Speech.” Well, it was now one story higher, nothing else in the whole building was there except two walls and those walls had holes repunched in them where they wanted to get them in. Nowadays for offices and so forth where the holes that were in certain offices in the original building were all covered up. My goodness, because they...we needed those almost for the map to get back into the building.

Q. Of course, of course.

A. So the question was, with the building up there, what are we going to do about it? When Lake Springfield II, no, when Lake Springfield was built, this was Willis Spaulding, Spaulding’s folly. They had excess dirt and they said, “This is the opportunity. We’ll just take that dirt and built it up and cover up that first floor.”
Q. [laughs]

A. Which was serious issue and they damn near did it. Well, we read all about it. This is part of what the feasibility study was about.

Q. So you’re sitting on the crown of a hill?

A. Yes. What we did to illustrate it...unfortunately the slides that I... I know I’ve got the other slides someplace but I made a little few remarks on it at the university the other day. One of them showed some of these background slides. What we did is we took pictures of the four elevations around the square. In other words, on the north side, we got Illinois National Bank and then we got the Marine Bank and we went back at Penney’s and so forth.

Q. Right.

A. Well, of course, here’s the Illinois building sitting here, whatever it’s called...Ameren, today. Here it sits 14 stories high and you got the façade of the Marine Bank. What we did is superimpose on that a profile of the capitol sitting on the hill. So in other words, you got the backdrop but you got the capitol raised up and so forth. Then we made another board, which is the one I showed them out there of the capitol sitting down where it ought to be, where it was originally. Oh that sold the evening because I’m a tell you that sold...what we were trying to say is that’s foolish.

Q. Yes.

A. So in other words, it can’t stay up there. Now this was important because a lot of people said, “Well, why are we spending so damn much money for this thing? We need a parking lot.” That was a great crime of that. But the other part that was important was that the building, if it has to come down, do it or reverse it. Well, it won’t come down the old way.

You can’t go in there with a needle and then lay it down. It’s had that course and it won’t work. We’re coming up and that’s when, when I had...I think my remark has been quoted a few times, we almost thought we’d be fired when I went in to present. We had a meeting actually at the Leland Hotel, and this was the building committee. The governor was present.

Q. Governor Kerner.

A. The question was, “What are we going to do with the building?” Here comes Henderson here with the report, Don didn’t go with me down there that day. We talked about it before, and we were going to tell them that the building had to come down. Don Ferry says, “Well, what are you going to tell them?” I said, “I don’t know.” Except that you and I agree that there’s no other approach to it to make it a realistic study. These two boards were pretty convincing once you saw them.
Q. The Marine Bank disappeared.

A. It’s goofy and people walking up the hill to get into it, it’s dumb. Any event, I made that comment and the governor...or what I had said in the paper, but we thought we could get fired at this particular point because we’re saying that the building has got to come down. To make it right it’s got to come down in order get the mechanical systems and structure and everything else in there.

So I said we expected to be fired or thought we might get fired. Well, then I said that with a straight face obviously to the governor who is sitting there. He said, “Well, what is the recommendation?” I said, “The building needs to come down and be reconstructed.” He said, “Can you do that?” I said, “Yes we can. If the British can do it with what they’re doing over in Fulton, Missouri, by God, I can do it here in Springfield, Illinois.”

Q. Hence your national reputation for historic reconstruction.

A. Exactly right, exactly right. Well, then we were hired to do the drawings and so forth. But we took such care and good experience out in Denver, Colorado. I can’t remember the name of the kind of clay, but there’s a clay in foundation work that almost works like it is oil. In other words, like you’re putting skins on the floor or something...

Q. Yes.

A. If you get that, if you run into that kind of clay, a building can just tilt over. I remember that you had to make all kinds of...when we were out in Muchow’s office, you always had to look for that stuff. I can’t remember the name of that. Anyway it’s a fluke of nature, but it’s there and you could get it all kinds of strange things happen. So out in Muchow’s office, we made all kinds of studies about buildings and put tests on them and so forth. So when we started talking about working on this building and of course, the rumor comes along that the main town branch is still underneath there. We’re going to run into water.

We’ve got all kinds of tests and we put testing points on all, in a lot of buildings if there was any kind of settlement of anything because the lawsuits were heavy in Denver for things like that. Yes if you started pumping water in Denver and somebody’s building cracked or the windows broke, you better go see your lawyer.

Q. Yes.

A. We were trying to secure that along with trying to say every one of these stones is going back in exactly where it started. We got the fire department to run the cherry pickers and take pictures, and I guess we had some private people as well. I remember when we first started the thing we took, we did what parallax, it fell so that things looked funny.
Q. Yes.

A. So we’ve got them up to a height so we were getting head-on shots of the four sides of the building.

Q. Right.

A. Then we developed our own scheme of...because a pilaster is where the structure sticks out from the face of the building.

Q. Right, right.

A. If you spend some time you’ll notice them. The pilasters are there.

Q. Right.

A. So we got this is pilaster A, B, C, D, whatever it might be.

Q. Use the alphabet for them.

A. To go around the building.

Q. Numbering.

A. Then we come around on the coursing and this is like a grid, exactly what we’re doing. This is the number system 1, 2, 3 course so forth. Every stone had a specific number. Now that was, that was, we were designing all these thoughts how you get it but I’m a little...I’m getting way ahead of myself.

Q. That’s fascinating.

A. We needed it to be accurate so that there wasn’t any question in my mind that we’re going to do it. Part of the things that I went to masons to understand what they knew about the buildings, we also sent the stonework to the University of Illinois testing labs to be sure...

Q. I was wondering about that because is it sandstone?

A. No there’s another name for it.

Q. That’s all right.

A. It’s a low-grade sandstone.

Q. But it can hold up? I mean it wasn’t showing signs of erosion?
A. Oh yes.

Q. It was?

A. Well, certainly Judge DeBoice said publically, he said that any fool can look at this building and see that if you start taking it apart, it’s going to fall apart. The good Lord came to my assistance again when the register [Illinois State-Register newspaper] guy comes to me and says, “What are you going to say to the judge’s remark?” I said, “Thank him for his interest.” [laughs] That’s all you could say. I wasn’t going to argue and say well we went over to the testing lab to do this and that. It was just...you don’t get...if you knew Judge DeBoice he was...

Q. I did, yes.

A. He was another player. [laughs]

Q. So there were some momentous decision points on this whole business.

A. Oh yes.

Q. Give me an idea what your contract on the feasibility study was, $100,000 maybe?

A. I haven’t any idea. The one thing I want to tell you is that nobody knew anything about restoration.

Q. Right, including you.

A. Well, I wasn’t just anybody, which is nobody but anybody and nobody. [laughs]

Q. [laughs]

A. Well we had good sense and we had a good education.

Q. Of course you did.

A. That’s my defense.

Q. No, I’m not pulling your chain.

A. We also...

Q. I saying it was a new...being someone interested in contemporary architecture.

A. Oh yes.
Q. It was a very different...

A. Don Ferry, he was concerned about that. There wasn’t any question about that. I was sort of assuring him that this is good judgment that we’re going to...

Q. Yes.

A. But we almost, we didn’t quite cut our wrists and have a blood brother ceremony, but agreeing if anybody’s going to be able to do it better, they’d better come now or forever hold their peace because we’re going to give them a fit. We did. That’s the story. But yes, it was a...you asked me about the fee, again, the fee, I don’t know what the fee was.

The fee was enough to carry us. Like I say we were on to an adventure because there wasn’t any knowledge of what it cost to do things. The fee on the building itself was the same we would have gotten if we had been building a warehouse.

Q. [laughs]

A. Because it was...I mean building it from scratch was a six percent fee.

Q. A lot more work went into it.

A. Oh Lord, yes. I mean we were innovative as can be, but everybody was helping us. The Junior League did a marvelous job investigating, the newspaper doing things for us. We were soliciting help and getting help. Nobody coming back and saying, “Well, if I do this for you.” Unfortunately nobody paid our way either, made trips to different locations.

Q. Right.

A. But that’s the way we’re going to get it. But some of those trips, at least one of them, got us the Iowa Territorial Capitol.

Q. Yes, that was interesting. That came some years later.

A. Yes, it came 1973 because we get done in 1962 or 1963 of maybe 1965, we had gone to...I had spent time with the people at Iowa City trying to get details, photograph details, they didn’t have any drawings either. [coughs]

Q. That’s the same architect wasn’t it for both buildings?

A. Yes, John Rague. But I also went to St. Louis to Dred Scott Courthouse down there, climbed up into the dome and got that experience.
Q. I’m sorry, the architect John Rague?

A. R-A-G-U-E.


A. I suppose.

Q. Whatever.

A. He was long gone before I came.

Q. That’s right. You couldn’t communicate with him. So you were...there was an awful lot of research you had to do, not only on this clay but on drainage and the condition of the stones.

A. Yes, see you’re at the...we’ve gone passed the architecture part. We’re now into the physical...

Q. That’s true, that’s true. But even for the feasibility you had to test some of this...

A. Yes, oh yes, oh yes, yes. Well we had to...we couldn’t test whether the buildings were going to settle or not.

Q. No, of course not.

A. But we did bring that up after we gotten the job to be sure that things weren’t happening. Now the research is the big story, really big story. It was written several times by different people. One of the best ones, I can’t really...I know if it is one that I had read, but “The Great Jigsaw Puzzle” was the name of it.

Q. Oh.

A. I had done this because...we had to take some many pieces of information and make something out of them that you could interpret in three dimensions.

Q. Right.

A. That was a trick.

Q. Of course it was. That’s something you and your partner [clears throat] devised for this...the coding or the number, classification, whatever you call it.

A. Well, it would have been the way to do it.
Q. Right.

A. [inaudible 41:36] You want me to tell you that?

Q. Sure, sure.

A. In a room, size for which is maybe 15 by 50, something like that, chalked off on the floor... by the way, at this point I’m teaching Sunday school at Westminster Presbyterian Church and to get these kids information...

Q. Yes.

A. They had a timeline, which was a clothesline with clothespins. Here comes Moses, and we hang him in place. Here comes Jesus was another. But the whole idea is we were trying to identify what’s going on. As I have said in so many times when I’ve made the presentation, when I spoke at, and I mean this seriously, when I spoke at Columbia University, I’m invited there by James Marston Fitch. F-I-T-C-H. He was the big guy who put together the first class on perseveration, restoration architecture in the country. He invited me because we had just finished the cover of our, made it on the cover of Progressive Architecture Magazine.

Q. Right, right.

A. Ok, I walk in, everybody in the room at that time even was older than I was it looked like to me anyhow, at Columbia. But I started off and said restoration, you do it just exactly like you think you do. I tell you, that sort of stupid statement. But still, how the hell do I restore this old building?

Well, first of all, you put yourself in the place of what did they have available as far as knowledge is concerned? Thinking about what kind of materials did they have available? What kind of techniques of assembling those materials did they have? So you got to say, “Well, you know sure as know they hell don’t have a crane to pick this stuff up.” How do they do it? Well, they were, everybody in the world was on sailboats and they rigged ships and so had block and tackle.

Q. Block and tackle.

A. They understood but they could do it anyway. So now that relieves everybody that we’re not going to have to build an earth mound like the ancient Egyptians did.

Q. [laughs]

A. But in any event, we take, we said to the world anybody that has got anything that has family heirlooms or notes from grandpa that said “I was at the Old State Capitol when they did such and such” or those with materials and all this. The historian digs up out of, after we’re
into it several months, we had 16, 18 months to get that [inaudible 44:18] stuff together. But he finds that there was a labor dispute because they didn’t pay in 18--; I think it started in 1837.

Q. Right.

A. In 1840, right in that area, with a labor dispute because they weren’t getting their two dollars and 25 cents a day according to the contract, these laborers. Then they make a little investigation and decide that the money hasn’t been spent properly. It wasn’t there and they fired the whole board of directors, or whoever it was, including the architect.

Q. [laughs]

A. I mean they’re gone. At this particular point, now somebody’s got to be accountable, people that they make accountable and when they keep the records, and that’s what we could get – the records read to the state auditor. Nobody had ever gone to the state auditor.

Q. Of course not.

A. So he pulls it out and he doesn’t have any drawings but he’s got all kinds of bills and material.

Q. Sure, oh that’s...

A. The bills and material were dated. Well, because again whenever we left church with our people hanging with their clothespins, but over here on the floor we’ve chalked off 1837, 1838, 1839, and we go all the way around the room to 1858. Now he had gone in a letter he said well this may not do you much good if this is 1850. Well, don’t just leave us, don’t leave. We’ll take it.

Q. Sure.

A. 1850. Well the interesting thing is, it goes along we get some, get some, get a lot there, nothing, nothing, and then some.

Q. Yes, yes.

A. It’s all spread out. Then we go back to what I said to these in the case of the organization to the Fitch invitation. Is that you do it exactly like you think you do it. In other words, you don’t start building a building by hanging the flag at the top of the flagpole. You dig a hole in the ground and you put in the foundation. Then as you do it, you start doing your finish materials and so forth. So logically, it got to a point that it’s a thrill when something like this happens, you see in classical architecture which this building was a take-off...by the way we, the classical part, where did Rague with another issue that I said to the people in Columbia, is that what’s
the background? Where’d this architect learn to do this thing? Well he learned it from New York and his mentor.

Q. Right.

A. Somebody had to teach him something, was Benjamin [Minard] Lafever.

Q. Oh sure.

A. Was it Benjamin, not Benjamin?

Q. Lafever.

A. Yes, yes, yes, Lafever is his last name. L-E-F-E-V-E-R.

Q. Yes. Another Frenchman, right.

A. Anyway, who had produced three books on architecture.

Q. So you could...I’ve got to stop here.

END TAPE FOUR, SIDE TWO

47:35
Q. Oral history with Wally Herndon on April 14. To conclude your story...

A. It is Wally Henderson, by the way.

Q. What did I say?

A. Herndon.

Q. Forgive me, Wally Henderson.

A. It’s alright, Dr. Cullom.

Q. Ok, so you were talking about finding the books written by the tutor to the architect.

A. Yes, Lafever is his last name.

Q. Yes.

A. I got to remember that first name and get that back to you to. Yes, I went to the rare books library at the University of Illinois. They had some. I think at that time I may have gone to Columbia not knowing anything about Fitch at that time but because they keep rare books on a lot of things like this. Any event, it was there that we picked up the classical details that show up in the pictures of some of the, when Lincoln’s body was returned.

Q. Yes.

A. They took some pictures of the body in state in the house chamber.

Q. Yes.

A. You’ve got lots of bunting but you can see the details of these little details and so forth.

Q. Right, and that’s valuable.

A. That was it. Once again, in classical architecture, what you learn to deal with is like columns, for example. You start with the Doric column. The next floor, or the next step up is the Ionic column. It tops off with a very sort of fussy-type Ionic, I mean...
Q. What’s the other one?

A. See I’m working so hard to...well, we’ll come back to that one too. My memory is no good.

Q. Well mine isn’t either. I should know that.

A. In any event, as you work your way through the building you know how these different capitols and so forth are related. I went to the Junior League and said, “Look because we’re looking at our tracking on the floor, but didn’t stay there for five years.” They just...once we got it, we got it; we could translate it into drawings.

In any event, that was one of these issues where I called up the Junior League and I said, “We’re looking for something and they are going to be Ionic columns.” They’re going to be some place in this area, time range,” because that’s where they got to go in to hold that stair up. He called back and he said, “Ok we got your columns.” Whoa, it was like, well, it wasn’t five minutes later, but the fact that we put our finger on the thing was exactly what we were trying to get to.

Q. Remarkably fast. So we had great help, volunteer and conscientious.

A. Conscientious.

Q. Right.

A. That was terribly important because you could say, “Well, this is foolish,” because a contractor or the architect in those days came to the job site. I mean he was right on the jobsite.

Q. Right.

A. He would advertise I’ll be on the jobsite at two o’clock such and such. The contractors will be doing bill work; they’ll be doing whatever it is. He might even mention he’s doing some kind of classical molding.

Q. Yes.

A. Ok, that’s all we want to know because once we get that we can go backwards and find out what moldings would be there. It was just using common sense just like you think it ought to be done.

Q. Just like you think it ought to be done.

A. If you got to know the players and you know what the player can do, don’t ask him to play tennis if he is a football player.
Q. I realize that, but that sounds like such a simple philosophy. Yet it embraces an enormously complicated process.

A. I verbally started talking [inaudible 4:00] the other day. I seriously believe that anything you can think of can be done. Now that doesn’t mean you’re going to move a mountain by wave if a wand.

Q. Right.

A. It may mean a hell of a bunch of Caterpillar tractors or something, but you can move it or you can come up with an idea. I think that’s what we’re really saying here is that, that these people solved their problem. Now if you can get your state of mind on balance with theirs, you can say, “Well, ok. I got my two hands tied behind me, but how do I get to this thing and eat that turkey?” Well, you might crawl over and bite it or you might in fact use a block and tackle to pull that stuff out.

Q. Right, yes.

A. I think I told you that some stones coming back from the quarry area, which was one of the creeks around here broke down right in the middle of a farmer’s field. Somebody said that to us and I didn’t believe it. He took me out and showed it to me. I can’t take you there today, but it was still there.

Q. Yes, right.

A. But the issue is, he didn’t have a block and tackle. He had a broken axel. So he pulled away from it and just left the stone there. Nobody else went to get it. Interesting.

Q. It is. It’s remarkable. That’s an interesting area. I never would have dreamed it was quarry. It’s underbrush now.

A. Yes I couldn’t find it even today, these days for sure.

Q. Well, we’re right in the middle of what will be a consuming subject, and I have all kinds of questions. But I think probably I can defer them. You finished one story, and we’ll just return to the general subject next time.

A. Let me make this correction right now. Millard [Minard] Lafever.

Q. Oh, Millard Lafever.

Q. Ok. M-I-L-A-R-D? Like Fillmore?

A. I think that's correct.

Q. I still can’t think of the other Greek column.

A. Ionic, yes.

Q. That’s alright.

A. Oh man.

Q. We’re both embarrassed by this.

A. Am I embarrassed? Holy cow! I’m 80 years old. I can be embarrassed.

Q. That justifies everything. Well, thanks, this has been a great session.

END OF TAPE FIVE

6:30
Q. Oral history with Wally Henderson on April 27, 2011; the interviewer is Cullom Davis. Wally, you’ve given me some additional reading materials, which means that I think we will, for now, not return to the Muchow relationship you had in Denver until I’ve had a chance to read these and some of the other people involved in... the other engineers involved in that. Instead we will resume our discussion of the early stages of your partnership with Don Ferry. You moved to Springfield in 1961. We’ve talked about your respective titles in the partnership. Did you have any employees at all when you started?

A. No, in fact we didn’t even have any furniture. Don Ferry quit his job with the State of Illinois, which he was a hospital architect for the state. I had quit mine in Denver, Colorado.

Q. Right, right.

A. We had no employees and had no furniture. We did have a portable typewriter and a couple of stools in a one room of about, dimensions were 10 by 15 perhaps, on the second floor. So it wasn’t one of these walk-in operations.

Q. No, it was a modest beginning.

A. We, as a matter of fact, didn’t make excuses. We just didn’t invite anybody to come to the office.

Q. [laughs]

A. I also made the, the approach of different things about how we would acquire our furniture since Don Ferry’s furniture was part of the State of Illinois’ furniture, and I brought nothing with me. So one of my early adventures was to go to an auction by the State of Illinois and get some equipment. They had a drafting table, and I still needed a bid on it. I think I bid $120 for it, and I got the table. As I walked out, somebody else bought one for five dollars.

Q. [laughs]

A. It was an auction and I thought what it was worth. It had nothing to do with that at all. Just my stupid, not let anybody underbid me.

Q. Well, you needed a table so.
A. Yes.

Q. Ok, and so you had no, when you started, you had no existing clients.

A. That’s correct.

Q. But you each knew some people, and he had maybe state contacts.

A. Yes. He was quite competent in his hospital design.

Q. Yes, right.

A. Hospital, I mean medical was going on all across the area. We weren’t counting on anything other than...I don’t know, maybe it was just stupidity.

Q. No. You had new ideas because you had taken a look at the work of the existing architects. Who tended to be very, what, derivative or old-fashioned would you...how would you put it?

A. Yes, very contemporary Springfield 1950.

Q. Ok.

A. I mean that as far as it was going to go.

Q. Ok.

A. What we were really saying here is that first of all, I had lost track of Springfield. My folks still lived here, and I came back for visits.

Q. Sure.

A. At Springfield High School, I had a lot of friends and played football. That was one of these things that was easy to find people who were successful in Springfield, young attorneys and teachers and so forth. So I was out shaking hands and kissing babies is the best way to say it.

Don Ferry belonged to the Sangamo Club. He suggested that it would be probably prudent that I might want to join the Sangamo Club, and that was a good choice. It was really our first days when we were reading the paper, and that’s how we got almost our first job. The revenue building was about to be built, and this was one of these competitive type things.

Q. Right.

A. Now the revenue building in 1960 isn’t the revenue building we did for the State of Illinois a few years earlier.
Q. Oh this is on Eleventh Street?

A. No, this one was on Adams and First.

Q. Oh, ok.

A. We used to call it the “Purple Goose” because that’s the way it had those panels on them.

Q. Yes. Oh that’s right, you mentioned that.

A. Well, it’s one block from Springfield High School, as a matter of fact, right on the front edge of it. But a bidder and this thing was done by the GSA, and they take bids.

Q. General Services Administration.

A. They have a program where they write basically the program what they want: so many square feet of office space complete with certain utilities and a location. Then they ask for bidders from local people. It was already determined to be in Springfield – the location had been. But the bidder happened to be an entrepreneur from, I think it was, Minneapolis.

He bid it and had an engineer design it for him and got the...he was a successful bidder. Well, we read this in the paper. I remember sitting on a chair in front of a stool on which we had this little portable typewriter, which is all we had for equipment. In the paper it named the man in Minneapolis, and I typed a letter that we were new architects in Springfield and we’d like to have a chance to offer our services because they couldn’t actually...

Q. They had by law...

A. Yes they had.

Q. They had to have a local architect.

A. Local architect and somebody to inspect the job.

Q. Sure.

A. So we get a call a few days later that this gentleman is in town, and he’s an engineer of record in Minneapolis. But he came down and wanted to get together in response to our letter. I said, “Well, I’ll meet you some place,” because we didn’t want him up into this one room, no room type thing. He said, “I’ll come up there.” He came up and looked around, and he wasn’t much older than we were. He said, “I’ve been there. You don’t have to explain anything to me.”
Q. [laughs]

A. He said, “Can you do the job?” We assured him we were both graduate engineers, registered architects. So off we went and that was our first job.

Q. Was that a contract then you had to sign between the two of you?

A. Oh yes.

Q. I mean the two groups of people?

A. The contract to do the services for them, and we did. We checked their shop drawings. Actually any job where you got active builders, you want somebody who, well, it used to be to inspect the job to make sure it is sound; we took it. Today the architects found out that there are legal things. You observe a job, you don’t inspect it.

Q. Oh boy.

A. It’s one of those legal terms that, observing you just are seeing and reporting. But if you’re inspecting it, you suddenly take on the responsibilities of correcting it.

Q. Liability.

A. Yes, the liability. We went through the whole process, and it worked out fine except that I refer to the building the “Purple Goose.” We had some, as part of our job you approve certain materials and certain colors that go into the building, and that was part of it. So we had a whole panel of colors, and I knew that our responsibility was to them. We asked them to observe this saying, “What do they want to do?” They said, “This will be it.” Boy, I tried to talk them out of it but again, but so it was purple for the next 30 years.

Q. [laughs]

A. Purple panels.

Q. These were panels, so it was in part a steel though…was it a modern building?

A. Yes, steel frame building.

Q. Ok.

A. But it had...

Q. Had these panels.
A. Brick framing and the framing had windows, below the windows because it used to be a...I can’t remember whether the air-conditioning was part of the panel system itself. But in other words, it was a brick building but the windows were not just glass, the space below the windows that was a panel.

Q. Yes.

A. That panel was, it was a metal panel but the color was purple.

Q. Right. [laughs]

A. Which was a hard one.

Q. Sure you had a lot of reservations.

A. As a matter of fact I didn’t drive by and say, “Wow, that’s our building.”

Q. [laughs]

A. I said, “We were doing the field supervision for it.”

Q. So that was for the Department of Revenue and in your first year...

A. Illinois Department of Revenue, yes.

Q. Yes, right, yes, of course. Except you said it was a General Services Administration, that’s federal, isn’t it?

A. Well, GSA writes the programs for this.

Q. Ok.

A. You may be right. I’m sorry, because it was the feds.

Q. It was? Ok. Internal revenue?

A. Yes.

Q. Ok, ok.

A. I don’t know why they run the programs around so much. That’s what’s wrong with...

Q. I know that building, and it was ugly. I mean the purple was.
A. Yes, yes, yes.

Q. But it was a modern office building.

A. Oh exactly what it was.

Q. About a block or two from Springfield High School. I used to get there to pick up the IRS forms.

A. Just east of Springfield High School.

Q. Yes.

A. You got it.

Q. I thought they should stay there, but they built way over on the west side. I thought for people who don’t have cars or have trouble travelling, they’re making it very difficult.

A. You know what you get, you see when they put out these things through the... whether it’s federal or state or anything else and this GSA design build type thing that they’ve really gone to almost exclusively. They say, “This is what we want for our building.” You come back, anybody who wants to come back and tell us how much you’ll build it for, the location of it. Then say to complete it, we want the location for so many cars and within... They don’t, I’ve never read it, the need for bus service or anything. But the whole idea is that if somebody comes in, it’s like it had dangling candy in front of somebody. I just don’t like popsicles. I want to look for something else, that kind of thing.

Q. Well anyway, I remember the building well. I often visited it, and so I mourn its passing.

A. [laughs] Nobody says it’s gone completely yet, but it’s not utilized that way.

Q. [laughs] Yes, right, exactly. Did you develop a banking relationship early in your partnership? Do you remember?

A. Yes we did. You’re asking me a trick question there.

Q. No you don’t have to...

A. Before we were done we had banked and were banking in all the downtown banks.

Q. Ok you wanted to...

A. I’m saying, yes, exactly right. It was First National Bank, National City Bank...I’m sorry INB.
Q. INB.

A. Of course, Marine Bank, and we had interest in all three of them. As a matter of fact before we were all done we worked in all three of them.

Q. That’s right. That was an intelligent thing for an architectural firm or an insurance firm. A lot of companies spread the...

A. We really thought we had something to offer, since what was existing...

Q. Yes.

A. The time span, in fact we had just learned in the paper that the infrastructure in the whole United States is about to wear out. We think, “Boy, we’re the top country in the world,” except Eisenhower had the interstate highway system built and the bridges that went with it. That was 50 years ago.

Q. Exactly.

A. The bridge only life is 55 to 60 years.

Q. Yes, there’s a monumental challenge there or opportunity for engineering.

A. Oh boy, oh boy, that’s coming right back at them again. They know how to make money on it.

Q. Of course they do. What about with the construction firms? Did you develop any early working relationship with construction firms? It’s just a naïve question.

A. I will say yes, in a way. Springfield is a small town so usually it’s somebody we will...an example of not only construction firms but consulting engineers. We had some guys because we had a professor who opened an office here in Springfield, which turned out to be the most famous, Hanson Engineers.

Q. Ok so you did, with engineering you dealt with Hanson?

A. Well in, on we divide our engineering up. We also worked over the period of years with Collins and Rice Engineers. Crawford, Murphy, and Tilly at Don Ferry’s church was one of our earliest projects which was the First...Douglas Avenue Methodist Church, I guess it is.

Q. Oh, ok.

A. Crawford, Murphy, Tilly, it was Crawford who belonged to the church.
Q. Yes. Collins and Rice and then them, of course.

A. There were others, too.

Q. Yes, ok. But I interrupted you because...oh contractors.

A. Contractors...Larry Evans. Certainly...boy, you wouldn’t ever think I would forget contractors.

Q. [laughs]

A. They’ll come to my mind. I can’t now. Just startup, who is very successful right now, was Bud O’Shea.

Q. Yes.

A. O’Shea Builders, but they were just really in the beginning towards the time when we were...that was 25 years later than when we started. They came and went, but the interesting thing is when we opened our office in 1961 there were, I think we were number 13 or number 14 in town as far as what was in the phonebook in architects.

Q. Yes.

A. Only, oh my goodness...I’ll come up with it in a moment because it’s...

Q. Yes.

A. The pair of architects who raised the building...it was Samuel Haynes. Sam Haynes? Haynes and Bullard.

Q. Ok. Haynes and Bullard.

A. That’s who raised the building and it was, I’m sorry, Murray Haynes...

Q. Murray Haynes.

A. Was the son of Sam Haynes.

Q. Oh, ok.

A. He was an architect.

Q. Yes, I know him.
A. He was an old gentleman.

Q. Yes.

A. At that time. I think in his eighties, a big, big, strapping guy.

Q. He wore a three-piece suit down to work into his nineties, I think.

A. He was in the office where they used to have the courtroom that Lincoln presented his case out of.

Q. Right.

A. His office also held in it little examples of his dad’s work with the little jacks that helped raise that building.

Q. Oh yes.

A. Well, when we opened our office, which was not very far from Murray Haynes’ s office, and he still, he did, by the way, the Congregational Church, which is right around the corner from us right here.

Q. Murray did that?

A. Yes. He was the only architect out of all the other dozen firms that came over and welcomed us to Springfield.

Q. Isn’t that something?

A. Yes, I thought so. Others would say…it’s easy we got competition, nobody wanted us. He said he was glad. He was almost like a father figure. He just talked about how to keep your nose clean. Watch out for this political thing. He was a good person to know.

Q. Very good advice. Now were the Helmle’s still around?

A. No their fame was still hanging around. Yes. Let’s see, got to think. There was a pair. He was quite good. Worthington, Zeke...Hadley Worthington.

Q. Hadley Worthington?

A. They were one of the big interests in town. Nelson and Fernandez were n existence.

Q. Oh sure.
A. I had worked with both Nelson and Fernandez one summer when they were both working for the university architects. Not university architects, state architects.

Q. Yes.

A. Who happened to be, he was now one of the competition. As long as my memory’s shot up, I can’t help.

Q. Ok, that’s fine. That’s a few of them at least.

A. Yes. Phil Trutter was in existence.

Q. Phil Trutter, I hadn’t thought of him. Of course, of a younger generation is Toberman.

A. Well Toberman and...

Q. That right?

A. Toberman and...who was the other gentleman who joined Trutter? It will come someplace.

Q. Alright, well, because I’ve met him. I don’t know his work. Is he living?

A. Oh yes.

Q. Ok, so there was a fair, there were a fair number of architects here in town.

A. Oh yes, we weren’t without competition.

Q. Yes, and some of them may have had the inside track on some state business. I don’t know.

A. Not only state business. I mean, Central Illinois has a lot of business. You don’t recognize it and the laws posted, be enforced that says anything that is a public type building, used by the public, must have an architect as the builder, I mean as part of the team. So there’s work there and churches do it. Unfortunately in our particular area, the Catholic Church, they don’t go outside their religion for selecting. But we poked that one slightly later well when I was with Hahn’s office.

Q. Ok. That’s right. They tend to pick Catholic.

A. Oh yes, oh yes. Jim Graham, who originated his office about four or five maybe six years after we opened ours and some, both, several people who worked for us went to his office in the beginning, and then they split off of that, too. That’s where I think I said in one of our remarks earlier that one thing and certainly in that paper that you had a chance to read, one of the prides I’ve always had is from our office we spawned, at one time, offices that were in
Spr

Springfield, every single one. I think I’m accurate in this up to again 13 or 14 offices had at least one principal who was a graduate of Ferry and Henderson Architects.

Q. Well that’s impressive.

A. Well, and it was and what happened because you see in Muchow’s office, it was a practice like no other place I had ever been in. When I came back, that’s all I knew.

Q. That’s all you knew.

A. Model-making, we were all taught to make models, but nobody else was making models. Ferry and I took off into models and that was one of the great selling points. We could be able to walk in and sit out a model in front of people. I think I made this remark in one of the earlier tapes that when you set a model down and people would gather around it, it was inevitable they would walk around...particularly when you take the lid off it, the model, and say, “Well, here is...” Everybody said, “Well that’s the gymnasium.” How do you know that? That’s because we put the marks on the floor where the basketball court are.

Q. Ok.

A. Everybody would...and there’s a source of pride when an observer recognizes, “Well I know that. There’s the gymnasium.”

Q. Of course.

A. Yes ma’am, that’s the way it is.

Q. So did you have to hire a model maker or you two?

A. Oh no.

Q. You did it yourselves?

A. Oh you bet, and we were good.

Q. Yes.

A. We had been, later on we got good—good. I mean we got a...in fact there was a young man that his birthday is just about the same time as mine is only he is 20 years younger than I am. We have our birthdays every year now, but he came to work for us when he was 16. That was how many years ago? I don’t know. Lots of years ago and I still see him. But he works for the...and he’s known as the best in Springfield.

Q. Now what’s his name?

Henderson
A. Terry Clark is his name.

Q. Terry Clark, with an “E”? 

A. I don’t think so.

Q. Clark, K-E?

A. C-L-A-R-K. He lives now in Chatham; I think he’s originally from Virden. His dad was a teacher over there.

Q. He’s really a craftsman would you say?

A. Yes, he had not…his education was not in architecture at all, but I think his dad was a school teacher…maybe his mom and dad.

Q. But he had learned to look at plans?

A. Oh yes.

Q. He could see the inside of the interior of rooms and dimensions and the exterior and he could then make them to your specifications.

A. He could read the plans and he knew what was going on.

Q. Sure.

A. As I think I told you, I used to make model airplanes.

Q. Yes.

A. I was eight and nine and ten years and twelve years old, and those taught me about plan making.

Q. Sure.

A. There’s a logic to it and once you get into the thing. But all of the people we hired, with few exceptions, were usually exposed to some kind of educational work with the university. Most of them, in fact, the majority of our early workmen, particularly with the Old State Capitol were graduate architects.

Q. Yes.
A. Yes, they had the training and they had model making at the university.

Q. Oh, I didn’t realize that.

A. Oh yes you learn how to sketch, to draw, to take photographs.

Q. Of course. That figures.

A. Any way you can sell it.

Q. [laughs]

A. If it takes a [inaudible 21:39] we’ll show you that.

Q. Did you make models for all your projects or only when the client...I mean say it’s a small residential building?

A. We would make that decision.

Q. Ok.

A. We didn’t ever say to somebody well you get a model when this is done.

Q. Right.

A. If we thought the model was what it took to actually explain the issue...

Q. That’s the...

A. But what we really and again, I’m doing the pitching in the firm to meet with people. I made the point, even when we were interviewed, I’d say the building is only as good as its client and its architect, not just its architect. I’d say if we’re selected, it’s terribly important that you totally don’t give me a fake budget and say we can only spend $100,000 when you’ve got a million dollars to spend. Then I bring it in at $90,000, and you say, “Well what a crummy building.”

Q. [laughs]

A. That’s not the point. You just...let’s everybody be honest and out on the table. I won’t let you down, and you as the client don’t let us down. That was it. So a model, if that’s what it took to explain it, we did it. We made more than one if we didn’t get it explained with the first.
Q. Oh, ok. You obviously developed or demonstrated, quickly, a persuasive quality, a marketing savvy. Let me put it that way. Was that something you had always been kind of good at?

A. I never thought about that, I don’t know.

Q. Just meeting with people and convincing them of something?

A. I never...

Q. Well, you take it for granted, of course, and you have for years.

A. I wasn’t a dateless wonder.

Q. [laughs]

A. I was pretty successful with the other sex.

Q. Yes, right.

A. But no I enjoyed being, well, I think I learned something. When I was in high school on weekends, I worked in the A & P grocery store.

Q. Ok.

A. I was a grocery sacker.

Q. Yes.

A. This is when you didn’t have to sack your own groceries. The experience was interesting because you’d stand there, at least on Saturdays from eight o’clock in the morning until eight o’clock at night, and you’d meet people. I mean, pretty soon they’d get to know you or something. You’d get so you could talk and pick up a can and catch it in this hand and put it in a sack and carry on. Then the sackers in a row would start racing, I mean, not the sackers but the guys who were running the...

Q. The cashiers?

A. The cashiers would have, sort of have a contest. Well, the sackers is who decides how fast it’s going to turn out of there, and boy, we could beat that; I mean, this was fun.

Q. [laughs]

A. So I guess the answer to it is, yes.
Q. Ok.

A. You’d see people come through there and go, “Wow you almost missed that one,” or something. So you got...

Q. So you developed a lot of social skills?

A. In the fraternity house. I’ll go back to that one again.

Q. Sure, sure, ok.

A. These guys were...they had been around the world and in World War II. They weren’t embarrassed about anything or hold back about anything, but they were courteous and they understood some of the basics. So I think maybe the whole house had a completely different tone to it.

Q. Ok.

A. Nothing slick, it was just this is what we really think.

Q. Right.

A. Don Ferry, again like I say, had said, “Join the Sangamo Club, that’s where you get to meet people.” It’s true, very true. If you get a chance where you’re together, then you may have a chance to spill coffee on him and get a chance to apologize.

Q. [laughs] That’s right.

A. But do it in a sweet way. [inaudible 25:10]

Q. Did you end your first year in the black making money?

A. We split $1,500, yes.

Q. Is that right? The total net profit was $1,500?

A. Yes. That’s something I think the last one a told you, we had one job for $1,500. I kept playing with that idea and that was our profit for the year.

Q. Oh, ok.

A. The other one I think may have been a mistake.
Q. So at least you had some business but it was still a fairly quiet year, wasn’t it?

A. At that point our wives hadn’t walked out on us. [laughs] They were still betting on us, yes.

Q. [laughs] Ok. In addition to joining the Sangamo Club did you join any other civic groups in order to kind of meet people?

A. Well, I think when we did on one of our tapes at least to start up, when I went in to Oliver J. Keller’s public invitation for the Civil War roundtable.

Q. Oh, you did talk about that.

A. Sure.

Q. Right.

A. I stayed with the Civil War roundtable ultimately becoming president of it.

Q. Did you?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you give talks on the Civil War?

A. Oh, I took my turn. That was part of the...

Q. Sure.

A. Met with all the members.

Q. Right. Oliver Keller, I guess, was a great guy.

A. Yes he was, yes he was.

Q. I know Bunch Bunn used to talk about him.

A. One of these guys who you felt comfortable with. He was sort of not fatherly type, very intellectual but not imposing. He said things that made sense.

Q. Yes.

A. His son, O.J. Keller Junior, was, well different than the guy you have emceeing on the radio now, but he went onto to be a consultant or something.
Q. He was involved in corrections work, wasn’t he?

A. Yes, yes, yes, that’s what it is.

Q. Bunch knew him too, Bunch Bunn. How about the, well, you didn’t make cold calls, as they say an encyclopedia salesman would.

A. Well, no, no. Yes, here’s a perfect example of, for example...I don’t know what job I was chasing down but went through Hillsboro to...I guess I was down there because I had to...oh, we had a little nursing home down there.

Q. Ok.

A. Ok, in that particular case, it came through with Don Ferry, some of his contacts. I’m down talking to the people at the nursing home and the process, it was just my process to go in and meet the president of the bank.

Q. Ok.

A. Usually I would try to go over to the school district and see if they got a principal just again to lay the cards down.

Q. Good for you.

A. It is, if you got that much time to go down to spend an hour and spend another half hour, and you at least got one more meal in. Something that came natural, again it’s...I think I told you my dad always had a creative bend.

Q. Yes, right.

A. Without any kind of education for it but he did it. Same thing in Muchow’s office, all these things are creative in their own way, but our business card, first of all was the same color as our stationery, which was gray.

Q. Yes, ok.

A. Nobody has ever...as yet, I’ve seen come up with gray stationery. But we had that which was...well, I proved this to one of my later employers and I was commenting to him about how he didn’t quite get the whole idea about the coloring and particularly on business cards. This is the way we were already practicing long before I got this other job. But he had shown me some different materials and things.
I had said to him after we had had our conversation. I said, “Where is that letter you gave me?” Somebody had had a yellow something in there. I said, “Where’s that letter?” He pushes this around, and he hands it to me. I said, “No kidding, how did you find that so quickly?”

Q. [laughs]

A. [laughs] So the point being that we were trying to get an identity. Something that...I don’t think we were ever kidded, but it always surprised me when they had this big thing about wear pink, “real men wear pink” or some crazy thing.

Q. Oh yes, sure.

A. Well our board, our project boards were pink.

Q. Were they?

A. I mean you could see them a mile away. It said “Ferry and Henderson Architects” on there but they were pink.

Q. [laughs]

A. I’m always sorry that after we closed our office, I didn’t still have one of them because it was a hot pink.

Q. It got attention, sure.

A. Sure because everything else is lost and you can’t find it. You could find our boards, boom there it is. You don’t have to read a whole bunch of things. We’re there.

Q. You, of course, didn’t do any display advertising but your constructions were your advertising, basically weren’t they? The buildings you designed became your advertisements.

A. Yes, yes.

Q. You had to be in the classified pages, you had to pay for yellow pages.

A. Sure. I remember being, once upon a time, challenged by a fellow architect about the fact that we had, excuse me, supported the Junior League Follies. They used to have then, which was a fundraiser.

Q. Yes.

A. In fact, I found, going through all these papers, a picture that had, it had the girls, the follies was a dancing, musical program?
Q. Yes I know.

A. They were, showed the girls doing the kick line in front of a bunch of buildings, of our buildings.

Q. Chorus line, wonderful.

A. Which was a terrific thing. That was in the Junior League Follies, but it wasn’t an ad. It was a support thing, but it talked about contributions by Ferry and Henderson.

Q. Cleaver.

A. Yes, I was taken a heavy task on that.

Q. Oh were you?

A. Yes, by a local architect.

Q. Exploiting?

A. Oh yes, oh yes, which I still at this point, I still think it’s a damn good picture of it. I look at it and think it is...

Q. He may have been a little envious.

A. Oh, I’ll guarantee you that.

Q. [laughs]

A. I’ll guarantee you that part.

Q. Then, let me see, what other...did you do some entertaining? Well, I suppose maybe for lunch of something but business...

A. Used to the Sangamo Club for business.

Q. Yes, ok, sure.

A. So there was that. Yes I found nothing wrong with that thing.

Q. No, of course not.
A. The other thing, boy I can’t even tell you...those were the days when women weren’t allowed places.

Q. Right.

A. Women were sort of sneaking into things, into jobs. To take a lady out to lunch, are you hitting on her? I mean that was crazy stuff.

Q. Yes.

A. But yes, I would just...these were people in the school board for example, principals.

Q. Sure, yes.

A. When I got involved particularly, and this goes way from right in the beginning, but 1976 was the bicentennial of the U.S.

Q. Right.

A. Well, Sally Schanbacher and I were co-chairmen of that. Sally and I, shoot, I met her way, way back in the very beginning.

Q. Yes. How was that, that you met her?

A. Boy, I can’t even tell you at this point. I do, I guess I do know. When I came, again, I was volunteering. This was...they were...Les Collins was the mayor. Somebody had just bought the chunk of property behind the Lincoln Home on Ninth Street.

Q. Ok, yes.

A. Apparently there was a standoff on how to do it and, and there were two pieces sold. Frank Mason bought and gave and got that one into the city hands. So Les Collins woke up, or somebody woke him up, that you can’t have this property not zoned and expect it stay in some sort of a satisfactory...it wasn’t zoned. It was zoned for residential. You wouldn’t have even known it in those days.

Q. No.

A. No, it was sitting on the corner and the only reason you knew that it was anything important, it had an American flag in the front.

Q. Yes.
A. Across the street was a Piggly Wiggly. Houses on all of...for six blocks, was a totally residential neighborhood that had fallen flat on its face to the point that they had multiple...these were single family homes that had been turned into multiple apartment type things. Who was the leader from... I know we covered this the last time - Merchandise Mart founder?

Q. Chris Kennedy?

A. No, no it was...

Q. It was before that.

A. No, this guy founded Sears Roebuck. It’s going to come to me.

Q. Not the, excuse me, growing up in Springfield in the Lincoln...

A. Right across the street.

Q. Yes.

A. Three doors down.

Q. I know who you mean. [Julius Rosenwald]

A. Ok that’s...it will come up. We’ll get you. But he...those were things that people had some idea but not the extent of it. Well, I went in to Les Collins and said, “Well, I’m interested in this,” and got appointed to that committee. Part of it might have been that I just walked in off the street and said I want to be part of it. This turned out to be the historic sites commission.

Q. Ok, it wasn’t called that then, or was it?

A. No, it was the Lincoln Home Advisory Committee.

Q. Ok.

A. Now when you asked me how did I meet Sally Schanbacher? I don’t know whether she was on that or not, but when I got into the historic sites commission, she did get on to that. If my activities with...while we talked about the Lincoln Home, trying to preserve it and just getting back and forth to Washington a lot, that’s when we got a big tip on what has happening on the bicentennial coming up.

Q. Ok.
I went into the Mayor Howarth at that point and said I was interested in being the chairman of that in Springfield. Sally Schanbacher had apparently shown up just hours before and said the same thing. He said, “Would you consider being co-chairmen?” I said, “Well, of course I would.” Sally and I from then on were stuck.

Q. Oh yes. You were a great couple.

A. Clyde Walton, Clyde C. Walton, who was the state historian, he was a marvel. When you put that together, you add Nelson Howarth to that scene, and you put Otto Kerner in, I mean, I’m just saying people that you could rely on to start banging in and not backing off and saying, “Oh, you’re going to embarrass somebody.”

Q. Right.

A. It’s politically incorrect. Nobody gave a damn. We were going to get certain things accomplished for the good of Springfield, and I think the Lincoln Home and some of those things were clear examples of it.

Q. No doubt about it. So you were an earlier member in your residence in Springfield of the Lincoln Home Advisory Committee, which became the Historic Sites Commission.

A. I was on the first group they put together.

Q. So you were helping both mayors?

A. I was also on the, before they called it the Prairie Capital Convention Center, the auditorium authority.

Q. Yes, the SMEAA, I think it was called.

A. Yes. Springfield...

Q. Metropolitan Exposition.

A. And Auditorium. Springfield Metropolitan Exposition.

Q. SMEAAs in there.

A. You’re right, you’re right.

Q. Metropolitan Exposition Authority.

A. Yes, I had that cutout of the paper and maybe I didn’t give it to you.
Q. It was an elected body then?

A. No, it was appointed. It was appointed by the governor. It was...one of our meetings, I’ll show you a picture of it, but I can’t remember the names of the people, the other three but there were four of us.

Q. Ok. That was early in its history.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Not that it meant that you had the chance to pick up any business from that necessarily, but you met people who could be.

A. As a matter of fact, I made a big point of the business. Part of my reason for wanting to be...this sounds screwy but this looked like politics to me. We didn’t have anybody I knew of that could do this job as well as it should be done. An auditorium could bring lots of business. I was savvy from living in...I think I told you I practiced in Indianapolis, I practiced in Denver.

Q. Right.

A. I had been around the world and so now at least I know certain things happen, make things happen. An auditorium attracts business. If you attract that kind of business, it’s not just to the auditorium.

Q. Right.

A. It’s to hotels, it’s to restaurants, it’s to gas stations.

Q. Right.

A. So anything you can do this, and so I came talking those kind of language. This is an interesting thing I almost, you brought this one up. Someplace along the way, the Sangamo Club at that particular time, was at Capitol Avenue and Fifth Street.

Q. Yes, right.

A. Ok, that was a downstairs basement location and it was a businessmen’s club to say the least.

Q. Right.

A. But I think I may be mentioned, I don’t know if you did or didn’t record it, that when I took my wife there it said on the menu to make your reservations. I took my wife there on a
Saturday night, and they had five waiters because I was the only person there and five waiters could serve us. I mean, in other words, they had no business.

Q. Right.

A. That was at that club on...

Q. I know the building.

A. Any event, but they had invited...somebody in Springfield had invited the Wall Street Journal to come down to Springfield to see what was happening in the capital, Abraham Lincoln’s capital. So here comes a young lawyer, a young reporter...

Q. Yes.

A. He was a business reporter and the whole thing goes around. Well, he comes over and we get acquainted and made good friendship. Damned if he doesn’t go back and quote some of the things I’m talking about, we need to do this and we need to do that. I was mouthing off to say the least. I had a couple of the members come up to me afterwards and say, “Keep your mouth shut. You just joined this club, and you don’t know anything about it.” But I was saying that we need to...I don’t think I used the word kick in the ass.

Q. No. Energize.

A. I wasn't cool enough to have that word in those days.

Q. Well, that was your point and it was true.

A. It was. That’s exactly how I ended up on Dean Collins...Lester Collins’ historic sites or Lincoln Home Advisory Committee, which transferred into the other things.

Q. Yes.

A. Again, the Lincoln Home area was a growth of say, why do we have Lincoln’s home across the street from a Piggly Wiggly when this is part of defense we have. I mentioned, when I think we were off the record about Ernest Connally, who had been my history professor over at the University of Illinois that we had used when we were doing the Old State Capitol as an advisor for some of our decision-making and things.

Ernest Connally, from there, it was kind of funny, the Old Capitol blew a lot of people out from their jobs into better jobs. He became number three in the Department of the Interior in Washington. Ernest Connally came back...

Q. I don’t remember him. Is it C-O-N-E-L-Y?
A. However the man who was in the motorcade with Kennedy, it was his relative.

Q. Oh, sure. The governor of...

A. Texas.

Q. John Connally, Governor of Texas.

A. Part of the reason it’s memorable to me in that particular case because Ernest Connally come back at our invitation. How he paid his own way was interesting from Washington because diagonally across Jackson in the alley, a person in Springfield had bought property, and it hadn’t been zoned. It was still an open space, and anybody could do it. It was in the zone, and he had taken it there because he was looking for a building permit to build. I swear to goodness and it will sound like a joke this time, and eleven-story aluminum clad, log cabin.

Q. [laughs] Log cabin.

A. Now how far away can you get with balconies that would overlook the Lincoln Home? Why it was about as goofy as you could come up with, but there was no defense for this thing. I had called Ernest and said something about it. He made a special trip when he was...he testified at the hearing because we took it to some kind of a court, I don’t know what it was. Anyway when they interviewed him and swore him in, your name he... “What’s your name?” He said with his hand right up, he says, “Ernest Connally of Texas.”

Q. [laughs]

A. Because I mean he just [laughs] he just made it clear...that was clear statement of who he was.

Q. That’s right. So there hadn’t been...it had been residential zoning, but this guy wanted a commercial hotel.

A. Oh, yes. Well, see we had immediately following as soon as anybody acted like they were interested, the Old Capitol traded all of this. Whether we want to admit it or not, Lincoln – before the Old Capitol was restored – was the name of the taxicab company and the name of a restaurant some place and something like that but Lincoln was the favored name. It was like, “Oh my, are we going to do another one of those?”

Q. Yes.

A. But Otto Kerner again, stood in front of the Rotary Club and made a remark that I think was a changing point. I say Rotary; it could have been maybe one of the other clubs.
Q. Yes.

A. But I was there when he stood and said because we were losing Baker Manufacturing and the others, that smokestacks were not our industry, but it was tourism.

Q. Oh, my gosh.

A. It was like somebody just threw water on everybody, “Hey you guys, wake up.” That’s what started it and made it much easier because we had a governor who said, “Come on guys. Get off of it. We’re not making machinery exclusively anymore. Some of these people are leaving us. What is our attraction? It’s on our license plates.”

Q. [laughs]

A. You know? It says “Land of Lincoln,” which was put there in 1955.

Q. Yes, right. That’s brilliant and I hadn’t known that Kerner was...I knew he was very supportive, but he was more than that. He took the initiative.

A. He took the initiative, and he also walked the streets of Springfield.

Q. Yes, right.

A. You could run into him at the grocery store. You could run into him hanging over the fence watching the Old Capitol.

Q. Isn’t that great? We’ve got to stop here a second.

END OF TAPE SIX, SIDE ONE

45:29
Q. We just mentioned off tape that Sally Schanbacher had her own persuasive...she cared deeply about these things.

A. Oh, absolutely.

Q. Had a way of charming or even cajoling people to...

A. Yes, she didn’t back off. You could count on Sally, and she went to great extremes. That if in fact...and it wasn’t smugness that would do it. If she decided that the principles of an organization she was with, and I won’t recite a bunch of them, but she would withdraw her membership. That was shocking sometimes when she could have probably been in charge of that membership.

Q. Yes, right.

A. But if the principles weren’t there, she wouldn’t do it. But she had a group of people who were trying and going way beyond their necessary things that caused Springfield to come to life during that particular period of time. It was a lucky day for Ferry and Henderson because there was more work all the time coming along.

We were being considered, and people were trying...we were using in our business, saying it can be better. Don’t just say, “Oh that looks pretty good. Good is not just good enough. If it isn’t the best you can do, you came up short.” That was part of a...it was a sales pitch, absolutely.

Q. Of course it was.

A. But we had a lot of confidence that it could be much, much better. I think much of our work proved that point, and it built the business.

Q. Sure. Well, we’ll get to some of these on this side of the tape. When the competition...well, when Kerner announced that the state would tear down the Old State Capitol, or the capitol building I should say.

A. When he said he would buy it.

Q. Buy it rather, ok. Then they let bids for design, or concept?
A. No, here’s the way that worked actually. I think I had mentioned in a previous conversation when the candidates for governor came through Springfield, they were the clearinghouse which were the downtown bankers.

Q. Yes.

A. That’s again Bunch Bunn and Al Schlipf [2:18], and I’m not sure who was president at that time of the First National Bank.

Q. I’m not either.

A. But I’ll get you that one. But the question was asked of the candidates: if you’re elected the governor, we want to preserve this Old State Capitol and we want your support. Will you give it? Apparently when it was all said and done, Otto Kerner won the game. When they asked Otto Kerner, he already committed to supporting the purchase of it, and so the State of Illinois was going to buy that building. They already know this; now they got that. Now the next thing was the development of a…stop that a minute.

Q. Ok, sure.

[Tape stops and then resumes]

A. Ok, I’m going to pay you to go off and study this whole dog gone thing. You come back with a report, and tell me what it is.

Q. Ok.

A. What’s that called?

Q. You commissioned a study?

A. Yes, but what’s the report you’re going to give me?

Q. Recommendations, options, choices?

A. Recommendations. That’s it.

Q. Well, it’s probably a technical phrase then. But the gist of it is in there.

A. It’s so basic you’ll think I’m stupid.

Q. No.
A. I am stupid.

Q. I’m stupid for not thinking of it myself.

A. We’re doing a preliminary...we’re doing the...see I had to turn this report in, and then to have...the next trick was to get to be appointed, and that happened to us.

Q. Right.

A. But...

Q. I think...as we say, we know what you were talking about.

A. Go ahead. Shoot it off. I’ll pull off something.

Q. So you and others had the chance to each submit a plan. You were given a job of submitting a plan.

A. The secret between you and me, our secret’s not secret, is that you know the governor’s already met Wally Henderson but put me on the commission.

Q. Right.

A. Clyde Walton, I met him sitting down at the O.J. Keller’s and O.J. Keller is also a friend of Otto Kerner’s.

Q. Sure.

A. Here’s Wally Henderson, who is an architect, and now they need somebody to come up and write this.

Q. This was not a coincidence that you were named.

A. No, in fact that’s...remember this was the thing that Clyde Walton said to me. He says, “What do you know about reconstruction and preservation?” I said, “As much as anybody else.”

Q. True in those days.

A. There was not, you could not, you could not get a reference book anyplace.

Q. Right. The second part of that answer, which you didn’t bother giving us was, in other words, I don’t know anything. [laughs]
A. That’s right. My mom didn’t say tell them all. Tell them just as much as they need.

Q. No, no. I’m just...well good for you. So Walton obviously had a persuasive...

A. He did. Again this is, you asked me a question.

Q. Yes.

A. I like people, and I guess I am personable. The governor was a personable guy.

Q. Yes.

A. I mean you could talk with him and just have a heck of a time. I mentioned to you when I told you the story of going over to the mansion and having this other guy says, “Who the hell is Wally Henderson?” He had been with me the whole day, and these thirty Springfieldians are there, which was his way of introducing me at the mansion.

Q. [laughs]

A. But again, but that’s good. Throw me the ball; I’ll throw it back at you.

Q. Exactly.

A. So I don’t...

Q. So partly by chance and partly by your nature you had cultivated friendly relationships with people who were going to be in a position to take this second, this next stage.

A. I guess another thing that fits into this thing and that’s all that was done without thinking, “Boy, this is the big plan.”

Q. Yes, right.

A. I will do this next. It’s a commitment in determination. I aggressively pursue some things when I really believe in them.

Q. Yes.

A. To being a pain in the ass to a lot of people.

Q. [laughs] Well, that’s ok.

A. We’re...are we underway?
Q. Oh, we’re on tape.

A. Ok, well...

Q. That’s ok.

A. Ok, well, yes I think it’s terribly important if you have a big idea, and it has to be a big idea, to carry it all the way through. People can become enthusiastic when they don’t think, “Well, it’s passing through the night. Tomorrow morning we’ll wake up and think it was hooey.” Springfield can be a great city. We can be ranked today a regional center.

Q. Yes, right.

A. But we can’t do it hoping that somebody’s going to bring a new business in. You got to go out and grab them and bring them in.

Q. Oh I know. You are a...you’re a born salesman and promoter as well as an architect. Do you know, remember when you and Ferry were paid for this next step consideration?

A. Well this...

Q. Was it a yearlong, year and a half?

A. I can’t remember the money. Yes we had...

Q. Ok.

A. I think we had sixteen, maybe eighteen months really, and I keep fooling around with the study. It’s to evaluate all the options.

Q. Yes.

A. Once we got all the options together we...the recommendation was to come out and tell the governor what should be done since he was going to commit to this.

Q. You identified the options but also gave your recommendation as to the best.

A. It’s the recommendation, that’s what they were waiting for.

Q. Yes, of course.

A. Well, of course, we put our time in this way, and doing it we had to do a lot of studying. That’s where nobody had ever done it before.
Q. Yes, right.

A. It is that you had to understand the building that you had before they screwed around with it in 1898.

Q. Right.

A. Well, the plans, if they ever existed that long, were probably lost when they had a fire in the original Armory building in the 1933.

Q. Yes, right.

A. So there’s no drawings of it. Nobody had... and even Murray Haynes no longer had his drawings, his dad’s drawings. So we got a building and the building now has a life that’s ending, but it is the original life that we’re trying to get back to. It really was put on ice when they lifted it up in the air and tore the interior out of it. The only thing we really had standing was the shell of the building, even the cupola itself had been removed.

Q. I didn’t know that, ok.

A. That was a completely replacement of the cupola and the only thing that you were looking at was the stone. The stone had been raised up 11 feet and at the bottom of it, Indiana limestone had been inserted as a base, which again, allowed them to expand but not authentically. The only thing you can say is, “Well, yes some place in that volume Abraham Lincoln did try 200 and some law cases,” and so forth, but this isn’t his building.

Q. Right.

A. When we did our studies, we start trying to find out who even participated in the building of it. We said, we put out a call anyway we could get - radio, newspapers, any schools we could write to. If you got any information about the Old State Capitol, if your grandpa wrote in or had a picture taken standing in front of the building, send us the picture or tell us about your grandpa. We started getting this material and the material doesn’t mean anything. It’s a letter and this letter is from Freeport, Illinois about somebody who visited the Old State Capitol in 1850. It said you should have been on the treasurer’s office and described the treasurer’s office, but where the heck is the treasurer’s office?

Q. They were pieces to a much bigger puzzle.

A. Pieces. But you keep getting pieces, and that’s nice because we need that. As the pieces come along, which I think I used this term in an earlier tape again, I was teaching Sunday school at Westminster Presbyterian, which we had a timeline. The timeline had a clothespin.

Q. Oh you mentioned that.
A. When you have a timeline, you have to organize things by this preceded that so that could happen. Well, as I think I used the same statement the last time we talked. We chalked off on our little ten by fifteen floor space and put all those lines on there. We went from 1837 around to 1858, and if we found anything at all, we plopped it down on that space. Some spaces had a whole package of stuff. Other spaces had nothing.

Q. It was blank.

A. What we suddenly learned, those were real people. They did not start building a building at the Capitol, at the flag pole. They waited to do that at the end. That goes on top. They’re doing a foundation. What do we need in the foundation? Oh, a stonemason. Well, we got a stone mason, but we still don’t expect ornamental plaster to show up.

Q. No.

A. Pretty soon we get down to enough stone, enough structure. Now we’re looking for some structure that goes in there. That starts turning up. Now we got enough smarts to say and see part of the way they did it in those days is that the newspaper, which was being published, same journal paper when Lincoln, when we’re here was here then.

In that paper on a regular basis...we found out early in the game that we did find in a book, we’re going to a lot of libraries, in a book that a group called... not a group, an architectural firm. Town and Davis I think it was out of, I want to say Ohio, Cincinnati perhaps, I don’t know...any event, here’s a picture of the Old State Capitol as it looked in our day, in other words, 1898.

Q. Oh, yes.

A. So somebody had just glued it together and said, “Well Town and Davis had done something like that.” They had in South Carolina and maybe in Ohio, but they weren’t in Springfield, Illinois. So we’re going along and all of the sudden it turns up, the architect’s name is John Rague. R-A-G-U-E.

Q. Right.

A. John Rague, we try to track him back and some of our readers in the Junior League was doing this on a gratis basis and doing a wonderful job of it, reading the newspaper columns. Now the newspaper didn’t have pages and pages and pages of classifieds.

Q. No.

A. Everything was sort of news and so including the arrival of John Rague newly arrived from New York City, who could do modern buildings, and he advertises as an architect. Then he
makes one of these little devices that you write down your topic and columns. The next one was John Rague, newly arrived from New York. He develops cold stone, which is sort of like concrete block, but he could do all the ornamental things like... That column ends with another little device, John Rague also is... well, he calls himself some kind of a special baker. He like bakes, bakes goodies.

Q. Oh, goodies.

A. Like baking goods.

Q. [laughs]

A. This guy is going to stay in Springfield. There’s no question. I’m an architect first. I’ll do the stone. If that’s not good enough, I’ll furnish the goodies for you. Anyway, but we got John Rague and now the next logical step, and that’s what I think I’ve said earlier again. When I spoke to the Columbia University people, I said, “You restore a building exactly like you think you restore a building,” which is a phrase that doesn’t say a whole lot until I keep saying to you, “Ok, well, what do you think is the next thing?”

Now you’ve found that you got an architect, at least, and you got people reading for you who’s telling you that every... they don’t read all the papers but about every month or so, you’re going to say, “Oh, I got an Ionic column,” or they’ll say, “We needed a beam but we got a molding,” and they were talking something.

Well, what do you think you’re going to do with that thing? You got to figure out where these guys are getting their ideas. Well, then let’s...would you think to call and find out where did Rague come from? Rague came from New York. Well, who the hell did he study under that would now about columns and things? The guy’s name is Millard [Minard] Lafever.

Q. Ok.

A. Millard [Minard] Lafever is an architect of some note in New York City in 1830s, who also wrote three books, and books usually go someplace. We found these in the rare books library at the University of Illinois.

Q. Terrific.

A. The interesting part of it now, we’ve seen this very classical type stuff and again I think I mentioned to you that classical architecture follows the orders.

Q. Yes.

A. Doric, Ionic, Corinthian.
Q. Corinthian. We got stumbled on Corinthian.

A. Yes, we did, and also that means sizes. You don’t build a column that’s a certain diameter and expect everything next to it is going to be out of proportion. So the spaces between columns are going to be such and such. It’s again and again and again whether you take it from ancient Rome or you take it from the Greeks, you just keep on following the building because that’s the advantage. It’s like pronouncing a guy’s name correctly; you build a building correctly. When Thomas Jefferson came back he said, “Copy the classical orders. That’s where it is.”

Q. Sure.

A. That’s some of our first buildings though is federal...is finally agreeing to go with what the federal thinks than to follow with that all the way through. But in finding Millard [Minard] Lafever’s buildings, we found the actual... Well I never have written it down enough that I can pronounce it, so we actually found the building that was as I recall it was a Grecian building that you...no, I’m sorry, it was a Roman building where you actually saw the dentals in the ornamental plaster that you could see in a photograph taken after Lincoln’s body was returned into Springfield.

Q. So you found the...

A. Actually it was drawn. There is was. It was right out of the books of Millard [Minard] Lafever showing you how to put all this thing in there. Once you get this sign of a good relationship going, you’re working backwards and you’re going to go forward with it, but now we’ve got some goodies.

Then right about this time somebody digs up that...I guess we’re into 1840 or 1841 and there’s a strike. The workmen weren’t being paid their two dollars and 25 cents a day, and so they have a strike. Then somebody turns up that they have a little doubt about the honesty of the guys who put this whole thing together, so they wipe that whole bunch out including Rague. Kiss him off and he’s gone. They take the money and this, I mean take all the information and give it to the state auditor. Now nobody ever thought about trying to find out about the Old Capitol.

Q. Of course, looking for it in the auditor’s office.

A. Well, because now they are wanting to know where is all this money going.

Q. Sure.

A. So now we’ve got...the auditor pulls out all kinds of billings for materials that were going in the Old State Capitol, and certain materials just told us to look for another place.
Q. Yes.

A. We ended up being able to...in some case, in one case, one just knocked me out. I think I told you that the building was pretty well figured out on the inside. What we were trying to analyze what was going to hold up that stair up that was going upstairs.

Q. Yes.

A. I went to the Junior League people and I said about this time and I had given them a little time thing, “We’re looking for four columns, and they’re going to have Ionic capitals on them if you can read for that any place that you can.” I swear to goodness it wasn’t a week and I was called and said, “Come here, we got your columns.”

They called me and here it was describing the columns that you go down and look at them. They’re down there. But all of the sudden it was like we got it because here we could call the time out it’s in there. We know what’s going in the building from here on out.

Q. That’s terrific.

A. It was.

Q. It was a giant puzzle.

A. Oh and one of the articles that was written in some other thing with the giant jigsaw puzzle.

Q. Yes, exactly.

A. But the amazing thing was that because again, following all the way through, we got faked out a couple of times where we didn’t have anything in some of the fill-ins setting on our floor all these follow-throughs. The State of Illinois went broke exactly like we’re going broke now.

Q. Right.

A. They couldn’t afford to finish the whole building. So instead of putting the plaster in where you’d think they put it in at the bottom, they plastered the second floor, which was where the state legislature and the senate and the governor’s office was. The first floors were rough walls, which was stone and fill-in brick and whitewash. The whitewash we knew where it was except they had stair up to the...going up to the upstairs, and so they couldn’t whitewash it. They had to whitewash around the stair.

Q. So you found...
A. So when we got into it, into the plaster, taking the plaster off, there’s the whitewash right where it ought to be. Now we’re going, “Yeah, we got now exactly what we’re trying to get.” So it’s…we were building a case for ourselves.

Q. This must have been for you and your partner, incredibly exciting, consuming, consuming.

A. The excitement was over eighteen months in that particular case, which you don’t wake up all of the sudden crazy.

Q. I understand.

A. But you are feeling awfully good and awfully confident about it, which brings us right up to D-day. D-day is we’ve got to get this thing ready to roll, and that’s when we take our recommendation, which we had it written as well. We hadn’t put the final touches on it, but the meeting is with the group, the downtown group, SCADA. I think it was down at the Leland Hotel.

Q. Sure.

A. I can’t remember all the other people in there, but Bill Montgomery…Bill Montague, Bill Montague was head of SCADA.

Q. Oh, Bill Montague.

A. He was SCADA president at that time I believe. Any event, that was in his conference room in the Leland Hotel. The governor was there and Clyde Walton and there was a dozen people. I remember walking in. When I left Ferry said, “What are you going to tell them?” Because what we had done and we had made several boards and when I make the presentations, one of the early things we had done is to say…I think I told you the, when Willis Spaulding succeeded in getting...

Q. Yes, you mentioned this.

A. Lake Springfield was not a completed lake. It was evidence that it could be a lake if you excavated some more space. Well, when they did the excavation they had a lot of extra dirt. The big idea in 1933 was bring that dirt and put it around the bottom of the building, and it will look like it did when Lincoln was there.

Well, we had already said that would be a little goofy including since we had to put a new cupola and everything on there, but how do you prove this to people? We made boards where we took pictures all the way around the square and in black negative type things, we had the Illinois building mounted and we had the, I can’t remember…oh, Sterns Furniture.

Q. Sure, sure.

Henderson
A. Next to that was...

Q. Marine Bank.

A. Marine Bank and...


A. The State Theater was right there on the corner or the Strand Theater, I guess it was. Then we went on all four sides that way. We had the Old Capitol sitting on a mound [laughs] in front of all those. Then we had another set of boards that had the Old Capitol down where it belonged.

Q. This contrast was...

A. We didn’t have to say which do you like?

Q. It was obviously...

A. It was dumb, just dumb.

Q. But that, of course, extended the cost and the time period considerably. It was what, probably about a three or four year construction period when you actually?

A. No, no. Here...now that was...

Q. I’m wrong, ok.

A. You’re smart. Your thought process was right, but part of the real thing that we were challenged to do is it to make this building like Lincoln had it if he could come back, that was the term that was I always used, including... excuse me...including the Lincoln Home area.

Q. Right.

A. If Lincoln could be returned and be on his porch, what he would see would technically be it which means if he can’t see beyond that next building...I’m not trying to cure all of Springfield. Same thing when you’re talking about the Old Capitol, Lincoln the man should be able to walk in there and be familiar with the space.

Q. Yes, sure.
A. Ok, but we also want to have it be a secure place, and we don’t want it to burn down, so we better provide for security and the communications. We’re going to have a need to heat the building. In those days they had potbellied stoves.

Q. Right.

A. The potbellied stove has got to be replaced...no, it’s got to be there, but we got to replace the heating system.

Q. Yes that’s right.

A. How do you get that in there? It just had happened, I was on one of these trips back from Washington but I was on this national committee of RUDATs. It was an interesting...the timing on all these things are so coincidental. The RUDAT, which was the Regional Urban Design Committee of the American Institute of Architects, was having a big event in Washington, D.C.

What they were talking about is the need for planning, and it was put together by the American Institute of Architects. The first time that they had turned out the lights in Washington, D.C. since World War II was going to be on the mall, the National Mall. We were down there, our committee was sort of the champions of that whole thing, but they were trying to say to the city, “This is what we’re trying to do.” They actually turned out the lights of the whole mall area. We were in the tent, and it was a big public reception. Big tent, the Smithsonian’s over there. Of course, all the things that we, you and I would see now, the air museums and so forth weren’t built.

Q. That’s right.

A. The lights go out and then they have these big search lights. You hear this voice of I always say Westbrook Van Voorhis [25:45], which in the old days this was the guy who did the “March of Times” on the movie.

Q. Ok.

A. Between, we always had double movies in those days.

Q. Right.

A. Any event, it was the voice of Westbrook or God speaking.

Q. [laughs]

A. “They came to the site of the” and he goes on and every time they would say we were...we should have...and he’d talk about a building, and a light would go on.
Q. Oh boy, dramatic.

A. Another light would go on. It was just absolutely fantastic. Of course, you finally end up lighting the Lincoln Memorial, you end up lighting...and after that was a hospitality session where we were sort of guests of honor and marched through with the whole bunch through the White House. Got introduced to...was it Lyndon Johnson, I guess?

Q. Wow.

A. I mean, yes it was Lyndon Johnson.

Q. Probably, yes. Was it the mid-1960s?

A. I remember it was in the Green Room. The whole wall of this space was taken up with ornamental iron, which was a return air duct. I mean it was very ornamental.

Q. Right.

A. But it was so darn out of place, I thought. It had stuck in my mind.

Q. Yes.

A. And it...

Q. So you needed to design a system that wouldn't be visible.

A. That's what stuck in my mind.

Q. Yes, sure. So you were always looking at old buildings for new ideas that would help you create a comfortable 21st century building with a 19th century feel to it.

A. You got it. How do you do it? That's the whole, the whole thing.

Q. Right.

A. If you don’t that...how do you do it if you don't get that attitude? How could he do it? I know how he did it, but he did it with those black stoves, but we have got to get real air in there. So we’re now looking for real air, all the grills and, of course, I run into a problem as recently as this year. I’ll tell you about that, about how we heated. Ok, any event that was part of the problem and that was part of our answer. We came back, now at this point we’re going to have to jump back on our session.

Q. Right.
A. We have now discovered that they had fired the architect and all the people who financed it. We got a whole new slew of guys in there doing something. We know where or at least we can find the parts and pieces that are coming, and the newspaper’s going to tell us, and the auditor can identify it. So we got that, but where did Rague go? Well, Rague went from there to...and I had already been to the Dred Scott Courthouse in St. Louis because we’re looking for a period of time. But Rague has been hired by the territorial capital...

Q. Of Iowa.

A. Of Iowa.

Q. Iowa, right.

A. To do the territorial capitol. Ok, that’s good enough for me. John, I’m blown away, and he did. He put it together and what we’re looking for is how the windows and some of this because we had again, photographs from the outside of the Lincoln group when they came along. We had art sketches from when Lincoln was elected the president from artists of the Harper’s Bazaar and the other. They had made sketches, window details, the governor’s office.

Q. Yes.

A. In fact, they have one of the sketches from Harper’s for you to compare to where they actually had a wooden chain that was laid out.

Q. Yes, the famous wooden chain.

A. You also see the potbellied stove in there and you also see the windows and you also see the shutters. So all those things are going there; I go off to Iowa and there they are.

Q. Ok, so you found a building with its design features consistent with everything you knew about the Illinois Old State Capital.

A. There was an overlap. Let’s say we didn’t do the outside of their building. We didn’t take their building...we were all interior, but that’s what I’m working on, the interior.

Q. Sure.

A. So we got that but we got, first of all, the details of the ornamental plaster; we’ve got most of that in there. Some of these letters, in one letter, the guy has actual drawn a floor plan, a sketch saying, “When I was here in this new, beautiful, modern capitol office building or capitol building...” Then there is Mr. Converse, believe that’s his name.

Q. Henry Converse? It doesn’t matter.
A. I think it is. Yes, in 1922.

Q. Yes.

A. He’s in a hospital, and he’s sending a letter to George Pasfield.

Q. Ok.

A. He’s saying to George Pasfield, “This is what I remember of the Old State Capitol.” Well, you saw it in this publication.

Q. Yes, right. Right, exactly.

A. That’s Henry Converse’s statement of saying that I sat there at Mr. Lincoln’s feet when he gave his “House Divided Speech.”

Q. Yes.

A. But in it, he names each room.

Q. Yes.

A. When he names each room, that’s exactly a follow-up of what we had.

Q. Right.

A. I thought it was in this one, maybe it isn’t in this one. Well, it isn’t.

Q. That’s ok.

A. No, actually it’s a drawing by a person who had an idea but his scale... but he did a pretty dog gone good job.

Q. That’s remarkable.

A. But from there we’ve got the names of all those rooms, which are the very names...the library’s here, the auditor’s office here, and it was amazing.

Q. Yes, it was a great challenge and contest.

A. But you don’t quit looking just because we have that, and we just kept sniffing it out, sniffing it out.
Q. No. Were there any last minute discoveries that forced you to change some of your details, specs, or plans? Remember any?

A. No, but I had a couple of criticisms by the head of the national, I mean by the head of the Department of the Interior. Now criticism is objective criticism.

Q. Now what did the Department of the Interior have difficulty with?

A. Well, this was “the” building being built in the country. There wasn’t anybody ahead of us.

Q. Right, I understand, but it wasn’t a federal building.

A. No, no, no they were invited to come.

Q. Oh, ok.

A. He was the guy from Arizona, one of his relatives was just running for something else. Anyway, but we were getting international attention.

Q. Oh, I know who you mean. Yes a friend of...he was in the Kennedy administration.

A. Yes, yes, yes.

Q. He [Stewart Udall] was a well-known senator and congressman and he has a son [Tom Udall] or something in Colorado [New Mexico]. *[Stewart Udall’s nephew, Mark Udall, was/is a member of the U.S. House of Representatives/U.S. Senate from Colorado.]

A. He’s got somebody running right now.

Q. I can’t think of his name, but he was a well-known figure.

A. Sure, we’ll decipher that one. But any event, he’s going through, and we’ve got all the spaces right. We know that, and he’s admiring all that stuff. Anyways he commented to me, he looks out the window and he says, “They were making better glass than that when Columbus came.”

Q. [laughs]

A. Some remark about like that. He was a good guy. He wasn’t being...

Q. Yes, he wasn’t being...
A. I said, “It is antique glass.” He said, that’s when he made that comment, but he said, “I think it really is effective because you don’t see, because you just get a blur.” Otherwise you would be seeing F.W. Woolworth and J.C. Penney’s and all this stuff.

Q. It would ruin the image. So in a way, the older glass...

A. So it’s a little convincing to people that it’s an antique window in there. The other thing was, we had broad paneled floors, and we had used pegs. They said they weren’t using pegs. So, I mean that was just a miscall on my part.

Q. They were just common...?

A. They were...well I, yes. I don’t remember the...he wasn’t asking us to replace them. In fact, some of it’s still left. They had a water pipe break in part of our heating system. It was under the floor and had one break, and they had to replace some of the stuff because it warped as soon as it got wet. Those were the two remarks we got. But from there, as I say, Connally became number three in that department, Ernest Connally.

Q. Oh, Connally, yes right.

A. Our mechanical engineers, who did a genius of a job, and you saw the sketches of that.

Q. Yes, right.

A. Which...

Q. Who were they?

A. They were out of Champaign...Carroll Henneman.

Q. Carroll Henneman?

A. Carroll and Henneman. Their spelling is right here. It is interesting Henneman, no it’s Carroll. Carroll was offered a job or else he went for it, I’m not sure which, with the Department of the Interior in Washington and he took it. I was interviewed for a job to be chief architect.

Q. I know you were.

A. With the Department of the Interior. I was consulted on doing Independence Hall in...

Q. Is that right?
A. But see my prices were right. I wasn’t smart enough to charge them, but I was so flattered I just gave my opinions and they wanted to...someplace on here there’s a sheet that...

Q. That dubs you the names of the participating...

A. Supposed to be. I know it’s there but...

Q. Ok.


A. Maybe it’s double “R”-O-L...double “L”.

Q. Ok.

A. I’ll get all of it for you.

Q. Ok, well was it a natural then once this committee and the governor had agreed to your proposal that you were then chosen as the architect for the project itself or was that a bid thing?

A. No, there was no bid. No bid. But also, another self-defeating thing is [laughs] that nobody knew how to price it.

Q. [laughs] That’s right.

A. The fee that we took was the same thing if we would have been building a warehouse, six percent, which is one crazy thing. Today, that would be 20, 25 percent. Usually...there’s a little tab there someplace.

Q. Yes, I’ll find it.

A. Sure.

Q. Well, that’s really interesting. There were no, there were no precedence.

A. No there wasn’t anybody else to call because we had...and our justification, you asked a question again about...

Q. Yes.
A. All of our reasoning...see the structure of the building was wooden originally. I mean they had a fire in there.

Q. Yes.

A. That’s part of what triggered this expansion and replacement. So by all that being lost, we had to build a building that you could still get all the systems in there including the air-conditioning system. You can go along and we actually put a thing...I understand that they did, after our consulting work at Independence Hall, to put communications in along the baseboards and so forth.

Q. Yes.

A. But we actually did get a molding and accepted that.

Q. That’s one of them.

A. Which we felt good about it.

Q. Of course. I found it.

A. We copied that a few dozen times.

Q. Yes, alright. So that...I mean, your firm had other ongoing projects then, but this was a consuming activity.

A. Oh yes, oh yes. We had people, our staff was building because we had to build other projects.

Q. Yes, of course. You had to move then. You had to move into a new...

A. Fortunately yes. That was when we got together and built, with Steve Barthoff, the Design Center on South State Street.

Q. Oh.

A. Now the Design Center, all just goes back to Denver, Colorado.

Q. The Design Center on South...

A. South State is right off South Grand. It used to be a furniture store. I mean, remember there was a gas station right there.

Q. Yes, yes.
A. Across the street from that was a grocery store.

Q. Ok.

A. Then we had the building just east, just south of the gas station.

Q. Ok. Steve built a building according to your needs?

A. No, Steve Barthoff and Ferry and Henderson became partners and did it.

Q. Partners.

A. But the Design Center concept because Steve at that time was interested in furniture...

Q. Well, see I didn’t know that.

A. Ok well, here’s what we did. There was a Design Center out in Colorado, which wasn’t very far from Bill Muchow’s residence. I was going out to see Bill Muchow yet anyway, so we go over to the Design Center. We’re in his place, and it was the first time we had ever seen Coke bottles that had been heated by blowtorches and made into glasses and such, but it was neat. The Design Center is what it was called. They were part of the architectural society out there.

Q. Sure.

A. We thought this would be great, so the area on the south side of that building was a showroom for what was called the Design Center, which was Steve Barthoff’s furniture store.

Q. Oh my gosh, I didn’t know that he had had that interest.

A. Steve had the furniture, and we had the rest of the building.

Q. Well, I know the building I have thought about...yes, of course I know that because it still is the Design Center.

A. We had a little courtyard. The courtyard had show windows in it. I mean, if you ever go in there, and there’s a tree in there today that’s this big around. When we put it in it was that big around indicating much smaller].

Q. [laughs] So now it’s more than a foot in diameter.

A. Oh yes, it is forty years old.

Q. Yes.
A. But the front has not changed. They cut all of our trees down just recently so that’s alright. But the mound in there, we were probably the first people in Springfield not to throw all of our dirt away. We said, “Just put it there just to change the grade a little bit.” So the little mound and that’s how we decided if we liked… but in his furniture store, rather than having show windows, because nobody buys anything out of it at all.

Q. No.

A. We wanted to put a teaser in there. So it’s a window, and the window, I think, is four or five feet wide. We could get about 400 foot-candles of light, and he’d hang one chair in there, or something.

Q. Oh ok.

A. That was the come-on. You had to get out of your car and you come in. Then once you got into the courtyard, we had a couple benches and people could sit there and look at…and it…[laughs]

Q. Ok. So that was a brand-new facility designed to your needs?

A. The concepts were there. He could show his show windows.

Q. Sure.

A. We were there and could show contemporary furniture. As a matter of fact, the first contemporary furniture by the State of Illinois, at least we were told by Herman Miller was specified by us when we did the Old Capitol Library.

Q. Oh, yes, ok.

A. It was furnished by the Design Center people.

Q. Interesting.

A. They bid it against Sears Roebuck and got it. They wanted to get into it, so they did it.

Q. Good. Is that company still owned by Steve?

A. No, no, no. No that...

Q. Long gone?

A. Yes, many, many years ago. I can’t tell you the successors of that thing.
Q. Meanwhile you were doing other work. You didn’t have all of your eggs in one Old State Capitol basket obviously.

A. No, we didn’t even have any interest in doing any kind of restoration work. We were trying to get the other work.

Q. Yes, of course.

A. So we had to...one of our first jobs again, as I said, was Douglas Avenue Methodist Church.

Q. Yes, you mentioned that.

A. I always remember one of the comments when we were being interviewed, and that’s when Crawford...

Q. Crawford, Murphy...

A. No, it was Murphy. Murphy, Murphy was...

Q. Joe Murphy I think. No, not Joe Murphy...anyway, it doesn’t matter.

A. Well, it did because he was our really guy inside because we had no projects to show anybody. He was sort of the inside and when he asked us, because we pitched hard. We said all the things that we could do and I think the Old Capitol was...I don’t know how far along we were but maybe we didn’t have it on the ground yet. Any event asked the question, he said, “What if you guys split up what are we going to get stuck with?”

Q. Right.

A. So we had to be very convincing at that point and say that we have no intention of splitting up.

Q. You didn’t really.

A. No, we didn’t. It hadn’t occurred to us, I should say.

Q. No, that’s right.

A. I never thought about that. Like Muchow, I don’t know. [laughs]

Q. [laughs] I think, no we can stick a few more minutes. I’m trying to wrap this up somehow. Were there any really serious construction problems? Did you reach an impasse on anything or a crisis?
A. No, a surprise thing that happened when I was...Augie Wisnowsky, now after we under construction was moved down on to the jobsite downtown and did a full...he didn’t have to pick up the stones though I think he...I think I’ve said a few times when I’m being smart. I said, “He didn’t pick them up I picked them up.” I said, “That’s why I’m so short.”

Q. [laughs]

A. No, but Augie was a big guy and he could get around and did a good job down there on the jobsite, trying to solve problems. I would go down and look at them on a Saturday because you don’t want to get on a jobsite wearing a helmet and all that stuff.

Q. No.

A. But I got out on where the columns had been restored.

Q. Yes.

A. The framing had gone up for the roof itself, and I guess the cupola structure was in there and there was a creeping sound. I was up there and I could hear it. I said to Augie...we were out where there wasn’t anything to hold on to. If you fell, you went down about three stories. I said, “What’s that sound?” He said, “Well, it’s the wind on the cupola framing.”

This, all of the sudden, answered because now we had those things would go all the way back to the auditor studies. Some of the records had them continually repairing the roof and the cupola, not the roof, but the flashing. Well, if you take a circle, let’s say just a round thing and if you blow on it hard enough and it’s anchored at the bottom, it twists.

Q. Oh, my gosh.

A. It’s like nailing somebody’s hoopskirt to the floor and saying, “Try to walk.”

Q. Sure. Yes, right.

A. Well, that twist is what I was hearing. Well, we had to reinforce that or they would have still been doing this thing. We had to go in and get a $6,000 extra on a million dollar job. I mean, we came in so could you couldn’t believe that one.

Q. That’s amazing.

A. I mean the whole thing was $1.7 million.

Q. That’s remarkable, Wally. But you did have to reinforce that early on.
A. We put in steel plates like you drive over on a manhole.

Q. It’s good you visited that day.

A. Well, it was a pure accident but it was one of those things.

Q. Yes. I got to stop it here.

END OF TAPE SIX, SIDE TWO

46:21
Q. This is an oral history interview on April 28 with Wally Henderson. The interviewer is Cullom Davis. First, let’s get down on tape the two words that we had trouble coming up with. One, when we talked about your work on options was a feasibility study.

A. Feasibility study, yes.

Q. Of course, we both blanked out on that.

A. That was the big preliminary before we started to get to serious designing.

Q. Then we were trying to think of a well-known family who lived in... neighbors who lived in the Lincoln neighborhood. Do you want to mention them?

A. Yes, I certainly do because in a later issue here we’re probably going to talk about the Lincoln Home development.

Q. Yes.

A. Julius Rosenwald family. They were across the street on the west side of the street on Eighth Street, from Lincoln’s home, about three doors north of Lincoln’s home on the opposite side of the street. Julius Rosenwald.

Q. Right.

A. That was his name but the family name, I mean, was Rosenwald. I don’t know what the father’s name was.

Q. Yes, and he grew up there but he then later probably moved to Chicago or something. He was a very successful merchant.

A. Oh yes. The Merchandise Mart has his bust right there in the center court, outside that area.

Q. I think he became president of Sears Roebuck.
A. He was responsible for it. Interesting thing is that later when we start talking about the Lincoln Home area, we wanted to approach them about them contributing or being acknowledged and so forth, and that's a story all by itself.

Q. Ok, we'll come back to that. Though I do know that the Rosenwald family, probably under his wealth, had also established a major foundation to improve education for African American children in the south, I remember that was the focus of that foundation. This was in the early 1900s.

A. I never followed that.

Q. No, I just happened to have read that.

A. Interesting.

Q. Yes. Ok, well, trying to wrap up our coverage of the plans for construction of the Old State Capitol. I remember reading I think in *Progressive Architecture* article about a kind of a humorous adaptation you made in developing the plaster, the appropriate plaster form, I guess it would be for the columns, or something.

A. Yes, it was actually the form that connected columns. There was a fake beam that actually in the original was the beam but we replaced all that. So these are hollow beams where we carried all our mechanical and electrical and so forth through there.

In order to get the pattern, actually Augie Wisnowsky, who was our field person, was on the jobsite and they were trying to cast these things in here. As an innovative solution and thanks to him, he got together a baking pan, like a pie pan [laughs] and turned it upside down, so you got this indentation, which was part of the design pattern.

Q. It was essentially the right dimensions?

A. Sure. He had to do a little shopping, but he did it.

Q. Yes.

A. But it was very creative. He did a good job.

Q. It was. Otherwise you would have had to have one custom-made, and that would have cost a lot of money.

A. Casting.

Q. Yes.
A. All these castings again it’d...casting was very popular in the 1920s in a lot of quality homes for moldings and different forms like that. That was almost out of existence. We had to search hard to get the people to do the Corinthian columns and so forth in this. That was in Chicago.

Q. Sure. That was clever. But people who wrote that article in Progressive Architecture labeled that innovation in capital letters, “THE LINCOLN STATEHOUSE MEMORIAL CAKE PAN PLASTER FORM.” I thought that was a nice little touch.

A. Was that C. Ray Smith, I think that wrote that?

Q. I can’t remember.

A. C. Ray Smith with the Progressive Architecture.

Q. Yes. Well, maybe you came up with that title, but the point is that it was an amusing, show how routine, everyday things can be useful.

A. Exactly right, exactly right. That’s really how we approached many things and try to get back to how they did it in their day, which we didn’t have anything to go on, but you need to form the pattern in there. C. Ray Smith, by the way, came at our invitation to Springfield and actually stayed at our home. We had a couple of evenings together where we could talk the whole thing through. He went through it carefully. His article was really quite outstanding, but it was the cover article for the magazine.

Q. That’s pretty nice attention.

A. Oh yes, worldwide, as a matter of fact.

Q. [laughs]

A. It’s good.

Q. I’m reminded that, of course, you meticulously numbered and transported and preserved at the State Fairgrounds, the original stonework. What did you do with the floor that was added stonework? Did you just, that was...

A. Hauled off of the site just like the backup material. Understand the exterior wall is stone from the outside, you see it. The backup, it started at a base of 42 inches wide at the bottom and ended up 18 inches all the way up at the top in the original building. Well the backup, all the stones weren’t 42 inches.

Q. Oh, of course.
A. They were big. The tie stones particularly went all the way through. So you got some that are 14 or 42 inches, but then you have thinner stones and that infill on the backside was just brick. So the brick was in there.

Q. Ok.

A. That again was one of the keys because particularly on the center walls were all brick and the outside walls of the backup were brick.

Q. Ok.

A. When we were doing the investigation and during that feasibility study and when we were selected to do the architecture work itself, we had time to knock some of the plaster off that covered the brick itself so you got to the brick. What we were searching for is evidence of partitions that were tied to the wall.

Q. Sure.

A. When you do that, you leave a brick out and put a piece of wood in so that you got a nailer that you could nail your two-bys to.

Q. Oh, ok.

A. When I say two-bys, that was rough cut stuff.

Q. Yes, that’s right.

A. It was the partitions and...or we would find shadow lines like at least in the old days when they didn’t have quite as many filters as they do today. If you hung a picture on the wall too long, it created a shadow.

Q. Wonderful.

A. We would find the shadows of partitions.

Q. Yes.

A. Of course, when doorways had no longer belonged in that place to accommodate the new occupancy by the county, they filled them up. When we tore the plaster off what we were looking for was evidence of that.

Q. Yes.
A. The old arches were the, they had to build an arch rather than...a lentil is a piece at the top that ordinarily is a beam straight across. Well, they built arches in that particular building and so when you were trying to get in to the Supreme Court or the House of Representatives, you walked through an arched opening until they boxed it up. We got back there and there were the holes where we were looking for them and the two walls in the middle.

Q. Well, it’s really like architectural archeology. I mean, you were dismantling but looking for windows, doorways, other evidence from the original construction.

A. Exactly right. See there was 90 percent of it was gone, maybe more than 90 percent but the little bit that was there we analyzed it to begin with because when the building was raised and the cupola was on top of it. We had a picture showing the cribbing, this was taken 1898, the cribbing meaning those two-by or the railroad ties I said that raised it the 11 feet. Well, in that picture is the cribbing at the bottom that was going to be replaced by the Indiana limestone.

Then you had the old massive stone and the roof is still on the building and the cupola was still on the building. Well, you can’t get the cupola up there while having masonry walls to carry it up. But they lifted those two interior walls as well so those...now we got two interior walls that shows these doors out of that main open space and we’ve got the width of them and everything all start to line up. I mean it was like it was archeology in its own way.

Q. So the dismantling had to proceed fairly systematically and carefully.

A. Oh yes, oh yes. I have a picture, I have it someplace, the first stone coming off there because we had no experience in this thing. Again I think I mentioned that we were criticized that this thing may fall apart or any fool would recognize it’s going to come apart because it had weathered. There was a lot of iron substance in it, so naturally you got the rust and all that.

Q. Sure.

A. But when we picked the first stone off there, we had to keep our fingers crossed because it was one of the big ones. I think it was a ton and a half as a single piece. It was a cornerstone on the northwest corner of the building. It was a big tie stone. When it came off there and that one I think had a couple of belts around it, but the belts were the really spooky thing. If you had a very soft face, when I say belt in other words it’s just...

Q. Literally.

A. Just literally a belt and you got a crane. Well, you can see that belt could just pull on it just like it could pull on anything else. So when we discovered and it wasn’t what we discovered; it’s once we got the top off there, that they used this Lewis hole that I described to you. I think I described to you.

Q. Lewis hole.
A. Lewis hole is a...we learned this...I went up always pursuing what we didn’t know, which was everything. [laughs] Went up to see how things were done as far as stone and also tried to find if we had problems with a stone where the replacement could come from.

Q. Sure.

A. Mankato, Minnesota was a good shot at that if we had to do it.

Q. Oh.

A. I think we replaced six stones in the whole total.

Q. Is that right?

A. But also, these old-time masons said to us because what we’re trying to do is try to get this...they said you have replacement stone if you’re going to have to...if you’re going to do...what we had proposed, the word plenum means space...

Q. Yes.

A. Between exterior wall and interior wall.

Q. Right.

A. Well, there’s a plenum of at least, I think it is nine inches, all around the building now, which you can now get electrical work and air-conditioning and other kind of stuff, too.

Q. Sure.

A. So they said, “If you’re going to cut those stones, that stone is just as good today as it was went it went up there.” So you got a replacement stone to begin with, but we knew Mankato, Minnesota we could get them.

Q. That was the place. You did have to get some of them there?

A. No, we used it right off the jobsite.

Q. You didn’t have to replace any stone?

A. Yes, no. Well, we didn’t have to get new stone.

Q. Ok.
A. We had to cut stone that came off the back of that.

Q. I get it, ok.

A. That became surplus stone at that point. You see, the word veneer is a little tricky. Veneer sounds like something that you do in an expensive house that you want to say, “Look, I got a brick house.” But you don’t you have a skin. The structure wasn’t masonry like this any longer. The structure is a concrete structure, which is reinforced concrete with steel and the whole bit in there. It does have this…the tie stones are in there that bring you to the back side, but there is the nine inch space all the way through there so it’s a...

Q. Ok.

A. But the Lewis hole that we were talking about is, and the masons taught me this thing, they said, “This is how you do it.” You take a drill and if you take a drill and just drill a hole in anything, and then you keep this position the same but rock the drill.

Q. Oh, you widen the hole at the bottom.

A. So you got a fan.

Q. Yes.

A. The small end of the fan is at the top and the big end of the fan is there.

Q. Yes.

A. Then they’ve got these pins that come down with a little…it’s the way actually that they hang on this little hook. You lower the pins in there. When you pull them up, they spread open.

Q. They grab. Kind of like those simple things on hanging a picture where basically you put it through and it catches.

A. It spreads.

Q. Yes.

A. Spreads open. When you take the lift off of them, they just hang again and just fall right straight out. They were in the stones, were put in, the original guys who put them in, but they were filled with sand. You see there was no mortar in that building over there. Everybody thinking well you got big stones you put mortar on it.

Q. Yes, sure.
A. There was sand to level them. There wasn’t any... no cement on the edge of the stone

Q. No actual mortar, just sand.

A. Yes. [laughs] So they would go up there and blow that out of there. Stick those little gadgets there in the Lewis holes, and pull them off. That was pretty neat.

Q. That’s remarkable.

A. Some of the original markings were on it that we didn’t put on were on there, too, but we have our markings.

Q. Now you have talked about tie stones. Those are...I think...was that the term, tie stone?

A. Yes.

Q. They would somehow hold...

A. Well, here is what you do. You have a wall and the wall is part of the way up.

Q. Right.

A. Thirty inches deep all the way through.

Q. Right.

A. Well, so I said we put stones in there. Then every course or...and you have this in masonry, same kind of work, not every course because it was a bigger kind of a deal, but every, frequently you would lay a course of stone that went all the way from the front to the back.

Q. Ok, that’s to stabilize.

A. It is stabilizing it. So you got it in there, and then you fill the next and then brick, brick, brick.

Q. Sure.

A. And some more.

Q. Ok, thank you. Now, so there was a lot of masonry work?

A. Oh yes, oh yes.

Q. Did you have a masonry contractor?
A. Yes, it was construction everything.

Q. Evans Construction?

A. Oh yes, did every job.

Q. Did they have to bring any craftsmen who were, who knew the art of some of this work that was a hundred years...

A. Well, it wasn’t any of our doing. We didn’t tell people how to do their work other than particularly Phil Evans was the head of the company. Most of his people he literally had brought over from Ireland to start with.

Q. I know. I’ve heard that story from his widow, Dorothy.

A. Oh yes, oh yes. I mean they were all Irishmen, and they were in the masonry business. Of course I was…I loved Albert Myers because Albert Myers was the head of *Women’s Wear Daily* along with being head of the department store here for us. He made a trip to Europe and came back, and he said, “They really need you.” They were doing an awful lot of work after World War II, of course, had blown all those buildings up. He said, “They really need you.” I assured him, however, that we needed them more than they needed us.

Q. [laughs]

A. It was interesting but he was always excited. He also had a place out in Aspen.

Q. Yes.

A. He had the same kind of remarks. I said, “Albert, there’s other people at this particular point.” That wasn’t going to…and it wasn’t restoration out in Aspen.

Q. No, no it wasn’t. But he was a character.

A. Anyway yes, Albert was a good guy.

Q. Who was his other pal?

A. Bill.

Q. Bill Gingold.

A. My dearest friend and best client for many, many years.
Q. I’m sure and we’ll get to that. I think he probably was. I know he was involved in the Iles Park place.

A. That’s correct.

Q. Yes, ok. Well so Phil, the Evans people had masons on the job basically every day.

A. Oh yes, oh yes.

Q. Did they have to actually repair some of the original stone?

A. Well they had to cut them and then they had to get them out to the fairgrounds.

Q. Yes.

A. See part of the trick was we got to get them out of there because we’re going to dig a hole 50 feet deep in the whole square block.

Q. Right.

A. So there wasn’t anything there when... the masons didn’t come back on the job until we had the structure up to where they could attach it to the concrete frame.

Q. Sure, right, ok.

A. But again, we learned and I had my friends at the... the masons that I had met up in Chicago who had taught me a little bit about this stuff. They had said to me that they painted the identification on to the stone itself. Well I...we didn’t talk enough and so whatever they painted...in other words, you say specifically don’t just paint it like with watercolors. Go ahead and use something else. [laughs]

But the first load came off, 26 stones on the first day and it went out to the fairgrounds. By golly we got them down there in a flatbed truck, and we got pictures of them being loaded on there with a crane. Well, they’re unloaded out at the fairgrounds and I went out the next morning. It rained that night. Went out the next morning to the fairgrounds and sure enough they’re all 26 there with all the 26 identification numbers running because they were water soluble. So I said, “Stop the presses!”

Q. Wait a minute, you can’t do this.

A. It’s going to be a little tough when we get 3,300 stones like this. We’d better be going to look for the poor house because we ain’t going to be back here.

Q. You caught it in time to avoid a mess.

Henderson
A. Yes, yes, yes. I don’t know how we did it. Immediately they called up and said, “What are you doing?” They gave me some kind of paint we could use. We painted it on two sides. There’s this exposed side and then you got the other hinge and you got so we had plenty of opportunities. But two sides so if one of them ran, the other would be safe in case it chipped off or something.

But we also immediately got a print out, I’ve got those bills, I saved a couple of them. Well, we made a little tie with about a nine by six piece of paper and we had a sketch of the rectilinear stone with the vertical dimension, the depth of it. Well, we had three dimensions called A, B, or C or whatever it was. They would fill in the date that they took that particular stone down and mark it with the dimensions of itself and the identification we had given it from taking those original pictures.

Q. Right.

A. Because we had again the pilasters was one part of the grid and parsing itself was the horizontal identification.

Q. You did that for 3,300 stones?

A. 3,300 stones and we had five copies. We had an office downtown, which was where we kept Augie so he could stay there handy and I wouldn’t have to be running back and forth. We had one copy in our office, state historian had a copy, the contractor used to have one. In other words we scattered them just in case all hell broke loose, somebody was going to survive – including us and how to get those stones back out there.

Q. Because it took several years before they were brought back.

A. Oh, yes. We took them down in 1964 and some of them didn’t get back until 1967.

Q. So you had an enormous excavation.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Fifty feet down. Where did all that fill go? Carted off?

A. They carted it off, I didn’t. Most of the trash, this was the concern of the state historian was that for here and forever more if we don’t get this thing carefully disposed of, you would always have these hucksters standing on the corner saying, “Have a real live brick from the Old State Capitol.” [laughs] So I know where all those went.

There were used to be a coal mine on the road to the airport, extension of Walnut. It’s right across from the cemetery and actually the tipple was there and the elevator was there and
everything else. Well, the coal mine was closed. They had made a deal with the contractor that that was where it would go. So it is four or five hundred feet below the surface. If you get down there, you deserve to keep the brick.

Q. [laughs] That’s a great line, too. Well, that means then when you were at the major extent of construction all the bordering streets were closed, weren’t they?

A. They actually used sheet piling to hold it in position.

Q. Ok, so you didn’t stop traffic?

A. No, Sixth and Fifth were still running. I think from a pedestrian standpoint that Adams and Washington wer as well.

Q. But you did build a couple of tunnels that took some.

A. Well, that was late in the game. I say kind of late in the game because the original program was to restore the old capitol. Then Clyde Walton, who was again an integral part of the activity, was the state historian. He was looking for a new home for the State Historical Library.

Q. Right.

A. So he really designed the program. When I say designed, in other words he said, “The Old State Capitol shouldn’t be an office space for state government. It should be a statement of what Lincoln was experiencing and so forth.” So in other words, the old capitol is not going to be full of people in the sense of with desks and typewriters and things, but he thought it was the ideal place to be for the state historical library.

Q. Well, that wasn’t part of the original design.

A. No, it was part of the original program...

Q. Because of him?

A. Yes. But taking it a step further and it has always been my appeal of why we need a city planner because when we opened our office 1961, Brad Taylor was the city planner. Well, we had several mayors that began with... who did I tell you yesterday?

Q. Collins?

A. Lester Collins and, of course, we had Nelson Howarth. The city planner was an active office. He had a dozen people in the municipal building and published with, I think, on a monthly basis just sort of a study of an awareness of something they were planning to keep active thoughts going.
One of them they put together early in our operation, within maybe the first year or so, was I think it was like a loss-sized paper, 14 by 16, or whatever it was. Anyway, it was a plan in just very simple color that showed Washington Street, Adams Street, Fifth and Sixth, and the Old State Capitol plan on there. He had two little slots, and it was a suggestion it would be terrific to have underground parking. Now that wasn’t even part of the game at all.

Q. Oh, my gosh.

A. But it was a neat drawing and I thought it was neat because we didn’t have anything else hanging on our wall, but they had moved out of our room by that time. The governor came over to review some of the work, came right to our office; it was amazing. The governor came over and he was sitting right there in the conference room, and we’re telling him about this whole thing. He said, “What is this?” I explained it to him and someplace along the way at that meeting or later on, he said, “Don’t you need parking downtown? Isn’t this going to impact the city?” I said, “Sure.” He said, “Why don’t we build under the Old State Capitol.” I said, “Because there is nothing in the budget.” He said, “If I back this up with something, it can be done.” I said, “Yes, the governor himself suggested the idea.”

Q. Isn’t that remarkable.

A. It became because that was on the wall and Brad Taylor was doing his job just trying to give people ideas, and he gave the governor an idea.

Q. That’s a great story.

A. Yes it is.

Q. By the way, Brad Taylor just died.

A. Oh, did he? I don’t know.

Q. I saw it in the paper yesterday.

A. Oh man. Well, I got yesterday’s paper out yet.

Q. I think I read that because I knew him, not well. I knew his work.

A. He was a good man.

Q. Yes.

A. He was young and feisty. There was a whole bunch of creative type people that were gathering at that time.

Henderson
Q. When you think about how fateful it was, those simple little coincidences.

A. Yes.

Q. And influences, it’s a remarkable story.

A. At least one merchant, there were several who objected that this is going to destroy their businesses completely.

Q. Yes, yes.

A. Who needs that Old Capitol? What we need is a parking structure. I think I told you that the person who took the London Bridge all the way to Arizona came back and said he’d take the Old Capitol off our hands.

Q. You didn’t mention that. [laughs]

A. These clowns came along with, “Boy I’d take advantage of that and we will let them build that parking garage for us.” Bless Otto Kerner’s heart. He suggests, “We’ll build it, but why don’t we build it underground?” That was something else.

Q. In general, did the neighboring big merchants object? It certainly created a lot of dust and noise for years.

A. Oh yes, but the payback it what is what we were going for.

Q. I understand.

A. But when I said that the clearinghouse, that’s the major bankers.

Q. Right.

A. That’s First National, INB (Illinois National Bank), and Marine Bank.

Q. Yes.

A. Their presidents were the clearinghouse.

Q. Right.

A. That’s how we referred to them. When they made a decision, they probably loaned money to most of the people in the central business district.
Q. Yes.

A. So when they smiled on us on a project that was it. You had Albert Myers who was the primary merchant in the downtown area. He was totally active in the whole thing. The amazing thing was is to do the landscaping now that we’ve even got the underground parking, nobody provided for that. That group, there was a nine block area going all the way to Fourth and Eighth Street and I guess it was to Jefferson and Monroe, voted themselves an instrumental tax district area for landscaping that area.

Q. My heavens.

A. Which was…but again you got Billy Gingold was in there.

Q. Right, of course.

A. His new building was there. Of course you’ve got Albert Myers and you got the clearinghouse. It just put a fresh new look at the whole thing.

Q. They all had the vision to see that the...

A. Sure, sure. Which was...

Q. Now at Marine Bank it was probably Jim Bunn or was it Bunch at that point?

A. Always Bunch.

Q. He was still living though a very…I mean, when I moved here he was still living.

A. I remember meeting him on a couple of occasions.

Q. He was a wonderful gentleman but Bunch was...

A. Bunch was it. Yes, he went all the way through. When he was enthusiastic, the world started smiling on you. When he frowned, it wasn’t that good. But he was smiling all the way through this project.

Q. Probably at Illinois National Bank it was...

A. Albert Schlipf.

Q. Oh, Albert Schlipf, ok, that goes back, right.

A. He preceded Andy Van Meter’s son-in-law.
Q. Yes, yes.
A. A.D. Van Meter, not Andy.

Q. Yes, A.D. Van Meter, right. I can’t remember. It may have been a Patton at the First National Bank.
A. That, I’m sorry, I can’t verify, but I think you’re right.

Q. Ok, wow. This is great ground we’re plowing here. So while it was dusty and noisy for a period of years, the streets except for the two tunnels, three tunnels...
A. We have tunnels on all four sides.

Q. Of course, those obviously interrupted traffic.
A. For a period of time but actually we did when they drove this piling and what they do are these are sheets of steel with a little convolution on them so they have strength on their own. They drive them right straight into the ground and hold the walls back, and that was a major task to start with.

Q. Oh, of course it was.
A. When they get cranes down in the hole, the center right underneath where the Old Capitol is and the State Historical Library is, that’s the one point, that’s 50 feet. That’s where we had storage.

Q. The rest of it didn’t have to be.
A. It had to go down to 40 feet.

Q. Forty, ok.
A. The structure, if you go to it now and it’s unfortunate when the State of Illinois puts programs together, they talk about how meeting expenses is and so forth, they always fail to understand that preventive maintenance extends the life of any structure. Out of all the contracts they’ve ever had about that underground parking because it was leased out by the state. Part of the governor’s argument was, this would be a pay as it is utilized and it will pay for itself. It has many times, but they pay periodic contracts or bids for people who operate the garage but no requirements to repair the garage. So when the lighting got bad you had the...well it was, there was for the state said, “Well we’ll just replace then.” The lights we had were pretty sexy lighting is the way to say it.

Q. Yes, I remember, yes.
A. They were on each column and they lit up the area. So instead of being in a flattop parking garage, on the upper level, you had this hyperbolic paraboloid.

Q. Right.

A. Which when it’s…the part of it that turned up was actually the sockets for the landscaping the trees were going in.

Q. That’s hyperbolic...

A. Hyperbolic paraboloid.

Q. Ok.

A. They are 30 feet on the side and just for basic definition, that’s an upside-down pyramid that is hallow.

Q. Right.

A. The base of the pyramid is what’s on top and so you got all that beam in there, but that’s where the trees go.

Q. So really attractive and, of course, they serve that great purpose of providing fill or soil for...

A. That was exactly why we went that direction. That was thanks again to this particular case with Hanson Engineers. They had a pretty clever bunch of people. We were into shale when we got down to...oh, I can’t remember but we were still pretty high in the ground.

But every...now remember, $100,000 was one big chunk of money in the whole process when we’re talking about it. It was costing us 100,000 a foot to go down into the shale. I’m saying over the whole block area. Anything we could do to eliminate that kind of depth was it. So in order to get the planting for the trees because that’s what we were trying to do is get our landscaping back.

Q. Right.

A. That makes us five foot deeper than we had to go. So we added another half million dollars to the project if we did it that way. But Hanson came up with this thing and they met a problem that was needed. You put it together and it becomes very sexy and then you light it, I mean it’s everybody’s starting to work together.

Q. Right, right.
A. One of the pictures in that particular article that you read, I think, shows that.

Q. Oh, it does beautifully.

A. Now I go down there today and they’ve got fluorescent tubes.

Q. Fluorescent lighting.

A. It looks like somebody’s basement that they didn’t have enough money to finish doing, which is embarrassing.

Q. Too bad. Then of course there was a problem with water leakage.

A. Yes. But that again is the maintenance type thing.

Q. Ok.

A. If you don’t keep your maintenance up, you’re going to get leakage. The tunnels particularly have gone this way. The exit tunnel on Monroe Street, I mean sometimes I just wonder whether I want to go out of there or not because it’s just the plaster’s been busted away and so forth. But it’s because they don’t do maintenance.

Q. Ok, well that’s a great line of subject we covered. I read, I think, in Julie Cellini’s article that the overall, total construction cost was $6,000,000? Does that include the garage?

A. Yes.

Q. Ok. Does that sound right?

A. You’re close. I was going to say 7,000,000, 7.1 for some reason but I...we got that?

Q. Article?

A. Did I grab that article?

Q. Yes it was in there, 6,000,000, I’m pretty sure.

A. Yes, whatever’s right there at the bottom. That is correct.

Q. Ok good.

A. I meant the article in the Progressive Architecture. Did I steal that from you?

Q. You know what, I didn’t start the recorder again.
A. Oh, that’s alright.

Q. Gosh darn it.

A. Here I’ll want to show you, I want to show you the poster.

Q. Ok.

A. It’s right here.

[Footsteps walking away from recorder, long pause]

Q. I put it on pause when we stopped. I’m just going to have to quickly point out that there was no dedication or anything.

A. Sure. Well, the demolition was right...

[Tape stopped]

Q. Ok, this is resuming with apologies. No ground-breaking ceremony, just that trucking company’s poster, wrecking company’s poster.

A. Yes the demolition, actually the ground-breaking we had to take the building down before we were breaking ground.

Q. That’s true.

A. The night before they took it down Taylor Pensoneau, you may know him.

Q. Yes, of course.

A. Taylor Pensoneau was working for the Post-Dispatch I believe in those days.

Q. That’s right.

A. He had become interested in the project and a good friend. He said, “I want to take a look at it.” This was, I’m going to tell you it was in February and I can’t give you the exact which year it was but 1964 or 1965, 1964 perhaps. They were due on the next day to start work on there, but they had done certain preliminary work on the inside. So Taylor wanted to get here and he was with his wife, and so I said, “I’ll get you in there.” This was nighttime in February. So in other words, it’s pitch-black outside and it’s probably early evening but eight o’clock or so. There’s no power to building anymore. They cut that so you don’t blow yourself up in
demolishing the building except that we had strings of conduit. He wanted to go upstairs to where that room was going to be.

Q. Yes.

A. So we climbed the stair, which was still in place. Not the stairs like we see them.

Q. Right.

A. They were all on the walls. Any event, we went up there and starting opening doors of the room and seeing this thing. But there was a lot of plaster dust and there was a lot of ornamental iron that was there. So this was sort of a junk place, but he was carrying a floodlight, which was like what you see in a studio.

Q. Yes, right.

A. It had a little tripod on it.

Q. Right.

A. His wife was there and we’re just making our way up there. We open up the door in this one place and turned the light on, and all of a sudden there’s a scream. I mean I didn’t know anything like this could happen. Scared the liver out of all of us and we turned that light around there and there was a rat. The rat is sitting on top of one of these demolition things but the screaming from the mouth. I mean, I didn’t know a rat did this. Boy we got out of there so fast. [laughs] But that’s the last live people that weren’t taking the building down, and we were trying to get out of that thing.

Q. That’s a great story. I’ll have to remind Taylor and Judy, his then wife.

A. Yes, yes.

Q. Right. Then you were about to talk about the dedication ceremonies in December of 1968.

A. Yes, Statehood Day, you’re correct there and that was a big day in Springfield. On the streets, well they were closed anyway because we were putting on where the underground tunnels and everything were.

Q. Yes, right.

A. But I’ll never forget because we were up there on the...well, not on the platform in that case because I wasn’t speaking or anything but there watching it. But they came through the door and mostly kids in the beginning, and I swear to goodness that stair coming from the south side, that’s where the ceremony was taking place. When they opened those doors they hit this thing
and went right straight up the stairs. I swear the banisters leaned out. I thought we’re going to lose those stairs the first hour. [laughs] I mean it was frightening but everybody was...

Q. Sure they wanted to rush around.

A. Oh yes, yes, but the kids, they have got to be first ones up on the first floor and boom when they hit the thing the banisters warped. [laughs]

Q. So the interior was essentially completed.

A. Oh yes.

Q. But there was still some exterior landscaping that hadn’t been done probably yet or...

A. We were pretty well done.

Q. Was this platform, from which people spoke, about the same location of Barack Obama’s when he announced his...that’d be the southeast corner.

A. To tell you the truth I really don’t remember that but most of the time before Barack Obama did choose that point, remarks had been made. I’m saying every presidential candidate that’s one thing I said to my partner, Don Ferry, at the time. He said, “Why do we want to do this old building?” I said, “Because from now and forever more every presidential candidate will be on those steps.” Because that’s...remember Tom Dewey?

Q. Sure.

A. He preached off those steps themselves. It was an elevated, he was higher on the ground.

Q. Yes.

A. Than right now. We got lowered down so being on the steps got you up above the crowd. Well, anyway...

Q. Interesting, ok. So there was...I see on that poster, there was a parade, and I’m sure some dignitaries. Probably Governor Shapiro might have spoken you think or not?

A. Yes I’ve got a list in there some place of who was on the programs.

Q. Did you speak?

A. Did not speak.

Q. Did not. I suppose the mayor may have spoken.
A. Oh yes, oh yes.

Q. A ribbon cutting or something?

A. It was a pretty, it was a ceremony, again a December ceremony. You’re in between Christmas and Thanksgiving, and so people were all bundled up. It wasn’t quite like a summer day where the flags fly and this and that, but a ton of people, everybody filling up the place.

Q. Sure, and let’s see...and then its first purpose, its first use it turns out was for the Constitutional Convention or Con-Con.

A. That’s correct.

Q. So they kind of moved in and there was some kind of worry that they would ruin furniture.

A. Didn’t worry me. I was out of that game. But I was so pleased to have it used that way. We created history right at that point.

Q. Yes.

A. Now let’s see which governor was that? Was that...

Q. Ogilvie came in 1969.

A. I think it was Ogilvie. Seems like it. I’m a little behind on that one. Any event, but this support, it was better than doing it in the present capitol building and so forth.

Q. Sure.

A. But that’s where the Constitutional Convention was.

Q. They met for, I don’t know, six months or something like that.

A. Something like that.

Q. But I know that some, maybe Jim Hickey or somebody had been worried they would scratch their initials in the desks.

A. Well, I don’t know who it was, but we all could’ve figured that the way the government works around here. It’s a wonder they didn’t take the desks right on out. [laughs] Why mess around just scratching your name in it?
Q. As if they owned it, right. Of course, it was Walton’s idea to move the historical library in there from the old centennial building.

A. Oh yes, he was essentially lobbying for it, but he was a good lobbyist because his best friends were the people he was talking to.

Q. That’s true. I remember that old library in the centennial. It was actually fairly handsome. It was paneled walls, but it was crowded. It didn’t have much space.

A. Sure, the centennial building was celebrating a different event, and now we got the event making a difference.

Q. Well, those were an exciting five years for you, weren’t they?

A. I would say so, and it’s continued to be because right now you and I are talking about it and that’s 45, 50 years later.

Q. Yes, that’s right.

A. So yes, it was a turning point clearly in my career and as far as that goes Springfield’s appreciation of Lincoln.

Q. Exactly. You very candidly earned and your partner earned some national stature. I mean this was big news in architecture.

A. The world “preservation” did not exist in architecture. As a result we made both the LA Times and New York Times on several occasions and many articles in magazines and certainly the Chicago Tribune had features regularly.

Q. Right.

A. Another one that we missed was Channel 3, which was Urbana-Champaign, the news. They followed that thing from almost the day of the so-called Chicago wrecking company arriving until we had that dedication on film for their nightly news.

Q. They regularly followed it.

A. Oh, they had maybe… it might be just thirty second; they didn’t lecture every night about it. But when we had turning points, they would be giving it. Well, we were pleased and impressed by the whole bit. I think it was probably a half a dozen years, maybe ten years later, get a call from Champaign.

They said they were remodeling the building and they needed some additional space and they’ve got all this film, would we like to buy it from them. I remember having the conversation.
and they said, “Is $150 fair?” I said, “We haven’t talked about it.” He said, “We need $150 more than we need all that film. What are we going to do with it?” Dumb, dumb, dumb.

Q. Well, that’s too bad.

A. It’s spelled with a capital B because that film...

Q. For the historical library.

A. Yes, yes.

Q. So it got destroyed?

A. Yes.

Q. Oh, of course, it would have had to have been retaped, but still that was a valuable record.

A. When we had this 40 year appreciation of the building that Justin Blandford put together, he found about five minutes of one of their tapes. But they offered the whole thing for us for $150. Well, we were young and dumb. [laughter]

Q. Young and dumb. Well, that is too bad in retrospect. Ok, we’re going to stop here for a moment.

END OF TAPE SEVEN, SIDE ONE

45:05
Q. There were a few things about your job in Denver with Muchow that I wanted to pursue because they had to do with some well-known kind of innovators in design and engineering. One of them was Milo Ketchum, am I right?

A. Yes. I frankly don’t know his history other than I’m sure it is available now in some depth. He was a professor and I think it was at the University of Colorado.

Q. Yes. I read that he had bachelor’s and master’s degree in engineering from the University of Illinois.

A. Milo Ketchum?

Q. Yes.

A. I’m not surprised. That’s one of the great engineering schools.

Q. That was mentioned in one of the architectural magazines. He was involved in this thin-shell concrete, is that right.

A. Well, let’s put it this way. Ketchum was a fiftyish-year-old college professor. He partnered with a young man who was an ex-fighter pilot and I think World War II that was in his early thirties at that particular time, and he was an engineer as well. So it was Ketchum and Konkel was the name of it.

Q. Vernon Konkel, right.

A. Yes.

Q. Vernon was the younger fighter pilot?

A. Yes, and a frisky guy. Milo was the stalwart engineer, no question about that, outstanding. But here’s what you got with Bill Muchow. Bill Muchow was a person who wanted to do his best, and in order to do his best he wanted to have good people surrounding him who would do their best. Together you would at least have something better than just a common job.

Q. That’s an unusual person.
A. Yes.

Q. He wasn’t afraid of being upstaged by bright workers.

A. Oh, exactly. But you see this was a team, and that’s a real team because the architect and you’ve heard my line, “It’s only as good as its client, too.” If the client isn’t going to speak up, you can’t pull them out of the dream form. The same thing with Ketchum and Konkel in the structural engineering, but we had also some of their name slips on it but mechanical engineers who were quite innovative.

In other words everybody knew you could take a coal stove and put chunks in it and get heat, but it wasn’t that old fashioned. But my point being that they would bring fresh ideas about, “We could try this, and we could try that.” We might be on the cutting edge and we may not be the greatest thing in the world, but we are on the approach to being the greatest thing in the world. Ketchum and Konkel were a very reliable source, and I had mentioned that thin-shell concrete, which was a... the world was playing with it. I told you about the Mexican architects and engineers we had.

Q. Yes.

A. Some of these things were... they had met with Milo Ketchum of Ketchum and Konkel, were capable of doing. So we had resources to be able to build buildings that most engineers hadn’t even heard about. These guys were good guys; they were worth it.

Q. Was the thin-shell concrete, was it structurally different? It didn’t have the metal strengthening rods.

A. Not in the same fashion. You are using everything a little bit differently. Post tension, you’ve heard of?

Q. I’ve heard of post tension.

A. Ok, post tension is one of these things were you put cables instead of the rods in.

Q. That’s right.

A. They have clips on each end and you pour in the concrete. Then after you get the concrete poured, you tighten the cable up. The cable, the tighter it gets, the stronger it gets. It’s an amazing process. You can actually on some occasions, you’ll see it bend. Although it’s concrete, it isn’t busting up the same way. Post-tension concrete is good stuff.

Q. Remarkable. So you could get maybe an inch and a half thick concrete in some cases.

A. I wouldn’t go quite that.
Q. Ok.

A. No, I would say six inches is right.

Q. Oh, all right.

A. But it expands and with post-tension usually is in a beam thing. You’ve seen, well, I’ve put the face on Ace hardware here, which is usually pre-cast floor panel, and it’s got actually two ribs on it. We just tilted it up then because of the outside wall. It was a pattern, like the parking garage downtown, too. There is one right across on Capitol Avenue from the INB office is a pre-cast concrete beam with the steel in it, but it’s got a six inch slab across. It’s a unique thing. You ought to think it would run all the way through, but you’re using a wire mesh not wire. That’s wire but the wire is about pencil size rather than wire.

Q. But you’ve got to be very careful with your materials and your processes.

A. Oh, yes. Your depth; you’ve seen it in... architectural engineering is what both Ferry and I studied, but again we didn’t want to make our time arbitrary to the think process and the design process. So to get the best engineers here is how we ended up getting ahold of Hanson and Collins and Rice.

Q. Sure, sure.

A. We went beyond that stage on occasion. But the reason it contributes a lot to Bill Muchow, he would sit down say, “Well, what do you think it ought to be built with?” It didn’t just have to be concrete; it could be anything. But they gave is the latitude because, “Ok, if that’s want you want, we’ll figure it out.” Wonderful spirit.

Q. So they were not employees of Muchow. They were consulting engineers?

A. By contract?

Q. By contract.

A. In other words, we hired them, and they came as part of our team. Now it’s interesting because I had mentioned our backgrounds. By being an architectural engineer that meant we had studied engineering, so we knew what to do with many of these things. In many of our projects over the twenty-five years we were partners, we would start off and the engineer would say, “It can’t be done.”

We could sit there and say, “Wait a minute. We will share a couple of ideas with you.” It wasn’t going to be one of these argumentations. We knew what could be done, and we knew what
hadn’t been done so far but could be done. Oftentimes it got to be a little irritating but it worked.

Q. Well, there was an electricity issue that kind of undermined things.

A. Well, all of us take the shortcuts if you can get it done easier and quicker, you do it. Sometimes we’d get somebody’s first response, and the answer was ok. But, come on, I want a bigger span than that because that’s how you do it, and it’s beneficial to the client.

Q. Was the development of the thin-shell concrete particularly important aesthetically?

A. For me, I would say, “Yes.”

Q. Well, it’s graceful.

A. Yes, and that’s part of the whole idea. You have less material in it. But aesthetically, yes, you can get some beautiful forms out of it.

Q. Yes because this fellow Konkel was credited with having designed the very modernistic TWA terminal in Kansas City. I thought maybe it was St. Louis, too because...

A. Now that happened to be Yamasaki. Well see other architects would maybe get onto this thing, but you got the right idea of what they had in St. Louis was a thin-shell example.

Q. Right, ok.

A. The same thing with...oh, who is it in LaGuardia? Looked like a big butterfly.

Q. Oh yes the famous TWA terminal. Was it LaGuardia or Kennedy? LaGuardia I guess. Yes, it’s an amazing experience still to walk that terminal.

A. It made postage stamps. I mean I have a whole panel of those someplace.

Q. So that was a revolution in design.

A. Sure, you didn’t have to have...this is like gothic architecture. That was the big idea because before that happened you had columns and you had lentils.

Q. Right.

A. Then somebody said, “Can we build an arch?” They built an arch.

Q. That’s right.
A. That meant they are touching, so it’s the stresses that transfer their load back and forth and a gothic arch comes to a point, of course, and an arch goes...

Q. Yes.

A. So it’s a whole thought process on how you do it. But if a guy doesn’t know what he’s trying to do or how to get there, you’re not going to get it. That’s where we had the advantage, or Muchow did, that the people he selected were people who were out on the cutting edge.

Q. I can tell that. What about this fellow Deaton, Charles Deaton?

A. Chuck Deaton, he worked. He was one of the ten or eleven of us that were the staff of Bill Muchow’s office. I think I told you in an earlier conversation here that the…Muchow did the design work. He put it down on paper as he wanted it. Beautiful delineator and an eighth inch scale; you could scale it using your eighth inch scale and that’s what he wanted. It wasn’t arbitrarily very small, it was intentionally small.

Anyway, Muchow was the designer and then each of us would do a project. In some offices, some people do all door jamb details and different selected phases. We did the whole project, which was pretty exciting because that means you are getting the whole experience. Well, Chuck Deaton was the table next to me. Back...those who read this will now have to find out what our architect’s office used to look like, used to have drafting tables. We had T-squares and we had scales that you measure with.

Q. No computers.

A. No, computer hadn’t been invented yet. Just like preservation approach.

Q. Right.

A. Well, computer wasn’t anything other than that was what you added to your grocery list. I mean there was nothing else. Any event, in those days I had a desk, a big desk, six or eight, seven feet long, and a roll of drawings that rolled up into a little tube in the front. We made our drawings on those things, and they had T-squares and all that.

The guy next to me was Chuck Deaton and he was this interesting guy with an interesting personality and he was always, always pushing, going, going. He ended up with patents of his very own. He had an idea of how to build buildings using small models and using a parallelogram system where he could actually...if you have a model...a parallelogram and I may be using the wrong term, but if you measure something out here and extend it this far and you move the bottom of it that much, this end is going to move that much.

Q. That much, yes, more, right.
A. He wanted to build all concrete houses including cabinets, drawers, the whole thing, and the building itself. The magazine you took with you was the clamshell he did build.

Q. The clamshell house.

A. After he left Muchow’s office, overlooking the heights overlooking Denver.

Q. That’s right, you mentioned that. But it was fascinating to read about it, too.

A. Yes.

Q. That must have caused a sensation because it also looked like an alien space station.

A. Oh, and that was referred to it many times. But see that was after I left; this wasn’t while I was there.

Q. I understand.

A. But he was a side-by-side partner working, and I left and I didn’t know any part of it. But next time I came across his name…a Merchandise Mart in Chicago has a lot of, well it’s all furniture.

Q. Yes.

A. In my practice with Ferry and Henderson, we had an interior design group and I have an interior design license. So I would go up to what they call NEOCON. This is the annual show they have, and I walk into the showroom and here’s this squiggly, cursive type letter and it was “DD” and that stands for “Deaton Design”.

Q. Oh, boy.

A. I got talking about it, and it’s Chuck Deaton. Good ole Chuck Deaton took off and did it.

Q. So he did alright by himself?

A. Oh yes, he was creative.

Q. I remember seeing one of the pictures in that magazine article was of that really strikingly beautiful elliptical stairway.

A. Yes. Well, the whole form...you see, once you get into...and this is the advantage of thin-shell concrete to begin with, concrete, when you’re just playing with words, is plastic.

Q. Yes.
A. In other words it’s a plastic way of doing a curve where you take steel and you just heat it and bend the hell out of it and hope you get the right curve or get the right curve. But either way you can do things in it.

Q. Well, you were working with some very innovative people and you, of course, had some innovative skills yourself and the ability to adapt to looking to the past rather than the future.

A. I got to say honestly, I never dreamed of being an architect up until I got into it, and I never, never, even thought about ever having an office. Then when I got in with Muchow all of a sudden, it wasn’t an office like I thought offices were. This is something that where I think I said to you that we wouldn’t even...we were in downtown Denver except that much of the time, I would say three out of five days a week we would elect to sit around the guys in the office at noon and eat a sandwich and drink a Coke and argue about design.

Q. That’s a great atmosphere.

A. We were critical of everybody’s work around us [laughs] and would read the magazines so that in our conversation we could contribute. You weren’t practicing; you just simply wanted to be part of the game. It was like a great game of poker except it was intellectual poker.

Q. Exactly.

A. That’s exactly what inspired me with Muchow’s office and I think that, a lot of that I brought into Springfield.

Q. I can sense you brought ideas and approaches from that experience and put them to good use yourself.

A. That made an architect out of me.

Q. That’s a great story. I’m glad we went back to that. Ok, do you think now, Ferry and Henderson is a very much a going concern with a larger office. I mean it was then in 1968 or 1969. You got some more commissions. I’m not sure of chronological order here, but would you want to turn next to the Lincoln Home work or what would be next?

A. See Lincoln Home was running parallel with the marketing idea and so forth. I did mention once upon a time in our conversation Ambrose Richardson.

Q. Yes.

A. Well, Ambrose Richardson was big time into the AIA, American Institute of Architects. After we opened our office, I remember going over and talking with him. He said, “Why don’t you
get involved in a national committee?” He said, “If you’re going anyplace in the AIA, you ought to be aware of that.” He made that suggestion, and Ambrose was a mentor as well as Muchow.

Q. Yes.

A. When Muchow says, “Don’t go with the Air Force.” Ambrose says, “Go with the AIA.” That was at separate times but the issues were completely different. I took Ambrose’s suggestion, and I was given the opportunity to apply if I was interested in a committee. I was interested in the committee on design having come from Muchow’s office. Well, I get in on the committee on design and at this point, you got some really hotshot guys, guys like Muchow only from all over the country.

Q. Sure.

A. Now we’re meeting and we spent...and Ferry was donating part of the salary that neither one of us got, part of his being donated to let me go to Washington and sit in with these guys, hotshots. It even got to a point where they were saying, “Part of what was wrong with the whole country,” this was 1965 maybe, “is that we need more planning, city planning.” But cities didn’t know about city planning. So how do you...

Q. It sounded communist, too. I mean, in some communities, planning a city...

A. You’re exactly right. I even had...

Q. It was a bad word.

A. Uniforms had a bad...

Q. Yes.

A. My kids didn’t join the Boy Scouts because they thought they were military or something. Anyway, it was a screwy way of looking at things. But I’m getting to Washington with, three times a year I think we met, and listen to these guys who were all...bashful, they all made their remarks, and they were all coming from very successful businesses, and I was a neophyte. I was the kid from the University of Illinois, oh my goodness, which happened to be one of the best schools in the country, except the east coast guys. They couldn’t get past the Hudson River.

Q. That’s right.

A. [laughs] Any event, so I sat through and learned these opinions. One of the guys, oh boy, I wish... that will be a name I have to dig up for you...anyway, suggested that in order to be able to get people to understand city planning, they had to know what the opportunities could be. So why don’t we have an urban design, a regional and urban design assistance team?
Q. Oh, RUDAT.

A. RUDAT.

Q. That’s the origin of RUDAT?

A. Oh yes, I was there the day they came up with the RUDAT, and then they added to that. It was all the smart remarks coming…well, you can do a preservation, so it could be a preservation design assistance team: PRUDAT.

Q. PRUDAT.

A. Then somebody from the other side said well make an “S” and call it “SCRUDAT.” [laughs] There was the conversation, very productive conversation. These were all the big thinkers in the AIA. Any event, we’ve…from there and the whole concept was that if…and we weren’t trying to get anybody’s work. We were just trying to convince a community that they would be better if they would get themselves a planner.

Q. Yes.

A. So how do they find that out? Well, if the architects would invite us or the city would invite us, we would come in with a team of people who could talk from different positions and that would be a real-estate guy, a lawyer, an architect, several architects, and a team of six or eight.

Q. Sure.

A. Go in and they tell us their story, completely open the doors to us, and support us just pay the...

Q. Expenses basically and...

A. They, I guess they did, they had a basic expense. So maybe they did get paid. Any event, that’s all. We’re just going to give you a stand up ends to the whole thing. Did I discuss anything with you about my experience with Falls Church, Virginia?

Q. No.

A. Ok, well...

Q. Was this a RUDAT?

A. This was number 14 of I don’t know how many hundred they’ve done so far now.

Q. Wow.

Henderson
A. But Falls Church, Virginia is right outside of Washington, D.C.

Q. Right.

A. This is where Radio America or something; it was our broadcasting to the rest of the world about...

Q. Radio Free America or I don’t know. I know what you mean.

A. It is close, the same idea. Any event, but the majority of those people in there from Radio America happened to live in Falls Church, Virginia, which I didn’t know anything about Falls Church, Virginia, but that was part of the deal. You shouldn’t know anybody or know anything about it.

Q. Ok.

A. So when we went in there, I’ll never forget. We’re all set to understand it. We go in, like on a Thursday evening to the high school. The high school has got two aisles and they got seating. They’ve got the center section, and then they got an aisle and then another section. Group of people sitting over here filled that side and filled that side but nobody in the middle. We’re sitting on the stage. Now we’ve been told what the issue is whether we’re going to have a crossroad...whatever they call that, a five-points something, which was suddenly becoming very...

Q. Intersection.

A. Yes, intersection where everybody is starting to do shopping, whether they are going to develop something like it in Falls Church, Virginia or are we just going to do something sort of common and I don’t know...

Q. Warring camps.

A. Oh, exactly. For the fact they wouldn’t sit together [laughs]. So we’re up there telling them we’re going to spend the next four days with you folks. We understand we have access to a lot of private issues, including sitting in at bank board meetings, taking pictures, going in talking to the real-estate people and the merchants. Anyway, we did all that and in those days you didn’t have instant cameras. They did have Polaroid, but that wasn’t good enough. They kept a camera guy on running all night, so we could take our pictures and could develop them for us. So everybody was cooperating. It was sort of...we’re pushing because we’ve got to get this done because on, I think it was on Monday night or it was Tuesday, Monday night that we finished the weekend and the whole bit. We come back in and by golly, same place, same crowd. We get up there, and we start making the presentation and we had our justification.
I don’t think we had slides in those days because they didn’t, we might have had. Either event, maybe we had some boards but we had drawings and few things went with it. They could tell we had learned a lot in that whole period of time. Well, this is interesting because I’m from Springfield. They said, “One of the things that we noticed – the sign wasn’t there – but they acted that there was no black people lived in Falls Church, Virginia. Here we are in Washington, D.C., the Radio, just like you said it, Free America and there is no black people. They come in as workers. The sign wasn’t there but about – don’t let the sun go down or move on.

Q. Yes, that’s right. Isn’t that something?

A. They said, “Wally, you’re from Lincoln’s hometown; you explain that to them.” I said, “We’ll have a limousine at the backdoor when they start throwing it at you.” This wasn’t funny. I mean this was serious because we felt it was an obligation.

Q. No.

A. You got to say that we observe this now think about it a little bit. I made those remarks and I won’t say anybody did any clapping or anything at all, but at the end of that program when the whole show was done and boy it happened again and it’s been happening for the last 50 years. Every time I tell this line right here, when the conclusion was there, that group got up and that group got up and walked into the center and shook hands and started their clapping for us.

Q. Holy smoke.

A. It was the most unusual experience I have ever had in my life.

Q. It was a breakthrough.

A. Oh, it truly was. I mean we had just laid it on the line. I had other things to say other than that particular issue, but I said it just as straight as I could. We noticed that you are telling a story that you don’t live. Everything else was happening, and so we didn’t say you must do this.

Q. No, just look at yourselves honestly.

A. At that point they honestly looked at themselves and shook hands. That was the amazing...

Q. Oh, Wally.

A. That was a hot one. That was very hot. Any event, that RUDAT thing, and I had been called after when I came back to Springfield a few weeks later, and in those days you couldn’t go back to the city or anything, but I was called up by their chairman.

Q. Oh really, they asked you to...
A. He asked me to come back and talk to the community again. So it wasn’t like I was persona non grata I was, it was alright. But today, which is a mistake that’s being made and I’ve said this to Paul because we’ve had a PRUDAT in Springfield in 1979. That’s the preservation.

Q. Ok, PRUDAT.

A. For the development of downtown.

Q. But there was also a few years ago...

A. A RUDAT, that was in 2003, 2002 and I’ve sat in without...I wasn’t one of the leaders.

Q. No.

A. That wasn’t the point. I wanted to listen to it.

Q. But you were a founder, you helped found this.

A. Oh, yes, yes, yes. I was on it for 20 years. Some of the guys, we didn’t have the money to do it, but some of the guys almost made it a profession. They would do 20 a year or something like that. You would go to any community that would ask you. The only thing we said is that...

Q. Great idea.

A. It truly is and because you come in with professional eyes with no intention to say the right thing so I can get the job.

Q. Right.

A. You’re not going see me again so I’m going just tell you that that building is ugly and it needs a replacing or have you thought about this kind of thing? That’s the way it came off.

Q. So there was a PRUDAT visit here you said 1979?

A. In 1979, yes.

Q. You must have engineered or persuaded or put in the request for it or something?

A. I encouraged everybody, but again I was part of an architectural group that agreed with him.

Q. What was the specific issue? There is always an issues, isn’t there?

A. Downtown.
Q. Ok.

A. We had the Old State Capitol there. I remember one smart ass remarked because by that time we had done the Marine Bank. I know all these guys because, of course, I have been meeting with them in Washington, but now I’m sitting and listening to their report. I think this remark was something about the Marine Bank that it looked like “Mussolini modern” or something. [laughter] I could have Bob Dixon beat over the head, one of your own guys. But we hadn’t gotten into these fancy columns or caps or anything else.

Q. No, no.

A. So this was “Mussolini modern.” Thanks, pal. [laughter]

Q. Now I know that you faced a difficult challenge there because they wanted... anyway, we will cover that later. So they were dealing with... because at that point major retailers were leaving downtown.

A. Well, no. They were captured there, but they wanted to know which way to go. Now in other words, see what was recognized because we had the old capitol in there and all of a sudden, Springfield was back on the charging line because we’ve got something that nobody else has got at all, and it was being reported that way.

Now during that period of time, I don’t whether you want to lead into it or not but I am chairman now of the Lincoln Area Advisory Committee, turns into the Historic Sites Commission.

Q. Historic Site Commission.

A. Yes. I am on that commission although I don’t know if I was chairman quite at that point or not. But at any rate, I was on that thing for more than twenty years and chairman for five. We got to the point that we are going to lose that Lincoln Home if we don’t get something – I was chairman at that time – if we don’t get some way to safeguard it. So we did get it rezoned so it was...

Q. We already told that story.

A. That was the very first historic sites zoning in the state, number one. That was when Clyde Walton was part of that Historic Sites Commission. He knew his way around the state, and he knew what it was. We had Ralph Newman; we had all these things that were being supported. But it was the same little clique of people – the governor was being replaced at this point – but we had in motion historic preservation as a concept.
The Lincoln Home, we had reported out of Wes Collins original committee that was the Lincoln Home Area Advisory Committee, that the Lincoln Home should be maintained and not contrary to what they had done in Washington’s place. In other words, you don’t mow everything down and just make it pristine. This was a residential neighborhood, but it should be the residential neighborhood that if Mr. Lincoln would show up and stand on his front porch, he would recognize his neighborhood.

Q. That’s right.

A. So we said, “Stop the show.” Don’t let the eleven story motel go in. Don’t let somebody who came along with a reduced scale Independence Hall. That was going to be three doors down from Lincoln on the same side of the street but at a small scale.

Q. I just can’t believe it; that was awful.

A. Yes, these people were serious. What they really understood and what I always loved after we finally got the park service in here, they were going to sell – what do they call it – watch fobs and alligator belts or something. [laughter] That is what all tourists were calling for or whips or some goofy thing like this. But we were saying, “No.” At that particular time, we had the little Piggly Wiggly across the street.

Q. Yes, you mentioned that.

A. Everything else had been hooked up.

Q. But that sort of preservation initiative was just as publicly controversial as city planning was because, in effect, people looked at it as depriving owners of private property of their right to do whatever they wanted.

A. Absolutely. Well, the issue we ran into early in our business and may have been even the first year we were in business. We were approached by people who were looking for help if they could get it moved or get something done. The Junior League approached us. What’s the name of the house?

Q. Oh, right next door?

A. Good, you get stalled the same place I do. We can recover I can see that because we did it before. In any event, the house was sitting at that time on Jackson Street on the south side of the street. It was a house that was very modest and so poorly maintained that you walked in and the floorboard had fallen through. It didn’t have a basement or anything in there.

But for $150, we got paid to go in and try to fix it up so it would at least be like it was. Now that is not what was moved over there, but it was the same guys...it was a small house, not a big one. That one moved around several times. Somebody else had moved it over onto Jackson
Henderson Street or onto Eighth Street, and then it jumped across the street. But you know who we are talking about. I mean that...we’ll get there. I think he was a druggist or something.

Q. I guess so.

A. I really just appreciate that you get that, but that introduced us to the Junior League.

Q. Yes.

A. The Junior League has played such a very, very strong point and how to get all these things through because once we as the Historic Sites or at this point, we are still the Advisory Committee. We were saying, “We still have got to get this thing changed for zoning.” But when you start saying zoning because all of a sudden the guy who owns that house that they, somebody wanted to put a log cabin on, property values went down.

Q. Exactly. It was in incendiary idea.

A. Yes. Well, the Junior League helped us close the streets. We said, “The streets have got to be closed.” That’s one that tickled their fancy because all of a sudden we were saying that you are not going to be able to park the cars in front of your house. Well, we’ll talk about that.

So we talked about it by having a Sunday social, and this was still the women coming through like crazy for us. We actually closed the streets, put little barricades on there, and invited the whole neighborhood for doughnuts and cider or some doggone thing, but so we could talk to them. There were people there who, I told you, that whole area had deteriorated into multi-family, from single family dwellings to multi-family occupants.

Q. Outside stairways going up. I remember it.

A. Oh, yes and ill-kept. It wasn’t because... well, the person doesn’t own the house, they got an apartment upstairs and somebody doesn’t paint the house or the fence is broke down, and they can’t do it. But we said, “This is Lincoln’s home,” and we made a pitch. I think I told you this again, I was right in the middle of this one because it was my home town. I knew Lincoln’s home because it was ten blocks from my house. But I had to go there only when the relatives came because I would never go back again because Lincoln is never there, right?

Q. No, he is never at home when you come. [laughter]

A. No, but the Junior League ladies were, and they were including my wife Sally and the Junior League-ers spent time in there. It was an important thing because our pitch when we said what we need is government assistance in this thing or to raise money. To raise money again in this case you are asking somebody, “What have you done to help yourself?”
We were doing everything we could; we got the zoning taken care of. We got some kind of a temporary thought process that we could close the streets on certain occasions. We had participation by the Junior League. At this point, somebody said, “Well, has anybody talked to the Rosenwald people?” Well, Julius Rosenwald, I think it was Star... Star something. There wasn’t a foundation by the Rosenwald family. This was something else.

Q. Was it the Sears Foundation?

A. No, it was Star something. Anyway I got the name. However I got it, I don’t know. But I went to see the foundation, to the person to deal with who was in Philadelphia. I will never forget this, in one of their high rises right down where they got this pylon out in the center of the city and it’s got somebody on top of it. I can’t remember who it was. Well, this man’s window I was looking out at that, I will always remember that.

It was a tiny thing, almost the smallest office as when we opened our office. I was surprised because this man was dealing in big money. I’m saying, “Well, how much, that it is so important that we get this job done.” I was pitching pretty hard. Apparently right from the beginning, the Rosenwald family said they never wanted to be publicly identified as part of the Lincoln Home or whatever it was. I don’t know the reason behind that. But he said, “That’s it.” He said, “Wally, you went around the way.” But he said, “Well, what do you think we can do for you?” I said, “We need money.” He wrote out a thirty thousand dollar check, which was big money.

Q. Of course it was big money.

A. I about flipped out, and he was just the most modest Jewish patriarch except that he listened to you politely. When it was all done, he had a little secretary, nice lady there, and that was it. That was the whole foundation.

Q. Isn’t that wonderful?

A. He wrote that check out.

Q. Boy, you were a happy, proud guy.

A. Oh, bringing that one back was good. My RUDAT stuff was bringing me back and forth to Washington, so here Paul Findley was our representative at the time. Now I got a double reason because Paul Findley is our champion on getting this thing done. He starts plugging me in to other people on this thing, and one of them happens to be Nelson Rockefeller. I ended up going to New York on two occasions and met with Rockefeller in his office.

Now I just suddenly learned or I’m saying to you or if anybody else cares, these pretentious offices are not necessarily what these people operate out of. Nelson Rockefeller’s office, I’m
sure he had one that he used for show, but this was during the time when he was not governor. He was not in office, he was going to be the vice-president and he finally got it that time, too.

Q. I can’t remember he held other positions.

A. Well, he also received the... Rockefeller, his name came up because Williamsburg is a venture by the Rockefeller Foundation. So that was who I was suggested that I go see him, so I go see him. Now this one was, he was on 54th Street, right off of – I want to say – Fifth Avenue, maybe a little further down right next to a bar and a door that was like a steel door that would go into a warehouse, down a corridor and up a stairway, down a corridor, and this was the most unpretentious place you have ever been in your life.

I was just smoking because I am having so much excitement that I am going to meet this man. He said he understood what we were trying to do. I’m saying, “We need you to save the thing because the Lincoln Home is going to be ended up as scrap. We are going to have this eleven story hotel thing that was a threat.” He understood the issue, and as a matter of fact he sent people to come and look at it.

Q. Ok, he asked someone, his aides to take a look.

A. There was a house that was two doors down from Lincoln, while the people were coming. See, they didn’t tell us they were coming. They come, and then we got baseball hats and short pants and all that stuff right while they are there, I wasn’t there to see it. I was over in the report that I had gotten back afterwards, threw a mattress off of the roof on fire right [laughter] out onto the sidewalk in front of these people, which that was a report we got to do something.

I mean that was incredible. Anyway I ended up going a second time to his office in New York. Invited him as a matter of fact to come here and be a speaker at the Abraham Lincoln Association and met him out at the airplane. He and Happy came in.

Q. He came, that’s right, yes.

A. He and Happy came in, and I gave Happy my coat because it was cold when he flew in on that airplane, on his own airplane, of course. Then we later on, when the report came back that the Rockefeller Foundation could not spend money from the foundation outside of the...

Q. Virginia or something.

A. Virginia, yes. They don’t call them counties; they call them something else. Anyway, so that couldn’t be done. But he now has become the vice-president of the country.

Q. Right, yes.
A. Findley again puts it together and we go to meet with Rockefeller in his office, not in Washington. We had breakfast as a matter of fact, [[72x54]Henderson 252 [72x709]Howarth went along. Can’t remember whether Jack Clark was there and I can’t remember who was head of the… I can’t remember who was president of the ALA. Anyway we went there and made a big pitch for this becoming necessary to turn it into a park. We had already come up with the idea of six blocks and that would have taken us all the way to Cook Street.  

Q. Right.

A. But unfortunately because we thought we might be biting off too much. They sent a committee down. I sent you my testimony before that committee. Representative Roy Taylor out of South Carolina was head of the… whatever the committee was called. Interior Committee?

Q. Interior I think, yes.

A. The pitch… took them through New Salem and the whole bit, and I think very favorably impressed them. Got a chance to talk to Everett Dirksen when he was in town, they pushed me off into talk with him. But I was pitching good only because I believed it, and we got the cracks coming. All this sudden we could answer the Rosenwald or the Star something foundation gave us $30,000, the Junior League has done nice, the county has or the city has tried to close the streets.

Q. You could point to a momentum.

A. Yes, and that’s what should be expected by everybody. Don’t just come in begging, “Can you help us do this?” If we helped ourselves as far as we can and we can’t take it any further, we need your help.

Q. Yes.

A. That was exactly what people, I think, believe, and it was a success. They made it, and they continued to build on it. The successor to Findley was Durbin, and he’s been the dearest friend down there.

Q. So, but it takes little things like that.

A. Sure.

Q. You’ve got to convince them that you’re capable of generating support. Then they’ll either support legislation, as in this case or give you money.

A. Or steer you to somebody who can. Just using the word “Rockefeller” to somebody else...
Q. Oh that’s right. “I was just talking to Nelson Rockefeller.”

A. I wasn’t quite that casual. [laughs] No, but to use the fact that you’re not just bluffing, you’re trying to play the big game.

Q. Yes.

A. Otherwise you could say we had cans outside of every...right next to the guy on Christmas ringing the bell. “Save Lincoln’s home.”

Q. So that took several years, didn’t it, as I recall?

A. Twenty years of my life.

Q. To get the home?

A. To get to where we are now.

Q. No, I don’t mean where we are now. The process of having it become a National Park Service property took five years, maybe longer because it was an issue.

A. Well, from the day we first started to getting there, well Nixon was the president who came in and signed it at the Old State Capitol.

Q. Right, right. Well I’m not sure but it was a period of several years, at least.

A. Oh yes.

Q. I know who the heroes were. You mentioned Paul Findley and you didn’t mention he was a hero, but you were a driving force and the Junior League you’ve mentioned.

A. I called Paul Findley that day in his office and I said, “You’re going to go down in history for that.” He said, “Well, I never thought about it, but you’re probably right. We did a good job.” He was always that kind of man. I’ve introduced several of the park superintendents, taken them over to Jacksonville and he’s an old gentleman now but...

Q. He’s an old gentleman but...

A. Very bright.

Q. He’s wonderful, and I’ve visited with him over there.

A. He always treats me like we’re all young again.
Q. Yes.

A. It’s good.

Q. So that was a major achievement though it was controversial. There were people who thought, “We don’t want the feds coming in.” I mean there were kind of turf battles. The state conservation...

A. ALA as a matter of fact...

Q. And ALA.

A. I mean I sat in those meetings when Jim Hickey was probably the most vocal saying, “Once you get them in here, it’s completely out of your control. They’ll stuff it down your throat.” Which unfortunately, Jim has passed away he’d probably be pointing out they did exactly that this last term...before they got onto Durbin about the...what they call “earmarks.”

Q. Yes.

A. The two buildings that are missing, where the two grass patches are across from Lincoln’s home and next door, he had money put in to have not the buildings restored like they should be but restored. They had a good bid on it. The superintendent out in the regional thing got word of it somehow about don’t go with this one because it’s going to be controversial or something and pulled the switch on it, which is too bad.

Q. That’s too bad. We’ve got to quit today.

END OF TAPE SEVEN, SIDE TWO

46:07
Q. This is an oral history interview with Wally Henderson on May 2, 2011, the interviewer’s 76th birthday. We are in his home, and we are going to continue our discussion of your architectural, early architectural projects, I guess, after the monumental Old State Capitol. You were involved, I know, in lobbying for bringing the National Park Service here and upgrading the neighborhood, but what sort of actual architectural work did you perform for the National Park Service?

A. Alright, let’s go back and, of course, we got hung up the last visit we had for the name of the house that was removed from the Junior League for $150.

Q. Yes, ok.

A. Again, I’m still searching for the name. Any event, that sort of got our foot in the door and I think I told you that I was on the Wes Collins’ preserve the Lincoln Home area thing.

Q. Yes, right.

A. So I was touching base with him and when we turned it into the Historic Committee of Springfield I was on it along with Sally Schanbacher and Clyde Walton and there was a bunch of them. It was really a historic idea and a district and that plugged us in because now we’re out begging money anyplace we can. I think I mentioned contacting the Rosenwald Foundation.

Q. Yes.

A. They gave us a donation and now we also tried the Rockefeller Foundation and they had their little exhibits going, but all this kept bumping me into the Lincoln Home area.

Q. Right.

A. Being with the AIA and getting back and forth to Washington we also decided maybe the federal government has got to be in it particularly when the Rockefeller Foundation came back and said, “We can’t spend our money outside of the Williamsburg situation.”

Q. Right.
A. So working with Paul Findley we ended up getting into the Park Service having actually a congressional hearing here in Springfield, which I testified at it. I escorted the representatives around, including New Salem, which kept getting us closer and let’s be very candid. I was very interested in the Lincoln history, but I was also promoting Ferry and Henderson Architects.

Q. Well, of course.

A. So the work had to be done. We’d already done a little bit. The Junior League was certainly working with us when we did the Old State Capitol. So as we got further into the thing, the Lincoln Home had been touched on. Actually when I was raised in Springfield 10 blocks west of Lincoln’s home on Edwards Street, 400th block of West Edwards, the Lincoln Home wasn’t that far away, but it was one of these places that you just plain, you’ve seen it once you’ve seen it all.

Q. Yes, right.

A. But this was a shabby neighborhood. What are efforts really were to clean it up. Well, in the 1950s, and this was when I was overseas and so forth, it had been picked up by the Department of Conservation in Springfield and discovered that...

Q. State Department of Conservation.

A. Yes state, I’m sorry. It was discovered that... it had always been a white house the entire time I was in Springfield except that they finally got down to it in a scientific way, did a little scrapping and found out it was a tan color. It’s an off-white but really leans towards the tan. Jim Hickey was part of that operation. There were a couple other people who were leaders in it as well, and so the idea was, “Hey what else is different about the Lincoln Home?”

Q. Right.

A. Well that was kind of somebody’s mind working. Of course, the hopes of us getting it into a National Park area was still just an idea. It wasn’t anything else.

Q. Right.

A. Well, finally when Nixon came to Springfield in 1970 and sat in the Old State Capitol and signed the bill, it now becomes the four block area that is today’s Lincoln Home area. Ok, the first thing that happened is that they wanted to proceed with this thing. Of course, at that particular moment they didn’t have any staff architects to work on it, so it sort of shifted to “Can you take care of it?” We’d already done, again, the Rosenwald house wasn’t anything we working on. That was where we got our money to begin with or some of it.

Q. Yes.
A. But the other, earlier thing we said was we had a little bit of experience but yes. But the building was intact. Remember Lincoln, when he moved in, it was single-story building.

Q. Yes, right.

A. He added a story to it. So that made its second floor. My wife and I think Don Ferry’s wife as well was part of the docents who worked in there, put on the clothing of the 19th century and presented the building that was now at least protected but still in this very shabby neighborhood.

So we now had access to the building. We discovered things because they were looking for the structural capacity of it. The stair particularly, which was a very ornamental type stair, but the whole idea is you can go through the building so you had to be sure structurally it was sound enough.

Q. Of course.

A. We removed some materials but in every case, and this is part of the direction by the National Park Service, and the more you get into historic preservation the more you recognize the last thing you do is to destroy it if you can preserve it.

Well, in keeping with that then that means you don’t go ripping wallpaper away and don’t start tearing timbers off and all that. But as we got into it, we found some structural elements that had to be taken care of. Then the bigger thing is how do you heat that house because they didn’t have central heating in those days?

Q. Right.

A. We had to work between making the potbellied stoves something that actually worked and get ventilation and air-conditioning into the space without it being, “Oh look, that’s the latest air-conditioner. We’ve just seen it advertised.”

Q. So you couldn’t have an open grill on the floor or if it were hidden?

A. Exactly right, return air and so forth, which we’re all used to. Given the old house that I lived in, it wasn’t built in the 19th century, it was built in the 20th century. The grills were made out of wood, not metal because it was I think probably built in the 1920s, the house I was raised in.

But we were trying to get it back again to the Lincoln period. So we did spend time doing it and lots of interesting things and some of it never explained because we didn’t have any insulation. That was first thing in order to heat the house and to cool the house; you got to get some insulation in. So there’s several ways that you can do and I think all of us has seen the blanket type and the foam type that you squirt into it.
Q. You want to take a break? Want to take a break? Ok.

A. So as a result that was start one we had to get the roofing and everything tied together. It was sort of an updating without tearing it apart and doing all those kind of things.

Q. But you had the assignment, you had the contract?

A. Oh yes.

Q. With the National Park Service.

A. Which was a sort of continuing contract. In other words it wasn’t a...you don’t go in and bid it. It’s you’re on call because we need you. We’ve discovered this door isn’t going to fit or it is inappropriate or there is another door. Once we got that into motion we sort of kept the project all the way through even after Ferry and Henderson dissolved and I went to Ralph Hahn’s office, the project followed us.

Q. Ok. You continued doing that kind of work on a piecemeal, I shouldn’t say piecemeal.

A. It was a contractual basis.

Q. Yes, ok.

A. They had this, the Park Service works that way. They have contracts where you actually go in and examine buildings for what their values are and you write a structural report to them and they have their own form. Interesting thing I always tell people they don’t believe it. The original, when we started with the Park Service, their standard form paper was eight by ten.

Now that sounds logical except that they don’t make eight by ten, and you had to go get your paper cut because eight and a half by eleven was the standard size. Even the Parks Service people, and they were, we were sort of contemporaries. They had older folks around but many had been working with us, they couldn’t hardly believe it either. Why are we doing eight by tens? Well, today and all the reports we wrote after that first couple of them are eight and a half by eleven. [laughs]

But again, the important part of this thing and I was helping our contracts, but I was also helping the whole issue because I was being able to deal directly with Paul Findley who couldn’t have been better and more significant in getting this done. He talked it up on both sides of the aisles and this in days when the aisles, I think, worked in a little less obvious than today.

Q. Yes.

A. But Paul Findley did a wonderful job on it. At that point we just on kept on going and when it came to doing the visitor center, we were interviewed for that.
Q. I was going to say that was a bid or an interview or an RSVP sort of? Not RSVP, RFP.

A. RFP, they still do it sort of remote control but interviews count, and of course, we had the recommendation. We meaning, at that time for Ferry and Henderson Architects, from the state, the city, from the representatives so it was a pretty, I shouldn’t say cut and dried. We wouldn’t ever take anything for granted, but I made a special effort to attend; there were a couple of fairs going on, one of them out in Victoria, British Columbia.

But that was...I forget exactly what it was and there was also a transportation fair. So to go to see what the...well, I take it back. We went to the World’s Fair in what was it... 1964, the Department of Conservation. That one was in New York and went with director Bill Lodge, as a matter of fact, who was head of the Department of Conservation. The Old Capitol was...

Q. Bill Lodge?

A. Bill Lodge. L-O-D-G-E.

Q. Ok.

A. He was the director of conservation because we did not have a Historic Preservation Agency in those days.

Q. Right, right.

A. The whole idea I’ve said somewhere in earlier remarks in preservation was almost like, “No kidding, are we really going do that?” I mentioned before they had no agency, but they also didn’t have any fees for doing preservation work. When they got all rounded up and the guys doing it twenty years later are much better off than those of us who started right in the beginning.

Q. Yes, let’s wait.

[tape paused]

Q. We’re back.

A. Ok.

Q. Was there a historian on the staff of the Department of Conservation that you dealt with at all?

A. Again actually we were dealing with the state historian.
Q. Nichols.

A. He came through and yes, the people who had been around and had made some of the discovery of the Colorado paint and so forth were around. Remember they were digging all the time into the finding out where the papers are and looking in the auditors file. But I think I told you on our staff on an interim basis had Dr. Ernest Connally, who was actually a professor of History from the University of Illinois, for actually Don Ferry and myself and a couple of the members of our staff. So we’re dealing with somebody who had been a teacher to us and we passed all the questions about this back and forth.

Now interesting thing, Clyde Walton again was directly responsible – I think he was Chairman of the Historic Sites Commission in the very earliest days when it was transferring from the Lincoln Home Advisory Board. He proposed that this be an historic district. There wasn’t such a thing in the State of Illinois. He proposed it, and it was passed. This was number one, the first state historic district in the State of Illinois.

Q. Oh, this is still under the Department of Conservation auspices?

A. Yes.

Q. But they broadened it into a neighborhood rather than just the buildings?

A. Yes because the neighborhood is the only way they could protect it. They couldn’t say, “Hey all you folks who have got your property here and so forth. We’ll make these remodel changes.”

Q. But that took legislation?

A. Oh, it certainly did, and that’s why Nixon came down to do it.

Q. I mean in Illinois.

A. Oh, yes. Preservation of an historic district of which there are bunches of them right now. The Department of Conservation held it for a long time until they got the IHPA.

Q. Yes, right.

A. But the interesting thing was, Clyde Walton again you have got to give him an awful lot of credit because he was leading this pack. So first of all, we got an historic district. Now, what do you do when you put the visitor’s center in there? Of course, one of the things that we had recommended as the historic district, I guess this goes back to Lester Collins, is if Lincoln returned to his front yard, everything he could see would be something that was familiar to him.
Q. Right.

A. Now, of course, we’re seeing the visitor’s center certainly is going to be in his front yard or awfully close to it because the master plan was done by a group out of Cambridge, can’t remember their name right off. We can look that up a little bit later. In fact, if you want to stop and look, maybe Massachusetts.

Q. I can’t find the document right now, but you think Dahlquist was a principle of that firm?

A. Yes. Again, we were all contemporaries together; it was a younger group but had the spirit of what it was. The whole idea was you don’t want to some way compete with the Lincoln Home. Clyde Walton, who made the final decision that the Park Service certainly agreed with it as we went into it.

The visitor center shouldn’t be mistaken as, “Oh, is that the Lincoln Home?” In other words, if we would have built an 19th century building, then everybody would go to that one first because when they get out of their car, that’s what they are looking at. It should be clearly established as an identity that would not be interpreted by anybody. As a result, that’s the way it was built.

A. A fairly low profile. Was that part of it, too?

Q. Well, they didn’t make those kinds of rules. But here’s what we had for our problem. Of course, all the homes over there are 19th century, were in the neighborhood, 19th century homes that were modest in size – 2,000 square foot floor plan would be about as big as they were going to get. There were no mansions in there. The Lincoln Home was probably the biggest house there in the 19th century, particularly when you put the second floor on the thing.

As a result, we were now going to put together a visitor center, which is now to take people who are coming to find out about the Lincoln home. We’re also talking about the whole Lincoln legend and legacy in the central Illinois area. This means we are taking a capacity of people who are coming and going; we need a parking lot. We also need certain areas where and I have now been to several world’s fairs that I’ve mentioned earlier in addition to the one in New York, but in Canada and there was another transportation fair.

But the interesting thing is when you make an exhibit to people at least if we’re trying to give them a message and they are there for a few minutes, five minutes or thirty minutes, whatever it might be, seating has to be provided. So now we have to put some kind of seating arrangements and I will always remember it, it might have been the transportation fair that I went to in Washington State.

What I was really impressed with was that people would come in the door and take a seating arrangement. While you are in there, there happened to be a movie projector. When it was finished, the door would open only it would be on the other side of the room so the people
would not walk back into the crowd. They would walk out of it and into the rest of the fairgrounds. This became a concept.

The other big thing in the Lincoln Home area was that you could accommodate people and we built it this way where you’ve got separate projection areas, two screens in the common projection area so one set of projectionists with equipment facing the opposite direction could operate, and we would have two theaters operating at the same time or they could be one-two, one-two. But they all exited on the back side, which we had designed as a grape arbor so when you came out in the summertime you’ve got grape leaves over the top of you, but you are looking at the Lincoln Home.

Q. That was crucial to your design, that configuration.

A. Oh, absolutely.

Q. Of course, there had to be restrooms and some limited exhibits.

A. Oh, yes. As the Park Service said, you have to have the place where you can sell the whips and belts and all those things because that’s... but they’ve turned this into a... can’t remember the name of it. They worked with the National Park Service a great deal; they had the books and all the other things in there. A lot of people that you and I know from the Abraham Lincoln Association, their books are already in there.

Q. Exactly. It’s a very fine book store of Lincolonian and Civil War.

A. Exactly right. They keep trying to make it upscale. Once upon a time the Edwards Place, which was relocated into that area, remember Ninian Edwards?

Q. Yes.

A. His home site on the north end of Edwards Street, same block as Lincoln’s home. They used that for a little while as a visitor center until we got this one built.

Q. I didn’t know that.

A. But it was successful to the extent that... and still is. It is a contemporary building but... Oh, what I started to say to you is, that house is a mere 2,000 square foot, but when we got done programming this thing, that’s a ten thousand square foot building. How do you get ten thousand square feet into a building and not make it look goofy? This is something I used to explain to the city council and we used to have...oh, I can’t remember the councilman’s name now, but he was always a naysayer. It didn’t make any difference what anybody did, he voted no. When I got done and made this explanation, if you drive through a neighborhood, and I’m saying just try it sometime. You don’t remember the house, you remember going by it. I’m saying you stop and look at it.
Q. Yes.

A. But you are aware of the fluttering roof lines. In other words, it’s the masthead that jumps up and down, and so I referred to the fluttering roof lines. So what I didn’t want to do is to establish a big mass. I wanted this whole thing to sort of literally flutter because it did flutter, and so a low profile was it and break it down into pieces so it even sits on its site not right ninety degrees facing the road, its offsite, which was beneficial to what we were trying to do. But you’ve got to move around it and you don’t recognize that there are ten thousand feet there.

Q. I think that worked. It’s not an overwhelming building. It is attractive, it’s modern. It’s well-landscaped, which was also obviously crucial. It doesn’t shout at you.

A. That’s the big point. It had to be obvious that this is something that and, of course, they’ve got some signage, but very limited signage. If you wanted to go in there, you come right down Eighth Street and you see the Lincoln Home. That’s the way it ought to be because it’s the way it had to go. There’s no question about that.

Q. Now I know it was a success, but looking back on it is there one thing that you kind of wish you had done that you didn’t do to that visitor’s center.

A. I won’t say the visitor’s center. I’ll start with when we had the legislative group come to Springfield, and Roy Taylor from North Carolina was the head of that group. He asked me a question and I’m not sure whether it’s part of my testimony or not. But originally we looked at this thing as a six block area. Six blocks would take you down to Cook Street. Part of that is because of the way with the roads and the underpasses and so forth, Cook is a main access to the Interstate system.

We thought going there would be great. Of course, it was a continuation of the neighborhood. It had a little more of a commercial to it than the other four blocks. I guess we backed off – we meaning our Historic Sites Commission. We were begging because we were saying we couldn’t keep shutting that street down and expect to have everybody say, “Well, someday it will turn into something.” So we’re saying and I’ve said this at least in an aside to the committee, “We’ve got to do it because we could lose this thing by somebody else who decides he is going to build a five story simulated log cabin or some doggone thing.” He couldn’t hold it forever that way because we didn’t have the money. So we cut that back, and I always have regretted that.

Q. You wish it had been the full six blocks.

A. Oh, yes. To this very day, I’ve even produced a couple of drawings but not the most recent person who is the Park Service superintendent, but I’ve always stayed close to them – when I say on a friendly basis without too much – but I knew my way around the Park Service. He
went off to Colorado – in Denver is where they had their regional office – and we got to be
great friends and had him over to my house when he came into Springfield. I visited with him
several times out there.

The result was that I could make suggestions that they didn’t ask for, and they could accept
them or not, and it was beneficial. Of course, when you got down to it, we had to settle for
whatever we could get and that was a four block area. Your question about anything we did on
the visitor’s center or failed to do, well, no. Right off the bat, nothing comes to mind.

It was funny. The Handicapped Accessibility Act did not exist when we did the Lincoln Home
area or the visitor’s center. Now that, of course, means accessibility to toilet facilities, and we
had no stairs so there was no problem there. The swing of doors was ok, and you could get a
wheel chair there. But we didn’t have toilets that were specifically and, of course, the water
closets and so forth are in larger stalls, and they got a new superintendent in there.

Now the new superintendent was about to blow his mind, “How incompetent can you be?” I
sat down and explained to him. I don’t remember who the gentleman was, but I said, “This was
built before you came here and also before there was a… there hasn’t always been an historic
accessibility type stuff, so we got that modified. Everybody looks back and says, “Well, you
could have done this different.”

Q. Yes, right.

A. Yes, hindsight is best sight. Or if you’re not smarter, you can call it anything you want to,
and that’s where we were.

Q. Yes, ok.

A. It was basically well received, and I can’t think of anything we improved as time went on.
We did a little different configuration of the parking area and a way of collecting the monies.
Today they have changed that to an honesty panel rather then we had a little, not a kiosk.

Q. A little booth or something like that.

A. Yes, exactly.

Q. Ok, so that was probably about a two year project, the visitor’s center?

A. I would say so. President Ford came and I sat on the front porch with President Ford when
this was dedicated. But he also was there for the Lincoln Home as well.

Q. Front porch of?

A. The Lincoln Home.
Q. The front porch of the Lincoln Home.

A. The Lincoln Home, it has a little porch to it. The President sat on there, and I was invited – not to entertain. I just sat on the far end, but it was something.

Q. Make sure he wouldn’t fall down the steps or something.

A. It wasn’t up to me to do that. [laughter]

Q. No, I’m kidding. He was teased for being a little awkward.

A. Well, he was a heck of a football player.

Q. Yes, I know he was.

A. I went up to, part of the town is in Michigan.

Q. Michigan?

A. Well, they’ve got the floor of the library up there.

Q. Yes, right.

A. Grand Junction.

Q. No, that’s Colorado. Grand Rapids maybe?

A. Grand Rapids, thank you. That’s where it is. I thought I was going to show you a Ford picture, but maybe I’m not. [Looking through pictures] Yes, there it is.

Q. Ok, there is a picture, right? So he had elections. Oh, of course.

A. It says.

Q. Ford, not a Lincoln.

A. [laughter] That’s a funny line, and I was sitting right there.

Q. That’s where he addressed... Whereas the focal point for Nixon’s appearance was at the Old State Capitol.

A. Yes. He didn’t go over to the Lincoln Home area.
Q. Right, but in this case, Ford chose that location, which was nice.

A. Yes, it was.

Q. Ok, Did you compete for the major restoration work at the Lincoln Home that took place about, what ten or fifteen years later when they had to close it down for a while?

A. Well, the whole Lincoln Home work... we were involved and here’s what happened now – this again going back and forth to the regional office. The regional office actually was in Omaha, Nebraska, but the National Park Service has...well, they actually had a piece of a shopping center our there where they had two hundred...well, I'll call them drafting tables, now what these people did. But there were three offices – one was in San Francisco, and one in Washington, and there was one in Denver.

Q. Right.

A. We reported to the Denver one. You had to when we started. This was a little interesting side story because again I told you before many years, for at least a dozen years, I was going back and forth to Washington as part of business but not just specifically for this business. I got to be good friends with the Washington group. The Washington group...oh, I can’t think of their names.

They were in Georgetown, and they had boxes of drafting tables and these were architects and everything else, and I got to be friends with these guys. One time I go out there and show up and they treated me and they started saying, “You are the g. d. cause of this.” I was like, “What are you guys talking about?” They had decided that they needed a regional office in mid-country, and so they were dismantling the Washington office.

Q. Oh, they were being set up.

A. What they were doing was blaming me for me costing them their jobs. I said, “Believe me, what I do is just in my business and not in yours at all.” They relocated our regional office to the one out in Denver.

Q. So you made a lot of trips out there and conferred with those people.

A. I did, and then they finally ended up, one of them applied to come and be located on the site here in Springfield. I cannot give you his name.

Q. Fran somebody. Fran Weber? Weber or something?

A. You’re close.

Q. I met him. He was a little different.
A. Yes. You got the right man.

Q. Maybe not Fran Weber, but I know him. He had dark hair. I got to know him; he was a funny guy.

A. I had run into him, he was on a board, I was chasing some other National Park Service work, and I can’t remember what some of those were. Any event, he was on...I got crossways with him at the interview because he asked a couple of cheap shot questions. When you do that, you get a little defensive, and I never tried to be obnoxious to somebody. But sometimes you’ve got to stop them in midair because this was off the beam.

Q. Yes.

A. Then when he came here, he wasn’t exactly hospitable to me, but we got along. He used to come out to our office and check out the work we were doing.

Q. I don’t know how I got to know him. By chance, I guess. But I found him to be kind of cynical and wasn’t sure about his orientation.

A. Yes.

Q. Ok. But now at some point...I don’t know the date, but at some point, the Lincoln Home took on a major rehaul of everything, and they closed it for at least six months or a year. It was probably in the 1990s.

A. Yes, and the people that were doing the work, worked from...oh, they called them the river...that article from which it was taken out of may have had that in about that period.

Q. Fever River. Not fever, but...

A. We’ve both got half a recollection.

Q. The guy who runs that is a nice guy; he’s an archeologist.

A. They do a nice job.

Q. Mansfield or Man something.

A. Yes, I was going to...

Q. Mansburger. Floyd Mansburger.
A. I think you’re saying it right. Yes, someplace I probably have so many boxes you have to load and unload, so the whole story is being told. Yes, the whole area was being shut down for a while.

Q. Right.

A. Because they had to get the insulation in there.

Q. Insulation and strengthening and maybe the handicapped access, I don’t know.

A. Structure. I don’t recall. We didn’t solve the handicapped access in the same way in the Lincoln Home area.

Q. Right. In the back, they added a little...

A. Yes, yes. The Park Service talks out of both sides of their mouth.

Q. Sure.

A. They wanted it exactly like it was except that you’ve got to provide for handicap accessibility. So a couple of the buildings have been restored in that area and even have a lift to take people up. They’ve also, I told you earlier stories about some of the Chinese restaurants that we used to have at least to go to it in Champaign. They actually would carry a person who couldn’t make it, carry them up to the second floor, which stretches the...I mean I not sure how sure-footed somebody might be is if they carry you in a wheelchair up the stairs, but that was an answer in the early days.

Q. Oh, that’s funny. So I can’t think of the name of the contractor. He was a big contractor and big contracts.

A. Yes. But you didn’t compete for that?

Q. No, no. This was the contractor. He was following what we had already...

A. Oh, I understand that. That’s how that works. He was the actual person who was gluing it back together again. The place was in pretty good upkeep because they had maintained it, but when they found that there was no insulation whatsoever and you are trying to use this thing year round, it’s different. I remember something that nobody as yet has explained to us. We removed some of the overlap siding and there is bricks stacked in there.

Q. Stacked bricks?

A. Stacked inside on top of the plate. When you build a building you do a foundation and then once you get above the foundation...well, of course, they didn’t do it in the earlier days, but
typically you put a termite shield, which is a metal thing to keep termites from falling crawling from the brick into the first thing you put down, which is the plate. Of course, much of this lumber is not planed. Planed, P-L-A-N-E-D. Not ordinary but hasn’t been milled and so it’s rough-cut two-by-fours.

Well, when you get the rough-cut in there, that’s a little tougher to do but to hold the plate down, which was rough-cut, and then to hold the studs that are going to be on top of that, there were bricks standing on the plate. Now why, whether the plate was warped or what, we don’t know. But it was a little stack of brick. It wasn’t...I would say about three feet high and about...well, in those days they didn’t have 16 inches on center so it’s a little bit different spacing there, but we never did get an answer to that. I mean, we had all our researchers and everything else but...

Q. Couldn’t figure it out.

A. If somebody wants to go look for it, it’s either on the north or the west side is where we discovered that little bit.

Q. That would be considered unstable, wouldn’t it?

A. Well, it wasn’t doing anything other than looking like dead weight.

Q. Ok.

A. So we concluded that it was probably, actually trying to anchor it down on this like well buttresses do on a building or flying buttresses do if you know that term.

Q. Yes, I do.

A. Well, I told you I flunked an architectural test on that thing when the flying buttress...flying buttresses that arch that comes pushing on the building and the question was what does the finial, which is an extension of the buttress, stand up above it, is it just for dead weight or is it design? I said. “Design and it is dead weight.”

Q. It’s dead weight?

A. Yes, it just holds...

Q. It holds it down as dead weight; it doesn’t strengthen it other than...

A. It strengthens it to the point that if any of the sides bend, it’s got to overcome this dead weight coming down.

Q. You have just taught me another little answer on architecture.
A. Well, they taught me one, too, because I flunked that piece of the question.

Q. [laughs] Ok, is there anything else about the Lincoln Home work you did that you think we should cover?

A. I’m satisfied with the work that’s been performed. I’m always questioning because they always come back with five-year plans, and we just came up with a new one.

Q. Another one, right.

A. A five-year plan I guess is responsible government trying to evaluate what you do, which has always been a concern. I think we said something in our last meeting that for years there was some question particularly from members of the Historic Sites Commission about are we sure we want the federal government involved.

Q. Yes.

A. We felt safer with the Rockefeller Foundation or with others but the federal government had to come to our assistance. But the minute that they get a hold of it, and particularly Jim Hickey expressed concerns.

Q. I know he did. He was really against this.

A. Very concerned about it. We don’t want to do that because from then on you lose total control. It’s a fact because their last five-year plan they decided not to do certain things, which had been always right from the beginning, but we said restore it to its natural area. They came back with a recommendation, which I don’t know how far it’s going to go, but you just simply put in the foundation.

Q. The foundations of buildings, leave it to your imagination like the Franklin home in Philadelphia. I don’t know if you’ve ever seen it. It’s a skeleton.

A. That’s exactly what they came back with. To me that’s just unsatisfactory, it’s irresponsible. But their issue is if you can’t be an exact duplication of the floor elevation of the building, then you can’t do it. Well, come on we’re talking about something that...this would be like staging like all the movie people put all the backdrops in there. They could just use pipes and put them in there. Now you’re looking at Philadelphia or you’re looking at Springfield, Illinois. No, I totally disagree with that thing. In some cases they don’t even go that far. They just pour the foundation.

Q. Don’t you suspect that it’s also to save money?

A. Oh, sure it is.
Q. I mean, if they have budget pressures...

A. Yes, but we’re talking about the most outstanding president...

Q. I know that. I couldn’t agree more, obviously. But I think, probably, budgetary pressures...they think we can get more bang for the buck if we could just show in Philadelphia or Springfield, a general impression rather than a real building. It’s a mistake, I think.

A. You and I both don’t disagree with that judgment. I mean, with that fact. But I’m saying, to me, when you put your best foot forward is when, where the rest of the world peaks and they don’t come in and look at the post office building. They come to Lincoln’s Home and say, “Well, that pipe thing was that there?” No, and particularly when you have foreign visitors and I’m talking about Asians and have the highest regard for...the regard they have for Lincoln, which is the very highest regard. Asians come over here and we show them pipe city because we’re saving a buck and it’s good budgetary thing? It’s irresponsible.

Q. We’re in agreement.

A. I’m not trying to get a job at the Park Service.

Q. No, no. So you do have some regrets at the National Park Service?

A. I have some opinions yet, and I’ve said that very much to them, “Come on guys, you’re cutting the buck where...” and there’s a couple other things that previously some of the earlier people who were both the superintendents and the director of the region, that is that a lot of the Lincoln story hasn’t been told.

These buildings could be used to tell about slavery, perhaps, or about portions of the Civil War, but they have no facility to do it in other than the existing buildings. So this would have been shell type buildings, wouldn’t have had rooms. Nobody really cares whether they had one single floor that had no structure in it or they had individual dining rooms and all this kind of stuff. This was going to be exhibit space, but from the outside it would be residential buildings.

Q. What is your opinion of the Park Service? Is it really the general service administration’s decision to have the exteriors fit in with the neighborhood but the interiors could serve a contemporary purpose, like Dick Durbin’s office?

A. I think it’s very important, again, you’ve probably been to Williamsburg and that’s what goes on in Williamsburg. Notice there’s no cars; the street is closed, so you don’t see any cars. Williamsburg was this marvelous thing to me. Where are the cars? They parked in the barns. That’s exactly what happens when you get the Lincoln Home area. Durbin’s office, from Lincoln’s Home you cannot see any vehicles because they didn’t have vehicles. There’s a
carriage or two occasionally sitting on the street which...and the horse places where you could tie up the horses as would have been legitimate in the in 19th century.

Q. Of course.

A. But the vehicles themselves are out of sight. I concur with having occupancy there. They had law offices and again I think it’s very complementary and beneficial to the whole thing to have this...

[speaking simultaneously - inaudible]

Q. Mark Kirk has moved his office...but I’m not sure, maybe his predecessor had it there.

A. Well, that was Obama.

Q. Both senators had offices...

A. Are they there now?

Q. No, Senator, you’re right. Well, then, of course, briefly the senator, temporary appointee.

A. Burris.

Q. Burris, yes, anyway I thought it was a reasonable idea that added some life and pedestrians to the neighborhood without distracting from the neighborhood.

A. I think that’s important. This is not a dead neighborhood. Again I would hope one day because if things deteriorated a little bit on Seventh Street, you’ve got houses on the next blocked down that includes the Iles House.

Q. Yes.

A. That historic building and well preserved, thank goodness for that. Then right next to it you got an apartment house on Cook Street that has been waiting to be repaired for a half a dozen years. It’s now getting to be a dangerous thing, but then you go the rest of the block going towards the east you got, oh, I think a gas station and a cleaner and something else.

Q. Yes, it’s not very much.

A. So the block is kind of foolish and only Jackson Street is the difference between...it’s Jackson and Cook, those two blocks if they got into the whole thing. There was a need to get some storage space for the Park Service and they were talking in terms about trying to move in that direction with an appropriate building that would not look like a warehouse. But you got to always worry about what that interpretation is.
Q. Exactly, ok. You want to mention one or two of your favorite superintendents here over the years or least favorite?

A. I’m smarter than that.

Q. Well, I mean, this is your...

A. A dear friend of mine was Norm Helmers.

Q. Yes.

A. The very first one who is just out of my mind momentarily but was outstanding and the man immediately following him who was the Irishman who... oh, this is embarrassing.

Q. The only other one I can remember is Gentry, who I don’t think it is.

A. I don’t remember. It wasn’t Gentry.

Q. He was a character.

A. Yes, he was and he went on to be a senate administrative person, studied in Washington as a matter of fact. I visited with him a few times, too.

Q. I can’t remember the name of the first superintendent.

A. It’ll all come...of course, the records could be looked up. I just haven’t, I’m not prepared.

Q. But you dealt with these people a fair amount?

A. Oh yes, and the first one...I mean they, well, for several of them and Norm Helmers certainly was one of them, would call me and ask my opinion on how I would do it. Didn’t have to take it as orders but that was a suggestion, which was always very flattering.

Q. Well, of course it is and wise on his part. I mean, he didn’t have to follow your advice but he knew you had good ideas.

A. We had worked at having the right answers, so it wasn’t exactly a hipshot.

Q. That’s right.

A. Remember the Park Service is part of the Department of Interior and so...which I don’t know whether I did mention it to you but James or Professor Connally, Ernest Connally, when he left the university he went to Department of the Interior.
Q. Oh, did he?

A. He was number three with the Department of the Interior. He, after the whole fact that the Old Capitol was done and we had gotten along well in the Lincoln Home area, recommended me to be the chief architect for the National Park Service. I had an interview...

Q. For the National Park Service or the park capitol?


Q. Ok.

A. I got a couple of job offers...

END OF TAPE EIGHT, SIDE ONE

45:57
Q. I had confused things. I knew of your recommendation to be, among five people, to be selected as chief architect for the capitol.

A. Architect of the Capitol was the title, yes.

Q. Which is a very visible but then later your acquaintance and friend, Connally, who joined the Department of the Interior, nominated you or approached you to be chief architect for the National Park Service?

A. As I think we mentioned before, this is Dr. Ernest Connally from Texas. He loved that Texas because he was a Connally from Texas.

Q. That’s right, I forgot.

A. The gentleman who was wounded with President Kennedy was related to him. Any event, Ernest Connally was number three in the Department of the Interior, and they were about to select the architect, chief architect for the Department of…or the National Parks Service. I was invited to have an interview, which I did go to Washington and had the interview. It was polite and I didn’t succeed, but I wasn’t trying as hard as I could.

We had a good practice in Springfield. My partner always, I think, it was always, it was soft but he says, “What are you trying to pull now?” When I call him and tell him because it came out in the paper on another occasion or something and he said, “It’s very flattering and it doesn’t hurt our business to at least be considered and I’m not about to be leaving Springfield, Illinois.” Of course, if they would have offered it to me I would have had to make that decision to them, too. But I didn’t have to make that decision, I wasn’t selected.

Q. Ok, fair enough. You don’t care to talk about the other superintendents here who...

A. No, they all had their places and their knowledge and I suppose different directions.

Q. The recent ones haven’t struck me as too impressive, but that’s my opinion.

A. Well, the impressive, and I’m guarding my words slightly because again they’re new to the job. I’ve been on the job so long that I almost know where all the spooky things are and so you just got to be a little bit cautious.
Q. But Norm made up for a lot of people because he was active in the community, he was very astute.

A. He still stays in touch with me interestingly enough. He will read certain things over the internet, and I’ll get an email from him. Great surprise. He’s in Indiana.

Q. Wonderful. Let’s pause.

[pauses tape]

A. Emails are getting so piled up on me.

Q. Ok, I think we’ve covered the Lincoln Home. Let’s turn on to your next big architectural project. I’m not sure whether it’s maybe the Iles Park Place or the Public Affairs Center.

A. Iles was a...are we on?

Q. You want to take the Iles Park? Yes, we’re on.

A. Ok, well Iles Park, of course, was a private investment. This was the person who actually was the managing partner of this whole thing was Bill Gingold, who turned out to be my best friend and dearest friend and best client for years for Ferry and Henderson Architects. Any event, he had a piece of property that was Iles Park which is on Ash, the name of that street?

Q. Ash and...

A. Ash and Sixth.

Q. Sixth, right.

A. Which was the bus barns if you called it. They didn’t have barns, but it was a parking place for the public transportation.

Q. I didn’t know that.

A. He bought the property and decided to try to develop a shopping center. We had no shopping centers in Springfield and that was in the 1960s, again. We were lucky enough that Bill liked what he’d heard at least. We started off with a building, which was the first building of this complex, as you know today. It’s set right on, not on Ash on the corner, it’s set a full block away from that corner towards the south and it was...I think it was an insurance company. We started off with a modest building, flat roof.

Q. Two stories, maybe?
A. One story.

Q. One story.

A. Some arches by the end of the whole thing and I remember the reception because the rest of it was all field, some improvements. They had paving out there for the buses, but there was anything out there except that building. He had a party, Bill Gingold knew how to be a real-estate man. He was a merchant along with everything else, but he had a party.

I remember being invited along as the architect. He came up to me right in the middle of it and he said, “I want to see you tomorrow; we’re going to start on building two.” Everybody was so enthusiastic and it was a couple things. First of all it was the first building built out of the downtown area after World War II. It didn’t have anything in it.

Q. Yes, right.

A. No other shopping centers anyplace, and so he put it in there. He had people who were very enthusiastic. Actually, I still smile when I think about it, he comes over in the middle of the party and just puts his arm around me; he’s a big guy, put his arm around me and said, “I want to see you tomorrow. We’re going to start on building number two.” We went on, there’s five buildings there.

Q. Now, also, as I recall, the design was contemporary.

A. Oh yes.

Q. Black glass or I mean, it was very sleek.

A. We also put arches into the thing. I don’t know how we got into the arch. We did a number of arches. In fact, for a while we were kidding. Now I’m going to digress again for one of our previous conversations we talked about that visitor’s center. I told you that there was one alderman who always got hung up in saying, “No.” Well, when we broke that 10,000 square feet down into a small building as you say, it’s not imposing. It’s because we bent it out of shape, but it was because of the fluttering roofs. If you go by there you’ll notice you don’t see any big roofline.

Anyway, we got into arches and so along with the fluttering roof I was always kidding about on that one, arches seemed to be our trademark. We did that on several buildings. But that whole area through there was precast concrete after we got past that first building. We used a lot of masonry but precast concrete arches and got some walking spaces. In other words – it wasn’t sidewalk you walk off the sidewalk into the front door – it was landscaping, it was lighting, it was everything like that.

Q. Then the dominant building was what, six stories?

Henderson
A. Five stories.

Q. Five stories, yes.

A. That’s where Gingold moved his office for a while.

Q. Ok and they had a restaurant?

A. Top of the Arch.

Q. Top of the Arch, which was like, we used to enjoy it.

A. Yes, the whole thing was contemporary, but the arch wasn’t repeated in its same form in each of the buildings. It was an arch but all different one. We didn’t get into the gothics, but we did get into all kinds of other things. The precast ones, interesting things, you learn a lot in the buildings but some of the precast will cut the size because that is as big as it could be hauled on a tractor trailer from the casting up near the Chicago area. I went up to visit that casting place back then, but you learn things in architecture just because you are there.

If you look at that five-story building, the arches in that building the glass is set back and the arches are sticking out about twenty feet in front of it, but it is part of the shade. In the shade area, which was designed to be a shade area, but as the sun moves around, the sun allows stresses on the glass. This is black glass as you recognize, well the dark glass then attracts heat.

Q. Oh, it absorbs heat.

A. Yes, it absorbs heat. As this glass moves around, it stretches the glass and Gingold happens to be in his office when one of the glass goes bang and busts out right there. It is like somebody takes a shot at you. Well, we weren’t told that glass wouldn’t take that load of heat, and the insurance covered it. But it was one of those lessons that we taught the glass company, too, after we had the experience. But Gingold was in his office when it happened, but it was all because of the glass. You could actually measure the difference in heat differential on either side of the shadow line. It was considerable, and it just couldn’t stretch.

Q. It just couldn’t stretch. Well, that was a successful office. It never really became a shopping center, did it?

A. Oh, no. It was all commercial.

Q. It was all commercial offices.

A. The last building that we put in there, which we had also done that building, and the client followed us up with... today it is Steak ’n Shake. It was another before.
Q. It was called the Golden Bear.

A. Indeed, the Golden Bear. We did the Golden Bear in Carbondale first. Then Carbondale came up here and said they wanted to put a Golden Bear up here, and that’s fine. We’ll do that. Golden Bear was successful as a food service.

Q. Oh, that was a totally different kind of building.

A. Oh, yes. It was trying to attract food service.

Q. Sure I understand, but it didn’t match your office buildings.

A. As I say they still use it on that Steak ‘n Shake thing, which turned out fine.

Q. Fine. How is the office part of it doing, do you know? Do they manage to have full occupancy?

A. I haven’t any way of saying yes or no other than the parking lots usually full.

Q. That’s a good sign.

A. I think it’s been relatively successful. I know there have been buildings that have grown up around it, which also speaks to success.

Q. Yes.

A. I’m going to tell you that it’s been a success.

Q. Ok.

A. I know it was successful as long as Gingold had it.

Q. Yes, yes.

A. He’s long gone, of course. He’s passed away out in California, but we continue to do buildings for him in different locations.

Q. You continued to even after he moved.

A. Yes, we did Jefferson West, which was a pair of office buildings again. We took an old, well it was almost where they dumped coal off the railroad tracks there and turned that into a very successful state office. That was a private situation but...
Q. Right, right.

A. Gingold and Albert Myers got to speak very highly of Albert. He was a downtown person, and they were brothers-in-law by the way.

Q. Yes, right.

A. Together they were always coming up with good ideas. I mean you sit there and start talking to them and they had fresh ideas. Gingold, loved him dearly, but he did it more than once, he’d call me up at three o’clock in the morning and start right in midsentence practically and say, “Well, did you see what they had in Progressive Architecture?” I said, “Bill it is three o’clock in the morning.” He said, “Well, I just got excited.” I said, “Well, yes, I just got awakened.” [laughter] Any event, but he was kind of doing things.

Q. He had a kind of energy.

A. He was apologetic and I was half-awake anyway because I didn’t give a damn. Just he was my client, he was my buddy and we’d make money every time he calls me and says, “Did I see it?” “No, but I’ll come and see it with you, Mr. Gingold.”

Q. So he, actually, over the years, was probably your major private client?

A. Absolutely, and my dearest friend. I mean his wife used to kid us we’d fight five days a week and then Fridays as I was coming from my office, used to live over on Woodland and my office was over on South State Street and I lived out in Country Place. I would go by his house over on Woodland, and he would always have a gin ready for me. We’d sit there until early evening was over with, and she said, “You guys fight five days a week and kiss and make up on Friday evening.” It went on as sort of a tradition that I’d see him on the way home. He was a good man to deal with.

Q. I guess so, I met him but I didn’t…I knew Albert much better.

A. What made him a good client and good clients are so important to a good project, I think I’ve said to you, but my whole philosophy and I tried. Being interviewed I’d say, “A building is only as good as its client and architect, not just its architect.” Now Bill Gingold was a smart client. He had enough savvy because this wasn’t the only real-estate things he was involved in, and I think his family had done real-estate before that.

He had originally owned part of G & E Furniture Studio or Store. I mean his dad was the Gingold, in the “G” there. In any event, Gingold would probably be 90 now, about 10 years older than I am or was, but Gingold knew his materials. He knew the difficulty of getting things in there, and he knew a lot of the suppliers. I watched him time and time again tell somebody and turn down low bids when he said, “You can’t build this building for that kind of money.” When we’re doing multiple buildings, this is important.
His whole point was, he explained this in the contract. It wasn’t, I don’t like you. It’s the fact that if you get stalled out, the only way you can come out of this thing is you start cutting costs. The only way you can do that, is do a lesser job than I’m expecting. That was wonderful. So we were building good buildings and because I had a good client who wanted good buildings, he wanted the best buildings. We were giving the best we could handle at the time and I think it paid off.

Q. Yes, he left his mark here. I think he also developed or remodeled the building on Washington and Sixth, cattycorner from the old Marine Bank.

A. Yes, now that was done by one of the professors at the university that I had. Jack Baker was his name, was the architect on it.

Q. Ok.

A. It actually was a total new building.

Q. Yes.

A. They tore it down, it was black glass, and he tore it down. Kind of a funny floor plan but Baker also did his house, I think... no that wasn’t his house. Baker did another house for Ralph Hahn or somebody out on Williams Boulevard. Any event, Jack Baker was a contemporary architect and built it downtown, but that was the first building after World War II downtown.

Q. Isn’t that something?

A. There’d been some remodelings, too and so forth, but downtown had gone to sleep. But the Old Capitol will always wave the flag because it was sort of the anchor that the boats not going to move.

Q. That’s right.

A. Downtown’s not...but interesting enough because the merchants always have to think ahead, and chief merchant downtown certainly was Albert Myers.

Q. Absolutely.

A. Myers Brothers was one of the first stores to get into the first shopping center, which was the retail shopping center out on the west end of town.

Q. Right.

A. But you don’t as a merchant, say, “Well we’re downtown, we’re never going to move.” They built their own competition out there.
Q. Yes, I know. I thought Albert was a very bright merchandiser and publicist and successful...

A. Showman...

Q. He was a good showman.

A. Dynamite guy.

Q. All right, shall we turn to the university? Then the Sangamon State University, which had built only one permanent building in its first 10 years – that was Brookens Library, built by a St. Louis architectural firm, Murphy, Joe Murphy I think was.

A. I think you are right.

Q. I think the architect on duty was a guy named Ted Wofford, I remember meeting a younger guy.

A. Well, you’re further ahead than I am.

Q. Doesn’t matter. But that was it plus the master plan, which Murphy had designed.

A. I came back to Springfield in 1961 at certainly the urging of my partner, Don Ferry. I was just feeling it was the right thing to do. Another event that I earlier explained to you out in Colorado, everything was good spirit. Didn’t leave with any hard feeling anyplace or arrive with any particular intentions other than one thing that was very clear in my mind, I had been...practiced in two other state capitals, in Indianapolis and in Denver, we didn’t have any higher education and it was almost embarrassing.

Like today, I’ve got two children, my two daughters, one in Austin, Texas, and the other in Concord, New Hampshire. I don’t know how we all keep going, but all of them have higher education. Of course, I didn’t know anything about Austin at the time. Well, I knew about it but I didn’t hear too much about it.

Having practiced in there I came back and part of the thing that I said to Don Ferry is that in this town, “I want higher education.” So when the higher education thing came about I sort of wasn’t on the board, but I was trailing them all the way through until I did get onto the group and meeting with people doing the thing. But when George Hatmaker, again zeroed in on this space and all these things there was hope because if you can get...I got to say honestly...and Howarth was all for this thing. He had gotten his degree, right across from the Sangamo Club there’s a little building.

Q. Yes, a little...Lincoln College of Law was it?
A. Yes, that’s where Howarth got his degree, so you had people who felt that way. But when this whole committee started going in there, I snuck into the committee sort of, but they were also seeing that there was opportunity. Later on I got to the point where I made trips with them to the University of Illinois when they were trying to get their interest in things, but again we got good old Otto Kerner.

I don’t know why that particular series of years or decades was so important, but education suddenly came out of the ground with the junior college first and so we got the “Plywood U.” also was following, but it was a senior college, only a two-year college and that’s what Otto Kerner, his side remarks was, “If you get the two-years in, you’ve got a chance to get the next two.”

I watched this in so many occasions, if you get the foundation in the ground and that’s maybe the hope for when you start building pipe houses for...if you build the foundation, maybe you have a chance to go the rest of the way. Any event, “Plywood U.” was a two-year college, which now had been developed into the four-year and this was Sangamon State University.

Q. Well, “Plywood U.” was Lincoln Land over by the heritage house.

A. You’re right.

Q. Now it’s got its own good-sized campus.

A. Exactly right.

Q. We had temporary buildings, metal buildings.

A. They called it something like...because the plywood ones...you’re exactly right. But the temporary buildings were there.

Q. Yes, “Tin Can U.” or whatever.

A. You got it. I’d go out there, and it was embarrassing. I looked like warehouses with “A,” “B”, and “C” on them.

Q. That’s right. That was because Bob Spencer, the first president, was always afraid to name buildings for previous Illinois politicians because you’d have to build two buildings at a time, one for a democrat and one for a republican. That was his explanation.

A. You were part of that early bunch?

Q. Oh yes.
A. Well, that was an unusual philosophy. I knew Bob Spencer well and let’s see, while he was...a good friend of his was Clyde Walton.

Q. Yes.

A. I went to lunch with those guys several times and his whole idea was like a totally different type of education process.

Q. Absolutely.

A. This was the...what do you call that? All the free-thinkers...

Q. Yes, hippies, free-thinkers.

A. Yes, yes, yes.

Q. Innovation.

A. Yes it was a completely different thing, which was a spirit to bring in. It was very important at that time. Well, to answer your question, I got involved listening to this thing and planning as far as I could. When the time came for the next building...this is interesting, that was an interview process. I always smile because I am only speaking the truth...the interview process and I made the presentation and hit it hard.

We had a lot of things to offer but part of it had to be with the expansion that you just talked about and few other things were moving on us, but one of the people sitting on the board was Bill Gingold, the interview process. When we got done with the interviews and when it came out; he didn’t even tell me this right off the bat but I was glad he was there. He said, “I got to tell you, Jim Graham was awfully good.”

He said, “But you certainly made your presentation well; you were selected well.” I was selected, I mean Ferry and Henderson Architects, and, of course, this was a bigger project than anybody quite understood because it had the cafeteria and it had all the other things.

Q. Classrooms and offices.

A. See the original plan by the planners in St. Louis was the number two building should have been the power plant. Now the power plant, if you’re familiar with the campus at the University of Illinois, the power plant sits off...the tunnels connect all the buildings. You could move in between most of the buildings at the U of I, which have steam lines and power lines and everything else, but it’s all underground.
Well, the whole idea, that’s what they were following through and it’s a circular design. When you put in even the first loops right there, it had part of the curving roads, the landscaping and all that was part of the early master plan.

Q. Sure.

A. Second building was the power plant, now everybody is starting to look at budgets and all the rest of these things. Can the power plant be someway included into this effort that we’re about to do. So the power plant to a degree is glued into the Public Affairs Center. If you drive up to it and so how do you integrate the smoke stack or smoke coming out of that; it’s a different kind of a deal. You’ll see it; it is prominent, but it’s not prominent.

Q. No, in fact I only noticed it a few years later, and I don’t pay any attention to it.

A. Well, after this whole thing starts to change, now we realize we had the entrance to the campus. Originally when it was thought of, the entrance loop was not there. So we started saying, “How do we bend this around?” In fact, the building was designed before we got to the connector, which was the cafeteria, which was now the... you could drive a vehicle between... you could get in that door, which it is designed so it could be. If you get in that door you could drive down that corridor to get over to Brookens Library or you could drive straight ahead and get into the book store, which was designed originally to punch into the next building, which is not connected.

Q. That was, yes, an unfortunate decision.

A. Yes.

Q. It was made by the former Chancellor Ringeisen. But I understood the concept of the concourse, of course, made sense. People appreciated it particularly in January on their way home.

A. Oh, absolutely.

Q. So you had the challenge of some conference facilities, which was another element of it. They had put in a large auditorium although originally I don’t think it was not designed to be as large as it was eventually. Do I know that story?

A. You’ve done your homework well or your memory is correct.

Q. Somebody went to Governor Walker about that?

A. I’ll tell you that story, yes.

Q. Ok.
A. There were several things in there, yes. What was very unique about Brookens library, for example, is it’s on a module; now modules to most of us is on two by fours, at least at right angles.

Q. Right.

A. In this particular case, they are equilateral triangles – 60, 60, 60 degrees. Brookens Library has got... it goes for an interesting design, but it’s hard for people to understand that you can’t stack a desk in a corner that is 60 degrees. It’s always difficult, but in any event that’s how it all started with the Brookens Library. If you go ahead and project out, you’re thinking that way. Of course, the piece of property where this building was going to go and that’s the administrative building. It’s the Public Affairs Center and that is a public affairs university, still Sangamon State University.

Well, the center of that campus at least when you put those circles roads in there, drives and so forth, are right there at the point where the corner of the Public Affairs Center building is placed now. If you look at that thing, we established the triangle. The triangle has got if you can get in the building and you can find a corner of the building, you can find an elevator. So these three corners represent elevators. You can also find the toilet facility there, and you can find a stairway there. So those things are the marks, and we had to in fill that triangle.

Now connecting the triangle, this is to be a classroom building. It is to be a student recreation type building or at least options to it. We were supposed to have in the program, a twelve hundred seat auditorium, speaking auditorium. Brookens has a three or four hundred seat capacity. Anyway, it’s a small facility, and we’re only talking about slightly bigger. Some place along the way, I can’t remember the name or he was one of the people who was also involved in it.

Q. Bud Budinger? I had always been told that Bud Budinger played a role in it.

A. He could have. I was also going to say somebody from the Abraham Lincoln Association, may have recognized him, but maybe, yes, maybe it was Bud Budinger. In any event, was pushing hard for the symphony, for capacity of the symphony. Now I had been up to Bloomington, of course, this is one thing at least we followed and this was my job to get out there and see what these things were. So tell me I didn’t go to Dublin, Ireland to do the bank, but at least in the case of the auditoriums, go see what they have up in Bloomington. Bloomington’s got 3300 seats in it; that’s a big capacity. It takes a lot to fill it, but it’s also prudent when you have a major production. Every one of those seats is money in the bank.

Q. Yes.

A. Well, alright we herded the whole thing together so we get to have, we’re going to have a meeting. But it has to be approved by inflating the budget, get the budget inflated by getting
first of all the people that have to agree with it to sit at the table. So we had a meeting and I
guess, I don’t know whether I was sponsoring the meeting, that means pay for it, but at least
arranged it, at the Sangamo Club.

Q. Ok.

A. We sat at the Sangamo Club not even in that private area but underneath the stairs over on
the west side of that main dining room. Dan Walker was present. Maybe it was Bud Budinger
and I can’t even tell you all the other players at this moment, but Spencer maybe had to be
there, he was the president.

Q. I’m sure he was.

A. Anyway we had the meeting all day. The whole pitch was we can do it, but the building now
is under construction. Though because there’s been this rattle all the time they haven’t gone
and started the final piece, which if you take the equilateral triangle that they prescribed to you
you’ve got a building that is shaped like this and these are classrooms [drawing on a
scratchpad] and we got a hole in the middle. So the question is, how big does this box go that’s
going in here and originally it was like that.

Q. Yes.

A. So we’re meeting and what I’ve just sketched of course is a “V” with a building block instead
of the open “V.” Well, the 1200 seat thing isn’t going to produce any money and it’s going to
be a speaking auditorium. We want to expand that down there.

Q. Into a theater, with a backstage and larger capacity.

A. With a full, legitimate theater for New York. In other words, we know that as you move
around the country with New York productions, they come in with vans and they’ll be able to
rig the whole thing up. It has a standard rating. Every major legitimate theater that you’ve
been in has a certain standard that they all have.

Q. Right.

A. The idea is that they come in and hang, and they got all these different fancy names for
these guys, but they can hang the curtain and the backdrops and all the settings in there. The
dimensions are very important, not only the dimensions of the stage but the acoustics of the
people that are sitting there. So that’s their whole series. We got...first of all, we got to get the
governor to go along with this thing. The governor was acquiescent; he was agreeing all the
way through this thing. Yes, he would do it.

Just another aside, which I am pleased to get on the record, learned a lesson here worth the
while. We spent the whole afternoon together with the governor and these other people.
There was some kind of reception at the governor’s mansion that evening at five o’clock, and so I was going to go over just to walk through the line and shake hands. I’m doing exactly that, and now remember the governor left just an hour before to get to, so he could stand in line. I walk up and I say, “I’m Wally Henderson.” That’s just because I did it.

Q. Yes.

A. The governor, honest to goodness, pulls my hand, grabs and shakes my hand, pulls me completely out of the line, and he says, “Thank you for doing that.” He says, “We’d been together all afternoon. I’d know your name but you forget those names. Don’t ever forget to introduce yourself.” I said, “Governor, that’s good advice.” I have told every person that I ever had any reason to do it. I remember people in the office and I’d say that to them and they say, “Well somebody didn’t speak to me and he met me last week.” I’d say, “Don’t flatter yourself. Just introduce yourself. Give them the benefit of the doubt.” That’s good advice, it is.

Q. So he bought the idea?

A. He bought the idea. We got a hold of a theater consultant who has passed now and boy they used to...for the first 10 years...

Q. That’s ok.

A. He’s back in town again. He used to be the theater consultant.

Q. Oh, John Dale Kennedy.

A. John Dale Kennedy, of course. He is a close personal friend; I just blanked out here again.

Q. Sure.

A. Any event, John Dale Kennedy actually had in the handouts, the programs, on the back page – the building has been design by Ferry and Henderson Architects, the seating capacity, and all those things, which was a come on. It also mentioned that we had used the theater consultant so-and-so...but this was so important because you don’t just say, “You can get so many seats in here.” Acoustics mean everything.

Q. Oh boy, yes.

A. We employed...boy I should have...we’re about to deal with them on the Abraham Lincoln Association. We’re supporting the acoustics in the Old Capitol.

Q. Oh, ok. You’re using them again?

A. We’re using the same group.
Q. But they’re a major, national acoustical...

A. International is the word. We were one of the first ones to use them in Springfield. We were the first there. It’s Larry Kirkegaard and Associates. Larry Kirkegaard, used to be out of Downers Grove, I think they’re in downtown Chicago now. But they’ve also been consultants...if you’re familiar with Sydney, Australia’s Opera House.

Q. Oh yes.

A. They’ve been consultants there. Larry Kirkegaard’s still alive, and he came when we got this whole thing together...I’m jumping ahead of myself on this thing. But he wanted to check the acoustics himself, and he had his glasses on. They were real unusually glasses; I didn’t pay any attention to them. He’s sitting there and said something and I said, “What did you say?” These were microphones on his glasses. [laughs] He was taping the whole thing.

That’s incidental, but that’s how if you’re an acoustician you want to know how this result is and you can’t take somebody’s word for it. Of course, we had the best seats in the house and we’re sitting right there, and it was when they had some of the introductory remarks. It was hot.

Q. It was.

A. But again the gentleman who was our advisor about the facility itself was concerned about the...oh you had to tune. The acoustician again...this is Kirkegaard. You tune the auditorium. You tune auditorium. The original one was designed and if you can remember, the walls are not flat.

Q. Right.

A. There, as a matter of fact, roughhewn concrete block, but they’re not parallel or anything else. They’re all jagged. Well, I guess the best way to explain it...I went looking all over the country for acousticians before, again, I selected Kirkegaard. I remember going out to some place in California and the acoustician was now showing me how they study these things.

They built the whole auditorium, I mean one of their facilities, but they had a model of it and I’m sure it was one of their marketing type things. If you put a little object in the center of the platform and you’ve got your walls where they’re supposed to be and you take, for example, that’s a spotlight.

Q. A microphone?
A. The microphone is there and it hits this thing, the thing being the object, the reverse coming back is where the light goes and that’s what sound does. So from the sound source when that sound hits the wall, it bounces again.

So they would actually test, this other acoustician was showing how they tested theirs using a light throw where it hit the object and it would hit where the proposed walls would be to disburse the sound. When you have a speaking auditorium you don’t want all that bouncing around.

Q. No.

A. So you’ve got to tune it. You tune it by dropping...

Q. Baffles or whatever you call them?

A. Well, these happened to be beautiful things and we were doing the interiors as well. My interior designer did a marvelous job on that. Her...she’s long since left us but Lonnie Schier was her name. She came up with these banners, which are patterned banners that are still hanging there. They roll up like great scrolls of fabric. But when it’s to be a speaking auditorium, your banners are down. When they’re looking for the symphony and so forth, they want them up so they get the reverberation; it fills the space. They were work; they actually work. You can tune them halfway up and halfway down, but they end up adding color. It’s a speaking auditorium.

Q. Yes, I noticed those and I knew they had to have something to do with acoustics. I have always felt the acoustics in that chamber were excellent.

A. We had, can’t remember who the black singer was that came and stood on the stage and made some comment about how surprised he was that... he sang one of those southern songs about... I’ve lost all the great players names. In any event, he made the comment how he was surprised to find an auditorium of such good speaking qualities singing qualities.

Q. That was really your first theater/auditorium process, wasn’t it of any size? You did the Lincoln Visitor’s Center, but this was a major new venture.

A. Yes, sure. Even the big U, University of Illinois was told when they came over, they were surprised. Of course, they are used to what they have over there, but we ended up with the quality of this. It wasn’t we were so talented; we were just smart enough to go find people who brought each one of those specialties into it. I flew over to and I ended up flying an airplane so I could get to certain places, too.

Q. Sure.
A. We went over to Iowa State University. They have an auditorium that was a conversation piece like this. That was right there. The contrast between that and what I saw up in Bloomington, I’m saying the different places I went to so I could see it all. I also went to the University of Iowa at Iowa City, but Ames was the other one. But you saw things that you shouldn’t do.

This was also from acoustical panels and stuff you hang on the sides. The lighting, you get your lighting in the right places. Even the flexibility, that stage that we have out at our location here, you can move a lot of parts of that stage even while you’re looking at it practically. Anyway, we learned a lot.

Q. Something else I noticed, I think the seating is called European style? It’s a little more in the aisles.

A. We got rid of some rows.

Q. Well yes, but also getting to a seat is easier than it is in many certainly Broadway theaters.

A. Well, we have a little more space. I understand that you have seating requirements that, and I can’t remember whether it’s thirteen or sixteen seats, you can’t cross over more than sixteen seats to get to an exit.

Q. Right.

A. Well, when you do that, the exit has got to be pretty close. We got rid of the center aisle. The center aisle, remember, is the best seat in the house.

Q. Of course, yes, and side aisles

A. So you plug your side aisles in and you got people going in both directions, and then they pop right straight out to the exit.

Q. It is a terrific auditorium. The story I had heard was that Bud Budinger made the pitch to Governor Walker that Springfield needs a genuine auditorium that can perform a theater and symphonies. He said apparently that the convention center wanted that sort of thing but could never get it.

A. You got it right. They had tried it, and it didn’t work. You know the acoustics were shot to pieces. Everything that you are saying is exactly right. It was Budinger. I just sorry...

Q. It may not be, but that’s what I heard for what it is worth. You are our source here. As far as the classrooms and offices in that building, I think they are the most attractive on campus. I love the atrium where you can throw large parties and dinner parties. Where you can overlook
the atrium, they thought often they could have campaigners speak on the second level to an audience on the ground level. It has been used for that occasionally.

A. You are thrilling me by the observance of that.

Q. Yes, many, many things about that building are outstanding, and it has stood the test of time. It is probably the center point of campus. The library is, too, because they built it deliberately too large so that the library would grow into its space. That was smart.

A. Sure, exactly right.

Q. Bob Spencer wanted that first because he said, “The first building we build will be a “gimme” from the state.” We have to have a building. He said, “I want it to be the library because when you want a library and you’ve got other buildings, they’ll say you can wait a while.” So it was a deliberate choice on Spencer’s part.

A. Good one. Part of the design problem is that this had to be able to be functional and this is how the Governor could justify it, could be operating as a separate entity to the classrooms or the offices there.

Q. Right.

A. That’s why people say, “We can’t understand these doors.” But you can get to the toilet facility, you can get to the exits, you can get into the theater.

Q. It’s amazing. Everything you need is there, so it is very well designed.

A. Well, we were pleased that we got some awards on that.

Q. I’m sure you did. So your relationships with Alex Lacy and Robert Spencer were fine and all that?

A. Got along with everybody.

Q. Did you have to deal with the Capital Development Board? Was it in existence then?

A. I don’t recall. There was always a board involved.

Q. Did you ever in your dealings on the planning of it have conversations with Professor Bob Batson, great big heavy guy?

A. Do not remember that.
Q. Well, he’s notorious for at the opening ceremony with Lacy there and Governor Thompson. He with his bellowing voice stood up in the balcony and made some caustic remarks.

A. Ok, that’s the guy who made the remarks. I was on the stage when the he came right up, but the whole point and I’m sitting next to… who was the vice-president then? He lived out in Sherman.

Q. In Sherman? You mean the vice-president of the university?

A. Yes, or actually in charge of activities, yes.

Q. Oh, Homer Butler.

A. No, Homer was student something I think.

Q. Goins?

A. Goins. Tom Goins and I was sitting next to him. The man you mentioned, he did stand up in the balcony and made some remarks.

Q. Yes. He had a powerful voice, and it just ricocheted. It was enormously embarrassing to people.

A. As a matter of fact, I think I said to Goins because Goins, he was sort of difficult sometimes.

Q. Yes, just a little [laughter].

A. In any event, I said something to Goins, “Well, it proves at least the acoustics work.” Something like that [laughter] because he had his doubts as we progressed through this whole thing.

Q. Well, I just had to mention Batson. I’m getting too much involved. He also was a major… he fancied himself an architectural expert, amateur expert.

A. Oh, yes.

Q. He wanted the center of campus to present a view of such different angles and corners as represented by the library and the Public Affairs Center, that it would be reminiscent of – hold your hat – San Marco Piazza in Venice.

END OF TAPE EIGHT, SIDE TWO

46:12

Henderson
Q. This is an oral history interview with Wally Henderson, FAIA on May 17th, 2011 in his home. The interviewer is Cullom Davis. Wally, we pretty well wrapped up before your departure for your great honor and award, which we’ll come to later. We pretty well wrapped up your coverage of the Public Affairs Center at the university. That’s where we finished it, and it was a pretty clean break. My next question and we’re talking here about your architectural work, would probably be the Department of Revenue, Willard Ice Building. Is that next or is there something.

A. Well, we had a career in between those two buildings.

Q. Of course you did, but they were pretty close, weren’t they?

A. Honestly, just give me a little bit, the Revenue Building. Well, we were in the midst of the Revenue Building, you may be more correct than came to my mind. The Revenue Building actually was about...we were still working on it when my, we dissolved our office. We were working on it the 1980s so that’s a yes.

Q. Let’s wait. Is there something...in your mind, in talking about your professional activities are there some construction projects preceding that?

A. Well, we got heavily involved, and I think I mentioned before, my partner, former partner Don Ferry had been with the public health of the State of Illinois and had experience working with people who developed nursing homes. So we really took off due to his contacts and his knowledge and done a whole lot of custom work for various people. Religious organizations were right about that time, Christian Homes was our basic beginning client with that doing nursing homes, which did everything for care where people came on a temporary basis but also with permanent living. This went on for years and was a pretty successful practice.

Q. Very lucrative and how about here in Springfield? Did you do any of the...

A. Over a period of time, yes, several. Actually Lewis Memorial Home was a major one that we started right again with the nursing home itself and then they have independent living in apartments and then there’s also a congregate building where you have mixed areas almost like a big fraternity, so you could have your own room and so forth but you ate together and those kinds of things.

Q. Well, that was a big project.
A. Oh, yes.

Q. A pretty good size piece of land.

A. We did several of those as a matter of fact.

Q. You want to at least mention a few of them that stand out, that were particular challenges?

A. Every project is a challenge; let’s look at it that way. There’s no cut and dried type things and we did have great success because we paid attention to our clients. There’s another way of practicing where all of the sudden take plan “A,” “B,” or “C” and we never did that thing. Of course sites and the amenities and so forth have a lot to do with it and budgets.

Unfortunately, Cullom, to be honest with you take 45 years of practice into, the names slipping more than anything else, not that they were not significant. We made a big point, in fact part of the presentations that I made, every time I said, “We assure that one of our principals, we will be with your project from the beginning to the end.” That’s the way we practiced, and we had great success doing it that way. I also want to tell you how we had great success, which was a new concept it seemed like here in Springfield.

Both Don Ferry and I were architectural engineers by degree, which the engineering part of it...engineering was sort of a big word. A lot of young people say when I grow up I want to be an engineer, and they mean run a freight train or something. But engineering can be electrical, it can be molecular, it can be HVAC (heating and ventilating and so forth), but structural engineers, architectural engineers is a structural engineer and we could get a license for that.

We chose not to do that. We chose to do architecture exclusively, and I told you my background again with Bill Muchow. That’s do the best of your and get the best consultants you can. We relied on our consultants all the way through on all of our projects. We had a team going in and we would select who the consultants were. We knew more than one engineer, structural, more than one electrical, mechanical and so forth.

I really believe we had success because we had a dedication that we just really, every building we made we wanted it to be the best building it could be made. We would brag about it and suggest that please go back and check our records. We had a few failures and, of course, architects are always blamed every time the roof leaks that, “Don’t you guys know how to fix them?”

Well, there are mechanical problems with installing a roof, that you can’t even...the people putting it in at the time, if the temperature of the, they call it bitumen, which is the tar that puts layers of flat roofing or at least low slope roofing together. If the tar gets beyond a certain temperature cooling off, it doesn’t adhere as well when you put the next layer on. So you catch a bubble, perhaps even a drop of water inside that space when you put the second one on there, five years later you can come back and see what looks like boils on top of the roof where
that little drop of water got heated up and became steam and actually blew its way out. So anyway we got all sorts of things like that. But we tried...

Q. Well, now your point about the fact that you both had training as structural engineers, but you didn’t play engineers. You had, you engaged engineers but you knew enough about it that that gave you an edge over other architects?

A. Sure, let’s put it this way. It gave us an edge because again, if you have a specialty and...I’ll take it another way. In the old days at least, architects couldn’t be involved in the building process. They actually had to be independent. But again, if you had a building or if you had a brickyard and you were an architect, all of the sudden you going to see a lot of my buildings are going to be brick buildings. The point being that as an engineer, you can have a specialty of steel or you can have a specialty of concrete or something like this. To be current with all those things that are happening, and we talked earlier about thin-shell concrete, that was a specialty in concrete.

Q. Yes.

A. But we were never trained in it because we were taught about normal concrete; that was a specialty.

Q. Right.

A. What we were smart enough to do is to say we’re going to stay on the front edge of it so we’re going to select our engineers. If the building called for something unusual that particularly our owner thought was necessary or the code in that particular area said was the way it was going to be or even just the circumstances of it, we could get the proper people to do it. Our consultants were chosen for the specific project.

Q. You, in looking back, do you think that the fact that you and Ferry were structural engineers made it easier for you to explore contemporary design even though you got specialists that are engineers for some of this thin-shell concrete? Am I making sense?

A. Yes.

Q. Ok.

A. Here’s actually what it gave us and this I experienced several times. Again, I can become sort of vocal about these things. If you are an experienced engineer and you have...and there are a lot of problems but certainly not the magnitude of architecture simply because we got to take it all the way down to the paint job or starting with gravel in the concrete. But in the case of the engineering thing, you get used to building and building, and this is the efficient span, and all these things.
So when somebody comes along like Ferry and Henderson Architects and says, “We want to do this.” Usually our engineer would say, “Well you can’t do that.” Well we already had the training to tell us you can’t do it obviously, but you can do it if you start working with it. On occasion I sat down with some of our engineers. Now I’m not saying we did the engineering but sat down and sketched out this thing and influenced the designs that we wouldn’t have gotten otherwise.

Q. That’s interesting. Ok, so that was an edge. it nothing to do with contemporary design except that contemporary buildings often have steel and concrete and those were materials that you had a certain comfort level with.

A. We understood the limitations and today, which didn’t happen until, I don’t know, maybe in the last 20 or 30 years when they had continuing education. I sit on those meetings now because I’m still at least a registered architect, so I go to the meeting. The materials that come on now these days didn’t exist in the old days. So if they didn’t have continuing education, that education that I did have wouldn’t have applied at all.

Q. Right.

A. Things have progressed, thank goodness.

Q. Ok, well that’s interesting. So you’ve talked about the nursing homes, which were very functional. They weren’t designed to be architectural masterpieces. There was a budget, but they’re attractive and welcoming and serviceable certainly.

A. One of the few things that we put in that even amazed me because my practice in Denver did not include nursing homes but my partner had. Nursing homes don’t have to be just simple bedridden places where they get up and get in wheelchairs and go into the dining room. They should be attractive and useful. We have, in some that we put in some of our nursing homes, places for hairdressers and barbers.

The barber’s chair was right there and so a gentleman who wanted a haircut, the barber wouldn’t necessarily be full-time employment, but they would have the barber come in and cut the hair. These were amenities that were...you always have sort of comfort areas that were in there. Something I don’t think we ever did but I was in a few nursing homes myself. It’s amazing how people who are in nursing homes, and I may get there myself soon but live animals and fish tanks are very interesting to the people who are there.

Q. Yes.

A. It’s the movement of another lifestyle.
Q. Sure. Yes, we visited a nursing home where my mother was here in town years ago and one of the patients or inmates she called them had a pet squirrel that was outdoors, but she domesticated it.

A. Sure.

Q. It was the hit of the nursing home.

A. Absolutely. That’s what we’ve got to start thinking about. They’ve come along ways from...I guess it used to be the poor farms that my folks used to tell us about in Southern Illinois and so forth. But these were just some way to keep the people sheltered and not freezing to death. But in a nursing home nowadays it’s really a way of life. It’s fun because... and you get the “inmate” is a standard comment, but everybody loves their fellow inmates. It’s a different game.

Q. You’re right with things like hair salons and all; it’s like a community, self-enclosed community. Well, good. So you did a fair amount of and it was profitable work in central Illinois primarily?

A. Yes, in fact the Christian Homes I talked about, I think we did more than a dozen projects for them. All of the major, not just nursing home...usually they had some of the other elements that go with it. Yes we were...

Q. So the leaders of that Christian Homes Enterprise were people that Don had known through his work?

A. That was one of the major contacts.

Q. Sure.

A. They were from Lincoln, Illinois. I’ll always remember when we first started and didn’t know that particular group of people...George Gahr, I mention him because he was the president of the Christian Homes for lots of years and still is alive in Lincoln, Illinois.

Q. Gahr, G-A-R-R?

A. G-A-H-R.

Q. Ok.

A. Fine gentleman. The whole group was Christians to say the least and several of them were ministers. I’ll never forget the first meeting we had. It was Don and I sitting in our conference room and being interviewed by them. They were very enthusiastic about what they wanted to get started in Lincoln, Illinois. That was the first one of that particular group. Just the normal
questions, they asked us what we were doing. Some place along the way, and I say this and everybody...I hope you understand I’m just literally saying what happened.

I said to them, “This is very ambitious and so forth, have you got you’re...how are financing all of this?” One of the ministers responded, “God will provide.” I immediately, I mean it was frightening but not exactly one of these things you’re expecting an answer. I say in all honesty without the smile obviously I had to cover up at that time, God did provide them. We did at least a dozen of these units and that’s how it happened.

Q. He was right.

A. I mean, they went out and the money came along from their parishioners and from churches and all kinds of sources. But when they walked in the door, they didn’t have a dime to lay own on the table.

Q. They didn’t get financing? They may have.

A. Well, I’m sure it was financed.

Q. Isn’t that...

A. Yes, but seriously, they had the idea and they had the absolute confidence that it was going to happen and they would get it done some way, and they are hiring an architect to draw it up because here we come. They did and they were our best client for years. I am saying that with much compliment to the Christian Homes.

Q. Of course, and they deserve those compliments. I would’ve been lousy there. I would have been dumbfounded but that’s...

A. We were also, we were dumbfounded, but we weren’t dumb. You don’t say, “Well come back when you got your signature.” [laughter] That might have been funny to Don Ferry and I to say that, but they would’ve walked through the door.

Q. Right, of course.

A. You’re exchanging ideas and that was fine. So we understood what we were talking about, and they understood we accepted it and we did. Tthank goodness we did because they were the best of clients.

Q. So you did about a half dozen or so of these facilities?

A. I can’t come to the number, but it’s been lots of them in different locations and a lot of them in central Illinois but we went beyond. We had one in, I know, in St. Joseph, Missouri that I worked on even after that later on.
Q. They probably had some common elements because you knew certain things needed to be there, but it was different topography and so forth so they are distinctive buildings.

A. The interesting thing is, and this was very important that Don Ferry, again as I say, used to work in the department that approved the nursing homes. He was head of the department, as I recall. Any event, we produced for the Christian Homes one, maybe we were in the second one, and by that time, the people who were in the public health department were coming checking our nursing homes to write the standard for the State of Illinois.

No kidding about it. We were using tiles and so forth that were easy maintenance and the kind of things that you had to go into endurance and today we call it sustainability. In other words you don’t replace them every other year or lots of paint requirements or maintenance that can’t be done easily.

Q. You were the model.

A. We were the model for a lot of years. I mean they actually came to us, came to Don Ferry, I shouldn’t say us because he knew about that; I knew about a lot of other things but not necessarily nursing homes. As a matter of fact, they always got to me a little bit. Older people there, they need the help, and you want to help them as much as you possibly can, and it’s somebody’s mother, somebody’s dad, whoever it might be. I didn’t have a lot of joy going into them, but I was always pleased when you see them obviously enjoying it well. They always welcomed you. They were always glad to see you.

Q. It occurs to me, and now that we’ve interviewed awhile that your career has been very successful for a lot of reasons, aptitude and so forth. But also you were smart enough to catch some looming opportunities. You did that with, of course, restoration work, historic preservation work. You did it with contemporary architecture. You did it with nursing homes because they suddenly, in the 1970s and 1980s became major elements of construction.

A. It’s keeping your eyes open. Before I came from Denver, we were working and this was the first time we had ever heard the word “congregate” living, and Muchow’s office, which we didn’t do a lot of health care and things like that, but we were doing a congregate living facility for a Lutheran group in Denver, Colorado. At least that word didn’t...

Q. It didn’t sound obscene to you?

A. No, but that’s what was passing through I think in... we had meetings of different church groups and so forth that mentioned how they served their parishioners or their members. As a result, when I came to Springfield and the Christians walked in, that’s what they were talking about. I don’t know if they used the word “congregate” living, but I understood the issue.

Q. You understood it.
A. We are now gathering these elderly citizens under a roof that is a protective Christian, they always made a point that and you always had a chapel that was part of the facility. But it wasn’t like everybody had their... go to church every Sunday or anything, not that that wasn’t that heavy duty. But at any rate, yes – a time that was ripe. We look at it today and we want to get into the stock market. There are a lot of elderly people out there to be considered and who is going to take care of them, put your money on the servers; that’s where it’s coming.

Q. Yes, absolutely. Well, I would say you did sense the opportunities and changing trends and became experts in them.

A. We’ve often said and regretted that we didn’t write the first book on preservation because it hadn’t been written yet. We were writing it, but we were too busy gluing it together at that time.

Q. Did you get involved in any hospital work?

A. Yes. Another interesting little side story, I suppose, because of Don Ferry’s contact with Public Health, he was a little aware that Carlinville area hospital was wanting to put – I think it was – an OB/GYN wing into the hospital. Anyway it was a small addition, but he was aware of this. Now when we opened our office in 1961, Jack Kennedy had been elected President of the United States. Now whether we can remember that far back or not, we remember it. There were things happening, but the economy wasn’t exactly moving.

Q. That’s right.

A. That’s why a lot of people looked at it and said, “You’ve got to be crazy,” because they had a dozen firms in the Springfield area already and we came in to open an office of architecture; there wasn’t a lot of business. But Kennedy came out and there was no knowledge it was going to happen this way, he came out with trying to put a little spark into the economy. He said what Obama said in our recent life time, if you had projects that were “project ready” or “construction ready,” bring them in because we have money we want to get flowing into the construction market.

This is the honest-to-God truth and it sounds impossible but it happened. This was probably a month or so before Thanksgiving. Yes, it had to be sometime in September. Don goes down to the Ob/GYN people or down to the Carlinville area hospital and makes the proposal that if we can get their drawings, get a first look, we have that hired but we do know what kind of an addition that they wanted because that had been done in Don’s job. If we could get the drawings prepared in time to be presented to this group who was reviewing for moving money to them, this was federal money. Would they hire us? Well, they said, “It’s your gamble.” The answer was, “Yes.”
That particular Thanksgiving, we only took off in my mind Thanksgiving Day, I mean Thanksgiving dinner. I mean we worked all day; we were under the gun because first of all, we had to design it. I’m talking about in a three week period – design it, get approval, do the working drawings, and get them prepared and get them into Washington. I think we had a total of three working weeks. We worked literally night and day including Thanksgiving except time out for dinner, but there was only the two of us. There wasn’t anybody else.

I’m trying to remember because I made several trips to Washington. I’ll tell you about another one of those, but I remember, we had to take it away. The application was made, and we got the money. We got it, and we were off and running. That one paid off. Somewhere one was over in Hardin, Illinois, which whatever the county is that was over by the Mississippi.

Q. Yes, right.

A. We had a contact, happened to be a local contact in Springfield who said they wanted to put a ski facility, knowing that I had been out practicing in Denver, and we had done six ski slopes out there. They wanted to put in a ski slope in at Hardin County where they had some hills with the connection that there was going to be a bridge built to take people out of St. Louis. So as a result, this was going to be, I would go on location and so we were hired. With that they were going after federal money as well to design a ski slope. I did it and I took the drawings with us to Washington. I walked in to... now you’ve got to understand Hardin because it was a small community.

Q. Well sure, I’ve been there.

A. Yes, I can’t remember all the exact details of what the person we were dealing with but who was a very vocal person in the community and was quoted in the paper, which I didn’t know. I arrived in Washington, D.C. in time for the meeting with the people who were going to review our drawings. When I walked in, the gentleman greeting me and said something. Whatever it was, he said, “What are you here for?” I said, “For the ski slope.” I think we called it “lost valley” or some doggone thing.

He said, “Have you read the Hardin paper lately?” There was a weekly paper, Hardin paper. I thought this was kind of a trick question. I said, “No, what’s going on?” He handed me the paper and this is on the front page because it’s a very enthusiastic endorsement about what the benefit is going to be to the community. Of course, it connects with St. Louis. I thought, “Boy, this looks bad for the record, but it’s right on the front page, “There aren’t going to be any blacks using this facility.”

Q. Oh, my gosh.

A. This federal guy said to me... I said, “Forget it. We have no meeting.” I just walked away, maybe it was the most embarrassing moment I have ever had. The paper, bang, somebody ought to dig that one up, but it’s back sometime in the 1960s.
Q. So it died appropriately.

A. Oh, I just got back on the plane and came home. Nobody was going to talk to me not while that was out there.

Q. Well, that was kind of a red neck.

A. Oh it really was. But you can’t think that people are just... You’re saying the purpose is because we’re going to attract the population of St. Louis, not only skiers and whatever the county of... I can’t remember.

Q. Calhoun.

A. Calhoun County, and there weren’t any skiers in Springfield, Illinois either. I happened to come from Denver, so I knew at least what a ski looked like. But that’s another point that we can talk about, our opportunities. Sports became very fashionable during our lifetime, I mean during our practicing lifetime. Ski slopes were built where they were never had been built before.

Q. True.

A. That was going to be in Hardin County or Calhoun County, and they would have gotten it, except that the... The guy was so positive that he had actually gone out and mowed down the trees on the slope. It wasn’t a grand ski jump by any means but was snow, and they got enough snow to see if they could make it run. Those were opportunities, but they were... you can also get them broken off on you.

Q. Yes, I’ll say. What a dumb gesture. So you had this one Carlinville area addition to the hospital.

A. That was a start.

Q. Did you do some other hospitals?

A. Did an addition over on Passavant over in Jacksonville. Trying to think, can’t remember that we did Memorial or St. Johns. St. Johns always had an out-of-state...

Q. Catholic.

A. Oh, always Catholic, yes. Seems like we may have done a little for Memorial, but I am not sure.

Q. Ok. Doctor’s offices?
A. Not in the way they build them today, no.

Q. Ok. I’m just kind of roaming the architectural landscape.

A. Oh, sure. Airports. We did the Capital Airport major addition. But before that, we did the one for Jacksonville. Certainly unlike the one over here at Capital Airport, but you got the idea.

Q. In those cases, you had an engineering company as your partner, in effect, or you engaged Hanson or somebody to do some of the engineering.

A. Every project had an engineer.

Q. Ok.

A. For the hospital, we had engineers. We had electrical, mechanical, or structural; one in the airport was not for the planning. The planning, we said these are the runs and so forth, but there are codes for each one of these things. In other words, when you do lighting particularly if you are in a hospital operating room, there are certain required type lights and certain forbidden type lights. As a result, your electrical engineer is going to come in and keep us within the codes of those things. But to do the whole code thing by itself, you’ve got to know more than just how to draw plans.

Q. Of course. I would think that doing architecture the way your company did by taking on new clients in totally new areas made it more exciting because you were always learning. You had to learn these things well enough to be able to hire specialists to do it but also to talk to your clients.

A. The interesting thing that you said is exactly right, but that was pretty exciting. We had a lot of self-confidence at that point because the Old Capitol taught us so much. The one thing was to concentrate and go beyond the obvious. In that particular case, you’ve got to get yourself to be an eighteen century or a nineteenth century person to be able to get the building together in the form that it is.

Anybody can take a picture and say, “Make it look like this.” But if you’ve got to put it together from no drawings, then you’ve got to start figuring out what were they even capable of doing. But yes, we got a lot of confidence with it, got a great reputation going. A lot of people just came into us like I told you about Muchow’s office and said, “We would like to work here.”

Now they were looking for jobs first, but then flattery didn’t hurt them when they said, “You’ve got a good record.” But we ended up with at that particular time, we were one of if not the largest architectural practices downstate, certainly in Springfield.
Q. Wow. So within fifteen years, you had begun with a two person operation in a small old rental office to maybe a twelve person office, twelve employees.

A. Yes. When we took on the Revenue Building, that one really and that and we were warned, once you get more than fifteen employees, it starts getting harder to do because you’ve got a big overhead. You’ve got to coordinate it, and you’ve also got to manage people on your managing projects. We finally drive that shop up to... I think when our separation things occurred and, of course, we were operating in San Antonio as well, we had thirty-five people, so it was a big overhead to say the least.

Q. This was your offices over near MacArthur and...

A. We built that building interestingly enough with Steve Barthoff, who was an outstanding person to associate with. Steve had an interest in contemporary furniture.

Q. Yes, you mentioned that, right.

A. We opened and I had practiced in Colorado again close to an outfit called the Design Center, and we did interiors in our office in Denver. So it became a natural thing that when we started working with Steve Barthoff, he was interested in taking a look at it. That way when he and Carolyn went out and saw the Design Center, he said, “Why don’t we build a Design Center in Springfield?”

He became a partner of ours in the building. He was now a tenant and we were now a tenant in our own building. He took the half, which was the half that Ferry and Henderson finally after they emptied the whole building; we took the south half of the building. But we came from the north half originally when it was a big open space. In any event, Steve operated the furniture, contemporary furniture, and we did the architecture, so we had something to offer there. That was important.

Q. That was a very successful relationship?

A. Oh, yes, absolutely. It was profitable to an extent. Contemporary furniture, you sell this stuff differently than the way you do typical furniture. In other words it is not how many different looks, either you like it or you don’t like it.

Q. Right, right.

A. If you notice when we did the building, which still stands over at 1320 South State Street, it has what you see from the street is a single window that is, I think it is five feet wide, and it was floor to ceiling in those days, and it had a spotlight right over the top of it. We could put four hundred foot candles in that slot.
If you’re driving by in a car at night time, it was a blast of light hitting you. It had a single piece of furniture in it, didn’t have a showroom. It might be a chair, it might be anything. It had an eye catcher because we had a little courtyard in there. If you have been in that particular space, that whole side has those glass windows exactly like what you see downtown. He would do displays there, and we, of course, operated on the other side. It was still set up where you had a whole lot of glass, but there were draperies and so forth kept it covered up.

Q. Now when do you think he built that building roughly?

A. In the 1960s, it had to be about 1960.

Q. Oh really? That soon?

A. Yes, late 1960s, might have been middle 1960s. I just don’t know.

Q. I know of some other structures, and I want to talk about the San Diego operation.

A. San Antonio.

Q. San Antonio, excuse me. Let’s take a little break here.

[Tape pauses and resumes]

Q. So you said that lovely building you designed and inhabited with Steve Barthoff was built in the late 1960s.

A. I am thinking it was in the 1960s. I’ll settle for that.

Q. Ok, all right. Now what I don’t know is I know about a number of buildings you did, but I don’t know whether it was with Ferry or post-Ferry. For example, you helped design several buildings for the Copley Press. Was that later?

A. Oh, yes, that was, and I went even beyond that stage and with Copley Press. Yes, our association with Copley was very successful. We did Aurora Beacon-News, Joliet Herald-News, can’t remember the name of the one in Elgin. We did certainly Springfield, which was Press Time magazine cover for their big convention in Las Vegas, which I am very proud of.

Q. So they just decided to upgrade the whole series of the media market newspapers.

A. Well, yes. Now Jim Copley turned out to be... Well, I won’t say... he didn’t call me, but he asked me to play golf. Well, he did ask me to play golf every once in a while, but I don’t play golf so that was it but became a very familiar person. I attended a couple of meetings out in Borrego Springs.
Q. Oh, sure. In the desert?
A. Yes.

Q. Yes, I’ve been there.
A. Copley had a facility out there.

Q. Oh, it did? Really? Their own?
A. Their own layout and that’s where I met Billy Graham. We talked about that, I think, earlier. But Billy Graham was... they always had a guest and this was a publisher’s meeting that they had annually. Billy Graham was there at the time one of the times I was there. It was pretty exciting to be sitting at a table for twenty people, and I was one of them.

Q. Of course, did you meet Jim through Jack Clark?
A. Yes.

Q. So you and Jack were good friends?
A. Oh, yes. I was best man in his wedding, his second wedding.

Q. Yes, second wedding.
A. We got together early, and I remember how we got together, and it was just by chance. Well, you heard of me going to the Westminster Presbyterian Church forever, since 1943. In walks this new person I had never seen, and I was teaching Sunday school at that time, and he is Jack Clark. What impressed me was he was recently graduated; he went to IU to start with – Indiana University – and then to Harvard. He was a Harvard MBA. Well, the MBA part impressed the heck out of me, and I just started talking to him.

Well, we’ve been friends and he was relatively new into Springfield. From there on, we sort of started and I can’t remember what the first breakthrough was. Well, we were in the old Journal-Register Building, seems like we did some kind of a remodeling... I can’t pick it up at that point, I don’t know. Yes, Jack and I were great friends.

There was another gentleman that I got acquainted with after at least one of our trips to Borrego, and that’s where all the decisions were made. We picked on up... I loved it because I went on the airplane with this other gentleman, who was in their research and development group out in... whatever that was. They weren’t right in San Diego.

Q. Just north of it, not La Jolla?
A. Yes, La Jolla. Anyway as I am flying back with him around here to look at our building, we were talking about other buildings we were going to do. When we got done, we ended up doing the four I just told you about.

Q. Could we repeat those? They were coming fast at me: Aurora Beacon-News, Joliet Herald-News.

A. Elgin something, I don’t know.

Q. Ok.

A. Then Springfield Journal-Register. We also did the… well, the Sun-Times was a later one. In other words I got several newspapers because of that.

Q. You mean in Chicago, the Sun-Times? No, not that.

A. No, no, no, no. This one is Naperville.

Q. Oh, ok.

A. Maybe it’s not “Times”, just Naperville Sun.

Q. But that was also a Copley?

A. No, no, no.

Q. It was a different one just because...

A. But it was a person who...now this is long after Ferry and Henderson.

Q. Yes.

A. Let me think how that one worked. Anyway, an employee of Copley, of Journal-Register, who when I met him, was a photographer. Greg Mellis was his name.

Q. Greg Melch?

A. Mellis, M-E-L-I-S. He ended up, hooked up in Naperville somehow and hired somebody out of Chicago and out of the blue he calls me up...I mean I’m talking about architects. Out of the blue he calls me and says, “I need you.” I said, “Well, I’m no long Ferry and Henderson,” and so forth. He said, “I don’t know anything about what you are, but I know what you have been.” He said, “I need you and I’ve got a problem.”
I went up to see him and he had an architect. I mean, it was already chosen. I mean, they had done work for him. He said, “Look at how screwed up it is.” It wasn’t...he was right in a way, but he didn’t know how right he could be. That’s what he was saying; I want you to do it over for me. So I ended up starting it out and what they had was an existing building, which was a warehouse. I mean, just a pure nuts and bolts warehouse sitting on a very prominent street, which Naperville was sort of growing like grass.

Q. Right.

A. I think across the street from them was the Mercedes-Benz dealer or somebody. But any event, we took this building, of course it was interior planning more than anything else and a little bit of sweetness on the outside. But they were the publisher and he was a good client, a good tenant. We just took this building and it turned out to be pretty good job. But of course, then everybody just keeps on moving along and so that’s a different end.

Q. Sure.

A. Now the last time I went up there, they practically undressed me too, like on an airport, you can’t take pictures. I said, “I designed the damn thing.” [laughter] Finally they let me in. But it was a different experience.

Q. So that’s another niche that you developed. Of course, newspaper buildings, just off the top of my head I can imagine they’re kind of a duel function building. You’ve got have this heavy, loud printing apparatus and then the rest of it needs to operate as a business office and so forth.

A. Now what you just said is exactly what I try to say back to people. As a matter of fact, is that function first of all, what you really got to be thinking about on a building, that and your budget, but what are some of the constraints? I mean you mentioned the sound, yes but the shipment or movement of the raw materials...when they bring you a roll of paper it isn’t like they got it out of a grocery sack. You just got it off of a railcar or a big van of some kind, and so all these things have to go together. When we did the Journal-Register here in Springfield we did the printing plant, and it was several years before we did the rest of it.

Q. Right.

A. The printing plant, of course it’s closed now...changed the whole thing. But you got to understand the process, the function but you’re inspiring me when you recognize these things. Yes, a newspaper plant is not a Coke machine by a longshot. You’re dealing with lots of different problems, not the least of which is also...it should be attractive, a presence at the same time and acknowledged as the fourth, whatever the hell, fourth industry or whatever they call it.

Q. Yes.
A. Estate.

Q. Fourth estate, right. We have to switch tapes here, just a moment.

END OF TAPE NINE, SIDE ONE

45:35
Q. Wally Henderson FAIA [Fellow of the American Institute of Architects] on May 17\textsuperscript{th}. We’re talking about the Copley Press in general and the J-R building here. I had forgotten that, but you built the printing plant before you added to it the...

A. Several years before, as a matter of fact.

Q. The printing plant had to be there because of the railroad connection, right?

A. Which was exactly right, in those days. But afterwards it turns out that today, or up until recently when they closed it down, but for the last dozen years it has been served by trucks, maybe more than a dozen and so the rail siding doesn’t count.

Q. But at the time that was crucial so that dictated placement.

A. Sure, sure. Of course, another interesting thing, now the site again was chosen by Jim Copley, which it could’ve gone any place, like the Sun-Times up in Chicago jumped around and did all kinds of remote stuff.

Q. Yes.

A. They knew that there was a change in it, but Jim Copley wanted to have something to do with Lincoln. Now so he’s looking around, of course, if you remember the location, the \textit{Journal} paper and the \textit{Register} paper which was, \textit{Register} was the evening paper and the \textit{Journal} was the morning paper, were independent of each other. They bought out the \textit{Register}, Copley had run the \textit{Journal}. The \textit{Journal} paper was...always memories in there...was my friend, was quoted on the paper.

Copley owned the \textit{Journal} paper. They bought out the \textit{Register} and then they moved into the \textit{Register} building, which was where they had done the printing. Well, those old presses were breaking down now. An old press never dies just in case you ever want to...of course, things are changing so rapidly in the whole industry, but an old presses never dies, When they had to replace those presses they sold the presses to here in the States still to, I think it was the San Antonio, oh my goodness...It’s still got the name, too. San Antonio, I won’t name it.

Q. It’s ok.

A. I’ve forgotten it. I want to say Express or something like that. Any event and I went down with them because they were getting rid of the paper and I helped them, not install it but just
observe it, which my comment at the time and I'll always remember it because a printer press thing is like almost two stories tall, a story and a half tall and you climb around them like a monkey. There are all kinds of oil and inks and so forth and it looked like the engine room of a submarine is what I said because you’re in a closed environment. I remember going in there, oh man, I hope I can get the name of that press because when I went back and saw it again in its place, but this was years later when we opened an office down there.

Q. Sure.

A. But they, in turn, had replaced their presses.

Q. Ok, they were upgrading your used J-R equipment.

A. They put our used in, but they upgraded and sold...they sold the old presses from the Journal-Register to someplace in Argentina. That’s why they say in the industry, “Old presses never die. They just fade away.”

Q. Well, they’re built pretty solidly.

A. Oh yes. When we got the ones for the Journal-Register that was the occasion that I was out in Las Vegas and saw those, the new color presses. This was the first color presses in downstate Illinois. We put those in, but again they all come with their own special arrangements and things. Once you get on top of that you’re into the industry and us being on the cover, I mean I was in heaven.

Q. That’s terrific.

A. Of course, now we’re in San Antonio and I had two quick shots. In this case we were operating in an unusual way. I think I told you Ferry would go down for a period of time and I would replace him, and we’d just go back and forth. We had a small office. I think we had, at the most, four people down there at one time because we could do most of our work. In fact I did mine, I didn’t have a secretary that I could rely on. I would come into the office at night and dictate by telephone to my office in Springfield and she’d produce the stuff, and I’d get it quick.

Q. Sure.

A. So anyway it was San Antonio Light [Lightning]. I want to say Light. I may be wrong.

Q. So the reason you opened the San Antonio office was because you were working on the San Antonio Light?

A. No, no, no, that was completely independent...years between that, many years.

Q. Ok, sorry.

Henderson
A. No, so no. The reason we opened the office in San Antonio is that things were very slow in central Illinois, the Rust Belt, I think they were calling it. Any event, I took a pass through the southwest, went down into Tucson, went to... I didn’t go into New Mexico, I was in Oklahoma. Where else did I go? Not Tucson, Tulsa.

Q. So you were looking for markets?

A. Oh yes, yes.

Q. This is after the breakup of...

A. We had 35 people. We had to do something with those 35 people because we were doing the revenue center up here, which was sucking all of our energy up, but we could see an end coming to that revenue building.

Q. Yes, you were thinking of the future.

A. So we were out there, and that’s where the action was. Take Tucson off, I meant Tulsa. Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Q. Sure, ok.

A. That looked pretty good and kept on going, went to San Antonio. They just really romanced me in the sense of they couldn’t do enough good things, and, of course, it’s an attractive city.

Q. Oh, a beautiful city.

A. It was the best place that I had lived or worked in a long, long time. We found space down there; we also got a housing location in what they called the King William district, which stood for Wilhelm. That was a German, San Antonio was founded with German immigrants.

Q. Yes.

A. They flour mills and breweries down there. Well, the King William district, which was the historic district for them, I lived in a house that had a historic sign on it and the whole bit. We took the upstairs area, “I” meaning Don and I together because he would go down for a few weeks and then I would go back and that kind of thing. We immediately hooked up with the people who now own the San Antonio paper, and we did the San Antonio paper down there. We actually did his home, didn’t do the paper again. But it is Bob Marbett I think his name was.

Q. Bob Marbett?

A. Bob M-A-R-B-E-T-T, I believe. Boy, some of these names are slipping me.

Henderson
Q. Oh, that’s good.

A. His house had been done by the... they had a very famous architect whose name is slipping from me, too. Down there streets named after him and I’m saying he was a contemporary, still alive when I did it. When we moved down there, his office was still there. In fact, our office was located where they had cleared away for their exposition, which was like a world’s fair in San Antonio.

They mowed down a bunch of early, well it was old, early Hispanic homes. It was right by the railroad station. In fact, I could look out of my office on the second floor in San Antonio at the train that was going to Chicago, which passed through Springfield. You would get on the train and ride it, but it would take you two days to get up there, but I never took the train. In any event, so we were right there in the heart of, near the River Walk and all that stuff, whatever they call it.

Q. Now the home you designed for the newspaper executive.

A. No, remodel it.

Q. Oh, remodel it.

A. It had been done by this very prestigious architect. The interest thing was they call it a home, but it was 14,000 square feet.

Q. Good heavens.

A. Incredible, I mean really incredible. All the spaces were just independent of any thought you ever had. You went into the bathroom, it was a “his and hers” bathroom except it was...the only thing that might have been shared was the huge shower. He had his own dressing room that was half as big as the kitchen we’re sitting in, which is... I mean it was easily 15 by 20. I mean it had, his room had already been on design.

We didn’t design it, we were just remodeling it for him, had an interior designer of the dressing room. The dressing room because he would get up... they did funny things down there, it’s the only way to say it. They would get up in the middle of the night; they had their own planes and would fly in and out.

He was afraid he would get up and not be able to identify the color of his socks, so he had a whole box of black socks and brown socks. [laughter] I mean, I’m not making fun of him, but it was just the whole concept. Everything was special design and huge.

Q. Was this a Hispanic designed home?
A. No, no, brand new and very contemporary and well-designed building. No, it was just... you could forget that story and not lose anything, I assure you. Anyway, it was in excess but it was... I was glad to get it.

Q. Well sure, it was a plum, really.

A. Actually Marbett was... I can’t put all these names together. I could be giving some misrepresentations, but there was also a Springfield person down there who I didn’t really know. I knew briefly in Springfield many years before, and he turns out to be the publisher of the San Antonio paper that I was telling you about. He was there and when he left to go to the... I want to say he was the *Sun Times* or whoever’s with Australian.

Q. Oh, what’s his name?

A. He bought it and that’s who Bob... oh, the other Bob. Went to work for... I’ll come up with that name because it will tell you a whole lot. He left San Antonio and I assumed his lease in his historic building. “I” saying was Ferry and Henderson at the same time. Well, this was still... well, this was 1983.

Q. Ok. Now you picked up a fair amount of work down there obviously, one of them was this remodeling of the huge estate.

A. Well, that was probably our biggest job. It wasn’t an estate, it was a single building.

Q. Oh, I understand, but it was large.

A. We were shaking hands and kissing babies and being productive. That was exactly what we were trying to do. We were only there four years and this was in that time, and that’s when our office broke up, I want to say, in 1985. So it was someplace around 1981 to 1985 is our period of time in there.

Q. Ok, ok. So you hadn’t picked up other business in San Antonio?

A. Well, we were surviving, and I can’t tell you...

Q. Well, that’s ok.

A. To the point I did have, when I finally closed the office, I did have a secretary and I had one full-time person.

Q. A draftsman?

A. Well, he was more than a draftsman. He had experience, but he wasn’t a registered architect. I was the only registered architect but had been making friends. As a matter of fact,
we had been interviewed and I was about to partner, we were about to partner with a
gentleman who had left a Peoria firm and come to Austin, Texas. I was pursuing work, which
that was the capital and Austin is an hour drive or a little more from San Antonio.

Q. Sure.

A. So I was visiting them like people from Peoria come to Springfield, and I met their public
works people and all that. I was starting to get my name pretty spread around while I was
there. I did find out something to do when I had been at one of the conventions, yes. When I
had been to that Las Vegas convention with the newspaper plant, a couple of people who had
locations – one in... oh, now this brings me back – see part of our spread was going... we were
operating up here full time, made contacts over in Indiana, to their newspaper plant. Ran into a
woman publisher I had met someplace else, but that one fell through.

While I’m down in San Antonio, I get lined up with the Austin newspaper, not Austin newspaper
but the University of Texas newspaper in Austin. They had at that time 48,000 daily
distributions, which is a pretty good sized newspaper, a little larger or about the same size as
ours. I had gone through that one, but I’ll always remember that final visit because I was
packed and ready to leave San Antonio, but I had already made contacts and made several
visits.

The association we were with was right in Austin, Texas, so went in and made the presentation.
Well, it didn’t surprise me when we got done at this particular point, one of the interviewers
says, “You know more about this press than we do.” I mean about the newspaper organization,
and I said and I wasn’t being a smart ass, but I said, “Well, that’s my job.” We got the job, I was
told but I wasn’t there to do it anymore because we had to leave.

Q. At that point, Wally, with the breakup of your partnership, did you contemplate maybe
moving to San Antonio?

A. Yes, yes. No use going into the details, but we made the motion. It looked like the logical
thing. I didn’t do it, but yes, I was ready to move.

Q. Ok.

A. I mean, everything was getting sweet, very sweet. I had also gone for an interview again
because of the contact and we had a San Antonio address established by that point. We were a
couple, several years into the development stage, but in Pueblo...

Q. Colorado?

A. No, it wasn’t. I say that, it’s again a vocabulary problem. I apologize so much. It is Pueblo,
not, not... It’s the houses that go in these... The town is named after the buildings that they put
together. You should check this.
Q. So we think we’re talking about Taos.

A. Yes, I think so. I was invited over to look at the newspaper, to do their newspaper plant. They had a newspaper. I go over there, of course, and the community is built with all of these quaint buildings and it is very, very charming. Again they are all low-rise, and they’re very native oriented. I’ll never forget because when you take a newspaper plant as we mentioned before, you put the newspaper, modern one – that calls for a two-story building.

How are you going to end up with this one? It’s going to be a good trick. That was part of the community, and I got a walk in and suddenly say, “Well, you’ve got to have it because we’ve got a newspaper plant.” Well, they’d say, “Take your newspaper plant home with you.” At any event, it was one of those things that I felt pretty good about, but about that time is when it all crashed so I couldn’t follow through on that one.

Q. I see. So you came close to resettling. Did that coincide at all with because I don’t know the dates, your divorce from Sally?

A. Oh, whoa.

Q. I’m sorry; that came out of left field. I just thought maybe there was an impulse to start again.

A. I think we were separated. We were separated because I wasn’t having any trouble staying down in San Antonio.

Q. Yes, ok, fair enough. Sorry to ask that out of the blue, but I was trying to see whether there was a temptation professional or otherwise to move to San Antonio.

A. No, that was... I should add to this since you’ve got it on tape. We were separated in an amicable sense; there was no hard feeling. In Springfield, I lived just a block away or two blocks away from my residence. Sally was there with the kids.

Q. I knew that. It was obvious that you and Sally remained very friendly, and there were other episodes in that relationship, which reflect very favorably on you – that you were there when she needed help.

A. The divorce was only necessary because of financial problems that I didn’t want her to lose the house because of what I was into with other issues with the business.

Q. Ok, we don’t have to talk more about that. That’s fine. Ok, that’s taken care of the San Antonio office. We’ve been skirting around but not dealing really with the Willard Ice Building. Why don’t we do that? Or I call it the Department of Revenue Building. Ok?
A. Yes. The Willard Ice Building is a horizontal high-rise, Ferry high rise. It takes up fully two blocks plus it had all kinds of issues in here with delivery of daily mail on big quantities. It had a function, which you identified with. When you are processing all kinds of tax records and files and yet... well actually, their standard daily operation had 2,300 work stations, so you got a small community. In fact, I made a point of... the fact that Petersburg at that time was just slightly bigger. In fact when they got to tax season, they took it up to... I think I was told, up to 3,700 maybe.

Q. Wow.

A. Anyway, this was a lot of people to pack in there, and we had parking and day care and all kinds of issues. When you start packing that many people in there, in Chicago, you go 20 stories high or in Springfield, you do except they didn’t want that.

Q. You mean CDB didn’t want it or the Revenue Department?

A. I don’t remember who didn’t want it, but the whole idea was that it was a horizontal situation. That’s an old railroad site if you would remember; there used to be tracks that went right through there.

Q. Oh, yes, ok.

A. It ran right up there, but they are all gone now, but we had done the two buildings immediately to the west of the Willard Ice. They are called the Jefferson West Complex.

Q. Yes, Jefferson West.

A. There was a third building in there and that was my dearest friend and our best client through all the years was Bill Gingold.

Q. Gingold, correct.

A. Bill Gingold had hired us to put this complex of state office buildings in there. We got two of them in and then the state bought the building in the next way, but we were backed up to the railroad track. That was sort of an interesting thing. The railroads were still in at that time until they finally took Jefferson Street out, I mean Jefferson railroad, Madison rail.

Q. Madison railroad, yes.

A. Madison Street. Any event, the Willard Ice Building had a lot of unusual things, the programming we did first. Their operation was located on north... I’m sorry, Tenth Street, Tenth Street between Ash and something, Ash and Laurel maybe. Any event, which was an old warehouse building and you went out there and it was kind of interesting because it was a factory. Had been a, not warehouse, shouldn’t say that. It was one of the factories during
World War II certainly. They moved all their stuff in there and it was operated like a machine shop. I mean it was just kind of embarrassing. But in fact, while I was programming the building – that means you go in and they had this I recall and some of these numbers I’m fairly accurate, in 57 different departments. So again, you’ve got 2,000 people.

Q. So you’ve got to decide which departments interact so much that they need to be adjacent or secure.

A. Absolutely. You’re a programmer. You’re saying everything exactly right because what was very important in one area, had nothing to do with anything else. It’s like a guy who is in the old fashioned ways with cameras. If you had a dark room, the dark room doesn’t need to be next to the conference table. Bit does have to be next to where supplies are, and where you aren’t going to get suddenly bursts of light.

So that’s exactly what happens when you have 57 departments. I interviewed all these people, and we did diagrams. We wrote a book on how this whole thing needs to be organized. Again, we had a pretty good history, again, going all the way back to the Old Capitol about being able to write programs. We did the feasibility study on the Old Capitol. This wasn’t called a feasibility study; it was called a program.

But it was a feasibility study about what are you going to really get on those two blocks. Horizontally it looked like it could go in. Again if you know the building to the site, it slopes. It’s higher on one end than the other. It slopes more towards the south than the north because the railroad track was up there above. So what we had to do was to get a building that’s going to lay down instead of stand-up tall, and it’s going to lay down on these blocks and put that whole thing together and take then advantage of the sites as they were. That’s really what counts, is when you’ve got streets, your actual street was lower than the railroad tracks and so when the replacements go in there you got a different level of entering the building and all the other elements that go with it. You got figure your way how do you do all those kinds of things.

So the programming was essential and then we started with the design and it was a major, major project. Even with our 35 people to produce the working drawings was going to be a major, major task. I was called in right early and very early in the game as a matter of fact by Tom Madigan. Remember we did him. Tom Madigan was the number two person in the Capital Development Board. Tom was from Lincoln, Illinois, knew our work there, well he knew our work. He had been with the Capital Development Board forever, and he was one of these outspoken type guys. He’d say what he wants in any crude form or sweet form he could get into. But he was managing, basically what the department...he was number two. He called in one day and he said, “We want you to associate on this building to be able to be sure and get the production drawings done in a certain period of time.” He said, “We want to associate, want you to associate with...”
Q. Until we can come up with the name of the firm, I take it what Tom Madigan wanted, was another Chicago firm in on the...

A. Oh yes, oh yes. It was politics.

Q. Yes, sure.

A. It’s a hell of a big job to say the least.

Q. Yes, right.

A. The interior design...we did the interiors on this as well, and the wastepaper contract was $100,000.

Q. Good grief.

A. Yes we had 2300 workstations. When you start dealing with numbers like that you...it can go sorted around pretty much.

Q. Was this the biggest single building you ever did?

A. Oh yes, but remember, we’re doing it with a partner.

Q. I understand, yes.

A. As far as size is concerned, yes. I can’t tell you how many 100,000 square feet but it’s several. It’s about as tough as that.

Q. Ten million dollars or more in those days?

A. The building?

Q. Yes.

A. I think it’s a hell of a lot more than that.

Q. Ok.

A. I don’t know.

Q. But it was big. You had a partner kind of imposed upon you. Is that a fair way to put it?

A. Yes, but we had no choice.
Q. Yes.

A. It wasn’t like we’ll choose it this way. Tom Madigan, I mean he swore and I told you about...we are off the thing?

Q. No we’re on now.

A. We are?

Q. Yes.

A. You’re kidding me?

Q. No, I’m not. No.

A. Oh ok.

Q. This is not insulting he just wanted his way and...

A. No, no. He was going to get his way. It wasn’t he wanted. I wanted to just keep on the project, so I’m not about to argue about anything but I just wish I could get the name proper. These are quality people; there’s no question about that. But the whole issue was is that he had a deadline that he wanted to get done. He was doing his job well, and I didn’t contradict that.

We did all the planning. We did the programming, we did the planning, and we take the drawings. We’re back and forth all the time. I can’t remember during that particular time...we had an office in Chicago once. That was many years ago, but it wasn’t the same as this particular time. We welcomed the fact that they had production when we had the office in Chicago because they did have surplus production people when we were busy on something else.

Q. So did they kind of take over the actual oversight of the construction of the revenue building?

A. No, we did that 150 percent. In other words, they had nobody down here at all.

Q. Ok.

A. During the production of the whole building, whole concept, we did rent offices in the, what used to be the INB III, over on First Street.

Q. Yes.
A. We did this intentionally in order that people could observe that. I may be getting a little bit out of phase on this thing, whether we opened or actually...you’ll have to figure out how to sort this out on your tape. But we were architects for the Capital Complex. At that particular event is when we opened the office.

Q. Oh, in INB III, which is the Greyhound building over on...

A. The Greyhound building, correct. Which by the way, we did program that one, too.

Q. Oh did you?

A. We programmed it, but it was done by Skidmore I think or one of the other firms. But we did this because, again, it was the development of the Capital Complex and we wanted to be sure that the people could look at it. We had open houses actually and several events where you invited everybody to come in and even had a little, few hors d'oeuvres and things like this because that whole idea to get input and positive thinking on that thing. It was a different way to approach planning. Ok, I’m sorry I digressed.

Q. No, that’s ok.

A. On the other building we did all the work independently in our office. We didn’t have anything to do with that common space. Well, with the Capital Complex, yes we had to get off of that to get to the...I was chairman of the Capital Complex.

Q. Oh, ok.

A. This study. So I had to get off of that in order to do the revenue building, which again was a Tom Madigan judgment.

Q. Yes, right.

A. Yes, yes Tom, we got...he was a good friend of mine, too, but he came on strong.

Q. You had your...you had a full plate.

A. Oh yes, and a lot of responsibility. I mentioned earlier they said, “After you get more than fifteen people, you got your hands full.” This is not a small business; it’s big for little guys and that was us. Any event, but all the design was done in Springfield, 95 percent of the working drawings were done in Chicago by...

Q. It was a firm.

A. What, I thought you had it there for a moment.
Q. Abramowitz?

A. You’re close but that’s not right. Ok, well we won’t get hung up on that. We’ll come back to it. Any event, but then all the supervision and the checking of shop drawings and most of that kind of stuff was done locally. It had to be.

Q. So it worked alright?

A. Oh yes, no problem with that at all. No, everything was quite smooth. Yes, we were all glad to have the work is one way of saying it. The other way is that we were well suited to do it.

Q. So I think that pretty well takes care of that. What...I forgot to finish up on your work on the J-R building the printing plant you designed. It had to be by a railroad and I suppose it also had to have special construction strength, didn’t it? For those big presses did you have to have...foundation had to be...

A. Sure you’ve got all kinds of the shifting weights; that’s a different kind of a problem than just a dead weight. It has rails in there to move all the materials through. Again when the presses are on there’s a vibration, and you get that kind of stuff going. It can be quite an experience.

Q. The sound, did you have to build in any sort of sound protection? Or maybe when you added to the other part of the building, I don’t know.

A. It’s an independent building, so you get in there and they wear earphones, they put them on there. The presses are overwhelming. You do that almost on an individual basis and people have their earphones.

Q. Right. So then you got the contract to design the signature part of the building. Right? The offices, editorial offices.

A. Yes.

Q. Yes.

A. I mean the contracts sort of worked together. I think I maybe I mentioned to you the site was selected by Jim Copley. He said he wanted to be associated with... [telephone rings]

[Tape paused]

Q. Ok so Copley had, of course, picked the site because of Lincoln.

A. Because of Lincoln which, again, remember the Lincoln Depot is on this.

Q. Yes I know, that’s right.
A. That’s what really...and he’s across, almost across the street from the Lincoln Home. Remember Lincoln didn’t have far to go when he got on the train for Washington.

Q. That’s right.

A. Any event, that was what the whole things was about. Then Jim came back with some statements. He says, “It should have something Midwestern, a Midwest type style building.” Well, we put together several studies, models and I remember flying one of them out there that was...well, Midwestern is grain bin is what we said. We ended up with a building that if you would look at it in king-sized...

Q. It’s like a silo.

A. It was like six silos.

Q. Oh ok, yes, right.

A. Big domes, like this. Well we’re going to use those for elevators and stairs and vertical whatever had to be run there as far as climates or air-conditioning and so forth. It was sort of a massive bunch of silos, not out of metal, they were out of brick. Well, Jim didn’t really like that. He said he understood the silo thing, but what else was Midwestern? Now this is really a true story. At the office we’re sitting there fooling around, trying to get an idea, and we had already dealt with some things in our head.

This was a Quaker Oats box, it’s been published a couple of times on the, hesitate to say what we’re using, but here we got one of these great big boxes of Quaker Oats, with no oats in it, of course. Took off and cut it at a diagonal and what you get is a big ellipse that comes up there on it. To me, this started saying a whole bunch things because what it was was a big super skylight, cut it at an angle. As a result, it’s facing the capitol before they built the other building in front of it.

Q. Very distinctive.

A. Yes.

Q. He liked that?

A. Yes sir, yes sir. I mean it really was a design solution subsequent to getting that approval and all the joy that went with us getting in to it that far. For the dedication, Helen Copley comes, now she’s chief and I had met Helen out in La Jolla. Interesting, the Copley’s lived at the top of the bump that is La Jolla. I remember going up there and seeing the sight of their house at some event. They were overlooking the Pacific Ocean.
My memory will always be it was the first time I had ever seen a submarine, and there it was pulling out of its docking area right down there, right by their house. [laughter] But the Japanese gardeners and all that, it was a pretty good time I had to say the least. It was very impressive.

Helen Copley comes with her...I think Jim had died at this point and it was with the vice-president whose name slips me obviously, to the dedication. Well, it’s raining cats and dogs and when the rain comes, of course, we’re inside the building. Of course, the roof leak. [laughter]

The glass leaks and I give Mrs. Copley my raincoat because it was a monumental failure with the drain off the glass was not opened up properly, and as a result it built up. Anyway, heck of a way to start, and she’s standing next to me. I’m being apologetic and she was being as nice as I’ve ever been around anybody who’s multimillion dollar [building] is now leaking on us. But anyway it was, that was an event that I will never forget. [laughter]

Q. Well, you were gallant to give her your raincoat.

A. I would have given her two raincoats if I could’ve have gotten it off somebody else. Yes, that was an experience.

Q. Well, I think it is a distinctive entrance to the building. It stands out in an area that doesn’t have a lot of distinctive buildings, though there’ve been a few. I’ll never forget Jack Clark’s personal message on the front-page of the Journal-Register, this is for the record.

A. Sure.

Q. About Ozzie Langfelder building the firehouse, which is a strange building, architecturally.

A. Yes.

Q. Its function has gone berserk and form seems lost. He was gently, maybe not all that gently complaining that Ozzie got his revenge on Jack Clark’s critical by putting in this monstrosity across the from the building. Am I correct? Basically right?

A. No, you’ve said that exactly right, and Ozzie was a good friend of mine as well as Jack. I mean these were political appointed opposites to say the least. It was funny because...well that’s the end of that. It was fine.

Q. You don’t want to say anymore for the record?

A. The firehouse was relocated because we had been working with a group to develop Center City is the name of it. It was a complex across from St. John’s Hospital across from at that time the abandoned railroad tracks. In Center City we had...the firehouse was located on the corner.
and to get that whole city block and we made some arrangements and almost got the financing settled as a matter of fact, $23 million worth of financing in Chicago. Denny Polk was part of the group and there was another, Charlie Robbins was a major investor and Dr. Bob Russell.

We were carrying through on Center City, but we hadn’t made all the final arrangements. I was quoted in the paper saying that the firehouse was going to have to be relocated. We had already worked on the firehouse to preserve the damn thing. I mean Ferry and Henderson had, so it was there but people had got that in mind. So the move of the firehouse came over and sat down in front of the Journal-Register. The joke was on us. It was worse than anything else. In any event, before we got Center City done, the state had lined up to buy it. That was awful close to being done. If we’d put Center City in, it would have been different.

Q. Quite a story. Be careful what you wish for.

A. Well, we were working hard and obviously... as a matter of fact, that Fellow Award that we talked about was part of not only for the Old Capitol restoration, but it was for urban development. It was put into the documents for restoration, urban planning, and contemporary architecture resulted because of this, though I got my fellowship in preservation.

Q. Yes.

A. Because of our work, which we did the Lincoln Home area as well, and we did many of the contemporary buildings – the bank and all that stuff – both of them fit together in urban planning.

Q. Well, that was nice, so that was the connection?

A. Sure. We had a lot of buildings downtown also while we were there.

Q. I think today since it is past noon, we probably out to break it off at this point. I think we’ve finished with the Copley side of the story, and I guess we finished with the Revenue Building, though maybe have we really completed our discussion of that?

A. Well, after you figure out who I was working with.

Q. Well, you had nothing to do with naming of the Willard Ice Building obviously.

A. No.

Q. Did you know Willard Ice?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. So did I; he was a remarkable man.
A. Yes. The building is unique in a lot of ways. Have you been inside of it?

Q. Oh, often at tax time.

A. The whole concept of having an atrium space that went all the way to the basement, the fact that we were trying to turn this thing into something that was a completely different type of office building, so we got plantings in there. I told you that it was supposed to have been a stream, but they insisted we put a stair in there at that location, or there would have been more of a stream.

Q. Probably a better aesthetic.

A. Sure.

Q. I think it’s a functional building. Because of security, it’s not quite as welcoming an atrium as it used to be.

A. Yes.

Q. But that was something you couldn’t predict. Who would know that there would be those security concerns?

A. No, things have changed considerably in that area. One part of the design problem, which might be interesting and maybe we might have talked about before, was the when you build a building that is wide open like this and 2,300 people are in, somebody has to say, “Where is the Xerox machine? Where can I make a telephone call? Where’s the restroom?” You have to have visual contact, and one of the requirements in that building was no partitions, all open and no partitions. So they didn’t want anything including another... how do you design a conference room if people are going to suddenly say, “I want that for my private office.”

Q. Yes, right.

A. The answer is – it is a round building. The conference rooms over there are round. That was our invention.

Q. You knew there would be claims to turn those into offices.

A. Absolutely. So you put them in there round so that with at least a change of furniture, you could work in a round building or a round office, but you would have to have everything pretty built special for you. You can’t get just anything in there.

Q. That’s brilliant, but otherwise it was all open offices.
A. If you could find a conference room, now here’s what we did. We had, here’s our round building that we think and we put a top on it this way [drawing on paper], which had three dimensions, sort of like this thing hanging there only it was just a box. Or think of is as a giant column, and it’s got a great column cap over it about three feet high. We painted those all different colors, and these were conference rooms, all of them were conference rooms. I think there are nine or ten of them in there. You can find that, you can find also this is where we have the copy machine. This is where we have fire extinguishers.

Q. Restrooms?

A. No restrooms. But you have a drinking fountain or water, in other words, we call them the oasis. You come by the green oasis or the blue oasis.

Q. You colored them. Ok, that is good signage.

A. We color coded them and didn’t have to put no names on anything. But if you could find it, you can find that event, what’s called a destination.

Q. Right.

A. Now, if you’re part of the 2,300 people with destinations closest to you is probably how you will take or find the yellow water, but color is how we did it. I’m saying “I” in this case, this became my stuff, this interior stuff. I was always impressed with the European thought processes or again being able to talk in different languages without being able to talk in different languages.

Q. Right.

A. So if you could see this thing, at least you don’t have to say, “Where do I find it?” You know you have a chance there.

Q. Right. It is universal, things like colors or a word, like oasis, which is simple and yet it means more than just one thing.

A. Yes, sir. That’s why that’s fun.

Q. I agree.

A. Just to trick people into being intelligent [laughter] or something like that.

Q. Well, I think you succeeded there, though. I’ve never been privileged to walk through all of that building.
A. Well, they dropped the requirement about the partitions. They chopped it up, and it feels bad.

Q. I agree.

A. If they would have organized the petitions it would be one thing, but it was some director or I shouldn’t say director but somebody who had something to say about it said, “Well, we can do this and we’ll put in the moveable partitions.” You can’t do that, very few fixed.

Q. Right. Ok, that’s a very good session.

END OF TAPE NINE, SIDE TWO

46:48
Q. Continuation of the interview with Wally Henderson, FAIA, on May 20, 2011. The interviewer is Cullom Davis. Wally, we have a few more, smaller topics to take up before we kind of complete your account of Ferry and Henderson, the company.

A. May I ask you to... ever explain what FAIA is?

Q. I didn’t, I just called you that. But it is Fellow...

A. Fellow of the American Institute of Architects.

Q. Thank you. I knew that, but I just was teasing you last time.

A. Grant is so proud of that; she insists that I wear my lapel button every time I’m out. I said that I’m not used to lapel buttons.

Q. How about a sash? Do you have a sash you could wear?

A. No.

Q. A medallion?

A. No, it’s a ribbon with a medallion hanging there, haven’t started wearing that yet.

Q. Well, I won’t tease you – well, I probably will tease you if you do it. But it’s a great honor and it’s worth that recognition.

A. Thank you very much.

Q. Ok. I think we’ve covered all of your major institutional and commercial work that I can think of. We covered the Willard Ice Building. We covered the Lincoln Home Visitor’s Center and the Lincoln Home, of course, the auditorium, PAC building, of course the Old State Capitol.

A. The newspapers.

Q. The newspapers and the Marine Bank.
A. Sure. Over a period of time, nearly twenty-five years, we had about four hundred projects. A lot of them were simple things and not very exciting to most people, but we were very pleased to do the work and did our best most of the time.

Q. You built easily the largest architectural practice.

A. Oh, yes.

Q. Easily.

A. Oh, yes.

Q. Your own home and I was a guest there once, your older home that you designed, to me had hints of Japanese architecture because I think you had sliding screen doors.

A. Yes.

Q. A little enclosure within a courtyard, am I right?

A. You are pretty close, yes. It was... I never thought of it quite that way. It had a combination of everything, of course. It was control of sight lines more than anything else. Of course, Japanese architecture is very unusual. When I was in the service, I got into Japan from Korea and literally walked the streets, which some of those streets you walked, there was no sidewalk. You're walking in the street and the fencing is taller than most Japanese people. I think maybe six or seven feet tall, but the gate is right there. When you step into it, you actually stepped into the house. Many of their lots are forty by forty or I'll say roughly forty feet, that doesn’t do the metric system, but they take every square inch and use it well.

Q. No setbacks at all.

A. Well, none, no. There are no front yards and all that kind of thing.

Q. Of course, it’s a crowded country.

A. They have to make use of every bit of their space. As a result, we’ve all seen these Japanese gardens, which are beautiful, precious in a little bit of space of maybe ten feet by six feet wide. They have a lake in them, and they’ll have trees in them and these are living things. They are not little papier-mâché trees; they are dwarf trees that they cut the roots until the roots can’t produce anything other than small leaves and it goes on and on and on. Bonsai is a very great science over there. They perfected it.

Q. Bonsai, right, so this was not a conscious?

A. No.
Q. But what you did as a modern architect, you did things that also may have also... well, of
   course, Frank Lloyd Wright himself was interested in Japanese.

A. Oh, there was no question about that. That influenced his work a lot. Actually sort of the
   premise that I had is the way we were building houses, still build them that way as a matter of
   fact is picture window faces picture window across the street. So you’ve got a great big
   window and you’ve got the doors and all that kind of stuff.

The house that I built that you’re referring to actually I turned the approach to the automobile
off of the street, you actually pulled in and turned and pulled in and you were looking at a wall
with a door with side lights, and a single slit of glass on the side and it was a brick wall
essentially.

The whole idea was controlling the space because you turned inward and house was U-shaped
in the floor plan, and so my dining room and a portion of the kitchen was part of looking on that
outer space, which was also a patio, again a sliding glass wall from the living room into the
same little piece. So we had a private place where we could do a lot of barbequing.

Q. That was such an intelligent arrangement and spacing and orientation, I guess it was called,
of that house.

A. It’s funny, I’ve always... I tell some of these stories because they are maybe stupid, I don’t
   know. I’ve always been fascinated with moonlight – not romantically but it’s just cool how the
   moon really gets big. I remember when I was in the service in Korea and we were on top of a
   mountain. This was not dangerous Korea. This was after they got through the action. The
   moonlight came for all the months I was there, and I took a picture of it, of the full moon, all
   those months.

It was interesting, when you get a negative, though, it’s a white dot. The moon was, I thought,
bigger than the world (laughter), but on film it is one dot. I could have just saved the film and
said, “This is the moon, moon, moon.” But I’ve always been fascinated with it. When I
   designed the house, I realized, I had drawn it up and I had realized I had it oriented so that the
   moonlight wouldn’t fall... I mean I hadn’t even thought about the moonlight. I had everything
   oriented just as I liked to have it.

Then I started thinking about the moonlight and decided that I wanted the moonlight to come
specifically into the house in a certain way. I had to flip the plan over. Well now, the contractor
is on the job and he taping it off and the funny thing was, you could read a blueprint if you
could look through it from the back side. So he put up a piece of glass and glued it, so he was
reading the thing backwards [laughter] because I had this stupid orientation.

Q. That’s a great story. Who was your contractor?
A. I can’t remember his name now. I don’t recall.

Q. Because that’s wonderful; he just read it backwards, had a mirror image.

A. Well, it was on a piece of glass. I don’t know. It was up to him to get it down, I don’t know how. He did it; he did a beautiful job.

Q. Did you get that moon the way you wanted?

A. Oh, yes, so it was a little different.

Q. Well, I know you were an admirer of Frank Lloyd Wright. There are people are almost goo-goo for him. Have you bothered visiting any of his famous buildings?

A. I ended up, as a matter of fact, this last year going out to Taliesin West.

Q. Taliesin West, right.

A. I have not been to Taliesin East, which is up in Wisconsin.

Q. Yes, I know. I’ve been there.

A. Have been to Fallingwater in Pennsylvania, and in Oak Park they have a good number of Wright places.

Q. Including his studio, which shows the barrel vault he later made even larger at the Dana Thomas House, barrel vault of the ceiling.

A. Dana Thomas is one of the best ones, no matter what anybody says.

Q. You’re right. It absolutely is.

A. Thank goodness it was saved, almost torn down for a parking lot for the YMCA.

Q. Thank heavens we had a governor, Thompson then, who cared about antiques and architecture.

A. Now it was Payne Thomas, who happened to be a sailor as a matter of fact, too. It was either Payne or his family or maybe it was Payne and his son and somebody else. I can’t remember all of the family. But actually bought it and when Ferry and I opened our office in 1961, we went over there because they had part of that, it is called a ballroom. It was actually a place to dance. It had an orchestra space and so forth and I went over and spoke to Mr. Thomas, whether it was Payne or exactly which Mr. Thomas, about us leasing that back space for our first office space.
Well, he wasn’t interested but he showed me through the house. The interesting thing, he was so far ahead of himself in preservation. The word preservation, it means preserve, don’t destroy. So here we’re in this very interesting house as you describe it again, oriental, no question, every lick of it – scale-wise and material-wise and everything with it. But we’re in need of workspace because his was a, I want to say, medical publishing.

Q. Medical publishing. So there were editors, there were desks.

A. Of course, when you have that sort of thing you’ve got to have lights. Of course, when that house was built in 1904, the lights they had were not electric lights. They were all kinds of combinations of light and light, of course, and those stained windows and everything was terribly important. But Payne Thomas went in there and actually put ceiling lights in. But he surface applied them, including the conduits to furnish the power, which meant in other words he didn’t destroy the original fabric. He applied what he needed to get it, but he was going to save the house.

Q. Now that’s a remarkable foresight or respect on his part.

A. It was the kind of thing that nobody, as we’ve covered early in this conversation, the preservation restoration was not something anybody wrote any books about. So there wasn’t anybody around to say, “Hey don’t tear that down.” He was smart enough to know if you tear it down you can’t replace the same thing. He had the original, original. He saved it simply because it was a vacant…I was again, I told the story earlier in our interview here, it was a haunted house. I, with my fellow 13-year-olds broke into that house on occasion or several occasions. [laughs]

The last one I told you I kicked the bottle through the glass and that was my last trip through like that anyway. It was very thoughtful because Payne Thomas saved it and you acknowledged again a governor that respected the fact that we can’t replace this with anything better.

Q. It’s an amazing place. This is harking back to your architecture schooldays. In the 1950s, was Wright a particular subject of professional respect in your experience?

A. I’ve got to say you’re literally baiting me because here’s the answer to that question. When I got my master’s degree, we had a paper that had to be written and it was assigned right at the beginning of the last semester. We had a whole semester to write it and I put it together. I think it was my master’s, but it could have been my bachelor’s, doesn’t make any difference. But I wrote it on Frank Lloyd Wright.

Q. My heavens.

A. I was delighted to do it because I had the house and I owned all these things and I photographed the whole thing. You’ve got to understand I got undergraduate degree in 1954
and the graduate degree was 1959, I believe. Let’s say it was the undergraduate degree. Any event, I was pleased with what I got. I turned it in and I got passing, but I had a remark that came to me from the professor. He said, “Why didn’t you pick somebody famous in architecture?” I mean he slapped me across the face just cold turkey with that remark. You’ve got to understand the Beaux Art School, which was just going out of fashion, but what was coming into fashion was this...well, it was coming from Europe. It was the...

Q. Who’s the...

A. Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier that was the group.

Q. Right, Mies van der Rohe, right.

A. IIT is where Mies van der Rohe was teaching here in our country at that time. But yes, it had a completely different philosophy and wasn’t art in the sense of...certainly what Frank Lloyd Wright had picked up was the whole culture of the subject. Well, I shouldn’t say that. What Mies van der Rohe was bringing was a different culture; sort of the brick was what you measured by and went from there.

Q. They were the reigning modern architects?

A. Oh yes. I told you I had the good fortune with working for an architect, Bill Muchow, in Denver who had studied under Eliel Saarinen. Saarinen was from Finland. It’s interesting how you got jobs in Finland and I sense with, Brynn and I have both been over, went together with a group of architects to Finland and Russia and Scandinavian countries. In Finland and I don’t know how many of the others follow the same thing, you get your job with a competition. In other words, they’re going to do a governmental job and you and me and somebody else could get off in a space and you do your thing and I’ll do mine. They had a jury and whoever they picked, got the job. So it was kind of a hot subject to be able to do these things. But Finnish architecture is different than German architecture.

Q. I’m sure it is, right.

A. Of course, the English forever got the arches and all of that.

Q. That’s right, they won’t give those up. You’re right; van der Rohe actually worked with the Illinois Institute of Technology.

A. He was head of the department I believe, yes.

Q. So you visited some of Wright’s...and you admired him in part because you had grown up close to Mrs. Dana’s house.
A. Well, and what really I understood, of course, when I was in Japan I made a point of going to the Imperial Hotel, which was very famous because in 1923, they had an earthquake that destroyed much, much, much of the city and the Imperial Hotel stood. It was Frank Lloyd Wright who, I don’t think he had graduated from civil engineering, but he knew it enough about engineering. But what the key to that was, the elements weren’t all rigid together, they could bounce.

Q. They could absorb.

A. They could actually take the vibrations and still stood. So a lot of people said, “Whoa, the Imperial Hotel, you got to go see it.” I did. Last evening when I was shipping out I went in. I had to go in there and have a drink at the Imperial Hotel. It was an honest to goodness Holiday Inn. Now, here was the disaster of that. That age was 19…when I was over there…must have been about 1956, 1955, 1956. Well, it was when I was shipping back. 1956 I’ll say.

They had made an edition to the Imperial Hotel. It was an honest to goodness a Holiday Inn. It was a curtain wall type thing and it was attached to it. It was like, “Goodness this is insane. Why would they do this?” It couldn’t have cheapened it any worse, but it was American and that’s what they were looking for. American culture was being observed.

Q. Then, of course, finally they raised the whole hotel.

A. Apparently so. I didn’t have anything to do with it. I may have swiped a menu that night, but it’s loaded in a box someplace that somebody else is going to have to happen and find, I don’t know.

Q. Was Don Ferry also an admirer of Wright to your recollection?

A. We never talked about it. I don’t know.

Q. You were doing your work.

A. Sure it was a company, and we never were trying to really copy anybody’s work. In architecture, I shouldn’t say only, in the old days, copying was the way to do it. Copy architecture, we didn’t have an American cultural architecture. Certainly Thomas Jefferson was one who made every effort he could to import what was being done in Europe in the classical sense or to our governmental sense. Copying architecture wasn’t, bad but what you really try to do is to learn from what you’ve seen and apply it in appropriate ways. It gets better. There’s nothing new under the sun invented. You’ve just got the recognize it and use it. At least that’s my philosophy.

Q. Good message, good message. We have already covered your move to much larger space over off of MacArthur and how appropriate that was and with Steve Barthoff. Well tell me about…

Henderson
A. We did win some awards on that particular building, on the design center.

Q. Yes, right. Tell me now about the third partner. Don Walton did you say? You want to talk about that, no? Ok, but what should we say? Just that Don wanted to bring him in as a partner? Had he been working for you?

A. Oh yes, he had worked with us. We just made the decision to do that but that’s...he was...but that was the only one we had ever taken in as a...

Q. I don’t want to pry too much, but this is important. This changed your professional relationship with the existence of three rather than two partners.

A. Well, just as a lesson to anybody who does it. If you divide up an asset into three parts, and three parts are voting parts, when two parts get together one part isn’t part of it.

Q. So what you’re politely and you already talked about your reconciliation with Don Ferry.

A. Sure, sure, sure.

Q. What I think you’re politely implying is that Walton and Ferry held the majority of decisions, and you were kind of left out on the decision making.

A. Let’s just clarify – it wasn’t a series of events. We were also running an office in San Antonio, Texas. I was going down for a period of time for, I think it was, two weeks at a time, then Don Ferry and so forth. So we were stretching out because this was another kind of a minor recession in 1983 or 1984, 1985 something, I don’t remember when it was. Any event, we were going back and forth. When you do that the decision making is oriented around different things.

Of course, I think I was instrumental in getting us down to San Antonio because, again, the work was not here in Springfield and remember this was the Rust Belt as they were starting to call it. I made the venture down into Oklahoma and Texas area, and we ended up establishing an office that lasted for four years in San Antonio.

Well, as I say it stretched the relationship to the point that on one of the occasions I was back or I was on my way back and forth and some of the situations came up and it was just decided that probably we ought to dissolve this relationship because it wasn’t paying off. It was just beginning to pay off down in Texas. We were making our contacts. We had been there maybe two years at that point.

Q. So there were no lawsuits or anything.

A. Nope.
Q. It was quiet, but it was a serious, well, it was unfortunate in the sense that you had this thriving joint practice, not that you didn’t have your own clients obviously.

A. Well, we never had any of our own personal clients. I shouldn’t say that. The best client, I’ll put down my best friend, Bill Gingold, turned out to be our best client. When you say, “our,” that means he was a repetitive client. Bill Gingold was I shouldn’t ever say a pushover; Bill Gingold was a hard guy to work with because he was a very smart man both in what was happening in the world and in what costs were as far as construction was and who were responsible contractors.

He never hesitated to correct me when he thought I was wrong, but he expected me to respond accordingly. That was a good relationship because again you don’t want to develop something just simply because the client has got so many opinions you just say, “Yes sir,” or “No sir.”

Q. It’s got to be a candid and free exchange. He stayed with you? Gingold did?

A. Oh sure, oh yes we did work together.

Q. After the breakup...

A. I only kept the office running another four years, I think it was, and then sold it off to Hahn, Ralph Hahn.

Q. Now let’s cover that. So where was your office? Did you stay in...

A. Oh they left.

Q. They left, ok. They left and so you had more space than you knew what to do.

A. Let’s put it this way, the difficult part was that I had an office in San Antonio to run and an office in Springfield to run. I think we had a maximum of three people down in San Antonio at any one time and a dozen in Springfield at that particular time. That going back and forth had to go. So I had to get rid of, first of all, San Antonio and that took a little time again because it just popped.

It popped to the point that I had a good job that was going to be the newspaper for the University of Texas, had been selected. But I had associated with a person I had known in Peoria, Illinois and he had moved to Austin, Texas. I had all the newspaper experience in this, and we went up and got that job. Then I had to shut things down.

Q. That hurt.
A. Oh yes. Well, I had clients down there that were expecting me to finish the work. I did or else passed them on to the other team in that case.

Q. So you were a very busy, stretched man during those couple of years where you had offices here and in San Antonio.

A. Oh yes, oh yes. Like I say, which I didn’t start both of them together. We had the part up here, but it was the problem. You can’t just abandon one or the other. You’ve got to dump one or the other and, of course, the stepchild was San Antonio. They left and we left good friendships down there, of course. Then we came back up here, but the same thing was happening. I was trying to complete the Willard Ice Building. I completed that one.

Q. Oh, you did? Ok.

A. That wasn’t done. Maybe that was before it was finished, and that was a handful.

Q. I’m sure it was. So you… I don’t know how these things work, but you certainly retained your share of the original partnership clients?

A. Yes, I would say so, yes.

Q. Was Don Moore involved in residential work?

A. No, no, no. He was the hospital architect. No, we were all solid architects who… you can’t pick and choose in small communities. Large communities, you can say, “I’m going to be doing industrial work or commercial work or something.” Somebody who has been very successful in sort of specializing in Springfield is Jim Graham, who has done some marvelous churches. He’s done lots of Catholic work because he is Catholic. His family is very high in the Catholic Church. The interesting thing is that when he got beyond the Catholic religion, he also did a marvelous thing for the Methodists.

Q. Oh, the new one out west?

A. The big one out here on the west end, yes. The United Methodist, I guess.

Q. You got his projects?

A. Yes, we had done the Methodist Church downtown, the one that they left. But, of course, there was a shift during the last two decades from the Central Business District, CDB, where the churches just closed down. Just like the same thing that happened a couple of decades before in the theaters. We used to have, I think, seven or eight theaters downtown, and they completely dissolved. Now, of course, I’ve tried to attract the theaters to come back because I think there is still a marketplace. But I think they voted at their convention, and I was told back when… Oh, I can’t remember who used to run it. They just sold all their theaters.
Q. Kerasotes?

A. Kerasotes. Tony Kerasotes told me that they were told in their national convention like the convention I just came through for architects, but that the future was not in the downtown areas. Don’t spend your money there, do the multi-screen theaters, which as a matter of fact that was back when I had the office in San Antonio. You spent several Saturdays where I would start at two o’clock in the afternoon and go home at eleven o’clock at night having seen three movies without leaving the theater. They just had eight screens and yes, it was like that. But it hurt places like Springfield because we had a number of good [movie] houses.

Q. There were some nice theaters downtown when I first moved here, and they were still in business but one by one... I still think there is a market. It might be for a more independent, I don’t know what, but it has happened in other places.

A. You may remember I was instrumental in what we called “Center City.” There was a presentation and we had models and we even had a group together to make it work and lost out in... well, the State of Illinois grabbed the site and the site is where the Abraham Lincoln Museum is. It was right across from the hospital, and Center City was an interesting complex. There had been photographs and everything by the newspaper about it, but it was a combination of townhouses. We had...Ferry and Henderson Architects when we had our offices in Chicago; we ended up getting that condo [contract].

Q. In Chicago?

A. Yes. The condo, they always referred to them as the corn cobs.

Q. Oh sure. The famous Marina Towers?

A. The Marina Towers is where we started and then we went up to... what’s the name of the library there?

Q. Newberry?

A. Newberry, yes it was part of Newberry, which was where State and Rush came together.

Q. Sure, I know the area.

A. Well, they had a complex that was just dynamite where they had a parking garage. On top of that, they had houses with a little grass space on top and actually houses sitting on top of it. Off to the side, they had this tower and we were in that tower on the 27th floor, 24th floor maybe. In any event, the location was great. I was proposing here in Springfield, right there because St. John’s Hospital and, of course, not very far again from Memorial Hospital. This was the medical complex.
Well, part of what they do in hospitals is they get intern doctors, and they bring these doctors in. The doctors have to find a place to live and so forth. The whole idea of Center City putting it at that location was ideal. We could end up with housing sitting on top of a parking structure. It was very much needed across from Union Station, which would become a shopping center, and then fill out the rest of it with a high rise.

This was several levels of housing – inexpensive and also some town houses that would be very fine places to live. We had a cleaners lined up. We had a... and that’s how I ended up talking to Tony Kerasotes about putting in a theater. We had, actually it was a two-screen theater. I said to Tony because he came over to the office. I said, well I gave you that story about not being interested and I said, “Well, would you just rather than saying the other word, say you would consider it?” [laughter] He said, “Yes, I will consider it.”

Q. Wink, wink. [laughter]

A. Well, I just needed somebody to say, “Hell, no,” and apparently to just shut me down.

Q. You didn’t want to do it.

A. I just wanted it because the idea was big enough and good enough because I’m moving a whole batch of activities right together. While it was there, and we had to move the fire station.

Q. That led, of course, to the... I had forgotten that. So that was going to be Center City but not government buildings so much. It was going to be commercial development.

A. No government buildings, not at all. When we get a chance or take a time out, I’ll show you a picture of it.

Q. Ok. That was Madison, Jefferson, Seventh, and Sixth?

A. Sixth and... the museum.

Q. Jefferson, Madison?

A. Yes.

Q. Sixth and Seventh?

A. I think that’s correct.

Q. Ok, interesting, well in a way. I think it was a great idea, and the museum is right there.
A. Oh, no question about that thing. Well, it was interesting.

Q. It could have gone...

A. But this is an interesting point though, maybe the museum got there by chance because a good friend of mine from when we first got together and I think you rerecorded part of this, was Bill Cellini. So Bill Cellini, of course, had offices in Chicago at that time, and so I got together with Bill Cellini to talk about financing. He also led me to some of the ways and came through it was one of the meetings up there.

They didn’t sign any papers. We had verbal conversations about it, but we were talking about nearly $25 million. I think it was 23 something is what we were going to spend on the thing, and they were going to get involved in it. It was going to be a good thing. Well, in bringing up Bill Cellini, I was puffing really hard about how this would be an important place.

Bill Cellini said, “Why would anybody spend the kind of money that you’re talking about” – which I don’t remember what we were talking about – maybe five hundred dollars a month for one of the apartments or something. He said, “We need to get something out on the west end of town.” He was talking back and forth. The next thing I know all of a sudden and I love her dearly, but the head of the Historic [Commission].

Q. Preservation.

A. I’m talking about Julie [Cellini] now.

Q. Oh, Julie, of course.

A. She was the head of it, and she had heard all of the conversations. I argued with Billy. I said, “It is what the future of downtown has got to be.” People didn’t live downtown. I had made a couple of speeches to the Chamber of Commerce and also the Sangamon Historical Agency. I will always remember one of them was given in the Old Capitol in the House chamber and I was the speaker of the evening. I made all of these comments about the future of the downtown area.

One of the people in the audience, I can’t remember who it was but it was a friend of mine really. He said, “What do you think is necessary to make this happen?” I said, “People living downtown.” Well, I had a couple of people afterwards come along and say, “Where would they live?” That is what generated my first thought, thinking about it. Now, of course, they are starting to say this second floors and so forth.

Q. Which is incremental but is not...

A. But I was pounded on this thing thirty years ago.
Q. Yes, that was... well, Julie ended up...

A. Well, she knew the advantage of the site. When they asked me about the site, I thought it belonged out by the university. That wouldn’t have been any good for the town, but it would have sure as hell anchored those university people on gifts. I often accuse Julie of stealing my site. That was a joke because I love her dearly and Bill, too. He knew how to get things done.

Q. Indeed he did. Ok, so you don’t want to say any about Don Walton.

A. No, other than everybody makes their own decisions, and they elected to withdraw from the partnership. I was left with the residue, which was a good history, several lawsuits. There were leaky roofs, things like that, but otherwise, it was unfortunate.

Q. I agree. Is he still around, Don Walton?

A. He ended up, he and Ferry started to operate together for a little while. Interesting enough, the church I went to, Westminster, for all those years, in 1940, I became a member. We interviewed for that obviously because it was my church and they knew that. I’ve never been told exactly but Walt Hanson. You know Walt Hanson?

Q. Well, sure.

A. After we had the split up, and the interviews had already taken place. Walt Hanson, I happened to run into him out at the airport, Capitol Airport, well it just happens the way it happens. I was out at the airport going someplace, and he says, “Gee, I’m sorry that you’re leaving town.” I said, “What do you mean leaving town? I’m just going down to San Antonio.” He said, “But I sat in on that meeting when the church picked its architect for the addition.” I said, “Your partner said that you had left Springfield.” [laughter] I said, “Maybe I left that day where I was going and that’s where I am going today, but no way am I leaving Springfield.” But they had been chosen as the architects then.

Q. Those things happen, I guess, in split-ups, but that is rough.

A. Yes. [laughs] Well, the roughest part of it was to be told by some third party.

Q. I understand your leanings.

A. He was a good friend of mine.

Q. I know him, a great guy. Oh my heavens. Well, that’s the tribulations of life I guess. Let’s see. So you spent a couple years still in that worksite here and then how did the arrangement with...
A. Epstein?

Q. No, Ralph Hahn.

A. Well, Ralph Hahn happened to be the tenant in our building.

Q. That’s what I thought.

A. Lived here right across the way, which you see, had great advantage when we went together. Actually we started it off it was Ferry and Henderson, Ralph Hahn Associates, and the Design Center, which was Steve Barthoff. Well, Steve Barthoff operated the furniture areas, and we were doing the architecture.

Well, we were growing. Ralph Hahn was growing. We’re getting tighter and tighter. I even had people working in the basement, half basement over there. When Steve decided to get out of the business, it was easy for us to say, “Well, ok we will get upstairs and keep the basement and keep that south half of the building.” Ralph Hahn at this point is ready to grow, and he grew into the north side of the building. So Ralph Hahn is now a tenant of ours.

Q. His business was growing and thriving, I guess.

A. Yes. Steve got out of the business ownership, and so now Don Ferry and I own the building independently though we’re no longer partners in the architectural thing. We’re still taking money from Ralph Hahn, and that’s the way that goes. Anyway finally I sold my business. It was Ferry and Henderson. I kept the name and the whole bit. I operated for a couple of years, and then sold it to Ralph Hahn and Associates. Or Ralph Hahn, I guess, I don’t know whether he had any associates or not. But I ended up heading his architectural department without even moving my desk. I was just changing over.

Q. [laughs] Well, that was convenient.

A. So now he had the whole operation.

Q. Was it new for him to have an architectural department?

A. Oh yes.

Q. It was a major initiative on his part to recruit you?

A. His partner, George Bloom, who had been there for lots of years...

Q. Bloom?
A. B-L-O-O-M.

Q. Ok.

A. I don’t know if there’s an “E” or not. I don’t think so. Yes, George Bloom, who was an architectural engineer, younger than Don Ferry and I but had the same degree that we had from the University of Illinois. He had done basically engineering work until...engineers continue, as a matter of fact, but it started about that time sort of saying, “Well, we can do architectural work.” They do things but they don’t have any – I’ll put it – background because we go six years to school to learn how people think and do things. They go four years to know how to keep the building from falling down. Well, I got my four years of keeping it from falling down and the other two are about how to do architecture, I’ll put it that way. It’s not quite that simple.

Q. I understand.

A. Any event, so there are is always a little difference in the thing. But George Bloom was very pleased with it and as I said I headed up, I ran the architectural department. George Bloom headed it up as part of the partners. I was not a partner with Ralph Hahn. I was just an employee. The shifts just got interesting because I learned... I have never been a business person; I’ve always been more of a thinker or creator of other events. I just simply made an arrangement with Ralph Hahn, if you’ll support me into these...I was left with five lawsuits.

Q. Oh boy.

A. These lawsuits were taking time and that’s part of why I had to shut down as soon as I could, the firm down in San Antonio because I just couldn’t do it. You sit there and listen to them make all these remarks. You’ve got 16 lawyers and that’s not exaggeration. They sit there and they are paid by the hour, and it’s the hours I need to work.

Q. Exactly.

A. I made the deal with Ralph Hahn – you take on the lawsuits and you handle them because I had insurance and so forth.

Q. Sure, but still.

A. You got the lawsuits, and you’ve got my practice. No money ever changed hands.

Q. Interesting. That got you out of that nasty litigation and depositions.

A. The depositions would take a half a day. I’ll never forget, when I really walked out it was very nasty. I been in somebody’s office with these attorneys all morning and I’m tired and
they’re tired, and we are now breaking for lunch. Somebody says something, “Well, we’ll take up I’ll start my interrogation,” or whatever it was, “after lunch.” I said, “Wait a minute, you been sitting here all morning. You’re going to do this all over again?” I don’t think I used all the nastiest words I had, but I said, “You’re just not going to have me because I’m not coming back.” I didn’t come back. I was just...

Q. Got tired of it.

A. No they asked every question they could think of, and that was the way it was.

Q. Well, they’re making more money the longer they work.

A. Yes sir, at the rate of a 100...

Q. You’re making less by having your time.

A. Sure. I couldn’t make decisions; I couldn’t do any doggone thing. So anyway, that was the...

Q. That was a relief that Ralph...that’s an interesting thing. He took up the settlement of the suits.

A. Sure just...again, everybody said, “Boy, I bet you made money when you sold that firm.” I didn’t make anything. In fact, the day I decided to sell the firm is when I had gone down...this was a recession era.

Q. Yes, right.

A. I remember going to the bank, and I still had a dozen people up here. I had to go to the bank and out of my personal account take the money to pay 12 people in payroll that month. It hurt so badly and that was pure cash money. There wasn’t any going around. I just simply walked in and said, “Everybody, the office is closed as of the end of the month.” That was it. It was bad.

Q. That was a bitter, bitter pill.

A. Oh yes. You get used to bitter.

Q. You were economically stretched.

A. Oh yes. That was, that was the nut. I had to dump my insurance. I had a pot full of...when I went down to San Antonio... again Franklin Life was founded, by the way, in San Antonio.

Q. What was?

A. Franklin Life Insurance Company.
Q. Franklin Life?

A. Franklin.

Q. Oh Franklin, I didn’t know that. That’s the home, the original home?

A. Who was the family that was out here on the end of...

Q. Charlie...

A. Becker.

Q. Becker, right.

A. He founded it in San Antonio.

Q. I didn’t know that.

A. There’s a building down there that’s a big building that was the Franklin Life building.

Q. Interesting.

A. Any event, but I go down there and I meet an agent down there and this guy is, he’s good. He’s a salesman and everything else, but I had a lot of Franklin Life insurance, not a lot but a lot as far as I was concerned. Well, I had to go dump that and I went through him. He said, “You’re crazy.” I said, “I’ve got to get out of this thing because I’m not going any place with it.”

Q. So you were...well understandably. So this was a change in your life.

A. Oh yes. Sometime we dodge those bullets we talked about earlier.

Q. That’s right, that’s right. Ok let’s stop a moment here and turn the tape over. Is that alright?

A. Sure.
Q. Interview on May 20, 2011 with Wally Henderson. We haven’t touched directly though, only indirectly...

A. That’s Wally Henderson F... [laughs]

Q. [laughs] FAIA.

A. Don’t cheat me now, go ahead.

Q. That’s right. The eminent, how’s that? Eminent Earl Walter Henderson, ok.

A. It’s Wallace actually.

Q. You’re right, I knew that. Pick up your civic life because I know you were very active all the way back to being on the Historic...back to the Lincoln thing...the Abraham Lincoln Association, maybe you want to talk about that?

Q. Sure. It was a timely thing. Remember when we opened our office in March 1961 and I think I’ve said before that I had been away for 12 years, never to come back.

A. Right.

Q. When Don Ferry suggested it and after some thought process, I did come back. We opened up I want to say like in the day before but it is mid-March. Immediately, because it was 1961, this now Abraham Lincoln a 100 years before had been elected the president and was coming in. John F. Kennedy had just been elected [President] and was just coming in. Otto Kerner had just been elected governor and was just coming in.

So a lot of change of faces and when I was in Colorado and I’d still be to this day if I could be, I was a registered independent. But when you come back to Illinois you can’t be a registered anything, which I think is a rip-off because somehow it puts...it doesn’t let me say what I want to at any time. But if I ever voted straight ticket, I would figure I was retarded someway in my think process.

So what I’m saying there is that I get involved in the community. I think I’ve told you the story previously about getting involved in the Abraham Lincoln Association or rather into the Civil War roundtables. That was with Ollie Keller. Well, Ollie Keller was also very effective in Springfield in a number of things, not the least of which was the Abraham Lincoln Association.
So this was a good event and also through that Civil War roundtable meeting not only did I get involved with the Old State Capitol, but I got involved with other members of the Abraham Lincoln Association.

This was more than beneficial because these were subjects I liked and the people I liked and they were also many of them very important people in the city of Springfield. Important from the standpoint that at least they had ideas of where opportunities were and they led me a lot of good trails. Getting appointed by the governor, again, on the Auditorium Authority was not accidental. It was, had been picked up because I had been associated with some of those people and got one of these, “Here’s a comer type thing.”

As a matter of fact, I’ve over the years and just most recently, a recommendation for...this wasn’t in existence when I was there but future leaders type thing. Right now they’ve got a group called “Forty under 40” that Springfield Journal proposes. They’ve got a few people that I have run into lately that I have talked to myself and have actually written endorsing a couple of them because these are comers.

It’s kind of a fun thing, but I think in those days I was lucky enough to be picked out by a few and endorsed to the point that I got to be on the Historic or the Lincoln Home Advisory Committee to begin with, then appointed to the Historic Sites Commission, and then with Clyde Walton as the head of that and that was creating historic zones. I became the chairman; I was 27 years on that particular group along with Sally Schanbacher and Bill Sheehan, I think I don’t quite have his name right but anyway, very prominent people. It was very important that we be represented not just in the prominent people but across the board to be able to do work. That’s how architects get their work, but that’s how anybody gets to be active.

Q. When you establish a new business, even if you’ve grown up here, you have to begin establishing ties socially and civically other than just professionally.

A. I didn’t even think about that until you just made those remarks. One of the people who right from the beginning when we opened up came almost out of the cloud. It was Gail Wanless. Gail Wanless, who had a very difficult hearing problem, but he looked us up. Of course, Gail was in real-estate as well, and he was glad to see me come back and so forth. He said, “I went to all your football games when you were a football player.”

Q. Oh, my gosh.

A. We had a couple of other friends and Connie Noll, Conrad Noll, were others, but those football days came back. He said, “I attended every one of your games for four years,” which was pretty flattering. Gail Wanless was always a dear friend and also started us with one of our very first jobs in Springfield, again. I’m trying to remember, it was 838 South Second Street, is a little apartment building. He calls me up one day and said, “This is a job.” It ended up a seven unit apartment building.
Q. That’s nice.

A. Which we got an award on, which is the interesting thing is.

Q. Well, congratulations.

A. It was a completely different approach to apartments here in Springfield and it’s still inexistence, right across from 835 South Second Street now where they did all that stuff. It’s just stuffed in there now because of those big buildings next to it. But it’s in there.

Q. What was so...how was it so different from existing?

A. Well, it was pre-cast concrete. This was brought right cold-turkey from Denver because they were building them out there actually using pre-cast concrete beams. I took the floors and that’s the extension of the balconies on the…it kind of looks funny because the building next to it is so tall. This little building is kind of stuffed in there. But it worked.

Q. So Gail was your client on this, Wanless? He was the developer of this apartment complex?

A. Well, he found the...he put us together. I can’t remember who signed the final check on those things, but Gail was always a good friend and carried us out. Over the years we got to know him.

Q. Did you join any of the more typical clubs like Rotary?

A. I was in Rotary for a while. I don’t remember really why I left it other than just got too busy to continue it. But yes, I was in there for a short period of time.

Q. But you were on some...well the Abe Lincoln Board I guess you call, pretty prestigious. I mean it was a...

A. Abraham Lincoln Association?

Q. Yes.

A. Absolutely and it had just been revived now, remember that. It was an interesting thing it was founded, of course, way back in 1913, or something.

Q. Or even earlier, right.

A. Now, whatever was right after the riots [Springfield Race Riot of 1908].

Q. The centennial of Lincoln’s birth, yes.
A. Yes, that was another famous one.

Q. Their first banquet was six months after the riot.

A. That’s, that’s exactly right. Then, of course, I always relate that to NAACP, they were founded afterwards. But right, they were at parallel things. I happen to have a...I can’t pull all these things up but I got one of the early books.

Q. Yes, right.

A. Any event, but that group was looking like they were going places and wanted to go places and Clyde Walton and I became great friends. I ended up as a best man at his wedding when he got married.

Q. Best man, yes. Well, for a fair amount of the time when you and I both were on the Lincoln Board, Floyd...

A. Barringer.

Q. Barringer was the president.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Were you friendly at all?

A. Oh yes. Barringers went to the same church I did.

Q. Yes, that’s right.

A. So yes. I’ve been friends with many of those people from... well, our church to begin with. But when I disappeared for 12 years, I had grown from a kid out of high school to an adult.

Q. Fiscally to a professional.

A. I had people come up and say, “Glad to have you back; didn’t recognize you.” [laughs] I had been class president at my senior high school. Some people said, “Well you’ve come a long way.” I said, “Well, I hope so at least.” So that was it. But as far as civic groups, yes, I never thought about joining them for a particular reason other than something that had to be done.

Q. Well, it’s good business, not that it’s only...not that that is your only reason, but it’s obviously good business.

A. Sure.
Q. To meet people in a board situation and have drinks together and so forth.

A. That’s right.

Q. There used to be a group that I briefly belonged to that had its dinner meetings at the Sangamo Club. It was called the Cracker Barrel.

A. Really?

Q. Did you know...I can’t remember. Walt Hanson was in it and some other people. I was by far the, at my age in the 40s, the youngest member.

A. No, I hadn’t heard of the Cracker Barrel that I can remember of before last night and get this, how close this one is. I’m forgetting many things, and that’s why I could’ve heard about it. But last night we were over at Suzanne...Fred Stericker, do you know Fred Stericker?

Q. Yes, sure.

A. Fred Stericker just got married to Suzanne...

Q. Oh yes.

A. Man she’s... I can’t think.

Q. I know him well but...

A. Suzanne is Brynn’s, one of her best friends, and I was with her last night. I can’t get her maiden name now, but they got married about five months ago. We went over. They just moved into a new condominium.

Q. Oh wonderful.

A. We went over and took salt and bread as I was taught by my Jewish friends as appropriate. We took salt and bread, and Fred wasn’t there. She said, “Oh, I’m so embarrassed, I just insisted that he,” she said, “he’s belonged to this group of people for so long. It’s the Cracker Barrel and I insisted that he just has to go to that meeting down at the Sangamo Club.”

Q. They still meet?

A. They met last night, and I heard the name last night. Now how’s that within 24 hours.

Q. Isn’t that remarkable. The name just popped into my head. I was flattered to be invited and these were obviously heavyweights in the city.
A. Sure.

Q. Many of them. A number of lawyers and doctors and I was happy to go. They asked me to give a talk and I did. Then I began to find this...I was a little young.

A. Sure, sure.

Q. They were nice, don’t get me wrong, but they were all members of the Sangamo Club and I wasn’t. I finally resigned, and I probably raised some hackles by that. It wasn’t out of anger. It’s just that I’ve learned that I have to be careful joining things because if I don’t genuinely enjoy it, I’ll not attend and I’ll embarrass myself.

A. It’s interesting what you’ve said. As a matter of fact, I’ve made some preposterous remarks like, “I don’t join it unless I can be the chairman.” [laughter] I’ve never said that really cold-turkey, but yes, I can’t sit back there and suck my thumb because I either got to be in it or I’m out of it. It’s important because it to me again, you get things done by being sure that you’re participating not just in name.

Q. Not just sitting around a table. I agree.

A. Yes it’s...some of these things that you and I are saying confidentially should never be published.

Q. Well, yes but were doing it, I think, very delicately.

A. My dog just said hello to you.

Q. I saw that and I love...

A. You can go over and say hi. [talking to the dog]

Q. Sure. It’s ok. So no other...oh, did you have any political ambitions?

A. Not really but I ran one time.

Q. Ok.

A. The one time happened to be for park board. Now I’ll back up. I say political ambitions, when I was in high school I was, I guess I must have participated for a little while as a page or something. Not sure how I was smart enough to get to...I’ll go back to Blanche Fritz. That’s going to be way back in your early report.

Q. Blanch Fritz.
A. Fritz, F-R-I-T-Z, state democratic chairwoman. Remember when I told you?

Q. Oh yes, of course.

A. She was always an influence to me. She lived to be pretty old, and she was the one who told me, “Go see Lyndon Johnson. He’s an important man.” I said, “I can’t do that.” She said, “Well just do it. He’s just a guy.” So I go see him, the vice-president of the nation anyway, whatever. Anyway, it was Blanche Fritz said to me, “Get acquainted with these people.”

I, for some reason, ended up going over there whether I was a page or something. Anyway, she had me doing something, so I learned to wear a coat and tie to go over there. I used to take, used to – several times I took dates, when I’m in high school, to sit up in the balcony of the house or senate chamber and listen because I got a kick out of it. Now I don’t know what the date ever thought about this.

Q. [laughs] What is this guy up to?

A. But again and if you’re smart enough at that age to put on a coat and tie, and you walk right down on the floor. Nobody’s about to through you off the floor, nobody but the Sargent at Arms. But I got accepted, so that got to me. I knew someplace along the way before I got into that astronaut type thing, I used to say I wanted to be a U.S. senator from Illinois.

Q. Is that right?

A. That was a thought process, not ambition because I never ran for anything. But like I say, the thing I did run for was the Park Board.

Q. Roughly when was this? In the 1980s?

A. It had to be the 1970s or 1980s. I think it was more in the 1970s.

Q. Ok.

A. In any event and I always remember, I think it was maybe Bill Cellini who suggested that I run.

Q. Oh, that’s a good suggestion.

A. I ran. I told you about making the contribution of Bill Cellini about coming back and staying stern when we opened the office and a good contribution would be to Bill Cellini. I gave him $16. He was running for [laughter] running for... remember that?

Q. Yes, you did tell me.
A. I have never really been a big donator of anything. I just mouth off.

Q. Well, you must, excuse me – we’re going to challenge you. The firm never made political donations?

A. Oh, we made donations but they were always on my books so there wasn’t anything straight across Springfield. I think $500 would be the bigger jump or something.

Q. Sure, sure.

A. Don Ferry was a Republican.

Q. You were a Democrat, each of you...

A. I could make contribution and he could. The firm made them, but we may have made a couple thousand dollar one once or twice. But I’ll never forget the something as measly numbers as I just told you. We say, “measly” now but it was considerably more twenty-five years ago. But something came out in the paper, I think it was the Citizen’s… not Citizen’s but the Tribune in Chicago, Chicago paper. They mentioned how Ferry and Henderson made a donation to whoever it was.

The number stated, which looked preposterous to me, of course, I say these jack ass friends of mine who were architects, I got a couple of telephone calls and they said, “Anyway, I’ve got some money for you to invest,” which it was a joke and we all laughed. But it was like, “Why would they do this to me?” [laughter] No, I was never a big political contributor. The one time, the Park Board that I ran for was because we had people that were in there just ended up doing nothing. I can’t remember, I think maybe Woody Dirksen was also part of that group.

Anyway, we lost. The whole thing was… I remember going in there at the fundraiser and talking about… the issue was who are we going to hire to cut the grass in the parks? I remember asking the question, “Why do we care?” The answer was, the precinct committeemen are interested because that’s where the votes are coming from. You have got to get smart enough, and you are supporting the precinct committeemen’s kids to cut the grass.

I said that this was getting too political; that and going out at four o’clock in the morning to Allis Chalmers shaking hands with the people leaving Allis Chalmers.

Q. So you ran as a Democrat? Well, it was nonpartisan.

A. Nonpartisan.

Q. But you were a Democrat?
A. Yes. Well, I missed... you couldn’t have no enlistment thing, but I just said Bill Cellini was one of my good, food friends, always has been.

Q. Yes, I know. He was good friends with many notable Democrats. He has always been smart enough to...

A. Of course, I was there when they used to have a beer party out at Central Park or wherever it was – beer and hot dogs. It was Cellini and Madonia and a couple others, but they knew how to entertain the community.

Q. Sure.

A. I remember sitting in on some kind of meeting and somebody was saying, “All we’ve got to do is to get some of these people.” He asks, “Does anybody know Bill Cellini?” [laughter] The whole friggin’ crowd did; there was probably fifty people and forty-five of them said, “We know him well.”

Q. Probably owed their jobs to him.

A. Yes, yes. Bill was a Republican.

Q. Of course, he was and still is. That is funny. So you weren’t at all happy in county Democratic... you didn’t know Tom Owens?

A. Oh, I knew him, made a point of knowing all of them on both sides.

Q. Sure, yes.

A. As a matter of fact and that, to me, is exactly what somehow I believe our country once upon a time was – get to know these people and get to know what they really are, and hope for the ones who really do this – I said this the last time we were on the mike – “by the people, for the people, of the people.” Lincoln said it but that’s the way it ought to be. We ought to just keep going on it and destroy this nutty, out of the party, by the party, and for the party.

Q. I agree. I think the parties are weaker though they become funnels for an enormous amount of money.

A. Well, they are going to get their payoff just like I told you that I had my payoff, the third party and it doesn’t mean this cute little Tea Party thing. But Lincoln’s Republican Party was a third party that wiped out the Whigs.

Q. Absolutely.

A. I think we’re about to see this happen.
Q. You do?

A. I do. It is getting too preposterous.

Q. I kind of think so. Do you want to elaborate or just leave it at that? [laughs]

A. You can read my mind.

Q. I still can’t resist that comment you made. We can leave it at that if you want to. I don’t know which party is going to die. You’ve left me hanging in suspense.

A. If you want my forecast, I’m going to say the Republican Party. They can’t keep going. They are no longer talking about having a middle class. If you don’t have a middle class, you have a poor class and you have an infinitely rich class. When you have millions of people, there ain’t going to be a no middle class. There is going to be a revolt.

Q. I think you are absolutely right. I just finished a book on that subject, which was just devastating, the inequality. It’s not healthy for capitalists really.

A. Absolutely not, you can’t do that.

Q. Now well, I don’t want to get too political.

A. That’s all right. I just wanted to get you on record [laughter].

Q. We’re both on there [laughter].

A. That’s right, and that’s not a Democratic speech. That’s just a fact of life when you... the people can’t go to hospitals and doctors and have a fair shake and they only mean fair. It doesn’t mean everybody has got to be driving Mercedes and things like that.

Q. I’m not talking about totally spreading wealth, but there ought to be some reasonable laws and regulations and tax policies that give everyone a genuine chance.

A. Of course, and I pointed that... that’s the little Democratic way along with the big Democratic way.

Q. You could make that a platform if you want to run for office now. Do you think maybe your chance has passed now?

A. I don’t know, but if I got elected I’d be so startled at eighty-years-old and not know what to do with it. [laughter]
Q. Do you remember what Bill Buckley said when he ran for mayor of New York City as a protest vote? Someone asked him, “What will you do if you win?” He said, “I’ll demand a recount.” [laughter]

A. Makes sense [laughter].

Q. Ok, I’m trying to think of... have we forgotten anything in your civic life. Have you been an advisor to mayors directly in any way?

A. I told you that I was Chairman of the Capital City Planning Commission for a while. It was civic in a sort of a sense.

Q. Called the Capital City Planning, Capital County Complex.

A. Complex, yes.

Q. You did. Was that a kind of a thorny role? There were a lot of contending forces on that, wasn’t it? Who wanted what done where?

A. Well, I didn’t find it that way. I thought it was a positive thing. It was really a result, I think I told you that a highway building, which had originally been proposed to be located on the west side of Monroe of MacArthur Boulevard, across from... don’t know what park that is over there. Douglas Park?

Q. Yes, I think Douglas Park.

A. Yes, that was where the highway building was going to be. When it was relocated out on I-55, it was Jim Myers who was part of Myers Brothers just came out of the woodwork and said, “Look, that’s hundreds of thousands of jobs that are no longer going to be in the downtown area and we are destroying the downtown. We need to pull this whole capital complex together.” So Jim Myers, the merchant, was the starter of the Capital Development Planning.

Q. Oh, I didn’t know that, and he was right, of course.

A. Oh, he was exactly right, and we’ve lost again. We’ve broached this subject several times and we keep going at it. We lost a city planner. When that city planter went away, it’s not his job to guarantee the population demography what’s going to happen, but he could sure forecast it. Jim Myers, the merchant, forecast it. You take those people away and all of a sudden your downtown starts to deteriorate. He was exactly right.

Q. He was exactly right.

A. So when after he got into that thing, they said, “OK, let’s build this Capital Complex up.” They started off and I think Jim might have been the first Chairman. I don’t believe... there may
have been another one in between there or just proceeding him, and I believe the third one or maybe it was just the second, was Wally Ackerman. Wally Ackerman was an attorney.

Q. He was an attorney, not a judge, right.

A. He was an attorney. Wally Ackerman was a... well, he might have went that far, I didn’t realize. He was a good friend of mine when he was a lawyer.

Q. Sure, sure.

A. Well, I saw Wally Ackerman in the grocery store interestingly enough. Now this was put together when the... I can’t remember when that was; maybe I’m not real sure.

Q. Maybe in the late 1960s or early 1970s.

A. When did Dan Walker appear?

Q. He was elected in 1972, I believe.

A. Walker was?

Q. Yes.

A. Ok, we’re right at the tail end of the 1960s, and Wally Ackerman was the chairman of the Capital Complex planning group. I run into him at the... whatever store that one used to be, not Target, the other one over here.

Q. Kmart?

A. No, well maybe it was Kmart. It was right here over on MacArthur Boulevard. Well, ok, Kmart, maybe Walmart. Anyway, he was walking through the line and he turns to me and he says, “Boy, I’m going to give you a tip. I’ve been looking for you. You go apply for...” I think I have told you this story.

Q. No.

A. He said, “Go apply, call up...” I want to say the man’s name was Lou Silverman or something like that. It was a Jewish name, out of Chicago and he was a pushy guy. You didn’t fool around with Lou Silverman, if that was his name. Sorry, I didn’t mean to get sidetracked.

Q. No.

A. But anyway so, I did just exactly that. I walked in and said I want to be the chairman of the thing. He made me the chairman.
Q. So he was a state rep or a state senator?

A. He was the right hand of...

Q. Secretary of State?

A. The new governor, no... yes and no. No because Thompson was in there for a while, so Thompson.

Q. That’s ok, but somebody worked for a state big shot. Had he appointed people to the Capital Complex Planning Commission?

A. Yes, yes. He was the guy who said, “Don’t hold the meeting until I get there.”

Q. Ok, so he was at these meetings.

A. Oh, yes, he was there. I keep losing my train of thought on this thing. It is when the governor quit attending. The governors attended these things. But when the governor quit attending, the key players quit attending. But when I first started, I mean, I was the Chairman, the governor attended.

Q. Wow.

A. This just was... I keep thinking for some reason that this was Dan Walker.

Q. Dan Walker?

A. Dan Walker. Maybe that’s why Ackerman was leaving because Ackerman was appointed under the other governor. Ok, so when the governor attended the meetings right in the beginning, and it was very important because I would start the meetings on time and people were expected to be there on time and the whole bit.

I’ve always had that philosophy. If you don’t start it on time, don’t expect anybody to pay any attention to you. That is usually how I have my meeting both Historic Sites Commission and this particular group. But with Dan Walker, he gave his spiels and really participated as a member of the committee, not just a leader.

Q. That is interesting.

A. I was the chairman, and he was a contributor.

Q. He was a member.
A. It was amazing.

Q. Did you occasionally vote on ideas?

A. Basically it was recommendations type thing.

Q. Yes, recommendations to the governor or to the Secretary of State?

A. I don’t even know how to answer your question.

Q. You might say we recommend that you build an underground parking or something like that.

A. Sure, sure. Any of those items that came up, I don’t remember. All of those minutes are lost to me completely.

Q. How long did you serve?

A. I don’t remember that. I did get out when all of a sudden we were now going to start building in that area. When this report was written that had my name on that one, I mean Ferry and Henderson on that one while all of this was still taking place.

Q. When you started building on west Jefferson?

A. Sure.

Q. Then you really had a conflict of interest.

A. Yes, and the fact that Billy Gingold built on west Jefferson, too.

Q. Right.

A. In fact west Jefferson was great. We had a couple of streets that were favorable for us. MacArthur Boulevard had smaller stuff, Jefferson street had the big stuff, which we had the public housing.

Q. Yes.

A. That’s west of MacArthur. We did that one and then we built Gingold’s double building there. Then we did, of course, the Revenue Center.

Q. Right.

A. So those are all multi-million dollar things.
Q. I’ll say. Now another very successful developer was Frank Mason. Did you deal with Frank much? I don’t know if he was a developer, but he bought the property very presciently.

A. I dealt with Frank Mason in high school because it was the two platoon system and he was... I was his substitute or he was my substitute. On offense, I played guard. On defense, he played the same position. My position on defense, but I knew Frank Mason all the way through high school. When I came back, Frank Mason had just saved the City of Springfield and this is 1961.

The problem that I told you that in the Lincoln Home area, the property immediately behind the Lincoln Home had just been up for sale. It was zoned ok for C, which is commercial – could put a Kmart or a hot dog stand or anything else in there. Frank Mason got involved in that personally and bought the thing out from under the guy. He then went to Lester Collins and maybe it was the mayor even before that and said, “You have got to do something about this.” Frank Mason was a hero in that deal.

Q. Well, good. Well, he had a special interest in historical things. He had a special interest in making money and befriending.

A. He was a very astute politician.

Q. Yes, I agree.

A. He knew what he was doing, and it was none of my business. It was interesting after I got separated, Frank basically used to... he collected more people who were separated from their original relationships for Sunday dinner. [laughter] He would have twenty people over there and it was amazing. All of us would sit...

Q. Where did he live?

A. He lived over on... same street that Barthoff lived on, over here. Starts with... not “son.”

Q. Willowmore?

A. No, no. It’s perpendicular.

Q. Ash? Cherry?

A. No, but you’re going in the right direction.

Q. Well, we won’t worry about what street Frank Mason lived on. We know that he was in Leland Grove.

A. Yes, Sunset.

Henderson
Q. Sunset, of course. Sunset Lane.

A. It is Lane.

Q. Thank you. Oh, he was a character, Frank was. Actually, well, I’ll tell you a story after we finish. It’s about me, not about you. It’s about Frank, and it’s cute. I had respect for him.

A. But when you said he was a little unusual, he had strong opinions.

Q. Oh, he did, not really gruff, but he was skeptical so often, I think. He would gather these separated or divorced men. All men was it?

A. No, no.

Q. Oh, it was a mixture.

A. Oh, yes. Marilyn was there. It was a congenial bunch, and there were no hateful people there at all.

Q. Isn’t that wonderful?

A. There really wasn’t. You could just talk about anything, but you didn’t talk about anything personal.

Q. No, of course not.

A. But he would do this and Marilyn would cook up a big meal and would just, you knew when to leave, and it was good.

Q. I’m told... I never saw him because I never went to the supermarket early in the morning or the train station. But I was told that he could often be found drinking a cup of coffee in the supermarkets like at 7 a.m. Maybe he was an early... maybe he stayed up all night, I don’t know.

A. He had a driver. He didn’t drive his own car. He was... what is it, what is the right word?

Q. Eccentric? Not eccentric. That’s not right.

A. That’s awful close, though.

Q. Close, yes.
A. But he’s, well, he had his own way of doing things. At Christmas time back of his trunk was loaded with gifts. I mean he would go in and buy, oh I can’t even give you a good example of it. Let’s say frying pans were on sale, he would go off and buy twenty frying pans [laughter], and take them to secretaries. I mean every secretary in town knew him, and we talked about kissing babies and shaking hands.

Q. Yes.

A. Frank had that unusual way of doing things, and he had gift for people, and it was generous, very generous. But as a result, he could get most answered about any questions you had to answer. He used to be “patrols” is what he used to call it. He would have his driver drive around and check out who was doing what. He knew more gossip than anybody could ever know.

Q. I’m sure he did. Ok. I’m not sure where to go next. We’ve covered civic life. We’re going to leave family life. You don’t want to talk any further about separation, but you ought to talk about meeting Brynn, I think maybe.

A. Well, I can do that.

Q. Ok. You and Sally remained separated for some years?

A. Well, we would never have gotten this divorce, the separation. Are we on record now?

Q. Yes, we are.

A. Well, you’ve got to kill it for a minute.

Q. Ok.

[Tape pauses]

Q. Let’s talk about Brynn.

A. Sure, sure.

Q. How do you spell Brynn?

A. B-R-Y-N-N.

Q. Ok, I should know that.

A. She was Van Pickerel; Brynn Van Pickerel of Van Pickerel liquor distributor.
Q. Oh, yes.

A. Any event, yes, now my kids got into hockey, and hockey was a sport. I attended it regularly, and it was a family project as a matter of fact. They had a fund raising type thing and this is where the mothers, and Sally was a mother skater. Well, she wasn’t a skater, none of the mothers were necessarily skaters, but they all got dressed up.

I remember going over there as a family and the mother’s had teams, and I don’t know whether Brynn and Sally were on the same team or not. I think maybe they were, and the team had the unusual name of “Mother Puckers,” which was unusual to say the least [laughter]. But they were all out there practicing their hitting or trying to stand up on skates.

Q. Was this at the Ice Chateau?

A. Ice Chateau, which was just a few blocks from our house. The whole family is there including the dog and the sisters and everybody else... I mean sisters of the boys. But here is this very attractive lady who had an outstanding figure even in a hockey uniform and trying to maneuver that puck with a hockey stick.

I asked her what her name was and walked around the course with her a couple of times just flirting obviously. I had a whole family to worry about, but it was probably fifteen years later when I am...well, I don’t know how many years later it was. It was a lot of years later. I’m now single, and Sally has passed away and I’m down with Bill Schroeder, who was a doctor friend of mine.

Q. Bill Stringer?

A. Schroeder, S-C-H-R-O-D-E-R, spells like Schroeder but I always told him he mispronounced the “e.”

Q. So you were living with him?

A. No, no, no. This is years later, and I just happened to be down at the bar with him, which what’s Monroe and Third Street?

Q. Oh, I can’t, but I know the one you mean.

A. Anyway, I’m in there and here this lady that I hadn’t seen in all those years comes walking in. She knew Bill and she remembered me following around, and we dated for fourteen years and got married. [laughter] That’s true.

Q. That’s interesting. Fourteen years? You were a single man for even longer.

A. Oh, yes. About sixteen years.
Q. We used to see her. She obviously accompanied you to many events and liked her a lot.

A. Oh yes.

Q. I’m glad it worked out.

A. Oh sure, yes, we just travel together...just did not live together anyways.

Q. No, I understand. She still works for the state.

A. Yes, thank goodness.

Q. Thank goodness? [laughs]

A. Well, these are hard times, you’ve got to recognize that. [laughs] We’re laughing but...

Q. There is something to that, of course.

A. I’m not going to ask her age but she’s younger than you.

Q. Yes.

A. Let’s just leave it at that.

Q. She’s, what, nine years younger, that’s right, sounds right.

A. Well, I know the feeling. That’s the gap in my marriage. We’ve just about, well, we haven’t gotten to your honors, but it’s going to take a little more time than the time we have left today. I think maybe we’ll stop.

Q. I enjoy the time we spend so we can go early.

A. I think we’d better do one final session, but it will probably be limited.

Q. Sure.

A. So that’s it for today.

END OF TAPE TEN, SIDE TWO

41:42
Q. Oral history interview with Wally Henderson on May 24, 2011; the interviewer is Cullom Davis. I guess we’re going to take up your family life a little bit, Wally, if you want to talk about the growth and education of your children and their lives since their education.

A. Sure. Let’s start with the fact that I was an only child and born in the depression era, and my folks said that’s why I was an only child. That’s all they could afford anyway. So I was sort of the focus of their attention. It’s interesting because by loving me they exercised the kind of restraint you put on children and by loving them I acquiesced and I came out fine.

I didn’t want to ever embarrass them, so I was trying hard not to and that probably explained some of things that happened. In high school, I personally got involved, first of all, in sports, I knew nothing about football but started on the freshman team and got four letters in football.

My dad was a baseball player along with having a band but I disappointed him because I couldn’t hit a ball with it hanging on a string. [laughter] So that was it. From there, and I think I told you, I was the January class president which by the way, that was when we still had January classes at Springfield High School.

Q. You mean January, a whole, you mean a new semester?

A. Yes, a new semester started, but they had graduations in January and June.

Q. In June, right.

A. It was the January class, 1949, Springfield High School.

Q. So you graduated early? Is that right?

A. Well, I graduated with my class. That’s the way they had broken things up. I think I mentioned in one of our earlier discussions here. The school system, District 186 was struggling to the point that they had locked the doors on Springfield High School.

Q. Oh, you mentioned that.

A. The whole thing was split shifts and everything. That was into effect, well, it wasn’t in my years.
Q. But your children.

A. But my children, that’s what our subject truly is. I ended up as an only child, married to Sally Vicary, V-I-C-A-R-Y, which is a Swiss name I’m told. We met when I came back from overseas stationed in Fort Carson, Colorado. She lived in Colorado Springs and that’s where we got married. We spent the first four years of our life living in Denver. Then I came back here.

But during that time, we had one baby in Denver. Then I came back for part of my...the first half of my master’s. I finished my master’s by coming back to Urbana. My number two child...my first child was Rebecca Mae Henderson; number two was Katherine Marie Henderson. My third child was born in...let’s see, she must have been born...Kathy, Katya I call her now, was born in, as I said, Urbana, but then the other three, which is Kirsten Henderson, Kirsten Elaine Henderson; then came my two boys: Earl Wallace Henderson III and my last son was Timothy John Henderson.

Q. Earl went by a nickname, didn’t he?

A. Tiger, yes.

Q. Tiger, right.

A. That was a story came back from the days when I was at the University of Illinois, and I put in my summer camp with the Air Force ROTC at James Connally Air Force Base in Waco, Texas.

Q. Oh yes, you mentioned that.

A. That was an unusual event. Got to fly in B-25s, I think it was the old F-80 converted to a jet trainer. But every place you went on that base, and of course, they more than just the University of Illinois group in there. There were several platoons of us, and they had a commanding general whose name was Disaway, D-I-S-A-W-Y.

I always remember, in fact this tiger story...the buildup of this was, every place you walked on that base, and I always joke around, if you’re at the urinal you look up and the poster on the wall is “tigering” at you. I mean, you go anyplace else on the base you always had this tiger poster. One day the general himself was going to speak to this, well, there were several hundred from different universities and ourselves. Our group was sitting up in the front area. I’m going to show you, as a matter of fact, the paper...

[tape paused]

Q. The theme of the paper, the base newspaper, was the tiger. Was that the mascot?

A. Well, that’s what I’m wondering while I’m there. Of course, that was a collector’s item that I showed you.
A great newspaper.

Q. When General Disaway gets there, and he stands up in front of all of us on the PT platform and starts telling us about what’s going on. I think he might have asked if there were any questions or something. I stuck my hand up and I said, “Sir, why do we see all these tiger posters and so forth?” It was like, man, I pushed the right button because he just lit up and he said, “A great question.”

He went into this almost like I’ve seen in Japanese movies about Bonsai, Bonsai. It’s like he was just at the top of his voice saying, “Every man a tiger.” He went on explained that the king of the jungle really is not the lion, it’s the tiger. He wants everybody in that Air Force ROTC group to be tigers.

Well my son “Tiger” Earl Henderson III, when he was born, came down with a little fever or something as a little baby. They put him in a gurney and literally tied his arms and legs so he wouldn’t flail around in the thing but he was just screaming at the top of his voice. I said, “That kid is a tiger.” Somebody heard that and it stuck from there on. People call him that today. In fact, I’ll run into somebody and they say, “Are you Tiger’s dad?” I don’t know them from anybody but that’s it.

Q. So he’s the only one of your five children who really kind of had a nickname?

A. Well, let’s see. I’m trying to think that over. I call Kate “Katya” which is a Russian pronunciation of that. I call Kirsten “Rabbit” and I don’t know why yet except that she was always busy doing things. Tim, I’ll remember this one, he went to Owen Marsh Elementary School, which is a school our office had designed.

I remember the first time I went to a parent-teacher type thing and this was a round school. It was famously or infamously known as “the round school,” so everybody... extended into a storytelling area. I remember walking into the space, and there are all these little kids. They had nameplates, bent cardboard with their names on them. Well, there were several Tim’s in there and he was “Tim H.”

Q. Tim H.

A. To this day I call him “Tim H.” [laughs] The nicknames just kind of pursued him there.

Q. Several of my children were Tim’s age, they went to Owen March and they played hockey.

A. Oh did they? Really, ok.

Q. My son and my two step-sons, so that must be about the same age, 43 or something like that.
A. Sure, you’re right in the area.

Q. So they knew each other pretty well.

A. I don’t have all their birthdays in front of me but it was a span of about 10 years from the oldest to the youngest.

Q. Ok. Timothy was born then in Springfield?

A. Springfield, yes, oh yes.

Q. Right, ok.

A. It was an interesting series of events because again there was an age difference in there. I’ve got some neat pictures, which can’t be seen on these, of course, but we can pull them up there. But the family was quite the thing, and of course, we always got the biggest Christmas tree we could possibly buy.

The house that we lived in I had designed an 11 foot ceiling in a spot, so we would buy very tall trees. It was fun in those days because it took all of us to decorate the tree and another whole day to undecorate the tree. [laughs] No, they were great times. When we’ve talked about this thing before, you kind of caught me cold turkey on it.

Q. I’m sorry.

A. Yes, my kids were a delight and their mother was the mother. I spent time trying to build the Ferry and Henderson thing, and that took a lot of time, not saying anything like to ignore the family but it just took time.

Q. You had to travel a fair amount.

A. Travelling.

Q. Long hours.

A. The long hours particularly. I didn’t have many overnights except when I got involved with the American Institute of Architects. We did some work at that, but that again was very important from a marketing standpoint getting into the cities and... we’ll get to that part soon.

Q. Ok.

A. But we ended up, matter of fact, when my daughters, this would be Katherine and Becky, when they were, oh they were old enough to travel anyway. In 1968, I had gotten in contact with Copley Newspapers, in fact it was before then, but at this point we had already gotten the
contracts to do the Journal-Register. I think we were already maybe even signed up for the other, several others that I had mentioned. Any event, Jim Copley, I think, is where it can from, or Fred McCann who was their creative person who kept track of new concepts and so forth. He said it would be worthwhile because they were putting in new presses to make a trip to Europe.

The actual springer and the…I can’t pronounce it properly but Svenska Dagbladet, I think is the paper in Stockholm, Sweden. So they encouraged and paid the way for Jack Clark and I to go to Denmark, to Sweden, to Germany, and to England. So in 1968, that’s what we did. Going to the newspaper plants, which was quite an exercise. I had never been to Europe at that particular point, so it was very exciting.

But newspaper people are different than other people. They know other things that most people don’t know or how to get things done. It was really an exciting thing and spent time, as I say, in Copenhagen, and then we went up to Stockholm. The Stockholm paper [laughs], I have to laugh because they’re pretty heavy drinkers in Denmark and in Sweden.

They treated us very well and they wrote some of their work…we watched them, actually watched television and write about things that happen. They weren’t there at all. They just watched television and wrote their own paper story. But it was neat.

Up in Stockholm we went out one night, and I clearly just had poured myself sick. When I got up in the morning, I was dead tired and I go to sleep right in the middle of one of the meetings. My head hit the table like this and everybody starts…they think it’s just funny as heck.

But they would do their meetings and go into a sauna, and here you’d sit together. Over here’s a half a dozen drunk men just naked as a jaybird, 120 degrees sweating like crazy and talking about how they delivered papers to the countryside by airdrop. I mean they would actually fly over an area and drop the bags.

Q. These were remote areas.

A. Yes, yes, yes, it was a different thing. All the way through it was...

Q. Were some of these newspapers, you visited European newspaper plants that had been built fairly recently?

A. Yes, oh yes.

Q. Ok. That was the point to see those?

A. The equipment. See we didn’t have colored press. I think the ones that Copley got were some of the first in the United States. They didn’t have color comics or anything like that. We put in color newspapers at the Journal-Register in Springfield.
Q. Were some of those color print, printer manufacturing companies in Sweden or Germany?

A. Sweden particularly and certainly in Germany. I did go to Fleet Street in England and their presses looked more like our presses. The way the things were actually being accomplished...but everybody was cozy about this. Of course, we were dealing with the publishers and the upper echelon, didn’t see all the working people but they...but it was an interesting type of research.

Q. Of course it was, sure.

A. That was when I ended up getting into East Berlin. While I was over there, Jack Clark had been calling home as I had and his wife reported that she was going to have a miscarriage or something similar.

Q. Her name was Bert wasn’t it?

A. Bert, yes.

Q. Roberta?

A. Yes.

Q. Go ahead.

A. We had finished Denmark, and we had finished Stockholm. Denmark is a very small country. It is seven miles from the tail end of Sweden, so we actually took the airboat to wherever it was to get over. I think it was in the wintertime because there was snow on the ground. Anyway we went from there to Berlin. It was while we were in Berlin, not yet looking at some of the things. The Russians had surrounded the whole area.

Q. I know, yes.

A. So we were in Berlin. We just couldn’t go through it. We landed in Berlin.

Q. Was that at the famous Tempelhof Airport?

A. Yes, I think it was. We did go to Munich as well so I’m trying to figure out whether we...

Q. Well Tempelhof was famous because that’s when the airlift...

A. Well, anyway we get into Berlin. We’re staying in the American section. Everything was blown to pieces to say the least. The ruins of the allied bombings and the Burgess Garden, not Burgess Garden but the gate and all these things were ruins. There’s also Checkpoint Charlie.
Well, someplace along the way, Jack had to be called back, so I’m just going to just take that trip by myself. I get on that bus that goes to Checkpoint Charlie. They drive you through and it’s got guards, Russians, and all this stuff.

They pull the buses up off to the side and I’m sitting there in my seat and VoPo [Volkspolizei], that’s the Russian police, get on board. They go from seat to seat and want your passports. They come up to me, I give them my passport. This VoPo, who all the time they got their guns on you, not pointing in the air like you are used to.

The gun is pointing at you. He’s just standing there, and he’s got my passport in his hand. I finally turn my head, not turning my body, what they’re about to do because I look out the window. They had, well I remember a Volkswagen right outside the window, but they had the seats out and a thing that looked like a lawnmower with mirrors.

Q. Oh, checking for weapons.

A. If you were carrying people out.

Q. Of course.

A. I mean anything at all. They were all prepared for that kind of stuff, but the Volkswagen was just dismantled. Other buses were getting the same treatment, but this VoPo standing there with his gun up against my head. I finally turn and I say, “Is there a problem?” He doesn’t say anything and he reaches in and he hands me my passport. He still doesn’t say anything, and I say, “So what?” He said, “It isn’t signed.” Now get this, I had been to Denmark and I had been to Sweden and I had been to Munich, Germany, nobody else caught it.

Q. Nobody else caught it.

A. These Russians...and I hadn’t signed it. So I mean, now my heart is choking because I’m already in Russian territory. I can’t get back unless they let me go back. He stood there another five minutes before he said anything. Then he said, “I want you to sign it,” or I don’t know how he said it, but the message was, “Sign it.”

So I’m standing there and I sign it. Of course, they keep the passport at this point, and I’m on my way out. When I come back, they still got the picture and they’ve got me and they’ll let me back. But that was an experience because I went through and it was a day tour essentially. Of course, the place had been just blown to pieces.

Q. Yes, East Berlin was a real mess.

A. It really and truly was. It was interesting. Everything was very tense. The only street they took you on, they were reconstructing as best they could. They took us for tea or coffee or
whatever they do just at a convenient stop. We got out and we’re in a hotel lobby, and it looks pretty good.

Here are people dressed mostly western and there was a good-looking middle-aged woman. For some reason she said something, she was English or American. Anyway, I walked over to her and I said, “Are you an American?” She quickly, I mean she was terrified, she said, “Don’t talk to me. Don’t talk to me,” and almost ran away.

Everybody was so sensitive about if you brushed shoulders with them, the Russians wanted to know why you brushed shoulders with them. That was a sensitive thing. But seeing that part of the world in that condition and we went back to the Berlin Wall of course; went through one of the parks and the parks had three-story tall pieces of sculpture of soldiers.

Q. Yes, these heroic statues.

A. Huge. They were heroic sizes even.

Q. Exactly.

A. Monumental sizes.

Q. It’s a coincidence. I went through East Germany and Russia in 1968, too.

A. Oh did you? Oh really?

Q. Education group. It was a stark, stark sight.

A. Sure. Well, in any event, that was 1968, so now I come back and I had now been to Europe. I said something and whatever it was, we put it together. But the next year in 1969, we ended up taking our two daughters and we still had, I think we had a little baby. My mother, we had moved back to Springfield by that time. So my family was living within a half mile where we were. Anyway, we took the two daughters, and we go back.

Q. The two oldest daughters?

A. Yes, that’s…

Q. Rebecca and Katherine.

A. Becky and Kathy. We ended up going to England, and went to the Cotswolds and all through there, which is fairyland; it’s wonderful.

Q. Oh I’m sure.
A. Then to Paris and saw the Eiffel Tower, and did all those kind of things. That was sort of the extent of what that trip was about. We believed that it was important that they get a chance to see it. Later on his class went back, Tiger’s class when he was...he might have been going to Grant, anyway they took a group to Europe on a ski trip. He went on that trip.

Q. Kelly was on that same trip.

A. Oh was he?

Q. Southern France.

A. Yes, exactly right, ok.

Q. Interesting. Yes, that was quite the adventure. I pitied the parents who went along as chaperones.

A. Well, I understood that. I think Tiger’s a little nervous about that thing. Someone had told him his parents, us, had died or something and it really scared the hell out of him, and nobody could convince him it wasn’t true.

Q. So they did get some exposure to Europe.

A. They were. In that case, later on Kirsten, on her own, went to Greece and Turkey and so forth. She was sort of a phenomenon there because Kirsten was blonde, and they had never even seen a blonde [laughs] Some of the places that she went to, but she was an adult by that time.

Anyway, my kids, I think I told you I had an orange Porsche, orange one and a yellow one. These Porsches, I always called them fake Volkswagens because they were...it was the 914 model, which was sort of like a convertible. It was a two-seater, air-cooled engine in the rear. It was a terrific car.

I loved every bit of it except the heater was no damn good on it. It was fun to be with. It was small, and you could park it anyplace. But I could also drive it anyplace. When I would come home some of these evenings and the kids would be outside. I’d just drive up over the lawn and chase them around the trees because it was a low car. It was “Daddy’s racing car,” that’s what they called it. [laughs] They’d be squealing, just having a heck of a time with it.

Q. Because it wasn’t exactly a family car. You could fit one other person in it?

A. That’s all.

Q. It was a real small sports car.
A. It had a console between the two seats. It was a two-seater from the word “go.” The top wasn’t a top that removed. You stopped the car and got out and unsnapped it, and pulled up the hood. Set the top in there and closed the lid.

Q. You must have had a lot of fun with that.

A. Oh I did. Again, the justification, they painted them in this bilious orange, bilious yellow. If you saw them, you could see them a mile away. That’s the point because they were smaller than any other car on the road at that time. So as a result...maybe the Mini Cooper was about the same size.

Q. Yes.

A. The British MG, too. But this was my favorite car and it was a beautiful thing. While I was out of the office someplace out of the country I think, and I called and I had left the car so somebody could drive it. My interior designer said somebody had a wreck with the car. I said, “You’re kidding me.” I thought she was putting me on. She said, “No,” she wasn’t. They just bashed the side of the car. It was never the same because there weren’t any replacements. It was a one-shot deal.

Anyway, but talking about other things, those were sort of the glamorous trips. We did, on I think four different occasions, went to Hilton Head, South Carolina. That was a big...the first years that it came out, and I can’t tell you what that was but it hit all the magazines because it was a planning resort.

We got down there in the first two years, and I didn’t know anything Hilton Head or that part of the south. Anyway, approaching it you went on sort of like a country road, and just before you got in there was absolutely the poorest village I had seen since I left Korea. I mean the poor black people were just barely surviving. You went over this sort of gangplank-type thing, and now you’re on the island. It was barely developed. Have you been to Hilton Head?

Q. Yes, for a conference once.

A. They have Harbor Town. The Harbor Town was the beginning of sort of like a little village, but they had some condominiums right there. I was thinking, “Boy this is a good place to be.” Well, I went over and the construction was built out of concrete, basically, or cement. But it had wood framing in there, but everything was busted seashells not rock or anything else.

I thought this cheap thing isn’t worth anything, and so when I went over and asked about it they wanted $30,000. Boy oh boy, that was a lot of money and whatever year it was I still say it’s not worth that. Now the last time I was there or the last time at least I inquired how much it would be, that very unit I asked about was $300,000. [laughs] I mean it’s so preposterous, and I was the big bright architect, that’s really crap.
Q. Didn’t see that coming.

A. [laughs] No I certainly didn’t.

Q. You said they were built on just seashells, it had no real foundations?

A. No, they had foundations. No, I’m saying the mix was instead of aggregate being like our normal aggregate, they had broken shells.

Q. Which is not a strong?

A. In my judgment but nobody asked for my opinion. They just wanted my money.

Q. Seashells were...

A. Enamel, enamel. Of course, everything there was sort of the first time in. They had marked it unusual ways, little signs that showed you where you were going, so we were back in there. There were and still are, live alligators in the ponds. They told you don’t get your dog there. Course we didn’t have a dog with us. In any event, but it was put together as a resort, which I thought was wonderful.

Q. Oh, of course.

A. I often times wish I had bought a little something there.

Q. I later read that some of those poor black people who had lived there for generations had to sell their land because they couldn’t afford the property tax. The property taxes went up for improvements, and this may not be true but essentially they were forced out, which was fine with the developers because they picked up some more land. Now I don’t know about that, but I read it in the newspaper.

A. I wouldn’t doubt that for a second. I say this because of my bad attitude, unfortunately is capitalism. Money is everything, and so somebody’s opinion or somebody’s hardship is – “Sorry I did this, but it’s got to happen.”

Q. Of course.

A. I’m apologetic for having that attitude, but we do.

Q. Ok, so then the kids went with you on some of those trips?

A. Sure. On occasion I had taken some of the kids with me. I had made some, still haven’t figured out how I winded up with Tim and a couple or three of his buddies in New Orleans.
had taken them down, we had by that time had an office or did have an office operating in San Antonio.

Q. Yes.

A. I think I was taking a side trip but brought those kids that far with me. In any event, which was an exercise all by itself. I had been to New Orleans several times with the AIAA Urban Design Committee, and I had always stayed in the French Quarter. Today I probably would again, had been there a total of five to six times and the last time, which we'll pick up here at the end of the show here maybe. I had stayed west of Canal Street.

I had always stayed in the French Quarter, always west so I didn’t know anything about New Orleans at all except when I had stayed there. What was funny about that is that now I’ve got these kids and they are thirteen-year-old boys, and we’re down there and I’m telling them to stay in the hotel because I’ve got to go down to a meeting or whatever, must have been AIA meeting. In any event, they snuck out on me and then come back. There were these thirteen-year-old boys terribly in love. They have seen the most beautiful girls in the world.

Q. Strippers on Bourbon Street?

A. Yes, cross-dressers. [laughter] I said, “First of all, I told you just to stay here or anything could happen to you. Those were somebody’s brothers, not their sisters by a long shot.” You had to tell them a little of the facts; they didn’t believe me, just absolutely didn’t believe me. I said, “Well, you better believe me.”

Q. Because you’ll find out.

A. But the French Quarter so that was fuller vacation and a lesson at the same time.

Q. It was a real education.

A. You’ll have no more Lake Pontchartrain or something. It seems like you’re driving forever across the seas, thirty-seven miles on that water. Let’s see, we went on camping trips. One of those that was quite good was Lake Superior. We went up to the Apostle Islands on Lake Superior, which was pretty exciting to say the least. Stayed out east and my boys, I had been a Boy Scout and thought very highly of the Boy Scouts.

I don’t know where the kids got it. My mother had taken me to Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and I always regretted never being a Boy Scout, but I wanted my kids to get into it. They wouldn’t touch that with a stick because they took the uniform to be some kind of a military thing, and we couldn’t get them into it.

Q. Well, the times here were very anti-military.
A. Exactly right.

Q. Anti-uniformity in general.

A. Oh, exactly right.

Q. My kids, we introduced them to scouting.

A. You had the same experience?

Q. Oh, yes.

A. Well, I did everything I could by taking them on the trips. We got one of those pop-up camper type things, hauled it all the way up to the Apostle Islands, had to take a ferry boat out to an island beyond the or in the Apostles and set up our tent and the whole thing, our pop-up thing. It was just great stuff.

Q. Well, that’s fun. Sure, that’s just like camping and Boy Scouts except it was family.

A. Of course, Sally’s folks were still in Colorado Springs, and so we got out there one Christmas and went to Aspen. Stayed there with snow on the ground, and that’s when Albert Myers lived out there at that time. He had made himself so welcome into Aspen, when I said, “Does anybody know how I can meet that Albert Myers?” “Oh, he’s in the Bear Lodge or something,” they would say, but he held forth and we would go to this after ski place or whatever they call it type bar.

At the back row here’s this round table. They said, “Well, Albert will sit there.” We walk in the next day and there is Albert and all these other guys all drinking their morning coffee and telling war stories. [laughter] Albert Myers was funny, too, because he was pretty well accepted. They were going to build some parking structures out there. I think this was after I had been down there for another year, but it doesn’t make any difference.

At any event, he came to me and he said, “You ought to come up here because they need you because these parking structures ought to be more than just parking structures. There are some historic buildings.” I said, “Albert, there’s an awful lot of architects in the world.” He had thought because he was head of Women’s Wear Daily, the magazine for a while, which I felt was quite an honor.

Q. It is.

A. But he also made speeches in Europe and he was one of them after he had been to Europe, came back. I don’t think he, in the war. Gingold had been, Billy Gingold, his brother-in-law, had been a prisoner of war in Germany.
Q. Oh, I didn’t know that.

A. Was a B-17 pilot, and he got shot down and interned in the stalags over there, the jails. That wasn’t good for Jewish people with Hitler there. Everybody was worried about him. Anyway, Albert kept saying, “Boy, they need you in Europe because there are lots to be restored.” I said, “Albert, the buildings are restored. It was before we even saw the Indians in America.”

Q. He was always trying to...

A. Well, he was always that way. Albert was just, “Go get them.”

Q. He was a great promoter.

A. Yes he was. Springfield was better off because of it.

Q. Yes, I agree, ok.

A. My kids learned to sail. I told you that story about my sailboat. I ended up with this 28 foot boat, which took a crew of four and since I had five kids, I had a crew.

Q. You had a crew for your boat.

A. Of course, everybody didn’t get to go at one time. In very heavy weather, I would usually go for an adult because in heavy weather it still took that to hold her down. But Sally always was the, ran the jib and the head sail. She was happy they do have, I think we mentioned before, they have a plaque out on Island Bay [Lake Springfield Yacht Club] for her for the best woman sailor each year award.

Q. So she really found a calling or a hobby in sailing.

A. Oh, yes. Oh, yes. She was a skier, too. Now see when she had lived in Colorado, she had moved from wherever they lived. It wasn’t Peoria, but it was a town right outside. Her dad was an accountant; her dad, through his accounting, he got his...he hadn’t gone to high school I don’t think, but he ended up at Brown’s Business College. He ended up getting an accounting license and so forth and became a very successful accountant in the Peoria area.

In the process, some of the people he worked for were creative but couldn’t develop things that they had invented, but they had the patents. They sold them to buy... my father-in-law and so he had like a half a dozen patents or more at one time. A couple of them – Willys-Overland Jeeps – you could put on the front hubs and disconnect the front wheel drive.

Q. Oh, sure. I’ve seen people do that. That was his.

A. He had the patent on it.
Q. He had bought, but he wasn’t an inventor himself.

A. No, no, no, no.

Q. Smart guy.

A. In fact it was funny, he was a very smart guy except that anything done around the house like wire an electric fan or something so that you could plug it in, Mildred – that was Sally’s mother – had to do that because John just wasn’t mechanical. But he had a factory out in Colorado Springs that did air...well, I shouldn’t say that. They die cast aluminum materials and sort of the equipment for the wheel things for the jeep and so forth. He had the die cast machines.

He was permanently located and very successful. As a matter of fact, hoped that I could be in the business, I think we touched this, and he wanted either me or her brother to do it. Her brother went to California as a stockbroker, and I was busy as an architect. He ended up selling it, which was too bad. She went out there as a young girl, and their school wasn’t even big enough to have a football team. This was, I always called it, called her high school “Rocky Mountain High School for Wayward Children” or something.

Q. [laughs] This is now Sally you’re talking about?

A. Yes, that’s Sally. That was being a smart-aleck about things. It was a small, it was right, not very far from the Broadmoor Hotel, which was a big, big tourist attraction. Before, in fact, Colorado, just before we got out there and got married, Colorado was fighting the fact that they didn’t want people who had experienced Colorado to come back.

They were perfectly happy with it as Colorado Springs, a modest little town and all this. So when somebody put skiers on the license plate; that was a major argument because they didn’t want to tell people. This sounds like a fake story but it’s true. There was a group of people who said this land was too good to give to the tourists.

Q. Save it for us.

A. Yes, yes, of course. Thank goodness they got them because Colorado had run out of gold and a lot of other things that they didn’t have.

Q. So you did make some visits when you and Sally were married to visit her family and took the kids?

A. Oh sure, because it was less than a hundred miles driving down when we lived in Denver to get back and forth, and so that was easy to do. The Broadmoor Hotel was less than five blocks away from us and the ski slope you could look out our back door and see it. It was a bunny hill,
but it was all I could take. The bunny hill was, a bunny hill by definition is for bunnies and that’s people who don’t feel very comfortable skiing.

Q. That’s right.

A. Beginners to say the least. But I never got beyond that. We went to Aspen and we went to...oh I can’t even tell you some of the other places.

Q. Vale?

A. Vale, of course, that just kicked in. When I worked there, Vale was just starting as a matter of fact. As an employee in the Muchow office we’d go out some of the times if we didn’t sit around the office and argue design elements, walk around 16th Street and so forth. They had a couple of show windows there. Somebody was promoting this strange thing up in the mountains called Vale, Colorado.

They showed their properties were $3,000 or some doggone thing. We’re all laughing because architects build models, and they’re building little models of what these ought to look like. We think boy this is the biggest joke in the world because everybody knows Vale is just barely one block away from a cliff more than anything else. But the long and short of that one was I’ve been to Vale to many times since and thought I could own maybe the corner of this corner for $3,000 today. [laughs]

But they were doing just anything they could. But in Muchow’s office we had done several ski lifts moving our way to Vale. I’ve lost track of what those were, but I did a couple buildings on that. But again, my kids got used to skiing. We took them up to Wisconsin. There are a couple of hills up there and so forth.

So as time went on, my kids again had a little different experience. When Becky went to school, this is when they had, in Springfield High School, split-shift and they were locking kids in and all those things I told you. We gave her the option, or actually it wasn’t an option, we found a school in high regard for discipline and so forth in Wisconsin, Wayland Academy.

Q. Wayland Academy.

A. I can’t remember the town it was in, but it was a good school. Of course she went there for I think a couple of years and then came back and did graduate at Springfield High.

Q. She liked it. It was a good experience?

A. Yes, but her friends were still here. But actually, that time away...yes, as a matter of fact, one of her good friends she brought home one time was...I can’t remember the first name, was a Harley, daughter of the Harley motorcycle.
Q. Harley motorcycle, Harleys?

A. Yes. Motorcycles sacred me, too. Some of these going fast too close to the ground is not exciting to me.

Q. Exactly.

A. When Katherine came along ready for high school, we gave her a choice. She wanted to go away to high school; that was Sally’s idea. Of course, it cost money to go to Wayland. I said, “Let’s try Springfield High.” But Katherine chose Wayland Academy. Now you mentioned your boys were into hockey. Well, my boys were into hockey, too, both of them. Those teams got very close to each other. Well, when the time came, and you’re not Catholic are you?

Q. No.

A. Well, my boys are not Catholic either, but every boy that is on their particular team went to Griffin-Sacred Heart. So my boys...where else are they going to go? Why would I want to spend money when you have a perfectly good public high school? Well, so and so’s there and so...

Q. So they went to Griffin?

A. So did their sister who was older than they were because she used to go to all the hockey games. Kirsten now is my number three daughter who, as an aside, passed away at 47 years old in 19...I’m sorry 2009.

Q. Yes, I know. We attended that service. She was the personality of the family. She attended the games and brought the dog and put the dog in sweaters on the hockey rink. She was always the fun girl. So when they started in the direction, she went there first but it was because her friends that she had met over there were there.

A. So all three youngest children all attended Sacred Heart? Or Griffin-Sacred Heart.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. Which is probably, I won’t call it a better education, but it was expensive for the parents, a little expensive.

Q. I thought there was discipline but their discipline was...what do you call it...corporal treatment?

A. Corporal punishment.

Q. They smacked them.
A. I know they did.

Q. Today they just, they stopped that. I don’t know whether I told you that story or not, but my boys were...they had to attend whatever the religious events were, which I think they had a daily five minute prayer or something. I don’t think they did more than just keep quiet. That was probably the contribution they made.

But Tim, when they wrote...they had a little column in the paper that they turn out. He’s now graduating, and they had been featuring the different seniors and here comes this...the columns called “Spotlight.” When my son Tim’s picture was in there, they changed the title from “Spotlight” to “Flashlight.”

Q. Flashlight.

A. Preceded the whole thing with a tongue and cheek about how Tim is going to miss Father so-and-so and particularly his red socks and sandals. Then he goes on with a whole bunch of stuff about how Tim’s real goal is to become a priest. [laughs]

I mean it was like, just...in fact, I think one of Tim’s birthday’s here when he was 30 years old I sent him a copy of that because I got a copy someplace. But it was fun times and that took us...the family went to a hockey camp up in Minnesota, which I don’t think that would have been a possible Iowa trip but would have been a good excuse to get in that area anyway.

Q. I’ll say.

A. We did have an adventure that was where everybody could have their tongue hanging out. Becky, by this time, was in Florida with her grandfather who had moved down there after his wife had passed away and he got remarried. Any event, we went sailing at the invitation of the Evans, Evans was Larry and...

Q. Phil Evans.

A. It was Phil Evans. He had a, I want to say a 40 some foot, two-mast sailboat down there, out in the Bahamas. He invited the whole family, which at this point is four kids and Sally and I. We fly down to the Bahamas and get on this baby and spend, I think it was a better part of...they could have been gone two weeks, but I had to come back for an interview. Interestingly enough, the interview was to do the Willard Ice Building.

Q. Oh, my gosh.

A. I flew out of the Bahamas to get up to Chicago for the interview for the building. Of course, we had already been asked would we do it? But we had to meet with the board.

Q. You had to be there. Did Dorothy Evans accompany?
A. Oh, yes.

Q. She’s our neighbor you know?

A. No, I didn’t know that.

Q. Out in the condos. Real character.

A. We’ll do that later...

[tape paused]

Q. So you talked about this cruise you took with...

A. It was a great experience and learned things. They had the boat outfitted with...well they had a Bahamian crew. They had a captain who was from Germany. The boat, as a matter of fact, apparently had been a German minesweeper converted into this sailboat. It was a German captain, but he had two Bahamians on there.

I remember that we go to these various islands and particularly this little venture where to get fresh supplies they have this little shack sitting on top of a mound they call an island. I guess it’s above the water level most of the time. I remember going in there, and it was just an experience all by itself because there is nobody else there.

Q. [laughs]

A. That’s all there is out there. That’s all there is out there on the island. Those are side notes.

Q. We’ve got to stop here a second.

A. Sure.

END OF TAPE ELEVEN, SIDE ONE

46:44
Q. Oral history interview with Wally Henderson on May 24. Want to continue your story? You’ve got some ideas about the kids and travels.

A. Well, we went to football games. They went to the University of Illinois, and I was always trying to get them sort of interested in that. It was just exposing them to a little different kind of things. They took me to the first baseball game. I had never seen a professional ballgame.

Q. You had never been to a professional game? Ok.

A. My kids and Tim particularly was quite a baseball player in high school, and he could’ve taken that even a little bit further. He got interested in girls and one thing lead to another, and he just drop interested in the baseball thing. So they took us to St. Louis and the ballgames, but we also, Ferry and Henderson, had a condominium, actually two condominiums at different times.

Took the family up to Chicago into the condominiums, which was a good experience for them. We saw the planetarium and zoo and a few things like that. Yes, I think they had a fairly normal life except the things they got involved in and they got us involved in part of them and back and forth. I think they were all baptized other than Becky might not have been baptized in Westminster; she might have been baptized at the Episcopal Church in Colorado. Otherwise, they were baptized at Westminster.

Q. Attended with their parents when...

A. In Sunday school, yes, and I taught Sunday school there for a while. I’ll always remember, as fathers will do, of course when you sit down with four or five kids in a row in church, and we didn’t sit in the front row, but we were up front. Of course, they started acting up, and I remember going over and trying to shush them.

Of course, there are people around us, so to shush them I finally just reached over and smacked one of them. She starts crying or he starts crying and I always remember my comment was, “Well that’s better.” I thought, “What, how stupid can that statement be? “

Q. That’s better. [laughs]

A. At least they weren’t fooling around but this one’s screaming, and I went, “Bam.” Well anyway, we had a lot of fun.
Q. Now they all went to college?
A. They did.

Q. Ok.
A. Becky didn’t go directly to college. She ended up working in healthcare. She liked old people, did very well with old people and worked in the daycare centers and nursing homes and things like that. She finally got a degree in nursing when she went to New Hampshire.

She ended up, in fact, licensed in I think 15 states or so because she got her basic license in New Hampshire, and then she worked for a company that needed licensing all over. It was one of these call-in things. They do it in a reciprocal way. So she hasn’t practiced all those things but she...

Q. She has the right to perform. She still lives there?
A. Still lives in, what is it? The capital of New Hampshire...

Q. Not Concord.
A. Concord, yes, memory gone again, regular thing. Ok, number two daughter. Degree, Southern Illinois University, she is in Austin, Texas working for Dell.

Q. Oh, is that right?
A. Been with them for a dozen years I think or so. Anyway, she got her first degree at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. I’m not sure, but I think it was journalism. She practiced that a little bit, ended up going to California. In California worked for some time for Apple Computer and shifted from that into another private office, still dealing with computers but learned more about the business, and decided she needed to get a graduate degree in business. She calls me one day from California saying, “Dad, I’m going to get an MBA.” I said it just about this way, “Really?”

That’s the first I’d even heard of this one. She said, “Yes.” I said, “Well, where are you going?” She said, “Well, I’ve applied for seven universities.” She said, “They’re on the cover of U.S. News & World Report.” This is when they made that addition. Well, I got that thing and there were five on the cover. When I called her I said, “What do you mean you put in you put in for seven?” She said, “Well, all five on the cover and two more, the next two.” Then the next call I get, she’s been accepted but not the five on the cover but to the University of Texas which was way up, way up on the top.

Q. Well sure, of course. Well, good for her.
A. Any event, she ended up going from there to Austin, Texas to get her master’s. I went down when they had their moot court and so forth. Their training down there was sensational, and the degree was gold. After she gets her degree and I had been down there, and watched her I was like, “Boy my daughter’s going places.” She still, two months later, she’s in Austin, Texas. I call her up and said, “What’s happening?”

Now my kids, kids know my personality, I guess I’m expecting instant actions. When I come on it’s like, “Gee, I’m glad you called Dad.” It’s like, “Oh god, you called Dad.” She said, “I know what I’m doing. Just be patient.” Well, she ended up with Dell. Went straight to Dell and has been there ever since. She started in the executive office, not sitting next to Michael Dell but in that suite, and she operated in that capacity for several years.

Q. Well, good for her.

A. Then she decided she wasn’t going anywhere there, and got into sales and has been around the world.

Q. There’s a lot of success in sales.

A. She’s been around the world several times and set up offices in Dublin, Ireland, and I don’t know whether it’s Beijing or Singapore or something, which impresses me, of course.

Q. Of course. So she now lives still in Austin?

A. Still in Austin with a companion guy.

Q. No children.

A. No children. She’s very successful and wise with her money. She came down as a matter of fact, to the event I just came from. She came over when I got my fellowship, which was really nice. Really was.

Number three was Kirsten. She got her degree at Sangamon State University. I think it was, I don’t know what it was. She converted that, of course, when U of I became U of I, she was very proud to go get the degree endorsed by the University of Illinois. Then came Tim, and Tim also got his degree at the U of I.

Q. At Urbana, though.

A. No, from Springfield. Again, I’m proud of that because that again is one of the very basic reasons that I came back to Springfield is to get higher education and send my own kids. Tiger went to Illinois State University. I should have said Kirsten went there in the beginning as well. Tiger went there in the beginning and got his degree up there and then came back to Springfield and got his masters in history, I think.
Q. Oh, is that right?
A. History, yes that is what he studied.

Q. Now where does he live?
A. He’s here in Springfield.

Q. Oh, he’s in Springfield.
A. Tim is in Springfield.

Q. Both your boys are in Springfield?
A. Yes, and Kirsten was.

Q. Kirsten is deceased, and Kathy is in Austin.
A. Yes, Austin. Then you’ve got Tiger has two children, and he is divorced. But the mothers of the kids were Susan McCord, Dick McCord’s wife. Two sweetheart kids, and that is Lauren and Nicholas.[Looking at photographs] Tim has three kids – one by marriage to Jennifer and that’s Brandon. His name is Brandon Fletcher. His other two children are Connor and Zander.

Q. Zander?
A. Zander, Z-A-N.

Q. So you see something of grandchildren, particularly those who live here.
A. I do. It’s sort of fascinating that we all have dogs, all black dogs, all labs. We bought them independent of each other.

Q. Just personal taste. There must have been a black lab earlier in your family history.
A. The first one came by one of Brynn’s friends. We talked about, oh, I had said I wanted a dog and a friend had always had dogs, but both of us had them when we were growing up. When my kids were little we always had a dog. Becky, as a matter of fact, she loved animals and she would bring strays home. We had to solve that problem by saying, “Don’t bring any more home.”

We had two from one litter, and they loved each other, the dogs did. Doggone if the little dog, which was a Dachshund. We had Dachshunds for a long while when my kids were growing up. The little Dachshund the first day of summer or spring ran out and got hit by a car. The other
dog saw it happen and went to the basement and didn’t come up for almost week. It was like... I mean dogs to me, they have a hearts.

Q. Oh boy, do they ever.

A. We started talking, Brynn and I, after we were married – Sally Henderson, by the way, passed away of a brain tumor. She was in her 50s, 53, I think.

Q. That was a fairly drawn out process.

A. Yes. I had a brain tumor as well. I had one first, and I thought I was gone. I ended up going to Northwestern University, and Sally came up – we were separated briefly at that time. I guess I was working in Hahn’s office, yes, so that would be about 1986. She came up when I was there for the surgery, and it just never occurred to me that I would be alive. I asked the doctor, I said, “What are my chances of being alive, 50/50?”

I wish I could get his name, I can if it is important. Anyway I said, “50/50?” He says, “No, you’ve got a better chance than that.” I was trying to get, trying to say your chances are 80/20 or I don’t know what. So anyway, I just figured that was the end of it. When I woke up it was like, I don’t believe it. She was the last person I saw before I went under that gun. She came up but we were separated at that time. She came up and met me at the elevator before I went into the surgery. Yes, she was a good lady. She came down after I got out, and she helped even though I was living independently but two blocks away but helped me recuperate.

Three months later, she passes out at her desk after she had been on a road trip. She was with the State of Illinois, State Deferral or Unemployment or whatever. I am sure she was in the field a lot. She came in and just passed out at her desk. They called a doctor and so forth, admitted her down at St. John’s Hospital emergency room. She went through this whole process of MRI’s, and they said, “She has a brain tumor.” I couldn’t believe it.

Q. It’s not something you catch.

A. The doctors said, “The chances of having two brain tumors in the same family in the same year are like a zillion to one.”

Q. Exactly.

A. It just doesn’t happen. The kids immediately wanted to know if this was contagious because both mother and dad had this.

Q. Well, sure.

A. Hers was malignant and mine wasn’t. So if you want to wait, I can get the doctor’s name.
Q. That’s ok.

A. Any event, he was the outstanding guy in the city of Chicago, and so we go right back up to him. So I am still recovering while we’ve got Sally up there to get her surgery. My, the team that did me was the one who did Sally. So again, I helped her and I visited her. We didn’t live together, and I told you before, not for hate reasons weren’t why we separated. It was strictly protecting our welfare, so she didn’t go broke.

But in any event, hers came back as I was told mine could. There was a 20 percent chance that mine could come back. Hers came back immediately and had another surgery. Hers came back immediately and when I say immediately, a year apart. The first, the second time I was with the surgeons, and he sat down with them after they had done the work. They said, “We’ve done as clean a job as we could, and we think we got it all.”

They were just exhausted. They said, “If we would have done anymore, she probably would have been a vegetable.” I knew that, boy when the same thing showed up again. She knew what it was and they wanted to go to chemotherapy. She said she wouldn’t try it, so as a result we stopped, and she passed away.

Q. Oh, I’m sorry. Was she in hospice?

A. No, she was not; she had three of the kids. Kirsten, by that time by the way at that time, had moved previous to all this. When her mother got sick, she left California and came back and moved in with her mother.

Q. Oh, really?

A. So Kirsten was really just a godsend. I remember because when we got that first diagnosis, I thought, “What are we going to do?” Kirsten was there.

Q. That’s really sweet.

A. She drove, had just a little Volkswagen, across country. I can’t even believe this, but it’s what she told me and I guess I have to. She drove it and never shut the engine off because she couldn’t get it started again. So she just kept pumping gas in it and drove it all the way, she and another girl. But she did move back for that. Mine came back fourteen or sixteen years later.

Q. I remember that.

A. That’s when they opened me up again, same design team. When they looked at it and saw where the spinal cords and so forth where it’s too dangerous because if you nick a spinal cord, you can shut somebody down completely. In any event but then you put me on this therapy where they zap it with ray guns. Apparently it did it, I’m still here.
Q. You sure are. You don’t feel any effects?

A. No, no, did not. It’s amazing that, the guy in fact... he’s the gentleman who was acting in Edwards’ place when Edwards took over as mayor of Springfield.

Q. Sure.

A. This was when... oh, what’s his name? It’s an Irishman.

Q. He’s an Alderman?

A. He was until...

Q. Oh, Dove?

A. No, no Dove.

Q. I don’t know. Oh, previously occupied the chair.

A. Edwards.

Q. Mahoney? No.

A. I don’t have a list in front of me.

Q. That’s ok. Maybe it’ll come to us.

A. It’s important because this guy was so good. I literally came back from Rush Hospital with Brynn – Brynn was with me at that time, we were married and so forth. When we left Rush Hospital, they said, “We can’t do any more for you. This radiation is the way to do it.” That’s when this Vietnamese doctor who was part of a consultant at a particular event, he says, “You have in Springfield, the top of our class at Northwestern radiation specialist,” and he said his name, which we’re going to get, and I thought this was a lot of baloney.

He said, “You are fortunate.” Because I had made the comment when they said radiation; they told me I would have radiation five times a week for six weeks. I said, “Are you telling me that I have to move Chicago to get this thing done?” This was getting way beyond my thought process. I just about figured out that you can have that. That’s when he said, “No, the best man in our class is in your town.” I thought, “Man, you’ve been smoking something that Vietnamese dope or something.” But it was true.

Q. Well, we’ll get the name. So he treated her for a while.

A. No, no, no. She’s passed away. She had been dead by that time fifteen years.

Henderson 392
Q. Oh, I’m sorry.

A. This was me coming back.

Q. That’s right, excuse me.

A. I had a delay on my... I had two surgeries and a third one. She had two surgeries, and her third one was right away.

Q. That’s right. So then you had the radiation therapy?

A. Yes.

Q. Here, and it worked.

A. It worked. Well, wish I could remember the name.

Q. Well, it will come.

A. Well, it was amazing how the whole thing was done, very technical, but the man’s a genius. Man he could sell, and that’s what I said because I came back stubborn. Ok, I’m going to humor those people in Chicago, but I’m not in for that one because I had watched what happened to Sally. She turned down chemotherapy, but chemotherapy is a different vehicle.

Q. Very different from the radiation.

A. They have an approach of or at least in the old days, it would kill you within in an ounce of your life, bring you back to life again. But radiation, I met five days a week for six weeks, eight o’clock in the morning at Memorial Hospital. They would go in and fifteen minutes later I would go off driving around in the car feeling great.

By ten o’clock in the morning, I had to lay down, and I was down until two in the afternoon. I mean the radiation was always good for you to turn on a light on you and you think what, that’s nothing, but boy you know it four hours later, two hours later. It was something else.

Q. But that finished and you have had no symptoms since?

A. No.

Q. Wonderful.

A. Now I also had the great advantage, I always wanted to go back to my kids again. They came up for... Tim and Kirsten both came up to the hospital both times I was up in Chicago.
Q. That’s wonderful.

A. Yes, it really was; that was a different experience but you learn a lot. I told you the story of the MRIs and the Dr. Lauterbur, Nobel Prize winner who got that... He was the guy who invented the MRI. I told you the story about...

Q. What was his name again? Lauterbur?

A. Lauterbur. Dr. Paul Lauterbur and the story, but I’ll just relate again because somebody will get to laugh again. The MRI principle is it is heavy magnetism. They turn on so many volts and there’s nothing passing through your body except magnetism, so it’s number of amps and so forth. But the voltage is so damn high that the magnetism is enormous. So they claim when we built the building for one of them that you have got to keep automobiles far enough away or it might suck the bumper right off of a car. [laughter]

That’s where I said that Lauterbur when we first started working with him, I was in Hahn’s office then and Lauterbur came in with a couple of guys walking with him like – the Lord is in front of us. Everything was doctor this and doctor that and because I’m the architect, I’m sitting at the front of the table with him, and he is beginning to explain to everybody about the thing. I said, “Dr. Lauterbur, I have a lot of experience with the MRI. I said, “As a matter of fact, every time I get close to them, I get an erection.” [laughter]

These guys paled, the two guys with him. Everyone else was dead silence, and it’s like I’m dead silent. He looks at me and says, “Well, congratulations.” This is a Nobel Prize winner. He hadn’t gotten the Nobel Prize at that point. But anyway, I thought it was funny.

Q. I remember you told me that. It’s a great story.

A. Anyway.

Q. Ok.

A. So I had a good life and good kids, and we cared about each other a lot. I encouraged them to be liberal in the sense of take everything for face value. Rumors, don’t listen to them and don’t pass them on. That was some of the more basic things.

Q. A good lesson.

A. Sure.

Q. Right, ok. Well, let’s turn back to your professional work a little bit today. I don’t think you wrapped up your association with Ralph Hahn. Maybe you did. It lasted for five years, was it?
A. Something like that.

Q. Yes, yes. Of course, he owned the building. You didn’t even have to move your desk.

A. That’s right, that’s correct.

Q. So you were doing design work, whatever it was that they had from an engineering standpoint.

A. I probably told you wrong. He didn’t own the building. Ferry and I owned the building when we split, but Ralph Hahn wanted to get the architectural department, so it didn’t move. We didn’t move, he didn’t move. But Hahn paid money to Ferry to the mortgage on that.

Q. That’s right, yes

A. Steve had already gotten out of it, so it was just the two of us.

Q. So what sort of work did you do for Ralph?

A. Well, what quickly comes to mind is the Baptist Church over on Outer Park Drive right now, which now has been superseded. I had done some work, boy oh boy, oh boy, I can’t remember all the names.

Q. Sure, that’s ok.

A. As a result, it came in and we put that one together under Hahn’s name. Under Hahn’s name, we also did the addition to the Catholic Church in Chatham. That was an addition that I felt very good about. This was under Hahn’s work but George Bloom, who was a Catholic and who at that particular moment, he was head of the architectural department. I was head of it, but George was the partner in charge I guess. In any event and that’s how we got that, but it was an interesting thing.

I guess that’s part of the reason I’m proud of it, it’s a very contemporary church. We were going to put an addition and I used some of the terms that... oh, I can’t remember when we were being interviewed, I used terms that I had used in the Presbyterian Church. They looked at me like, “What’s that mean?” I finally said something to them, “Well, he means...” because I am just using different terms. But when we got it done, I took somebody out to see it and this is a couple of years later, and I couldn’t tell them where it started, where we picked up.

Q. So seamless?

A. It was seamless. I’m so proud of that. To this moment, I can’t go out there and tell you the part that was added. Well, it was half of the building, but it just kind of interlocked.
Q. That’s an art.

A. It wasn’t that I particularly designed something so neat, but the workmanship the way they tied it together and the orientation of the building, the natural breaks occurred when they had to occur. As a result, they could start a new piece of construction but matched all the brick work and everything on it. So I am very proud of that one; that was a good one.

Q. I can see why.

A. I am trying to think of other things. Hahn had continuous stuff going, but those two come to my mind.

Q. Ok.

A. But I do remember part of the things... well, I’ve always been good friends with Hanson Engineers.

Q. I’m sorry.

A. Hanson Engineers.

Q. Oh, yes, right. You joined them.

A. But before joining them, when we opened our office the first engineer because the guy, I had told him that Ferry and I had architectural engineering degrees, which meant structural work, we could have done by our own licenses essentially. We didn’t elect to do that. We always elected to get consultants including structural. In that particular system, we built the house or the apartment building at 838 South Second Street.

Q. Yes, you mentioned that.

A. We got Walter Hanson with Hanson Engineers when we did that. We went personally to Walter Hanson and renewed our friendship for church and so forth. I had kind of stayed in close touch with him. I am still in close touch with him after I sold... I think I told you I had no financial exchange when I got rid of the company. I assumed the liabilities of five lawsuits that were on us. Nothing ever came of those things, other than...

Q. But still were a burden on you.

A. I couldn’t... they were running me out. Any event, I couldn’t do that, so I never tried to sell it to anyone. I never even thought about it; I just wanted out. But I kept in touch with Hanson Engineers. I knew Walt Hanson, and we went back and forth. So on one occasion, I’m there. By this time, Walter had retired and they started changing the name to Hanson Consulting Services or something, and then another planning got into professional activities.
In any event, someplace along the way Satch Pecori and I, who had gone through a couple of presidents before him, Gene Wilkinson. I don’t remember some of the other names, but they had a succession of presidents. By this time we’re up to Satch Pecori, who is younger. We had a good exchange together. I’m going to ask you to stop your machine.

Q. Sure, of course.

[Tape paused]

Q. We are resuming a conversation about Wally’s work on RUDAT and also the end of your relationship with Hanson through this fellow John Coombe.

A. First of all, it is RUDAT.

Q. RUDAT. There’s no H in it?

A. No. It’s the Rural and Urban Design Assistance Team is what that stands for.

Q. Thank you.

A. You could utilize this in so many ways because we and this was one of the jokes with the RUDAT people is that if you change just one letter, you have for preservation, a PRUDAT. Then if you get tired of what you’re doing, you change that to “S” and it is SRUDAT. [laughter] Then if you just want to do something else, change it one more time. Put a “W” in it. and it is WUDAT. So that’s how we used to spend our time. [laughter]

Q. Very convenient acronym. [laughter]

A. Oh I love it. It’s a good one.

Q. Ok. So you were working for Karen Hasara [former Mayor of Springfield] and you wanted to be blunt about this problem, blighted area and Coombe thought this was…

A. Yes, now this is not for Karen Hasara. I’m still employed with the Hanson group.

Q. Yes, ok.

A. I’ve got my marching orders to go over there and say what it’s about. We’re not working for anybody except for [inaudible 31:06]. Hanson is working for the city and I don’t know who the city is at that particular moment, but I wrote it. That’s what he comes back with and calls me in and says, “You can’t write things like this.” I said almost what you did, “How would you say it?”
He’s the vice-president of the company, and I’m not being paid to ask how you’d write it. I’m being paid to write it. So I understood. John Coombe and I are good friends to say the least. But I’m now defending the fact that I’m telling it like I see it, and the same way that it was written, I had written for the other group.

The reason I told that story is because when the RUDAT comes to Springfield, the first thing in the world they start off with and if you read the report and this is I’ll say a year, maybe a little bit longer later. I got a copy of the report, which I just swallowed and took away and I don’t think I even finished it. I think they did something on their own.

Here’s the RUDAT had come to town and their whole job is to spot it and see what you do. They write something, this used to look like a warzone. I mean, this is what they wrote. No use to me saying it’s seedy, but they did say it’s insecure. You don’t want to walk down with your best girl down the street because it may be the alley instead. So anyway but it was just a difference.

Q. So they verified?

A. When they did, did you hear what they said about us? We’ve got to do better than that. I mean everybody’s said. “That is not it at all.” But the RUDAT said it. Now Hanson could have said it.

Q. Should have but they were a hometown company. It helps when outsiders say that.

A. Oh yes, and you want to be a little careful because somebody owns the property. So you say this could have been another one of their good clients on the other side, but we were talking about a whole area. I didn’t pinpoint and say the property at 410 West Edwards is shabby.

Q. No, you said in general.

A. You’ve got to be careful when you’re writing like that, and the same thing when I did my report for South Grand. How do you make this thing happen? Cars were parked on the lawns on South Grand. Well, visually you say, “Boy, oh boy, is this crappy and the trees are overhanging on the sidewalk and grass is not cut, the sidewalks are broken, the curb lines are busted up and all kinds of things. You’ve got cars parked on front lawns.”

Well, it took me, and I know I said this in one of our earlier tapes, most cars on that front lawn, it only took me...it took me about three months to write down all on these papers and things. It took me two full months to really stop and look at the signs that were along about every 150 feet were and still are on South Grade Avenue — after such-and-such a time like seven o’clock in the morning until midnight or some ridiculous time, no cars allowed to park on South Grand.
Well, this is a main artery into the city from out of the interstate system, from Taylorville and Jacksonville and all those places. So all of the sudden you say, “You can’t park there.” Well, what if you live there? Now you can say, “Park in your backyard.” You don’t have a backyard or you’ve got an alley, maybe, and the alley’s not being maintained by anybody.

So as a result, because those were lots…now again, Springfield can’t grow mentally; they can only grow horizontally. So here in the days when Springfield is being founded, by god a 40 foot lot when you’ve got all these 40 foot lots, which is terrific. They’re a 100 feet deep maybe, or maybe not that much, less than that I think. Any event, your 40 foot lot doesn’t get you a house and garage or anything else, and you’ve got sidelines.

You can’t have a structure any closer to the other structure. So by our own codes we’re making that a city. So I go immediately and right in and say, “This needs to be widened. This has got to be part of the study. We are now a main thoroughfare.” I met with this, “Well, no that’s IDOT. You can’t force IDOT into doing something.” My answer was, and this was a nice meeting but by this time I’m acting city planner.

This now is where we’ve got to kick in. I had gone to Mayor Hasara, after the RUDAT thing – I’m saying RUDOT, RUDAT – and said what I had said to all the other mayors after Telford [former Mayor of Springfield] got rid of our city planner, the need for the city planner. She listened with some concern to what I was saying and provided for a city planner, got it into the budget.

They hired a young man, I’m saying I don’t think he was right fresh out of college but he wasn’t very much out of college. But a young guy and he is going to have to put the tough group together again. Brad Taylor had had the experience or at least by the time I opened the door, he had a professional organization of a dozen people who it was a one stop shop and very well done, very inspirational as far as people developing their properties were concerned.

Any event, so this young man, I can’t remember his name, I think he meant well. But he again, if you’re young and you sort of mince your words, you’ve got to. You’ve got to some place along the way not say, “Well Mayor this has got to be done immediately.”

Q. There are circumstances.

A. Sure. Well he goes on a, like a convention for city planners. I think it was in Oregon or Seattle or Portland or some place, [laughs] and sends back his resignation.

Q. Oh is that right?

A. He took another job some place. Whether it was out there or something else, but didn’t come back. Now we’re without this, but we’ve got the monies are in there. I was still in touch with Karen Hasara and I said, “Look, I will take this as a contract type thing but get a city planner. This is no time to throw that money in the kitty.” She took me up on the thing.
So I now got to be acting, well a city planner’s what started and Norm Simms said, “You’re not a city planner; you’re acting city planner.” Ok, and Norm and I are pretty good friends still except he is a policy wonk, and I’m a planner. He’s got all these little silly statements about houses being something or something. The only I got to say is if they can’t get there from here, you just didn’t plan it right. So we would meet once a day with those words.

In any event, that was an event but when I pointed that thing out about those signs in my report and I said that to Norm Simms. Norm says, “Well that’s IDOT, they can’t change that.” The hell that can’t change it. The other thing that should be changed is that they got Jefferson Street that is again an IDOT main thoroughfare and we got it going under the bridge.

You got all of the museum and all of the tourists, the dumbest place in the world for this thing. It’s got to be relocated. I said one other thing, somebody, and I believe this tourists stuff, terror stuff to be anything. I said, “One day somebody is going to get smart enough to just park a bus or a cleaning truck underneath that bridge and blow that whole damn thing up.” He said, “Why would they do that?” It’s there.

I said, “Because it’s just one of those dumbs those Arabs like when they knocked down the World Trade Center.” People would never again get into a crowded situation. One bomb going off in a shopping center could break the whole concept of shopping centers as they’ve done the airlines.” That isn’t for publication either.

Q. So how long did you serve as acting?
A. Until whatever time I took it over until the mayor came in, the new mayor.

Q. Davlin?
A. Davlin, yes.

Q. So maybe three or four years?
A. Maybe three.

Q. You were able to do some work, but it was frustrating.
A. I was never able to do anything significant.

Q. When did that RUDAT team come this last time? Wasn’t that within the last...
A. 2002.

Q. Ok. Well you know what I think? Maybe we’re not going to finish today.

Henderson
A. Ok.

Q. You’ve had to talk a lot, and I’ve got good notes. We might break here if that basically finishes your professional career.

A. If you want to burn off that last bit about me talking about the terrorists and so forth, it doesn’t bother me.

Q. Oh, that’s up to you. You’ll see it.

A. It happens to be at the end of your tape so the easy part is there. Erase it, if you wish.

Q. Ok.

A. But I don’t feel bad about that other than I feel... we are not on tape now are we?

Q. Oh yes we are. Just a second.

END OF TAPE ELEVEN, SIDE TWO

41:23.
Q. Oral history interview with Wally Henderson, FAIA, on May 26, 2011. The interviewer is Cullom Davis. Wally, you mentioned some early job experience, which had an important contribution to your professional future, and that was a summer job during your years at Urbana, your undergraduate years I guess, with the Ohio River Valley Sanitation of the Illinois Division of Waterways.

A. Well, now I will break those down for you because you got two separate jobs and two separate conditions. First, that was the first job out of high school that I got, and that was the Ohio River Valley Sanitation Commission. Now, the Ohio River Valley Sanitation Commission meant nothing to me other than there were three of us who were in high school together and one of whose father was head of the Department of Sanitation for the State of Illinois. Klassen was his name, Clarence Klassen.

Q. Oh sure, I knew him.

A. He put together a little team of us to go over to do water sampling of the pollution in the Wabash River. Now, the Wabash River is a tributary to the Ohio River. Now of course, they were trying to establish the qualities of water. That whole summer we were in pop-up trailers for twenty-four hours a day for a period of time and several locations on the river. We would every hour take a sampling of water from a weir as they called them where you actually…

Q. W-E-I-R?

A. Something like that, yes. What we would actually do is… of course, the river is actually receiving tributaries as well, which also turned out to be cities like West Lafayette, Indiana was one of our stops. A number of them but some of the communities didn’t have any type of sanitation plants. You just ended up flushing your toilet, and it just came right on down the toilet. That’s what we were trying to establish what was happening. Also heavy in Indiana or along the Wabash River was plants for making soups and vegetables and so forth.

One of those, I will never forget, was again at the northern end of the river, they actually… I had a picture of a flow of rejected tomatoes that were not being used to make soup out of that they just dumped into the river. It was a mile long flow down the river, just the red floating down the river, which what they were trying… and the fish kill was amazing because what we measured was dissolved oxygen.
We didn’t take any to the laboratory, the laboratory wouldn’t measure that. But whether we know it or not, there is oxygen in the water and fish were suffocated in that sense. Of course, they always had an explanation. But in any event, that was the first job.

Q. Let me ask a quick question.

A. Sure.

Q. Was custody of that river shared between Indiana and Illinois?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. So they also were maybe doing some studies? You were working for the Ohio River system. They both emptied into the Ohio River.

A. It was probably a federal grant. I don’t know. Of course, Clarence Klassen, his son was a fraternity brother of mine ultimately, but at that time, just a high school mate of mine. But before I was... of course, the leader of the squad was an older person and a young guy. I think he was in his early twenties and in college. But at any rate, it was a grubby job.

You climbed over the dykes on the river and got in there. Sometimes you are by yourself at three o’clock in the morning. There wasn’t two of us together. It was every hour, and today it would scare me to death to do that. We were climbing a mile from anybody’s knowledge that you are even there except the guy who sent you out to do it.

Q. What did it pay, do you suppose per hour? Do you have any recollection?

A. Oh, I have no idea. I was perfectly happy to get the job and I was on my way to college, and I was with friends. So we took it sort of as a lark, but it was a grubby job.

Q. Sure, yes. But it didn’t in any significant way contribute to your intellectual development, the way your second job did?

A. Oh, I don’t know. [laughter] I know about dissolved oxygen that I wouldn’t have known anything about. It was an experience, that’s a way to say it, yes. So I had no complaints. I am out of high school and I’ve already got some money and I’m away from home, sleeping in a trailer, so all those things are contributions to my education. Following that, I end up at the University of Illinois and a couple of summers in a row, one summer I worked for the Division of Highways.

Q. Highways or Waterways?
A. Highways. But this is back in Springfield; this was in the summer. I end up in the Division of Highways again through people I knew here in Springfield. At that time, I think, Walter Hanson was...

Q. Oh, you worked for him.

A. Yes, he was in the Bridge office as well. Well, I ended up doing models, which they had never had models of bridges before. I was in the Bridge office, and I had my own little corner. I was doing what I did at the university when you make models of houses, what houses will look like after you put them together. I was sort of entertainment for them. I wasn’t doing design bridges; I was taking their design and making models.

Q. Out of balsa wood or what?

A. Cardboard mainly. That was our standard materials and most things for that. I made Balsa wood airplanes when I was growing up. So it was the idea of model making; it came as second nature.

Q. It is meticulous work.

A. Oh, yes.

Q. Your work needs to be reasonable, well certainly in their dimensions, in their scale I should say.

A. Oh, yes. You do your best to represent what they are going to get for what they are looking for. In other words, if you did colors and so forth, that was important that you did it in color. Otherwise it was sort of a neutral color type thing. Of course, you were very conscious about the contours that that was the bridge approach to the end line and lots of things that went with it.

Q. So you used what – papier-mâché – to kind of shape hills?

A. No, it just took more and more levels of concrete as the contours. In other words, the contour lines we had at ten foot on centers, so they just start to build a little berm for you.

Q. Well, that was valuable experience in terms of spatial matters.

A. Sure and got to talk to engineers. I think I told you this maybe earlier, while I at at my desk working on models, a gentleman comes through and he says, “You’re not a member of the Council of Engineers?” It was a state organization. I said, “No.” He said, “You ought to be a member. It is only five dollars.”
Well, I’m just grateful to be there, so I said, “Ok.” I paid five dollars there. For thirty years and now I’ve become an architect and I’m still getting materials from Illinois Consulting Engineers. I finally called them and said, “What’s this about?” Well, they said, “You’re an engineer. We’ve got you on the roll.”

The engineers are much smarter than architects. The more people you represent when you go to the legislature, for example, if you say I represent two hundred thousand engineers, it is more important than saying ten thousand engineers. So any name that they can get on there, and I called immediately because architects and engineers are a little dissimilar. I said, “Well, after thirty years, get my name off that list.” So I resigned, say it that way. But for five bucks, I got a free ride for a long time.

At the university, I worked while I was at the university, not full time obviously, but part time and worked for the University Architect’s office for one year. On a different year occasion, I worked for the Illinois Division of Waterways. This was an interesting type thing because and you asked me about what benefits did I get in some of these early jobs. In that particular case, apparently there was a heavy epidemic and I want to say it was Tuberculosis or Diphtheria or something. I forget what the real issue was in 1920s, but at that time, the water supplies were very much in concern about being the source of the problem.

These wells that were dug by farmers all over Illinois, particularly southern Illinois, were measured and recorded with the Division of Waterways. So and now this is the 1950s and I’m in school and they got the Division of Waterways, met Wally Hanson, went to his department but they would pass them down to me. I would get to do the research because the file still existed. I would do the research, and write the answer back to the people as a personal response. I think it was signed by the Director of Waterways or architect or something.

Q. They were providing the results of your testing the water?

A. Of their testing.

Q. Oh, their testing.

A. Of the 1920s.

Q. Ok.

A. Some of these might have been kept current; I forget all the materials we had. There was a lot of information, but it was sort of a very special type thing. When I learned in there first of all, is recording keep and why some of these exist and a little bit of history about health and water and all the things that goes with it.

I had learned how to write letters, not just “Dear Johns,” but serious ones because they were going to be signed by the director. So I learned an awful lot, and I used that in my practice from
there on. I like writing, and I think I told you part of after I closed my office and left Hanson’s even, I have done reports and still even worked on them but didn’t get paid for them. There’s nothing too shabby about doing that.

Q. Ok, ok. Well, that is helpful and useful. So you had that work for the Division of Waterways for several school years?

A. No, no, I think it was a whole year.

Q. A whole year, part-time.

A. Sure. But I was also at that point non-academic staff, not with the waterways but when I was at the university architect’s office helping with my tuition. It was beneficial in several ways.

Q. Who was…did you deal with the director of the Department of Waterways?

A. No.

Q. No you were down...

A. The office was in Urbana, and the waterways I think had versions here in Springfield.

Q. I see, and how about the university director or the university architect?

A. Yes. I can’t remember his name now, but he was the key man.

Q. You didn’t render drawings for him?

A. No. Well, I did anything they wanted me to.

Q. That’s right.

A. Including keeping and it was amazing because they had an active wall that showed building projects that were happening all over the campus. I was responsible for keeping that up to time, so I was roaming through all kinds of things.

That’s when I probably learned that line, “I can run that mimeograph machine,” which mimeograph to those who can’t know what we’re talking about or today Xerox, and they won’t know what that is 20 years from now I guess.

Q. I remember.

A. Copy machines.
Q. Messy machines.

A. Oh yes.

Q. Purple ink.

A. The ink was everywhere.

Q. Ok. Well, those were useful experiences.

A. Sure.

Q. You did mention, and it’s a short note that one of your trips east included staying in Washington.

A. Oh yes.

Q. Being witness or well, in a sense, being present at a major event in our history.

A. By pure chance and this is when we had the family together in Hilton Head and we were on our way back home, but we were coming up the coast from the Carolinas to get up to Williamsburg, Virginia. We spent a night in Williamsburg, Virginia, and then continued from there to Washington, D.C.

We checked into the hotel and I had made arrangements and in those days I was getting back and forth to Washington, so I knew a little bit my way around. It was a nice place, and we spent a couple of days there. Unbeknownst to us, as we looked out our window we were looking at Watergate.

Q. Watergate Hotel or complex, what was it called? Watergate...

A. It was a big office complex.

Q. Yes and there was also one section that was residences, I think.

A. I don’t know, never got that far along into it.

Q. I know there were a lot of offices.

A. Didn’t have any interest in Watergate. When it came out, all of the sudden somebody said, “Where did you stay?” I said where we stayed. They said, “The hotel you were in was facing Watergate.” We were facing the very section where the whole issue took place. [laughs] I can’t claim anything other than a coincidence of time.
Q. Right. I’m pretty sure June of 1972, maybe July.

A. Pretty close.

Q. Ok, well good for you.

A. Yes, I was...

Q. You were cleared of any suspicion?

A. Didn’t even mention anything. My mouth is sealed for that.

Q. [laughs] One other thing about your career I wanted to clarify is that I think you said on your estimates or bids for clients you guaranteed ending within 10 percent or your estimate.

A. Yes.

Q. Was that common?

A. No.

Q. In your profession?

A. No, but that was very common in any presentation I made because we set our goals and we set them high. Different then, I think again, when we probably started this series of interviews. When we opened our office in 1961, one of the things I said to anybody who asked, “Why did we open our office in 1961 when it was not exactly a boom year and there was already a dozen good architectural firms in Springfield? Why would I possibly leave Colorado and why would Don Ferry leave the State of Illinois to open up a firm? It’s competition."

My response always was, “We’re not competing with anybody. We’re going to bring new concepts and designs to Springfield.” I didn’t say at the time, something different because I didn’t know other people weren’t doing models. Models we were trained to do in schools except nobody was doing it in Springfield.

So we started right off with the attitude that we’re going to do design, and we’re going to work hard. Our commitment was, I said particularly on the Old Capitol job, that we made a commitment to each other. We are going to work hard on this thing. We are going to do it, and it’s going to be the best thought-out building and researched building that the state had even gotten a hold of. It was a concept of things.

Q. That was the ten percent guarantee.
A. Well, part of the things I always said, “A building needs to be functional, economically feasible, and aesthetically pleasing.” We would guarantee our estimates within ten percent of what we said we would do. We would provide the redesign at our own personal expense. Now, nobody says that because again, you’re playing it kind of wild because we were smart enough also to hire people who were contractors to estimate with us and for us.

We didn’t have books and all that because we had no idea what the going wages were in certain specialties and this kind of thing. But understand when you say that, to me that is what’s responsible. Somebody doesn’t go in there and say, “Well, build me a building and about what do you think it will cost?” Everybody has some kind of a budget.

I always made a big point and I said this before in our interview, “The building’s only as good as its client and its architect.” Now the client has got to come straight forward to you with what they really want to have done and what they want to accomplish and for how much money they’re willing to spend.

The architect has to come back and give them an answer for those two objectives. Now if all of the sudden what they really wanted was an ice-skating rink, but they talked about a little pond, don’t come back when I say we have to put something in here to make this thing freeze.

Q. So obviously change orders were an exception to that ten percent guarantee. Obviously, if they said well we want an ice-skating rink...

A. Well, the guarantee was with the bid.

Q. Yes, right. Your bid made clear what you would do for that?

A. Sure.

Q. So as I say, change orders and additions by them, obviously...

A. My job again is to warn and weigh that. Don’t go in and this was inevitable when you’re doing a residence and it’s not going to be a little – who doesn’t – but generally you’re putting in a kitchen, for example, and the lady of the house will walk into the kitchen and say, “Oh my goodness we’ve got to have an electrical outlet here or there,” or something.

We designed it according to the code or according to what we understood, and that’s what the contractor bid on. The contractors say, “Well ok, I can put that in right away.” I would invariably have to say, interrupt if I was present, say, “How much is this going to cost us in addition to what you bid?” or immediately. $155 bucks was about usually moving one outlet in that wasn’t included in there.

You could end up with a lot of extra costs, and then all of the sudden, “Oh my gosh, we can’t do that. Why did you let this happen?” Well, I would stop that. We said, “Now when the bid
came in, that was what we were measuring for.” But now get this; ten percent over on a $100,000 is $10,000 over. Ten thousand dollars under is 10,000 less. That’s a twenty percent span when you look at it.

Q. That’s true. So it’s a pretty...

A. So that’s a pretty good hole. You ought to be able to throw a baseball in there.

Q. You think you could accommodate that even with some reasonable change orders.

A. We made a commitment to it. By god, we’re going to do it. There weren’t many instances where we were very far off.

Q. Did you get a reward if you billed less than your bid?

A. No, no. Unfortunately.

Q. Some contracts...there’s often a time completion thing. Did you ever do that sort of work? Where there was a penalty for being late?

A. We did that for the contractors but we never...I mean contractors do have compensation like this – bonus-penalty clauses is what they’re called. Bonus is if you bring this thing in a month early, and I can rent the building or occupy the building. They get their boost of some of whatever they agree to.

If they can’t deliver it on time or don’t deliver it on time and contracts are already there and all of the sudden you are threatened with losing a tenant or something, the penalty comes back and the contractor goes out.

Q. So you didn’t do that, but many of your contractors understandably did. So you dealt with that issue but not as a company.

A. Time was critical, that’s exactly right.

Q. Sure.

A. Now bonus-penalty clause, architects haven’t learned to do that. I can’t speak for the engineers because I never wrote their contracts, but that’s where I think we are deficient in the education. You can figure out how to do a change order and figure out how to do buildings and a few things like this by our education even though we have to go six years to get our education.

Q. Right.
A. The business part of it or the promotion part of it was never part of the whole thing. What I learned a lot about is that marketing was... again offices I had worked in and we had a few occasions and described Ambrose Richardson as preaching marketing, but I think we were on the graduate school.

Q. Right.

A. But we’re talking about different concepts and different... don’t call it tricks, but things that appeal to people that the people don’t even know it appeals to them. Again the thing that I wrote in every time I wrote a letter is a building should be practical in the sense of its function, of its economy, and its delight.

Q. Good, ok. There is kind of a silent war between the architects and contractors, do you think? War isn’t the right word, but don’t many contractors think they don’t want the architects around the job site because they will interrupt them.

A. I’ll represent it this way. There may be that, but the contractors that we dealt with, we got a lot of respect early in the game. The contractors that did our work understood what we expected of them, and I never had those kinds of issues at all.

We would show up on the sites any time we wanted – usually for me it was Sundays or Saturdays I would be on a job site when nobody is around. The contractors had been told that they had to work those things around us, although they would gather to you immediately if you showed up on the job site – kind of a whole bunch of people talking to you, so you don’t see the job.

Well, we never had that experience. People told me about that but we didn’t. No, I think we had respect. I even say with appreciation on a couple of occasions, we had dropped something out of our specifications that was obvious.

A perfect example – and I want to say the contractor in this case was Larry Evens and his construction company – he was putting our masonry in and, of course, I can’t remember the other name, the other mason the job, or the masonry contractor on the job was also related.

Q. Phil?

A. Sure, Phil Evans. Anyway, the two of them together, we had concrete block but to get insulation both for temperature and for sound, you always filled in the holes in the concrete block so there were no vacant holes after we filled out our lines and so forth through there with an aggregate or it was an insulation material.

Darned for the State Journal-Register if we didn’t forget to put that in the specifications, and we are right in the middle of this thing. We had a wall that had to come down because they had error in there. When it came down, the stuff was in there. For some reason, well, one of the
masons came along and he said, “We had already added that aggregate in there for you guys.” I mean because they couldn’t move it. I said, “Well, praise the Lord for that. Thank you.” He said, “We know what your standards are.” They bid it that way, and they installed it that way.

Q. Wow, that was classy.

A. That, to me, was far and above. When you get contractors that do that, you feel awfully good about it because when they start choosing to let concrete get hard before it sets up... I mean it sets up before you’ve got in place and so it’s not working right, you’ve got danger. A good contractor doesn’t want any compromising on his quality either. I’ve always been very satisfied with them.

Q. Were you as satisfied with any contractor as you were with Evans? Were they among your favorite contractors?

A. Oh, there were a number of them. Again, of course, we did a lot of out of town work, too. We didn’t know anything about the out-of-town people at all. But people who knew through the guys we worked with didn’t care who we were, and that was all right. We didn’t want to get into any hassles. But I mentioned when we closed our office down, there were five lawsuits.

Q. Yes, you mentioned that.

A. It had to do with roofing and roofing contractors are notorious. I don’t think they do this intentionally except it takes a lot of... in the old days to lay on roofs, you unrolled the material, which was about three to five feet wide. It was put down on insulation or whatever and structure, and you get the next piece. When you overlaid it, you took this pitch, which was tar, hot tar, and lay it down on top of it. When it cooled off, it was adhered together.

If the tar gets too hot and a bubble gets inside that tar and it happens to have any moisture in it and it can have just because the air has got humidity in it, that roof is going to come a part. When that roofing comes apart, where is it leaking because water doesn’t drop straight down? It makes its way down to the path of least resistance. As a result, you’ve got a leak and a client who is unhappy and saying, “By God, that’s your responsibility.”

Well, we got our roofers; we had that. We had field people inspect it, too, our own people and not just on a hire. But anyway, so the out-of-town is just a different situation. Not horrible, but we had our share.

Q. Ok. Let us turn to some of your nonprofessional but civic activities? You, I would say, had always been an active observer and sometimes advocate, sometimes critic of things happening particularly relating to Abraham Lincoln. You somehow got involved in the issue over naming the airport, which wasn’t always Capital Airport. [laughter]
A. Yes. We did the addition to Capital Airport.

Q. Ok.

A. I mean we even put the sign up that said, Capital Airport. But on one occasion I and I did a lot more traveling I actually recalled over the years, but airline traveling was the way you got there. Most of us when we get on an airplane, well, I could go to sleep but occasionally I would reach in the little thing on the back of the seat in front of me and pull out the airline thing and open it up.

I’m coming back from some trip and I’m reading about Louisville, Kentucky or someplace. All of a sudden, I’m interested in they’re having an event that was other than the Kentucky Derby that is bringing in lots of people. It is saying, be sure that your that you are there at such and such a part of the season. I would get off that airplane and I would think about, “Wait a minute, wait a minute. What about Abraham Lincoln?” These buys are bragging about... Louisville is a bad choice, but someplace else, which was a lesser deal except that I now remember it how many years later.

I don’t have the name of the right place, I don’t think, but my point being this that, here’s advertising, free, not it’s not free. Of course, the people who put these magazines together are trying to get more business. So if you walk in with an idea to them and they put in there, “You ought to be in Springfield, Illinois.” Or if you even name the airport, Capital Airport, every schedule that this goes out that this airline flies, says “Capital Airport in Springfield, Illinois.”

I learned that one when I was down in San Antonio. I was introduced to the Petroleum Club down there, and that’s where you learn a lot of things by the way you get there. An organization has got business people, and I met the gentleman who was putting together a basketball team for the National Basketball League.

Everybody thought, “Oh, that is wonderful.” I said to myself, “Who the hell cares about a basketball team in San Antonio?” This is Yankee Wally Henderson, who was persona non grata, not welcome but at least a Yankee with a question that they didn’t have to answer. Well, they answered, “Well, it is because,” and this is because the guy who was investing in it, “because every time we play a game, across the whole United States, they will say the San Antonio Spurs are away.” It was advertising backing a product.

We’re backing the airlines but we’re saying, Springfield, Illinois again and again and again. I said that to a couple of people and one of them happened to be Pat Coburn. Pat Coburn called me one day and he said, “We’re in the middle of a meeting with the Advisory Board.” Pat says, “We’ve got a meeting of the Community Advisory Board and we’re talking about the Capital Airport name. Do you mind if we quote you in this thing?” I literally said, “Hell, no, it’s exactly what we need.” It came out in the paper.
I was talking because it was one of those obvious things it seemed like to me. As a matter of fact, I had a couple of letters that independently came into me that said, “I wish I would have thought of that, and I’m in the business.” I guess also that somebody also inspired me. I had been to mission...

Q. Old Mission?

A. Old Mission up in Michigan and went through... what’s the city that Ford came across?

Q. Grand Rapids?

A. I think it was Grand Rapids or Kalamazoo, one of them has got their airport named for...

Q. Ford?

A. After that, yes. We also have Ronald Reagan. I had a couple of people and people who are ordinarily on top of things went on their own... but somebody said, “We’re just fed up with Abraham Lincoln around here. One more Lincoln is just what we don’t need.” I think that went into the newspaper, too. They were fair.

Q. Something that you had said, the paper picked up, pushed it, and the Airport Authority agreed?

A. Yes, sure.

Q. So now it’s what? The Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport?

A. Yes, that’s exactly what it is.

Q. I had the impression maybe that was around the same time that they were naming a military cemetery up near Joliet the Abraham Lincoln Cemetery.

A. You are exactly right on that. The interesting thing is since I’m being interviewed by somebody who is familiar with my attitude about things; I guess I’m speaking more frankly that anything else. But Springfield, I was raised here from nine years old on. Springfield has lots of assets going, but we are so damned conservative and proud of it, that the only thing that kept us alive in my judgment was when we had politics over the years, about every eight years, the administrations would change.

Q. Oh, of course.

A. As a result, so many people left and so many new people came in because to fill the jobs.
Q. It was a realtor’s dream, of course. I used to say the realtors around here always vote to throw the bums out. [laughter]

A. Well, that was an important concept for Springfield. Springfield grew exactly how a tree grows. You give it some kind of nourishment and sunshine and some water and, in this particular case, you bring in people with new ideas and new talents, and they bring from wherever they came from. I had that out in the world finally. I had gotten out in Indianapolis, been to Denver and all those kinds of things, and that was two state capitals.

I was in service half way around the world, and I come back to Springfield. Now I’m starting to say this, “In Denver we had this or in Indianapolis we did that.” But it wasn’t what I was doing, it was what they were doing, but we had lost over a period of time... well, at that particular time we still had it. In fact, we had just gotten a new governor. That was 1961, that was Kerner. We had a new president and that was JFK. So everything is sort of moving to a good change, and we were still turning those people over.

But with my outspoken thing, I got riled up about the Lincoln Home area being more than just a house sitting in the middle of a shabby block. From there on, I got to be on the Historic Sites Commission and worked with the Lincoln Home Advisory Commission and from there to the chairmanship. Then from there, into Washington with Paul Findley to accomplish getting the, and again, you get these things only from persistence not from any political achievements involved here. We weren’t paying anybody off.

I was always obviously always promoting work because I think people appreciate freshness, fresh ideas, and many of our jobs came from efforts. We didn’t get any of these things because I’m important. I have always given advice to these young people who would come to my office, “You don’t go see somebody in their office after it has been in the paper that there is a big job. If you can anticipate that there could be a big job, get yourself out there and get acquainted with them before.” It is just good thinking, and the same thing with Capital Airport.

Q. I don’t remember whether that had a direct connection with the naming of the airport. It looked like Springfield was losing its kind of exclusive control over Lincoln because there would be people who would go to this new national cemetery thinking Lincoln was buried there. Of course, they wouldn’t find him.

A. That’s exactly right. That as a matter of fact, I was also quoted in the paper someplace along the way. I said, “We’re going to wake up some morning and find out that Bloomington is the Abraham Lincoln Bloomington Airport.

Q. That’s right. You said, “We’ve got to get that name.”

A. Absolutely, absolutely. They would have done it.
Q. Was that a pretty easy sale, though? There were people in the community who were sick and tired of the name – Lincoln.

A. Very prominent people, yes. Everything from... well, I don’t know. It was ridiculous list, yes. You’ve got to start going places that you got to. But in the world, Abraham Lincoln and Springfield, Illinois are associated, and we don’t even know it. I’m pretty sure I told you Asia, it is on the map, but it’s not because of the capital of Illinois

Q. Ok. I think Dick Durbin once said that you were his favorite pest. Does that sound right?

A. That’s what he said when he came and presented the bicentennial penny along with the Director of the Mint. I’ll give you a little background on that. When the bicentennial for Lincoln’s 200th birthday was about to shape up, our program, it was actually put together in 2002. There were fifteen people who made up the national committee, and each of those had ten advisors.

Well, in 2002, Dick, who has been a friend of mine for at least thirty years, he called up and said, “Would you like to be or would you be an advisor to me about the Lincoln Home activities?” I said, “Sure.” Well, I ended up on what they had as a communications committee, which one of the things was trying to get the message out.

We met mostly by telephone and several times a years. Well, we were getting way into to the whole thing and part of communications happened to be that there had been a motion made and passed that there would be four inaugural coins.

Q. Bicentennial.

A. Bicentennial coins. Those bicentennial coins would represent Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois and the District of Columbia. That’s all the phases of the fifty-six years Lincoln’s of life. Ok, so Kentucky and what they had was the reverse, not the front side. The obverse side is the front side. They kept the Lincoln penny, which by the way was put together on Lincoln’s centennial, which in other words it was a hundred years old. That’s the longest running coin of anybody’s coin of any country. That’s what I’m told.

So that particular face wasn’t going to be changed, so they are going to use the reverse side of the coin. So Kentucky comes up with a... and what they actually did is they said, “For the sculptures,” of course, the first event, for each contributor or each state, “what do you think ought to be important?” We set a list of, I think, fifteen different things.

This had everything from... and it was people from all over the state contributed. Several had Lincoln and Douglas together, facing, looking, with a little banner in front of them. Somebody else had Lincoln’s home. Somebody else had Mary and Abe standing in front of Lincoln’s home. It went on and on and on, different things like this.
We ended up on our committee trying to make recommendations, and they would come back from Washington. This takes two years from when we started looking at them. These were photographs. They would send them to us, and we would discuss them at our telephone conferences.

Well anyway, it really boiled down to a very few numbers, and Kentucky had already made their decision. We looked at it, but we didn’t have much to say about Kentucky or Indiana or Washington, but had over the two year period had discussed it.

When the selections were made, we came up with Lincoln standing in front of the Old State Capitol with... that was it. Now because we’re trying to... the provisions in there were to represent the political life of Lincoln in Illinois. That was sort of generally what they were suggesting. So the Stephen A. Douglas debate type thing and again, Lincoln had two faces – one without a beard and another face. What you had in this particular piece is a beardless Lincoln standing in front of the Old Capitol Building.

We understand it has been accepted, thank goodness, and had been endorsed by two other committees that were doing the same kind of reviews we were. One being the Citizen’s Committee, Washington Monuments Committee in Washington, forget what the third one was. We thought that of both of those and picked the same one we did, which was money in the bank except one of them didn’t.

Now, we’re going to have a conference call and the director of the event would be represented in the conference call. This was a little unsure of the signals coming at us. We had already received the letter saying that our selection was going to be the reverse side for Illinois. Soon as the thought or the information came through was followed by a new set of selections, and here is Lincoln with a sheaf of papers in his hand, beardless, just that was it.

Q. No background of the Old State Capitol?

A. Not even a full Lincoln. It was like from the waist up but holding papers in his hand without a beard. I just explained to Harold Holzer, who was the head of the committee. I said, “Harold, this is absolutely ridiculous. We made our decision. This doesn’t say anything about Illinois.” I’ve been quoted several times about this, but this is exactly what I said to Harold Holzer as well.

I said, “This thing that they’ve sent back to us could be anybody anyplace in the world reading Playboy magazine.” Who the hell knows it is Lincoln without a beard really. It was just a ridiculous choice, and Harold said to me. He said, “Well, you’re the one to bring that up.” I said, “Just one time when we have this interview thing on there.”

So he put me on the schedule. So the lady gets on there and when she is introduced, she takes off, and Cynthia something was her name. I’ve got that someplace. Anyway, she takes off talking very fast and just to mimic her I was going to talk just as fast as I possibly can just to let
you know she can get a lot of words in if you talk fast (laughter). So she is now proceeding to
say, “We’ve made our final selection. The director has approved this and cannot be changed.
We’re going to have this done.”

I’m saying, “Excuse me.” I tried to break in, couldn’t break in. She talked for, I’ll say, a dozen
minutes straight like that. I got slightly angry and said, “You should be complimented for at
least protecting the mint, but this is not the one we accepted.” She said, “That’s exactly what it
is going to be.” Just shot it down right there (laugher).

Well, she was wrong and she wasn’t... and for what the premise was of this thing. So I went
back to Harold Holzer, and he said, “Well, if you want to take it up, go for it. I can’t take it that
far.” So I made a couple of letter writes including Dick Durbin but to the national committee
and the State of Illinois group and made a couple of presentations.

All of a sudden, it is getting endorsed very heavily. Fortunately, my copier is equipped with a
fax machine. I ended up sending faxes for a couple of weeks in a row at midnight or two o’clock
in the morning. This is where after so long, Dick Durban personally picks the thing up and Ray
LaHood was on that as well, had been hitting with him.

I did not know the Director of the Mint, but the only person who could override the Director of
the Mint was the Secretary of the Treasury. Well, I didn’t know him either except that I’ve
already gone face to face with his representative, the Director of the Mint. So when I met with
Dick Durban, he said, “I’ve got to go talk to the Secretary of the Treasury.” The next thing I
know, I get an email from Durban saying that the problem has been solved. The Director of the
Mint or the Secretary of the … it was accomplished or something similar. Anyway, it was
wonderful.

So when Dick comes back to Springfield to present the coin, he has got the Director of the Mint,
who I had not met before. I got acquainted with him, and it was cordial. I also met Cynthia, the
lady that allowed this. Something had transpired that made them change to their selection, I
don’t know, but we got our coin.

Q. Well, Dick Durban flexed some muscle.
A. But why did they change it is what I question.

Q. Well, I think when they saw that there was a superior alternative...

END OF TAPE TWELVE, SIDE ONE

46:49
Q. Secretary of the Treasury. Want to pause a minute?

A. In fact, the way she presented it, it sounded as if the coins had already been made.

[Telephone rings – tape stops]

Q. You also for some reason have served as the Director the Abraham Lincoln Association. Do you want to talk about that? For twenty years you’ve been or maybe longer.

A. Yes, before you were born almost. [laughter] I have been told that I was made a director in 1965. I’m the oldest director yet. I started in... but I’ve director longer than anybody else.

Q. For a while, it was Margie Van Meter. Is she still there?

A. No, she’s out. Andy Van Meter is still on it.

Q. Yes. That’s right.

A. No, that came about because I guess the same thing we’ve just been talking about is that I was up to my ears in Lincoln when we were doing the Old State Capitol and knew a few people that were... again Westminster Church had a lot to do with my career because at that point besides Hanson, this and that, but certainly Dr. Barringer, who was ALA president was part of Westminster and others. In any event, I was nominated and I was just a young guy at that particular time, but Steve Barthoff was a member as well at that time. We were the same age basically.

Q. Sally Schanbacker, who was a good friend.

A. Oh, yes. But that was when I was appointed and have been it ever since.

Q. How do you think it is doing? Do you think it is healthy and active as it should be?

A. Well, yes and no. I had certain opinions. I didn’t want it to become a legal society. For a while there it was really overwhelmed with lawyers. We have our own jokes about lawyers, but when you thought about Abraham Lincoln, he was a lawyer but first of all he was a humanitarian. He had a lot of opinions about a lot of things that didn’t have anything to do
with law at all. So I think diversity is something I thought was lacking and certainly that has been changed.

I think on occasion we’ve had more aware and active officers than on other occasions. I didn’t think that we had much to our advantage when Harold Holzer and Frank Williams were officers. Of course, they were the first, but again let us understand that the Abraham Lincoln Association had sort of gone silent or at least just down to a whisper for a number of years. Then I guess in the 1950s they started worrying about… somebody found out that the Lincoln Home wasn’t painted white, and they started doing something about it.

Again, Clyde Walton had a lot to do about this thing. He was the State Historian and he pushing hard. I think he had a great access to or at least he was made available to us, was Ralph Newman. Ralph Newman, out of Chicago, put life back into the Abraham Lincoln Association. He ran the Abraham Lincoln Book Store in Chicago. There were others that just sort of came out of the woodwork.

Q. Wasn’t it really energized when the Old State Capitol was under development and it took on the responsibility of furnishing or raising money for the furnishing?

A. Here’s where this came from now. The Old State Capitol was one of these things that came out of the ideas that were brought in by Clyde Walton and by Lester Collins. The event that really stimulated everything was when somebody bought that property behind the Lincoln Home.

Q. Yes, you told us that.

A. That made everything happen. So Abraham Lincoln’s, the Old State Capitol was common talk and that is part of the reason because I was... now I’m being quoted pretty daily about the thing because as a young guy and certainly Sally Shanbacker and some of the other people would have been people responsible for me, so that is how it built from there. But the Abraham Lincoln Association with Frank Williams started bringing in people from distances.

Q. I had a different question though.

A. Yes, I’m sorry.

Q. I thought that the Abraham Lincoln Association, once the collected works were published in the 1950s, had pretty well gone into eclipse until someone, maybe Kerner, asked them if they would help raise money to furnish the Old State Capitol.

A. You got that exactly right.

Q. They did that, so in the 1960s and 1970s that became the means by which they became active again. Is that correct?
A. Oh, you’re exactly...at least.

Q. That’s before Williams, it’s when he joined.

A. Oh yes. Otto Kerner was a great friend of the Old Capitol project. I mean he was instrumental in adding ideas and support to it when we needed it. He also asked for support. When a community supports a project, as all politicians know, it’s easier to do it then when a community just lays on its back and does nothing.

The Springfield community was working hard to get the support of the politicians on a national basis. Certainly when they wanted the Lincoln Home area created or needed support to save the Lincoln Home area itself, Springfield came and spent all their money all their efforts. Findlay had done the same thing.

Otto Kerner in a particular case got, walked into his friends with the Abraham Lincoln Association and said, “I need the support.” We turned up as a group $300,000 that was spent to furnish...In fact, he never stated the cost. He simply said, “What is your contribution?” We said, “We will furnish it.” That’s how that whole thing...Jim Hickey was very instrumental in all of this.

Q. Yes he was, of course, very instrumental. So you served many years with many presidents. There have been high points and low points in its modern incarnation.

A. Sure, sure.

Q. But how do you feel it is operating now? Pretty effectively?

A. I think we are doing very well.

Q. Ok.

A. I truly do.

Q. Good.

A. We’ve had the great success of the bicentennial, which the president of the United States came to our celebration so that was...

Q. I guess we’ve got to credit Dick Hart to some extent with having...

A. Oh not just to some extent. Dick Hart was a very good president.
Q. Ok. I just wanted because that’s a major part of your volunteer life over the last forty some years.

A. I think it’s always been one I enjoyed, too, which it is not too demanding in time or resources.

Q. Right, meet a couple times a year.

A. But you meet with people who care about things and you do get the benefit of opinions from out of town. [laughs]

Q. That’s right. I agree. That’s refreshing.

A. Yes it is.

Q. It’s a mixture of lawyers and dynastic. I’ve always felt there were some dynastic seats. [laughs]

A. Yes, you’ve got that right.

Q. Also some academics but not too many. It’s a pretty good mix, but it depends a lot on leadership. Right now I think there’s a pretty active leader in Lenz.

A. Absolutely, yes. There’s that whole group out of Bloomington that’s made a major contribution.

Q. That’s right. They had maybe taken it over for all I knew. [laughs] Ok. Then one last volunteer service is when you were invited fairly early in this idea’s history to join the Journal-Register’s Community Advisory Board to the Board of Editors.

A. Yes.

Q. That was maybe three years ago, four? I don’t know.

A. I don’t...boy, time is flying. I can’t tell you. It was early in the game. I think I was the second group.

Q. Was Pat Coburn still the publisher then?

A. Oh no, no.

Q. I thought that he had left, hadn’t he?
A. Yes. No, I had sat in, again because we had been the architects for the capitol and Pat was a good friend. As a matter of fact, I think I told you he was best man in Brynn and my wedding.

Q. Yes.

A. Pat’s always been a good friend. Any event, I had sat in on meetings that he thought I might be interested in and just sat there with my mouth shut because I was a guest not a participant. But when the newspaper was sold to Gate whatever...

Q. Gatehouse.

A. Gatehouse. I didn’t know they were going to come up with civilian members of that group. When they did, well again, sure I didn’t want to sit back too long I just said, “I would be interested in being considered if you’re going to continue this thing.” Low and behold the second group came along, and I got an invitation.

Q. So you were part of the second wave?

A. Second.

Q. Advisory Board members. Do you remember who served with you?

A. I can’t tell you their names.

Q. That’s ok. But I, knowing you, I suspect you played a pretty active roll.

A. I have to be very honest with you. For the first two months I said nothing. Only from the standpoint that my experience in the situation before, I had been a guest and I sort of still felt like a guest and didn’t want to mouth off too much. The other two were doing all right so I didn’t see...I finally started saying more and more but my contribution wasn’t anything like I think I have seen, well certainly what’s come out of yours because they didn’t give us any instruction, direction. There are so many things that happen in the community that need opinions.

One of my opinions at that time, when I did finally start speaking up was, I’ve said this, you heard me say this so many times in this series of interviews, a city planner is a neglect that has gone on for decades now. Cost us money, cost us ideas, cost us our good fortune, I think. So I would say that more than once at meetings with the paper because again they would come off with saying such-and-such is a traffic hazard or the building is vacant or all these things.

They would come out in headlines and I got the paper and I cut them out. I sit down with John Broadbooks who is their publisher or their editor. I said, “John don’t you see this is another cry for city planning.” They can’t exactly pick it up this way because that is a remote statement even to the public.
But the city planner isn’t just somebody who sits on his butt and draws pictures, or says, “Should we do this?” It is all those things along with the fact of practically pointing out our shortcomings. If you don’t point out your shortcomings, you just keep lolling your way through. The next time they build a regional airport, it will be in Lincoln, Illinois or someplace else.

It won’t be Springfield except that we have got people who are thinking ahead and kind of rolling with the punch. We need a city planner who picks it up like Clyde Walton did this historic thing. Again, for the record, the first historic zoning on real estate in the State of Illinois was put out by, who was chairman of the Historic Sites Commission, was originated by Clyde Walton, who got it passed in the legislature. We were number one.

Q. That’s remarkable.

A. You’re damn right, but you need fresh people with fresh ideas in making things get done.

Q. Did you’re colleagues and the employees on the editorial board eventually accept your notion that the city planner was a crucial person in the city’s work?

A. It never became a major topic.

Q. Ok.

A. No, no.

Q. You still believe it, of course.

A. I’m not done with it to be honest with you. Well, only from the standpoint that it’s ridiculous. We’ve got the issue right now that trains coming through, freight trains coming through Springfield. The word “through” never is missing because they are on their way to Chicago or St. Louis and to the tune of, ultimately at least they are projecting within the next twenty years there may be as many...well they said one time in the paper sixty, they denied ever since that, but at least forty a day.

If you have sixty a day, that’s one every twenty-four minutes going right through Springfield not stopping, but they will be slowed down to forty miles an hour. That’s the biggest joke anybody ever had. How dumb can you be? Please quote me on that.

Q. That was...you just said it yourself.


Q. You think a city planner, had such a person been in place for the last five years, could have been very effective or useful in pointing out the...
A. I think yes because everybody rolls when the punch rolls by. IDOT, Cullom, IDOT is an organization; it’s the Illinois Department of Transportation. Also the head of transportation for the United States is LaHood who understands that the train limit wasn’t from one of the cities that trains goes through. But if you’re from Bloomington or if you are from Lincoln, Illinois or any of these others, those trains are going to destroy those cities. News from Peoria, I think. But Ray LaHood, after I had discussions with Dick Durbin over the thing and Dick Durbin is doing what he has to do and I can’t, I don’t know how he does things.

Q. He’s caught because he has got Chicago and Joliet.

A. The law gave the property of the Union-Pacific Railroad to the Union Pacific. Well ok, so change the freaking law or at least banish what they can do with their equipment or make better equipment.

Q. Good for you for hanging in there.

A. I just have to take my daily vitamins.

Q. [laughs] Well, let’s take up a happier subject of some of the most important honors you have received. One of them, of course, you were nominated as architect of the U.S. Capitol. You told that story.

A. Yes.

Q. But that was a distinct honor and that stemmed directly from your work on the Old State Capitol.

A. Yes, that was. I’m very proud of it.

Q. I sense from what you told me that had the offer been given, you probably would have accepted it.

A. It would be a hard one to turn down.

Q. Of course it would, sure.

A. Architect of the U.S. Capitol, I was sort of overwhelmed when I went through there, but again I had an obligation here in Springfield. I hadn’t abandoned that, but I had no big illusions with my politics. At least politics had a lot to do with that. I wasn’t of the same ilk as the president. He was the guy who had to sign it first and then be approved by the senate.

Q. Ok, but it was, it’s still a blue star on your career.
A. Thank you and I feel it was, too.

Q. Then you, I’m sure you’ve been nominated as first citizen here.

A. Several times.

Q. Several times.

A. Yes.

Q. But never won it?

A. No sir.

Q. Well, it’s a campaign, you know that. You know about campaigns. It’s hard to generate your own campaign, but I know having been a judge that these things are systematically planned.

A. Now that I... Bill Becker was responsible for me being nominated on two occasions and making the final ten on those occasions and not coming in first. But he did contact people and I didn’t know this, I seriously didn’t. He was so good as to give me a copy of—and this is recently, in the last few months—the collections of letters he’d got. It happened in the last few months because I passed this on to another event person and that’s the College of Fellows we’ll talk about in a minute.

Q. Oh sure, right.

A. Who lifted some of these messages and applied them to...

Q. So they’ve already had some benefit?

A. Oh yes, they have. But yes, it was clearly a campaign that Bill Becker put together and I wasn’t even aware it was happening.

Q. That’s kind of the way it has to be. You have to be innocent of any sort of self-promotion.

A. Yes. What else would it be if people didn’t really appreciate?

Q. But there have been some real campaigns. I mean real campaigns that we observed the year I was a judge, which was about eight years ago.

A. Really? Well, it’s an honor to be nominated.

Q. It is.
A. This paper, the present owners, have made more out of it actually I think than the *Journal-Register*.

Q. Of course it’s no longer the Copley First Citizen it’s just the First Citizen.

A. Exactly, that’s right.

Q. You’ve got to pay for the breakfast, but that’s not a big deal. People still go.

A. But they use photographs and so forth, which is good.

Q. Then you also did win the Logan Hay Medal of the Abraham Lincoln Association.

A. Yes.

Q. That is a distinguished award.

A. Yes it is. I’m very flattered. [laughs] That one was a surprise.

Q. I got it, too, and it was a great surprise.

A. Yes. It’s one of those things that you want to…I still don’t have anything to say about it other than it’s amazing.

Q. As you know, it’s rarely bestowed.

A. Yes sir.

Q. It’s a great honor, so congratulations.

A. Well, thank you much.

Q. Now, let’s get to joining the College of the Fellows of the American Institute of Architects. Is that right?

A. That’s right.

Q. You had applied several times previously had you not?

A. You don’t apply; you’re sponsored.

Q. You had been sponsored.
A. No I had never been sponsored before.

Q. Oh, ok. I thought previously you were under consideration.

A. Not exactly. I was told I was sponsored a lot.

Q. Ok.

A. What a sponsor does, they put together materials. But I guess it was even before the materials had been put together, there had been an objection about a position I had taken about marketing.

Q. Beneath the dignity of architects.

A. Close to that and to be honest with you, as I responded when I got the call from the Washington office, I said, “Well I haven’t got the time to confront this issue.” To me I wasn’t in it to win in, and I just didn’t have any more to say about it.

Q. But when you notified in this recent round that you had been sponsored.

A. Well, it was about two years ago now.

Q. Oh my gosh, ok.

A. Fully a year but Paul O'Shea, who I had work for me many years ago, had asked me to write a letter of endorsement for his sponsorship to his sponsor.

Q. You had to endorse his sponsorship of you?

A. No, no.

Q. Excuse me, I’m sorry.

A. Here’s the way it works is that you get a sponsor but the sponsor has to... but you have to be endorsed by, you can either have all College of Fellows people endorsing you or you can, which if you do, it’s only five required. If you have ten AIA members endorsing you, that’s a minimum requirement to start.

So in the endorsement type thing when the sponsor in this particular case was Bob Selby, Professor Selby from University of Illinois, sponsored Paul O'Shea. He got acquainted with Paul O’Shea when Paul was very active in the RUDAT accomplishments and holding an active city planner position today but it is called city coordinator.
Any event, Paul contacted me and I very enthusiastically endorsed Paul because he’s an affable, capable guy who puts...and of course the idea behind the fellowship is having people who are active as architects but also from different angles. In other words, a person who writes about architecture can also be a fellow. A person who is a...

Q. Teaches it?

A. Teaches, yes, education, of course, and a practitioner who designs it or particular phases of the practice. So in this particular case, Paul O’Shea was, I’m not sure exactly what the number, they got different categories. Any event, I wrote exactly, I said, “He’s got that Irish personality where he gets along with everybody and was capable,” and on and on and on. Anyway, Paul was nominated and selected as it.

Q. Oh good.

A. During that process I had...the professor and some place along the way we got roped in or not roped in...

[telephone rings—tape paused]

Q. Paul O’Shea, it is O’Shea isn’t it?


Q. Yes.

A. In this particular case, of course, he says to me, he said to Paul O’Shea, “Who will you use for endorsements?” I told him people that I knew, and it turned out to be Paul O’Shea and Don Ferry. Don Ferry also had been many, many years ago made a fellow. The three others: Jim Scheeler, who was a former professor of mine at the University of Illinois who finally succeeded even as a paid exec in Washington with the AIA.

Another gentleman from Denver, Colorado, who was an award winning fellow from the Kemper Award out there; I had that and a couple more as a matter of fact. Those were the people who wrote letters for me, which again, you don’t get to see letters. You never get to see those but Becker...anyway, Selby put together the damnedest collection of stuff. I furnished photos.

Q. You also, you prepared this didn’t you? Did you prepare this? This service award?

A. Oh, that’s a different event.

Q. Oh excuse me, I’m sorry.
A. That was an honor within the state.

Q. Ok, I’m sorry, of course

A. What he did is took all the pictures and all these different things I had, worked for the better part of a year on it.

Q. Yes, that’s a huge job.

A. Man, I’ll tell you. It is fifty-seven pages, I think. I’ve got several copies in there, which it has pictures, it’s got everything that goes with it.

Q. Sure.

A. So I was glad to get that thing.

Q. So that was the main document that the college officiates, or whatever they’re called, considered when they voted to invite...

A. They had very, very set rules. It had to be done in such-and-such a manner. It was bound into so much information. It had to be specifically for a category. Yes, they shut out all kind of things. Many years ago I was a judge on a design group in Washington, D.C. and we met there and I think there was a dozen of us and there were like 500 entries. These entries were that thick and this was a design award.

We were trying to select somebody for a design award. Each of us got a stack of materials. Well, some of them were interesting, and you want to keep. Some of them you just tossed in the pile. It was done without anything other than it had to be eight and a half by eleven. But this College of Fellow’s thing now doesn’t even come to you this way. It comes to you on a CD.

Q. Oh my gosh. So they’ve really automated and standardized?

A. Yes, you don’t deviate. So your classification in this particular case, I’ve got the award on, and I didn’t know what the differences were, for design. When it came back to me, you don’t want to write that in yet, I mean I got the letter...did they enclose a letter? No, that’s for...you saw my stones in there?

Q. Yes.

A. I got the President’s Award and I also got Outstanding Architect Award from Central Illinois.

Q. Yes, right.
A. Ok, well in this particular case I got this nice letter saying you’ve been selected as a preservationist or in the design category. I guess two days later, I can’t say correction, it’s the way she wrote it, “I’m sure it will disappoint you to know that they have elected to have you in the preservation award as opposed to the other one.” But the way she said it, it’s like, you guys get this stuff, you’re so damn happy anyway just getting it.

Q. Well, not that you didn’t deserve a design award but this was clearly the most, of all your achievements, probably the most indelible and important from the AIA’s perspective.

A. It started me and Ferry a long, long, long ways.

Q. Well, congratulations. So yours is in the preservation category?

A. Yes.

Q. So you are now a member of the college?

A. College of Fellows.

Q. How often, do they meet once a year or do they meet at all?

A. Well, they always meet once a year, I know that. I’ve only been in it for three weeks now, so I don’t know. But they have a monthly newsletter.

Q. Ok. There are probably several thousands.

A. There are 2,700.

Q. Wow.

A. 2,700 fellows.

Q. That’s not very many.

A. 80,000 architects.

Q. This is a very exclusive celebrity.

A. [laughs] I guess for public information, it ain’t cheap. I mean, everything they do is first-class and that means when you go to a black-tie dinner, you’re paying for a black-tie dinner and all the other events.

Q. So there was a high price.
A. Oh yes. Well, the price wasn’t really this issue I was trying to make for me. It is they go first-class because they intend to go first-class.

Q. They think they owe you nothing less, though you have to pay for it.

A. Oh yes. Don’t come in your jeans, though I don’t think they would throw you out.

Q. [laughs] So it was an elegant occasion?

A. Oh yes.

Q. The conferral of...

A. It was part of the national convention.

Q. Yes.

A. Selby always referred to this, the final night after we had had our...not invocation, investiture?

Q. Investiture.

A. Investiture, I’m sorry. Can you spell that for me?


A. Which was done in robes.

Q. Oh, my gosh.

A. I mean just like graduation.

Q. Black robes or formal academic gowns?

A. Black robes, they were academic without stripes.

Q. Yes.

A. We were the lowly guys in the blacks.

Q. You looked like monks.

A. Well, sort of. We didn’t have hats. But we were, it was held in...well, it’s a historic synagogue in New Orleans. It was a very large space, and each of us were individually escorted
down the aisle from our seats. We were all lined up alphabetically, 104 of us. The former
president, they had a number of former presidents since it’s a 100 year old group. So they had
the presidents, former presidents escort each of us individually down to the side. We line up
and go up and they read what we’d done, one liner.

Q. Yes, just a short.

A. Then you bend your head and hang a ribbon over you.

Q. Hang a ribbon with a medallion?

A. With a medallion, yes, shake hands with the chancellor and so forth and then be escorted by
another officer down who did have their colored robes. These colored robes meant something,
which I got all the copy of someplace now.

Q. So this was a pomp and circumstance ceremony.

A. Absolutely.

Q. Formal.

A. Absolutely.

Q. Colorful…a great honor.

A. The next night was when we had the prom as Professor Selby said. We called him Professor
Bob. He’s a good guy all the way through.

Q. That was a little more lighthearted and with alcohol being served.

A. Oh yes, oh yes. Everything you paid for and it was in grand surroundings, everything about
it.

Q. It was dance?

A. Oh yes.

Q. I mean actually was there dancing?

A. Yes, they had an orchestra. Of course, this was in New Orleans. Almost every place we
went was this wonderful jazz music. The jazz part I enjoyed a lot more than hearing some of
the old-time type things going on there.

Q. Did Brynn have to dress up too?

Henderson
A. Oh yes.

Q. Therefore she had to buy a new dress I’m sure.

A. Yes. [laughs]

Q. Well, do no less.

A. That’s part of being a woman I have been told several times.

Q. Exactly. Well Wally, I think that’s terrific. You and your 103 new inductees are very special obviously. Now you don’t wear that medallion when you walk around town?

A. No, but we do have lapel pins.

Q. You can wear that on a jacket.

A. Well, as a matter of fact, Professor Bob, first thing he got a letter just because he was the sponsor. He knew it before I knew it. So he calls me up the day he knows I’m going to get my letter, and I had my letter. He said, “You’ve got to go get your jewelry right away.” This is before even the investiture out in New Orleans. He said, “You get it at the bookstore.” I didn’t even know what he was talking about.

Of course, Paul had his and so I saw Paul’s and it’s a little pin. Any event, so I said that to Brynn, I said, “If you want to get,” I told her I got the award and all that. She knew we’d been doing this for...I had a pile of papers that were not ever going to blow away. [laughter] So any event, I do have the pin, but I have never worn a lapel type thing. I’ve always worn a handkerchief. I remember Bunch Bunn used to...

Q. Always had a nice handkerchief.

A. Yes. But the only thing else, by the way those of us during the ceremony, they put a carnation on us.

Q. Oh, my gosh.

A. I saw something I had never seen before, maybe in fact, I’m going to call up some of the florists here in town. I was ready for this, the gal gave it to me, I guess it was at the evening dance thing. Anyway, she says, “You want me to help you put the carnation on?” I said, “Sure.” She just reaches up and puts it on. I said, “Boy that was easy,” because usually I have to fight this thing. Well, it wasn’t until I got back home and took it off; it was a magnet.

Q. [laughs] Clever.

Henderson
A. This is interesting because what she stuck it in it, the flower came with a disc that had a magnet in it. The only thing she did was just pick the flower up and snap another disc on the back side of it.

Q. What a brilliant idea. Did it punch a hole in the collar?

A. No, no, no. It just grabbed it. If you get anything else close to it, it grabs it too. It’s a very powerful magnet.

Q. It could pull your fillings out.

A. That’s going to take the place of paperclips.

Q. Yes, exactly. For the investiture you wore tuxedoes or white tie and tails.

A. No, no, no. Had the robe on completely so it was a white tie affair, I mean a white shirt.

Q. White shirt and suit?

A. Yes.

Q. Well, what a moment, that’s great.

A. Yes, we had. Again I understand we’re going to get the pictures of what I elected and what they said about me as I walked up there because I wasn’t listening.

Q. You can’t remember, right. Well, that is terrific, and there may be more capstones to your life and career but that certainly is one.

A. That one I had the one worry about not being able to walk as well as I’d like to.

Q. Yes, you mentioned that.

A. They did have a handrail going up the steps. That was a help. Now where they still have handrails, I can get to a lot of places.

Q. [laughs] Now we’re going to stop a moment.

END OF TAPE TWELVE, SIDE TWO

38:15
Q. Interview with Wally Henderson, FAIA, on June 7, 2011. This is our final session, Wally. We covered, I think, pretty well your civic interests and activities on a wide range of subjects from muni airports to redesigning bicentennial coins to the newspaper. Do you want to say anything in general about your attitude on creativity and your civic life?

A. Yes. As a matter of fact, I’m glad you said, “My attitude.” I believe that’s something that I think we all of us believe in but sometimes don’t say it quite as outspoken as I do. I think we have a good community. I came back to this community after never intending to come back because it could be better. I think unfortunately and even this is maybe how the world gets old all by itself, but new ideas are something very hard to come by in Springfield.

We used to have an election cycle about every eight years the political parties would change and new people would come to town. We’d have people from every place – from southern Illinois through the top of Illinois and up and into Wisconsin – that had different opinions, different experiences and would offer new ideas to Springfield, so there was a little freshness in there and youth came with it.

But what happens in Springfield unfortunately is that an idea that works pretty well, unfortunately that’s as good as it’s going to get because it works pretty well. I’m always taking the approach, and you’ve heard me say this, Cullom, and I appreciate you give me the chance to say it, is that Springfield can be a better place to be, better in quality, better in everything that it does, but we don’t put our standards high enough and they can be higher.

Any of these things that I have contributed to and been responsible for, I think, are obvious things. All you have got to do is stop a while and say, “How can we be better?” If we spent more time being creative, we could help ourselves, be admired more, be recognized for what we really can do and not just Abraham Lincoln, not just because we are the state capital, but because we are a doggone good place to be. So many of these things that I get involved in, is be critical of the capacity that we have that we are acknowledging.

Q. Ok. Well that’s helpful, and it leads me to think of a few questions or even one example. There was a citizen of Springfield, who, like you, was a restless visionary, I’ll say. That was Vachel Lindsay. Maybe you weren’t expected me to give his name.

A. I was not, but you’re exactly right.
Q. Well, he wrote about what Springfield could become. He wrote a book called *The Golden Book of Springfield* looking into the future. I’m not asking you to comment on that or anything, but you know enough about his restless manner and his poetry. I don’t want you to compare yourself to him, but is that the kind of person you have in mind – someone who will be not content with the status quo?

A. Boy, that’s a terrific type of question. When you mentioned Vachel Lindsay, that takes me all the way back to Elizabeth Graham, of course, who was this famous person who taught me about Vachel Lindsay.

Q. That’s right.

A. But what you really bring to my mind is over the years, I have collected things. There was a young man apparently in Carlinville, Illinois and I want to go back maybe twenty years. While I have been juggling my papers, I recently came across what I cut out. I cut it out from the paper because this young man as he got out of high school ends up with his SATs, or whatever that test is, and got a score that was miraculous, the highest in the nation. The highest ever within one or two, but it was incredible.

Of course, they went down and interviewed him and also the people who taught him. The people who taught him said he was always inquisitive, that was the first thing; that was his basic nature. When they asked him, he said, “Well, I was just taking shortcuts.” Now that was an interesting kind of answer, and the article is much more explicit.

But the point being he was always searching for the next better idea. In other words, you don’t just simply be satisfied because you say, “Oh gosh, I got that one right.” It’s not luck; nothing is luck. But anything you can think of that can be done and you’ve heard me say this a number of times because I really believe that but, of course, that’s what Einstein said, “For every action, there is a reaction.”

Well, if you can think about moving a mountain, you can move it. It may be a hell of a long time taking it, and it may take a lot of machinery and a lot of money, but you can move that mountain. Well, of course, that’s a ridiculous type of thing, but you can also incite within people the desire to be free. That’s what is happening now in these countries that for centuries have been putting up with religion and all these things. No, creativity is something that I have a lot of respect for.

I had a dad who had no formal education in the state, but he was forever sitting down saying and I remember during World War II, Norden bombsight; my dad designed a bomb sight at a kitchen table. He didn’t know anything about wind velocities and curvature of the earth and all the rest of these things, but he was trying to do something.

We also talked about lighter-than-air vehicles, like balloons only they weren’t balloons. They were propelled automobiles. But these are the kinds of things that my dad would say, “I don’t
have anything to do this week,” so he was just always coming up with an easier way. I found that in my own office when we... they didn’t collate papers when we first opened our office. The machinery was there if you had a very expensive office layout, but we didn’t. We prepared specifications that could be a hundred pieces of paper sorted out.

Everybody would start sorting a certain way, but we would pretty soon get into a swing that was a team effort. That’s what Henry Ford taught us. It is one of those things I saw the other night as I was telling you earlier. They showed how Henry Ford showed if you allow of these people, if you just gave them one thing to do and give all the supplies necessary to do it and they didn’t have to know, they just did it eight hours a day and you had the most competent people in the world, the machine would be a lot faster. People like go crazy. [laughter] The production line was an innovative thing that changed the whole idea in the world. That’s what I’m looking for, yes.

Q. Ok, so your father was a visionary in many ways. He was a tinkerer.

A. Yes, he was.

Q. You may feel this is putting you on the spot in self-promotion, but do you think your career as an architect engineer could be characterized as visionary?

A. I think I had the good fortune of going to work with Bill Muchow in Colorado. Bill Muchow, I think I’ve given him all the accolades from his experiences with Eliel and Eero Saarinen. That was what was in his office. He practiced what he had learned. What I learned, I brought back to Springfield and we actually did it.

In other words, I wasn’t a visionary; I was looking to be as capable as people can be if you get experience. I had more experience because I had a practice in Indianapolis, had a practice in Denver. Well, I was overseas with the service and had been half way around the world. I had a little experience that many of our cohorts hadn’t had, so I’m trying to apply those things. It’s amazing how you see something, and it sticks with you.

You literally and it’s a little thing I do, but I was working in Muchow’s office because I wanted to be as good as I could be for him, I used to sleep with a pad and paper next to my bed with my new wife and thinking about design issues that Muchow had created with his design. You don’t design something and then say, “Well, there it is.”

Somebody has got to put it together, and that was my job in that particular case. So to be able to wake up in the middle of the night and just make a couple of lines and be surprised the next morning when I look at the drawing, it was an answer and it had the possibility.

Q. That’s an amazing mental process, isn’t it?
A. Absolutely amazing, but I did it that way for twenty years. I just had that pad of paper and pencil you don’t even turn on a light. You just draw something and it is there.

Q. Made sense of it the next day.

A. Yes, yes.

Q. Well now, there are people who might say that visionaries can even include people like Don Quixote, who tilted at windmills. I mean that is to say, their visionary qualities were off the charts. No one ever criticized you of being hopelessly idealistic, did they?

A. Oh, I’m not sure that they haven’t but not to my face. But idealistically I’m saying when we took on the Lincoln Home National Historic Sites, they said, “This isn’t going to happen. That Lincoln Home there, if we can just keep the American flag on that corner and that neighborhood right.” Well, we kept battling with it. The whole issue is, you just don’t walk in, snap your fingers, and say it is done.

The Lincoln Home National Historic Site took twenty years, but it is twenty years when you don’t let up, when you enlist every bit of help you can. Again, I was no visionary by saying, “Let’s close the streets,” as an example as what could happen without having cars in front of Lincoln’s home. I wasn’t a visionary by saying, “We’re going to have a token doughnut party out there if this intersection is still closed.”

That was the Junior League, which brought all these people together because the Junior League... and again, here was a bunch of ladies who had ideas. The docents at the Lincoln Home as a matter of fact, but they also came up with ideas like this to make it more hospitable for the visitor. This was before the Park Service ever took it over.

Q. Absolutely.

A. Maybe I did what I did, I like to tinker with other people’s ideas because somebody has a fresh idea, but they haven’t got any idea how to carry it through. The best way in the world to carry it through is to enlist them. Enlist somebody else who is sort of compatible – not the same idea, not a competitor- but everybody sort of gets together, and then you’ve got a team. Once you’ve got a team, you can win.

Q. That’s very interesting. It reminds me a little bit of being a very effective community organizer not that you were in the job of community organizing, but that you found a way light a fire under good ideas by enlisting help from the Junior League or you name it.

A. A lot of people like to be asked. Shy may not be a good word. They just never thought about it. All of a sudden there is a spark and that spark in some way needs to be fanned just a little bit, and you get fire. There are lots of people – everybody wants their fifteen minutes or five minutes of fame or identity anyway.
It’s amazing when you ask somebody to do something, they say, “Oh, I can’t do that.” Just give them a little encouragement, they can do it. It surprises them, and they do it well. It is an interesting return. Yes, I like dealing with people, but I like dealing with people that have got ideas because they give me ideas, too. It’s fair, it’s a trade.

Q. Another thing that interested me about your very successful career was that you managed to combine a visual view of life that is after all central to an architect. You looked at things in terms of images and visual things, but you also have grown a lot — text. You were texturally — I hope I’m making sense — texturally well enough experienced to write up a lot of your material for your proposals and so forth. Where am I going with this? I don’t know. It is just that those were often considered two different things — pictorial vs. text.

A. I’m going to go right back to Elizabeth Graham. Elizabeth Graham, English 13, Springfield High School. If you took that course, Elizabeth Graham would send you away to a college, and you could proficiency the freshman English without blinking an eye. She was notorious for lots of things, and the education thing, she has my greatest admiration. I think anybody that ever had her, [would feel] the same way. I was very comfortable writing things. While I was in university, I had a job with the Department of Waterways where I wrote the reports for the division to people. These were personal letters to be signed the Secretary of Waterways, but I had confidence in writing. Elizabeth Graham gave me the confidence, and the experience was terribly important. But writing what you think is what is really important. In other words, it is not a play on words, it is to get your ideas out in a succinct way and it helps everything that you ever do. I have always enjoyed the opportunity and wrote a few articles about this.

Q. Yes, right.

A. That’s a nice commentary on that.

Q. Yes, good. Well, if we can I’m pursuing just a number of tantalizing leads. You had begun our interviews eight years ago. [laughter] No, really two months ago talking about how you had identified some turning points in your life; we covered some of them. It is always an interesting point because you are reflecting now as you look back on eighty years of life and family and professional experience. What were those moments where you took a different road or made a particular leap that stand out in your memory as being turning points?

A. I wish I would have spent some time writing this down because I will skip back and forth.

Q. Well, that’s fine.

A. We talked quite some time ago when we moved to Springfield, I was eleven-years-old. My mother relocated. That was a change because from then on, I was sort of aimlessly doing
things. We camped in Springfield at 206 West Edwards. We came in on Sixth Street is, I think, where we first lived and then on to Edwards Street, which I lived the rest of my grade school and high school days out.

Q. So there was some stability there at home?

A. Yes, we were right in the shadow of the state capital because my mother was employed there. This was the tail end of, I say tail end because of the recession, they don’t identify it with starting and stopping except World War II stopped the recession.

Q. No.

A. My mother chose to have us live on 206 West Edward Street, which lay in the shadow of the state capital right there at Spring and Edwards. We moved down the street a little bit later on, but this was also ten blocks from Lincoln’s home. Now all these things I guess had something to do with it. First of all, Springfield was a good place to grow up. I remember when we drove from St. Louis there and I was going to Mullanphy Grade School, which was out near Forrest Park, actually Shaw’s Gardens, which is now I guess the Missouri Botanical Gardens. But Shaw’s Gardens, Mullanphy was a grade school.

Q. Mullanphy?

A. I can’t even spell it.

Q. That’s ok.

A. Well, I was in second grade. [laughter] I remember that the teacher said to all the kids, “Little Wally Henderson is moving to Springfield and Abraham Lincoln’s home.” I didn’t know Abraham Lincoln. I remember, what I do seriously remember to this moment, rolling my eyes like this and thinking, “Ok, Abraham Lincoln.” I get on the train with my mom, and here we come to Springfield. My dad follows us to Springfield, and that’s where we are. Well, that was a turning point.

Q. Well, the turning point in the sense that it was a whole new life for you and at an age when you were impressionable. It opened up ideas?

A. Well, Springfield always, my mother was always...my mother and dad, I should say, would...well, certainly during the war years, my dad was still at home, but he was with the Air Corps storage depot out at the fairgrounds. He was a superintendent out there, so he was gone like working people do but on a shift-type basis.

My mother and dad both encouraged me to the Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts first and then the Boy Scouts. I was an only child, so that was an advantage and disadvantage in a way. But as an
advantage, you didn’t want to let your folks down. These other things, I can an advantage, too, where they didn’t want to let me down.

I remember picking up an interest in rocket ships, and I used to draw pictures when I was a Cub Scout. The Cub Scouts were asked to draw sketches of rocket ships for them. It was fun and so I would just draw pictures. I got kind of an interest into aeronautical engineering. This is 1949, I may have told you this story earlier, but when I graduated from Springfield High School in June or January, I stayed on an extra semester to do some electronics and stuff like that at Springfield High School. Then I went to the University of Illinois that fall in aeronautical engineering.

I’ve told you the story again it was one of those turning points. I went into aeronautical engineering not architecture engineering. It was when my folks blew me out of the water that following spring with the remark that they didn’t see it that way but what would I say was that I wanted to be the first man on the moon. Guests would come over. I was their only son, their only child who was going to college to study aeronautical engineering and said I wanted to be an astronaut. My folks said, “Don’t say that. Say it privately. Don’t say that to anybody else. Everyone else thinks you are crazy.”

That was a turning point for me because it was my parents, but I’ve always thought back, “Why did I – today I look back on it – how did I get so damn smart?” That was 1949 when I started and 1954… well, would have been 1953 if I had done the four year course, but architecture was a five year course. But in 1954, I would have gotten an aeronautical engineering degree and so many years later having been a practiced aeronautical engineer, here comes the new president who comes off in 1962 saying, “By the end of this particular decade, we’re going to have a man on the moon,” I would have been just exactly the same age as the guys who got there.

Q. So you might have become one of the first crew of astronauts?

A. Well yes, yes my age timing was perfect.

Q. I remember kids our age were fascinated because we’d look at Popular Mechanics magazine and some of those others. They would show these visionary pictures of helicopters, personal helicopters and spaceships. I never was oriented toward that as a career, but you obviously were enthralled.

A. Sure. I built model airplanes all through grade school and high school.

Q. Yes, so you’re interest in design and engineering and architecture kind of coalesced there and your parents kind of got you back on the reality track saying, “Forget about the moon shot.”

A. Thanks, Dr. Cullom. [laughter] Yes, back on the reality track. I never thought of it quite that way.
Q. I understand.

A. So they brought me, shot me down into space. So now when I got to Muchow's office, well now I owe a lot to...turning points was the...

Q. Yes.

A. I learned a lot about the military. I say it from the standpoint I did not go in...I had a commission coming because I went through ROTC, but I elected not to take the commission because it was going to be a four year tour and I didn’t want four years of military. I said, “Well if I get drafted, I get drafted.” This was right at the tail end of the Korean War. They were still shooting when I graduated, but I didn’t get drafted until they quit shooting. That was in November 1954.

Q. 1953, 1954, ok.

A. Yes, and that put me into Korea in 1955 and 1956, and I then I was back in the United States at Colorado Springs.

Q. So how was that a turning point in your life experience?

A. I think it’s important because again, I never thought about it. I had a college degree, but I had a college degree. I ended up being drafted. You stand in line and here’s a whole bunch of people, and they all got the same little gym bags together. We don’t know each other, and some people look interesting and some people look frightening and I mean that literally. I’m not comfortable, really, with living in a fraternity with new guys which fraternity life was very beneficial I think. I would recommend that any day, but it’s not frat boys. I’m straightening that line up.

Q. No, I understand.

A. But no, in the military, you learn to get along with people. You get along with them because first of all, they break you down. They call you, “Ok, girls,” and anything that is demeaning to you and puts you in your place. Of course, they wake you up at odd times to just prove to you they can wake you up at odd times. “Swab the deck,” as they call it cleaning out these in the old days, those wooden barracks.

You’d swab them at like 4:30 in the morning five days a week. So I mean it was crazy, but that’s the way it was done. But they finally...what I’m really saying is that you learn to rely on the guy next to you that you wouldn’t speak to on the street or anything other time. But they ended up to be your best buddies, and it wasn’t rank at all. It was case that you’re in this thing together, and they convince you that you’re going to be a team.
The military could be an opportunity for lots and lots of people who have never had a chance to be the first power to do anything beyond grade school. But they got have to have those kind of opportunities because they teach you respect for each other. I wouldn’t know this guy and all of a sudden, by order you respect him.

I roll my underwear. I got three pair of underwear; it’s my job to keep them clean. It was my job to keep myself clean in order to keep me out of the infirmary because that’s bad timing that it would extend your military duty. Whoa. [laughter] I mean after you get a few of those rules, you change your attitude about a lot of things. Turning point was there; no question about it.

Q. Yes, it was part of your personal and social growth, I guess.

A. Sure. Ok, I come back. I’m now stationed at Fort Carson, Colorado and met a lady on way down to get involved. I came back early from leave having been overseas sitting on my mother’s, my folk’s front porch. They didn’t know I was back in the States. When she came home from work, she just about had a stroke but that was a good thing.

I left early to get out to Colorado because I didn’t have any connections in Springfield any longer. They had a chapter of my fraternity at the University of Denver. One day this young fellow says he was going up to the University of Colorado, which is twenty, thirty miles up the road. “Do you want to go with me?” I jumped in the car with him, but I was reporting the following week down at Colorado Springs, Fort Carson. We drive by the Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority house.

Q. Oh I remember. You did tell this. [laughs]

A. I said, “Stop the car.” He stopped it and he said, “Why, do you know somebody there?” I didn’t, but again since I told him before I met the lady that I a year and six days later we got married.

Q. Sally, right.

A. Sally, and had five children after all those events. I was in Colorado Springs at that particular point, but again I think I told a story of a turning point. Now they’re about to ship me up to become a ski trooper, and I don’t want to go up there. I want to stay right there with Sally Vicary, and get out of the army.

When I went to see the chaplain, he said, “There’s no way you can get off those orders of going to Steamboat Springs for ski school other than unless you were going to school.” [laughter] I applied literally within hours of him making that remark to the University of Illinois to get a master’s in architecture, which is...so you have a five year degree in those days and today you have to have a six year degree, four and two.
Well, I had five and the one was going to be a master’s. All architects today, if they’re going all the way to have a master’s degree, which there are not many professions, well, law of course, and then some are even beyond that. So I went back to school, and that’s where I met, ran into that group of air force engineers.

Q. Oh yes, that’s right.

A. That was the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile opportunity, which would have been...I think you’ve got that on your record somewhere.

Q. Yes, we have that.

A. But that was a turning point when I turned it down. That’s when Bill Muchow said that if I would accept that appointment, which would have been a complete diversion from where I was going. With a lot of money coming in at age 29 or so, whatever it was, thought I would never be an architect.

Q. Yes, that would have ended your career.

A. Of course it would have.

Q. You turned that down.

A. So when I turned that one down and then Don Ferry called me, that’s clearly a turning point because I didn’t have any plans of my own, I really didn’t.

Q. You mentioned before how important your relationship with Muchow was.

A. Oh yes.

Q. In terms of working with new materials and all and I just want to say obviously that was a very, relatively brief, but very important professional experience on your part. Ok, that’s all.

A. There’s no substitution. Pull that one out, and I would be a completely different person.

Q. Right.

A. By the way, it’s pronounced Much-o.

Q. Ok, thank you. What did I say, Moocho?

A. Yes.
Q. That’s like “mucho money.” I’m sorry. [laughter] Then you mentioned Don Ferry and your collaboration, which of course, was the springboard to extraordinary rise in architectural work.

A. We got along well. We were compatible and had basically the same, we both were architectural engineers.

Q. Yes.

A. Which I always said was a real ace and became an engineer. I didn’t go from aeronautical engineering into architecture; I went into aeronautical engineering into architectural engineering. Now the engineering tale was meant that you knew how to hold the buildings together. An architect without the engineering degree knows more about aesthetics than some of the other things.

Q. Oh, excuse me. You talked about how you and Don Ferry built a very successful relationship, and you were complementary and had similar interests.

A. What I was leading to was the architectural engineering degree gave us the ability to think how to assemble these buildings. Similarly all architects are taught something about you got to connect two points to make a line and that kind of stuff. But when you start talking about the potential in engineering to have a knowledge, a working knowledge of the engineering is terribly important because every building has to have these skeletons just exactly like a human body does.

So whoever designed the human body put all those bones in there not just to fill up space but to make things happen. Ok, same thing exactly on a building. This applied and engineers many times didn’t want to deal...I was outspoken, as a matter of fact some would say, but you can’t do it. You just can’t build it that way. Because I was an engineer I could sit down and say, “Have you thought about this or thought about,” not doing all the mathematics and all the other things because there’s a dozen ways to skin any cat in there. But if you haven’t had the experience, you don’t think about it.

I think I mentioned earlier about Muchow got into some of our buildings because of Ketchum and Conkel, the consultant he had and their thin-shell concrete, which nobody knew anything about thin-shell concrete. Certainly I didn’t know anything about it, but I knew of it. I knew the principles behind it, and we had experienced it in Muchow’s office.

It wasn’t any difficult thing to talk about though we didn’t really apply it in its direct form here in Springfield but did in Muchow’s office. But because of that engineering thing we had an advantage and as I say, could have been a pain in a lot of engineer’s sides, but they got better because of us as well.
Q. We don’t need to retrace all of your great successes as a partnership because we’ve done that in great detail. Would it be fair to say that period of time of your partnership was kind of a professional high point for you?

A. Yes. Well, there’s no question about as far as acknowledgements because from there on I was working for somebody else. Of course, when you’re working for somebody, it’s their standard you go to. When you’re working for yourself it’s your standard. Now my standard, our standard, when it was Ferry and I, was very high to the point that we lost money because we were so dumb as to say that’s not good enough and make those reversals.

I gave you that illustration earlier. When you’re working for somebody else, they’re watching the bottom line. I was told at least on one connection is that we’re not going to spend any more money on that project. You’ve got to understand again as an architect commits himself to a client, no I’m saying this architect, our firm, Ferry and Henderson, we made it right on the line from the day we signed the contract with the client.

We’re leveling with you, we’re your guys, we won’t let you down, one of us will be on that job full-time until it’s done properly. I mean that’s pretty simple to say except when you get into a problem on a job, it’s pretty easy to say, “Well it’s the other guys fault.” We didn’t let that happen. We got a good reputation on that.

Q. So this was a highpoint in a sense that you were your own bosses, you made your reputation zoom up because of that kind of quality work, and so in that sense it was a highpoint. Later on you did good architectural work, but it was for other people.

A. Yes, and many times, I shouldn’t say many times, there were lots of...I’m trying to say many without saying it right. [laughs] No, there were occasions certainly when I wouldn’t have taken that approach other than it was more direct...you see there’s a philosophy that I personally have is that what I’ve trained to do and I think I had written that something that you’ve read that I have written, my personal philosophy is this.

The client comes up and says, “Well, this is what I want.” I’ll always remember residential work and having dealt with the lady of the house who was always in the middle of those kind of things. She proceeds to bring me a magazine, Better Homes and Gardens or something, and shows me a kitchen that has 40 linear feet of counter space. [laughter] Now, that is one ton of counter space. She says, “That’s what I want.” I’m thinking you’ve got to be goofier than whatever, but you don’t say that.

Again the magazine is selling space. They’re selling not only space in their magazine, they’re also, in this particular case, had sold her the idea that she needed 40 linear feet. Well, that’s a pretty big kitchen to say the least. It’s now my job to not say this, “You don’t really want that much.” I’m just saying that the expenses and so forth involved.
What I’m really getting to is that in any project, I feel it’s the architect’s responsibility in the best interest of his client not necessarily to say, “How did you say you want this? You want 40 linear feet? I’ll give it to you by golly.” It is to advise this particular person that it’s excessive. It looks good in *Better Homes and Gardens*, but in what we’re trying to put together, it’s going to be ridiculous.

Q. You have to find some way to say that.

A. Yes.

Q. Persuasively but sensitively.

A. Yes, yes, yes because nobody wants to be told, “I’m not going to do it,” and particularly if you deal with people who are in the banking business or anybody else. We had several experiences with banks; we did a number of banks as a matter of fact. Did a number of them in Colorado, too, with Muchow’s office, but banking took a whole series of changes particularly with all the automation.

Banks are not easy because again you’ve got Mr. Big. He knows damn well what he wants; he’s the president of the bank except that you’ve got to say, “Have you thought about this? Or maybe you ought to visit one of the other projects that we could take you to, not necessarily ours but it illustrates this.” It’s touch and go, but you’ve got to use, you’re always presenting something. That’s what they try to teach architects something about and fail totally about. They never taught engineers this.

Q. No, of course not.

A. No, you don’t have to sell anything. It is just keep the building from falling down. Of course, the joke to us is to keep the roof from leaking. But the joke is not on us, it is the way they put that roof in, but that’s neither here nor there.

Q. So you were learning and demonstrating diplomatic skills when you couldn’t just let them run roughshod and make fools of themselves in what they want, but you had to find a rational way to make them feel like they have made the right decision.

A. That’s exactly right because it is terribly important that, again part of our line is that the buildings we build are going to outlast us as far as second generations are concerned.

Q. Right, right.

A. Any mistake we make will add to that longevity that we don’t need to extend, so do it right and do it as well as you can. Never take any shortcuts to that kind of a solution. It is just the pure odyssey of the profession, so that’s my story.
Q. You’ve talked about turning points. If you’re comfortable doing this, do you want to talk about as you look back over an eighty year career and life and family, are there any points at which you kind of hit a low because of problems of any kind? The break up with Ferry.

A. I think we don’t recognize when things are happening that there is a tomorrow or even remember the yesterday. Now as this is happening, I don’t remember the yesterdays to much of a point. There were points where all of a sudden, yes a separation of a partnership of nearly 25 years, which was a very successful one.

When I say very successful, from the standpoint that we were only getting all new accolades and recognitions and the jobs, not just the flowers necessarily, but we were getting interviewed. There wasn’t a job that was a big job that we weren’t interviewed for.

Q. That’s impressive.

A. We were getting our share of those jobs. Didn’t get them all, can’t get them all, and shouldn’t have gotten them all. When you change that all of a sudden, I say I relied on everybody. Don Ferry was my partner, but we had 35 people. With 35 people, we weren’t just saying, “Well, we just pay them to do a job.”

We were realizing that the job that they did was upholding standards we were creating. All of a sudden, I don’t have a partner. I’m still, I guess we were down... weren’t there when that happened, down below the 35 level. We might have been down to 25 at that point. I think we had 25 people to take care of. I had no leadership at all because of the breakup.

Q. Plus you were split between San Antonio and Springfield.

A. That’s really what the bind was. It was the two weeks I was there and realized that I have to change that quickly. The time I spent in San Antonio, I wasn’t up here but as I think I told you, I gave my dictation at night on the telephone to the secretary in Springfield, so I could get the letters out because I didn’t have a secretary down there. I had one but she didn’t take dictation. It was just easier to do it the other way. In any event, it was a small operation but I kept alive for a year or so. I closed it first, and then I came up to Springfield and closed that, too.

Q. So I am guessing at this time, which is kind of a low, your income was at some risk. You had some lawsuits that were over your head. Your partnership professionally had dissolved, and I guess, fairly acrimoniously at that time.

A. Yes, yes.

Q. Ok. So you were scrambling at age, what? Forty-five was it probably then?

A. Well, let’s see. I might have been a little older than that. These mathematics.
Q. I know, I should have been prepared to give you the number.

A. No, 55.

Q. Fifty-five, ok. Prime of life, a great record, but the income was shrinking some.

A. Oh, yes. Well, that was how I made the decision because I think I’ve said this on a previous tape, when I went to the bank to make the payroll and had to duck my insurance, life insurance – trade it in for cash money. I came right back to the office and said, “We are closing the office at the end of the month. No other advance notice given.” I couldn’t afford it.

Q. You couldn’t make another payroll?

A. No, no. It was too much.

Q. That was tough.

A. Yes, on the employees, too.

Q. Of course it was, sure. Well, I won’t explore all of the feelings that that generated, but it obviously was a difficult period for you – emotionally and professionally.

A. Well, it was, which the next that happens the government building that we had designed and gotten awards for, Ralph Hahn, who had been in the building almost from the beginning, decides that he will now buy the Ferry and Henderson firm. Maybe I offered it to him. I think I told you that.

Q. Yes. I think you did.

A. What he did was, he kept my employees employed.

Q. Yes, right.

A. Because he could pick it up from there and they had a little bit of work because we always... not always, he didn’t get all of our jobs. He got some of our jobs. But in this particular case, what we’ve done is extend his abilities; his partner was George Bloom, who was an architectural engineer. He had gone to the University of Illinois. We had all worked together so that was it.

George Bloom headed up the department, except that I didn’t even move my chair [laughter]. That’s the way you do it. But from there on, and then we sold it. I didn’t have the partnership at that time; I was an employee. I was with those guys, but you pick up any of those problems with the insurance, those projects.
Q. It was a fair deal. No, it had to be, says I, looking back on it, a kind of a bitter pill to go from being a big shot partner to being an employee even though Ralph Hahn was a perfectly capable engineer.

A. Well, let me say it this way. First of all and I really mean this and there is no modesty involved, I never thought of myself as a big shot. I was the boss, and I had to answer for these things. But it wasn’t like, “By God, you guys will get out there in the weeds and beg me for this one.” I had to share with people who had equal educations. I might have more experience but equal education.

But, no, I would give... I would say it was Ralph Hahn, as a matter of fact, who was and he is still a good friend. He gave him advice and I said, “I wouldn’t do it this way.” He said, “Why not?” I think he respected me for that kind of approach because he was the boss. He didn’t have to listen to me at all. One of the many things, he was getting counseling for free because I was an employee, but that was good advice. I never felt like a peon.

Q. Ok, but it was a change in status. Ok, we’ve got to break a moment here.

END TAPE THIRTEEN, SIDE ONE

46:06
Q. This is continuing and, in fact, concluding an oral history memoir with Wally Henderson, FAIA, on June 7, 2011.

A. The FAIA, what does that stand for?

Q. Fellow.

A. You never said that.

Q. I know. I’ve always just memorized the initials.

A. Ok.

Q. I was ready.

A. Ok, I’m ready.

Q. So we’re pretty well through kind of a recap of the high and low points of your life unless there is something you’ve overlooked in either one that you would like to discuss. We don’t have to. If we finished that subject, fine.

A. I can’t think of anything other than I never expected to live to be 80 years old. My dad passed away at 69. My mother, she reached 90 though, so that was something. But you don’t think about getting older. What you don’t think about and it’s because I walked well, ran well, and played football and things like that.

A football injury that happened way back in high school finally caught up with me. As you know by now, I am walking with a cane because I got two knees that are out. But the real problem is balance, so in other words...and I have celebrated my eightieth birthday. So I am coming apart as old age will take you apart. I so much appreciate the chance to have these conversations.

Q. Well, that is kind of you. I know that you’ve had some health challenges in recent years, but you’re just as vinegary, or not vinegary, as intelligent and observant as ever. While you may have slowed down your involvement in community affairs somewhat, it has been a rich 80 years.
A. Yes. I look back and there’s...I am having to measure what I do these days because I just can’t get around. That is what I was starting to say with that. If somebody would have said that I would have trouble walking but I can’t go a city block. I can’t take my dog walking.

Q. That’s too bad.

A. So when you can’t do it, you don’t get around as much. But yes, the thought processes for those of you who read this or hear this and are not 80 yet, looking through your eyes you don’t see anything different. Everybody else looks like they look. So your eyes don’t suddenly get dim and daguerreotype sepia and all that stuff in there.

Q. That’s right. I know you’ve got some pain with your walking and you’re limited now in some ways, but do you have any unfinished business that you want to accomplish in the form of writing or collecting or advocating?

A. Wow, I could spend all afternoon trying to think this one out and saying it properly. Yes, I think there’s so much to be done. I almost want to grab, start with my own children and just shake them sometimes saying, “Cut out the messing around and get right to the task and get it done. Don’t make any excuses and quit procrastinating.”

I mean that’s a mouthful of [laughter] dos and don’ts, but the message that there really is, there is so much that can be done and can be solved. It is just asking for people to do it and nothing else. But everybody...again, as my democratic teachings might bring me along, the unions are good, but they were a hell of a lot better when they were helping people rather than shaking people down.

With, right now, we have to be competitive worldwide but the Chinese make a dollar a day, and we make a dollar a minute. Now, who’s going to buy our property, and who’s going to buy theirs? We’re going to pay for that.

Anyway, no, there’s a lot I’d love to be able to do. Where to start and the whole bit? I’ve had conversations with politicians now and then. Again, unfortunately being a politician has turned into a profession as well. It has nothing to do with government anymore.

Q. A lot of us as we age become more conservative politically; do you think that’s happened to you?

A. Yes sir, absolutely. No question about that. I still believe, and I’ve made the comments, which are as candid as can be. If I’m fat as a pig, don’t tell me somebody else is going to starve because they don’t deserve this. You share these things as human beings. As you go along, I’ve had good fortune but the good fortune is if you got a lot of other people...I don’t think I’ve cost anybody anything, we’ll put it that way.
If all of the sudden everything that I did was at somebody else’s expense but I hope to be, I hope the work has been a contribution to the welfare of anybody who associates with it. I used to tell that to my kids and young people who used to work in the office, “Whatever we do guys, we are acting as gods. If we put a hole in that all at the point, that’s a door.” Nobody says, “Well, I can walk through the wall three feet over the other way.” Every decision ought to be as good a decision as you can for the benefit of whoever is going to use it to function. It’s a standard.

Q. So although you’ve become more political, so have I, you still have certain strong liberal and humanitarian...

A. Absolutely. The trip...I discounted Korea almost like it wasn’t anything. Poorest people in the world, I mean I never seen people live out of garbage. Well, when I was there, as I say, the shooting wasn’t going on but there were 13 miles of roadway in Korea. When I say roadway, that’s paved roadway and that was out of Seoul directly into whomever the guy was the leader in those days.

Q. Syngman Rhee?

A. Syngman Rhee, I think it was. But what I’m saying is that Korea has come so far. In fact, that report I talked about that was on the TV most recently, talked about how Korea is like right now number two in this creativity, innovative type thing. I was there...I was a chaplain’s assistant, by the way. I took that just to stay out of trouble, I think I did. It was effective. It was a very convincing scene, all these poor people. But the churches would send clothing as Westminster does and other churches, and they’d arrive on the other end.

The Koreans would cut those pieces of cloth apart, and make five coats out of one [laughter] for little kids. Little kids and I did this one Christmas, go into, we were invited at the orphanage to come down. Here are these little kids and they’re all running around, many of them wearing the same color red coats on them that was one coat from somebody, barefoot in the snow. I mean they had nothing on their feet.

But they insisted that they had these pears, which were something very special, that we eat it. I mean they had nothing to eat, and they’re going to have us take their choice thing. Anyway I also went to the first factory that was announced while I was still in Korea, and it was for concrete blocks. Now what the concrete block company was was wooden baffles that they made that they went over and stirred their concrete in buckets. Poured them in there, stomped them with a stick, and let them sit in all night and that’s a concrete block.

Q. Fairly primitive way of making concrete.

A. It couldn’t be more primitive in the world. Everything was done by hand, but they didn’t complain. You’d see papa sans meaning the old gentlemen carrying what they called the “A frames” because it was the shape of a triangle, on their backs stacked, half again taller than
they were with leaves and branches cause they...every leaf that, fell they heated their house with. They weren’t houses.

They had a fireplace at this end and a smokestack at that end and the floor, it took the heat from the floor underneath coming from the fireplace down and smoke and carried it out the other side. That’s how they heated their house along with any animals they had were in the house. It was terrible. Today they are like number two and the most progressive and their wages are going up and up and up.

Q. They’re inventive.

A. Yes.

Q. Highly technological, very bright, it’s an amazing story and so is China’s story.

A. Yes, well the Asian people...I always remember another thing that is astounding. I was at Seoul or something and all of a sudden I hear music, and by god it’s Frank Sinatra. I couldn’t tell what it was playing or what. Well, I walk in and it was Frank Sinatra as far as I was concerned. This Frank Sinatra was about 5’ 2” singing with an orchestra right there, but he had the Frank Sinatra voice. It was the most amazing thing. These people could mimic anything. [laughter] I mean Frank Sinatra, do that again. It was really something else.

Anyway, but yes they made everything, everything has virtue. I had the conversation again with one of our administrators just the other day trying to say just if we make a list because today is not exactly one of the high points as far as productivity in Springfield, for the whole country.

I said, “I’m encouraging you as an administrator, a primary administrator to make a list of the assets we have in our community and how they can best be used.” Find the people who...lock them in a room and say, “Nobody leaves here until we come up with some ideas that could be done.” I seriously believe you could turn Springfield around in a very short period of time getting some bright people that you never even think could have idea one until they say something obvious about, “Why don’t we,” and they come up with an idea.

Q. You are a plucky optimist. I mean that respectfully, that you feel there is no circumstance under which good people cannot congregate and do something better.

A. Well, I just wouldn’t use the word “good.”

Q. Ok, equal.

A. I say something with total, not admiration, but saying 9/11 should have taught us one big lesson. We keep thinking they don’t have bombs big enough to blow up New York City or
anything else. So they say, “What the hell, let’s just get airplane tickets and fly into this thing.” They taught us a lesson to drop the biggest buildings in the United States in three hours.

Q. Right, that was a humbling.

A. Well, that’s creativity.

Q. Yes it is.

A. That’s a negative one. That’s why I say good people or it’s not limited to good people. Anybody’s got the ability to think but we, again, I would say other things that right now I think not only did they do the damage to the building, they completely revised our airline service.

Q. Absolutely.

A. I mean it’s not like it was. What does it cost? Ten times the money it would have cost today. Service is awful. I’m complaining. They’re going to beat us, and this is one of those forecasts you don’t want to talk about. But by using their heads, the Chinese are getting all these things. Pretty soon our steel mills are no longer in this country.

Do you honestly call them up and say, “We’re going to have war with you. Will you build us a few tanks?” [laughter] Or, “Will you send the steel over so we can have…” this is insane. We’re losing our grip because we’re not smart enough to apply our own knowledge. But in my particular case I was limiting it to 90 miles around Springfield.

Q. I understand. Well, was there anything final, I don’t want to say testament, obviously, but is there anything final you want to say about your life experience and the meaning of it all to you? That’s a cosmic question but if you don’t, fine, but I thought I would give you that chance.

A. You probably ought to give me the chance to erase what we just talked about. About admiring these people who blew us up [laughter] I mean that’s…Cullom I can’t think of anything. I have no regrets. I shouldn’t say, “No regrets,” everybody has regrets.

I have written a couple of things and I remember one thing, in fact, it’s at the last of this page I happen to have over here. I said, “It’s been a great ride, good ride.” I have no complaints. You get your share of good things. I have no complaints.

Q. Ok. Well, this has been an honor and a pleasure.

A. Well, thank you.

Q. I congratulate you for telling your life and work and family story.

A. As long as I get a copy of it from you.
Q. Yes sir, it’s a promise.

END OF TAPE THIRTEEN, SIDE TWO

15:08