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Raymond Arsenault oral history interview by Lucy Jones, February 9, 2004

Raymond Arsenault (Interviewee)

Lucy D. Jones (Interviewer)

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USF Florida Studies Center
Oral History Program
USF 50th History Anniversary Project

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TRANSCRIPTION

J: Today is Monday, February 9, 2004. My name is Lucy Jones. I'm a graduate assistant for the Florida Studies Center at the University of South Florida. Today I am continuing a series of interviews with USF faculty, students, staff, and alumni to commemorate fifty years of university history. This afternoon I'm with Dr. Raymond Arsenault at the historic Snell House on USF St. Petersburg campus. Dr. Arsenault is the John Hope Franklin Professor of Southern History and has a long list of accomplishments list of accomplishments here at USF. St. Petersburg, including director of [the] university Honor's College, co-director and co-founder of Florida Studies Program, [which is] the first program of its type in the state. Dr. Arsenault, thank you for talking with me today.

A: My pleasure.

J: I'd like to start by asking you to describe circumstances that brought you to USF.

A: I came here as a faculty member in August of 1980. I had been teaching at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. It was my first teaching job out of graduate school. I had taught there for four years. I liked it very much at the

University of Minnesota. I had a terrific position there. Although, it was a bit exotic, you might say, teaching southern history and civil rights history in Minnesota. My wife [and I] had our first child in 1977. So [my daughter] was two-and-a-half years old, and my wife was a seventh generation Floridian. We had been living in Boston in graduate school for a number of years. I had lived in Princeton, New Jersey before that, but she had never encountered anything quite like Minnesota winters. She felt proud that she had survived four winters, but I was pretty sure she wasn't going to survive there indefinitely. She didn't take very much to the Midwest, not only in terms of the climate, but in terms of the culture. I had to promise her that we wouldn't necessarily be in Minnesota forever. When a job came open at the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg campus...I don't really remember how I first heard of it. I saw it in what they called the EIB, which is the Employment Information Bulletin. The American Historical Association publishes [it]. I'm sure that's where I saw it. At first I didn't pay much attention to it. This was in the fall of 1979, maybe October or so. I had just defended my dissertation at Brandeis University. I was in a rather unusual situation. I had gone to graduate school in 1971 at Brandeis. It was a very unusual graduate program. It was small, almost tutorial. They would only admit five or six students in American history each year. Virtually all the students were given what were called crown fellowships, which were the largest fellowships in the United States for history graduate students. It was a wonderful place to go to graduate school. They treated you almost more like a colleague than a student. They tended to get more older students than normal. I had actually graduated from Princeton in

1969. [I] had planned to go to Yale for graduate school. C. Vann Woodward was the great figure in my field. I had been the research assistant as an undergraduate for Sheldon Hackney. [He] was a young professor who had just graduated from Yale. [he] had been one of Woodward's favorite students. I became the protégé of Sheldon Hackney and worked as his research assistant my last two years. I was married as an undergraduate, which, at Princeton, was very unusual. We got married after our sophomore year. [We] lived off campus. There were only fifty-five married students there in the entire place. I had almost a graduate school experience as an undergraduate, working as his research assistant on civil rights history and southern history. I graduated in the spring of 1969, which, sadly, was coincided with an upsurge in the Vietnam War. I got my draft notice the same day that I got my graduate fellowships in the mail – wonderful fellowships to Harvard and Yale and Stanford. So Uncle Sam needed me. I was very, very much opposed to the war. I wouldn't say I was really an activist at that point in the antiwar movement, but I certainly felt very strongly about it, even though I had grown up as the son of a career naval.... My father had been an enlisted man, a chief. Then it became an officer. He was a photographer, not particularly a military man, but I had grown up as a navy kid. It was something of a change for me to become involved with the antiwar movement. After much soul searching and a very difficult situation, I went into the Navy as an officer candidate for, supposedly, a non-combatant position, in the fall of 1969. I knew it was a bad decision from the outset, but I just simply could not make the compromises that I needed to make. I was at Newport, Rhode Island in the fall of 1969. Some of the promises that were

made about being non-combatant.... I had a lot of computer training as an undergraduate, actually. I had secondary interests in math and computer science, in addition to history. Sheldon Hackney had been one of the first quantitative historians at the Institution for Population Research at Princeton. I ended up in September of 1969 at Newport, and it was a bad fit. Let's put it that way. There were 13 of us out of the 1,200 of us [that] were in this special intelligence designation. About halfway through they decided we would eventually be military attachés in embassies, but I had this notion that somehow I could bore from within and reform the Navy. Pretty naïve there. Twenty-one years old, you know. So in the middle of OCS when they told us that we were going to be combat information center officers on guided missile cruisers, we would push the button and the village would disappear, I resigned. You could do [that] at that time. They would try to get you drafted, of course, which they did in my case. I resigned at got out on Christmas Even, 1969, knowing that I probably had a couple of weeks before they would try to draft me. Amazingly, I was able to get a job in a Chatham High School on Cape Cod, which was the next town to where I grew up. I was born in Hyannis, but my family lived in Harwich on Cape Cod for centuries. I was able to get a job as the math teacher, actually the chair of the math department. We only had two mathematicians at Chatham High School. I started on my twenty-second birthday, January 6, 1970. [I] taught there for a year and a half teaching high school math: algebra, calculus, [and] some computer science. [I had] the intention of being able to go back to graduate school as soon as I can. My wife had dropped out of college. She had gone to Endicott College her first two

years. She dropped out to get married. She had been our high school valedictorian. We'd been valedictorian and salutatorian at the same high school. We promised her parents [who] were not particularly pleased by our elopement at age nineteen....Anyway, she applied to Wellesley College and got a full scholarship. For a year while I was teaching on Cape Cod, she commuted to Boston, to Wellesley. [She] became a Renaissance literature specialist because that's what was offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays. In the spring of 1970 they did try to draft me actually, but I always love to play basketball, and I broke my ankle in two places the day they sent me my draft notice. Even though the lottery system had come in, my number was 221, they said that they needed me now. In fact, they needed me in the Marines, not in the army. They weren't going to wait for the lottery system to kick in. They needed bodies. Of course, my ankle was broken, [and] I couldn't report for the physical in Boston, and I made sure that it took a while for the ankle to heal. By that time they could no longer make the argument that they hadn't had time to adjust to the lottery system for this first year. I got time. I applied for a deferment as a math teacher. I got my deferment three days before all deferments were discontinued. It was miraculous that I was able to escape. As a teacher on Cape Cod, I got very active in the antiwar movement. I was one of the local coordinators for Gerry Studds, an antiwar congressman who ran for congress. The summer of 1971, Kathy and I ran a coffee house in an outlying Methodist church, did drug counseling, and had folk bands and that sort of thing. [We] did a lot of interesting things in those years. To make a long story short, in the spring of 1971, I had gone through the year of the lottery.

Kathy was a senior at Wellesley so I reapplied to graduate school. In the interim, there had been a real intensification of the market. The golden age was over in academic life for a lot of people. They weren't admitting as many people, particularly in American history. A lot of the fellowships were being discontinued. I was not at all sure that I could get these wonderful fellowships that I'd gotten in 1969. In looking back on it, I don't know quite why I didn't consider commuting. She was in Wellesley. I could've gone to Yale. I knew I could get that scholarship back to work with Woodward, but we never considered it. Young love, hormones. I'm not sure. A combination of the two. Anyway, it was really between Harvard, who had given me a wonderful fellowship, but I wasn't sure at all I could get it again. I applied to Brandeis as a backup school, not knowing much about it. I did get the fellowship at Harvard, but I was so taken with the interdisciplinary program at Brandeis. [They had] extraordinary faculty, some of what are now considered the greatest historians in the country, if not the world: David Hackett Fischer, John Demos. There were other people Marvin Meyers, Geoffrey Barraclough. [They were] extraordinary faculty. I took an incredible gamble and turned Harvard down. I later got to know the number of people who were at Harvard at the same time who have gone on to good careers, certainly, but really did not have a good experience in graduate school. I think, intellectually, I definitely made the right choice. I went to Brandeis with this wonderful Crown fellowship. I broke my grandmother's heart. [She] didn't understand why I turned Harvard down. I took a flyer and went to Brandeis and absolutely loved it. My wife worked in the library, first in the science library. Then, after she got her

master's, the library science degree at Simmons, she was a cataloger. We had a wonderful five years there. After a couple of years, they tried an experiment of putting one graduate student on the faculty, one in European history and one in American history, as a half-time instructor. It was called a "stool." Instead of the chair, it was the stool in American history and the stool in European history. I was given the stool in American history in 1974 [or] 1975. That was a wonderful experience. I went on the job market. In the first year, I got a couple of one-year offers at University of North Carolina, Charlotte, and Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo [California]. I decided I'd better stay around [and] finish my dissertation. They renewed my fellowship for 1975-1976. I did some teaching for them. I went out on the market in earnest in 1975, 1976. It was a very bad year, but I was very fortunate. In part because I think I had the quantitative training that looked unusual. [I] ended up getting a wonderful job at the University of Minnesota. That and Rutgers, which I would have been offered if I had turned Minnesota down, were the best jobs in the country that year. I felt very, very lucky. I had never been in the Midwest before. We chose Minnesota because we thought it was exotic. We thought the world ended in Pittsburg. Off we went in the fall of 1976, [the] bicentennial year in August, to the University of Minnesota. I loved it from the outset. It was a wonderful history department. [It was] very big. The reason I'm mentioning all this is because it's such a contrast to what happened here. I was in a department of forty-two historians. I also taught in the American Studies program, which is one of the great claims to fame of the University of Minnesota. That and Yale and the University of Pennsylvania, that's really where American

Studies began. I also taught in the American Studies program there. I loved it. [I had] great friends there. I was so busy, a young faculty member worrying about getting tenure. I did not have my dissertation done. Another striking thing about this is that Minnesota had a system that if you came as an instructor.... I had written a draft of my dissertation, which I was very unhappy with. In quantitative history you sort of have a choice of doing either a thematically oriented piece, analytically structured, or a more traditional narrative. I had done the analytical, and I just didn't think it was anything that anybody would ever want to read. I thought I'd have to start over and rewrite it as a book anyway. In Minnesota you had three years. If you were hired as an instructor, you were given three years to pen your thesis. If you didn't, you were gone. I took the whole three years and essentially rewrote my dissertation from stem to stern as a narrative book. It was a study of southern demagogues. It was called *A Wild Ass of the Ozarks*. Published by Temple University Press in 1984. I mention it because, essentially, I left in 1976, was on the faculty, had my own Ph.D. students...I think I sat on eight or nine Ph.D. defense committees directing my own students before I had my own Ph.D. I was maybe the last historian to have experienced this. I was really young. I was only twenty-eight. I was the youngest by probably ten years on the faculty. I didn't really think of myself as being all that much younger, but I was baby of the department. I loved it from the beginning. [I had] great friends. [There was] a lot of interdisciplinary work. I probably would have stayed there forever, but Kathy was really unhappy there, particularly after we had our first child. I think her family looked at this as spousal abuse, why you'd make anybody live in such a

cold place. Three of the coldest winters on record were three of the first four winters. [They were] just brutal. [It was] thirty [or] thirty-five below zero some days. It was harder on her definitely. We had good friends, and it was nice in the summer. She's a real Florida girl. Her family is going to become a historic family in the state. [They have] lived in Florida since the eighteenth century. I had to promise her that we wouldn't necessarily be there forever. I applied for the job at USF. It was an entry-level job, so I knew that they would have to change it. It's not easy to do. Today it's almost impossible to. It's much more formalistic now, but then you had more leeway. I came down for my interview in January.

Actually, at first, I defended my thesis in September of 1979. I still had a little work to do. I defended it before the deadline. In celebration, Kathy gave me a trip to Mazalon, Mexico. We went with Amelia, our daughter who was two-and-a-half, for a week in Mazalon on the Pacific coast. It was a wonderful time. Except, the last day there, I made the mistake of chewing on some ice in a drink. I think that's what the cause was. And I got salmonella. In those days, the American Historical Association meeting at the annual convention is where you interviewed for jobs. I think they probably had a dozen finalists [that] the USF department interviewed in New York. I was there in New York with salmonella. I looked good. I lost nineteen pounds in two weeks. I hadn't eaten. The only thing I could hold down was chocolate. Before I had my interview for USF, I thought this was not going to go anywhere because I literally could barely stand sometimes. I have a dear friend, Vernon Burton, who was also a candidate for the job. He grew up in South Carolina. He's quite a character. He got a job. He was a Princeton graduate

student that I knew, another protégé of Sheldon Hackney's. Vernon got a great job at the University of Illinois. He's still teaching there. He never liked Illinois. He's done wonderfully there, but he's always wanted to get back to the South. This was one of his early attempts to get back to the South. He's still trying. He was a candidate for the job. I remember he and his wife let me, before my interview for USF, they let me lie down on their bed for a few minutes. I was just sick as a dog before I went into my interview. I think I did, I obviously did fine. When Vernon had his interview, my colleagues here later told me, and Vernon told me as well, that he spent most of his time trying to convince them as to why they should hire me. He's a sweet, sweet guy. He's very eccentric, but wonderful. That was a strange opening for my beginning contact with USF. That was December of 1979. They invited me down for one of the three on-campus interviews. They had three finalists: Bill Barry, who was a Princeton Ph.D. [and] who went on to be a college administrator in Georgia, Charles Regan Wilson has become a good friend of mine, who now teaches at the University of Mississippi and who is one of the two people doing the Encyclopedia of Southern Culture. Charles was one of the three finalists and I was. We were all brought down in January. We interviewed essentially equally at both campuses. It was ten below zero when I left Minneapolis. I'll never forget flying in here. Even though I had lived in Florida a good bit of my life...My father, as I said, was in the navy...When I was seven years old, we moved to Pensacola and lived there for about two-and-a-half years. When I was fifteen, my last two years in high school, we moved to Jacksonville. The schools were discredited in Jacksonville. My

father's mother, French-Canadian maternal grandmother, lived in Fernandina Beach on Amelia Island just a few miles north. I lived with her in high school and went home a couple of weekends. I went to Fernandina Beach High School. I knew Florida, and I had been to two conferences down here. I went to a Key Club conference in Tampa my junior year of high school. Then I came to Clearwater in the spring of 1965 to an Honor's Society convention on Clearwater beach, which I remember being very romantic and exotic. I loved it. Those were the only two times I'd been on the gulf, except for Pensacola, of course, in the Tampa Bay area. I had not been here since 1965. It had been fifteen years when I flew in, in January of 1980. I had never flown in. I had never seen Tampa Bay, its broad expansion, the blue sky. Dave Carr was sort of my host. He picked me up at the airport in a VW Microbus. I'll never forget about going across the Howard Franklin Bridge. They treated me really well. They put me up in the old Edgewater Motel, which was owned by the city. It's gone now. It was surrounded on three sides. It was opposite where the Vinoy Villas are now, very close between that and Northshore Pool. It's now a park. The motel was there many years. They put me up there, and I was completely surrounded by water. It was about eighty-five degrees. They took me to show me the pool here. I remember it as if I saw people playing water volleyball, but I think they just told me about it. The pool was glistening. I remember they took me to Pepin Restaurant. I had Shrimp Suprema and that wonderful pumpnickel bread. On the Tampa side, when I went over there, they took me to Café Don Jose. [It was] the same company, same menu, so I had Shrimp Suprema over there. Lou Perez, who was

the chair of the department then gave me, as he was taking me in his little VW Bug to the airport, he stopped and got me a loaf of the bread to take back with me on the plane. The interview went extremely well. [It was] a good fit. I took to this place immediately. Although, none of the permanent buildings were up. We were in the old, what used to be called, A building, the old merchant marine building where the marine science is still housed. They were just building Bayboro Hall, which didn't open until the following January, January of 1981. It was about as far from University of Minnesota as you could imagine. At that time, University of Minnesota was the largest campus in the country. The system wasn't the largest, but there were 52,000 students on the campus. Actually, if you counted the extension students, I think it was 70,000. It was gigantic. [There were] just those big, solid buildings as far as the eye could see. I came here and it was sort of this adjunct to a fishing village: military looking, barrack-type buildings and no library to speak of. It was the most bizarre college campus I had ever encountered. I suppose, in some ways it's akin to the decision I made in going to Brandeis. I'm not sure what I thought initially. I was very taken with St. Petersburg. It was just like I fell in love with it right away. I had never lived in one place for very long. Being a Navy kid, I never lived in any place more than five years. We lived in Waltham when I was in graduate school from 1971 to 1976. That was the longest I'd ever lived in any one place. I always had this kind of wanderlust. They offered the job to me and I negotiated with them. I kept demanding certain things, and they kept saying yes. Before I knew it, we were coming here. It was a shocking thing for my colleagues in Minnesota. Professionally, it looked like a crazy thing

to do. I had one of the best jobs in the country at one of the best departments, a very established position. I look back, and I think it was absolutely the right decision to make, but at the time, some people just didn't understand what I was doing. It seemed crazy. [It would have seemed better] even if I had gone to the Tampa campus, but I was going to the regional campus of this developing university. If you think about it, my interest in southern history and regional culture and race...It's been a much more fertile environment here for me than it ever would have been there. I don't think that was really the reason why I came. I suspect I thought about those things, but they were secondary to the personal decision, my family. I flew down in June of 1980 to look for a house. Dave Carr helped me with a friend of his, who was brand new to the real estate game. Nin McQuillan was his name. The house he sold to us was the only house he ever sold. He never sold another house. He got out of the game. He showed me all around. Kathy was up with her family on Amelia Island for the week so I basically looked up one hundred houses and then picked the half a dozen that were possible. Then she came down and we chose the house, which we still live in, in the Allendale section. [It is a] 1926 Mediterranean revival house. [It] looks sort of like a Taco Bell restaurant. It was very appealing to me to have a Florida boom house, coming back to Florida. We immediately fell in love with the brick streets and the big trees of Allendale. We live right across from Doc Web's old house. Jay Starkey lived next door there. It had a nice feel to it. We went to stay at the Don Cesar to celebrate. That was the only time we've ever stayed at the Don Cesar. I remember it was forty dollars a night. I thought it was very expensive, but

we splurged and paid forty dollars to stay at the Don Cesar. We went back to Minnesota for the rest of the summer. One of the difficulties of making the decision to come was that I had gotten very active in the American Studies Department there. The Fulbright Commission in the Department of Education had come to us and ask us to take over their summer seminars for Fulbrighters from Europe, Middle East, and Africa. We had already planned this thing. Ed Griffin, who was a dear friend of mine, [an] English professor, he and I did this together. That was the first year we did it, in the summer of 1980. [It] was a five-week institute on regional culture. Then we took about a two-week tour of the United States. [We spent] several days in New Mexico, then in New Orleans, Boston, and Washington. I had this wonderful experience that summer in 1980 of running....Ed actually was the director, and I was the associate director, but I did a lot of the teaching that summer. I got to go to New Mexico [and] New Orleans. I think that was one of my first visits to New Orleans. It was definitely my first visit to New Mexico...Santa Fe and Acoma. Then in August, 1980, we got a U-Haul truck, towing our car behind with our three-year-old daughter...We couldn't fit all of her stuff in the truck. She had a big bear. She had to sit in the front seat of the truck, three of us with this big bear. She was grabbing on as a security blanket. [We] stayed with friends on the way down in Yellow Springs, Ohio. [We stayed with] A friend of ours, Fred Hoxie, professor of American Indian history at the University of Illinois. Then, he was an assistant professor. He was a friend from graduate school. His wife was an artist who was later killed by a drunk driver in Chicago. They lived in Yellow Springs. The reason I mention that is that

when we got there, there was a change in all the FHA mortgage rates. The deal we had done for the house fell apart. We had to renegotiate it from a Western Union office in Dayton, Ohio. We did it. We had to take out a second mortgage and do all this stuff, but it worked out. I'll never forget when we were walking around Yellow Springs, which is a tiny place. That's the kind of place that I always thought I would end up. The only other academic in my family was my Uncle Don who was a very prominent physicist. He went to Middlebury College in Vermont [and] then went to Amherst for his master's degree and then to Cornell. When I asked him where I should go to school.... I only saw him a couple times in my life, but he was still a very important person to me. He was my great uncle, my grandmother's brother. He was at Texas A&M. He started the physics department there and taught there for most of his career. He told me to apply to places like Saint Olaf and Carlton. That's the kind of place I always thought I would end up, a small liberal arts college. I went to Princeton; I went to Brandeis, more of that model. Yellow Springs, Ohio really appealed to me. I'll never forget walking around. I love the beautiful old houses. [They were] very modest, but the college is everything in Yellow Springs. I turned to Kathy, and I said, God wouldn't it be wonderful to live here? She said something like, if I had to live here for more than a week, I'd slit my throat, or slit my wrists. She was very sincere. I've always had, from the time I was a little kid, this deep connection with teaching and history and universities. I wanted to be a college professor when I was eleven years old. A lot of it was [because] my mother's mother lived with us. Marjorie Osfey was her name. She was a little bit of a woman. [She] sort

of fancied herself as the last of the Boston Brahms. [She] lived with us a lot of times in the South, and she didn't like it. She was happy was alive, that was the good news. The bad news was that she had to live in the South. She was this wonderful, kind of brooding influence. [She was] a lovely woman, a bit of a snob. She was the one, I think, who always gave me this sort of image that you should aspire to go to an ivy league college. She had studied at the New England Conservatory of Music. Essentially [she had] been a housewife. [She was] an intellectual woman who never really got to use her talents and married a crazy Norwegian photographer who died in the 1940s. She was a great influence on me. [She was] sort of a connection to the abolitionists of the nineteenth century. When we lived in Pensacola, she would take me downtown [and] she would insist on sitting on the back of the bus. This was 1956. [It] was probably the origins of my interests in civil rights. I had no idea what was going on. [I was] eight years old. [There were] people looking at us strangely. [My grandmother] was this little 4'11" woman dragging me by the hand and everybody [was] peering at us, the only whites in the back of the bus. I'm very proud of her for that now. I didn't understand it then, of course. For whatever reason I always have this deep affection for an academic culture, particularly, at those small liberal arts colleges. That may actually have been the origin of my initial openness to this campus, in a sense. I've often talked about the uniqueness of this campus, of [it] having the feel of a small liberal arts college in the midst of a major, large research university. St. Petersburg has that feel to it, of an overgrown village. It's a way of having the best of both worlds. I'm just psychoanalyzing myself here, but I think that there

may be something to that connection. Anyway, we got here in August of 1980. They told me that I would be the beginning of a new wave of faculty. It really wasn't even a trickle, as it turned out, for a long, long time. There was one other new person that year, Sam Fustukjian who came to be the director of the library. He was [a] Lebanese, Armenian, larger-than-life character. In fact, when we were contacted after we got our jobs, we were sent letters telling us to get in touch with certain.... Actually, it came from the real estate company, is what it was. I got his, and he got mine. He said, well who is this Arsenault character. I couldn't even pronounce Fustukjian. It means pistachio in Arabic. I knew Sam's name before I ever met him. He came to be the director of the library. We became very close friends from the beginning. We sort of saw that we wanted to make this place over to some degree. We really put our hearts and souls into it. Kathy got pregnant in the summer of 1980, and our second daughter, Ann, was born March 12, 1981. She wasn't working then, but in 1982 Sam hired her as a collection development librarian. Of course, we had an even closer relationship. That first year I was very close to him and very close to the history department, I must say. Dave Carr had a very troubled relationship with the department. The department had tried to deny him tenure. They were able to deny him promotion so when he was given tenure, he was not promoted to associate professor. It took him thirteen years after that to get promoted. He was having an embittering experience. He had a colleague here, Steven Lawson. [who had] a Columbia Ph.D. [and was] a New Yorker, very street smart. [He] got here and sized up the power relationships and realized that the power was in Tampa. He lived in Tampa from the beginning.

He'd been here a couple of years and he got an offer from Howard University after his first book came out. He parleyed that into some leverage and was able to transfer to the Tampa campus, which opened up the position for me. I actually, technically, replaced Steve Lawson. When I got here, Dave was the only historian. [He was] the Medievalist, there were no Americanists. Lawson had already moved to Tampa the previous year. There had been, at one point, John Belohlavek who later became a dear friend and chair of the department. [He is] still in Tampa. John came here for one year. He was also a Nebraska Ph.D. like Dave Carr. He came here in 1970. Dave came here in 1971. After a year, John went over to the Tampa campus. Dave stayed and then I think Lawson came in 1973 or 1974, then went over to Tampa in 1979. By that point, Dave had a very embittering experience with the department. He was fortunate he had a job at all. It was a strange situation for me to walk into. Steve Lawson had not supported him for tenure so they were enemies at this point and not necessarily speaking. I didn't know any of this. It was a very factionalized department. Lou Perez, who is a very talented Cuban historian – he's Puerto Rican, but he studies Cuba – was the chair of the department when I came. He and Bob Ingalls, who was an American labor historian and Steve Lawson, we later called them the junta. They controlled the department. I think they had made a decision that USF was a mediocre university. They really wanted, I think, to make the history department an excellent department, even if they had to drag it, kicking and screaming into a more research orientation. It was a rather bottom-line, rather brutal attitude. There were those who were clearly on the inside and those who were on the outside of

the channels of power. I look back on it now, and I think that they really brought me in to be sort of a fourth horseman. Lawson, Ingalls, and Perez were very, very attentive and very nice to me that first year. You might call it a full court press. [They were] taking me to dinner. We used to teach in Tampa every semester. We'd do exchanges. We'd go over there, and someone from over there would come over here. I was teaching in Tampa almost as much as I was teaching over here. We were on the quarter system that first year. That first semester, that first office I shared with Dave Carr and Cliff Holmes. Maybe Harry Schaleman was in there, too. We had the end office on the second floor. [We had a] beautiful view of the water, but you really couldn't get anything done in your office. It was charming in its own way. Then the old A building, and of course Bayboro Hall opened up in January of 1981. We moved over to the new building. The people that I became closest to in the department [were] Gary Mormino and John Belohlavek. Gary was actually in Italy my first year. He was on a Fulbright. I think he may have also been teaching in the Florence program part of the time, but he was in Italy. John was in Russia in the spring of 1981. I knew him a little bit in the fall of 1980, but the two people who became my best friends in the world really weren't here that first year. I was very busy getting acclimated and teaching new courses. It was a very good situation, but I think I was a bit naïve about departmental politics. Minnesota was famous within the historical profession of being an ultra-democratic department. When you came in as a first year faculty member, you taught graduate courses right of the bat. Everything was done by democratic votes. There was very little hierarchy. I was just spoiled.

Everyone was encouraged to speak his or her mind. There was no etiquette of deference. Everybody was an independent operator, as far as I knew, anyway. I'm sure there were factions of sorts. Clark Chambers was just wonderful. He was the chair of the department. Stuart Schwartz, who became a good friend of mine, was a prominent Brazilian historian. [He is] now at Yale. Stuart replaced Clark as the chair up there. I was socialized into that Minnesota system. I probably was stepping on land mines all the time here and didn't even know it. I just spoke my mind. I can remember one instance where somebody was going on leave, and they needed a replacement for a year. They had already arranged to have this guy Jim Dunn, who was a professor at Hillsborough Community College [and] who was a friend of theirs, to do the replacement. The decision had already been made. I didn't know that. We were supposedly making the decision in the department meeting. I brought up [that] I think we should give this to an unemployed Ph.D., someone who doesn't have a job. We shouldn't just move this person over for a year from Hillsborough Community College because we know him. We should do a search and hire one of these desperate, unemployed Ph.D.'s. That carried. In a sense I won, but I lost. I was too independent. That was probably the first sign for them that I was not going to be the fourth horseman. When Gary Mormino came back the next year, we became instant friends. The people who control the department had already decided they were going to fire him, essentially. It seems ridiculous now, but one faculty used to refer to him as always Gary "Dead Man" Mormino. They would never say his name except for Dead Man. I thought this was absurd. We began to have an organized opposition. I think we had seventeen

members of the department in those days, and the votes were often nine to eight. Gary and I were always among the eight. We always lost. It became unpleasant in the department for several years. There were members of the department who used the phrase “democratic centralism.” [It was] kind of a Cuban model, where it’s okay to have a debate [and] dissent, but once the decision is made, everybody gets on board. You don’t go to the dean. You don’t mention this outside. You sort of give up your rights as a minority. There were members who didn’t believe in that. We had a more democratic definition of deliberation. Both Gary and I got tenure during 1982. We liked it here. It was a very embattled situation in the department, which maybe encouraged me to do more of my work here and to identify with St. Petersburg. I always cared deeply about the department, in part because I had been in such a wonderful department in Minnesota where you thought of yourself as a team player, and it was a great tradition. I wanted that here. I really cared deeply about the department, but it was a difficult situation. I suspect if I had not been here, I would’ve left. I don’t think I would’ve stayed. Gary tried to leave for several years. He was not happy at USF. Eventually things worked out. I went in 1984 [and] took a Fulbright professorship at Université d’Angers in Angers, France for a year. That was just a life changing experience. [It was] a spectacular year. Our kids were three and seven. [We] lived in a little Greco-Roman village in the middle of a vineyard near the Loire Valley. I had so many of the alumni of my summer institutes, which I continued to run. The first one was in 1980. Every summer I would go back until 1987, with the exception of 1985. In 1985 I didn’t do it because I had just gotten back from France. Every

other year I went to Minnesota, usually for three or four weeks, and ran those institutes. I had all these teachers all over Europe. They invited me to speak so I ended up doing just dozens and dozens of speaking gigs all over France and Western Europe. We just had the most spectacular year imaginable in 1984 [and] 1985. My dissertation was published in the summer of 1984. [There was] this article on air conditioning in southern culture, which became a classic piece. A lot of good things were happening. That was a great compensation for some of the more unpleasant things that were going on in the department. I always consider myself to be something of a peacemaker and a bridge builder. I tried the best I could to be civil and get along with everyone, but I didn't like some of the things that were being done to certain people. I made that clear. I felt loyal to the department and to [the University of] South Florida. The St. Petersburg campus, in part because we were a bit embattled....John Hinz, who was an English professor [and] kind of an eccentric character, was dean until 1985. He's the one who hired me and was dean the first five years I was here. Bill Garrett was another good professor. He was the associate dean. They were kind of like Abbot and Costello. They were just wonderful, eccentric characters. John really fought hard for the campus. Sometimes maybe too hard, and it backfired. We had a very nice sense of community on the campus. It was a smaller faculty then. It was much smaller. John Hinz organized something called the Asparagus Club, which was a town and gown kind of thing. He'd have a faculty member, usually two, give a talk. He and I did them together. I did something on southern demagogues. He did one on Mark Twain. It was one of his great interests. They'd invite people

from the community to come in, and we'd have a reception. We'd do this once every couple of months. Virtually every faculty member came. What was nice about it is that you had a sense of obligation. I think people really enjoyed it. Eighty percent of the faculty would come to this. For most of them, it wasn't in their field. It was a way of getting them out of those compartmentalized lives or divisions. That was nice, it really was. [We] expressed what was best about the campus. We'd have faculty. [Some of them were] Danny Jorgenson who used to be here, Greta Scheid-Wells, [and] our program assistant's stepfather. He and his wife Lynn, they had a big rambling house on the south side of St. Petersburg. They would have a Halloween party. Steve Turner was over here then, also in sociology. He's now in Tampa. Regis Factor in political science, Harry Schaleman [geography professor], Joy Klingman. [There was] a lot of socializing together. It had a really nice feel to it. Everyone knew each other well and cared for each other. It was a real community. I think it still is to a very large extent. It definitely has a special feel. You lived in two worlds. You lived in your department, which had a lot of power, I suppose, although, the budget was over here. You had to learn to live in the two worlds. I suppose most of my intellectual connections were either with Gary Mormino or John Belohlavek or some of my other colleagues in Tampa. More, actually, [were in] a national network. Part of it was [that] technology was changing. It was easier to contact [others]. We were given more travel money than they ever got in Tampa. Part of the justification was that we needed that kind of reinforcement. We didn't have such close contact with out departmental colleagues. That became very important to go to

conferences. I was struck by how interesting a lot of the students were here, particularly the older students. Once I figured out what was going on here, I taught more and more at night. I liked the older students. They brought more. I liked to teach at a seminar level. For the first nine years I taught every semester [in Tampa]. I love the intergenerational mix here. I would get lots of senior citizens in my classes. I taught a seminar once on the Great Depression. Half the class had been there and would talk about hearing William Jennings Bryan speak in 1925. I love the diversity of the students. I must say, there was no real falloff between my students in Minnesota and my students here. I think part of it was that they were self-selected in the sense that....One promise that I made to myself was that I would not lower my standards. I was famous, or infamous you might say, in Minnesota for assigning enormous quantities of work, particularly of reading. I really put students through their paces and try to give them a taste of the reading culture, a life of the mind. I was determined not to water things down here. Even though, as soon as I got here, I did hear the sort of arguments that these were people who have worked all day, we can't push them too hard, and they're first time in college students. For me, all kinds of reasons not to give them their tuition money's worth. I resisted those as much as possible. I think the more marginal students, they took one look at my syllabus, and they were out the door. Many of the best students, I did get. I would get them over and over again. I just had some wonderful students and devoted students, both of the graduate and the undergraduate level. Classes were small. You became friends with the students. Some of them are older than I was. I didn't think much of that. I miss not having

Ph.D. students, when I had had in Minnesota. Although, I have served on Ph.D. committees as a visitor at various institutions: Rutgers and George Washington University. I remember always saying that I wanted us to get a Ph.D. program, which we're still in the process of trying to get soon. [I realized] it was difficult, logistically, to do. There are negative sides to that: the responsibility of finding jobs for your Ph.D. students. They had made me the program placement officer in Minnesota my third year there. Trying to help those graduate students at the bottom of the market was just a nightmare. I had just come through the market myself. I felt for them so much. Aside from not having Ph.D. students, I just really felt very good here. For me, St. Petersburg was a revelation in the sense that it acted as sort of a little funnel for people from all over the United States and the world. For someone interested in regional culture, it was a perfect place. [I'm not really] a southerner, even though I lived in the South much of my life. I think I would have found great difficulty teaching in Jackson, Mississippi or Birmingham, or even South Carolina. I'm sure I would've adapted, but I'm politically very on the liberal, radical side. I'm very much of an activist. St. Petersburg gave me a great opportunity. I got involved in the American Civil Liberties Union after getting here just a few months. I became involved with the historic preservation. [I did] a lot of the things I'd always said I wanted to do but never seemed to have time to do when I was in Minnesota. Even in Boston, I hadn't done as much as I would have like. Here, I just threw myself into every kind of cause that I believed in, particularly the ACLU. I used to tell people in Boston, you could always make an excuse that if you don't go to a rally, 500

people just like you will be there, so what's the big deal? Here, I had a sense that if I didn't go, maybe no one would go. I used to be involved in protesting the death penalty. We'd stand out with signs. We had half a dozen people. I'd drag my daughters with me. Half the group wasn't there. For me it was just a wonderful thing to meet the community. I felt like I made a difference. I had to rationalize that leaving Minnesota. I used to say that I felt like I loved Minnesota, but I probably could've been there for fifty years and been run over by a truck and no one would know I'd been there. The best Minnesota could do was really maintain itself. It's a fine institution. If they can stay where they are, they'll be doing well. Nobody's really going to move that place one way or the other. Here, I feel like I've made a difference, that I've tried at least to put my stamp on this place. I suppose that my most obnoxious [quality is that] I sometimes see myself as a missionary, trying to bring more of a sense of an academic culture here, of standards. What I've discovered is that there are lots of talented people here and well meaning people. Really, I've had an interesting faculty. It's been, not without a lot of effort, but a very good mix, an orientation towards close, crafted, caring teaching, and a real interest in research and writing. I've taught an enormous number of courses since I've been here. I've lost count. [I've taught] probably twenty-five different courses at least. [I've taught] everything from primal ooze to last week. I deliberately did that to keep myself intellectually alive, to force myself to keep reading, to stretch myself a little bit, or a lot in some cases. I just don't like to do the same thing over and over again. It may well have lowered my total productivity. Probably, if you look at me at the end of my career, I could

have written another book, or maybe two additional books, or more articles. I don't think I've traded. For me, that's been my intellectual key, to bring all these different perspectives. [It's been] truly interdisciplinary and intellectually curious. I like that about the students here. A lot of them don't bring a lot to the table in terms of intellectual preparation. They often bring curiosity and openness. A lot of them bring life experiences, which make for interesting people. I really think that if you looked at the average GRE score of our students, they might not be overwhelmingly impressive. If you look at the quality of the honors theses that the honor students have done....[It's a] program I've been directing since 1995. [Look at] the quality of some of the master's theses that people have done. Some of the students, Jack Davis, Chris Warren, [and] any number of students who have gone on to academic careers [and have gotten] Ph.D.'s elsewhere....Just looking at the reaction when we bring guest lecturers here who teach at prestigious universities, they're usually just knocked out by the quality of the questions. They just are not expecting what they find here. I think it's the image of Florida as being an intellectual wasteland and a place where you go to die. I think they're just stunned at the level. Part of it is this campus. It's such a great place to hold small conferences. We had that wonderful lecture series for years. Sudsy Tschiederer was the force behind. Harry Schaleman and I and Danny Jorgensen and others really worked so hard. I'd always prevail on everyone I knew around the country to come. At one time or another, everybody I know has been here to talk. Many of them [have been here] several times. So many times I can remember the surprise on their faces. They were so proud of the students and the

faculty, many times. I think we've done something right. I hope we don't lose it in the growth pattern. It's easier to talk about doing interdisciplinary work than to actually do it. Sometimes I think you have to be careful not to move too far with a disciplinary base. I worry about that sometimes, spending too much time on the honor's program and the Florida Studies Program. I don't want to neglect the history program here. It's a constant balancing act. I live and breathe history. I really believe in it as an ennobling discipline, a humbling discipline in respect to bridging social science and humanities and caring about the literary quality as well as the analytical quality of the work. The complexity of the past is incredibly important...people developing healthy identities and all that. I never expected to stay here forever when I came. I've talked to a number of people about this; there was a time when you thought you could expect to teach at an institution that was as good as the institutions you attended. Up to about 1968 or so, you could do that. If you went to an ivy league school, you could probably teach at an ivy league school or a big state university, or whatever. That's just not possible for the vast majority of people now. I think some of us at times have felt sorry for ourselves. We go back to our professors. When I go back to Boston I walk around Harvard, or I go back to Princeton or Brandeis, and it's sort of bittersweet. I think, on balance, it's been very good for me and for people like me. It's also been very good for American education, a kind of democratization. There are first-rate people everywhere now. Our best historians in our department are as good as any historians in the country. Our classes are as good as any courses taught anywhere. I really believe that. You couldn't say that thirty years ago. People can't ride on

the institutions the way they used to. It's incredibly important to give the students that we get here access to a first-rate, high-quality education and to not dumb it down for them. [It's important] to give them a chance to compete with the best students. We have a range of students and a range of faculty. It's wider than it's going to be at some institutions. If you look at the people we hired here last year, it's very encouraging. In the last couple of years, we've gotten some fabulous people. We've been able to keep the balance between teaching and research and to keep a sort of Research I orientation. We could've gone to a glorified community college when we faced the hostile corporate takeover by Senator Sullivan and Carl Cutler, all the threats from the community college, and people talking about complete independence instead of autonomy within the university. There are some people who wouldn't mind if this campus became a glorified community college and was just teaching [with] the Research I stuff happening over in Tampa. I've spent my whole career trying to fight for parity in research expectations. I've served on every task force imaginable. My friends think I'm out of my mind serving on as many committees as I do. Maybe I am. I detected early-on that if I was going to stay here, I wanted to have my say, have some impact and see that the place became as good as it could be. In an institution that's forming, sometimes if you don't put your finger in the dike, nobody else is going to do it. I don't mean to suggest that I put my finger in the dike, but I've done my best to be an involved citizen at every level – not just here but in Tampa. Sometimes I get frustrated when all those reports we worked on get shelved in the back or thrown away. A lot of them never come to anything, but some of them

have. When I was here on the University Planning Commission for three and a half years, I went over to Tampa every week. [I went] one day a week for five or six hours. We reorganized the university: all the priorities, the new book store, all the architectural changes. All that came out of our planning commission, various emphases. Not everything came true, but the liberal arts core and all those kinds of things [did]. Obviously [there is] still a lot of work to be done. When I came to USF I had a few moments of real depression, disillusionment because I encountered people who thought of this as a second-rate place. I'm not thinking just of this campus, I'm thinking more of USF generally. I've never encountered that before, where people would ask me, why did you come here? If you want to assign all that reading and if you want to do all these great things, why did you come here? They had sort of given up. Another theme that I ran into was people blaming the institution. They thought of themselves as failed academics. They blamed the institution. They had never been anywhere else or maybe not since they'd been very young. They had this image that the grass was green everywhere else but here. If they'd just been at the University of Maryland, they would have had hot and cold running research assistants, all the time off, not too many students and they would win Pulitzer Prizes. They had gotten a raw deal. [It was] kind of a whining mentality, which I really don't like and resent. That was very disconcerting for me back in the 1980s when I heard that. I haven't heard it so much in the last ten years. I remember it distinctly, and I had never encountered that before. It almost made me leave, frankly. I've had a couple bouts over the years when I thought of leaving and almost left. [It is] hard to do. Kathy's so

happy here and loves St. Petersburg, and I do, too. I'm glad I didn't leave. That's the one thing. There have been a few times when I've been a little disappointed in some of the general attitudes of the faculty. I've never really had any complaints about the students. It's been very gratifying. It's hard for me to imagine what my life was like before I came here. So many of the most important people in my life, students who have gone on to do great things, particularly environmental history, [are here]. I remember coming here and thinking, I had such great friends in Minnesota. Many of them are still great friends of mine. In graduate school [I thought], I don't want to start over. How am I going to do it? What if I can't find anybody like those people? Back in the Minnesota department of forty-two people, I had probably eight or nine really good friends there. There were some people who I discovered I probably didn't want to spend a lot of time with, out of those forty-two. Definitely I didn't. The same thing is true in any situation. I think [it is good] if you can find a few people that you really feel close to and respect, which I have found many here, certainly enough. I have one friend in particular who teaches in Washington DC who's a very dear friend of mine who is coming here in a couple of days, actually. He's always saying he envies Gary Mormino and I, John Belohlavek, and others here. We have this very close friendship, both intellectual and personal. He's never had that. He has a million friends and a great life, but he doesn't spend any time with his colleagues. He's at George Washington University. There's nobody he really wants to spend much time with. He has to go to the conferences. I think if you can find a few people [who] you have that kind of connection with, you should be thankful for it. I think this

institution has allowed that. I'm very grateful for that. When I think back, there are always moments of doubt and regret. I think USF and this campus can be very proud of what it's accomplished. It's a far better institution than it has any right to expect to be. In a new institution, when the national rankings come out in *US News and World Report*, I think they're really off base. I think within the state of Florida, we may well be the best institution. I think what we do with our students, generally speaking, is [that] we do more with them than they do at Florida State and University of Florida. Florida gets good students. They have a lot to work with. That oppressive culture of fraternities and sororities, drinking, and football, at least at the undergraduate level, is terribly enervating and diverting. Until they get their priorities straight, those will never be great institutions. I've had many, many students over the years who have been first at Florida State and UF who tell me they work a lot harder here [and] got a lot more out of USF. I think we do more with less, in a sense. I worry a bit now that we have a football team. I suppose maybe we have to do that in the culture of Florida. It's the Gators and the Hurricanes and the Seminoles. I worry a bit that southern state universities have made some terrible choices. I teach a course once a year in sports in American culture. I've done a lot of thinking about this and a lot of talking to the students. My next book, after I finish the *Freedom Riders* book, is going to be on sports. My next two books, probably, are on sports and race. I think those questions about the power of popular culture are very important ones. We're very fortunate that we don't have sororities and fraternities on this campus and that there's not a huge, classic college sports orientation. As much as a love sports, I think that's

been one of the secrets to our success. In part, it's been the connection with community. We're so close physically, and it's such a beautiful location. I always thought I'd end up in a place with ivy-covered walls and gothic or red brick architecture. I'm the kind of person, when I'm traveling [and] I see a sign for a college campus, I always go visit it. I drive my family crazy. I'm always driving off these things. I love college campuses. I never thought I'd end up at one that looks like this. It's so quirky, so distinct, that it has its own charm. It really does. The harbor, the shrimp boats, the Coast Guard cutters, the Dali Museum, Poynter, [and] even the wacky airport that I was hoping that we would be able to cut back on. It's part of the ambiance that I think is really special, particularly now that we've gotten newer buildings [and with] what's going to happen in the next couple of years. I don't know if people fully appreciate what a remarkable place this cultural complex we have around the harbor [is]. With what's happening downtown, there can't be many examples like this in the entire United States. A campus like this where you can walk into a downtown that's still a European-style walking city, but kind of human scale, with historic architecture, [and] now with the new Publix, you could live here without a car. You really could. There's almost no other Sunbelt city you could say that about. I have a friend who's a novelist from Manhattan who just moved here, and they don't have a car. They're living in the Madison right here [and] loving it. I hope that people have developed a real appreciation for this place. I was in a meeting earlier today, an accreditation of the mass communications program, and I made a statement in there that we've fought for many years for parody with Tampa, at least parody, and we didn't want

them to do us any favors. [We didn't] want them to water down the tenure requirements or expectations. People should have a real sense of pride and accomplishment [for] what's happened here. If the politicians don't interfere too much, we should have a very, very rosy future. If I just think about the programs of distinction, Gary Mormino and I are like kids in a candy shop. In fact, it's hard to believe [that] we have the opportunity to do what we were going to do now. Getting these wonderful students and having Jeff Klinkenberg here, the writer in residence, and what we're thinking about doing next year, all the field trip possibilities.... We went canoeing yesterday on the Hillsborough with my honors class. It's a privilege to be able to do those kinds of things. In general, being a university professor, an academic, we're incredibly lucky and privileged to do what we do. I think it's particularly true here. The salaries aren't high, in relative terms, but the quality of life is amazing. There's so much going on in the metropolitan area that you only have yourself to blame if you don't take advantage [of] the tremendous amount of things in terms of music...and just people coming through. Norman Mailer [is] here this week and John Hope Franklin [is] here for three weeks. Derek Bok from president of Harvard was at the Bok Tower yesterday for the re-dedication. You just look at the people coming through here: Verlyn Klinkenborg of the *New York Times* giving a talk at the writer's conference. One thing about being in Minnesota was that no one really came to visit us there. If they had a reason to come there, they came, but no one just sort of casually slipped through. Here, if you wait long enough, everybody comes through here. Just the fascinating people who end up here: so

many old lefties, just all the old religious labor types and peace activists. That was one of the great revelations when I moved here. [Some of the people are] Don West, the poet who was one of the founders of Highlander Folk School in 1932, Willard Uphaus who was a famous religion professor at Vanderbilt, who spent a year in jail during the McCarthy period. Hosea Hudson has come through. [He is] the old black communist from Alabama. Ruth Uphaus who is still here at Amity House, Ruth Payne who was Lee Harvey Oswald's landlady in 1963 and was an activist. Ray and Margot Yazell, who were wonderful activists here who published in their newspaper community, Sid Gets who was a separation of church and state activist. Elizabeth Holtzman's father, congressman Holtzman's father, used to come to all the events here. We'd have the lecture series no matter what the topic. He would get up and ask the first question. The question would have to with, how are we going to stop nuclear proliferation? It could be a travel log on India, it could be anything, and he would get up. [He had] a big, booming voice, he was a retired rabbi. Ed and Ruth Johnson, who is a former dancer and woman who's donated some to the Franklin and Galman here. They have a room named for her in the back. Snell House who was the editor of the *Churchman's Humanist Magazine* for so many years. All the people associated with the *St. Petersburg Times*, Gene Patterson. There's just a remarkable energy. Yet, there's also a kind of quietness to St. Petersburg. There's a balance between enterprise and leisure. It's very healthy. It's, for the most part, outside the rat race. I've always said that this city needs to have the courage to be different because it never went through the industrial stage. It's certainly a place to live. Do not look

across the bay and envy the glass towers and the hustle and bustle of Tampa. I think in the last few years, there's a downtown renaissance if we don't kill the goose who laid the golden egg by putting up towers that are too tall and if we're able to protect our historic buildings and keep the scale of the city. I think we'll be able to do [that] because we're on a peninsula, and we're sort of built out. We can have more density and make it more urban and more livable and allow the urban sprawl. Part of the secret of the campus is its location. For years I heard people say, why is it there? I've argued with Virginia Littrell, who is a former student, who is on the city council now. I love Virginia to death, but she's always saying, the campus shouldn't be there; it should be in mid county. Maybe demographically, we'd get more students if we were in mid county, but we'd lose so much of the charm and the special nature of the campus. I think it would be a terrible loss. You can see the problems with the USF Tampa [campus], building it out in this sort of field. I think it's difficult for people to have a deep affection for USF Tampa. It's a multiversity. It doesn't inspire that kind of loyalty and connection that this does. Most of our students here will do anything to stay on this campus, to not go to Tampa. It's not just because they don't want to drive across the bridge. I think there's just a deep loyalty and sense of affection, which I think is growing actually. It has a lot of what you'd expect in a small liberal arts college. It has a sense of place. This couldn't be anywhere else. You could not create this complex of buildings and this place, this crazy mix of pelicans flying in, and all the marine science stuff, [and] the Dali Museum. How crazy is that? We've got Salvador Dali there, the geological survey people, the Poynter

Institute, all the old residential hotels a few blocks away, the crazy cast of characters who have made up the city, and we've had our fairly crazy cast of characters who have been at the campus. Sometimes I'll start telling stories about my colleagues, and people think I'm making them up. [It is] sort of like [when] Carl Hiaasen talks about his fiction. He doesn't have to make it up. He just looks at the headlines in the morning and does a little bit of embellishing but not much. It's true here. It's really a very distinctive place, in all the good ways. You didn't get to ask many questions, did you?

J: No, but that's ok. Thank you.

A: Ok.

End of Interview