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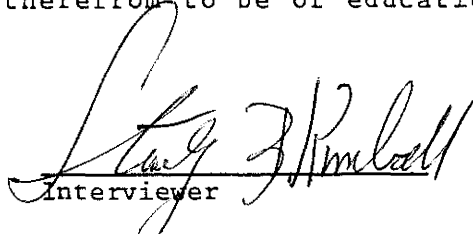
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SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY EDWARDSVILLE

ORAL HISTORY

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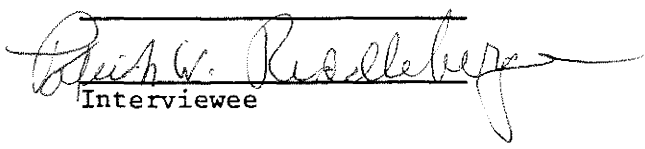

Interviewer

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SIUE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Summer 1990-91

Patrick Riddleberger Interview, April 11, 1991

Interviewed by Stanley B. Kimball

Filename: RIDDLE.309

Q. Patrick, Professor Emeritus Patrick Riddleberger, thanks for coming to my office April the 9th at 1:00 pm to be interviewed to help the university gather the collective experience of the pioneers that built this place. I think you share my feelings that we've done a lot and we're proud of it. I sent you a list of questions. It's just a point of departure, there's nothing sacred about them. I did read over some of your answers. I found them, as I expected, rather adroit, interesting, and to the point. Question number one amused me. Why did you come to SIUE? You gave a generic answer that fits us all. You wanted a job. Surely there's more to it than that.

A: Well, I got fired from the University of Maryland to put it quite bluntly.

Q: That is certainly typically candid and I for one am glad they fired you.

A: I am too. It was one of the best things that ever happened to me.

Q: Well, the follow up question would be - you know the tee-shirt that says "Where in the hell is Edwardsville?" -how did you know we were even here?

A: Well, we weren't at Edwardsville yet, as you know.

Q: That's true. You were in Alton weren't you?

A: I saw this job advertised in one of the journals or somebody told me about it advertised. I called up and talked to Herb Rosenthal. Then I came out for an interview. There was some question whether they were even going to interview me because there was a librarian up at Alton who taught some courses in American history and I'm not sure if he had a doctorate. I don't think he did. I don't remember his name. Anyway, there was a possibility of their hiring him. Then they did have me out for an interview. Then they hired me as an associate professor in 1960.

Q: I came in '59 and Herb, Professor Rosenthal, was my contact person. I think that one of his main jobs was recruiting. We have a mutual friend that brought us here. Now that we know why you came, I think an appropriate follow up question would be, why did you stay 24 years in harness and of course fortunately you're still here with your office and it's like you never left.

A: I don't think I ever had any intention of leaving and most of the time the people seemed to want me to stay. I liked it. Let's face it it's not a great prestigious place, but I thought it suited me and

my abilities and my needs. I felt that I was probably doing something worthwhile here. I just didn't want to leave. This has been my feeling all along. It still is.

Q: How many years had you taught elsewhere, at the University of Maryland?

A: I taught there six and a half years. I guess it was.

Q: Anyplace before that?

A: No. Only as a teaching assistant at the University of California.

Q: I see.

A: I stayed at Berkley to finish my dissertation. I didn't leave. I stayed an extra year to write my dissertation so I had it all cleaned up which I think was a wise decision. Then I had a part time job at Maryland first. Then that went into a full time job, but I never got tenure. It was very difficult to get tenure in Maryland.

Q: Well, I can share those feelings. I've been here -well lets see I came in '59 - I guess that's what 32 years now. I did not come here to stay. This was my first real job. I've stayed. I've been glad of it.

A: I didn't go out looking for a job and nobody asked me. So here I am and that was the essence of it. I don't think I would have left anyway unless there had been something very unusual. I've done some publishing. I wasn't a big publisher or anything like that and nobody asked me so I was very content to stay here.

Q: All right. Then perhaps we can lead right into (word unclear) just a bit. You've liked it here obviously or you wouldn't have stayed. You're still here. So in your opinion, what have you done? What are your most significant contributions for 24 plus years?

A: I think I've been a pretty good teacher. That's the main thing.

Q: You got the Great Teacher Award, did you not?

A: Yes. I got both the Teaching Excellence Award and the Great Teacher Award whatever that means.

Q: Well, it means a lot.

A: I think a lot of people who are better don't get those things.

Q: To those of us that don't have either one it sure means a lot.

A: Well, I don't mean to downgrade it. I'm delighted to have won them, but I think that there are plenty of very good teachers. And the way that thing operates, I don't think one should get smug about it. I'm very happy to have won.

Q: Well, I'm sure that's true, but I'm sure any of us that have ever had it or if I ever get it - I hope I'm not smug, but I'll certainly be pleased and honored.

A: Oh, I was very happy. I don't want to be misunderstood on this.

Q: I again feel and can perfectly understand that what you consider the satisfactions around here. That is, we are professors and we are professing what we think is important and this area needs a lot of good professors that just aren't marking time, but doing what you have been doing.

A: I have published two books since I've been here and I've, of course, enjoyed that.

Q: You're working on one right now I understand.

A: Yes. I'm working on a third.

Q: A definitive study of reconstruction?

A: Well, I am really, but at 75 I've cut it down to the first volume. I've written one volume on the reconstruction period and this is on the war time reconstruction 1860-1865. If I'm still around when I finish this, I'll go on to another volume. But anyway, this is what's in my mind. I did something I didn't mention there.

I did go to India on a Fulbright in '64 and '65. That was an interesting experience for me and I think I brought something back to SIUE from that experience which was valuable.

Q: Conversely, you took, obviously, something with you.

A: Sure. Of course, but you know I was very pleased to get that.

Q: Well, that was an excellent exchange for both parties.

A: Yes. I was very pleased to get that and I was made the head of the American Studies Research Center in Hyderabad in India and that was not much of an administrative post, but I was sort of tossed into that place. I both taught and administered that place. I was the director and that was a pretty interesting experience. That led me to traveling all over India so I think I brought back something worthwhile from that.

Q: One thing you said just a moment ago I think should be picked up on you said you were 75. I have known you for 24 plus years and consider you as active as you have ever been.

A: You have known me for 30 plus years.

Q: Yes, that's right. (mixed voices) 31 years. I see you as I have always seen you and it is hard for me to believe that you are 75 and still fully in harness. I hope I am. You have your office, you have your work. It must be very satisfying.

A: Well, I have never intended to do anything else. I never intended to retire and go off someplace and not work. I don't think that I am a workaholic. I don't knock myself out, but I think I am consistent. I think I have some discipline and this is the way I want to live. I would be bored to death I think if I couldn't work.

Q: I can fully understand and appreciate (mixed voices) that. We operate quite similarly along those lines.

A: You work harder than I do. I think. You're here longer hours but I do have a certain consistency that which I'm happy about.

Q: The Germans have a delightful expression they call it *sitzfleisch*, the ability to put your fanny in a chair and get the job done.

I'm sure that a lot of people would be interested in not only your great contributions here and the satisfaction, but on the other hand what have been your some of your frustrations?

A: I felt some frustrations with the administration, I think a failure to communicate I'm not blaming them or us but I think that there is sometimes a failure to communicate. This is always true, but I think sometimes that has become difficult between the administration and the teaching faculty. That has been frustrating at times. It's frustrating for all of us. Maybe that is built into any university and to some extent I think it is. I think we have had some frustrations there. I really can't complain because this university has been very good to me.

My personal life has not been an ideal one by any means. I must say this. It has been confused and mixed up and that time has fortunately passed, but in light of that particularly the university has been very good to me and I really have nothing to complain about. I don't mean to get too personal, but this is a fact in my life and that I can't ignore and the university has allowed me to do what I can do. I would say the only problem with the university is that failure sometime to communicate about what I believe our purpose to be, but to me that's nothing terribly serious.

Q: Let's pick up on that because all the years that I have been here one of our problems has been trying to define what our purpose is and sometimes we come up with a meaningless statement like the best of our kind and nobody ever defines it. It sounds good. Would you care to comment on what our purpose it, ought to be or should have been?

A: I think that there is too much talk about that frankly. I don't mean we shouldn't talk about it but I think we all have pretty much in mind what a university is supposed to do. We are supposed to take in young people and teach them and help them grow up and help them mature and help them to leave here more mature and better able to live in this world not only in regard to making a living but in regard to having some sort of felicitous life and to becoming citizens of the world so to speak and this I think is our mission. This is the mission of every university and I think we talk a little bit too much about this. I think you and I believe if year after year we get students that's what were here for and we do our best by

them and I'm sure some purpose and some point in seeking our purpose or our goals. Personally I have never had much problem understanding what my goals were here.

Q: All right, you made a very clear statement about a paragraph back on what a university ought to do. In your opinion have we done it?

A: I think that there is a core faculty here which has done it. I think that there is some dead wood around the periphery of this place. I'm not going to name names, but I am sure that this is true everywhere. I think that there is a core faculty and I think some of this stems from our time here, from the old hands. But obviously there are newer hands which are part of this. I think that there is a core faculty quite dedicated and irrespective of what the administration says or does. I think that's what keeps the university going. I think that is a very important element in keeping this university functioning and giving it some quality and it does have some quality.

Q: I would nominate you for a member of that core group. Would you care to comment on what you have done to advance your ideas of what a university is and how successful have you been?

A: Well, I have tried to be a publisher although I probably shouldn't mention that first because I don't think that ought to be the first priority. I think teaching ought to be the first priority. I happen to believe that there is a connection between publishing and

teaching and while there are some of the very best teachers are those who have not published. There is a notion among some people that if you publish you can't teach well. That's nonsense and I think that in my own case, my publishing has enhanced my teaching. But I'll agree that the first priority has been teaching and I think to be a responsible teacher that is to want to care about students to genuinely care about student to be interested in your subject matter and to prepare yourself to teach that subject and to meet your responsibilities which is going to class every day and meeting your office hours and getting your papers graded and get back to students with some comments so they can know where they stand and having yourself open to students where they can talk to you.

This sounds routine, but it's not quite so routine as it might sound. There are people who don't do it. And I think there is a core of us who have this sense of responsibility, who do it. And I think I belong to that group and I certainly hope so. I think the university has encouraged us to publish and I am very pleased about that. Although, we all know that it is not a publish or perish place. And I think for me that has been better because what publishing I have done and will do will happen no matter what the university policy is. I haven't done any publishing here because the university told me to. I have done it because I wanted to.

A: My first book did help to bring my promotion to full professor. I'm sure of that.

Q: This is a related question and it may be repetitive but I am going to ask it and if you can put any top spin on it, feel free to do so. During the 31 years that you have been here, what evidence do you have that you, myself, this core group, the university as a whole has carried out or mandate and actually made all these wonderful contributions who have dedicated many years to.

A: I think if we look at the students we have turned out, we have reason to be very proud of a large number of them. This has been kind of a people university. It's been a commuter campus. We have had a good many student who in my view would never have seen the inside of a university except for this place. I am very happy to have been involved in teaching these people. I am not saying that this is the totality of our student body, it isn't. I think it is a good thing that it isn't but I think that we have turned out a lot of people who have done very well and I think we have enhanced their lives. I have seen them around you know. They are around and if they see you in a public place they come over and talk and if you look at the alumnae review you see how they are doing and I think they have done very well indeed. Wouldn't you agree with this?

Q: Yes. I want to ask you a very pointed question, one I have asked myself and we will ask other of course. Do you feel that our graduates who have gone into teaching, public school teaching, have eventually sent us better students?

A: I don't know this. I think one has to know what high school students they have taught and I don't have any record of that. It's a question of whether that is a general question or a particular question.

Q: Well either way however you want to field it.

A: I would think so. I think a university in a region and there wasn't one before we came here and obviously I didn't come here until the university existed. I think the university enhances the life of any community and I can't believe this university has not done that.

Q: I used to think that when our students graduated, they went out and became teachers, I had a feeling that we got slightly better qualified entering freshman. I don't know that I can quantify that. Have you ever felt that?

A: I have felt that way. I know that we have turned out some very good ones because I have kept track of some of them. I just am not specifically acquainted enough with exactly what students come from what teachers to really comment on that. I can only comment on that in a more general way.

Q: My sense of feeling may have been wishful thinking. I don't know. I don't think it is, I don't want to think it is. Let's lighten up a little bit now. We have been quite philosophical and

quite serious and we may be get back to that, but let me toss in a question. What are some of your happiest memories around this place over 31 years?

A: I have been generally happy. I think it sort of the spirit we had up in Alton in the early days. It was kind of fun.

Q: We were closer then.

A: Yes we were closer but I am not one of those to look back on those days as the epitome and as the great day. I'm glad were here and I'm glad we have grown. There are people who look back on those days with a bit of nostalgia I think. I am not one of those. I enjoyed it and I think it had meaning and think there was a belief that we were doing something important. There was also disillusion among some of them that we haven't fulfilled our mission and that we are not what we hoped to be. I never quite believed that we were going to be a huge university with 20,000 students or whatever it is we were projecting and I think because I didn't have that belief, I haven't been so disillusioned and some of them have been. (mixed voices)

Q: Did you get what some of us call the "See" treatment from Harold See?

A: He left the year before I came and of course I heard a great deal about him.

A: He left the year I came, but I heard of him.

Q: This disillusion is probably because he was so enthusiastic and we were going to become a big big place and then as we all know, Morris kicked him upstairs. Morris did not want Edwardsville competing with Carbondale and that has rankled me.

A: I'm glad that we are not that big. I think we do a better job from what I have seen. I have talked to people who have been to Carbondale. I think that on the undergraduate level from what I have seen in history we have done a better job that Carbondale does. In the first place, we don't turn students over to a bunch of graduate assistants to lecture or to teach the course. We are in contact with the students. I think that's a great advantage, more than a lot of student realize. I think we we do very well compared even to the University of Illinois in that respect in that we do deal with our students. I think it is rather sad when professors who have their doctorates and who are trained to do this somehow remove themselves from their students and so I am sort of glad that we are not huge with great classes and quiz sections and that whole thing.

I would rather be in contact with the students myself and I know that we have sent out some very good graduates. Two people who took their masters with me went up to Illinois for their doctorates. I got a letter from the professor that they worked under thanking us for sending people like that. I don't want to sound like a Poly Anna I think that we have to recognize the limitations of this place we are not in a great big prestigious place but that doesn't mean that we can't do important work and I think this is a fallacy of the

thinking about a university that you have to be in a certain kind of place otherwise you are not doing important work. I think we are doing very very important work here.

A: I hope that I am not sounding like a Poly Anna.

Q: No, candid I think is the proper word. Back to this happy thing.

A: Maybe because this place rather suits my temperament and my needs. Maybe that is what I am talking about.

Q: Yes, well I think you're fortunate. Let me just bore in a little bit more. You have mentioned many of your happy memories with the close knit groups we had in the groups in the old days in Alton and East St. Louis, socializing, closeness and all. Would you care to add anything to that aspect of this interview.

A: I would have personally been happier if I could have been a good family man. Which I haven't been because I think this is very important. This is a personal thing but I think that it bears on and relates to what you're talking about. I would have been happier if I could have been a consistent family man with a wife and children here with me, but this has not been my fate and has not been my situation. I am not blaming anybody but myself but I think I would have been happier. I think for a person who is a little unruly is not exactly

the right word but idiosyncratic as I am. I think this place has been wonderful because they put up with me and let me do what I think I can do best. I can only be grateful for that. You know.

Q: I'd say you were a lucky man. Okay let's turn this over just to see what happens. We have discussed some of your frustrations with the administration but lets....

A: This is not really serious. There was a point here when I sort of talked too much I think. I am kind of sorry about that, but this is not really terribly important. There was a time when I felt frustrated. A time when I think we were having a little trouble and I wondered if we weren't maybe downgrading ourselves in order to keep students coming in. I felt that and I expressed that about our president and I think I went a little bit too far.

Q: I was in many of the meetings. I am glad that somebody said this. Now lets build in on that with maybe a little different angle. What are some of your worst or most unhappy memories around here in the past thirty-one years?

A: There was a time back in Alton when in my first two or three years when I think that they may have been inviting me to leave, but they didn't follow through with it. That was only one or two years with no raise in pay. I am not very money oriented, but this was kind of a message to me that maybe they didn't want me around here, that was sort of a bad time. One of my brothers died in 1963 or 4 just before I went off on my Fulbright. I was in kind of a bad mood

and I think maybe this reflected my attitude about the university and at that time I think I was considered to be maybe a bit of a trouble maker.

I was not a trouble maker, a guy who didn't quite fit in. I was sort of down, but that passed and they held on to me. I hadn't really had any times of great frustrations. These have been temporary. I really can't look back and say that I had a period of great frustration. I think in the '70's when I did think we were maybe having to make too many concessions (sp unclear) with regard to academic quality to keep students coming in here and maybe that was the purpose of the administration. They knew more about this than I did, but I was a little bit concerned at that.

Q: On that, what would be your reaction to a statement that well they can lower entrance requirements all they want but I won't lower my teaching standards?

A: Oh sure, I always felt that way but sometime in regards to requirements. I thought that they ought to have done a little more with foreign languages. Foreign languages are not our department and it is not our direct concern, but I think as historians that foreign languages ought to be taught in universities and my view would be to require it for every student here. A few years ago I think the foreign language department has recouped quite a bit. It seems to me that they were almost pushing it out at one point and while I am in American history and I don't need foreign languages in my research and I am not much of a linguist I am very happy that I was subjected to four foreign languages in my student days. That is Latin,

German, French and Spanish and I just think that this training, even though I am no linguist, I think this training is terribly important. I think a few years ago, particularly when we were really living in a world of economy and a world culture, I think they let the foreign language department slip away which it seemed to me to be doing at one point was indicative of a kind of parochialism, some kind of training orientation rather than education orientation. I thought that was somewhat pomous at that point and I still do to some extent. I believe that we have to distinguish between education and training. They are both important, we have to do both and if we neglect the education for the training we are not doing our job properly.

Q: Now let me ask you a parallel question. Over the long haul, you mentioned a very critical element of education, foreign languages. Now, a closely related or equally important or maybe more important question, what is your feeling about the quality of student writing over these thirty-one years? Not only the quality, but what we demand of students? Has it gone up or down?

A: I can only speak for myself there. (mixed voices)

Q: Speak for yourself and then whatever your general opinion is.

A: Well I don't have freshman and so that extricates me from the people who write the worst in the student body. The teaching I do now, I teach only a 300 level course and an occasionally seminar so I don't get the worst. My own view is that we all have to teach people

to write. We are not in the English department, but I think that we have to see that they do write, that we correct papers; if they cannot write, we must send them to the tutor agencies here. I think this is a part of our job. We are involved not only in the teaching of history, but in the education of people and I have always had this view. I have always corrected my papers scrupulously and always had in class a critique of examinations and then I always let myself open for student coming and talking about any examination. I have made copious comments on my exams and that is one of the things that have taken my time, but I think that is time well spent. To me that is part of being a responsible teacher you see.

Q: All right let me bore in a little deeper here. Would you agree or disagree that for a variety of reasons, one of which is generating credit hour production, that the university as a whole has let writing requirements slip, made it easier to get a degree by coming up with alternative programs to good solid writing?

A: That is the impression I have. I can't prove it. They do have to take certain basic English composition courses. I don't want to put down any department, sometimes I don't see the results of that.

Q: Let's take our department. We recently initiated a non-thesis M.A. track. I know why we did it, but to me that is lessening, obviously lessening, the (mixed voices) quality of that degree.

A: I wasn't a member. I was retired before that took place, but had I been there as a member of the faculty I think I would have voted to maintain the thesis. However, there is one very salutary thing about this and that is that the vast majority of our master students opt for the thesis. That's the impression I have. Right?

Q: Yes.

A: Also the other program does not get them out of writing. They don't write a thesis, but they do have to write papers. I agree, I think the thesis is very very important.

Q: I think that I just made a very meaningful statement, Patrick. I talked to you as if you weren't retired. You retired in '84. That's seven years ago and I addressed a question to you as if... it's just that I don't think of you any differently that I ever thought of you.

A: That's very nice to hear because I never intended to retire. I formally retired from the university. I have been lucky in an ad hoc basis to be allowed to teach one course every year, that's all I want to teach. I am trying to write and that's just enough to keep my hand in. I just think I am very lucky in that. No, I want to be considered a member of the department.

Q: Share some humorous experiences with us.

A: I hope I'm not lacking in the sense of humor, but I can't really recall anything right off hand that I think is terribly humorous. I'm sure there are plenty of them.

Q: Put it in the back of your mind and maybe some will jump out. Now, this university, I think has gone on record, and done a good job of working with the physically handicapped and the educationally deprived.

A: That's my impression.

Q: Now, to what extent have you been directly or indirectly involved with the educationally deprived?

A: I have not been involved in any programs. I have been very much involved with certain individual students. One was a very bright girl who we had here who attempted suicide and eventually she did it, but through this attempt of suicide, she was left in terrible shape and she lived in Greenville and very tragically she never recovered and then her father, this is an incredible case, her father administered, the whatever it was, to her and he took it at the same time. This was a dual suicide about three years ago. This girl had been here she was a very fine student but she was a very handicapped student. I stayed in touch with her and tutored her hoping she might recover.

It was quite clear after a while she was not going to recover. I brought her into contact with the person in charge, it is not the same person who is here now, of the handicapped students. I even

brought her up here for class. She was in terrible shape. She really couldn't participate. Anyway I stayed in contact there. There was a student with diabetes who was blind a few years ago. She took my courses and I gave her oral examinations. She died since, I am sorry to say. Then there was a handicapped student in wheel chair who couldn't write and I welcomed her in my class and tutored her some and gave her oral examinations. She got through and has gotten a job. She is the most satisfying. I have always tried to be cognizant of the needs of handicapped people although I have not been involved in the program. These are three instances that I can remember where I tried to help handicapped students.

Q: I have had some. It's most satisfying so I can of course completely identify with you and I appreciate you sharing those very specific and very poignant experiences. Now an open ended question that may go anywhere, and I hope it does. What would you like to record that might never appear in an official history?

A: I think I have recorded some already.

Q: Yes, you have done quite well.

A: I don't want to bore anybody with my personal life but these are things that bare on my tenure here and at my age there is not much point at trying to cover up anything. You know what I mean. Everybody knows pretty much about me anyway. What I am trying to do is to be as honest as I can possibly be and to talk about things that have some bearing on my life here.

What was the question again? Somethings I wouldn't want recorded? I really don't think that there is anything that I wouldn't want recorded. I am sorry that I became strident about eight or ten years ago with the president. I think that I was too strident and I have tried to let it be known publicly. There was a story on Lazerson in the *Post Dispatch* a few months ago. I was interviewed. I didn't want to say very much, but I told him that I was sorry that I became strident and I sort of took Lazerson on in public and I didn't do that until I talked to him in private about some of these things and I thought he wasn't listening, but why should he listen to me. Anyway that was at a time when I was feeling rather concerned about this university. I think that I was too strident. Whether that should not be published, I don't or not, I don't know. Anyway it is something that I wished hadn't happened. I wish I could have kept my cool. I think I lost my cool a little bit that time and I don't think it did anybody any good. I am not saying that what I was doing was not correct. I think my ideas were right but I didn't handle myself well. One of the things that I like about this administration is that their reaction to me was not one of retribution, but that of accepting me. That is one of the reasons for my loyalty to this place because I was really quite strident. I took Lazerson on in a public meeting I did it again in a letter to the *Alesterle* and very strident. Then I think in one or two interviews one person from the *Post Dispatch* some years ago and I am sorry about that because I don't think it did anybody any good. In other words one can be right in ones mind and belief but your not right necessarily in the way you handle yourself. So I have some regrets about that. Is that the kind of thing you thinking about?

Q: Yes, I am thinking of a very excellent history of this university that was written by one of my esteemed colleagues at the tenth anniversary and it is an excellent history, but naturally he was somewhat constrained as to what he could put in.

A: Well you don't want to put this in. Some of this is junk. You don't have to name me you know.

Q: No. We don't need names, rank, or serial numbers.

A: You don't want to put trash in your book.

Q: No. I don't suppose so. I would use the word candid or off the record. My mandate, if that is the word, is to get the real feelings and reflections of the people who built this place and I am going to. I'm going to get some stories that we might not want put on the front page of the newspapers.

A: Let me say one more thing about this.

Q: Please.

A: There may have been a time when I was a little angry. Maybe it's because I am old. But I am not angry at anybody anymore. I have come to realize that those people over there, while I think they don't always communicate with us as well as they might, they probably have things to do that I don't know very much about. They have to deal with legislatures, and governors and higher boards etc. etc. and

I am not excusing them on that basis, but I have just come to the conclusion that they probably have things to do that I know nothing about at all and have no experience with and that may shape the way they deal with us. I am trying to be less judgmental about them. Now also, even after I took them on in a quite strident way, when I retired they came over here, you know the little party we give, they came over here. They could not have been more gracious to me. I was moved by that. Nobody said why don't you shut up or anything like that. They came over here and honored me on my retirement and I thought that was classy. I thought that showed class and that made a very fine impression on me so I tried since then to be a little less judgmental and to look at what they have to do that I don't know very much about.

But I do wish that we could have a little bit more communication. I wish the president would walk around here a little more. I wish the provost would walk around here and see us a little more. I invited him into one of my classes since I retired and I think he was going to come, but I happened to have an examination on the day he chose to come so it didn't work out, but I think those people ought to and I don't mean any strident criticism about them. I think we ought to see more of them around here. I think they ought to be sitting here occasionally talking to us, not in any formal meeting. I think this would improve the tone of this university.

I think the president ought to go down and, this is between us, talk to some of these black people who sit around here and say how are you getting along and how are you keeping up with this work, do you know there is a library here, are you using your time in a nice way. You know what I mean? I think that I don't mean to make it

just blacks but I think they have a problem. It isn't just blacks. I think to circulate around and to talk to students and to inquire how they are getting along because they do get isolated. So while I don't want to be strident and I don't want to be judgmental about them. This is the feeling that I have about them. If I were over there, maybe I wouldn't, but I think I would want to get out and walk around this place. Do you feel that way?

Q: I feel that way to the extent that I am delighted when I do run in to them. On rare occasions, I look up and my door frames somebody and I am so delighted that I jump right up and I say hey nice to see you!

A: Maybe I am asking too much but I think this would make a difference.

Q: It would. Now, I have asked a lot of questions here. Perhaps there are some questions you'd like to frame and ask yourself or address. What would you like to add in general or specifically to what we have done in the past nearly an hour. What have I left out that you would like to talk about?

A: Again, I don't want to sound like a Poly Anna. But I think we might be a little less critical especially around our groups. If we are going to take on the administration, maybe we ought to quietly go over and talk to them. But to sit around and hear what they have done, this they have done wrong and that they have done wrong and when they come around, I don't hear very many people challenging them

on any of this you know. I think a little less of that and a little bit more attention to our own work. To make it as good as we can make it and to weigh our opportunities.

Maybe I am totally wrong here but I think that this tendency to down grade us which we should not engage in to much. I don't mean by that not to be constructively critical. I think we ought to be constructively critical but don't you think there is a little bit of, and this is inevitable some of this, a bit of gossip in sort of a, what's the word I want, sort of a criticism or feeling of criticism that goes on? The university is going to work if its faculty does its' job.

Q: Over the years you have been here, is it better or worse than it used to be?

A: I think it is better now. I think it was bad three or four years ago.

Q: What was it thirty years ago?

A: My feeling was that when I came we were all pretty much together seeing what was going to happen. We didn't know whether this place was going to be built. We didn't know we had to get a bond issue through and remember all that stuff? It seems to me we didn't know then. I thought we had a pretty good rapport with each other and a pretty good spirit about it all and obviously there was criticism. I came here with a great salary raise from the University of Maryland. I came here for \$7,500. I though that was just great.

Q: I came a year earlier for nine months at \$6,300 and I thought that fresh out of graduate school that was pretty good. I think we have shared an awful lot that we like around here. You have been candid, but most of your experience, I gather, has been good and you have enjoyed it and been successful and fulfilled.

A: I think it has been. There is no question about that. I think we all pretty much know what they are and one of the great advantage that we had in the early days, I had is that I was that I was one of the few people in American history so I could organize the whole thing. I think that I organized nine courses of American history that were more or less in my field, I was allowed to teach them. Some of those same courses, I am sure they have been much changed, I hope so, are being taught now. You see. So this was a tremendous experience to come in here and to be able to organize this course and this course and this course.

Not only did I teach the Civil War and Reconstruction, but I taught the Old South and the New South and I introduced Black History to this place, having worked under Kenneth Stampp at Berkley, the great historian of slavery. I didn't get very many black students but I got a bit of a write up in a history of the study of Black History published by the University of Illinois Press. This is one of the first places where Black History was taught and I think I only had two black students in a very large class the first time.

Q: Now were getting down to really some good stuff. The first place around here or the first place in the country?

A: The first place in the country. I organized the Black History course. I came in '60 and I think I organized it in '61 or '62.

(mixed voices)

Q: Is Kenneth Stampp comparable to John Hope Franklin.

A: Oh, he is better. I mean John Hope Franklin is the great black historian. Kenneth Stampp (sp unclear) wrote the *Peculiar Institution* which is what I would say is one of the two great works. One of the two great histories of slavery. Certainly one of the three great histories of slavery.

For my tastes, Kenneth Stampp is a little too much of an abolitionist. I'm a southerner, but he was wonderful to me and a remarkable teacher and a remarkable writer and whether you agree with all of this or not, this was my background and I taught at Maryland but I was a student of Stampp. I was one of his early Ph.D's and he has turned out Pulitzer prize winners. done. But at least I had the advantage of working under him. So I was in a position to organize a course in Black History, called Negro History then, and this was one of the first places in the country to have it.

Q: This is, in my opinion, the information I am supposed to get. I would like you to give us some perspective over the long haul. Your general impressions, your specific impressions as to where we have gone with black studies, where the nation has gone with black studies.

A: This was Black History. (mixed voices)

Q: All right Black history.

A: Then Elliot Rudwick, who was in the Sociology department and who was down in East St. Louis, and who wrote that book on the East St. Louis race riots and was much more of a scholar than I ever was in this field. I went to India in 1964 on a Fulbright and Rudwick took that course over when I left.

Then we alternated. During the rest of his time here, which was four or five more years, we alternated. He taught it one year and I taught it the next and then we were really compelled to get a black historian in here so we got Wilbur McAfee who didn't have a doctorate, but who was a sweet guy and who worked very hard. My feeling about Wilbur McAfee was that he lowered the standards a little bit. He was so compassionate towards these black students that he had largely segregated classes. I don't know whether you remember him or not.

Q: I remember Wilbur.

A: He spent a great deal of time with these students and he is to be commended for that but his classes were a little bit, I don't think he had them write very many essays or some sort of writing. He should have. Maybe he was just too busy. He was a loaded down because the black students just flocked to him. He was out of the old school. He was a gentlemen and a very nice fellow, but I think he did lower the standards a little. Then of course we got Shirley.

Q: Shirley Carlson who was one of our graduates?

A: Right but remember we went through a search?

Q: Yes, she earned it.

A: Yes she did. Anyway I started Black History here.

Q: Well what about texts and how did you build this course anyway?

A: Well there was a very good John Hope Franklin book *From Slavery to Freedom* which has been sort of taken over now by Rudwick and Meyer's book *From Plantation to Ghetto*. Franklin's book, a major text which has since become a kind of classic, an early book on Black History.

There were sociologists who were writing on it, there was a fellow at Howard University who had written some Black History, there was Herscovictz who had written on the African background and this kind of thing. And I had heard about this from Stamppp you see. I didn't take a Black History course with Stamppp, but I took his Old South course you see. He was writing his great work on slavery just at the time

(END OF SIDE 1) and he stayed with me. I sent every chapter to him. This is off the subject a little bit. But I had this background with a noted scholar in this field so I had a certain fund of knowledge that not everybody had.

Q: Do you feel good about what happened subsequently to your pioneering in this field?

A: I don't feel altogether good about it. This does not pertain only to SIUE, but in general. I think Black Studies probably were inevitable and I think there has been some good, but I think it has tended to be a kind of mish mash and has been something that black students can take and I believe that black students ought to be oriented more and funneled more through, this is my feeling, through the regular requirements. I think this is one of the reasons why so few of them graduate, they tend to take courses where they re-examine themselves instead of what I would call basic fundamental courses. Again I don't know. I can't prove this, but I wonder if this isn't one of the reasons why their graduation rate is so low. It is appalling low here on campus.

Q: When I go to commencement I have a tendency to count the black faces and regrettably I happen to agree with you. (mixed voices)

A: I think that we ought to pay a little less attention to recruitment and a little more attention to getting these people through. This is the kind of talk that gets you branded as a racist. I don't think I am a racist.

Q: I want to ask you a very tough question. I have asked others this and I have even written letters, but never mailed them. To what extent has the black community supported what you wanted to do and

what this university wants to do in relation to Black Studies, or our mission, or whatever we want to call it? Would you care to comment on that, or are you aware of it?.

A: I really couldn't comment on it because I just don't know.

Q: Have we made the contribution you hoped to make?

A: Well I think we have made part of it. In my case I was virtually driven out of the classroom by blacks. Probably for a good reason. Things change from the early '60's when I introduced that course until the late '60's and the early '70's when I was still teaching. By that time they had some doctrinaire notions that I couldn't agree to and I wasn't going to stand up to them in a classroom and spout those notions just to be popular with them and the time had come to get a black person to teach this.

I saw one of them around here recently. I remember her very vividly as one of the people who was almost saying you better stop teaching this course because your not telling us what we want to hear and what you should tell us. They didn't want, well I can give you a very specific example. They wanted to hear about all the evils of slavery and I didn't mince words on that. I worked under Ken Stamp and there were plenty of evils. I would not admit that slave owners purposely bred slaves, you follow me, like cattle breeding and that's what they tried to get me to say and what I said was to be sure in plantation system it was encouraged, slaves were encouraged to have children and these children could be sold and these children were

part of the capital goods, but I never said or never would say that this was intentional and a positive slave breeding like cattle breeding was what these people did. You see the difference?

Q: Yes I can. (mixed voices)

A: I never would do that and I tried to deal with the leniency and the concern of masters and slaves and I tried to deal with the cruelty and Ken Stampp has described that very well. I tried to deal with the fact that I come from slave holding background from slave holding ancestors and this is not easy for me. I don't think I eased up at all on the cruelties and the difficulties that slaves had, but I wouldn't go all the way to say that these were sinners and evil people, you know.

Q: You didn't play to the grand stand.

A: I didn't play to the grand stand. I couldn't. I don't yet.

Q: Let me ask you this question. In your opinion, I don't ask you to document it, you couldn't. In your opinion if you were to pick up Black History now how different would your approach in the classroom be?

A: I wouldn't think of doing it, Stan. I wouldn't think of doing it. It's just changed. It's totally different ball game. I couldn't do it. (mixed voices)

Q: When you say couldn't

A: They wouldn't have me in the first place.

Q: Well that's what I am getting at. Leaving aside how much work it would take for you to catch up. Leaving aside the mechanics of this question. The question is if you were to next fall, Shirley goes away and you're asked to take her course, the question is how much would your approach be different and would your students be different?

A: I don't think I would do it.

Q: Why wouldn't you do it?

A: I would be in a very awkward position.

Q: Why would you be in an awkward position?

A: I think it is kind of dumb to get into things which you can't handle and I think that people wouldn't like me in there. It isn't that I am trying to be liked, but I think they would really find me obnoxious.

Q: Do you mean because you would continue to tell it like it is?

A: I think that is part of it. But I'm an all white male and you know how they feel about that. (mixed voices)

Q: Well you'er probably a male WASP I suppose.

A: Part of this I can answer by telling you very briefly what I am writing about now. I am writing about the war time reconstruction. This has to do with blacks coming into the union lines and the organization of blacks by the army and by missionaries and by all kinds of people. That's part of the story. And blacks indeed came in when the union armies went south and a good many missionaries went down there and I am trying to tell the tragic story of the blacks the understandable story of their leaving their masters and going to what they thought they were their freedom.

I am also telling the story of the army officers and the missionaries who went down with the Massachusetts Contingent, and went very idealistically down, but who in a few years developed some of the same ideas that southern slave masters had. I am trying to tell that story as well you see. I am trying to tell the story of Governor Andrew of Massachusetts, one of the great leading political abolitionist of the north who talked about freeing slaves. One of those generals of Virginia said, fine let me send some of them up to Massachusetts. He wouldn't have any; he wrote a vicious letter about this. We don't want any of these people here. Free them and keep them there in the climate where they belong. That is the story that I am telling now. I would have to tell that, Stan, if I were to teach. You know what I mean? Did I make my point?

Q: Yes. I think you have made it clear.

A: So this is a very complex story and many facets to it. And that's what I am trying to tell and I am going to catch it in reviews I know. I am sure of that.

Q: You mean like you'll get some reviews like *Time on the Cross* got?

A: Sure, of course I will. I know exactly where they are going to come from.

Q: I, as we say, read you. The other half of this question is what difference do you sense or perceive in the black students who would be taking it or just in black students in general?

A: Well I don't know. I have very few of them. Sometimes they do very well. I am a little hesitant to talk about this, but I think they need somewhere to get some incentive.

Q: Challenged. Properly challenged.

A: I mean I think somebody needs to talk to them about what they are here for. I am on their side. I'd like to see them do the job, do the work. I am on their side. I have tutored them by the hour. This Ellenor Harris who is now our black graduate assistant. I tutored her hour after hour after hour once I learned that she was going to be a graduate assistant to get her up to some kind of standard where she could function. So I am on their side.

I am opposed to anybody, black or white, who sit around here and come in without any intention of graduating and hang around for a year or two. It isn't just blacks, I mean there are other people like that. Blacks are the most obvious contingent who I think have that problem here. I think it is a little surprising. The complaints about racism that you hear about on college campus, you never hear anybody say that these complaints may at least a little bit or partially be attributed to the blacks behaviour.

Q: Yes.

A: I think this is a kind of racism. This is my feeling about it. It is a kind of racism to always take care of people and to always make excuses for them and admitting that the

Q: It's the old paternalism.

A: Yes, of course it is.

Q: That we hated, that we now hate so much in the new world.

A: I know that not many people would agree with me. I am on their side. I want to see them make it, I really do. I have spent a great deal of time. I had one who was almost white, in fact really a handicapped student who was very very nervous, on medicine and everything and she took my course and she didn't know anything. I simply tutored her up to the point. I taught her enough that I thought she could get a C to give her a chance to be here. I did

this through hour after hour after hour of tutoring her. You know, I am mixed about this. I'd like to see the black students make it, but I think we ought to stop making special cases of them. Except in individual cases where they are willing to work. You know what I mean?

Q: I think I do.

A: Excuse me, I'm a little bit excited.

Q: I'd like to quote the old definition of justice which is simply treating everybody the same. You might treat them poorly or well or whatever, but everybody is treated the same. Okay, now is there anything that you would like to add for the record now anything else that you'd care

A: I don't think so. I have enjoyed talking and getting some things off my chest. I am very very happy here and I think that, I'll say to you and my younger colleagues, that I think there is something to be said after you retired from staying here. Some of the pressure of a lot of teaching off of you. I think the university is good to you and I think it is a rather nice place to live. I think that what I am doing, if you are at all interested in the subject or interested in the university environment or community, I would recommend it.

I think the time since I retired has been maybe the happiest time of my life although obviously not everybody agrees with me about that. Some people want to leave, but I would highly recommend in

ones old age to do what I am doing. Because, if you are so inclined, that work is something good for you, to work and have something to do on a regular basis. I think the university wants to be good to us essentially.

I would like to have a little bit more money, but I'm not money oriented. I live comfortably. I don't know if that is worth saying with respect to your history or not, perhaps not, but it is a very strong feeling I have. A very good feeling about this place as I look back on it over the last three decades. This is a personal thing. I don't expect everybody to share this with me.

A: Well as I look back over the last hour and a half it has almost been the *leitmotif* you keep coming back to it time and time again. And since I happen to feel pretty much the same way I have made no effort to steer you from it. I doubt that it would have done any good anyway. I think what I should say now is thank you very much Professor Riddleburger.

A: I am delighted to do it. I hope that I haven't gotten off on tangents with respect to black students and that kind of thing.

Q: One final comment on getting off on tangents. I did a little bit to get you off and from my opinion they are some of the most revealing comments.

A: Well I'm glad I started Black Studies here. I think it is rather revealing that a white man started it. (mixed voices)

Q: A white southerner. I think it is excellent and that's why we spent nearly thirty minutes on that. It was worth it. I'm glad that it came up.

A: It's ironic, but a Virginian, both of whose grandfathers fought in the Confederate army, began Blacks Studies. There is a certain appropriateness about it. Not everybody would agree with that.

Q: Well not everybody agrees....

A: I did study under one of the best people in the country. I don't think he has been superseded on this.

Q: Well thank you.

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