

CWU Living History Project

Reino Randall

INTERVIEWER: MILO SMITH

The beginning of the interview is missing.

Randall: ...Getting a job like sweeping the floor in Barge Hall and then Shaw Building at the time and then, of course, I taught, I was a life guard during the summer at the 55 degree water pool in Ellensburg with the wind blowing. So I did that for three or four years.

Smith: And then, after your continuous eleven quarters, you did finish with a degree?

Randall: That was the first year, yes, I, in 1934 I got my degree in teaching, and that was the first year the degree was granted.

Smith: Oh! Good, good. Then, let's go ahead and repeat some of the things that were on Na's tape because we have no assurance that people will look at these in order in the future. What did you do after you attained your degree at Central?

Randall: Taught in Wapato for two years, as Naomi did, and then from there I went to Columbia Teacher's College and got my Master's degree.

Smith: What was the magnet that drew you clear back there to school?

Randall: Well, many of the professors here on our campus recommended that I go over there and go to Columbia and that was Amanda Hebel was the primary instigator of that, and pushed for it. And she was one of the great faculty members on the staff at the time.

Smith: Well, I can remember even in my earliest years that Columbia was the place to go if you wanted to be a teacher. I'm surprised you didn't pick out an art school rather than an education school.

Randall: Well, to tell you the truth, I didn't know much about art schools at that time. I was an un.. came from, as I said, from right in and didn't have much experience in art, and didn't know what schools were available. Being from Finnish family, we weren't taught about all these different colleges and universities like some of the students that came here, you know. Had some very fine background from their parents and got information and also from the schools and all that, but at that time we just...

Smith: I would assume, Reino, that being from a family with a Finnish heritage that the family would have sat around designing beautiful furniture.

Randall: Well, thank you. They're pretty good designers.

Smith: You bet!

Randall: Yeah, they're pretty well-known for it, for their design.

Smith: You bet. All right now, after you left Columbia, you attained what degree there?

Randall: My Master's degree at Columbia University.

Smith: In?

Randall: In, I guess it was just teaching and I (Unknown words?)

Smith: In Education

Randall: (Unknown words?)

Smith: And then you went where to teach?

Randall: What to teach, I looked for a job on the West Coast, but jobs were scarce and I wasn't particularly sure that I wanted to come to the West Coast right away, so there was an offer to go to Gloversville, New York, which is a town of about 30,000 people, and it was a small manufacturing town in northern New York, near Schenectady, New York, so I decided to take the job because it sounded like, the job, it was an art job, a full time art job, and also had charge of the annual for the school, and so we had a nice publication there that was done every year. And we also put out a monthly newspaper (Unknown word) campus.

Smith: Now whereabouts through your life were you married to Na?

Randall: 1938.

Smith: And you were married where?

Randall: Right here in Ellensburg.

Smith: And you lived first where?

Randall: We lived, 9, no, I have to think about this. 104 N. Sampson.

Smith: Good, good.

Randall: We also lived in a little apartment house just right off of Sampson here. Mrs. McCumber's place. She had a little apartment in there and we were there the first year.

Smith: Now, 1938 you got married. You finished your degree at Columbia what year?

Randall: In 1936.

Smith: When did you and Na establish a home together, right after you were married here in town?

Randall: Yes.

Smith: OK. And when did you become an art professor at CentraV?

Randall: In 1938.

Smith: 1938.

Randall: And taught for thirty-eight years.

Smith: How large was the faculty then in art?

Randall: Well, actually, when Pauline Johnson left, I got her job, but there was another teacher by the name of Miss Tjossem, I think related to the Johnson family. Remember they had a mill down here (Unknown word) on the state highway down out of town.

Smith: Do you recall at that particular time, Reino, what your first salary was at Central?

Randall: I think it was two thousand dollars.

Smith: That's important to record that for history because there are going to be a lot of young people who will see this and hear that and they won't believe you. Nobody would work for \$2,000.00.

Randall: That's right. I was glad to work for \$2,000.00. I thought that was great.

Smith: You betcha. Do you recall what kind of a load you were expected to carry as far as a teaching load and committee work on campus, and so forth?

Randall: Three 5 hour classes each quarter. And then you have to take part in some committee. What ever they happened to decide, or you could choose, and you could choose the committee you wanted to be on.

Smith: How about student art organizations? Had they begun by then?

Randall: Oh, yes, There were many art organizations. And after two or three years of teaching, brought in an honorary art organization called Kappa Pi, an organization which is a national organization. And this went on for several years, and then finally all these organizations got out of style, you know, just like fraternities and sororities, you know, with the same popularity.

Smith: I assume that you spent a number of years as an advisor for these art organizations, student organizations.

Randall: Yes, part of the time. One of the faculty, they were all, faculty was so small that there was a kind of a social organization, I mean we had parties and so on, and the students would come complete, the ones who were art majors, would come to the parties and we had a great time.

Smith: Well, when I came to Central, long after you had been teaching for years, the Art Department was totally housed in Barge Hall. Were you teaching in Barge hall when you first started?

Randall: Yes, started in Barge Hall and just, what two, three stories down, three floors down...

Smith: The next floor down, the big art room.

Randall: Yeah, right, and that was the old auditorium at one time. There was a stage there, you probably knew that.

Smith: Urn huh, urn huh.

Randall: And finally with all the changes that they made, and with the new buildings that came on campus, well, then they decided to make that into a classroom. I had that room for all the years that we were in this building.

Smith: Did you teach in any other department here at Central in all those thirty-eight years that you spent here or were you totally in the Art Department?

Randall: It was mainly in the Art Department. I was trying to think one day if, I taught a class in design for the Industrial Arts Department.

Smith: Did you get involved with teaching any of the cadets that were housed here on campus during the war-time? I know, for example, Pappy Hertz taught math. Did you teach any of the cadets?

Randall: Having been on the track team, I was asked if I would be interested in doing something with the calisthenics with the college training detachment program, so I worked on that with Leo Nicholson and Arnie Faust.

Smith: Good.

Randall: . . .And so on. And we would go on big long runs around the valley, and I can remember we went through Rudder's Lane, but that was Rudder's Lake was up there, Rudder's Point run through there. These were the kids that were 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 year old kids that were running and that, in those days I was really in good condition. I'd say, Oh you kids can run better than that at your age."

Smith: Good for you. Now, do you recall humorous people or events that occurred here on campus that you knew about, or you participated in, or even that you may have perpetrated?

Randall: Yes, I remember one that I thought was quite interesting. And today they can't believe it. And that was, we wore cords, corduroy pants, everybody wore cords, and then the dirtier they were, the more you were in style. They'd stand up in the corner when you took them off. And I can remember Hal Holmes, he was pretty annoyed with the situation of college students walking around campus looking like that, so he came over and talked, I was living at Munson Hall at the time, he came over and talked to the students and said, "Look, you people better clean up and do your washing," and he said, "if you can't afford any soap," he said, "I'll buy you a bar of soap, so you can wash your pants and look decent." Can you imagine that today?

Smith: No. Now, was Hal Holmes then serving as Dean of Men?

Randall: He was Dean of Men then, right.

Smith: And the lady he married became the Dean of Women.

Randall: Right. Well, she was the Dean of Women before they married.

Smith: She was before, OK. Now, In the best of your memory, can you recall other professors here that you had as a student that you felt were significant and influences in your life?

Randall: Well, of course, Professor Stephenson, and Shaw, and Amanda Hebler, of course very much, and Miss Anderson, and Glenn Hogue, and so on down the line. Now and many of those, let's see...and Pete Barto, he was a great history teacher, teachers at that time, that's kind of a hard one.

Smith: Well, now some of these people became good close friends of yours a short while later when you became a faculty member and as May was saying, it became a little awkward to call some of those people by their first name, since you had a student-teacher relationship previous.

Randall: Urn huh.

Smith: Did you find that there were any of those who were a little reticent to accept you as equal?

Randall: No, I think that most of them were very receptive.

Smith: Good.

Randall: They were really nice people that were very congenial and wanted to help if you had any questions, or wanted to find out anything, you could go directly to them, like Samuelson and Barto, and so on. No, they were really great.. Nicholson Leo Nicholson, and I can't recall who the others were at that time. Smyser, I remember he was really a great Prof.

Smith: You're making me feel (?)

Randall: Shaw...

Smith: . . .unfortunate since I knew and worked with most of the people you have named with the exception of Smyser, for example, who was gone by the time I came. and those were wonderful people.

Randall: Old Bill Stevens, he was a character, and a great teacher. Beautiful, I enjoyed being in his class.

Smith: Good. Now, thinking back as your years as a faculty member, do you recall any particular periods when there were what must have at the moment seemed like insurmountable problems between the faculty and the administration? Do you remember any of those?

Randall: Well, let's see. I think one of the biggest problems was to get a faculty code worked out. And it seemed like it took several years before they got that going, and then had it passed by the Board of Trustees, it had to go through them. And then, I can't remember when, the University, became members of the AAUP, American Association of University Professors, but there was a lot of, there was some friction between the administration and those people who were working on the faculty code.

Smith: Many of us, who consider ourselves old-timers, have interesting, at least, and sometimes humorous memories of Dr. McConnell. Do you share any of those with us?

Pause

Smith: Did you ever, for example, try to buy something and have him cut you short because he decided you didn't need it?

Randall: Yes, I think that's very true. I can remember when I wanted something, wanted one thing particularly wanted an air compressor, so that we could use the air brush for painting, and I went to him and he said, "Well, we can't afford it." So I went to him a month later and said that we've got to have it because air brushes are in style. And so he finally said, "OK, well give you an air compressor, so right down there next to the Little Theater, down stairs, they put in the air compressor, and that would bang away, and we had a big tank there. And we got the air piped into the different desks, and so we were fortunate in getting that.

Smith: Oh, that's good. Now, do you recall any administrators that you worked under, shall we say, as a faculty member, that you felt were especially significant to your progress, or the progress of the school?

Randall. Well, I think Dr. McConnell was pretty receptive to the Art Program, and we got as much as anybody did in those days. And I think when Perry Mitchell was in he was pretty good. He was the interim-president for two years. And he was always very receptive to the Art Program, and so we were very

fortunate for those two people. And, oh yes, and then, of course, Dr. Brooks was very good, an exceptional faculty member now as he is and was at the time. In fact I had him in class, so I kept telling him, I said, "All you know about running the college is what I taught you."

Smith: Now, in all the years you spent as a student and as a faculty member, do you recall any particular problems that arose on campus between student body and the faculty, or the student body and the administration?

Randall: No, nothing relative to that, particularly.

Smith: Do you recall when Dr. McConnell was hung in effigy?

Randall: Yes.

Smith: On the corner of Munson Hall because he wouldn't do anything about fencing in the Vet Ville to keep the children away from the irrigation ditch.

Randall: No, I don't remember that one.

Smith: Oh, that was a big fuss on that end of the campus. Only the married students that lived up there became involved in that imbroglio. Now, react if you can to the following list of subjects as you probably would have at the time you were teaching at Central. How about the salary schedule,

Randall: Well, I had a little run-in with, about the salary schedule, as I thought they should have a schedule where you got your raises each year, or cut each year, and it was all equal among the faculty. So I did go to Dr. McConnell about that, hoping that something could be done. And eventually we did come to a regular scale, a salary scale, and it seemed to work out pretty well for a while, but then there were disruptions along the way with the War and the like, and so that changed occasionally, but nothing particularly serious.

Smith: Do you feel that you were allowed a reasonable amount of academic freedom as a faculty member here on campus?

Randall: That's in our teaching?

Smith: Um huh.

Randall: Yes.

Smith: Was there anything you couldn't allow students to paint or to draw? What if they painted nudes?

Randall: Oh, you didn't paint nudes. You couldn't use a nude model, so they used student models mostly, [[icy wore a swiuhinilig suit om shoits, whatever (?) ...happened to be, and we were allowed to do that, but that was true all over the country at that particular time. That was pornography probably. They felt it was pornography if(?)

Smith: Then in your later years in the Randall Building there were nude models, weren't there?

Randall: Oh, yes. Yes, absolutely, and even before we even...(?)

Smith: Our school grew up.

Randall: Right, yeah. That's right.

Smith: Do you feel that the faculty code, being a written document that was occasionally updated, do you feel it was an advantage to you as a faculty member to have a written document that says, This is what we stand for..?

Randall: Well, I think it opened up opinions and ideas along the way. Yes, I do. I think it was because I can remember there was quite a turmoil about that, getting it through the Board of Trustees. There were some members of the Board of Trustees who just felt that wasn't necessary. That the administration should dictate what's to be done and that wasn't necessary to have a faculty code.

Smith: Did you ever, at any time, serve on the old Faculty Council and then later on the Faculty Senate? Did you serve on either of those bodies?

Randall: Yes, I was on the faculty when the Faculty Council was in operation. I served on that.

Smith: Do you recall any particular strain in the relationships between the students and faculty, on one hand, and the administration and the town, on the other hand. The town and gown relationship?

Randall: Town and gown. I think that every once in a while that would pop up. You know, that people would feel that maybe the college is trying to run the town, and sometimes, I think, faculty felt that they weren't accepted like they should be accepted. After all it was the biggest industry in town and should have been, but generally speaking though, I think, everyone got along pretty well.

Smith: I'm sure that Reino Randall put in an awful lot of volunteer hours of this town concerning himself with the pruning of trees, and the removal of trees. Tell us about Reino Randall's relationship to Ellensburg's tree growth.

Randall: Well, look at it now, and actually I don't think there was a tree downtown. Marge Rowley, and Dorothy Nelson, and myself, and Louise Shelton got onto this committee, they didn't have a committee, (?) the City Council...The Beautification Committee and so we brought in the first planters into town, and you can still see them down there, fairly big round ones with aggregate surface on the outside. They didn't have any money to get those, but I had been up to Bellingham and saw those containers there, planters, and so I contacted the Council to see if they could bring them down, and they said no, they wouldn't. So I got Mr. Robbins. (?) Robbins, he delivered hay to the Coast, over to the Coast, So when he delivered hay over there he said, I'll be going to Bellingham, I'll bring back as many as I can each time." So we have several of them downtown. And then we had to cut... then we decided that we.. .Oh, by the way, they said, "Oh, we can't have those planters on the sidewalk, someone's likely to bump into them and we'll be sued." And I said," Look, on Fifth Avenue downtown in Seattle which has narrower streets than our streets are, our sidewalks are pretty wide here." And I said, "You shoot a cannon up the street there and you wouldn't hit anyone. ' So they finally let us put in the planters, and then we decided we wanted to get some trees into the sidewalk. And they said, "Oh, my God, we can't do that! We can't start cutting holes in the sidewalk, and the expense, and so on. And then how are we going to water them, and then what about the leaves, and so on." And I can't imagine anybody even saying that, with the wind we have here. That took care of the leaves. We finally got... The council finally OK'd it, and they did water them. It's too bad we lost that watering tank, it was pulled by the horses here, but that was the beginning of tree planting for the town. And, of course, Marge Rowley was very active in promoting that, too, later on.

Smith: Well, you did a lot of counseling of tree pruning and trimming here on campus for the physical plant men who used to just go out and saw off limbs at random. You did some counseling on that I recall.

Randall: Yes, I brought in, I can't remember what his name was, a man here in town that knew something about tree planting, pruning. So we got him to come over and give administration, and from then on Paul Betco said that if you're going to prune any trees here we're not going to prune until Reino gives us permission, and we're not going to cut down a tree until Reino says so. We saved the trees in front of the Art Building up there. They were going to cut a trench through there and put in the power lines and I said,

“No way! If you’re going to cut those trees down I’m going to be chained to the tree, and then you can take your chances.”

Smith: Now, Reino, those of us who have been a friend of yours over the years were very proud when a building named in your honor. How do you personally feel about having buildings named for people who are still living’?

Randall: Well, I...

Smith: Which is a big problem here on campus right now.

Randall: Uh huh, right. I think it’s wonderful. At least I feel that way. I’ve enjoyed that for twenty years now.

Smith: Sure, Wayne Hertz answered exactly the same way. But there is a considerable number of especially newer people who do not believe that buildings should be named for anybody still living. That’s an honor that should be paid to the dead, and I feel as you do that the living should have the joy of knowing that.

Randall: That’s right. There’s not much enjoyment after you’re dead. None, unless you have something like that.

Smith: Can you comment just a little bit about the constant reorganization academically, into departments and to divisions and then into schools. Did it in any way effect the work that you folks did in the Art Department, knowing from year to year that you’re apt to have a different academic organization in the next year?

Randall: Well, we had a little problem there in the real early years, and that was that Mr. Hogue was Chairman, theoretically, I guess, Chairman of the Division. He had the Art Department and the Industrial Arts Department, and the Home Economics Department. But he felt he wasn’t very proficient in all those areas, so all those years he was head of the Division I did most of the work in the Art Department. I wasn’t interested in Chairmanship or anything like that because he was theoretically was the Chairman of that Division. They wouldn’t...! hope.. (?). . .was the Dean except that he was, I guess, would be considered the Dean. But he had these three different Departments, and I know that Helen Michaelson directed their Department, and then George Sogge in the Industrial Arts Department, took care of that Division that Department.

Smith: At one time there were three or four professors in the Art Department all of whom had at one time been Chairman of the Department. Was that ever any particular problem?

Randall: No, I don’t think so.

Smith: . . .And leaving the Chairman’s office and becoming simply a teaching faculty member under a different Chairman.

Randall: No. I don’t think. ..We had some problems in the Department and we had a vote in choosing the Chairman, and there was some feeling there at the time, but I don’t think there was anything serious that we weren’t able to solve eventually one way or another. Since we had a vote on it.

Smith: Now that you’ve been out of teaching for a number of years, as you look back, do you believe that senior faculty members should be allowed to ride their bicycles in the buildings up the elevators, and then walk it to the railing outside their office?

Randall: Gosh, I don't know. I quit riding a bicycle so I... I rode my bicycle to school here, but I parked it right outside down here, outside the building, and never even locked it. (Snickering)

Smith: I'm thinking especially, of Randall Hall, in your last few years, and I was an acting Chairman for seven quarters up there, and I remember going to Reino, and saying, "Reino, I've been able to have success with one exception. I've got all the bikes out of the building now except yours." (Laughter) And I used to watch you come in the front door, on to the elevator, up, and then there was a little...

Randall: Not very often

Smith: ...little tiny railing outside of his office. I don't blame him for wanting to lock it because bike thieves were numerous in those years.

Randall: I'll tell you what, that didn't bother me very much, but it bothered me when the dogs could come in the building and some of the faculty allowed that, and then they do their thing in the hallways, and so I got into an argument with a couple of the staff, they thought they had the right to bring their dog in there, so a little fur flew there. Not only dog fur.

Smith: How about any awards that you were given through your teaching years, Reino? do you recall any?

Randall: Well, I got the American Institute of Architects Award to go to school, summer session at University of Oregon, and at Columbia I got the Osler Wesley Dow Scholarship, it certainly helped, boy, those were the lean days, and then I was, I don't know if you'd call it an award, but I was one of the first members of the Arts Commission, appointed by Rosselini that's when all this started and now... we didn't get any expense money, we went on our own, now those people get paid.

Smith: As you think back over your career in the Department as a faculty member can you think of significant contributions that are traceable directly to Reino Randall in courses or sequences of courses in Art, things that you contributed that perhaps are still going on?

Randall: Yes, and I'm pretty proud of one particularly, and that's the Graphic Design area. When I came here it was commercial art, and you went to a commercial art school if you were going to do anything in Graphic Design. And so I would sneak in some courses in the commercial art area and, so when I got in a few courses like that and finally I was able to work it up to a two years, we gave credit, a two year certificate in commercial art area, so that students could go out and get a job. And then gradually, we got the Graphics Design program, and now that program is the largest, that particular program is the largest area in the Art Department, and I always felt that the Graphic Design people should know about drawing and painting and so on. I didn't look down on any of the Departments in school because I thought the print makers and the glass blowers, even at that time we had glass blowing, and painters, what have you, that they were all necessary evils, or whatever you want to call them, but there would be some faculty, you know, that really looked down their nose at the idea of having a commercial art program as it was called in the early days. Now it's one of the big significant areas in the training field, and in the advertising field (?). When you take Silicon Glass and Graphics, it's a large outfit and certainly is very important.

Smith: How have you been able to survive through the years when you knew that there was among some academicians a feeling that Art really wasn't sufficiently academic to be part of a University?

Randall: Well, I don't know, you can look now and see how important Art is. You look at the restoration of this building and its art when it's done, and I think that Art should be, well Art is around us every place and any place that we look. It depends on what a person wants to do with it, and what was the (?). What else did you ask on that?

Smith: Well, faculty members in the Arts have always had trouble getting recognition of what they did compared to the writing of papers, or writing of distinguished articles, the writing of books, the Arts have always taken a second place in academic judgment as to the validity of the program on a University campus. Should the taxpayers be paying people to learn to paint pretty pictures?

Randall: Look at the National Endowment for the Arts. Look at the problems they're having today. There are... different Senators that definitely..., they want to cut it out completely, and can you imagine a society not having Arts included in their daily lives today? Even in the theater (?) had their problems, and musicians have had their problems all through history...

Smith: Certainly, you've been aware that Art students have had greater trouble finding financial assistance than a student in math, or physics, or chemistry, or engineering of some sort. And I'm sure that that is a reflection of a lot of the academic attitude that, Arts are fine, we need them, but not on a college campus.

Randall: Well, yeah, those people that feel that way, they should give a little bit more thought to what they're saying. I think that's the best thing that I can say about that. And, for instance, when I first came here, they, you know, people looked down their noses at any one, any man that was going into the Art profession, and being an artist. they thought that was only for women, and that's completely changed now. Look at the ceramists you have, and the sculptors, they've only been casting in, of course, with all the different metals and woods and what have you.

Smith: Now, in Na's interview she mentioned that you folks have moved to California to be near your two daughters. I think we ought to get their names, their maiden names and their married names on this tape, and identify where they are and what they're doing.

Randall: OK.

Smith: Because they're Central kids.

Randall: Right. Terry, Terry McMann lives in Palo Alto the older of the two daughters, and Lynn lives in Hillsborough, just north of Palo Alto. And that's Lynn, Lynn Blackwell and Terry McMann. Two names.

Smith: Are they full-time mothers, housekeepers, or do they work?

Randall: Both. Terry is an Art teacher in Menlo Park, which is right next door to Palo Alto, and has been, well, every since they moved to California, Terry has taught Art and run work-shops and so on in the school systems in that particular area. And Lynn is very active. She doesn't have a permanent job, as such, but she's been a volunteer teacher, although she gets paid for that, too, I think, in the Senior Center working with the people in their in the arts and crafts program there. So both of them are applying their background knowledge.

Smith: Now, Reino, Is there anything that you'd like to record for posterity that I haven't asked you about?

Randall: Yes. I think the one thing that bothered me about the time of Joe McCarthy, the McCarthy days, when they were witch hunting, and that was really a frightening, serious time for faculty, for faculty members and for the country. One of the black marks, I think, in history was that particular period of time, during McCarthy days. And the faculty, many faculty members were black-balled and lost their jobs, and affected their lives for many years after that. So I think that was a very serious time in our history.

Smith: Can you recall any problems that occurred here on this campus? Were there any faculty members who were suspected of being subversive?

Randall: Well, I think all the college faculty was. I can remember when we kept Hadley from putting his signs up from the fruit stands. He wanted to put a series of signs all the way up toward Thorp, in that direction, where the fruit stand is now, and when we fought that particular thing (?) enough to clutter the highway with signs and the like, the next day he had a full page ad in the paper saying that all the communists up at the college are the ones who are keeping me from (?). And I think that's always one of the (?), but I think, Central is a great institution. There are many, many things that I think that it has offered, and I feel that I've had a little part of it. For instance, I started the International Program. It was the first one to take any students out of the country, and that was to Mexico. And then I took several tour groups to Europe. And now it's,... I'm just up talking to them today, because we have a young man who wants to come and he's from Moscow, and we've been corresponding with a young man in Kiev, Ukraine, and trying to help him out, but, you know, they have their political problems, and also their financial problems.

Smith: Good. Well, Reino, as a member of the Committee, I personally thank you, and I'm sure all the Committee's very happy that we were able to catch you and Na when you had some free time and we could get you on tape for posterity. And this tape will become part of the Living History of Central and it will be housed not on campus, where people are always changing and you can't count on things being taken care of, they will be part of the State Archives Building up here on the corner of Fourteenth and "D" Street. (?) building...

Randall: Yeah, right.

Smith: And there they have professionals who take care of things carefully.

Randall: I was up there and that's the most beautiful building (?). Actually feels like it's a part of the campus. Very nicely designed.

Smith: Yes. Well, I thank you very much, Reino and Na.