

CWU LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Wendell Hill

(Transcription of Tape 1, Side 1)

MS: This is another interview for the Living History Project. I believe the date is March 27th, and our interview is Mr. Wendell Hill. Now Wendell, give us a little bit of an autobiography, will you? Born? Educated? Moved? Hired? Go right down the list.

WH: Well, I was born in Home, Kansas on May 15, 1928. My father was a grocery man. My mother had taught school for a couple of years before she was married, and started having children. My father – and my father, soon after I was born, became a manager for Safeway stores, and then moved to Missouri for a while. My brother was born in [inaudible] Kansas, and we were raised in Atchison, Kansas. Went to school there – high school there. Went into the service – military army – after WWII in 1946. After service I attended Washburn University in Topeka for a semester. Came back and tried to go into a school in [sounds like home town], and that didn't work out. Went into the laundry business for a short period of time. Went back, married Shirley, and we decided to go back to school and I went to Washburn University in Topeka where I got my Bachelor's in Business Administration in 1953, I think it was.

After college a short period of time I was hired as Assistant Treasurer at Washburn University. I was in that position for nine and a half years, and then, December 1, 1963, started as Director of Auxiliary Services here at Central Washington University.

MS: Now you were hired as Director of Auxiliary Services here at Central. What position did you hold at the time you retired, and when did you retire?

WH: Well I had exactly the same title when I retired. Well actually, it did a little different. When I was employed, I had my – my title was Director of Auxiliary Enterprises, and the word enterprises bothered me, so we changed it to services.

MS: Good. And what year was it that you started, and then retired?

WH: I started December 1, 1963, and retired June 30, 1993.

MS: Good. Now you mentioned a brother. Were there two children in your family?

WH: There were four of us. I had two sisters and a brother.

MS: Did all of your siblings attend college and/or graduate from college?

WH: No, my – my youngest sister went to Washburn for a couple of years, and then just recently, within the last year or so, has started working on a degree – finish her degree. My oldest sister never went to college, and my brother didn't either.

MS: Now for those of us out west here who are not familiar with your school, what kind of school is Washburn?

WH: Washburn was a Congregational University. It's named after Ichabod Washburn, because he gave a sum of \$25,000 to it. Ichabod Washburn was the inventor of barbed wire, and I assume became very wealthy because of that.

MS: Wendell, as Director of Auxiliary Services, I personally know that you had to wear a dozen different hats. Would you describe that position, and the various kinds of duties that you were responsible for?

WH: Well, I think that one of the greatest pleasures that I had was that I was with Tech Support – that we generated the revenue that we used. That gave me a feeling of pride, but also a feeling of anxiety, because you had to [inaudible]. So I believe that caused us to do things that we might not have done otherwise. Auxiliary Services included housing and [inaudible] apartments, dining services – that would be for the Residence Hall students in the Conference program – the Conference program, the University store, and parking. And then we had supporting departments such as Auxiliary Services Production – graphics, and so on, and computer support, and accounting support, and a maintenance support.

MS: Now certainly an active part of your responsibility was the Conference Center. Could you describe for us what was, and what is the Conference Center at Central.

WH: Okay, the Conference Center is a – is a outgrowth of a disastrous time. Early in Seventy – 1971-72, prior to which we were having unbelievable enrollment – within a year or so, our enrollment dropped 1,000, and we had been building for the future, and found ourselves with a lot of the [inaudible] of the past. So I – it's really more of an outgrowth of accident than pre-planned thought that we closed much of the Residence Hall and started [inaudible]. Elaine Reich, who was then in the Scheduling Center – later became the manager of the Conference Program – was very instrumental in the start of that program. The Conference Program is – is – is largely – is – it facilitates groups who have Conferences here. It works with many onto the campus to bring their conferences here, and works closely with such things as Continuing Ed – or departments as Continuing Education, with like, Senior Ventures, Elder Hostel, and some other things. It's not a – it's not an academic program. It doesn't – uh – engage in that at all. It just simply a partner with academic department.

MS: Now if I were – if I lived in Leavenworth, and I wanted to bring a conference here, and I would contact you, what kind of services would you be able to provide my organization for a conference?

WH: I believe that – that – that – and I know there would be exceptions, but almost all the services you would require. That would include housing and dining – and dining would include the full range from cafeteria line to special banquets, outdoor functions, and things like that, and the housing would vary from private suites in Munson to the typical – a building with [inaudible] and central baths. Uh, supported with audio visual equipment, classrooms – not classrooms, but meeting rooms, both in the Conference Center and Student Union buildings, and if a group would need, or would desire a speaker whose expertise would be of the faculty, then we would try to do that for them. So that's pretty – it's actually – what has happened with the Conference Program was – well, originally we had two groups. We had [inaudible], and their – their – they functioned at that time mostly like students – put us into line, and [inaudible] us, and all that sort of stuff. Well as the Conference Services Program grew, people's requests became more sophisticated and advanced, and so you build, and build, and build, and build. And the other part of the Conference Program I think is nice is that things that were done for the Conference Program, particularly in dining services, were enjoyed by the students, and so that had added dimension to it to the students, as well.

MS: Now I know that in recent years there's been a magnificent renovation of Munson Hall. It appears to have become completely taken over by the Conference Center. Is that true?

WH: It is, yes.

MS: And it will be for the future, in so far as we know?

WH: Yeah, I believe – uh – I don't know if they're doing anything with this yet, but we – when I was still here we tried to invite the departments over to have a meeting in Munson, and to encourage that sort of thing, yeah.

MS: I thought it was a very, very well done renovation of that building for that purpose. I enjoy those facilities very much. Now with food services, Wendell, how did you ever solve the problem of the fact that it has been a long-standing tradition for students to always complain about institutional food. How did you solve that problem, or did you?

WH: Well I think we solved it well. I believe that Central has a reputation for quality food service. I think it was solved in two ways. We had people who knew food – who know food, and like students, and when you have those two ingredients, then you have quality food service.

MS: I've been so interested in comparing food services here with what I knew as a student – I think one of the most significant differences is the fact that nowadays students have some options when it comes to dining. If you don't happen to like this particular entrée there's another one there, and there's another one there. Providing options must have been very costly.

WH: Well we thought we were spending a lot of money at the time, but we feel it's turned out not to. When you establish price for room and board, and the board part of it, you anticipate there will be some absenteeism. And so you just anticipate that when you establish your rates, and it turned out to be – for instance, we went to an unlimited seconds program, which is unusual to still have that – I don't know if we have that – but it didn't – it didn't – didn't cause any problems. In fact, more and more things were done to eliminate part of the absenteeism, and so – there's more convenient hours, and so forth. I remember one year we started the midnight breakfasts on finals week. But no, it – the room and board rates at Central – while there was a time they were the lowest, they still aren't the highest, and – I don't think they are, I mean, I don't know what they are right [inaudible, but it wasn't "now"] but – when you have – when you had a staff that cares and is good, then you really take out a lot of the waste.

MS: Now Wendell, you were on campus at the time that the high-rise dormitories were built, weren't you?

WH: Yes, and I guess I can take part of the blame for them.

MS: Now, I seem to recall that townspeople who lived adjacent to the University, and especially on the South side, when they found out that there were going to be two very large dormitories placed across the street from them, one of the things that they became very concerned with, of course, was parking. And it seems that I have some memory of an agreement with the citizenry that only students without cars would be housed in the high-rise dormitories. Did that ever materialize?

WH: No. And the reason for that is that students may not have a car available when they come over and find out, and they get Mom and Dad's car, or something like that. No, what we – what we – what we did to try to alleviate that problem – and you just can't do it altogether – was that the housing system would purchase parking permits – campus parking permits for the residents of the building, and encourage them to park on campus. I think that helped to some extent. We've provided, for instance, in the lot behind SUB some overnight parking spaces which would be convenient. But it really was – we really shouldn't have made that "guarantee" at the time, because – there were reasons why those buildings were put there. One is, and it may not make sense to people now, but that was really the only place we had to build 500 residence hall spaces. The other thing is that we had the capacity in principal to accommodate those students without building another dining room. Those are the biggest. Now, with foresight, it turned out to be an awfully good location for the Conference Building. So in some ways I wish we hadn't done it, and in other ways I love it. But we tried to alleviate problem parking, but we never could do it.

MS: Now I don't know if you know about this, Wendell, but I'm going to describe something to you and ask you to comment. Quite a few years ago I had need to come up on campus one evening for rehearsal. I parked my car over in the Buttons lot and walked over, and as I approached this building I met President Brooks coming into the building at about the same time. He had just come back from Olympia – a whole series of meetings – and he said he felt like he'd been beaten about the head and shoulders, and I

said, "What's the problem, Jim?" And he said, "They are raking me over the coals for having overbuilt." And he said, "All we did was take the figures that Olympia told us we had to get ready for. We used those figures in our construction planning, and we provided for the number of students they said that we were going to have, and now we don't have them, and there's an element in Olympia that's very excited and angry about that." And he said, "I'm the whipping boy. I'm getting beaten, and it isn't any more my fault than anybody else on this campus, simply because we are dictated by the studies that are done in Olympia that indicate what our enrollment will be in the future, and we try to respond to that."

WH: Well you know, up until '72, or whenever it was at that point, we would get enrollment projections. And you've got to remember, we were – we were planning these facilities, constructing these facilities, and opening these facilities all at the same time, and every enrollment projection that we received, we exceeded. Now in early '71 or '72, when that – well, about the time the Viet Nam war was over, and some other stuff, you did say to yourself, "My God, we overbuilt. What are we going to do." Well it turned out to be, what we did was right. What we found in that down period in the early Seventies was that the housing and dining system was totally dependent upon students for income, and if there were students we did fine – well, there's another factor, too, if there weren't students. So what, out of that – that was created the Conference Program. Okay now right today, right this last two years – up until a few years ago there hadn't been any construction of significance in Ellensburg for almost those 20 years. Now, as you know, the last few years has been considerable. In fact, I would say that the private sector [inaudible] construction. But what they have done to fill those apartments is – they're taking them out of the residence halls. They're telling – you get your choice of the privacy of an apartment or the community living in a residence hall, there have got to be some real compelling reasons for you to stay in the residence hall. So what happens then, is that the Conference Program is the second source of revenue for the housing and dining system, and it's been growing and contributing. And I would say that the housing and dining system would be [inaudible] greatest point in the [inaudible] program. And all the facilities are used right now. Now some of them you wouldn't say to capacity. They've lowered the capacity on them. No, I think we just sort of lucked out with that. I wouldn't disagree. I was scared to death, and it's – I guess it's like the people who go through the Depression – they never forget it. And I think one of the drivers for me was those early Seventy years, and I didn't want to do that again.

MS: Thank you, Wendell. Now I think it's important to get on this tape information from you concerning some of the problems that arose that I'm aware of, such as a certain amount of pressure from downtown on the Conference Center competing with the motels, competing with the restaurants – uh – sometimes considered unfairly competing. How did you respond to that?

WH: Well, I think that to begin with, there was a distrust of those sectors of us. And then – then it was realized that for every conference we brought here, there was a certain percentage of people who stayed in the motels, and who ate in the restaurants. So I – that – that – that distrust, I guess – I don't – I think it's evaporated years ago. Um – there was some – the – the static really was not because of the Conference Program, but it was because of the – to some extent – bookstore, and to some extent of the activities of the University itself. I can't remember when – time goes by – but the legislature passed legislation that says that if the colleges and universities will establish their commercial policies in consultation with local business people, and so a group of us on campus met with a committee of the Chamber, and some non-Chamber people, and I so happened to be the person who coordinated that from the University side. And out of that came a very positive relationship, and a vehicle for if somebody says "Why are you doing this," or something like that, for us to look into. Quite frankly, that policy – the policy itself was not under attack with the Taco Bell thing. The policy didn't anticipate things like the Taco Bell. But I think that – I don't know – I think that – well, like with organizations such as Rotary, where half of our membership is University, say, and [inaudible]. I really haven't felt a – really a negative thing for quite some time – years, and years, and years – and I think the only thing that's recently been is that Taco Bell thing, which was –

MS: Now that you've mentioned that, there are going to be people viewing this tape who have never heard of the Taco Bell problem. Can you just quickly describe what you're referring to?

WH: Well what – let's go back to that statement you made – that question you made about the variety that students have. Well students come to Universities after enjoying, I guess you'd say, fast food menus all their lives. And they're very brand-conscious. I mean, if you don't have Coca Cola or Pepsi, you don't really have anything anymore, do you? And so the students wanted – the students wanted to have Taco Bell. No, they wanted – no, that's not correct. Services. Dining Services was looking at a way to improve the University food service – the Student Union food service. And if you go to conferences in Higher Education for [inaudible] organization, many, many franchise food specialists are there. So – so this became a Taco Bell thing because of trying to see if we could franchise – the University could franchise it – some of these food things the Student Union wanted. And it could have easily have been Taco Pete, or something else, but that's the way this got done. And so that created quite a stir of the Chamber, and the town, and the University, and legislature, and – it looks like it's working out okay. But you have to – what I think it is, is it's like any other place – you have to service your customers with what they want. And – and I really couldn't see where that type of a thing would hurt anybody.

MS: Now we have all gone to colleges or universities – places where in the Union building there were barbershops. Has there ever been any pressure to include barbershops?

WH: Well when we expanded the Student Union the last time, building-wise, there was thought of a barbershop, but it's pretty hard to justify when they're right across the street in this little town. And I think that – I know for a fact that the University has been aware of the needs of the business community. For instance, the University food service doesn't make any deliveries to residence halls. Now maybe forty years ago if you'd started that, that would be one thing, but when you have so many fast food places, I guess, who are dependent upon that revenue, you just don't want to cut them off. So I think – I think the Taco Bell became symbolic of something that we really [inaudible].

MS: Now Wendell, Director of Auxiliary Services – were you ever aware of a certain type of problem that occurred between the campus and the town relative to barber shops when there were especially men, in the men's dorms, some who would set up a barber shop in the basement of the dorm and would cut hair, and I can recall going to downtown barbers to get my hair cut, and they would beat their drums about the fact that they were notifying the State inspectors who were going to come down, and did come down, evidently, and did stop the hair cutting in the basement of the dormitories.

WH: Honestly, I don't remember that, Milo. That must have been before my time.

MS: It may have been.

WH: But I haven't heard of it. I think we all recognize that people do that.

MS: Now another service that is available in dormitories here and elsewhere is the availability of washers and dryers so the students can run down and throw in a load every evening or whatever. I also know that that is a high cost for maintenance and replacement. Was that any significant albatross hanging around your neck – the maintenance of all those machines?

WH: Well what happened was that we held out as absolutely as long as we could of including the use of washers and dryers in the room and board and rent. Two things caused us – maybe three things caused us to change. One is our machines are old. Second, we were keeping the whole town clean free. I mean, people who didn't live in those facilities were up there washing. And we looked at it as a way of – with even purposely low rates – to create some additional revenue for the system. So I can't remember – ten years or so, something like that we went out this way, and with the contract we had, it was a good one. We've got a good contract. We were assured of quality equipment and things like that. But you can get tremendously [inaudible] investment in washers and dryers.

MS: Now did you have any kind of job security, Wendell, compared to my tenure, for example?

WH: No.

MS: Or did you – did you exist on short-term contracts year by year by year, or did you sometimes have an opportunity to sign a contract for several years?

WH: No, I – I think the later years, when we got the administrative code – I think that's when it was – is that there was a series – there was a period – there was a – okay, so much notice due for termination without cause. And that ended up at – I think that over five years of – after five years it required one calendar year's notice. Now you need to understand something, too, is that I've been at [inaudible] for nine and a half years. I was almost considered about the same thing as furniture that would never leave, okay? And my appointment letter says something like this: "Your salary will be such and such, and if you're outstanding and retained it will be increased to this on this date." And that – gave some thought. No, no – I – before we had the code, why, I think it was a year to year thing. Yeah, it was a year to year thing.

MS: What position was your immediate senior or supervisor?

WH: Well when I came here, Ken Courson was the one that employed me.

MS: Business Manager.

WH: Business Manager. And then, over the period of time I reported to the Dean of Students – that was Waxy Witherspoon. I reported to Dean of Administration for a while, and then reported to the Business Manager, who reported to the Vice President for Business.

MS: Mm-hmm, okay. Now thinking back over all of your involvement in Administrative Services – Auxiliary Services – and all the years you served, what specific things can you identify as having been Wendell Hill's contributions to the ongoing enterprise of the Auxiliary Services?

WH: Well there –

MS: What did you bring to the position?

WH: Well, I don't – nothing that's Wendell Hill's sole contribution to Auxiliary Services. Uh – we had a fantastic staff, and we worked together, and somebody would get an idea that we would develop. I don't mean that we had a – necessarily had a democratic completely thing like that – so I guess maybe it would be easier to say what kind of things do I take some pride in that we did, okay?

One of the thing that I take some pride in is that Central built a lot of apartments, particularly for families, we [inaudible] – compared with our – say, with WSU, with the number of students we have and they have, we have a lot. We were one of the very first that had apartments for single students. Those – you have some fun things that you do along the way. One was Conservation Corps. Camps. We had two of those, and the people who have worked for them are still my – surely my very close friends.

Don Guy and I, and Don Cummings put the idea of the Enrichment Programs together. Another program that –

MS: Could you describe that Enrichment Program?

WH: Well the Enrichment Program is a – is a – I don't know what – how – I should have said previewing together. Don Cummings, Don Guy and I were previewing together – that's a week before school starts of getting acquainted and accustomed to college. The Enrichment Program, that was done largely with Jim Hollister and Murray Larson, which is a program for first-year students living in residence

halls together. They pay a higher fee and have more activities. There's some faculty involvement – more faculty involvement in that. Let's see, uh – it's been a very successful program. The Senior Ventures Program that I was involved with that I think's a plus. The Conference Program, of course – those were some of the things.

MS: Okay. Now would you be so kind as to think back through the years, and let's name some names of people whom you felt were significant support to you and the execution of your duties as Director of Auxiliary Services. Who are the people who helped you along the way?

WH: Well those people – I would first of all start with Ken Courson, who was a business banker, and of course Paul [inaudible]. Uh – I'd say Don Weisch. Don, when he first came here about two years after I did was the [inaudible] man, and then he was – has been Associate Dean of Students, Vice President of Student Affairs, Director of Student Union Building Council – and he and I worked together closely for a long, long, long time. Uh – Jim Hollister, who was Director of Housing Services, was a – did a fantastic job. He's sort of semi-retired from here. I keep asking him, and begging him, and pushing him to become a professional writer because he's [inaudible]. Uh, give me a second.

MS: How about the maintenance people who worked for you that most people never know about.

WH: Well the significant ones – yeah, thank for your help Milo. Okay, uh – before I get to the maintenance there's another person and that's Bill Archen – Bill Archen is Manager of Auxiliary Services Accounting, and he told me yesterday he's retiring after 30 years at the end of June. And Auxiliary Services – or I would normally go to the Board of Trustees asking for room and board rate increases. I would get glowing comments, you know – almost embarrassing, they were so positive – about this housing and dining projection book that we presented every week. Well Bill Archen was the one who put it together. And then another person would be Glen Pennell, who was the Manager of Dining Services. And Glen was really the first one – Manager we had that brought this care for food, and knowledge of food, and care for students together, and he was the one that preceded Tom Oliver.

In Maintenance, in Maintenance there would be Jerry Morang, more recently. Jerry was the one that really got our Maintenance program going well. He's a – he's in a unique background. He's – he had his Master's in Counseling. He was a school teacher – Principal, Superintendent. He's a master craftsman at welding and construction, things like this. I'm leaving people out.

MS: Oh, that's inevitable. How about Administrators other than Kenny Courson – Administrators who through the years you feel made significant contributions to Auxiliary Services?

WH: You mean outside of Auxiliary Services?

MS: Yes. Was the President ever involved?

WH: No, I don't think so. I think that – I believe we got a lot of support from all three of the Presidents that were here when I was. The Auxiliary Services is sort of a – a little bit was taken from here, and a little bit was taken from there, and a little put there, and put it all together, so in some ways there's always the pressure to pull this part out, and pull that part out. Not very serious or not very strong, but – uh – I think Don Schliesman has been a person who's been supportive of – very much supportive of what we've done over the years. Um –

MS: Wendell in this room this afternoon there's going to be a reception for Courtney Jones, who has just –

WH: Oh, thank you sir.

MS: Who is retiring.

WH: Um, yeah, thank you. I should have called just before I came, I guess. No, Courtney has, and he's been a – he's a jewel, and – I think it's fair to say, and I was going to say that Courtney's what you might call somewhat conservative, and you never have a successful chief fiscal officer who isn't somewhat conservative. But he led me wrong quite a bit [laughs], and without that, we couldn't have – if we did anything, we couldn't have done it at all. [?] He always asked hard questions, but good questions. No, no, no – he [inaudible].

MS: Good. Now since parking was one of your areas of responsibility, could you explain for posterity – how does Central acquire parking lot spaces?

WH: Well there are two parts to that. [Inaudible] I mean, not the kind we had when we were kids, but parking lots spots. First of all, the land was never – was purchased for the parking, and most always it's been that never – a piece of land purchased for parking was land that – property that the University had. But all the improvements in the park were funded from the [inaudible] licenses and – and contrary to what was thought, probably – that the parking funds did not pay for construction of – operation of – maintenance of the parking lots – basically the parking lots paid for the people who [inaudible]. So – so – so our aim was to provide adequate parking, but more than that, it was to provide quality parking. I remember one comment of a faculty member – you remember up on D Street that parking lot there used to be gravel, and we had a P parking lot for paved and we had a G parking lot for gravel, and so he was – the park detector was up there one day, and he says, "I don't think this G is any good any more. I want a name for a mud parking lot." But parking was a lot of fun.

MS: Well when the State purchased the railroad right of way that passed through the campus it stood idle for a number of years, and much of it since, on the east end of the campus has been developed into some magnificent parking lots with curbs, and spaces, and it's really uptown. Now where did the money come from to develop those lots?

WH: From people who use those lots.

MS: That's where the parking fees go?

WH: Yes. For instance, going back to the Conference Program, every person who attends a conference through the Conference Program, there would be some [inaudible] – if they have a vehicle or not, they pay a certain amount of their fee for this goes to the parking fund.

MS: Now when the Conference Center uses spaces in the Union building, are you assessed rentals by the Union?

WH: Oh yes.

MS: You are.

WH: Mm-hmm.

MS: So you have to pay for the use of those spaces?

WH: The [sounds like "ice event"] is a major – major source of revenue for the Student Union building.

MS: Aha. If you use spaces – classrooms, for example, on campus that are available – I'm thinking especially on weekends – does the Conference Center have to pay any particular entity for the use of regular academic spaces?

WH: I think unless there's – I think the answer probably is – I think that with the exception of group – maybe not even group – I think the answer is that it doesn't pay for rental for those spaces. If there's a special set up, the Facilities Management Department would do that, and they would pay for that.

MS: Okay. Now I know that any time that the Conference Center has needed McConnell Auditorium – uh – I used to have to – when I was responsible for the building I used to have to assign stage crewmen to turn lights off and on, and control lights, and pull curtains, and provide minimal furniture, and so forth, and I am not aware that it costs the Conference Center to use the building, but I am aware that the Conference Center did pay the stage crew that was hired to serve those conferees in that building. Were there many situations like that around –

(Transcription of Tape 1, Side 2)

MS: [Tape begins in mid-sentence] student workers other than let's say the servers in the dining halls make part of their tuition and fees through the dining services. My students in McConnell used to make part of their tuition money by working as stage crew. What I'm really looking for is, were there a number of opportunities that came through your enterprise whereby students could earn money here on campus?

WH: Oh yes. The Conference Center, particularly in the summertime – uh, particularly in the summertime, employed dozens of students. One of the things that we took pride in – on a full time equivalent basis, Auxiliary Services had more students than it did full time employees, and we tried in every way to um, to employ students.

MS: Good.

WH: And I guess another program that I'm pleased that we started was what we call our Apprenticeship program. And I know it's not an apprenticeship like it would be in the trades, but what it started out was is that we needed more people who could prepare food in the summertime because of the Conference Program, and we found that there were students who came here with quantity food experience. So out of that – the food apprentices – then we had graphic arts apprentices, accounting apprentices, computer programming apprentices, bookstore apprentices – there was about 45 of them, I think, at one time that were – paid a higher – paid in full time employment in summertime.

MS: I know of one young lady who graduated from Central having had a food services apprenticeship who then went back east to school to specialize in food services, and having graduated with a degree in that area she was hired in Montana at one of the universities to be the Director of Food Services, and is making her living very, very well from having started in the dining hall here working as a student server, and then getting into the apprentice program. So it was successful.

WH: Well you and I will enjoy a lunch today catered by one of the first food apprentices.

MS: Who's that?

WH: Sandra Coulter.

MS: Sandra Coulter. Good. Now were you too busy in all of your various duties, Wendell, that you did not have an opportunity to serve on other committees that functioned on this campus? Did you, for example, ever serve on a building committee, planning a building?

WH: Oh yeah, yeah, lot's of them. That's practically all I did for a few years here.

MS: Okay.

WH: Oh, I served, of course, on the housing – when we were doing housing and dining facilities, I was responsible for that. I served on the student union building planning committee. I served on the committee that recommended the architect for this building. I had nothing else to do with this building but that. Yeah, I've had a lot of experience with that.

MS: Um, let's lighten up a little bit. Can you think of any humorous things that are worth recording that occurred in your area? I'm thinking of one, but I'll wait and see if you get to it first.

WH: Well, there's Kamola Hall, and there were two kind of humorous things about that – that happened there – well, more than that, but I can remember – and the head resident was Lois Straub. And her daughter was a librarian, and she has – had interest in writing a book, and the title of the book was going to be Don't Call Me Madam, because a young lady knocked on the door one day thinking this would be a good place to set up her trade. Another one was – was Mitchell – Flossy Mitchell was the head resident there, and just as she was being proposed to, the – just *after* she was proposed to, there was a knock on the door. Well it was her custom when somebody knocked on the door to say "Yes," so she answered the door and the proposal at the same time. There's a couple of things.

MS: Tell me if this story is true. I'll take it part way, and if it's true you can probably complete it. When Holmes dining hall was first completed, it is my understanding that the Board of Trustees took a tour of that building, at which time one of the Food Services Directors up there was very proud of the new disposal system and wanted to demonstrate, and consequently had saved up a certain amount of garbage as a demonstration for the Board of Trustees. The garbage was dumped in the disposal, and it was turned on. Do you recall what happened?

WH: No. That probably was before my time, because Holmes was originally opened in 1962, and –

MS: I was hoping you could complete it. I'll go ahead and complete it. To everybody's dismay, suddenly most of that garbage ended up on the ceiling. The power – the propeller blades of the disposal had been put in in reverse, and instead of forcing it down the sewer, it threw it up onto the ceiling. It was one of the funniest things that I have personally known about.

WH: If I had been here, I'd have remembered that one!

MS: Many years ago we used to store a certain amount of furniture in the basement of Kamola Hall, in the basement on the north end. Preceding our storing furniture there, there had been hundreds of old mattresses stored down there, month in, month out, and finally when the room got full they would be released, and they would be taken up and sold to highest bidders, and we needed very badly that space for furniture storage right across the street from McConnell, and we were allowed to have that. And we had no more than moved all of our furniture in there with totally volunteer help – there was no money to move furniture. Students helped, and I worked morning, noon and night. There was a complaint that that furniture in the basement of Kamola Hall actually consisted of an absolutely excellent source of firewood. What about the mattresses that had been stored down there? Now I know for sure that there were students that had access to that room, and that there were all kinds of parties taking place in those mattress storage rooms with smoking, and nobody seemed to complain about the mattress storage being dangerous in the basement of a living dormitory, but suddenly our furniture – and there was nobody partying in a room full of stored furniture. Were you aware of that problem? This was when Don Miller was serving there.

WH: No, that was before my time, although I knew – during my time, I know that we stored a lot of the – the Drama Department's furniture there. And it was sort of my thought that the Drama Department truly thought that they owned all the furniture on campus.

MB: No.

WH: [Laughs]

MB: We tried to get – now this is an honest truth. One day I saw a campus – a college truck backed up to Kamola, and there was a lot of very old furniture being carried out and put into the truck, and I asked the Physical Plant man with the truck, “Where is this furniture going?” And he said, “It’s going out to the City dump, and we are informed that we have to set it afire, and stay there until everything is burning, then we can leave. Because it’s not to be salvaged from that dump and sold, or used by anybody else, because it’s State property.” And I said, “How about the Theater Department getting some of that old furniture?” And they said, “Well, we’re going to go back up to get some more, and when we come down, if there’s some missing we won’t know where it is.” And we used to have a standing request that if there was furniture on campus that was extra, it was to be replaced, it was going to be hauled to the junk, please give us first crack at it.

WH: Well my thought would be is that the response should have been, “Well where do you want it, and we’ll help you move the furniture there?” Uh, uh – but yeah, the thing about that section of Kamola was – originally, a trillion years ago, even before your and my time it was a dining hall.

MB: Yes.

WH: And it sort of became – well, I knew it more for storage of linen. When I first came here there was a – provided linen [inaudible]. And it sort of became a forgotten spot [inaudible]. It’s been, since then – it’s been fixed up. There’s – now it’s the – now it has two uses. One is that the – well, at least when I was here it did – has a computer lab for two residence halls, and a drapery and upholstery shop.

MB: Now very quickly before we end, did you ever have racial discrimination accusations among the students who worked for you in the food services or in the housing?

WH: Uh – I can remember one – I can remember a couple of times.

MB: A couple times?

WH: Yeah.

MB: How about young ladies who felt discriminated against? Did you have any problems in that area?

WH: Well, not really. I think what happened with that is that – was that we all learned more. I remember – I remember a person in my office – a young woman in my office, and I had a promotional decision, and I told her that traditionally that I wasn’t going to consider her for promotion because she could get pregnant anytime. Well that – you know, that was a common thought about young women [inaudible], but it was a stupid statement. So I retracted the statement. I think the other – the other case I’m thinking of is a racial one – was more of a miss – not understanding – more not understanding a person of a different race. But all – and then we had – we had one – one – one person who brought – we had two people – two employees who brought claims of racial discrimination, and those were dealt – they worked out okay.

MB: Good. Now is there any area that we haven’t asked you anything about that you’d like to say something about – your job, the people you work with, the people you work for, here on the end of this tape?

WH: Well I – I think that the real blessing I’ve had with my time of being in this position, and I think it’s something you guys will share with me, is that it was fun working with students. That’s – that’s what – that’s what really it was all about. They’re so refreshing, and so darned smart, and so good people that – that’s what makes it worthwhile. I – the other thing I had is that I had a – I had to learn to understand

Central. I came to Central, which is an open, open campus – I mean, I don't think that there's any place that could be more open – from a place that was not, and that was – that took a little bit of me getting used to, but it was fun, I think. No, I feel like I've been blessed with being here in town.

MB: Well we thank you very much, Wendell, for your contribution to this ongoing history project, and I hope that someday some researcher will have need for the kinds of information that we've recorded for them today. Thank you.