

CWU LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Roy Wilson

(Transcription of Tape 1, Side 1)

LL We are interviewing Roy Wilson at this point, on March 27, 1995. The interviewers will be Eldon Jacobson and Larry Lowther.

And Roy, I want to start with some biographical information. Can you tell us where you were born and brought up, and something about your family background?

RW Well, I was born in Casper, Wyoming. My father worked for an oil company, American Oil. Standard of Indiana became American Oil. And it was in a company town outside of Casper, but for the birth certificate, we had to say Casper. And that was in 1931.

And we lived there until I was eight or nine years old, and then moved to the Chicago area, where my dad was transferred. And I never got over that move. My dad had a two-week transfer notice, and they told me the second week.

And I think because I didn't get over that move is why I ended up in Ellensburg. Because I never wanted to leave the West. I never got over – Casper was where I wanted to be in my life – and, of course, when I grew up, that wasn't practical.

So when this job presented itself, this was very exciting to me. This was *really* West. My mother thought it was the other end of the world.

LL Were you part of a small family or a large family?

RW Yeah. I was the oldest, and my mother and father adopted a child when I was five months old. They'd lost someone along the way at birth, and so then adopted me.

My mother was a diabetic, and eventually, I became a diabetic. And now, I've got an older daughter who is diabetic. So, we're running in the family, in spite of everything it says about it escapes a generation. It gets milder every generation.

LL Where did you do your undergraduate education?

RW My bachelor's degree was at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. And that was in Education. It had some strange majors ... English major, Social Studies major, and Science major. The Science major was the kind of thing where it sounded good, but I didn't have to take any lab courses. That's why I was in it.

Then, I graduated in 1949 to 1953 – and went out to Denver, Colorado – that was my first step at being in the West – and taught in Englewood, Colorado for about three years. And during that time, I got my master's degree at the University of Denver in Education, Elementary Education.

LL Were you teaching elementary school?

RW Yes. I taught in fourth grade in Englewood. I have trouble with “Englewood” and “Ellensburg.” Those are the two towns I feel a lot of feeling for, and I mix them up always as I get older.

Yeah, I taught in Englewood. I started in the fourth grade and then they finally let me do fifth grade. I discovered – I did my student teaching in third grade; and they told me, when I interviewed in the Colorado area, that they would never consider a man below fourth.

And so, they hired me for fourth; and then, fifth grade presented itself and I did that. So I must have done fourth grade, two years in fifth grade.

And then, I thought I'd go back to graduate school, and decided that I didn't want to. So I went to St. Paul, Minnesota, and taught there in what you'd call an inner-city school today.

That was a rough year for me. It was so different from what I was used to. I learned a lot out of that.

And then that year, which must have been 1956-57 school year, I began looking for something out West. And through the placement office, it seems to me, at the University of Michigan – no, it must have been Denver, I'm not sure – one of the placement offices sent me information, and that's how this job came through.

And Ed Reed was the director of the elementary school here. And he interviewed me by telephone, he interviewed somebody else by telephone, and we got hired. And our viewpoint was that they never did it again.

I think everybody got smart and decided there were better ways. And part of it was because of the “somebody else,” not me.

LL This would be a good place to pick up, Roy, in terms of what your beginning assignment was here, and the year of arrival. And what the brakes were that you took in the final year.

RW Now, I drove out here from Minneapolis in the early summer of 1957, and was set up to take some graduate classes at the University of Washington. I thought it would give me a feel for the area, and give me a little time to pick out a place to live.

So I came through Ellensburg early on, in June, I guess. And I stopped at the elementary school and introduced myself to Ed Reed.

I can remember, when I arrived, I had to try and find him. School wasn't in session, this was summer. And so I was trying to find him, and I went to the house across the street, which is now where the Hertz Music Building is.

And I asked someone, I said, “You know, I need to get an address. Could I use your telephone and ask the operator for the address of this person?”

He said, “No, you can't.” And his name was Martin and he was the head of the telephone company. He said, “That's not allowed, but I'll do it for you.” [laughter] I ended up having his daughter, Mary Martin, either that year or the next year, in school.

So anyway, he found Ed Reed's address and I went down to where they were and introduced myself. And I think he brought me over to the school and walked me around. I was very excited and fascinated, you know. The facilities were some of the best in my life.

And in spite of all the computers that are over there now, the room looks pretty good. And, well, it's two main rooms and an office. That in itself was quite attractive, having been in a regular elementary school in a crowded space.

My first year of teaching – my *very first* year of teaching – was fourth grade, in Colorado, and I had 43 children. So I often wonder how people do that, and how did do it? But I was enjoying it so much that I did.

LL So your assignment here was which?

RW To teach fifth grade. I came here and did fifth grade for several years. I don't remember when, but at some point, we did a – we put the –

No, first thing that happened, after a couple years – er, one year, maybe – of fifth grade, [in] the second year, that group of fifth-graders, I took through sixth grade.

And that was neat for me, because there was only one class of each group of children. So you were taking the same children, not getting different children, basically. And I took them fifth grade and sixth grade.

Then, I left and did a year at Chicago.

LL I think it would help, for the history, if you would describe what the relationship with the students attending Central getting Education degrees – because by then, I think, the student teaching itself was not done there?

RW Yeah, yeah.

LL It was?

RW Yeah. I supervised a student teacher each quarter. And I have somewhere here the names of each of those.

Fred Johnson was the first one. The second one was Carl Tinglestaff – and he was probably one of my best. He became a principal over in ... I don't know, Shoreline, I think.

And the third one was Josie Jordan. [Inaudible.] There were a lot of people who thought that something should work out with that.

Because when I arrived – and I discovered this in my letters that I've gone through – Ed Reed is the one who said that I would never get to have a female student teacher, because I was single. So I found it interesting that by the end of that first year, I had been assigned Josie to me.

Anyway, those were the first three I've discovered. I'm amazed at what I didn't say in my letters – names and places. And I was curious about how much I was being paid. And I finally found – but not the first year – but three or four years later, I was at \$6,300. I won't be able to find it for you.

And the first year, I got a raise of \$200 to go into my second year, after 1958-59. And in the summer, they hired me to teach – and that was summer school over there with the children – it was a little over \$600 for that summer session, which was a four-week session.

And then, a couple years later after I came back in 1959, I got a \$630 raise. And that took me from \$5,700 to \$6,330. For whatever that's worth. But it's interesting.

LL That does help.

RW Yeah, sort of fun. [chuckles] I'm glad I had that.

LL Did you have a student teacher every year?

RW Every quarter, the whole time I was here.

LL Right up until 1968?

RW Well, I didn't leave – I ... I'm not sure ... I have a feeling that the 1968 year is the year I was on leave. So maybe 1967 is the last year I was actually here. And there were two other times –

LL But you had student teachers right up to then?

RW Yeah. I had one student teacher – And they made a big thing out of [the fact] that we were the supervisors of the teachers up there. When Thelma arrived, she was supervising student teachers in public schools for the college. But we did our own supervision of the student teachers here.

Somewhere along the way – it wasn't right at the beginning – they – yeah, I would guess it was ... I feel like it was before Thelma came but it might have been right ... no, that must have been the first year, when she came – they instituted this September experience.

And you and Thelma, I find in the letters, sat down with us. And you worked as a pair, I guess, to get that thing [inaudible cross-talk]. And Ham Howard. You and Ham. You mean to say this came from [inaudible]? [laughter]

But I discovered that they were working on that for the local area.

EJ Did the Ed Department use Hebler [School] for other purposes, such as observations?

RW Yes, like crazy, it seemed like to me. Because I was told when I was hired, or on the phone even, that I would be doing demonstration teaching. And it looks like I did two and three a week, at least.

I did his – Ham's – frequently. Many, many times. And then, there were a few others.

Mabel Anderson would bring in students. Mabel and I began – she wasn't sure about me at all, and there was a big turnaround when I had her nephew, which was early on, and she decided I was OK. And then she would bring classes in.

You know, she didn't do P.E. but I can remember doing kinds of P.E. demonstrations for her, where we'd – I know, she was looking at physical growth and development, and she wanted – so I was great in having kids square dance. I discovered very quickly that you didn't make square dancing the heart of the P.E. program. The kids resented that, because then they lost out on all the neat things that kids liked to do in P.E. And it's not dancing!

And so we had musical games and didn't call them dancing. We had musical games, and we did it at another time of the day. And they got very good at it. Because Ham's kids were square dancers in my class.

And my parents were square dancers, and they had actually come out to visit. They were very serious square dancers. They organized a Junior Achievement company where they lived, in Chicago, that was a square-dancing company. These young people actually went out and made money with things that were square-dancing oriented. And then, they did square dances all the time.

So when my parents came out for the first visit – the first visit, I guess, was before Thelma came, it must have been in 1959-1960 maybe – my mother was so impressed with how those kids square danced, she said they could learn *anything*.

This whole business of [inaudible], of dancing sheets. I don't know. Because I was having kids do – well, I discovered I couldn't do the simple "Red River Valley" for very long with fifth- and sixth-grade kids. So we got into "Grand Square" and we did a lot of couple dances, line dances, that were sort of complex, and they were very good at it.

Well, it was that kind of thing [inaudible] was interested in seeing and would push me.

The demonstration, right from the start – I was overwhelmed from the start, but Ed Reed kept telling me what an outstanding teacher I was. Now, he was saying that to every teacher in the school. And what he was doing was he was telling us that's how we were supposed to be was outstanding.

But I kept saying, "I am *not* so good. I am learning."

He said, "That's fine. You can go ahead and learn, but you are an excellent teacher."

It built the ego. That was good. I also understand that he had – he was still giving me room to grow, in spite of that. And that was scary. What was I – 25 or 26? I thought, *Oh gee*.

So it was quite an experience. But I enjoyed it. I thoroughly did.

Right off the bat, they talked about bringing in a closed-circuit TV. And from the looks of the letters, it took them a lot longer than they expected. It seems like – I don't know if I was two years in, but I know it wasn't the first year, and without hunting, I can't find it – but soon, they had it all going.

We dedicated the whole system – and I could find that date if somebody needs that, you know, eventually – we dedicated it in the fall.

And they had the Board in one room over there, to watch it. They had faculty in a room to watch. They had a room for all those parents who didn't have television at home, because they opened it up so it could be seen in a home, which it normally couldn't. And so those who did not have TV at home could come to school and watch.

And I did the lesson that dedicated this. And I felt tremendous pressure there, because I'd been listening to Ed Reed talk for months now about how every demonstration had to be educationally sound.

And *mygosh*, I've got to be educationally sound for him ... and I've got all these people, like Ham Howard, in another room watching, who also wanted sound.

And then I've got all those kids' mothers and fathers, who don't give a *hoot* whether it's educationally sound or not. [laughter] They want to see their kid.

And I suppose I had 23 kids about then. You know, I've got to be sure that during this lesson, every one of those kids gets a chance to say something. And that worried me because I didn't want to put them on the spot, I didn't want them to be embarrassed.

So I learned a lot about how to ask questions that could be successfully answered, even if they didn't know *the* answer. And it was a fractions lesson, in which we used a fraction kit, so we had some manipulatives on their desk and that kind of thing.

And I can remember that sort of in the back of my mind was who haven't I gotten [to] yet? And I knew I had one or two. And I knew that of those two, the one was going to be just very painful if I didn't do it right. And we pulled it off!

EJ So, this is helping us also get a good history of Ed Reed. Was he the only principal that you had during this time?

RW No. [chuckles] Ed left – and that's somewhere here, too, but I won't find that quickly – but he was gone by the time Thelma got here. So ... he resigned and ... hmmm ... the next person must have been ...well, I don't know if Raninger came next.

You see, there was a piece of time here when Amanda Hebelier came back. Now, Amanda is also someone that I did some demonstrating for. But I always thought that my first year was my last year, in that she was in the College of Education.

And I had that feeling that it was about that – maybe it was only one year – because she was, as I understand, really retired when they brought her back to fill in until we got someone.

Now, we've looked at the letters, and Bill Raninger was here – Thelma, I think, met him – and Bill Gaskell came and was here for several years. And I gather from the telephone book she's still here, evidently.

And then, Dick Covington came and before ... and then he went off and did student teaching, I think, in Bellingham. But not for this school, though. Maybe for Western.

So those are the people that I knew and had some, you know, were directors of the elementary school.

Just an interesting aside – two asides – they have to do with Ed Reed. Let's see ... I was in Ohio ... see now, I've never stated this, but I got my Ph.D. at Ohio State University eventually, having gotten everything but the dissertation done in Chicago, over many, many, many, many years.

I finally quit. I gave it all up and went to Ohio State and got it there, and there it took four years.

And Edgar Dale was at Ohio State. He was retired but he was in the building all the time. And he called my advisor, Charlotte Huck, and said, "I've got someone who's looking for a teacher in children's literature in Utah. And it's not an easy position. There are three problems: Can't drink ..."

Had I quit smoking by then?

TW Yeah.

RW "Can't smoke. And no facial hair." [laughter]

And so they thought, well ... and Charlotte Huck was my advisor, who was one of the leading people over the years in children's literature at Ohio State. And she said, "Well, he's good on two of those." [laughter]

So they called. And we went through a rigmarole like you can't imagine. Phone calls. And I finally made up my mind I was not shaving a beard to suit them.

They already had no liquor and no – and I guess I'd quit smoking then – that doesn't seem right – but I'd quit whatever else I had to quit. But I was not going to get rid of [the beard]. I thought it was utter nonsense. So I said no.

EJ In Utah, was that Brigham Young University?

RW Yeah, it was BYU. That was where the position was. And somebody had talked to Edgar Dale, who had then talked to Charlotte.

So I said, "Oh, I'm sorry, I just can't do it."

Well, over a two-year period, I would get a phone call every once in a while. Two or three months would go by and I thought it was over with, they'd forgotten about it. But they started in again and worked on it.

And, of course, the problem was, they couldn't find anybody who didn't drink! [laughter] And so they thought, Oh, if we grab him, we'll get him.

And so I went through a lot of hassle. And he said, "We know, we know the elements of [inaudible]. We know that [inaudible]. But, you know, it's the stereotype."

And I said, "And you're not doing anything to get rid of the stereotype, are you?"

"No." And then, they'd take it to a higher level; and then come back to me months later, when I thought it was over with.

Well suddenly, the phone rang. What did I say the year was? Well, I had finished Ohio State, and I finished that in 1975. So, somewhere in the next few years.

Ed Reed was on the other end of that phone. And I was torn. I hadn't talked to him since he left here. And he said that they had called him. He was at the University of Utah in Salt Lake, and he was in Administration.

And he says, "It's a wonderful position. It's at the beginning. There's lots of technology out there that you could create [inaudible] and whatever. It sounds very exciting to me."

And so he wanted to know the story. And as soon as I told him the story, he says, "They don't have any business telling you that. That takes care of that."

So he was trying to encourage me, until he realized what the problem was. "That's ridiculous."

Because we had discovered, at that time, we were not to serve anything at home. Even though they couldn't police it. They said, "We would expect you to honor this."

Including coffee. And I remember hearing that Ed only drank Sanka. So he said, "Oh, that takes care of that. Forget it." So we forgot it.

LL It sounded like a real problem for him. What about the years you were here? What kind of –

RW Let me give you one more thing and then I'll get back to that, because this Ed Reed thing was surprising. Because it was out here that I met him and knew him. And I learned so much about teaching because of his high standards.

I went and taught at the University of Oklahoma. They had a master's degree program for teachers in Saudi Arabia [inaudible] for oil. And so, in 1978, I went to ARAMCO to teach one of these intensive courses.

Eight days and you get a whole quarter's worth of credit. The teachers came after school and on two weekends, to do this. It was wild.

And early on in that week, the person who was looking after me said, "Would you like to meet the Administration?"

And I said, "No, I don't want to meet the Administration. I've got 45 adults in this class, and I make a big point of knowing everybody's name. And I'm working hard at it. I don't need to learn any more names! And it's the teachers that matter." Fine.

So the night before I was to leave Saudi Arabia, in a fog – and you don't expect fog over there, but they had a fog – I'm walking back to this little quarters, this hotel-type thing that they had on the compound, and in the fog, I saw Ed Reed walking towards me.

I said, "Ed Reed?"

He had become the director of the school over there, and he ran that school. And so, in the long run, I got a job, finally – a real job, [inaudible] eventually – and we went in 1989. And we lived there for 10 ½ years.

And a good many of those years, Ed was the Director of Education; and he did a lot of similar things there that he did here. He was gung-ho for something called "continued progress education," one of the things he did here. Individualized to the *n*th degree.

I got along fine with him, but he drove a lot of people crazy. [chuckles] I just made up my mind I'd get along with him. And, of course, he had a lot of respect for me, for some reason.

But he was very demanding. He was very demanding over there. And basically, he wanted high standards. And he got some. But I think nobody cried when he left until somebody replaced him, and then they discovered they had had it pretty good.

LL High standards might have been why Central picked him as a –

RW Yeah, yeah. Oh, he did very well here.

LL What might you have seen were significant problems with the college, at the time while you were here?

RW I liked it here so much, I avoided seeing problems, finally. You know, this has always been a magical time in my life, and ... and I don't know ... I'm not sure I'm going to latch on to problems. I maybe avoided them. I know there were problems.

We eventually had faculty meetings where we had to be in on them, and that's where I became acquainted with people I knew, I think, more so. Over in what was then the new Ed-Psych Building.

EJ Did the staff ever feel that they were accepted as colleagues by –

RW I have this feeling that there was a lot of doubt about that, concern. And, you know, I really never let that ever mess up my [inaudible]. But I think there were people who really felt that we were looked down on – you know, we were “just” elementary school teachers.

But there were certainly other people who – Ham was one of those – who recognized that [chuckles]. Ham always said he didn't want to have to take over an elementary classroom. And I kept saying, “I think it would be a wonderful thing if a college professor would have to work with kids.”

And that's one thing that he did when he went to – see, he started it at Provo – I think that's where he went to start with, yes. And that's one of the things that he instituted there, that they all had to – it seems to me, every couple of years, they had to do a term. The college faculty had to work in their Laboratory School. And I thought that had real value.

I've always enjoyed working with kids, and I learned a lot of that by being stuck on a camera here, and having to demonstrate – *and* to do it for the classes – because for a couple of years, it was only the college students and their instructor coming into my room, and filling the whole – you know, well, we had kind of little chairs or something, folding-out seats.

And they would sit on those all around the whole room. The biggest tension that I can remember is students who fussed, because this isn't real life, you know, it just can't be right. But I thought it was all right, and it was all worth something.

And I learned so much. I was on the spot all the time. Now, I never felt uncomfortable about that, and I know there were some who did. Some left fairly early on, they didn't stay very long; and others probably just struggled. Because there was that pressure. Any time you –

You see, when we'd get finished – we tried to do a half-hour lesson, approximately, it seems. I think we had like an hour class, and so we tried to have 25 minutes or 30 to go into that auxiliary room and have a question-and-answer time, where they could talk about what they had seen me doing, and raise questions. And some of them would raise very pointed questions, and that helped me.

They'd say, “Well, how come you spent the whole morning on [inaudible]?” And then I'd [inaudible]. And then they'd tell me something. And I'd be just flabbergasted. *My goodness, I didn't know we were doing that.*

And it so much for me, because then I became far more aware of everybody in the room; realizing that if I had people sitting around, and they were going to see these things, I'd better start learning to see these things.

And I used that a lot with student teachers, then, and with college classes. Eventually, I got to teaching – in the summer, I would teach classes for Education in children’s literature and language arts.

And they had a class that I’ve never seen offered anywhere else, on parent-teacher conferences. That was a class here, which I thought was fabulous.

And then, I did some extension teaching, too – or they called it that, I think, where I went out –

EJ Do you care to expand that concept where you say you felt the “reality” in that kind of situation, and yet you’d taught in standard public schools versus laboratory? Did you see a real distinction, or what was it?

RW Between those schools?

EJ Yes.

RW Well ... of course, the numbers were quite different, you know, in that we had a much more manageable number, at least for a lot of my years. So that was more attractive.

I always felt that the Lab School gave people a chance to see ... almost the ultimate of what we really hoped can happen with children and teachers. And that that’s worth it. That’s really worth it.

There were students who would come by who did not want to be assigned in the campus school. They wanted to be in the “real” school down in town.

And my duty was [to] get them on at either one of them. And quit calling my world “not real.” Because here I am, I’m living in it.

We had the same problem in Saudi Arabia. Everybody said, “That’s not real.” Well, it may not be real, but for ten years, it was real.

So my view was that there was a lot of reality that you could learn from. And I had a number of student teachers who were very capable of making the connections, and seeing what the ultimate might be for doing something.

Because, you see, in the year that I was leaving, or near the years that I was ready to leave, they were beginning to talk about “Should we have Lab Schools? Is that really wise?”

Of course, I think it had to do with money more than anything. And I felt that yes, we should have a Lab School, because you do see – you attempt to have the very best, and to do the very best, and to do some exciting things with the kids, which should help [inaudible] for other people.

So I felt it was sad to lose it. See, my office at Ohio State now is in the building which was, I swear, built by the same architects. It was their campus school, and it went through great trial. It’s got the same tiled fountain walls, you know, around the fountain?

LL You use the word “was.” Have they –

RW Oh, yeah, yeah. Now, it’s not full of computers [chuckles], like this one. It’s part of the Education College and it has a lot of classrooms in it.

EJ You said that the question was being raised about whether we should have a Lab School [inaudible]?

RW I'm wondering. Well, the Board, you know, was talking about this. Yeah, it had to do with looking with budgets, and were we getting our money's worth, you see – to put that kind of money into faculty – and could we not get just as well out there?

And I guess we felt that we had a better chance – Ham had a better chance of telling me what he wanted to see in the classroom than he could to go down to a public school and say, “Hey, I want you to do so-and-so.”

And then, we were hired with the understanding that we were to demonstrate, we were to help the College of Education. So it never bothered me – I don't think it bothered most of the people I worked with over there – to upset the day.

Now, as I recall, Ham didn't want us to upset the day. But I felt we could live with that. Kids can – they can roll.

And if your class is coming in at two in the afternoon, and you really want to see something I can only do in the morning, then we'll do it in the afternoon, I think we can manage it.

That was a little argument that I carried out wherever it was that I taught. Elementary teachers still think that the only time you can teach children how to read is the first hour and a half or two hours in the morning; otherwise, it's lost.

And that just seemed nonsense to me; that it depended on how you felt about it. If the teacher felt that you couldn't learn to read in the afternoon, then you were going to have a mess with the kids. But I could do it.

EJ It sounds to me that what you were doing was very valuable to the Education Department. Did you have the feeling before you left that some of that support from the Education Department was beginning to weaken?

RW Hmm ... well, I don't think so. I think the support of keeping that kind of school going was certainly weakening. That was happening. But I honestly felt that that was more financial than anything, just “Can we get our money's worth some other way?”

But I never felt uncomfortable, or that they didn't feel that we were doing a very good job. Now, there might have been individuals they weren't happy with, but overall, I think they felt – there was a fairly positive feeling.

EJ Were they beginning to say that “Oh, we can get these same things from the public schools”?

RW I think that's what I recall hearing. And they could get some of it, but ... and I guess they did the September experience. I think we ... I feel like there came a time when they increased the number of –

Oh, we had something else called “participation.” That was early on. I think they were something like maybe sophomores? They were before the junior year. And they came in for a couple of weeks for an hour at a time.

And I know people felt “Well, that’s not realistic.” And students were often the ones who pushed that to start with. “It’s not realistic. This isn’t the way the real world is.”

I said, “Well, get as much out of it as you can and then worry about what you think is real. But make this pay off.”

So, you know, I’m sure there was some of that feeling. I felt pretty positive. When we came over, there were regular faculty meetings, where the Education and Psych Departments were together. And I think I resisted listening to the negative. I think it was there, but I tried [chuckles] – or, I didn’t let it bother me.

EJ Were you considered part of the Education Department?

RW I was hired – and I’ve been surprised at this – when I was hired, my salary was half paid by the public schools and half by the college. But I was hired as an assistant professor.

And I feel like I had something called “tenure” before I left. Now, does that mean I was an associate? I can’t remember anymore.

LL No, they’re not related. But it’s interesting that you were tenured.

RW Yeah.

LL And treated exactly as if you were a professor.

RW Yeah, because I got a leave when I went off to school. And I came back a couple of times, and because I realized there was that pressure beginning to happen. For all my love of what I was doing over there, you realized you would never go very far if you didn’t go on and get your doctorate.

EJ Did you sit in on department meetings of the Education Department?

RW Well, I think that’s what we were doing, yeah. But they were – yeah, yeah, I think so. I would say yes. But the department was this mix, wasn’t it?

EJ It was a division.

RW Division. Yeah, OK.

EJ The Division of Education, Psychology and Philosophy.

RW Right. I’d almost forgotten that, yeah.

EJ Roy, you’ve mentioned some administrators through the Hebel School. Do you remember other administrators on this campus who had a significant role for you? Or, your perception of administrators? [End of Tape 1, Side 1, Side 2 is blank]

(Transcription of Tape 2, Side 1)

MS OK, this is Milo talking. This is Milo Smith. Roy, on several occasions, I would find out what your schedule was, and I would take certain of my classes over to you to Hebel Elementary, and we would watch your children put on plays.

That was not so terribly different. What was different was that I understood at the time that there were stories in the class that they had perhaps read in a reading class; and from those stories, they made a dramatization; and from the dramatization, they would perform the play.

That's an exciting experience to see, and it proved to be exciting for my students, many of whom have stolen your idea later.

RW That's what I thought I was there for over there. [laughing] Because I've known people who haven't liked having their idea stolen, but ...

And, you know, I was exciting about that building when I first arrived, to see this lovely auditorium and a *real* stage with curtains that closed. So we had those props, which I learned from someone I didn't have to have. But they were wonderful, and we made use of them.

And I was really into, and have gotten more into it in years since, in taking good children's literature and taking pieces of that. And I remember one year doing "The Pushcart War," which is a book by Jean Merrill. It's a spoof on pushcarts in New York City, when the trucks got too big and were fighting with pushcarts.

And there's a Dr. Yee who's still here, right? Yee?

MALE VOICE Bob Yee.

RW Yeah, Bob Yee. And his son, who I want to say in Kim, but that doesn't seem right. Kim Yee? ... I met him, and that's the year I taught third grade.

Now, I got to teach third grade the year – that's the first time in my life I got to do third grade, from the time I'd done student teaching at the University of Michigan. And that was the year that Thelma and I got acquainted, got engaged and got married here in Ellensburg.

So, that's the 1961-62 year. And that's when I taught third grade. And I started teaching in – my very first teaching was in 1953. So it was a long time before they let me do third grade. And it worked out. I didn't have any problems like they thought I would.

But this young Yee boy was in that class. I don't know why I remember that, but he had a great time creating a game with the notion of shooting pea-tacks at the tires of the big trucks in this story, and causing them traffic jams in New York City because of all the flat tires.

And that was [inaudible]. And I really got into kids creating a sense of what was going on, without all the props.

Because one of the things we did with you and with Hazel Dunnington, and with whoever was putting on performances, was to come over. And I'd walk the kids over when you were in rehearsal, or working on the stage sets, so the kids would see what was going on.

And we did – you did "Finian's Rainbow"? Somebody did.

MS Wayne Hertz.

RW Yeah. And I can remember coming over and seeing that in development. And the idea was for my kids to get a sense of what goes on, and how –

It seems to me there was a notion of a house somewhere in that thing, and it was just a little bit of a house, a suggestion. I was trying to get that across to the kids, only to *suggest* what it is. You don't have to have all four walls of a house in order to have a house.

MS Just the front.

RW Right. And the kids have that feeling when they're starting drama, and nobody helps them, that you have to have the whole thing, that it's got to be on stage. So this was *very* helpful. That's why we came a number of times to see the sets, and some of the rehearsing.

And then, one of the nights of the performance – I couldn't make them come, they had to pay to come – we figured out a pretty large number of that class, all but five or six, were able to come and see it.

And we were doing – we were performing within that same week. So it was very exciting for the kids to see really professional college students doing something that they'd seen the beginnings of; and then, do their own thing. So yeah, we made a big thing out of the drama.

MS Did the principal have you spend much time thinking about such things as mission? Or was this so apparent that you didn't have to [inaudible]?

RW Well, I think Ed Reed made quite a point about why we were here and what our purpose is to the students, and to the whole notion of education [inaudible]. So I would say yes.

And certainly, when Bill Gaskell took over, I had that similar feeling. He operated very differently. He had a much more ... well, his way was finally getting teachers involved in making the decisions. It seemed to me that we were more told what to do with Ed, though I felt what he was telling us to do had some value. But Bill Gaskell –

Bill Gaskell published a – and I don't know that I found that. If I did, I'll give it to you and if I didn't, I'll send it to you. He created a little newspaper from our school called *The Bridge* for a number of years, and that was there. Actually, I'll name some people ...

My parents retired from the Chicago area, and my dad wasn't sure he wanted to leave. He said, "Everybody picks up and goes somewhere else when they retire." But his whole condition in his family was that you stay in that same spot forever – like when I found you, I've been smart enough to do. [chuckles]

And so he says, "Let's trade houses." Because I was going back to Chicago again with the family. And so they came out here and lived in our house, and we lived in their house in Chicago.

And out of all that, my mother did some teaching at the elementary school, some enrichment Math; and my dad did some things over in the Science Department in the Chem Lab and so on. And he worked at with Bowen, I think. Was Bowen in Science?

MS Chem, yeah.

RW Chem. And so he did some things. And my dad enjoyed that. He had never been a teacher, he was a chemical engineer. And he really enjoyed that kind of experience.

And my mother, of course, had a ball. And what made me think of it is she did an article on some intuitive geometry that she had the kids doing for that little publication [inaudible].

So I ended up getting my parents sort of teaching at this school, too. And it was sort of nice. And I can say that without cheating because the rest of the family is here.

MS Well, you guys taught about 25 years. What significant changes have you seen on the surface, the buildings and this and that?

RW [Laughing] I keep talking about one building and it's somewhere else! The library, the new library, when I was here last, we were so excited. Do you remember – and maybe they're not there anymore, I don't think they are – but when the [inaudible] was going on with the new library, there were little ceramic birds that peeked over the urinals. [laughter] Remember that? Are they there yet?

MS They got stolen within the first couple of months.

RW Now see, I felt they were there for several years.

MS You were just self-conscious! [laughter]

RW Well, that was fabulous. That building was fabulous, you know, and I realized that it didn't –

But I found that in here that within the first couple years – somewhere it says, "We only have 80,000 volumes in the Bouillon Library and we should have 150,000." So that was an interesting comment that I'd made to my folks in a letter.

So I realize that that's changed. I'd forgotten, until we walked around our school this morning – the Hebel School – because I thought, Well, they've filled in where the Martins were.

And that family lived right – the Martin family – across the street. And then I thought, Wait a minute. The Hertz Building was here before all that, and that's part of where those people lived. So I think there were some houses from Hertz on down.

MS Yes.

RW But Hertz takes up a space that I had forgotten about. And, of course, the [inaudible] Building is gone. And I was – you can't see it from here anymore, you used to be able to see things. Oh, you can see our play area for the school.

And when Bill Gaskell arrived, he had a fit because of our freeform sculpture that was outside the kindergarten window. And he put a fence up immediately.

He said, "That's an attractive hazard! And in California, it wouldn't take very long before we had a lawsuit on our hands." And so he said, "We have to take some kind of precaution to show you can't be here outside school hours," which was [inaudible].

I would guess that's not there anymore. I looked out a window but I couldn't quite tell. I was guessing where it was.

MS It's not there anymore.

RW But I came out to the Art Department – now, that's another thing that I did. Not only the Drama people, but I believed firmly in having the arts part of a kid's education.

And I wanted to be in on it. Because I was never very good at art, but I was very sympathetic. I walked children over – it must have been this building, down in the basement.

MS First floor.

RW Now, what's his name? It starts with an R.

MS Randall.

RW Randall.

MS Next floor down.

RW But what was his first name?

MS Reino.

RW See, it's not in the phonebook anymore. So you have these thoughts ... anyway, I came to him, but not only him.

I would walk kids over here, I think about three times a quarter. And we'd go to the oil painting room, and the silk screen room. He was a silk screen guy. He used to be a silk screener. Clay. Sculpture.

I wanted kids to see adults involved in art. And by coming three times – Stephanie – uh – Ramona Solberg was here, wasn't she?

MS Uh-huh.

RW We would see sometimes the same painting, still being worked on, near the end of the term. And that was [important] for kids to realize, that you don't always dash off a creative picture and say, "I'm done, now what do I have to do?"

But I realized they'd have to grow into that. But to get a sense there were people doing that very seriously, and not get satisfied; you still had things to do. And I think that paid off.

We did that all the time I taught here. And I was always welcome; I felt welcome. Out of all that, I took Art Education for Elementary School for credit, from here. Three times, from Frank Bach. And so that was, to me, that was great to get the arts.

MS I have just one more question, and that is, was Hebel School involved during your tenure with controlled experimentation?

RW No. No. And I feel almost like you might have heard people starting to talk about it. It wasn't happening that I was aware of. Might have helped me get my degree, finally, if we *had* been doing that.

MS For the sake of history, I think we should note that that freeform sculpture that was mounted over there was a graduate project from an Art student who had arranged with the Hebel Elementary School Administration for its location, because it was designed specifically to allow children to crawl all over it.

RW And they loved to! They absolutely loved it. But I think it was the Administration that left, and Bill showed up and he wasn't willing to go there. He wasn't against it, he just was overwhelmed that it was so accessible without any supervision.

I broke my back here my first year, I want you to know. I didn't know it at first, but some boy named Danny – and I don't remember his last name – he was a sixth-grader, and I was the fifth-grade teacher – and he was tripping a kid.

And I said, "How did you do that?" And he showed me. And he took my hands, my feet near his feet, and forced me over. I went over his head and landed back there. And that was great.

Again, I was a klutz when it came to P.E., and so I said, "Let's do it again!" Well, I shouldn't have done that. I landed on something, and I was in absolute – this was my first fall here – I was in *such misery*.

And there was some people named Foster, Roger Foster and ... I can't [remember his wife] – but I had two of their boys – they were down the street on Third Street. I think he still lives in that house, but that's where the Fosters lived.

I can remember going down there, and she was pummeling my back [inaudible] to get a crick out of it. Well, after a few days in absolute misery – where, in my apartment – I lived in the Hill Village Apartments then – I would go and stand at the end of the bed, and sort of fall on the bed, because I couldn't get into the bed. And I had a devil of a time in the morning getting up.

I went down to the doctor who, I'm guessing, is Dr. Ostrander. Was it Dr. Ostrander?

MS No [inaudible].

RW But there's a doctor, too, right? No?

MS Olander.

RW That's the name. Olander, he was the doctor then. And I went down to him. He says, "Oh, let's take an x-ray and look at it." So he says, "Well, come on down and we'll look at it."

Here we are, standing in the door, and he's [inaudible], and he says, "You look like you've broken your back." And I said, "What?" "Yeah, see, you've broken your back. See? Right there."

Well, it was a little, tiny bone called the [inaudible], and it's near the bottom. And he says, "[Inaudible], and there's nothing to do, but time. And don't fool around with kids anymore!" [laughter] [Inaudible.]

MS Ray, obviously you've done some preparation for this interview earlier. Are there things that you want tell us that we didn't ask you?

RW Well, there was a man on the Music faculty who was hired the year I came named Stuart Churchill. And Churchill sang with Fred Waring, and he was our favorite soloist on the "Fred Waring Show," Thelma's and mine, for years.

And so I was very excited to know him, and I took voice lessons from him for several years. And he was here not more than, I would say, two years. Then he went off to Lewis and Clark [State College] and I don't know what happened. So, you know, there's that.

And, of course, I met Thelma here, and we got married in the Methodist Church.

MS I think that's very significant.

RW Yeah, I think it is. And two of our children, the eldest and the youngest, were born here – the eldest in the old hospital, and the youngest in the new hospital. The middle one was born during those years that we were in Chicago.

And we passed through this town several years ago, and had the youngest with us. At that point, she and her husband were – he's in the hotel business over in Bothell or somewhere. So we brought her over here and showed her the hospital where she was born. And actually got to go in the house.

I had the house – see, Merv Johnson and I, who were hired at the same time, decided to build houses. And we bought lots next door to each other down on Maple. And I took his house plan and turned it around, so that the kitchen would be on the front, because I was born in a house with the kitchen in the front. And I also took out the dining room wall, so I had this *enormous* big room.

And we went and visited and stopped at that house when the daughter was with us a couple years ago. And the people who live in that house used to live across the street. And they had their eye on it – not the house but all the yard, about a half an acre. So they bought it and spent twelve or thirteen years, I don't know.

So she let us walk through. That was fun. It's fun to walk through a house that obviously someone has cared about. They could have let it go, but they didn't. They obviously cared for it.

And she says, "Oh, I would hate to think that this long room would built in half," which it is next door. And she also said, "I love the kitchen out in front."

So I thought, Well, it wasn't just me. [chuckles]

Ham had about 18 students the first time for my demonstration. And for my participation, I had two in the morning and four in the afternoon, and that was just to get familiar with the school, what school was like.

I was active in WORD conferences. Does WORD still exist? Washington Organization for Reading Development? They also did a few math things, I remember. But I did a couple of demonstrations there, I think. Yeah, it was that first year in November when Ed Reed said I'll never get a female student teacher in my lifetime, but by the end of –

Now, the secretary at the elementary school was named Mary Hayes. And see, I had ... oh, I started out ... I did a thing called a [inaudible] letter, which I had done before I came here. But I did a weekly letter that was supposed to tell parents what we'd been doing all week.

And that paid off. That really paid off. I did that even when I got over to [inaudible], where somebody else was doing it and it wasn't self-contained anymore. I still did it, sometimes every other week.

And I actually wrote an article on it that was based on letters that I'd done. I used sample letters. I didn't need to get all that kind of permission to print anything because I did an article that had some of their letters in it.

I had sixth-grade children – the kids I took from fifth grade to sixth grade – and I taught them to silk screen. This is, again, thanks to Reino Randall. And we really got into silk screening.

One of the things that I worried about was this whole notion of doing an art project. And so teachers would say, “Well, we did our play last week, and we’re going to do finger painting next week.”

And my feeling was you don’t really learn about art by doing it once and making a handprint or something. So silk screening was one thing that I’d really come back to periodically throughout the year.

And before we got through, they had made stationary, they had done program covers. Because one year, I was Chair of the PTA program for the PTA here, and we did the program covers, we did some kind of little tablecloth.

And then, the culminating experience in the spring was every child printed fabric for a shirt or a dress. And I had something – I used to think it was five but it might have been seven – I ended up with five or six boys, because their mothers couldn’t sew. And I sewed their shirts.

Because every kid had to have a skirt or shirt, because we did a style show. That was, again, in the grade – everything, the writing, the sense of drama. We put on little Mary Martin – Mary Martin? – well, I don’t know.

We did a style show where everybody – we did a potluck supper on a night when the families came. And that was when we all first got dressed up in those clothes. But I got a kick out of the fact that [inaudible].

And one boy’s mother should have let me sew. You do some sewing?

FEMALE VOICE Not much.

RW You know what it’s like to put in a sleeve?

FEMALE VOICE Oh, yes.

RW Well, this boy’s mother needed help. So this little boy came in this beautiful silk-screened shirt with these puffy sleeves, because she didn’t know what to do with all that extra stuff. She didn’t know how they fit in.

I’m sure that’s the only time he ever wore it, whereas the other boys always wore theirs.

Well, you know, I’ve got more stories than you can stand. I can write some of it up and send it to you.

MS All right, that’s excellent. But are there significant teachers that taught in the elementary school that you recall? [Inaudible.]

RW Yeah, Alan Bergstrom came while I was here, and he’s still here. I’ve seen his name in the phonebook.

Oh, you know, James Connor, who was – I may have a newspaper clipping – he had a big title nationally. And he came here, and he saw me do a TV demo. And his sidekick was from the

University of Chicago and was a friend of mine, and so we had a nice visit. But he was studying our system of education, while I demonstrated a spelling lesson.

Oh, and that was ... OK, that was when ... so it was after the TV and we'd moved further along, we did closed-circuit TV, but it wasn't at the beginning. But we were eventually able to do the demonstration here, and talk to the class in the other building. We didn't start out that way. And it seems to me that's what happened there with Dr. Connors. So they got that sense of relaying questions back and forth.

We had Science textbooks that were dated 1940 in about 1960. There was time for something to change.

Oh! Oh, OK, so it did change. It says so here. I wrote down [inaudible]. And that was in the fall of 1961. That's when [inaudible]. We got excited about [inaudible].

Irene McPherson was the first-grade teacher, and she was gung-ho about them and did all sorts of interesting things. There was a lot of talk about were they good to have or were they not. She did some neat things with them. I can remember [inaudible] with older kids doing it.

There was something about ... some of the other teachers at that time were Grace Armstrong. I don't know how long she stayed.

Hank Hammer was there for a while. And Charles Sears came in and did sixth grade when [inaudible] left. [Inaudible.]

And I told you Amanda Hebel came back. So I actually had her – which I thought was a treat – I had her for principal.

MS Was Barbara [Kohler] still there?

RW Barbara was still there. And ... I can remember an eldest child learning – we [inaudible], see? So by age two, she was in to using sewing shears, this little girl.

And there's a trick to that. I worked on these kids to learn to learn how to do some sewing, too. You can't cut cloth as easily as you think. And so she learned how to handle sewing shears. She learned how to walk with them, and knew they had sharp points.

And I knew that Barbara introduced using the little children's scissors. And I thought, What's going to happen? These kids won't want to do that. That's going to be too easy.

Well, we never had to face that problem because she left.

And Barbara, I was just amazed, Barbara was just eager to repeat. She had a morning and afternoon kindergarten, and she really wanted them to have an identical experience as possible.

So there were times when I wanted to do something. Sometimes I'd do a drama for all the kids to see. And she'd agree to it if I would do it twice. So they both would see it. I remember that.

And we were [inaudible] in what we called a "squaw skirt," which would probably be very politically incorrect today. But it was one of those ... well, it had kind of an accordion effect to it, and we could use it in square dancing.

She had a skirt – it was Southwestern, I would say – that she wore when they did some special thing with the kids each year. It must have been a rodeo dress or something.

MS She did that whole thing twice?

RW Yeah, and I remember telling lots of college classes, “If any teacher tells you they have 20 students or 25 students, multiply it by two. That’s what they’ve got. Because you have to become acquainted with all those names, and you have to deal with it every day. So it’s a lot of kids.” I remember that.

Norm White was there [inaudible] was our Art teacher. My cousin, Margaret – she was Margaret Warner – was here one year in the Art Department. She came out and [inaudible]. And she did that for one year and then [inaudible]. And has lived in Portland ever since. [Inaudible.]

Mary Bird was into ballet. Years later, we saw Mary Bird in a traveling – wasn’t she in Salt Lake?

MS Yes.

RW And they traveled, I think, to Ohio State – when I was doing the [inaudible] they were there, and I got to speak to her. This was back in the 1970s. And Herb Bird is still in the phonebook, I think.

MS They’re both [inaudible].

RW Are they? And we ran into Jim McInerny this morning. He was going to that [inaudible] school.

Well ... what do you think?

MS I think you’re going on for [inaudible].

RW Oh, in the fall of 1962, I had to teach bonehead English. And that’s where a lot of students –

And I think the year before that, I was on what was called the Teacher Education Committee. And I see here that I was teaching a remedial spelling class.

I’d done that several times. And I was so frustrated with them, because they had to be able to pass the spelling test. And it didn’t matter what we did in the class, they had to pass that test.

And all that test was, was lists of misspelled words. You had to find the word in the group of four or five that was spelled wrong – no, spelled right. The rest of them were all wrong.

So you got to look at four wrong and one right, or whatever it was. And [inaudible]. That’s maddening. And that doesn’t say whether you can spell or not, because [inaudible].

And I’d seen that, and I finally got that committee to let my remedial spelling students do be admitted into my Education program if they passed my class, instead of that test. So I guess that was an accomplishment of some sort.

Well, I'm sure that I can write up some things and send them to you. These are special things. I'm almost an alumnus. I've sent my money, and they treat me like one, and send me the newsletter. And it's fun when you have to write out where you were, and I wasn't.

MS Well, we appreciate it.