

## CWU Living History Project

### Cliff Wolfsehr

Jacobsen: Today is November 7, 1996 and we are interviewing Cliff Wolfsehr, a former librarian and Associate Professor of Librarianship. I am the interviewer, Eldon Jacobsen, and the camera recorder is being done by Ham Howard. Cliff, would you give us some of your background before you came to Central and then tell us when you started here and that kind of thing?

Wolfsehr: Thank you Eldon, and I must say immediately, briefly, that this is not only an honor but a personal pleasure that is almost indescribably lovely because to be sitting here with Hamilton Howard Jr. and Eldon Jacobsen is just a wonderful experience after these years. We spent years on the same faculty and a lot of experiences we shared. A lot of wonderful people we all admired and loved. Well Eldon, thank you. Briefly and my closest friends wince when I say that because I'm a garrulous Gemini but I'll try to be brief. My academic background is - is - I was started in Portland, Oregon and my undergraduate work was not far away, forty miles west to McMinnville, Oregon where there's a little - was little then, it's not so little now, Linfield College. Quite dramatic, very eloquent. One amusing story about that. It has to do with my verbosity. Early on in writing papers, Bundy had us write several short papers in his World Lit class and this was my first semester and, of course, everyone was trying to do one's best and my papers were a little bit long apparently. I wasn't able to say things succinctly enough - briefly enough and on one occasion near the end of the semester I got a paper back which really floored me. Bundy's handwriting was rather horizontal and not too easy to decipher immediately and I thought he said, "You are beginning to achieve consciousness," on the top of the paper. He marked an A or A-, I think, and I was of course flabbergasted and went up to see him in his office as soon as I could after class and he had written, "You are beginning to achieve conciseness, Wolfsehr." So that one turned out all right. There are many interesting things about that year at Washington State. We had to buy a house. The old Patzold property it was called in Albion, just a few miles west of Pullman. The word was that Albion had been selected by the state legislature to be this university - the land grant university originally and the people thought that it was too much progress or not enough or something. By the time I got there after World War II the man who was reelected to the office of mayor of the town every election was reelected, it was said, because he was the only citizen in town who had the equipment with which to mow main street in the summertime. (laughs) It was an interesting place of some two hundred or so odd souls. No pun intended there. They were not odd. John Lily was the name of the grocer and he claimed to be a direct descendent from the famous John Lily who wrote something called *Euphues* way back in the 18th century British literature. Anyway, then on and I had one - my faculty advisor, I didn't study with this man, Louis Buchanan, had become interested in American studies programs which sprang up at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Minnesota and Amherst right after World War II and he said that - "Wolfsehr," he said, "if I were doing it I wouldn't go on for a PhD in English, I would go on into American studies." Well that comforted me and aroused my interest because I didn't think I was that interested in going on for a PhD in English literature and so that's what I planned to do and he also said, "You'd be wise if you'd take two years out and try to do some teaching before you invest the money and the time for a PhD program to be sure you really like teaching." Then fortune smiled and former undergraduate classmates Roger Barrett and Gail Barrett his wife and Charles Manly a sociology student were all on the faculty of little Frances Shimer College in Mt. Carroll, Illinois and a brilliant young man and a very energetic young man, L. Albert Wilson out of Havre, Montana had studied at the University of Chicago and was a good friend of F. Champion Ward who was in charge of the college program and with all the fermentation of Robert Maynard Hutchins and Springfellow Barr and those people were doing with the so called Chicago Plan you know, they introduced a very interesting curricula at Shimer and so I had my first two years teaching there. It was very interesting. We had - talk about team teaching, we had three of us - it was core humanities programs, one, two, three, four committees working together for a long time - going in and observing Chicago and studying their plan. Anyway, very very exciting work there. It was Shimer that - the Institute of Shimer that also had a personal connection with Linfield College in my years there. One sad thing about my memory of Linfield College is that while I was overseas on a PT boat squadron in World War II I had a letter that told me that my dear dear philosophy professor Tom Hollingsworth Tuttle had been summarily fired on the formal charge of heresy in 1945. So it's not only this church or that - that branded heretics then, its also - and the way it was done

was outrageous. Let's be pleasant today and think of happy things. It was done through an informer actually and I know the story but let's not get into that. One particular minister whose theology if he had one was strange. Tuttle, I will only say a positive thing, Tom Tuttle was the most magnificent teacher I've ever had and I've had some good ones, great ones but he stood alone. He devoted his whole life to his teaching. He was a bachelor married to his students and his books and his ideas and his teaching. He was also as far as my interpretation of Christianity which I've studied and have been actively involved in several churches now and then if one were to judge Christians then I think St. Paul would rate him highly. Mighty wonderful man. He taught a course - not a course, it turned out to be a seminar and the same Roger and Gail Barrett and I were three students privileged to sit with him in a seminar called "Robert Browning as a Philosophical and Religious Teacher." Browning was then and is today one of my favorite British poets and that was an experience never to be forgotten. One of those experiences that enriches one's life and is consciously with one frequently throughout the years. Then on to the University of Minnesota and the graduate program in American studies and I can wind this up fast on that part. There were three years of work in the program. This was an interdisciplinary program. One worked in humanities and the arts and social studies and then an integrated program and of course these new programs in PT - Joe Haruda taught me a lot about that where he took his PhD to the University of Iowa eventually you know in repertory. Joe had to do one and a half times probably as much work as most people because it was a new program and new programs wanted to prove to their colleagues that they're quite respectable. Well, American Studies is a little bit like that but they turned out some fine candidates and fine graduates and who went on to earn their PhDs. I did not gain a PhD. I spent three years at it, finished the course work, passed the two language requirements and got to the dissertation point and presented a prospectus but I didn't know what I going to do with it. It was a very strange sort of thing. It was called "Concepts of hell in America from 1899-1915 with special reference to Karl Mannheim's Sociology and Knowledge." It would have had a short title but I was - the research and went into that kind of in a way but it was not something I didn't think I could handle, you know, so I - on the streetcar one day coming back from the village where we lived - University Village - Sam Philips, the name of a student who was working - had been working for a PhD in political science and switched over to a second masters in librarianship. He said, "Cliff," he said, "have you thought about library work?" He said, "It's too bad," but he said, "they're starting to reprint - they're not prejudiced against women but they really want men in the profession and opportunities are magnificent." Oh boy, did that ring bells. I've always loved books from the time I was a little kid, loved books and reading and ideas. The idea of teaching was largely to be on a campus with colleagues of thinking people that were actively involved with ideas and books. What Whitehead called the adventures of books and ideas and students and so - of course teachers are students first and last, just students that have been around a little longer. So that worked out so I took a second masters degree because it would have taken me three more years if I would have followed the usual program. That's what it was taking people at that time. Nearly that much time. My G.I. was running out. Kids were growing. We had two sons then. Worked out fine and at the time - then notice came that one Dr. McConnell from Ellensburg, Washington was going to be on campus, the notice was up. Anybody interested in applying, ho ho. So the northwest was home, I wanted it and oh boy did I drool for that. I had taken a seminar from McDiarmid, the assistant director or was director of the University of Minnesota libraries. He wanted things he said as be on time Whenever you go to the interviews. Well, that didn't need much emphasis. That's common sense. So I was on time. Dr. McConnell wasn't and of course that was his prerogative. He had a lot of people to see and a lot of things to do. My nervousness while I was waiting took the form of resentment as you're a psychologist Howard, you are too Ham. So I was feeling resentment. I was on time and he wasn't. Now that, I mention that because I figured belatingly that did me in good stint. I got over my nervousness and I just talked like I feel I wasn't so, "Give me that job, please. I need it." So I was - what do they say, being cool? Maybe I was a little bit cool. I don't know. Anyway, I got the job. I think it was \$4600 and people were going ooh, ahh because it was the highest paid salary any graduate the University of Minnesota Library School had at that time. It lasted about a year maybe and then they started going up. Well, that's - that's how I got here and coming over from the east to dry me out from the eastern part of the state through the basin we thought as we looked at the country side what is this? The book said it was pretty country, this is desolate. And then we got looking into this beautiful green valley and the top of Rainier over here and we knew we were in a wonderful place. I was a little prolix on that gentlemen, I'm sorry.

Jacobsen: That was interesting Cliff. Tell us, what your initial assignment was?

Wolf sehr: Yeah.

Jacobsen: And a little bit about how you progressed there through the library.

Wolfsehr: I was appointed Circulation Librarian in what is now Shaw-Smyser. The Shaw part of it. The first part of it. Dr. McConnell, the president's office and first you remember Louise Shelton, gentlemen? The secretary just inside to the left, a large office. Our technical processes, John Allen and Mary Grace Green and other helpers were on the right side and catalog department side. Then that cavernous room with the high ceiling - high like renaissance building. august, stately and it absorbed sound pretty well. Students could talk in there and it didn't get too noisy. Then the circulation desk over there with the reserve collection and then the stacks. This was - this was what we called in library parlance an open stack collection. That meant that the books were set apart from the reading areas but being open students and, of course, faculty could go in there and then you had to go through a turnstile to get out. The turnstile was put in because a little later when we were planning what became the - Fred Basetti designed the beautiful Victor J. Bouillon Library after the name of that wonderful old man, the banker who was the chairman of the board of trustees for a long while. Fred designed such a beautiful library. It didn't last that long but boy there's a story there and I'd like to hear Ham talk about that and listen to him because Charlie Wright had assumed Ham's mantle but Ham was the senior officer president and all of the people in the education department and everybody who put together an integrated collection of material there and whether it was called the learning center or a library or an instructional material center, nomenclature is one thing but function is the other and boy that thing functioned with Bill Schmidt and Charlie Wright and Charlie Vlcek, bless his heart just gone and all the crew. We had something there that we could really be proud of. I always felt that way because I - I'm not digressing but you know, what is a library and what is a book? My gosh, times do move and it's exciting to be alive. I always felt that a book is not something that has a format of a block with certain number of pages and print on it. No a book rather is any instrument or vehicle or vessel from clay tablet or stone paper on through computer software that records - does two things, it summarizes, hopefully, collectively the best that has been preserved through the ages making it unnecessary for each succeeding generation to repeat from scratch. It gives you access to more and more of what we call generically cultured civilization and then we do our own programming. We go to the library whether we're checking out maps, photographs, archival material, software, anything it's all book if it does two things, and one of them is storing information and making it retrievable, effective, efficient and worthwhile and secondly not just information, of course, because we haven't mentioned the arts yet. All the esthetic art and that's novel as well as paintings and sculpture and all the arts - music that it represents another kind of imagination. Another kind of creative one. Well anyway, so I was circulation librarian my first year and we had turnstiles because when we went over - we went over to what was then new the Penrose Memorial Library in Walla Walla at Whitman. John Allen himself was an alumnus. As a matter of fact, when John passed on two years ago he left his money to his alma mater and he loved Whitman and who wouldn't. It's a fine college. But you know, we were astounded when we went into that excellent then brand new college library because somebody or a crew of people had walked out with a whole 20 volume set of Encyclopedia Americana and they had to put in turnstiles. Now I say I was astounded because I made the assumption, John made the assumption, I think any of us made the assumption that Whitman where you had to be as good as Reed College I suppose to get in with your grade point average - we made a correlation, an unconscious assumption poorly which brains if you call it that and ethics or whatever. It doesn't always work that way does it. Recently we had a guy in Montana without getting into that who had brains a PhD and anyway - so then circulation, reference librarian and finally Corky Gorchels came along and George Fadenrecht and one librarian. John was acting head for a year and did a wonderful job and then he did such a good job they wanted him over in Pullman and John got a nice club over there and became the head of the whole technical processes at Pullman. Actually I got an appointment over there after I left here and which I declined on Colville made it here and told them I had to decline because I just didn't finally want to do that so I left what would have been sixteen thou in what, about 1970 and a fine position but it was an administration and Cliff is not an administrator. Cliff went into librarianship for books and people and ideas and I honor administration. It's necessary. It does the work that needs to be done in that category and we can't live without them but personnel files, interviewing people and budgets is the last thing - can't handle my own let alone tax payers money so I didn't want an administrative position. Also I had had nine months in Pullman and I'm not that fond of the topography so I left sixteen thou and went to

work for two dollars an hour and became the whole library staff at the Curry County Library in Gold Beach for a few months and that was an interim thing when I left Ellensburg following a divorce and I was in the most beautiful country I think I have ever seen. Sometime gentleman when we get a week time I myself would be honored listening to you, I don't want to impose on you about a tale of beautiful country and fun - that wonderful country but not fun so much. The country was actually so beautiful that it was painful because I had just lived several years here - almost fifteen years counting a sabbatical and a lot of friends and family - left with - with my pickup and thirteen foot Deville trailer and my dog Holly the Collie and my belongings which consisted of hundreds of books and lots of music, recorded music and a Navaho Indian. My Navaho Indian brother, Alfred Clah who came here to study art after a year in Japan picking up a black belt and having done a film for Margaret Mead which I had the pleasure of showing in the library down there.

Jacobson: Is the reason you left because of family problems?

Wolfsehr: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Mea Culpa I had a lot of learning to do and I still have.

Jacobson: While you're at it, why don't you give us a very brief covering of what you did since you left. Then let's come back and zero in on Central.

Wolfsehr: Yeah, okay, yeah. This was - this can be said briefly. I then went to GoldBeach and very quickly was told by two half brothers bachelors where I was able to stay, the Wildwood Gallery. I met them on my sabbatical and they had bought a building that had a big building where they lived and Will had his art classes and taught pottery and painting and this and that and Bonsai trees too and then the other thing they weren't using were four motel units that the coast guard had used when World War II came along and the coast guard used it to watch for balloons that they thought - as a matter of fact the Japanese did send some balloons over, incendiary things and so those of course were vacant when Dawson and Speare bought it and they said, "Cliff, you can have those. Do anything you want with them. You can live there free if you fix them up and then we'll see when you fix them up how much rent we'll charge." That was free but then Will said, "Did you know there is some positions open. They want four English faculty at Coos Bay." This was Southwestern Oregon Community College. Gentlemen, I had already found - well way back in library school before I came here to Ellensburg that I had an interest in community colleges because it's a very interesting concept isn't it. Community - community college and here Ham, was I found an integrated learning center - you know who it was run by? A wonderful lady who had been one of my students, undergraduate students here in our library science program and boy did she have a program and every and any citizen in the county could come in there and check out a book or a phonograph record of - the woman who ran the classical record collection was an immigrant from Germany who knew classical music, she not only - she knew the best recordings of each. But they did have a classical library. It was very exciting and the students had two years of that. Just before the second year was up, here it comes lady fate smiling showering blessings all over me. Did you know Cliff, there's a man here from Southern Oregon State College Library, Richard Moore, and he's here for a meeting but he'd like to meet you? Well, they were opening up - they wanted another position. Now this was the first place where I wanted my position before I even heard of the one here in Ellensburg. Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Ashland, my home state of Oregon. Oh what a dream. But at that time - and I had been there on my sabbatical. You know Ed Hungerford, well, both of you do, the Hungerfords and their daughters and Ed and Sheila were building their lovely new home at the time of my sabbatical and so I got to see that being built and I got to see the new library on that campus being built and so in short then I got the appointment at Southern Oregon State College Library and was Reference Librarian there for a few years. Assistant professor there and taught courses again in librarianship which includes bibliography. I never taught cataloging. I taught most of the other nuts and bolts courses but the courses that I really really loved to teach I was able to teach here and those are courses in the inside of books I call them. The contents, ideas and I always figured that we need to talk about how to treat books as objects and think of books not just as I already said as Kodaks but as all forms of format but also contents, contents, contents. What's the significance of them so I introduced a course on this campus called "Problems and Possibilities: A Search for Significant Meaning." It was old Jack Crawford who was on the curriculum committee that said, "Cliff, I've never seen such an exhaustive prospectus." I said, "Jack, it had to be or you'd never vote on that one. That's a little bit off the wall." But I

changed the title after Corky or somebody's suggestion and made it more palatable to everybody involved in the sense of a bibliography of ideas or something like that. I had a ball. Anyway, then going from the Ashland years were very very very good years. I had the pleasure - wonderful staff. One of my pals on the staff was Harold Otness who lives three blocks away from my home in Portland, Oregon and Harold had after he graduated from Lewis and Clark in Portland did what so many young people have done, took a tramp steamer around the world and in Hong Kong he met the woman he married, Loretta, and a wonderful couple and they have a young man now, their son Derek. but a wonderful staff and tragedy, Norm Alexander was shot in the head after he became head librarian at San Louis Obispo. He refused to fire a woman who was a good worker in civil service and he was threatened and the man did walk up to the parking lot after Norm got out of his car one morning and in the presence of the man's 16 year old son put a bullet through Norm's head. Norm's family was praying that he died quickly because it took his whole head off. The man got five years incidentally as I recall in prison. Anyway, yeah, then to Bend, Oregon. This is a circle gentlemen. A geographical circle and there's a psychological circle there I figured out a lot of life follows a pattern and pattern to me is one of the most important things in my life. It was Rebecca West in the first volume of Black Lamb and Grey Falcon who said and I can virtually quote it if I took time but I won't take the time but she says - she says, "As we grow older, it is more important than that our lives be happy or sad in the scales more happy or more sad that they should be stories, that they should form a pattern and a recognizable content in a sense." Then she says, "Art is not a play thing but a necessity. A cup which can be filled to the lips and be tasted. If the events of our lives do not come handily to mind and disclose their significance we feel about ourselves as if we were reading a bad book. Pattern books - life." You know actually I used to tell my students that to read is perhaps the second most wonderful ambiguous but profound verb in the language. the most profound being to love and ultimately maybe to read merges into that if by reading we mean reading not books but life. To read people, to read one's self, to read life and that's what we really do, we know that. To observe and to see the relationship. To know what we are and what's out there, in nature and people and society. Well then it was retirement - self retirement earlier than 65 in Ashland, Oregon having so much fun. I - it was Harold Otness who told me about the Pear Blossom Run, the first mini marathon they were going to have and some famous - at that time famous Olympic athlete was running. I can't think of his name right now but anyway I ran that, 13 1/2 miles and it was a disaster because my son Tom and my daughter Wendy flew down from Seattle to see dad and I had told them that I'd been practicing. I thought be running and getting in shape pretty - I had the foolishness to be vain enough to buy a ridiculous outfit to wear and the day turned out and the weather had been cold and I felt I was dressed properly. It turned out to be abysmally warm all of a sudden and here was this fancy costume I was wearing and I couldn't stop to take it off and throw it away. It was too expensive so I wore the thing and I got hotter and hotter and hotter. My time was terrible but I made a vow that next year I would run 13 miles plus and average six and a half miles an hour. I did. I came just under two hours. Then on my 60th birthday the next year I went up in the Ashland Watershed and that's - I never was a runner but I was a jogger. I think it was - I think it was maybe Bink Beamer that started for the faculty around here and the jogging was big fun. That's when I started but I'm slow. I have what I call these dramatic thighs. Anyways, I'm not a gazelle, I'm not a greyhound but I love to just keep going. So, the Ashland Watershed is marked for me and I made it 26 miles, 13 miles up and 13 miles down so I gave myself a 60th birthday present going 13 miles up in a slow jog. Anyway, then back to Bend. Bend was a wonderful thing. There are all kinds of stories on that but there's not time for that. I could take up the whole hour telling what I've done. Let's talk about the college, huh?

Jacobsen: I think we've covered a lot of these. What I think I'd like to turn to if you don't mind, do you remember significant problems that existed campus wide?

Wolfsehr: Oh yeah, sure, sure, sure. Yeah, yeah and on my sheet that I've got here it says to be candid. I want to be candid enough and I want to be sensible enough not to say anything offensive, especially about anybody who's not here to give their point of view because through the years Eldon and Ham, I think one thing I'm slowly beginning to learn is that there are points of view called perspectives or something and when I was a young man I had one point of view and I guess I thought that was it. There's a phrase "young Turks" and I guess I was one of them. But anyway, anyway problems? Yeah, there were problems that affected the campus. It doesn't need to be personal. It became personal in a way once when I had the dubious distinction, honor yes, but dubious distinction of being the president or chairman of the faculty

council it was called before senate, you know. Do you remember? At the same time there was getting to be a lot of strife between the top administration and faculty and a faculty clique at least or group and at that time our friend Abe Poffenroth was put up for three - all three kinds of raises of salary, merit salary and increment and cost of living and the whole thing which we felt, those of us on the - Sydney Mundy and the rest of us and elder advisor Sam Mohler and others we talked to was a clear and explicit violation of the faculty code which was our duty to uphold. This was - see, this was a time when the board of trustees had been expanded from three members to five and two of our alums, Lloyd Patrick Wahle, a complex named for him, Herb Legg who's in Olympia now, the former editor of the paper and former class president, I guess, of students, they were on the board and that story I guess is probably well known. Albert Rossellini was indebted to one of my lifetime best friends, the late Elwyn O'Dell and his work for the democratic party and so it was - there was an agreement that Rosellini would see that the board was increased to the five members and who would be finer than two distinguished alums. But it was difficult for Dr. McConnell who apparently had said, I didn't hear him say it. I had been told in reports that he had said it if faculty ever sat in on board meetings he'd resign. I don't know whether that's true or not but I know it was difficult for him and it was difficult for us so we had two forces coming together. It happened at the Davenport Hotel in Spokane, that meeting and I remember what I said. I said - I didn't have an opportunity to speak until Herb Lake said, "And now would the faculty representatives have anything to say." And with some temerity I said, "Gentleman, there's a noose out there in the middle of the table and it's my duty to put my neck in it so I'll stick my neck out. I'm afraid we have to protest, this violates the code as we see it," and that was the beginning - it wasn't the beginning at all but it was a rough spot. Anyway, Dr. McConnell, of course, needs no praise more than - I mean, he's always due praise. He's entitled to all the praise. I respected him and respect him now and his memory but that was a tough time. Another tough time under another president was under Dr. Brooks. He was just here one year when the Gus Hall affair came up and I'm just going to hold something up for the camera because this represents something that Dave Burt told me should go to a member of the faculty now and I tried to get it to him. I didn't know the gentleman. I don't think he was here when I was here but he was interested in such and he was on sabbatical when I tried to give it to him. Maybe I should try again. These are things that Elwyn and I saved - papers from the so called Gus Hall affair. All kinds of newspaper reports and so on. Gus Hall, of course, at that time was - excuse me Ham. I'm sorry, that's not a nice thing to do to you - was the Secretary of the Communist Party of the United States. Of course, commies and all that was a red flag to lots of people not surprisingly but he was on a national tour. He was talking to college audiences and university audiences and he was coming first to Eastern over in Cheney and we were - got the word all of a sudden through the news and through the grapevine that a bunch of people were strong arming it and saying that they would not allow him to speak there. Well, this is what librarians are taught to do and this is what a lot of faculty people are taught to do or do without being taught. You get your back up if academic freedom is threatened with bully tactics so immediately eight of us went to Dr. Brooks office and got together a statement immediately and maybe in retrospective it wasn't a nice thing to do because the whole faculty should have had an opportunity to be there. It's just that there was a fire burning and we wanted to put it out I guess was the feeling so a statement and then - then a petition was circulated and, of course, this is a small town and some of you have lived here a lot longer than I have. I came in '53 and I had a lot of friends downtown even then too so one is always sensitive about friends and family and I think Ham was at least second generation here and so things are, you know, you've got to be mindful of a lot of things. We probably were thinking of academic freedom and that was it. But anyway, anyway this college was threatened, you see, that a bus load of people armed one way or another with clubs or something this wasn't a day of guns, it was a day of clubs and brick bats, they'd be over here and they would prevent Gus Hall from speaking and use force tactics. Well, after a lot of consultation with wiser heads, Dr. Brooks did the right thing and called them off. I want to mention this partly because when I went down to Reed College on another matter - actually down there to hear a wonderful person, Kenneth Burke, a great great scholar who came later to one of our symposium speakers here through David Burt and some good offices and my former friend Henry Nash Smith, my American studies advisor was there, Kenneth Burke and Portland was my home town, anyway, a former faculty member in the English department started - his first faculty assignment was then he went to Reed - still there - Donald McKray. He had a book out - a novel that was sitting in our library in '53. Anyway, he told me, he said, "You know." he said, "we appreciated the stand you people - your faculty took there up in Ellensburg." He said, "It made it a lot easier for us at Reed to allow Gus Hall to speak here to convince our board of trustees." So it did accomplish something indirectly. Let's see, so then I left Ashland, retired, went to Bend and that's too much wonderful things to say but Bend what happened then - oh, rye got to say

briefly, I found the most wonderful property and thought that was it for the rest of my days. A lot of friends. I started having study groups again. Single people and married people in my house down there. Bend, you know, is 3,600 feet elevation. Mine was 10 miles south southeast of Pilot Butte. I was 4000 feet. I had mountains to the east and the Big Fellows to the west. An almost unobstructed view 360 degrees. Glass over my bedroom. Just everything I wanted. I converted the garage into a library with thousands of books. I had two wonderful dogs. I had the Deschutes Forest there. I had everything I wanted and these wonderful people - study groups and Bend was a lovely place and starting to ski cross country and everything. Magnificent. By the way, one quick, quick, quick one. Met a young guy. We were going to bike together. His name was Peter. I met him at a study group downtown and I said let's bike together someday. So he came out. I said, "Peter, what's your last name, by the way?" No wait, first I said, "Where are you from?" "Portland." "Oh, I'm from Portland. What's your last name?" "Sheldon." "Wait a minute," I said. "My mother's family doctor was Sheldon. Do you have a doctor in your family?" His mouth fell open and he says, "My grandfather." So Peter Sheldon's grandfather brought me into the world. That was just one of those little accidents. A lot of wonderful things, though. And then from Bend, John Utzinger, Bill and Connie Speth were a few of the faculty people and Don and Irene Warner who came to see me either in Ashland or in Bend for visits and overnight stays with some others. John always would come around and the Speths. Connie Webber Speth and Bill and John it was who brought new of - well they all brought news of a lot of people. All of you I'd ask all the time and I'd get word from Christmas card letters from others about some of you but - but John was - anyway, told me about Trudy Rodine and I didn't - you know Floyd had been one of my closest friends in spite of the fact that he whipped my tail in handball. Consistently, uniformly Floyd was unbeatable and the bad part of it was he wasn't that good. He was good but not good enough to win every game. But Milton has a line "the indomitable will, the courage never to submit or yield." That was Floyd. That's why he beat me in handball. I was not that bad but he had it. He had that will. Anyway, so I met Trudy again and a lovely lovely relationship developed. She's the only reason heaven or hell why I would have left that place down there. First we thought we were going to live there, you know, do you invite a woman - do you propose to a woman and say will you be my wife and then say I'm going to move in with you? So it was never in my mind I'd move back and then something lovely happened, eventually I found out maybe it wouldn't be so good for Trudy. She was going to get a teaching job down there but you know, we had a couple of friends - I had a couple of friends who were teachers. We looked in to that - it didn't sound that good. Trudy had roots here. She was on the faculty and in the department over there teaching language arts she loved in Black Hall in the education department - college and so - so anyway, romance and young love it was in our sixties. She wasn't 60 yet, I was. I'm eight years - now that's - I'm not going to tell you how much older I am than she is. That wouldn't be nice. I'm 120. Let's leave it at that. But golly gee, coming back at the Christmas party the Garrity's had and here I walk in and here's Milo and Helen Smith, here's Ham Howard. Maybe Jake, were you there I think? I don't know, I think six, seven years ago. Here were these old friends. You know what? Somebody said. "Hey look, there's old Cliff. Hey look at that." And son of a gun, here I felt I was home again. So Trudy and I started talking and a lot of things - she loves that home. She's built something since Floyd went on in 1977. Trudy's done so much with it that's made it her own and so on. So I decided to take my little hope chest and sell my house and put my stuff into that place and that's what we have done. So that's the loop.

Jacobsen: Appreciated that and appreciated those two problems you brought up. Can you think of things that were particularly humorous during your time on campus?

Wolfsehr: Yeah, I think of one but I don't know if it's true but it's humorous. It was Elwyn O'Dell who told me that Hal - wait Hal Holmes? No, no, I'd better be careful. I think it was Hal Holmes. Anyway, if it wasn't Hal Homes it was somebody else who was supposed to give the talk in what became McConnell Auditorium way back when. Can you tell me another distinguished dean whose name I might not remember right away who it could have been?

Jacobsen: Uh...

Wolfsehr: I'd recognize a name if it wasn't Hal Holmes. Anyway, so anyway Dr. McConnell who ordinarily as far as I know when I was out there didn't take an awful lot of time with announcements or preliminaries or introductions. This time he was carried away by something he wanted to say and kept

saying it, saying it, saying it. So he was all through and it was time for the speaker of the day to get up. The speaker rose and said merely this, "Gentlemen - ladies and gentlemen, when the eagle flies, the bat seeks his cave," and walked out. (laughs) Now that may not be true. It was be apocryphal but it's funny I thought. McConnell was flying that day, the bats on his cave. 'Oh I'm sure there are lots of funny things. There were so many good funny times and one that I think of right now - probably I shouldn't tell to an audience whose faces I can't see, whose names I don't know but there were a lot of great times. Great times. We had a camaraderie while we had our differences I think because everybody knew everybody else. Oh golly, Burt Anshutz, bless his heart. Burt was, Burt just, "I had a bad habit of writing a white paper a few times." Just a memo to the faculty. Crazy, crazy Cliff. Once somebody got on Frank Bach's case in the Ellensburg Record I think and I wrote something that I thought - I was quite Puritanical believe it or not in some ways - and I thought - I thought that was outrageous and so I wrote something and I don't know whether it got in the local paper. I think it was just a memo here and by golly Burt Anshutz was so outraged at what I wrote because it smacked of something he didn't like but you know what, I mention it because Burt did me the great honor of coming - rushing to the library when he could and letting me know about it and I thought that - later you know, it didn't take me long to think that was pretty good and maybe that's the best way to settle disputes. John Allen was pretty good at that. John - you always knew where you stood with John, didn't you gentlemen. John would tell you. He wouldn't go talking behind your back and that was pretty neat. Well, what else. Eldon, excuse me. Jacobsen: Are there particular administrators or faculty that you haven't mentioned that you might recall now?

Wolfsehr: Yeah, there's one who was gone before I came I really intended to mention. Thank you Eldon. That's a good question. My first year, '53-54 Circulation Librarian. Margaret Sylvia Mount asked me - gave me one special little assignment and it was to go through some cases that were locked up in the second floor wherein there were certain faculty things that weren't really archival because they hadn't been left with that intent. They hadn't been processed at all that way but she was wondering what should be done with them and would I go through them and screen them and make a recommendation to her. The thing that I was astounded to find quickly was - pertained to a man who came here I understand from Yakima whose name remains Selden Smyser. You know much more about him than I do but I know this, I found that he had corresponded with H.G. Wells, with Oliver Reiser who became and was for many many years head of the philosophy department at the University of Pittsburgh and then became one of our symposium speakers long after Selden was gone. They had written a lot of correspondence back and forth and he had corresponded with others. Selden Smyser I remember coming into the library supported on one side with his daughter and the other by his wife. A frail old man but I always revered that man. The man, I guess he had a master's degree in maybe social studies. I don't know. Maybe in education. I don't know what. Maybe he'd been a high school teacher when he was hired on this faculty. That man to me was a giant, an intellectual giant. If you look in the third edition - in the preface to the third edition of Korzybski's book Science and Sanity which is a classic in Aristotelian logic you'll find a sentence that the first American seminar in Corn Korzybski's in honor of Aristotelian logic was held at the Normal School in Ellensburg, Washington. Selden Smyser's work. Oliver Reiser was out long before he was in the symposium because of Smyser. He was a giant about that high. A giant and a very - such a quiet, lovable man. Oh yeah, and then Bill Stevens with his cigar and on and on and on, you know. Isn't life wonderful. And Elwyn - and Eldon. you know, one of the things I cherish about you is your bulletin board there when you were head of the psych department, you know, and for a long time I'm sure. I'm not one who remembers dates that well but I remember why dates are important to me and I remember this one I've thought of through the years now and then. We got something in the library that really belonged to you and it was the time that George Leonard, then of Look magazine. I think it was Look and Michael Murphy. a young pup out of Stanford and a years travel in India were using an inheritance that Michael and his brother got from their parents in Big Sur, California, a famous resort hot springs that their parents had belonged to to start something called the Esalen Institute named after the Indian tribe that lived there. So I marched it over to you and I asked you if I could have the brochure when you were through with it - after you'd posted it and you were kind enough to let me have it. That led to some wonderful things. I wish it had led to something for Elwyn and David Burt because the symposium was one of the biggest things in my life during those years I was here and Elwyn and David were the symposium got the idea, carried it through. What an interesting combination of temperaments and personalities and abilities those two friends were who could lock horns and still be friends - dear dear friends. But anyway, I went to Charlie McCann when he was dean then -eventually and

said, "Charlie, what do you think - what do you think? Wouldn't it be a wonderfully fitting thing if the college could find some money to send David and Elwyn to the Esalen Institute for a year. Look at the program Charlie. You know what they're doing down there and these guys are doing so much to stimulate furthering ideas here with this symposium and wouldn't it be great for them and bring some more ideas back?" And McCann said sure and he by golly found the money for it. You'll have to interview David on this one. He didn't go. Elwyn wasn't interested but Bill Speth and Cliff Wolfsehr got to go. Golly sakes. Boy, did that open up some things. Well, Eldon. keep asking me questions and shut me up because the clock's going on here.

Jacobsen: Fortunately, we're covering an awful lot of it.

Wolfsehr: Are we Eldon? Good.

Jacobsen: There's something down on that small list that - what do you remember about town and gown relationships?

Wolfsehr: Town gown? Well, there's one that's a little bit rough here but - here, I say, at this moment. No, what's here. Here in Ellensburg because there was one in my first teaching way back in Mt. Carroll, Illinois it was a little rough and that wasn't town - that was a bigger town in the United States. Or maybe the town of the world. I walked into a drug store in that little town of Mt. Carroll, Illinois once, made my purchase and I was going out the friendly druggist said, "Oh," he said, "anything going on?" He said, "Somebody was in flashing an F.B.I. card and was asking about you." You know, that's like John Alan coming to me or Burt Anshutz coming to me. That's a nice thing to do. If somebody's tailing you, it's nice to know. Well, I was startled. Mt. Carroll, Illinois is famous more for - for most people not for Frances Shimer which was 95 years old then when I was there in 1947-49 I think it was but famous because the character of Andy Gump in the funnies was inspired by a local guy. Saturday night in Mt. Carroll, Illinois all the farmers and people come to town like they do in those mid western towns, sit around town square, go get a haircut and this and that and chat and visit for all hours of the night. The cartoonist found his inspiration for Andy Gump there. Anyway, town and gown here, town wonderful. Clarence Helgeson I saw as soon as I came back we were working out together and oh I could mention a lot of names, names dear to me. Dear, dear, dear and especially now. John down at Ace Hardware - Woods Hardware who just lost his wife. Wonderful people, all the Woods family. You know, I could go on and on and on and especially now that I'm working at Safeway as a courtesy clerk. I see a lot of them again. Old old timers and it's wonderful. No, any unpleasantness is two sided. It takes two to tango or two to do anything and the town had to look at the university or college then, you know, and wonder what was going on sometimes. Goodness heavens. I did too during the symposium when one poet came in and started throwing out four letter words and one of my dearest friends Dr. Coppok got up and walked out. I felt ashamed that I didn't get up and walk out hand in hand with him. I don't like that kind of language privately let alone in public. So, you know this cuts all ways. But there was one episode and this isn't town - there was a peace demonstration during Vietnam I guess and I was observing a lot of people marching and then I saw some apples and tomatoes and eggs thrown at some marchers that included women as well as I think kids and men and I just got in there and walked with them because, you know, you know I read once that - why men walk on the street side. Do you know that story Eldon? Because in the days of horse and buggies the man was supposed to stop the run away horse, Ham is nodding too. Well, that was for the case of run away horses. I'm only saying folks that are listening if anybody's listening to this when times get tough and tempers get up or fears, first of all fears, apprehension then suspicion if communication isn't good - Eldon would say it much better than I am, a psychologist and Ham would too but clearly I know that when distrust occurs out of poor communication - a communication breakdown or something then - then people might start throwing things one way or another literally or figuratively. Basically, my experience in this town from '53 to '68 was how harmonious it was.

Jacobsen: Did you happen to be the recipient of any specific awards or honors while you were here? I remember something about the yearbook?

Wolfsehr: Oh, I forgot. I thought there was something. Didn't remember that one. Yeah, that was real nice and it was nice because it was kind of personal. Terry Fade and his wife worked in the library. Terry was editor of the yearbook and that's how Cliff got that one. Nice for Cliff - people were being nice to Cliff. But Cliff will stand up for himself in the sense that Cliff enjoyed his work like you all did but you all should have been in there. It was nice that a librarian got recognized the library staff thought but good heavens, there are so many people who did things more important than that that weren't recognized. Recognition is terrific but I think the best recognition always comes from students and sometimes it comes from - after a lecture. Sometimes - think the thing I appreciated most - the thing that surprised me most because it was said often to me and it was said in my office and it was said sometimes by people who weren't my students and it was said after listening to them, "Cliff we really appreciate you because you really listen to me," or something like that. Well, I know that's said of many of you too because I know you guys are that way but it's nice. I mean, it seems to me it's the easiest thing in the world to listen to people. They're nice people that are giving you their confidence, they're important people, you know, and they're sharing a problem and even if you don't have any wise advice you can listen.

Jacobsen: I don't think we got it articulated. It was a dedication in the yearbook, was it not?

Wolfsehr: Yeah.

Jacobsen: And was it roughly '60-

Wolfsehr: '68 or '69. And I'd like to give my family credit for that too because, you know, that's a nice thing to do. You're married, you have a wife, family and kids and whether you're writing a book or getting acknowledged the home is what starts it. We had students in our home and that's one reason I think that they took it into consideration - I'm sure it was because I think some of their friends were people. George Fetter and I started one. George was only here for a year or two. Milo Smith and Helen would tell you when he left because they bought his house and made a lot more out of it too but then I kept going and kept going with study groups - I guess you would call them and book discussion groups in the house and that was access to students that I dearly dearly loved because there are things you can talk about in your subject matter or things you'd like to talk about and think about with students outside your subject field.

Jacobsen: There's one question here that has to do with family that attended Central. You had some.

Wolfsehr: Yeah. Thank you. Two sons, two daughters. Peter Gregory born in '45 and we took him to Pullman with us and then Peter became a librarian. He was a graduate of Central. Peter started out as a business major - finished as a business major. He took one course from Peter Burkholder. Peter over there - I'm looking in the direction of your hall, bless you. Peter's now head of the - at least was acting head - think he's still acting head of Philosophy Department, isn't he.

Jacobsen: He's head of it.

Wolfsehr: Peter took one course - my son Peter took one course from professor Burkholder and decided he wanted to minor in philosophy. My son Peter is not the only student I heard of who did that. Peter Burkholder must have a real real special ability as a lecturer and teacher. Anyway, an interesting combination, business and philosophy I thought. Peter then took a master's degree at the University of Washington librarianship and then spent some years as a reference librarian in the social studies, social science department down in Dallas - the University of Texas in Dallas. Earned a nice honor over in Fort Worth at Southern Methodist as students got together and gave him an award. Now Peter's banking. He earned his CPS by going to night school while he was a librarian. I won't give you a life history. Tom, my son Tom the second one is a novelist and a poet. A poet first and a novelist. He's actually a publisher. He's written two novels but they're not finished. He keeps working on them and reworking on them. I got in yesterday's mail a draft - a reworking of either a second novel or the beginning of a third, I'm not sure which. He doesn't write letters anymore, he sends sheets of his printout of his books. Tom is a - amazes me and his mother I'm sure too and family because he had developed a very serious interest in ancient Roman

history and Tom is a fellow who has taken his own job. He has his own business. He cleans houses for the reason that he's his own person and while he's cleaning houses he can think. He takes his note pad out when he gets an idea for his writing and puts it down whether it's a poem or his novels or listens to public radio at times and gets ideas. He's combined his interest in Roman history which is really quite considerable. As a matter of fact, when I was invited to do some thing when Ray Burn was over seas and not able to give his Douglas on the Romans I was in the Douglas Honors Program lecturing on some other stuff with Jim Nylander. I wasn't lecturing. I was with Jim. Jim's still there and had been earlier but I was privileged to sit in on the sophomores under various leadership for a year - part of a year before we went over to Moses Lake where Trudy was teaching. Anyway, so I said yes I'll be glad to take ? and ? and Taoism but I don't know that much about ancient history and Roman civilization. I'm a Greek man myself, not the Romans but I have a son who prefers the Romans to the Greeks so Barry said well, will he consider. So I took a - checked out a whole couple boxes of books. Trudy was teaching an extension course in Seattle Southern - Seattle University Southern branch - South Seattle College and actually Webster Hood was teaching over there a couple times, night courses. Tom took the books home and then he of course got them back to me so I gave them back to the library. He went - he had several months to study that one. That was a wonderful wonderful opportunity for him to focus his mind and he gave some wonderful presentations. I have recordings of them to the Douglas class on the Romans because of it. The girls are doing great and I'll have to be brief but both of them are teaching now. Both of them are graduates here. Tom is a graduate. He majored in anthropology at Central and Wendy's working for a masters in business administration. She's into her fifth year. Now she's teaching business English and keyboarding. Taught at Kennewick High School and Hannah just graduated again this time with teacher's credentials and special ed. teaching sixth grade special ed. in Moses Lake where Trudy taught for four wonderful years. Trudy got an award over there I want to mention because she's a Central alumnus and has gotten far more distinction than I've had in many ways and this is just one of hers but I was so pleased. Trudy wouldn't even mention it but she was the first teacher in Moses Lake gentlemen, this reflects some credit on Central Washington University and the education department here as well I'm sure. Trudy was awarded teacher of the month for the first time they offered that award and a nice public event - the whole town and a full page spread in the paper. I sent a personal letter to the Daily Record and a copy of that page. Never got a personal response. I was a little unhappy with that. Not that they didn't - because Trudy knows far more people in Ellensburg know Trudy than I. She stayed here virtually all of the time. Floyd and Trudy came in '55. I really am a little bit unhappy about the Record. Somebody at the Record dropped the ball. I'm not unhappy about them, I'm unhappy that a lot of people in town didn't get to celebrate Trudy's achievement. Trudy didn't look on it as achievement. It was recognition, you see. Recognition. Her students thought that much of her and wrote a letter and everybody thinks that much of Trudy over there. Her principal wants her to come back. Anyway, so gosh, this has wasted a lot of time.

Jacobsen: One last question, is there something that you feel that I haven't asked you that you'd like to respond to?

Wolfsehr: I'd like to run down my list real quickly and I wish Ham would turn the camera on you and a really good looking guy whose better than Walter Cronkite at this interviewing, I'll tell you. Or turn it on Ham whose better than the best photographer is. Yeah, yeah I'm going down here fast. Eldon, you've done a wonderful job. I told you ahead of time the ones - a lot of them and you picked out the ones I was most interested in and some I'm not quite ? but gosh. Well sir, you didn't ask me about military and you needn't have. You gave me the opportunity to mention that and the only reason I'm going to mention it is I'm wearing two hearing aides because that's where I lost my hearing-nerve damage in World War II. Those PT boats were noisy. The engine rooms were noisy, three Packard Bell engines, three thousand gallons of high octane 120 octane gasoline and 78 feet of cardboard - I was going to say plywood. Five feet of free board and lots of airman and lots of fun and sometimes not so fun. The noise - there was really noise came in concentrated doses. My first assignment was - my first assignment actually was in Southbend, Indiana was amphibious school in Northern Virginia and -

(tape ran out)