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Philip Kern interview

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Smith: Our interview this morning for the Living history Program is Mr. Philip Kern, citizen of Ellensburg, and it is February 11th. We are meeting for the first time, and shooting for the first time in the State Archives Building at the corner of Fourteenth and “D” street in Ellensburg. All right, Phil, would you please start our interview this morning by giving us a history of your life.

Kern: Well, thank you. I was born and raised in Ellensburg. I was born at Ninth and “B” Street which is only a couple, three blocks down the way, and grew up in the neighborhood of twenty-four boys and very few girls. You can imagine what it was like. I was, Don Schaake and I were the two youngest ones and my brother and Hank Schnebly, Dick Ross, and Torn Bostick were the older ones. And Don Sanders, I’ve forgotten Carter, Crimp, and they were all... We played football out on “D” street because they wouldn’t let us play on the elementary school lawn. They had heard about some kid being hurt, and so we played ball out there on “D” Street. We had apple fights, acorn fights, snowball fights. We had track meets. We made our own fun. Baseball games, the whole bit, and we just had a wonderful time. One little off—shoot of it is that now a lot of us get together every Thursday morning and talk about how it used to be, of course we can’t lie very much ’cause somebody else remembers it differently. But we had a wonderful time in a neighborhood that was pretty affluent. Most everybody went to two different schools. One was Central, and the other was University of Washington. Most of us graduated from University of Washington, and it was just, peer pressure was great, we all went, practically everyone of us went into the Service, and if you didn’t get a commission, you were dirt. But with that pressure and, Don Schaake and I were the two youngest and we both went in the Marines, lie as a flier, and I went in as a line officer, eventually after twenty-three months. But we had a wonderful time. I went my freshman year to University of Washington, joined the Phi Delt House, had a good time, didn’t study too hard, but made my grades. Then I came over to Central to play ball, and that’s where I really had fun.

Smith: OK, what year did you graduate from high school, Phil?

Kern: ‘41.

Smith: ‘4!, and you started at the University of Washington the Fall of that year?

Kern: Right.

Smith: Good. OK, so the year, or years that you attended Central would be what?

Kern: I started here in the Fall of 42, and they finally called me into the Marine Corps., into the V-12 Program that the University of Washington began on July 1st of’43. So I completed all three quarters here.

Smith: That’s interesting that I was in Boot Camp in San Diego at the same time.

Kern: Is that right?

Smith: When did you complete your commission?

Kern: May 9th of ‘45.
Smith: May 9th of 45. And you were then stationed where?

Kern: Then we went, over a hundred of us put in for amphibious tractors and tanks out of two hundred and fifty, and eight of us received the permission to go into those two programs. I got amphibious tractors. Then “Crazy Legs” Hirsch was called to play for El Toro, and Julie Reicovich was an All American from Illinois, and he played for Hawaii. One fellow had chemical warfare, and the rest, rest of them went to Camp Pendleton, then they went over-seas. And we were stationed at Pendleton at the boat basin to begin with, that’s Camp Del Mar, I believe now.

Smith: Yes.

Kern: And then we went upon the hill and of the main Camp Pendleton and trained troops.

Smith: You might be interested to know, Phil, that during the Korean War when I was back in stationed at Pendleton, we used that boat basin at Del Mar, and every morning we would get in small boats and we’d go up the Coast a ways and then we would take the Beach, and run right directly into cattle cars and back to Tent Camp 1. OK, Phil, now someplace along the line you got married.

Kern: Yes, I was, met Shirley here at Central. I was with the jocks in, because they were my buddies, and then Shirley was with the student government association and very active in student affairs, and we started going together and then eventually we were married on May 15th of ’45. Her dad had this, this rule at home that everyone of his daughters, he had four daughters, and they had to get their degree before they got married. And then he and I were like Billy Goat Gruff at the Bridge, so we left it at the point that if I made my commission, well, I was worthwhile for her to marry me. So we got married, and then I couldn’t have a better friend afterwards.

Smith: Good. Now, some place along that line, Phil, you had some children.

Kern: Yes. Five daughters.

Smith: Five daughters. Would you mind telling us where they are located and what they are doing now?

Kern: Well, I can tell you this, four of them got their degrees from Central, and they’re very proud of them. And one of them received her degree at W.S.U. in Interior Design. The oldest one, Sandy, and she’s here in the Valley. Her husband is a computer man. He travels extensively out of here, but they had a Coffee Company, which they sold, which she was running, and now she’s not engaged in business, but she’s in Rodeo Affairs, She was Rodeo Queen when she was a senior in high school. And then she’s been active in the community. She has two boys and then two little grand daughters. And then the next one is Peggy. She’s the interior designer. They just moved down to Scottsdale, and they have four kids. One of them is going “U Dub”, and one of them will go to the University of Arizona this Fall. The other two are in lower grades. Then Lad is the third one. She teaches fifth grade here in Ellensburg. Incidentally, Peggy’s husband is an architect and she’s an interior designer, and very successful in both cases. Lael’s a fifth grade teacher at Valley View. She has a boy who’s graduated from Central and is in the Maritime Academy at Vallejo, and a girl, I think she has a quarter to go, but she’s just taking Spanish so she’s going to have to get a teaching degree for it to be worth while, when you have a major like that. And then Jan is over in the Basin, and she has a little girl six years old. She is kind of the manager of the Adams County Fair in Othello. Then, Kern has two kids. She’s married to Johnny Woods. And one of them is Well both of them would be, lets see, RJ completed his sophomore year and Moira was in the Honors Program at Pullman in Business.

Smith: Good. Now specifically what years would bracket your period at Central?

Kern: 42 to ’43.
Smith: ‘42 to ‘43.

Kern: Just that one year.

Smith: OK. What was your major interest while you were here at school? Academic major.

Kern: Academically, you’re talking about.

Smith: Your major interest, probably, was Shirley.

Kern: Yes, that and athletics.

Smith: Sure.

Kern: But I concentrated on science and math over here. I’d taken all business at Washington, so I concentrated, took a lot of math, and enjoyed it thoroughly. And then I followed up the next year when we went into V- 12, I took more math and more science, and so I had a double major there in business or math, or... science and math. Smith: Now when you returned home the service, did you resume college?

Kern: Yes, I tried law school for a quarter in the Fall, or in the summer of ‘46, and that was a disaster. I hated it. I got into it with one teacher, and that was all it took. And then I got into, I’d taken a lot of foreign trade in the business part of my major, and that major, and so I was concentrating on foreign trade and we were going to get a job down in South America working for an implement company, and my dad talked sense into me, and so I came back to Ellensburg in January of ‘47. I’ve been here ever since.

Smith: And after January of ‘47, what did you do for a living, Phil?

Kern: Well, first I worked for my dad. Said he’d pay me not less than two hundred a month or more than two fifty, and so I said, “OK, two fifty.” But that was less than I was getting as a Second Lieutenant down at Camp Pendleton. And I got into the sheep and cattle business. And then in ‘48 I bought the sheep, borrowed the money and bought the sheep. In ’49 I bought cattle. And we were in that until 1970. ‘71 we sold the cattle.

Smith: You got heavily into sheep too, didn’t you, Phil?

Kern: Yes, the most we lambed out was thirty-six hundred head, but it’s know more to iamb out thirty-six hundred than it is three hundred and sixty because you just have that many more people, you get it organized and it falls into place.

Smith: While you were here at Central did you live in a dorm?

Kern: No, I lived at home. I made enough money between my freshman and sophomore year, I only got four days off all summer, and one day was because I broke training the night before. And so I had enough money to stay home, take care of the furnace and the sidewalks, and everything else, and to put myself through school.

Smith: Now I assume that you were still eating Mom’s cooking.

Kern: It was very good.

Smith: How did you finance your education?
Kern: Well, that was it. It only cost $1,000.00 for the first year. (?) is the only one that seems to remember what it cost to, for tuition here, and then we called it a registration fee. It was twelve and a half dollars. That’s what he said. Now, I don’t know if somebody else remembers or not, but the books were very reasonable, and it just didn’t cost very much to go to school here.

Smith: Who was your football coach?

Kern: Phil Sarboe. He was our track coach, too, and he was wonderful.

Smith: I remember Phil Sarboe as a coach at Clarkston High School.

Kern: Right. I think he was on that last W.S.U. team to go to the Rose Bowl as a quarterback.

Smith: Do you recall any other costs at the time you were attending Central? What would a good pair of shoes cost in those years? Do you have any memories?

Kern: I remember this. They said my track shoes would be five dollars. Because when we got into V-12 I turned out for track at the University of Washington, too. And made my letter there, and I wanted these track shoes I had at Central, of course, Leo Nicholson and Sarboe gave Shirley, who was the student government President at that time and me, an awful bad time on the whole deal.

Smith: Now, what events did you participate in in track?

Kern: I was a sprinter and a broad jumper.

Smith: A sprinter?

Kern: Yeah, I got third in the hundred up here in the conference meet, and I actually won the broad jump and stepped back, and got second. And then we won the relay.

Smith: And in football what position did you play?

Kern: I learned every position in the line. I think I, really, if I gained anything if given an award, it would have been the silver sliver for sitting on the bench.

Smith: Did you develop any...were you here long enough to get to know any of the administrators well at all?

Kern: We knew them all.

Smith: You did?

Kern: Oh, sure. It was a real close...(?)

Smith: What size student body would it have been?

Kern: Well, our last year here, our last quarter here in the Spring there were sixty boys. We were all in the reserve except for five of them, who were 4-F. And then Sixty guys and about three hundred girls, and then the rest were these Army-Air Corps boys, cadets came in. And so we got acquainted with quite a few of them, too. But the student body was the ones that were still civilians.

Smith: Now which professors do you especially remember, Phil?
Kern: Bill Stevens, He was so colorful. I remember, I sat in the back row with all my buddies, and when we got our final grade, why, he gave me a “C”. And I said,” I had a “B” average.” And he said, Oh, it’s not going to hurt you any,” and he said, “Besides that I gave everybody in death row a “C”. And it was a gift to some of them.”

Smith: Any others that especially...stick out of your memory?


Smith: Reg Shaw.

Kern: Yeah, he was tremendous. What a wonderful person. En fact, after I got out of the service and everything, why, one year he took pictures of our sheep, all through the year. And be up at the camp and everything else with the guys, and it was quite a shock to him. He thought he’d lived a pretty protective life by the time he got through. I remember Ken Courson was a real nice guy. Then, let’s see, we had so many replacements. Mr. (?)

Smith: Did you have any contact with Dr. McConnell?

Kern: Oh, yeah, yeah. He was anti-Student Government Association. So, and then, of course, going with Shirley, why, and he knew our family real well, and so he would know us. We had a good time with him. I mean, they treated us very well, of course we were all waiting to be called. And that was, you know, there was a sentimental value there, as well as just regular camaraderie.

Smith: Now for the sake of history, Phil, do you happen to know when the first Kerns came to the Ellensburg area?

Kern: Well, Dad came in February of 1909; he was the first one. My mother was born here in 1889. Her grandfather started the paper, and her dad built that Davidson Building downtown. He was a judge.

Smith: Did you participate in any other activities on campus other than sports? Did you have any time for anything else?

Kern: Well, we attended all the plays, all the dances they had. I mean, there was quite a social life here. The camaraderie was great. And the funny thing...We were awfully close as a group, the guys that joined the Marines, when we were recruited in November of ‘45. November of ‘42, why, the different ones all came there and a Marine Captain said, “You’re going to be taken by March of ‘43, and we’ll send you to Boot Camp at O.C.S. and you’ll either have a Commission, or be a Non-corn.” Well, that sounded pretty good. “And you’ll be overseas.” So about half the football team signed up. I was one of the few that didn’t go overseas.

Smith: Do you recall that there was such a thing as “Grant-in-aid” to help football players in those years?

Kern: Sarboe recruited from all over. He had guys coming from Lewiston, some that you knew. And some from all over, University of Washington, and ones like that. There were only about six jobs, but we all came here because we wanted to get settled before we went into the service. And so he recruited about as good a bunch of guys as you could ever recruit.
Smith: Now in that group would have been Al Martin from Lewiston and Jack Spino from Clarkston, right?

Kern: And Bud Hill.

Smith: Bud Hill, right.

Kern: Steve Smith from Idaho. Johnny Kate played for Lewiston. Earl Howard. Incidentally, Earl Howard, after, hurt his knee, so he couldn’t go in the service, and so he went to the University of Utah, and if you guys recall during the War, Arkansas beat Utah for the Western Championship to compete for the National Championship, and then the Arkansas boys were hit by a car, and it killed a couple of them and injured another one. And so Utah went. Earl Howard was the high point man in the National Championship game and made All-American.

Smith: I’ll be darned.

Kern: He was a sub for Nicholson here at Central when he played basketball. But we had, afterwards that group of guys, you know we had Chuck Wilson, the first string tackle for W.S.U., and then Davy Canyon was first string center for Northwestern. L.G. Carmody came back here and he went to the East-West Game, representing Central, the only guy ever to do so. Bobby Osgood in ‘48 was the outstanding played in small college football, so they had a great group of guys. But they were, they all went to college, too. And they saw the value of a degree.

Smith: Now did Leo Nicholson have good basketball teams in those years?

Kern: Yes, Cheney beat them because they had the Leifer brothers. But it was nip and tuck all the way.

Smith: Do you recall at the time, Phil, do you have any particular feeling one way or another, about the college library?

Kern: Yeah. Miss Mount, I think was the librarian, and she was always making us shut up. It was a good place to meet your date, or...

Smith: Yes.

Kern: We studied there, but very little.

Smith: Do you relate any lasting memories and attitudes toward any of the following of these subjects: Registration and the Registrar’s Office?

Kern: Well, as I say, I don’t remember yet particularly, but Forrest Keyes said it was twelve and a half dollars for registration fee.

Smith: How about the Business Office?

Kern: Well, I think that was Ken Courson, wasn’t it?

Smith: Yes for keepers.

Kern: But we didn’t, not too much.

Smith: Do you remember any other costs on campus?
Smith: Once you had paid your twelve dollars registration fee. What would a typical textbook have cost you in those years?

Kern: I have no idea.

Smith: No idea. OK. How about the physical plant and custodial staff? Did they hire part-time students to sweep floors and...?

Kern: As I recall, I think those were some of the jobs. That and cleaning or washing our athletic equipment, and that sort of thing.

Smith: Was there a student health center at the time?

Kern: We had a Miss Anderson, I think, was her name. Gee, she was a good looking gal. She was a nurse, and that was it. I mean, it was a pleasure for the guys to get sick.

Smith: Could you go to the health center to get shots?

Kern: It was down in (?). No, we didn’t, nothing like that. It was down in on the lower floor, in the back of Sue Lombard.

Smith: Sue Lombard Hall, That’s where it was when I came here. Now Shirley was President of the student body at the time. Because you were dating her, did you become involved in student government at all?

Kern: No, it was better for her if I didn’t. But let’s put it this way, when she became President the first, let’s see, in the Spring of ‘43, and then she was elected for the whole year for ‘43-’44. And, of course, I wasn’t here ‘43-’44, but all of the jocks voted for her as well as the people that she knew, because they liked her, too. But something interesting, Ham Howard’s sister, Barb, succeeded Shirley as President. And then Maxine McCormick who was another, who was an Ellensburg girl, too, as well as Barb was, succeeded her. And those were the three girl Presidents they had.

Smith: Do you recall, do you have any way of knowing, were there any women Presidents beyond those three?

Kern: I think there was in the Eighties because Shirley had her picture taken with a girl that was President of the, was elected President up here, of the student body, just a few years ago when Shirley was working at the library.

Smith: Were there jobs for married students at that time, that they could work part-time downtown in order to finance an education? Do you know that?

Kern: Yeah, some of the guys worked at different stores, but very limited, very limited. A lot of the..., it took an unusual person, unusual guy to be a good clerk here in a small town.

Smith: Do you remember any awards or honors which were given to living groups, or clubs, or teams while you were here at Central?

Kern: Well, we won the championship in ‘42, and also in track...

Smith: Was that in League, the league Central was in?
Kern: The conference, yes. The WINCO Conference. I don’t recall any trophies or anything else. And we didn’t even get ribbons for our participation in it.

Smith: Can you recall any student attitudes relating to these short subjects that you recall? Women’s rights?

Kern: They had the same rights that the men did. We didn’t see any difference, except the house mothers were much more protective of them. I remember at ten o’clock Ole’ Fanny Coffin would come down and rattle her keys, “All right, all right, boys. It’s time to go home.” So we all scattered.

Smith: Now this was (?)?

Kern: Sue Lombard.

Smith: Which? At Sue Lombard.

Kern: Kamola was the same.

Smith: Was there much concern at the time with such things as marijuana smoking on campus?

Kern: No. Some of the guys drank, but, and some people smoked, but, you know, we were just coming out of the Depression and were students and the guys didn’t have that much money. They just didn’t want to blow it on something along those lines.

Smith: Was there any concern with racial discrimination in those years?

Kern: We didn’t have any blacks on campus that I recall. We’d have more than welcomed them, especially if they were a good athlete or a good student, or a good singer, something like that. But there was absolutely none.

Smith: Was there any Native American population on campus, since we’re so close to the Yakima Reservation?

Kern: There could have been, but I don’t recall any. I think we had some that had Indian blood in them, but, you know, that didn’t make any difference.

Smith: How about Smoking among students in those years? Was it common?

Kern: Very limited. As I say, mostly because of the economic factor.

Smith: Sure.

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Smith: Now, Phil, was there any concern on the campus with narcotics among the student body?

Kern: Not that I ever heard of. Because, for one thing, the guys were training. Most of us turned out for well, like for two sports, and then we’d be in intramurals, say for basketball, something like that. So we wouldn’t...Nobody considered that.

Smith: Was there any concern at that time with academic freedom? Did the student government, for example, have some rights that they...
Kern: Very limited rights, because McConnell tried to clamp down on it as much as possible. And he had that right. I mean, he was running the show, so it was one of those things that, actually I don’t recall any problems anywhere where, or anybody going out on the limb one way or another.

Smith: Do you recall any concern at that time with homosexuality on campus?

Kern: We didn’t have any queers that I knew of.

Smith: How about, what was the attitude at that time concerning the military service that you were all headed for?

Kern: Well, we weren’t in it yet, and so we weren’t griping yet. We knew, we were trying to get the best deal possible. And it made, some, there were a couple of them that had farm deferments, but were among our group.

Smith: By the time I got in the Corps. in the Spring of ‘43, I sensed a very strong patriotic attitude in my home town. Did you sense that here in Ellensburg?

Kern: Yes. We had a couple of things here that are kind of unique. One was not unique; we were very patriotic here. Everybody had victory gardens. They had, they were saving up for, what was it “Care” or something like that. I forget what the name of it was, but where they’d send things overseas, boxes overseas for the troops. Different things.

Smith: Care packages.

Kern: And then the other thing was Hal Holmes was our Congressman. G. L. Putnam down in Ellensburg High School claimed that Ellensburg High School had the highest percentage of officers for guys in the service of any other high school in the country. Well, I don’t know where he got his facts, but Hal Holmes said that Central had the highest percentage of officers for people who attended here that went in the service, of any college in the country.

Smith: Now he had been Dean of Men here hadn’t he?

Kern: Yeah, I knew Hal quite well, but I was kind of wishing that he would...been here when I was here.

Smith: Sure. Was there much concern in those years with what we know of as welfare programs? So much of the tax money going to support the needy and the welfare victims?

Kern: Well, I can remember, this was during the Depression that there were some families that went on relief, but I don’t, it wasn’t such a big factor, and it certainly wasn’t a factor at Central.

Smith: Any sense of, or any memory of concern for violence in the streets? Rage on the highways, and so forth?

Kern: That’s so ridiculous. No there wasn’t anything like that. We all drove too fast. There was a thirty-five mile an hour limit, and we were always trying to avoid the State patrolmen, but we had one patrolman for Grant and Kittitas County.

Smith: Is that right?
Kern: We had a chief-of-policemen and a night-man and a day-man. We had a sheriff and an Upper-county deputy and a Lower-county deputy. And that was it, and thank God for small favors while I was growing up.

Smith: Was there much concern on campus with student conduct away from school?

Kern: No not... we were pretty well integrated with the community. A lot of the guys lived with, I remember Johnny Cate and one other, well, maybe it was Al Martin, I don't remember for sure, lived with the Weavers. Ole’ Doc Weaver, and they, you know they were just part of the family. When the students got, wherever they were, why, for the most part they were just good citizens and blended right into the community.

Smith: In those years was there any concern with dieting as there is today?

Kern: Well, with the girls, but see, all of us were active in athletics, so you had to be, we were in shape all the time.

Smith: And physical fitness then, too, would be the same program for the athletes.

Kern: Oh, sure. We’d go up... They had a big rope in the gymnasium, which is the sub now and we’d have to go up that thing. And, gee, you know, it was a contest to see who could go up the fastest.

Smith: Sure.

Kern: Just to look at it now would scare me.

Smith: And then when you got into the service there were more ropes to climb. Do you recall any problems which became the focus of campus meetings, marches, boycotts, protests?

Kern: I can remember a meeting or two that McConnell had, but I forget what they were about. But I think it was more for, to show our patriotism and that sort of thing, or to hear these recruiters.

Smith: Now you didn’t have campus police in those years, did you?

Kern: No, we didn’t need it.

Smith: But local police had jurisdiction on campus, did they?

Kern: Yeah, but there wasn’t ever a problem that I can recall.

Smith: Do you know if they were much concerned with breaking into cars in parking lots as they are today?

Kern: Nothing like that.

Smith: How about humorous events, Phil, do you recall some of the things that come to mind that happened that were generally known, and became very humorous?

Kern: Well, I remember, the guys all laughed, but the girls were awful mad at it. In the dining hall one time this one girl had an epileptic fit. Bill Langenbacker was there. He always said the wrong thing at the wrong time. He said, “I knew this food would get somebody pretty quick.” It was terrible, but all the girls were mad about it. I remember Shirley and I had a set-to over it because the girl was her friend that had the problem.
Smith: Did you eat on campus sometimes, Phil?

Kern: I think once or twice.

Smith: Once or twice. Was there such a thing as a training table for football?

Kern: No.

Smith: There wasn’t was there? Do you recall how many assistant coaches Phil Sarboe had?

Kern: He had Stub Rowley, and then Stub went in the service about two thirds of the way through the season.

Smith: I’ll be darned.

Kern: Reino Randall used to help used to help once in a while with athletics, and I remember in track, he was around.

Smith: I know he had had a history as a track man. He might have served in that capacity. Now you did attend the University of Washington, and what were the years that you were there?

Kern: Well, I was there my freshman year, and then in v-i 2 I had three semesters in a row in one year, and got my degree.

Smith: Now what year would that have been?

Kern: That was ’43-’44, so I got my degree then, and then we went back East to Parris island and to Camp Lejeune and Quantico. And then, as I say, I went after the War and did post-grad work. I remember after I had my disaster in Law School that I had to take a special test to get into grad school. I really creamed it; I really did a good job on it. And so I got in.

Smith: Now, as a grown man, after you once got out of the sheep business, what did you do?

Kern: Well, about “74 we had some ranches, I had to raise six hundred thousand in two years. Darn near killed me. I was trying to develop some property and it just didn’t work out, and so I was able to sell our places, and so I decided I ought to sell other places and I got my Realtor’s License. And I’ve been doing that ever since.

Smith: Now, Phil, weren’t you once involved with a Port District here in town?

Kern: Yeah. I was on the Port for about ten, eleven years.

Smith: What was the Port District for people who read history?

Kern: Well, the Port District was, you could consider a railway, a highway, or a waterway in the same light. And so we could go ahead and develop property for development here. We brought in Twin cities Packing, into Ellensburg, and we got Shoemaker to stay in the Upper County and locate in Cle Elum. And that used to be a derelict mill, if you recall. And we did quite a few other things, I can’t think of them, but we accomplished quite a bit, but we had a lot of opposition. The same opposition that the library district has in Ellensburg, and so then our manager was connected with the Rodeo, and he was using the office for, the Port District Office, for that. And we told him to divorce it and everything else, but he didn’t do it. The next
thing you know, the stuff hit the fan. We all got into a problem area. I was never charged with anything. I was never. I was as clean as I could be on it, but the splash over was such that it really hurt.

Smith: Now was that the end of the Port District?

Kern: That was, then pretty quick, they dissolved it.

Smith: And why do we not have one now?

Kern: Well, I don’t think you can control it well enough in a small town. It’s just too hard. I was in that and I’ve been real active in J.C. s, real active on the Wool Growers, real active on the Forest Advisory Boards, and Soil Conservation Boards and things like that, and with the Cattlemen’s Association. And so I figured I’d do all right as a Port Commissioner and did for a while.

Smith: Now, Phil, you and your wife and four of your five daughters attended Central.

Kern: Uhm huh.

Smith: Are there any other relatives that attended Central?

Kern: I should tell you this. That when I went to Central, my cousin, Jack Kern, who is here, too. Jack and I were like twin brothers. He was two months older than I am. And so we played together in Jr. High, High School, and College, and he had a good time here. And then he had a deferment. Because I joined the Marine Corps, he got into the Paratroops, and he got killed in Holland. And that really hurt me. I wanted to transfer out of Pre-O.C.S. and go overseas at the time. Foree Keyes and a guy named Cev Grassi that played with us up here, talked me out of it.

Smith: Are you, Phil, any relation to the Kerns that are involved in the fruit business down in Badger Pocket?

Kern: Well, yeah. Alabam went here. He played football here for three years.

Smith: And he’s related how?

Kern: He’s my first cousin.

Smith: First cousin.

Kern: And his sister, older sister went to Central, or Ellensburg Normal. My brother went to Ellensburg Normal for a year, and then he graduated from U. Dub. My little sis went here, and then she, I think she graduated from here.

Smith: Now you’ll recall that this question was number 25 on your list. Do you know the names of any class mates who have developed significant positions since having attended Central?

Kern: Well, A lot of them were real good coaches, administrators, and that sort of thing, but one that stands out to me, and is Bob Hornbeck. He was a chemical engineer, and had his Master’s from U. Dub. He went to work for Alcoa, and he was a, they said they could get all kinds of chemical engineers, the egghead kind, but he was, they wanted a guy who was a regular guy, too. He had worked in the woods, and chummed around with US in high school and college, and he went up the ladder with Alcoa to where he was one of the three senior vice-presidents, and he was in charge of technology for Alcoa, and he was in charge of
world-wide production two different times. He’s retired now, so he’s just like he always was; he hasn’t changed a bit.

Smith: Good. Have you registered, you and Shirley, are you registered with the Alumni...?

Kern: Oh, yes.

Smith: You are. Good. Now please close with a statement expressing your feelings about your time at Central, was it pleasant, challenging, rewarding, what was your feeling?

Kern: One word would be rewarding. Like our ‘42 team was taken into the Hall of Fame. We’re all close knit. I’m kind of the chairman of the group to make sure we all keep in touch. The fact that I met my wife here. That’s the main thing, and the camaraderie, it’s something like when we went to V-12 over at the U. Dub. Well, I’d had a year there and so I knew all the Phi Delts, and quite a few of the Betas and other guys, but the ones we were closest to were our arch enemies from Cheney, because when we came in we all blended together and we all had the same outlooks on life, and I just liked these people better than most of them that went to the larger schools.

Smith: Good. Now, Phil, I would guess off-hand, that since Shirley is such an attractive lady, that when she was here on campus, she must have been a knockout. You must have had some competition for her attention.

Kern: Oh, you bet. You bet. I had to get by a couple of them, but it was well worth the effort. We have fifty-three years of marriage, I should say that.

Smith: OK. Can you think of anything we haven’t touched on that you’d like to tell us about?

Kern: No, although I think that the Central (?)...You go to college to learn, but also to be able to react to other people, and inter-react, and so I feel that Central was just wonderful that way.

Smith: Good.

Kern: That it didn’t have the curriculum it should have had for what we all wanted. It was oriented towards getting teachers prepared to teach, and they did an excellent job on that, but as far as business or different fields that they now can go into, we didn’t have it in those days. You had to go someplace else, but for the years here I think the guys and the girls, too were just, they appreciated one another more. There wasn’t so darn much one upsmanhship that there is in a larger college.

Smith: We thank you very much, Phil.

Kern: You bet.

Smith: And for the record, our interview has been with Phil Kern. Ham Howard, or Alexander Hamilton Howard has been the cameraman. Your interviewer has been Milo Smith. And we thank you very much.

Kern: You bet.