

JIM AND PAULINE DICKMAN LAWLER, MARCH 5, 1973;

W. D. MILLER, MARCH 20, 1973, INT. W/ A. McA. MILLER.

WDM: We had a Pretty good athletics Program in Glen Ellyn, IL, which is a suburb of

Chicago. When we were there, they had a football team, and basketball wasn't an item at that time because it was at an earlier day. But they did Play baseball and football with such colleges as Wheaton, some of the colleges in Chicago. But down here there wasn't, we didn't have much time to do this kind of thing. The only thing that we had of any athletic nature, was that we did have a very good tennis team from one family that came down here, the Carrs, and they had been very good tennis Players, and they had two or three boys and a couple of girls that went to school, and they also helped out on our basketball team. But we had to Play on an outside court, which was just a sand court, or a grass court, and of course we were Pretty hardy because we did have to Play outside that way and when we were ?. We would go into Tampa or the other college and Play, but we didn't have the equipment to stick to the floor, you know. We just had tennis shoes.

AMM: The ball bounces a little higher, too, when you're bouncing it off the floor than off the grass and the sand.

WDM: Yes, it sure does. But the other People were in the same difficulty because they were used to dribbling on a floor, and then they'd come up and have to dribble on this other. It just depended on whose ball was bouncing. But we, Admer did most of the coaching on athletics, he was quite the athletic. And we had, three years we had some very good competitive sports. We went up and Played the University of Florida, and we just swept the tennis end of the thing and we lost on basketball. But we beat Rollins and Stetson and got Mr. Stetson out, they had a tennis tournament which all of the, we took all of the Stetson hats because of this Carr family who were quite athletic.



AMM: Who in the family or in the children of the family would be likely to have correspondence or Publications, or the things that weren't lost in the fire that burned out the library?

WDM: I don't think that there is anything that you would have, but the small catalog, which was. . . I think you've got one copy of that.

AMM: I have that.

WDM: That is about the only thing that is left around.

AMM: The catalogs must have been Printed every year.

WDM: Yes, they were. they were Printed every year.

AMM: I was thinking that maybe Rollins or Stetson, or some of the other colleges that were around at that time Probably exchanged catalogs. . .

WDM: I'm glad I gave you some of the stuff that Father used to do, but. . . Talking about the size of that Bahia Beach.

AMM: I'm just now getting my files in order. This is 1415. That's the first catalog that was Published, and that would be about four years before you graduated.

WDM: Yes. And this was the motto of the. . . H.H.H. Head, Heart, and Hand.

AMM: Volume 1, number 1 or July 1914. I imagine maybe one of the other colleges has some of the later bulletins.

WDM: I don't know whether they. . . I imagine there is another one, but. . . There's Terra Christna Miller(?), who was Admer's second wife. Mr. McCard was Georgadda's first husband, and Ray Edwards was Aurora's first husband.

AMM: Now, how did the McCards tie in with Pauline?

WDM: Well, there were a number, there were three, two girls and three boys, the McCards, yes, and he come up from Tennessee and they came down and lived down here for a while. And then, Georgadda married Lester and they had their own farm. His college(?) wasn't here a great deal. But these, I think these are honorary degrees. I think one of mother's, I think she had an A. B., but she was a, did the expression and the literature and things like the classical



iterature, things of that kind. (150).

AMM: This expression class picture here you tell who's who on that one?

WDM: Yes, this is O. D. here.

AMM: On the far right. Thought so.

WDM: I think this is Aunt Ethel.

AMM: On the far, far right.

WDM: On this, on the. . . Ethel Fields she later was. And we had a very nice group, and I don't know who all the rest of these are. That's not Pauline. I don't recall who that was.

AMM: Do you know if there's any tie-in between Ruskin College, any formal tie-in between Ruskin College here and the Ruskin College of Oxford?

WDM: I don't think there was any definite, formal tie-in any more than, I don't think there's too much of a tie-in with New College over there, is there?

AMM: There's a very sort of honorary and tentative tie-in, to the extent that one of their college officials, a rector, I believe, is an honorary trustee of ours, and there's simply recognition of the continuity of the name.

WDM: that would be the only way there.

AMM: Does the name Vrooman do anything for you?

WDM: Well, Vrooman was a man that had a considerable amount of money, and Carl Vrooman, and he was interested in the cooperative movement when it was headquartered in Trenton, MO. And he is the one that ? staked? the college to start off with. He took over what had been the old Avalon College there and it wasn't, it was just one big, great building as I remember it. I just very small, young at the time. But the Vroomans were interested in that whole set-up on a nation-wide basis, the cooperative movement on a nation-wide basis. Now, you ought to tie in in some ways, though, what the socialistic movement,

so it wasn't the socialistic college per se. It was a , the college that, because it was on the left, naturally leaned over toward the left, and the



cooperative movement was a leftist appeal, more or less, and as such, it had, I would say, psychological ties with the socialistic movement and with the temperance movement. And of course, there weren't too many people in the movement, the cooperative movement, that were capable of handling a college, and father was, had gone out to Oregon in an early day. All three of the girls were born out there. And he taught in the school out there. I don't know just how high-staked it was, for a job up in the Willamette(?) country up there, for land(?), and he had had this college education, and of course, they would get your background when they were trying to find somebody capable of starting a college to educate the young people in the movement. Why, that's when they got him and brought him in from Oregon and California, living in the San Joachin Valley at that time. I don't know where he lived in the San Joachin Valley, but I'm going to check that out. But they came on back to Trenton, MO., and father had in the meantime interested himself in the socialist movement and, so that, and mother had interested herself in the WCPE movement, which was also very leftist at that time. (248). Women's Christian Temperance Union, so when people like ? Willard and Susan B. Anthony and that whole group, my father was quite an admirer of Eugene B. Debs who ran for about four times for President with no chance of ever winning. But he then got interested in the sweatshop and the underprivileged and things of this kind, which required ? and ? people also followed, to show that this was more of a socialistic movement than it was actually a cooperative movement, as far as the people that started coming down, because they were more attracted to the socialistic end because there were more socialists and they were better organized.

AMM: The people that came down to Ruskin here, rather than the people who came down to Trenton.

WDM: Oh, yes. They came here, because it was growing all of the time. It wasn't, it had a vision of being a cooperative deal, but Father, for example,



could not allow anybody to donate to college. It wasn't kept going by donations because he said that anyone that wanted to donate would want to dictate, and he didn't intend to be dictated to. And a person with a great deal of money would want his ideas of education carried out rather than the teaching that Dad did. I never knew the Vroomans. I only know just the name and hearing the talking that was going on at this time. But there was a man who ran the Christian Socialists up in Chicago with the Carrs, and they came down and lived on us for some time and the boys and girls went to school. So many of those people were sponges. I mean, they'd stick to somebody that'd take off their shirt and give it to them, you know, if he had two of them, well he'd keep one of them, but if they had the second one, why he'd keep it you know, and it got to be pretty rugged, you know, because there was not much money coming in. The only thing that there was, I guess, was Father's portion, or what he had in land, more than anything else. A certain amount of land was donated to the college because of the zoning card for it(?), which was. . . and of course the paper itself was another money maker.

AMM: And this is the Beacon? WDM: Yep. AMM: There was a publication, too, called the Triangle? Could you tell me about that?

WDM: The Triangle was more of a publication of the school itself, much the same as the Cobra(?) deal was. And they got out this publication simply so that they would have some voice for the students and let them show their stuff.

AMM: Was the printing press, the printing operation here intended to be a money-making operation, or was it an in-house operation?

WDM: Well, I, it never made any money as far as I know because there was nothing down here to advertise. It was more or less a holding of the groups together and a way of interesting people that were interested in the socialist movement or the other, much the same as I put people on my reporter list if they are interested in that type of thing, without saying, well, hey,



gimmee some subscription money, because you might run them off. They might not so that, but you want, you need a backlog that they do for you. And of course also it was used for putting up the sale of land.

AMM: Is the newspaper, the title of which is the Coming Nation, is that at all familiar to you?

WDM: Well, like, the Coming Nation was one of the socialistic and cooperative movement . . . (331)

end of interview

AMM: the reference works, you say? I'm sorry, the

JL: No, it's stored, stored in there would only be used for reference and I don't want to let it go out, because we're going to get it back at. . . The other night. I'm so damn mad about this, too. We had a 45th meeting, the 45th annual meeting of the Chamber of Commerce, and they had the original book of where it started, and I asked them, if they'd put that, to get it to me and I'd deposit it in the library with our other, the other archives? Well, this is all I got, this is all I got of it. The, Paul was still sitting there reading, she wanted to come home, otherwise I'd have waited until the next morning until I got it, so I don't know whether Paul's got it, or whether it was left up there in the Chamber of Commerce. It's book that's absolutely invaluable.

AMM: It would be an interesting thing to have a copy of.

JL: This thing, if we can't mimeograph it, I'm going to have that typed, I'm going to have that copied.

AMM: Or you could have that xeroxed.

JL: You couldn't xerox that. You couldn't get that out. Well, I'll get another copy. This will go in as the original, but so you can read it, that's what we've done. . .



JM: Mac, Willard could give you as much information as anybody else.

AMM: Right, well he's, Daddy's back talking again now. He's, you know, doesn't talk for too long a time,

JL: You know, I tried to talk to him, too.

JM: He remembers a lot more than I do.

AMM: I think he remembers a lot more than O. D. does, or at least maybe O. D. is more sensitive about. . .

JM: I think Paul and Willard remember more. I know Georgeadda and I just didn't seem to remember some of those things.

JL: I told you about me getting here that Sunday afternoon with my tape recorder.

JM: Now that was ridiculous.

AMM: I imagine, there's a real interest now, I was mentioning at dinner, in oral history. Now that tape recorders are easy to carry around and that so much that's interesting and valuable just gets lost because it doesn't seem important to the people perhaps who did it then, and if one doesn't write something down, it just tends to be lost forever, so, I thought that since I do have a little time, I'd come around and. . .

JL: I've found that very handy, of course, I'm digressing.

AMM: It makes some people nervous, too.

JL: But I got interested in the, of course my hobby is the United States Navy. I've got the history of the Navy and, in fact I've got as good an individual library, which I'm turning over to our library very shortly, and I got interested in something that happened on the old Des Moines, a ship that was launched in 1907. When she was out in the Mediterranean at the time of the outbreak of war and the events that led up to this happening, she was the first ship to cross the Atlantic under war conditions in a hundred years. Clearest reaction, she didn't make it, but that's neither here nor there.(387)



But in getting this stuff together, the man that told me about it, I took my tape recorder out there and I've got his tape. And from then, then I investigated. I went to Des Moines and I saw the actual bowl, the ship's bowl that he talked about that they thought was silver. It wasn't silver. It was really funny in a way because they started out to collect dimes from the kids to have a silver bell made because the city of New Orleans was supposed to have bought a silver bell for the cruiser door. So it comes out of the history of actually how we got a steel Navy, and it's true, but it would take me an hour to tell you. But anyhow, they did get this bell and it was silver washed, and I've seen it now, when I saw it I went out and got some Blue Bell metal Polish and some rags and I got the Janitor, and I was going to pay him to clean it, but the librarian said he would do that. Well, we scrubbed and we rubbed and we couldn't get any sign of any silver or the copper that was underneath. But the tape of the thing was invaluable, what this man told me. I'm going to write that out and send it to our, I don't contribute, but I do belong to the Naval Institute, and I've saved the Institute, and in their Proceedings they have a division they call, a department they call the old Navy, and that's a very interesting thing, what happened to her and how it happened. Oh, it tells a lot of things. A mutiny in another ship, how this man's cooking, the man that I was talking about, caused a mutiny of the crew of the ship. Very funny, very interesting.

AMM: Collecting documents is certainly as important as the oral aspect of the thing, too. What happened to the early records of the college?

JL: We've got them. Oh, of the college? I don't know, I don't know.

AMM: There must have been a good amount of paperwork in student lists and that kind of thing when they were into it. I know there was a fire down in an early day, wasn't there? I don't want to disturb Pauline. There was a fire in an early day that seemed to have burned part of the campus. I don't know whether it burned the record part up or whether there were lists of the



graduates of the college somewhere?

JL: No they, as far as I'm concerned the college was without record other than the Pictures that we have, the buildings. And after seeing the beautiful, beautiful Wright architecture at Macon yesterday, and then to think of this poor little college here with their rough board that they made themselves, go out and hew the trees and cut the boards and built the thing themselves, what a terrific contrast.

AMM: The Frank Lloyd Wright buildings over there at Florida Southern in Lakeland. . .

JL: Yeah, that's where we were yesterday.

AMM: They're all right if you don't happen to be six feet tall. I can't get through the doors. Hits me right in the middle of the forehead to go into the doors.

JL: I remarked that to Dana. Says it's a good job we're not six foot. I said, I don't know what the basketball Players ever do here.

AMM: Of course, the architect of the New College dormitories, I. M. Pei, is an Oriental fellow. He's only about this high. But he built these doors about eight feet tall in the dining room, so maybe it's some kind of compensation. He's real small and makes his doors real tall. Over in the library, is there a reference librarian who is in charge of this material, or is it just one little room. .?

JL: Yeah, just Dorothy, Mrs. Wrenshaw. She's a librarian. She has two assistants there part time. One comes in three days, and the other comes in three days, and then they have a girl from high school to put the books away and a boy that does the janitor work.

AMM: I'll have to go over there and take a look. When you were having your tape recorded session, did you have anything that was interesting in terms of factual material?

JL: I never got anything. You mean at Ruskin? No, sir! I shut the thing



I'm not sure, it was someones Pregnancy before she was married or after she was married or something, the day was some silly thing, and they can get into a real argument as who got married first, and it wasn't what I wanted at all.

AMM: (laughs) I remember when I was a kid over at the clubhouse there were, that's where the original, where the library was, of course, before the library building was built. I imagine most of those books have been moved over into the new library?

JL: Yes. None of them amounted to anything. I have your grandfather's Greek dictionary which he probably used on that book that the one cover's gone. And so I thought all I could do when I went through all that stuff, of course people had

pawed through that for years before I got it, so when we started the library and moved everything out of there, the only thing I could do was to make a collection of the type of current fiction that they were reading then, because it was all, all these, aw, to me that was silly, all these love novels that these girls read, and of course the front cover had a beautiful lithographed picture in color. Oh, the Gibson Girl era and a little added to that. But I collected that, kept so many of them just to show the future generation what was read.

AMM: That's very important, contemporary historical study kind of thing. Well, I think what I should do is go over and check in the library and see, see where it is. Opens at one? I'm going to be back, I'm going to have lunch over at my parent's house at 12 and then Daddy can get his rest. I brought the baby up with me today. Mother's taking care of the baby. Mary Ann's teaching down at Bradenton, so I've been chief cook and bottle washer down here for a little while and it gives me a good chance to. .

JL: Where is she teaching?

AMM: Well, in Samoset, FL. Well, it's not much of a community now. It's a pretty rough place to teach. They got a 7 foot high chain-link fence around the school with barbed wire on the top to keep the kids from smashing the



Place UP on the weekend. I mean, it's that rough.

JL: That's down there near Oneco.

AMM: Right. It's just north of Oneco.

JL: Yes, I know that. How I know it, that's the thing about this American or English Pronunciation. In New England the Pronunciation of that word, I would have said Samoset and they'd laugh at me. The Pronunciation was Samset. That was the name of Indian in Mass., in fact I think somewhere around ? of Mass., because that's where I heard the, where I heard the name. Although I'm interested, always have been interested in history. When I'm going somewhere by myself in a strange area, if I see a road-side marker I'll get out. Had one time there when I was taking my first wife back UP to Indiana. She was dying, and we got to a little town in Ga. which had seen a lot of Civil War activity, and she was in the hospital there for two or three days, and so, the hours that I had to stick around, I'd go out UP one road and down another and these markers would say, here was, such-and-such an action took Place and the troops moved, this regiment moved over here and crossed the crick, and I'd follow that if I could get round to it, and see till the time I got to Chatanooga, I was pretty well, on the way home I was pretty well aware of what the, of the action that took Place in the Civil War, but I never knew so much about it until I got into this Naval history, and it's still, I think I'll start a, I'm so dead against that civil law and the mental attitude of the South, I think the only solution for this blessed furor of Playing Dixie every time a southern band gets together, I think we're a northern college, a northern university Plays a southern, the band, I've seen them in Texas Play the Eyes of Texas Are UPon You and everyone will stand and remove his hat. And I think they ought to Play Marching Through Georgia and make these southerners stand and remove their hats. We have to listen to Dixie.

AMM: I don't know that that would be a very Peaceable solution.

JL: Well, they don't want it. If you want to see how Peaceful these People,



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they'll say, oh, no, we're not starting a Civil War, so ought to go on a construction job in the north, because they couldn't, now they are beginning to earn wages down there. They couldn't before. All these people used to flock up there. How I met them around Cincinnati. You'd be in a brand new job, and you wouldn't be on the job one week before those walls were covered with insults to the northerners written by these rats that was getting 3 and 4 dollars an hour, that couldn't get 50 cents down here. They're still fighting it, and amongst Masonry, too. That's why I'm dropping out, and the rotten part about it is, they've never been taught their right history. they never been taught of the offer that they had from France and Europe in general It was a southern aristocracy that wanted to break off, and the poor fools, they had fighting for them, didn't realize how they were being used. Those men were just killed unnecessarily. Jefferson Davis was the most hated man in the South. did you ever know that? Talk about J. D., that guy tried to do right, and he wouldn't do what they wanted him to. They wrested some laws from him like any man that had twenty slaves didn't have to go to war. They had families that had 500 slaves with five sons, they'd say, well, this is his twenty, this is his twenty, . . and the ones that they made go wouldn't dig their own trenches. they had the colored people digging the trenches for them.

AMM: Well, I'm going to have to zip on back and catch some lunch at the house

the foregoing was a conversation between Arthur McR. Miller and Jim Lawler, 6 March, 1973. Mr. Lawler is married to Pauline Dickman McCard, who is the twin sister of Paul Dickman of Ruskin, FL. (584).

end of tape & interviews side one

AMM: 20 March, 1973, interview with W. D. Miller.

The story about how the group first came down here and got off at Wimauma, did



ya'll stay at Wimauma before you came down and stayed on the Shell Mound near Shell Point?

WDM: No. The background of that was that Father was on the train coming down to look at some land down in Florida, with the idea of locating a colony down where the college should be moved. As I got this from a man who was a boy at that time, his mother was on the same train coming down from Jacksonville, and Father got to talking to the woman, and she was named O. L. Williams and he told her that he was looking for some Place on the West coast of Florida, preferably near the water. And she said, well, that her husband owned a Place down at the mouth of the Little Manatee River and that it was approximately 50 acres in beach and that there was a large hotel on the Property, and suggested that Father come down and see this. This was about 1905. So, just how he got down there from Tampa, I don't know, but he came down and looked it over and came that it was not suitable for a colony because much of it was in marsh grass at low tide and the hotel was up on the shell mound up about five acres, but was not large enough for what he had in mind, nor were, was there enough land to do anything with. So he determined who had the adjoining land and there was a terPentine, well, really they called it a naval stores company, which dealt in terPentine and rosin and lumber, that had a tract of land for a thousand acres. This stretched down and connected with this land of the Williamses, and he got in touch with that Party by the name of Davis who was their representative. Mr. Davis lived down in Manatee. He got in touch with him and determined what it would take for the 12000 acres that lay along Ruskin Inlet and up along the Little Manatee River. And I don't know exactly what the Price of it was, but Father found that he couldn't swing that, and with just one family it was very difficult to do much with it because he would need far more help than he had, and he had to have the money. And so he looked to Mother's brother, A. P. Dickman, Albert P. Dickman, he was the father of Paul Dickman, and suggested that he come down and go over this with



him, with the idea that Perhaps they might sell out their farms up in Sedalia, MO. where three of the Dickman boys were living. That was A. P. Dickman, L. L. Dickman, and N. E. Dickman. So Uncle Bert came down, this was about 1908, right around in that neighborhood, and they went out and looked the land over and the Father went back up to Sedalia and talked to the other boys, and they decided to sell out up there and bring their farm equipment and animals down, which would give a start to the home building. but there was on this land a terPentine still.

AMM: This is here where Ruskin is now?

WDM: No, it isn't here now. It's up on 674, up right where Grady lives. There was a still up there that had terPentined most of the 12000 acres. And it had been a still that was run by convict labor. The convicts could be rented for about 75 cents a day from the state, and then it was up to whoever rented them to be sure that they didn't get away. They had to guard them and feed them and handle them, but that was a very easy way of having a supply of labor at a very cheap Price. That was not being handled that way at the time. They had closed down the terPentining for that 12000 acres, for that time. But there were a number of houses up there and some of them were People who had been in authority during the time that the still was running. then there was a very large building up there that had been what they called the stockade, that was a building of considerable size where the convicts were housed at night. It was inside a fence that had Guard Posts up on top of it, and, so those buildings were utilized. And in 1910 ? by the three Dickman families, two mules and ? and chickens and other farm animals on the train, and they took the train down from Sedalia, MO. (171).



Uncle Bert rode the train down with the animals. But the only railroad connection was over at Wimauma, 7 miles to the east, so that they came in there during 1910 and everybody settled down in these houses which were up on that, at the old still. Then the surveyors had started in and surveyed the land and laid out the 12000 acres into a town site and into a five and ten acre farm sites known as Ruskin Colony Farms and then as those were sold out, why they would open up another division. but the town itself was laid out along the Ruskin Inlet, and they, there was no way of having any county government down here, because it was entirely divorced from Tampa, and no way of getting down by any way except boat at that time because there were no roads and no bridges and no railroads, except the one that came in over at Wimauma and went down to Manatee and Bradenton, at that time the Seaboard Rail line. And so they had to have some sort of town government. The town government was laid off similar to the town hall government that was prevalent up in the New England states and everyone who, and the Commongood Society, formed a C. S. was established. And because there was no idea of incorporating, they had to have some method of taxation in order to, for them to do streets and roads and utilities that they needed. So they thought, arrangements were made so that for every tract of land sold by the owners, which were called the Ruskin Homemakers. And that was Father and the three Dickman boys and their wives. And for every acre that they sold, a certain amount of land was put aside and earmarked for the Ruskin C. S., and so that, if someone wanted to buy a piece of land, and they had no money to buy it, it was possible for them to work on their own or hitches(?) or something of that kind and then have their labor credited to buying the land at a very reasonable amount.

AMM: But were they actually given physical pieces of paper, work chits or something like that?

WDM: Oh, yes. There were no work chits, they called them Commongood script. And during the time of Panic, and there were several Panics that came along



during that time, that was practically the only currency that there was in town. I mean, a person could take his Commongood script down and buy groceries at the store. It acted somewhat similar to money that like, invasion money, but it was redeemable in land.

AMM: Was it redeemable in cash?

WDM: No, they were not redeemable in cash. they couldn't cash them, got no cash for it.

AMM: Were the denominations in hours of work?

WDM: No, they were not in hours of work. They were in so much per hour, I don't recall just now, but it seemed to me they were in units of 50 cents and a dollar, it seems to me those were the units. But that's something that I don't remember exactly now. Now they had then, once a month, a town hall meeting, and everyone who owned a piece of land in the original subdivision had the vote. Someone that didn't own any land of course had no vote, but they would, they had a secretary, and no particular present chairman. All matters to do with the running of the colony were thrashed out at this meeting. It wasn't a very place at some times, because there were always factions, and the factions were constantly warring against each other.

AMM: Could, were the factions, could you divide the factions up, you know, into any particular groups?

WDM: No. We couldn't divide them up into any particular groups. It was more the haves and the have-nots, than anything else. In other words, there was a faction that Father and the Dickman boys more or less came along with them on their thinking, and then there was always the parties that wanted to take over and run it themselves, and it was really divided into what we used to call the regulars and the kickers. One sat on one side of the aisle going up the front, and one sat on the other. Nobody ever crossed the line. So you knew you had a solid vote over here and a solid vote over this way.

AMM: the thing about the divisions of opinion in the early community, this



ne between the regulars and the kickers, then was that between the esarly group comin9 in with the Millers and the Dickmans and then those who later joined, or was there a division also between People who were more native to the area than the Dickmans and the Millers?

WDM: No, there were no, there's no native in the matter at all berecause the natives, there wasn't a family that lived on this 12000 acres. And the Royals and the Saffolds, so that there wre no friction in the C. S. with the native PoPulation at all. The native PoPulation as a General rule resented the fact that someone was goin9 to come in and change their way of life. They Put it, that the old sPoon had been laid aside. And they objected to the fact that their way of life, which was a fairly easy way, was bein9 Phaased out. So it wasn't, it was individual groups comin9 down. In other words there was a faction that came from Ruskin, TN, down to here, and they wanted to Put their, to get their group together and they bought, say, 20 acres and they started to make kind of a communal arrangement with their own buildings and everything of that kind, and have their own life there, but in the restrictions that Father wrote into the deeds, there were only one store of a kind. In other words, everything was cooperative. Yuo bought in on it, and the only store you had to groceries, was the Grocery store which People had Put money in, and they had shares in this Particular . . .

AMM: So you couldn't, for example, have two Grocery stores. .

WDM: Oh, no, not two Grocery stores or two hardware stores or anythin of this kind. And of course there wasn't much conflict there because the Grocery store handled evrything that there was to handle.

AMM: But, did you remember the names of any of the People that came down from Ruskin, Tennessee?

WDM: No, I don't remember. I just couldn't think who they were. (351).



There was an Edwards that came down, that Ray G. Edwards's father, George his father, and he was one of the original Ruskin Tners.

AMM: So, now, up in Ruskin, TN, they were the regulars and the kickers evidently, too. I mean the community seemed to split pretty badly apart along the lines of the early, the charter members who were the core of the community, and then the later members who had to pay to become members of the community, and the core members of the community up in Ruskin, TN, both the husbands and the wives, were allowed to vote, whereas the newer members of the community, only the husbands were allowed to vote unless the wives also bought in. And evidently Ray Edwardds was the Printer and was one of the people who was pretty much upset at this splinter. I didn't know that they had come from Ruskin, TN directly down to here. Now the timing is about right.

WDM: Yes, the timing is all right on it. Ray himself came down, and he was a very, . . . on the violin. He had been in the Boston Symphony Orchestra for a number of years, and he was also one of the editors of a music magazine and did quite a bit of composing. And he came down and joined the faculty when we activated the college in 1910.

AMM: So, now he wasn't a Printer though.

WDM: No, he was not a Printer. His father was not a Printer as far as I know, unless there is something in the literature that shows it. I don't really know. He had, he liked to do work like carpentry and woodworking and working with leather and things of this kind. And he spent a lot of time at the roy(?) cloth shops. There was quite a colony of those up in New York and the roy crofters, and he had come down from there and he had been up there working with that group. His father had been more in that deal, I think, than Ray had. I don't know the background of that as much as it came down. Of course he, see, he married Aurora and he died in Washington, D.C. But the college was activated then in 1910 and of course it was in temporary buildings which were at the corner of what is now College Avenue and U.S. 41. And the first



building put up was the Chataqua building, which was a rough building of two stories and it had a meeting room on the first floor, and a dining room and a kitchen and several classrooms. And then upstairs was a boys' dormitory. And then there was a second building, across the little Ruskin Inlet at that point, about where Lucille Taft's house is now, and that was the girls' dormitory which was built the same way, with two stories on the center and wings on each side. And that was the building that Father and Mother moved into. And that was our home for a number of years. And the girls' dormitory was upstairs in that, same as the boys' dormitory was in the larger building, which was the central building for the school. And of course there ain't no school down in this area, except for the Public school which Aurora taught for a number of years was only an eight grade school. And so there was no way of the boys and girls that were out of the eighth grade qualifying to go into the college, so that they started a Preparatory school in connection with it. And by going through the Prep school, they could save one year, making it a seven year deal rather than an eight year deal. D. D. as did many of the other younger people, of course when we couldn't go to high school, this is where we had to get our basis for going on up. We could take some college studies for credit if we were, if they were possible and we could handle even when going through Preparatory school, which made it a little bit easier to get on through.

AMM: Thinking back again about the group that came down from Ruskin, TN, you mentioned that there was a sort of, they wanted to found a separate community down there?

WDM: Well, no, each little group, and the cooperative movement had probably the one core which was originally at Trenton, MO, where the college was first opened, in fact about 98 and we moved from there to Glen Ellyn, and then from there to Illinois down to Ruskin, down here. (448). But though the core of the movement was there, there was a general movement over all, which was tied in



n some ways with socialistic thinking, the cooperative movement was not something that was socialistic in essence. It was, Let's get together and be able to buy things wholesale and cooperate that way, much like farm cooperatives are at the present time. And there were, say, there might be a group from, say, Atlanta, one from Ruskin, TN and then another one from some other place, and they might send somebody down knowing that there was a cooperative colony being started in Florida, and so they would say, Well, I'm going to bring my little group down, which they would, and then as such they'd form their own little grouping around here. There were two groups that started in on that particular thing, one of them where the present shopping center is, there's an old well that was put down there, I think the first that was a big well down any where around here still out in the center of that place out there. And a special subdivision made out of some acreage there that was known as the Emory Manor subdivision at the present time, which is where the people building is at that particular place, and the farms, then were around that particular place, and on the other side of the U.S. 41 there was another group that started up, and they made their own little subdivision, divided up the acreage that they'd bought and sold town lots and then were going to have cooperative farming, but I don't know that they ever did any cooperative farming because I was rather young at that time and wasn't interested in those particular things. But those were what made up the group, because each one of them had a leader, and the leader then wanted to take over and say, well, I don't like the way this is being done. And in particular he didn't like, some of them didn't like the idea of the restrictions in the deeds because there were restrictions put in all of the deeds that no tobacco could be sold, no cigarettes could be sold, they did not limit pipes, pipe tobacco, but all cigarette papers had to be, all got burned. They all came with cigarette papers in those days. And no liquor could be sold and there were restrictions in the deeds, so that if you, you couldn't sell liquor or



even offer anyone a drink in your house or offer them a cigarette without the chance of your land reverting to the Commongood. And all of the streets that were laid out in the original Platts were given to the Commongood together with all Parks, so that the Commongood had what would have been the Power of County Commissioners as far as saying which roads to Put in, which roads went in and things of that kind.

AMM: As far as you know, the group that came down from Ruskin, TN, was one of these other two groups? Which side of 41. . .?

WDM: One of the two groups. I really don't know. I think they took the left hand side, there where Wright's Cabinets are now. but there were a couple of, that were divided into some town lots, whereas originally that was all farm on that side and the entire town was on this side, the original town itself was to be laid out right where Costello's little barn, that was the original little commissary, they called it, was set up and there were several large slots that went into it at that Point.

AMM: At the time that the college had its largest enrollment, about how many students would that be?

WDM: I think it was figured at 300, and of those, there were Probably 45 or 50 of them were the, from the town itself, People that came down with their families in order to take advantage of the college as well as the other movements.

AMM: Was the college itself a drawing card to the original community? I mean, did People come out for that?

WDM: Yes, it was a drawing card for the original community, because we got out a monthly, a weekly Paper that was called the Ruskin Beacon, and Father was the editor of it, and my oldest brother, Admer, was the manager of it.(528). It costed 35 acres of the ? to lay out the college campus, at what is now Campus Shores, starts right on the little College Inlet and Runs all the way up to College Avenue. And on the south side of College Avenue we laid



ut about 40 acre for the college farm, that's where Georgadda had Part of that, and I was given some of that after the college closed. and Admer got some of it. But the boys would come down, or the girls would come down, and they could work out for their board or tuition, see, they would go out and grub the Palmettoes by hand. And it wasn't anything that was where we could sell Produce because we were too far away from the markets. We could send somethings UP north, UP to Tampa and sell them, but you had to go UP by boat but it did help out with the school boarding house, you know, and

AMM: Where do you think the files of Publication for the Ruskin Beacon, where would those be? Somebody must have kept a file of them somewhere.

WDM: I don't think that any of those files were kept. They Probably, they Probably were at one time, but of course, in 1918 for 16, 17, and 18 the war was coming on, WWI, and the boys were being drafted and there just wasn't enough People to keep the college open and Father developed a stomach ulcer, at least that's what he said, I don't know, it might have been something more than that, but he was in very frail health at that time and Admer was, had to be the business manager and run most everything, all of the college buildings were UP on what was the Chataqua grounds. that's right UP where the neighborhood Plaza was, down in that area, and that building burned down, too. Some man having a Commonsod Society, he knocked his Pipe out right by the front steps going UP and the whole building burned, and that's where all the classes were being held and the library was, and everything to do. . .but the classrooms were there, so we got into a Pretty bad current, and that's when we were building what is now the Ruskin Womens' Club. And that was built back in 1913 and 14. That was after this house was built. There was quite a bit of room in there, and of course this was our home, but the, that was turned into classrooms UPstairs on the third floor and downstairs was used for classrooms to keep the college going then and there were some rooms down where we had a complex and had the woodworking shop and the laundry and the college office



which were down on the campus, and all of the buildings, including the new library, were. . .

AMM: When you were in school there, or in a position to observe it, what was a regular day like? Was there any particular time the day started. . .?

WDM: the day started rather early because the first classes started at 7am, and they ran for a 40 minute duration, or 45 minutes I guess, and they strung on out until 12 o'clock. And then at 12 o'clock, everyone that was there, you know, earning their board and keep, earning their tuition, they went and put on their working clothes and then they went out at 1 o'clock and worked four hours in the afternoon, from one to five, and they were given credit against their tuition for the work that they did. And their work was largely on the college farm or grubbing on the campus or something at that time.

AMM: So, when it came to supervision of work crews or deciding who did what kind of job, how were these things assigned? How were the leaders of the groups. . .?

WDM: Well, they weren't. I presume that Admer had as much to do with it as anyone. You see he had, by that time, he had finished up his, he had gone to Ruskin College in Trenton, MD, as had Aurora and Georgadda, and he had just about finished up when he was in Glen Ellyn, so the he finished and took a law degree and started a University. And he got married and came and brought his wife down, and they lived down on fourth street. And then Aurora was a school teacher here, and she taught, and Admer taught. He taught business, typing and short hand and business machines and things of this kind and was the secretary of the large radio network(?) and owned the Beacon also. And the Printing office was down on the inlet, down there. there's a big double building down there. One half of it was the main office and the other half we put the laundry in and the crafts.

AMM: About what would be at that point now? I mean, what building is?

WDM: It would have started down there right where 4thst. crosses the inlet. 627



WDM: Where the bridge is, and worked back this way. The buildings were half-way down, between 4th and 1st street. Down there on the inlet. And the office building for the college was on Ruskin Boulevard at that point. And the other buildings were behind that.

AMM: So they were really not members of the family to go around, in terms of supervising?

WDM: Well, yes, and each one had to do different things. For instance, the McQuhards(sp?) came down at that time, and they were TN people, but they weren't from the Ruskin, TN group. There was one of them, who was Lester McQuhard, who had graduated from TN in agriculture, had an agricultural degree, and he supervised the farming and the preparation of the land and things of this kind. He later married Georgadda and died in the First WW in 1918. Then Ray G. Edwards came in. That was the son of the man who had been interested a great deal in Ruskin, TN. I don't know how much Ray G. had done in it. But he was an expert violinist, and he taught music and harmony and woodworking and crafts and things of this kind. And then only one of the original faculty came down from up in Chicago, and that was Harriett E. Orcutt, and Miss Orcutt had taught languages and mathematics and she taught some literature, and German literature, and things of this kind. So she came down with one group that came down from Detroit. Wheelers brought her down when they came, made a trip from Detroit to Ruskin in the Stanley Steamer. It took them four weeks to make it with the roads as they were at that time, but they came on through. And the Wheelers had a number of children that they wanted to finish school. And that was the time the Crawleys came down, and Esther and Lou, that was a big family, too. They had six kids.

AMM: Well, now, did Esther go to the college?

WDM: Yes, she went to it and graduated with ? she had never finished high school, and her sister Ruth, who later married Clarence Leisey, he came down to go to school, and they, both of them went, as did their brother John. the



other boys were too small. Boys and girls, they just kept coming, they had about nine kids.

AMM: This is the Crawley family?

WDM: Yes. They made good wives for all the boys who. . .?'s mother was a Crawley, and Paul married one (Esther) and two or three of the other farmers married them. And the girls, chick-blissed'em (?) every one, and in 1918, 17 was the last year of the College, and that was when I left there, in '18. I was in the last graduating class. Aurora taught elocution and Public speaking and some literature classes. And mother, who had a degree in literature, she taught many of their classes in literature and father taught the Greek and Hebrew and Bible. He was at that time in Philosophy and humanities more than anything.

AMM: Did it prove to be pretty difficult with the staff and faculty of the college pretty much involved in one family. Did this mean that matters of academic dispute wound up to be matters of family dispute, between, say, the Miller families and other people?

WDM: Well, there wasn't too much of that because the preponderance of the teaching was in the family itself. There wasn't enough really to cause a schism there. They just married into the family, that's all.

AMM: It just absorbed them up.

WDM: There wasn't much to it. Georgadda taught music, I mean the piano and things of that kind. (697) But she also graduated after Aurora, Admer, O. D., all graduated from that. O. D. was two years ahead of me.

AMM: Are there any graduates of the College around whom you know or (for)whom you might have addresses?

WDM: No, there aren't any more of them, they're nearly all concentrated right here. It would be Paul. Pauline never did go through and get her degree. But O. D. and myself and Paul would be about the only ones that I could give you any addresses on at the present time. There were a number of



them, but they have since died. And of course, I was rather young, in on the deal. I started in the preparatory end of it, and I was only 17 when I graduated.

AMM: Graduated from the college.

WDM: Yes. (712)

END OF INTERVIEW

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