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UA68/8/2 Frances Richards Oral History

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James Bennett: Research office, interview with Miss Frances Richards, the fourteenth of December, 1977, at her home in Simpson County, Kentucky. The interviewers are Lowell Harrison and Jim Bennett.

Lowell Harrison: Miss Richards, how long has this farm been in the family?

Frances Richards: Since nineteen hundred and twenty-one.

LH: Did the family live here in Simpson County before that, or...?

FR: My home has been in Simpson County all my life, except when I was born.

LH: Where was that?

FR: I went to Allen County to be born. My father's people lived in Allen County, but his father married a Simpson County girl. Therefore, my father grew up in Simpson County. My mother's people lived in Allen County since about the time of the American Revolution because the home was granted to my great-great grandfather for his services in the Revolutionary War, and it remained in the family until the nineteen hundred and fourties.

LH: Now, what were the names of your parents, your father?

FR: Edwin Lovin Richards and Minnie Dixon Richards.

LH: Well, once you got back from Allen County on this early trip,

where did you go to school - your first school?

FR: I never went to school in Allen County. I went to school in Simpson County.

LH: Where in Simpson County?

FR: I began school at a little place called Cedar Hill, but later I went to Barnes School. And Barnes School was named for my great grandfather on my father's side, Stephen Barnes.

LH: Where was that located?

FR: Stephen Barnes had hundreds of acres of land, and the Barnes School was named for him. Now that's where I went to school.

LH: Was it located in Franklin, or...?

FR: Barnes School is located about a mile and a half from Gold City, and Gold City is about a mile and a half from where you are right now.

LH: Now that went through what grades? Did it include high school?

FR: It included about two years of high school, and I might say here, I wouldn't mind being recorded on this, the best teacher I ever had was at Barnes School.

LH: Who was that?

FR: He was a Mr. Bervard. Mr. Bervard belonged to an old family of French ancestry. I believe I might say, he was a classically educated man. His father was an early teacher in Franklin, but this man stayed in my father's home and taught my sister and my brothers and me five years. Now let me say that he didn't teach us alone. He taught in this little school, Barnes; but he boarded in our home. And he supervised our work. Out of all the teachers I had, I regard him as the best out of all of them.

LH: Miss Richards, where did you finish high school then?

FR: I didn't finish high school. Doesn't that sound strange?

LH: It does.

FR: But when I went to Western, my credits were accepted, and to be very frank, my average then when I received my degree in '25, I had the highest average at Western.

LH: You started to Western then in what year?

FR: In 1921.

LH: Now that was just before Western became a Normal School, wasn't it? Wasn't that in '22 or '23? I may be wrong on that. I'm not absolutely sure.

FR: It was a Normal School when I went there.

LH: Well, perhaps Teacher's College then. I guess Western became a Teacher's College perhaps then about '22.

JB: Twenty-two, I think, it changed to Western Kentucky State Normal and Teacher's College.

FR: I have forgotten what year.

LH: What was the campus like when you started in '21?

FR: To me, I thought it was a very beautiful campus. It was, but it was so different from what it is now. It had a natural beauty to it that it doesn't have now because it has too many buildings. It had the Administration Building. Potter College was there. Potter Hall was there, and Cabell Hall was there, 'course that's where the library is now.

LH: What was Cabell Hall used for? It was located just between Potter and Van Meter wasn't it?

FR: It was. I believe, at that time it was used as a home economics building.

LH: And it was later moved over to the other side of the hill.

FR: Yes, and then later it was used as a library during the time the library was being constructed. I believe, that is right.

LH: Now I suppose that most of the college classes were in Potter Hall.

FR: Many of the classes were in the Administration Building. I had several classes in the Administration Building. All the work I had with Mr. Claggett was in the Administration Building, and all the work I had with Dr. Leiper was in the Administration Building.

LH: When you went to college, did you already know what you were going to major in?

FR: Yes, I knew that I was going to major in History and minor in English or have a double major, and that is officially my major on my record there now. Officially my major is history, but I believe I had more work in English than I had in history. And Dr. Leiper, when he was away finishing his doctor's degree, asked me to teach during the summer immediately after my graduation and during that time, I became affiliated with the English Department. Dr. Stickles offered me a place in the History Department. But I liked Dr. Leiper, and I liked the work I was doing. So, I never did change.

LH: Was Dr. Leiper head of the English Department at that time?

FR: Dr. Leiper was head of the English Department at that time.

LH: Who were some of the other members in the English Department whom you had to work with?

FR: Dr. Gordon Wilson, I had worked with.

LH: Did he have a crew cut even in those days?

FR: Yes, he did. The crew cut was part of Dr. Gordon Wilson.

LH: It certainly was as far back as I can remember him. Any others in the English Department that you remember especially?

FR: Dr. Clagett is an unforgettable character for anyone. Leiper, Clagett, and Wilson were the ones I had my classes with; and I want to say that I was fortunate in having those three people. They were great teachers, all of them.

LH: What about members of the History Department with whom you had classes?

FR: I had thirty-five hours with Dr. Stickles.

LH: You majored with him.

FR: I did, that's right. I had thirty-five with Dr. Stickles, and I had some work with Miss Gabbie Robertson. And Miss Robertson was also a great teacher, and they were the two that I had my work with.

LH: Well, Dr. Bennett and I, of course, would be especially interested, I guess, in the historians. Would you tell us a bit more about Dr. Stickles? How did he conduct his classes?

FR: He was a good organizer. He was meticulous in his work.

LH: When you started at Western Kentucky, had Miss Robertson started collecting materials for the Kentucky Library and Museum?

FR: Not to my knowledge.

LH: Did she get you involved in that while you were a student?

FR: Oh yes, but when I entered there, I believe, that she hadn't begun - that is to my knowledge - she hadn't begun collecting. But she did very soon after that, and I became involved too. Miss Robertson was, when I entered school there, very much interested in a new curriculum for the teaching of history in the state, and one time I went with her to Frankfort. It was when Miss Emma Guy Cronewell was Secretary of State. And Mrs. Cronewell happens to be a distant relative of mine, and we stayed with Mrs. Cronewell. And during that time, we studied the course of study of different high schools. And then when we went back to Western, I wrote a course of study, and my grade for the semester depended on how well I did that. And Miss Robertson did not hand out "A"'s promiscuously.

LH: She never did.

FR: But she gave me an "A" for my work, and that stands out as one outstanding event of my college career - getting to go to Frankfort with Miss Robertson.

LH: Were there any other faculty members, Miss Richards, outside of the English and History Departments in which you were especially impressed by, or did you take all of your work in those two?

FR: No, I was impressed with Dr. Crabb. I felt that Dr. Crabb had a good mind, a keen mind, and he had a love of history. I think if

you will consider the historical books that he wrote after he went to Peabody College, you'd know he had something history that he liked.

LH: What about President Cherry? As a student, did you see much of him?

FR: Yes, I did.

LH: Tell us about him.

FR: I have a great admiration for the memory of Dr. Cherry. He was very good to me, and I think he was a man of tremendous power and ability. I think if you consider what he began there when he had practically nothing - practically nothing from the state - I think, what he did is enough proof of the man's natural ability.

LH: Did the students meet him very frequently, or was he a rather remote administrator, or what? Would you be likely to have personal contacts with him?

FR: I think he had more contacts with students than the public probably could have given him credit for having because he had so much to do. He was a man of tremendous power. I heard someone say of this, "H. H. Cherry looks like a king, and he acts like a king." He was a man of powerful physique. He's a good looking man, and he didn't have time to waste. He was too busy doing something for that school. And one thing that reminds me of his ability, when he brought speakers, singers, he brought the best that this country

had at that time. For instance, William Lyon Phillips was one of the most sought after speakers in the United States. He came to Western. Another speaker was Bishop Freeman from Washington; he came to Western. Josephus Daniels came to Western. William Jennings Bryan came to Western. Schumann-Heink came to Western. You see, I'm naming the ones that were considered the outstanding in their fields when they came to Western. His idea was to do anything that would publicize that school and publicize it right.

LH: I suppose that a number of these people that you mentioned spoke at chapel. Wasn't that one of the features of the school that President Cherry was very fond of?

FR: Yes, he had them speak at the chapel, but he had them come, well in the role now that would be called the Rhodes-Helm Lecture Series. And Will Hill had charge of booking the music people that would come. I don't remember if you remember Will Hill, but Will Hill was a musician. And he had charge of bringing a good many of singers there. And, Mr. Cherry's idea was to bring the best that he could bring. I only remember one time, well, we wanted a speaker, and I'm rather timid, but someone said, "You go see President Cherry, and see if we can get Desha Breckinridge, editor of one of the Lexington papers." And I did. I went to see him about it. "Now," he said, "I'd rather have him than anybody else in Kentucky," but said, "I can't get him. I've tried before." Well, I asked him - this sounds presumptuous - but I asked him whether he would let me try. He said, "You may. You call him, and if he comes," he told me how much I could offer him. Well, I called him. He was very gracious. I never saw the man, but he just spoke to me as if

he had known me a long time. He was just as kind as he could be, but he said, "I'm talking to you in bed now. I'm not able to come." And he told me what to tell Dr. Cherry. And of course, I was crest-fallen because I couldn't get him to come, but I have been always sorry that we didn't get to have Desha Breckinridge.

LH: Well, it was a good try.

FR: I think it was a good try, I tell you. We had Raymond Robins. We had Robert M. Hutchins. See he had the best speakers that he could get from the Ivy League Schools and from the University of Chicago. It was his idea that it would enhance the value of Western. It would add to its prestige to have people of that type.

LH: I understand that he was very much interested in chapel as an institution. Was that on the five days a week basis?

FR: That was for a long time on the five days. I might say that it was his life. Chapel, his idea, was - it's the basis of everything; and woe be to the person who misbehaved. It didn't happen often, you know.

LH: Was attendance compulsory?

FR: To me, I'd say yes and no.

LH: Was it mostly yes, or was it mostly no?

FR: Well to me, mostly yes, and yet there wasn't a monitor there

to point out John Doe in this seat. It wasn't like that, but I just felt honor bound to go to chapel.

JB: People just didn't think of not going, did they?

FR: That's right. That is right.

LH: Did President Cherry usually preside himself?

FR: Usually yes, usually.

LH: I've heard too that he had a disconcerting habit of calling on people to speak unexpectedly.

FR: Oh, he did.

LH: Did that ever happen to you?

FR: No, not to me. No it never did.

LH: I can see it coming as a real shock to a person who didn't speak on the spur of the moment very well.

FR: I think I would of had a heart attack, but yes, he would. But usually John Doe knew when his, and the men were usually the speakers.

JB: Isn't it true that we had quite a number on the faculty who were, as a matter of fact, very good speakers?

FR: We did.

JB: Dr. Stickles, I know, and Dr. Earl Moore.

FR: Right, he brought some tremendous people there in the early days. He really did. When I think of the early faculty there, of people I knew, its just a miracle with what he had to offer that he could get together the group of men and women that he did.

JB: How was he able to do that? It seems almost as if there would be some secret that he would have had to do that.

FR: Now, I think I quoted this a few minutes ago. Someone, different ones said, that H. H. Cherry was a genius. I think he was. Now you might say, well who are you to say that anybody's a genius, and I recognize the statement that I'm making, but you can tell by what this school has done since then. He laid the foundation for it. I think he had some good help.

LH: Yes.

FR: I think that he had some good help, and even the men who help him in the very foundation work, for instance the legislative work, W. J. Gooch, Miss Travelstead's father. Now, I happen to know something about that because my father knew W. J. Gooch. Gooch lived in Franklin, and he was speaker of the House of Representatives; and Miss Travelstead - when she lived in Franklin, she married early - I didn't know her until I was a student at Western. I was simply petrified in her class, but later then she became one of my best friends.

And Mr. Gooch was a very, very good friend of Dr. Cherry. And another one was Whit Potter for whom Potter Hall was named, and Mr. Potter for his day was an influential man in Bowling Green and the surrounding area. He had some good help. There isn't any question about that. ^{9,} Starett Cuthbertson is another one who was his good friend and later became a member of the faculty. But he had an ability, a native ability, that I think was extraordinary.

LH: Miss Richards, when you were an undergraduate, Ogden College was still existing as a private college just down the hill from Western. What were the relationships between the two?

FR: Well during the time that I was there Ogden was a dying school. The relationships between the two schools at one time hadn't been very cordial.

LH: What was the relationship, Miss Richards, of Ogden to Western and Ogden and Western to the community of Bowling Green?

FR: In the early days of the Normal School, some of the older people in Bowling Green, older families there, whose sons had attended Ogden and who probably realized that Ogden couldn't last too many more years, had a feeling probably of superiority toward the new schools. I believe that's as well as I know how to say it.

JB: That was more true with Ogden than it was with Potter College, wasn't it, in relationship toward Normal School?

FR: In general I would say yes, but you see, I was there during the

last days of Ogden. And Potter had gone some years before I was there.

LH: Yes, as a student of Western, did you see much of the students of Ogden?

FR: No.

LH: I was just wondering, did they mingle very much socially or for public events, programs?

FR: Ogden was too nearly finished for there to be a reason for much social connection between the two.

LH: Miss Richards, didn't you get started with an interest in journalism while you were at Western?

FR: That is an interesting story, and I have promised to write that for the records. And I'm going to do it when my sister gets better and can type for me. I don't type, unfortunately.

LH: Well, will you tell us at least briefly about it now?

FR: Yes, I don't mind telling you about that. One morning at chapel, President Cherry announced that the school was going to have a newspaper. This was about the middle of the year. He and Dr. Leiper had talked to me about it. He called me to the office one day, and they told me, and another one who was with them was Dean G. C. Gamble. And they told me that they had picked me as the first editor. I never

had a day of journalism, of course, we didn't have journalism there. But Gamble had been to Columbia University and had had some connection with the Journalism Department there, which, of course, at that time was considered one of the best in the country; in fact, it still is. Mr. Cherry then announced at chapel that there would be a newspaper, and he liked to do things on a competitive basis. Bowling Green had two papers at that time: the Park City Daily News, run by the Gaines, and the Time-Journal, by the Denhardts. Now, one of the Denhardts had been Lieutenant Governor, and the Gaines had been in the newspaper business for many years. He then just decided he would give the contract to the one who would make the better offer economically. Different ones wanted the Daily News to do it because it was a better newspaper, had better facilities, everything about it was better. The Time's-Journal, however, got it. Well when we got the news together, I did it the best I knew how to do. I think I was a fair student in English, and the best I knew how to be. Dr. Leiper went over everything, not because I had been over, but Dr. Leiper had done it with a fine tooth comb; and when the paper came out, it was terrible.

LH: What happened?

FR: It was filled with errors from page one to the last page; and as I told someone not long ago, I cried and he cussed. I kept that first issue for years. My mother kept it. She kept all of them, the first issue. I was editor, you see, for one semester. Well, when they were making an effort to put records of the college in the archives, I gave it to the college so that it...

LH: It is there now?

FR: That's right.

LH: How often did the Herald come out?

FR: First once a month, then later every two weeks, I believe, and then it came once a week and then twice weekly. Then, of course, in modern times then it had come out more frequently, I think.

LH: Is there anything else that you remember especially about the early days of the Herald?

FR: Yes, we had the Kentucky Press Association on the Hill a few times while I was there, and fortunately, we made good ratings part of the time.

LH: A tradition that the Herald has continued with.

FR: Yes, Of course it is so much better now, and I tell you one thing that happened at one time. We made a high rating at Columbia, and suddenly we made second place. I couldn't understand. I went to Columbia to the next meeting of the Press Association (College Press Association). I found that we had been classified instead of a college paper, we had had the classification as a liberal arts college with a teacher's training program. Well, I came back and told what had happened. So we began working on that. We were reclassified, and next year we make our old rating.

LH: Did you ever have any problems with censorship for the press? Any of your stories not appear? Did you have any difficulty with cen-

sorship of the paper when you were editor of it?

FR: I can't remember one instance of any problem in that line.

LH: Were you involved with any other campus activities, Miss Richards, other than the Herald; clubs or anything of that sort?

FR: I belonged to the History Club and to the English Club and was an officer in each one.

LH: Were both of those established during the period you were a student?

FR: Both of them. In fact, I'm a charter member of both the History Club and the English Club. The History Club was established first and named for Dr. Stickles; and the English Club was established second, named for Dr. Leiper.

JB: Was the History Club the first of the departmental clubs organized?

FR: It is my impression that the S.C.G. Latin Club is older than the history club. I'm not sure about that.

LH: What types of programs did the History and English clubs have? What activities did they carry on?

FR: You mentioned Miss Robertson a few minutes ago. After the organization of the History Club, Miss Robertson saw to it that we had some program pertaining to saving material for Kentucky in the Ken-

tucky Library. I don't mean all the time, and we had outside speakers. We had men, and occasionally, we had a woman from downtown. And now and then we would have speakers from a neighboring town. They had a good many of speakers then.

LH: I believe you indicated, Miss Richards, that you graduated in 1925, and then you started teaching in the English Department immediately?

FR: I taught a high school English class that summer while Dr. Leiper was at Peabody College.

LH: Would that have been in the Training School?

FR: No, it wasn't. For a while the college had a high school department for instance, for teachers who hadn't their degree or hadn't finished their high school diploma. And I taught one of those high school classes. And when Dr. Leiper came back, he asked me whether I would like to continue teaching. And I had a freshman English class that fall, and two classes, ninth grade English and twelfth grade English, in the Training School.

LH: How long did you continue teaching in both the college and the Training School?

FR: One year, I mean, no that and that fall. I had those two classes in the Training School that year. I didn't have any work in anything but the college after, I'd say, a full year.

LH: Let's talk then a bit about your work then in the English Department. Of course now, I suppose about the time you came into the department and not long after that, a number of other new members came in as the institution was growing. Who were some of your colleagues that we haven't talked about?

FR: Miss Stith came after I was there a few years and Mrs. T. C. Cherry. Dr. Earl Moore was there some after I was a member of the department.

LH: I think, Dr. Bennett referred to him a few minutes ago as the one of the excellent speakers.

FR: I did. He was a good speaker. Dr. Moore was a valuable addition to the English Department in any college.

JB: And he taught at several.

LH: Let's see, James Cornette came in, didn't he too, sometime about not too many more years?

FR: James Cornette, I don't know why I didn't mention him. He's one of the best.

LH: Where was the English Department housed when you first became a member of it?

FR: It wasn't housed at any one place. I'd say at old Potter College.

LH: Just where ever there was a spot?

FR: That's right. For instance in Potter College on the second floor in the right-hand corridor, I had several classes before the building was torn down. And the Administration Building, I mentioned earlier in this talk, the Administration Building when I had all my work with Mr. Clagett was all in the Administration Building. I didn't have a class with Leiper or Clagett that wasn't in the Administration Building.

LH: Where did you do your own teaching then?

FR: I did mine mostly in Potter College.

LH: Until Cherry Hall was built?

FR: Yes, then of course Cherry Hall after it was built. I had all of it in Cherry Hall.

LH: And, of course, with the group of offices along the English row.

FR: The "English Channel," it was called that. I believe, I had one class in the Administration Building. I'm not perfectly sure about that, or whether I was teaching for someone else during that time. For instance, I remember Mr. Clagett was quite ill at one time, and I had his Shakespeare class. I believe it was in the Administration Building. So it may be that I didn't have one of my own classes in the Administration Building, but I was teaching for someone else.

LH: What classes did you teach, Miss Richards, 'course Freshman English?

FR: Yes, and the last few years that I was there, I didn't teach any

freshmen; and I had the sophomore class the last years I was there.

LH: What about the advanced courses?

FR: I taught the Shakespeare class. I might tell you this. Mr Clagett willed that class to me.

LH: How do you mean?

FR: I had all the classes that Mr. Clagett offered. I had two courses in Shakespeare. At that time you could get credit for doing two semesters worth in Shakespeare. I had his class in Dante, and I had his class in Milton. I think, I had probably about fifteen hours worth of Mr. Clagett; and he finally told Mr. Cherry that he would retire if he would let me have the Shakespeare class. So I taught the Shakespeare classes then the remainder of the time. And when Dr. Wilson was away to finish his doctorate - he was away one summer - and he asked me if I would like to take his Kentucky literature class. I did, and I - I've always liked Kentucky. I liked Kentucky history. My father did. My father was what you would call local, well, a good historian. He liked Kentucky history. He happened to be in Frankfort when William Gobel was killed. I think I inherited my love for Kentucky and Kentucky history and Kentucky literature from my father; and when Mr. Wilson came back, he told me that I could keep the class. And then when I went to Indiana University, I wrote my masters thesis on John Rowan, the builder of the Old Kentucky Home. During my research, I went to graduate school, my father told me, "Now you take an indefinite leave of absence and do it just as you want to do it and the right way." Well, I did a lot of research, and Dr. Wilson said, "You've had an op-

portunity to do some things in the Kentucky field that I've never had." Therefore, he just let me keep the class. And it was one of the most enjoyable things of my life. I called it in my own terms, my course in Kentucky life. Yale University had a course in American life, and I called my course the Kentucky life. I made it history and English, you see.

LH: You've mentioned Shakespeare and Kentucky history.

FR: And the Kentucky history.

LH: Kentucky literature, I'm sorry.

FR: Kentucky literature, and I taught a class in journalism.

LH: Yes, when did you start teaching journalism?

FR: At the time the College Herald was organized. I had never had a day in journalism, but I do owe a great debt of gratitude to G. C. Gamble. Gamble knew something about the technique of an editorial, for instance. I think at one time he considered going into journalism; and Mr. Leiper was a master in composition. Those two men helped me more than I can ever let anyone know. And the first editorial I wrote, I didn't know anything about the technique of an editorial. Dr. Gamble went over it with me, and he taught me more about the writing of an editorial: what it is, what it should be. I believe it was, it just seemed to me that he gave me a semester's work there because he taught me things that, naturally, I'd never known. Why should I? I hadn't had it, but through his help - and he helped me all the time. He left

not too long after that, and I taught the journalism class.

LH: Many of the Herald's stories actually were written in and for the journalism class?

FR: Oh yes, and some of these people, believe it or not, have gone on in the newspaper field. For instance, Larry Stone at Central City, Gene and Wilbur Cannon over at Scottsville; and I have several who have gone on in the field. And Thomas - Bill Thomas, has gone into professional writing. Dave Whittaker was with the Courier-Journal seventeen years. And to take it as a whole, I made a list not too long ago of some of them. I hear from some of them, and considering the fact the poor teacher they had at the beginning, they have done well in spite of it.

LH: Well, course you see a number of them at the Herald breakfast each year.

FR: Yes.

LH: Although you did miss this last one.

FR: The first time that I have missed. I went to the Alumni Dinner that night before; I had the beginning of a touch of laryngitis, and I just talked too much. The next morning I could hardly speak above a whisper, and I was so disappointed. See, I instituted that breakfast. I had the Herald editors and business managers. I believe it was fifty-one, and I paid for all the - it was just a private breakfast. Someone made the motion that day that we make it an annual af-

fair, and it's met every time since then.

LH: And it's grown and grown and grown.

FR: Oh, grown and grown and grown. That is right.

LH: Miss Richards, suppose, oh, back in the period of the nineteen thirties, what was your normal teaching load? How many courses or how many hours per week?

FR: Well, I think five. I can't remember having six. Does that sound right?

JB: That was the normal load as I recall.

LH: We've talked about some of your colleagues within the department, and we talked earlier about some of your teachers perhaps in other departments. On in the nineteen thirties and forties were there any other faculty members at Western that were especially distinguished?

FR: Yes, there was a woman in the Physical Education Department, Elizabeth Dabbs, who, in my estimation, was a superior woman. She was a well educated person, a woman from South Carolina, and a woman of fine background. She stands out as one of the outstanding women I knew at Western. And one interesting person was Miss Day. Miss Day was head of the Home Economics Department, and a woman who was, well, easily upset. I remember one thing about her. In the Ohio River flood in thirty-seven, three hundred evacuees were brought to Bowling Green, and they were served meals in the gymnasium - the

library now - and the College Heights Herald office, by the way, was in that building at that time. It didn't occur to me what might happen. I took from my office anything that I thought was of any value, and I don't mean that anything disappeared from my office. But, things were so dirty and things that I had planned to keep a while - materials pertaining to journalism - were in bad condition. The office just had to be cleared out. But anyway Mr. Cherry made me chairman of the ladies' committee to serve the meals there. We didn't prepare the meals, but we were to serve three hundred people. Miss Day, head of the Home Economics Department, and all of them had much fun about my being chairman of that committee and Mrs. Day a member of it too. And she would say, "Now Miss Richards, do we put the fork on this or the other side?" Well that's neither here-nor-there, but it's just something that we continue to remember.

JB: Do you recall anything else about the time when the flood victims were there? Were there any of them housed on the campus, or were they just fed there?

FR: I have forgotten where they were housed. They were, some of them, I think, in that building, but there were three hundred. And, of course, they were placed all over the state. Western just happened to have that many, and Mr. Cherry cooperated with the others. The other colleges did as much in proportion, I think, as Western did. I believe, in the ROTC, but anyway, in the armory there - some of them were housed there.

LH: Where the television station is now? Do you remember how long

that they were with you?

FR: No, I don't remember. There were two things that year I remember particularly: the Ohio River flood and Mr. Cherry's death. See, he died in 1937.

LH: That must have come as a real shock to the college and the community.

FR: It came as a real shock.

LH: You had no particular desire to continue with that type of feeding assignment when the crisis was over?

FR: No, I felt that I had done my patriotic duty as head of the serving committee for the flood victims.

LH: Mr. Diddle was a friend of yours too, wasn't he?

FR: Yes, Mr. Diddle was a good friend of mine, and Mrs. Diddle is one of my best life-long friends. A few days ago she sent a book, John Crowe Ransom, and I hadn't even seen it. Mrs. Diddle and I had been friends a long time. The Diddle place was more-or-less my second home while I was there. I never shall forget one thing. I happened to be there at a party one night, and the phone rang. Mr. Diddle was called to the phone, and I could tell that he was disgruntled about something. He said, "Why I paid him thirty-five dollars. We had agreed to pay him twenty-five dollars." Evidently the other person said that, "Well, he's not satisfied." Mr. Diddle

then more-or-less repeated what he said, "Why I paid him twenty-five dollars and his contract was for twenty-five." He said, "I gave him that other ten dollars just free gratitude." Now I heard him say that. Now, should that have been told?

LH: Oh certainly.

JB: That's just another one of the "Diddleisms."

FR: I was very fond of Mr. Diddle, and he was a good friend of mine.

LH: What about your relations with President Cherry once you were a member of the faculty? We talked earlier about President Cherry when you were a student. Did you have many contacts with him as a faculty member?

FR: Yes, I consider him as one of the best friends I ever had, and sometimes feel he gave me more credit for being something that I deserved. He was very good to me, but all the presidents were. So I am thankful to all of them.

LH: How would you describe him, Miss Richards, as the administrator? Did he believe for example, in a great deal of committee work, or did he prefer to make decisions by himself? Could you get a quick answer from him?

FR: I believe that he believed in committee work, but he understood his committee.

LH: I think I understand you. Did he delegate authority much?

FR: In the frame of the law, yes, but I think he was very particular about who served on the committee. Does that say what?

LH: I think I get the idea of what you mean.

FR: I thought many times, for instance, of Mr. Cherry and Mr. Garrett, and I was very fond of both of them. I liked Paul Garrett; and Mr. Garrett - is it all right for me to say this?

LH: Oh, yes.

FR: Mr. Garrett was an omnivorous reader. He read and then he had his secretary take notes of what he read. He read widely; he read the best and he read trash. But he was a good reader, and he was a retentive reader. And I heard Julia Neal say this at founder's day one time, so what I'm saying here exactly tells it as I see it, and I'm more or less quoting what she said. She said that he gave to his chapel talks a tone of literary, and I remember a new faculty member came to her after that and told her, said, "I'm glad you said that 'cause I didn't know that Dr. Garrett had that quality." Someone that this man did not know said, "That I didn't know that." I happened to be there and I said, "He did." Dr. Wilson's influence will last a long time after he is gone, and I am reminded every now and then of something that he said. For instance, I spoke at the beginning of this interview about a revolutionary grant that was given to my great-great grandfather. It had a lot of bottom land on it; it was consider a good farm, bottom land farm. And I re-

member one time my father said that the sediment left on it, no thicker than a knife blade, would make a living for his four children in corn. Years after that, I had heard Gordon Wilson say that the day of the bottom land farm had passed. Johnson grass and not knowing how to preserve it. This farm that I mentioned that had belonged to my great-great grandfather and to my great grandmother and to my grandmother then to my mother and father, because my father bought my uncle's share of it, and now I heard my brother say this last week, "Now it is practically worthless." He said that the bottom land is covered. Now the last time, it used to be a show place. It was a beautiful place, gorgeous place. He says that those bottom lands - there were three or four of them - they belonged to different farms and my people bought them. He said that land is covered with Johnson isn't even tended." Now I heard Gordon Wilson say that and he explained what he meant until he said that I didn't know what he meant. The study he made in Mammoth Cave Park area the sayings of the people - you see those sayings are gradually being eliminated. Different authorities in that line of work have said that it's one of the best local studies made in the United States. I might say this; when his last book on the study of Mammoth Cave, the sayings of Mammoth Cave, when that book was published, someone at the University of Kentucky conceived the idea of having a luncheon for him at Mammoth Cave, and I happened to go to that luncheon. The centerpiece was a piece of driftwood - Worster did it - with birds on it. Well at the close of the dinner or luncheon, he gave that to me and that's one of my prize possessions. And I would like for you to see it before you leave. Dr. Wilson, in my estimation, was a eminent scholar, a great humanitarian, and all together one of the most delightful men that I ever knew. He was the head of my department, and he was my teacher when

I was in college. And I think one of the phases of my teaching life which I regard so highly is the fact that I knew Gordon Wilson, and that I had enough of something to appreciate his many fine characteristics. I really feel that way.

JB: I have just one or two things, and these are just things that I've picked up as we've gone through. So there will be no real order to them. One of the things we were talking about Miss Gabby collecting for the Kentucky Building. In those years prior to constructing that building, where did she keep all these things that were being brought in?

FR: Where did she keep what?

JB: Where did she keep all of the Kentucky material that was being brought in?

FR: Oh, she had to keep it just where she could. There was so little space there. She didn't have any regular place. You know one of her very early projects, the excavation of some Indian mounds in Warren County; and part of the material was in old Potter College. I sometimes wonder what the college would have done if it hadn't been for Potter College.

LH: It would have had difficulties at one time or another.

JB: One other thing, do you remember there was a time when the home economics department or the student center operated a tea room? I heard several faculty mention this tea room, and I think it was in

the basement of...

FR: Of Potter College, Potter Hall.

JB: Potter Hall.

FR: Well, it was one of the most delightful parts of the college, and it was operated for the - students didn't go in often. Students worked there. For instance, I know in Franklin now Miss Neily, Nancy Neily, the wife of a dentist who is now dead; but she worked there to help pay her expenses through college, working in the tea room. And you could get a meal, well, for a very small amount. You didn't get a full meal; it wasn't one of that kind of thing. It was just a typical tea room, and the sandwiches were good. And the fellowship was good, and it was just a very delightful thing to have.

JB: In the days, well, before Cherry Hall and before the time you had certain areas pretty much assigned to different academic departments, did the faculty have individual offices, or did you pretty much use your class room as your offices?

FR: I remember where my office was in old Potter College on the second floor. I was on one side of the desk, and Mrs. T. C. Cherry was on the other side. It was almost - Dr. Stickles, I believe, had his upstairs second floor, front office, the one facing what is now College Street, and sometimes there were three or four. I just happened to be lucky in being with Mrs. Cherry. We had our office together, I say, for maybe three, four, maybe four, five years, but office space was very crowded and here's something else about that of-

fice. I happened to have a class right across the hall. Say here's my office right over here, and here is a class room. On the outside next to the wall of the classroom was a cage in which there was a rattlesnake.

LH: Not a student?

FR: No, in back of this hall was a large room. I think it must have been the old auditorium in old Potter College. Some science classes met in that room, and this rattlesnake was in connection with some science work. How I don't know; but anyway, I had a class in this room right here. And there was a boy by the name of James Wade giving a report on Common Dowles Speckled Bands. Speckled Bands of course was the snake. Well, he told it well. The boy had a lot of ability of a certain type and later lost his mind. Well, he told this graphically. He told it phonetically. And when he finally reached the conclusion, that rattlesnake rattled. And that's the truth if I've ever told it. I heard it, and you know that I almost failed to hold that class in there, and that was the result of the Speckled Bands. And just think, we mixed literature and rattlesnakes.

JB: Can you tell me anything about the Model Rural School that one time was on the campus? Do you know where it was?

FR: Yes, I know it was right across the street from Ivan Wilson's house. There was a beautiful tree there, and the little building was a stone building. Do you remember that? Mrs. Clark was the teacher, Mrs. Ethel Clark, and it was supposed to be the practice house for people going into rural school training. 'Course that was

in the day of the rural school, probably the Warren School. And Mrs. Clark was supposed to be by people who by administrator in that field were supposed to be a model for rural teaching. I have heard that she was just one of the best that could be found, and that little school was there until another building had to be put there, and is torn away. And the Wilson's just regretted so much that it had to go. Does that answer your question?

JB: Yes, Ma'am, you remember it quite well.

FR: Yes. I remember it quite well.

JB: Do you remember the building, well, in its last years? It was used as the home management practice house for home economics, and before that it had been, I think, the music department. And I believe earlier that it had been a stable. It's, it was right on the corner; it almost stuck out into Normal Drive. And they tore it down.

FR: Well, I tell you, wasn't that Cabell Hall?

JB: Was that Cabell Hall?

FR: Cabell Hall was on the - you go, well suppose you're on Fifteenth Street in front of the statue. Well, it's just when you turn into the circle. Of course, it's now the Gordon Wilson. Now, the Cabell Hall was right there.

JB: No, now the one I have in mind is in the other direction. You would go down to the training school and turn right going down the hill.

FR: I know where that's at.

JB: And around the corner.

LH: Just below the swimming pool, Miss Richards, it was where the girls lived who were taking home economics for a number of years.

JB: And it was just almost juttet out into the street.

LH: One corner did.

JB: And I heard that for a while, it was the Music Department.

FR: Well, Cabell Hall was when I was in school there, Cabell Hall was in the Music Department. I mean the Music Department was in Cabell Hall, and then the Music building, I know where it is, now is that the one you were thinking of?

JB: No Ma'am, this building was torn down, I guess when they built the new library.

LH: Yes, it's where the tower part of the library is.

FR: Now, have I made myself clear how that little building that was where the Gordon Wilson building is now? That used to be the old library.

LH: Right.

FR: Well, when I was in school there, it was the Music Department; and then it was the Home Economics Department. And then it was moved around the circle. So it has, you get that?

JB: Yes, I know what you mean. It's on the corner there right behind the faculty house. This was on down the hill a little bit.

FR: Well, I see. I was wrong about that.

JB: Did you know Miss Egbert pretty well?

FR: Miss who?

JB: Miss Egbert?

FR: Yes, indeed I did, and she was one of the good teachers. Wasn't she?

LH: Yes.

FR: She was one of the good teachers. I'm glad that you mentioned her, and she and I graduated in the same class.

JB: Oh, did you?

FR: She was in the class of twenty-five.

LH: Another faculty member you mentioned a moment ago, just in passing, we might come back to for a moment, Ivan Wilson.

FR: I don't see how I could have missed him. Ivan Wilson was a great person. He had qualities that you just can't put your finger on, but you know what it is. You know I mentioned my early teachers, Mr. Bravard, a few minutes ago. In thinking over what I might tell you today, I didn't know what you were going to ask; but Mr. Bravard had qualities, innate qualities, that characterized him as a gentleman. And that reminds me of something that I have read that a Yale professor - I think he's from Yale - said to his students one day. He said, "Young men, I doubt whether any of you has ever known a gentleman." Well, there were these men, their fathers many of them had been graduates of Yale. They were men of distinction, many of them, but he explained to them that it was a quality. Mr. Bravard had that quality. Now Ivan Wilson has a quality that's different from which Mr. Bravard had, but it's something distinctively Ivan Wilson's quality. It's not a culture such as my teacher Mr. Bravard had; it isn't that. It's something just as good, you see, but Ivan Wilson had something that - I believe more people go to see him and more people went to see Mrs. Wilson. Did you happen to go to her funeral?

JB: No, I didn't.

FR: I went to the funeral.

LH: I was there.

FR: You were? Well, did you ever see more beautiful flowers in your life? Not the great number, but I do believe, they were the most gorgeous flowers that I ever saw. And there are those simple, humble,

genuine people that any college in the world would have been fortunate and honored to have had Ivan Wilson. He was my teacher. See, a good many of these that I have mentioned were teachers of mine, and he was a good, good teacher. Without ever using the word method, he wouldn't have known what method means.

LH: I don't think so.

JB: He always impressed me as being one of the most gentle, one of the kindest men that I've ever known.

FR: Yes.

LH: Miss Richards, I think before we close, we should say something to pay tribute to 1340 College Street.

FR: Well, it was an institution to me. I stayed there practically all the time I was in Bowling Green, and Miss Egbert was there a while. Miss Eaton, Mary Frances Eaton, was there a while; Lavinia Hunter was there a while. And you know about four years ago, I went to Paducah to Mary Frances Eaton's funeral, and about three years ago, I went to Bowling Green to Lavinia's funeral. About two years ago or a little more, I went to Percy Legwishe's funeral, and you know, the four of us were there together. Now, during the time, I was there longer than any other one. Maybe one would be away and move and somebody else would come; I was there solid time from the time I went until I came home in '64.

LH: It was a very convenient location, wasn't it, to Cherry Hall?

FR: Yes, it was fine.

LH: Miss Richards, is there anything else that we haven't talked about that you would like to comment on?

FR: I would like to tell you something else about Ivan Wilson.

LH: Good.

FR: You know, he was interested in old water mills, and years ago somebody told me that he painted, did a water color, of Butlersville Mill in Allen County. Well, my great-grandfather went to mill there. My grandfather went to mill there. My father, when he was a little boy and visited his grandfather, went to mill there. After my mother and father came into possession of this ancestral home, we lived there a few years, but when we moved, we knew that we, my father, wanted to buy this place. And he knew if he ever did get it, which would be at the death of an elderly woman, he knew then we'd move back here. And we did. Well, then my little brothers went to mill there. Well, I asked him about it one day, and he said, "Well, I don't have it. I think it's in Chicago." Well, over the years, I continued to ask about it, and each time he said, "I think Austin Duckett has it in Chicago." I went to see him about a year ago, and my brother, who has wanted that picture - oh, how he has - said, "Ask him about the Butlerville Mill." And during the time I was there, first I thought I wouldn't - I thought I couldn't ask him any more, but I did. And he said, "Yes, it's here," he said, "Austin Duckett had it." I think Duckett wanted to show it at the Chicago Art Institute. Anyway, he had it there and just hadn't brought it

home; it was there for years. And finally I asked him. He said, "It's here." He finally got up and went into his studio and came back with it. When I saw it, I never wanted anything in my life as much as I wanted that. And then he left and brought back a piece of wrapping paper, and he began trying to wrap it. And Charlie Roberts - now I don't know whether you remember him or not - but Charlie Roberts and his wife were with me. They had taken me over there, and Charlie helped him to wrap it. And he handed it to me and said, "Now, it's for you." Well, I was never so glad to get anything in my life. And he said that of the water mills that he had seen that was the best example of a pioneer type that he had ever seen. Would you like to see it while you're here?

LH: Yes.

FR: It means that you'd have to go upstairs. I hate for you to have to do that, but I would just like...

LH: I would be delighted to.

FR: Well, is there anything else?

LH: I was just going to ask you that.

JB: I think there's enough in it.

LH: Thank you very much, Miss Richards.

END OF INTERVIEW