

Interviewee: Richard Hunt Davis, Jr.

Interviewer: James Meier

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UF 291

M: It is March 22, 1996. I am here with Professor Hunt Davis in his Grinter Hall office on the campus of the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida. My name is Jim Meier. I am conducting the interview. For the record Professor Davis could you give your full name?

D: Richard Hunt Davis, Jr.

M: Where were you born?

D: I was born in Hyland Park, Michigan, which is surrounded by Detroit on September 30, 1939.

M: What were the names of your parents?

D: My father was Hunt Davis and my mother was **Helen**.

M: Were they from the Michigan area?

D: My father was from Nebraska and my mother was from Michigan.

M: Do you have any siblings?

D: Yes. I have a brother named Michael who is two years younger than I am and holds a Ph.D. from the University of Florida. He currently lives in Denver. I have

a sister **Nina Portun** who is five and a half years younger than I am. She currently lives in Peru.

M: Are you married?

D: Yes, I am. My wife is Jeanne. Gruber is her maiden name. Her mother taught French and thus it [Jeanne] has the French spelling.

M: Is she from Michigan too?

D: No. She is from Minnesota. She spent all of her life growing up in St. Paul, Minnesota, where she was born and raised. We met as undergraduates at Grinnell College [located in central Iowa].

M: Do you have any children?

D: We have two children. A son Richard who just turned twenty-six a few days ago. He lives in Washington, D.C. Actually he lives in Virginia across from Washington, D.C. A son Johnathon who will be twenty-five in a few more days. He teaches in St. Louis.

M: You were born in Michigan. Did you grow up in Hyland Park?

D: No. Actually Hyland Park is surrounded by Detroit and I lived in Detroit but the house was in Hyland Park. I was born there and lived there. My father worked for the **S.S. [?] Company** but then went off in the Navy. After coming back from the end of the war in 1946 we left Detroit to go to Colorado and the little town of Lyons which is not too far from Estes Park and near Rocky Mountain National Park where my grandfather was in the lumbering business. We spent only a year there and then we went to a town called Broken Bow, Nebraska, and my father

went back into the variety store business. We lived there for a couple of years and then moved to Winterset, Iowa, in the midst of the county where The Bridges of Madison County [a Clint Eastwood and Meryl Streep film] was made. Also it is very well-known because John Wayne comes from that town and I believe that George Washington Carver does too. So it is a renowned town. We spent a couple of years there and then went to a rural town called Osceola, Iowa.

M: How long would you have been in that town?

D: I went through the seventh, eighth, and ninth grade in Osceola, so I would have been about thirteen, fourteen, or fifteen. Then my family moved to another town called Cherokee, Iowa, but I never went to school there because I carried newspapers for the Des Moines Register and Tribune which served as an agent for **Phillips Exeter Academy**. Because the owners of the newspaper had been associated with Exeter they awarded scholarships [to go there] both for college and [high school]. I won a scholarship to go to Exeter and so for my sophomore, junior, and senior years I was in New Hampshire and graduated from there in 1957.

M: So you did not have any family in New Hampshire at that time?

D: No. It was a big experience for a young boy.

M: I could imagine. So that was during the ages of what?

D: I graduated right before my eighteenth birthday, so I was seventeen.

M: Was that a tough experience for you: going from one school to another? You moved around quite a bit.

D: I feel I contributed to the statistics of the United States at that time of the average American moving once every three years during that mobile time in our past. We certainly contributed to those statistics. So I do not have a clear hometown. I feel I am a midwesterner, because then my family lived in Cherokee, Iowa, and I went off to New Hampshire for three years of secondary school.

In those days we rode the train. I had great exciting times riding the train. I took the New England State _____ from Chicago to Boston and then the Boston A and R rode up to Exeter. We did not fly in those days. I played cards all night long on the train. I had a great time. Then I came back and went to Grinnell College for four years of college. I graduated in 1961. I then went to the University of Wisconsin for my graduate work. So I feel very much a midwesterner but with no particular hometown in the midwest.

M: When you graduated from Exeter did you go directly into Grinnell?

D: Yes. I went straight to Grinnell.

M: What determined your choice of Grinnell?

D: At that time Exeter was an all-male school and I thought I might like co-education. I did apply to Dartmouth which was still an all-male school but I heard from Grinnell and thought I might like to go back to the midwest, so I went to Grinnell. It was a fortunate thing I did too because my future wife enrolled in Grinnell in the same year that I was enrolled there and that is where we met.

M: Did you meet in your first year there?

D: Yes, we did.

M: So you were dating throughout your college years.

D: For most of our college years.

M: Was there any one field you studied in Grinnell?

D: I became very interested in history well before high school. At Exeter I had excellent history teachers: Francis Broderick, for instance, who was a biographer of W.E.B. DuBois and was also the first Peace Corps director in Ghana [a republic in West Africa]; Henry Bragdon who wrote, as I recall, a general U.S. history for secondary schools; and others. There was very good history teaching then, so I went to college pretty sure I wanted to be a history major. I never had much doubt about that.

M: Were you already leaning towards African history?

D: No. There was no African history taught. The only interaction or acquaintance I had with Africa was a course I took on the anthropology of Africa. I recall very well we used that **Murdoch** book, I believe its **Peoples of Africa**. If I looked on my shelf I think I can still find it. It is sort of a classic. I really had the sense that my professor for that course, who was an archeologist in the American Southwest, was probably a chapter ahead of us. He had not taught it very frequently, if at all, before. I had an international interest because I was president my senior year of the college International Relations Club. So I sort of had this international interest. I was interested somewhat in Latin America but knew very little about Africa.

M: So at what point did you turn to Africa? That was not until you arrived at the University of Wisconsin?

D: Yes. I went to Wisconsin. I had not decided if I wanted to go into law or into history. I had a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship and I was accepted to the University of California, Berkeley and the University of Wisconsin. I had a scholarship with which I could have gone to law school in the University of Chicago. I decided that I really wanted to study history. I was neither married nor engaged but Jeanne had gotten a job teaching in Beloit, Wisconsin, which was fifty or sixty miles south of Madison. So I think that is probably why I went to Wisconsin instead of Berkeley. I went to Wisconsin planning to major in U.S. history; my masters degree is in twentieth century U.S. history. I worked with **David Shannon**. But I was actually and maybe the best word I should say is bored with what I was studying. I did a masters degree thesis on a man named Merlin Hull who was a Wisconsin Progressive congressman in the 1930s. I was hoping to understand Progressive politics, intra-party relations, but I could not find anything about that in his papers. I did find lots of American Legion telegrams from American Legion posts telling him please vote this way or that way. I thought I might want to study Latin American history. I had some Spanish in college and I had always been interested in Latin America. I even toyed with the idea, which was sort of romantic I suppose, of going to a university in Latin America for a year or so which I did not do. It was a situation where Latin American history was part of a comparative tropical history program. As I recall it was not Latin America on its own at that time. So I took a course that **Philip Curtin** taught called The Expansion of Europe. That course dealt not with what Europeans

were doing overseas but what the impact of European expansion was on indigenous populations in various areas that fell under European rule. I knew very little about Curtin. I had no knowledge that he was one of the eminent historians of Africa but I was fascinated with what he was talking about particularly when it came to African history. So I recall very well, maybe it was 1964, that I came home one day and said to my wife, "I am going to switch to African history."

M: And that was while you were still engaged in your masters?

D: I was still engaged in my masters. I was working at the state historical society and I have always been interested in museums as a way to teach history, a very effective way I think. There was to be a seminar on the history of museums that I was going to take but not enough students signed up for it. So I did not take it. So who knows? I was obviously ready to move out of U.S. history maybe even leave graduate school altogether. Who knows if that seminar had made and had proven as interesting as I hoped it would I may very well have gone off in that direction: be a curator of history at some museum rather than a professor at the University of Florida.

M: That happened in the second year of your masters?

D: Maybe the third.

M: So you did a three year masters?

D: It took me longer than that by the time I finally got my masters. I could not sit for what we called preliminary examinations, we call them qualifying exams here, until I finished my masters degree. I was all ready to take those exams but my

masters thesis had not been finished yet. So I decided I better write my masters thesis so I could get on with my Ph.D. in African history or comparative tropical history with an emphasis on Africa, and then work in Latin America and Southeast Asia.

M: So what year did you obtain your M.A.?

D: I think it is dated 1965. I entered graduate school in 1961. That is why I try not to be too hypocritical when I inquire if people are making progress and so on. I took my preliminary exams in the spring of 1965, and my wife and I headed off to South Africa for the 1965-1966 academic year. I was back at Wisconsin for 1966-1967 and interviewed here in the fall of 1966. I started teaching here in the fall of 1967 A.D.D. My Ph.D. is dated 1969.

M: When you went to Wisconsin you were on a Woodrow Wilson scholarship?

D: I was on a Woodrow Wilson scholarship which was for one year.

M: What was your source of funding for the remainder of your time?

D: Then the next year I served as a resident advisor, house fellows they called them, in the residence halls which provided room, board, tuition, and fees. So I did not need to worry too much about money since I worked a little bit in the summer. I told my wife that I could support myself but that I could not support her but fortunately she was teaching. As I recall probably the third year I was in graduate school I did not have anything and then I got a National Defense Education Act Fellowship under Title VI to pursue African history.

M: Were Title VIs new at that time?

D: The National Defense Education Act I think was 1957 or 1959, I forget the precise date, but that money had been there a little while.

M: Why would the National Defense create an act for university students to study foreign languages?

D: The National Defense Education Act was in the Department of Education, the money was in that department. If you recall, in the struggle against communism, the Cold War, our interstate highways that are a product of the Eisenhower administration were not built just because we needed the highways. It was the National Defense Highway Act. A lot of national needs were met behind this notion of national defense. Those bridges of those highways had to be a standard height big enough for a missile on the back of a semi-trailer to get underneath as they zoomed around the country on these highways that would be there for national defense. Thanks to that we have a fine interstate highway system. Sputnik was key to this. We said that we were falling behind the Russians and education was one of those areas of importance. If we are in this worldwide contest against the Russians and against communism, engaged in this Cold War, we have to have people who could speak (**far-see**), Swahili, Chinese; who know the language, the history, the politics, the culture of these areas. Of course this includes the Soviet Union and Latin America as well. If we are going to be successful in this prolonged contest for power we need people who are knowledgeable in these areas. I was a beneficiary of that. Although they dropped the national defense the current Higher Education Act with Title VI is a direct descendant of that Cold War legislation.

- M: Had you any funding at Grinnell too?
- D: Yes. I had a scholarship to Exeter and I had a scholarship to Grinnell. My family could not have afforded private tuition.
- M: Did your father, during this time that you were going to the university, continue at his variety store?
- D: He sold the variety store and then he worked for awhile for Investor's Diversified Services. Then when I was in graduate school he and my mother opened up a dress shop in Cherokee, Iowa. He opened his own store which had been his goal for a long time. It was too small in comparison to the local Woolworth's store. That, of course, was in the day before K-Mart or Wal-Mart. Main street America was still very viable in those days. They moved to Sioux City towards the end of my time in graduate school. He worked for Goodwill. He was the finance officer of a local Goodwill organization in Sioux City, Iowa. Later he went back into the retail business and opened up a specialty wood store.
- M: Did your siblings get equally good opportunities at education? You mentioned your brother has a Ph.D.
- D: Yes. My brother followed me and went to Exeter. Then he went to Grinnell as well. For a student he had a very interesting experience at Grinnell. Grinnell had a guest house and he worked there. One night he was working the night shift and former President Truman came to the college to give a lecture and stayed at the guest house. My brother had an opportunity to chat with Mr. Truman for a while after he came back to the guest house. Grinnell had wonderful speakers. I

remember having spent an evening in a dinner seminar with Pierre Mendes-France, the former prime minister of France.

[My brother] went into the peace corps in Columbia. My wife and I visited him on our way to Africa to do my research. He came here [the University of Florida] to pursue a degree in rural sociology with T. Lynn Smith who was a very well-noted, internationally renowned rural sociologist at the University of Florida. My sister went to Grinnell for awhile. She left college to get married and finished her degree in California. She has her masters degree also. I must confess I do not remember where it was she finished her degree. I will have to ask her. It is embarrassing that I do not know.

M: That is probably quite unusual at this time for three children [in the same family] to be so relatively well educated. Were your parents a driving force?

D: Yes. My mother never had a chance to go to college. As a girl her mother had died and she was living with an older sister in South Bend, Indiana. She won a scholarship to the University of Chicago which was quite remarkable in those days but her family said, I do not know how we can afford to clothe you for that. So she never went to college and my father had only one year of college when his father thought it was time that he went out and started working for a living. I think things in his family had turned for the worse financially as well. He went to the University of Nebraska for a year. It is a shame that he died before the Fiesta Bowl this past January because it would have been a good discussion: Florida versus Nebraska.

M: He would have been on the wrong side though.

D: He would have thought we were on the wrong side. Unfortunately he died before that happened. He died in February of 1995. He lived here in Gainesville for his last few years. That is why both my brother and I went to Exeter. They did not take girls at that time but they did have a summer school where girls could go and my sister went there for a summer. My parents really were committed to us receiving the best education. They said, "You get in where you can get into school and we will figure out how we are going to pay for it."

M: But you made that easy getting a scholarship, so you were extremely precocious?

D: I would not call it that.

M: I mean to have gotten the funding.

D: Fortunately I was a good student. [Exeter] had a very good secondary school education, so for both my brother and I having a chance to go to Exeter gave us a good opportunity. Schools wanted us to go there. Actually Grinnell usually got one or two Exeter alumni a year, so it was not totally out of the question. But I think something like 10 or 15 percent of the incoming class at Harvard were my classmates from Exeter. Most people went to Harvard or Yale, few went to Princeton, some to Dartmouth, so it was unusual to leave the Northeast and the Ivy League.

M: Getting back to your time at Wisconsin. Wisconsin is a very important school for African studies, many eminent people have come from that program. You were studying under Philip Curtin at the time.

D: And **Jan Vansina**.

M: Were there any other African scholars there?

D: No. Those were really the principle ones. They had not added other people.

Steve Feierman joined the faculty after I had left Madison as a young assistant professor. For awhile they had brought a person from North Africa named **Stuart Schaar**. But through the 1960s it was principally Curtin and Vansina.

M: Was **A.C. Jordan** there?

D: A.C. Jordan was there and **Xhosa**, so African languages. In fact we are having a visitor next week, **Neil Skinner**, who is speaking to the [barraza] of the African studies center. He was the Professor of [?] there. I know Professor Skinner from those days. Crawford Young, a very prominent political scientist, was one of the other people there. So Wisconsin was in the forefront of African studies. I remember a seminar that I believe Vansina taught, and Chris Ehert, who is very well-known historian now at U.C.L.A., came from Northwestern to the seminar and **Bill Pruitt**, who has since died, also came for the seminar one semester. David Robinson, who was a student at Columbia, spent a semester studying with Curtin and Vansina at Wisconsin. He is a very well-known historian now. He is a former president of the African Studies Association. It was by chance, not by intent, that I fell into that program at the time it was really developing. As you know, we interviewed Iris Berger for the directorship of African studies. I do not know whether she will be offered the position or whether she would come here and take the position if it were offered. She is a very well-known historian of Africa with a Wisconsin Ph.D. She entered Wisconsin in the later 1960s. I think

she entered in maybe the fall of 1966 or so after I had come back from my field research. So probably in terms of my generation an unusual share of the historians of Africa and especially among those who have maybe made their mark have come from Wisconsin. That includes not only Americans; there were a large number of African scholars as well. For instance, E.J. Alagoa, who is a very prominent Nigerian historian, was there when I was there. He is now one of the most senior historians of Nigeria. Kings Phiri was a little after me. He is a very senior historian from Malawi. Thomas Tlou, who is from Botswana, was Botswana's ambassador to the United Nations and here I was an assistant professor at the University of Florida. He is now the vice chancellor of the University of Botswana. So well-known scholars from Africa as well had their degrees from Wisconsin.

M: Do you keep in touch with some of these people?

D: Yes. I see them now and then, probably not as conscientiously as I should. One of the wonderful advantages of the African Studies Association is seeing people at these meetings and so on.

M: In his autobiography Vansina mentions the different approaches to African history and his conflicting approach with that of Phil Curtin. Was there a tension at the time between them in the department or was it an amicable relationship with simply a difference of philosophical approach? Was that ever noticeable to graduate students?

D: At Wisconsin in U.S. history there was a very well-known feud between Professors Hesselstine, who is a civil war historian, and Merle Curti, who was a U.S. intellectual historian. By the way I just saw Professor Curti's obituary in Sunday's New York Times. He died at age ninety-eight. Students could really get themselves in a jam, but with Curtin and Vansina we were aware somewhat of differences but it never impacted us as students. For example Phil Curtin was the director of my dissertation but when I finally was ready to defend it in the spring semester of 1969 he happened to be on leave. So I wrote Jan Vansina and asked him if he would do me the kindness of sharing the defense and he did quite willingly. I very much appreciated that. He did not tell me, you're a Curtin student; I'm not going to have anything to do with you. It was not the point. Some of my U.S. history colleagues got caught in this crossfire but that did not affect us in African history. We learned different things from them. I think, as that book [Vansina's autobiography] points out, Vansina was much more African centered in his focus and Curtin saw a more global approach and tried to put African history in this wider global text. One could not have envisaged Jan Vansina teaching an expansion of Europe course. One could not envisage Phil Curtin teaching a course on oral tradition or a course based on oral history. Curtin's Ph.D. research led to a book called Two Jamaicas, which I have right here, that looked at the role of ideas in a tropical colony, 1830-1835. So his dissertation led to that book and the Western image of Africa which was formed particularly by British ideas of African history. He always had a more, if you will, externally based look. Where Jan Vansina's experience is this young

anthropologist sent off to work for the Belgium Official Research Organization in the Congo which is just a very different approach to the study of the African past.

I think the two of them together meant that we had superb training as budding historians. I might also say that I think that so many of the present day historians that have done so well and have published a lot--the ones being cited and so forth--and I am not including myself because I have not published to the degree that some of my peers have who were there at that time, have Wisconsin degrees. And they have done so well because of that energy, if that is the correct word I want to use, between the Curtin and Vansina approaches. They got a very diverse and complementary training from those two men.

M: So it was a very positive experience for you?

D: Yes. I know a friend of mine who was there just a few years later and I was talking to with him about Wisconsin. He said, I did not have that experience there. But I happened to be there just as the program was really gathering steam, so there was a real sense of excitement among the students and faculty. In the fall of 1994, there was a big retirement party for Vansina and a lot of people from all over the country came. All of us were really pleased to be back there and to be part of that event. I flew to Milwaukee and picked up a car and drove a friend of mine who teaches at William and Mary back to Milwaukee. He happens to be a Sudanese. We had a really nice conversation talking about how fortunate we were that we had gone to Wisconsin, to be able to have the ticket to that event which was a degree from Wisconsin.

M: Which made you very marketable I would imagine at that time.

D: Yes, I think so.

M: What was the topic of your dissertation?

D: It was a study of nineteenth century African education in the Cape colony in South Africa. There was a model at that time and Curtin was one for models maybe that differentiated him also from Vansina. The model was that of plural society and **M.G. Smith** was the one who developed that. I was interested in the question of acculturation: Africans move in, if you will, into the European social-cultural sphere and become, in terms of the times, acculturated. Education was the vehicle for many of these Africans of whom Nelson Mandela is a principle example. Of course it was closely linked with missionary enterprise. That was sort of the theoretical or the question I was asking: how does this process work that you get this group of Africans in South Africa who become, I want to avoid the term "westernized" because they had assimilated much of Western culture without becoming de-Africanized, acculturated. It involved political history, intellectual history--the history of ideas is clearly involved, and also social history.

M: You went in 1965. Was that for a full year?

D: Pretty much. We were gone nine or ten months but I guess we were in South Africa from maybe September until May or June. Then we went to England for the summer. I used records of the British record office, the PRO--Public Record Office.

M: You visited your brother in Columbia?

D: Yes. We went by way of Columbia. We stopped there and saw him in the Peace Corps in Columbia. We also stayed in Rio de Janeiro for a few days

which was the only time I have ever been there. Then we took a Luftansa flight that started in Santiago to San Paulo, maybe Buenas Aires too, I do not know, to Rio and then to Dakar. A good friend of mine Leo Spitzer and his wife were working in Sierra Leone where he did a study of the Creoles. He was among the group of students I was with at Wisconsin, so we stopped in Sierra Leone. I came down with malaria which I picked up in Columbia. We were going to go to Nigeria. The principal of where my wife taught in Madison was part of a teacher education project in Nigeria. We were going to visit him but we never got there.

M: Was it a serious bout with malaria?

D: Yes. I was in the hospital.

M: For how long were you laid up?

D: I was laid up for about a week in the hospital and a week recovering. I have never been sicker in my life.

M: Were you on death's door?

D: I thought I might be. I do not know whether I was. From my perspective I was feeling pretty miserable.

M: Did that have lingering effects?

D: No. It has never had any impact that I know of.

M: You made it in fragile condition to South Africa?

D: Yes. I had shots in the hip and I could feel the changes in the weather for six months from having those shots in my hip. I thought the weather was going to change and sure enough it did. I could have been a weatherman.

M: Where did you spend most of your time in South Africa?

D: In Cape Town. I lived there, got a flat there, studied Xhosa more while I was there. Most of the material I was looking at was in the South African Library of Cape Town.

M: Did you find that your research went well?

D: Yes. I found enough to write a dissertation anyway.

M: There were no road blocks to the information you needed?

D: No. I got the information I needed. Actually I learned a lesson. This friend of mine whom I visited in Sierra Leone, Leo Spitzer, actually had wanted to do his research in South Africa too and he got denied a visa. So I simply told them, "I want to come and research the work of the missionaries in converting the Africans to Christianity." It was not a lie but it was not the truth either. I got a visa to do my research. It had to be renewed every three months. So I was sort of careful that I did not get in trouble and we were there for nine months.

M: What was the purpose of learning in Xhosa? Was that just for your own benefit?

D: I never used it to speak very much. As a result I never had that experience [with it]. At that time a lot of my colleagues went to a place where they could use the language and needed to use the language they learned for interviewing, for day to day living, and so forth. I never had that opportunity. In Cape Town it was very seldom, especially in the apartheid driven society of that time, that one had much chance to interact with Africans anyway and when one did the conversation was usually in English. But I did use it. For example, I was able to read material in _____, the newspaper that was published in Xhosa, because I had a fairly good

reading knowledge of the language but I never really did develop an ability to speak it effectively because I never was in a context where I had to use it.

M: So you got back to Wisconsin in 1966?

D: Yes, in 1966. I had a teaching assistantship for the year. Brian Du Toit of our anthropology faculty, I met him and his wife in South Africa, wrote to me and said they [the University of Florida] were looking for an historian of Africa and I applied. I came down here in November of 1966 and interviewed before Thanksgiving. One could tell the difference in those days when they had written me. As I heard, John Mahon, who was chairman of the history department at that time, and it was a much smaller department than we have now, said to Brian, we would be interested in hiring an historian of Africa, do you know any? Brian said, yes. There is this fellow Hunt Davis up in Madison. I got a letter [from the University of Florida] asking me if I was interested in applying. I also heard from other places asking me if I was interested in applying for a job because people were trying to add historians of Africa. There were not enough to go around. I was the only person they interviewed for the job. They did not bring three people down. They did not interview me first at the American Historical Association. As I said I was invited down before Thanksgiving, sometime in late October or early November. They said they would pay my way down and I wrote back and asked if they would pay my wife's way down too because I would like her to see the place. They said, you know if we do that we cannot pick up the cost of the hotel but the Du Toits will put you up. They did not

ask me to prepare a talk. I came down here to interview and when I got here Professor Rene Lemarchand, who is a political scientist, was teaching an African history course. They asked me if I would be willing to give a talk to that class. I was not asked that before I arrived here; I was asked that after I arrived here. I said, well, if I could talk about my dissertation research because I did not prepare at all, I would be glad to give a talk. So I gave a lecture to the history class. I guess it went all right. I had to talk with people on campus. There was a reception for my wife and myself and I was offered the job before Thanksgiving. So I had great comfort that year. I knew that the following fall I had a job to start teaching African history at the University of Florida. I had hoped to finish my dissertation but I did not. Professor Curtin had approved the first part of my dissertation and I sent him the second half. He said it was a little hurried and I needed to do more work on it. I was busy teaching by that time, so I put it aside. But then Irving Wershow, who was head of African studies at that time, made sure that the following summer, the summer of 1968, I had money and did not have to teach. He put me on salary and I was pretty much able to finish my dissertation. That summer I finished the writing of it and did the revisions in the fall. That winter or early spring I went to Madison to defend the dissertation and got my degree that spring.

M: Was your dissertation ever published?

D: No. It has never been published.

M: Did your 1972 work Bantu Education and the Education of Africans in South Africa draw heavily upon your dissertation research?

D: No. That actually came out of a paper that I gave in a political science seminar. The interest in the issues of African education came out of that background. In terms of the chronological coverage there is no real relationship at all. That was focusing on the 1950s and 1960s and my dissertation was 19th century but obviously I was prepared to work and write on the topic of education because of the work I had been doing on my dissertation.

M: It certainly sounds like a different process in terms of getting hired at a university especially when universities are soliciting more professors and only having one professor come down for a position. It was certainly a different environment then.

D: Starting with the G.I. Bill there was a huge boom in American higher education in terms of numbers and there were not [enough] faculty to teach them. That is why you had the Woodrow Wilson Scholarships because they were designed to encourage people in going to graduate school and to enter into university teaching. And there were all sorts of loan programs available and so forth. If you got one of the loans and you taught for a certain number of years you did not have to pay the loan back. I really was sort of at the last stage of that boom. By the 1970s there was now an over supply, if you will, and the supply exceeded the demand where I was in a situation where the demand was still exceeding the supply. So I was **ABD**. I did not have my degree finished, I had no publications, and yet I was the only person they interviewed. Within a few years we were bringing three people to campus to interview. I remember when Professor Sommerville [a professor of history at the University of Florida] came to interview

he was one of three people that we interviewed for that position. He was appointed here in 1971. I was appointed in 1967. So four years later we were already in the process of bringing people to campus for interviews, formal talks, and all of that.

M: What was your initial impression of the University of Florida when you and your wife came down here for the first time or in your first year?

D: It was a very different place. I had never been in Florida. My wife I think had been once to Miami with her parents as a child on vacation. We came down in August. Her brother had gotten married that August, no, he was not married yet, I take that back. I think maybe it was a cousin of hers who got married. Anyway as I recall we went to a wedding. Then we drove down here. We started getting into the area and noticed the Spanish moss on the trees and the heat. We had a 1966 Valiant that we hung onto until last year. We bought it when we first came back from South Africa. We gave it a good Xhosa name: imoto. In the Xhosa language [there are words like] ibhasi, itreyini, imoto, itafile, the Dutch word for table, and _____ for window. So we gave it that name and that was my joke. It was a good Xhosa name.

M: What did it mean?

D: Motorcar. Imoto means motorcar like ibhasi which means bus. Actually we just sold that car last year. It had no air conditioning. There were days in the upper midwest when you wanted air conditioning in the summer but not that many. In

the late summer with the Spanish moss on the trees and the heavy humidity we knew we were in a different place. One of the aspects of it was a sense of being in a very different physical environment than what we had grown up in and knew in the midwest. The grounds of the campus, which I consider a very attractive campus, are in much better shape than they were in those days. Back then there were all these pine trees and sandy patches where the grass does not quite grow as well compared to the manicured campus of the University of Wisconsin. Again [it was] a very different physical environment. We had a sense that physically we were in a different place. [But in the history department] there was John Mahon who was the chairman of the history department from Iowa; Marvin Entner from Minneapolis; Harry Paul who is still on our faculty from the maritime provinces; Lyle McAllister from the state of Washington and so forth. So there was not a sense of being in a southern university so much in terms of the people at the University. I used to ask my students, where were you born? Where did you go to high school? Give me that information. Many of them were from northern states. I think if one had gone to the University of Georgia or the University of Alabama or Ole Miss one would have felt in an extremely southern environment in terms of faculty and in terms of the students. So I want to say there was not much of a cultural adjustment, in that sense that I sort of had the feeling of not being in a regional university, that I think I would have felt if I had gone to some of the other SEC schools. But then the state of Florida was changing. One of the statistics that always struck me is that in 1950 I think the census of Florida was three or four million people. In 1990 it was thirteen million.

This huge boom of Florida, I think, [outstripped] the pre-war Florida [boom] to a large degree. Things were lost in that. I was part of that in-migration and that was the norm; it was not the exception. In terms of the intellectual life, in terms of the students I was teaching, in terms of people we associated with and interacted with on the faculty and as a couple and so on, there was not the sense of being in a different view culturally. It was different enough to be interesting but not different enough to undergo any sort of sense of _____. Also, I have known faculty members here who have come for example from New York, New England, or Boston, and they have a hard time adjusting to the University but I grew up in a small town, county seat town, except for Detroit: Cherokee, Iowa, [had] 7,000-8,000 people; Osceola [had] 3,500-4,000 people; places like that. While my wife was from the Twin Cities and had a big city [background] we had gone to Grinnell which was a town of a few thousand people, a little college. There was not anything to do except on the college. Madison, a larger town than Gainesville because it has the state capital, is more parallel perhaps to Tallahassee with both the university and the state capital there. But again it was not this major urban environment and so we never felt that something was really lacking in Gainesville. What surprised me when I first came here when I thought of Madison and the University of Wisconsin and State Street and all the student oriented businesses and so forth that that did not seem to be as developed in Gainesville. Jeanne talked about the University of Minnesota. She had gone to the university high school on the university campus and of course growing up in the Twin Cities knew the university campus well. They had what was called

"dinky town" there, a big student oriented business area, and University Avenue did not have that. It still does not have it as you would expect it to. So that was sort of surprising to us. When we were in Madison we enjoyed the symphony orchestras that came through. They had a symphony series. There was not very much like that at the University of Florida, a little bit. The Boston Symphony chamber choirs came here a couple years while we were here, those early years. Now with the performing arts center one is able in a week or two to go to a concert with Isaac Stern, Yo-Yo Ma, Emmanuelle Ax, and **Jamie** _____ all in one concert. Nothing like that would have happened in Gainesville, Florida, twenty-five years ago. So the town has changed a lot. Both the town and the University have been very agreeable places from our perspective.

M: When you first came here did you purchase the home you currently live in?

D: No. We lived in an apartment for a year. Then **Bob McAllister** and his wife Gerry who lived in the area of town known as Golfview went on leave to Spain for the year. They had ancient cats, Lupe and Cleo, that were fourteen or fifteen years-old. We were worried that they would die before the McAllisters got back. Both survived, thank goodness. Anyway we lived in their house for a year and that gave us an idea of what it was like to live in a house. Then we bought the house our third year here on NW 6th Avenue. Fifteen, sixteen years ago in the late 1970s we added to that house.

M: When you came here in 1967 what was your position?

D: I think the title was provisional assistant director.

M: In your curriculum vita it says, "Interim Assistant Professor of History."

D: Interim assistant professor. Once I got my degree the interim was dropped and I was assistant professor.

M: There was not a center for African studies?

D: And that is why they hired me. There were a handful of African specialists. Haig Der-Houssikian whose office is next door to mine was here. He had come in January of 1967, so he arrived a half a year before I did. Renee Lemarchand who just a year or so ago retired from our faculty is a political scientist who [at that time] had been here a couple of years. He had come from U.C.L.A. By the way he was on leave either that first year or second year I was here. There was an Ethiopian named Nagussay Ayele who was a visiting assistant professor. He also had a Ph.D. from U.C.L.A. Ayele was the first black member of the faculty to teach at the University of Florida. As I said he was Ethiopian; he was not an African-American. The first black member of the faculty here taught African studies at the University of Florida. There was David Niddrie in the geography department who had come here from the University of Southern Illinois. He was a white South African, an English-speaking South African. If I recall correctly he had come from the Town. He and his wife Mary still live in Gainesville. Then there was Brian Du Toit, an anthropologist and also a South African. Brian had his degree from the University of Oregon, or was it Oregon State, I think it was the University of Oregon. He was teaching at the University of Cape Town in the anthropology department there when we were in South Africa. I was doing some

work with **Monica Wilson** and she introduced us. They lived outside of Cape Town and had small children and we would go out and visit them. That was pretty much the core. Irv Wershow who was a professor of romance languages, Spanish, was the director of African studies. There was Clem Donovan who was an economist. I do not know if he was chair of the economics department at that time, I think maybe he was. He had worked in the Sudan a little bit. I think maybe he taught at the University of Khartoum for a year. Then there was George Winius who was not really an historian of Africa. He was interested in the Dutch, actually [he was more interested in] the Portuguese. He married somebody who was Dutch and then he settled in the Netherlands but he was interested in the Portuguese empire. I believe he wrote a book on Angola. He was interested in Angola and Mozambique as Portuguese. He had sort of an expansion of Europe approach but not the Curtin expansion of Europe but the much more traditional [approach]-- what Europeans do overseas. I was the first historian really [in the African studies program]. There was a political scientist, an anthropologist, a geographer, and then Donovan in economics who was not principally an Africanist as [were] the other people I mentioned. That was African studies at the University of Florida. We had a Title VI grant at that time. There were a lot more Title VI centers. That money was being used to encourage the development of these schools.

M: Was Irv Wershow the first director of the African studies?

D: No. Rene Lemarchand was the first director of African studies. He got at odds with people as he occasionally did and Wershow replaced him. As I learned later

on Rene was rather bitter about that or [he was] not too pleased [about that]. Wershow just knew administration. He has been dead for a number of years now. He was a very effective director. He was from a Gainesville family. His brother James Wershow was a very well-known attorney in Gainesville. He dealt with agricultural issues and was an adjunct faculty member in food and resource economics. James's son (Irv's nephew) John Wershow is an attorney in town. He happens to be my attorney as a matter of fact. He was a student of mine. He took African history from me when he was an undergraduate at the University of Florida. Then he happened to join a firm that we dealt with. One of the members of that firm, **Chuck Chance** who was our attorney, became a state court judge, so we needed other legal services. James Wershow was one of the members of that firm.

M: Do you get a discount as a result of his being an ex-student of yours?

D: Not that I know of. Fortunately I have not used an attorney very often.

M: When was the center initiated under Rene Lemarchand?

D: 1964 or 1965, somewhere in there.

M: Was it initially a Title VI center or did that take a couple of years?

D: Yes, I think. Wershow had spent a year or two at the department of education and knew there was money to be gotten and thought we ought to get it. At that time Manning Dauer was the chairman of political science, John Mahon was the chairman of history, and Charles Fairbanks, I think, was the chairman of anthropology. I do not know who was chairman of geography. Several

department chairs got together and put this all together and got African studies started.

M: Did Lemarschand serve for two years?

D: A year or two.

M: Then Wershow took over.

D: In fact Wershow was in charge when I came here. Interestingly enough the first year I picked up my paycheck in the Center for Latin American Studies from Vivian Nolan who was the secretary there. I guess they paid part of my salary.

M: Did you teach any courses?

D: No. They just wanted African studies. They were in helping to get African studies [going].

M: So what were your responsibilities when you first came here?

D: I taught a year survey course in African history and then I had to teach European Civ. But John Mahon, the chairman of the history department, said, if you could develop African history and if there is a demand we hired you to teach African history, so you can teach African history exclusively if you can demonstrate there is a demand. So I did not teach the European Civ, or whatever it was called in those days, very long. A year or two. I would have to look up in my grade records and then I could tell you how many years I taught it.

M: Was the center fairly unique in the sense at this point were there a good many centers across the United States?

D: There were a lot of small African studies programs. The Title VI program supported a lot of programs. The statistics are in the center office. I do not know

what they are. Then in the Nixon administration Title VI was cut back and instead of funding a multiplicity of centers the centers funded were cut back to under a hundred and the Center for African Studies here lost its funding as did many others. Latin American studies did not. We were without funding for several years. Then Haig Der-Houssikian became the director of the center. I remember traveling to Miami where the U.S. Department of Education was putting on a seminar and several people from the Department of Education, their office of international education, were talking about Title VI. We rented a car and Haig went down and I think Bill Carter from Latin American studies went down too; there were maybe three or four of us. We drove down there and we were strongly encouraged to submit a proposal. Donovan probably went down too. We even brought back one of the Department of Education people with us to talk further and they said, you ought to really apply. We put in a proposal and we got funded. We got back on the funding and developed the center more forward.

M: This would be in approximately what year?

D: Carter was elected president in 1976 and Nixon had been elected in 1972 and then had to step down, so sometime probably before Carter became president: the mid-1970s.

M: But the center had gone for a few years without Title VI funding?

D: It had gone for a little while without Title VI funding. We got on funding. Then when I became director in 1979 we had lost our funding again. It was announced that I was going to become director, and announced within a two week period the funding had been lost except for a little bit of our fellowship money. Fortunately,

it was only a two year cycle and we were able to put things together to get funding again in 1981 or so. This center has been funded ever since. It has built on strengthening [its base] so that we went from being sort of at the bottom of those nine or ten centers that were funded and this last time we were funded we were ranked in the top three. The 1970s were rough times but the University stuck with African studies and the real growth came in the 1980s.

If you were to look through the faculty who have been here for awhile and you start looking at when people were appointed here, for instance, Anita Spring, an anthropologist, was appointed in 1973, so she was here [in the 1970s]. But Robin Pointer who is our art historian, a very well-known figure in his own right, was appointed in 1980. Art Hansen [associate professor of anthropology] was appointed in 1975. Professor Olabiyi Yai [professor and chair of African and Asian languages] was appointed in 1988. I know I was on the search committee for that. The department of African and Asian languages and literatures was created in the mid-1980s which was a major development for the center. The center began to pull in people from the other disciplines [where there was a] greater interest in agriculture or in the law, things of that sort. It survived the 1970s and took off in the 1980s.

M: You took over in 1979?

M: I became director in 1979 and was director until 1988. So I was director of the center for nine years.

M: Did you take over from Dr. Houssikian?

D: Der-Houssikian, yes.

M: So you were the fourth director then in the center?

D: Yes, I guess so.

M: What was your vision or what did you set out to accomplish when you first stepped in?

D: At that time they were redefining Title VI. They were calling them "National Resource Centers" for African studies or for Latin American studies and so forth. I thought, what is there about the University of Florida? What niche does it occupy? To use an economic term, what is its comparative advantage over some of these other long-time centers: over a Wisconsin, a Michigan State, an Indiana, a U.C.L.A., or a Boston. There were two things one of which was not particularly unique but was important. There were three things I should say. Our relationship to Latin American studies, but in particular to a Latin American studies [program] that paid a lot of attention to the Caribbean, which has a large African population. Then Brazil was very important with its African-based population, part of the _____ [and] being in the southeastern United States and being part of that plantation America. See I am thinking as the historian. By the way, I think the University of Florida's history department has yet to build forward on that: this triangular dimension of Africa, South America and the Caribbean, and the plantation South. That is an opportunity we continue to lose and ignore. But do not get me started on that. Then there is the fact that Florida is subtropical, Africa is subtropical and the tropical agriculture and the tropical ecology. We were the only Center of African Studies in the United States, the only university I should say, which had an African studies component as an

integral part of what is taught at the university: tropical agriculture and tropical ecology. That is what made this university a national resource center for the study of Africa. That is the vision. That was the game plan we developed here.

M: [Was that plan developed] during your tenure or had that been in place before?

D: No. It had not been in place before. How is it that we can sell the University of Florida as this national resource center for Africa? It was the juxtaposition of the traditional African studies in the social sciences and the humanities with the agricultural sciences and the ecological sciences. It was more agriculture at that time than the environmental ecological, which came a little later because at that time there still was not that emphasis on it. That was and continues to be [our selling point]. The study of the tropics is not germane to the agriculture of Michigan, of Wisconsin, or of New York state. Hugh Popenoe, the long-time director of the international programs in agriculture at the University of Florida, his long point out was the germaness of the agriculture of Africa. For instance, most of the commercial pasture grasses used for pasturing livestock in Florida originate in Africa. Research on soybeans or peanuts, I think more peanuts (brown nuts in Africa), is germane to the interest of Florida farmers. Our soil share is much in common with the African soil. [Then there are] the livestock diseases. The founding head of our College of Veterinary Medicine helped found the College of Veterinary Medicine in northern Nigeria. I forget where that is located. Faculty members Mike Burrige and Paul Gibbs [professors of pathobiology] have linked the experience in African veterinary medicine. It is

those types of ties and so forth. Then we developed what we called a "Food in Africa Program." It led to a very successful textbook, more or less text, I should say; that Art Hansen and Della McMillan [assistant research scientist of anthropology] published called Food in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is an interdisciplinary book that drew to a large extent on our own faculty and some of our graduate students although not exclusively. It is the type of thing that serves the basis for this global research on environmental agricultural nexus issue, this GREAN Initiative [Global Research on the Environmental and Agricultural Nexus Initiative] that I am involved in right now.

M: And you had previous experience with these facets of linkages between Florida and Africa or did your position as director expose you to these and broaden your horizons?

D: My position as director exposed me to these and made me aware of them. We had to find a way to argue. We could not argue on the traditional social science ground. I was the only historian. We had one political scientist and so forth.

M: Who was the next historian hired?

D: It was Kathryn Green who was hired in the mid-1980s. She left when Feierman came, just by chance, not on purpose. She was lured to Wisconsin and we brought Feierman here from Wisconsin. In 1980 I became the editor of the African Studies Review which I also held for eight years until 1988. In editing that interdisciplinary journal combined with my position as director I became much more aware of issues dealing with Africa beyond history. We published

articles dealing with economics, agricultural issues, ecological issues, sociological, historical, or political issues.

M: In assuming the editorship of the African Studies Review did you have support staff here?

D: Yes. The graduate school provided me with a graduate research assistant. I had several people fill that position over the years. Since I was director of the center I had control over the resources of the center too. So Carol Lauriault [office manager of African studies] worked on that. About half of her work as a staff member of the center was on the Review. Later on we also had some editorial assistants from the college as well.

M: Were you able to teach at this time?

D: I usually taught one course a semester.

M: But the brunt of your time would have been taken up as director or as editor?

D: If you look at my publications there are very little publications in those years because I was spending my time teaching one course, a half load of teaching, serving as director of the center, and serving as editor of the Review. The review came out four times a year.

M: What made you accept the editorship of the Review?

D: Keeping intellectually active.

M: Does one get paid as editor?

D: No. One does not get paid as editor. I think the Review was sort of on the rocks as well. But a golden opportunity came along. The Review, of course, is the journal of the African Studies Association, so it is the publisher. The immediate past president of the African Studies Association is the head of the publications committee of the African Studies Association which oversees the Review. I think there are three board members plus the immediate past president who chairs that committee. The publications committee deals with the newsletter, with the Review, with history in Africa, and various issues. They put out some books, the association occasionally publishes books. One reason I became editor was Rene Lemarschand was on the board of directors of the association at that time and I think he may have been on the publications committee and he knew that **Alan Smith** who was at Syracuse was stepping down as editor. So there was an opening and he asked me if I would be interested. I informed him that I would be and we talked about it. Then Ali Mazrui who as you know is an extremely well-known political scientist and has done that series The African Zion on PBS was the head of the publications committee. Crawford Young then became head of the publications committee. At that time the social science research council had decided that they would commission a series of review papers on Africa and those review papers were to be state of the art. What is the state of knowledge of African studies? One of the fortunate things with the African Studies Review was the series of review papers: **Fred Cooper's** African World History paper, **Bill Froin's** paper on labor history, **Karin Barber's** paper on performing arts in

Africa, and so forth. These were papers that were commissioned by the joint committee on Africa of the **SSRCACLS**. These papers were going to be presented at the African Studies Association annual meeting. Carl Rosberg at Cal-Berkeley thought he would maybe publish these in an edited volume and so on. Crawford Young and I were talking and said, these papers are being presented at the African Studies Association meeting. Therefore, the association is sponsoring them in that way and featuring them. Therefore, the association should have a right to publish them through its journal. So we picked up these papers. The African Studies Review had been a journal which for many years had been authors' second and third choice of where to publish. Then these reviews started to appear beginning in 1981, and they became [the most frequently cited articles on Africa by discipline]. If one were to go into the citation indexes one would probably find that these articles were in fact the most frequently cited articles on Africa by discipline. The Review's visibility just catapulted and it became this highly visible journal. As a result people were reading the Review and other scholars started saying, hey, you know, I want to have my article appear in the Review, because of these high profile articles which, even the early ones, remain prominent. **John Lonsdale's** article on, I think it was, state society in Africa and others remain cited. Again it was fortuitous to have the African Studies Review be the place these articles were published. It gave me an opportunity to have some very interesting interactions being the person who was editing these. I remember working quite at length on

some of them. They were excellent scholarly articles but one or two of them were not as well-written as they should have been. I had to spend a lot of time in a couple of instances getting them in the state of writing. I remember having a very pleasant meeting with Karin Barber at the University of Birmingham in England. I had been in Africa and I came back through England. Her article was to appear.

I thought it would be nice to meet with her, and talk with her about it. I had never been in the West African studies in Birmingham and went there. They happened to be having a summer tea that afternoon with fresh strawberries and cream, so I stayed for that and had a nice time. Actually, when we were looking for the **Yoruba** position, she had a lot of useful information. In fact, she would have been a possible appointment herself in that. She was the one who so strongly recommended Professor Yai for the position. Also, I got to know John Lonsdale through his piece. I was in England at another point and went up to Cambridge to meet with him. That was during the Falklands War. There was a big service for peace in one of the Anglican churches in Cambridge. I went with him that evening to that church service. In addition to the scholarly connections and interaction with people on an intellectual basis, having those personal connections out of the Review from very prominent scholars was very rewarding.

M: So it is not by any means a source of regret that you devoted as much energy as you did for eight years of your life and maybe detracted from the time you could otherwise spend for publications?

D: I think that probably, knowing me, that I might not have put that time in publications, but would have been sucked into administrative work at the center.

The journal had to come out every three months. The editing work had to be done. So you had to do it. On a couple of occasions I got guest editors. **David Newberry** edited one of the journals on a guest basis. We had one or two others. On just a couple of occasions I was able to have somebody else pick it up for a little bit. A couple of times we put out joint numbers because we only had so many pages we could print. There were four, I think, in the first set of SSRACLS papers, so we put out a double number. We put out a double number of the Review for the 25th anniversary of the African Centers Association where we published the papers. The other thing was the editorial board we put together which was quite interesting as well. We would have our annual meeting. We had a very good working relationship with the editorial board of the Review. I found in one way it was very demanding on my time, but on the other hand intellectually [rewarding]. The issues we were dealing with in the Review and then running the center at the same time, certainly strengthened my understanding of African studies. As an area of inquiry with some of the insights, I got into the issues from what people all around the world were writing about. There were always some good laughs too in editing the Review. We got some very improbable papers submitted.

D: There were some humorous aspects of it. Probably the most humorous paper, not humorous paper, but humorous dimension, was a person from Nigeria

submitting a paper on raising Rhode Island Reds [an American breed of domestic fowls] in Nigeria. I wrote him back and said, you know, I really do think that this paper ought to go to a poultry science journal rather than African Studies Review, because I do not think many of our readers would be particularly interested in this paper. One had to be very diplomatic in turning people down. Also I learned that some people do not have ethics. I remember having had one paper and we sent it out to reviewers. They thought it was rather shallow. We turned the author down and then within a few weeks I got my copy of African Affairs and here the article appeared in African Affairs. At the same time we were considering it, this author had sent it to African Affairs. The article had something to do with African-Americans in Africa. I think that [since] African Affairs is a British journal that by sending it to readers who were British [the author] thought the article was more profound than [it would be] in an American based journal, and sending it to readers who were in North America who thought the article was less profound. So there were two dimensions of it. I thought that African Affairs had been suckered, but I also knew who the editor was at that time. I had correspondence with him, and I wrote him a letter. [I] said, you know, there is a matter of ethics here. We had asked people to read this carefully and they had spent time. Yet this author was sending it off to you and you published it. By the way, I do not think that I told him he was wrong, but we did tell him we turned it down. I was really glad that we had not accepted it too.

M: Was that a large part of your responsibilities as editor: to read over and determine the admissibility of articles and also to correct them?

D: What we did, because I really had good research assistants, was log in every paper that came to us. [Then] the research assistant read the paper, and [placed it in] three categories. Take a look at this, but I do not think you are going to want to send it out to readers. Ninety-five percent of the time that was the correct assessment. Where if you take a look at this, I think this should go out to readers. Here are some suggested people who perhaps could read it from our reader's list. You may have some other ideas. Most of the time they had picked an article that, in fact, we would probably would want to consider very carefully and we should send it out to readers. Then here is the middle third. Ghee, I cannot make up a decision on this. You are going to have to look at this one carefully, I think, to decide for yourself whether this should go or should not go. The decision on whether to reject an article out of hand rested exclusively with me. The decision about whether to move an article towards acceptance rested with me. So I had the role as the gatekeeper. I did not want to waste people's time with stuff that I thought _____. We sent every article out to two readers, anonymous readers, asking them to rate them and that was another enjoyable aspect. People put [forth] a lot of time and effort. I remember, for instance, one case [when] somebody I knew from graduate school served as reader and he said, I really like this article. I think it was by an African scholar based in Africa. But this person [the author], you [could] tell had not had access to recent publications. The reader said, but it is really very good; the research is very

good. He needs to read such and such, and such and such, and actually give him my name, and I will help with those footnotes and stuff, so that this article will make the impact _____. Nobody is getting a dime for this. So I think it was very enjoyable. The quality and the seriousness of purpose of people that are interesting. In some cases it needed very little work and both readers would say, yes, publish it. Sometimes if they said, publish it, but it needs some more work. It was usually some editorial work. Quite often I would have to go through with red pen for four, five, or six pages and spend a lot of time saying, you need to make these changes (grammatical issues, passive voice, sentences that are too long, shorter paragraphs). You make these changes throughout the rest of the paper. That was sort of the technical aspect. For instance, [I might say], you do not really say what this paper is about until page two or three. You need to bring this up into the introductory paragraph. Your conclusion needs to summarize more. You get lost in your argument here on pages fifteen to twenty and what's it all about and so on. So [that work was] more of the substantive aspect. If we had a divided opinion I would send it out to a third reader. I would say, look I want you to read this. The reason I am asking you to read this is I have two opinions, both of which seem sound but they conflict. I want you to give me a third opinion. Do you think we should publish it and if so why, if not, why not. Then we would send the comments. For people who we rejected out of hand we would say, thank you very much for submitting, but it does not seem to be appropriate. We might suggest another journal. For people who we sent to readers and turned down we would say, we are turning your article down [for

these reasons]. Here are the comments, maybe they will help you improve it. For people who we told to try again we would say, if you will pay attention to the comment we will reconsider. There were articles also where I really did not know enough. [I would ask myself], is this a sound article? I would send it off to one of our editorial board members and say, look, you are a specialist in this area. You are a specialist in African literature. This paper sounds good to me but what do you think? Should we send it out to readers? Who would you recommend?

M: If nothing else, I imagine serving as editor for African Studies Review and being the center director certainly exposed you to a lot of different views and areas of Africa, which as a South African historian you would not have otherwise really dealt with. I think a lot of scholars probably go through their careers dealing with a specific region or an issue, but I do not think that you even had that option fielding the positions that you did.

D: That is very true. It changed me substantially from what I had to do. That is one reason I am teaching that course in the history of African agriculture that you have been taking, because of the grounding I got both as center director and also editing the African Studies Review. That does not come out of my background in preparation in South African history. So something like Colin Bundy's book The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry, which when I first read it I was very excited about but I now say, he does not talk anything about what they were raising. He does not talk about them as farmers at all. There is very little in there about agriculture or about markets, sort of political economy. I think that in turn all this fed back into my own teaching and research interests. Back in 1980 I

would not understand these issues. But on this GREAN Initiative, when we are talking about tropical soils I cannot speak to those issues as an authority, but I listen to people talk about them and I know what they are talking about. I know what the economists are talking about. I can understand and interact with the person who is the head of the International Potato Center or the West African Rice Development Authority, WARDA, or the person from the international wheat and maize center, CIMMYT [International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center], or hillside agricultural issues with CIAT [International Center for Tropical Agriculture]. I know what they are talking about. I interacted with them enough that those issues make sense to me. I have an appreciation of the pressure the tremendous world population growth is putting on the environment. And what is meant when we are talking about our water resources being ruined, what waterlogging the soils and salinization is about, and not just whether there is pollution because oil has gotten in the water or something.

M: I am going to pick that up in a few minutes and talk about your work with the GREAN Initiative, but I want to back track a bit because we are sort of low on time. Under your directorship of the African studies center up until 1988 it saw a lot of change. It expanded quite radically and a good many more faculty members and graduate students became part of the center. In terms of the history department, it too expanded quite a bit in the mid to late 1980s. You mentioned Kathryn Green was hired shortly thereafter.

D: Then Steve Feierman came and I forget the precise date that Steve got here, about 1988 or 1989, sometime in there. Then Katherine left, so there were two

of us. Then we got another West African position for which we hired Barbara Cooper. She and her husband left, and we hired Tim Cleaveland. Then we had this opportunity through hiring through the McNight Program of bringing in junior faculty who were African-American, regardless of field, to finish their dissertation. John Mason who is a really emerging historian of South Africa and also of issues having to do with slavery and a comparative perspective came here. Then the Jewish history search brought a specialist in Moroccan history here, Daniel Schroeter, who was interested in North Africa in the context of African history and in trans-Saharan issues. Then David Geggus came here with his work on Haiti and on slavery and the slave trade. He has published in the Journal of African History. Then the archeologist Peter Schmidt whose training is as a historian, but he studies the African past through archeology, was the director of the center who took over after I was here. We had put together a very strong African history program which was arguably the best in the country. The quality of the graduate students that we got showed it. The first four of our students passed their qualifying exams, all got Fullbrights, three in the same year in history which is very unusual. That was because of the African studies center not because of the history department. In fact, Feierman came here because he had applied for the directorship of African studies and he was not offered that, but he was offered a professorship instead which he was glad to accept. Unfortunately, with his resignation last year and John Mason's resignation, this has come unglued a little bit. There are big debates in the department. I think that it is accurate to say that there are some people among my colleagues in history who think essentially that

Africa is an unimportant area of the world. Therefore, in the face of tightening resources, Africa is less important than other areas of the world especially U.S. history and European history.

M: Have you noticed changes in that opinion or attitude in the time that you have been at UF since 1967, or has that been a fairly constant feature the way that other professors view African history?

D: I think the situation improved. I think part of it is a situation of tightening resources at the University, and when we were in a growth mode there was opportunity for everybody. But I think also the intellectual climate is a little bit more conservative and events in Africa are such-- the Somalia crisis, the Rwandan crisis, the terrible civil war in Liberia. [These are] offset, of course, by the very dramatic developments in South Africa, President Mandela's election in 1994, and the ending of Apartheid, which is as dramatic certainly as the collapse of the Soviet Union. I mean the Berlin Wall and Apartheid were symbols of oppressive regimes and both crumbled, one figuratively and one physically, about the same time. So as resources tighten up priorities are set. I think also with affirmative action under attack that African history is something people feel is mostly of interest to blacks. Therefore, we do not need to pay perhaps as much attention to that. Obviously that is not the case. You and I are sitting here and we are both interested in African history and our ancestry is European and not African. It is not overt, but it is intellectually just the sense or feeling that I have that some of my U.S. history colleagues feel that as long as U.S. history is

okay the rest of the world, we do not care. Let the people interested in Europe and the Third World divide it up themselves. Do not bother us. The really important stuff is U.S. history. We are a U.S. university and it is a history department. The king is U.S. We do not worry about the princes and the dukes, counts and countesses and so on.

M: Given those attitudes are you pessimistic about the place of African history within the department of history?

D: I am more pessimistic about the place of history within the University, and the place of the University overall within the country. I think public higher education is under assault. I think the professoriat is under assault. I think liberal views are under assault. These reprehensible attacks on multiculturalism and picking and choosing and highlighting sort of glaring examples of what in some cases can be considered outlandish statements. On the other hand remember George Wallace many years ago ran against pointy headed professors who could not even ride their bicycles straight. And it is the same type of language that Pat Buchanan is using about education department bureaucrats with their beads and sandals and Pat does not seem to be attacking professors with their beads and sandals yet because that is a little bit passed. On the one hand things continue. There is great continuity. The McCarthy witch hunt was anti-intellectual. You ought to ask somebody to tell you more about it than I do, maybe Dr. Proctor. [For instance there was] the **John's Committee** in the State Senate and this witch hunt at the universities, hunting out homosexuals and commies and so forth in a very unconstitutional manner. This friend of mine Ken McGill got

denied tenure because he said bullshit at a Yale Club dinner, and people at Yale Club dinners do not say that. Obviously he is a Yalee. He went to the Yale Club dinner. But the then chancellor, who was dean of the university system, was also a Yalee. Somebody said that there could be more academic freedom at Yale maybe than at a university such as the University of Florida, we Yalees need to realize this. Ken stood up and said, bullshit. That was inexcusable. He was a Marxist, and that is why he was hot. There is nothing new about these efforts to weed out dissident elements, but I think it is the funding crunch.

M: But you have seen it before in the 1970s?

D: In the 1970s but there was a recession and there is not a recession now.

M: So you think it is more ominous now?

D: It is part of the conservative ascendancy and they distrust the university. **William Bennett** and **Lynne Cheney** are good examples of that. Bill Bennett's candidate Lamar went nowhere. That is too bad, isn't it.

M: Getting back to your career. You left the directorship of the African studies center in 1988?

D: 1988. I got a year's leave. I taught for the fall semester at Dartmouth at half-time. A friend of mine was on leave and asked me. So that was interesting. I had applied to Dartmouth. I do not know whether I would have gotten in or not because I [first] heard from Grinnell. That was 1957 and thirty years later or so I end up as a visiting professor for the fall term.

M: You taught a course in African history?

D: I taught a seminar on African history. I taught half-time. I was paid very nicely for it. I had my salary from here because I was on leave. So I went up there. That is when we finally finished that book that Oxford put out on Mandela, **Tambo**, and the ANC [African National Congress].

M: How did you get involved in that especially jointly with **Sheridan Johns**?

D: He and I have known each other for years. **Tom Karis**, who had been asked to do that book but could not do it, suggested Dan [Sheridan Johns], and Dan wanted somebody to work with him and asked me if I would do it. That was also part of his connection with Gwendolyn Carter when she was here.

M: During what years was she here?

D: The early to mid 1980s. She came here from retirement. She retired from Indiana. We had her here not as professor emeritus because she was not on the faculty here but she came here for several years. She died in 1991, but she had fallen ill and been in declining health certainly after her eightieth birthday. She was eighty-four when she died. She had come up and had taught a course here and had been associated with us, and we named the lecture series of the Center for African Studies in her honor. She gave the first set of lectures. They were published by the African Studies Association.

M: You later edited a volume I think published in the same year as the Mandela-Tambo book. I believe that was Apartheid Unravels in 1991.

D: Yes. That was in that series and then she and I jointly authored an article in a **Peter Schraeder** volume on South Africa: Intervention in the Nineties.

M: Also, in the early 1990s, you took on the position first as Associate Director and then Interim Director of the Office of International Studies and Programs for the University of Florida. What kind of responsibilities did you have there?

D: First of all, I had no intention of doing that. I thought I was done with administration. Some people who go into administration decide they want to only use this as a stepping stone to become a dean or a vice-president and so forth. I went into the directorship of African studies not with that purpose in mind. I was ready to resume activities fully in the history department and to get back and do research. Uma Lele, who was the director of the Office of International Studies and Programs, which was a newly created office, was someone whom I really admired. I remember many years before going to a conference and she gave a paper. I had no idea who she was and there was somebody else who was giving a paper that I knew, a big name. I thought his paper was a real bust, just dull, uninteresting, simple. I thought, here is this guy with a big name and he gives a paper like this, but then here is Uma Lele, this woman from India. She has something really interesting to say. She was talking about rural development. Then she came here as a graduate research professor. She phoned me at home

one evening and asked me if I would be willing to become the associate director. I said I am not particularly interested in this but she asked if I would think it over. I said, okay. She was somebody who I thought would be extremely interesting to work with, and I think internationalizing the University is very important, so I agreed to become the associate director. If I remember correctly that was in 1992. We worked on developing the Office of International Studies and Programs. It had three responsibilities, two that were very clear and one that was vague. First, we incorporated the office of international students and scholars that all the international students, which you as a Canadian, are involved with in terms of visa and so forth. International scholars have come here. The hiring of people who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents, getting visas, and those responsibilities. That was very clearly defined. That is a challenging area you have to be specialized in, so nobody is going to contend for that. Another responsibility was getting overseas studies, study abroad programs, which were fragmented and scattered over the University in that office of development. Some people contended, you ask a dean or a faculty member, you want to send these students, your students, overseas? What are you going to do in case one of them gets desperately ill and needs to be medivacked. Do you know how to handle that? What if one of them dies? What if the faculty member you send over there has a serious automobile accident? So that office, and this was with the full backing of the provost and the president, has responsibility for the administrative dimensions of sending U.S.-UF students overseas, not a graduate student doing dissertation research or an

undergraduate in an individual research project, but any sort of formal program. The academic responsibility rests with the appropriate academic department. So there is a clear division: the academic content of a program is to be approved by the appropriate academic units; the administrative responsibilities, seeing to the welfare and well-being of students and insuring that they get their money's worth, rests with that office. That was a contentious issue, but one that people ultimately realized the ramifications and the responsibilities they were undertaking. The University is very concerned about legal liabilities and the more contentious [the issue], the more litigation that takes place, the more they are concerned about those responsibilities. For the student who was severely burned and needed to be medivacked it cost tens of thousands of dollars. If she had had this insurance, it would have saved the University a lot of money. Then the third area was providing leadership in research and that is the real contentious area. What does that mean? What is the responsibility of that office vis-a-vis other entities on campus? Here there is a sense of people maybe stepping on turf. Some units were willing to cooperate and others were not. I do not want to name names because that is besides the point. But there were some deans who really thought it was none of our business what went on and other deans that said, hey, we are glad this office is created and we would like to work with it? What can we do to strengthen this. I was disappointed with this aspect. I think it is interesting working with the faculty in African studies even though some people really vehemently disliked each other. There were a couple of instances where people just could not be in the same room with each other. As a

group, there was a sense of a common purpose with a common interest in Africa. The faculty members [were] looking and supporting what I was doing as director. [They were] able to draw on that and so forth. Also, although contending a little bit over some things, by and larger getting cooperation with other administrative units. But when you were working with administrators primarily, because that was what that office often dealt with, there was this, hey, that is my job, that is my area. You are intruding in my sphere. [There were] those types of attitudes rather than, let's all work together to do something for the larger good and we will all work it out. That was something I had not anticipated. Then I became director because Uma Lele resigned rather suddenly from the directorship in October of 1993, and appropriately resigned but we do not need to go into that, not on tape anyway. I was asked to be interim director which was supposed [to last] through the end of the fall. Well, I was interim director for fifteen months and being interim director for that length of time is difficult. If people want to work with you they will, but if they do not they think, I will just wait it out because he is not going to be here forever. We were looking at how the University of Florida, and this is Uma Lele's leadership, could become more involved with the international agricultural research centers, the CGIR system [Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research]. There are now sixteen of those centers. There were eighteen at the time but four of them combined into two. We asked, how could UF institutionalize this involvement? Where a lot of UF faculty had been involved with these centers on an individual basis, how can we do it more institutionally? We looked at that and we discussed it. We thought, let's have a

workshop. The issue seems to be that we can put this workshop together on reconciling the need for productivity growth, so more bushels per acre or whatever, with a sustained need to have environmental sustainability to feed this quickly growing population and [to find] ways for U.S. universities and these international centers to cooperate in that. In May of 1993, we organized a workshop here. We invited faculty members and not the administrative type. So we did not invite directors of international programs, assistant deans, or deans. But we invited the scientists who were doing the work because we wanted to focus on the issues. We invited several people from Cornell and the people at Cornell said, we would like to jointly sponsor this with you. We will help put it together. So they did. They joined in and so it was a joint UF-Cornell workshop. The director's general of these international agricultural centers were meeting in Puerto Rico at the end of May. So we said, if we put it before then maybe some of them would come. Well, fourteen of the sixteen centers were represented and nine of the DG's came. We had 130 or 140 people from around there, some international people, and a few people from foundations. Out of that [workshop] came a sense, you know these issues are big enough that we need to put a task force together. Ford and Rockefeller agreed to fund a task force. Nobody is going to get any salaries except for a graduate assistant and a secretary but we had to have travel money, telephone money, Fedex money, hotel money, and all that. We put together a task force and the international center said they wanted to be represented. We thought we needed to include the developing country agricultural systems, the so-called NARS [National Agricultural Research

Systems]. We put this task force together with six U.S. universities: Florida and Cornell having the co-chairs with Uma Lele and Ronnie Coffman [Dean of Research at Cornell], Ohio State, Michigan State, Texas A&M, and the University of California at Davis. It got very prominent scholars from these institutions. Then it got two of the international agricultural research center DG's, a person from the international potato center, a person from the West African rice development authority, plus a person from CIMMYT [International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center], a leading Indian agricultural specialist, a person from West Africa who is a Gambian who heads the institute to _____, and an Argentinan scholar. We started working on really diagnosing the problem. Then we decided, these are the issues but we ought to put forth a prescription. So we came up with the idea of this Initiative for Global Research on the Environmental and Agricultural Nexus and involving the United States in a collaborative research effort that has a different approach, a demand driven approach. The developing countries, scientists, and institutions have to be part of defining the problem from the start. The demand has to come from them for the issues to be _____. They have to be addressed in a way that will be of interest to U.S. science and we need to bring in the best science. What is wrong with the AID approach is that it has been supplied driven and not demand driven, and it is not scientifically based in terms of the definition. We are talking about the basic research: to involve the best science in this from the U.S., from the National Science Foundation, the national institutes of health, the best university science, and the military. In the international sphere, to bring in the same type of research

that is brought to U.S. problems. We saw the National Research Initiative of the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a parallel with a competitive grants process and they are funded at a 100 million dollars. So we said, what is in essence an international research initiative should also be funded at least at 100 million dollars. This 100 million dollars would essentially fund the U.S. involvement in this international and local research with the countries themselves having to put up money. This GREAN Initiative is a collaborative research agenda effort [involving] U.S. universities, developing countries, agricultural research systems, and international agricultural research in a collaborative approach to address this triple global challenge of population growth, environmental degradation, and hunger.

M: What was your formal title or involvement in this GREAN Initiative?

D: I was working with the task force; I was not a member of the task force. I was really sort of a resource person for the task force: organization, logistics, and so on. But I participated actively. I am not an agricultural scientist. I understand what they are talking about but I cannot contribute as Rattan Lal, as one of the world's leading soil scientists from Ohio State, or Cal Qualset [Calvin Qualset], who was president of the American Agronomy Society, or Ronni Coffman, who is a rice breeder, or Uma Lele, who headed the World Bank's "A" economics for Africa for many years. I cannot make that type of contribution. I do know how to administer and I do know how to write and edit. I am now, for want of a better title, the secretary or the coordinator of the effort.

M: Are you currently still involved in the project?

D: Very much so.

M: And anticipate being so for the next year?

D: If we continue to make progress, I anticipate being so. Again, it is a type of reward that I got from working with the Review--working with high quality people, working with people who could get \$400 or \$500 a day consulting fees. They give their time freely in their very busy schedule to participate in this taskforce. [The kind of] people who are willing to go off and work with countries overseas to get some pilot projects off the ground without getting consulting fees and so on. Meet my expenses, pay my airfare, pay my hotel bill. As long as it is not out of my pocket I will do it. It is out of my hide, in terms of my time, because the work is still sitting there when I get home, but these are important issues. People who are far-sighted individuals say, we have to adjust. So we will do our best; we will do our part.

M: Have you yourself traveled in your capacity as coordinator?

D: To Washington, New York, and Minneapolis.

M: You flew off to Uganda?

D: Yes. I tried to go to Uganda a few weeks back for a meeting in connection with a group of Africans calling for a special program for African agricultural research, SPAAR [Special Program for African Agricultural Research]. I was supposed to be in Kampala, Uganda, for several days for a meeting, but _____ because Airlines went on strike. By the time I could have gone to Kampala, the meeting would have been over and then how the heck was I going to get back home.

M: We are winding down in terms of time, so to just sort of finish up here. That is your immediate project to keep you busy in addition to your teaching and administrative responsibilities within the department of history?

D: I do not really have administrative responsibilities. Service responsibilities call it: being a professor, being a member of the graduate committee, or things of this sort. I do not have formal administrative [responsibilities] either, [other] than the department chair.

M: You have filled quite a few administrative positions in your time but you do not see that as your role. You are not going to become the next Dr. Lombardi [current president of the University of Florida]?

D: No. Let me say this. I could see myself, I have no intention of doing so, being a dean of a college. I think I could handle that. Looking at the job that John Lombardi has there is no way I would have the energy, the stamina, the ability to interact with a wide range of people that he has. He has particular and unique qualities in this respect. For example, at that workshop he gave the luncheon talk. He is not a specialist in this, but he turned this around in a way that people were quoting what he had to say. People came up to us and said, our president could never do that. The Cornell people said, our president could never give a talk like that. He understands those issues, but he could never speak [about] them that way. Then when the Lombardis opened their home for us to have a reception people felt, they genuinely liked having all these strangers in their house and they are such gracious hosts and so forth. You are really fortunate

who you have as president at the University of Florida. I think a lot of my colleagues on campus do not understand that.

M: Are there any other ongoing projects or projects you anticipate initiating in terms of scholarship?

D: This GREAN Initiative fits into this interest that I have developed in the history of African agriculture. I would like to write a general book on the history of African agriculture. I do not know if I ever will, but that is a goal I still have for myself.

M: Will you devise a course on the prospects of that?

D: Yes. That was the first step: to teach a course several times and understand the issues fully. [Then] develop the outline for a book, a general history of African agriculture. Then write the history and in doing that also identify the topics for specific research. Then go and research an area that needs research that I would be particularly interested in at the monographic level. I have taught the course twice. In another year or two I would hope to teach it again. But I have been pulled away and I have not been able to do the reading and so forth that the teaching of the course could have offered me the opportunity to do because of these administrative responsibilities. So out of this, [there is] the possibility of writing that general history sometime. Nobody else, I think, is likely to do it. Whether I will ever get to do the indepth monographic research I do not know.

M: I have noticed in your CV [curriculum vita] that in various times you would be on editorial boards of various journals or [involved in] different projects and taskforces. Are you on any boards or any such committees right now?

D: I am on the Journal of Third World Studies editorial board. The job I had enjoyed was being on the Fulbright applicant committee. I am not any longer. That was a three year stint. I read, recommend, and then review manuscripts of the history book club on Africa.

M: So is your association with _____ at an end?

D: Yes. I am not doing any of those at this point. So that is sort of where those are. Occasionally we read a book manuscript for a publisher or something like that.

M: Was there anything else you wanted to talk about or anything we have not addressed?

D: I would just say on sort of a final note why I have enjoyed being here at the University of Florida. First of all, it is a very good university despite its problems. While there are better universities in the country, there are not that many that are better and there are a lot that are not as good. It has been an opportunity to focus on Africa and not have to maybe teach one course on Africa a year. This type of thing: to have colleagues, to have students who are interested in Africa, to have interesting visitors coming through all the time who are interested in Africa, and to interact with them.

M: And they being part of your family too. I know that you play host to a good many international visitors.

D: Yes. I have enjoyed that. It was interesting that both of, our sons in going off to college from Gainesville, felt surprisingly cosmopolitan in part because of these visitors that we had in our family staying with us and the traveling that they have been able to do.

M: Both Johnathon and Richard were educated in Gainesville?

D: Through high school. John went to Washington University and Richard went to High Point College.

M: What are they each doing respectively in professional terms?

D: John, who is our younger son, is teaching eighth grade world history in a private school in St. Louis. [It is a] job that he seems to enjoy very much. Richard is a senior staffer for a member of congress from Connecticut. He seems to be honored doing what he enjoys very much. He is also married. I have no grandchildren yet. Someday I anticipate [I will]. What I was saying about the University of Florida was what has been enjoyable is being able to have a number of different careers without ever having to sell the house and move. It would have been advantageous to sell the house and move because we would have had to throw away this junk that we have accumulated. But [I have been fortunate]: coming here as an assistant professor of history, hired in African history to teach African history, and to be the only person in the department teaching African history. Becoming an administrator of the Center for African Studies that gradually emerges as one of the most prominent centers in the United States, one of the places to study Africa. [And], at the same time, having the University provide the support for editing the leading journal in North America on Africa and being able to do that while still living here in Gainesville. Then being a senior historian and part of building, what for a short time and perhaps can revive to become again, one of the best, if not the best graduate, programs in African history in the United States. Having an opportunity to work at the

international level globally, and not just with Africa, through the global research on the GREAN Initiative. Again, those opportunities that the University of Florida has been able to provide [have allowed me] a various diverse career. I have had several different jobs without having to change employers. That has been one of the very rewarding things of being at a large diverse university. [In] various stages in my working life [I have] been able to do various things, all of which I have found of interest and stimulating. Although, as I have said, being interim director was challenging in sometimes a very exasperating way, unlike any of the other things I have done.

M: You have been here a long time too.

D: Yes. I have become a real Gator. Who would have think it, as they say.

M: It strikes me, though, that in your nearly three decades of service at the University of Florida, in addition to the wide variety of positions you have filled, almost all of your endeavors have received a great measure of success. With respect to your stint as editor of the African Studies Review, it became a prominent journal and remains so to this day. It is really one of the finest in the field. In the time that you oversaw developments as center director for African studies it emerged, as you point out, as one of the premier if not the very best, certainly among the top half dozen best, centers for African studies in the country. In addition to all that, you worked with some really fascinating people in your capacity in the international office.

D: People even refer to the few things I published and all of that.

M: That is right. At the same time you published numerous articles and some books.

D: It has been rewarding. Let us put it that way. I have enjoyed it. I was fortunate that John Mahon called and said would I be interested in taking a job at the University of Florida. I went and talked with Phil Curtin and said, I do not know anything about the University of Florida. What do you think? He said, it is a pretty good university, but be sure to say that you want to invite your wife down too. Bring her down because if she does not like it, you will not like it. But she has liked it and I have liked it too. It has been a good community to live in, a good place to raise children. I think I have been very fortunate. I hope people who are starting here as assistant professors now can be as fortunate. I had some colleagues who have left, and I regret they have left. I suppose there has been one or two who have left that maybe it is just as well they did. But, by and large, I have enjoyed the people I have worked with, despite what I have said about some of my other colleagues in the history department, perhaps not thinking African history is as important a field as I think they should think it. That does not indicate any sense of being at odds with them or objecting to working with them or having difficult working relations. Quite the contrary, I have always felt comfortable in the history department. Maybe I am not as integral a part of the department as most people are because of working with African studies during the 1980s. If we were hosting somebody for dinner, it was usually somebody with the African studies program, and not somebody coming here in history, unless they happened to be in African history. Just as I started to get

back involved with the department as a professor I was getting pulled into international studies and programs which diverted my time and efforts and energies and so forth. This GREAN Initiative is not the normal thing that a historian is likely to do, but maybe that indicates that those of us who are historians can think broadly and conceptually embrace a lot of issues.

M: It has been a fascinating career and I imagine there will be a need to conduct a similar interview sometime in the new millenium.

D: In the new millenium when I am creaky and hard of hearing. Maybe my mind is wandering off.

M: I am sure in the next several years your career will take on new directions as it has in the past.

D: I intend to be around for a while longer, so thank you for taking the time.

M: Thank you for your time.

D: You are welcome, Jim.