

UFLC 9

Interviewee: Paul Smysor

Interviewer: Sid Johnston

Date: September 5, 1984

J: This is an interview with Paul Smysor, and I am Sid Johnston. Today is September 5, 1984, and we are here at Mr. Smysor's home in Gainesville, Florida, at 1605 NW 22nd Street. How are you this afternoon, Mr. Smysor?

S: Well, glad to be able to be of some benefit to you with your historical search, I believe we should call it. Is that right?

J: I think that is correct.

S: You are particularly interested in the law college at the University of Florida?

J: Yes, sir, but I would like to start out a little bit with your childhood in growing up. Where were you born?

S: In Ohio, in a farming community outside Cincinnati.

J: What day was that? What year?

S: Well, that was many years ago. April 7, 1902, believe it or not.

J: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

S: Just one sister who has settled in Gainesville with her husband.

J: And where were your parents from?

S: Born and reared right in Ohio. My father was born on a big, beautiful farm and remained on the farm until he retired to move to Florida in 1939.

J: He was a farmer?

S: A *real* farmer.

J: A *real* farmer? What is a *real* farmer?

S: One who takes pride in his crops and grows nice crops and pays his debts on time.

J: And your mother?

- S: She was raised on a farm also. Six miles away.
- J: Where did you go to elementary and high school?
- S: Elementary was District 5, a one-room, red-brick county schoolhouse in which my father was the director. They did not have a school board. They just had different districts with a director for each one. The director maintained the building and hired the teachers, all on his own.
- J: Did your mother have a role in the school board or in the directorship of the school?
- S: Yes, she advised my father about it, what teacher to hire and not to hire.
- J: Did you stay in that one school all the way through the twelfth grade or through your high school?
- S: No, just through the eighth grade.
- J: Where did you go to high school?
- S: In Milford, Ohio. I rode the electric C. M. & B. line, Cincinnati, Milford & Blanchester, built by Mr. Kroger, the grocery man. They have grocery stores in several states up there. You very rarely can find a transplant to Florida that has not heard of a Kroger grocery store. He made lots of money and spent it on building this inter-urban electric line, right through our farm. That is how we went to high school.
- J: How did your father feel about that electric rail line cutting through his farm land?
- S: We were pleased. We gave them the land.
- J: Because it was more convenient for your family?
- S: They put a little station there, and all the tickets were printed "Smysor's Station." We were the most urbanized farmers that you ever heard of, in that we could get on the car line and go right down to the heart of Cincinnati and attend grand opera or any functions that were important. We were in and out of the city regularly and inexpensively.
- J: Now, was the home that you were born in that fine, two-story brick home you showed me a while ago? When did your dad build that?
- S: My grandfather built it with the help of my father when he was just a young man.

J: So when do you estimate that house to have been built?

S: It would have been 1895, I would say.

J: Do you think there were any additions made to the home after it was originally constructed?

S: Yes, we added a room in 1918.

J: When did you graduate from high school?

S: In 1920, age eighteen.

J: So you were too young to be in World War I. What did you do immediately after graduating from high school?

S: I worked on the farm the year after high school. The leading young man in the class, whose father was a lawyer, and I opened up an automobile repair shop and made more money at that during the summer than my dad did on the farm.

J: How did your father feel about that?

S: He was proud of it.

J: I bet he was.

S: We have had people pull a Model-T car with a team of horses miles to get us to fix it.

J: Was your mother's family farmers?

S: Yes.

J: Is there any tradition of law in your family?

S: No.

J: You are the first lawyer in your family.

S: That is right.

J: You said you had one sister. What is her name?

S: Frieda Pollack, living here in town now. She has a beautiful home.

J: When did you determine to come to Gainesville, Florida?

S: In the summer of 1923.

J: What were the compelling reasons to bring you here?

S: My mother was a real scholar; she read a lot about what went on around the world. She did a lot of reading and was always talking about Florida, that Florida was destined to be a great state someday. She always wanted to visit Florida, and it created a desire in me to see Florida also. After one year at the University of Cincinnati, the fall of 1920, I was a little bored with liberal arts, and I dropped out and got a teacher's certificate after a two-day examination and taught school. I taught at a one-room country schoolhouse with all eight grades, and I walked three miles there and three miles back each day. The next year I was in business in Cincinnati. The third year, 1923, I decided to go away to college and experience real college life and not commute back and forth as I did at the University of Cincinnati on Mr. Kroger's C. M. & B. line.

J: How did you travel to Florida?

S: On the train, the L. & M. train [Louisville & Nashville].

J: Did your mother come with you?

S: No.

J: She stayed there. Where was she educated?

S: In a one-room country school house near Goshen, Ohio.

J: Had she graduated from college or attended college in Ohio?

S: No. She was very well self-educated. She was a walking encyclopedia, you might say, to exaggerate slightly.

J: Did she get the chance to see Florida in her lifetime?

S: Yes, she did.

J: And were her dreams realized, that Florida would be destined [to greatness]?

S: They sold that beautiful farm and moved to Florida, to Gainesville, in 1939.

J: So she did see it.

S: Oh, yes.

J: You arrived here in 1923 on the train, then?

S: That is correct.

J: And that was in downtown Gainesville?

S: Yes. The Seaboard [Air Line] Railroad brought me in from Jacksonville.

J: Did you stay here the rest of your life after arriving?

S: Oh, no. I went back in the summertime usually, and . . .

J: So when you moved here in 1923, you began college immediately at the University of Florida?

S: Yes. That was sixty-one years ago this week.

J: That is right. Congratulations.

S: And yet it seems like yesterday in a way.

J: What type of courses did you begin taking?

S: The first semester I took some extra work--philosophy and psychology under one of the most wonderful professors that the University of Florida has ever had, Dr. [Hasse Octavius] Enwall [head professor of philosophy and psychology]. His son Hayford Enwall became a teacher at the University law school. Is that right?

J: Yes, sir.

S: I value very highly the experience of having courses under Hayford's father.

J: What types of jobs did you have to help support you in school?

S: Well, my father was well able to send me, but I worked on the side. I clerked in a hotel that fall, and then the next semester I helped manage a room and boarding house.

J: What was the name of that room and boarding house?

S: Cottage Home.

J: And where was that located in reference to the University?

S: At the southeast corner of University Avenue and 17th Street, where Chaucer's Restaurant is now.

J: Was business pretty good?

S: Yes. And he was a very, very fine tenant, the man who operated it, Phil Hefman. Then I built the building in what was then the side yard. It is now occupied by Court Side sporting goods store.

J: When did you have that built?

S: I did not have it built. I built it in 1932.

J: You actually laid the stone yourself?

S: Part of the brick, yes. I had a professional bricklayer to lay most of the brick for forty cents an hour. [He was] a good hard working laborer, a black man who worked six days a week for five dollars. He proposed that salary when he asked for the job.

J: Did you have an architect draw the plans?

S: I drew the plans.

J: You drew the plans and had it built--and built it.

S: I built it. I was on the job every day.

J: So you began your university schooling here at Florida in 1923. Where did you graduate with an undergraduate degree?

S: What do you mean by undergraduate degree?

J: Did you graduate . . .

S: I got an LL.B.

J: You got an LL.B.

S: Which was later made a J.D.

- J: I see. So you began at the undergraduate level taking freshman courses and then went directly into law school?
- S: In February of 1924.
- J: So you took some refresher courses to begin your law training that first year.
- S: Right.
- J: When you first entered the University of Florida law school, did you have an application to make out for consideration by the dean or the college president, Dr. Murphree, at that time?
- S: I do not remember any of the preliminaries entering the law school except regular registration.
- J: What was regular registration?
- S: Well, becoming a student in the law college.
- J: What I am asking, I guess, is how would you register? Today there are long lines and forms to fill out, and there is the opportunity to drop one class and add another class before you begin the semester in earnest. Did you have any of those types of things?
- S: I do not remember filling out any forms. Perhaps they did have them, but I do not remember. It was just a matter of signing up in registration line.
- J: Where was that registration line?
- S: I do not remember. Most likely Peabody Hall.
- J: Where were you living at this time in Gainesville?
- S: At what was then 1880 West University Avenue. It is now 1642 West University Avenue.
- J: How many places did you live subsequent to that? I am talking about during your law school career.
- S: Before 1923 I lived on Lafayette Street, which is now 16th Street, in a green-colored house that is still standing. It is across from the 7-11 store. It was called Campus View Lodge, and the man who later became governor, Fuller Warren, moved in the same house that same fall, and we ate at the same table.

J: What was Fuller like?

S: Well, he was from west Florida--he still had some country in him--and he was very outstanding. I do not know whether it was the first or second evening after dinner his roommate let us know that he was quite a speech maker, so I helped push him up on a table to make a speech.

J: Right there at the boarding house?

S: Yes, in the lobby after we had finished our dinner.

J: How many people were there to hear him on that first night?

S: Let me see now. Some other boys came in to eat there. I would estimate that there were thirty-five students there.

J: It sounds like that is a big boarding house--a big eating hall, at least.

S: Well, it was. On down the stairs was the eating hall.

J: What did he talk about?

S: Well, he said, "Now, gentlemen, if I am going to make a speech, I would like to have a subject matter that you would like for me to speak on." So somebody hollered, "Why do grasshoppers hop?" We had to pull him down off the table to get him to sit.

J: He was that extemporaneous?

S: He certainly was.

J: How long did he live in that rooming house with you?

S: Just that semester. Then I moved to this 1880 house that is still standing that I told you is presently Chaucer's Restaurant. I think Fuller might have moved to the Sigma Chi House.

J: Was he in that . . .

S: No. No, it was not Sigma Chi. It was the nearest fraternity uptown at that time, on the south side of University Avenue.

J: The farthest one uptown?

S: That is right.

J: On the south side. Is Fuller still alive?

S: No, no. He died several years ago.

J: Ten years ago?

S: Several. I would say more than ten years ago.

J: Did you remain at what is today Chaucer's for the rest of your law school time?

S: No. I was there off and on, but I was there most of the time.

J: How much did you . . .

S: I think I was not sure I was going to get back the fall of 1924, and the rooms were all rented, so I got a room in the dormitory, in old Buckman Hall.

J: Was it any cheaper to live in a dorm than it was to rent out in the town?

S: Oh, yes. [It was] \$22.50 a month for a steam-heated room with maid service, three to a room, and three square meals a day, family-style, all you could eat. Food was good and plentiful.

J: That was over at Buckman?

S: Yes.

J: Were there many law students that housed at Buckman Hall when you were there?

S: Very few. There were only three of us that had automobiles at that time. My roommate, Omar S. Thackerey, who won a set of *Corpus Juris*, was one of them. That was for his winning position in research. He later had a big law practice in Kissimmee of Thackerey, Thackerey & Thackerey.

J: And he was one of the few that owned an automobile, along with yourself.

S: There was one other boy. I have forgotten his name.

J: Barton Douglas owned an automobile when he was on campus, but he did not graduate until 1932.

S: I graduated in 1929, you see, after dropping out and setting up a little state up North. I dropped out one year.

J: What year were you not at the University?

S: It would have been 1928.

J: And then you returned in the fall of 1929 and finished up?

S: No. I was out for a year and maybe one semester. Anyway, I finished in 1929.

J: It was \$22.50 a month for maid service and room and all the good food you could eat over at Buckman. How much could you expect to pay out-of-hand?

S: We did not eat in Buckman Hall. We ate in what they call the Commons.

J: What is that?

S: I believe the building is still standing. It later became a cafeteria. It was duplicated with another building similar to it and the same size where they had four serving lines altogether.

J: My, my. Where on campus was that?

S: Near the south end of Buckman Hall. Very near.

J: Now, in the past you have spoken to me about swamp angels. Tell me about that.

S: Oh, the housekeeper. Ma Peter she was called. She had a group of colored girls who came around and cleaned up the rooms.

J: Why "swamp angels"?

S: I do not know who started it or why.

J: Did they provide pretty good service in cleaning up the rooms?

S: Oh, excellent, excellent. And you better be out of bed by a certain time whether you had classes or not.

J: Was there a chapel or a religious service each morning to attend?

S: No, not at that time.

J: What church did you attend in Gainesville?

S: I was raised a Methodist in Ohio. I became a member of that church in my teens. Upon arriving down here I attended all the churches to see which pastor appealed to me the most. The one who appealed to me the most was Dr. John R. Cunningham of the Presbyterian faith, who later became president of Davidson University, a Presbyterian college. And he was a very, very outstanding preacher who preceded the famous pastor at First Presbyterian Church, Preacher [Ulysses S.] Gordon.

J: Preacher Gordon?

S: Those who have not read the book about Preacher Gordon should. It was written by Dr. Hale and one of the sons of the man who was in the school of pharmacy [Perry A. Foote, Jr.] The book is called [*Preacher Gordon: A Mischievous Saint: [The Christian Charisma of a Man Called Prescher]*].

J: *A Mischievous Saint?*

S: If I remember correctly.

J: Were there groups of you law students who would attend church on Sundays?

S: Oh, not in groups. I appreciated Dr. Cunningham so much that I ushered three times a week--Sunday morning service, evening service, and then night prayer meeting--even though I had been raised as a strict Methodist.

J: Now, when you were in law school, the building was not yet named Bryan Hall. Did it have a name?

S: I do not recall that the building had any name. None other than just a law college.

J: You all called it the law college?

S: Yes.

J: Was there an entrance other than a west entrance where the portico is?

S: Oh, yes. There was a door to the east where during class break on cold mornings we would stand around and carry on conversation there in the sunshine.

J: As you walked in the west entrance, what was there immediately to your left?

S: The law library.

J: And who was in there commanding the desk?

S: Priscilla Kennedy, a very exacting, very beautiful librarian. I worked under her for one year, as I recall, and ran the library at night. I was there when Dr. [Clifford W.] Crandall was writing his book on part of civil practice, and a professor by the name of [George W.] Thompson was doing research on books he was, I believe, revising on property law.

J: What kind of financial compensation did you receive for working at the library?

S: My tuition at the law college.

J: That paid for tuition?

S: And added a little private office in one corner of the building.

J: How did you arrange for that?

S: I have forgotten. One of my roommates at the law school, and then Chester Gridley, who is still living, called my attention to it. And we worked together. We alternated part of the time, but I was always there at night.

J: How many nights a week?

S: Seems to me like I was there on Saturday night.

J: Sunday?

S: No. I do not remember being there on Sunday.

J: Do you remember any library on campus where there was a law library, the main library, or even agriculture library being open on Sunday? Was anything open on Sunday?

S: I do not recall any being open on Sunday.

J: Now, those nights that you worked at the library, what time would you close up?

S: I think we were supposed to stay until eleven, but I had the keys and nobody questioned me, and I remember staying late on several occasions when somebody was doing research there. One of the professors would be doing

research. There was a new attorney who came to Gainesville. He did not have a library, and he spent a lot of time out there. It was nice. He was very nice to me, and I was proud to know him. I stayed until after midnight on occasions.

J: You were a devoted librarian yourself?

S: Yes.

J: How would you check out a person's book? How would you check out a book for a person from the library? What was the procedure?

S: Well, cards. There was a card to sign, and it had to be kept in the file.

J: Was there a fine for late books?

S: So far as I know, but Mrs. Kennedy would, or Miss Kennedy, would have handled that. I had all the books back in the proper places when I locked up.

J: Did you ever have a crowd in there, students studying?

S: They were coming and going. Sometimes it would be pretty well full, especially when the examination time was nearing.

J: Now, how much time could you study in there a night?

S: Oh, I got to study I would say over 50 percent of the time. It was not a continual deal. Law students took the books down that they wanted and just [left them there when they were finished]. I have seen the time when the tables were covered with books left behind.

J: And those books were what was facing you, and you had to put back on the shelves.

S: And put them in the right place.

J: I bet that took a little bit of time.

S: Yes. I enjoyed it.

J: Do you remember nights when Professor Crandall and Thompson were in there working on the books or doing research?

S: Research.

- J: Where were their offices?
- S: As I recall, their offices were upstairs at Dean Trusler's office, and Judge Cockrell's office was downstairs together with one classroom. [There were] maybe two classrooms.
- J: Did you think there was a need for more classroom space? Do you think the library may have been overcrowded with books?
- S: No, I do not remember it seeming to be overcrowded.
- J: How many classes a semester did you take?
- S: The usual requirement was fifteen hours.
- J: Do you remember people taking less? Were there part-time students [who were] just going to school taking two or three classes?
- S: Not that I recall.
- J: Tell me a little bit about Dean Trusler in class when you were sitting there and he was giving his lesson.
- S: He was a very interesting, very thorough, a real teacher. One peculiarity that he had was to lecture with his eyes closed.
- J: Do you remember him speaking one-on-one to a student outside the hall, or maybe even you going into his office and him speaking to you with his eyes closed?
- S: I cannot imagine him doing that. I do not specifically recall that, though I talked to him in his office many times. In fact, part of my duty in connection with the library was to bring the mail to all the professors' offices.
- J: Was the mail delivered each day?
- S: I went to Language Hall and picked up the bundle of mail for the law school and had keys to all the doors and put the mail on the right desk.
- J: You must have developed a real sense of confidence in those people to give you free run of all the offices of the law college itself. Did you have that feeling?
- S: Yes, yes. And I was very faithful at all times in all respects.
- J: How did Dean Trusler treat questions raised by students in class?

S: With all due consideration. In fact, he was very human about that, as I recall.

J: How about Judge Cockrell?

S: Well, Judge responded in his own way. I do not remember him being discourteous to anyone. He was maybe more difficult to approach with a question.

J: Was he more imposing?

S: Perhaps so. You know, you take me back many, many years now.

J: It is a long way off.

S: Right.

J: How many people would you have in class with you?

S: Well, I can see the room. The downstairs classroom was pretty well filled, but not completely.

J: Maybe forty people?

S: I can see Tom Sebring sitting usually on a front seat. He later became dean of Stetson Law School, and he shared in the international criminal trials in Germany after World War I. He was also, I believe, a football coach. Was he not? Do you recall? Tom Sebring?

J: I do not recall. The only person I recall having any responsibility for football or athletics was Judge Cockrell as part of the athletic association, and I do not know exactly what his duties were. When you were in there in the classroom, did you see any women?

S: Yes. One woman. Stella B. Fisher. The first year or so. Then later another lady came in who subsequently married Professor Slagle. Stella B. Fisher it was.

J: Stella?

S: Stella Bittle Fisher.

J: Do you have a sense of what has happened to Stella over the years?

- S: She died in the prime of life, not too many years after she set up a practice in Gainesville.
- J: When did she graduate? Before you?
- S: Yes. You see, I dropped out a year to settle an estate up North.
- J: Now, who was the lady that married Professor Slagle?
- S: I do not remember her maiden name.
- J: What was her first name?
- S: Whoa. You got me there. However, they lived in town and had a daughter who was in class with one of my daughters. Just one daughter.
- J: Did she graduate from the law college?
- S: I think so, yes.
- J: Now, you had turned North to settle your father's estate?
- S: No, not my father's estate. Another estate.
- J: You saw the bust happen in Gainesville. Describe to me a little bit about whether students dropped out of school, whether the population decreased around here, if building slowed down.
- S: I told you about after my graduation, which included a license to practice law, and about my putting up that two-story brick building to avoid a mortgage foreclosure. I also told about when two proposed tenants advanced me some money on a lease, one for a drugstore and one for a men's clothing store. And there would be many people who would be concerned with this interview who would remember Jim Larch, a clothing store man when it [the University] was for men only. He had a very nice clothing store.
- J: That was in the early thirties?
- S: 1932.
- J: Now, I am referring to the land bust of late 1925 and early 1926. Do you recall effects in Gainesville by that bust?
- S: Oh, yes. In 1923 and 1924 it was still going strong. I night clerked in the Arlington Hotel. We filled it full every night.

J: Were these vacationers or speculators?

S: Mostly speculators.

J: What happened at the law college in the fall of 1926? Did the enrollment fall off?
Were there smaller classes all of a sudden?

S: I do not have any figures to make a comparison.

J: What developed as your favorite type of law while you were in school?

S: Well, property law, I would say, and contract law.

J: Who taught those courses?

S: Professor Thompson taught the property law, and contract law might have been
[taught by] Professor Slagle.

J: What did Professor Slagle look like?

S: He was very neat, extremely neat. He wore a white stiff collar and was balding.
He was strictly business; there was no laughing.

J: How would he teach you?

S: Very precisely, very accurately.

J: Would he read out of a book?

S: I do not recall him specifically reading out of a book. I guess they all did at
certain times, a passage pertinent to the subject matter during that class.

J: What was his examination like?

S: Well, they were I guess about the stiffest of any in the law school. Judge
Cockrell sort of had his mind made up before he read the papers, to a great
extent.

J: Did any of them give a midterm exam?

S: I do not recall midterm exams. It was the end of each semester.

J: Would you put in a large number of hours of study for that final examination?

S: Oh, yes. I had worked with other students half the night. I saw our dear professor Jimmy Day come to class to take an exam the next morning with a wet towel around his head to subdue a severe headache from being up all night drinking coffee.

J: My God. How old was Jimmy Day?

S: Seems to me like he was older than I was. He was perhaps a few years older.

J: You mentioned that you felt Judge Cockrell had pretty well made up his mind who was going to be what.

S: That was more or less traditional.

J: Is that right. That was the kind of shop talk around the school, in a sense?

S: Yes. In a way.

J: What were some of the factors that would make you either popular or unpopular with him? Either he would favor you or he would not, let us say.

S: I do not know what criteria the Judge used to judge people other than the rating as an all-around good student. I had very pleasant relations with him when I would carry the mail to him.

J: When you carried the mail, did you generally find the professors in their office, if they were not in class?

S: Well, it depended on the class hours. I would have unlocked the door many times and put the mail on their desk.

J: Now, the year you graduated I believe Jimmy Day also graduated.

S: About that same time.

J: So you never had him as an instructor.

S: Oh, no. We attended classes together.

J: Did Priscilla Kennedy ever teach a class?

S: Not that I know of.

J: Tell me about Professor Clifford Crandall.

- S: Crandall was a very pleasant man, well organized, respected as far as a professor could be respected. He was jovial and *very thorough* in his work.
- J: Had he finished his book before you graduated?
- S: On Florida civil practice? I believe so.
- J: Do you remember using that book in any of his classes?
- S: I knew he taught the subject. Now, whether or not we had that as a textbook from the publishing house or not, I do not know at this time.
- J: I meant to ask you how much would you pay to live in the downtown area when you were a student instead of living in Buckman.
- S: Well, there was so few who lived downtown that I would say there were no standards to go by.
- J: How much did you pay?
- S: Well, the first semester at Campus View Lodge was . . . I do not remember. It was more than the rate in the dormitory. Then when I moved to a cottage home, I was more or less manager. I got my room and meals for helping manage the place.
- J: Was shuffling a tradition in class when you arrived in 1924?
- S: Oh, I remember it. It was not a very significant thing.
- J: Do you have a sense of how it began?
- S: I can imagine Professor Slagle maybe wanting to keep the class overtime. He was so thorough, and he wanted to get his points across. He was very serious about it.
- J: Do you remember Mrs. Crandall pulling up in her automobile?
- S: Now that you mention it, it was a very peculiar situation in the family. A thunderstorm just literally scared the good lady to death, and she would come and break into the classes and get a chair and sit right as close to him as she possibly could during the thunderstorm.
- J: Is that right?

S: Yes.

J: That is peculiar. What was your reaction the first time that happened? How did you find this was a story?

S: We just took it gracefully.

J: No other way to take it. Do you know if she was ever cured of that?

S: I do not know. Have you heard this from others?

J: No, I have not. Now, I recall a case of an Edward Johnston, I believe it was, who rushed into Judge Cockrell's office one day and verbally abused the judge, and he responded vehemently likewise. Do you recall that incident?

S: No, I must not have been in class when that happened.

J: That was about 1924 or 1925.

S: You mean the student's name was . . .

J: Edward Johnston, I believe. Let me check. How well did all these professors get along amongst themselves?

S: I would say that if you have not already heard about it, you will hear about legis, a special legislative investigation inspired by a member of the legislature in regard to Judge Cockrell, a teacher that I regarded very highly. I was requested to have a practice courtroom open for a meeting. While I was adjusting the thermostat and opening up the courtroom, I lingered. Presently the meeting was underway, and I took a seat in the corner and sat all the way through it, missing lunch time completely. And no questions were raised about my presence. It turned out to be very interesting. The main thing that I learned was that there was a friction between Judge Cockrell and Dean Trusler. The attorney general was there from Tallahassee, and it was obvious that Dr. [Albert A.] Murphree [president, University of Florida] wanted to avoid any adverse publicity and wanted the meeting to run as smoothly as possible, which it did.

J: How long did the . . .

S: Although the member of the legislature who inspired the meeting had a grudge against Judge Cockrell, and he came at the beginning of it and read a telegram from the governor requesting that the meeting be held elsewhere, at another date, but they went ahead with the investigation anyhow.

J: Why did you feel that that member of the legislature wanted the meeting held elsewhere?

S: Well . . .

J: Was it clear in his message?

S: They did not think it would be fair to him to have it there after what had happened the night before. A group of students had gotten together and burned him in effigy.

J: I take it that the atmosphere in the practice courtroom was very tense.

S: Very tense. Very tense.

J: Who was the attorney general?

S: I do not recall his name, but he was taking it seriously. Dr. Murphree was in favor, and everybody there acting in any official capacity was in favor, of going ahead with the investigation nevertheless.

J: Did the investigation proceed?

S: Yes. It proceeded and lasted for hours, many hours.

J: And what, as you recall, was the outcome of the investigation?

S: That it was not well founded.

J: How long were you in the courtroom?

S: For hours until it ended. It was time for afternoon classes to start. I never had any lunch that day.

J: Now, do you wish to tell us who the legislative member was that initiated this action?

S: Yes, it was Dwight Sketson.

J: Did he have a car in which he drove down from Tallahassee to [Gainesville]?

S: I do not know if he lived in Tallahassee. I do not recall if the legislature was in session. His home was in Sumter County, but he spent most of his life in Gainesville.

J: What other functions did the courtroom hold other than for incidences like the one you just related?

S: I do not recall any. That was the only one that I at least became familiar with.

J: Was there much talk about that around the law school?

S: No, not a great deal. The publisher of *The Gainesville Sun* was there. He testified to the effect that any of the faculty meetings--any meetings of any kind that he was familiar with--were as nice as a "Sunday school picnic."

J: Did the proceedings vanish, dissipate, after that day on the case?

S: Yes, it all settled down. If any other investigation, any meeting was held anywhere else, I never heard about it.

J: What was the outcome of the friction you mentioned between Dr. Murphree and Dean Trusler and Judge Cockrell?

S: Nothing that interfered with the smooth operation of the law school. Knowing how tense the feelings were, particularly between Judge Cockrell and Dean Trusler, it did not surface in the operation of the law school or have any effect upon the confidence that we students had in those men.

J: So you would say that you would have not known of any friction between them.

S: No, had I not accidentally heard the investigation.

J: That is a remarkable story. So they were able to suppress their differences.

S: Yes, they did. Nicely.

J: Now, that courtroom also served as a moot court or maybe a practice court.

S: It was the regular practice courtroom.

J: Did you participate in any of the moot courts or practice courts?

S: Oh, yes. Part of our graduation requirement was to try some cases.

J: What case in particular did you try?

S: Oh, it was a fictitious one. I forget whether I was . . . they did it in pairs. They had a pair of lawyers on each side. I worked with Miller Boyer with another student.

J: Who?

S: I do not remember who it was.

J: Do you recall the case?

S: Not exactly. It was not of any great importance. We argued before a jury, and frequently I was called to serve on the jury. Just whoever happened to be around handy would be given a subpoena by the sheriff, the acting sheriff.

J: Would you all actually, as a jury, pass judgment?

S: Oh, yes. We would get in and have some big arguments in the jury room. Yes, indeed.

J: How many practice courts were you involved in?

S: I do not recall.

J: Five?

S: No. Three or four.

J: And how many did you argue, either in the defense or in the plaintiff?

S: It was both, acting as defendant one time and the plaintiff another time.

J: Who was the judge?

S: Cockrell. He was a typical judge with his feet up high on the desk and acting like he did not even know what was going on.

J: So it was not quite as serious as it might have been. It was not like the real thing, so to speak.

S: It was very much like the real thing. When objections were raised, he would pass on the objections, sustain it or not sustain it. Just very typical of court proceedings.

J: Does any one case that you were involved in in the practice court stand out in your mind?

S: No, seemingly it does not. It does not.

- J: You have such a good memory I am quite frankly a little surprised that you were not involved in some rambunctious.
- S: No, I was not involved in any history-making cases, setting any great precedents.
- J: How were the facts presented? Who decided what the case composition would be? Would Judge Cockrell or . . .
- S: Oh, they gave us a set of facts to go by, and we had to give quite a bit of our attention. [We had to] work on it pretty hard to win the respect of Judge Cockrell.
- J: Would you have a week to prepare?
- S: Probably longer than that.
- J: Well, it is not a course that you were actually . . .
- S: I do not mean we worked the whole week, but we probably had time to think about it a week or longer.
- J: Do you remember Fuller Warren in any of those practice courts?
- S: Not in practice court. I do not remember being on a jury or being on a side when he was taking that course.
- J: What was the John Marshall Debating Society about?
- S: I do not remember too much about that. I remember it by name.
- J: Do you remember being involved in that at all?
- S: Very slightly.
- J: Do you think that they . . .
- S: I did not participate in any debates.
- J: Were there any fraternities--legal, honorary, legal social--that you participated in?
- S: No, I was pretty busy all the time managing the boarding house or . . .
- J: [You were] working on the clock.
- S: Looking at real estate bargains.

J: How often were you looking at real estate bargains?

S: Oh, every once in a while.

J: Were you able to take advantage of any of those while you were in law school?

S: Not while I was in law school, no.

J: That had to happen afterwards.

S: Well, the bubble of the famous boom of the 1920s was fading out, you see, and it made everybody pretty cautious.

J: When spring house parties and fall rolled around each year, what would you do? How would you be involved in those activities.

S: Very slightly.

J: Do you remember them happening?

S: I attended the dances. The military ball is the main dance I remember going to on the campus.

J: Who were your dates?

S: Well, I went around with some very, very nice girls. I was in a little theatre in 1923, and two of the girls in the little theatre became well known. One of them married a publishing man by the name of Shaw. Her name was Virginia McCall. They had a home on the Hudson in New York, and she visited Gainesville quite a bit. Another one was Dorothy Black, who became one of the associate editors of *Reader's Digest* and had quite a staff under her in her office, with secretaries and all of it that goes to make an office staff.

J: Were the swinging 1920s as swinging as you could expect in Gainesville?

S: Yes.

J: Were there dance centers you could take your date, or could you find yourself a basketball game?

S: No. I have danced at the [Gainesville] Woman's Club on occasions with young people. I do not remember the sponsors right now. I think I went to every military ball while I was there.

J: Were you in the ROTC program?

S: Yes, that first year, in 1923, the fall of 1923 and spring of 1924.

J: What were your duties while you were there?

S: Practice and drill and the classroom work. We had to take written examinations. And we had a teacher that was very outspoken. What was his name? Captain somebody. He was strictly military. If I had my annual, I would name him. I can almost name him, but not quite. Captain somebody.

J: I understand that the Black Cat was on the corner of University and what was then 9th Street.

S: [It was] 9th Street at that time. [The Black Cat was located] immediately west of the corner filling station. It was on the corner. Wait a minute. Was it just the Black Cat? Operated by Bud Mizell and Peewee Keezell.

J: Was it popular?

S: Very popular.

J: What happened inside the Black Cat?

S: Well, they served mostly hamburgers. It was not a regular restaurant, exactly.

J: Alachua County at that time was dry.

S: Yes, I think so. Oh, yes. Well, Prohibition days were on.

J: So there was no alcohol, no beer.

S: I do not remember about beer, but there were no whiskey stores; there were no bar rooms.

J: Was there a fellow that you recall on University Avenue that would sell moonshine or some type of whiskey?

S: Not that I ever encountered. I was not looking for it, and they were not looking for me.

J: What about the Old College Inn?

- S: Oh, that was a great institution. That was great.
- J: [That was popular in the] 1920s, too.
- S: Getting back to the Black Cat, I had built the two-story brick building, which later became the Florida Book Store for several years, and then currently, as I said, Court Side sporting goods store. Why, at one time there was a vacancy in it, and Kezell, Peewee Kezell (that is the only name I ever heard him called; he was a tiny little man, as smart as he could be, and he later became quite wealthy in Orlando or Winter Park), branched off from Mizell and rented this store and opened a restaurant of his own and announced the blessed event. The cat had a kitten! He was a very nice tenant to deal with.
- J: What was the Old College Inn?
- S: Well, it had a post office in there, and there was a barber shop in connection with it. It had a box there where I could get mail. It was operated by a rather important character in Gainesville, Sam Harn. His widow lives up here at the corner, at 17th Street and 8th Avenue, and she was a Gracie, a famous family in Gainesville at that time. The old Gracie home has been developed as a sort of historic building. Are you familiar with it?
- J: No.
- S: They have bequeathed or given to the University Foundation approximately \$3 million.
- J: Incredible.
- S: And Sam ran this College Inn. You know, he was such a nice fellow. He would cash our checks whether we looked good or not. Then it got in the hands of a young man by the name of Mann who was killed riding on the running board of a Model-T Ford. This caused an ordinance to be passed that you could not ride on the exterior of a car. He was killed instantly, and his father then took over the old College Inn. His father was from Mannville.
- J: Sounds like it was named after his family.
- S: It was named after him. Very fine old gentleman. Then it finally got in the hands of Jean Hammond, she and Kenneth Cameron, and they ran a very successful place for many years. [They] completely rebuilt it two times--one time before a fire and one time after a fire.
- J: When did you buy your automobile?

- S: In the September of 1923 at the Old Star Garage.
- J: How much did you pay for it?
- S: Ninety-five dollars. [It was] a one-seater, four-cylinder Buick with a top that folded back.
- J: Did you instantly become popular on campus?
- S: Oh, no. Not necessarily. At least I did not feel that I did.
- J: Did you drive to Jacksonville to see the football games or down to Tampa and take a crowd with you?
- S: I took a load to the Florida-Georgia game in Jacksonville and had to go by way of Lake City to get there.
- J: Did you do any fishing in the area?
- S: I never had time to fish.
- J: Pretty busy.
- S: I went swimming in Frazier's Pond right about midway between here and the campus, as the crow flies. It is just a kind of a sinkhole. Nevertheless, the University had its official swimming meets in Frazier's Pond.
- J: Did you see any of those?
- S: I do not know. I swam in it a lot of times.
- J: Were there any popular spots for law students, in particular, around town?
- S: I do not recall. The fraternity I spoke about . . . Fuller Warren belonged to Theta Chi. That just came to me, so we will make that correct.
- J: What was a legal fraternity?
- S: I do not recall. I did not have time to get involved in them. I was invited to become a member of a couple of social fraternities, but I was too busy with other things.
- J: There is one professor we have not spoken about yet, and that is Mr. Cassell.
- S: He came after I was in law school, as I recall. I had no class with him.

- J: I think he came in 1929, so you probably just did miss him. What day did you graduate from the law college?
- S: I do not remember it. I wore a cap and gown--that is about all I remember about it.
- J: Was it in the summer, in the spring, in the fall?
- S: It was at the end of the summer school.
- J: Where were the ceremonies held?
- S: In the auditorium, the existing auditorium.
- J: And how many people graduated with you?
- S: Oh, quite a few. There were not too many in the law school. The outstanding member of my class was William Pepper, who later became editor and publisher of *The Gainesville Sun*. He has long since been deceased.
- J: He graduated with a law degree?
- S: Yes.
- J: Did the law students have a separate ceremony from the rest of the graduates in the auditorium?
- S: No. We just all lined up together.
- J: How did you go through receiving your diploma? [Did you] walk through a line and shake somebody's hand, or did they come to you and hand them out?
- S: That was not too important, and it is too long ago to tell about it. I remember getting it, though, and having my picture made holding it.
- J: Did you have your picture made shaking somebody's hand?
- S: No, just alone.
- J: What was on your mind after graduating from the law school?
- S: Things were pretty bad then. It was not easy making a living. I had taken on a bride in the meantime.

J: When did you get married?

S: In 1927.

J: What is your wife's name?

S: Hazel Dodson. Her maiden name was Dodson.

J: How supportive was Mrs. Smysor of your efforts in law school?

S: Well, I could not have had a better wife.

J: How did you all meet?

S: On the front porch of the 1880 house on West University Avenue.

J: Were there many of your friends in law school that were married?

S: Only two that I recall. One was Bob Cargo, who later practiced law in St. Petersburg and may still be living, so far as I know, and [the other was] Wilber D. Job, whose wife taught music in Gilchrist County to help him get through law school.

J: It was an asset to have a wife in many ways--moral support, financial support. Did your wife work while you were in school?

S: One year. She had been in Florida State College for Women [now Florida State University, in Tallahassee]. She, at that time, knew every businessman in Gainesville. She was the cashier at the most popular uptown place called "Glasses." That was a famous place on the north side of the courthouse square. The professional people, the judges and everybody, were in and out of there all the time. It was a very popular place.

J: When did she move to Gainesville?

S: In the spring of 1924.

J: And you met her after she was in Gainesville?

S: That is right.

J: Did you make any trips up to Florida State College for Women?

S: Oh, I lost count of how many trips. And I had to go by way of Valdosta to get there.

- J: That is not exactly on the way, is it. What were you doing up in that neck of the woods?
- S: We boys would stay till the curfew blew up there, and then we would get back in time for classes on Monday morning--without hitting a bed.
- J: How long of a drive was it by Valdosta in 1924?
- S: It was about 110 miles from here to Valdosta and about that same distance to Tallahassee, I guess.
- J: Were those dating excursions, or were there any kind of sporting events that the women were involved in?
- S: No, [they were] Dating excursions. They did not have a football game.
- J: Who were some of the fellows that would ride with you up there?
- S: Well, a boy by the name of Davis from St. Petersburg and another fellow by the name of Bob Miller, who later became clerk of the courts in Suwannee County or Madison County, I forget which. And whoever was lucky enough to have a date up there. I would always take a sedan full.
- J: How would they get in touch with you?
- S: Oh, we just knew each other. I always had a load.
- J: Were there girls coming down in their automobiles to see you all?
- S: No, they did not have automobiles. They would come to Lake City on a train. We would meet them in Lake City.
- J: Would you all get together in Lake City and then drive over to Jacksonville to watch a Florida game?
- S: No. I went directly from here.
- J: Realistically, how often a month would your schedule allow you to slip over there to Tallahassee?
- S: Oh, I averaged maybe once a month.
- J: And you put in about 50 percent of your studying time in the library, so how many hours in total a week would you say you were studying?

- S: Well, in my room and at the library . . . I was awful fortunate in having two wonderful men as roommates. We remained close friends the rest of our lives. One of them became the head title examiner for one of the oldest title companies in Orlando, Fidelity Guarantee and Title Company. His name was Chester Gridley, and he became a wonderful, wonderful title man. They would not insure a title unless he approved it. I have had frequent visits with him. The most recent ones were quite sad. All the time we went to law school together he would not touch a cigarette, but in doing the rush hours on title work he would have to work late at night, and he got started smoking cigarettes to stay awake. He got completely hooked on them, and now he is slowly dying with emphysema.
- J: It is tragic.
- S: He can barely walk from one [side of the room to the other], from his chair to his bed.
- J: Was he also one of the people you would study with as well?
- S: Oh, yes, we studied together.
- J: Would you rather study when you were in law school by yourself or with other people?
- S: Well, when we would study in our room together. We had a law that nobody talked. He [Chester Gridley] was a very hard-working, studious boy. He has a beautiful home on the lake in Orlando. I visit him practically every time I am in Orlando.
- J: Well, I am sorry to hear that.
- S: And Omar Thackerey was the busiest lawyer in Kissimmee; [he had the] busiest firm as a rule, although there was another lawyer who was maybe more popular politically. His older son practiced with him and married a law student, and she became a member of the firm Thackerey, Thackerey & Thackerey. Then his younger son got a law degree and his daughter got a law degree and married a man who became a circuit court judge in Jacksonville. They used to practically have the keys to Kissimmee. His son was mayor of Kissimmee, and upon his sudden demise his wife became the mayor. When she went back to practice law with her brother in Clearwater, the other son became mayor of Kissimmee. Then later, subsequently, the son became county sheriff for several years. They had to be pretty capable people to hold those offices in a predominantly Democratic town, having been Republicans.

J: That is very surprising.

S: That is.

J: Were they Republican when you knew them in law school?

S: Oh, yes. Staunch Republican, he was. He had been superintendent of schools in Ohio. He was older than I was.

J: It sounds like you had a lot of friends in law school and had a lot of acquaintances and had a lot of good times with those people.

S: The outstanding ones, yes. There was Hubert Hurst, who has just given the foundation \$1.some-odd million. He had no heirs.

J: He was an instructor at the school for a while.

S: In business law.

J: Has he passed away?

S: Just recently. This year. Great loss to me. Another friend that is still the main one that I remember who is still living now--he is the only one in town--is a very fine retired lawyer by the name of E. A. Clayton. Ermine Clayton. A very fine, very fine person.

J: What were some of the most difficult times for you in law school?

S: I do not remember any particularly difficult times. I did not have to work on the side, but I have always made a dollar here and there. I got my room and board for managing the house.

J: How would you make those dollars here and there?

S: Oh, various things that came to hand.

J: Odds and ends.

S: Odds and ends, yes.

J: Where did you buy your books for classes?

S: There was a bookstore on the campus, as I recall, and there were usually always second-hand books available that were good books.

J: Do you recall buying from . . .

S: And buying from other students.

J: Law graduates and . . .

S: People who had graduated, yes.

J: What were some of the best times in law school?

S: Well, I always had good dates for dancing. I had the best.

J: I remember talking with someone about the building, and I would like to talk about that again. How well heated was the building in winter?

S: Very well.

J: Of course, there was no air-conditioning. How was the temperature in there in the summer?

S: Well, it was pretty hot.

J: So uncomfortable that they would have to call class off?

S: No, I do not recall that.

J: Were there screens on the windows?

S: I do not believe so, no.

J: You had to contend with the bugs, then.

S: I do not really remember it being any problem.

J: You graduated in the summer of 1929. Times were bleak. Gainesville did not look real good as a place to make a lot of money. Were you in law school to make a lot of money, or were you in law school for other reasons?

S: I took it to be a very broadening course of study that I would recommend to anybody unless they have some other choice or are going just for general education. Nothing beats training in law.

J: Did you go in with that philosophy and come out with that same kind of thinking?

S: More or less, yes.

- J: What was your first course of action after graduating? What did you see as a way to survive in Gainesville?
- S: Well, I had taken on the two houses, two old houses, and they had to be maintained and looked after. In order to avoid losing them on the mortgage that I had assumed, I had to build that brick building or lose the property.
- J: Now, will you explain to me how building that brick building helped you from losing the mortgages?
- S: Well, as I said, two tenants approached me wanting a location near the campus--the drugstore man and the men's clothing store man--and they were willing to pay good rent. Each of them advanced me \$500 dollars on the rent to help.
- J: In the early thirties?
- S: No, this was the spring of 1932.
- J: It sounds like that is a good sum of money.
- S: To put up a two-story brick building, it did not go very far at the time, but I exercised credit to the fullest extent and then did not let any of my creditors regret having given me credit.
- J: OK. So then you had three properties to manage.
- S: Well, one of them was the same building.
- J: How did you put your law training to use in managing these structures and rooms and the like?
- S: No particular way, except staying out of court and helping my friends and relatives stay out of court. By managing things as correctly as possible.
- J: Were you able to take advantage of the foreclosures here in Gainesville during the Depression?
- S: Well, or foreclosures to be.
- J: And were there legal proceedings that you were able to circumvent by having a knowledge of the law?
- S: More or less so, yes.

J: What were some of the properties that you purchased during that 1930s era?

S: Well, I bought one from a bank in Jacksonville that foreclosed a mortgage on what later became, after I fixed it up some, a home of William A. Shands, Senator Shands. It is now the home of Finley Cannon, a well-known insurance man. Then [I bought] two brick buildings uptown.

J: Where were those in town, the two brick structures?

S: One is known as the Pickett building on the south side of the square, and another one is on Main Street, backing up to what is known as the Mizell building.

J: How do you see the law school in its function today in comparison to when you were in school, when it was turning out law students in the late 1920s and early 1930s?

S: Well, I have not kept up with the activities. I support the alumni association. I pay annual dues. I just got a nice letter from Dean [Frank T.] Read the other day thanking me for the contribution.

J: Do you have a sense of whether the training is more practical or theoretical from what you had?

S: Oh, more specialized. It is much harder to enter the law school now. You have to have an academic degree first, of course. That is common knowledge now.

J: Did you feel that your education at the law school was good, practical knowledge to people's lives, as opposed to . . .

S: [It was the] most practical knowledge in the world. I would not take anything for having buckled down and gotten through it. Very, very, very fine.

J: Was it much different attending law school than it had been that first year of college in Cincinnati?

S: Well, of course it was different. That was just liberal arts: history, political science, English. This law school here was very enjoyable. I enjoyed every minute of it.

J: Well, you have made a fine home for yourself here and found a good woman to marry and lots of friends, and I am sure the law school is what propelled you in that direction.

- S: Well, I got my nose on the grindstone assuming mortgages and paying them off, if I can use a common expression. And I had to swim upstream during the 1930s.
- J: Did you remain active with the law school as an alumnus?
- S: I did not really have the time.
- J: Capacity.
- J: One other question I wanted to ask you. As I understand it, you graduated with the LL.B.
- S: That is right.
- J: And then in 1965 they made the J.D. retroactive to all former graduates.
- S: It cost the whole sum of five dollars.
- J: Did you participate in that?
- S: Well, yes. I came up with the five dollars and got the diploma.
- J: How did you feel about having your degree changed to a J.D.?
- S: Oh, I was sort of proud. I just took it in stride. It was a matter of policy on the part of the University.
- J: Now, there were some people that when you graduated received a J.D. which was some type of honors degree, I believe.
- S: It required additional work at that time.
- J: Do you know of any people that received that degree and then how they felt about the retroactive part?
- S: Well, my roommate, this Omar S. Thackerey, got a J.D. as he went on. He was practicing law before he got a degree for his own self. [He was] in properties. His father had left him [properties] around Kissimmee and Osceola County. He was a multi-millionaire when he died.
- J: But he was practicing law long before he ever came to law school.
- S: More or less. For himself. Not for a client.

- J: Now, you were given--actually you were not given; you *earned*--the membership to the bar without taking an examination. Is that correct?
- S: No written examination. We had an oral examination where you had to go before a member of the board of law examiners and be questioned and furnish letters of good character and so forth.
- J: Who administered that series of questions to you?
- S: A member of the bar in Ocala. A lawyer in Ocala whose name I do not recall.
- J: And that was common practice until when?
- S: Some few years later.
- J: Did you then have to take the bar examination?
- S: No, I never did take the formal bar examination, and I let my license to practice law expire. I did not follow up with it.
- J: How would you make that active again?
- S: I never investigated it. I had too many other interests to look at.
- J: So you have been able to put that knowledge to good practical use in completely separate fields in practicing law.
- S: And I took over the settling of an extremely complicated family estate in Ohio in addition to the small one I spoke about earlier. It was a case without parallel in the courts of Ohio. I was written up in a half-page ad twice in the Cincinnati newspapers. It involved distant cousins from New York to California.
- J: So you set a precedent in Ohio law?
- S: Not necessarily. My legal file is a very thick one. We had to go back and look up old laws of 1910.
- J: When were you working on this case?
- S: I would think it began with tracing a family tree on my honeymoon trip in 1927.
- J: You have been at it a long time, then. Have you finished that tree?
- S: It would be impossible to finish it.

J: That is true.

S: It was my grandfather's uncle who was a doctor in Cincinnati--the suburb of Cincinnati--who practiced medicine along with Smysor's sister, and they accumulated property around Cincinnati. He had two sons who died interstate without issue.

J: Will you explain that to me?

S: Without a will and no children.

J: OK.

S: So that complicated estate had to return back. The doctor and sister were two of twelve children, and the other ten children scattered to Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Indiana. And then their descendants scattered still farther than that. One became a famous brain surgeon in New York City. [I learned] about a lot of cousins I am proud of. Some of them visit me, and I would otherwise never have known them had it not been for settling this estate.

J: That is fascinating. You have quite a family, then, that is scattered throughout and who have roots in the Midwest.

S: One is an engineer in St. Louis, [and another is] a wealthy wholesale furniture dealer in Los Angeles. I have issued checks to [relatives] who never dreamed of getting a dollar.

J: Well, I have enjoyed speaking with you about the law college this evening. There are a few other questions that I would like to have you address, and then I will finish. Do you remember a publication put out by the law college that took the form of either a quarterly or a monthly or was just distributed to the library?

S: What would the name have been?

J: I have no idea. The only publication . . .

S: Did they put out one? I do not recall.

J: I do not think so. There may have been a leaflet or newsletter called the *JMDS*, which of course is the John Marshall Debating Society. There may have been another one called *The Shuffle*, which of course, draws its heritage from that tradition. Any recollection of that?

S: No, I do not recall.

J: Let me ask you, how were you dressed in class? Did you appear in shorts and wild-colored shirts?

S: No, no. I was dressed very conservatively. I wore a military uniform part of the time.

J: Was most everyone in a suit and a tie, or even just a tie?

S: Well, I know I wore a sweater and my military uniform and a suit of clothes. I dressed very conservatively.

J: What did Fuller Warren wear?

S: He was very conservative. He did not impress you as being a future lawyer at all, except by his speechmaking.

J: Was there anyone that was outstanding in their attire?

S: Yes. One man, and he was a pet, if there was one, of Professor Crandall.

J: Is that right?

S: In answering the roll call, when he would come around to joke, he would smile and lighten up, joke and look to see who was there. And Joe Lloyd wore a suit of clothes and a coat and necktie. He was from Pennsylvania.

J: Did any of these professors have nicknames?

S: Well, Professor Slagle [was called] "Slugie." [That] is about the only one I recall at this time.

J: Did you all call Crandall "Pop"?

S: I faintly remember something to that effect. "Pop" Crandall.

J: Could anybody call Judge Cockrell "Judge"?

S: Everybody did.

J: In class? Could you raise your hand and ask for the judge's attention, "Say, Judge, I have something to say"?

S: I do not recall specifically anyone addressing him that way, but he was known as "Judge."

J: And then Trusler?

S: Dean.

J: Dean. Dave was not yet an instructor. Cassell?

S: Well, as I say, I do not remember any classes under Cassell.

J: Now, we talked a little bit about Fuller Warren. Was he president of the student body when you were there?

S: He might have been, but I do not recall it.

J: Was there an active law student government?

S: I do not believe there was. I do not recall voting.

J: Were there any lectures given by state supreme judges or local practitioners in class?

S: Not that I recall.

J: Well, did Judge Cockrell or Dean Trusler ever suggest going down to the courthouse to watch the proceedings?

S: I do not recall. Now, this is after I was out of law school. They called the rather famous trial of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, *Cason vs. Rawlings*, who set quite a precedent in that case.

J: Did you have a role in that in any capacity?

S: No.

J: Do you remember watching the case down at the courthouse?

S: Oh, yes.

J: Tell me a little bit about the people involved and the issues.

S: There was this spinster woman by the name of Cason that she [Ms. Rawlings] wrote about in her book *The Yearling*. The old lady got offended and charged

her with libel, as I recall it. The young attorney by the name of Sigsby Scruggs--he was young then, now deceased--was in the case, and I believe E. A. Clayton was in it.

J: As I recall, Phillip May and Sigsby Scruggs were the defense [counselors], and E. A. Clayton and a fellow Palatka (I do not recall his name) [were the attorneys for the plaintiff].

S: I would rather think that Clayton was a defendant. I am not sure.

J: No. He represented Zelma Cason.

S: Oh, he did?

J: We talked about that a little bit. He was a good friend of hers. How were they composed, Zelma Cason and Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, when they were asked to testify?

S: I do not happen to remember being there when they were on the witness stand. I can visualize Marjorie, but I do not visualize Zelma Cason.

J: Well, Mr. Smyser, I have enjoyed talking with you, and I think you have given us some good information tonight. We will take this tape and transcribe it and send you a copy to look over and make corrections and additions and deletions, and then we will put it in final form.

S: In print.

J: Yes, sir, and [we will] send you a copy of that in exchange for sharing your time with us.

S: I am glad to do so. [I] feel honored to have the opportunity. How many others will you interview that far back?

J: As many as we can find.

[End of the interview]