

FBL 28

Interviewee: David Cofrin

Interviewer: Samuel Proctor

Date: March 5, 2003

P: I'm with Dr. David A. Cofrin for the University of Florida Oral History Program. It's March 5, 2003. We're in the University of Florida Foundation building on University Avenue. David, let's get started if we will, and give me your full name.

C: David Austin Cofrin. I was named after my father.

P: What is your birth date and place of birth?

C: I was born in Green Bay, Wisconsin, Brown County. That's up at the body of water connecting to Lake Michigan in northeastern Wisconsin. [I was born] November 10, 1923.

P: How long had your family been living there?

C: My father moved to Green Bay in approximately 1910. He took a job as a manager or superintendent in a large paper mill in Green Bay.

P: Where did he move from?

C: At that time he moved from London, Ontario, where he had a lesser type job in an paper mill. Prior to that, he had lived in both New York City and Philadelphia. The story that I remember is that in New York he worked [as a] shoe salesman and in Philadelphia he worked in a furniture store. He was always looking for an opportunity to get into the paper business, to get a job in a paper mill. He read the *Paper Trade Journal*, and I think that is where he first found the job in London, Ontario. He was single and had no family obligations at that time, so I think that he up and moved to London, Ontario.

P: Where did your father's family come from?

C: They're from New England, in New Hampshire and Vermont. My father was born in a small farm community in central New Hampshire. Some of his mother's family came from Vermont. They have an early history in the graveyard, but we really don't know too much about when they migrated from England, Ireland, [and] Scotland.

P: So they came from the British Isles to begin with.

C: My grandmother was a Ward, and we think that's an Irish name and that at least by the early 1800s that some of her family had come to New England.

P: So your father's name was David Austin Cofrin.

C: No, I'm sorry. My middle name was from my father's [father]. My father's name was Austin Ellsworth Cofrin.

P: What about your mother, what was her name and where did the family come from?

C: My mother was born and raised in the little town of Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, which is up in the finger, Door County, Wisconsin, which over the years has become a big resort area. She was born in 1890. [She] went through the public schools. Her father was a shoemaker and her mother was a midwife. Both of them migrated from Germany and Norway, respectively. Her father, without any college or legal training whatsoever, was elected as county judge in Door County, Wisconsin. He was one of those old-timey lay county judges, and he served for about thirty-five years until he retired at [some age] over eighty.

P: Did you grow up with grandparents?

C: No. I knew my grandfather. My grandmother died. I visited my grandmother in New Hampshire a couple times as a child. My father's father had died of some acute condition when he [my father] was only thirteen, and then his mother remarried a farmer on a little farm in New Hampshire. We visited him one time when I was a small child. My grandmother in Wisconsin died the year before I was born. I knew my grandfather fairly well. I remember his active years, going to his office in the courthouse, but we were never very close. He didn't really participate in my bringing up at all. In fact, he died in about 1933, I believe, and I would have been ten years old. He was a cigar smoker, and I think he, typically, died of some kind of throat cancer or what we now call smoker's cancer. Of course, in those years, nobody worried about it.

P: David, where did you say you grew up?

C: Green Bay [Wisconsin].

P: Is that where you got your education? Did you go through public schools?

C: Yes, I went to Green Bay East High School.

P: How good of a student were you?

C: I was a pretty good high school student. I got nearly all A's. I was interested in science, and in those days science courses were a lot different than they are now. I graduated from high school in 1941. I had taken high school physics and

high school chemistry, and I was interested in biology. So when I went to college, I had no difficulty getting into Cornell, although I had never taken any of the college entrance examinations.

P: Did you have to work while you were going through high school?

C: No, not really.

P: Your family was well off?

C: I had a job in the gas station the last summer before I went to college, but we had no financial hardships.

P: Did you have a car?

C: Yes, I did. I used the family car. My mother became an invalid with Parkinson's Disease when I was in high school. I did have access to an automobile, but it was a family automobile.

P: Were you a social man?

C: Fairly much, yes. I dated in high school. We went to dances and went to places on Friday night, but that was before the wild period pretty much. When I went off to college in the fall of 1941, which was only three months before December 7, the Pearl Harbor attack, I was a pretty conservative young man. I had vowed not to smoke or drink. Of course, neither of those things held up too long, but we were immediately into the war. Of course, I was a premedical student, so it became apparent early that premedical students were going to be exempt from combat duty. I got into the Navy program, at that time called the V-12 program. Eventually, in 1944, I went to medical school.

P: Before you get into that, let me ask you a little bit more about high school. How did the decade of the Depression impact your family?

C: My father had, by that time, founded his own company, which was to become a model of success. His [company] was very successful all through the Depression, so we had no hardship. In fact, in general, I think Green Bay has always been a somewhat affluent community because of the industry and factory jobs there and so forth. My impression is that, although I was only ten or eleven years old at the time in 1933, I don't know that Green Bay as a community really suffered too badly in the Depression.

P: Are you an only child?

- C: No, I had two older brothers, both of whom are deceased now. My oldest brother was nine years older than I was. He went to law school. He graduated from Princeton and went to law school. As I was growing up, he was so far ahead of me that he wasn't at home very much. When I was eight or nine years old, he went to college. He later became very active in the company, and he became a financial advisor to me, which was very helpful in developing my financial planning. He worked with my father in the paper company.
- P: What about your other brother?
- C: He didn't do well in school. He was considered, later, to be a psychopathic personality. He had what they called a subarachnoid hemorrhage, which is a brain condition that can be fatal. He did marry. He married and had two children, but then he had a recurrence of a bleeding condition in the brain and died in 1945. He was four years older than I was and was twenty-six when he died.
- P: You have no sisters?
- C: [I have] no sisters. My father had coined the phrase that we were "The Three Brothers." In fact, that was the name of our little motor boat, "The Three Brothers." He also named our summer cottage "The Three Brothers."
- P: Did you participate in athletics as a student in school?
- C: [I] had a considerable loyalty to try to be on the football team. We had a very topnotch high school football team. I was a bench warmer. In the line, I was always a little heavy and I didn't play very much, but I stuck it out. Because the team was so good, all the substitutes played near the end of the game when we were way ahead. Consequently, I played enough to get my letter, so I was a letterman in football in high school in my senior year, which was a [source of] a great deal of pride. I was never very proficient.
- P: Why did you select Cornell?
- C: My older brother got into Princeton and he got into trouble traveling too much into New York City. He sort of decided that the things he had heard about Cornell were a little different. He thought it had the advantages of being an Ivy League school. It also so happened that in 1941 my mother and father took an automobile trip from Wisconsin to Connecticut to where my middle brother got married. I was the best man at his wedding, although I was only seventeen at the time. We stopped at Cornell on the way home. We stopped at Ithaca [New York] and I had an interview at the admissions office. As I recall, my high school record was quite good and we had no financial problems for tuition and so forth.

At that time, it was a shoo-in that I almost had my admission guaranteed by the time I walked out of the office.

P: So you didn't apply to any other institutions?

C: No, I never applied to any other college.

P: What was this business of your brother having a little problem getting into New York City? The ways of evil were there?

C: Yes, he got into some drinking troubles and troubles with the law. I mean he got arrested a couple times for drunkenness.

P: That can happen.

C: As a matter of fact, at one point, he was expelled from Princeton. I never did totally understand this, but my father supposedly had to go and guarantee his future behavior. My father did that, and so my father always took the credit for keeping my brother in Princeton. He did graduate with honors in economics.

P: So probably your father was right.

C: Yes. Well, my brother was undoubtedly the smartest one in the family.

P: How was your career at Cornell?

C: I stayed a little bit off campus in what they called at that time a private dormitory. I went through some visits to fraternities, but after visiting several fraternities, I was prepared to not join any, and probably would not have been asked to join any. But then the fellow who lived across the hall from me, his pledge class at Phi Delta Theta was apparently needing a little boosting up in numbers, so he invited me to the latter end of the rush period, which in those years was in the fall. He wanted me to come and visit his fraternity, which was one of the better fraternities on the campus and one of the best known fraternities nationally. He encouraged me to come to dinner at his [fraternity]. I was asked to join Phi Delta Theta, which I did.

P: This is in your freshman year?

C: Yes. Then the next year, as I said by December 7, the war had started. Of course, that changed how things were going to go. By the following summer [1943], I had enlisted in the V-12 program.

P: What was that program?

C: It was a college training program. It was the summer of 1943. In the summer of 1942, I was still a civilian, but because of the war, our college program had been accelerated. It was almost necessary to attend summer school at a full academic level in order to avoid the draft. So I did attend year round. We also, as a result, had some acceleration of the premedical requirements, so to speak. By the summer of 1943, I had practically fulfilled all my requirements.

P: So right from the very beginning you were a pre-med student.

C: Yes.

P: You had committed yourself to that.

C: Yes.

P: You didn't take any other courses, any of the literature?

C: I didn't take too many. I took a course in geology, which I didn't do very well in. Mostly no, I didn't take any advanced literature courses. We were required to take language, and I had taken German. I was supposed to complete three years of German for my degree. I really only completed about a year and a half before I was exempted. It's very strange, but I did get moved out of college to the Great Lakes Naval Training Station [Illinois] as a medical corpsman [a Navy enlisted person trained to administer minor medical treatment as first aid].

P: You wore a uniform for that?

C: Yes, we were in uniform. We were in uniform beginning in the summer of 1943. I was actually an apprentice seaman, which is like a buck private. We were apprentice seamen, but we wore midshipman's uniforms, which was so much better looking than the corresponding Army program that we got a lot of credit for having people think that we were officers when we were actually just apprentice seaman.

P: You were flying under false colors.

C: Sort of, that's right.

P: Well, under that program it was study, study, study, wasn't it?

C: Pretty much, yes.

P: There were no extracurricular activities?

C: We had all of the requirements. The Navy took over the fraternities and turned them into military barracks, so to speak. We had to be accountable and we were able to be out on the town. I don't have any recollection of what the limitations were on going to the library in the evening, but I didn't do that very much anyway. No, we didn't carouse around. We were required to be accounted for wherever we were.

P: How long were you at Cornell?

C: I was at Cornell from September of 1941 until October of 1943, at which time I shipped out to the Great Lakes Naval Training Station and became a medical [hospital] corpsman. Although, at that time I had already been accepted at Cornell Medical School for January 1944. I had that course of orders in place so that I knew they weren't going to take me and send me onboard ship or to do something else. When I went to become a hospital corpsman, I was assigned to regular corpsman's duties. As a medical corpsman, I remember I had duty for about two weeks in a row, and there was a very dreaded concern that if you were caught sleeping, you would probably have received very strict discipline including being shipped out to combat duty.

P: What were the responsibilities of a corpsman?

C: We were like you might consider a nurse's aid, but at night we were in charge of a ward. We had to sit at a desk with a whole open ward of sick military [men]. [I was in] an ear- nose-and-throat ward. We mostly had people with ear infections and tonsillitis and things like that. Penicillin, by the way, had not come out until after I started medical school. Anyway, we were responsible for making entries on their [medical] charts. I remember the last thing we had to do at six o'clock in the morning was go around and record everybody's temperature, so they were nursing duties, you might say.

P: You went into medical school when?

C: I went into medical school in January of 1944.

P: You leave as a corpsman and you go into that. In medical school are you in uniform?

C: Yes.

P: Where were you living then?

C: I lived at the dormitory at New York Hospital. The ASTP [Army Specialized Training Program] Army students and the Navy students, we were mixed in

together. We were not separated and we all lived together in a special building there that no longer is used, but at that time it was very satisfactory dormitory space. All we had to do was go down the elevator in the morning and go across the street to class. The first- and second-year classes [were] in basic sciences—chemistry, physiology, pathology, and different things like that. The medical school is a series of buildings right on York Avenue, near Seventieth Street in New York City.

P: Where is Cornell's medical school up there?

C: It's at the New York Hospital, which has always been a strikingly large, twenty-six story building right on the East River between Sixty-eight and Seventieth right next to the Rockefeller Institute. It's also associated with the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Institute, which has been built up with a lot of separate units since that time.

P: You went to medical school for how long?

C: I went to medical school from January in 1944 and I graduated in March of 1947, so it was an accelerated program there, too.

P: Had you already made a commitment as to what your specialty would be?

C: I would say, pretty much, I was leaning toward a specialty in general surgery. I didn't really consider too much other than that.

P: What attracted you to general surgery?

C: It's hard to say exactly. I think I felt like that's where my abilities lay. I was always interested in anatomy. Since then, there's been a tendency to associate certain medical specialties with personality types. I know that's not 100 percent true, but I do think perhaps certain personalities gravitate toward certain specialties.

P: You were not attracted to any other profession other than medicine right from the beginning?

C: No, in fact that's very true, because when I was in tenth grade, we all had to write a vocational paper. I remember that I wrote my vocational paper on being a physician. It was also true that in high school I had accumulated a few old secondhand medical textbooks, which my father had a connection with. He used to order books from a book company, and I found out that I could order some of these textbooks. I remember that I had a textbook of DeLee's early textbook of obstetrics. Of course, that was a book that showed all the pictures of how babies

were born and so forth. I can remember showing those things to my friends, and, of course, we were all pretty much in awe of how a baby could develop and become born the way they are.

P: Did you do post-graduate work?

C: Yes, I was planning to become a board-certified surgeon. I was not in the top of my class in medical school. I didn't really have access to a topnotch internship. I was sort of in the middle. Ultimately, I had what they called a rotating internship at Milwaukee Hospital in Milwaukee. Then I went back for a year in pathology, largely doing autopsy work in the Department of Pathology at the medical school at Cornell. That required a move from Milwaukee back to the New York area in 1949. From there, I was looking for a residency position in the usual type of program. I did obtain a position at the University of Chicago clinics, which is a fairly prestigious place for postgraduate training. I stayed there for three years, until 1952.

Then, they had what they called the doctors' draft. That was supposed to be that if you went to medical school in the military program, which I did, [you could be drafted]. Although at the time they indicated that we were fulfilling all of our military obligations by the mere fact that we were becoming doctors, in 1952 they were changing the scheme of things and the government needed physicians in the military. So they had created what they called the Doctors' Draft Law [1951]. They were actually drafting doctors to serve in the military. To avoid that I enlisted in the Air Force for a couple of years. So from 1952 to 1954, I was in the Air Force. I was stationed in a little Air Force base in Oklahoma, and then I went to the University of Oklahoma hospital for a year, from 1954 to 1955. I was a senior surgical resident at the University of Oklahoma Hospital.

P: Hold that for a just a minute because I want to back up and ask you a question. When you were going through medical school or your post-graduate [studies], was there a member of the faculty or members of the faculty whom you were particularly close to who became mentors of yours?

C: Probably not, and I think I have some regrets about that. I think my friends in later years have never considered me very much of an introvert, but in those years I sort of felt a little differently. I think that, you might say, I have sort of a fear of authority among the professors. It's hard to say, but I did not develop any really close relationships to any of the instructors. I had a couple of the residents whom I became closer to when we were doing what they call externships, but actually I did not have close faculty relationships.

P: Were your Cornell activities a happy time for you? Were you pleased?

- C: I think, yes, in general. I had met my wife-to-be and she was living in New York. After the first year of medical school, I saw her quite regularly. We had a lot of fun together, maybe too much fun in terms of going out on weeknights. We did our share of visiting bars and so forth. I think that I would have to feel that I probably neglected my duties or neglected my studies to some extent. I always seemed to get along fairly well.
- P: You came through with flying colors.
- C: Yes.
- P: You had no problems, or certainly no lasting problems at all. Once again, I want to make sure I get this chronology right. After you leave medical school, you have your degree, you're a doctor, and you're a surgeon right from the very beginning?
- C: No, actually, my first year was in a rotating internship. So I wouldn't qualify as a surgeon, you might say, until I actually went into a surgical training program, which was at the University of Chicago. That would have been in 1949.
- P: How did that happen, you going to the University of Chicago?
- C: I was in the Department of Pathology at Cornell. I enjoyed that work. We were doing autopsies and we had a very scientific environment. I probably could have elected to stay on and become a pathologist, but that, for some reason, didn't appeal to me. I made it known that I wanted to go into surgical training. The dean of students at that time—I'll always remember that he was very, very helpful to me—his name was Dayton J. Edwards. Dr. Edwards was a guy who always came through as being kind of prudish, but he was helpful to me. He knew that I was looking for a residency program, and he came to me one day and said that he had heard that there was an opening at the University of Chicago. He was very helpful in getting me that position.
- P: I see. You were there how long again?
- C: I was at Chicago three years and then I had to repeat a straight internship. It wasn't totally ideal because I didn't really get into the program at an advanced level, but as far as my credit and my training were concerned, I thought it was very satisfactory. I was there until June of 1952 when this Doctors' Draft Law came along.
- P: You were not troubled by the Korean War? You weren't subject to that draft?
- C: I was a little bit careful. When I went in the service, I could have actually joined a

military unit that was going to be shipping out for Korea right at the moment. I actually did try to pick an organization. That's part of the reason that I went into the Air Force because I think I was sort of assured that I wouldn't be shipped to Korea. There was no guarantee of it, however. Some of my classmates actually did go to Korea. Actually, one of my classmates by the name of Hornburger, we think, was the first one to invent the story about *M\*A\*S\*H* [Mobile Army Surgical Hospital, became a popular television show beginning in the 1970s]. We think he invented *M\*A\*S\*H* and wrote a story about it that was accepted by the *Saturday Evening Post*. This is sort of all conjecture because I never verified it, but he supposedly was paid \$500 for the story which subsequently became the multi-million dollar TV program and so forth. Then, of course, the original MASH all began with the Korean War. It was the years of medical graduates who participated in the Korean War.

P: David, did your family support you throughout your medical education? You weren't working?

C: Well, my father had divested himself. I had an independent income from stock dividends that my father had saved for us.

P: So you didn't have to go out looking for a job.

C: No, I've never really had any financial problem.

P: Now, once again, I'm not quite sure. After you leave medical school, what's the next step that you took? I want to make sure that I have it correct. Is that when you went to Chicago?

C: In order to become state licensed, there are requirements in internship. You are required to take one year of approved internship, and I did that. I did that in Milwaukee. I spent one year as a rotating intern in Milwaukee. Then, I went back to New York in the Department of Pathology.

P: Let's just jump ahead to Oklahoma. I stopped you before when you were talking about that. What was that and when did it happen?

C: When I enlisted in the Air Force, by that time I did have some advanced training in general surgery, and I was told that I would probably qualify to be assigned to a military hospital or an Air Force hospital that would be larger than 100 beds. That had some significance in terms of type of cases and the quality of the training and exposure to training. As it turned out, when my orders came through, I was assigned to a very small thirty-bed hospital in a very dinky little Air Force base [Vance Air Force Base] in the middle of Oklahoma, in the middle of the Oklahoma wheat fields. I spent two years there. We moved my family. We

had two children at the time, and, in fact, the third one was born while we were there, but we had a very pleasant time. We were treated royally. The doctors at a small military base are always given prestigious treatment by the military because they don't know when they're going to get sick and need a doctor.

P: Who were your patients?

C: [My patients were] military.

P: Did you treat wives and women?

C: Yes, we had a small obstetrical service. Everybody had to deliver some babies. We weren't always the best qualified for that, but everything, I think, was satisfactory.

P: But they all popped out all right.

C: Yes. If taxi drivers can do it, we should have been able to do it.

P: Obviously, you did, and all of them survived.

C: Yes. We had an operating room and we did appendectomies. We also had a consultant who was available to come out on more difficult cases. We called the consultant to come out on things like gallbladder operations and different things that we were doing.

P: Were you at the University of Oklahoma?

C: My little Air Force hospital was up near the town of Enid, which is in northern central Oklahoma, about 100 miles north of Oklahoma City. When I got out of the service, I was thinking of going back to the University of Chicago, but I'm glad that I didn't because it would have been a hassle, in terms of moving the family and what I would have been able to do and so forth. I was happy to take this position which came up at the University of Oklahoma Hospital. We moved to Oklahoma City for a year and I had a very good experience there, and then, after that, I came to Gainesville.

P: Let's get some personal stuff in there. How did it happen that you met Mary Ann in New York? What was she doing there?

C: Well, we had a mutual friend from Florida named Olin Shivers. He was a fraternity brother of mine at Cornell and he was a year behind me in college and he was a year behind me at the medical school. So, I finished my first year at medical school in September of 1944, and he came into the freshman class. He

was from the little town of Chipley, Florida and he knew some Gainesville people because his father had been in the legislature. They had a little hotel in Chipley, Florida, called the Shivers Hotel. Olin knew some mutual friends, and when he came to New York, some of his friends said that Mary Ann Harn was living in New York City and that he should look her up. He called her and she had just moved into a little apartment about twice as big as this room. She invited him to come down and help these three girls paint their apartment. She said, if he would bring a couple of his friends, medical students, they would cook supper for us. So, we went down there on a Saturday afternoon and painted the apartment and had supper, and that's the way I met Mary Ann.

P: What was she doing in New York?

C: She was working. She had finished her year at the Katherine Gibbs Secretarial School, and she had gone back to New York. She had a good friend, whose family was the Cannon family from Gainesville. Marjorie Cannon was married to a friend of Sam Harn's by the name of George Bailey. They had been roommates at the University of Florida, and Mary Ann had gone to New York and finished the secretarial school and then she had gotten a job working for Paramount there right on Broadway. She was a secretary and living with these two other girls, one of whom was Sue Bailey. That's how we happened to meet.

P: What's Mary Ann's full name?

C: Mary Ann Peebles Harn Cofrin

P: She was born and raised in Gainesville?

C: Yes

P: Her family's been here awhile?

C: Oh, yes. Her mother was a Gracy in the big Gracy House in the back of the Methodist church in that area. There are a lot of the Gracy people still around Gainesville, several of her cousins.

P: Who is Harn?

C: Well, Sam, his family was from Alabama and they had [probably] come [from Scotland]. His father had died at an early age. They lived in Bartow, [Florida] and his mother was a schoolteacher. Samuel Peebles Harn was an only child. He was originally raised in Bartow, but he went to the University of Florida. Then he became a fixture in the Gainesville area. At one time, he was city tax collector. He started out in the College Inn [near University of Florida campus]

business.

P: What do you mean, College Inn business?

C: Well, there was that little store for university students.

P: I know the College Inn, but I was wondering what his involvement in it was.

C: Well, he managed it or owned it, supposedly. I mean I don't know all the financial details. Unfortunately, I don't think he ever owned the property, but he may have owned or managed the business for a couple years.

P: Did he have any connection with city hall? I thought he was the clerk.

C: Yes, he was the tax collector. They had some financial hardship during the Depression. As a matter of fact his wife was Gladys Gracy, and [her mother] inherited some of the timberland up in High Springs and the northern part of Alachua County. Some of those areas, as I understand it, she actually foreclosed some mortgages during the Depression. [She] ended up with a lot of tenant farm property, and when she died....

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C: ...Some of her family inherited some property, which was eventually sold as farm land, I think. Mary Ann's mother and father, Sam and Gladys, had some periods [of hardship]. I think Sam always had a white collar type of job, but [they were] by no means well-to-do. Their friends were in the professional group of people like lawyers and other business people. They actually did get a small property out on one of the lakes near Melrose where they spent time in the summer. So, Mary Ann and her two sisters, I think, had a very happy childhood.

P: So you met Mary Ann in New York and that began the relationship.

C: Yes, we became quite close. After a year or two, it was apparent that we were going to become engaged [and] get married.

P: When did that happen?

C: Actually, we became engaged in the summer of 1946, when I had been released from the Navy program and had not graduated from medical school. I can remember coming to Florida for a couple weeks to visit. Sam, Gladys, and Mary Ann were over at Daytona Beach on a week's vacation. I [went there] and I remember when we were riding in the car one time in Daytona Beach. Of course, I had to ask Sam for Mary Ann's hand in marriage, which was the old

traditional way of doing things. I remember sort of oohing and ahing and being very uncomfortable sitting in the back seat. I finally blurted out something like, well you know Mary Ann and I would like to get married or I would like to marry your daughter, or something. Sam said, "Well, that's nice."

P: He didn't say, why? [Laughing.] That's nice. He was driving the car and giving you his blessing.

C: He said, "Well, that's nice."

P: When did the wedding take place?

C: The wedding took place then on April 9, 1947.

P: It took place in Gainesville?

C: Yes, at the Methodist church. Then we had the reception at the Gracy House. Of course, we have some of the old pictures of the old house at the time. Of course now the Gracy House has become quite a landmark. Fortunately, it's in the hands of some very interested people. I forget his name at the moment, but he's a neurosurgeon now at the medical center, and they've taken very good care of the house and are raising a family there.

P: Tell me about your children.

C: Well, we have five children. The first child was born in Milwaukee toward the end of my internship.

P: Give me the full name of the first child and birthdays, too.

C: David Harn Cofrin, he was born May 24, 1948. While we were at the University of Chicago, the second son was born. He was born on July 9, 1951, Paige William.

P: Is he named for somebody in the family?

C: The funny part of that is that my brother had the name John Paige, but he was named for somebody who we later found out was really spelled Page. My mother had made the mistake because she had never seen the gravestones, and I'm not even sure there were gravestones at that time in New Hampshire. Anyway, everybody in the family has come down P-A-I-G-E.

P: So, that was your second child.

- C: Yes, then the [third] child was born when we were in the Air Force. That was Edith Dee, who was named after my mother who was Edith Dehos. It was a German name. I think it's sort of related to the German name Dehoff.
- P: So your daughter carries that full name, Edith Dehos?
- C: No, we just named her Dee. Edith for my mother, but we didn't like the name Dehos too well so we just named her D-E-E, Edith Dee. She was born January 11, 1953. Then, Gladys, the fourth child, was born in Gainesville. She was born on February 1, 1956. Her name was Gladys Gracy Cofrin. The last daughter was born on December 19, 1959. She was born in Gainesville. [Her name is Marcy Ann Peebles Cofrin.]
- P: The total was five children, two boys and three girls.
- C: That's correct.
- P: Do all of them live in Gainesville?
- C: No, in fact, only Gladys lives in Gainesville.
- P: Have they produced a whole slew of grandchildren for you?
- C: Well, two of my daughters turned out to be gay. I'm not sure how much we want to talk about that.
- P: You don't need to talk about that at all.
- C: We have eight grandchildren.
- P: Where do they live?
- C: Two of them live in Amherst, Massachusetts. One of them is a natural child of my gay daughter, who is very openly gay and has a gay lifestyle.
- P: We can leave all that out if you want to leave it out, or we can put it in if you want to put it in. It's up to you.
- C: Well, as far as they're concerned, they don't mind having it be in. I don't care. I mean we've pretty well accepted it and they are our grandchildren. So anyway, then my son in Atlanta has three daughters. One graduated from Williams College and two of them are at Cornell. One of them is graduating this year. One of them will graduate next year or two years. My son Paige lives in Boulder, Colorado. He has one step-child and two natural children. His marital family is

kind of mixed up.

P: So you've had a lot of happiness and a lot of times that have not been the greatest.

C: Well, we've mostly had happy times. We have been very fortunate that none of my children have had major illnesses.

P: Right, that's important. Are you close to all your children?

C: Fairly close, we're not as close as a lot of families are. Part of that is because their lifestyles are as I mentioned, are separate. It's been an education to be associated with the gay world because that is definitely separate.

P: What does your son in Atlanta do?

C: He is an attorney. He is the only one who has what you might call a viable profession or professional college training. My other son majored in real estate, but he is now working mostly in investments and financial dealings. He doesn't have what you'd call a bona fide career that can be well-defined.

P: It doesn't sound to me like you have any Gators in the family.

C: Actually, my daughter Gladys graduated from the University of Florida and got her master's degree in some kind of counseling. I can't remember exactly what her degree is called.

P: So you have one out of five.

C: The thing is, my sons are sports enthusiasts. My son David went to Notre Dame Law School and he's a very strong enthusiast for Notre Dame. Gladys has got very little sports interest. For years she's gone to the Gator Grawl, but she really has no interest in the football team or other sports teams.

P: Well, I always say that there is a university beyond the stadium that functions Monday through Friday. [laughing] Let me get back to your father now. He comes out to Wisconsin and he works in a paper mill?

C: Yes, and the interesting thing there, and a story that he liked to tell very much, was that when he went to Wisconsin, the fellow who hired him and the fellow he worked for was a chronic alcoholic who was drunk a good lot of the time. So, my father ended up running the mill and pretty much ignoring his boss. In other words, he didn't have a boss. This was sort of what my father wanted, and it probably couldn't have worked any better for him. He developed management

skills, although, as I understand it, he was not a front office man. He never was an executive of the company. In 1917, the company, which was family-owned, was sold and he lost his job.

P: He didn't go with the sale then.

C: No, because the sale was to another family type situation and they wanted to install their own people. So, he was out of a job, and that's when, very fortuitously, he decided to found his own paper mill. Which he did.

P: That called for capital.

C: He had a stock subscription. He told funny stories about that. He had no difficulty in that time selling the stock. His main trouble was that people who bought the stock wanted to buy more than he wanted to sell.

P: Did he have an established reputation then in the community?

C: I wasn't there, but I would have to say, no. He really was not a downtowner type. I just don't know. I think that what happened was, when he promoted the stock subscription, it was such a good idea that he had no difficulty in selling it.

P: In other words, it wasn't his personality selling the stock, it was the stock.

C: Well, I think that he was a very serious minded person. He wasn't at all a wheeler and dealer; he was strictly meat and potatoes type of stuff. [He'd] get in and pound the nails himself. I think that there was a lot having to do with the timing. I think it was right after the end of the war [WWI], 1918. There was a fair amount of money in Green Bay apparently. The capitalization for his company was \$400,000.

P: David, what kind of paper were they manufacturing?

C: [They were manufacturing] tissue paper, toilet paper, [and] paper napkins.

P: Was this wood stock? Was that the basis of it?

C: No, they started off with pulp. There again, he became a very shrewd buyer of wood pulp. Subsequently, he found out that he could get a shipload of pulp delivered through the [St. Lawrence] river into the Great Lakes. He could get a boatload of pulp delivered from Norway all the way to Green Bay. He became a very shrewd, successful businessman. He did everything. He not only bought his materials, but he used to travel a lot and he ended up getting a lot of large markets. He got contracts for providing the state of Illinois with all of its tissue

paper requirements, and he had New York state at one time. They were big in commercial [contracts]. They weren't putting rolls of toilet paper on the stores' shelves back in the early 1920s and 1930s, but they were the low-cost producer and they were the low-cost seller on large contracts.

P: How large was the company?

C: Well, it was enlarging all the time. They claim that the growth of the company provided a classic textbook picture of American industry at the time. It was written up as an example of a successful enterprise.

P: What was the name of the company?

C: [The] Fort Howard Paper Company. Fort Howard was an English fort in the Green Bay area, the site of which has been excavated partly. Of course, Green Bay was founded in 1636 by the French fur traders, one of whom was a Jesuit priest by the name of Jean Nicolet. [There is] Green Bay and then [there is the] Fox River Valley. There is a short section of river, I say short, [but] it's about fifty miles long, which goes down to Lake Winnebago. But there's a string of towns [south of] Green Bay in northeastern Wisconsin that have all developed paper mills. It's a big paper-making area. I mean you've got Green Bay, you've got Neenah-Menasha, you've got Appleton. Neenah-Menasha, incidentally, is the home for Kimberly-Clarke Corporation. They were the first ones that came out with [disposable] paper diapers, Pampers. Oshkosh is a well-known industrial area, which is not necessarily very much paper, but other industries. Lake Winnebago is about fifty miles long, and this is all from glacial times in northeastern Wisconsin. Then, at the bottom of the lake, you have the town of Fon du Lac.

P: Was your father a pioneer in the development of tissue?

C: He and my brother, after World War II, were pioneers in the development of recycling.

P: But your father starts this business earlier than after World War II.

C: Oh, yes, but as I say, most of [the] paper was made with paper pulp.

P: What kind of paper were they producing before they got into the tissue paper?

C: It was always tissue paper.

P: When did he start this business again?

- C: He started the business in 1919. He built the paper machine and started producing paper.
- P: It was a small-time operation, I presume, at that time.
- C: It was pretty small at the time, one paper machine.
- P: How did the Depression impact him?
- C: Well, as I pointed out earlier, I don't think Green Bay was hit very hard with the Depression. My father's corporation paid dividends every year during the Depression. As I say, he was always very shrewd in his business practices. He was a low-cost manufacturer and a low-cost seller. He also did some things that were very helpful. For instance, he always prided himself in that he had a [first class] machine shop. They machined all of their own parts for refurbishing their paper machines. By the time I was coming along, probably they had four machines. So they weren't as big as the mill that he had left, which later turned out to be International Can and James River [Co., but Fort Howard became well known.] It was very common to see our Fort Howard fixtures in New York City, for instance, in all the major cities. Then, when my brother came in after the war, they went through further expansions.
- P: How large did it become?
- C: Later with mergers, they became a Fortune 500 company. They became an internationally known [company].
- P: It was always the tissue paper that they were manufacturing?
- C: They had some other lines, but the major line was always [tissue paper].
- P: Did they make Kleenex?
- C: Kleenex, it so happens, would be one of the lesser lines.
- P: That's relatively recent, isn't it?
- C: At one time, they were the biggest maker of paper napkins in the world. Of course, they began to supply all the fast food companies. [They had] big contracts with McDonald's and Wendy's and all those things. Then, when they got into the recycled paper business, they became the low-cost producer.
- P: When did your father give up the paper mill?

C: He never gave it up.

P: He died?

C: Yes.

P: When did he die?

C: Well, he had a subdural hematoma, if you know what that was.

P: No, I don't.

C: Well, he had an accidental fall and had a brain injury. In fact, he was operated on here at the medical center in 1959. He never had full recovery, but he was president of the company at that time. My brother was sort of working as his right-hand man, and when that happened, my brother became president of the company.

P: So it was a family business, then?

C: It was always considered to be a family business, but the truth of the matter was that the family interest in the corporation never exceeded 25 percent. That was the way the original stock had been set up.

P: Are we talking about a big-time company? I mean is this a large corporation with lots of money?

C: It became a Fortune 500 corporation. That means it's one of the 500 largest corporations in the United States, so yes.

P: That's why your father was still in the company?

C: Well, after 1959 and having his brain injury, he was more of a figurehead. He was born in 1883, so in 1960 he was seventy-seven years old. My father wanted to continue to have an interest in the company. At one point, he thought he could do more than he really could. My brother had to sort of manage him, you might say, and arrange for his medical care. Maybe in 1965 or 1966, my brother more or less insisted that he be relegated to a non-active status, but he still had his office and he still came to work every day. He would tell you that he came to work every day, but he didn't do anything.

P: What happened to the business?

C: Eventually, my brother took over in the 1960s and he was trying to manage the

company in a way that controlled the price of the stock. They were trying to keep the price low for the purpose of estate evaluations and so forth for the original stock holders who were dying off. However, that became impossible to continue. So, in 1971 the company went public with an IPO [Initial Public Offering].

P: Where did this leave you?

C: It left me a lot richer than I thought I was.

P: And you thought you were?

C: Yes. I knew that we were well-to-do, but when the company went public and I participated with some of my shares into the IPO, it was fairly obvious that our assets [were great]. All my children had assets, they had gifts of stock from their grandfather, so they all became wealthy.

P: Do you want to document the amount, or do you want to just leave that?

C: I think it's probably better not to try to do it.

P: Well, then don't do it, don't do it. Be happy with what you say. I don't insist on anything. When did your father die?

C: He died in 1980, but my brother had died in 1974.

P: What did your brother die of? He was a young man. You said he was a smoker, didn't you?

C: No, I was talking about my grandfather at that time, but my brother was a terrible smoker and drinker. He carried some of his drinking habits from college. He definitely had a drinking problem, but he also developed throat cancer which remained undiagnosed. There was a Mayo clinic trained ear, nose, and throat man in Green Bay who actually missed diagnosing his condition for at least a year. He ended up with a lump that was almost that big around. He ended up with a lump [on his jaw] which his doctor didn't even see. Right here, I mean you could look at him and see it.

P: It seems pretty obvious.

C: It was terrible about his mis-diagnosis, but he had a condition which is questionably curable. He eventually, in 1974, went under treatment. He received radiation and radical surgery with Dr. Million and Dr. Nicholas Cassisi at the University of Florida.

P: You brought your father and your brother to the university for medical attention?

C: Well, my father was here in 1959, but I wouldn't have necessarily brought him here, but he was here when he had his [accident]. He was visiting when he had his trouble, and he was misdiagnosed, too. You probably know [Dr.] Richard "Dick" Schmidt.

P: Oh, yes.

C: He was on his case early on. It was Lamar [Roberts], the neurosurgeon guy, who said, "I think he had a brain tumor." They took him into surgery and he nearly died, and that's when they discovered he had a blood clot over one side of his brain. They evacuated it and saved his life. He went down to Ocala. Anyway, my brother brought in another, younger man who became president and chairman at the time. [My brother] died in 1974. My father, by that time, he was almost ninety years old and he was staying at home.

P: You've got a great memory.

C: Fair, yes. Some of those stories I've told so many times. My father loved to tell the story about going to Green Bay with this drunk. He met him in Detroit, as a matter of fact. He met him in Detroit and they both came [by train] to Detroit to talk over this job. My father came from London, Ontario, to Detroit, and Fogerty came [from Green Bay]. When my father got there he was drunk. So, they went around and caroused around a couple of bars for the evening and he got drunker and drunker. Finally, my father had to catch the train back to London, Ontario. So, he put this guy to bed and they had never even discussed the job. They never talked about the job at all. So, he got back to [his job] the following morning, went back to work, and thought he'd never hear from him again. [He figured] it was just a useless trip [because] they never talked about the job and he didn't know that he would even remember who he was. So, anyway, after a week went by he got a letter from Fogerty offering him the job at Green Bay.

P: He was a good party man.

C: He went to Green Bay and took over being the superintendent of the Northern Paper Mill.

P: Is the paper mill still in operation today?

C: Oh, yes, it went through several changes of ownership. You've heard of [the advertising slogan], "Don't squeeze the Charmin?"

P: Oh, sure.

- C: Well, that's Northern Paper Mill. In fact those little babies were Northern something or other, weren't they?
- P: I know what you mean.
- C: Yes, the three biggest paper mills, one, I think, may still be operated by Proctor Gamble; one became operated by James River, which merged with Fort Howard; and then there was Fort Howard, which had become the biggest company in Green Bay.
- P: David, you moved to Gainesville. You had never lived in Gainesville. What motivated that?
- C: Well, I was opening my practice of surgery.
- P: You decided on Gainesville?
- C: Yes, I knew that Mary Ann would like to come back to Gainesville. Of course, her father was ill with the neurological condition that was going to take his life in a couple years, and he died in 1957. I knew that she would enjoy coming back to Gainesville. I think really that part of the decision was that there was no great financial concern. I mean, I wasn't worried about financial difficulties. The other thing was that Sam Harn was noted for making the remark about people retiring to the South. He said, "You never hear of anybody retiring to the North."
- P: He's right.
- C: So, when I came to make my choice about where I was going to go and started thinking about going back up to Green Bay and opening up a practice in Green Bay, I thought, why do I want to go up there with all that cold, snow, and ice?
- P: Had you been to Gainesville already? You came when you got married.
- C: Well, [I came] even before that. Not very much, but I had been here a couple times. Anyway, when we came to make the choice, it was not hard to decide that I didn't particularly want to go back up to Green Bay.
- P: You didn't want to be affiliated with Shands [Hospital]?
- C: Actually, that was never an opportunity. I didn't have the qualifications to become a professor, I don't think. You may remember that we developed a rivalry between the town [doctors with Alachua General] and the gown [doctors affiliated with Shands medical center] for a number of years. That was in my early years here in Gainesville that everybody was worried about losing all their

patients to the medical center.

P: I wanted to ask you about that. That's a question that I have here, but before I do that, let me get you settled. Where was your office?

C: My office was down by Alachua General [Hospital]. I was in that original row offices, which was not completely demolished. I moved in with Dr. George Putnam, who was a urologist. I moved into a little space in his office, and, then, I eventually became associated with Edwin Andrews. Not actually contractually, but we worked together a fair amount. When Edwin Andrews eventually retired, I took over his office although by that time, he didn't have the biggest practice in the world, either.

Of course, there are some things about the medical story, but at the time that the Shands Hospital opened [October 1958], there were a lot of things in private medical practice that were quite competitive. We had probably more general surgeons than we needed. There were about six of us I can name. There was me and Allen Delaney, Glenn Summerlin, [and] Henry Babers. There must have been someone else I'm missing. Anyway, that was a period of development of a lot of the sub-specialties. When I first came to Gainesville, we did not have a well-qualified or well-trained orthopedic surgeon, so all the general surgeons were doing a fair amount of orthopedic work. But as the orthopedic surgeons came into town and set up their practices, they got a lot of the orthopedic practice, which I think cut into the work of some of the general surgeons.

P: You performed all your surgery at Alachua [General Hospital]?

C: Yes.

P: How satisfied were you with their facilities, coming out of Cornell?

C: Well, that's another long story. The facilities at Alachua General, when I came to town, were not adequate or satisfactory.

P: Would you label them as being primitive?

C: That's perhaps is a little bit too strong of a word. In 1965, Ed Kissam, one of our colleagues, went to visit in Russia a few years later. I'll always remember, he came back and he said that the medical practice in Russia was comparable to what things were in the United States during the 1920s. In other words, he was intimating that they were at least thirty or forty years behind. I'll say, when I came to Alachua General, things were a lot like the Depression times in the 1920s. Of course, the Alachua General Hospital, I can't even remember when it was built. It was probably built in the early 1920s or something like that. It was

fairly primitive, but the quality of the medical treatment was superior to what you might call primitive because there were a number of specialists who were well trained. I think, by and large, there was a lot of good work being done, but the facilities were definitely limited.

P: What kind of a staff did you need when you started up?

C: I just needed an office nurse, just a combination receptionist/office nurse. I had a rather small practice. My practice never went according to any real plan, because when I was in medical school, I probably would have thought that I would never be an individual, solo practitioner. I always thought that I would join a group, which is certainly more common nowadays than it might have been then. It was only because [of] my solo practice that I was compatible and developed friendships to the other surgeons, that it became relatively easy to utilize their help like for assistants in surgery and so forth. We were a fairly compatible group at the same time as being moderately competitive. I would have to say that I was fairly well treated. We had some funny things that happened, but the development of the medical situation and the medical community is sort of a different story. If you're going to do an oral history concerning the medical situation, that almost should be separate from my relationship to the community.

P: Where did you and Mary Ann live?

C: We bought a house near J.J. Finley Elementary School, which was very convenient because the children could walk a couple of blocks to school in the morning, which we thought was very wonderful. Then, in about 1960, we bought the property out on Eighth Avenue, which belonged to Dr. Pollard. Do you remember Dr. Pollard?

P: Yes, I do.

C: Well, anyway, he had developed that property of about twenty-five acres. I bought that property from his widow in 1959, and we moved out there in early 1960 and did some remodeling in the house. We lived there until 1991, so we lived in that location on Eighth Avenue with the large acreage of woods and so forth for thirty-[five] years.

P: What is this business with you and racing horses?

C: That's a long story, too. I had always been somewhat interested in horses. We had a friend who introduced us to these South American horses, which are known as Paso Fino.

P: Are they small horses?

C: They were raised as small horses because the riders in South America are small people. They were raising these horses to develop a special, smooth gait, or what they call a running walk. That's what Paso Fino actually means in Spanish, "fine gait." I'm not well acquainted with Spanish, but *paso*, I think, means walking or gait and *fino* means fine. We had this opportunity to get interested in the Peruvian variety, which I call Peruvian Paso horses. Among the aficionados, they don't like to be called Paso Finos because that's a generic term. They prefer that they be called Peruvian Paso. The Peruvian were considered the best by our group, so we started. We imported several Paso Fino horses from Peru.

P: Did you have to go down to Peru to select them?

C: I didn't, but other people did. We eventually ended up having over thirty horses.

P: What did you do with them?

C: Not very much, we were trying to sell them and the whole enterprise got out of hand. In the meantime, I had purchased some property out in Jonesville [community just west of Gainesville] area. I moved some of the horses out there.

P: There's a ranch out there now in Jonesville, I think, with small horses.

C: You're talking about the miniature horses. No, these are not miniature horses. These horses are riding horses, but when you said small, a lot of the people refer to them as ponies. A hand is four inches, that's supposed to be the width of your hand. A horse that's under twelve hands is considered a pony. Shetland ponies could be in the area of possibly nine, ten, or eleven hands high. Twelve hands would be forty-eight inches to the withers, and that's where the horse is measured.

P: Did Mary Ann share your support of the horses?

C: Not in the training, the breeding, or the raising of the horses, but she got interested in riding. She eventually had a few of her girlfriends who came out once a week and went riding. We got to the point where we could saddle up four or five horses at a time. She had this riding club, so to speak, and for a couple of years they were riding horses every week. We had the ability to ride back in the woods, we cleared out a little area.

[End of side A2]

C: [We called our property] Rancho Neglecto, which was sort of a humorous term to

describe a sort of semi-professional situation that we had. There again, the details get rather tedious. There was a short period of time when I felt that it might be financially remunerative that we might actually develop a market for these horses. There were two problems. One was that the major interest in the breed was limited to California, which is a long ways away. The second problem was that in Florida the interested people got more interested in the Paso Fino generic horses than they were in the Peruvian horses. They also were Latin people from Cuba, who became more or less clannish and developed their own group, so to speak. We had a problem of breaking into the group. We didn't have the professional expertise to do it, and partly we didn't speak Spanish. Down in the Hernando area and some of the those areas there were a lot of the Cuban immigrants who were interested in these horses, but we never did mesh gears very well.

P: The interest in the horses was not in racing them but in riding them?

C: They were always raised as show horses. The idea was to raise these horses with a special gait. We did go to horse shows for a time, and I had one employee who became quite well known in the Peruvian horse world in the United States. We did breed some horses that eventually became nationally known within this small circle of Peruvian enthusiasts, but it was never financially successful. We went through a period of fighting with the IRS on a couple of occasions as to whether we were operating a bona fide business or a hobby. You probably remember that business affected even the thoroughbred horse owners in Marion County. If they didn't show a profit in a certain period of time, the IRS was categorizing them as a hobby and wouldn't allow any tax deductions. We were fairly successful in fighting that situation on a couple of occasions, but we also took some hard licks on a couple of the cases.

P: How long were you in the horse business?

C: Well, longer than I should have been. I would have to say, almost twenty years.

P: Did you then sell the property?

C: No, I never sold the property and we always had a few horses around. This is taxing my memory considerably, but eventually we moved all the horses away from the Eighth Avenue property. I don't think that was actually until I retired from medical practice in 1985. I think that was about the time that we gave up, and, of course, we moved away from the property in [1992].

P: Where you presently live is where you moved in [1992].

C: Yes. The children felt that we should retain the property. My daughter Gladys

was still married, which she no longer is, but my daughter Gladys decided that she wanted to buy the property. She was financially able to buy the property, so we just sold it to her. I understand now that she has finally completed successful negotiations to have the property converted into a park. I was rather surprised because I think that there are some disadvantages to that area as a park, but she's been promoting this notion for a couple of years. Apparently, they'll make the newspaper when it happens. She's now got this thirty acres designated as a park.

P: Will it be a recreational park?

C: In some ways I'm not sure what recreations. I don't think that they're going to build any tennis courts or baseball diamond or anything like that, I think it will always be maybe a walking park with maybe certain plantings. I don't know what they're going to do with it, because I've kept out of it. Frankly, I never have been that much interested and I didn't think it was going to be successful. You've heard of the blue gumbo clay?

P: Yes.

C: The blue gumbo clay in that area is terrible. It's hard to control the subterranean water. I just don't know what's going to happen. The house that we lived in should be torn down. It's right on the edge of the creek and the creek is eroding badly. There are serious problems there. I don't know how they're going to handle that.

P: David, I want to get back to the conflict between town and gown. By the time you came and opened up, Shands was here.

C: I came in the late summer of 1955 and Shands had not actually opened. The first class in medical school I think started in 1956.

P: But the decision to locate the medical school had already been made.

C: Oh, yes, the decision was made and the construction was probably underway, but the hospital didn't actually open for patients until [October 1958].

P: Now the feeling with many of the local doctors was that they would lose patients and lose business.

C: Yes, I think that's fair to say.

P: Where did you side on that?

C: [I] felt, in many of the specialty areas, we could provide services that were equal to Shands. So we were trying to discourage Shands from doing the routine types of surgeries, for instance, that we could do at Alachua General [Hospital].

P: Was there an effort being made, now with the Shands presence, to increase the facilities and so on at Alachua [General Hospital]?

C: Well, I don't know. As I said, the facilities were inadequate when I came here. I think that there were some plans for the new plan, which was ultimately called the 1961 Building, the main red brick addition to Alachua General. So we went from 1957, you might say. I can remember a few meetings that were held at the old brick Alachua County Health Department, which used to be in that area and I don't think is there anymore. I don't know where it is, but I remember there was a small auditorium there that we used to field these questions of how we were going to deal with patients going to Shands. There was a development that Shands supposedly agreed to, that they would not accept self-referrals. [A patient] couldn't walk in or make an appointment. You had to have a referral by a physician. That was not terribly successful. If I was sitting in my office and you were my patient and you looked at me and said, I want to be referred out to the medical center, what could I do to counteract that? I pretty much had to acquiesce. I think there was a factor of looking at Alachua General and saying, it's not an adequate hospital, but that only existed until 1960.

P: The thirty years that you practiced here as a general surgeon, you didn't deal with Shands at all? All your activities were held at Alachua?

C: I referred patients out there and I asked for consultations and so forth. I had a good relationship. I trained under Dr. Ed Woodward [Edward R. Woodward, Chairman of the Department of Surgery, UF College of Medicine, 1957-1982] at the University of Chicago.

P: One of the best interviews I did was with [Ed] Woodward.

C: He was an interesting guy, [but] he was also a big fat liar.

P: I didn't get that in the interview, but it was a good interview. [laughing]

C: Ed had the ability to speak grandiosely. That was one of the things I remember about him. Of course, he was a controversial character.

P: He had a terrible temper, I understand.

C: I saw that on a couple of occasions. I worked with him as his assistant resident at the University of Chicago for a year.

- P: So, you knew him before.
- C: I knew him before he came here. In fact, one of the search committee came and interviewed me about him. I can't remember that fellow's name, he was from Starke and he was in the Department of Pathology. I can't remember his name.
- P: David, your career then as a surgeon was a successful one.
- C: No, it really wasn't. I don't look upon it as being terribly successful. There were some people who knew from the beginning that I was financially independent, and that worked partly against me. We had situations like Dr. Babers and Dr. Glen Summerlin were both local boys, they were both Gainesville boys. They had doctors who had a lot of loyalty to them, which was fine, I mean that's the way it should be. But there was an attitude that patients were being directed toward [other] specialists.
- P: Away from you and to them?
- C: Well, not so much away from me, but toward the local, hometown boys.
- P: You can't fight that.
- C: You can't fight city hall. You might say something similar to that. So, I never had a large practice. In some ways, I went through a period of resenting it on occasion, but I had some fine associations. I had some very fine patients and I had some very rewarding cases and so forth, but I wouldn't say it was perfect.
- P: I was going to say, it must be comforting to know that here, some years afterwards, that people know who Cofrin is, and Babers who?
- C: Well, that might be because I'm still living. But there are a lot of people who don't know who Cofrin is too, that's all right.
- P: I want to get this onto the tape. You were a diplomat in the American Board of Surgery. What does that mean?
- C: That means that I have fulfilled and prescribed a period of treatment in approved hospitals.
- P: 1957 was the day that happened.
- C: And [it meant] that I had passed the examinations.
- P: Was this like a postgraduate degree?

C: I guess you might say that. It's also of interest that all of the specialty boards only began essentially after WWII, which is something that is hard to understand for a lot of people. In other words, the American Board of Surgery was essentially only twelve years old when I took the examinations. Prior to that, in the 1920s and 1930s, the American College of Surgeons was the most prestigious organization, which didn't involve individual specialties but was made up of all of the surgical specialties. Of course, the American College of Surgeons has continued to be a very prestigious organization, but the sub-specialties of neurosurgery, orthopedics, gynecology, thoracic surgery, all of those things only came into their own as specialties after WWII.

P: Did you develop a specialty?

C: There again, you're asking a question which betrays ignorance because general surgery is a specialty. That's one of the problems that we've contended with. I would say that there is a large body of intelligent people who didn't understand what general surgery was as a specialty. That was part of our difficulty. If you ever knew who Dr. Ed Kissam was, I worked with him in orthopedics a fair amount.

P: I do.

S: We were bemoaning the fact that if I had a college kid in the emergency room with a broken arm or something that I was going to treat, and the next thing I knew I got a call from the mother in Miami, and she would say, are you a bone specialist? If I said, well, I'm a general surgeon, she'd say, well, I want my son to be treated by a bone specialist. So, then, I would call Ed Kissam or something. Well, that happened a few times and it was, of course, a demeaning type of development, but Ed Kissam said to me one time, "Well, the problem with general surgery is that you ought to get away from the word general."

P: All I was going to say, all you need to do is just change the title.

C: General surgery as a specialty probably had characteristically, and I used to talk to people like Henry Babers and other people with it, but general surgery as a specialty probably had the worst publicity and the worst overall public relations situation of any specialty.

P: See, you've educated me.

C: See, there again, I've educated you, but when I tell you that in the 1920s and the 1930s there were no surgical specialties. It is true that general surgery remained a hodgepodge, because I came into town, I said there were no orthopedic surgeons in Gainesville, so who was going to take care of the people with broken

arms? Naturally, it fell to the general surgeons. If I had a woman who had a big fibroid tumor or something like that, I would like to do the hysterectomy but that made me a gynecologist.

P: It sounds to me like you were all things to all patients.

C: My point is, we started off that way. That's what I say, we were a bastard specialty, but we were a specialty. There again, I'm afraid I could talk for the rest of the day on this subject, but the American Board of Surgery was never called the American Board of General Surgery, it was called the American Board of Surgery. Well, then, the question is what kind of surgery was the American Board of Surgery limited to? Well, we were limited to the field of general surgery, because at that time the American Board of Surgery and the general surgeons were the same group. So [there's a] reason that you come along and think for years and years, with perfect reason, that a general surgeon was a general practitioner who did surgery.

Again, there's a background for that. That's exactly what Edwin Andrews was. He was a general practitioner who did surgery. Edwin Andrews had his surgical training when he was in the army during the war, which is the way a lot of people did it. They came back and they had no formal training, they couldn't qualify to become diplomats of the board, but they could come back in and do surgery. Dr. Edwin Andrews, in many ways, was a terrible surgeon. God bless him, he was a nice gentlemanly sort of guy, but there were a lot of things that he didn't do very well.

P: David, during the thirty years that you were a doctor here in Gainesville in practice, what changes occurred in the medical field?

C: Well, that subject, again, is a very big subject. In a way, it would almost be a fair statement to say that part of the reason that I quit or that I retired was because changes were occurring so rapidly that I couldn't keep up with it. One of them was the field of laparoscopic surgery.

P: What was that?

C: Laparoscopic surgery is performing surgeries through an endoscope, through a lighted tube, so to speak. Of course, the laparoscope had begun to be used probably ten or fifteen years earlier than that, but it was mostly limited to rather minor operations within in the abdomen and particularly by the gynecologists who were clipping tubes or performing sterilizations through the laparoscope. That was referred to at the time as belly-button surgery, which means that the laparoscope was a lighted tube about as big as your little finger and they could, with the techniques, insert that through the abdomen, blow up the interior of the

abdomen with air, and create an operative space to which they could do surgeries. Then, five or ten years after that, they first began developing many types of extensive operations.

P: All of these were revolutionary changes or things that were revolutionizing medicine.

C: These were revolutionary changes. There again, there were local surgeons here in Gainesville who were learning these techniques, but part of my problem was, I didn't have a big enough practice to have enough cases to learn those things. They began, of course, it was after I retired largely, but they began doing gallbladder operations through the laparoscope, which was a really big deal. It was a wonderful development because it just changed the field so completely. It made the gallbladder surgery a relatively minor operation from the patient standpoint. It's still surgically a major operation, but if it went well and there were no complications, the patient could go home the same day or the next morning, and it's a marvelous development. I don't know how often they're doing it now, [but] I've also learned that some [surgeons] were doing appendectomies through the laparoscope and they were doing more extensive removal of the pelvic organs like an ovarian cyst or something like that. Plus, I would say, there are a lot of other inventions that are difficult to keep up with. The field of vascular surgery was developing very rapidly with a lot of tremendous improvements in surgical techniques and things that I was trained in.

P: There were lots of improvements in cancer activities.

C: Well, the improvements in cancer activities, there again, that is a big subject. I think that a standard radical mastectomy, which was in vogue for a long period of time, almost fifty years, was a great disgrace to the surgical profession. As it turned out, it was probably an improper, incorrect analysis. That takes a lot of explaining. In the field of breast surgery, for instance, the improvement in the treatment has been largely [accomplished] by downgrading the surgery or changing the surgery to lesser operations rather than bigger operations. One of the most famous surgeons in New York at one time when I was in training and was in practice, claimed that if you didn't spend five hours doing a radical mastectomy, you weren't doing the right kind of thing for the patient. That turned out to be totally incorrect. That was the worst thing you ever heard of. That same person went together with a prominent pathologist in New York and one of his major contributions was to show that there were a lot of cases that were being operated on by a lot of [surgeons] all over the country that should not have been operated on because the disease was too far [advanced]. At the same time, they thought they were recommending larger operations, they were also finding a series of cases that shouldn't be operated on at all, which was an important development.

P: David, who made up your clientele?

C: I would say that I would never have been considered a high society doctor. My clientele, my patients were made up of average people.

P: You were seeing black and white patients?

C: We had rural areas here from Cedar Key and Lake City and Trenton and all those places that rural people were coming [from] to Gainesville.

P: Did you have black patients?

C: Oh, yes, I had a lot of black patients. In fact one of my closest alliances professionally was with Dr. Cullen Banks.

P: But when you came here and opened up in 1955, segregation was very much still in place.

C: Yes, and that is a big area I've been thinking about how much you might be interested in. I'm sure that a lot of the doctors who have given interviews have talked about the segregation at Alachua General, which really was quite disgraceful. At that time, for instance, the blacks were limited to the area called the Annex, which was essentially the basement. Of course, I don't think there was any air conditioning in the whole hospital, but the annex was right over the boiler room of the hospital and they were not even segregating black obstetrical cases. Segregating obstetrical patients was supposed to have been a tremendous factor of improving postpartum infections by not having them associated with infectious diseases in other parts of the hospital. In the Annex, obstetrical patients were being taken to the delivery room, to the common area of the white and black delivery room area, but they did not have their hospital beds in a segregated area. This was really a very disgraceful situation to be existing at that time, 1955 to 1960.

P: Things began to change in 1960?

C: As soon as the new building was opened in 1961, then I think the black obstetrical patients were moved into the desegregated area.

P: During this period there were other changes that were taking place that have been controversial, Medicare and Medicaid, for instance, came into existence.

C: Yes, the medical profession opposed medicare. Everybody in the medical profession, we knew that it would be an explosive type of development, which proved to be correct. Also, I believe that Medicare has been associated with

considerable deception and fraud. If you know, the HCA hospital had some executives who faced serious fines. There was a time when we thought, and my knowledge is strictly from newspapers and so forth, but there was a time when some of those people were thought to be going to jail because they were changing Medicare diagnosis. That isn't actually as bad a practice as it might sound to be, because there is a slightly logical explanation for some of it, but they were still doing fraudulent things.

P: The presence of Medicare and Medicaid were not things that compelled you to say, I've had enough of this foolishness, I'm going to get out of it?

C: I never considered resigning for that reason alone. I was faced with early retirement partly based on malpractice insurance premiums. I was faced with some large insurance premiums. The other decision to retire somewhat early was the fact that one of my closest colleagues in practice was Dr. Harry Walker. Harry decided to retire. I have subsequently come to conjecture that he partly retired for health reasons, which I didn't know at the time existed. He had a heart condition, which he eventually died of, suddenly, that I didn't know he had at the time. That might have been one of the reasons that he retired. When he retired, he had been my sign-out partner a lot and we helped each other in the operating room. So, when he retired, I felt that I had lost a good friend in the profession. I think it encouraged my decision to retire also.

P: So it wasn't the problems of the federal government or the pressures?

C: Not really at that time, I didn't retire because of Medicare.

P: You had the complaints about government interference.

C: Well, that was at the beginning, but as far as I was concerned Medicare allowed me to get paid for surgeries that I might not have been paid anything. They were charity patients to begin with, and if they had Medicare that was great. Certainly, early on, I always accepted Medicare.

P: What was the percentage of your clientele were people who were too poor to pay their bill?

C: Oh, a lot, it was certainly greater than 50 percent.

P: Fifty percent, that's a lot. There was a level of poverty, then?

C: I tell you, there were some funny things that happened. There were a lot of people in this area who felt that they really shouldn't pay their bill, they didn't need to pay their bill. There was an old man who lived up in High Springs and

his name was Max Edel. He was not related to Dr. Max Edel.

P: I was going to ask you, was this the famous Dr. Maxey Dell?

C: No, Dr. Maxey Dell, he ought to have a statue put up to him because he was a great man. No, this was another Maxey Dell. In fact, I believe this other Maxey Dell, if you know [that] out toward Newberry there's a road, 241 North, that's called Maxey Dell Highway. Well, I think that was him. Anyway, I did an operation for him. At that time, there was a lady who was running the admissions office of Alachua General and she admitted whoever she felt like admitting as a free patient.

P: She was the empress of the world.

C: I know who she was. I could name her name, but I probably better not. It's better not to.

P: Yes, we don't need that.

C: Anyway, she was a friend of this Maxey Dell. She admitted him as a free patient, so when I tried to collect my fee, this was before Medicare, of course, they didn't feel that they needed to pay any bill. But his wife was related to the president of the bank in the town of Alachua. So, it seems to me like I pressured him somewhere and they did pay the bill, but they were unhappy about it.

P: You should have published it in the *Gainesville Sun*.

C: We had a lot of free patients in those days. I knew some doctors up in Green Bay, when I'd talk to them, I'd say, "You don't really know what poverty is." In Green Bay, nearly everybody had insurance or they worked in a factory; there was no poverty in Green Bay.

P: It's hard for people coming in from the outside to realize the level of poverty in the South.

C: Of course, the other big element was the emergency room clientele and the cuts and shootings we used to get into on Saturday night and all that stuff. Most people in Green Bay, the doctors in Green Bay, would have no idea what went on and things like this.

P: There wasn't any single thing that brought about your retirement?

C: Actually, I retired very promptly for the moment. By that time we were going up to North Carolina in the summertime and I was taking a fair amount of time off.

My nurse came in to see me in the month of June, I think it was 1985. As I say, Harry Walker already retired. She said, "you've got this big malpractice insurance premium coming up and we've only got so much money in the bank; you've got a bunch of bills that are going to be paid, and if we're going to pay this insurance premium, you're going to have to put some more money in the bank." I remember looking at her and I said, "To hell with it, I'm quitting." I said, "We're not going to pay that insurance premium," which was a little bit unusual. I don't know if you've talked to doctors enough, but have you ever talked about doctors protecting their tail?

P: No.

C: Well, you see the tail on your insurance premium policy meant that as your practice moved forward like a comet, the head of the comet is up here, but there is a streamer that extends backwards. So, you might have somebody that, two years after they had their gallbladder out, they discover you left a stitch in or something. So, they're going to sue you two years after you think they're long gone and they're still around. That's what they mean by tail. There was, supposedly, a statistical analysis which showed a very high percentage of malpractice cases occurred in the tail. I never believed it myself, and it never did [happen] to me. I never had anybody come back a year or two later and say, "Hey, you did something wrong two years ago." We had a couple of malpractice cases, but that's another story.

P: You said to the secretary, "We're stopping."

C: I said, "I'm just not going to pay that." I said, "I'm going to quit, I want to retire."

P: She said, "What's going to happen to me?"

C: I owned my office building and I was able to rent my office immediately to someone who wanted it, and I just quit.

P: Tell me again where your office was.

C: Well, it was down by Alachua General.

P: It was in one of those little office spaces?

C: [It was] actually in the block that was east of Alachua General toward downtown. Dr. Kissam built a building; Billy Brashear, Evans, and Casey had the building, and then somebody else had built the building in back of that, which I purchased. And then I built another building eventually.

P: You became a landlord.

C: Yes, I became a landlord.

P: I'm still waiting for you to tell me what happened to the secretary.

C: Oh, she still works for me.

P: She's the nice lady who answers the telephone?

C: Yes, Maxine, she hasn't had a lot of raises, but it has actually suited her to keep working. One time I said to Maxine, "Maxine, how old are you?" She looked at me and she said, "I'm the same age you are." Her husband retired. At one time they were operating a little dry cleaning business for Rip Van Winkle. Do you remember him?

P: I do.

C: Anyway, her husband retired but they liked to have some continuing income. I don't pay her very much, but what's happened is that instead of giving her a lot of raises, I reduce her working time.

P: When did you acquire the property in North Carolina?

C: We got that in 1983. My friend Bill Barkley, the automobile dealer, was a close friend of mine. He's the one who talked us into coming up there, and we were visiting him for a few days. He said, well, how would you like to look at some real estate while you're here; why don't you look at some houses? I said, well, Sunday afternoon, and he said, I think I can get my lady real estate agent to show you some houses. She was delighted and she was available, so we started. We must have looked at a half a dozen houses and we found a nice property on the lake.

P: That suited you well.

C: Yes. It was a bigger property actually [than average]. The way property value is up there, if I was low on cash I wouldn't be anymore because the properties up there have [increased in value]. They say now that in our lake [area] there is no lakefront property that's worth less than a million dollars. Some people are buying for a million dollars and tearing the house down and starting a new house.

P: That's happening a lot.

C: In fact, I know a person who did that over at Doctors Landing at Jacksonville. He bought a beautiful lot on the St. Johns River.

P: A lot of it is being done at Ponte Vedra Beach.

C: In fact, one of the nicest houses on our lake is going down. In fact, one of the nicest lots on the lake was bought by a fellow by the name of Marcus, and he's the head of Home Depot in Atlanta. He tore that house down and that house was owned by a millionaire shipping magnate from the Palm Beach area. He tore that down and built about a 15,000-square-foot house that just about covers the whole lot.

P: You can't see it anymore for the house.

C: Yes, you can't see the lot, no.

P: So what have you been doing since 1985?

C: Well, [since] my brother had died I was on the board of directors of the company.

P: Are you still?

C: No, the company is gone. The company went through a leveraged buyout in 1988 and at that time I had been on the board since 1974. I would say that we've done a fair amount of traveling, but then I've got investments that I spend a little time at. Of course, I spend a moderate amount of time with philanthropic things.

P: Tell me a little bit about the philanthropic things. I know that you're the donor for the Harn [Museum of Art].

C: When the money started rolling in, which, as I say, really began in 1971 . . .

P: And you're living now in Gainesville then.

C: Yes, the first philanthropic thing that we got involved in was with building a small theater out at Oak Hall School. That was an interesting project. That was later in the 1970s. I don't think that theater was actually finished until 1979. Dr. Bill Hadley and Caroline Richardson were both very interested in getting an art museum at the University of Florida.

P: Caroline was my across-the-street neighbor.

C: Bill Hadley was very active in that also. I talked to my children and we came up

with this gift for the University of Florida.

P: Do you want to say how much that gift was?

C: It was a total of \$3 million over three years, but it was participated in [by my children]. Fifty percent of it was from my five children who gave one-fifth of one half and Mary Ann and I gave the other half, but it was over three years.

P: Why have you been reluctant to use your name, Cofrin?

C: There is an appearance that I've been reluctant, but the truth of the matter is that the library at the University of Wisconsin in Green Bay is named after me. I got my name up there. My name is probably as big as this whole wall.

P: See, I didn't know about your Wisconsin gifts.

C: We got involved with a performing arts center that actually had nothing to do with building the library, but it's the biggest building on the campus. It's about fifteen stories high, and because of what we donated for the performing arts center there, which has been a big success, they [named the library for me]. They had been naming some other buildings. In fact, there was a rule in Wisconsin . . .

[End side B3]

C: In Wisconsin, in the university system, they had a rule that there was nothing named after a living person, but we helped them to change that because the founding chancellor was a fellow by the name of Weidner, and we insisted that the performing arts center be named after him, which the Board of Regents in Wisconsin finally agreed to. They may have actually named something else earlier for a living person. I'm not quite sure, that may have been the first one. Anyway, by the time they came along in 1990, they decided to name the library after me, which they did. I think I had a reluctance [to use my last name] because my father was sort of the same thing. My father didn't want to name his company with his name. He named it Fort Howard, so I had a feeling about it.

P: When it came to the art museum, wasn't there pressure to name it for you, the Cofrin name?

C: No, because my children wanted to name it after their grandfather. Sam Harn was their grandfather, that's the way I talked them into donating the money.

P: I see, well that's perfectly satisfactory.

C: The other thing is that the theater at Oak Hall that we built in 1977 or 1978 was

named after my mother. I named that after my mother, Edith Dee Cofrin. We had indicated to them that if the theater was going to be written up in the newspaper or anything that we would prefer them to call it Oak Hall Theater, but in the publications and things out there they always refer to it as the Edith Cofrin Theater.

P: Now the Harn Museum cost more than \$3 million.

C: Well, of course, [there is a] marvelous [state] matching program. That's what makes it attractive to donors.

P: I wonder if the Florida legislature this year will do it.

C: Well, I don't know if they will this year, but they did for the Harn Museum. So, we immediately had \$6 million. E.T. York did a marvelous job of raising an extra million or \$2 million. He got a number of gifts, most of which were in the \$10,000 range, but that adds up.

P: Caroline, I know was very active.

C: Well, she and Jim endowed an acquisition endowment, plus they named one of the galleries. Jim was very philanthropic, but he was a tightwad philanthropist.

P: I knew Jim before I knew Caroline.

C: In fact, the story that [the museum director] told me about Jim was that Jim would come around, he'd make an appointment and go in to see Budd Bishop about something to do with paintings and Jim would say, "Well, when are you going to put up the name in the gallery? When are you going to put up the Caroline Richardson... I wish they'd named that after her only, but they have it the James and Caroline [Richardson]. Anyway, Jim would say, "When are you going to put up our names in the gallery?" Budd Bishop would say, "Whenever you donate the money." [Laughing.] He was piddling it in a little at a time. I understand that Jim's trust fund is probably larger than anyone [else] thought it was. I [never knew] the details.

P: Well, it's a magnificent addition to this campus.

C: Also, of course, now we've got the addition. Didn't you come to the thing that they named for Mary Ann [Cofrin]?

P: Are they working on that already?

C: I don't know, I don't really think so. They're working on some things.

Supposedly, the butterfly [institute] thing is going to be a little bit ahead of it.

P: I thought it was going to be just the opposite.

C: One thing that they have said about getting the money was the fact that McGuire had stipulated in his gift agreement that if the matching funds were not made, he was going to take the gift back, so that scared them into doing that. Of course, now future people who make large gifts are going to be doing the same thing. They're going to be saying, if you don't get those matching funds, we'll take the gift back. Ours was never that way, so they found the money for matching our gift, and I'm not sure where they found it.

P: You know, I go back to the 1930s. I came as a freshman in 1937, and I can remember when we had no art here or the little that we had they had to use the walls in the library. So the Harn has really brought us into big time. Do you know Mickey Singer [UF graduate who donated a Monet painting to the Harn Museum of Art in the 1990s]?

C: I met him on one occasion. In fact, I think I met him over at Caroline's house.

P: That had the party for the Robertsons.

C: Was it that party or another one?

P: Anyway, I think I saw you there that morning and Mickey Singer was there.

C: I think the party that I met Mickey Singer at was after the Robertson's party.

P: Oh, no, I knew Mickey when he was a student here, but I saw him at one of Caroline and Jim Richardson's parties.

C: I had some thought that I was not terribly happy about the Monet thing ["Oat Field" painting]. I'd rather have seen them donate the money than the picture.

P: I don't think he had any question, did he? I don't think he gave them that choice.

C: No, he didn't give them any choice.

P: He said I'm getting you this Monet if you want it. The gallery wasn't going to say, no.

C: That was one of the things that poor old, the short-lived director who was here. She was there during the time that they accepted that.

- P: Your philanthropy has not stopped with the Harn though, has it?
- C: No, we're still active. We have a family foundation now.
- P: Aren't you supportive of the Curtis M. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts?
- C: Not to any great extent. I'm an elite auxiliary member of the performing arts center.
- P: But you haven't made any major gifts?
- C: No, [I haven't made] major gifts.
- P: The same thing is true of the museum?
- C: We made the gift for the Mary Ann Cofrin Pavilion because of divesting stock to avoid capital gains tax.
- P: Was the pavilion going to be just at the Harn or is it also going to be gardens leading into the museum.
- C: It's interesting you should say that. It sounds like you know something I don't know.
- P: I don't know, I'm just asking.
- C: There's going to be some landscaping. They've been trying to put a lot of fear in our mind about what might happen down at the corner of Hull Road and [Southwest] Thirty-fourth Street. There's a big hole there, and I know that they've also found some subterranean caverns in there that could cause construction problems. Mr. Bishop said to me last year, which is after he left, but we happened to meet on another occasion, he said, "You've got to watch out." He said, "That damn John Lombardi [president, University of Florida, 1990-1999] would like to put a classroom building down on that corner, you want to make sure that he doesn't do that. Well, I've since then talked to David Colburn [UF Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, 2000 - present] and a few others and they pretty much have guaranteed us that they're not going to put a classroom there or any other building.
- P: No, they'll keep that the cultural center.
- C: That means that the area around the Mary Ann Cofrin Pavilion, which is also known as the sculpture garden, is going to have to be landscaped and there's going to probably be special plantings and different things of that sort. It may

mean that we'll have to pony up some money for that, too. I think Louise Courtelis is interested in that spot also.

P: Are you talking about the garden spot or the empty spot near Hull Road?

C: Well, it's all the same project. In other words, the way I picture it is the butterfly thing is here and the Museum of Natural History is here and the Harn Museum here and the Mary Ann Cofrin Pavilion is here. [Interviewee is describing positioning for the benefit of the interviewer only.]

P: What's in between that?

C: I think it will either be subsequent additions to either one of the existing buildings, I don't think they'll put anything extraneous.

P: I don't think that either. I think they probably will add onto the Harn.

C: Well, it would certainly be possible, but it's nothing that I have much of any idea about. As far as we're concerned, this is the end of our tenure there. We're still supporting our tenure there. We're still supporting the museum with acquisitions. In fact, they've got a big computer system that they needed funding for and I'm helping them with that. It's an object locator data system.

P: Whatever that means.

C: Well, they want to have every art object in the museum in the computer and be readily accessible. I think it will also be accessible from probably remote locations back at the art college for students to look up different things like a library system. They'll make a library system out of the collection.

P: David, I want to ask you some other questions now. Did you grow up in a religious household?

C: No.

P: Religion didn't play a major role in your upbringing?

C: No, my father, he didn't attach a great deal of importance to it, but he was probably a very devout agnostic. In other words, he also was in his thinking and talking. He also used to decry the oppressions of the church like the Inquisition and all the things that happened in early days of the Christian churches, and he never went to church. My mother was raised as a Protestant.

P: So, growing up, you didn't go to church regularly.

C: No, but for a couple years in high school I sang in the junior choir, but that was a social thing. We had our girlfriends and we all went to choir practice, I think, on Tuesday or Wednesday night.

P: What about now?

C: We don't go to church. We got into the Methodist church at the tail end of Thaxton Springfield's thing, and, of course, when he left and retired, I don't think they were as successful with their subsequent minister assistants. We tried to get the kids to go to Sunday school at the Methodist church and we live not too far over in the Finley [School] area, but the kids hated Sunday school. They didn't enjoy it at all. Finally, Mary Ann decided... I wasn't going to church. She wanted to move over to the Presbyterian church, but I think the only thing that she was interested in was having a church for her daughters to get married. But as it turned out, none of the three daughters got married in the church at all. Gladys got married at the Thomas Center. She had a pretty big wedding. She stayed married for ten years and then she got divorced. My father, as I say, he never went to church. My mother, the last ten years of her life was a Parkinson's [Disease] victim and she wasn't active in the church during that time.

P: You and Mary Ann aren't active now.

C: No, we're not active. I think I would, if I had a better understanding of it, I would probably consider myself an atheist, but I like to feel that there may be a God associated with the dynamic force of the universe. That's my concept of it.

P: How much of a social person are you?

C: Oh, I think we're pretty social. Mary Ann has always accepted her social [obligations]. We accept invitations to dinner all the time, and she's always tried to repay her social obligations. She belongs to a couple of small bridge [card game] clubs. First of all, you know Sam [Samuel P. Harn, Mary Ann Cofrin's father] was a big Kiwanis [member]. Then again, he was an invalid all that time. I never was invited to join a luncheon club in my early years, and then, finally, I think I was invited to join one that I really wasn't too interested in. By and large, I never have particularly wanted to have the regimentation of going to a luncheon club regularly. So, it was easy for me not to join a luncheon club. I usually worked or went to the hospital during lunch hours. I ended up always saying to people that the reason I didn't join a luncheon club was because I don't like to sing a song before lunch.

P: Now that's a very good reason, I give the same one myself. I've never joined Rotary or Kiwanis or anything because I don't like to sing.

C: Anyway, I have friends who have very successful relationships with their luncheon clubs. Rotarians have done a great deal charity-wise and Kiwanis does, too, but I just haven't gotten involved in it. As I say, we accept most all of our social invitations and Mary Ann, more than I, has tried to repay our social obligations.

P: What do you do with your time?

C: I waste a lot of time.

P: Are you a TV watcher?

C: Yes, I surf the TV sometimes and maybe I'll find something. I read a lot of magazines, but I don't read any of them thoroughly. For a time Mary Ann said we're inundated, we'd have ten or more weekly magazines. We used to get *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *US News*, and I would like to look at them at least and find the interesting articles. Now, we've decided to give up on *Time*, now we've only got those two. I also try to look at *Forbes*. I also have some nature magazines. I like nature things. We get the *Smithsonian*. We get the *Natural History*. I've made some patron-sized donations to the Museum of Natural History in New York, also to the Smithsonian [Institution]. We also have a major involvement now, what most people would consider major, to the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama. We met somebody from there and got interested in it and they invited us to come down for a trip last year, which I took some of the fellows from the Natural History Museum, Doug Jones and Bruce McFadden and Darcy McMahan.

We went down there and, of course, it was a solicitous program. They really treated us royally. They treated me like a millionaire. Naturally, at the end of the program they asked me what I wanted to donate to. The other thing that I didn't tell you was, Mary Ann has had a big classroom building named after her at the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay. That has a lot of energy-efficient construction, one of which is a solar photovoltaic roof with those things. So they're building a new research building in Panama and they didn't have the money for the photovoltaic roof, so that's what I said. When they said they needed some money for the photovoltaic roof, I said, well, Mary Ann is getting big into photovoltaic roofs, so we're going to pay for the photovoltaic roof in the new research building in Panama.

P: I remember Mary Ann telling me you all were going down to Panama.

C: Yes, it's a very interesting place, the work that they're doing down there worldwide. Believe this or not, they've got 10,000 trees identified by satellite all over the world and they're collecting data on what those trees are doing. Can

you believe that?

P: That's a mammoth project.

C: These trees are all located geographically with an X-marks-the-spot. They're all located everywhere in the world. They're all identified by the species of the tree, type of tree, type of leaves, and they're making annual measurements of what they're doing in terms of growth.

P: So you're very much into conservation also and the environment.

C: Yeah, of course, I'm not very much into the so-called radical environmentalists like the Green Peacers or people who are trying to tear down electrical stations and things like that.

P: Those people say, save the lions, save the whales.

C: I firmly believe there is a conflict that exists in me. We've always loved animals and had a lot to do with animals, but I feel that humans are worth more than animals. I don't like to build an animal shelter. I'm very much in favor of the euthanasia of animals. Now, it's getting ridiculous. I just found out, for instance, not too long ago that it probably would be illegal for me to euthanize some of my old horses out there that I'm feeding. I have to be very cautious or I might get stabbed with a cruelty to animals [charge].

P: David, you said you watch television. Do you go to the movies?

C: Yes, we like to go to the movies. We're kind of particular about movies. We frequently go to a movie that we don't like or don't think we enjoyed it that much, but there have been a number that we loved. We loved to see the movie *Chicago*.

P: Oh, yes. That was great.

C: We didn't see the *Greek Wedding* movie until quite late, but we liked that. We saw those movies with [Leonardo] DiCaprio, went to those ones. The one about the *Gangs of New York* was kind of interesting, but it was a little bit too much.

P: David, do you and Mary Ann travel a lot?

C: Well, we did, we've made I guess about four or five or six trips over a period of years. We've been to a lot of major cities. We've been to Istanbul, Turkey, but we've never been to the Far East. In fact, we had been thinking about going to China. We've got an opportunity to go. I've been collecting imperial jade for the

last five or six years or more. My jade dealer in San Francisco wants to take me on a trip, which he says I don't have to pay his expenses for. I don't quite understand that one, how that's going to add up. We're considering it, but with the war developments and so forth [we might not go]. I've been having trouble with my right hip, I don't know if I mentioned that, but I've had some pretty severe pains. If I don't have that taken care of, I would not like to be in a foreign country, although, I haven't been disabled. I do have another health problem. They've diagnosed me with a condition called polymyalgia rheumatica. Have you ever heard of that?

P: Never.

C: Well, I hardly ever had either. It's supposed to be an auto-immune thing like rheumatoid arthritis. It affects the muscles sometimes and causes your sedimentation rate to go very high. I had that last year after I got back from Panama. For a couple months, we thought it was that I had gotten some virus down there, and we messed around with different tests and so forth. Finally, that's what they've decided I've got.

Mary Ann goes to the fitness center and she's in very good shape. She still plays tennis maybe once in a while and would like to play every week. She can still do the most amazing exercises. She can get down on the floor and do sit-up exercises that you wouldn't think anybody over the age of thirty could possibly do.

P: How old is she?

C: She's a year younger than I am. She's seventy-eight.

P: She looks so much younger than that.

C: Yes, her poor sister is ill now with a disease.

P: I met her sister at the groundbreaking, we were sitting together at that.

C: Yes, Margaret, since then, has had surgery for a lesion on her tongue that turned out to be cancerous. Well, they knew it was cancerous, but she looks like she's going to go down hill. She's having some interior bleeding now that they haven't been able to identify.

P: David, what kind of a political person are you?

C: Well, my father was a very strong conservative. There's an interesting story about him, though. He always voted Republican. When Barry Goldwater [1964

presidential candidate; U.S. Senator for Arizona] came up, my father had already had his brain condition. My brother tells the story that my father had to vote by absentee ballot, but my brother determined that he was unwilling to vote for Barry Goldwater. My brother said that it was one of the hardest things he had to do was to mail my father's absentee ballot, because he was going to vote for Lyndon Johnson [U.S. President, 1963-1968]. I've, since then, figured out how that story should be told. Although my brother never admitted it, I know from what I know about my brother [that] he probably never mailed that absentee ballot. I'm quite conservative. I'm more conservative. My children all voted for [William Jefferson] Clinton [U.S. President, 1992-2000]. All five of my children voted for Clinton both times. Of course, this was a great disappointment to me.

P: You didn't disinherit them as a result, did you?

C: No, if I could have, I might have. That's the trouble with me and my children, I can't disinherit them because they got all their money from their grandfather, not from me.

P: I was going to say, you have no weapon to use.

C: Anyway, I'm not as ultraconservative. My kids always put up the guy from North Carolina, Jesse Helms [conservative Republican senator for North Carolina, 1972-2002]. They say, you don't think we should vote for Jesse Helms, do you? Of course, I did support Jesse Helms early on, and I, basically, would be considered a Jesse Helms supporter. There again, his ultraconservative and anti-black and all that stuff I don't think is very real, although it was at one time. Of course, I'm shocked to think what could happen to Trent Lott [conservative Republican senator, 1988-present] from Mississippi. Of course, he was just so dumb. I must confess that I've never been terribly fond of him, and I've never known why but now I know why. He's too damn dumb to pound sand. To do what he did is just [dumb]. [Trent Lott lost his leadership position among Republicans in the U.S. Senate when his comments lauding former segregationist and Senate colleague Strom Thurmond caused a public furor. Lott's comments were captured in television coverage of Thurmond's birthday party.]

P: What are you going to do about Bob Graham [Contender for the Democratic presidential nomination at the time of this interview who pulled out of the race in October 2003; U.S. Senator for Florida, 1987-2005]?

C: Well, it depends on how the president [George W. Bush] does in his war [with Iraq, Operation Iraqi Freedom]. If the president is successful in his war and it turns out that everybody else is wrong, I guess I'll have to vote for him. If I had to vote for a Democrat, I think Bob Graham would be as close to whom I'd like to

vote for as anybody.

P: Bob Graham was once my student.

C: I did not like Buddy MacKay [Florida Lieutenant Governor under Governor Lawton Chiles, 1991-1998] I thought he was a little bit of a pip-squeak. I'm not lock, stock, and barrel in favor of the governor [Jeb Bush, 1999-present]. I don't understand half the things he's done. The thing about the schools, I just plain don't understand it. I don't understand, if they have an F-rated school that's going to close down, where the hell are they going to move to? I don't have any notion. They're not going to go out to Oak Hall. They haven't got room to take them out there.

P: And it costs money to go out there.

C: Well, supposedly they're going to get money from the state, they'll get the vouchers.

P: So, David, are you unhappy or happy about the political situation now in the US?

C: Part of my problem is that I am not too happy about these religious politicians, and I'm not too happy about the Bushes and their religious situation. I'd hope that the president knows what he's doing on this thing. He certainly isn't telling anybody. I have a feeling that every time they destroy these missiles and the White House says, it's not going to work and they're faking, and all this stuff, I think that's all canned material. They've decided what they're going to say and how they're going to impress. They certainly don't want Saddam [Hussein, former Iraqi leader deposed by the United States in 2003] to think that they're not serious. I have to have some confidence in Colin Powell [U.S. Secretary of State, 2001-present]. I mean, I have a lot of respect for him and I have a lot of respect for Condoleezza Rice [National Security Advisor, 2001-present]. I think there's some very smart people.

P: She certainly is.

C: I wouldn't want to say that I understand it. Frankly, my political attitude is, I'm just an old man who's sitting by, watching to see what's going to happen.

P: Are you happy with the world we're living in?

C: No, because, there again, it comes down to religion. I think, for instance, this televangelism is so bad and so awful, terrible. You take these guys like the Armenian Benny Hinn. I don't want to call him Benny Hill [Benny Hinn, a faith healer], but he was a comedian. All of these televangelists with the things that

have happened and so forth, the money that they've raised, and the people who send money to them, I think is terrible. If you take the cross-section of America and the terrible things on television and the terrible things that are going along in the subculture, it's not hard to understand why the Muslims hate us. So many things are being squandered. Take things like these stupid nightclub fires and so forth and terrible, terrible, sad things that have happened. I think there's a large element of degeneracy in the population. There was an elderly professor at Chicago by the name of Bloom. Anyway, he wrote a book and I remember I wrote him a letter one time and I asked him if he'd come down and give a lecture at our school. He wrote me back and said, no. He was past that, he couldn't take on any more lecturing schedules. He was talking about the music culture and the preoccupation with sex and the bad things that were happening, the drugs and the bad things that were happening. I think that those things are not being controlled the way they should be.

P: Do you think they're getting worse?

C: I think they will get worse. My brother, of course, he claimed that there would be a race war in the United States.

P: Well, that did not happen and will not happen.

C: Well, you say that. I think you're right except the Hispanics and the Asians are going to become the majority population in the United States. I believe in that sociologist guy, [B.F. Skinner] who came to lecture here. He said he thought that the human race could save itself if it wanted to, but he didn't see any evidence that they were trying very hard.

P: David, do you have any grandchildren?

C: Yes, there's none younger than ten or eleven now.

P: The reason I asked you that is, I wondered if they were here and you had occasion to talk to them, what kind of advice or counsel would you give them?

C: Well, I think they should have active careers. Four of my children don't work. My son David is the only one who has an active career. I think that this is a very serious imposition. My one daughter in Atlanta probably is active enough in volunteer work to where she could say that she has a career. She's been president of volunteer societies and different things that have made her fairly busy. I think the work ethic is necessary for psychological mental health. I think part of my children's problems [are] related to the fact that they don't have to get up and go to work in the morning.

P: Are they setting a bad example for their children?

C: Well, two of them don't have children. [They're] not entirely [setting a bad example], because all my kids graduated from college. David has got the law degree. Gladys has got her master's degree. Gladys almost has a career at the crisis center, but she is not a paid employee.

P: So you're presuming that your grandchildren will be college graduates also, and you're emphasizing the work ethic to them.

C: I don't really have that much of a close relationship with them.

P: I understand that, and they're not here. I was just asking what you would say to them if you did have that opportunity. I would say to them that I hope that they would subscribe to the work ethic. In a way, the oldest grandchild has a very good job working for a private foundation in Washington D.C. She's got a very nice job. The one who is graduating this year is also getting a good job in her field. So, as we stand right at the present moment, they're doing okay. The girls all did extremely well in a private high school in Atlanta. They all had excellent high school experiences. Two of the girls played on the basketball team and had very successful extracurricular activities.

The next one in college, my son in Boulder, his oldest son who is a stepson, just finished a term at the University of Colorado unsuccessfully. At least the story that we get is that he's dropped out of college for the time being. We don't know what it means. His father recently took him on a trip abroad to Switzerland for something. I don't know exactly what it was. He gets along with his stepfather. His natural mother is now divorced from his [step] father. She has had all sorts of mental and alcohol problems. She's pretty bad off.

P: David, believe it or not, we've talked for three and a half hours. What have we not said that needs to go on the tape? What have we left out that I didn't mean to but did? I thought I covered the waterfront.

C: I think we covered an awful lot.

P: You've got a wonderful memory for detail, excellent. When I talked to you on the telephone, I thought to myself, I wonder if this guy's going to cooperate. [Laughing.] You did beautifully.

C: I'm not so sure that I'm taking old age very well. I've had difficulties being as active as I would like to be, which I think is mostly due to this polymyalgia business, but my wife would say, and I would have to agree with her, that there may be a large element of laziness. I don't really have as much energy. I'm not

able to walk a mile. She and I both started off thinking that walking was the answer to everything, and there was a time, as [recently] as five years [ago], when I thought I could start walking and would never have to quit. I mean, I would think I could walk for five miles. I had a friend who got me into mountain hiking, but that was in 1979. One of my famous feats that I should mention is that I climbed Longs Peak in Colorado [in Northern Colorado Rockies]. Are you acquainted with Colorado at all?

P: I've been to Colorado, but I've never heard of Longs Peak.

C: Well, Longs Peak is in Rocky Mountain Park and it's a similar kind of mountain as Pikes Peak in Colorado Springs, which is about 100 miles south. The two mountains are about 100 miles apart. Anyway, we climbed Long's Peak [14,255 feet high] with this friend of mine who was a classmate in medical school. That was a considerable feat, which I was quite proud of at the time. We walked nine miles up and nine miles down, starting at four o'clock in the morning.

P: That is a feat.

C: Yes, 5,000 feet [14,255 feet high] of elevation [over] nine miles.

P: You started at four o'clock in the morning and you got back the following week?

C: No, we got back at six o'clock in the evening, which is a lot longer than a lot of people take.

P: You walked eighteen miles.

C: We saw a college student, believe it or not, we were in the middle of it and we saw her pass us going up and she passed us going back. Some of those athletic college kids can do it [quickly]. We took fourteen hours to do this hike, and some of them can do it in two or three hours. They jog most of the way.

P: I couldn't have done it in fourteen hours.

C: Are you a golfer?

P: No.

C: [You] never have been?

P: I exercise three times a week, but none of the other thing.

C: [You exercise at] the fitness center?

P: No, I go to the one on campus at Yon Hall. They have a gym for faculty and staff. It's a wonderful set up. Well, David . . .

C: Is that going to do it?

P: Well, I'm waiting for you to tell me, you forgot to ask me the most important things of all, but you're not going to ask me that.

C: What?

P: I'm just waiting to hear what I have left out.

C: Oh, I'm trying to think of it.

P: You're going to be able, of course, to add to this if there are things that come to mind, I wish Proctor had asked me about this. You'll just write it on the back of the sheet and we'll add it to the interview completely. I can tell you, and I've done a lot of interviews over the years, this has been a very successful interview. You've cooperated.

[End of interview]