JH: My name is Jim Hansen. Today is February 8, 2008. I’m in the Morgan Library Conference Room, interviewing Harry Rosenberg for the CSU Senior Scholars Oral History Project. Why don’t we begin with your family, your parents, their background, what your father did for a living, what your childhood was like.

HR: Well, my background is the Ukraine. My father came from Stechel, a Jewish village near Kiev. He never explained when. He did like to talk about the circumstances that led to his fleeing. That’s not too harsh a word to use, because he was somehow just drafted into the Tsar’s army. And he came a cropper of an officer, and he was put on report. He knew that the court martial might not go well. The only question was [inaudible]. And he said, I left the Army. From that point on he would never, never talk. He was always proud about that incident. But he would never describe how he got from the Ukraine to North America. I never found that out from him. And as far as I can recall, he had no relatives in North America.

The first reference I can recall to his experience in North America was that during World War I he ended up in Utah. And there was another man he’d met at the Orthodox Synagogue, which is where East European Jews would go. They began trading hides and pelts together. He did that, and then what I next learned about him is when he and my mother were married in Toledo, Ohio.

Now I will talk about my mother. Her maiden name was Rose Sochet, S-O-C-H-E-T. And she came from Vilna, in what we now know as Lithuania. But before World War I, of course, it was a part of Tsarist Russia. And that was a great center for Northern European Jewry. In fact, in my subsequent reading about Medieval Jewry and the like, Vilna was known as the Jerusalem of the North. They were very proud of that.
My maternal grandparents had something very interesting. They had a large family. And they encouraged their children to migrate. Most of them migrated to North America. Some in one family, one branch of them, migrated to England. And I remembered to note the fact that I met members of that branch when, courtesy of the United States Army Air Corps, I was sent to Britain in late 1944 or early 1945.

Well, my mother and a niece of her’s – my mother was twelve and the niece was four – (the niece I know was Gertrude Hoffman). Arrangements were made for a travel outfit. That was apparently done quite frequently in this period in Europe, where they went around to Jewish communities and signed up to provide you with transportation to North America.

JH: What was this organization?
HR: Well, it was a commercial venture, like a travel agency.
JH: Like a travel agency, okay.
HR: And it wasn’t the best of accommodations, as she told the story. She loved to talk about it. She was very proud of the fact that they had made it.
JH: And she was just twelve years old when she…..?
HF: She was twelve and my cousin Gertrude, Gertie or Gertrude, was four. They went to Canada where, on her side of the family, a large number of them had come to North America. They settled in Toronto, Detroit, and Toledo. And it was in Toledo, Ohio, that she went to work in one of those sweat shops as a seamstress, working on a machine all day long. But she moved to Toledo because the oldest member of the family who was sort of the patriarch of the Sochets of North America, my Uncle Meyer. I don’t know whether he changed his name or whether an immigration official did it for him, from Sochet to Shone – Shone – S-H-O-N-E. He had settled in Toledo, and her favorite sister, my Aunt Ida, who had married a gentleman named Bernstein, settled in Toledo, so that’s where she gravitated to. And that’s where she met William Rosenberg. They were married, and that was where, March 22, 1923, I was born in a Toledo hospital.
JH: How did your parents meet? Did they meet at Synagogue, or…?
HR: I don’t know.

JH: Okay, they never discussed that.

HR: They never discussed that. I have no recollection of that, that part. And by that time, my dad had become a tailor. Had a tailor shop, and…

JH: In Toledo?

HR: In Toledo. And he liked to work with his hands. I remember that he built me a model of Lindbergh’s plane, the Spirit of St. Louis, and I treated it like it was a scooter car. I could sit in it and walk around …[laughter] The tailor shop and the adjacent apartment—there’s where we lived until 1928.

JH: Now, did you have siblings?: Did you have brothers and sisters?

HR: No, I was the only one.

JH: You were the only child, okay.

HR: The only child. And in 1928 my father decided that he could do better out West, in Salt Lake City, because he knew a number of people there from his previous experience. And he decided he was going to move to Salt Lake and open a tailor shop. Now that put a considerable strain on the marriage, because her family was in Toronto, Detroit, and Toledo. So for her to move to Salt Lake City was, as I subsequently came to describe it, it was like going to the end of the world. But there we went. [laughter] And he was very proud. He had a car called the Straight A Jordan.

JH: Oh, he had a car?

HR: Yes, a big, sort of a box car of a vehicle. We drove West and went all the way out to California just to look at it. Then we got on Highway 50, a gravel road. They had a tent, and we camped out at public camp grounds. And we got to Ely, and spent July 4, 1928, there in Ely, and…

JH: In where?

HR: Ely, Nevada.

JH: E-L-Y, okay.
HR: And the morning of July 5th, the landmark day, a traumatic one. We loaded up the car and headed out on this gravel road heading towards Salt Lake City. And because the car was so big, it didn’t have much of a trunk; but the back seat, they put all their things there, and it came up to the level of the front seat. And I, apparently, they told me subsequently, wanted to ride back there; I was lying right on my tummy, and look out between the two of them at the road ahead.

JH: No seat belts. [laughter]

HR: It was the injuries that ultimately resulted that made the relationship very difficult. Because three miles outside of Ely, dusty road and that, we end up in a head-on collision.

JH: Oh, my!

HR: I was projected from where I was lying. I went through the windshield. And that’s what cost me my eye. My right eye being artificial. What I always can remember is someone stopping in a touring car, it didn’t have any windows, and somebody picking me up; no sense of pain. The next thing I remember is running around the halls of the Ely, NV, hospital, playing with other kids.

After some months there, we finally made it to Salt Lake City. And that’s where he established his tailor shop. We were on Regent Street, which is where the Mormon Church, the word escapes me, Jim, compiled their ancestry—they gathered all these records.

JH: Oh sure, Genealogical Center.

HR: Genealogical Center. But at that time Regent Street was a street where there were tailor shops and pawn shops. Our tailor shop was right next to the back door and the loading dock and everything of the Salt Lake City Tribune. That’s where I got my first experience, I guess; subsequently. I wanted to be a journalist. [laughter] And I remember the pressmen there making me a hat out of folded newspapers, or they made me airplanes.

Well, we lived there for several years. I used to go with a friend down the street, and this mysterious lady ran the pawn shop, and she had son about my age. And for entertainment we would walk on up a couple blocks to Temple Square, and I grew up playing around Temple Square, and going
into the great Tabernacle a number of times. I never went into the Temple because I was not a convert there.

But within a few years, of course, a few things happened that were traumatic and life-shaping for the family. My dad’s eyes began to go bad on him. And that affected….

JH: When was this, Harry?

HR: Pardon?

JH: What year did your dad die?

HR: Oh, he didn’t die till 1952.

JH: Oh, I thought that’s what you just said.

HR: No, no. His vision deteriorated.

JH: Oh, his vision. Okay.

HR: And for a tailor….

JH: Oh, yes.

HR: The other thing that happened was the Depression came. And so in the depth of the Depression he decided he had to do something else. He got some sort of a ramshackle truck, and began peddling. And about 1931 or 1932, he decided that what little Vernal, Utah, needed – 150-60 miles east on Hwy 40, 12 miles from the Green River, 40 miles from the Colorado border that I didn’t know anything about – he decided that what little Vernal needed was another general store. Vernal was a town of 900. . . growing to be sure, and a Mormon community.

JH: So he had a general store in this Mormon community?

HR: Yes, and he…

JH: I’m sorry, what was this town?

HR: Vernal.

JH: Oh, this was Vernal, okay.

HR: On Highway 40. It became a center leading up to World War II for uranium research.

JH: Right.
HR: Our colleagues in history have pointed out to me subsequently, that they figured out somehow or other the Rosenbergs were the first Jewish family to settle in Vernal. And I want to reference that later because ...[inaudible]. So as I said before, if moving from Toledo to Salt Lake City was like moving to the end of the world for my mother, this was like moving off it.

But in the dead of winter, I think in 1931 or 1932, [with a] chain that [towed] the pride and joy, the Jordan, [in] the back of this truck. My mother had never driven a car, but she and I got in the front seat; she tried to do the steering, poor dear, and we drove 150 miles out to Vernal.

Now it was interesting, I subsequently found in his effects all kinds of canceled notes that his friends in the Synagogue in Salt Lake had co-signed for him. But my parents never learned to read or write English. I saw these, his notes. There was an X, an observation comment by the side – his mark. And in looking at Medieval manuscripts I found the same thing from early Medieval Lords who had to make a mark on the Bishop ...[inaudible]... Anyhow ...

JH: Did he read Russian or write Russian?

HR: No, no, they could speak Russian. They did some. They spoke Yiddish. But sometimes they would switch to Russian. I came to learn that when they switched to Russian, that was something real serious, and I didn’t have any chance or any way of understanding it, which, of course, I couldn’t. And so with the help of his friends from Salt Lake he rented a store, and got goods, and started this general department store.

JH: Wow, that must have been tough in the Depression.

HR: Yes, it was very tough, and it didn’t last very long. And then, for reasons I’ve never learned, and again I think it was the influence of his friends in the Synagogue in Salt Lake City, they decided to build Vernal’s first apartment house.

They bought a piece of property, not too far away from where we were – this general store – and two blocks from the center of little Vernal on Roosevelt Avenue, I think it was called. And there he, being a jack of all trades, he began laying the foundation, hired people to do the specialty things.
There was a little barn with a tin roof at the back of the property, and that’s where we lived for three years. They got cardboard to line the walls, make it bearable, and upstairs was a loft. And subsequently they had a big flock of pigeons. I grew up eating squab but didn’t know what a delicacy it was [laughter]. But what I do remember and didn’t like, I had to feed and water those things, and I was scared to death of those pigeons flying all around me.

So after three and a half years, he finished the apartment house – eight units. And had a stroke of good fortune, when he came to renting it, because the Department of Interior team came in, which was in 1934, to work on the Dinosaur National Monument. They rented all eight apartments.

JH: Oh, that was great.

HR: That was a coup for them. And they rented an alfalfa field across the street for their overflow – their supply tents and that.

The other focus of my life there - I was sent to grammar school. One thing I certainly have to thank the people of Vernal for is that the teachers at the grammar school—they’re the ones who taught me to love the printed word and to love to read.

The other major influence was the family that lived next door. They were not Mormons. They were Congregationalists. The Thorne family, T-H-O-R-N-E.

JH: T-H-O-R-N-E?

HR: Mr. Thorne was the town photographer. He was an amateur archeologist, and he created a small museum of American Indian artifacts. And one horror of that little museum, he founded it with an Indian mummy [?]

JH: Oh, wow.

HR: His daughter and her husband continued the museum, I know, up until the 1970s. They’d moved it to Main Street, and tourists were still stopping there. They came there, because as I found out subsequently during my years at CSU, in the Reconstruction period the Congregationalist Church took as a mission establishing academies – elementary schools. And that’s what brought them to Vernal in the 1920s. Now I don’t know if the school was still functioning when we got there, but they had a son
by the name of Larry who was my age, and proved to be my best friend. He subsequently became an engineer and had his career in Pocatello, and I think has passed away. But they were very kind, very helpful, very generous. So that is where we lived until October, 1938. Am I going into too much detail?


HR: Now the major concern of the family - my mother and her senior brother and her two sisters, one in Toledo and another one in Toronto – was to bring over from Europe the last remaining member of the family. There were two nieces in a Jewish orphanage. My mother had always wanted a daughter, and that’s why I learned – I was always doing dishes [laughter]. She was an excellent cook, by the way, and people from the town loved to eat her Jewish style cooking, as they called it. But I never learned to like gefilte fish. That was just too much, too strong a thing for me. But she loved to cook. Anyhow, she…

JH: Well, she wanted to bring her family over.

HR: That’s right. Thank you. And so they began to plan how could they do it. And of course you know we had a very small Jewish quota in the U.S. But through his friend, my dad, through his friends in Synagogue in Salt Lake contacted the Democratic U.S. Senator [William Henry] King, I think he was named. And he carried a special bill, if that’s the right phrase, that allowed Lillie, I’m going to say Sochet as the name, but I don’t know whether that was actually her. I’ve not remembered whether she kept that name. Since her mother had died, she and her sister were in this Jewish orphanage. And Lillie was the last member of the family to come over from Lithuania – Russia. The arrangement was that we would adopt Lillie once she came into the States.

So in 1936 – he’d done well with the apartment house, and he was determined to get a new Chevrolet pickup in Detroit – we made our way with whatever vehicle we had then to Detroit where he bought the pickup. And we drove up to Toronto and got Lillie and brought her down to Toledo and then brought her on the way to Vernal.

JH: How old was she at this point? How old was Lillie?
HR: Lillie was sixteen when she arrived.

JH: And she was your mother’s niece? Is that right?

HR: Yes. And she was a survivor, Lillie was. She was very bright and a survivor. And she wanted to live her own life. My mother thought she was getting a daughter who she could mold into what she wanted. [laughter] And frankly it was, like this, the relationship. And it probably was a very good thing that within two years – 1938 - the fall of 1938, we moved to Los Angeles.

Meanwhile, my mother was always unhappy, and the apartment house got going. During that period, her favorite brother, Uncle Meyer Shone from Toledo, had moved to L.A. And he finally convinced my dad that they should move to L.A. So that was the one move she was happy with. And so in the fall of 1938 we moved on to Los Angeles. And within a year and a half Lillie was married to Ben Stein, and living her own life.

So I arrived in Vernal in the ninth grade. Meanwhile I have to thank people, as I said before, in Vernal for giving me a good old fashioned 3-R education, and for helping me cultivate my interest in sports. I became, in 1934 – 1935, the bat boy for the Vernal Merchants [laughter].

Now there is, if you like, there is an interesting footnote to that that brings us down to the recent past.

JH: Okay.

HR: You’ve heard of Frank [Ferenc Morton] Szasz, a New Mexican? Well, when we were doing the American West Program one summer, we had the theme of religion. At the time people said, Szasz is doing a book about religion in the American West. So we said, Well good, let’s invite him. He and his wife teaches [?] Native American history down there. So we invited both of them along. And when they were here - they came early and spent several days - he came by my office and said, Harry, they tell me you grew up in Vernal. Well, I said, Yes. He said, Let’s have a cup of coffee. And I thought it was great, and I enjoyed meeting him and so forth. He asked me about life in Vernal and what-have-you. And then when his book came out – I don’t know when that was], [Mark] Fiege came
by one day and said, Harry, did you know you’re in Szasz’s book? I said, Oh yeah? He said, Well here. He gave me a photo copy. Now, what he wrote… he said one of the things was that social conditions were difficult, I’m paraphrasing it badly. I asked him how he worked his way into Vernal society. He said it was his interest in sports and his excellence as a baseball player [laughter]. I almost wrote him a letter, but then I thought, no, he’s done a good book. If I ever see him, I’ll buy him a drink and tell him that what happened in 1934 [was that] Harry became the bat boy for the Vernal Merchants. [laughter]

JH: Did you experience any discrimination as a Jew growing up in a Mormon town?

HR: Yes. I didn’t tell him that, but yes. Especially my first day going to Central Grammar School.

……[tape cuts off.....]

JH: notes: Other boys called Harry a “dirty Jew” and threw rocks at him.

End of Tape 1, Side A.

Colorado State University
Senior Scholars Oral History Project

Interviewee: Harry Rosenberg (HR)
Interviewer: James E. Hansen (JH)

Tape 1, Side B
February 8, 2008

JH: Okay.

HR: Well, we had this [house with a] tin roof, and it butted up against the back of the Second Ward chapel of the Mormon Church. Monday night was what they called ‘Mutual Night’. Our first Monday night in there, suddenly there was a hail or rocks on the tin roof. And my dad did something he shouldn’t have done, but he carried a .38 Police Special. He went out with that gun and fired off a half a dozen shots into the air. Well, within a little while the town night marshal, a Mr. Erickson, was there. I don’t know what was said there (subsequently we became good friends with that family), but
what I do remember is that the next day a gentleman arrived and drove onto the property with his touring car, and he was a bishop, a Mormon bishop. All I can remember, I was never told any of the conversation and I heard none of it, but my dad stood there with his foot on the running board, and they talked for the longest time. But you know, the Mormons have excellent discipline. And that was never repeated again. The taunting went on for a little while, and the only thing I think helped me there was that I did well in school. And I liked sports, and the like.

My mother, to go back to when we arrived and they had the clothing store, she loved to tell the story. When we got to L.A., the family said, Well, what was it like, living amongst the Mormons? Well, she said, I’ll tell you what it was like. Just after we got the store open, two women came in and I stepped forward and said, ladies, can I help you? And they said, oh no, we just came to see what the Jew lady looked like.

JH: Oh, gosh.

HR: And she said, now I don’t know if she actually did this, though I think she had the personality to do this, said, See? I have ears.

JH: Right. [laughter]

HR: She loved to do that, because she was a bit dramatic.

But it was really …[inaudible]…life in the school and the sports, and I made my way. I got a very good basic 1930s elementary education, thanks to the teachers who were very good to me. And my mother was very proud. She kept that certificate and took it everywhere and framed it and put it in the living room.

One day when I was in the fourth grade, the superintendent of the Uintah District Schools came in the classroom. They had an annual contest where every member of the class was to read books and write book reviews. And he got up and he announced that the student who had read the most books in Uintah County and wrote the best reviews of them was Harry Rosenberg.

JH: Fourth grade!
HR: [laughter] And he brought me up to the front and gave me the certificate. When I brought that home, she was just beside herself. Well, I really have….excuse me…

JH: Help yourself to the water, if you want, there…[pause]

HR: That was a highlight. Then when I moved on to Vernal High, which included the Junior High, seventh grade, they had a new football coach and basketball coach – graduate of BYU He kindly took a shine to me, and made me a, not a water boy, but what’s the term you’d use?

JH: An equipment manager?

HR: Well, equipment manager, but I took care of the equipment and things like that. And he was great to me. He really was. Even though I was…for some reason or other I don’t know why, I became a Utah State fan. Not the Utes of Salt Lake or the Cougars of BYU, but the Aggies…[laughter]…end up here at CSU, an old Aggie school.

JH: Do you remember the coach’s name?

HR: No. I apologize. I wish I had.

JH: Well, you can look that up.

HR: Now, if I ever can find it, I’ll pass it on to you.

After practice he’d love to – he’d been BYU’s punter – and he liked to go out then and punt. And my job was, of course, to shag it. He’d get half a dozen balls, and he’d keep me going for an hour while he had his [inaudible].

And so that was when I was on the football team. But with basketball, they were pretty good in basketball; they didn’t do as well in football. I don’t know if they had a baseball team, but the Vernal Merchants – we played Roosevelt in Duchesne, then the Fort Duchesne Ute Indian team, and they also went out and played Craig. I didn’t get to go on that trip. My father wouldn’t let me go. The other big trip was to go over the Uintah mountain range to Green River. And the day I was to go – they were going to let me go to that – it was raining, pouring, and the game was canceled. So I missed out on that big road trip. [laughter]
Now, the Vernal experience I think was, to me, a very valuable one. They really laid the foundations for my intellectual interest. The town library was open to me, and then the Thorne family. There was obviously no discrimination, no name calling. Mrs. Thorne, a former teacher at the academy, helped me with my work. They served as a core for I guess a half dozen Protestant families. Every once in a while a circuit rider would show up and hold services for them. There was also a small core of Roman Catholics, and a priest would come either from Price or Salt Lake City once a month or whatever to hold Mass and hear confessions.

But otherwise the town was solid Mormon. Except I had one friend, close friend, by the name of Kelly, whose father worked at the huge copper pit mine outside of Salt Lake City. His grandparents had retired to Vernal. They were not Mormon, but apparently they had been rather wealthy. They had a very nice home, and thanks to their dietary interest, Johnny and I used to go outside of town to the creeks and kill frogs for them and …[laughter]… bring them home so they could have frog legs. …[laughter]… They never cooked them for me, but it’s probably just as well.

So that was the core of the Vernal experience, except my interest in baseball certainly developed in 1934, partly because I became bat boy and [also] discovered Hank Greenberg and the Detroit Tigers.

And that leads to another distinctive memory. We were going back, my mother and I, to Toledo. Aunt Ida was sick or something, and she wanted to see her favorite teacher [?] so we went on, I guess it was a Greyhound bus, back there. Well, Aunt Ida had two sons older than I. I think they were nineteen or twenty. When it came to the famous seventh game, between the Tigers and the Cardinals, they were getting ready to go to it, making packages of sandwiches, and taking blankets and pillows. They were to get in line all night to get bleacher seats, and they asked me to go along with them. Wonderful! And my mother said, No child of mine is going to stay up all night for a baseball ticket. So I missed that momentous occasion. …[laughter]…

Then came the decision to sell the place, the apartment house, and move on to Los Angeles.
JH: Was your dad able to do that with a good profit, since it had been occupied by New Deal type construction people?

HR: When he got this …[inaudible]… and I thought about it, too, when I went to the …[inaudible]… and I couldn’t find any clear evidence of anything significant except that he was always working for somebody else, and he was in the furniture business. So that’s what he did in L.A.. And the family helped him out.

And so it was in October, 1938, that we arrived. In that neighborhood the junior high was called Hollenbeck, and the high school was Roosevelt High. Because I increasingly had become interested in journalism. I wanted to be the next Grantland Rice. …[laughter]… I’d already read him, what he’d written, and his books. So I went down to Hollenbeck after we arrived and got registered there, and they asked what was interested in and I said, why don’t they put me in a journalism class.

And that was the first time I saw a lovely young lady by the name of Adeline Steinberg.

JH: This was at Roosevelt High School?

HR: No, this was at Hollenbeck.

JH: Hollenbeck, okay.

HR: Subsequently, years later, she told me, you know, I’ve never told you this story about your first day at Hollenbeck in that junior high class. Every class, of course, usually has a member who is the gossip and who knows everything that is going on. Well, Phyllis Kadner [sp.?] – I’d almost forgotten her name – she and Adeline, Adeline Steinberg then, had been together from grade school, I mean from kindergarten all the way through. They were both in this journalism class. And she said, The day you came in there, we saw you there, and I nudged Phyllis and said, Who’s that guy? And she said, Oh, some hick from Utah. …[laughter]… That’s typical Phyllis Kadner.

Well, the next year, in tenth grade, we were in Roosevelt High School, and it took me two years before I got enough nerve up to ask Adeline for a date. Took her to a movie. And she was the one who introduced me to serious music, because she had a good voice and did a lot of singing in a choral group. I was trying to figure out what to do for a date, and she said, Have you ever heard the L.A.
Symphony? And I said, No, I’d never heard a symphony orchestra before. So we went to symphonies
at the Hollywood Bowl. The L.A. Symphony’s home then was an auditorium downtown; I don’t
remember the name. But eventually, thanks to the Chandler family, and the L.A. Times, L.A. got a
new facility after the war and so forth.

We were in a number of classes together. Adeline was good at math; I was not. I’d done all
right at arithmetic, but I sat behind her in Algebra and I sat behind her in Geometry. She got the A’s
and I got the C’s. The only C’s that I ever got.

Then came Pearl Harbor. I spent the summer of 1942 trying to convince my folks to let me
enlist.

JH: Could you enlist with your eye?

HR: …[inaudible]…right on. The Air Force had decided, I don’t know if it was the Air Force, I was
attracted to the Army Air Corps. They decided they would take those with limited disabilities. They
would not be allowed to go into combat areas, but could become, as I ended up becoming, a clerk
typist. Fortunately I came out of Roosevelt High School with one practical skill. I could type 50
words a minute with only one or two errors. But they [my parents] wouldn’t listen to it. And the
summer after we graduated, the 1942 class—a large class, 550 of us—I worked in a shipyard down in
Long Beach. Meanwhile, that’s when I first ran into a labor union, because you had to join the AFL
labor union to work in the shipyard. Cost me $25.

JH: A lot of money then.

HR: It also got me a job that paid me 88 cents an hour. That was big money, as you know.

Finally, by early October, I said, Look, all my friends are going into the service. We all have to
fight Hitler. Well, they finally agreed. I remember going down to the recruiting station that was in
downtown L.A., and a Major[?] said, Oh, you’re one of our new type of recruits, was the way he put it
gently. And so I signed up there October 17, 1942, and was shipped up to Monterey, in northern
California, for processing. From there I was sent to Las Vegas to the Army Air Corps Gunnery
School. But I had nothing to do with gunnery. That was where we got basic training.
The only lasting impact I think I might have had there was that after we finished our basic training, we waited there for an assignment. And to keep us busy, they made us go through basic training again, and then put us to work with picks and shovels. We started digging a big hole that would become the Officer’s Club swimming pool eventually. …[laughter]…

But finally, I was called in, in early December, 1942, to the Company office, and the Captain there said, Well, Rosenberg, we’ve got a good opportunity for you. You ever hear of Chanute Field? I had not. Of course that was the big Air Force training center, near Champaign [Illinois]. You can type, too, I know, but this is a chance you can add something to it. You can become a teletype maintenance mechanic. …[laughter]… That shook me right there. Well, he said, you take this, Rosenberg, or you’ll stay around here, and I don’t know what you’re liable to get. So that convinced me. I got on the train with I don’t know how many others. We arrived in the dead of winter in Chicago with snow piled up all over. And they marched us from one train station to another, and took us down to Chanute Field. And how I ever passed the course they said I did, I don’t know.

But from there I was then sent to, let’s see, I need to get myself straightened out here. I was then sent to Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis. It was down along the river; it was known as ‘pneumonia gulch’ in those days. And we had a terrible drill master. All we were doing was basic training over again, while we waited for assignment. Well, I had passed the course at Chanute where everything was going on. They had classes 24 hrs a day. And if you got KP, that was a terrible job. You would work from day to night. But I was sent to Jefferson Barracks, where my kids say, it is my best war story. You may not want to record this.

JH: Oh, go ahead.

HR: Well, we had a drill master who would come in at 5:00 am. We had metal bunks, double bunks. He had a piece of lead pipe. And he had the most inventive four-letter word vocabulary imaginable. He’d come in there, and he’d walk down one side, that pipe hitting every bed bunk …with a flow of four-letter words accompanying him. And you had to get up, get dressed, and get out there and be lined up to go or no breakfast. Or else umpteen laps or whatever.
But one Monday morning, the usual routine, and so we all rushed for the latrine. I was in the latrine; and this artificial eye, I had to take it out and wash it each morning. Well, one of the guys bumped me, and they were generally glass in those days. That was an interesting experience. My mother would always order the artificial eyes from Denver Optical; he’d get a box of twenty of them and spend days trying to match me up. That was one of the most excruciating experiences. But that morning, …[laughter]… in St. Louis, somebody bumped my arm and I dropped it, and it broke.

JH: Oh my goodness.

HR: And I thought, oh no! Now in addition to no breakfast, I don’t know what they’ll do to me. I’ve got to get this out of here. The guys on either side of me said, No! Leave it alone, Rosenberg. Then, in came their buddy. They’d all been hung over from that weekend out, and he was probably already seeing pink elephants. So he stepped up to the sink and looked down there, and there was my lovely, soft brown…staring up [laughter]… And he barely made it to a stall. …[laughter]…

Anyhow, from there I was finally sent to Will Rogers Field, where I was assigned to the Communications Group, where they were putting together A-20 attack bomber groups—the A-20s being light weight bombers that worked in conjunction with infantry. After a couple, three weeks, somebody discovered the fact that I had a restriction on me that said I could never be assigned to a unit to be involved in combat. And they said, You can type, can’t you? And I said, Yes. So they put me over and I became a teletype mechanic. A terribly boring job – every night I’d sit there and I had to type out a list of all aircraft by aircraft number and engine numbers on the teletype machine. And I was constantly ding-dinging which was a warning that I’d made an error. …[laughter]…

Now I’ve left out one very critical event in my life. Is it all right for me to go back?

JH: Absolutely.

HR: In terms of my relationship with Adeline. I didn’t learn until my senior year that she had been converted to Christianity. During that spring when we started going together, became interested in each other, she said, You know Harry, every weekend I attend a meeting with lots of interesting young people. Some of them older than us, some in college. Would you come along? I said, Sure, I’ll go.
Well, I discovered this place she took me to had a long interesting name – The First Hebrew Christian Presbyterian Church of Los Angeles. ...[laughter]... It was founded by the L.A. Presbytery, something the Presbytery would never do today. But there it was, in the heart of the Jewish community. And it had as the professor who ran it, a Polish Jew, Mr. Immanuel Gittel, who had been training for the Rabbinate, and somehow or other was converted. I never learned the circumstances. And he came to the states and graduated from the Presbyterian Seminary – McCormick, in Chicago. It’s still functioning. And I know academically it is a very good school. Well, he and his wife were the first ones who were hired to run this center, and they focused their outreach to children and young adults. They never directly approached the synagogue or the Jewish community that way. It was through that contact that Adeline became a Christian. She converted. And half way through the summer she said to me, Well, Harry, you like to read. Have you ever read the New Testament? And I said, No, I haven’t even read the Bible. The next thing I knew I had a Bible. And I did, and that was the means by which, eventually that Fall, my conversion occurred. And I accepted Christianity as the natural adjunct to my Judaism. Now my Judaism was nominal.

JH: Were your parents devout?

HR: Well, they weren’t devout, but all East European Jews were associated with the Orthodox Judaism. Germans usually tended to be with the Conservative. Subsequently other more liberal groups, tended [to be liberal] in terms of careers and that – it was the Jews that created Hollywood. I finally found out one day on the shelves here, the UCLA study on the ethnic groups of Los Angeles and their history, which I found fascinating, of course, and learned how through actual figures, which groups settled where, and that confirmed what I just mentioned.

Now, I never said anything to my family about the conversion. I didn’t know how to do it. When it came time for me to leave for the service, my mother noticed I had a Bible. She said, Where’d you get this Bible, Harry? I said, Well, Adeline, whom she liked very much, gave it to me. And then I made a very terrible mistake, Jim. I was impetuous, a young earnest convert, and I laid the whole nine yards out. It was simply too much for them. And my dad never forgave me. He was not really
religious himself, except to go to the Synagogue for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. My mother wanted to do more, but of course she couldn’t keep a kosher kitchen in Vernal. And when we got to Salt Lake, why she didn’t start then. But she was nominally an Orthodox.

So when I went off to the service I went in as a recent enthusiastic convert to Christianity, and thought I could convert a barracks full of G.I.s right away. It didn’t take me long to discover it was going to take a little longer than that.

So,…when I started this parentheses ….

JH: Well, you were telling the incident about your eye being smashed, and then going off to be a teletype writer and listing airplanes, and then you recalled this….

HR: Yes, that’s right. Now, going back to Oklahoma City, and Will Rogers Air Base. I was called in, and they said, Harry, you have a pretty high IQ, Army IQ. There’s a new program in the Army called the ASTP – Army Specialized Training Program. I don’t know if you’ve heard of that?

JH: I have, yes.

HR: There was Engineering, something else, and military government. And I said, Well, that seems to be closest to my interest. So I said, Yes, I’d like to give it a try. They said, Okay. So I was sent down to Stillwater at Oklahoma A&M for ten days of evaluation. By the way, they already by then had dorms for the athletes, built into the stadium. And that’s where we were for a series of tests and everything. Then we were called up before a room like this with faculty and officers. And they said, Harry, you look promising. Would you like to try Civil Engineering? …[laughter]… And my heart fell. I said, Sir, my interests have always been in history and law and journalism. And they were very frank and said, Harry, you don’t have to take this. You can go back to Will Rogers Field. Well, that meant going back and running the teletype machine and doing KP, waiting for some sort of assignment. So they said, you know you might get some good courses that you can use after the war…………. [tape cuts off…]

End of Tape 1, Side B
HR: [sentence overlaps from Tape 1, Side B] .....courses that you could use after the war to go to college. So I said, Okay. And so that summer of 1943...[tape cuts off]...

[Gap in tape...]

JH: notes: *HR’s ASTP included assignments in Stillwater, Oklahoma and De Pere, Wisconsin. [The ASTP provided academic training for soldiers, usually at land-grant colleges, but many private schools participated as well.]*

JH: You were in Wisconsin.

HR: And so an ASTP unit – the 400th – saved that college [St. Norbert College], like I guess hundreds of Liberal Arts colleges were saved by the Naval Reserve and all that. The people in West De Pere, and then across the Fox River, beautiful river, the first time I’d been to that part of the country. In De Pere itself, well, it’s now one town, according to Nancy.

Every weekend the bulletin board was filled with invitations to come to church, to have dinner, and so forth. And that’s where I first heard about major league football. In professional football, who was the famous Green Bay Packer pass catcher?

JH: Don Hutson?

HR: Yes, he had his bowling alley over there already.

You’d go in to Green Bay, five miles away, you’d go to the USO, and you could have plenty of food, but nobody was there, because every one was being entertained by somebody.

I took US History, got an A. I took English and got an A. I took Chemistry and got a C. But when it came to Math and Physics, I.....

JH: Now, you’re in the Army, and you’re in this training program, but it sounds like it’s basically a sort of undergraduate college education.
HR: That’s right. What I came out of there with was twelve hours of credit that Berkeley subsequently accepted. They didn’t like the fact that I didn’t do well in math, but they finally agreed to let me in. I pleaded. I said, I want to do the Middle Ages. I want be a Medievalist. I’d decided I wanted to be a Medievalist by the time I got ready to go there. I don’t know what led them [to decide] we’ll let him come anyhow. I only lasted one term.

That’s when I ended up at Jefferson Barracks, waiting for assignment. After about a month at Jefferson Barracks or two months, I was assigned to Troop Area Command and their base up at Alliance, Nebraska, Troop Area Command where they had gliders…

JH: You went to Alaska?

HR: No, Alliance, Nebraska.

JH: Oh, Alliance, Nebraska. Okay. [laughter]

HR: I arrived there in December, 1943, just as the 101st Airborne, the Airborne Infantry, and the Airborne Artillery, all left for England to get ready for D-Day. It was a very real experience there. I would say that I always admired the people of Alliance, and the town, a railroad junction, an agricultural town of 5,000. At one point they had 35,000 troops up there.

JH: Wow.

HR: The people were just wonderful to us. I have many friends I came to know there and enjoy their companionship. The families were really great.

Meanwhile I wanted to go overseas. By that point I didn’t need my parents’ signature. I could waive certain rights if I wanted to go. So I went to see the Company Commander and said, I do want to go overseas. He said, Well you will have to waive your G.I. insurance and so forth. I said, Okay. My time came, and I was an individual replacement. In early December I was shipped off to Kearns Field outside of Salt Lake City. That’s were I was finally put on a troop train heading East it turned out. We didn’t know where we were going – well, there was rough scuttlebutt. Was it going to be MacArthur or Eisenhower. [laughter] And that’s where I then headed for England. That year, the year the Air force put me there, really would determine my career and my eventual life.
JH: So, the first time you were ever really on a ship was on a troop [carrier]
HR: Oh, you bet. It was terrible, terrible. [laughter] My military experience there, by way of Kearns Field, we usually had about 72 hrs of processing. I had an interesting human experience to show that the army – the military – could have a heart. We were going through with this and that, and it got to checking insurance. So they said to me, Rosenberg, you’re signing a release here that you’ll not hold the military responsible for any injury to you, and if you sign this release, you lose your G.I. insurance. In my youth or whatever, I said, Okay. I’ve never forgotten that moment, because the Sergeant looked at the Captain. The Captain looked back at the Sergeant. And the next month when I got my pay stub, my G.I. insurance was continuing.

JH: Oh, great. Great.
HR: Anyhow, the other part is not so military. We had to qualify on the carbine. Well, that morning, the next morning we were marched out to the gunnery range. Here I was in the dead of winter, and the wind was coming off the Wasatch, and nobody was hitting the target. We were all getting ‘Maggie’s Drawers,’ as they called it in those days. And the Captain came along with a clip board and he said, What group is this? You’re 45 minutes late. You’ve got to get to the train. And the Sergeant said, Well with all this wind, all we’re doing is ‘Maggie’s Drawers.’ The Captain looked at him and said, Qualify them all! …[laughter]… So eventually I got a Marksmanship patch, but I never wore it. I just didn’t feel I earned it. I just put it away and never wore it.

Then we got on this train and went through to North Platte and enjoyed the famous hospitality of the families in North Platte and surrounding communities. We went on to Boston, went to Camp Miles Standish. We had one night out. I went into Boston with some guys, and we had a dinner. Do you know Boston?

JH: Yes, a little bit.
HR: Well, in the center of town there is a very famous restaurant with big, long tables and everything. We were told about it and went there, and had a wonderful meal. And then the next day
when the USS Washington, one of our trans-Atlantic passenger liners for 2200 people. They put 9,000 G.I.s on it. That was the most awful experience of my life.

JH: 9,000?

HR: Yes, it was just terrible. Ninety-nine percent were sick – they were throwing up and everything. We finally pulled into Liverpool, and from there I was sent to an RAF Station – Wattisham [], nine miles from Ipswitch in East Anglia. It was a fighter station for us, mostly P-51s. Oh, what were the other ones, the big round things, the P-51s, and I went right in. The work began then, as it had up at Alliance where I’d worked in the Flight Operations.

I left out one vital experience with American youth in Vernal, and from Alliance. My dad would never let me drive. He didn’t want me in a vehicle. You’re not old enough. You can’t drive. Well, my G.I. pals said, How come you don’t drive, Harry? In the summer of 1943 (after D-Day when, as you know, the use of gliders was a disaster), the base was moved into the Second Air Force to become a staging area for new B-29 groups. For a couple months there were just a hundred of us left on that big base. The first time I saw the enemy was because of that situation. I came down with the flu or something. I was put in an ambulance and taken to Scott’s Bluff. And the first nurse I saw was a Rommel, North African veteran bringing a bed pan, still wearing an Iron Cross.

JH: My goodness.

HR: [laughter] And I had another interesting experience there. I’m glad you’re making me remember these things, thank you. A Red Cross lady came around with a cart of books. I said, Well, while I’m out in the American West, I should read about something in the American West. Now, who wrote *Across the Wide Missouri*?

JH: Bernard DeVoto.

HR: That’s the first one I read. That was a wonderful experience.

JH: He was a great writer.

HR: After a week I was taken back to Alliance. Anyhow to get back to Alliance that summer, they said, All right, Harry, you’re going to learn to drive. So we took a jeep – we had this 6,000 foot
runway …[laughter]. So that’s where I got my first lesson. But within a month the Second Air Force was very G.I., and the order came down that everybody must have an Army Driver’s License. So they brought in civilians to run a driving school, and that’s where I got my first formal license.

And then, can I leap back to England?

JH: Yes.

HR: When I got to Watti sham, I very quickly met a G.I. by the name of Cornelias Askren, from Seattle. A-S-K-R-E-N. He’d been in publishing, the printing business, really. And he’d been there already nineteen months; he arrived in England very early. And he had tremendous curiosity. He was mean and lean, and he had a bike, and he’d biked all over England. Somehow or other we’d met and begun talking, found we had similar interests. He said, Harry, you gotta get to know England. I’m going to give you a bike tour. He almost broke my back. …[laughter]… Thanks to him I was exposed to cathedrals and things that I would not have probably otherwise done.

And it was also while there, that I had a dramatic intellectual event occur. I learned from my mother that a Canadian cousin from Toronto, Harry Noodleman, N-O-O-D-L-E-M-A-N was a rear gunner in the Royal Canadian Air Force, and his bomber group was stationed up near York. So she sent me his military address. Then when I was in London (another aspect of the London trip I want to mention to you), I went to the Canadian Red Cross, and I just went up and showed them my cousin’s address. I said I’d like to write him a letter if I could figure out how to get it to him. And they said, Oh yes. So I gave them my letter, and we had correspondence and agreed that I would come up and visit him on a 3-day pass. And we spent those three days climbing all over that wonderful York Minster. I didn’t know then, of course, that it was the largest church in Northern Europe. And that was really a very significant experience for me.

The other thing that he did for me (Oh what’s the name of the place, 20 miles away, that had been a monastery and fallen into disrepair?) he said, Harry, we’ll take the bike – we’ll ride the train up there, and then we’ll bike back. I want to take it easy on you. I said, Okay. Well, we went and climbed all around at the ruins of St. Albans. And then he said, Now Harry, we’ve got to head home.
Britain has double day-light savings time, so we have lots of time, Harry. Well, I didn’t want to have him have to carry me home, but that was an experience that left me drained... and the like.

So I was there at that Group, and my main job there was – they combined my administrative responsibilities in Operations with my experience in teletype maintenance. Every evening I had to sit down and teletype to Wing Headquarters the number of planes available and their serial numbers, and pilots available and their serial numbers. I wanted to get into Intelligence, but I never made that. So I had that experience. And then, you know, when they’d go off on the mission, we had some spare time, so we’d all go off and play volleyball or softball, waiting for them to fly back in. Then we’d go back and count the planes, and what-have-you.

There was one morning I especially remember in the spring of 1944, and that is the day our pilots came back from their first encounter with the German jets.

JH: Oh, wow.

HR: Now, that was interesting. I’ve never forgotten that they were so excited, and all the motion with hands and everything. We hadn’t lost a plane. They all came back, but, boy, that was a dramatic, defining moment for them in their careers.

And another interesting experience is that I got to know a bit more about England, thanks to Cornelius. He introduced me to a number of families. And I got to meet an Anglican pastor who had, by the way, a German wife. He’d been a missionary on the Continent when he met her. They were very lovely. I mention this here because after V-E Day (By the way, we celebrated V-E Day on the Base, by the order of the Base Commander.), it was the common order throughout the whole European Command for America that those troops that were off base could stay off base, but they wouldn’t let the rest of us go off base because they knew the Brits were not very happy with the G.I.s. I don’t know if you’ve heard the story (I think John [Albright] mentioned it, and you may have been there the day we had the luncheon. He said, I saw this at the Smithsonian, a letter from Harry Rosenberg.) The war time joke was that the Brits said the G.I.s were over-paid, over-sexed, and over here. And the G.I.s’ response was, You’re under-sexed, under-paid, and under Eisenhower. ...[laughter]... But
they wouldn’t let us go off the base. So we spent the day playing softball and so forth, and those who wanted to drink beer, got the beer, and the like.

But then in a few weeks, I was transferred to another air base, a B-17 Group. (Did you want me to stop?)

JH: No, no, go ahead.

HR: [The] B-17 Group, over near Cambridge, the 306th, was one of the early groups that arrived that had such terrible casualties when attacking the [Schwein…?]… It almost cost us our whole program of high altitude day-time bombing. The Brits didn’t want us to do it. There were plenty who attacked the Air Force. We’ve seen the Hollywood versions of it.

JH: Sure, Twelve O’clock High.

HR: Yes. One thing they gave us at the end after V-E Day, they made up a list of all the missions. And I looked at that – the number of planes, pilots, bombs delivered to the target, and then the number of planes lost. And every time we lost a B-17, we lost a group of ten. And when we were losing thirty and forty, it almost brought an end to it. And it had a great commander [Lt. Col. Earl W. Kesling]. I saw The Memphis Belle again the other night. Most of them flew 25 missions. He flew 75. He stayed there for two more years. So the guys – they just worshipped him. He was a great officer. And his style got me in trouble. After V-E Day, he finally went home.

The first morning the new commander, who’d just arrived from the Pentagon, woke up to the record we’d always played. When I got to Cambridge, that was the base of the B-17 Group, I was low man on the totem pole, so I got the graveyard shift. Well, it wasn’t all that bad. I could read and do anything, and usually I got a 2- or 3-day pass after one of the graveyard shifts. We had to play military calls and then whatever popular songs we wanted. And the first time the new base commander woke up to “We Get No Bread with One Meat Ball,” which was on the Hit Parade for ten weeks, …[laughter]… that was the last time it was played. Because within minutes, the Duty Officer came
roaring up in his jeep, and said, Rosenberg, don’t play any more of those songs. An hour later there came a memo from the Base Commander: only military. We knew the war was over for us.

But then, what that group did, they sent detachments, We decided we might as well use these B-17s, and we set about photographing the whole coast of the whole African continent. And we had a base at Marrakech. And I was hoping I would get a chance to go there, but I never did.

Another vital aspect, as far as my career is concerned, occurred when I got there. Corney Askren had told this Episcopalian priest’s family that I had been moved on to Cambridge. About the same time, he was reassigned to St. Matthew’s Parish in Cambridge. They got in touch with me and said, Harry, we have this big mansion. (Their children were off in the War.) Whenever you want to come to Cambridge, you can come and stay with us. And one day he took me on one of his average tours. He was responsible for five different grammar schools and all sorts of things. But they were very kind.

Of course, my interests were broadening, and it was there, in the medieval market Saturday morning, Cambridge, that I made my most fundamental book purchase that [son] Stan [Rosenberg] has claimed. I bought an 1825 edition of Gibbon’s *Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire* for five pounds. You know, the pound was pegged at $5 [US] unofficially between us and the Brits. And it has a place of honor in my library. And I went through Heffers, that great book store. When I got to Berkeley in a couple years and went through that marvelous library, I thought, boy, all the good things I could have bought for so much less. But I didn’t know the bibliography. But that was a very interesting experience for me. It was vital in terms of my future.

Then, December of 1944 – 1945, excuse me, the decision was made to move the 306th to Germany. And so we took over an air base in Bavaria near Wurzburg. The town near the air base was Giebelstadt. It was a farming village near which the Luftwaffe put up an air base. And they had built it for the Luftwaffe personnel, officers[?], and they were really very nice, very comfortable.

Then I had an interesting experience with another G.I. Neither of us were very mechanically inclined, and it was the wrong combination. The non-flying personnel had to drive all the vehicles and
all the equipment in convoy to Giebelstadt. So he and I were assigned a jeep to drive, and we drove our way, well we went down to Southampton and across the Channel to Le Havre, and to one of the cigarette camps. We were served dinner by German PWs. We all woke up the next morning with the GIs, and we blamed it on the Germans. ...[laughter]... And we then started this trip across...[inaudible]..., and the first German I saw with a weapon in his hand happened when we got to Soissons. It was 75 miles northeast of Paris. We pulled into a rest camp, and three of us along with a new, 90-day wonder Lieutenant who’d just arrived from the states. We were given all the jerry cans, and the two and a half ton truck. We were told to go to the gas dump and fill them up. You’ll get here for late chow. Well, the driver was a German PW. Nobody spoke German. Nobody spoke French. We got in and we drove the truck into the town. We spent five hours driving in and out. Finally, about 10 pm, we found the dump. And we’re challenged by this heavily accented German voice; he’s standing there in front of us with his carbine. And we were unarmed. That was my first confrontation with the enemy. Really.

JH: This was in December of ’45, though. The war was over.

HR: Oh, yeah, oh, yeah.

JH: But they had weapons anyway?

HR: Oh, yeah, yeah, because they were guarding... So we filled them up and finally got back. They said, What’s the matter? Why are you so late? There’s nothing to eat except Spam. Well, I didn’t like Spam, like all the rest of them. And many a supper, both in the States or over there, I would have a can of peaches and milk and bread. And that was my meal.

Then we drove on to Giebelstadt.. I was only there for three months. And my job then primarily was to train the new recruits that were coming over that would take over the flight operations and the like.

Finally in April of 1945, I made my way to one of the cigarette camps, got on the train, and they gave each of us two big bottles of wine. And because I didn’t drink then at all, I had no trouble trading those off for cigarettes and for candy bars.
JH: What were cigarette camps?

HR: Those were the camps that were set up at Le Havre to process our troops heading back. And they called them Camp Lucky Strike, Camp Camel, and ..[inaudible]…. And that’s were I really first saw, awaiting there and walking around one day, and here were all these French civilians, going over our garbage piles, looking for something to eat. Horrible picture.

And the trip back on the Liberty Ship – it was a larger Liberty Ship, to be sure, but it was much better than going the other way. And we got to the homeland. We didn’t land in New York Harbor, we went across to…what would the harbor be in New Jersey?

JH: Hoboken?

HR: Maybe. What was the big base?


HR: We were just a couple days being processed again. Then we were loaded on aircraft and flown to Marysville in Northern California. That’s where I was discharged and got my bus ticket and headed for L.A..

JH: Well, that’s quite an experience. Quite an education for a young person, though. Especially since you weren’t in peril, you know, you really saw something of the world. You developed an appreciation for books and other cultures.

HR: That’s right. So, I thank the Air Force for my career. In fact if I didn’t make it to Britain I don’t know if I’d ever gone that way.

So, I headed back. [In the military] I was very active with the religious bible studies. There were G.I. Bible…..[tape cuts off]….

End of Tape 2, Side A.

Tape 2, Side B
February 8, 2008
HR: There were G.I. Bible study groups at every base. Chaplains - some were really suspicious of these religious enthusiasts. But they were always fair and kind and said, Okay, we’ll find a place for you to stay for your Bible studies, or they’d loan us a car, or arrange for a car so we could go to a local church. That’s how I first ran into the Pentecostals in Alliance. The G.I. Bible study, one of the members was…[tape cuts off]…

[Gap in tape]…

JH: notes: HR describes a religious service at a Pentecostal church in Alliance, Nebraska, at which he was invited to participate.

HR: When we went in, this chap introduced us to his pastor. And we were always arguing theology, and the like. Good group. And at the end of quite a long service, the pastor, what do you call them? I’d like to ask Brother Rosenberg to close the meeting in prayer. Well, all right, I started to pray. And suddenly there came a babble, a female voice, because she was speaking in tongues I knew about tongues. I stopped. I didn’t know what to do. After she finished speaking I looked up at the pastor, and he nodded to me, and I finished my prayer. But that was interesting. The military can teach you an awfully lot about life and people. Expose you to things that you might never have seen or known in your life.

So when I got home to L.A., my folks in the meantime had moved from Boyle Heights. Quite a population shift occurred. Especially Mexican Americans, as we called them in those days, moved up into Boyle Heights, and many of the Jews moved to the Near West Side. The West Side had always been the upper class of Jews, the Near West Side the lower middle class. And I have to tell you, as you know athletics so well, the highlight of my senior year [in high school]- we got into the L.A. city league. Roosevelt High . . . was forty percent Jewish, forty percent Mexican American, with a large number of Nisei, about ten percent. And not a large number but a significant number of White Russians, from the Russian Revolution. They’re important because the White Russians got control of the garbage industry of L.A. in the Twenties, and were down on what was called The Flats, adjoining
Boyle Heights. They were important to us in football, because they provided our interior linemen. They were big [laughter], and the like. . . .

I must say this, too, by the way. After Pearl Harbor, at that time the L.A. system graduated two classes a year. There was Twelve A and Twelve B. And the Twelve B class that would graduate then in June of 1942, we elected three or four Nisei to our class officers. That’s how I got elected, then to be the editor of the local newspaper, beating out two women – Adeline and a girl by the name of Lila Gros, brilliant student. I think they split the vote, that’s how I slipped in.

Anyhow, when I got back, my folks had moved to the Near West Side. Now that was disastrous for me in one way. Because I had saved baseball cards from my Vernal days on. When I left I had this package, and I told Mother I wanted to save these. She said, Sure. In the interim they were lost.

JH: Oh, no. [laughter]

HR: I don’t know how much value I lost, but I really was saddened I had lost those.

But anyhow, I knew I wanted to go to school, and I’ve got to get a job. So I went down to Civil Service, downtown L.A. near City Hall, and had [an interview] for a job [inaudible] And he said, Well, yes, what do you do? I told him, and filled out the forms. Well, he said, you worked in administration, and we have some jobs. The Sheriff’s Office, the Office of Identification and Records, has an opening. You might do well with them. I said, that’s fine. Then I just bumbled on in my naiveté and said, Well, I only want this because I’m going to school in the Fall to take advantage of the G.I. Bill. He said, Don’t tell them that or they won’t hire you, Harry. Go up and see them and keep your mouth shut. Well, this caused a crisis of conscience for me. I wasn’t going to lie. I walked into the Office of Identification and Records and gave the secretary my application form. And out came the Captain in charge, with a gorgeous shock of gray hair, and steely blue eyes. I’ve never forgotten that. He stood there and looked at my form and he looked at me, and he looked at my form and he looked up at me, and said, Rosenberg, you’re going to take advantage of the G.I. Bill, aren’t you? And I said, Yes, sir. Good, he said, we’ll keep you off the streets if you go to school.
JH: Oh, that’s great. So telling the truth paid off.

HR: I was put there, in a room where everything was pre-electronic. They had a huge array of three/four drawer files with nothing but finger-print cards. And there were two, well, they weren’t aging, but they were well into middle-aged, ladies. Now I thought I had a pretty good memory, but I watched those women work. An officer would come in and talk about somebody, and unerringly they’d walk to a drawer and pull it out and thumb through it, pluck out a card. I did that for one month, and then I was called in by the Captain, and he said, Harry, we’re going to move you upstairs to the prison, to do the secretarial work there. We need you there. So I said, All right, Sir. I went up there, and I did the clerical work where they booked people. That was a very interesting experience. I mean I learned how tough law enforcement could be. And the L.A. Sheriff’s Office was in the original L.A. County, and there weren’t as many communities with their own police forces, so they had a very large jurisdiction. I had all the photographs of murder scenes and the like that I had to classify and identify and file. But the one bad part about that job was because I was up there I got to eat in the Officer’s Mess. Thirty-five cents for lunch they gave you, and immediately after eating Spam and things for so long, that’s when my weight began to balloon. The trustees who waited there, they wouldn’t bring one steak, they brought a plate of steaks. Didn’t bring one dessert, they brought a tray of desserts. …[laughter]… Well, that was a very interesting experience for me.

JH: By this time, had you been communicating by letter with Adeline?

HR: Yes.

JH: All through the war?

HR: All through the war.

JH: Then you come back, and I assume you kind of renew that relationship.

HR: Yeah, yeah. She was playing hard to get. …[laughter]… No, she graduated from Westmont College – an evangelical, like Wheaton College in Indiana. In fact, the Wheaton people were influential in its creation in 1945. And then she and her roommate immediately got teaching jobs up in the San Joaquin Valley, up near Fresno—Tulare was the town. And they lived in town – one of the
teachers had a bedroom she liked to rent out – and they lived in town, and taught in a rural school, with lots of illegals – children, of course. But they did that.

That first year, I didn’t go directly to Berkeley, I went up to Westmont myself, where I had several very valuable courses: I had a course in reading New Testament Greek; I had a great course in U.S. History; and a great course in Victorian Lit. Indeed I was very fortunate the teacher took me in there.

JH: So you were, in a sense, going back to college while you had this police department job, is that right?

HR: Yes, I had not done anything else except for that ASTP, my twelve hours of credit, I had that. Then, it turned out Adeline’s roommate with whom she’d been teaching together, she was being courted by her veteran, a man by the name of Don Norbie, a classic looking Nordic. So we would hitch-hike from Santa Barbara down to Santa Paulo, and then go across to [?] Junction, where we’d get that highway, Highway 5, and hitch-hike on up. One time I did it, and I had a tennis racket with me, hoping we’d play tennis. And a farmer stopped in a pick-up, and after a few miles he looked at me and he said, Do you really use that thing or do you carry that to influence people to pick you up? …[laughter]

The other thing about that, Norbie was, of course, he was a handsome guy, stylish. But we would sometimes have trouble hitch-hiking back late Sunday afternoon, early evening. We got out there, and we couldn’t get any rides. Finally, Norbie said, Harry, would you mind standing down there a ways, and just let me do the thumbing? …[laughter]… He would always get the rides.

So it was that year I courted her, and the Tulare graveyard where we’d go walking that evening was where I proposed to her. Then we got married the next June, on Flag Day.

JH: Right. It was 1947 when you got married.

HR: Right.

JH: Now, did your parents come to the wedding?
HR: Oh, that’s an interesting story. Now my dad could never make his peace with my conversion. My mother, mother’s love and so forth, she could. ...[inaudible]... and she just loved Adeline. We came to our decision. Adeline’s folks were not happy. When she went off to Westmont, they understood it was a Christian college, and they said, Well, you’re getting a good education, and you’re happy, and we know what you learn there will not hurt your life. We’ll agree to pay for your college. And that was a great, sweet thing for them to do. The marriage problem was difficult for us. Both sides said they would not go to a Christian church. Finally, Adeline’s mother suddenly said, My daughter...When they wouldn’t do...I said, Okay, we’ll go away. We’ll go back up to Santa Barbara and be married by a pastor up there. And [her] Mom said, My daughter is not going away to get married, but will be married in our apartment. And so we were. Several members of her family came. Her sister, she only just had a sister, and some of the other members. My Mom came. My Dad wouldn’t come. And that was very unfortunate.

JH: Well, now you’re married. You’ve had a little bit of college exposure. When did you set your eyes on Berkeley as a place where you wanted to go?

HR: That year at Westmont, I’d actually thought about going into the Presbyterian ministry by that time. In fact, I had friends there at Westmont who said, Harry, you should apply for a fellowship to Princeton Theological Seminary. It’s really a very fine academic institution, and so forth. I was interested in that, but during the course of my first semester that interest waned, and I became more and more interested in History as a discipline, and especially Medieval and Church History. I ...[inaudible]... church history, but I wanted to go to Berkeley. I knew that they had a great Medievalist. I didn’t know how secular they were. I really didn’t understand that. Because what happened at Berkeley – now they have people who specialize in the history of the early church, but then you had to sort of disguise it. That was easy to do with the Middle Ages, but if you couldn’t do bishops and popes, what were you going to do? No, I really wanted to go up there, and I finally decided I was going to do it. And Adeline was very supportive. I applied there and was admitted, and
that’s where I started the process that led to my Bachelor’s degree and then my Doctorate degree in Medieval History.

JH: “The Western Attitude Towards the Greeks During the Middle Ages,” by Harry Rosenberg, Ph.D. in History, 1959. That’s your dissertation. Your biographical information indicates that you were at Berkeley the whole time. Now, in researching this, you obviously had to learn Greek and Latin?

HR: Yes, I did use the Latin, I didn’t use my Greek too much, but the sources I worked with were the West, and my focus was Western Christendom, so I had to work into Eastern Christendom as well.

JH: Now, was all your research in the United States, or did you have to go back to the Vatican…[talk over]…

HR: No, pre-dissertation studies were all in the U.S. Excuse me a minute here. Starting to fog up.

JH: Well, that’s okay. We’ll call it after we finish this piece.

HR: That was all at Berkeley.

JH: Did you have a mentor there? Someone…[talk over]…

HR: Yes. I just stumbled on one. His name was Paul Schaeffer, a waspish man. It took me several years to learn that his bark was worse than his bite. And he had a very sardonic sense of humor. He was a bachelor. He’d been gassed in World War I and was sort of sickly. But also, he was a very frank person, and it cost him in his relationship with his colleagues at Berkeley. He was a Charles Haskins student from Harvard. And that was Haskins, as I subsequently learned, who put his students in every major Chair in Medieval in the country. He really had an iron lock on it, it seemed. And Schaeffer was a great devotee of classical music, and the opera.

JH: So this was a natural for you and Adeline.

HR: Yes. Well, I didn’t know it then, but one day he said to me, after I’d been around him for some years…[inaudible]…as I was leaving his office, I’d been up to see him about some chapter on my dissertation, and suddenly he said, Well, you know Harry, it’s possible to be a decent person and not know too much about music. …[laughter]… That was a typical Schaefferism. He encouraged me,
and it was thanks to him that I went directly from a Bachelor’s degree into the Doctorate program. You want a Doctorate, we don’t see any reason why you should have to spend time writing a M.A. dissertation, though it probably would have been a good help to me. But that’s why I didn’t do that, because of his advice. I’ve thought about it, and I owe him too much to really feel badly about that little matter.

JH: Was Adeline continuing to work as a teacher while you were in Graduate School?

HR: Yes. When we went up to Berkeley she got a job in the Oakland school system, and taught elementary school. And she taught at East Oakland, and of course that was inland from Berkeley. We got an apartment about half way on a major bus line, so I could get on the bus and be delivered right to the campus on the side where I wanted to be, where History was and then the Library was, and the like.

The campus was starting to fill up because of the extraordinary president they had then, Robert Gordon Sproul. Oh, he was a wheeler dealer. He was not an academic. He started out as an accountant in the late Benjamin Ide Wheeler’s presidency, a great early president of the twentieth century, in the 1920s. And the marvelous stentorian voice of his. He knew how to handle academics, though. He set his sight on Nobel prize winners, and he got them. He’d say, What do you want? What kind of a lab do you need? And the story was, now Schaeffer told me, and Schaeffer was always very straightforward, not a braggart. Schaeffer said, Harry, if we want something for this campus,…[inaudible]… tell Sproul what we want. Sproul calls [Edwin W.] Pauley – Pauley Pavilion? – the great oil man? Well, he was President of the Board of Regents then. He would call him and Pauley would call Sacramento, and we would get it. [laughter] There were interesting politically arrangements then.

It was Sproul who really built up Berkeley during this period. He also changed the nature of rooting sections. When I first started going to games there, it was an all-male rooting section. But after one co-ed, she must have been asking for trouble, how could you not know that you didn’t ever show anything red – the Stanford colors - in front of the all-male rooting section? But one day a co-ed came walking across, in front of the rooting section, in a red dress. By the time they rolled her up
seventy [rows] [laughter] and rolled her back down seventy, she was somewhat disheveled. The next day Sproul said, No more male rooting section. It will be co-ed.

The other thing I remember about him was sports. When the City Coast Conference signed the agreement with the Big Ten for the Rose Bowl? Well, I think Berkeley played the second game against Northwestern. And we lost it the last play of the game when the ref said that our, what would have been our winning touchdown, he hadn’t crossed the plane; and just furious. Well, when we got back – it took a week after that because we were still on the split semester system – when we got back, he convened a University gathering in the gymnasium and stepped up there and said, This is a victory celebration. [laughter] And on he went.

JH: You were on the G.I. bill. What did that cover? How good a benefit was that? Were your classmates fellow G.I.s? Were a lot of the students whom you went to Berkeley with, veterans?

HR: Well, it covered my tuition. There was an allowance for books, and I think I got $90 a month for living off.

JH: That’s pretty good.

HR: We certainly needed Adeline’s income then, to stay afloat.

JH: Absolutely, but still. So you got a good education at Berkeley, and now you’re ready to move on. Why don’t we just talk about your few jobs before you come to CSU, and then next time we’ll do CSU.

HR: Okay. I’m sorry I’ve laid on too much.

JH: No. No. No.

HR: When it came time for job hunting, there weren’t too many jobs in the early 50s, mid 50s. The big boom had not quite yet started. Actually, who was that – I forget his name, the American Historian, Colonialist? Carlos Allen was his student. What was his name? He’s the one who arrived at Berkeley, and the was a bull in the china closet. We’re going to make this Department better than Harvard. Well, that didn’t set very well with the Department in the first place, nor with John D.
Hicks, who had just come from Madison to chair that Department. He kept the Chair only a short time, and then resigned it. He also was given the Sather Chair, the honorary…

JH: Now, was this at Berkeley?

HR: Yes. He was given the Sather Chair. But he resigned the Chairmanship very quickly. He said, I didn’t come here to be a secretary. Because the way the Berkeley Department was run, when they went to hire, a committee was appointed, and the committee made all the decisions about the status of that individual, and the like. And he couldn’t take that. Bridenbaugh, Carl Bridenbaugh.

JH: Okay, oh sure.

HR: Now Bridenbaugh, somehow or other he got into a close relationship with my mentor who was not like Bridenbaugh, but who was patient and would listen to him. And Bridenbaugh ended up not having many friends. I remember one memorable day for me, I’ve never forgotten it. I was in seeing Schaeffer. Suddenly, Bridenbaugh bounces in. And as if I weren’t there, said, Paul! John just told me that the reason I didn’t get an invitation to his daughter’s wedding was that there’d been a mistake, and the secretary had failed to send me one. And Schaeffer sort of rolled his eyes [laughter]. That was Bridenbaugh.

But I owe to Bridenbaugh my first serious job interview. Schaeffer called me one day and said, Harry, Bridenbaugh’s roommate from Dartmouth and even at Harvard, is Chair of the new New York State campus at Binghamton. And they want to hire a Medievalist. And Bridenbaugh told them about you. I didn’t even know Bridenbaugh knew much about me. I didn’t realize how much faculty talk about students. Anyhow, he said, I think you ought to go back and look into it. I said, Well, sure, fine. So I sent my stuff in, and they invited me to come back. And I flew on in there. From the very beginning I thought it was sort of strange, this friend of Bridenbaugh, who was the Chairman of the Department, I didn’t see for two days. When I got there and discovered and everything that they were just building things. They were having a big fight in the faculty, in the Department and the Social Sciences. The young bucks, as they apparently called them, had come in and wanted to completely reorganize the traditional curriculum and have an integrated social science approach. And it was a
Russian Historian who met me. He was very kind, very good. I liked him. He sort of hinted at what I was going to be running into the next day. And he figured out that I was not a social science oriented person. So I had my interviews, and they didn’t go very well. I knew that. But finally, my last day there, I was finally taken to the Chairman. And what does he say to me? He says, Harry, you’re a friend of Bridenbaugh. Carl Bridenbaugh recommended you, and I don’t want a student of Carl’s to be misled. He said, If I were you and I were coming to this place, I wouldn’t come to this place. We’re having all sorts of problems, and the like. And that was it. And then they put me back on the plane, and off I went. But that was my first serious interview for a job, and it was never repeated again.

JH: You move on to Stanford then?

HR: Yes.

JH: Did you get a job there?

HR: Well, in the meanwhile then, the Stanford Western Civ program, the old fashioned one, was taught by a sort of sub-department of History by about 20 new Ph.Ds. or about to be Ph.Ds. Every undergraduate had to take Western Civ, so we had all 1,200. We were given three sections at 25 students each to start. Then at the end of the first quarter we would pick ten to fifteen out of the three and form an honor section, so we still had three sections. Did you know Dan Smith down at Boulder or hear of him?

JH: No, I just knew who he was. I never met him.

HR: He passed away. He was there. He was a brilliant product of the American History faculty at the time, and recognized as that. He went over there first when I did, but then within the first year …[tape cuts off]

End of Tape 2, Side B

Tape 3, Side A
February 8, 2008
HR: [sentence overlaps from Tape 2, Side B]…..but then within the first year there, he had a coronary and that plagued him, but he ground out lots of scholarship in the meanwhile. He liked to argue religion with me, and we carried it on here, because he came to Boulder a year before I did. Our wives had known each other well and did things. And I got to know all the graduate students rather well because I became President of Phi Alpha Theta chapter at Berkeley, and at Berkeley then it was an all-graduate student organization. But he went down there first, and then I got an invite, and I went down and I said well, fine, and they hired me. So I was there for three or four years.

JH: Three years.

HR: Three years. And while there I had one major interview that was…..[tape cuts off]…..

[Gap in tape]

JH: notes: HR discusses job possibility at the University of Kansas and asks JH if he is providing too much detail.

JH: Well this is good. This is really a biography. Okay, so you’re…

HR: So I got this invitation to go back there, and the Department was wonderful. But ultimately I heard that someone else had gotten the job. And then I found out to my deep chagrin, very deep chagrin—I didn’t take it as well as I should have. But anyhow, the Department had voted to give me the job, and the Dean said no. The reason why, my artificial eye. Back then before I had some plastic surgery done on it, this eye lid used to droop. And it was sort of disfiguring. He couldn’t do that in this day and age, but he said, No, students would be offended by that. We can’t have you.

JH: Oh, man. That’s awful.

HR: Well, that was passed on to me, and I must say, I just have to admit, I went into a really blue funk over that. I managed to do my teaching, but I didn’t do much else. Subsequently, I saw some of the people in the Department meeting. They were all very kind, and one of them finally said, Harry, we should have had you, if the Dean hadn’t intervened like that. But by then I was over that. I was happy here. That was the past. But that was the most traumatic interview I ever had.
Then in the meanwhile, I’d gotten to know Carlos Allen. He was a Bridenbaugh student. I don’t know how in the world he made it with Bridenbaugh, because the graduate students hated Bridenbaugh. He did very nasty things. He told one very good TA...in American History—and he was Irish [and] you could tell very proud—and Bridenbaugh said, The Irish are peasants; they’ll always be peasants. The next thing we knew this fellow had left the History program and was over in the Library School. And he should never [should have left]; he had very great promise. I don’t know why [but] Carlos could never learn to spell, [laughter] and Bridenbaugh was a great stylist; I know you American historians think so. But he brought Carlos on through. Then Carlos got the job here [at CSU], and he wrote me a letter and said, Harry, they’re thinking about hiring a Medievalist, would you be interested? And I said, Well, sure. So that’s how I got my first contact here. Of course, Bruce Frye had been a product of Stanford and taught in the Western Civ program and the like.

JH: So you had Bruce for a colleague at Stanford?

HR: No. No, he was already here.

JH: He had already gone on, but he knew the program

HR: Yes. Yes, he got here in 1953 or 1954. I didn’t get here until 1959. Well, where am I now?

JH: You were offered a job at CSU by Carlos Allen.

HR: Yes. I had one interesting experience [at Stanford]; I don’t know if you heard it. I had Bryan Morgan as a student there.

JH: At Stanford?

HR: Yes.

JH: No, I didn’t know that.

HR: Well, my second year there? Yes, it had to be my second year. I had this student. He came in to see me in my office. He said, My name’s Bryan Morgan. We talked about this class problem, and I said, Where are you from? And he said, Fort Collins, Colorado. And I said, Where’s that? [laughter] And he said, Well, it’s 60 to 70 miles north of Denver. Okay, what does your father do? And so he said, Well, he’s President of Colorado State University. I said, Oh? Really? And I let go of that.
Subsequently I found out the background. He’d been here at CSU. And finally his folks said to him, If you don’t stop cowboying around and get an education, well, we’re through. And so they sent him out to Stanford. And he kindly said that his Western Civ instructor opened the world of humanities, and the like, to him.

JH: And you were that instructor.

HR: Yes, the instructor. And he didn’t know that I had the job. He said, My father told me that he didn’t really know who you were when he signed the contract. But each of his parents both kindly remembered this I think. Lilla [Morgan] sort of made it a little embarrassing at times as she could, because she was a [inaudible] [laughter]. And he had been a good friend. You know, he put $40,000 into the Rosenberg scholarship. That was overwhelming that he did that. I was glad for our students. That’s what counts. Anyhow, so I don’t know if I’m answering your question…

JH: You had kind of a network here in Fort Collins. You had Bruce Frye, you had Carlos Allen, and you had Bryan Morgan, so that made the move [easier].

HR: Yes, it did. And it didn’t take Adeline and I very long after we got here, to conclude that this was a good place to raise our children. Then we had two. My oldest son Steve, who subsequently became a CPA, graduated in Accounting here and…[inaudible] in Centennial as they call it now. And Susan. They were both born in the Bay area. Susan only had one semester at CSU. She had a high school sweetheart whom she just insisted on marrying.

JH: Yes, I remember.

HR: And we couldn’t delay that. Subsequently, Larry [Bockman] proved to be what we were warned he would be, as was all too true, unfortunately. And he just got up and left her and little Jennifer. They got divorced. And the thing is, for Susan, my daughter, she learned out of that experience. We said, Come home, move back to Fort Collins. We’ll help you get an apartment. We’ll help you. She said, No. I created this, I’ll solve it. So she went down to Coldwell Banker in downtown Denver. She started at the lowest level, a minimum wage clerk, and has worked herself up pretty well in the business. Then, some ten-twelve years later, she married Mike Nord. He brought his
two children to the marriage. And they had a very happy marriage, except that he [contracted] fibromyalgia. It was a terrible disease. He was a good, athletic, husky guy. He played high school ball, had a couple opportunities to get a scholarship, but went off into the service like his father had done. And when he was about 35, it hit him. He had a friend who was a medical doctor at Old Fitzsimmons, who went to their church. And he did a medical search on it. It was first identified about 1908, and they’ve never found any medication that will counteract it. So Mike is, essentially he’s retired. He’s a walking weathervane. Two days before, his body…. He brought a son and daughter to the family, and they’ve had a very nice family life.

JH: Well, we got you here. We got your children here, and I think this is a good stopping point. We’ve got all the Rosenberg family background and your education. So why don’t we take at least one more session to do your career at CSU?

HR: Okay, all right.

End of Tape 3, Side A.

(Tape 3, Side B – Blank.)

Tape 4, Side A
February 12, 2008

JH: This is Jim Hansen. Today is February 12, 2008. I’m in Morgan Library speaking with Harry Rosenberg as part of the CSU Senior Scholars Oral History Project.

Okay, we’re continuing from where we were last time. We’ve got all of your background prior to your coming to Fort Collins. And you noted that there were some people who knew you – Bryan Morgan, a student, Carlos Allen, a fellow graduate student at Berkeley, and then Bruce Frye, who also taught in that Western Civ program [at Stanford].

HR: He didn’t know me personally, but he knew all about the back[ground]…[laughter]…

JH: Right, right. Okay. Tell me about the actual job offer. How do you come to be hired by CSU then?
HR: Well, I got this letter from Carlos saying they were going to hire a Medievalist. If you’re interested, write the Department. And course, I answered him immediately, and said, Yes, I’m interested. Adeline said, Well, we certainly ought to pursue that, Harry. I went to see the then Chairman of the History Department at Stanford, Gordon Wright, who was Bruce’s Ph.D. mentor at Stanford. Of course he knew Bruce was there, and he said, Oh, I think it’s an expanding place, Harry, and….

JH: This is not real good equipment, Harry, so we need to get you close to it.

HR: I think you ought to pursue that. And he said, As you know, all the Western Civ instructors, their secret wish was to be added to the Stanford faculty. [laughter] They’ve always had that problem. And he said, The chances of something opening up here for you are slim. So I said, Yes, I know that. And he said, I’d give it a go. So I wrote Carlos thanking him; I said I was going to submit my application, which I did. You would remember the name, the one who was Chairman before Norm Furniss, the one who died during registration in the old field house? McKenzie or something like that? [John C. McKinnon]

JH: I don’t remember.

HR: He did Agricultural History actually. So I wrote to him, and I got back from him a form letter saying I would be considered. And during spring break – we were on the quarter system. . .and did all of the registration over in the field house—In the middle of it, he dropped dead of a heart attack. Well, next thing I knew, I got a letter from Norm Furniss, explaining the situation, and saying we’ll certainly consider you. I can’t remember how long it took. I don’t think it was too long when I got a letter offering me the job - [inaudible] remind me of my salary… [laughter] …at $5200.

JH: Okay, a princely sum.

HR: Yes, as an assistant professor; as compared to the $2300 a year I was getting at Stanford as an instructor at that well endowed institution. [laughter] It looked pretty good to us. So I signed on, and Carlos said, We’re glad you’re coming here. This was wry for me, because subsequently, his role in the Department became so controversial that our friendship ended about the time I became Chairman.
That was very hard on us as a family, because Adeline knew Carlos’ wife very well. They’d been the history wives in the graduate program at Berkeley. They’d done a lot of things together. They even had a Ph.D. ceremony – putting hubby through it. [laughter] And I know they met and they shared a lot of tears together about the whole situation.

*JH: note: HR explains that Carlos Allen became angry about perceived teaching load inequities and disagreements regarding new faculty hires. These and other issues caused him to leave CSU after the 1965-66 academic year.*

HR: But anyhow, I got the letter from Norm Furniss, and I went and looked him up in the Library and saw where he had his book, *The Fundamentalist Controversy*; so I knew his background. We agreed what I would teach would be Western Civ, and the first year I was to do Greece in Winter Quarter, and Rome in the Spring Quarter. And then I also was to have—then we still had ED119, that was “Materials for Teaching Social Studies.” [and] Bill Griswold, I guess, was the last true member of the to do it. It was [offered] in conjunction with the Education Department. That was a little difficult to take [laughter] You know, all of our attitudes towards that. So I said, Okay. When I got here I said, They’re going to get a lot of history, historical bibliography out of me; I don’t know anything about methodology. And they said, It’s all right, just do your thing, Harry. I said, Okay. So anyhow, within a month I accepted the job. . . .

*JH: Now, at this point had History separated from Political Science?*

HR: No. That didn’t happen till 1965.

*JH: You would be the one who actually is involved in the separation then, right?*

HR: Yes, in the interim it was known as either Government and History or History and Government, I’m not sure, you’ll have to refresh my memory there.

*JH: I think it was Government and History.*

HR: Yes. Then they changed themselves to Political Science and History. Then in 1964 or 1965 the decision was made to separate the two into separate Departments.
JH: Okay, let’s back up. You’ve got a job now. You’re set to teach some classes. You come to this town – 25,000 people. Highway 25 is not finished?

HR: 20,000.

JH: Less? I looked at a census, but it was even less than that? Okay.

HR: Well, I’m not going to contradict you and your research. I had been told that the 1960 census said Fort Collins had 20,000. I’m wrong. Whatever.

JH: Whatever. [laughter] Somewhere between 20 and 25,000. Tell me what it was like? You’d experienced small town life, but had Adeline experienced small town life?

HR: No. No. She was born and raised in L.A., over there in Boyle Heights. She’d had a pretty tough Depression experience. Her father, mother—the Steinbergs—had moved from Detroit to Toledo, and he was a sheet metal person. And when the Depression came, he couldn’t make a good enough living, and they actually split up the family. Adeline went to stay with one relative there in the area, and her older sister Shirley went to stay with another relative. It probably was the war that pulled Lou Steinberg out of the doldrums. He was a sheet metal person, and he had lots of work with the war, and he did quite well. He ended up in a thriving business in that post-war period, and all the construction that came after the war in Southern California, and building houses where they shouldn’t be. The hills were going to go away on them. I still remember – I’m going off on a tangent – reading the L.A. Times, and reading of geologists and contractors and everything. The academic fellow said, Don’t build up on those hills. They are bound to be the source of constant trouble to the homeowners. And it proved to be so true, of course.

Anyhow, I’d had this small town background and had lived in L.A. Our two children, Steve, born in 1948, Susan in 1952, were born up in Oakland, which is a fair sized city up in the Bay area, and seeing the family in Los Angeles, but I don’t recall that they were interested in the move. They didn’t know what Fort Collins was going to be like, compared to what they were used to. Steve became a baseball fan, really not surprisingly. Let’s see, when did the Giants move from New York to San Francisco?
JH: I forgot – sometime in the 50s – …[talk over]…about that time I think.

HR: Yes, about that time, 1959. But lo and behold, I took him to games. They used the old San Francisco Seals ball park initially. One of his traumatic memories is after one game we went to see, who was the Latin American whose son also played and became a manager?

JH: Not Marichal? No [It was Filipe Alou.]

HR: No. Anyhow, as we were leaving we walked past the ball players’ parking lot, and here came this gentleman along, and Steve had the good sense to say, Sir, may I please have your autograph? He looked down at the kid who’d said Sir and please and so forth, opened up a bag he was carrying and took out an autographed photograph of himself and gave it to Steve.

JH: Oh my goodness!

HR: That made his day and night and everything else. So anyhow, in the meanwhile I’d gotten an invitation to teach summer session at the University of Washington. We faced a real tough move then: leave the Bay area, drive to Seattle for the summer, then from there drive down to L.A. to say goodbye to the family, and head for Fort Collins, and try to get there by early September.

JH: Had you come in for an interview, or had all this been done by correspondence?

HR: You mean with CSU? Yes. Yes, that was all done by correspondence.

JH: So, you’d never seen the town before?

HR: No, I hadn’t seen the town…[laughter]…And the only person I’d ever seen was Carlos Allen. And we’d shared TA offices at Berkeley and that.

JH: What did you do for housing when you came here? Was that Adeline’s job to really….

HR: Well, the Allens were very, very helpful. They found a little house on Woodford, which is a block south of Mulberry, and just immediately to the east of – it runs off of Shields. And there was a medical doctor in town, who we subsequently found out was one of the biggest landlords in the town. We lived there for a couple years until we found the place on Whedbee. We arrived on September 1, 1959, and we put up at the Allens or somewhere for a day or two, and they told us about this house. We went and saw it and thought it was about as well as we were going to do. I can’t remember what
the rent was, but it wasn’t very much. So we took it. It had a semi-enclosed back porch that became Susan’s new room. The two bedrooms in front were Steve’s and ours. Susan had a hard time that winter. In fact, she was quite sick. That’s where we got our introduction into Poudre Hospital. There was so much sickness going on that they didn’t have a room for her. She was out in the hallway while she was there. Fortunately, it wasn’t [inaudible]…

JH: What were your impressions of the town, though? Here you come, sight unseen, two small children. You do have a friend who can help you out a little bit in getting around, but as I remember, there’s no I-25. This is still a very small school with an enrollment of under 6,000 students at this point and just a handful of History majors.

HR: Very much. That’s very true. We didn’t have too many advisors in those days. But there were some pretty good ones: Jean Elshtain and John Roberts…

JH: Oh, sure.

HR: And, by the way, she received the College’s Distinguished Alumni Award this year.

JH: What about Mike Roster? When did you and Mike become acquainted?

HR: He was in my first Western Civ class that Fall.

JH: The first one you taught?

HR: Yes. And I don’t remember him as a student here. [laughter] Subsequently he identified himself to me and said that he’d been in that one. He was starting to work closely with the alumni. He was a real supporter and friend of CSU.

JH: Where was the combined Government and History? Where were the offices? Which building?

HR: We were in what – that building directly across from the Military Building – used to be called Braiden. Then they moved that name over to the dorm. And the joke was, the Department [chair] introduced me to the building and said, Harry, you may get lost in this building, because the story is the architect forgot about stairs…[laughter]…

JH: Yes, I got lost in there, too.
HR: I had really a beautiful office, that south-southeast corner, and a big one. It was a luxury compared to what I was used to at Stanford and at Berkeley. The Department was small, but was a cordial and happy one. Norm and Sue were just wonderful folks, and the Fryes.

JH: Were the Bayards there yet?

HR: He was hired at the same time as I, but he was hired two weeks earlier than I, and he always reminded me, Harry, don’t forget who’s senior [laughter]…in his droll way. Charlie and BA were very nice, and we did lots of things together.

JH: Well, you almost had to rely on one another, because there really wasn’t that much in the way of activity, unless you went to Denver. There was a symphony of sorts here. Will Schwartz launched….[talk over]…1947, I think, when he got here.

HR: Will Schwartz had just gotten started, yes.

JH: Did Adeline get involved in that right away, or did you get….[talk over]…

HR: No. No, it was not till the 1960s that I really got involved with the symphony. She had a nice voice. She’d done a lot of singing in choral groups, in high school and in college. When we first got here we attended First Baptist Church. It used to be the one over near downtown. That was before they moved and built a new one over there across from [Lesher] Junior High. She did a fair amount of soloing in the church.

Downtown was interesting. There wasn’t a decent restaurant downtown. I don’t know when the Charcoal Broiler was built, but that was the first one. And then the Prime Minister – recent publicity had a terrible murder case [near there]. If you wanted anything special there was always the ‘liquor trip’ to Denver.

JH: Was Harry Hoffman’s here at that point? Was Harry Hoffman’s in Denver?

HR: I think so. We were always kidding. You’re going down there? Well, here’s what I want you to bring back for me, and so forth. It was a two-hour drive down a two-lane highway.

JH: 287, right?
HR: Yes. Well, then they started building I-25. They were just tearing up South College; if I’m recalling correctly, both the block from Mulberry to Laurel and from Laurel on. There were still cottonwoods through the middle of the street. Those were torn up, and they were pulling those out, and they were putting new dividers in and so forth. The town was going modern.

Then I was given my teaching schedule – had an eight o’clock Western Civ class that met in a room in what we called the Ag Building. The room held about 100 – 125. I don’t even remember where I met my Greek course.

JH: What were your impressions of the students here, because you’re a TA at Berkeley, and you have the job at the University of Washington for awhile. You’re at Stanford for awhile. You’ve got high quality students before you come to CSU. How about when you get here?

HR: Well, I had some very good ones. Very few, but very good. And a very large group of average students, sort of C-ish, for the most part. I wrestled with the question of how tough to be in grading. That was a challenge. But I made it through all right, and then in my upper division courses, I didn’t have large classes, but I had some very good people. That’s how I met Dan Tyler. He arrived. and we didn’t have many upper division courses for him, so he came and took [his] second year here, my Early Medieval. And I assigned him a task of …[inaudible] with Norm and Bruce, he was co-chairman. I guess it was Bruce who said, Let’s hire Rosenberg because he called Gordon Wright his mentor at Stanford. He said, Yes, you should hire him. …[laughter]…so that was confirmed. [cough – excuse me.]

JH: Okay, so you have Dan and you have some others. Did you have contact with Bill Morgan early on? I remember very fondly the reception for new faculty when I was hired here.

HR: Thank you. I thought about it a few moments ago, but it escaped me. Johnson Hall was the old student center. Back then it was called the Ballroom. That is where the new faculty that year—I judge about 25 or 30 is all— met. Morgan welcomed us himself, and gave us a disquisition on the Morrill Act and the history of the Land Grant School. And it was very sweet to hear him stress the importance of the Humanities in the Land Grant tradition and the like. I didn’t say anything to
anybody that I knew his son then. And subsequently Bryan told me, Dad didn’t know you were being hired until your contract came across his desk to sign. He went home and told Lilla, Bryan’s instructor at Stanford is now on our faculty. That’s how that relationship began. So each Chairman stood up and introduced across the whole campus the 25 of us that were new.

Then, I had to face the reality of looking at the Library. I went and looked, and there wasn’t very much. I was surprised that some good things had gotten in there. Interesting…[inaudible]…Medieval studies.

JH: How much opportunity did you have to develop your own collections there early on?

HR: Well, you lead me into my next observation.

JH: Okay.

HR: They said, This is your first year, Harry. You’re going to teach Greece. And you’re going to do ED 119 – that was Materials for Teaching Social Studies – in the Fall, and then in the Winter, you’re going to do The History of Ancient Greece, and in Spring, you’ll do The History of Rome. Okay. I was given $100…[laughter]… to get all the books I needed to teach Greece and Rome. And the next year I got another $100 to get all I needed to teach Early Middle Ages and Later Middle Ages. Fortunately my own library was pretty good. [laughter]…. I had invested a lot of our very small resources in building up my own personal library, so I had many good things. There were some comments about how many boxes of books I shipped to Fort Collins before I arrived. They were put in what was to be my office. So that’s how I began with Materials for Teaching Social Studies. That was really – that was agonizing. I just didn’t know what I was supposed to do, and they were just all rather nonchalant about it. And it’s probably good that they were.

JH: Now, who was the Dean at this point?

HR: Oh, [Austin O.] Simonds.

JH: It was Simonds?

HR: Yes, he’d been there quite a while actually.

JH: Right, yes, he had.
HR: And I was introduced to him. That was about my only contact with him, for some years. How long was he Dean?

JH: I can’t remember. It was a long time.

HR: And that’s how the first year went, getting to know the community. And the community was very cordial. They were very receptive, I must say, and the campus, too. I liked the friendliness of the campus. It was a friendly campus.

JH: It was so small back then too.

HR: Sure. [the enrollment] recorded 5,200 that year at the school. There wasn’t much more than that.

JH: Now, did you get involved in …well, obviously Jim Williams’ basketball teams were THE event as far as sports were concerned.

HR: Oh, I tell people, I got here in the year Bill Green began his career. He was something.

JH: Yes. I saw him play against DU when I was a graduate student – like the men against the boys.

HR: Now, we had a Freshmen team way back then…. I think so.

JH: I don’t remember that.

HR: Steve says I’m wrong in my recollection, but I recall we had to line up just to get into a Freshmen game, once people learned how good he was. Then I remember when UCLA came in the next year or the year after to play us here, and what’s his name? The UCLA coach still alive?

JH: Tiny?

HR: No. No. No, the one who took them through all the…

JH: Oh, Jim Williams…

HR: No, I mean at UCLA.

JH: Oh, John Wooden.

HR: Yes. Yes. I remember him subsequently saying that it was an interesting experience going to Fort Collins because we beat them here. And he said, It was a little bit disconcerting to my players to inbound the ball when they were standing between somebody’s knees. And so right away
...[interruption] the . . . historians . . . [inaudible] . . . a number of them liked athletics, and they would all sit together and attend games together.

JH: Did faculty have reserved seats? Mike Rosser told me that they would literally start lining up in the middle of the day in order to get a seat at the game.

HR: Yes. Yes, I remember that. And the more notoriety Bill Green got, the longer the lines got. He was very extraordinary.

JH: Yes, because there’s hardly any room in that old College Avenue Gym.

HR: No, that’s right, there wasn’t. Also, away games, we went down to, we were still playing DU. They still had football. And went down there. But it was an Air Force game that was the tragic one. When we went down there – this would have been, what? 1963? – when on the way back Well, Air Force beat us 73 to nothing for openers.) We stopped at the . . . [inaudible] . . . I don’t know what – it wasn’t I-25 yet, but . . . [inaudible] . . . there was an Italian restaurant that sits up on a hill. It was there for a long time and the owner was . . . [inaudible] . . . used to go there. I remember he told me about it. But anyhow, we went there, we stopped there for dinner, and that’s where Norm [picked up the illness that eventually killed him] . . . [tape cuts off . . .]

JH: notes: HR explains that everyone in the CSU group who ate at this restaurant on that occasion became ill, but that Norman Furniss contracted hepatitis, which led other, ultimately fatal medical complications.

End of Tape 4, Side A

Tape 4, Side B
February 12, 2008

HR: So, my courses were pretty well set. I found that I had two sections of Western Civ, and the upper division course, each term. We were on quarters then. My second year here was a time of crisis. We met a family – Adeline actually met her through the First Baptist Church – who’d moved in from Yuma. They’d been out there on the plains. They were very interested in – their name was Robinson
– and they started the development of the property south of town, which was now more developed, especially …[inaudible]… They had us out there and we got to know each other very well.

One day she says to me, she says, You know, Harry, in Yuma we went to the Presbyterian Church. We knew a lot of people there. And I’ve told them about you, that you were a Christian and you were an Historian, and you knew a lot about church history, so to speak. [laughter] trying to learn a lot about church history. And she said, They’d like to have you come speak to them. I said, Yes. Well, …[inaudible]…I’d done a fair amount of speaking at churches over the years. We set a date in the spring to go out to Yuma. And she and the Rosenbergs got into one of those, we had a 1947 Plymouth or something like that. We drove on out to Yuma. It was very nice going and seeing that dry land farming area and what have you. And then we got into town, and they took us to the town’s one hotel. It was owned and managed by a Presbyterian, and he had room for us. I spoke that morning at the morning service, and the agreement was to speak to the young teenagers and what have you that evening. Then Monday we would go back to Fort Collins.

Well, after the morning service, we were detailed to a nice farming family who took us out to their place for dinner. Anyhow, they were very pleasant, very nice. About two o’clock it began to snow. About three o’clock he looked at me and said, Harry, do you have to be back in Fort Collins tomorrow? …[laughter]… And I said, Oh yes I do, because this is a busy day for me with classes. I have three classes or four. And he said, Well, then don’t worry about the evening meeting. We’ll take care of that. You better get back into town and get on your way. I said, Okay. So we bid them adieu and made our way back to town, came to the hotel, and told the hotel owner that we were going to head back because of the storm. And she said, Well, are you sure you want to go out there tonight? And I said, Oh, I have to be back, because I’m the low man on the totem pole, and I have an eight o’clock class, and I really don’t want to call my Chairman, Dr. Furniss, and tell him I can’t be there and can’t cover the class. So she’s very quiet and says, All right, you get yourself ready. So we packed up. We got in the car and said good bye and took off. We got about a mile out of town, and it was the first time I faced a ground blizzard. Couldn’t see anything. So we did the only thing we
could. I found a spot where I could turn around and made my way back to the hotel. By that point in time, many people were stopping, looking for accommodations. And that sweet lady, smart lady, smiled when we came back and said, I saved your room for you. [laughter]

And the next morning, about eleven o’clock I called Norm, and he understood, of course. He said, I’m glad you didn’t tackle it, Harry. We’ll take care of it. So the next morning when we took off it was so bad, we turned around again. Cars were off in the drifts and everything like that. So, I was answering my question, sorry.

JH: Well, I guess I wanted to get to the point where it’s decided to establish a History Department. So this will come in 1965. Well, by 1964, because that’s probably when you were getting it organized for 1965, and the CSU enrollment of about 10,100, and actually 264 people who were sort of History majors, although this was …[talk over]…

HR: We grew very rapidly in the early 1960s.

JH: How did this decision come about – to separate from Government and become an independent department?

HR: The initiative came originally, that I recall, from Poli Sci. Some of the younger people they brought in were, I think, found us a little too traditional by their standards. And they pushed for it. But the growth of the two areas was considerable, and that probably convinced the Administration that it would make a more effective administration if they broke us up into smaller units. Of course, that would ultimately prove to be a Ray Chamberlain tactic in splitting Arts and Sciences, as you already know. And that got into the works. And Norm, of course, and there was Paul O’Neal, and Leo Cefkin. Leo Cefkin was the last Chairman of the joint department. Then Bruce Frye went off on a sabbatical in 1963, I think. Was it 1963? And then I guess, he’d already had his year or two as Chair when Norm fell ill, and I’m losing track of some of the years there, but Leo was the last Chairman. And in the course of events, I got elected as Chair.

JH: How much planning was involved with this? We’re so overwhelmed by this plan and that plan, you know, strategic planning, planning for progress. You’re experiencing exploding enrollments,
exploding majors in History. Did you really have the opportunity to say, okay, this is how we want to
development an independent department. These are the areas we want to cover. These are the faculty
we want to employ. Were you able to do that or were you pretty much just sort of just reacting to the
enrollment boom of that period?

HR: Well, primarily the latter. Though we were all thinking about the necessity for looking ahead
and deciding what areas we wanted to develop. We knew then that Norm, well, he died shortly after.
But we thought about it. We sort of gave up on Agricultural History. I think that was a mistake way
back then. We shouldn’t have done that, I think. But we did. Anyhow. We had to add people on,
especially to cover the surveys. Those were difficult years because we ended up with people who for
good or ill, proved not to be very good colleagues. There was a lot of bickering and in-fighting, and it
wasn’t till the new generation came along, …[laughter]…that things began to stabilize. We got on the
track that we had to do. We wanted to have a strong area in Western History. We also designated
Colorado History as an area, and that’s how we got Liston [Leyendecker].

JH: Jim Frazier preceded Liston.

HR: Yes, yes. That’s right. And then I guess, was it not Liston who got us into Historic
Preservation?

JH: Yes, that comes later.

HR: Yes, that comes later.

JH: The late 1970s, really.

HR: We went through some rather traumatic experiences related to Sid’s tenure as the editor of The
Rocky Mountain Social Science Journal – the notorious case of his electronic typewriter that we
bought; It was pretty expensive in those days – do you remember that?

JH: Yes, as a result of Victor Sapio’s theft of that typewriter; that’s why you hired me. You called
down to DU, and said, Somebody stole a typewriter. We had to fire him. Do you have anybody down
there who could teach a course in Constitutional History?

HR: Well, thanks for reminding me. I didn’t know the precise connection.
JH: …[laughter]… Direct connection, Harry.

HR: So then we made our way, steadily but gradually, with adding people in the field. And after I became Chairman, I began to agitate for hiring an Ancient Historian. And that’s how we got Jim Jordan. We wanted to have somebody in Oriental History and that’s how we got Loren [Crabtree]. The two of them came from Minnesota at the same time, and they both had been teaching at that .oh, what was that evangelical college in St. Paul [Bethel Theological Seminary] part time teaching?

JH: Yes, I know the name of it because both Loren and Jim were there. They were colleagues there.

HR: Yes, and I was wondering how to become a Chairman: …[laughter]…How will I ever learn it? But one thing that did happen in the prior period, if I may.

JH: Okay, sure.

HR: The Honors Program came along in a halting sort of way. [Willard] Eddy, of course, led the way. And Eddy and Bruce offered the first Honors class, and they had to do it on a voluntary basis; it wasn’t part of their teaching load. Bruce had done this sort of thing at Stanford in the Western Civ Program. I guess it was my second year. Bruce said, Harry, how about you and I offering a Western Civ Honors class, jointly? And I said, Oh that sounds wonderful to me, I’d be happy to do it. He said, he give me an overload because there’s no budget for it. So I said, All right. So I did that. That’s that first class had Jean Bethke [Elshtain] and others who went on to very successful careers. Before then, they finally got honors on a professional basis.

JH: Now, all these hires – you’re swamped with students and Surveys – did the Executive Committee provide the input on this? Was Bruce doing this? And Sid? And you?

HR: No, the Chair was doing this.

JH: So, you were doing it basically on your own, and then you sort of….

HR: Let’s see, refresh my memory. What year did we get the Executive Committee?

JH: I’m not sure.
HR: Was it in place when you got here?

JH: I think it was in place. I came in 1966 in the year after the Department had been founded, but it seems to me – you hired me by the seat of your pants. I mean because Sapió had been fired, and I remember I came up and you just talked to me and said, Do you want a job? And then I guess I talked to Bruce for a minute, and that was it. But that was a temp job. It wasn’t a tenure track or anything like that.

HR: Well, we had all these forms that the students filled out, and it was my chore to go through and write up summaries and that. And the rule then was that you could get tenure in your fourth year. It was then by -- we hired Meyer [Nathan] in 1965, didn’t we? That was a big year.

JH: And Ken Rock…

HR: And [Henry Weisser and Rock. Who was the man who became Acting Vice President after…?]

JH: Ahmann?

HR: [Stanley] Ahmann, yes. He said to me one morning, Harry, I think 1965 was a great year. That’s the year you made a quantum leap. [laughter] The Executive Committee – it was in place when you got here in 1966?

JH: I think so, or very shortly thereafter. I was out of it. I was so busy finishing my dissertation and that kind of thing.

HR: There was an argument about it. Sid didn’t want it. Bruce was lukewarm. And Charlie just shrugged his shoulders. And I ended up putting something together that would be fair. But by that point in time there were four or five of us who had tenure. We were making decisions. Now, I thought it had been postponed till later because it wasn’t until we got Meyer on that – maybe he wasn’t on it yet, but he made his presence in his own unique sneaky and effective way. No, because the five of us were making all the decisions. So I don’t know who first suggested the Committee. But I thought it was a sensible thing to do, and was hit with the growth pattern of the Department, and gradually the others came around. Sid never did like it, and I felt like calling him a Bolshevik, but I felt that would be pushing my luck there. Anyhow, we got it, and it worked out that proportional representation for
rank. That was by 1967 – 1968? It was about then that it really got going. You say it was going in 1966?

JH: I could be wrong about that because I was just a temporary instructor...lower than the low.]

HR: Yes, well we got it, but it certainly changed things. Also there was further acrimony, especially with the Bobby Baker case, a cause celebre.

JH: That divided the Department for awhile.

HR: It sure did. Meyer, it took him a long time to forgive me. I think he did eventually. I don’t know, you may have heard it: The Collegian and The Coloradoan screwed things up by insisting Baker was denied tenure. It was his annual renewal. He couldn’t get tenure till his fourth year in those days. It was just a renewal. He came for the year 1969-70, and I’d gone off on Sabbatical the summer and fall of 1969. When I got back I learned about this and thought, well, another temper tantrum (?) The Vietnam war was upon us, of course. But what really made things difficult, I was told, Harry, he’s letting his students in his Modern French History course determine their course grades. So I called him in. Have you heard the story?

JH: Yes.

HR: About my meeting with him?

JH: I don’t know it from your perspective.

HR: Yes, well, he came in, and I said, Bob, I’ve been told that you’re letting your students determine their course grades. And he said, Sure. I said, Well, have you talked to any of the people in the Department about it? He said no. He looked at me, and said, Fuck you, Harry. So, I didn’t argue with him. I made my own mind up. I didn’t want him as a colleague. Then, subsequently, it came up at the point of renewing, whether he should be offered a renewal. And Meyer got very angry with me, because I’d been carefully reading Robert’s Rules of Order – what a Chairman could do and couldn’t do – and I knew that in the case of a tie, a Chairman could cast the ballot to break the tie. The vote was 4 to 4. And I cast the deciding vote to deny him renewal. Well, you know what all happened then. As a matter of personal satisfaction, subsequently his then friends didn’t feel I was all that bad
towards him. Whatever caused them to think that way, I don’t know, but I’ve never made a point of discussing it with them. I do know it meant a great deal to me – what year did Meyer die?

JH: 1980 or ‘81– right around there.

HR: Well, sometime, in fact my Chairmanship ran up to 1975, and the whole group was talking, and I said, Back in the dark ages of Rosenberg’s term…and Meyer said, Harry, they weren’t so dark. And he did a lot for me with that little remark. [inaudible] I think we all know what an extraordinary, brilliant individual he was. Anyhow, that spring semester of 1970 was horrific with *The Collegian* having a daily headline about Baker and how valuable he was to the school and how Rosenberg was screwing up the University, and all sorts of things.

I had one interesting experience, I don’t know if you want to delete this subsequently, but anyhow, one evening – what made the whole situation so difficult in dealing with it was that Dan Ogden couldn’t leave well enough alone. I sent along a recommendation that Baker not be re-appointed. Ogden should have either said yes or no and sent it up to a higher authority. But he had to write a 20-page memo. That made it hit the fan. One evening I got a call from [Academic Vice President Charles] Neidt. He said, Harry, Ray’s over here and we’re talking about this case, and can you come over? And I said, Yes, sure. So I went over there, and they were very frank with me, and they said, Now, this has become something that should never have been, and your Dean made a very serious error in writing his memo, and how are we going to resolve that and the like? I don’t remember all the conclusions. But it was the first time I’d ever been involved in that kind of a discussion with the higher Administration. Part of the education of Harry Rosenberg. Anyhow,…..

JH: Well, let’s move to something more pleasant. The Furniss Lecture Series. That starts in 1967, I think. And it’s, at least I remember it as one of the great experiences of being in the Department. How did that come about?

HR: Well, I’m not sure I can remember it accurately. I apologize, I don’t seem to remember my initiative in this thing. I felt that Norm, he really took the Department into its professional experience. He was a gentleman who had passed away. He was the former Chairman. He knew a lot about
cultural history, but had not had that much of an academic life. And I thought it would be meaningful to Susan and the boys to leave something like that. I didn’t ask the Department first. I quietly one day saw her, and I said, I want to ask you something in confidence. Would you and your family be sympathetic if the Department could set up a lecture series in Norm’s honor? And she said, That would be wonderful, Harry. And the Department took right to it. And then it developed a life of its own. I took the initiative with John D. Hicks at Berkeley. He knew who I was, and of course, I knew who he was. The Department to brought him up from Madison and they gave him the Sather Chair, the most prestigious Chair in the Department, there were lots of Chairs. And then [Department] Chairman; he held it for about two months. And [after] he got to be Chair he said, I didn’t come here to be a departmental secretary. [laughter] That’s the way the Berkeley Department was run. And Bridenbaugh had come along, and it turns out he hated Bridenbaugh. It turned nasty. And the graduate students were alerted – keep your nose out of things. It was really a nasty, drag out fight.

JH: Now, who in the Administration supported this, because obviously you had to have higher authority to provide some money…

HR: That’s right, so the Department immediately took to it. Let’s see, Ogden was the – was he here then, would he have been here then?

JH: Yes, he would still be.

HR: Yes, and he was empathetic. And he said, we ought to go to the Associated Students and see if they would support it. And they did. And we asked Phi Alpha Theta to get involved, and they did, and so I came up with John D. Hicks. I’d known since [inaudible], a very illustrious person and the like. He was really great. I don’t know if you remember - were you here for that first lecture?

JH: I was, yes.

HR: Do you remember the Student Center Theater was full, and he brought the house down by saying, Well, it’s good to be here in this part of the country. I remember it not too well, but my father was a Methodist circuit rider, and he liked Colorado. Wyoming was always a challenge because the devil was loose there. [laughter]
And I’ll tell you my own personal experience. I drove him and his lovely, charming wife up to Rocky Mountain Park so they could see the high, snowy peaks which they enjoyed. And I learned more about what had been going on at Berkeley in those two hours with him, than I’d learned in my years [there]. And I also learned how academe worked. He talked about scholarships and things, . . . and he was on one of THE national committees. He said, Well, you know, you get to know people. You get to know who makes the decisions. And I was thinking, Oh, how much time it must take. And he said, Well, so-and-so from the committee, the secretary of the committee, her Chair called me up and said, John? And he said to me, ask me about so-and-so? And he said, Up or down? And I said down. And he exploded and said, John, did you deal with a person’s career so lightly? And it wasn’t lightly; we both knew where we were coming from. And he went on …[inaudible]…. I’d never heard that before. Part of my academic education. Anyhow, I just found a copy of his lecture, which the Department didn’t have.

JH: Yes, that’s one of the few that actually got cataloged into the Library, Fortunately. But so many of them didn’t. .

HR: We wanted to print them all, but we didn’t get the money to do that.

JH: Yes, I understand that.

HR: I opened up one of my files and found all I had on that. Then I asked Doug, and he said, We don’t have much. We’d sure like to have it. So, I’m going to pass the file on to them.

JH: Yes, I’ll certainly look at that, Harry.

HR: I thought it would be a lot safer over here in the Archives, but the Library does have a copy of his lecture.

JH: Yes, the first one, fortunately. As these go on year after year, I’m sure this must be a great source of pleasure to you, especially your first eight years. …[tape cuts off]…

End of Tape 4, Side B
HR: Well, the highlight for us was we always had a reception for [the speaker]. And the night we had Augie Meier, (in 1961 we bought the house on Whedbee.), we went and got him from the hotel for the reception. I figured out we were going to have trouble, because he stood there. He wasn’t very communicable, and he didn’t mingle easily, and he kept popping peppermints to soothe his stomach. Then, of course, he gave his talk and his response to the Black students.

JH: Oh yes, yes, that was totally uncalled for, totally disrespectful.

HR: Yes, it was. I don’t remember whatever happened to him. We understood he was one of the leading scholars in the country, on Black History.

JH: I think Gene Berwanger knew him. I don’t know whether he was Gene’s mentor, but there was a personal contact there of some kind.

It’s a wonderful legacy, I think, the Furniss Lecture Series.

HR: Of all the lectures we had, aside from Meier, there was only one other where I thought we made a bad choice. And that was when we brought in a journalist whose father had been a Major Domo in the CIA. What was it, the OSS when it started out? One of those founders. Some of the people said, She has access to all sorts of inside information, and she’s really very good at the Vietnam period. Well, she was a journalist, not a historian [laughter]…

JH: Right, there is a difference.

HR: Anyhow I wound down [as Department Chair]. The other major event for me was the 1970s. . . .t we hired Jim Long and Dan Tyler.

JH: They were the last, under your. . .

HR: Yes. That was important because Ogden called me to say, Harry, we’ve got to re-trench. We can’t give you any more tenure positions. We’ve got to let these two go. I dug my heels in, and I said, I think it’s a mistake. In the first place, they’re outstanding. He said, Oh, yes, yes, they’re very good. And I said, We know that the University is going to pick up and grow, and we will have forfeited the
opportunity to have extremely promising scholars and outstanding teachers. I guess it’s the one time I really argued with an administrator in semi-anger. In any event, he agreed. Good sense prevailed, and we were fortunate to retain those two.

JH: Well, that’s to your credit because they’re great colleagues. Let’s move from the Department to one of your really important University service involvements, and that’s Faculty Council. I guess you begin there in the 1970s – late 1970s?

HR: No, I was active my second year here.

JH: Okay, that soon? Okay.

HR: You were part of it by rank, I think?

JH: Yes.

HR: I was an Assistant Professor.

JH: So as early as 1958 then?

HR: No, 1960 or thereabouts. And then in two years, I think it was, I was elected to – what was that committee we had on the standing of the academic faculty— the review committee for tenure questions and the like? I’ve forgotten the exact title.

JH: I should remember it, too, I’ll pull it up later.

HR: So that was my first of several times serving on that committee; and my second year I was elected Chair. That’s right. I enjoyed working on that, and the only time I felt awkward about it was when – what year did Jim Williams leave? Got pushed out of basketball?

JH: That was late. It was probably early 1980s, maybe, early 1981, something like that.

HR: Well, he stopped me once off campus. I was having a cup of coffee somewhere and he came in with some people. He got up and left them and came over to me. He said, How are you, Harry? …[inaudible]…Anyhow he had already alerted me on problems because he and his lawyer decided that he had tenure in his position as an Assistant Professor of Phys Ed, and that they could not take the basketball coaching position away from him. And I said, Well we are looking – we had that little booklet then - [inaudible]… He said, No, there was no way he or his lawyer could justify that. And no
way that that committee – I forget the name of that. It meant a great deal so much to me, anyhow, when you find out, please remind me.

JH: It’s the Faculty Improvement Committee.

HR: Oh, thank you!

JH: The light goes on. [laughter]

HR: Faculty Improvement Committee. He badgered me a little bit, and I said, I’m sorry [but] (whatever that manual . . . that little pamphlet was the closest thing to our code) the University Code, . . . was very clear about that. As I understand your status, your faculty status is that of an Assistant Professor of Physical Education, and he sort of harrumphed and got up and walked away, and never said anything more about it. Subsequently, I got to see him, because when I’d moved in the early 1990s to where we live now, I would go down to the strip mall and have a cup of coffee. And he and a lot of his buddies would gather there and talk. And he was very cordial. And he had gotten over it

That was an [inaudible]… experience, and the end result was that that led me to participate in the faculty governance at university level for out of my 46 years, I’d say about 38 years. And being involved with one committee after another. There was the Faculty Improvement Committee and then there was the new Faculty Council Committee on Standing and Responsibilities of the Academic Faculty, something like that, that took over its role. I served as chair of that committee. During that period there was a comprehensive review of faculty governance, which brought about a complete reorganization sometime in the, I thought, in the 1970s.

JH: Yes, it was the Charter Convention that you chaired, because you had started it in 1977, and then it went on for a very long time.

HR: Yes, someone said about it – it was the length of two pregnancies with no product. [laugheter]

JH: But ultimately, most of the recommendations were adopted.

HR: Yes, one of the things that came out of that was the recommendation that the Chair of the Faculty Council should be an elected faculty member. Well, Neidt didn’t like it, and the Administration didn’t, but ultimately. . . But what did happen in that period is that he [Neidt] provided
travel expenses for several of us to go to conferences on faculty government. There was a group that came into being out West here, and it was based upon the Nevada/Reno campus on the rights and responsibilities of the faculty in university government. So we went to that one there. The next year it was hosted by USC, the dirty Trojans. But it proved to be a very good experience because to my surprise—only because of my Berkeley prejudice, I’m sure—they had a very aggressive faculty government. And they really had done a lot of things. They came, members of their group, and met with us, and led discussions and the like. They made us determined to come back and push for that. I was elected the first Chair of that. I could not conduct a meeting like he [Neidt] did, because of that fabulous memory. He could memorize the names of all…I couldn’t do that [laughter] Neidt generally was, I think, sympathetic to the faculty government.

JH: Now, as a member of the Faculty Council, a leader of Faculty Council, you wind up on some pretty important committees. Beyond the committee service would be the Board of Agriculture representation. That must have given you an interesting perspective.

HR: It did. It did, indeed. Now I was very fortunate that Susan Furniss was on it that year, because she gave me an entrée that I wouldn’t have gotten otherwise, I’m sure. And I think also, I told my successors, you know, I think you need to remember when you go on that, is the Board members can detect/conclude that you’re really very responsible, and that when they’re having cocktails and talking more serious business, that you may hear it, but you will never comment, and you’ll never repeat it. If they have confidence in you, it makes all the difference in the world. And I enjoyed that part of it, to interact and the like. Except for that one – the Democratic State Senator from Pueblo.

JH: Tom Farley?

HR: He was the worst one of the bunch.

JH: Isn’t he back on now?

HR: Is he?


HR: You’re kidding.

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JH: No, I think I read that in the paper the other day. Okay, well, tell me some of the people on the Board who impressed you most. Obviously you have to have representatives from agriculture. Most of it’s political pay-off for whomever’s in power. I guess in those days it was [Richard] Lamm and then [Roy] Romer. Was John Stencel still on when you…?

HR: That’s right. Now, John, I admired him. He was solid, kind of slow moving, but a very solid guy who always thought out his positions on what he was going to say. …[pause]… And Dick Robinson. Now Dick I really admired. He really was a cultured individual. He was really smart and tough and sensible. And that’s of course, how I got to know…Who was the president, the one who left and went to Alabama then?

JH: Phil Austin?

HR: Yes, Phil Austin, with whom I got along very well. And he was very supportive of what we were trying to do with the Faculty. That was the year that our Sacramento friend, I mean our Pueblo friend, wanted to create the great CSU system that put the CU system in its place. He was like a bull in the china closet. I remember the Board began holding its monthly meetings at the [Denver] Sixteenth Street Campus. When we flew into the airport at Durango, got off the plane, and walked out of that little building, there were students with signs: Down with the Ag Board. When we got into the town, in front of that old-fashioned, modernized grand hotel, there was a big banner –

JH: The Strater Hotel…

HR: The Strater. Down with the Ag Board. [laughter] The next morning we met in their [Fort Lewis College] Student Center, packed and jammed into the ball room there – five, six hundred people, and our Sacramento [Pueblo] friend, he tried to make some amenities, but he just didn’t know how to do it. And he really infuriated people. I came a cropper with him because we were talking about the budget, discussing the system thing, and they wanted to give Pueblo a pretty good sized raise. And I thought that was fine. I didn’t begrudge them anything they could get. I said, you know, faculty reps have to give a report to their faculty through the Faculty Council. He said, Well, we’re
going to do this even-handedly, and try to help the Pueblo people one time. All right. And that’s exactly what I reported to the Faculty Council.

At the next budget meeting down in Denver, lo and behold it turned out that their representative, I guess, spilled the beans – they would have found out sooner or later – the increases they got were added to their base. And that’s not the one-time thing. And even though Rosenberg’s no budgeteer, even I could figure that out. And I said, You know, I’m very sorry to hear that this is done this way. You asked me to (and I looked at him), you asked me to present this to the faculty, and I did. There was some protest that our Pueblo colleagues should be leveled up a bit more. And the dumb guy from Pueblo said, Well, it’s just this one time. I said, If it’s in your base, it’s not just one time. I think he was surprised Rosenberg could figure that out. Susan was sitting back there with Austin at a table, and she told me subsequently, Harry, Do you know what Austin said to me when you made that comment? He said, You know? Rosenberg really is a Jew and a Christian. [laughter]. I’m not sure I really liked that, but anyhow. . .

JH: That was a heated time because there was this attempt to put together a super board. They were really looking at the CSU system, and it looked as though Fort Lewis was going to be put into a much more subordinate position than it had previously; hence, the big blow-up over there in Fort Lewis.

HR: When I went down there, they had that meeting, we were assailed. We sat there, and we were assailed by one speaker after another. That’s the first time I met, I subsequently found out was Nancy Hart [HR’s second wife], a good friend of Ben Nighthorse Campbell. He was an Indian artist, as you know. When she got started in the art business, she met him, and he said, Do you carry any Indian art, and she said, Yes. So he said to her, You know, you need to meet the Indian artists. We’re having a pow wow out in Sacramento. Why don’t you and your husband Bill come out there? He took her around and introduced her to all the Indian artists. For a white, middle-aged female that was a wonderful way of getting new business. Anyhow, he made at that meeting one of the most demagogic speeches I ever heard. He said, You can’t do this to this fine school – he was in the Legislature. He said, I’m going back there and I’m going to really hammer that CSU budget. Or words to that effect. I
told Nancy about it. She went and told him, and he said, Well, tell your friend that I’m just representing my constituents. [laughter] Anyhow, it was Austin who finally carried it through. They could trust him.

JH: Yes, he handled it really skillfully.

HR: I’m off the subject again, but I’m really disappointed that they went solo the last couple years and got out of the system. I’m not so sure it was a good time for them to do it. I don’t know how they’refairing. Their presentation was not as effective as they thought. It was all enthusiasm. But the faculty member who was Chair of their Academic Standing Committee for Students sort of let the cat out of the bag. He said, You know, we really have high standards here. Forty percent of our students are on probation. Forty percent! That told people something about that school. It used to be called Cherry Creek High South: So many of them went down there to get themselves in shape so they could go to Boulder or CSU or some place.

JH: That’s an interesting time for you, because it gives you another perspective on the way the University operates. You’re Chair, you’re on Faculty Council, and then you’re a Board representative. I guess another important committee assignment would be the one that resulted in the hiring of Al Yates. Tell me about that.

HR: Well, now I knew the Board was going to be influential. Dick Robinson was Chair of the Board, President as they call it. That didn’t bother me. That was fine, because I respected him. …[pause]… The Board hired a headhunter outfit out of Washington, D.C. I think it cost them $75K if I’m right, I don’t remember…

JH: That was a lot of money then.

HR: Yes. And we looked at the results. Except for Yates, they gave us nothing but second, third class people. All of them, none of them were any good. And one of them, a guy at Auburn who subsequently moved on somewhere else, I had people come tell me, Harry, how in the world did you people ever find him? Well, the pool was so bad that we felt we had to bring some people in. That probably wasn’t very smart of us.
But anyhow, the one thing that headhunter outfit did was to make the Board aware of Al Yates. They knew he was interested in leaving Tacoma [Pullman]. He’d been there ten years. And he really had been the effective administrator of that, because the President was always in Olympia with the Legislature. Al did one thing after another. I remember calling the Chair of their Faculty Council. He was a political scientist. I told him who I was and why I was calling, regarding Yates, and he was very forthcoming. I asked, How would you assess Yates in relation to the faculty? He responded, After a few years half of them will hate him and half of them will love him. I don’t know how proportionately that worked out here. [laughter] But he was telling me something, and I reported that to the Committee.

I guess I can go ahead and say this. It turned out that after we offered Yates the job, he called me up and said, I can’t take it. I’m sorry, Harry, but I can’t. I called Robinson. He said, We’ll have to do something about that. Well, the next two weeks, we didn’t find out till much later, Robinson and two of the Board members met secretly with Yates and convinced him to come. And I got to know Yates because the Highway Patrol has a small passenger airplane that state officials could use on certain occasions. They loaned it to the State Board, and I escorted him and his wife to Pueblo and then to Durango and back. They conceded all sorts of things to get him. And Robinson with all his connections in Denver: I can do this to get him if it’s more money…[inaudible] And that’s how that it was put together. Because when he came in and we were to meet down at one of the airport hotels, he just wowed the Committee. They were just tremendously impressed with him. So, that takes us into the Yates Era.

JH: Right. Thirteen years. You’re on the Faculty Council for a very long time in one capacity or another. Are there any issues that stand out, like one or two, that really impressed you? Obviously, the change in the position of the Faculty Chair is something. But what others? If you could just say, these are really issues that I remember as a long-standing member of the faculty?
HR: Hmmmm [pause] I thought on tenure issues the Board and the Administration were responsive to the Faculty, though they were concerned about tenure review, which I guess is still every five years, is it?

JH: Yes.

HR: What I don’t know is, I wouldn’t know how to assess its impact. I don’t know if anybody ever followed up for further review, who was challenged and was on the verge of having your tenure broken. I don’t know if that’s happened ever.

Talking about tenure, though, I was involved in – you’re the only person I’ve ever spoke to about this – one attempt by the College of Business, Accounting Department, to break a colleague’s tenure. It wasn’t part of the five year review. I just got a call from Neidt saying he wanted to set up a committee to review this, a special committee: a longstanding female member of the Athletic Department, [[P. E. Burns?]], and a man from the sciences, and they appointed me as the Chair. The effective member of it, though, was an Assistant Attorney General, who was detailed to work with us on this. And it’s a good thing. He was very good.

JH: Yes. He didn’t immediately precede Brian Snow, did he?

HR: No.

JH: He was the University Council, but he was based in the Attorney General’s Office in Denver.

HR: And that lingered on and on. The Department did a very poor job. They always wanted to get rid of him. They scrounged around for any possible scrap they could find. They threw together in a paper—we don’t accept this kind of work from undergraduates, a term paper—it was a mish-mash. They just wanted to get rid of him. We wrote a very detailed report for Chuck Neidt. Now, it continued on, because – the issue – a group of them went into court. Eventually the University had to reimburse somebody, because one of the guys who was behind it, got fired. I’d have to go look up….[tape cuts off]…

End of Tape 5, Side A
Tape 5, Side B
February 12, 2008

JH: Okay, we’re going to go back to something about the development of the Department of History.

HR: The last tenured appointments we made were in 1970 with Tyler and Long., tenure appointments or appointments to the faculty. Would that have been it?

JH: I think there were tenure-track hires, but those were the last two appointments until Ruth Alexander was hired.

HR: That’s right. That’s the point I wanted to make. Because we then went from 1970 to 1987 without adding a faculty member. I started getting calls before my Chairmanship was up. They were already starting to fill out little forms about the number of women in the Department and so forth. And I guess in a waspish moment I added a footnote, and I said, When you – for Ogden in particular – when you give some additional funds, we’ll be able to hire some women. But you haven’t. And we went from 1970 to 1987 without an additional new hire. Certainly in terms of growth in other areas the Department could have gotten involved in, that certainly slowed us down. So I thought it was a great moment when we finally were allowed to hire Ruth.

JH: Let’s go back to another department-related thing, and that’s the American West Program. And again, it’s a wonderful program, much like the Furniss Lecture Series. I think it is something very important, not only for the Department and the University, but the American West Program is outreach in the very best sense. Why don’t you tell me how you get involved in that and how it unfolds.

HR: Well, in 1975 when my, let’s see, Dan Tyler and, oh who was the gentleman in English?

JH: Was it Russ Churchill?

HR: No. He was involved, but the gentleman who taught American Lit, had come from Yale, had been active in the OSS during the War…I don’t remember, I’m sorry…

JH: I don’t remember. Anyway. [It was Joseph Angell]
HR: Anyhow, there was a group of them got together and came up with the idea of the American West. And so the initial ones they held were held in the form of conferences. Dan invited – oh, who was that very distinguished American Indian scholar down at CU Law School, and he was…

JH: I know who you mean…

HR: He had a Theology degree, and his son was at CU and then he moved on to Michigan…

JH: Yes, yes.

HR: Sorry, but I’ve forgotten his name. Anyhow, …

JH: It had to be like The Faculty Improvement Committee

HR: …[laughter] He was a featured speaker. So that was the first couple…

JH: [Vine] Deloria.

HR: Yes, thank you. I’m glad you have a good memory. During my chairmanship, the idea first emerged, and I said, I think it’s a great idea, Dan. Whatever I can write or do to help, I’ll gladly do it. So they got started with it. One of the arguments they used with the Administration to get money for it was that they said, We’ve got the Centennial and Bicentennial coming up. It seems very appropriate that CSU should be in the forefront of doing something in this area. So that occurred. [pause] Well, with that remark, I’ve already jumped ahead. Dan came to me, and he said, (and my chairmanship was over in ’75, right? Okay, it would have been 1976 or 1977 - 1977 I think. I don’t know if that’s right or not.) Harry, would you mind chairing this committee. We have an artist on it who does the posters and all sorts of things. He said I have a chance to go down to Santa Fe and be a witness, an expert witness, in a case involving the location of a ditch in 1835, [involving] a Spanish land grant. I said, Oh sure, I’ll be glad to do that. So he did, and by the way, he won it. His side won over the testimony of a Harvard prof on the location of that ditch. Then the next year he came to me and said, Harry, could you do it one more time because I’ve got a group of Indians down in Southern California who want me to represent them in a water case; they want my testimony in some way or other. So I said sure. Well, after some years I said to Dan, People are wondering if you’re ever going to come back. [laughter] He said, Harry, I’m always available if you need me.
So that’s how I got involved. And some of the committee members, I don’t think were very happy that this Medievalist was doing it. But we worked out a happy relationship, and I had to tell them very frankly, I said, I think it’s a great idea and I like the fact that we could reach the public that would not be coming into our classes. Frankly, I’ll be relying on you all because you know Western history as I do not. I’ve read a few good books about it and I’m sympathetic to it. So we went year by year by year. We kept getting grants in the summer from the Neidt’s office. When Neidt’s successor, the one, that chemist or something, the one we brought from Nebraska? [Albert Linck] He was antagonistic towards it. I subsequently found out, because Loren told me when he became the Academic Vice President, He really did that Harry because he had something else he wanted. And he didn’t have enough money for everything; so he said, Shut down the American West Program.

That was how it got started. Slowly and steadily it grew in interest to people around the community. We did very well in getting people, and we had a few bombs. One was a Denver Post columnist. He used to write a column about the West, and we invited him up, and dinner with him was very nice, very pleasant. Then he got up to give his talk. He talked about seventeen minutes and stopped. And he said, I don’t know what else to say. And he asked for questions. But they weren’t ready to ask questions. That was that. The other one was when we were still in the building across from the A wing, in that small auditorium…. JH: Yes, the Natural Resources?
HR: Yes, and it only held 115 to 120. And we wanted something on Southern Colorado. They got the name of this lady, who may have taught down at Pueblo or some place. She was supposed to be THE specialist on Southern Colorado. Well, that was fine. And I always wrote them that we had mostly a senior citizen audience. And if you talk, if you go very far beyond 8:30, they get a little restless. They’ll ask good questions and be interested. And I said you really shouldn’t go over forty-five minutes. Well, at the hour-and-a-half mark, she finally wound down. That’s one memory for me as I served as the chair of the evening. As soon as she finished, I stepped up to thank her again and to close the meeting. When I saw them stand up and start walking out, I knew we were in trouble.
JH: Was that Janet Lecompte, maybe? No.

HR: I don’t think so.

JH: She was a specialist in Southern Colorado history. It doesn’t matter. We can check it out.

HR: And then as we walked out, she said, Did I do a good job? [laughter]

JH: How early did the Fort Collins community get involved? Because Rheba Massey was on that Board for years and years. Wayne Sundberg was on that Board for years and years. Were they on from the very start? Did that….

HR: Well, we began adding people very quickly. Now, the gentleman from Ag was one of the original members. And he died a few years ago. Then there was Dan, and then, how could I forget that wonderful graphic artist who did our posters.

JH: Oh, Bob Coonts.

HR: Yes, Bob Coonts. He stayed on the committee. In the early days we sold a fair number of posters, but I don’t know whether people as they got older, or maybe moved into retirement home and didn’t have walls to hang them, or whatever. Nancy suggested it might be a problem. I think within about five years, six years, we were getting to the point where we had to move. And we moved to that auditorium. We were using the small meeting rooms in the Student Center. We quickly outgrew those. We tried a one-time meeting outside there where the ice rink was, but …[laughter]… the wind did us in.

JH: That can happen.

HR: So we never repeated that, but the numbers grew steadily until finally, I forgot what meeting it was, but we had a standing-room-only crowd in the auditorium there. And I thought, boy, if the Fire Department ever does an inspection, we’ll be in trouble. Then I went and asked about the auditorium adjacent to A-wing that could hold up to 350, approximately. Lo and behold, it was available. And that’s when I know, our crowds really steadily grew. Very responsive. People liked it, and they liked the speakers we got. One guy came, he was an impersonator. . . [Inaudible]

JH: Clay Jenkinson?
HR: No, I’m talking about the Civil War guy….massacre up in Montana. That was a very controversial meeting.

JH: Yes, but that was a great program. I hope that it could continue in the same way the Furniss Lectures continued.

HR: A group of us would brainstorm, and I saw my role as offering a sideline critique on what I thought might go over well with the mixed audience we had, and the level of doing it. Some of the best speakers, outstanding people, heard about it and were willing to come, even for the rather modest honorarium we could offer. And still, when I go to Whole Foods and sit there and have a cup of coffee, time and again people stop by and say, we miss the American West. [laughter] Very nice of them. So that’s how that went until it finally got to the point when I was leaving it that we were going to have to charge [admission]. And I knew that would impact it. And the character of the meeting had changed in the transition. I told Ruth that I would …well, you will probably want me during the transition, and when you find someone else to be director, I will step out completely. That will be their responsibility. So she got this person [Ann Bond] from the State Historical Society. And she made some tactical errors. She never convened the committee again.

JH: She didn’t last very long. She was only with it [a few years]

HR: And they resented it. I told them, well, the it’s probably going to become more academic. And that’s in part what happened. They had wonderful topics and scholars, but we didn’t have quite the mix that we had before. That was …[inaudible]. So did I answer it in a sensible way for you on that?

JH: Definitely. That’s great. Okay, some of these things, you know, as much as we cherish them, as important as they’ve been in our lives, it’s really a result of the people who are really committed to them. Like the Public History program has really changed since Liston and John Albright and I dropped out. And I think the American West Program changed when you left. And I think the Furniss Lecture series has changed when all the faculty that were involved in making it go, retired. One thing,
though, that hangs in there, and I think this is a permanent contribution of yours, and this is the Incunabulum book that you brought back from your sabbatical.

HR: And, in fact, I didn’t bring it back; I found an antique book shop and it had a lot of Incunabula, and so I prowled around. They didn’t tell me how much it was going to cost. I looked for one that I thought would be, from its land-grant position, good for CSU to have, and that was a late Medieval work on what we would call science. I don’t know how much they actually paid for it. They never told me, and I didn’t ask. But I told the proprietor who I was, what I was doing, and that I wanted to recommend something to my campus library.

JH: Now, had [Director of CSU Libraries] Lee Anderson asked you to do this or someone else?

HR: Yes. I thought it was supposed to be the one millionth volume they wanted. But I saw in the Library Journal they were putting out, that it was the 700,000th volume, so I’ll take their word for it. But anyhow, I wrote back to them and said, Here it is – here’s the information I have, and I don’t know the price; I’ll leave that up to you. And then when I got back I discovered that they had chosen that one as their 700,000th volume, I guess I like the [inaudible] of one million, but, hey…. [laughter]…

JH: My first book was the millionth, but it was a rigged deal, by Lee.

HR: [laughter]…I didn’t realize – sorry about that. [laughter]

JH: That’s okay, because Lee, I hadn’t even finished the book yet, but he had already catalogued it as the one millionth volume….

HR: That’s where I got the million thing…..

JH: Yes, that was a funny thing, too. Well, it’s a great thing to have. I mean to have a document of this age, antiquity, and also with a fairly significant person [Roberto Caracciolo] who authored it. It’s just not an artifact, it’s a historical reference. I think your role in that is important.

Let’s go on to something else that is important. I think the American West Program is important to the community, but so too is the symphony. And you and Adeline, together I think, really played a role in helping to build that into a fiscally viable cultural organization.
HR: Well, we didn’t get immediately involved. But then we’d get in places where they would play – high school auditoriums, and things like that, where the acoustics were terrible. Adeline hit it off with Will Schwartz, and he liked her very much. So we went, and it wasn’t I think until probably the early 1970s before I was elected to the Board. I was on the Board then. Finally, in 1982 I was nominated to be the next season’s vice president. The way they had it then, you succeeded from the vice presidency to the presidency. So it was in 1983-84 that I served as President, and came to be actively involved with it.

And after Adeline’s death I decided very quickly that I wanted to have something for her memory there. And I approached Will, and he said, Of course, Harry, anything we can do, we’ll be glad to have it done. June Bennett and her husband [Thomas], who was a dentist and also a Mayor of Fort Collins, she was then the President. She and the General Manager [inaudible] [name?] had left the position, but he was very active still with the Symphony. He was sympathetic, and so we got together and discussed it. I wanted it originally to be only the piano, but Will Schwartz said to me one day, You know, Harry, there are other instruments…[laughter]…and I looked at him and I said, Well, I’m sure you’re right. So we hit on the every other year thing.

Slowly but gradually it evolved, and has had people who have won and moved on to impressive careers. Who was the violinist from Turkey Creek? He won that competition early on, long before I got involved. He was the most successful one, and he became an international virtuoso on the violin.

But the interesting thing is to see how the major schools of music or Departments of Music at universities and colleges began to send their students here. So we have …[inaudible] Conservatory, and we have the Julliard, and then Peabody in Baltimore, and the Curtis in Philadelphia, and the Cleveland School, and then Indiana U which is really one of the major ones, and then – oh, what’s the Ohio Liberal Arts College famous for its radicalism and its…..

JH: Oberlin?

HR: Oberlin, yes. It has a wonderful music department. And they had a piano teacher, considered one of the finest in the world. He not only would send students here, but he came out with him – who
unfortunately didn’t win, because he should have. I may be giving tales away, I don’t…. It had cost us…He didn’t hold a grudge, because he sent students subsequently…[inaudible]…but who was that fine pianist who passed away on our faculty? [Wendel Diebel?]…[pause]… Well, he was one of the three judges. There were two from Colorado – all three from Colorado – one from Greeley, another one from the Denver area; and the other two insisted that this Boulder chap should get it. Well, our CSU colleague was so offended, he refused to judge for us ever again. That was the most unhappy part of it that I really regretted. And they set up a scholarship in his honor for some years, but somehow or other that’s fallen by the wayside. I hope it can be revived because he deserved it; he was a graduate of Julliard just like Will.

The symphony audience was very supportive of it, and we began holding receptions the weekend of it. And the way it was set up, the senior[?] is the semi-final; they can come in, ten semi-finalists, and they [the judges] choose three finalists. Now they’re choosing two. We enjoyed that very much.

JH: Well, it’s a great legacy for Adeline, a tribute to her.

HR: And the Orientals took Western music to …[inaudible]…all over the Orient. It’s extraordinary what they did. Really fantastic.

JH: One other thing I wanted to ask you about the symphony – the Designing [Today for Tomorrow] – The Lincoln Center as a true venue instead of Lincoln Junior High School. To what extent was the Board involved in that, and who were the prime movers in the community for that?

HR: Lilla Morgan, and then the dentist who just died. He was Mayor of the town for some years. Oh, what is his name? Also the owner of that department store, the biggest department store downtown, on the corner of Oak Street that burned down. His name is [William] Johnson. His son’s a lawyer here in town. And as you go in, there used to be, I guess it’s still there, handsome photographs of Lilla and Johnson, honoring them in their role in leading that thing. The only thing wrong with it is they built that auditorium too small.

JH: Oh, yes.
HR: Originally, it was going to be limited to 900 seats, but we have to thank Will Schwartz, that he was finally able to cajole them into at least 1,180 seats. As things grew and as the Lincoln Center’s own program grew and brought in traveling companies and that, it put them in a very difficult position because they couldn’t get a big enough house to justify short stops. So they had to get people or an outfit that would come and stay three and four nights. Will Schwartz had a great role in that with the support of the locals who carried it over. I’m sure that they would have liked to make it bigger. But they had to make a political judgment, and they could only ask for so much money – the bond issue.

JH: Well, I want to finish up here by talking about – do you want to take a break now?

HR: No.

JH: Okay.

HR: You have to go home and pack.

JH: No, that’s Thursday. Nancy does all my packing anyway. She doesn’t let me near anything. Okay, now the people who – I can’t give you a number – but the people who have impressed you most in all of your years in Fort Collins, either faculty or administrators or staff or students or Fort Collins citizens. Which ones really jump out at you as being truly important, say first to CSU, and then to the Fort Collins community.

HR: Well, Lilla Morgan did. I didn’t get…even though I had that contact with her son. She caused me some embarrassing moments because Lilla was of course no shrinking violet. And she went around telling people, You know? We now have my son’s teacher from Stanford, who’s revolutionized my son, and introduced him to culture and so forth. Bryan’s own story is, I was cowboying around and the folks pulled me in and said, Either you go off to a good school or you’re on your own. So that’s how he got to Stanford….[tape cuts off]…

[Gap in tape]
JH: notes: HR discusses notable people in Fort Collins (e.g., town and CSU). He discusses the impact of Lilla Morgan and expresses his admiration for James P. Johnson (former U.S. Congressman) whose Christian values and community service have been notable. He also evaluates CSU presidents. He regards Philip Austin as a charming diplomat and William E. Morgan as a fine leader and gracious person. He also mentions friction with Ray Chamberlain during HR’s tenure on the Human Relations Committee. This stemmed from a riot in late January 1970 at a CSU-BYU basketball game. Knowing that CSU African American students were determined to conduct a protest against BYU, a school identified with racist policies, Chamberlain wanted to confine this demonstration to a site outside of Moby Arena, but the students, with the committee’s concurrence, argued for an event inside the gym and prevailed. HR acknowledges that the committee’s position was a mistake.

He then discusses his values as a historian and an incident that resulted in his being fired from a fundamentalist book store job after voting for Harry Truman in the election of 1948. He also describes key changes in his lifetime, religious influences, and challenges of globalization.

JH 1948?

HR: Yes, that was my senior year. The idea was I had to get a part time job and I did, the Western Book and Track Company in downtown Oakland. That was a major fundamentalist outfit. My job there required that I get there at four o’clock. They had a tremendous catalog business, so I would wrap up all the orders, and take them to the post office. Well, I came in the morning after the election. The owner of it said to me, Harry, you’re an historian. Isn’t this a sign of the end times…[laughter]…with Truman? And I knew I was walking the plank. Well, I said, historians are very cautious about this sort of thing and there’s no way of being sure. And she just looked at me, and I knew my job was over. And at the end of the week, she said, Well, we’re making some changes, Harry, and I lost that job – not a bad job actually, and she paid pretty well.
So, it seems to me that this global society with all that we are doing to our physical environment is leading us to a disaster of some sort. I wouldn’t know how to conjure it up. I think it’s getting to be more and more, to have a social dimension to it. And I’m not sanguine at all about the U.N. resolving these sorts of things.

JH: This is a little different. I really believe that history is cyclical where we keep doing the same stupid things over and over again or some of the good things over and over again, but we’re really on a different playing field with the technology now.

HR: That’s right. With the global warming, but the President says it doesn’t exist. Meanwhile, someone said it’s too bad he doesn’t live on the Atlantic coast, when the sea rises, and all the Eastern seaports are gone. Whether that will actually happen, who knows. Maybe we’ll figure some way to counteract that.

I look at this generation of students. Now, you know how low tech I am. Technology is marvelous, and these kids can do so many things so much more quickly, and the like, but not come away with the depth of understanding that, of course, we were able to experience.

JH: There’s a huge difference between information and knowledge, and a huge difference between knowledge and wisdom. And I think we’ve got all the information that we can ever possibly consume now, but it’s really skewed us..

HR: I don’t know if anyone would come in and look at the 2,500-volume library I’ve accumulated. I can go bring that up online and hit the chapter I want and that’s it, you know.

One of the most interesting experiences I had in my time, especially as an undergraduate at Berkeley. They had at the main entrance to the library a reading room; I’ve forgotten what it was called – a reading room with very nice furniture, sofas and chairs, and a small note that said, Notes may be taken but only with pencil. And they had all of the classics. And of course for those who were in the humanities, it was a great place to go. I spent lots of hours there, probably in some instances, doing the work I had to do – more on the assignments I had than I should have. But these kids don’t know that kind of experience.
I’m very pessimistic about our future. And the time may come for the wrong reasons and in ways we can’t imagine whether it would be the human effort with the ability to destroy each other extraordinarily quickly or whether it’s going to be a natural disaster that will overwhelm the world. It’s sad what I see as happening.

JH: Well, the future may seem ominous, but you’ve had a good life.

HR: Yes. Yes [inaudible]

JH: And you’ve influenced a lot of people in positive ways.

HR: Well, I hope so.

JH: As you look back, I mean what could be better than being an academic?

HR: Right. …[inaudible]… I hope our colleagues experience something of that. Now I’ll share something. I’ve just learned this. Mike Rosser passed it on to me. When Jean Bethke Elshtain delivered the Gifford lectures – you know the Gifford lectures? You know, that’s really a very prestigious [honor] at University of Glasgow, I mean Edinburgh. Well, he came over and said, Harry, I have to share this with you. She told me she’d dedicated the book to her parents and to you. That was sort of overwhelming.

JH: Oh, that’s great.

HR: You know, she’s here for a weekend conference. Did you hear about it?

JH: I had no idea. I didn’t hear about it.

HR: Well, it didn’t get the publicity. The John 23rd, the Jesuit theologian residence [is sponsoring it] Actually, we have a committee on theologian residence that one of our colleagues is on, Jared [Orsi] [?]. They’re bringing her and a gentleman from the Nova Scotia University or Seminary, and the topic is, “9/11: Theological Response.” They’re doing it Friday evening at seven o’clock in the Eddy Building. They got the auditorium, but she’s speaking first and giving the introductory address. And then the next day they’re having all sorts of discussion groups all over campus, so I guess she’ll be

JH: Yes. I had heard about her dedicating the book to you. That’s really great.

HR: It’s really very, very touching.
JH:    Well? Do you have anything more to say here. We’ve covered [a great deal].

HR:    No, you’ve been very patient with my faulty memory.

JH:    You have a great memory, a great memory. Harry, thank you so much.

HR:    Thank you.

End of Tape 6, Side A.
End of Interview.