Thomas Sutherland Interview

Robert Zimdahl, Interviewer

November 5, 2009

INTERVIEWER: What was your father's name?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: My father's name?

INTERVIEWER: Your father's name.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: William Grainger.

INTERVIEWER: William Grainger.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Sutherland.

INTERVIEWER: And he was a farmer?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: He was a dairy farmer.

INTERVIEWER: G-R- A-I-N?


INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: And, you know, in Scotland, they always named-- the first son was named after the father's father. The second son was named after the mother's father. And the third son was named after the father. And so I was named after my mother's father. Thomas. He was Thomas McNee. And my mother was Helen McNee. And when I was chosen to play soccer for the--

INTERVIEWER: Are you all right?

KATIE: I'm burning right now, but it was just a test. [LAUGHTER]

INTERVIEWER: Now that does audio and video?

KATIE: Yeah. I moved it closer, 'cause the audio wasn't working entirely correctly. Are we on? Should I continue recording, or can I--

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.
KATIE: --can I stop it, and see how the sound is?

INTERVIEWER: So William Grainger Sutherland--

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Correct.

INTERVIEWER: --dairy farmer. Your mother's name?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Helen McNee.

INTERVIEWER: McNee. M- C-

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Capital N- E- E. And so I got--

INTERVIEWER: And that's your middle name?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: That's my middle name. Thomas McNee Sutherland.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: My father used to say that every second door in Ireland was McNee.

INTERVIEWER: Heh, heh, heh. Are you 8-12 Garfield?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: 8- 12, right.

INTERVIEWER: That's what I thought. And what's your zip code? 8- 0- 5- 2- 4. 4. Same as mine. OK. I've got date and place of birth, Jean's maiden name was Murry?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Mm- hm. Which is also a good Scottish name, isn't it?

INTERVIEWER: Is that right?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Oh, pfft-- listen, Sutherland was a sort of sub-clan of the Murry clan. And Jean never lets me forget about that. [LAUGHTER]

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever serve in the military?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Nope. No. I didn't even register. But when I got application in for citizenship, the guy there in Omaha, where I had to go, to Omaha, to apply for it, why, he argued with me about my health. And I said, gosh, I was just at the student health service, and had a complete examination just two week ago.

INTERVIEWER: In Iowa.
THOMAS SUTHERLAND: In Iowa, yeah. And he said, well, you don't have to take that exam. But, he said, I don't have to give you citizenship, either. [LAUGHS] Or a-- it was a permanent resident's visa, is what it was.

INTERVIEWER: But you're a citizen now.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Oh, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: What year did you become a citizen?


INTERVIEWER: 1963.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Hm. Well, Thomas, how did you end up in Fort Collins?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: How did I end up in Fort Collins? Howard Stonaker, who is also in his 90s-- 92, or 93-- is still going lickety-split--

INTERVIEWER: Really? Oh.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: He talked to me at a meeting of the American Society of Animal Science in Chicago. And he said, you know, we have a position becoming available in Fort Collins, at Colorado State.

INTERVIEWER: Uh- huh.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: And would you be interested in applying for it? And when I came home, I said to Jean, you know, Stonaker talked to me and said that they're having a position open in Fort Collins, Colorado, and would I like to apply? And she's, Ahh! I'd love to go to Colorado. And she had come to Colorado quite a number of times with her folks, stopping just above Estes Park--

INTERVIEWER: Oh, yeah.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: --where we now have a cottage, actually, up there.

INTERVIEWER: You do, and Ann does, too.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Yeah, Ann has one as well, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Right.
THOMAS SUTHERLAND: And so we decided that would be kind of fun. So we did apply for the job, and we got it. And came out here, and this was a considerably smaller place in those days. My goodness, 19-- what year was that we came here? '59, or something? We came to Colorado. Maybe '58, even. And the population of the town was, I think, something like 20,000. And there were about 5,000 or 6,000 students at that time.

INTERVIEWER: In the 20,000?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: In the town, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: But in addition to the 20,000?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: I am never quite sure about that. They never really made that totally clear. But I think that it was in addition to the 20,000 in the town. And now there are over 20,000 students.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: 23,000. And there are probably 135,000 or 140,000 people in this community. And it's still growing like a weed now.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, yeah. You remember Arch Alexander.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: I surely do.

INTERVIEWER: He came here about the same time. He said when he came here, there were two stop lights.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Yep.


THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Far too many I think, frankly, but Arch was a great guy. You know that he went over to Glasgow University--

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: --and spent a sabbatical leave at the vet school there, in Glasgow.

INTERVIEWER: Uh-huh. Did you have any favorite hobbies, or things that you'd like to do, when you were younger?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: When I was younger, I used to play a lot of soccer. And I did play an awful lot of soccer, as a matter of fact. And I ended up being chosen for the rest of Scotland schools against Glasgow schools. And I scored a goal in the game there, and my mother told my grandmother about that, when my grandmother was more or less on her deathbed. [CHUCKLES]
My grandmother's response was, Ah, you're well named, laddie. [LAUGHTER] Being named after her husband, who had died a bit before that. He died, I think, when he was only 65 or something. Didn't live very long at all. My grandmother lived until she was in her '80s. But Jean's family is all very long-lived. Her grandparents all lived up to nearly 100, every one of them.

INTERVIEWER: Uh-huh.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: And I told her, it looks to me like she's going to live to be 100, too. She's still going like a steam roller. Everything, uh? So many committees and whatnot, and she's happy as a clam, and, uh, frisky as a lamb, and she's on half a dozen committees, and 10 subcommittees, and three sub-sub committees, and--

INTERVIEWER: How did you get into animal science?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Well, I was--

INTERVIEWER: You changed animal science.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Yeah. I was in agriculture at Glasgow, and then when I went to Reading, on a post graduate year-- just west of London, about 40 miles--

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: We had a course-- only one formal course-- and it was taught by a guy who introduced us to the complexities of animal breeding. And we used a textbook by the name of Animal Breeding Plans, that had been written by Jay L. Lush, who was the principal animal breeder, actually in the whole world; he was the most renowned animal breeding scientist in the whole world. And so I told the Ministry of Agriculture that I would like to go on for another year, and go to Iowa State, because that's where Jay Lush was. And so I wrote to Jay--let me not get confused here-- I wrote to Lush, and Eames, and said that I have a fellowship, and would it be possible to come and study under him, at Iowa State? And just in about 10 days I had a reply, with an open arms welcome.

So that opened up the gates for me to go to Iowa. Came there in 1954, for one year, and then Lanoy Hazel suggested I should stay for a second year, so I did. I stayed for a second year, and in the meantime, I had been admiring this young woman in the office section of the church, by the name of Jean Murry. And I tried like the dickens to meet that woman, and I could not meet her. Everything just fell apart. Never did get to meet her, until just before Christmas, of 19--1955, and I finally met her, and offered to give her a ride home in my old clunker Plymouth, and so she allowed that, and then we-- she invited me to a Christmas party at her folks' house, along with two or three other Scottish guys, and English guys, and whatnot, and so we went there.

And then we went on a few more dates, and about three weeks after I finally met her, I asked her to marry me.
INTERVIEWER: Three weeks.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Three weeks. And she said, I'm sorry, but I don't know you well enough to marry you. And so I said, OK, let's get to know each other a little better. And we did. And by about March, she said, well, maybe we could get married after all. And we told her mother that we were thinking about getting married, and she was all for it. She was on my side. And so by June of-- June 23 of 1956, we did get married. And that's now 54 years ago.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: 54. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: So looks like it might take.

INTERVIEWER: It's still a trial marriage.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Yeah, it's still on trial. I'm still on trial, for her.

INTERVIEWER: When you came here, when you were in Iowa and you came here, did you have any particular role models?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Well, I would say Howard Stonaker was the guy that, that I looked on as a role model. And he was Secretary- Treasurer of the American Society of Animal Science. So everybody in the whole society knew Stoney, and he was a very famous guy, and favorite kind of guy.

INTERVIEWER: Mm-hm.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: So when he invited us to come out here, and he was kind of our sponsor, why, I felt like, couldn't do better than having him ahead of you. But in fact, he wanted me to be more into research than I actually turned out to be. And it transpired that I was more interested in teaching.

INTERVIEWER: Mm- hm.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: So when he invited us to come out here, and he was kind of our sponsor, why, I felt like, couldn't do better than having him ahead of you. But in fact, he wanted me to be more into research than I actually turned out to be. And it transpired that I was more interested in teaching.

INTERVIEWER: Uh- huh.
THOMAS SUTHERLAND: And I had a half-time appointment at one time in the Department of Statistics, and I quite enjoyed that. And I was teaching statistical methods, not any of the, you know, fancy, fancy, fancy kinds of statistics that the mathematicians teach. I was in the more practical kinds of statistical methods that you and I could use in our research.

INTERVIEWER: Huh.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: And I enjoyed that a great deal. And then, ultimately, I transferred back into animal science full time, and was asked to take over the freshman class. Well, they had actually asked Vern Swanson to do that, ahead of me, but Vern thought that was a terrible demotion-- to teach the freshman class. And I said to him, hey, I'll do that, Vern, I would love to do that. So I did. I taught that freshman class. And there would be, at that time, there were probably 150 to 200 students in that freshman animal science class. Taught every semester-- every quarter, when we were in the quarter system-- then we switched to the semester system.

INTERVIEWER: Uh-huh.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: And you know, to this day, when I go off speaking anywhere, which I'm not doing very much anymore at all, but almost everywhere I go, people will say, I had you for class back in 1963, or 1969, or 1971, or whatever, and they still remember you, and they say, man, you're that crazy guy that used to come to class in a kilt. Which I did. In the last class of every term, I would wear my kilt, and then read them about 5 or 10 minutes of Burns' poetry at the end of it. And even the hard-nosed cowboys, they quite got a kick out of all of that, so--

INTERVIEWER: And they found out what the Scotsman wears under his kilt.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Yeah. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: We won't talk about that. Other than Stoney, were there any mentors, or people that you particularly admired?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Well, I admired Sherm Wheeler, actually, the Dean at that point, and I thought he was a pretty interesting guy. And then, let's see, one of the other contemporaries of mine was David Kramer. And when I was teaching the freshman class, I put in there a section on animal breeding, a section on nutrition, a section on meats, and a section on reproduction. And when it came to the section on meats, there would be quite a few terms in there that I wasn't totally familiar with. And I'd just go to Dave Kramer and say, hey Dave, what is this is all about? And boy, he would just zip that-- he was a very, very bright guy. And he died before I got home from captivity, so I never saw him again. But he was really quite an interesting, talented guy.

INTERVIEWER: Let's switch subjects a minute. When you were a young boy, were your mother and father sort of equal, in terms of encouraging you to pursue education?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: In point of fact, neither of them encouraged me a whole lot. They just allowed me to do what I wanted. And none of my other brothers and sisters ever went on to
the university. And my younger brother, especially, went into farming. My older brother took over the family farm that I was raised on, but he didn't do all that good of a job of it. But my younger brother, he used to keep two sows. And he would farrow those sows twice a year. So we had four litters of pigs, and he would fatten those up and sell them off, and my dad let him keep all the money. And with that money from his pigs, he was able to buy his first farm. And then he bought the next door farm to that, and then the next door farm to that. And then he bought the Dunmore estate, that had been a very well-known family, in Dunmore, next to where he is now.

Well, he went on, and eventually he was farming 1,800 acres. And he just retired. He didn't have any sons to take over from him, so he just retired, and sold out all the farms on agreements, you know, and then all the implements. And he had all kinds of machinery, and he kept it right up to snuff, and the most modern and best condition you could have anything. And he just sold all of that, and I think he made something like 20 million pounds out of that, which is about $30 million. All started out with two sows.

INTERVIEWER: Wow.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: He was a very hard-working guy. No question. And he wasn't interested in going on to college at all, and yet he ended up there, just boom boom boom boom boom, in business. He was really a businessman.

INTERVIEWER: When, relative to education, were you a reader when you were young? Were there any particular books that you remember that sort of led you in a certain direction?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: I read a lot of books. And I would go--

INTERVIEWER: --other than Robert Burns.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Oh, my God, yes. Other than Robert Burns, I would go to the library with my dad almost every night. And he would let me off at the library, and then he would deliver the milk around to the dairy, where he was selling it off. And then he would come back around and pick me up at the library. So I traded my books almost every night. And I'd sit in front of the fire with the back of the chair in front of me, and with my head over the top there, and read that whole book in that one night. And then trade it in the next night.

INTERVIEWER: So you read a lot. Were there any particular ones that you recall?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Well, of course there were a lot of Scottish authors, like Robert Louis Stevenson. And then there were a whole bunch of books in a series, and I don't remember the name of those right at the moment, but I read a ton of those. And then a lot of adventure stories. They had a children's section in that library, and I think I just about read it out. The whole thing.

INTERVIEWER: When you came to CSU, what would you describe as your professional goals? When you arrived here?
THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Ooh, brother. I'm not sure that I could say with any honesty that I had professional goals. I just sort of followed my nose kind of thing. And I apparently had some kind of talent for being on committees. As you'll see in that CV I just gave you. Why, I ended up on almost every committee that was ever invented.

INTERVIEWER: But that's not a professional goal, is it?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: No. It's not. I didn't have that commitment to go ahead and be the best animal breeder in the whole world, or the best whatever in the whole world. I was just enjoying what I was doing, and I was happy enough with that. Whereas nowadays, people, you know, just take aim at being in the US Senate, for example. And they just go step by step by step to get elected into the US Senate. That never occurred to me.

But I sure was on an awful lot of committees. And I would say that the one that was the most challenging of all that I was ever on was President Morgan's Task Committee on Undergraduate Education. And in the early '60s, everybody was interested in getting research money. They were all into research. And so many universities-- in the whole country, not just at CSU, but in the whole country-- everybody was just trying to get more and more and more research grant money. And I felt like teaching was really more my domain than research. And as I said, Jim Brinks would always say, have Sutherland teach that. He enjoys teaching. But this was happening all over the country. People wanted to get research dollars, and to heck with teaching.

And so President Morgan, and the vice president at that time was Stanley Ahmann. And you might remember him. He asked me to be chairman of a committee on undergraduate education, and what was happening all around the country, and what should be done about that. And we came up with a whole bunch of recommendations. And that thing is still referred to as the "Sutherland Report." I didn't call it that. I just called it President Morgan's Task Committee on Undergraduate Education. But it actually made a whole slug of recommendations to the faculty. And many, many of those were accepted.

INTERVIEWER: Ah.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Pushing the importance and necessity of good teaching. As opposed to running around and trying to get more and more and more research grants.

INTERVIEWER: Was Bill Morgan president when you came?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Yes, he was.

INTERVIEWER: In what year did you come?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: I came in '58.

INTERVIEWER: '58.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: And he had been here for nearly 10 years at that time.
INTERVIEWER: When did you retire?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: I?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Actually, Jean retired me when I was on an extended paid vacation as a guest of Islamic Jihad in Lebanon.

INTERVIEWER: So your tenure at CSU was till--

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: It was actually 32 years.

INTERVIEWER: 32 years.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Because even when I was in Lebanon as the Dean of Agriculture at the American University of Beirut, I was there, and still kept my affiliation with CSU.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. You first heard about CSU from Stonaker.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: At a meeting. And did you ever have an official interview?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Well, he talked to me at fair length in Chicago.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah--

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: At the animal science meetings. And then he introduced me to Dean Wheeler, who was the Dean of Agriculture at that time.

INTERVIEWER: Uh-huh.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: And Sherm Wheeler, he gave me an interview--

INTERVIEWER: In Chicago.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: In Chicago, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So you never had an interview, or contact with the university, till you came here to go to work.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: No, that's not true, either.

INTERVIEWER: Oh.
THOMAS SUTHERLAND: They invited me to come out here and look the place over, before we finalized everything.

INTERVIEWER: What were your impressions of the place?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Oh-- I thought it was a very interesting place. It was not by any means as powerful a university as Iowa State at that time, and it still isn't. I mean, Iowa State is still a very powerful place.

INTERVIEWER: "Powerful" means?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Having top-notch scientists, and top-notch research all the way, and famous people on their faculty, and all the kind of thing that goes to make a university a big, big university. Like, for example, Michigan, or Berkeley, or University of Virginia, which, they kind of standardize universities in the country.

INTERVIEWER: Were there people in your department with whom you sort of immediately hit it off?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Yes. I would say Vern Swanson was a very helpful guy, and David Kramer was a very helpful guy--

INTERVIEWER: Yeah?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: There were some that I didn't admire all that much, who should probably remain nameless.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: But it was not a strong and highly-talented college, or department, at that time.

INTERVIEWER: Mm-hm.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: They had one man, for example, by the name of Mel Hazaleus, who was a good old meats man, and a good old livestock judge. At that time in animal science, there was a strong tendency to use livestock judging. And I didn't know anything about livestock judging. I'd never been a livestock judge, either as an undergraduate or a graduate student, and I preferred to have the scientific aspects. But at that time, animal science was heavily predicated on livestock judging.

Well, when I came here, Stonaker was a major thrust in getting science introduced, and getting the faculty to have Ph.D.'s. So they brought in Dean [? Sorrey, ?] who had a Ph.D. in ruminant nutrition. They brought in Dave Kramer, who had a Ph.D. in meat science. They brought in-- who else came in there at that time? There were a lot of livestock judging. Tom Blackburn, who's still alive, incidentally, now, he was a strong livestock judge and was coach of the livestock
judging team for a long time. And he alternated with Melvin Hazaleus. Now you probably know that Melvin Hazaleus died long, long ago. He got a brain tumor, and just passed away.

INTERVIEWER: Bill Morgan was president when you came.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Mm- hm.

INTERVIEWER: Tell us about Bill Morgan. What are your memories of Bill?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Oh, ho ho ho. I thought Bill Morgan made this university. And instead of it just being Morgan Library, which is already a very big honor, I always maintained it should be called Morgan University. Because he's the man who got us to be a real university.

He pushed on getting high-quality instruction, high-quality research, and support of all the people that were good people in there. And I just admired Bill Morgan a great deal. And I actually became good friends with Bill Morgan. Even after he retired, some of us used to go over to his home. And especially after I came back from my extended paid vacation there in Lebanon, his wife had already died. And there were about four or five families of us who used to go to his home, and we would take all the trimmings for the dinner. And then we would sit in his living room, with a few drinks here and there, and get him to tell us stories of his war years, and you knew that he flew the hump.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: From India over into-- China into Russia, I think, wasn't it? Or India into China. But he had done that as an Air Force guy.

INTERVIEWER: Mm- hm.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: And he had all kinds of stories about his experiences in the war.

INTERVIEWER: When you came to CSU, were you initially housed in what is now the Animal Science building?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: No. I was housed in the North East wing of the agriculture building.

INTERVIEWER: Shephardson.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Shephardson now, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: The whole department was there?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Yes,

INTERVIEWER: Uh- huh.
THOMAS SUTHERLAND: And we had something like nine people in our department. And Animal Science was in that building, Poultry Science was in the basement. Let's see, Agronomy was over in other buildings where there, there still are, the buildings are still there.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: In the Northeast corner of the campus.

INTERVIEWER: So when you came, what we call plant science, and animal science, weren't there?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Were not there. They were planned, but not there yet.

INTERVIEWER: Clark building wasn't there.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: The Clark building was not there.

INTERVIEWER: Uh-huh.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: At that time, the Oval was more or less still the center of the campus.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. And those things to the west were just fields.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Fields, that's right.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Swanson used to keep some of his sheep out there. Where the student center is now.

INTERVIEWER: Uh-huh. Wow. For you, what were the best places on campus? What places were special, or did you like to go to? Other than your office?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Heh. Well, I spent a fair amount of time in my office, but the old student union was an interesting place, and they even had a bowling alley in there.

INTERVIEWER: Where was that?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: That was what is now-- it's an administrative building.

INTERVIEWER: The one they call student services, across from ROTC?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Correct.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.
THOMAS SUTHERLAND: That was part of the student union at that time.

INTERVIEWER: Where was the library?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: The library was where the music department now is. Up in the Oval, at about 10:00 on the Oval.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Immediately north of the chemistry building.

INTERVIEWER: Mm-hm.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: And the chemistry building was immediately north of economics, was it, that was in that building at that time?

INTERVIEWER: Huh. This is a harder question. What have your activities been outside of CSU? Your community involvement? Perhaps not recently, but when you were on the faculty?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Back then?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Well, I was on the planning and zoning committee of the city of Fort Collins, which I enjoyed a great deal. And back in those days, when I was on that committee, we would meet until late into the night, and discuss requests for annexations, and new areas that the city was absorbing into the city. And we thought, honestly, we would get--after that meeting, we would go out and have coffee or a drink in the evening, and we would all say, my, you know they'll never develop all that land into the city. That's crazy to be annexing all that land. 'Cause they'll never develop it. Well-- [LAUGHTER] that was chicken feed compared to what they've pulled into the city now.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Anything else? Other than that [INAUDIBLE] zone?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Were there favorite buildings? Well, I liked the library a great deal. When I worked on that so-called "Sutherland Report," I had a special little room up in the third floor, I think, of the library, where I could go at any time and work on the report. And they left me with a key to get into that thing for quite a long time, so I had easy access into the library and its office.

INTERVIEWER: Mm- hm.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Any other buildings that were special? Whoo.

INTERVIEWER: Did you do any special things on campus, other than your professorial duties?
THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Well, I would like to think that I did. Being on so many committees.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: And all of those are named in that CV that I gave you. And so I was into an awful lot of committee work on the whole campus.

INTERVIEWER: You seem to imply that you felt some special calling to be a teacher, rather than a researcher. That was your professional goal. Tell us a bit about how you taught. What were your techniques?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Well, I didn't read my lectures. And there were some people who would just come in, and actually an agronomist, who was a very famous agronomist, who had been a Colonel in the army, and in the Korean War, and all that kind of stuff, maybe it was the World War II. And he would come in and just read the textbook that he had written. And I never did that. I would write out some notes, and that would keep me on track for what I wanted to cover.

INTERVIEWER: Uh-huh.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: And I would do it extemporaneously. And infuse a bit of humor into it here and there, any time I could. I also told stories here and there, which, nowadays, would probably have gotten me fired. But in those days they were a little less stringent about the kind of stories you could tell.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: But, I mean, you had to make a class interesting.

INTERVIEWER: What did you hope your students learned? From your teaching?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Well, I hoped--

INTERVIEWER: Other than the facts?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Other than the facts. That life was a good challenge, and that you needed to try your best to do something worthwhile in life. And I did that. I tried my best to be worthwhile to society.

INTERVIEWER: Would you call that your philosophy of teaching?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: A lot of people say, yes, they taught students, but they learned from students. Did you learn from your students?
THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Oh, yes. I would say very definitely you learn from the students.

INTERVIEWER: What do you learn?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: I learned what was of interest to them, and what they had to put up with in their lives. And the hardships that they had to endure. And so you learned to be sympathetic to the conditions that they were in. Many of them didn't have all that much money. And you needed to, you know, not require expensive things from them. Pieces of equipment, and books and whatnot.

INTERVIEWER: Mm- hm.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: And then learn to keep your demands of the students within reason.

INTERVIEWER: Mm- hm. You clearly said that teaching was your emphasis. But you must have done some research. What kind of research did you do, and why?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: OK. Well, I used to laugh with people and tell them, I just did enough research and publication in order to get tenure. To be able to stick on, on the faculty. But in truth, I did quite a lot of research, and had a big, big research grant from the National Science Foundation, way back when, to use mice in selection experiments, as a kind of a prototype for cattle selection. And I was interested in body composition, because back in those days, animal science was just moving animals from being way, way, way fat.

When I first came here to CSU, all the beef cattle were really fat. And everybody figured you needed that amount of fat in the beef to be tasty. Well, in fact, you need some fat, because most of the taste in beef is in the fat, and that's how you can tell the difference-- if you eat a piece of beef versus a piece of lamb, versus a piece of pork, you get a different flavor, and the flavor comes from the fat. Not from the meat itself. If you took out, essentially, all the fat, and by heating it up and getting the fat out of there, you would never be able to tell any difference between beef, and lamb, and pork. Maybe by the texture, if you were fairly familiar with the texture, but flavor is what people want, and it's in the fat.

And everybody back in those days thought you had to have a lot of fat to have a tasty steak. So you'd get a steak, and they'd have maybe an inch of fat, around the outer bit, which everybody would take a knife and cut off nicely. But they thought they had to get all this fat on the outside of the steak, on the edge of it, to get enough what they call "marbling," which is intra-muscular fat.

Well, selection in those days in the cattle industry, and sheep and pork, involved selecting animals that had the maximum amount of intra-muscular fat, and the least amount of peripheral fat.

INTERVIEWER: Mm.
THOMAS SUTHERLAND: And that was a big revolution that was going on at that time. Changing the whole nature of the beef that was produced.

INTERVIEWER: And your research contributed to that.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: I hoped that it would, yeah. And my selection was for body composition in the mice, to get a higher proportion of protein in those mice, and a lower percentage of fat.

INTERVIEWER: What were the biggest challenges you faced when you first came to CSU?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Well, when I came, I didn't have any lab, didn't have any research tools or anything, and actually Dean Wheeler and Howard Stonaker both helped me a great deal. They gave me access to space in what's now called, I think it's still called the Industrial Sciences building there?

INTERVIEWER: I don't know.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: It's the one immediately south of the National Seed Storage lab.

INTERVIEWER: OK.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: And they gave me quite a chunk of space in there-- about 3 or 4 rooms-- to set up my mouse colony. So, and at one point, I had something like 10,000 mice in there. And it took a lot of work to keep those cages clean and whatnot, and I had several people who worked for me that did all of that, so I didn't have to get my hands dirty, you know, with mouse cages.

INTERVIEWER: But your biggest challenge was space and equipment.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Yes, I think so.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. What were the biggest rewards during those early years? Or throughout your career?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Well I would say, number one is satisfaction at being able to do a lot of these things.

INTERVIEWER: Uh-huh.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Number two, they gave me nice salary increases. When I came here, I started out at a salary of $7,000 a year. And the average starting salary for Ph.D.s in agriculture was somewhere around $5,000. So I felt pretty good about that. And so did my wife, of course.

INTERVIEWER: Uh-huh.
THOMAS SUTHERLAND: And that was actually an unusual amount of money for a starting Ph.D. in 1958.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. We all learn some things that we wished we'd known when we were younger. How 'bout that? I mean, what do you know now that you wished you'd known 30 years ago?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Hmm.

INTERVIEWER: What has experience taught you?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Gosh. What has experience taught me that I wished I'd-- you know, I've said many times, I wish I were 25 again, and know all that I know now.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, so how does what you know now-- how did it influence what you did then?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Hmm. Gosh.

INTERVIEWER: No answer is an acceptable answer.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: I don't know that I can answer that right off the bat.

INTERVIEWER: OK. That's OK. Talk about CSU. How do you-- how did you, and how do you, see CSU's relation to the community?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: As a link?

INTERVIEWER: How did you once, and how do you now, see the relationship between the university and the community? Has it changed?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: I think CSU is, of course, much bigger and much more talented, actually. The faculty, I think, nowadays, is a lot more educated and well-trained than it was back then. But it was always an important part of the community. And in those days, the community had some interesting aspects to it, but not nearly as much as there is now. I mean, now there are theaters, and drama, and music going on. There always was quite a lot of music here, at CSU, because when land grant institutions were started way back at the very outset, more than 100 years ago, why, music was an important part of the curriculum. And it still is a very important part. And so that contributes to the community a great deal.

Will Schwartz was for over 50 years a conductor of Fort Collins' Symphony. And he started up the Fort Collins Symphony when he was here. He was a professor at CSU, but he was also the conductor of the symphony-- for the Fort Collins Symphony. And, whoo-- other aspects of the--

INTERVIEWER: During your time at the university, were there any particular issues that you remember as causing significant campus debate, or conversation? Important issues?
THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Well, the Vietnam War caused a lot of debate and argument, and ended up with Old Main being burned down. And that was a very important happening. And unfortunate. But it was burned right to the ground. There was nothing left of the whole building.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: And you were here at that time, I think.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, yeah. I have a brick from Old Main. So that was one of the significant world events. Were there any significant campus events? That influenced you, that everybody was talking about? On campus?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: I would say yes, there were indeed. Some of the students got pretty active, and were--

INTERVIEWER: Protesting?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Protesting various things. Particularly, of course, the Vietnam War. But there were other, other things that were going on at the time. The city was expanding very, very rapidly, and the students were living, not all in the dorms, but in residences all around. So there were then, as there are now, complaints about four, five, six, seven students living in a house.

INTERVIEWER: When you came here, the dormitories weren't there.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: That's correct.

INTERVIEWER: Uh- huh. So the students pretty much had to live off-campus then?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: There were a lot of them who did stay off campus, yeah. There were of course a lot fewer students to house, and there were some dormitories at that time, of course.

INTERVIEWER: You came here in 1958, you said?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Mm-hm.

INTERVIEWER: What do you regard as the most significant changes in the institution since you came here?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Well, it has become a much more respected research campus than it was at that time. And it may not have caught up to Michigan, and Ohio State, and even Nebraska, possibly, which is, incidentally, a pretty good university that its football team can be proud of. But CSU has come a long ways in developing into what you could call a real research university. When I first came here, it was not a strong research university. With the exception,
possibly, of engineering. Engineering was strong at that time, and even vet medicine was not as strong as it is now. Vet medicine is now regarded as second in the entire country, I would say.

INTERVIEWER: But Tom, if it wasn't a very good university when you came, why did you come?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Well, because it was in Colorado. And because my wife was excited about the chance of coming and living in Colorado. At that time, I didn't know that climate made that much difference to a person's life. But as you get used to it, and living with all the sunshine that we have-- for example, out there today the sun is shining bright and beautifully, and we had a humongous snowstorm the other day, but the signs of that are essentially all gone.

INTERVIEWER: So your reason for coming was geographic and climatic, not intellectual.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Yes, but you know, you have to know that I was not a very intellectual or dynamically talented guy in many, many ways. So I didn't look on this as being a poorer university than many of the others. Which, you can look around now and see, what are the universities that are much less talented. New Mexico State, for example, I would say, is quite a ways behind Colorado State. And a long ways behind Michigan, and Berkeley, California.

INTERVIEWER: When you came, what's your best estimate of the number of faculty that had Ph.D.'s?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: In our department, or in the whole campus?

INTERVIEWER: Either one.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Well, in our department, I think there were, like, four of us out of 15 who had Ph.D.'s.

INTERVIEWER: Uh-huh.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: And at that time, people thought, well, having a master's degree is perfectly OK.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: But now you would never get a position on this faculty here, even in agriculture, without a Ph.D.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Does being a land-grant university have any special significance for you, or for the region?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Mm- hm. I would say that the mission of a land-grant university is a very special one. That is, to be a service to the state, and even to the nation. And to convey research results out, practical results, as far as possible to the agricultural community. And to the
urban community and for their gardens and whatnot. And the Horticulture Department is heavily engaged in that aspect of it. Then, agronomy is pretty much involved with the grain producing, and so on, of the state, and of the nation. But the other, horticulture, is quite involved as the extension service, and horticulture's quite heavily involved with urban communities. Especially nowadays.

INTERVIEWER: If you were in charge of the university, what do you think should be done, in the next 10 years? What would you change? What should the best programs be? What would you emphasize?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Wow. Can I say I don't know?

INTERVIEWER: Yes. You can.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Honestly, I haven't kept that closely to the university in the last 20 years, since I went away from it to go to Lebanon and so on. And I'm not quite sure where improvement is needed. Now, there are young guys around there who are in that role, like Tony Frank, who's now the president, and seems to be doing a really top-notch job of keeping the university relevant. And these guys are younger, and they have a lot more energy than I do now, by a long ways.

You know, I have to admit, you know, you get older, and you have less energy, and less intellectual energy, even, not just physical energy.

INTERVIEWER: But you've got wisdom. Wisdom.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Wisdom, right.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Tom, you spent, what, a year in Ethiopia, you spent time in Lesotho. Independent of the Beirut all expense paid vacation, how did your international experience influence you in your career?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Well, first of all, I spent two years in Ethiopia, and then I spent two years more in Lebanon. And it gave me an appreciation, especially in Ethiopia, for what was needed in the world. And what America, especially, can do for the rest of the world. Ethiopia, at the time that we were there, was considered the poorest country in the world.

INTERVIEWER: Mm- hm.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: And there were people walking around the town, in Addis Ababa, without any shoes on. They just didn't have shoes. Now, they had pretty tough soles on their feet, all right, but it was really a shock to see how desperately poor those people were in Ethiopia. And when we went to interview there, Jean went out for a tour around the town, with Janine Temple, who was also a graduate of CSU, in agronomy. And her husband, Bob Temple, was a graduate of animal science, in both a Bachelor's and a Master's. And so we were guests of Bob and Janine in Ethiopia.
Now they had a big house there, five or six servants to wait on them, and Janine took Jean around the whole town of Addis Ababa. And when we got home in the evening-- I came home from the meetings of the Board of Trustees of the International Livestock Centre for Africa-- and we got ready for dinner. And when we were in there getting cleaned up a bit, Jean looked at me, and she said, I'm sorry, but I can't come here. I just can't stand all that poverty. And she was just shocked at the amount of poverty that was in the whole town, and the whole country of Ethiopia.

Well I think it's come a ways since then, in those 40 years since we were there.

INTERVIEWER: But did that experience, and if it did, how did it contribute to your teaching? That's the issue. Was it important?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Yes. I could convey to the students I was teaching how lucky they were, in fact, to be in a college like this, and getting the kind of instruction that they were getting, and that they should appreciate it. And it gave me a solid, first-hand appreciation for all of that.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think all faculty should have some international experience?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Yes. I do. I think that we should be involved internationally to the max. As much as we possibly can. And of course, nowadays, there's so much danger associated with going to other places. I wouldn't want to go to Afghanistan, for example, at this point. Neither as a private citizen, as some of the journalists do. There are some TV reporters who go there, and they're very brave people to go there, because America is simply not appreciated very much, at all.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: But other than that, I think that it's desirable to have a faculty being able to give the students as much international experience as possible. Now I went to France for a year, and that gave me a lot of appreciation that there were other ways to do things than the way that they were done in Colorado State. And I found that the French people were really smart, and articulate, and knew their stuff very well.

INTERVIEWER: Tu parle Francaise?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Huh?

INTERVIEWER: Tu parle Francaise?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Oui. [SPEAKING FLUENT FRENCH]

INTERVIEWER: This project we're engaged in, this oral history, do you think this is worth doing? Preserving your story?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Yes.
INTERVIEWER: Why?

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Because those who ignore history are destined to repeat it, as they say.

INTERVIEWER: George Santayana, yeah. So what we're trying to do, this is really not part of the interview, is preserve the stories of people who have been here, to gain that perspective of time, and to preserve the story, so that, 50 years from now, people can know what it was like. So I thank you very much for your time.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: You're welcome.

INTERVIEWER: Pleasure to visit with you, and hear your story.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: Well I'm honored that you would be even interested in hearing it. Some of it you knew, of course, quite well.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. We didn't touch at all on Lebanon, because it's kind of a separate story. And by the time you came back from your paid vacation, Jean had already retired you. So that experience, while it influenced your life immeasurably, really didn't influence your time at CSU.

THOMAS SUTHERLAND: No.

INTERVIEWER: Besides, if we did that, you might charge me $10,000. OK. Katie, you got this all recorded?

KATIE: Mm- hm.

INTERVIEWER: Good.