

Edward (Ted) Farmer

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Interview with Edward (Ted) Farmer

**Interviewed by Professor Clarke A. Chambers
University of Minnesota**

**Interviewed on June 30, 1994
University of Minnesota Campus**

Ted Farmer - TF
Clarke A. Chambers - CAC

CAC: This is Clarke Chambers. I am conducting an interview with Professor Edward Farmer, whom we know as Ted Farmer, who has been here since 1968. Ted has a field in Chinese History. He came to us with that kind of expertise. He's been with us ever since. He was very active in department, college, and university, and with communities, scholarly and otherwise, outside the university so that our conversation can be very wide-ranging. The date is June 30, 1994 and the interview is being conducted in my office in the Social Science building.

Ted, you're the first person to be interviewed and if my voice trembles a bit, it's because I'm just starting on this grand enterprise and I can't imagine anyone better to start with. Why don't you say a bit about why Chinese culture and history, and a bit about your training, and then your coming to Minnesota in 1968?

TF: I'm a fifth generation Californian. I grew up in balmy climes. My father was a professor at Stanford; so, I'm a faculty brat. I grew up in a university atmosphere. As an undergraduate, my first major was biology and organic chemistry persuaded me that maybe the humanities were more interesting. As a sophomore, I think, I decided I'd do history because it had lenient requirements that could allow me to explore things. My idea of exploring the world of humanities was to get the big picture; so, I thought I'd start with a culture least like my own and work my way across the spectrum. I opened the catalog and took a course in Chinese History and got sucked right in and then did all the history I could do as an undergraduate.

CAC: You started the language at that time?

TF: I didn't start the language as an undergraduate because the language instruction wasn't good at that time. When I finished college, I went into the Army with the intention of going into the Army Language School and satisfying the military service requirement at the same time. I went

to Monterey and learned Chinese, and spent a year in Korea, and another year in Seattle. Then, I went to graduate school at Harvard and did a Ph.D. in Chinese history.

CAC: Say something about the immersion system of learning a language in the Army.

TF: This is a magnificent thing that the Army set up to train people in languages. One had six hours a day in classes no larger than six people . . . all native instructors and a different instructor every hour. You had intensive conversations back and forth. Everything you learned, you learned at native speed and fluency; but, of course, you had only a limited vocabulary to begin with and you were saying idiotic things.

CAC: Sure.

TF: It would drive the instructors crazy. By the time you got done, you could converse easily with people in the language although you'd learned it on a military base.

CAC: By the time you were done . . . does that mean a year?

TF: The initial course was a year and then selected people could go on for another six months. I was in a group of four that did this and that gave us more reading skills, more characters, and a deeper vocabulary; so, I had eighteen months of this.

CAC: Do you think a lot of the folks who went through that then became experts?

TF: The field is full of such people. I could name a dozen.

CAC: The earlier generation were usually missionary brats?

TF: Exactly. Now, you can get this kind of training through universities.

CAC: But you have to pay for it.

TF: Yes. It was estimated that the cost of this was something like \$75,000 in 1957 dollars. [laughter] It approaches the cost of training a fighter pilot or something.

CAC: Just think of the payoff that there is down the line for exotic areas. I know China is not exotic, but its language is not one one normally would pick up.

TF: My graduate school was made possible by what was called the National Defense Education Act {NDEA}, which followed the Russian launching of *Sputnik* and that provided federal funding for graduate studies in world languages that were in short supply. I was funded all the way through Harvard by NDFL [National Defense Foreign Language] grants and, then, went to Taiwan for two years on a Fulbright . . . so federal funding from the military, from the education

act, and from the Fulbright program. While I was in Taiwan working on a dissertation, I was hired by this department by mail. I had already accepted a three-year job at Yale, which was a short-term deal. It was kind of sinecure to finish your dissertation and have an initial teaching experience. I had accepted the three-year job at Yale and, then, I got the offer from Minnesota for a tenure track position; so, I negotiated with Yale to go there for one year and then come here as a regular faculty member—which I did.

CAC: What was the status of East Asian Studies here at Minnesota at that time, in 1968?

TF: There was one person in history; Romeyn Taylor was already here. There was a language program in Chinese and Japanese. I suppose [there were] close to a dozen faculty members who did East Asian things.

CAC: They were tucked away in what . . . Geography?

TF: Geography, Political Science, Art History.

CAC: But that wouldn't be a large enough group really to sustain a program when you came here in 1968?

TF: Oh, yes, it was just enough to sustain a program. Our East Asian library had been started by the initiative of a vice-president named [Don] Smith, who since went to Wisconsin. That collection ranked about fifteenth in the country at that time.

CAC: How many of the other Big Ten universities would have had a significant number of Chinese scholars?

TF: Four or five . . . Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, particularly. Just before I came, there was a competition for federal centers, NDFL centers, in which the East Asian program at Minnesota and the South Asian program competed. The South Asian program got a center and was funded richly for a decade or more. We were a power relative to other schools in South Asian Studies. We have the Ames Library here. East Asian was just below the cutoff and every time we've reapplied for center status, we've been just below the cutoff.

CAC: That still remains the case?

TF: Yes. Somebody described our East Asian Studies program as a program that got out onto the runway, and revved up the engines, and began to taxi but never took off. [laughter] This has remained the case ever since.

CAC: Within Central Administration of the college and the university, were there persons who were vigorous and assertive in moving to strengthen East Asian or Chinese Studies?

TF: Don Smith was the visionary—he was under President O. Meredith Wilson—and he took a lot of initiative, and pushed things, and made things happen. When he left, there was a vacuum created and there's never been any leadership since.

CAC: Either in the college or the university?

TF: No. There were little spurts of leadership but nothing coherent. My impression of the university under [President Malcolm] Moos was that it was dead in the water and this continued under [President Peter] Magrath. There was a tremendous surge of energy when Ken Keller became president. I've likened it to a ship dead in the water in which somebody started the engine suddenly. The whole thing began to shudder, and roll, and churn, and surge.

CAC: [laughter]

TF: He went out and raised \$350 million for chairs. Things began to happen in every facet of the university and, of course, great opposition was aroused and Ken Keller was turned out.

CAC: At various departmental levels, an investment was made, certainly in History, to strengthen East Asian Studies, for example, and, the third world generally, by the addition of persons in those fields?

TF: I wouldn't give much credit to the History Department in that. It may have been the case that I was added at department initiative; but, David Lelyveld, who came as the second Indian historian, was funded by federal matching funds from the center.

CAC: I see.

TF: The truth of the matter is that in the East Asian Studies, we never got a center and we never had any matching funds; so, we couldn't break into departments. That was a serious problem.

CAC: We had a Japanese historian.

TF: The Japanese historian came before I did.

CAC: I see.

TF: There was a Chinese historian and a Japanese historian. I was the second Chinese historian. We had federal fellowships at that time for Chinese and that's all dried up since.

CAC: We may return to the more recent past later in our conversation. Do you want to say something about your perception of the college and the department when you came here in 1968?

TF: I had certain desiderata in a university. I wanted, first of all, a school that was large enough to have graduate program, and I wanted a place that had an East Asian library so that there were resource materials in Chinese and Japanese, and beyond that, a decent place to live. I had grown up in California but gone to school in Massachusetts and Cambridge and I'd taught a year at Yale and I knew I didn't want to live in New England. I was very much turned off by the class stratification of that part of the world; so, I thought the Midwest sounded great—knowing nothing about it whatsoever. I arrived here after returning from Taiwan and was met at the airport by my colleague Romeyn Taylor, who brought me to the campus. Here was this large river running through the campus and I said, "What's that?" He said, "That's the Mississippi River." I said, "What's it doing in Minnesota?"

CAC: [laughter]

TF: This gives you some idea of my knowledge of Midwestern geography at the time. [laughter]

CAC: Things were changing very quickly in many departments right at the time you were coming.

TF: Yes.

CAC: This is the end of the decade of tumult in 1968 and 1969. It was pretty wooly, I should think, to come in not being part of a history and knowing where things were coming from?

TF: Right. I also was somewhat isolated from the culture of history departments. As an undergraduate, I'd been in a history department at Stanford, but I also did a philosophy major and probably was closer to the philosophy department. Then, in graduate school, I'd been in a program which was history and far-eastern languages that insulated me from the history department at Harvard. I'd taught a year at Yale and that was a most unreal place; so, I'd never been in a public university. I'd never seen the politics that occur. I was, of course, shocked when I got here, and discovered how the game was played, and what was going on.

CAC: What was going on and how was . . . ?

TF: It was a very traditional, conservative faculty group. It was still an age in which there was tea poured by the chairman's wife with white gloves, as her thing. We were in a tremendous generation gap because by the end of the 1960s, younger generations of people were up in arms in anti-war movements and things like that. This change really took place in, I would say, 1965 to 1967, the time I was in Taiwan. I went away to Taiwan and was in a kind of capsule there and returned to find people with hair all over their faces, smoking pot, and generally declaiming the government; that was the kind of environment. The younger members of the department were, I think, appalled by the way decisions were made in the department. There was a committee of senior professors, full bulls, who made all the decisions in hiring, and salaries, and

promotions; and no one really knew what the reasons for anything were. We didn't even know what each others salaries were. So, I was a part of a group that wanted to open all this up.

CAC: That was pretty daring for a person appearing on campus then to get right into that?

TF: I guess I really stuck my neck out in a number of ways.

CAC: [laughter]

TF: The thing I cared most about was our so-called priorities. I remember trying to get the department to have a discussion of what its priorities were because I thought we were skewed toward U.S. and European history and needed more of the rest of the world. Whenever there was a priorities discussion or a new position open, it was a kind of question of who could prevail; and the people that prevailed were the people who already had the largest share of the faculty. So, I tried to get this kind of discussion going; but, I realized I couldn't introduce it myself. I wrote a modest proposal and then asked some senior professor to introduce it for me and watched it go down in smoke.

CAC: That was that the case at first that it did go down in smoke?

TF: Oh, yes, indeed. I kept coming back to it year after year. The big change was a change in our departmental constitution in which we changed the way we made promotion, merit, and tenure decisions. The first step was a step in which we elected representatives of the lower ranks, that is, associates and assistant professors, to attend the meeting of the full professors to watch what happened. David Kieft and I were the first two assistant professors . . .

CAC: Good for you.

TF: . . . elected; so, we sat in and watched some, what I would describe as, horse trading between senior faculty that decided the promotions.

CAC: What was your sense of where the initiative was coming and what support one had for these initiatives to open up the department's budget and procedures?

TF: I think the faculty was very much divided. I would describe it as a situation in which the European historians tended to take more conservative positions. There was a strong sort of Minnesota liberal constellation among the American historians. The Americans had spent a couple of years trying to hire Mr. [Eugene] Genovese. You may recall this. [laughter]

CAC: [laughter]

TF: That seemed to be one of the great battles that had taken place just before I arrived and sort of helped to map the landscape a bit.

CAC: We came close on that. It's your interview and not mine. Among others, I had to go over to Morrill Hall and testify to the vice-president. I said he was not subversive. That he was a radical historian but that he would be okay—then, he didn't take the job.

TF: Right. The way we finally turned things around in the department was kind of interesting. We introduced the subject, hypothetically, I guess, as could we reorganize ourselves and our procedures? Stuart Hoyt was the chair and he was open to that because he had a strong interest in constitutional questions being an English constitutional, medievalist type. Having done that, then, we hit on the strategy of having somebody from Political Science come in and give a presentation on what they did in Political Science because they had kind of a committee system. Frank Sorauf came in and gave a presentation describing what they had done. It totally changed the terms of the debate because by the time Frank Sorauf finished talking, it wasn't a question of what we were going to do, it was assumed from that point on that we would do everything Political Science did and then some more. In fact, we went far beyond them.

CAC: Where do you think that *more* came from? It really pushes from this younger generation?

TF: Obviously, it was supported by people at all levels who were dissatisfied with the way things had been done. I think there was a strong kind of democratic ethos in the movement, that is, giving everybody a voice. People may have subscribed to that from various ideological positions. I think the central genius of this department has been its tolerance of different styles of history. We don't have a particular ideological . . .

CAC: There's no party line?

TF: Yes, no party line. This, plus this old interest in a kind of constitutional way of doing things. Having rules that we agreed on made it possible for people to take radically different positions intellectually, and fight ferociously over things, and, yet, remain good friends.

CAC: I can understand the source of the latter, that is the constitutional and a commitment to procedure; but, the former, that is, the tolerance of different methods, different modes of inquiry . . . where do you think that derives in a department? Is that part of the culture? Is it college-wide?

TF: No, I don't think its college-wide because you can find departments in which . . . I think recently some of the language departments have taken a kind of a Marxist line to a particular kind of criticism you have to do or something. I think some of our Social Science colleagues had trouble with different kinds of number crunchers being in the [unclear] at various times. I think its a department culture that probably gains a lot from personalities . . . that there were some strong personalities who were in favor of tolerance and they basically carried the day. There were divisive personalities. Before my time, there was Timothy Smith in American History who apparently sowed dissention among the ranks. I would say Otto Pflanze, the great German historian, was the person who was most divisive in my early years here; but, when he

left to go to edit the journal of the American Historical Association, the *American Historical Review*, department politics improved dramatically. We've had, I would say, no serious divisions since.

CAC: These things that you're detailing were done at a certain cost, however. These were pretty tumultuous meetings, right?

TF: Yes. [laughter]

CAC: How long, in your memory, do you think it took to really open up the department and then settle down into an acceptance of these open procedures?

TF: My memory of it is that it went pretty fast, that it was a matter of, like, two years when we rewrote the constitution, and started having elective committees, and that sort of thing.

CAC: It's your perception that this was not college-wide?

TF: No, no. This was very much within the department and there was some fear that the college would try to override it or disapprove it. For example, we wanted to elect our chair and tell the dean who our chair was going to be; and in some technical way, the dean is not bound by this. It's the dean's judgment to go along with it. In matters of promotion, the college constitution specifically says it's those senior in rank who vote; so, we devised a system whereby we've done joint voting. We've done the voting required by the college constitution, but then we go on to do a vote of all members as required by our own constitution. If these two votes are at variance, then the chair of the department has to come back and explain it to the faculty. We have really set our own standard, which is more open, more democratic, more participatory than the college standards and have defended that against the college interests or against the college pressure—successfully, I think.

CAC: A certain number of deans were mildly amused?

TF: Yes. Yes. The question was, would this lead to a watering down of our procedures?

CAC: And of our judgments on promotion . . . ?

TF: Exactly, that we would be not judgmental in terms of making differences in salary, and would we be easier on promotions, and would we hire people on the basis of popularity? Anything but that has happened. I think the standards of the department have risen steadily since that point. I think we are the best run of departments, the most professional of departments, and the people who aren't professionally active have been marginalized in our department.

CAC: You came also at a time of national crisis. The anti-war feeling was cresting, 1968, 1969. I know that you were active in the Concerned Asian Scholars?

TF: It was called the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars [CCAS].

CAC: Okay. Was this a national movement?

TF: It was a national organization and I think other professional associations generated similar kinds of subgroups. Essentially, my professional association is the Association for Asian Studies. That's more meaningful for me than the American Historical Association.

CAC: Sure.

TF: The Association for Asian Studies was very strongly traumatized by the McCarthy period in the 1950s. The Institute of Pacific Relations, which was a scholarly association that produced a journal internationally, was denied its tax exempt status by the U.S. government under political pressure and was driven out of the country and out of business. So, the Association for Asian Studies made great efforts to exclude from its annual meetings and from any of its activities anything that touched on U.S. governmental policy or politics. This meant that among these people who were studying Asia, there was no scholarly forum to discuss the Vietnam War and/or the politics that led to it. When I was in Taiwan as a graduate student, a number of us who were alarmed by this and anxious to change it, petitioned the leadership of the association to make some changes. The man who had been my first adviser at Stanford, and who later hired me to teach at Yale, was president of the association. We wrote to him.

CAC: Who was that?

TF: That was a man named Arthur Wright; he was a famous Sinologist. His response was, "If there's any such impetus to change the way we do things in the association, I hope you'll kick it in the head." We were not impressed.

CAC: [laughter]

TF: I was not of the youngest radical generation. I was somewhat older. I'd been four years in the Army. I had been in the Counter Intelligence Corps doing security investigations; so, I was very much conservative on the question of political subversion and that sort of thing. I wasn't anxious to overturn the world. On the other hand, I agreed with those who thought we should examine U.S. policy as specialists on Asia. In Taiwan, we organized among a group of graduate students. We had meetings in our houses and began to organize. When we returned to the United States in 1968, the Association for Asian Studies met in Philadelphia and the young Turks split off. They hired a private hall outside of the association meeting and organized the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars.

CAC: What proportion of the group of scholars do you think that was . . . the splinter group?

TF: Initially, it was probably 10 percent or less.

CAC: Then it came quickly to be what percent?

TF: Maybe 20 percent.

CAC: No more than that?

TF: I would think not . . . that actually joined. It produced its own bulletin and for five or ten years had parallel meetings; that is, it would meet in the same city at the same time as the association but hold radical conferences.

CAC: What was the situation in Asian Studies politically when you came here in 1968?

TF: Politically, Minnesota wasn't a center for Asian Studies, particularly East Asian Studies; so, there wasn't a . . .

CAC: It was not a number one topic?

TF: No, not a particular landscape; but, it was a place where there was active SDS, Students for a Democratic Society, and a good-sized student radical movement. Some of the students who were studying with Romeyn Taylor and myself in Chinese History formed a chapter of the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars and did various things.

CAC: Did you gain support from people in the Chinese Languages for that?

TF: No, they were much more conservative.

CAC: Where else did you get your support then or membership?

TF: From some of the local colleges . . . from Macalester.

CAC: Ah! so it wouldn't be on campus, okay.

TF: Some of the people in South Asian Studies, and Anthropology, and others; but, it was mostly students not faculty.

CAC: You and Romeyn Taylor played a crucial role in that case?

TF: Yes, yes. I was the faculty sponsor for this student organization, as it were. We would have mass meetings with a case of beer at somebody's house and decide on this and that. One of our graduate students in Chinese History organized a camp-in on the Mall over at the "U". They put up tents on the lawn there. When the campus was on strike, there was a campus strike committee that met on the upper floors of Coffman Union and there were representatives to that.

CAC: So, this small group you were a member of reached out into the Teach-in Movement . . . ?

TF: Yes, part of that.

CAC: . . . which was beyond the Asian [unclear]?

TF: Yes, exactly, part of that whole thing but not in a central way but as part of it, one piece of it. Our courses in Asian History were fully subscribed. There was tremendous student interest and demand for anything on East Asia.

CAC: It's my impression that here at Minnesota in the heartland of the country that student activism became radical later than would be true in Madison [Wisconsin], or Columbia, or Berkeley?

TF: Yes. The first Teach-ins . . . I can remember when I had a Fulbright and was going to Taiwan in 1965, I went to Washington for a briefing at the State Department and the first Teach-ins were taking place there when I left. I was still a supporter of the war at that point. My view was that if we were willing to fight to support our European allies, we should be willing to fight to support our Asian allies. Then, later, we realized that we simply didn't understand what was going on in Vietnam. The CCAS produced a lot of materials to try to brief congressmen. I remember we had a meeting with Don Fraser when he was the representative. We went to his office and said we wanted to talk to him about the war in Vietnam. He said, "Yes, I've got some stuff here in my briefcase." He opened up his briefcase and pulled out a lot of CCAS literature. [laughter]

CAC: [laughter]

TF: Our organization had already got to him. There is one incident I particularly remember . . . Romeyn Taylor and I marching around Morrill Hall with picket signs saying, "On strike. Shut it down!" [laughter]

CAC: Were there very many professors later . . . ?

TF: A few but not too many.

CAC: It became logical then that in the real serious concern, in the spring of 1972 I think, when, for the first time, the campus really got in trouble that you were selected—I don't know what the process was—to make a statement of this position before the Regents?

TF: The statement to the Regents embodies two of my interests. One was the curricular interest in simply getting Asian Studies more centrally into what the university did. There's a big world

out there, and this is a very isolated university, and the students weren't learning about it. Then, second was this political question of how should the university respond to this national crisis . . . to the war and all of that? My line within CCAS was that without politicizing the university, it was perfectly proper for the university to play a bigger role in informing the American public about the area. I said the university, whether it was open or shut, was not doing its proper job, which is, it was not studying the reality. My presentation to the Regents was designed to urge them to think that it was proper for the university to promote the study of South East Asia.

CAC: Did the Regents invite you to make this statement?

TF: No, absolutely not. We got on the Regents' docket, as anyone can. We waited patiently through the Regents' meeting. When we came up on the docket, as we were introduced, Elmer Andersen, who was the chairman of the Board of Regents, said, "We'll take a break now," and they got up and walked away as I was starting to talk. [laughter]

CAC: [laughter]

TF: They were absolutely unwilling to listen to us.

CAC: How long a statement did you make to an empty house then?

TF: I suppose twenty minutes. It seemed like a year to me; but, I was very nervous.

CAC: Did any of the Regents drift back in?

TF: No, no. There was no acknowledgment of our presence, as I recall it.

CAC: Most of them were out of the room?

TF: Yes, they got up and walked away or talked with each other.

CAC: So you were speaking to the microphone?

TF: Whatever, yes.

CAC: I'll have to check to see whether . . . they did come to take microphone records, you know, recorded [unclear]?

TF: Yes. It pretty much soured me on the Regents and Mr. Andersen in particular.

CAC: Let's move now to a central part of any faculty member's commitment, that is, the realm of scholarship. We'll come back to teaching. You were very active in Ming Studies and part

of the outreach of the University of Minnesota was through your influence in international journals and a monograph series, etcetera. Would you say something about that, please?

TF: My speciality in Chinese history was in the Ming dynasty, which is 1368-1644, not a modern period, and an area of scholarship that was, at that time, underdeveloped. That is part of why I chose it. I was always wanting to kind of be a change agent and open things up; so, I chose to work in this field. When I got here, of course, I was rather isolated. I had the good fortune of having a colleague in Romeyn Taylor who was interested in the same period; but basically, my peer group is scattered around the country and around the world. I took the initiative to start a newsletter—slash—journal to service this field of Chinese history. This met with good results. I got some initial funding from the Association for Asian Studies and some support from the college to support a student assistant, and began to produce this journal, and published that for ten years from 1975 to 1985, two issues a year. It was very well received around the country and around the world and had subscribers in Europe, and the Soviet Union, and China, and various places. This was a great strategy for somebody, who was sort of isolated in the Midwest, to become part of an international network of scholarship. I still, to this day, get unsolicited manuscripts, correspondence, things just sent from anywhere in the world.

CAC: Does the journal still exist somewhere else?

TF: Yes. By 1985, I had done it long enough; so, I found somebody in New York to take it to another college. It's now endangered again and we need to find it a new home; but, it survived at least one transplantation. I have continued on with a monograph series here, which has only produced two numbers so far. I'm getting the third one out this summer—as a way of keeping that alive.

CAC: The support you had from the college and university was marginal and overhead but spoken encouragement?

TF: Oh, yes. I think the department very much supported me and the college gave small amounts of money. It was pretty much a one-man effort and became very burdensome. The fact that I couldn't increase the support for it was part of the reason I moved it elsewhere. Then later, I was offered the editorship of the *Journal of Asian Studies* which is our big national journal and the college would have given me all kinds of support for that. I decided not to do it because I wanted to keep the curriculum alive. I could have brought that journal here.

CAC: Keeping the curriculum alive . . . You were active not only in promoting the field within History but also with Area Studies in the college generally. Where do you take that in our conversation?

TF: I think I view the curriculum in a global sense. Going back, I guess, to my undergraduate days as a science student, I have always thought that curriculum should reach the whole subject matter; so, I'm opposed to parochialism in curriculum. I have always thought that I couldn't be

an advocate just for Chinese history or Asian history, that I had to be an advocate for African, Latin American, whatever wasn't being done; so, when I had a chance to speak on these things, I always tried to speak for the whole and not for the part. In the 1970s, somebody in the administration began to look at instructional costs in a serious way. You may remember some of these . . .

CAC: That comes with the first retrenchment, sure.

TF: . . . figures. Average instructional cost was \$14 a credit or something and History was down around \$9. At the top of the list in the college was Chinese at \$72. [laughter]

CAC: [laughter]

TF: So, the Chinese and Japanese Language instruction was endangered, as were all of the less commonly taught foreign languages. One of the responses to this was to create demand for them. Roger Benjamin, then a Political Science professor, and I organized the East Asian Studies program, which was an interdepartmental major run by a committee. We sat around my kitchen table and wrote this program proposal one night. That helped to save the Language program for five or ten years. It got into trouble again by the early 1980s. The strategy then was to merge the Area Studies program with the Language Department. This is called the imperialist model . . .

CAC: [laughter]

TF: . . . to bring the Social Sciences faculty into a common departmental structure with the Language and Literature people so that better decision making could take place and also so that you could marshal more administrative talent because the Language and Literature people tended not to be good at decision making.

CAC: Right.

TF: We merged and formed an East Asian Studies Department at that time. This was probably around 1980.

CAC: To become a department required real constitutional action at the college level?

TF: Yes, sure. We had to write a constitution and to lobby it through.

CAC: It required money to sustain a budget?

TF: There was already an existing Language Department; so, it simply was an expansion of that department by the addition of additional voting members. The external voting members provided the administrative talent. Byron Marshall was the first chairman of this department. I became

director of Graduate Studies. Romeyn Taylor became director of Undergraduate Studies. Basically, we took all the constitutional arrangements of the History Department and imposed them on this new faculty and all the organizational arrangements.

CAC: [laughter]

TF: I, later, became chair of that department. I was simultaneously chair and director of Graduate Studies. There was a period in the 1980s when it kind of blossomed. I was up to, I think, 22 TAs [teaching assistantships] and had about thirty graduate students in residence. These people are just now getting their Ph.D.s, a couple every year. We kept it afloat until about four or five years ago.

CAC: What do you see as sinking it?

TF: The college's need to contract into a smaller number of units; that was number one. Number two was the terrible cost that's put on the Social Science faculty who were trying to administer . . . going across the river, and running a department, and dealing with fund raising, fighting deans, running searches . . . all this.

CAC: And still doing all your work back home in the home department?

TF: It just wore us out. The decision was to merge these small Language faculties with the Linguistics faculty and some others to form an Institute of Linguistics and Languages.

CAC: Did this decrease the authority of the adjunct persons from line departments like History?

TF: It removed them totally. What happened to the Area Studies programs, components, which had initially been interdisciplinary majors and then had become parts of departments, was they were pulled out again and became interdisciplinary majors again. For a year, I served in the Institute of International Studies on the West Bank downstairs in Social Sciences as the director of all of the Area Studies programs.

CAC: This would include African, Latin American?

TF: Yes. I was simultaneously the director of the Latin American Studies program and East Asian and . . .

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]

[Tape 1, Side 2]

TF: . . . did merge the Area Studies program to save money. I think the answer is, "Yes, it probably did." There are economies of scale. The overhead is very good downstairs in the

Institute of International Studies. That's a very well-run shop. The new institute across the river clearly achieves economies of scale by having better secretaries.

CAC: What costs in program and scholarship [unclear]?

TF: I think the jury is still out on that. Whether the Area Studies programs will continue to attract students remains to be seen. Whether the deans will continue to support the less commonly taught languages remains to be seen. Initially, I think the forecast is good.

CAC: Is the size of the faculty in East Asian Studies approximately the same as it was in 1970 now twenty-five years later?

TF: There's very little difference.

CAC: Pretty stable then.

TF: Very little growth. A person drops off here and [there is] one added there. There's a little bit more China expertise. The Japanese expertise has eroded to the point where there are only two people in the college that deal with Japan at all.

CAC: And the East Indian side . . . South Asian?

TF: South Asian just went right down into the dumpster. They were very badly administered. There was very little student demand. They shrank and shrank. They lost their federal funding and, then, they lost their department. Now, there's nothing left at all.

CAC: But, yhey were the program with the best research base?

TF: Exactly.

CAC: How did that happen?

TF: I think it's two things: very bad leadership . . . they made very bad decisions and, secondly, that the external demand, that is, the student demand for South Asian Studies was low nationally. They couldn't demonstrate their centrality the way East Asian could.

CAC: What has become of the Ames Library use therefore?

TF: Ames Library is used by visiting scholars. It's a good resource, an underutilized resource. Some people on the administration wanted to sell it, which I think would be the stupidest thing the university could possibly do.

CAC: There was a basic collection . . . has it been added to?

TF: Yes, continuously. It may have some endowment of its own; but, it also gets large infusions of South Asian material through a kind of PL480 law in which the United States buys Indian publications with funds captured through the sale or distribution of American grain in India, that kind of thing.

CAC: Heavens. Let's turn to curriculum. After all, instruction is one the chief missions of the department, the college, and the university. I know that you were active—in what order, I'm not certain—in teaching not only Chinese history but in broadening it beyond that into comparative structures and a course, really, in world history, right?

TF: Yes.

CAC: You know that story. Help us out.

TF: The story is a multistaged story. When I came here, there was a survey course in Asian History taught by the then existing Asianist in the department. It was typically done in three parts: one, part of the course would be devoted to India; then, part to Japan, then, part to China. A big innovation was suggested by David Kopf who was an Indian historian trained in Chicago, who had worked with [William] McNeill at Chicago, the great comparativist. McNeill had written a book called *The Rise of the West: [A History of the Human Community]* which looked at the rise of the great civilizations somewhat comparatively. David Kopf suggested, "Why don't we do our survey of Asia comparatively?" We bought into this. David Kopf, and Byron Marshall, and Romeyn Taylor, and I reorganized the course as a comparative overview of civilizations.

CAC: How many civilizations did you incorporate into that?

TF: There are basically three Asian civilizations: Middle Eastern civilization, South Asian or Indian civilization, and then East Asian civilization. Then there are two areas, which aren't quite civilizations.

CAC: [laughter]

TF: One is Central Asia and where the Mongols and all those peoples come from and the other is South East Asia, where everybody has intermixed. Then, Europe is the fourth civilization, not described but implicitly there. This was an enormous brainstorm and the four of us fought like dogs and cats, writing memos back and forth.

CAC: To each other?

TF: To each other, yes, and deciding what are the central processes. We'd describe these processes and, then, we would look at the pattern of them in each area. Eventually, we designed a textbook, which surveyed all of this. It fell to me to coordinate the authors in this textbook;

so, I was applying some of my administrative experience here. It took us until 1976, I think, to finish this. It was about a six-year project. We took on a fifth author who could do things we didn't have expertise in in Central Asian [unclear], Gavin Hambly, who taught at Yale and subsequently moved to Texas. We produced a two-volume textbook, which was a giant overview of all of this history.

CAC: Is this reflected at other universities? Did this become a model?

TF: Some schools picked it up. It's generally too ambitious I think. As it turned out, it's a bit overwhelming for students. It was a great experience for the faculty.

CAC: Do you still teach that course from that text?

TF: The course itself was enrolling 250 a quarter.

CAC: That's a lot.

TF: It filled the room. Up through 1975, when the war in Vietnam was over, from that time on, it dropped precipitously. Student interest in this big Asian picture declined steadily. It got down to the point where it would draw about 35 students. Most of this is a lack of student interest. Some of it is due to the teaching calibre of the faculty.

CAC: But, the breakaway itself is really a Minnesota story?

TF: Yes. Later, we decided to take this comparative tactic that we developed and apply it elsewhere. We had the World and the West, which you'll recall was a group of faculty trying to think, How could we use this comparative strategy to bring the western world into the comparison?

CAC: I think it used to be the Expansion of Europe course, right?

TF: Right.

CAC: It then became dialectic rather than straight on?

TF: Yes. Then, another initiative that grew out of this was the development of the Early Modern program here.

CAC: Before you get to that, say a bit more about the World and the West. This had a short life?

TF: Yes. The World and the West was our idea that we would have this big overview course that would be comparative and it would break down everyone's parochialism. We ran it

essentially as kind of faculty seminar. I don't know if you remember but the faculty were very excited and talking at each other at a very high level of abstraction and the few students who wandered into this were just scratching their heads and looking back and forth at these faculty members debating.

CAC: [laughter] It was staged at the undergraduate level [unclear]?

TF: It was staged at the undergraduate level. There does survive an undergraduate course that is offered from time to time under this title, World and the West.

CAC: Usually it was team taught?

TF: Yes, but later it came not to be.

CAC: I see.

TF: Frankly, between us and this microphone, I think the people who were the more skilled lecturers did not carry this course. They went on with other courses; so, this fell to some people who were less attracted to students and that has something to do with that.

CAC: Mr. Lelyveld in South Asian Studies was one of the first members of this group?

TF: Right.

CAC: Then, he left?

TF: He left.

CAC: He was an engaged teacher?

TF: Yes. I was going to say that this led to . . . Jim Tracy, who was a Renaissance Reformation historian, and I got involved in organizing what became the Center for Early Modern History. It grew out of Tracy's perception that we had a group of faculty whose interests were chronologically embraced by the Early Modern period, say 1350 to 1750, something like that, yet, who worked in different parts of the world and hadn't really talked to each other. We brought these people together. I was very much attracted to this because of my interest in the comparative Asian business. This developed into a graduate program. We now have a seminar that has been co-taught. I've taught it with Rus Menard in American History, with Tracy, Carla Phillips. A number of other people have been involved in this. We got a half endowment for the center. We have a program which puts on scholarly conferences.

CAC: You talk of faculty whose geographic speciality and mode of inquiry, method, expertise are very diverse; so, the only thing that binds this is what? Goodwill and common chronology?

TF: And a knowledge that the world is out there.

CAC: Ahhh!

TF: That there is ultimately a world out there. You may have one way of looking at it and I may have another but ultimately, there's a world out there. I taught this course with Rus Menard one time and he is, by training, kind of a U.S. colonial historian who does everything in economic terms. He sees price fluctuation.

CAC: Population demography in economics, right?

TF: Yes, but basically it's price, basically it's cost. Markets exist over time and space and things and people move because the price is different. I was coming at it from a cultural point of view . . . you're a Confucian or you're a Hindu or you're something else. We had a wonderful time teaching this course together. We had absolutely non-synchronous world views, and we fought like cats and dogs, and had a great time. [laughter] I've just learned an enormous amount out of this. Now, I give this course by myself covering a wide-range of things I previously wouldn't have even known about.

CAC: Ted, many of the things we've been talking about and you've been initiating in the conversation demonstrate the ways by which a large institution . . . the University of Minnesota and we're one of the largest state universities . . . the initiative really comes from the grassroots. These changes are introduced by individuals, by clusters of individuals who just want to accomplish something in their own field. Is that a fair kind of generalization?

TF: Yes, I think so.

CAC: Then, you seek support from a higher level.

TF: My view is that you have your own agenda, and you have your own little arsenal of whatever weapons you have, and, then, you just look for opportunities in a large institution like this. It came to pass, at one time, that Clarke Chambers was chairing a commission to reexamine the undergraduate curriculum requirements and, at some point in that process, I got out my old priorities memos from the early 1970s, and dusted them off, and fired off a proposal that we ought to have a non-western requirement in our curriculum. When it hit the Chambers Committee, they thought maybe that sounded like a good idea; so, they enacted something like that. The dean named me to chair a committee to choose courses that would meet this requirement. Something happened that affected students. I had to wait ten or fifteen years before that opportunity came along; but, I had my little arsenal of arguments ready when it came, and wrote my memo, and got it done.

CAC: The memo came into a group that had heard things like this from other places, too; but, one has to have a trigger.

TF: Yes.

CAC: That report came out, as I remember, in 1980. In 1981-1982, you chaired the committee to define how that new group requirement for undergraduate instruction for earning the baccalaureate would be fulfilled. Tell me a bit about that process and the nature of that committee that you chaired.

TF: My idea was to define a non-western sphere of the world, that is, outside of the United States and western Europe, and that basically students ought to take in the course of their studies two quarter courses, I think it was, in something—we didn't make it specific. Rather than create courses for this requirement, we just said we would classify the courses that would meet the requirements; so, they could do a literature course, or a history course, or whatever that dealt substantially with Latin America, Asia, or Africa, basically. My committee was assigned the task of deciding which courses would meet these requirements. The committee was composed of people from a cross section of interests and disciplines in the college. We surveyed all the courses and tried to decide, make judgments about what percentage of the content of this course was extra western.

CAC: I see.

TF: So, that was a criterion. We argued a lot about this and that but basically it was pretty clear. There were some courses that were more theoretical and didn't really tell you anything about other cultures or societies.

CAC: Was Russia European or Asian?

TF: In my original proposal to the Chambers Committee, it was Asian. It was outside; but, the Chambers Committee chose to classify it as part of the west and to exclude the study of Russia, as I recall, which I thought was unfortunate but not worth fighting over.

CAC: This means that the Russian courses were not included among the inventory?

TF: Right, to satisfy that particular . . .

CAC: [unclear] Peter the Great, right?

TF: I don't know. Russian is a European language. You can argue it either way. My feeling was that Americans are generally ignorant of Russia and ought to learn more about it here . . . at that time the Soviet Union. The fault lines within the committee turned over a set of questions that had not been part of my proposal. My proposal was strictly conceived in global geographical terms as the non-west; but, this, of course, left out the whole question of cultural pluralism, what we would now call pluralism.

CAC: Yes.

TF: There were members on the committee who wanted to include American Indian Studies, African-American Studies, Chicano Studies, so my work as chairman of this committee was basically an argument with those people saying, "These are all part of American History and it's part of us. It's not the mandate of this committee to mandate people to study more American History."

CAC: It was that point of view that prevailed in the committee?

TF: Yes. This led on to another fight within the college—a prolonged round in which Mr. Tracy was very much involved—in which those advocates of those minorities studies, you might call them, or cultural pluralism, eventually prevailed on the deans to add cultural pluralism to the college's curriculum requirements; but, that was not my agenda. I saw it as logically a separate agenda.

CAC: It came to be a separate agenda?

TF: It came to be a separate agenda. I had no objection to it.

CAC: No, no.

TF: I just didn't think this agenda should be diluted with that one.

CAC: I think your perception was consistent with that of the forming committee that gave you the task. These courses then came to be part of group requirements in 1982. You've had twelve years experience. Do you have a sense that, indeed, our students are less parochial for this?

TF: Indeed, they take more courses in these areas. I think it has had a very salutary effect on the student enrollment in non-western courses and I can't but believe that the students were led to those courses by the requirements, which is what we wanted to do. A similar and parallel development took place in foreign language instruction. My colleague, Byron Marshall, chaired a very ambitious task force that rewrote the college requirements for foreign language instruction. This had a double effect: one of pressuring secondary schools to offer more language instruction in French, German, and Spanish and, also, to give students a strong impetus to take other than those three languages at the university at the elementary level.

CAC: That's a good lead; I'll interview him on that and other related matters. Let's move for the moment. The university has a mission of teaching and scholarship; we've commented on those two major missions. There's also an outreach mission. The East Asian block and you in your own life have done that, too, with the Minnesota China Center, and your relations with China directly, and so forth. Let's move there.

TF: This, for me, began with the formation of something called the Midwest China Center. The initiative for this came from people in the Lutheran church community here, particularly associated with the Luther Theological Seminary. There were a number of people there who had old China backgrounds. We're talking now the 1970s when China and the United States were just beginning to open up a bit. China was a mysterious world to Americans. From a certain radical theological perspective, in the days before Mao Tse-tung died, there was a kind of rosy view of China from the west. People went to visit China, and found great order, and were told very enthusiastic things by the Chinese—which we now know weren't so. At the time, there was a certain perception that . . . Mao Tse-tung came to power in China. He drove out the missionaries. He suppressed Christianity and, yet, created the most Christian of communities. How had this happened and what was the message for the church?

CAC: [laughter]

TF: There were these Christian intellectuals with a China background who were tormented by this question.

CAC: Did they have any ironic distance on that . . . ?

TF: Oh, I think you find people with all sorts of perspectives. This was part of the impetus and part of it, of course, was just to get back into the missionary business. There were other people who wanted to get back there with the message of the Bible, etcetera. This led to an initiative and they brought in a man named Don McGinnis, who was a China expert, an old missionary who had worked in New York at some National Council of Churches or whatever it is. He was a very dynamic, very skillful man, a great change agent. They put together a coalition which involved the University of Minnesota and all of the colleges in the region, down into Iowa even . . . all the church judicatories was the term, and brought in the Catholics, and the Baptists, and the Methodists, and everybody. They set up an office in the buildings of the Luther Theological Seminary and started to run programs, programs for teachers on China units. There was an oral history archive program that took down the experiences of people who had grown up as China missionaries.

CAC: So, you had an oral history project attached to it?

TF: Yes, a huge one. Jane Kuntz did that. You may have heard about that. We would go around. We would have conferences. I remember going down to Carleton or St. Olaf with Sara Evans to a conference on women in China . . . American Women's Studies, and Chinese Women's Studies, and aging in China. We'd get old age studies and social welfare . . . you name it, we had a conference on it. We got grants; but, the center was marginally funded. The university contributed \$5,000 a year or something like that and smaller schools \$2,000. It was never quite enough to sustain the costs; so, we got into . . .

CAC: Did the Lutheran Seminary itself pick up the overhead costs then?

TF: Yes, quite a bit. The various church organizations put in the most money . . . the Lutherans, the biggest but everybody contributed. It was enormously stimulating; but, the center got into a kind of crisis.

CAC: Financial crisis?

TF: Yes, financial crisis. Don McGinnis eventually departed. This would have been in the 1980s sometime and went to become the China expert for the [unclear] outfit in New York; so, in the interim, I became interim director and board chair.

CAC: Oh, good grief.

TF: I hired the second director, P. Richard Bura, China historian from a college in Ohio. He came and under his direction, we began to shift the emphasis to include the business relationship with China and to bring businesses into the membership. This became a little bit uncomfortable for the religious people and the college people; but, it began to happen. Then, we went on to a third generation in which the third director was a young China scholar who had left Chinese Studies and gone to work for businesses in China. He worked for [unclear] and various organizations in China and had business experience. The center began its transition from an educational and religious base to a commercial, industrial base. A large seminar program was designed to take place in Beijing in the summer of 1989. You can guess what happened to this in the advent of the massacre in Tianjin. The whole thing fell apart and the center died.

CAC: Did the scholars from the university continue through these three phases until the summer of 1989?

TF: Yes. I was on the board all the way through, I think, or most of the way through.

CAC: The real outreach of enthusiasm was earlier with McGinnis?

TF: Yes, yes. The university eventually ceased its support. The point I was going to make is that this led me into very wide contacts with other institutions, with the churches, with other colleges, and with the business community. When around 1979, 1980, the university began to have a relationship with China, there was established a university-wide steering committee on an ad hoc basis. Peter Magrath was in Washington and he discovered that the Chinese government had just proposed to Washington that they would send thousands of Chinese students the next year to universities. There was no way to coordinate this because we don't have a ministry of education that can allocate students to colleges; so, everybody scrambled to create institutions. At the University of Minnesota, we created an all-university steering committee, which was composed of a bunch of heavyweight deans: the dean of the Medical School, the dean of Agriculture . . . and Ted Farmer from History . . . [laughter]

CAC: [laughter]

TF: . . . and C.J. [Chun-jo] Liu from the Chinese Language program, an entomologist who was ethnically Chinese who was a member of the National Academy of Sciences . . . just a wonderful [unclear] of people. We would meet very informally and say, "What are we going to do?"

CAC: Who was the convener?

TF: I think the convener was the Office of International Programs [OIP]. Philip Porter, a professor of Geography, could tell you about this.

CAC: Okay, yes.

TF: I had had a lot of experience with the Midwest China Center in convening people who were interested in China from the business community; so, later, when CLA [College of Liberal Arts] tried to connect with the business community downtown, we put together a program of breakfasts in the IDS tower for CLA and business interests. That didn't go very well; the cultural distance was pretty dramatic. I got a lot of feedback from people in the business community about how poorly university people performed in those environments.

CAC: Yes.

TF: The business people downtown start work at 7:00 a.m. You can go into the Minneapolis Club and there are people having breakfast there at 7:00 a.m. Somebody's got a little tripod up there and is making the pitch with the flip charts. They're all doing business. You get a bunch of academics downtown at 7:00 in the morning . . .

CAC: [laughter]

TF: . . . and they're just talking about how they can't see and where's the coffee. They can't function; so, there's that kind of problem. Somebody told about a little Sunday brunch and cross country skiing thing, I think with the Whitney's out in Wayzata, and Peter Magrath was invited. He turned up in a business suit with a kind of purse under his arm, and wasn't ready to ski and wasn't ready to . . . didn't connect. I got a lot of insights to that [unclear]. The university eventually set up a University of Minnesota China Center to handle this relationship. Nobody in central wanted to put up the money for it; so, the dean of CLA said, "I'll do it." Fred Lukermann started the thing in CLA.

CAC: I see.

TF: Then, it moved over to OIP and, eventually, was attached to a vice-president.

CAC: It was through this that the contacts with the Chinese universities and their students and our students was made?

TF: Exactly. This was a very ad hoc kind of deal because there was basically no structure nationally that could interact. There was a coordinating office set up by the National Academy of Sciences in Washington; but, it was simply a letter office. The University of Minnesota was in the lead in this from the beginning and there were three university delegations that went to China in 1979, 1980, and 1981. The first one in 1979 was led by Wenda Moore, the chair of the Board of Regents, a black woman. She got to China with a delegation of people that included deans, Regents' professors, physicists and people like this. The Chinese, of course, were not disposed to recognize her as the leader of the delegation. They couldn't understand.

CAC: [laughter] Because she was black or because she was not a scholar?

TF: She was a woman, and not a scholar, and black; there's three right there. They couldn't figure it out and finally there was a meeting in which one of the Chinese asked her—he was sitting between her and the dean of one of the colleges—"Could you fire him?" She said, "Yes." From that time on, she was recognized as the leader of the delegation. [laughter]

CAC: Which, in fact, was legally an incorrect answer.

TF: Yes. The second delegation was to be led by Ken Keller who was then the vice-president or the provost . . . I'm not sure which. I was on that delegation. It turned out that he had to stay here and deal with a budget crisis; so, John Turner, a Regents' professor, acted as the head of the delegation. This group had just a magnificent trip around China.

CAC: That led to what?

TF: Each of these led to what were essentially bilateral agreements with Chinese institutions to exchange students and scholars. There was a third delegation led by the president of the university, Peter Magrath. What was very interesting was the hosting on the Chinese side. When you go to China with a delegation or a group of any kind, you have a host institution there. What happens to you in the country depends on the status of that institution. The first delegation found that its host institution was a college of agricultural machinery in Changchun up in Manchuria; so, somebody in China had sort of looked at a map of the United States and said, "Minnesota looks like Manchuria. What do we need? We need tractors." So, the host institution was a really small college which specialized basically in tractors; it was a tractor school. I went through their tractor lab and met a woman there and said, "Oh, you've got to see Machinery Hill at our state fair."

CAC: [laughter]

TF: They got us around as well as they could; that is, they visited other universities but they had poor liaison because this college was under an agricultural ministry. The second year a delegation went, we had learned a lot about them and they'd learned a lot about us; so, we were sponsored by the Ministry of Education in China. We had good access to all the key schools in

China, the major universities. Then, the third year, we were sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences, which got us into non-university, scientific laboratories in China. It's a very different structural system.

CAC: Were a lot of other universities doing this?

TF: Everybody was scrambling but Minnesota had some advantages. One was that we had this very flexible structure. We had this kind of steering group that cut across all of our own internal divisions. That was a great strength. We had a second strength in the number of alumni we had in China. In 1980, I went to an alumni reunion that was held at the International Club and people came from all over China and sang the rouser.

CAC: These were students who had come to the University of Minnesota to study . . . ?

TF: Before 1949 and they were senior people, many of them in positions of authority. They were survivors of the cultural revolution and anxious to reconnect.

CAC: We had several of these people then come to us subsequently, did we not?

TF: Most of the people who came subsequently were people trained in China in the 1950s in Russian. They had to learn English and, then, came here as visiting scholars. A couple of the earlier people came back.

CAC: We have a, I say disproportionately, large number of students coming from the People's Republic of China?

TF: We have the largest number in the country.

CAC: How do you account for that?

TF: I was trying to do that. I think part of it has to do with the fact that Minnesota was known in China by a lot of people who then wanted to send their students here.

CAC: Known because of the pre-1949 connections?

TF: Yes.

CAC: And because of the missionary connection in Minnesota?

TF: No, that's really been important for St. Olaf but not for us.

CAC: Okay.

TF: Then, another thing we did was to send professor C.J. Liu, who was a professor of Chinese Literature. She was, I think, in China doing research on a sabbatical or something when the whole thing broke open. She was living in Beijing at the Friendship Hotel and the university basically paid her quarter-time to represent its interests. She went around and made all the contacts in China . . . worked her network of friends in China and worked the network of alumni friends in China. This gave us access in China like no one else in the country had. We have more Chinese on our campus and we have more entree throughout China than, I would say, any university. Berkeley is in there but . . .

CAC: Has that had a [unclear] into Minnesota's curriculum and student body and scholarship?

TF: Only marginally. It has not led to any increase in China Studies at Minnesota because the university is conceived of its relationship as an exchange relationship. It has very much enriched our graduate programs in every area because it's brought a mass of talent to the university.

CAC: And it's made it possible for our students to study there and pick up the language?

TF: Yes, we did start a summer language program at Nankai University in Tianjin. That's continued. I've been the director of that a couple of summers. I went and took students to China and have been on the committee to select a director and that sort of thing. It hasn't gone where it could have gone if there was some support.

CAC: But, there has been, for a long time in Morrill Hall, in Central Administration, an Office of International Programs, which presumably is created to move forward these kinds of liaisons?

TF: That's an institutional question. It goes back to O. Meredith Wilson's tenure as president. The Office of International Programs was conceived as a conduit for federal funds, a way of getting aid funds, etcetera, into the university and not as anything affecting the curriculum of the university or its research; so, what that's led to was a connection between Minnesota—particularly agricultural expertise—and places in North Africa and in Indonesia. We've sent people to organize schools there and to export our expertise; but, it hasn't resulted in any importation of expertise. That's what was driving me crazy. In South East Asian Studies, there's not a single member of our faculty who teaches anything to do with South East Asia who was a specialist in South East Asia. In the 1960s, before I came, there were three people. There was a geographer, and a political scientist, and somebody else, all of whom left; and we've never, in the entire time I've been here, had a single person who teaches about this part of the world and, yet, we've impacted Indonesian agriculture heavily. It's just extraordinary.

CAC: God! that's a wonderful story. I'm going to shift, again, our focus . . . your career is all of one piece. There is this matter of what you've called university culture—I think I know what that means—and the way it's changed really in very recent years. Could you say something about your participation in that? It will take us away from China for awhile but I think to a very interesting kind of development.

TF: One of the things that came out of the non-western studies requirement was this battle over cultural pluralism and whether that ought to be part of the curriculum. Maybe this isn't what you're after?

CAC: Yes, it is. I'm after your career.

TF: I want to talk about the sense of community of the faculty at some point.

CAC: Please, do—later. Let's get through this.

TF: This, of course, sensitized me and everybody was sensitized, I think, to the cultural pluralism as a general change in American academic culture. At some point, there was a summer program set up for faculty to participate in a workshop that would deal with race, class, and gender. The idea was that you would take a particular course that you taught and somehow revise it so that it would confront these issues. This workshop was to help you do that. I jumped at the chance to do this.

CAC: Even though, presumably, the race issue would not be a major one in your classes in Chinese History?

TF: It didn't fit my classes in Chinese History; so, what I proposed to do was to use this workshop to help design the curriculum for a new world history course in the History Department. Of course, it hadn't yet been taught. I had proposed in the History Department that we have three introductory survey courses instead of a dozen. One was we would keep the U.S. history survey but, we would add a western civ[ilization] course and a world history course and that these would be the three entry-level courses. This was in response to some demand from the college that introductory surveys be rethought. It was my response to the whole question of cultural pluralism. Some people conceived of cultural pluralism as antagonistic to the study of dead white Europeans in classical curriculum. I saw it not that way but as an alternative; that is, I think you should do both the western tradition and everybody else. I was an advocate of doing both of these things and we did start a western civ course and, then later, we started a world history course. I was one of the people active in organizing that. I took this summer workshop, which was run by Rose Brewer, a black sociologist. It included a congeries of faculty from different CLA departments and . . .

[End of Tape 1, Side 2]

[Tape 2, Side 1]

TF: . . . things about race relations, about class, about gender, etcetera, a very catholic array of things, in which members of the class also told about their own personal experiences and their own perceptions of things. It was quite an exciting experience intellectually. It gave you a chance to rethink a lot of things. We had enough variety of people in the group that we could

speak to a lot of things. There were some minority members who could tell things from their experience that were motively very, very powerful. I came out of this course armed with a lot of perceptions of issues of race, class, and gender, and some ideas of things that were useful as readings, some ideas of classroom techniques that might be useful. The following summer then, I organized a workshop of the teaching assistants who were going to teach in the World History course for the first time; so, I ran them through some of this material.

CAC: How many TAs were there?

TF: There were eight TAs. Mary Jo Maynes, who was the associate chair of the department, selected for me the brightest group of people you can imagine. We got these people all fired up about teaching World History. We selected materials that students would read that would allow them to get at the experiences of different kinds of people and teaching techniques that would enliven the classroom. This led me on later to respond to the president's initiative on cooperative learning. There were a couple of workshops that President Hasselmo came to.

CAC: What does cooperative learning mean?

TF: Cooperative learning means that you set up the classroom so the students are not in competition with each other but are collaborating with each other. You present them with opportunities in which they can work together to try to master things.

CAC: This was a pedagogical strategy that Hasselmo initiated?

TF: Exactly.

CAC: He was fully informed about this learning . . . ?

TF: He came and took part in the workshop. For example, you give people a quiz on, let's say, geography . . . if I gave you blank map of Africa and asked you to name all the countries in Africa and you could name some and you wouldn't be sure about others. The person next to you would have their list. Then, if we put three of you together and you compared, the question is, "Could you improve your map?" The answer is, "Of course you could." You could actually help each other. You could actually learn from each other . . . this kind of strategy. It doesn't change everything; but, it means that you reorganize the classroom a little bit. For example, I had a big lecture course in World History with sixteen different sections . . . 200 plus students. We had always allowed them to seat randomly. Now, I had them sit with their sections and their TAs together in a group and, then, sometimes instead of lecturing, I would take part of the hour and have them do an exercise in groups of two or three.

CAC: I see.

TF: This is particularly useful in writing, for example. You have them do peer review of each other's written work. It transformed the class! By the end of the term, I would want to start a lecture and I couldn't get them to shut up. There was this huge roar going on. I couldn't figure out . . . what's the matter with these students? Why are they so inattentive? Then, I realized they knew each other.

CAC: [laughter]

TF: From the university's point of view—one of the points that Hasselmo made was that they have surveyed university alumni and they've also surveyed people who have dropped out after the first year—one of the reasons people drop out of the University of Minnesota and one of the reasons they don't remember it fondly is that they never get to know anybody. The only place they can get to know anybody is in their classes; because, it's not a place where people live in their dormitories. This is really a response to that.

CAC: That's part of that user-friendly notion that Nils has?

TF: Yes. I can say this really works. It's really interesting.

CAC: How widely spread do you think it is in the faculty?

TF: These workshops were just last year. Then, I got inspired enough about that Ann Waltner and I organized two workshops for TAs in our surveys in our department.

CAC: Beyond the World History?

TF: Yes, all the surveys. So, they got to using some of these techniques in their classes. That's the way things work; it spreads down that way.

CAC: Do you have any sense whether this is going on elsewhere in the country in any major way?

TF: I think all of these things are going on everywhere. It's one of the mysteries to me of the United States that we have no central system and, yet, anywhere you go . . .

CAC: The word gets out fast.

TF: I talked to Jim Brown, a graduate student who just got a job in Elon College in North Carolina. He'd been there and asked about teaching and they'd told him all these kinds of things were going on there.

CAC: We have a culture also—this is a question—at the University of Minnesota that is, in some of its places, at least responsive to this kind of shift in subject matter, in pedagogical style, and perception of student capacity and so forth?

TF: Yes, I think there are some people here, of course, who are well-known for this kind of thing. There are a couple of people, [who happen to be brothers] who put on the workshop on cooperative learning, who have publications on this and go around the country doing it all the time and they're from our campus, from our college . . . [David] Johnson and [Roger] Johnson.

CAC: You found also that the college and the department are encouraging for persons who wish to take a flyer at something?

TF: Yes, I think so. I think recently particularly. The cooperative learning thing came from Anne Hopkins, who is not known for anything other than that, as far as I know.

CAC: Whoever has to write a history of the University of Minnesota has to try to understand a culture of an institution and a large part of that is academic culture the nation around, that some part of it must be peculiarities of emphasis, or encouragement, or discouragement at the University of Minnesota?

TF: Yes, or things just happen. Like our Early Modern program is quite unique and it came out of conditions in the History Department. I've been asked to go to the University of British Columbia and talk to them about what they could do with their graduate program; so, things spread that way by word of mouth.

CAC: What experiences have you had here that would fortify strength and accelerate a sense of community? Really, you're talking about the engagement of people across all kinds of different lines.

TF: I talked a little bit about networking through the Midwest China Center. That was an experience that took me out of my discipline, out of my institution right across the state and into the region. It took me into the business community.

CAC: It enabled you to get to China, too.

TF: Yes. There are several experiences that I've had at the university which have connected me to people in a very personal way. I would say the first is the place I lived when I first came here. I stayed in Pillsbury Court, which is a set of faculty apartments or condos on the site of the old president's mansion over in Dinkytown on Tenth Avenue. You could stay there for the first two years if you were a new faculty; so, it's a place full of people who have been there one or two years. They're all new to the university and they basically get to know each other by sharing baby sitting responsibilities and talking over the sandbox where the children are playing. The circle of friends I have at the University of Minnesota, who are my best friends, are the

people I met then. They were staying there or their children were in the nursery school, and we got to know each other and sort of bonded at that level, and our children have remained friends every since. Annually, we have a Thanksgiving dinner we put together, which floats from one house to another. Then, we get together in the spring and have an Easter egg hunt. The Easter egg hunt started at Pillsbury Court and then it gravitated to Tower Hill and Prospect Park. This group of people gets together every year and have for twenty-five plus years. I have friends in Statistics, or Chemistry, or whatever that I wouldn't otherwise know. That turns out to be a strength later when you get into all-university politics. When you're in a senate meeting or you're in a Graduate School committee or something, there's a friendly face. That was one kind of experience.

Another was this delegation to China in 1980. Travelling on a bus under sort of field conditions, going through emergencies together with people from a Regent's professor in Chemistry, and a dean from the Medical School, and somebody else from Engineering . . . you get to know each other very well and, again, there's a kind of bonding that forms. A third such experience was the summer workshop and race, class, and gender. We all were hugging each other when that was over. It was a very powerful emotional experience to kind of expose your inner being to others. I had such an experience in the Humanities search. I was chair of a committee to search for innovative young scholars in the humanities. The idea was that we were all aging and that there would be a kind of generation gap when the older generation of people began to retire. There would be an enormous age differential between new people coming in in the Humanities faculty; so, the transition would be difficult. It would be hard to sustain programs. There was a proposal from the College of Liberal Arts to hire a group of young humanists, to get some sort of entry-level hotshots who would then be people who could carry the ball.

CAC: Do you know why the Humanities and not Social Sciences?

TF: I think because the perception that the Humanities are demonstrably weaker in the college.

CAC: That was something that Fred Lukermann was sensitive to?

TF: He was sensitive to that, yes. The idea was that these would be people who were interdisciplinary in interests, who had strong theoretical and historical interests, and who would be members of multiply departments. They would help knit the college together in a way by having multiple memberships institutionally. This proposal was made to the McKnight Foundation, "Wouldn't you like to give us money to hire some six professors?" They said, "Take a hike. You can pay for your own faculty." But, the proposal had enough merit that the president's office said, "We will give you bridging money to do this." It was the university funds and a very broad advertisement was written inviting people who had these multiple interests to apply across any of the social science and humanities disciplines. We got 1538 applications.

CAC: Good grief! [laughter]

TF: I asked to chair a committee of twelve people from different departments—most of whom I didn't know. There was some fear that this would turn out to be a search for a post-modern deconstructionist of some hairy, uncouth kind and that we'd all be taken to the cleaners by these [unclear] types. That turned out not to be so. The committee formed a kind of cohesive personality of its own, and internally functioned very well, and got a very high degree of consensus on people, and wound up hiring only one person who was really a [unclear] type. It was a young Chinese woman, as it turned out, from the state . . . This was a hairy experience. The college didn't make provision for the support of the committee and these applications started coming in. They got up into the hundreds and we were supposed to do this sort of in the waiting room of the dean's office over there with part-time assistance from one of the dean's secretaries, who immediately developed various psychosomatic symptoms. [laughter] I wound up hiring my kids on winter break to go over and open the envelopes to get the files opened. In the end, we got the job done though.

CAC: No one challenged you as they would Mr. [Dan] Rostenkowski?

TF: [laughter] I was paying for it out of my pocket.

CAC: I see.

TF: I didn't have a budget for this. In the end, we hired a group of very outstanding people who have, I think, turned to be a credit to the college.

CAC: It's my sense that others who might volunteer these kinds of experiences would have, in an earlier generation, made the Campus Club as a place of establishing those cross-disciplinary college connections?

TF: Yes. It's very sad to me to see the Campus Club decline as a viable institution.

CAC: When I came here as a very young man that was a place that eye-opened up many of the kinds of things that you're talking about now. I haven't gone there in twenty years.

TF: It's just not a place that anybody feels comfortable in anymore and you can get a kind of predictable meal in. It has been useful for me. When this committee was meeting, for example, I had a couple of dinners there where I paid for the dinner for fifteen people just to get them together. It made the difference in the way the committee worked. It's a valuable institution; but, it's not a social institution anymore. Basically, the way we socialize has changed. The way the History Department socializes now . . . the social core of the History Department, you might wonder where it is because it's not there. It's not in the department meetings anymore. It's in the brouhaha on Friday evenings. Friday afternoon, at sort of the end of the day, there's a case of beer or several cases of beer down on the sixth floor, and people gather in the lounge; and faculty and graduate students go in there and interact. It isn't the whole faculty and it isn't all the graduate students; but, it's the core that makes the connections. Steve Ruggles, who is not

a person who says a lot a meetings, has sort of made this happen and created a kind of network there.

CAC: The Geography Department did that for forty years.

TF: Yes, they had a coffee hour, a formal academic thing. This is an informal . . .

CAC: I understand that. The Geography thing quickly became informal, yes.

TF: Ruggles has now got an annual poster contest he does and the geographers know about it and come to it. It was a riot this year. It was an absolute riot.

CAC: Ted, you came in 1968 and now it's 1994. One could subtract quickly and know how many years that is. It's a large number of years that your career started in as a very young person and now you're a very mature scholar. Do you have an sense about those twenty-five, thirty years in the changed culture? How do you feel about the university now, looking back upon that?

TF: [I have] very mixed feelings about the university. I said at the outset that I am a campus brat. I grew up in a university environment and can think of no better environment. I am a person for whom institutional loyalty is very important. I love the Boy Scouts. I love the U.S. Army. I love the university.

CAC: [laughter] That's kind of promiscuous.

TF: Whatever my organization . . . I'm an organization man. I basically want what's best for the university. I'm not a careerist. I could have gone other places. I could have stayed at Yale and tried to get on there; but, I'm quite happy to work for the university. I feel profoundly fortunate in the department I am in. I think this is one of the great history departments in terms of its collegiality, and its support of excellence, and its general humaneness. I think we combine the best human and scholarly qualities. For the university as a whole, I feel profoundly sorry because I think this university has declined steadily since I got here. It's last vigor was probably under O. Meredith Wilson and I think it had a brief surge of energy under Ken Keller; but, I think it's drifting. I think it's declining I think state support has been withdrawn. I think it's on the way down and it's very, very sad to me.

CAC: How do you account for this decline?

TF: I think it's a failure of leadership. I would place the primary responsibility on the Board of Regents. I think they were very badly served for a long time; although, the regent I knew best, David Lebedoff, was somebody who was profoundly supportive of Chinese Studies. In fact, he wanted to go and get the MacMillians to give us \$40 million so we could build a program as good as Harvard.

CAC: How was it that you got to know him in particular?

TF: He was interested in China at some point and it was easy to know him through DFL [Democratic Farmer Labor] politics. My wife is an active office holder [Minneapolis School Board] and that sort of thing. I think there was very weak leadership under the Board of Regents. I think they chose poor presidents. I think the choice of Malcolm Moos was as, I understand, a product of indiscretion on the part of the Board of Regents, which screwed up a search. C. Peter Magrath came in a broken search in which better candidates were lost. Ken Keller came in an aborted search. There you have it. That's part of the problem; we've had a couple of weak presidents.

CAC: It's your perception of these institutions that you've lived under that the leadership at the very top is really of crucial importance? Because what you've been describing is an initiative at the grassroots in all kinds of different places in which you played yourself . . .

TF: Of course, of course. There are lots of resources around here. It's a big place; but, the drive to increase those resources, the drive to support real centers of excellence, the kind of ethos that you have in a place like Harvard or Stanford—those are the places I came from—is not here. It's just not here at all. The relations with the legislature are critical for this university and those have not been well . . .

CAC: Which Harvard and Stanford don't have to do.

TF: They don't have to do that, no. I can look at the Big Ten. What happens at Michigan, and what happens at Illinois, and what happens even at Indiana looks good in my areas.

CAC: Because these states have provided a larger legislative support?

TF: Yes, definitely.

CAC: Why not Minnesota? Through your wife, you are into an understanding with and a contact with the political sphere. How do you account for this?

TF: I'm not sure I can. I know when I came here in the 1960s, there was a Carnegie report on major universities and the ones that were in trouble were all in trouble because of their medical schools. There had, as I understand it, been an effort to separate the Medical School from the university at that time and the Regents had killed it and the Medical School stayed within the university. Then, I'm looking out your window here across the river and I can see rising like a great mushroom cancer on the body of the university, the biggest buildings. All of those health complexes from *A* through *H*, or whatever, were built after the Medical School was not separated; so, the Medical School has sucked up the money.

CAC: Appropriately, they are in Stalinesque, heroic kind of architecture?

TF: Exactly, and I say cancerous. [laughter] That, it seems to me, is part of the story. If you look at the university governance structure, it's been fiddled with and piddled with; but, the major interests have gotten themselves vice-presidencies. The Medical School got in there and then Agriculture got in there; so, when you get down to what I think of as a kind of core, which would be the Arts and Sciences, those things have not been represented at the table when funds were being doled out; so, that's a major problem.

I think that one of the indices of the stature of our university is our library. If you go back to the 1950s, I think we were the fifth largest library in the country, following the Library of Congress, Harvard, and . . . Now, we're down around sixteen.

CAC: It's lower than that . . . twenty-seven or . . .

TF: I've got the latest figures from the *Chronicle [of Higher Education]* if you want to look at it. In terms of volumes, we're still around sixteen; but, if you look at budget and staff numbers, then there are a lot of other universities that made the decision to move up and move up at our expense. If you look at the number of journals, we're at around 50,000 journals. When you look at some of the state universities, they have 90,000 journals. That's a big difference, a real big difference. I think that the library has got to be defended. There's been some movement in that direction. We've got much better library leadership now than we had. I remember when Wilson Library was built, it cost \$10 million. The first unit in the Health Sciences over there was \$45 million. So, the library has been relatively underfunded and it puts on the map. We're in a remote part of the world. The library is the only thing we have that really makes a difference between us and Iowa, or the Dakotas, or whatever.

CAC: Do you have any sense of the changing quality or nature of the undergraduate and graduate student body over this same quarter century?

TF: Of the undergraduates, I would say that this is a richly diverse undergraduate population. There are small numbers of minorities; but, you've got all kinds of people with all kinds of capacities and there are many excellent students, some extraordinary students. You can find them in any class. It's a pleasure to teach here. The students have gone on a kind of roller coaster, I would say, in terms of what it's like to teach them. When I first came, times, economically, were better; so, students could spend more time in their schoolwork and still support themselves. The situation now is that students are working enormous hours and simply don't have the time to devote to their studies that they ought to. You can't ask the students to do as much as you could because they can't do it. That's, perhaps, a kind of economic change that's affected this university, public university. There was a period in between, I would say, when students were less responsive in the late 1970s into the early 1980s. Maybe students were turned off or less responsive; but, that's over now. Students will do anything you ask them. They're very anxious to respond now. They were responsive when I got here and they're responsive again now. There was a period in the middle there where they were less responsive. Graduate students have become much, much more sophisticated and professional. It's really very exciting.

CAC: How do you account for that? Are they being better trained here and elsewhere?

TF: They are certainly being better trained; but, there is a difference, I think, in who is going to graduate school. I think that's a big part of the difference. When I came, in the later 1960s and early 1970s, there was kind of a tidal wave of people through graduate schools and the expansion of faculties. That all dried up by the end of the 1970s and there were no jobs. People who came out of the pipeline found themselves unable to get permanent jobs; so, graduate enrollments fell off. I can remember when I first got here, we were getting 450 applications a year and were just sending back form letters. We're now back to that; we're now getting 450 applicants a year. The difference is instead of accepting 150-200, we're now accepting 50 to 60 with the idea that 20 to 30 will come; so, we are skimming off the top of a very large pool of people now and a very high quality pool. I just think that our professional standards have risen enormously. The people that we're hiring now are very accomplished and have publications and things that weren't the case when I came here.

CAC: We're both getting tired. Do you have any final thoughts that the historian of the year 2000 should be privy to?

TF: [pause] We haven't talked about the physical environment of the university at all.

CAC: Okay.

TF: I think that's an important factor. I think this university paid an enormous price for some bad decisions or questionable decisions. The decision to cross the river, for example, to form this West Bank campus meant that the faculty was split off and divided in certain ways. You don't see people. You don't see colleagues in certain fields and the Campus Club is too far away to go for lunch. The physical dispersal of the campus cost this university an enormous amount in terms of its internal coherence.

CAC: But, it thought it had to go somewhere. They'd run out of space.

TF: Maybe it did but then, you see, if it was going to be done . . . The idea that the Washington Avenue Bridge, for example, could have shops on it. If you had little . . .

CAC: Mr. Wilson had that in mind.

TF: Yes, yes. The bridge, of course, wasn't strong enough to support it. Imagine what this campus would be like if you had bookstores, and coffee shops, and faculty carrels, and counseling offices all across the bridge for a half a mile there. You'd have an enormous center of interaction. Where do you go to sit around and talk about things with people? Where do you go to interact? There's very little space here for that kind of interaction and that's what makes an intellectual community. This place doesn't foster it. It's a commuter school. I've been here twenty-six years. I can't get a parking space here. I can't get a parking permit. What do I do?

I work at home. I've got a computer and a modem now and I'm not going to come to campus anymore because I can't get a parking place. Somebody should think about that. [whispered]

[End of Tape 2, Side 1]

[End of the Interview]

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