Stanford Lehmberg

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Interview with Stanford Lehmberg

Interviewed by Professor Clarke A. Chambers
University of Minnesota

Interviewed on September 8, 1994
University of Minnesota Campus

Stanford Lehmberg - SL
Clarke A. Chambers - CAC

CAC: This is Clarke Chambers. I'm having a conversation this afternoon, which is Thursday, September 8, 1994, with an esteemed colleague, Stanford Lehmberg, who came to the university in 1969. He was very active in departmental, and college, and university affairs. He also was one of our chief, distinguished lecturers and scholars for a number of years and also had outreach. We're going to talk about music, as well, before we're through with our conversation.

As I suggested before I turned this machine on, it's really very helpful to know where people are coming from in an academic and intellectual way. You were Kansas born and it seems like a long way from Kansas to Tudor and Stuart history; but, I'm sure there's a line there. You can start anywhere you want to and we'll take it from there.

SL: Geographically Minnesota is pretty close to Kansas . . . a day's drive; but, it has been a circuitous route that I've taken from there to here. I was born and grew up in McPherson, which is a small town in the center of Kansas. My father was originally a farm implement dealer; but, when I was in grade school, he was persuaded to go in the local bank which had a deficiency of management, shall we say. He went in more or less at the top without any experience in banking and, in fact, ran and built up a small town Kansas bank extremely well, if I do say so, for nearly fifty years. I went to the public schools in McPherson and I've never thought that was a disadvantage. I had some extremely good teachers, most of whom were close friends of my mother. She had been a Latin teacher before I was born; and although, she never taught again, she had many friends who did. I think I was very well-prepared by the public school education I had in McPherson. I went on to Kansas University [KU], which was sort of the normal thing for people from small town high schools in Kansas.

CAC: And a lucky thing, wasn't it? Kansas was a darned good university.
It was. In many ways, it doesn't compare with the University of Minnesota. It was, in those days anyway, almost exclusively a teaching university. The history faculty, in general, didn't write. There were very few graduate students. There weren't any TAs [teaching assistants]. It was all small classes taught directly by the faculty member. I had some excellent teachers though they are people now forgotten because, as I say, in general they didn't leave monuments in the form of books.

CAC: Some of them were in fields that then you were seduced by?

SL: Yes. I had been quite interested in music, which, as you say, we might get back to eventually, while I was in high school and had the good fortune of studying organ with a wonderful Swedish immigrant named Hardvard Brosse, who directed the famous Messiah chorus at Lindsborg, Kansas . . . Bethany College.

CAC: Bravo.

SL: It was really quite remarkable that he was willing to take me as a student when I was still in junior high and high school. When I contemplated the possibility of studying organ at KU, I looked at the descriptions of the various courses and I saw that I had already played all the music that was prescribed up through the master's level . . .

CAC: [laughter] although that was kind of silly. No doubt there were plenty of other things I could have played. I thought maybe this is not what I need to do. I did continue to study organ but very much on the side . . . one credit a quarter. I didn't know what I wanted to do. Actually, I was, what at Minnesota we'd call, a undetermined major. At Kansas, they had a fancier term for it; they called it a humanities major.

CAC: The best kind.

SL: So, I took a bit of this, and a bit of that, and history, and philosophy, and foreign languages, and the history of art, and the history of music. I've never regretted any of it. I think it's the ideal undergraduate education.

CAC: Yes. Then, it seems like a long way from Kansas to England. Someone must have alerted you to the possibility of studying . . .

SL: It seemed fairly obvious that I wanted to go on to graduate school and fairly obvious that humanities was too broad. You really had to pick something to specialize in. During my last couple of years, I enjoyed history more than anything else. I became quite close friends of two or three members of the history faculty who were bright young scholars and sort of took me under their wing. I did a master's at KU in, actually, the history of the Italian Renaissance and
thought I would like to go abroad. I applied for a Fulbright fellowship and was successful in getting it. I discovered that I couldn't apply to go to Italy to study the Italian Renaissance because I didn't know any Italian—a very stupid oversight but nevertheless true. I applied to go to England and wanted to go to Oxford or Cambridge as my preference and was successful. They sent me to Cambridge, which I always thought was very clever judgment on the part of the authorities. It was a better place for me than Oxford would have been in those days.

CAC: In what ways a better place for you and your interests?

SL: I think the history faculty was stronger and, certainly, it was stronger in the areas that eventually I ran into. I think there are a great many things in my career that are just the result of chance, or luck, or serendipity, or whatever you want to call it. Originally, when I got to Cambridge, I thought, I'll study the Italian Renaissance and, then finally, saner thoughts prevailed and I realized that this is ridiculous. If you're in England, you ought to study the English history; so, my first thought was to study the intellectual history of England during the era of the Renaissance with particular emphasis on Italian influences on English intellectual figures. This was too broad a topic; so finally, I arrived at the specific figure of Sir Thomas Eliot and wrote a study of him as my Ph.D. dissertation.

CAC: What do you suppose in your personality, experience, and character brought you to the Renaissance whether in Italy or in England?

SL: I think probably it was the fact that as Renaissance Italy was taught, at least in the history department at KU in those days, it was a course in intellectual and artistic history. Social history hadn't become popular and the politics of all of the Italian city/states is so complicated that at least the people I studied with didn't try to keep it straight. They were interested in Leonardo, and Michelangelo, and the great intellectual and artistic figures. This blended very well with other work in the humanities that I had done.

CAC: When you got to England it made it possible to study Shakespeare, I would imagine?

SL: I didn't specifically study Shakespeare; but, I certainly went to a lot of plays in London those two years. I finished my Ph.D. in only two years, which I would not recommend to anyone else. Three was the normal length of time and I asked for a year off on the grounds that I already had an American M.A. and it was granted. I did, indeed, do it; but, I have always thought that I would have greatly enjoyed a third year in stretching things out. My first year, I didn't particularly enjoy, and felt lonesome, and thought the English were a little cold and snobbish. By my second year, I had made a lot of friends; but, I was working pretty hard. I think a third year I could have played around a little more and enjoyed myself a lot.

CAC: Who were the Tudor-Stuart experts then on the faculty at Cambridge?
SL: I worked primarily with Geoffrey Elton, now Sir Geoffrey Elton who has for the last forty years or so dominated the Tudor field. Geoffrey is only ten years older than I am and had been in World War II. He was born in 1921.

CAC: He was a very young man at that time.

SL: He was, yes. He was not able in theory to be my supervisor because he was too young to have research students; so, I was theoretically supervised by an historian of political theory named Christopher Morris, who was a marvelous lecturer and a charming person. The only book he ever wrote was about cricket rather than anything else.

CAC: [laughter]

SL: But, he provided a social life for me and Geoffrey Elton provided the intellectual stimulus that I needed. I was, I guess, the first of Elton's Ph.D.s and he trained a lot of American scholars over the years; but, the records wouldn't show that because he's not the official supervisor.

CAC: What model of discipline as an adviser to graduate studies was he?

SL: He was very insistent on using the archives. He was one of the first people in my field who did that himself. Really, Elton was the third generation of scholars in my field. One thinks of history as going way back; but, in fact, the first professional scholar in my field was A.F. Pollard. A.F. Pollard, I don't think, ever went to the archives. He wrote out of secondary sources. He taught Sir John Neale.

CAC: Really?

SL: Neale was, again, a great figure. I knew Neale. I went to some of his seminars at the University of London. Neale realized the desirability of going to the archives; but, he sent research assistants to do it for him. He had several women who did this. He thought women were incompetent of writing anything on their own but could do his leg work for him. Neale was theoretically the supervisor of Geoffrey Elton. In fact, Elton was self-taught; but, he had to have a theoretical adviser so Neale was the one who signed the papers. Geoffrey taught himself to read Tudor handwriting and he was the one who ferreted out the documents and he was patient enough to sit for hours in the public record office trying to make sense out of financial records of the Tudor period, which nobody else had looked at before. He was very insistent that that was the way history ought to be done and trained me very well, I think.

CAC: Why am I surprised by what you're saying? There's an archival primary document tradition that runs longer and deeper in American historiography than that.

SL: I think maybe one of the factors involved is the situation in England in which a great deal of the original source material got published in the Nineteenth Century in our field.
CAC: So, you had records as [unclear].

SL: In my field there is the famous twenty-three volume set called the *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, which provided a summary, usually quite a full summary, of all the main series of documents in the public record office, [unclear] Museum. These volumes started coming out in the 1880s or 1890s. The set was complete probably in around 1920. This is what Neale wrote out of; so, in a sense, he had the archival materials but as filtered through these calendars. But Geoffrey was insistent that that was not satisfactory. That the calendars were incomplete and might misinterpret things and there were sequences of documents that were never calendared because they were too specific, too esoteric. Nowadays, it's wonderful for my graduate students; they have access to the calendars because they can't go to the archives. No serious historian would attempt to write Tudor history or Stuart history just out of the published calendars.

CAC: You had to be trained very early in your career there to read these scripts?

SL: I wasn't really trained; I had to pick it up. Nobody could tell you how to do it. There was a seminar in paleography; but, it was taught by a funny old man who worked in some entirely different era. He could teach you how to read Sumerian paleography or something, but not what I was doing. I trained myself by finding documents that had been transcribed and published, and I'd take the document and compare it with the published text, and figure out what was going wherever I got stuck. Eventually, I didn't get stuck anymore. I still tell my graduate students that that's the way to do it. I will help them; but, I don't set specific tasks or assignments for them in learning the handwriting.

CAC: I'm going to skip ahead. Did your graduates students in Texas and Minnesota have the same experience of going back to Oxford or Cambridge to do their own . . . ?

SL: Almost all of them have gone back to do research in the archives. I've had one or two who have been fortunate enough to have a year at Oxford, or Cambridge, or some other English university as part of their graduate program . . . that includes lecturing.

CAC: Clearly, this is something that you encourage the best . . . ?

SL: Oh, very much, yes. I've had one or two students, particularly young men from the Far East who have worked with me, who have not been in a position where they could go to Europe; though one of my Korean Ph.D.s, Minjae Kim, did, in fact, spend a whole year in the British archives and mastered Tudor handwriting.

CAC: I queried how you got from Kansas to Cambridge. How do you get from Korea to Cambridge? That's even a bigger swim.

SL: Minjae came to Minnesota and he didn't actually go to Cambridge. He simply got a year's grant from the Graduate School here to do research in the archives in England.
CAC: But it seems that the international students that I've dealt with are so concerned with the history of their own country.

SL: Yes, that's usually true. I don't quite know how Minjae and one or two other Asian students that I have had have got into it. Minjae has gone back to Korea and is the head of the history department at one of the universities in Seoul and the leading British historian in the country. He's actually back at Minnesota on sabbatical doing post-doctoral work with me.

CAC: I push on a few of these things because as I've gone through nearly thirty interviews now, it's clear that here we are in this landlocked Siberian province and so many of our students and faculty have contacts all around the world constant, and recurring, and persisting. It's an interesting phenomenon, which I think is very little credited.

SL: I think that's true. I wonder if the fact that we are isolated here has driven us to develop contacts more than maybe would be the case if they came more easily. You know, of course, about the China Center and all the University of Minnesota contacts with China.

CAC: Right, we'll get to that.

SL: I did have the privilege of lecturing in China for a couple of months, now nearly ten years ago. I had two guides and translators while I was in China and they are both now graduate students in History at the University of Minnesota.

CAC: [laughter]

SL: In fact, I suspect that's the reason they wanted me to go to Nankai University, not that they wanted to hear me lecture but that they thought I'd be instrumental in helping some of their best students get to Minnesota and to America.

CAC: That's an authentic motivation . . . admirable.

SL: Not a bad thing.

CAC: Right. When you were in London, you had not only a chance to take in probably the best theater in the western world over a season or two but I'm sure lots of music. Were you able to keep up with your music as a performer or just as a consumer?

SL: No, I continued to play the organ a lot while I was in England. I was very fortunate in being able to study organ and church music with Boris Ord, who is perhaps nearly forgotten now but was one of the great figures in those days. He was the director of the choir at King's College, Cambridge. The recording industry was just getting started really in those days; but some of the early records of the King's College choir were directed by Boris and are still well worth listening to. In fact, I think the choir has never sounded as good under anyone else as they
did under Boris. He was a great stickler for clarity and purity of intonation and tone. Boris was generally thought to be a very difficult prickly character and had the reputation for not taking students; but, I was a naive young American and I didn't know that so I simply went up to the organ loft to King's College chapel after evensong one day, and told him I was an American research student and played the organ, and wondered if he would be willing to give me organ lessons. He said, "Boy, sit down and play me something." I played him a Bach fugue and he said, "Boy, there are some things I could teach you; so, why don't you come along on Wednesday afternoons about four?"

CAC: [laughter]

SL: I did that for two years.

CAC: Heavens.

SL: It was a wonderful experience. I subsequently discovered that Boris never got paid for this. I thought the Fulbright Commission was paying him and it was only much later that I learned that he had never put in a bill, and never got a penny, and I had not even really thanked him properly. Also, the second year I was in Cambridge, I ran the music in my own college chapel. I was at Sydney Sussex, which was one of the small colleges and the music didn't amount to very much... hymns on Sunday afternoon. We had three or four semi-paid singers. They maybe got ten shillings a month off their tuition bill or something. It was fun and I did keep a hand in.

CAC: Your commitment to the musical world is more profound than many of our colleagues, which is to suggest that, as you know, many of us played or sang through college, let us say, and then once we get on a career line, that line is largely dropped. Persons like yourself who persist with that kind of serious performing commitment is relatively rare.

SL: I've enjoyed it very much. I think that it's inevitable that one gets irritated with the university occasionally so you can go play the organ or if one gets crosswise with somebody at the church occasionally, you can stay away for awhile and immerse yourself in the university library. One might think that church music is entirely separate from Tudor history, but in fact, it isn't because I have been able to have choirs that performed a lot of Tudor church music. The two fields dovetail to some extent and have enriched each other for me.

CAC: Late in your career, you publish out of this interest, do you not?

SL: Yes, the last ten or fifteen years, I have got interested in the history of cathedrals in England and one aspect, not by any means the only one, of the cathedral's life is the music. I have been able to write more knowledgeably about organs, and organists, and repertoire, and professional musicians and their lives because of this.
CAC: You bet. You get your degree at, I'm guessing, a pretty favorable time. The market is pretty good?

SL: It was.

CAC: You go directly to Texas?

SL: Yes. I had worried while I was at Cambridge about how in the world I would ever get a job because people in Cambridge in those days had no connections with the American market; so, they couldn't put you in line for something. The old boys network was still working but they weren't part of it. There were people at Kansas who remembered me, but that wasn't really quite prominent enough as a university and I hadn't got a Ph.D. from Kansas, in any case. I thought it was going to be very difficult and I was in England and I couldn't easily come back to America to be interviewed. But, lo and behold, I got a letter from Barnes Lathrop, an American historian, who was the chairman of the history department at the University of Texas saying that they had been looking for an English historian for several years and hadn't found anybody they liked very much. Somehow, they had got my name and had read my master's thesis, which wasn't all that great I didn't think but he did. He said that he would arrange for someone that had spent a sabbatical year at Texas, but was an Englishman in London, to interview and assuming that the result of that interview was all right and I didn't have three heads . . . I was offered a job at the University of Texas; so, I never applied for that and I never applied for the position at Minnesota. I am in the curious position of never having had to go through the job market business. Perhaps, because of that, I feel even more sympathy for my own students who have so much trouble. I was luckier than they were.

CAC: It was by good chance again going to Texas . . . it's my understanding that their library collection in your field was then or did it develop later into a very good one?

SL: It was appalling when I went there. They had virtually nothing in my field. I was the first really professional English historian that they had at Texas. The field had been taught but by little old ladies, and that is not meant as an unfeminist remark but just a description of people. They were women who were essentially high school teachers who had kind of got bumped up, and they didn't do research, and they didn't do writing, and the level of instruction they provided was sort of glorified community college. The library in Tudor history was negligible. They didn't have the *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII* when I went there. That was a condition of my going that they would agree to buy that and some of the other calendars of state papers. But, it was a struggle all the time to get the library materials that I needed. One thinks of Texas as being rich; but, in those days, the money was being put into rather glamorous collections of literary manuscripts. Harry Ransom was interested in buying the works of T.S. Eliot and writers of that sort for what became the Harry Ransom Research Center. My feeling was that they could have bought microfilm of these things for a hell of a lot less money and spent the resulting savings on Tudor-Stuart books; but, they didn't do that. The history department had a set quota. There were no bibliographers in the library at all. You had to order all your own books yourself.
English history got 16% percent of the history budget and I had a colleague in Victorian history who got half of that.

CAC: [laughter]

SL: So, I had 8½ percent of the history budget, which was inadequate to begin with, to try to build up the field. During the thirteen years I was there, we made a good deal of progress. No, it was not a strong collection.

CAC: I have a sense that Texas is now at Austin one of the great libraries in the country. Is that an undeserved reputation?

SL: It depends entirely on the field. If you're talking about Twentieth Century literature, it is. If you're talking about Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century English history, that's not true at all. That's one of the reasons I was pleased to come to Minnesota because there was a quantum difference between the library collections here and the ones at Texas. The Minnesota Library already had, when I came, virtually every published work in my field.

CAC: Heavens.

SL: In fact, when I first came here, the library put out a little pamphlet, "An Introduction to the University of Minnesota Libraries." At some place it said, "Although our collections are generally strong, we have preeminent holdings in two fields," ... one of which was Seventeenth Century English history and I can't remember what the other one was.

CAC: You credit this to the scholars who were here in this field before you?

SL: Indeed!

CAC: Namely?

SL: Primarily, David Willson. David Harris Willson was probably the most distinguished historian of Seventeenth Century England and the most distinguished Stuart historian of his generation. He taught at the University of Minnesota for forty-three years; it's the only place he ever taught. I don't know that he was ever recognized here for the quality of mind and the distinction that he had. He published only three or four books; but, they were exceptionally good and very highly regarded both in England and in America.

CAC: That would be rare.

SL: His biography of James I is still, after forty years, the best book in that field. I had known Wilson a little before I came here because, on one occasion, I got a sabbatical from the
University of Texas, and we needed somebody to fill in, and David Willson came down to the University of Texas and taught there for a year.

CAC: Oh, how nice.

SL: Although, I was on sabbatical, I was still in Austin part of the time; so, Phyllis and I became great friends of David and Molly. It was a pleasure to be associated with them for awhile even after I came here. He was one of the real gentlemen and scholars of a sort that the profession doesn't really produce much anymore. I entered into a very flourishing field with marvelous library holdings and a lot of graduate students and recognized distinction around the country.

CAC: And a related library collection in English constitutional history?

SL: Yes, that's right.

CAC: So, that that was a parallel kind of [unclear]?

SL: The two dovetailed, yes. David was in Seventeenth Century England primarily and I was in Sixteenth; so, I had to get a few additional things for the earlier period. In general, everything was here. Fortunately, the library has continued to keep up the field. I've worried about that some over the years with continued budget cuts. I recall on one occasion the university library had a financial crisis and said they were going to have to discontinue their subscriptions to some of the quarterly journals of the English County Record Societies. We have an almost complete run of all the journals of the twenty-five or so County Record Societies in England. It's the best collection anywhere between the east and west coasts.

CAC: Heavens.

SL: It's superior to any collection anywhere in Chicago. But, they said they were going to have to discontinue it and I said, only partially tongue in cheek, "Why didn't they discontinue some of their subscriptions to state historical societies in the United States?"

CAC: [laughter]

SL: You, as an American historian will, I suppose, think this sounds ridiculous. But, in fact, the Minnesota Historical Society got all these things by exchange so if we stopped getting them, they'd still be available a mile or two away; whereas, if we discontinued the English series, they wouldn't be available closer than one of the coasts.

CAC: This logic prevailed?
SL: It worked. I presume they have eventually caught back up on the American ones. They didn't cancel the English ones.

CAC: You were suggesting that the Minnesota job came to you and not you to the job. This was the occasion of David Willson's retirement?

SL: Right.

CAC: Do you know the path by which the job came to you?

SL: Stuart Hoyt was the chair of this department in those days. To tell the truth, subsequently when I became chair, I went back into the confidential files of the chairman's office.

CAC: Fair enough.

SL: There was a file marked "Lehmberg Search" or something like that. There were the letters that Stuart Hoyt had written to about a dozen senior English historians around the country. A surprising number of them said, "If you want to continue in this field, one of the people you should seriously consider would be Lehmberg at Texas. He has published a couple of books and is a very junior full professor; but, he probably would be movable and would be a good person for you to look at." So, I was invited here and I know the department also interviewed two or three other people; but, they made me the offer. This, then, got to be the occasion of a grand mess in the history department at Texas, the full story of which has never come out. The history department at Texas was, of course, eager to keep me from going and wished to make a retention case of this. That went up to a man named John Silber who was at that time . . .

CAC: Oh, my.

SL: . . . the president of the University of Texas but continued to interfere in college and department affairs. I had previously been critical of John Silber because I was not impressed with his scholarship. I had been on a search committee in which I thought he would not be a suitable candidate for the position he acquired because he didn't really have the scholarly credentials. So, Silber was opposed to giving me anything to stay at Texas and the department fought this but lost. If I had won the retention case, I don't know whether I would have stayed at Texas or not. My wife and I were very happy there. It was clear that this was a better job, not just in terms of money but in terms of the prestige of the department and strength in my own field. To some extent we left rather embittered at events in Texas because of the animosity of Sliver. The part of the story that hasn't ever come out and probably never will is that I happened to be a pretty close friend of the chairman of the Board of Regents, a man named Frank Erwin, who interfered in internal affairs more than he should have. In this case, he called in Silber and said, "Damn it, John, you're a fool and you'll be sorry."

CAC: [laughter]
SL: Within a year John Silber had been fired. Subsequently, as you know, he became president of Boston University.

CAC: And followed the same style of leadership.

SL: And has made many enemies there as well. I have said for years that sometime before I die I will forgive John Silber and I'm getting old enough that ... maybe I have. I don't want to go to the grave with that bitterness on my soul.

CAC: Perhaps, telling of the story today is [unclear].

SL: Maybe it will be cathartic to have done that. Of course, it was one of the cases where the right thing happened, fortuitously, for the wrong reason. I, in the long run, have been certain that I'm better off here than I would have been at Texas. Even my wife, who is a Texas native and bitterly resented being taken away from that environment when she first came, now can't imagine that she would be as happy in Texas as she has been here.

CAC: You met Phyllis when she was a student at Texas?

SL: She was one of my graduate students.

CAC: That often happens.

SL: We disregarded the injunctions against faculty dating students. It's amazing how many people have disregarded that. She was doing her master's degree in library science specializing in rare books librarianship. She was the principal manuscript cataloguer at the rare books collection in Austin and was supposed to have gone off to graduate school and library science at Yale. I doubted that she really wanted to do that; so, I thought I better just marry her and keep her in Austin. It was a wise thing.

CAC: You came to Minnesota at a time that the department and the college were engaged in building strength in the core departments ... History included?

SL: Yes.

CAC: Do you want to share your perceptions of that building process? I remember it as pretty chaotic and, finally, successful in many ways; but, to expand as rapidly as this department did and the college did in a matter of ten years, really just about the time you came . . .

SL: It certainly had both its positive and negative features. In retrospect, since we've had financial troubles, and salary freezes, and job freezes, and inability to make additionalhirings in departments like this, the old days look the good old days because things were moving forward, and people were being hired, and the department was acquiring bright young people in a wide
variety of fields, and changing very rapidly as a result of that. Obviously, there are enormous positive aspects of this which are perhaps apparent in more in retrospect than they were at the time. I think you're referring to the divisiveness that was evident in the department and which you as chair were so successful in trying to deal with and healing wounds. There were a lot of bright young people who were ambitious to the extent of trying to ride rough sho over other people that might stand in their way and there were a lot of different points of view about what History ought to be. This was still the 1960s, merging into the 1970s, and there were a lot of people whose real interest was in political change; but, for some reason, they thought the way to achieve political change was to study history or to teach history, a view that I have never subscribed to myself.

CAC: [laughter]

SL: There were a lot of these young people in this department. There were inevitably personality clashes and divisions of opinion within the faculty here. This has receded enough that it's rather strange to think back; we're now all quite tolerant of each other and as we age, we've really all become pretty good friends of each other.

CAC: You came at a time, under Stuart Hoyt just before he died, when the governance structure was being changed very rapidly within our own department.

SL: Right. It had changed just before I came. Stuart was the first chair of the new, more democratic, model. I guess Harold Deutsch was his predecessor and had pretty much been an autocrat of the old school—perhaps a benevolent autocrat. I always liked Harold myself. Perhaps, those who were here under him would not have such a happy view. Even when I first came, the full professors still dominated things. Opening everything up occurred very rapidly; but, it was a divisive process.

CAC: And took four or five years to settle down, as I recall.

SL: Yes, it did. You deserve the chief credit for that. I think the last tail ends of it maybe occurred while I was in the front office because I thought one of the most important things was to try to bring people together. I think at the end of the six years that I was in 614A that had happened.

CAC: I think that's true, yes. Against your experience with fellow graduate students at Cambridge and then working with graduate students and undergraduates at Texas . . . do you remember what the nature of our students was here when you came? Was it any different?

SL: I think my first feeling was simply one of difference of size that this was a much bigger university than the University of Texas. All the buildings were crowded. The corridors were jammed with students. The library was full all the time. The English History Survey, when I first taught it, enrolled 500 students. I had half a dozen teaching assistants and had to totter over
to the East Bank carrying maps, and overhead projectors, and microphones, and things to lecture in a large auditorium over there. That had never happened at Texas. English History was taught in maybe four or five sections of twenty-five students a piece, each one taught by a faculty member. The idea of having all these graduate students, and all these TAs, and enormous sections of courses was really very different for me from what it had been. That, of course, was something that didn't last very long. The English History Survey is now down to maybe seventy-five or eighty students. I don't like to think that this is because Joe Altholz and I haven't taught it with some enthusiasm and I hope distinction. Times have changed and the place of England in the modern world is not what it used to be; and with multiculturalism, people are, I think quite rightly, interested in a lot of other areas and we've had curricular reforms which have introduced a lot of new survey courses that didn't exist when I first came. Original English History was one of only two or three surveys that you could take at the freshman level in the History Department. American History wasn't available to freshmen in those days; you had to be at least a sophomore. That changed pretty rapidly. The English Department originally required all of the English majors to take a course in English History, which I thought was a splendid idea; but, it was given up at the demand of some of the more radical graduate students or regular undergraduate students in the 1960s and 1970s. That's all changed. My first perception was mainly one of size rather than anything else and the fact that I couldn't work as directly with a small handful of students as I had at Texas. I think I probably also thought that the students here were more diverse in ability and background than the ones at Texas. The Texas student body was not only smaller but I think somewhat more selective than Minnesota. I had a feeling that, although the best students I had here were probably better than the best ones I had at Texas, things were sort of dragged down by a large number of people who were not really all that interested or that well-prepared.

CAC: What happened to the centrality of the old basic English constitutional history and the preparation of pre-law students? I think under A.B. White and probably before then, this was a long Minnesota tradition and I would guess that it was probably at other universities as well?

SL: It was. I think the change started in the law schools really because they used to require English constitutional history of pre-law students. There used to be a fairly fixed pre-law curriculum which would have emphasized that and would have taught prospective law students about the origins of the common law, and the jury system, and Magna Carta, and habeas corpus, and all that sort of thing. Again, I think perhaps as a result of the student movements out of the 1960s and 1970s, the law faculty was under pressure not to require things that didn't seem absolutely necessary or at least [unclear] the range of things that students could take. Students began taking Accounting more and English History less.

CAC: After you came here, the old English constitutional history was not taught again?

SL: I think Joel Samaha may have taught it once or twice.

CAC: Then, Stuart Hoyt taught it?
SL: Stuart had taught when it was really medieval history with constitutional emphasis. The field changed, too. Constitutional history ceased being, for most professional English historians, the approach that we wanted. It was excessively theoretical and constitutional. At first, we went more into politics as opposed to constitutional ideas; and then by the 1970s and 1980s, we were going more into social history. My own bent was more intellectual history rather than constitutional; so, I never particularly regretted the demise of constitutional. Exactly the same thing happened at Cambridge University. There was an extremely popular and well-attended series of lectures in English constitutional history at Cambridge University through the 1960s. That gradually faded away. Geoffrey Elton originally taught English constitutional history . . . at least that was the title of the course. As he taught it, it became less and less constitutional and more and more political. I think this simply reflects a different way of looking at the field.

CAC: Late in 1940, I had a summer course at Harvard with Charles McIlwain in English constitutional history.

SL: He was one of the great names in Stuart constitutional . . .

CAC: I can't remember anything about it except his presence and his authority . . . wow! Really impressive. You're touching upon some of the changes that occurred within your own field. Maybe we could explore that just briefly and then turn to other concerns. You suggest that even Tudor-Stuart history, apart from English constitutional, turned from a focus on constitutional history to political and then to cultural or demographic and so forth.

SL: Yes, I think so.

CAC: How did that influence your own teaching and your own research agenda?

SL: It really had turned away from constitutional to political history already by the time I was a graduate student. As I said earlier, I started graduate school with the idea that I was mainly interested in intellectual history and my Ph.D. dissertation, which then became my first book, was an intellectual biography of Sir Thomas Eliot, who was a political theorist, and compiler of the first English/Latin dictionary published in England in the Sixteenth Century, and a man of interest primarily as a scholar and literary figure.

CAC: A Renaissance figure.

SL: Exactly. He was influenced by affairs in Italy. He was a friend of Sir Thomas Moore and probably met [Desiderius] Erasmus and was part of that very important group of intellectuals who introduced Renaissance new learning to England. It happened that Thomas Eliot was also involved in politics. He was a member of the King's Council. In fact, he was Henry VIII's private secretary for awhile. When Henry VIII decided that he wanted a divorce from Catherine of Aragon, he sent Sir Thomas Eliot as an ambassador to Europe to talk to the Emperor Charles V to try to persuade Charles V not to oppose the divorce. Charles V was a nephew of Catherine
of Aragon so was not inclined to favor a course that Catherine herself was violently opposed to and Eliot came home empty-handed from that interview and Henry VIII was angry and Eliot was fired. This is one of the reasons he did all his writing. He never held a position in the government again; so, he went off in a grump and started writing Platonic dialogues.

CAC: [laughter]

SL: At least they had been interested in politics and so, in a way, his career provided a bridge for me from intellectual history into political history; and I started reading state papers, and diplomatic correspondence, and that sort of thing. One of the problems with Sir Thomas Eliot was that, although he'd left behind at least a dozen published books and they were primary source material, there were only three or four of his actual letters that survived. Geoffrey Elton really disapproved of my working on this subject. He said, "There isn't enough primarily manuscript material here. You ought to do something else." I was pigheaded and stuck with it. For my second project, I thought I would like to do something for which there was a lot of primary source . . .

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]

[Tape 1, Side 2]

SL: . . . my second book, which was a study of the political career of Sir Walter Mildmay, Queen Elizabeth's chancellor of the exchequer for at least thirty years. Mildmay left behind a vast quantity of papers which, however, were not in the public domain. They had been inherited by his descendants. Mildmay built a country house called Apthorp in Northamptonshire, which was lived in by his descendants until World War II. His papers were up in the attic and nobody had been allowed to see them. In World War II, this was commandeered as a military command post. After the war, the family decided that they couldn't afford to keep it up because of inheritance taxes, what the British call death duties; so, in lieu of paying their inheritance taxes, they offered the country house to the government and it was turned into a reformatory, of all things.

CAC: [laughter]

SL: I once said I wanted to go around the house and was told by the home secretary that my life would be endangered if I did. All of the furnishings and even fireplaces had been stripped out; but, the house still exists.

CAC: But the papers were still there?

SL: The papers were deposited during the war for safekeeping with the Northamptonshire County Record Office. After the war, they couldn't go back to the house till they were given permanently to that record office. I discovered from J. E. Neale that they were available and had
not been used. Although I didn't know that I was particularly interested in financial history—I thought my chief was Henry VII rather than Elizabeth—nevertheless, I was seduced by the existence of this vast quantity of material.

CAC: Bravo. You were the first one to see them?

SL: Neale had sent an assistant to look at some of them. You will find some footnote references to them in Neale's books on Elizabethan parliaments; but, Neale was interested only in Mildmay's career as a member of the House of Commons and not really his financial administration or anything else in his life. Really, I was the first one to use those. What I'm saying, in larger terms, is that that was a study in political history.

CAC: I understand.

SL: The next decade or so of my life, I spent working on the history of parliament. This, again, was something that I sort of happened into rather than deliberately choosing. Even now, I don't think I have any real special interest and/or affinity for parliamentary history; but, the study of parliament, particularly the House of Commons, was thought by the people who led the profession in England during those days to be the most important thing that remained to be done. J. E. Neale had devoted most of his life to studying parliament, by which he meant the House of Commons—he ignored the lords—during the reign of Elizabeth and nobody had done it for the reign of Henry VIII and I thought somebody ought to do that. There were several people in England who had tried it and they concluded that the source material was wanting and it would be wiser not even to try; but, fools rush in, and Lehmborg did rush in, and, eventually, I wrote a book on the Reformation Parliament, one of the most famous parliaments in all English history, the parliament called by Henry VIII in 1529 in order to ratify his divorce from Catherine of Aragon and his marriage to Anne Boleyn, which then ratified the break between England and the papacy because the pope didn't approve of the divorce. In order to get the divorce, England had to become Protestant. The Reformation was brought in politically from the top down, imposed on English people by legislation passed by the Reformation Parliament. People had known it was an important assembly; but, nobody had studied the composition of the House of Commons, which I did. Prosopography, collective biography, was also becoming popular during that period.

CAC: Neale was one of them that . . .

SL: Neale had done that for Elizabeth; so, that was sort of an expectation that someone who did the Tudor work would do the same thing. Neale had really got the idea from Sir Lewis Namier, who first popularized this for his study of the Eighteenth Century politics and parliaments. I did that for the Reformation Parliament and, later, I wrote a sequel called The Later Parliaments of Henry VIII in which I carried the story forward to the death of Henry VIII in 1547.

CAC: Each of these books required your going to England to do the primary research?
SL: Yes.

CAC: You had a number of fellowships and foundation grants to do so?

SL: I had two Guggenheims which I'm very grateful for.

CAC: That's unusual.

SL: Yes, it is unusual. On the other hand, I applied for various things, including NEHs, that I didn't get. I never quite understood why I was so unappealing to the NEH and amazingly appealing to the Guggenheim.

CAC: [laughter]

SL: A lot of years, I spent summers in England if I didn't have an entire sabbatical. I did, I think, read all the manuscripts and study all the biographies. As far as collective biography was concerned, this was not so easy to do then because it was before the computer era. My files of collective biography, initially, were just done on three by five note cards. I was fortunate in having research assistants from among the graduate students here in Minnesota who got together biographical material mainly from published sources like registers of members of the Inns of Court, or admissions at Oxford and Cambridge, or government officers, or land agentry. Our life is much easier now in the computer era.

CAC: At what point did you learn to use this tool yourself?

SL: I didn't learn to use the computer until I retired from being department chair.

CAC: Then, as a [unclear]? 

SL: Fred Lukermann and the Graduate School thought they should give me something in recognition of six years of slavery . . .

CAC: Ahhh! Reward!

SL: . . . in the chairman's office; so, they gave me a computer. I learned to use it in a minimal way. I still don't do much more than minimal word processing; but, I've written four or five books on the computer and couldn't imagine living without it now.

CAC: Yes. There's another bridge that comes a bit later, that is, the bridge to the Early Modern period generally. There comes to be in the 1980s—I'm guessing now; you would know the chronology better—a cluster of scholars who were interested in what we define as the Early Modern era and you were prominent among them; but, it includes not only the Atlantic community but China as well, for example?
SL: This department has been one of the leaders in that.

CAC: Yes. Say a bit about that. I think that's a very interesting intellectual development really cutting across regions and areas.

SL: It is. One of my regrets, as I approach retirement, is that I have not plugged into that more fully than I did. One of the unusual things about this department was the fact that we had strong scholars doing the Early Modern period throughout the world... England and Europe with Jim Tracy particularly and the Far East with Ted Farmer. We finally came to realize that we had a lot in common and we could do comparative history.

CAC: American Colonial.

SL: Of course. That has been extremely valuable for this department. I think we offer the strongest program in comparative Early Modern history probably anywhere in the world. It isn't just comparative European Early Modern history. It is truly international and includes Latin America, and Africa, and parts of the world that other people might not initially think of. This all grew out of the fact that when this department was being built up right after World War II, as you described earlier, I think a conscious decision must have been made—it was before I was here—that we were going to do everything.

CAC: It wasn't really after the Second World War; it was the 1960s.

SL: All right. That was after the war but not immediately after the war. [laughter]

CAC: [laughter]

SL: There are two models I think that departments could have followed. One of them I sometimes call the Johns Hopkins model of carving out three or four territories, areas of history in which you would have great depth and strength and making no effort to do everything and the other which is sort of the Minnesota, or Wisconsin, or Michigan model, typical of a big state university in the Midwest maybe, of thinking that we had a responsibility to the geographic area that we served to offer work in all areas. That's been one of the blessings as well as one of the difficulties of this department. We're spread very thin but [unclear] everything. We made virtue out of necessity, I think, by realizing that, although we were spread very thin geographically, there were a lot of us who were working in the same chronological period. If we started talking to each other, we would discover that our work did, indeed, relate.

CAC: Yes. You're persuaded that this is recognized by other departments and scholars elsewhere in the country?

SL: I hope so. If it isn't, it ought to be. To some extent, I'm persuaded it is; perhaps, not as much as we would like.
CAC: It strikes me—you can correct or extend—that it also created a nucleus within the department of real intellectual collegiality.

SL: Yes, I think it helped very much in doing that.

CAC: I think that all departments in a large, sprawling university require some kind of glue, some kind of coherence.

SL: Absolutely.

CAC: And I think that really worked within the department, but across the department as well because we had people interested in this from other disciplines.

SL: Oh, certainly . . . English, Humanities, Political Science. I have not been involved in that as much as I wish I had been. I have always, I guess, thought that my chief loyalty was to the history of England, which I sliced geographically rather than chronologically. When I first came, my graduate students typically thought of themselves as students in the field of English History and their speciality would be Tudor-Stuart within that area. Now, you won't see jobs advertised as Tudor-Stuart; you will see them as Early Modern Europe with an English speciality, or with an English speciality permitted, or more often I see with an English speciality excluded because they've got somebody already in that area and that's not what they want. Probably, I'm a little out of step with the times in still thinking that my primary loyalty is to England. Probably, it would be better if it were to Early Modern and I thought of myself as an England specialist within the Early Modern time frame. It would fit into the way the department thinks of things and the way most of our graduate students now describe themselves.

CAC: You weren't here long before your potential, your latent capacity for administration was recognized. You became, first, chairman of the History Department and you saw that, as you suggested earlier, as a kind of time of reconciliation.

SL: Consolidation.

CAC: Right. You gave six years to it?

SL: It was no longer of period of growth in the sense that we had had before. It was a period of trying to hold together what was here, and get people to work with each other more effectively and cooperatively than they had, and badgering the dean's office for the resources that we needed in order to continue these things.

CAC: That, in turn, got you—as I look at your CV [Curriculum Vitae] here—into a number of college and then university commitments; that is, you very quickly, after becoming chair of History, become chairman of the Senate Committee on Educational Policies [SCEP]?
SL: Yes.

CAC: You pick up, later, chairman of the Senate Library Committee and of the Graduate School as well. Could you take the conversation that way . . . first to the college and then, perhaps, to the Graduate School?

SL: I think my interests have been more in university-wide committees than in CLA [College of Liberal Arts] committees. I probably have not been involved as much as many other people in the department in things strictly within CLA.

CAC: That’s true. SCEP is . . .

SL: SCEP is a university-wide committee; in fact, it covers not just the Twin Cities but also Duluth, and Morris, and our other branches. We have been fortunate in having people who have made the commitment to come in once a month from Morris and Duluth and be active in the committee.

CAC: You were chair twice—once in the early 1980s and once in the early 1990s—with almost a decade between these two chairmanships?

SL: Right.

CAC: Can you say something about the changing mission, or the changing style, or the changing influence of this really important committee on educational policy?

SL: It's been long enough ago that I have a little trouble recapturing exactly what SCEP did in the 1980s. I think one reason I have trouble recapturing it is that we didn't do all that much. I think faculty governance was more diffuse or there were more committees. I have the feeling that in those days, we reacted to issues that were fed to us by administrators or by other committees that reported to the Senate through SCEP and we didn't undertake so much on our own.

CAC: You weren't creating an agenda of your own of any substantial [unclear]?

SL: My recollection is that we weren't. Although, SCEP was thought to be an important committee, I think it was nowhere near as important in the 1980s as it became in the 1990s. There was a reform of faculty governance and a change in the structure of the Senate and its committees that came into effect sometime between the two stints that I did with SCEP. As a result of that, a number of committees were abolished and the committees that remained, like SCEP, had their mandate enlarged so that they took over a number of things that had been done by other committees previously. For instance, there had been a Committee [Council] on Liberal Education that was abolished and SCEP took over some sort of oversight of liberal education requirements. There had been committees on giving teacher awards and SCEP took that over and
established an expanded subcommittee that awarded the Horace T. Morse Amico awards for distinguished teaching. There had been a variety of other things that had been done by separate committees which did report to the Senate through SCEP, but nevertheless, were independent and did their work and we took that over.

CAC: But the initiative for expanding the teacher awards, for example, came from Central Administration and then the committee responded or was it the initiative of the committee as you recall?

SL: I think the initiative came from Central Administration. Some of the awards had been in place for a long time. It was a question simply of who would pick the recipients, how that would be handled, and what criteria would be used.

CAC: They’d been in place but, initially, many of them carried no honorarium and, therefore, not as much honor.

SL: Yes, that’s perhaps true. I think the main thing about the second time around with SCEP was that I felt and members of the committee felt that we really ought to try to determine our own agenda more than we had before, that there were things that needed doing and the committee had the power that we could decide what they were; and if they were, in fact, within the area of educational policy, we ought to be developing policies rather than just reacting to things fed to us by the administration. The thing that was most crucial during my second chairmanship of SCEP was student evaluation of teaching. We spent at least two years trying to develop a standard form for student evaluation of teaching. One wouldn’t believe—perhaps you will believe because you have been involved in that but many other people would not—the variety of points of view about evaluation of teaching.

CAC: [unclear] resistance [unclear].

SL: There are a large number of faculty who still don't believe that students have any business evaluating their teaching because the teacher knows more about it than the students do and you can't trust student evaluations; and even those who do value student comments, nevertheless, have a lot of different views as to what are appropriate questions to ask or what use can legitimately be made of student views? Is this something purely advisory to the faculty member so he or she can try to improve teaching, or is it to be used by the department in allocating salary increases, or is it to be used by the deans in granting tenure and promotion or other honors that might be forthcoming? There are a very large number of different opinions about that. I determined the second year that I was on SCEP, the year that I was on it but not chair, that my job during the year as chairman would be to get some sort of agreed policy on teaching evaluation hammered out and enacted. We had talked about it for far too long and we needed to do something. Maybe it would be minimal but I would not leave that office without something; so, we knocked heads together and drew up questionnaires. Various members of the committee would say, “I don't like this question.” I said, “Fine, we'll take it off.” We started with twenty-five questions.
and ended up with five that nobody objected to very much . . . mainly just how would you rate the overall teaching ability of this faculty member? We agreed that these would be required of all faculty members in the university, not necessarily of all courses. We said that all courses should be evaluated over a period of time; but, that didn't mean that every time you taught the Survey of American History, you had to do an evaluation. Finally, we had a simplified form we agreed on and we brought it to the Senate. There was a divisive debate in the Senate and a number of faculty members, particularly from Mathematics, spoke vehemently against it; but, when the votes were counted, we had a very substantial majority and the form is now in use.

CAC: Part of the consensus was the availability of these data to other faculty and chairs as well as to the individual instructor?

SL: Yes.

CAC: So that it really could be used depending upon the choice of the department or a chairperson in matters of merit or promotion?

SL: Yes. I think it's still not entirely clear to what extent this material can be, or ought to be, or will be used. So far, it has not been centrally collected or analyzed anywhere. A department could certainly make up its own norms; but, I think the college has not done that let alone the university. There are many people who think the university ought not to and I'm not sure they should because I think the nature of different fields is so diverse that it may not be possible to compare student evaluations in different areas.

CAC: You served also not only departmental but other tenure review committees. Do you have a sense that the criteria for judging merit and tenure and promotion have evolved, changed over the twenty-five years you've been here?

SL: I think it's generally thought that they have tightened up; but, I'm not sure that I really agree with that so much. I think we were pretty meticulous in looking at people's qualifications even twenty years ago when I was first on committees of that sort. It maybe was less likely that the department's recommendation would be overridden higher up; but certainly, from the very beginning that I served on CLA committees reviewing promotion and tenure recommendations, a number of them were turned back. They were all scrutinized with great care, and thoughtfulness, and efficiency. I am not so sure that things are tighter now than they were before.

CAC: I think that they tightened up just in the early years you were here in the early 1970s.

SL: Yes, I think just before I got involved in it, probably it did. One thing that had changed is that we have stopped granting tenure without promotion. In my early years, we still had some tenured assistant professors and I participated in committees that did that. We were persuaded that there were people whose abilities were great and were involved in the early stages of
scholarly work which didn't yet justify promotion; but, with a six-year up-or-out rule, they had to be granted tenure or dismissed. We thought it would be too bad to dismiss people as promising as that; so, I did participate in some recommendations of people to be tenured assistant professors. In retrospect, that was not a good idea. These people have generally not fulfilled the expectations that we had for them.

CAC: The committees we've been talking about really extend beyond any given department, or program, or cluster of programs. When you were on the Senate Library Committee, however, there was an agency to which the committee was responsible... not only to the Senate but to the library administration, which made the Senate Library Committee, as I understand it, a different kind of body. Do have any reflections on that?

SL: Again, I was on the Library Committee more than once. My feeling is that the character of the committee did change somewhat. Initially, I think it was a faculty body that was sort of there as a liaison with the library and we didn't imagine that we would change the operation of the library very much. The librarians wanted a group of faculty people that they could explain their activities to and they wanted the faculty to join with the library administration in lobbying for financial support. Those were the things we did. In more recent years, I think the faculty has become more willing to make demands of the library and the committee has been somewhat more important in insisting that we must have genuine competence in the chief administrative positions in the library and that faculty opinion must be listened to.

CAC: You had a couple of tenures on it. Who was the director of the libraries these two times?

SL: The second time around, Tom Shaughnessy, the present librarian was a new hire. There had just been a firing of the previous librarian and a divisive business. I was not on the search committee but did know something about the search for Shaughnessy. I think I was on the Library Committee rather than the search committee; but, the Library Committee, during the interim while John Howe was the acting librarian, did meet with the search committee. So, I had seen the candidates and felt that Shaughnessy would do well—in my judgment, he has done very well.

CAC: You weren't on the committee in the latter days of Eldred Smith then?

SL: No. I'm not sure I was ever on the committee under Eldred Smith. I think maybe the first time around, Ned Stanford was still the university librarian. I don't remember that as precisely as I ought to.

CAC: Down the line, I'll interview myself for part of that story.

SL: Yes, right.

CAC: It's not a pleasant story.
SL: Yes, I know. I know enough about it to know it wasn't.

CAC: In your covering memorandum to me, you suggested that you were prepared to say a few general things about certain administrative officers and you listed Mr. Lukermann, Roger Benjamin, and Ken Keller.

SL: And you'd like me to do that?

CAC: I think it would be an appropriate contribution to posterity.

SL: All right. As department chairman, I got along quite well with Fred Lukermann who was dean of CLA before I became chair and after I left [unclear] certainly was in that office while I was chairman. I thought he had a good understanding of what the needs of the department were and, insofar as possible, he did meet them. Occasionally, I found him vague and diffuse and I wasn't quite sure what he was saying; but, it may well be that he did that deliberately because he didn't want to say, "No," and wasn't in a position where he could say, "Yes," right away. I think, in retrospect, that was not as frustrating or as undesirable an attitude as I thought it was at the time.

I knew Roger Benjamin both as a colleague upstairs in the Political Science Department and then as an associate dean of CLA. I got along very well with Roger Benjamin. I found him very easy to work with when he was in the dean's office. Unlike Fred, you could get a speedy, "Yes," or "No," out of Roger. Generally, in my case, it was a "Yes" and I was very appreciative of that. I'd go over and say, "Professor so and so has received an offer from Carnegie Tech," or wherever it might be, "and we need to meet this and will you do so?" Usually, Roger would just say, "Yes, of course, we need to retain someone as good as that." There was no beating around the bush, or deception, or anything. I was then very pleased when Roger came back into the Central Administration. I know there are many people now who don't have as happy perceptions of that and I was not as directly involved with him as the number two person under Keller as I had been earlier. Again, I had the perception that he made speedy judgments and they probably weren't always right; but, at least it was better than being put on hold forever, or feeling that someone in that office didn't have the background to understand what you were talking about, or that procedures were so important that you had to play something through seven or eight committees before you could get a waffley answer that really didn't meet your needs. I appreciated the ability that Roger had to cut right through to the core of something and make a commitment, usually, right on the spot.

I found some of the same sort of thing in Ken Keller. I hope that eventually Ken's position at the university is more favorably regarded than it was during the unfortunate period when he had to step down. Probably, it has been since then. There were certainly a lot of unfortunate things that happened under Ken and I confess that, on a personal level, I never liked him very much. There just wasn't the sort of spark of friendship with him that I had with Roger. I think, in retrospect, that Ken Keller had a vision of greatness for this university which I have not seen
since his departure. He really thought that this could be one of the great universities in the United States and took steps to begin achieving that. It seems to me a very different attitude from the one that we've had subsequently in which we have retrenchment after retrenchment and wage freezes. No doubt Nils Hasselmo is accurate in his assessment of state politics, and his realization that we're not going to have additional resources, and that without those resources, we are not going to go forward, and we better just settle into comfortable mediocrity. I do have a feeling that under Nils—who used to be a close friend of mine; I haven't seen much of him since he became president—that we have allowed ourselves to settle into a kind of mediocrity without protesting very much about what a great loss this is. Maybe Ken could never have pulled it off; but, he . . .

CAC: Gave it the old college try.

SL: . . . had the vision. It was exciting to be here during those days and to feel that things were moving forward rapidly in what appeared to be the right direction.

CAC: For posterity, whoever is listening to this, perhaps, it should be said that the morning paper carried news of the loss of $25 million or $30 million in the combined investment portfolio of the university, which . . .

SL: I would say is a very serious matter. Of course, the university is not the only institution to have lost heavily in these very complicated financial dealings. It's tragic and suggests that there has been some failure of oversight at some level. I don't know whether the president can be expected to examine the investment portfolio; but, we have a vice-president for financial affairs, and a treasurer, and a director of the university foundation and I do think it is very distressing that they would have invested the permanent resources of the university in such a way that they were in danger of being lost.

CAC: Some were very risky.

SL: They, no doubt, were under enormous pressure to maximize the income and the way you do that is to increase the risk. It might have worked; but, a public institution of this sort ought not to have been involved in that, in my judgment.

CAC: To a banker's son, it may seem imprudent?

SL: It does.

CAC: Perhaps, we're nearing the concluding kinds of subjects we can talk about; but, I was impressed, knowing you for twenty-five years and reviewing your work here, at your persisting commitment to music in the community. It's not only your own work with playing the organ and leading a choir but serving on the board of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, for example, and other things. So many of our faculty reach out to the community not academic ways but in ways
that draw upon their talents, which are in part intellectual and cultural. Your wife, Phyllis, also has been so active in the arts, in tapestry, etcetera. Could you say something about the cultural surround of the university here in the Twin Cities?

SL: One of the great things about the Twin Cities as a community is, of course, the richness of the intellectual and artistic community here. That's another reason why I think it was fortunate, in the long run, that I'm in the Twin Cities rather than still in Austin, Texas. We have a first-rate art museum and two first-rate orchestras, one of which I was fortunate enough to serve on the board of when it was just achieving its national reputation. The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra is a relatively new creation; it was only twenty or twenty-five years ago that it became a really first-rate full-time professional organization and I was on the board in those years. Again, it was a difficult transition. The previous conductor, Leopold Sipe, I thought was quite unfairly fired; but, what the chamber orchestra wanted was a new image and a more professional way of doing things. With some personal hurt in the process, they did achieve it. I haven't been directly involved with the chamber orchestra or the symphony in a long time.

I have been more interested in smaller arts organizations. For a number of years, I helped run Concentus Musicus, which was the first organization in the Twin Cities to perform early music on period instruments. Arthur Maude had already started Concentus Musicus before I arrived on the scene. Originally, it was a very small operation of four or five singers who met around his dining room table. By the time I got here, they were larger than that and were performing at St. Clements [Episcopal] Church where I started running music; so, it was just sort of coincidence that that was a performing site that they liked because we had good acoustics and we didn't charge them anything. Of course, this was music out of the same period that I was studying as an historian. Here again, the two interests dovetail and Concentus needed financial advice and administrative common sense and I tried to provide that for them. I was chairman of the board for four or five years and on their board for a much longer period. Concentus unfortunately died—I think it was an inevitable natural death—about two years ago simply because Arthur Maude had been doing it a long time and, frankly, got a little tired of investing his energy in that way. The other reason was that early music has now become very popular and there are a lot of other early music organizations in the Twin Cities; so, Concentus was really no longer needed because there were more specialized groups that performed Baroque music on Baroque period instruments or sang only Sixteenth Century English church music, the so-called Waltham Abbey singers or things of that sort. We now have probably at least half a dozen, if not more, musical organizations in the same general area that Concentus used to be in. I have been involved in what's called the St. Paul Early Music Series, which tries to provide a performing opportunity for these various groups by offering the use of St. Clement's church without cost and providing a sort of umbrella for promotion, and advertising, and ticket sales, and affairs of that sort.

CAC: The authority you claim in this field has certainly had a bearing on your, I think, being called twice in the search for a new director of the School of Music here.
SL: That's true. I enjoyed the first of those searches very much, particularly because it was successful. We brought in Karen Wolf as director of the Music School and that was the point at which this Music School had a great leap upward—it had previously been simply a regional institution—and it was well on the way to becoming one of the country's great music schools by the time Karen left. The second time around was not so successful. In fact, the second search proved abortive and the one person that we wanted in the end wouldn't come. I still believe it was because the administration wouldn't make an attractive enough offer; but, the administration says it was because the person who was a very able black musician administrator was unwilling to come to the Twin Cities where he thought the black community was not large enough or supportive enough for him and his wife. I got involved with a number of Music faculty members during this and enjoyed that relationship very much. I think, to some extent, the Music School has not fulfilled the opportunities that were there for it. For that, to some extent, I fault both the college and Central Administration. The Music School faculty would like to become independent of the College of Liberal Arts and, frankly, I can't see any reason why they shouldn't be allowed to do this if it's a structure that they would prefer. This opportunity has been denied to them. I perceive that once again, we're sort of being comfortable in being a leading regional music school and have sort of given up the aspirations to doing more that.

CAC: Do you have any final reflections—we can always come back and renew the conversation later—about the university the last twenty-five years? Are there things we have not touched upon, epic themes that you would like to . . .?

SL: I don't think there are. I think the strengths of the university are very much the same now that they were then. We have a strong faculty, probably stronger than is usually realized either in this community or by our colleagues around the country. I have always thought that ratings of university departments don't give us credit for the quality of teaching and scholarship that really are present here. It's been very rewarding to be part of that atmosphere for a long period of time. I suppose if I were asked to reflect on the position of the university now as compared to what it was twenty-five years ago, I would be forced to say, "I think we are not as good now as we were twenty-five years ago." I think we do not enjoy the level of support from the state. I don't think the community respects the university as much or, if it does, we haven't succeeded in mobilizing the latent respect and devotion, which I do believe are there but we haven't tapped on them very much. Inevitably, funding cuts and matters of that sort do eat away at morale of the faculty. I think there is a fairly general malaise or a general feeling that we haven't been given the things that we need and that we have had to run awfully hard simply to stay in the same place as what were. It's still a great university—thanks, primarily, to the faculty, I think. It has been a privilege for me to be associated with my colleagues in the History Department—people like you—and with many friends whom I respect greatly in other units of the university as well.

CAC: It wouldn't surprise you that, as I listen to many different persons from all over the university, the assessment you're making in conclusion is one that is rather widely shared.
SL: I'm not surprised.

CAC: I thank you very much. Posterity will be rewarded, as a generation of students and colleagues have been rewarded.

SL: Thank you.

[End of Tape 1, Side 2]

[End of the Interview]