Gerhard Weiss

Interview with Gerhard Weiss

Interviewed by Professor Clarke A. Chambers
University of Minnesota

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University of Minnesota Campus

Gerhard Weiss - GW
Clarke A. Chambers - CAC

CAC: I'm interviewing, today, Gerhard Weiss who has been at the university in the Department of German for many years and has seen the college and the university from many, many different perspectives. It is August 1, 1994. The interview is being conducted in my office, 833 Social Science. It's a warm summer afternoon and, Gerhard, I'm delighted to share the afternoon with you. You and I have been colleagues in many things and in very much the same years.

GW: Right.

CAC: I suggested, before I turned on the machine, that I kind of like to have a person open up the discussion by saying a few things about himself . . . your youth, your education, how you got to America, your graduate training at Missouri and Wisconsin, and they we'll get you to the University of Minnesota and we'll be off and running. Say a few things about your origin.

GW: Sure, sure. Going back to my origins, they go back to Berlin, Germany, where I was born, and grew up, and where I went to various public schools. It was in the 1930s that I went to school there. Of course, that was also the Hitler period. In my own family situation, my father is Jewish and my mother is not Jewish; so, we belonged to that group of people who were in between two chairs. It meant that, politically and legally, we were considered Jewish with all the particular problems connected with it during the Hitler period; but, at the same time because of my mother, we were spared the ultimate problem of Auschwitz—otherwise, I wouldn't be sitting here. Of course, this is a long story . . .

CAC: It's a long story; but, it's really essential. How could a non-Jewish mother save a family?

GW: Since the Nazi laws were very vague, it was happenstance. It so happened that because of reasons that are not quite clear, the extermination of the mixed marriages did not take place.

There was no guarantee and, of course, we know now from looking at the records, that in January of 1945, just shortly before the end of the war, an order had been issued to round up the Jewish partners of mixed marriages and the offsprings to take them to labor camps; but, the order was countermanded and so we did not get taken to these camps.

CAC: How large a population do you think that was in Germany?

GW: It was maybe, in Berlin, about 7,000 and in all of Germany, probably 10,000.

CAC: Which would suggest that the intermarriage was very slight?

GW: No, but those were those that were left. Intermarriages, were at one time quite sizable in Germany.

CAC: But, many of them got out?

GW: Of course, many of them had emigrated. Also, of course, the natural attrition . . . For example, if my mother had divorced my father or if my mother had died, again, we would have been carted off immediately. She was the protector at all times.

CAC: Heavens. Did you have brothers and sisters?

GW: Yes, I had a brother who had left Germany in 1939 and had gone to England and, then, came back with the British Army, landed in Normandy, and fought his way back into Germany.

CAC: What was your father's occupation?

GW: My father was a merchant. He had a fairly sizable store that he had inherited from his father in Berlin. That store was taken over in 1938, just before the Crystal Night; so, we didn't have the loss of having the store destroyed—there are always, in times of chaos, some breaks occasionally—if I can use that term the Crystal Night. It's a story . . . there are a few of us who survived because of this particular kind of consolation.

CAC: It must have been very precarious. As a young man, you must have been very sensitive to this.

GW: Very precarious. Since 1942, our schools were closed. I had to leave the public school in 1938; and we were then enrolled in schools for the racially inferior, which were excellent schools. They were the best schools that you could ever have wished for because you had a few teachers left and those were the very best teachers. I really had an education, the likes of which I would not have gotten in a German public school at that time. After the schools were closed, we were assigned to labor details. My particular job . . . I started out working in a factory, working on thermostats for submarines. Then, after February 1943, which was the last roundup

of all Jews in Germany, we were taken out of this factory, which was considered to be a soft job, and were then assigned to construction work . . . that is rather, de-construction work because our assignment was to clear out bombed out buildings. Work was supplied steadily by the Allied Air Forces . . .

CAC: Yes.

GW: . . . so, we never ran out of work. Again, of course, it was a group of rather select people. There were a few of us young people from the school and then a few husbands from mixed marriages. One was a judge. Another one was a former prosecutor. Another one was a professor of philosophy and so on. We were all working together and had, in spite of it all, really a very, very congenial time.

CAC: So, your education continued?

GW: Continued . . . absolutely. Of course, these elders there made it a point to work with us young people. I got to know more of German literature working in the bombed disposal squads than I'd ever learned in school. [laughter] Of course, my love for literature had actually been generated, in part then, as sort of an antidote. When you have so much ugliness, and so much hate, and so much evil around you, it was a kind of security or a kind of island into which you could seek refuge. I made it a point, for example—I had to wear the yellow star on the subways going to work—to have a volume of [Johann Wolfgang Von] Goethe works in my hands; so, the image that the good Germans had was there was this Jew standing there reading German literature that they probably hadn't read.

CAC: [laughter] The drift of Goethe would have been a natural one for a precocious young man?

GW: Oh, absolutely, and of course also, the love for the language and all that was imbedded in me . . . what I had in this time.

CAC: That's a remarkable story because by the end of the war, you would almost have been of draftable age.

GW: I would have been, exactly. Of course, my friends from the public school . . . most of them didn't survive it either because they were killed in the war.

CAC: Yes.

GW: From my Jewish school, about twelve of us survived from what, I think, was originally a class of 300.

CAC: Good heavens. Did you ever get together and have a reunion with these?

GW: No, but I am in touch with many of them. Then, from my public school, I think the ratio may have been somewhat better; but, it wasn't very good. Ours was the last generation—I was born in 1926—the last ones to be fed to the war. Then, immediately after the war—if I may add that—then came another very important experience and that was in June of 1945. The Western Allies hadn't yet arrived in Berlin and we were worried that they would never come. A professor from the Berlin University opened up a school. He did that illegally because the Russian Occupation Forces had not authorized it; but, he did it in his apartment. He had a big apartment. He got himself a few teachers and, by word of mouth, the word was past around that those who, because of Nazi laws, could not complete their education should meet with him. He was establishing a school so that we could get our high school diploma. That started as a school for victims of fascism and then during the summer—by that time the Western Allies were there; it was in the British sector—we were in a regular school building. We had no roof; nevertheless, it was a school building. Then, he enlarged the eligibility for the school . . . also for the young men that came back from POW [Prisoner of War] camps. So, we had, at first, considerable tension. We had the victims and the perpetrators, so to speak, coming together in the same room; but very soon, we recognized that we had all been victims. They were wonderful young people with whom I was together. We really had very close friendships and friendships that last to this day.

CAC: By happy chance you were in what came to be the British sector. If you'd been living in the . . .

GW: Russian sector . . . We lived in the American sector; but, there was no problem moving from one to the other. If we had lived in the Russian sector, again, it would not have been possible for me to leave the city. Life is full of accidents, yes. Again, an accident . . . I had just finished the Abitur, the leaving certificate, and was about ready to enroll in the Berlin University when the American immigration quota for Germans was opened up again with a proviso that those who were victims of fascism were to be given preference to come to the United States. I didn't want to go to the United States; I wanted to stay in Germany. I had that great vision. Here we are, the young people, now we're going to build a better country; and it's going to be just wonderful and leave it to us. The old people all made a mess of it and now we're going to build a democracy. I had my friends, and I was recognized by my friends, and I recognized my friends; so, we had a nice, nice group there. But, my parents felt very strongly that for my father it was impossible to rebuild his business. My brother, who by that time, was stationed in Kehl with a British Army, had no intention of living in Germany anymore. After the horrors of the war, the only thing that you have left is a family; so, my parents felt that they wanted to use the opportunity to bring the family together. We came and my brother then joined us a little later.

CAC: What would you have known about the United States or was it your parents [unclear]?

GW: I knew something about the United States. I didn't know terribly much about the United States.

CAC: Had you studied English at all?

GW: Oh, yes. I was fluent in English.

CAC: I see.

GW: That was no problem.

CAC: And that was because of this schooling you had?

GW: Because of the school and because that was mandatory anyway. That was the first foreign language that you learned. I've been an Anglophile since I was a baby, practically. I always wanted to go to England. With my brother in England, I thought I would join him there. I was very, very British and admired Winston Churchill and then everything that Britain did.

CAC: Did you have radio contact during the last months of the war?

GW: The answer is yes and no. Officially, our radio was taken away on the first of September 1939. The police collected it because we might be getting messages. Since we were traitors to the cause, we were not to have a radio. In our apartment, we had sublet some rooms and we had some very nice people there who had a radio. Every night, at about ten o'clock I think it was, we went into their room, and we put a blanket over the radio, and then listened to the BBC [British Broadcasting Association]; so, we were reasonably well-informed. In 1944, we were bombed out. The house was destroyed and everything was gone; so, we didn't have our friends anymore with whom to listen but we did get information. The one thing we didn't know was that the war was over because during the last few days of the war, Berlin being a battlefield, there was absolutely no news. All we heard on May second was a terrific shooting out there. Those were actually the Russians firing guns into the air at the joy of the surrender of Berlin; but, we didn't know what was going on. On the eighth, we really didn't know what was going on and then gradually, weeks later, we found out what had happened; and we were pretty sure that the war was over because there wasn't any territory left where anybody could fight. [laughter]

CAC: Where did you find the capital for the family to come?

GW: Those were relief agencies in the United States that sponsored us. We had no dollars. We had a few mark, which was still the old Reich's mark which was worth nothing. Cigarettes would have been better than money. The relief agencies, sort of a consolidated United Fund type relief effort, paid for our transportation. It was on a troop ship. We were in one of those huge dormitory style troop ships, the *Marine Flasher*, and came to New York from Bremerhaven. Then, in New York, we were asked where we would like to go; and we said we didn't have any particular plans, except we didn't think it was a good idea to stay in New York. They all said, "That's wise." They said, "Would you like to go to Pittsburgh?" We said, "Yes, maybe

Pittsburgh is okay; but, we do know somebody in St. Louis." They said, "St. Louis is all right so why not go to St. Louis?"

CAC: You didn't know St. Louis to be a German city?

GW: With those Germans, we really didn't want to have anything to do.

CAC: I see.

GW: We knew somebody who had left Berlin before the war, an acquaintance of ours. At least that's some contact; so, we came to St. Louis. Three months later, I was drafted into the United States Army. It was the best thing that could ever have happened to me. It was wonderful.

CAC: It gave you the GI Bill?

GW: Everything. I hated it at first in St. Louis.

CAC: It accelerated your citizenship, certainly?

GW: It certainly did. It brought all kinds of pluses. Also, it got me out of the immigrant environment, which was a very difficult environment.

CAC: A refuge.

GW: We were no longer refugees because we didn't have to escape from anything. We were the first immigrants again; but, also the people who met us and who surrounded us were the refugees of the 1930s. My parents and I did not hate everything German, nor did we find that all Germans ought to be shot at sunrise and we talked about some very positive experiences that we had, otherwise we wouldn't have survived; so, people felt that we were probably Nazis. It is that old story of refugees who overcome their homesickness by being constantly telling themselves that everything and everybody in the homeland is terrible so that there's really nothing that makes you want to go back. Here we came after the war and through the suffering of the German people at the end of the war and we didn't have that attitude; so, we were suspect. We were also suspect that we were still alive. If we had arrived as corpses, it would have been clear. What did you do? We're you a collaborator? So, you have this internal tension. It went so far . . . I had a little job in a shoe factory in order to earn a little money. Somebody called the owner of that factory and told him to dismiss me because I obviously was a collaborator.

CAC: So, the Army was a real refuge?

GW: The Army was a refuge and I was an equal to everyone there. I have only <u>very</u> positive experiences.

CAC: So, positive that you stayed in the reserves?

GW: I stayed in the reserves afterward.

CAC: Did you become an officer while you were in the army?

GW: No. I left as a Private E-1.

CAC: But, I see that you worked your way up to Lieutenant Colonel.

GW: Then, I gradually worked my way up from the lowest rank to a Lieutenant Colonel and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel. I had a very good experience. Then, I was later in military intelligence together with college professors and school teachers, the most unmilitary bunch you'd ever like to meet; but, at the same time, just great people.

CAC: So, you came back to St. Louis where your family was?

GW: Right. Then, I started at Washington University.

CAC: Did you know, when you came back, what a great university that was?

GW: No. It was the local university.

CAC: Okay. I'm just thinking how chance operates here again. You probably went to one of the best universities, for you, in the country.

GW: I had some excellent instruction in history. Dietrich Gerhardt was my mentor. The German Department was terribly small at that time. It is now one of the best in the country.

CAC: Did that force you to take related courses [unclear]?

GW: Lots of them. I had Houston Smith for philosophy. I had, again, a very good liberal arts education. From there, then, I went to Wisconsin.

CAC: By then you knew you wanted to be a scholar?

GW: Absolutely, I had made up my mind quite early that this was the direction I wanted to go, not because I knew the language but because I loved the literature and the [unclear] history. Those are the two things that have always fascinated me. Usually literature is a reflection of history.

CAC: I was interested in looking at your bibliography that—I won't say half and half—a good number of the articles are linguistic. You're concerned with the language, structural and so forth.

The other proportion, almost equal in size, were scholarly, literary so that you've maintained a balance of language and literature.

GW: Oh, yes.

CAC: It's not true of all people who teach in the languages.

GW: That's true. I've also always kept very close contact with our colleagues in the high schools, to work with high school teachers in workshops.

CAC: Yes. I hope to come back to that because that's a very important outreach activity.

GW: Right. We need to do that.

CAC: I suppose the interviewer should not intrude very often; but, I've been impressed with the number I've done so far, of our professors, who at once have an outreach to the community beyond the university and in diverse ways. With secondary school teachers . . . all right let's come back to that. You came to the University of Minnesota in . . . ?

GW: In 1956. I got my Ph.D. in Wisconsin in May of 1956. I had, at that time, three offers. One was at Duke. The other was at the University of Kansas and the third one was from here.

CAC: What did you find attractive here?

GW: The proximity to Madison, Wisconsin, quite frankly. [laughter] I always thought, I'll go back to Madison. Now, I don't want to go back to Madison anymore; but, at that time, that was, especially for people in German and in German studies, with Mosse in history, a great place. I thought this is very close to Madison. Also, I liked the environment here. I like the north more than I like the south. In 1956, tensions in the south were beginning to become very noticeable. I was recently married, and we were going to have a family, and we thought this liberal, wonderful Minnesota would be a better place to bring up children than North Carolina or Kansas.

CAC: Even though implicitly we were going to be a little bit below Madison in quality?

GW: The department was very much below Madison in quality when I came here. That has changed, too.

CAC: Say a bit more about that because we are interested—we, the posterity . . . these tapes I'm creating—in the building of a department. Tell me a bit about the department then in 1956.

GW: It was a very small department. At that time, there was no language requirement; so—maybe that was good—everybody taught beginning Language courses, even the most senior

professors. It was a department not known for research. I think the best publications that had come out of the department were textbooks and grammars. There was one colleague who had, I think, been hired in order to beef up the department and to be the chair. He unfortunately had absolutely no administrative skills; so, being chair was a disaster and they put somebody else into the chair. He was a respected scholar . . . Frank Wood, a lovely, lovely person.

CAC: Oh, yes, yes.

GW: Herman Ramross was the chair. He brought me here. I remember him fondly. He was a very intelligent, very interested, well-read person who never published a line and who retired in the early 1970s. He just died just a few months ago. The other names then . . . there was Alvin Prottengeier, who was actually a Lutheran minister, who had sort of gotten stuck in the department. He had gotten his master's degree, and they asked him if he wanted to stay on, and he stayed on, and he stayed on, and he stayed on.

CAC: How many of them were German born?

GW: At that time, there was only Frederick Pfeiffer who was German born . . .

CAC: And yourself.

GW: . . . and he died during the first year. Then, I was actually the only one.

CAC: Then, the building of the department, as many departments, begins in the 1960s?

GW: Yes, yes.

CAC: There's more money.

GW: The 1960s are the golden years with our department and for our sister departments, too.

CAC: When you talk about sister departments . . . in the Languages?

GW: The Languages, yes. That was the time when the NDEA [National Defense Education Act] funding came in. Our department, together with Spanish, started the summer institutes for high school teachers, the NDEA summer institutes, which was the first major outreach activity. It brought in all kinds of visitors, and lecturers, and so on.

CAC: Would bring them in from other universities?

GW: Yes. We had an eight-week intensive summer program for teachers. That was right after the Sputnik period. It also fostered the collaboration between German and Spanish, the Romance Languages in those days. With that, there was that feeling of building up, which I had very

much with the coming of Meredith Wilson. I had the feeling that here came a president who was also a scholar and a colleague who understood what a university was all about, who was not just an administrator, who had a deep concern for the liberal arts. One of the first things was he called and wanted to see the Language lab. We scurried about and said, "All right. This will be a very short visit but do come." What we had was about six tape recorders, which Maggie Forbes in the Classics Department used to teach—of all things—oral Latin . . .

CAC: [laughter]

GW: . . . but, nobody else had any Language lab.

CAC: German did not?

GW: Nahhh! There was no Language lab around 1959 or 1960. I think Wilson came in 1960. Then, Wilson said, "Where is the Language lab?" We said, "That's what we've got." He said, "No, you're going to have another one very soon." Within a few weeks, the money was there, and consultants came, and the third floor of Folwell Hall was partially redone in order to have a state-of-the-art Language lab.

CAC: This was across the line . . . French, Italian . . . ?

GW: For all languages, yes. With that, we could suddenly do all kinds of things that we were unable to do before.

CAC: That's remarkable.

GW: With that kind of equipment, we were able to get the NDEA summer institute, which brought a lot of money to the university. Hal Chase's wife was our secretary. Otto Pflanze gave lectures on German history.

CAC: Auf deutsch?

GW: Harold Deutsch . . . ?

CAC: No, I mean, the lectures were in German?

GW: He had to give them auf deutsch. We should have had Harold, too; but, I think Harold wasn't there during there the summer. It was total immersion. We're now talking about total immersion; but, we had total immersion then.

CAC: It comes that fast and the initiative came from President Wilson?

GW: Oh, absolutely and, of course, there was a national trend.

CAC: Sure.

GW: We need to know foreign languages. One of the problems in American education is that we don't spend enough time and energy on foreign languages.

CAC: There was a critical mass in the languages to move with this against the older traditional . . . ?

GW: Right. The high school teachers that we had were, to a large extent, from the Robbinsdale School District #281 where the school district had gone on record that German will be taught in third, fourth, fifth grade. The only problem is most of the teachers didn't know any German.

CAC: Of course not.

GW: So, they had television and the teachers sort of had a study guide and usually sort of kept ahead a little bit of the kids; but, pretty soon the kids could speak better. So, we had these institutes. Even when people came from Robbinsdale, they had to stay in the institute. They could not go home. They were prisoners for eight weeks staying over at Sanford Hall. There, we really worked them from morn till night.

CAC: How many summers?

GW: That was going for four summers.

CAC: It gave you momentum so that you, in your own career, would reach out to secondary school teachers, school teachers generally?

GW: It gave me a major initiative. After the first year then, they asked me—I was after all, at that time, an assistant professor—to direct it the following year and that gave me quite a bit of administrative experience and a certain feeling of you can do it because I was quite shy and overwhelmed by all these biggies around me. Here was little Gerhard trying to get this thing going—but, it went. We got it going and it went well.

CAC: What persons in the associated language departments would have played the role that you did in German?

GW: There was Robert Estelle in the Spanish Department and very much so Walter Pattison.

CAC: Oh, yes!

GW: He had actually, I think, been the initiator of the whole thing. Walter was really wonderful in that.

CAC: Yes. And in French?

GW: In French? They never had an institute in French; so, there was nobody there. Armand Renaud came and I think she had some of the interest and then Gene Falk was there in French. Gene was more interested in developing comparative literature graduate programs rather than outreach to the high schools.

CAC: This initiative brought new life and new money to the department. How does that parlay then into attracting persons who would be interested in scholarship as well as [unclear]?

GW: It brought in more graduate students. We had the means to bring in graduate students.

CAC: So, it starts with good graduate students?

GW: We brought in better graduate students and we also brought in new faculty. During the 1960s, Wolf[gang] Taraba joined us in the early 1960s and then a whole group of young people . . . Evelyn Firchow came and a number of young people, who later left us again, came. The department was definitely rejuvenated. It grew in size. Its graduate standing grew. When I came we had, I think, two or three graduate students. In the 1960s, we moved to twenty, thirty graduate students.

CAC: And many of these had NDEA fellowships?

GW: Most of them had NDEA funding, yes, or teaching assistantships.

CAC: So, the money came to them as well as to the university?

GW: Oh, absolutely, absolutely. Of course, there was money also for book purchases. That was part also of the NDEA funding; so, we were able to build up our departmental library, which is our pride and joy in 128 Folwell Hall. It's still there and it's one of the nicest rooms in Folwell, the old presidential reception room with a fireplace.

CAC: I will share something with you briefly, just to lead you to talk about it a bit more. I had language instruction, formal, at Carleton College, which is a fine liberal arts college, before the second world war. Language [unclear] was absolutely abominable. It was formal. It was grammatical. There was no speaking. I had a French teacher who was so bad that even I knew he had a bad accent. I think that that wasn't alone a fault of Carleton College. This was the way languages were taught at that level.

GW: Right. That changed.

CAC: Yes, when does it change? Does it change in the 1960s because of NDEA?

GW: It changes, actually, in the late 1950s.

CAC: Because of what?

GW: Because of, I think, a greater interest in active language use. What brought it all on, I think, was the success that the army had with the language teaching.

CAC: I see.

GW: The methods of the army were then applied to regular college teaching.

CAC: Academic professors of language . . .

GW: They were the teachers. We had an ASTP [Army Specialized Training Program] program here in Minnesota.

CAC: So, it was a direct carry-over?

GW: There was a direct carry-over. That also led to the other interesting thing, namely, of involving the Social Sciences with the language teaching . . . that a person learning a language also has to learn something about the country in which the language is spoken; so, the textbooks begin to change. You deal with culture and culture not with a capital *C* . . . that you learn all about the cathedrals—you can read that in any art history book—but that you learn how Mrs. Miller in Berlin says, "Goodbye" and how you cook your meal and how you open or not open the door. The anthropological approach to culture becomes very important in the early 1960s. The NDEA summer institutes were based on anthropological, cultural concepts and linguistics. Linguistics and culture were closely intertwined . . . the language as a carrier of culture.

CAC: Now, they were still in place at this time—I'm thinking of the Arts College—that second route, whatever it's called?

GW: Yes, the second . . .

CAC: I should think that would have undercut what you're talking about.

GW: Exactly, it did.

CAC: Okay. Say something about that then. The listeners won't know what we're talking about.

GW: What was adopted by the college in the early 1970s, during the period of . . .

CAC: That late?

GW: Yes. We had a language requirement before that; but, in order to ease the pain of the language requirement—some students felt they were mandated to sit there and use the language and so on—we developed the two options. A student could either take one year of one language or two years of courses where one year is cultural oriented, where you take courses in English translation or a German history course. Otto Planze's courses were full. He was very mad at that when he came in and found all these kids who hadn't the slightest interest in it; but it sat there because it was an *in* course. It was one year of the language and then one year of the culture courses or four quarters of one language. Many, many people took that. There was some merit in it.

CAC: This was introduced in the 1970s?

GW: Absolutely.

CAC: Then, survived for how long?

GW: Until quite recently . . . about five or six years ago, I think. You get into a time warp here and what you think was five years ago was actually fifteen. The books reflect that.

CAC: It's the mid 1980s?

GW: It was a change that occurred fairly late and under Fred Lukermann's deanship.

CAC: I see.

GW: He always called it the scenic route to language bliss. He wanted to do away with it.

CAC: Those of you who were a younger generation did not have the wartime experience of how the language was taught during the war?

GW: Yes.

CAC: But, that became part of the folk [unclear]?

GW: Right. Of course, I've heard it from others.

CAC: When you trained at Madison, were you trained in doing the new kind?

GW: Pretty much the new thing and speaking was always very important. There were experiments. There was one in Glastonbury, Connecticut. One of the high schools experimented with language teaching. They had worked out a whole language system of how to teach active use of language; so, it was *in* as a definite revolution in language teaching.

CAC: What did this mean in the 1970s for your upper division courses which would have been courses of German literature? There would not have been a cadre of students prepared to [unclear]?

GW: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, because there was always enough students who carried on with the language.

CAC: Even though they might be a proportional minority?

GW: Right. Let's put it this way. The courses we taught in English might have had forty, fifty students; the other ones would have had ten or fifteen students.

CAC: But, enough to sustain a really challenging upper division courses auf deutsch?

GW: Absolutely. Right. Again, the department continued to grow and improve during the 1970s; and then, made giant steps in the 1980s.

CAC: So, you were ready for the change in the college requirements?

GW: Oh, absolutely, right. The problem, of course, too, was that the profession as such changed and the needs for new Ph.D.s kept on changing. In the 1960s, you couldn't produce enough. There were jobs for people who as soon as they said, "I think I'll go on for a Ph.D," they had a job offer. In the 1970s, that radically changed. Then, it improved a little bit and a few years ago, it was fairly good. Now, it's, at the moment again, rather bad . . . very difficult to find jobs. So, the need for . . .

CAC: [unclear] disciplines [unclear]?

GW: . . . preparing Ph.D.s changed.

CAC: Was the German Department interested in the 1970s and 1980s also in finding opportunities for study abroad of their own students?

GW: Yes. Oh, yes. We've been involved in that for a long time. We started our program in Bochum at the Ruhr Universitat where we had a summer program that actually was quite good. The advantage was, it was not a tourist site. Bochum is an industrial town in the Ruhr area not very far from Cologne. It was an ideal place to get to know everyday, average German life.

CAC: Students from Minnesota would matriculate there?

GW: Right. We had our own courses.

CAC: At other universities as well? Oh, you had your own courses?

GW: We had our own courses there.

CAC: Members of the department here would be at the receiving end?

GW: Would be there, too. We had some people from there teaching. The people stayed—some in dorms—many with families. They got a real flavor of, what I like to call, the Tuesday of everyday life because Tuesday is always far enough from the last weekend.

CAC: [laughter]

GW: You don't have the overglow anymore and it is far enough from the coming weekend. It's the workaday.

CAC: How many students would be there from Minnesota?

GW: We had about twenty, twenty-five students there every summer. It was only during the summer.

CAC: Only in the summer?

GW: Yes. Regular year-long exchanges also existed with Bochum. They were reserved for our graduate students. There was usually one student who went and one student from Bochum to come here. Then, we went on to Munich because our contact from Bochum was transferred to Munich; so, we started our program in Munich. When that finally folded, we moved it to Graz in Austria and there we have now a year-long program in Graz. We have all kinds of Graz, Austria.

CAC: This would engage undergraduates as well?

GW: This is primarily for undergraduates, yes.

CAC: That's a very important story to get on the record. Your experience in administration was primarily in directing the summer NDEA program?

GW: That's my start; but, then, of course, in 1967, I became associate dean for the Humanities and Fine Arts.

CAC: So often associate deans are drawn from chairpersons.

GW: No, I wasn't a chair at that time. I had sat in chairs but never been one. I had just been promoted to a full professor. There was, then, a new constitution of CLA [College of Liberal Arts], which divided the college into two divisions, the Social Sciences and the Humanities and Fine Arts.

CAC: We lost the sciences about four years earlier?

GW: Right.

CAC: Were you brought forward by fellow humanists or was it Mr. [E.W. "Easy"] Ziebarth?

GW: That is, of course, one of those mysteries in my life. I don't know. I do not recall that there was an inquiry anywhere.

CAC: You were not interviewed?

GW: Yes. I was told once that my name had been mentioned as one of the candidates. I think Bob Sonkowsky was another candidate and I know Bob Scott was another candidate to replace Dennis Hurrell who was the first associate dean.

CAC: Right.

GW: Finally, I got the call from "Easy" who asked me if I could come in. He wanted to talk to be about the possibility of being the associate dean. I felt kind of bad about it because I was a good friend of Bob Scott's and I also knew that Bob, apparently, was eager to get the position. I told "Easy," "If you change your mind, I won't feel hurt. I have other things to play with. It's not that important to me." But, I was terribly impressed that "Easy" knew exactly what my salary was. I was so naive in those days, I didn't know that he had his budget book right there. [laughter] He said, "You are now making . . . " that and that much and I thought, does he know that about everybody?

CAC: What kind of portfolios did you pick up when you became associate dean for the Humanities? What was your real function?

GW: That is a very good question because it had never been clearly defined. According to the constitution, I presided over the Divisional Council—which was, of course, nothing. I had, at that point, no budgetary functions. The budget was handled by John Turnbull.

CAC: Ohhh. You weren't even involved?

GW: I was not involved . . . bless everybody's heart. My function was to be sort of a spokesperson for the Humanities and Fine Arts.

CAC: Promotion and tenure?

GW: Promotion and tenure . . . I had certainly to give my opinion; but, again, I was not directly involved in that. It was a job that was sort of looking for a job.

CAC: So, what did you make of it?

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]

[Tape 1, Side 2]

GW: . . . the secretary that Dennis Hurrell had spent most of her time knitting because there was no business. [laughter] They had sort of a sign out there, "Open;" but, nobody came. John Turnbull, finally when I got into the office, said, "We've got to do something about that. I think I'll tell 'Easy' that from now on all the calls that come directly to him that have something to do with Humanities, get back to you." Then, we began to have a little business. On the very first day, I think I had my most trying moment because I had a call from Studio Arts, from Katie Nash. Dear Katie said, "The roof is leaking in the Naegle building and what will you be doing about that?" I said, "Where is the Naegle building?" She said, "That is that building over on the West Bank. That's where we are. The roof is leaking and you have to do something about it." I said, "Katie, I'll try." So, I called Physical Plant and they said, "Naegle building? That's condemned! They're not supposed to be in there!" [laughter] I said, "But, they are." I think the roof was finally mended; but, that started a wonderful relationship with both Katie Nash and the rest of the team. They were, at that time, still at very, very tense relationship with Art History. They had just separated through you and Art History and the battlefields were for, for example, the gallery. The Studio claimed that that was their territory, where their students and their faculty could display. Art History said, "No way. This is the university's gallery and it belongs to Art History, and we are showing the things that we have in our own vaults, and we also have occasional exhibits there." I was then asked to mediate. That was one of my major functions for the first year or so, to mediate. Gerry Shepherd, then, formed a task force, which I chaired, on the new museum for the university.

CAC: So, he would have that interest that early on?

GW: He certainly did. We had all kinds of visions of a new museum . . . also with Anthropology. They had a collection of things that they wanted to display.

CAC: Oh, early New Mexican Indian art.

GW: Absolutely. We, then finally, came up with a draft, which proposed the building of a separate art gallery, which is the basis on which the building that we look at over on the other side of river was then built. By that time, of course, the library plans began—actually, the library was built already.

[telephone rings - break in the interview]

GW: The Wilson Library has just been built. As a matter of fact, you and I were on the committee.

CAC: Yes, you bet we were. Let's come back to that. Go ahead with this story.

GW: Oh, yes. With the gallery, we had, at that time, planned that the gallery would be in the sunken court in front of Wilson Library, and that there would be sort of an open plaza with statues, and then the gallery would be around there feeding into the library. That was one of our recommendations that this would be a possible place for it.

CAC: That was one of Met Wilson's dreams, you know.

GW: Yes. That was one of my functions as associate dean and, then, to make peace among departments. The wonderful way in those days was . . . for example, French and Spanish didn't get along at all anymore with each other. They were fighting and feuding. Two of the nicest people, Armand Renaud and Walter Pattison, were at sword's edge all the time; so, I had to mediate there. I had them both come into my office, sit in two chairs facing each other and we tried to work things out. Then, "Easy" said, "Divide the department." Money was always there; so, we split the department.

CAC: It was a good time to be an associate dean.

GW: It was. It was wonderful—initially. Then, I had an occasional sit-in from Studio Arts. There was one student, E. Floyd Nottway, who came with some regularity and claimed that the people in Studio Arts wouldn't let him sit in in the departmental meetings even though he tried to climb in through the window. They had called the police and he was expelled; so, he was going to sit-in in my office then. I had a letter from a Pakistani student who told me that his girlfriend had walked off with a man from India and since the university has tolerated that . . . if I don't put a stop to that, he was going to blow up my office. I called the police, and they were very reassuring, and said, "We can't do anything now; but, if anything happens, we'll be right there."

CAC: If you're blown up, they'll . . .

GW: Right. [laughter] Nothing happened, fortunately. It all turned out okay. Then, came the beginnings of the student revolt in 1968-1969 and 1970-1971.

CAC: Of course.

GW: Things became a little bit more serious . . . also budget cuts and freezes of money. We had to get the full faculty together and tell them that the departmental budgets will be cut by so much and so on. Life became less pleasant. On the whole, it was not a bad time. I had a wonderful secretary at that time, Mary Lymer—who was not the person who knitted; she had left long ago. Mary Lymer was a great help and, of course, she is still in the college office. There was Roger Page. In between then, I got a job offer from Penn State and I was almost ready to

take it. I sat down with Roger Page and said, "Roger, help me sort things out." When I left Roger, I decided to stay.

CAC: He was a pretty good minister.

GW: Oh, yes.

CAC: Still sticking with your work as associate dean . . . it's widely perceived that the Humanities faculty, at that time, were underpaid relative to comparable persons in the Social Sciences.

GW: Yes.

CAC: It was perceived, whether accurate or not, that somehow the Humanities [unclear] work up to what the rest of the college was doing.

GW: Right.

CAC: Those are perceptions. I suspect the first one is easily proven with empirical evidence.

GW: Right, right. I think, by and large, that is true; however, it is also true—I think they are linked—that, for example, the publishing record of our friends in the Social Sciences was appreciably greater than the publishing record in the Humanities. Also, I think that the mobility of the people in the Social Sciences was greater. They received, more frequently, offers from other universities, which, even in those days, helped raise the salary.

CAC: There was a reality behind it [unclear]?

GW: Yes. I think it is true that the quality . . . There were points of distinction. There were, certainly, in the English Department a few very good people . . . Allen Tate and so on. There was that Humanities program, which was always in trouble administratively; but, they still had some darned good people, John Berryman and people like that. They were paid less probably. I don't have the exact evidence; but, I think basically that is true. They also had a feeling of, oh, woe is us, which is innate in, I think, all Humanities programs and Humanities departments.

CAC: How do you account for that?

GW: I think it has something to do with the way society views the humanities. An English professor is never going to be as respected as Professor [John] Najarian is in Medicine. He may not have quite the same problems either; but certainly, the values to society seem to be stronger in the people who deal with social issues rather than the intellectual elite that deals with the aesthetics. That's a problem . . . but that's no longer the case. I think the Humanities have changed immensely here.

CAC: Say more about that.

GW: The Humanities, I think, have become one of the great strengths. They've become much more interdisciplinary. They're much more interlinked with all things human, which involves very much the Social Sciences. They are also—sometimes to a fault—theorists and not just simply appreciators of the nice things. The analytical, theoretical aspect of the Humanities has become very, very strong—and we've hired good people.

CAC: Yes! That's the key.

GW: We've hired tremendously good people.

CAC: Is there a differential access to national foundations including the National Endowment for the Humanities, for example?

GW: Yes, yes, certainly there is. There is no question about it. I would imagine in your field of History—you are close to the Humanities—you may have some of the same problems we have. Some people in Sociology or Political Science and so on may find foundation money more easily obtainable; however, the humanists also have foundation money.

CAC: They came to.

GW: It developed in the late 1960s and 1970s. It is not only the National Endowment but there are others. When I look at my department now, how many people receive foundation money . . . and when I came, there was nothing, absolutely nothing!

CAC: Which foundations do the languages have best luck with?

GW: There is the McKnight, which is a very strong supporter. There's the Guggenheim, of course, which is access for everybody. There are German foundations that support research here. All that did not exist in 1956. I think that helps us also with very good faculty.

CAC: These differentials—now, we're speaking historically back to the days you were associate dean—did it complicate your being an associate dean of Humanities as opposed to an associate dean of the Social Sciences?

GW: No. I never had that feeling. Lloyd Lofquist was the associate dean for the Social Sciences at the time and we teased each other about how much better our unit is and how much less appreciated. E. W. Ziebarth, I think, also had a very open mind for the Humanities. I had no feeling of being a representative of the second rate.

CAC: His home department, Speech and Communication, was [unclear].

GW: Right, right.

CAC: From there . . . even earlier, you were engaged with the library?

GW: Yes.

CAC: Let's talk about that for a brief time. You were on the Senate Library Committee?

GW: I was on the Senate Library Committee when you, I think, were chair of the Senate Library Committee.

CAC: All right.

GW: I think it was you, during your chairmanship, that (a) the new library was planned and (b) that we preserved the Senate Library Committee as a committee of Senate. They wanted to do away with that when restructuring because we here on the Twin Cities campus and they thought it might be something for the Twin Cities Assembly but not for the whole Senate. We made a case and prevailed! My beginning with the Senate Library Committee . . . I've always had a great love for the library and my wife is a librarian; so, it runs in the family. We can't do without books. I've always found the University of Minnesota library very, very good and accessible, more so actually than the Wisconsin library, which is certainly very good in its holdings but is much less user friendly than Minnesota was and is. I enjoyed being connected with the library. I don't know how I got appointed to the Senate Library Committee; but, I did.

CAC: You came to chair it in the early 1970s . . .

GW: Yes, right.

CAC: . . . when you were still associate dean?

GW: Right; but, initially I was a member. That was then when the plan came through to build a new library. We divided the committee into two groups and we flew . . . I think it was to Purdue?

CAC: We went to Brandeis.

GW: You were with the other group.

CAC: Right.

GW: Then, we went to St. Louis University and Notre Dame, I think it was; so, those were the ones that we looked at. The architects were the same architects that, at that time, built the

airport. That's why the causeways and the entrance way are like the concourse at the airport. Later, of course, they went bankrupt. While they were building, that was their design pattern.

CAC: Do you recall that the faculty members of the Senate Library Committee had an influence on the way the building itself . . . ?

GW: We had some because there was this expert from Harvard who was hired as a consultant. I know we met and discussed. I don't know anymore whether we really shaped it; but, we certainly okayed it. We were persuaded that this box system has infinite possibilities of reshaping.

CAC: Yes.

GW: Of course, we thought that initially we could not finish the building, that the top floor would be incomplete. Then, the bids came in—what was it?—$1 million below what we had, which was the last time, I believe in the history of the university, if not of the universe . . .

CAC: [laughter]

GW: . . . that a bid came in lower than what was available so that we were able to finish the entire building and get the furniture. Stanford was at that time greatly worried, [Ned] Stanford and [unclear] who were sort of basically responsible. They were very worried that we would have sort of a half finished box sitting over here.

CAC: Again, as the interviewer, I can interject a little bit here. There was a tussle over the nature, the extent, and the size, and the security of faculty carrels.

GW: That's right. Yes, you're right. Of course, there are never enough carrels.

CAC: You can catch me on this. It may be that this is a legend and myth in my mind; but, I've wondered about it ever since . . . that the faculty members wanted faculty carrels and graduate student carrels that would have frosted glass on the doors and that the library administrators wanted clear glass so they could peek through and see that . . .

GW: Nothing untoward happened.

CAC: . . . and that there weren't books on the shelves inside the offices that hadn't been checked out.

GW: I do remember that there was a discussion of that, yes. Yes, I think it's more than legend.

CAC: And clear glass won out; so, that all the faculty then put paper in the windows.

GW: Posters, yes.

CAC: All right. I suppose that's not a matter of major import.

GW: There were all kinds of things in the library. Also there was at that time, when I was chair of the Senate Library Committee, one of their employees, one of the librarians was homosexual and the Board of Regents dismissed him.

CAC: Oh, my.

GW: You may recall that case? Then, of course, he appealed and I was asked as chair of the Senate Library Committee to get up in the Senate and protest this action of the Board of Regents under the claim that this a violation of academic freedom. I got up and, then, [Carl] Auerbach from the Law School asked me if I could define academic freedom for him and how this sexual persuasion has anything to do with academic freedom. We had a nice little spat there.

CAC: How did you respond? This would be in the context of 1971, 1972?

GW: Right. It was the freedom of expression and freedom of doing, since he wasn't harming anyone. There had been Letters to the Editor in the paper that people were afraid of having this man in the stacks when their daughters were in the stacks. The answer was their daughters were actually much safer than they would have been with other people in the stacks. [laughter]

CAC: [laughter]

GW: The young man then went to Law School and became a lawyer.

CAC: His name is [Jack] Baker?

GW: Yes, precisely.

CAC: All right. I'd forgotten that one. You were also founding editor and then chair of the committee on the Minnesota Monographs in the Humanities?

GW: Right. That was in 1964, July 8, 1964. That happens to be the day when my youngest son was born; so, I remember that. That's when this series was born; but, it was born out of exactly what you mentioned earlier, a concern that humanists don't have [unclear] of publication.

CAC: Where did the initiative come from?

GW: The initiative came from a number of the members of the faculty and John Ervin of the press.

CAC: The faculty members were beyond the Humanities or [unclear].

GW: The faculty members were in the Humanities.

CAC: Okay.

GW: Cecil Wood was one of the very vocal members. He was in our department. I think there were some people from English. They had gone to John Ervin and had said, "Look, we have a problem. The humanists are perceived as being non-research oriented, not publishing. We do have a problem. We don't have an opportunity to publish as readily as some of the people in other fields have." Then, we got the dean of the Graduate School involved. It was Bryce Crawford at the time. We went to Bryce. First of all, we had to define what a monograph is. Where does the article stop and the book begin and in between you have the monograph. Are there really enough manuscripts available? We said, "Yes." Then, Bryce said, "Let's try it out."

CAC: So, the subsidy came from . . . ?

GW: Came from the Graduate School.

CAC: Okay. All the way through?

GW: All the way through.

CAC: You didn't get external foundation grants for that?

GW: No, no. We never tried either. The press would give us an estimate of cost and income and would balance it off and what the deficit is, then, the Graduate School would fund. We came out with about seven, eight volumes. It's dead now.

CAC: But, it played its function at that time.

GW: It did play its function and we got some very nice handsomely printed and handsomely bound volumes out of that. We got something I'm proud of.

CAC: You see where careers lead.

GW: [laughter] You never know where they end.

CAC: There were other university committees then in the 1970s.

GW: I've been constantly on committees.

CAC: These concentrations were in the late 1960s, early 1970s?

GW: Right.

CAC: Then, in the 1970s and early 1980s, you pick up another range?

GW: Yes.

CAC: Say something about . . . after the Senate Library Committee.

GW: I think the major committee assignments dealt with grievances. I was the CLA grievance officer for a couple of years. I was the chair of the All University Academic Freedom and Responsibility Appeals Committee. I've been involved in those matters for a good number of years.

CAC: What kind of grievances came before your committee?

GW: It's, of course, always the amazing thing. The majority of the grievances were the students unhappy with a faculty member. I remember one grievance on the bigger appeals committee, a student who claimed that the university had no right to teach Metaphysics and that he was the only person because of his divine inspiration to be involved in metaphysics. We had to take this man seriously, and had to have a hearing, and then finally threw the case out.

CAC: These were not grievances of faculty on tenure?

GW: No, I never had a grievance like that. I had some salary grievances and grievances about office space or the chairman being unpleasant or something like that.

CAC: In it's early day, this sexual harassment . . . ?

GW: It was not an issue, no.

CAC: Or discrimination?

GW: No, no. The problem was that we had created a vehicle for complaint and people began to use it even for rather spurious and unimportant complaints. It was kind of a valve where they felt a little better when they talked to me. Also, they expected that I could <u>do</u> all kinds of things. The grievance process really didn't lead to anything.

CAC: But, now this was an appeals process?

GW: Yes, so it had gone through . . .

CAC: Departmental committees which were the same name [unclear] possibility?

GW: Or collegiate committees. Very often, we would simply throw it back to the committee because we did not deal with cases as a new case but rather as a review case. Did they follow proper procedures? It was somewhat frustrating; but, it was also not something that one was overburdened with. I think the situation has become much more complex. We have much more legal now, much more paragraph oriented than we were in those days. We did have a harassment case, come to think of it. Nils Hasselmo and I had to deal with it and Nils was from the college. I was the grievance officer and Nils was associate dean. It was a complaint from a number of women against a faculty member. That wasn't any fun either.

CAC: I'm sure those files are closed?

GW: I presume they are and the person involved is dead [unclear].

CAC: You had a kind of non-traditional career line within the university that you really were doing college and university business very extensively and then you became chair. [unclear]

GW: I was sort of chair in between all kinds of departments.

CAC: Oh, tell me about that.

GW: I think my first position as chair was for the Southeast Asian Languages. It was something where "Easy" put me in. I was sort of the associate dean because the department had management problems. They couldn't get along with each other and it was in receivership; so, he said, "Gerhard, why don't you take care of their business for a little while until we get it straightened out?" So, I was there. Then, I was chair of Slavic and East European [Languages and Literature?] because we were redesigning that department after Keith Armes had left and the department was very small. Tom Noonan and I were asked to sort of come in. I chaired a committee to design a department that would involve also the Social Sciences.

CAC: Once they got on their feet, then, they got their own chair?

GW: Right. So, for two years, I chaired the department. Then, Tom took over. Then, I came back one more year when Tom was on sabbatical. Then, of course, I chaired Comparative Literature for a number of years; but, that was just a program. It didn't have a budget; so, I was just a consolidator of things.

CAC: As you tell these stories, almost all of them involve being a broker, or liaison officer, or conciliation . . .

GW: Yes, that's been sort of my task.

CAC: You must have a reputation for doing that?

GW: The reputation but not always a success. Then, I've been chair of the German Department since 1987.

CAC: You also chaired the Center for Austrian Studies?

GW: That was the advisory committee.

CAC: Say something about that program.

GW: That, of course, is not an academic program in the sense of having a faculty and all of that. It is a facilitating program, which serves primarily in bringing people here, and in hosting symposia, and in furthering scholarly contacts with Austria. Of course, when Bill Wright, who initiated the whole thing with his proposal and who was the first director, he recommended me as chair of the advisory committee. The advisory committee comes together very rarely, primarily to discuss with the director proposals, directions, and so on. The center has certainly done a tremendous job, and I think has really blossomed under David Good's guidance, and has become more ambitious than it has ever been before. The yearbook is, I think, a fine resource for scholarship of Austrian history. It has brought scholars from Austria that also work with us. We don't want to miss it.

CAC: All of these recitations lead to a question of a more general nature. You've been experienced now. We've heard all the different angles that you've been involved in. What perception do you have of the effectiveness of faculty in university governance at all levels? Here you are in your departmental programs. You're in the Language Department. You're in the dean's office. You're in the Senate Library Committee. What's your general sense of faculty participation?

GW: I recently changed my mind a bit. If you had asked me that question five years ago, I would have said, "Clarke, how can you even ask that question? We <u>are</u> the university. We shape it. We do it. We make it. Everything there is us." The reason why I love this university and why I never wanted to leave even when offers came, is that I had that feeling of immense freedom and the right to participate. I had the feeling that as a little professor in a <u>large</u> university I still could do something. I could participate. I am sorry to say that I don't have that feeling anymore. It has gone away from us. Maybe, we're getting it back. Maybe, the times have changed so drastically. Maybe, forces that have come in from the outside, that in our society we have to deal with, make it less possible for us to simply be ourselves. I have the feeling—it's a fairly new development—that the administration and <u>we</u> are no longer the same. There was a time when *them* was *us*. I know it's in faculty circles always customary to blame the dean and curse the president. One used to do that; but, one never quite meant it. I still don't blame or curse; but, I do feel that I don't have the close contact anymore. I know that things are going on, and are being done, and memoranda are received in which none of us have participated, and that we are no longer in control. Morrill Hall, which was, at one time, very

much a part of us has become a bit of a fortress that is somewhat beleaguered, and where mandates are issued, and where our participation no longer helps to shape it.

CAC: You see that as a chair?

GW: I see that as a member of the faculty . . . whether that is in my position as a chair. One thing I never want to forget is my primary responsibility is to be a member of the faculty. I also happen to be a chair; but, that's secondary.

CAC: This gets us into a basic irony, doesn't it? I suppose that we've had no president since Mr. Wilson as sympathetic in trying to [unclear].

GW: It is sad. Of course, also times have changed. Maybe you can't be a president like Wilson anymore.

CAC: I was going to ask you that. It's a deeply felt description that you have and it is a matter of perception but based on a great of empirical evidence and a lot of experience. Where do you think that comes from? We're talking really about the decade of the 1980s and early 1990s.

GW: I don't know. There are probably many reasons . . . some of them rest with the faculty. I think that the faculty probably does not want to be as involved anymore.

CAC: How do you explain that?

GW: The rewards rest with the individual, and the individual's work, and the individual's publication. The time—it is terribly time consuming—to be involved in the activity and the business of the university is time that could have been used at home working on the computer and publishing yet another book, which will get you, if not a merit increase here, perhaps, an offer from elsewhere. The sadness that I have about the whole development is that we are not strengthening institutional loyalties. I think institutional loyalty—if I were to advise young people—is a foolishness almost now.

CAC: But, you feel this is a real loss?

GW: It's a terrible loss. We'll have to pay for it, eventually. The reward system, as it is structured now, tells you that the best way to get ahead is to get an offer from elsewhere. Then, you are a retention case. Then, the money that is nowhere to be found for anybody suddenly can be found. The facilities, that you couldn't have when you asked for it, can suddenly be made available. Your spouse can suddenly be hired. All things are possible if you are a retention case; but, you can only become a retention case when you threaten to leave. I always thought you have healthy institution when people don't want to leave, when people feel that staying here . . . I have my roots here. I'm beholden to this university. I'm beholden to the community in which I live and that's where I am.

CAC: Do you find this operating in the Humanities as well as other places then?

GW: Very much so in the Humanities.

CAC: Which means that the faculty then are identifying with their own subset of the guild?

GW: They are and, of course, also then communication doesn't reach beyond their subset. They talk to each other and they network among each other. That is a loss—to wit, the Campus Club. It's empty. It used to be, remember, in the good old days of Wilson? Wilson would make it a point for us all to have lunch everyday there. Then, when he saw somebody sitting there all alone, he would sit down and say, "I'm Wilson." People would have a chat with him. It is probably no longer possible to do that.

CAC: Why would faculty stop going to the Campus Club?

GW: It started being the concept the stuffed shirt syndrome. The young generation didn't want to go where the old people were.

CAC: I see.

GW: It then continued with people not being here for lunch.

CAC: Where are they? Do they go home?

GW: They're on campus Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 to 4:30, something like that. They're in the library maybe. They're working very hard. It's not that they are sitting at home and watching the baseball game; but, they are sitting at home. They have E-mail, and Internet, and modems, and whatnot. They can access the library catalog at home. They can probably get the whole stuff mailed to them. They can get printouts of everything. They don't need it anymore and they are now centered around individuals. That, of course, is the loss of the community.

CAC: Ah! So, you have a sense also in this dismay that there is a loss of community. We used to speak often of the community of scholars. As you were describing your early career, you felt that that was the case?

GW: Oh, yes. In Folwell Hall, we would meet every Friday up in the Classics Department. The faculty, not everyone but many, would come with a brown bag and we would sit there and talk about God, and the world, and all things in general.

CAC: Not only in the German Department but other faculty . . . ?

GW: I met Bill McDonald and I met Pattison. I met Bob Scott and people like that. We had a very good time.

CAC: You find that that community doesn't exist in Folwell Hall now?

GW: No, it most certainly doesn't. I try it by telling at the beginning of every quarter, "Wednesdays, come to my office. Let's have lunch together. Anybody . . . graduate students, undergraduates." The first day, first Wednesday, some people come. The second one, nobody comes anymore. It's not a feeling of belonging.

CAC: There's a real fragmentation.

GW: The same is true with students. Our students all work . . . the undergraduates. They have no feeling of belonging and loyalty. Wisconsin always had it. You could sense it as soon as you came to Wisconsin. You had that feeling of fierce loyalty among the undergraduates, among the graduates; but, here the big urban community, people . . .

CAC: But that was true in 1950 when you came.

GW: It was as big. Of course, the university was not quite as big; but, there were also, I think, more students who were full time students.

CAC: You and I both notice, I am sure, that Mr. Hasselmo is trying, to use a popular phraseology, make the university more user friendly.

GW: Yes.

CAC: That's what he means is to get [unclear].

GW: Of course. There's a lot we can do about it, yes.

CAC: But, mechanically not much that you can do in the German Department?

GW: No, no. Then, the other problem that we all face is that everything has become a potentially legal issue. You can always be sued for this or that; so, you have to be doubly careful what you do, how you deal with things. In many ways, this is probably good; but, in many ways also it takes away the personal warmth that you would to extend.

CAC: A certain spontaneity?

GW: Absolutely. I have to call my lawyer. I have to call my lawyer and check if all the things I said here I was permitted to say.

CAC: [laughter] Yours is a range in participation that you've had, and publications, and committee services, and so forth. Then, here at the end is WCCO [radio] Good Neighbor Award.

GW: [laughter] Yes.

CAC: I'm thinking of the outreach of the faculty to the community.

GW: Right.

CAC: Explain that.

GW: That happened when I received a teaching award, the Emma Burkmeier Award. Emma Burkmeier was a distinguished person in the College of Education.

CAC: Yes.

GW: The local high school teachers of Minnesota, foreign language teachers in Minnesota, had nominated me for that award because of my outreach to high school teachers; so, I received that. Together with that award, they always notify WCCO for the Good Neighbor Award. That was the morning I didn't listen to WCCO. Then, somebody said, "Oh, by the way, did you know?"

CAC: It kind of comes full circle back to your earlier enthusiasm of working with teachers of language . . .

GW: I liked to work with people, in general. I go out to groups and speak about topics of my area of interest. I get regular invitations. Senior citizens . . . I used to make a circuit here of the various rest homes for senior citizens. There was this very interesting series at the International Institute that started on global issues. When Germany was of interest during the period of unification, I went to all these places and talked. It was wonderful because you have very, very knowledgeable people in the audience.

CAC: Who are really interested in the subject.

GW: Oh, very interested and also you didn't have to talk about things that happened thirty or forty years ago as if they had happened before the world was created. These were folks that lived through it; so, that was fun.

CAC: Do you have any final, ultimate thoughts?

GW: No, not really.

CAC: We've covered a very good agenda and very central to, I would hope, what future persons curious about this strange animal the University of Minnesota was in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s . . .

GW: Of course, it has the substance of becoming it again. There's always the old fogy syndrome, that it may not be my university anymore; but, I've got to live with that.

CAC: That's a hazard of getting older.

GW: Life changes. There are many things in the old days that were probably not as good. I'm sure, in many ways the university has become more professional than it has been.

CAC: Yes.

GW: Our department now ranks among the top ten probably. When I came, it was an also ran. Now, I didn't make the changes; but, there are the new colleagues that came, and the new outlook, and the whole professionalism that had developed; and that is in many ways very, very good. We have—that is something we have to be very happy with—an outstanding library. You and I, when we're no longer here and others are not here, the library is here; and that's a continuum of the first order. The excellence of this university will not falter as long as the library is superb.

CAC: Our conversation encourages me in the project that I'm engaged in. There are many things that formal documents don't reveal and our conversation has revealed many things about how the college, and the university, and a strong department really work. I'm very gratified and thank you very kindly.

GW: That was a great pleasure, indeed.

[End of Tape 1, Side 2]

[End of the Interview]

Transcribed by:
Hermes Transcribing and Research Service
12617 Fairgreen Avenue, Apple Valley, MN 55124
(612) 953-0730