University of Illinois Student Life and Culture Archives

UI Centennial Project

Interviewee: Mary Rolfe

Interviewer: Jennifer Johnson

November 17, 1967

Length: 01:02:08

Mary Rolfe: And some students burned it down in order to get — thought they'd have the trustees then would put up a bigger one. And, you know, it was real nice to sit under a shelter when you're facing south. You've got the sun right now. And you see it had a long roof that came out over the — quite a way south, and that was lovely. But they wanted a bigger one. And they thought if they — if this wasn't there, then the university put up another one. Of course they didn't. They just put up some seats along the west side inside the road.

Jennifer Johnson: Well, baseball must have been awfully popular. Perhaps this is why they thought that they should have a larger...

MR: Yes, Jake Stahl was playing and he was...

JJ: Did you see he played football as well as baseball? He was captain of the football team.

MR: He was just that way.

JJ: Well, I think I've got this...

MR: And I think he was a good student too.

JJ: I've got this running so we could go ahead and see if we could talk about that. But what I recall was...

MR: Well, that's about all. I can't remember very much about the particular games except that Wisconsin game when they saw they were getting defeated and threw down their bats and went down the field and I said full left back about finishing the game.

JJ: You mean they just stopped at a fit of anger?

MR: Mm-hmm. And, you see, J. Hope was here then, and he was athletic, and he had started out to get a system of—well, where it wouldn't be so rough in football, you know, and where there wasn't any cheating and so forth, you know, get an honest and honorable sort of game. And he was trying to get all the university presidents to back it and so forth, and then this happened. So a president up there telephoned to our [unintelligible] and asked if they couldn't come back and play the game without getting any credit for it at all.

And they had to come back at their own expense and play this game over again. You see, Jake was just throwing the balls, and they couldn't do a thing. They were just, and they were mad. Just flat temper. That's what. And so they came back and they played it. And nobody, no, and they didn't win anything at all. And by their record, we won. You see, of course we did win anyhow. And that was, it went down on the records that Elle and I had. It was something to nothing. But that was really, that was really a big step, you know, that the president up there would make them do it, you know.

JJ: Well, let me be better over here. I think, really, wasn't this part of the whole idea you said G. Huff was emphasizing honesty? Was this just sort of a general trend in all the universities? But I think athletics maybe had a bad name before that.

MR: Well, before that, you know, they just did as they pleased. And the athletes thought they were smart and they weren't going to, why waste their time at just staying here when they couldn't do anything. So, they just went down and went home on their train.

JJ: Well, now, when we went to baseball games in Illinois Field, can you describe what the appearance of the area was like? You mentioned something I remember about going to the games, sitting on the stands, and the ladies wore large hats.

MR: This was after they burned down the other and we sat out in the sun, you see, no cover. And the style was for great big hats then. And so the women wore great big hats and the poor men had a hard time. So they got so the men stood up on the backs, on the top seats, you know, that the women had. Well then we got behind our friends with hats. Usually, if anybody asked, would you take off your hat so that I could see, people would do it. But they didn't like sitting out in the sun.

JJ: Did they have a series of cheers? Was there anybody who led cheers, or did you just sort of yell at your own pleasure?

MR: I don't remember any cheerleaders at that time. There may have been, but I don't remember.

JJ: Now, when I was over at the Archives…

MR: There was nothing about it particularly. It was just the way we did, don't you know? And nothing to try to remember through the years.

JJ: When I went over to the Archives the other day, I found a series of little booklets for field days with the pole vaulting and the 100-yard dash and so forth. Did this continue to the time when you were in school, and was baseball part of this?

MR: I don't know if baseball was part of it for now. They had that. They had field days. And if you knew some student who was performing, you went, you know, because he'd like to have to be there.

JJ: Was it an all-day thing?

MR: I don't remember that either.

JJ: I just wondered, because it sounded like there were quite a few events, and I wondered how...

MR: Well, I should think it would have taken most of the day.

JJ: Now, you mentioned Jake Stahl. Was he in school at the same time as you were?

MR: I think he graduated from [unintelligible]. It doesn't matter. I didn't know. I didn't know that we were recording anything. I was saying that. Let's see. Oh, this is a geographical, isn't it? I forget where Jake came from. So let's see, where is this thing? [Unintelligible]. I looked him up after he was here, you know. And I don't think Jake was his name.

JJ: Oh, it wasn't his real name?

MR: I don't think so.

JJ: Somebody was telling me they thought he was called Shorty. He wasn't, was he?

MR: I wouldn't say so. I'd say he was quite tall. But I would have been confused. No, I'm not too sure about it. I don't know.

JJ: Was it 1903?

MR: I thought it was 1903, where he was, but I don't know. Let's see.

JJ: How in the world could he be in baseball and football?

MR: It sounds to me as though that would be a [unintelligible] job. Yeah.

JJ: How could he do that? He had kind of…

MR: But he was captain of the football team. Let me see, where do I look at this? There's an index here somewhere.

JJ: Is it in the back?

MR: Yeah, here it is. I turned it over wrong a few months ago. Stall now. Stahl in 12, from 11. Here's all three, Garland, Washington Park, National Bank, Chicago, Illinois. See, he was a banker after that. And he used all three. S-T-A-H. You know, this is the way they did, you know. This is her last name. And it's hard to find people. It's just somewhere around here.

JJ: Oh, a married name they put?

MR: No, that was her maiden name, but the class about three, you see. They start in and say what she is at the time this was written, and then when she was born, and where she

was and so forth. But it's Edna May Hawley, instead of starting with Hawley, don't you say?

JJ: Yeah, I see. And it's hard to — so you've got to find the last name.

MR: So I was hunting for Jake Stahl. I wonder if this would give me anything else about it?

JJ: Did he sort of have the idolization of some of the girls that went to the university?

MR: I don't remember, I suppose so. Yes.

JJ: I wondered if he was like a lot of the [unintelligible].

MR: I think he was... I don't...He wasn't in my class, I know that, and I'm not sure...Well, I suppose we might as well begin with the beginning about three and [unintelligible]. That was quite a class. It was a bigger class than it had been. Well, let's see. We look to here and see if we find a Stahl, because it has to come as last name as the last of [unintelligible]. Well, they seem to have this kind of like that, doesn't it?

JJ: Let's turn over to the these. Mm-hmm.

MR: Maybe if we do it that way.

JJ: There's I. N. Over into the Rs. It might be the next page. Let's see. There. Isn't that Garland Stahl?

MR: Yes. It's Vice President. Now, I don't know why they called him Jake, but he was the son of Henry, you see. His father was here at the university. But everybody called him Jake. That's all I know, but there isn't any Jake in here, so I'm sure this must be him. He said [unintelligible] baseball and football, captain football team, played professional baseball 1903, Boston 1904 and 5, Washington 1905, Boston baseball 1907 to 10, manager, I don't know what the DO means, 11 to 12, vice president, Washington Park National Bank, 1910, Mary Jean Mahan, January 24th, 1906, Pasadena, California. Children, Adelaide, born September 16th, 1907. Died May 23rd, 1909. Garland, Jr., born June 7th, 1910. Address, Washington Park, National Bank, Chicago.

JJ: So he stayed in the area then? Did you find the people that were in the classes around you, most of them went away? Or did a lot of them stay in this, right around this area?

MR: **Well, I think most of them came from away. I don't think there were many. I'll tell you, quite a number of the people here in town who would have been in those classes went to East to [unintelligible] there some other place. And then when they came back here, they had no knowledge or interest to the university. Here was the university and here were all the people coming back and meant nothing to them. Because don't you see, their friends were all in the east and scattered around.**

JJ: But now, for instance, you were the daughter of a faculty member. Did a lot of the children of faculty members go here?

MR: Yes, they went here, most of them.

JJ: Did you find that there was sort of a special place because you were a daughter of a faculty member and you would know other faculty members through their children, too?

MR: In those days, the faculty was small enough that they all thought that we belonged to them and we knew they all belonged to us. And you just went and talked to them about anything you wanted to, and they'd talk to you the same way.

JJ: It was a very friendly, small gathering.

MR: It was just a small, small school, you know. And that's the way we grew up. It was all a group, you know.

JJ: They must have been really nice, because it gave you an opportunity to not just to talk to somebody in class, but on a personal level. Do you think that some of your friends who did not come from Champaign-Urbana also had the opportunity to contact faculty members?

MR: Oh, they were in their houses a lot, too. A lot of them were in their houses.

JJ: That was something I meant to ask you. What kind of housing facilities were there for women when you went to school?

MR: In people's homes. There were no dormitories

JJ: Were there any boarding homes?

MR: Yes. Uh-huh. But many of them were boarding homes.

JJ: So they'd take a number of girls.

MR: Yes.

JJ: But it was also fairly common for one girl to live with one family.

MR: If people had only one room that they wanted to rent, it was more apt to want to rent it to the older students or graduate students. And they had a ruling, not when I was in college, but later on, that people who took undergraduate students had to have some rule where they could entertain their boys, friends, or other friends, because they couldn't go to their rooms, you know. And it got so that people were in such a desire to fill their house, you know, that they would take what might have been the parlor and make it into a bedroom. that way. And so the dean of women made the ruling that they had to do it the other way. And I remember a friend of ours who had never had a date while she was in the university up to that time, took a room in a house where there was no partner facility because she had reached the age when she could do that. It was an age limit. And so she did

that and immediately left the young man. And because she couldn't take him inside the house, no matter how pouring rain it was, they would not allow her to bring him inside the house. Well, she would telephone to us and say, could she send him to our house to meet her at our house. She'd come down, you know, and then he'd come to our house and meet her and take her out for a party.

JJ: How did the Dean of Women control the social activities of women when they were all scattered in all these different houses and living at home or living...

MR: Well, just by rules, requiring certain things from the house mothers.

JJ: It must have been difficult. Did they have a rule then that, say, a girl had to live in some kind of approved place?

MR: Oh, yes.

JJ: And if they didn't, then they couldn't be a student.

MR: And, you know, the approval was done with the YWCA started going out and looking at all the houses where girls were in a room and reporting on them, and looking at the bathroom facility and of course, one bathroom, you know, for twenty girls, but that was kind of hard. But at one time, why they were filling up their houses with one bathroom for all these students. That was rather hard on the girls physically, you know, not to be able to get to a bathroom. But it was hard on the boys too. And the dean of men and the dean of women got their heads together on that and made a requirement for a bath for each one of so many students. They had to have a toilet and a wash basin. A great many of them put the wash basins in the student rooms. It got rid of it that way. Then they didn't have so many baths. The students were able to take care of themselves.

JJ: Did the students live very far away from the campus? How could they get to campus if they lived too far?

MR: Well, in the earlier years of the university, and when I was graduating off too, and when I was in college, most of my friends were rooming in houses over in West Champaign. Because there wasn't much built up this side of the [unintelligible] Central. And then the people came in and began building up. small houses to start with down on University Avenue and down that region, and then larger houses up on John Street between the fairgrounds, which were out, well, shall I say about First Street. The county fairgrounds were out in that region. And between there and the university, they began building these large, rather horrible-looking houses, which you'll see some of them still, but a lot of them had following pieces. They were doing it as cheaply as possible and taking rumors and orders.

JJ: Well, now, how did the ones out in West Champaign get to campus? Did they come in the morning and just stay all day?

MR: Well, it was a streetcar. Horse car. And if they were got up early enough, they could get across the old Ice Central tracks before the trains, freight trains came in. But the old Ice Central cared nothing about whether they got there or not. They put their trains across their tracks just any old time. And then the buses had to wait until the train left, and sometimes it might be half a quarter of an hour. So to hear the students tell the teacher that they were sorry, but they were late because of it. And he would look it up to find out where they were lying and see whether they were telling the truth or not.

JJ: Well, then there was no underpass at all.

MR: No, no underpass.

JJ: Well, when did that come in?

MR: Now the students just waited.

JJ: When did they finally put the underpass in? I thought they had been around for a long time.

MR: I don't know. Students quit, you see, the [unintelligible] houses came over this, toward the university, and the students quit. And it was so in Urbana too, you see. Most of the houses were east of Lincoln Avenue. And so they had quite a long distance to go to school, but they walked in those days.

JJ: Maybe a little bit more than they do now. People didn't think anything about walking. And, of course, the campus wasn't quite as big as it is now, too.

MR: No, it was just the first part of the campus. The auditorium wasn't built, and they had buildings and so forth. It was all grass from the main building back. And the new part of the Union Building sits on the grounds where the main building was.

JJ: That must have been very pretty with all that, the grass. And weren't there some trees that Bermuda did? That must have been very nice.

MR: Lovely. You see, there was only one tree and it's still there now. When the university started here, there was just one tree on the campus. And that is a sycamore that you find when you go take the sliding walk from the old auditorium to the library. On your right hand is an old sycamore tree.

JJ: I have to look for it.

MR: And that's the only tree that was on the campus. The only one.

JJ: It must have been so bare.

MR: And the students were paid ten cents an hour to plant trees.

JJ: I'm glad they did.

MR: And when the students came down, they were expected to do a certain amount of work. And the university paid them ten cents an hour. And they had a garden to raise vegetables for the students because you see the old dormitory was an old school building that hadn't panned out well with four floors high. And that's why University Avenue is University Avenue. It was at that end of the ball ground, don't you see?

JJ: I wondered about that because you'd think that Green Street would be University Avenue because that's the center of it now.

MR: That's why that was University Avenue. That was the street it went through. And so the freshmen had to room on the top floor and then when they were sophomores they could come down to the third floor, see, the fourth floor, and they had to carry all their water and all their coal up, and they had to bring all their ashes down every day. And all their slops had to come down to be disposed of. Every day this was demanded of them. And most of them batched because each room had its stove in it. And there were little stoves with a cooking burner and a oven on them. And most of the students backed because there was no place to board. There was only one woman who boarded students. So they just got their own meals. That's what they tasted like. And they, well, father was very fortunate because one of his close friends lived out in the country near Savoy and his mother wanted him to come home every three weeks. Well, it was every other week, I guess it was. And every other week, when the father came in to shop on Thursday, he'd come in to do his shopping on Thursday. That was when the farmers came to town, Thursday, in those days. And he would bring two saddle horses. and leave him in a stable west of the University block or so on University Avenue. And he would leave the horses there. So if the boys got out of class on Friday afternoon, they'd go and get on these horses and go out. And then they were supposed to come back Friday afternoon because they had eight o'clock classes. But Mrs. Raymond would say, "Oh, stay overnight. I'll get up and give you an early breakfast." Then she'd start them off with bread and cookies and potatoes and whatever they needed. So father was very, very, much more fortunate than most of the students were. Occasionally he was well fed.

JJ: Did your father ever tell you why he came to the university, why he came here?

MR: He came because his mother told him to. His father died on his first birthday and he and my mother's brother were bosom companions from a little childhood up and so grandfather Farley was sending Henry to Beloit and that was a liberal arts college and of course father wanted to go and grandmother said, "No, you're going down to the new university that they're starting down at Champaign where they teach the new subjects, the sciences." I think that's what you would like more than anything else. Now father liked poetry. He loved music. And so far as he was concerned, the liberal arts college would have been all right. But when he got down here, he just reveled in the sciences. Don't you see?

MR: So she was right.

MR: She was right. I thought she was pretty smart to realize that and send him down to this new place. And that's how he came.

JJ: Now, when he got here, then, he must have been in the first graduating class.

MR: Yes, and that is the first graduating class over there, the picture of it. See that friend picture? That's the first graduating class, 20 of them graduated. But they were all older than the father. The students were older. They were mostly, well you look at that and you'll see their beards and so forth. They're just an older, older group than he was.

JJ: Were most of them from farming communities, or were they mostly from larger [unintelligible]?

MR: Well, they came from some, well, quite a few of them were from the northern part of the state, too, and from farms and so forth.

JJ: Did they come back to the university after they had left? I mean, they were sort of special, you know, I would think, since they were the very first graduating class.

MR: Always came. Most all of them came every year. It was at commencement time. They had a special day for alumni, alumni day. In those days, you had alumni day and class day and commencement day and baccalaureate. Sunday. So it extended quite a little. So they always came back. And because we, by that time, were living up there in Mr. Taft's house, where Taft's father had built that house. And by the time that it came around to an anniversary where Father took hold to try and get them back together while we were living up there and we had a house full of them and we always had them all for dinner with all their relatives and so forth. I don't know how much of that coming back came before we moved up that house because I don't remember a house was always full of students or somebody down in our [unintelligible]. I don't mean that we never had a rumor. I mean, they always came in.

JJ: Well, it seemed to me, I mean, they'd be really special because they were the very first class, and I imagine they'd practically feel more a part of the university than anybody else.

MR: It's a very good picture, a ‘50s year picture of the class, and they had a reunion here. But we kept on, and then father as his class went, he would take in all the others that had President Gregory, the people they called the Gregorians. And he would have all of them come back with their families and so forth. So we'd often have 150 or something for dinner at night. In my graduating day, as I was going down to the, father had come home and he had said that he didn't find, hadn't found any of the boys back, and so we wouldn't have any dinner that night, not to bother. But we had the food, the boys, girls arranged, and I'd gotten them there, you know, to help with the thing and so forth. And a woman who was a good cook to help and I had to go off to my commencement. But as I was going down, marching down, they had a cyclone here the night before that tore down hundreds of trees

on the university campus in front of what's now the Union Building. You will find one old white birch toward the end of that slanting walk that goes up to the alma mater. And that white birch had its top torn off, but it's still the same one. But most of the other trees have had to be planted since because they were torn down all around across Green Street. This was the first year we were going to have the exercises down in the armory. And so the university men got out early in the morning and cut back to give us room to get through because we were to meet up at the main building and then march down there. And it was the first year we had caps and gowns. And so here we were in our caps and gowns marching down. Nobody could see us, and we couldn't see out. The piled branches were higher than our heads all the way down. Well, father found his way to me as we went down and said, "Well, I've found a number of the boys, and I've asked them to come for dinner after all, even if I told you not." And so I said, "Well, that was all right." And then I fell right out of the line and went back and met the house, the woman, the cook, just coming out of the house to leave. And the students were still there, and I turned them all around and told them what they had to do, you know, to get ready for this. [Laughter] And then I dashed back and got back just in time. to get into the building with the class. And of course, the class was bigger than any other classes had been, and they had jammed our seats so close together and here we were wearing wool caps and gowns, and it was an awful hot day. If I wanted to move an arm, there was a boy on either side, and if I wanted to move an arm, I had to say I wanted to move it so that he could move something so that I could move my arm. Don't you know? It's the same way he'd have to ask me to move my... [laughter] We were just doing so tight together on this commencement thing.

JJ: Just run all the way home and back. You probably were really hot.

MR: Yeah, I was. But then they were, too. We didn't think so much of our caps and gowns. We thought we were very, very smart to be the first class and have caps and gowns.

JJ: What did they wear before then, instead of caps and gowns?

MR: They just wore their ordinary clothes. They didn't have caps and gowns. But you did. That's your seats. We began wearing our caps and gowns the first of May. We wore them to school. We were proud of these caps in college.

JJ: Then it was your very own. You had to keep it. It's not, you know—

MR: Well, we had to buy our own. So we always had it until— I gave mine to a student, too. Well, just didn't know what to do. It was costing too much to rent the land because they were sent down from Chicago for the individual people and so forth. And he didn't know ahead of time that he was going to be able to be here because his mother had been very sick and he'd been home, and he wasn't sure that he could be here. So when he came back, he was going to have to go without a gown. And I said, Now listen, how all the world has to do will change the crossing of the gown, you know. So cross this way instead of my

crossing of this way, the belt on it. So I fixed it. He went off. But that's the way you did those days.

JJ: I wanted to ask you about Professor Burrill, Regent Burrill, Professor Burrill. You know him since childhood, but can you describe what he was like when you started going to the university? He was still teaching now, wasn't he?

MR: Oh, yes. He was my teacher.

JJ: Well, he was, wasn't he? What was he like as a teacher?

MR: Well, first, let me tell you that no matter where he was, where Professor Burrill was, or what he was doing, he was reserved and dignified and another word the other night. I don't fit in, but I forget what it was. But he wasn't one of these men who was bubbling, you know. But his eyes and his expression and all told you that he was interested in you, liked you and so forth. It wasn't what he said or what he did. He was just one of those men I imagine was a New Englander. I mean, I imagine his background was New England, but I don't know. But at any rate, he had that same sort of dignity that you find about them, that people who don't know New Englanders thought they were cold and hard to reach. Well, of course, I was New England blooded, so they seemed all right to me. Yeah, I went to school in New England, and people had told me that New Englanders were very cold and harsh. And I found they weren't as open as people in the Midwest, but they were just as friendly. Well, now that's what that Professor Burrill had that same sort of a dignity. It is, two people, a standoff dignity. I mean, they're not a [unintelligible], they don't put their hands on you and so forth, don't you know. And mother was a Boston woman, of course I was used to. But Professor Burrill, as a teacher, just stood up there and he talked and everybody listened. I never heard of anybody misbehaving or doing anything in his classes except trying to hear what he had to say.

JJ: Was he one of the teachers on campus, perhaps, that was of particular popularity with the students? That is, they made a point to take a course with him if they could.

MR: Yes. He was very popular as a teacher. But I wouldn't say he was popular with the students, particularly. Because I think students want somebody that just kind of goes out, you know, their way for the students and so forth. And he had all the time in the world to devote to students. I think this might interest you, or did I tell you about the religions? Did I tell you before about that?

Well, he had been, I think, over in England. doing some graduate work, if I remember that story correctly. And he came into his botany class, and he said something to this effect—I can't quote his words—"Gentlemen, the first thing that we have to consider in botany is the fact that the world was not built in twenty-four hours and of our hours and it was not it is not 5,000 years old as you will see in the front of your Bible." And of course the boys all having been brought up that way were just shocked to death and then he went on and

started into to tell what had happened in the evolution of plants, you know that's the sort of thing he was trying to talk about and plant life and that you had to words like mutation and all that sort of thing came into botany. Well the students left and I don't think they'd heard a word he'd said in the last half hour of his talking. They were just all shocked. So, when they came together the next time, the boy raised his hand and asked a question about religion, you know, the Bible and so forth. And he answered it, but always with the same standing straight dignity, you know, and answered it. And so then another boy asked a question and he answered that. And finally he laid down his book and he said, "I believe that before we talk about botany, I'd better talk to you about religion as a scientist," he said. See? For one week, he did no botany at all. He just talked to those boys, and in one week, he brought them from the 16th century Bible up to the earlier, don't you see?

JJ: That must have been very hard for him to do, though, because I should imagine these boys had a very strong founding in the beliefs of the Bible.

MR: Well, they did have, but he told them that there was nothing in the Bible that wasn't right. It was good, a fine history and so forth, but people had misinterpreted. That a day didn't have to be a 24-hour day. The word day that was used in the manuscripts wasn't the same thing as 24 hours. That wasn't required at all. It was a period of time and so forth. He talked to them that way and about the 5,000 years, well, evidently, the people who put that in front of the Bible didn't know that. That there was a new world before 5,000 years, but here's your evidence.

JJ: Did Professor Burrill get opposition from other faculty members in the region and so forth?

MR: I don't think so. I think everybody thought, "Well, here he is. He's putting out new ideas. I'd better get busy and learn them, too." Don't you know? That was the spirit in which this university was founded, that everybody was trying to learn sciences. It was a new thing, you know, and people trying to learn it. We went into zoology and the first thing we heard was about Agassiz and the way Agassiz got a student who wished to be a prominent zooologist. He wanted to learn how to be, so Agassiz sent him down with a fish, a big fish. He was to write everything he could see on this fish. And he kept him right on, looking at this fish for two months. And then he said, "You still haven't found the thing that you have to find before I can let you go from that fish." And you know, that boy thought, well, he just did look that fish all over. He's been looking at it so long and so forth. And then all of a sudden, he saw the scales weren't the same size and the different parts of the fish. See? And so then he got away from the fish and got something else. But that was the beginning of our zoology class. And in those days, that was what you started with in zoology. Mr. Forbes would start you off that way. Because it was the same way with the theory of evolution and so forth, that the first thing you had to do was to wake the student up to what science meant, you see.

JJ: Well, now you must have taken several science courses then.

MR: Yes, I took science.

JJ: Well, of course your father was…

MR: Father, you see, the early teachers taught more than one subject. Father taught physiology, and geology. And they were a part of zoology. And so he had his choice when they decided to separate them. He had his choice. He could take the physiology, which would continue to be a part of zoology, or he could take the geology and be free. independent and he did he took the geology because he had small children that brought more money in and so forth and he liked it but he from as long as he lived he had his medical books and physiology and books and that's what he did for recreation he read his medical books.

JJ: Well, that's good to have, you know, to have the two interests then.

MR: Yeah, the two interests.

JJ: There was somebody else I wanted to ask you about, too. Probably you knew Thomas Arkle Clark.

MR: Oh, very well.

JJ: Did he come before you or the university?

MR: Oh, no, he was a student here at the university. I think he would graduate from the university. Well, anyhow, He was here when I first remembered anything. He married a girl who... who lived here. He has talked so far before. He did. In the class of '90.

JJ: '90?

MR: Uh-huh.

JJ: Then he must have joined the faculty after that.

MR: 148. Well, he, I can't remember, but he was somehow helping a president, and he, and Ed was kind of a problem, and so he got him to kind of tutor Ed along, and then they came to Dean of Man as a consequence of that work they hadn't done there. He was born in 1862 at Minooka, Illinois. I knew that. And I had forgotten it. And then he came down here. And he Tommy Arkle was one. There's never been anyone like him, and I don't think there ever will be anyone like him. He had ways of doing things that were different from anyone else. For instance, if he went to a dinner party in those days, they would lay out all the silverware. Looked like an operating table when you got all the silver, different silverware that you were going to use for the whole meal that was laid out. on the table and people thought it was fine. We had all sorts of silver, you know, for different things. Well, we do now, but then we don't have so many courses and we don't expect to do so many things. It was the time of great, what shall I say? You were expected to do just the right thing, always.

You left one calling card if you went to anyone's house, if there was just one woman there. If there were two women, if her mother was visiting her, you left two calling cards. If her sister also was there, you left three calling cards. Do you see? That's just the way it was. If you were having a dinner and you had all these things arranged on the table, you were supposed to be smart enough to know which one to use and to watch your hostess to see which one she booked up. But Tommy Arkle was too interested in everybody to keep watching anything like that. So he'd come out with the wrong thing at the final course. He wouldn't have it. So would he be ashamed and try to hide the fact that he was using the wrong kind of... Oh no, he'd pick it up and say, "See, I came out wrong." That was some miracle. If the boys put on some sort of a, well, some sort of an unexpected celebration, he put on his clothes, dressed just like a student, and went right out into the crowd. And the students never really recognized him at all. But they thought he had spies out after them when the next day he would call in the ringleaders from his office. And he was there himself, you know. We all of us would just die laughing, but it was a rule that you never spoke to him if you saw him in the crowd. You never paid absolutely no attention to him. Of all those of us who would know him, you know, because this was his job. He was the young man and he had to be there and do it. On the other hand, if a student had to have an operation, T.A. was in the operating room with him. No student ever went into the operating room without T.A.

JJ: He must have been very reassuring to allow them in, I mean, to have somebody like that who couldn't...

MR: Well, everybody adored T.A., you know. And if they had trouble, if they were in trouble or had gotten into trouble, the first thing they did was to go to his office. and talk to him about it.

JJ: It's hard to imagine that somebody could do this. Of course, the campus was a little bit smaller, but still, he must have had a phenomenal memory to handle the problem.

MR: He knew every student by name, that as soon as he saw him, he called him by name, and all through the years he remembered those students by the right name when they came back to university. One time a student who had been in a Sunday school class of students that I had came over to the house very much concerned. His roommate had left that morning and told him he wasn't going to come back, that he was going to commit suicide. And he had argued with this boy, more or less, but the boy went out of the house and he got scared, so he came over to talk to me about it. And I said, “Well, there's nothing I can help you with, but let's go and talk to TA.” So I called him, we went over to TA's office, and he said, he told him, he wanted to know what was the matter. The boy told him, and he said, “Well, you know, he just left this office just before you came. He was here when you called.” He said to me, “He was here when you called.” He said, “You won't know what I said to him when he left.” “Go on and do it. Why don't you? You've been talking about it so

long. Why don't you go ahead and do it? But don't you dare muss up the campus with yourself."

JJ: That's probably just the right approach. You can have a lot of...

MR: Because I've just had all I want of you. That's what T.A. told him.

JJ: You can have a lot of respect for somebody like that. It's wonderful.

MR: And of course the boy went to class. And that was the last district room they'd ever heard of that stuff. Well, that was T.A. He had the funniest way of approaching things and the queerest things. But he had been a rhetoric teacher before he became Dean of Man. And he'd been my teacher in rhetoric, I'd been in his class. So that morning when I called him, I said, "Can I bring a boy over to see you?" He said, "I don't know how heavy would he be." I said, "May I bring a boy over to you?" There, now I just about I'd teach you that before I died [laughter]. Apparently I had been a little lax in my rhetoric there, although he had given me 96 in my grade. He apparently didn't think that was very soundly established. But don't you see he hadn't forgotten about his rhetoric business when he was doing the Dean's work. And he told me afterwards that he had a real fight as the year went on to keep on being what he says an undignified Dean. Because there were some people, some trustees that felt that he was not doing it the right way. And they had a new head of the hospital come in who didn't want him in the operating room and so forth. And he had quite a fight, he told me, to get a chance to do the work the way he did. But there's never been a Dean of Men like T.A. and never will be.

JJ: You can only have a man like that, I think, once.

MR: Yes. But you see, there had never been a Deaner[?] man, and he had to work it out for himself, what he was to do, and how he used to manage. And all the faculty people were behind it. I mean, he did it so well that there just wasn't any problem that the faculty had to handle in. And that ordinary faculty do have to handle. And he did the job. Now, does that tell you what I want to know?

JJ: Yeah, I think.