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Contact:

Special Collections, University of Delaware Library
181 South College Avenue
Newark, DE 19717-5267
302.831.2229 / 302.831.1046 (fax)
http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec
askspecref@winsor.lib.udel.edu

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH
EVELYN HOLST CLIFT
PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
MAY 5, 1976

Transcribed by:
R. Herman
February 27, 1978
SIDE I

EVELYN HOLST CLIFT
B: This is an interview with Professor Eve Clift of the University of Delaware at her home on May 5, 1976. Her retirement occurred last year in 1975. How long had you taught at the university, Ms. Clift?

C: Thirty-three years.

B: How did you happen to come to the University of Delaware?

C: In 1938 when I was the research assistant to Professor Tenny Frank at Johns Hopkins University where I took my Ph.D., the job here in ancient languages opened up and I was recommended by Professor (unintelligible), his best student. I was turned down on the grounds of being a woman and reluctantly he recommended someone else who had just finished at Hopkins. I had finished my Ph.D. the year before, 1937. That person got the job and I continued at Hopkins with all (unintelligible) recommendations but no prospect of a job, being a woman, until 1942 and then as this country went into war and as Canada went into war, the person who had been here for four years took leave of absence to go into the Canadian Navy. The then president of Delaware called me at Hopkins.

B: This was President Hullihen?

C: That is correct. Who himself was a Hopkins Ph.D. for many years
SIDE II

EVELYN HOLST CLIFT
of (unintelligible). He phoned me and asked me whether I would come for an interview and I did. Again, there were three candidates, I believe. I was led to believe by the then Dean of the Women's College that I had no chance for the job, partly because I was a woman, still the same disability and partly because I wore a brace on the left foot.

B: So you had understood that you didn't have a chance then for the job from Mrs. Robinson?

C: No, not Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Bolwick.

B: I'm sorry. I thought that Mrs. Robinson was still Dean.

C: No, Mrs. Bolwick. However Mrs. Bolwick's fears were unfounded and President Hullihen called me within a day or two to offer me the job. Since at Hopkins, everything was more or less going to pieces with people volunteering for the war especially the person with whom I was working most closely on the American Journal of Philology at the time, Professor Harold T , though overage had volunteered as a buck private in the Army. We were all amazed at this because we always thought Harold wouldn't get strength enough or energy enough to serve as a soldier in the line since he used to say that...he lived just across the street from Hopkins...that he lived just beyond walking distance. The...however he proved to be practically the staunt buck private that anybody had ever had on the long march of sixty miles carrying a heavy (unintelligible). He returned among the few who managed to make the whole trip not only carrying his own sixty-pound pack but that of a friend of his who fell by the wayside.

B: Was this the Bataan March?
C: No, no, this is buck training.
B: Oh.
C: Just plain buck training. However he was the most brilliant man I've ever met and he was soon picked out for intelligence work and spent all his time behind the lines in Germany in intelligence work during the war. I mention this because it has something to do with my first year here. I taught...needless to say I was very happy to have the job and be able to teach at long last. I had taught at Hopkins but Hopkins did not take women except in summer school and night school, but not on the regular faculty. This was a Hopkins tradition. So, it was wonderful to have a chance to teach. I also had the pleasure of having an office in what was then the main administration and classroom building on the Men's campus and I had...well, most of my classes were also given at the Men's end.
B: Was that Recitation Hall?
C: No, no, Hullihen Hall. It wasn't called Hullihen Hall then. What was it called? I don't know what it was called but is now Hullihen Hall.
B: Wasn't that just called the Administration building?
C: Probably, yes, the Administration building, yes. President Hullihen was always extremely nice to me because he himself was a graduate of Hopkins and in addition to that a classicist. I remember particularly the day in which he in the ligatory chapel meeting he announced the names of the new faculty and he announced me as Dr. Evelyn Holst Clift. When I got down to the Women's College where we all had to live...I should add here that only when we're in the late fifties or early sixties was one allowed
to live off campus if a woman in those days and so since I was considerably younger than that, I had to live on campus in a little two-by-four room and share a bath with thirty-five girls. I almost took the next train back to Baltimore when I saw the room and realized the conditions. But that's just a sideline. (The next sentence is unintelligible.)

B: Had you tried to get another job or had you been thinking about Delaware when you were at Hopkins?

C: No, I hadn't thought of Delaware except the one time that the position first opened and then was taken by the student who finished later than I.

B: Well, did you have another...other experiences of being turned down?

C: Oh yes, everywhere, Holy Oak, Wellesley. I can't even remember all the places now. I'd have to go through the files and see.

B: So you happened to just come a short way north.

C: A short way north, just by chance.

B: Did you find that your teaching experience when you first began was rewarding enough and did you meet faculty that you respected so that the room and the bathroom and so forth were sort of disappearing in importance?

C: Oh, well, I spent so little time in the room because I had so much to do that I was in Hullihen Hall or what is now Hullihen Hall until one or two o'clock in the morning and I had eight o'clock classes every day and I never missed breakfast and so the amount of time I spent in my cubby-hole of a room was negligible.

B: You must have spent a lot of time in your cubby-hole of an office.
C: Yes, but in my office I had all my books and everything else and peace and quiet.

B: Did you teach almost exclusively men then in classics?

C: No, I taught both men and women. I was also acting chairman of the ancient languages and literature department which meant that I was the only woman on the Men's faculty who was a chair­man status. And I remember my first faculty meeting at the Men's College, there were two separate colleges and two separate faculty meetings. Of course I was chairman of classics for the women too but also for the men. The first meeting that I attended, I walked into the room and the men all rose very self-consciously, shrugged into their coats and looked anything but pleased to see a female, one lone female come into the room. I promptly, as I already had a reputation for smoking, promptly lighted a cigar­ette and everybody relaxed and I had no problems thereafter of being a lone woman in the Men's faculty meeting. But that was a situation as chairman of classics. I also taught history however, ancient and medieval history and ancient and medieval philosophy with the result that my teaching schedule at its maximum was twenty-four hours a week. Occasionally it dipped to say twenty-one or finally to eighteen. But I should say for the first twenty-two years that I was at Delaware, I taught a minimum of eighteen hours a week and a maximum of twenty-four. All the time serving as one of the editors of the American Journal of Philology, the oldest classical journal in the country published at Hopkins, which took me down to Hopkins one day a week to do the work, especially during the war years when there were no other editors around and everything had to be done just from my end. And I
was also seeing through the press Harold Ternis's *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy* which he had left in my hands when he went off to war. And in addition when he thought there was very little chance of his surviving the war, he had written to the Hopkins Press and mailed me all the notes for the second volume plus the money to publish it. I wrote to him not knowing if or even when he'd get the letter, but he'd jolly well better come back and do it himself. I was also doing...

B: Did he?

C: Yes, he did, thank goodness. I just had a letter from him yesterday. I was also doing volume translations done by Ludwig and Emil Edelstein on Asclepius called *The Cult of Asclepius in the Eighteenth World*. That took a great deal of time. At the same time, I was working on and preparing for publication my own book on Latin pseudepigraphia. When I think now how on earth I did this and taught eighteen to twenty-four hours a week, I can only say I was so well prepared at Vassar and Johns Hopkins that it was not the terrible chore that it would be to people nowadays who are not so well prepared.

B: I'm very interested to hear you say this. Today, because this is an oral history interview, it might be interesting to know that today the New York Times published the results of their own history test which was sent to campuses and given to selected students asking basic questions involving American history. The results of the test show that students, I'm quoting now, "had so-called peak period, peak event recognition in terms of the answers on the test but that they had no grounding that would have been seen probably in older training, earlier training in American history." In other words, the results of the test seemed to show that the
training was not as well accomplished, at least in American history. Would you say that you've found students in your later years of teaching less prepared...less well prepared?

C: Very decidedly, very much so, not only less well prepared but also less willing to become prepared. That is, less inclined to do any work.

B: Why do you think this is?

C: I am making a study now of the inflation of grades that is reflected in even a highly selected group like Phi Beta Kappa. Starting with the first class which was initiated when we got the charter in 1956 and going on to the present, and I think the results will show tremendous inflation of grades—and at the same time an indication that students are not so well prepared nor are they concerned about being so well prepared. That bothers me more than their not being well prepared.

B: Would you feel that this might be a change in secondary school teachers' attitudes?

C: To some extent, yes, but one must also consider that the level at which people are allowed to enter college has been certainly dropped and so we get far more people entering college now who have no business being at college in the first place.

B: Do you think that your feelings and the feelings of other people today in the academic world are being felt? Is there a change back? I think pass/fail was outlawed recently at Yale, for example.

C: I wish it were outlawed at Delaware. I suppose so far as Phi Beta Kappa is concerned, we could say no more than one pass/fail and no pass/fails in a major and no more than fifteen credits of pass/fail in the total program would be permitted to anyone being
considered for Phi Beta Kappa. But even that is far too many. The whole purpose of pass/fail originally was to encourage people to take courses presumably on the basis of general intelligence, the ability to pass the course, in a field wholly outside his or her major or related fields and that would have been a fine idea to give people who are classicists or historians some...a really hard course in science beyond the elementary level all people have to take. In the old days, long since gone unfortunately, we had really strict requirements, group require­ments. That was the original purpose and it was very good. It didn't last a year under that system. It was promptly expanded even to include required courses.

B: Do you find that some of these changes, the laxness, would have to be attributable to numbers, a greater population in schools... because of the population itself being greater and certainly because Delaware is a tax supported college? In other words, more children with their C average getting out of high school are moving in. In other words the classroom with one hundred people in freshman English would...do you feel that would have to be less rigorous?

C: Well, I don't think there has ever been at Delaware a class of a hundred people in English except briefly when Dean Dearing was convinced that he could teach a course with seventy-five in it. I believe that was the largest. So, we have to rule out English.

B: Oh, I'm sorry.

C: The history classes of a hundred have been going on for a long time.

B: I think psychology, too.
C: Yes, yes. Well, there is certainly, definitely a problem. In the early days I knew everyone by name in a class. Now I recognize their faces but I can't catch names. It was also physically impossible to carry a heavy teaching load and at the same time grade every paper myself. Hence, the introduction of the graduate assistant which is, I suppose, very good for the preparation and training of someone who is going to be a teacher, but it's hardly fair to the student. I've never felt it was. I would say that it is particularly unfortunate that the team classes occur on the freshman level when according to the philosophy of the history department in the days when Dr. Munroe was chairman, the senior people should be teaching the freshmen. And I thoroughly agreed with that, and yet it was physically impossible to read every paper in a huge class of that sort. When it comes to the upper level courses, even with seventy-five in ancient history, Greek or Roman, I always managed to read them myself. I must say the students sometimes were very unhappy at having to wait for their papers but in the long run they were glad that I had read them and not any graduate assistant. But it would have been physically impossible on the freshman level. It has resulted too much in the multiple guess kind of question instead of the essay question which in turn is reflected in the inability of so many freshman graduates to spell, to write a complete English sentence, to marshal their thoughts into some kind of coherent essay, and that has gone by the board.

B: Well, what do you think is going to be the result in society?

C: Well, I could just say an absolute illiterate society. Perhaps because of my many years of editing, correcting manuscripts and
reading manuscripts critically for publication, I never read anything without a red pencil in my hand and I find I am making corrections in the New York Times, of every newspaper, of every book I pick up and everything else, really illiterate errors. I combine with the remarks I make of the decline of the use of English language, I must say that in every exam paper I ever read and every spelling error and every grammatical error I was often asked by students whether I took off for these, and I have to admit I did not if they were history papers or Greek or Latin papers or philosophy papers. And I guess it might be of value to them what the correct way of saying something was.

B: This may be an unfair question but has the classics training... the training of classicists changed? Has it become easier, less well done?

C: My opinion on that would be that of all the classics teachers I know and what I've seen them do, the training is certainly not less rigorous than it was before. It is hampered, however, compared with my early days, by the fact that the students coming into classics do not have the solid high school background. It is one thing to teach advanced Latin and Greek to people who have four solid years of excellent training in high school and...as it was in my day, and quite different to start with elementary Latin and elementary Greek on a college level...try to do four years in two years and still have some time to add all the rest in the way of classical training that...one couldn't possibly add all the rest because there would be only two years left instead of the four years in my day and so in that sense, the product they turn out couldn't possibly be as well-trained as in the early days. But
it's not the fault of those who are teaching the classics. They are most aware of this but they are in a very awkward position. This goes back to the high schools.

B: You talk about good training at the secondary level being very important. What was your...how did you become interested in the classics?

C: Well, as a freshman in high school, what would be called now the ninth grade I guess, at the age of twelve, I had the great, good fortune to sign up for Latin as well as French in my first year of what we call high school. There was no junior high school. You went from elementary school to high school. The teacher was Winifer Shirley Allen who was trained at Mt. Holy Oak as a brilliant woman at classics. The very first day of class to introduce us to Latin, she wrote on the board, "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" in Latin; "Micare, micare paulo stella, Miraculum etc., (she recites a few more lines). I still can't forget it. I came home that afternoon and said to my mother, "I'll never learn this language." And she said, "Now this is a new language. You start all over again. Now just say it, memorize it and I'll hear you in it." She heard me in it and the next day practically nobody had it down pat but I did because I wasn't going to give up on this strange new language and from that day on I decided I was going to be a classicist. That was it. That was the second day of high school at the age of twelve.

B: Well, were you successful in learning Latin from then on?

C: Yes, at least I won a New York Classical Medal for it...highest average....

B: Where did you do your secondary school work?
C: At the public high school known as the old ladies seminary because it was all girls but properly known as Baybridge High School.

B: In Baybridge, New Jersey?

C: In Brooklyn, New York.

B: Brooklyn! Of course! I should have known that. And you mentioned earlier you went to Vassar then for your undergraduate work and you were always a major as an undergraduate in classics?

C: In the classics yes, the whole classical field. As late Dean Squire used to say, I didn't teach a subject like Latin or Greek or history but I taught field which was the ancient field and also the medieval field and that therefore I taught the whole garrett of subjects that would be comprised in that field which would be the language, the history, the literature, the philosophy and so on.

B: You mentioned that you started at the Women's College and you lived in your small room and ate in the dining hall. When did you make the change living off campus?

C: Well, I started living at Women's College but I taught both men and women. That was...

B: Were you the only faculty person? You were the only person of chairman status, but were you the only woman faculty who taught at both campuses? or taught both men and women?

C: In 1942 one other person came the same year and also taught men. That was Elizabeth Edward, she was then, and she also taught. She taught German. She taught the men...the men's end as well as the women. In fact we shared an office in what is now Hullien Hall. But we were the only two who taught men.
B: And there were only 900 students then as you recall.

C: As the people left for the war, the first great draft, we ended up with just about 900.

B: I remember that the people left the Men's campus in April of 1943. There was a general exodus and something called the ASTRP came in and I don't think many people remember that, Army Specialized Training Reserve Program.

C: I never did know what they called it but all I know is that group was taught basic English, basic math, a little smattering of geography and so on. They had to be given a little bit of education shall we say, no means the college level nor pretense at the college level, before they went off to war. What was far more interesting in '43 I think it was is the group of seventeen year olds from the high schools in Wilmington and Newark and the whole state who were allowed to enter college at the end of their junior year in high school and they formed our little group of what we always referred to as the seventeen year olds. The idea being that they could get at least one year of good solid training before they reached the draft age of eighteen and I remember so many of the boys in that group because they were all boys and since I taught them all the time, the people who have made a great name for themselves since in particular I recall Irving Morris the great lawyer of Wilmington and also Martin Yalisove and Charles Veith.

B: And who are they? Martin Yalisove and Charles Veith?

C: They're both dentists, very successful dentists in Wilmington.

B: It sounds as though you fight think that going into college early is a good idea.
C: Well, if they are a select group as that group certainly was.
B: Oh, they were a select group?
C: They were a select group, yes. It wasn't a case of taking any seventeen year old. They were the top ranking students in school and they were picked out to start college and they were a magnificent group. It was the greatest fun to teach them.
B: When the war was over and the new G.I. Bill people came back, what happened then?
C: Nothing for the good. Maybe that's too categorical. There were ...a great many came back. The seventeen year olds came back and they simply picked up where they left off. And some who realized that they'd never before had the chance to go to the university everything wasn't free in those days, and there was not the same welfare business and all as today and they leapt at the opportunity for a college education. On the other hand there was too large a group in that batch who felt not only did the government owe them a college education, but that the faculty owed them grades so they could get through whether they worked or not.
B: Was this the beginning of the inflationary grade situation?
C: I'm not sure I'd say it was the beginning of the inflationary grade system, that comes later really. That comes with the great boom in numbers, the baby boom after World War II and it's why colleges were so crowded later. But far too many of the G.I. group who instead of welcoming the chance for a real education, wanted the easy way out. They wanted the degree without the work. It's very symptomatic of the whole change of the whole attitude towards college.
B: Interesting that it happened so quickly
C: Yes, I remember in those days there were not great huge classroom spaces other than the auditorium and so at exam time a large class might be broken up into several rooms and we were all expected to pitch in and help proctor class. I remember proctoring an exam class for a member in the political science department.

The first side of the Evelyn Holst Clift tape runs out at this point. The conversation is continued on side two of the tape.
B: You were talking about the problem in the change in attitude that you noticed in young people when the G.I. Bill students began coming back.

C: Yes, that's right. It was a very difficult period because with the end of the war, we not only had a tremendous influx of students way more than we'd ever had before at the university, some good, some very, very good and some who were just there because the government was paying for it. And then of course we had some of our own seventeen year olds that I spoke of earlier who survived the war and came back to start over again. It was a very interesting period and on the whole despite the fact that there were I think all too many who were taking advantage of the G.I. Bill without having any real university leanings or real scholastic leanings and I've often wondered whether this is the beginning for Delaware of the idea that everyone should have a college education whether he was capable of it or not. But despite that, by and large it was a very interesting period. It was in 1946 that since I was a wartime appointee beginning in 1942 when I first came here, my contract actually ended. But Dr. Sypherd who was then acting president had no desire to have me go and I would have liked to have stayed here anyway at least I thought I would because it was a challenge and Johns Hopkins University, I don't think I've mentioned this before maybe so, Johns Hopkins University however offered me an appointment as the first woman on the graduate faculty at Johns Hopkins and I was torn between the desire to go back to my beloved Hopkins where I'd gotten my degree and certainly to be the first woman on the graduate faculty and what seemed to me in many ways far
more worth-while a job and that would have been to stay at Delaware.

B: Why did it seem more worth-while?

C: Because I had come to recognize at Delaware though I must admit I had never heard of the University of Delaware before I came here...I found that there were a great many really excellent students and what they needed was guidance and also concern on the part of faculty members and I can't say that there was always a great many professors who really cared about them. They were more concerned with what they were doing themselves and I feel as if I can make this statement because years later when I was finally and at last, as a woman, promoted to full professorship, students from fifteen to twenty years back got together and unbeknownst to me arranged for a dinner in my honor and also gathered enough money to buy me a beautiful strand of pearls which I was told I should put in a bank vault as they were too valuable to wear every day. This I never did. I have worn them almost every day I think since 1962.

B: Are they the ones you're wearing?

C: No, no, not these. They're a longer strand. It seemed to me it was foolish to put those things in the bank vault when I just enjoyed wearing them so much all the time. But...I've lost track of what I was saying at that point...

B: You were saying you stayed because of your...you felt there was an opportunity...

C: I felt there was a great opportunity here. There were a great many students who were very, very well worth-while and...I know what I was going to say now. This is the trouble with oral repor-
ting. When at the dinner Clay Reid who was at that time chairman of the department, spoke of the fact that...in a nice little income on me for the benefit of the...at the end of the dinner... spoke of the fact that practically no one ever thought of going to graduate school until I came here. And after I came here I encouraged these good students with whom I came in contact to think about graduate school, think about going on in the field of history on the higher level. If they lacked the languages, I taught them. This sounds conceited but still in all I did. I French. I taught German and of course Latin and Greek to quite a number of students who there by could get into graduate school and at least pass one language as soon as they went in and then come back the following summer for vacation and I would coach them again in a second language because you needed both French and German and of course if you're going on in classical history you needed Latin and Greek for Ph.D. work. And I've always been particularly glad I stayed here if only to be able to get those people started.

B: Did you tend to help people toward Johns Hopkins?
C: No.
B: Did you have some particular graduated programs that you tried to recommend?
C: The only...well, I considered myself basically in history and the people who went on to graduate school for the most part were people in history. It's just ironic that the last two students that I taught in the ancient language department, Gary Bellock and John Gayan, were just going into their senior year when Mr. Shirley and Mr. Dearing canceled the classics department and at
that point I pulled out of it. That was somewhere around oh somewhere in the sixties I guess. At that point I withdrew from the classics department officially but since both Gary and John were in their senior year and were headed for graduate school, I continued to teach them the classics but with Dr. Munroe's blessing under history numbers. He said he didn't care whether I taught them Thucydides in Greek under a history number as a special problems in the historian Thucydides and so I got them through their last year at Delaware even though I was technically no longer in the classics department because I refused to teach in it.

B: Did you continue teaching under history numbers some of your...

C: Yes, I taught graduate Latin sometimes under education numbers, sometimes under history numbers. And I remember when Dean Archy I think his name was, he was here only for a year, but he...one time when I was holding one of the seminars with about six people in it in ancient Latin, he stuck his head in the door. Since this was all sub rosa I wondered what was going to happen when the Dean poked his head in the door and realized I was giving a seminar on the graduate level in Latin since I was not technically a mem­ber of the department and all he did was laugh and say, "I won't tell John Perkins." That was lovely. Well, I was very much concerned at that time and still very much concerned about the demotion of the classics to being the stepchild of a language... general language department and it is definitely the stepchild. It would seem to me that with the interesting classics that there had been for so many years and to which I hope I contributed some­thing and the present interest now with the two young men who are
in the modern language department of teaching classics that this university could afford to have a separate classics department. I understand that there is some move now to do something about co-ordinating courses in classical art history, classical languages and literature, classical history, classical philosophy, but that is really a mish mash and it does not substitute for a solid classics department.

B: Probably this with interested people...this might be expected to happen.

C: Yes, except that they, as far as majors are concerned, are in limbo and when it comes to going to graduate school, what department do they register themselves in and how do they explain that they're not classics majors, they are majors in this, that or the other but they've had a number of courses in the classical fields spread over numerous departments and they don't get the same consideration that they'd get from a recommendation by a solid well known classics department.

B: Have some of your graduate students become teachers in the classics?

C: Oh yes, and have gotten Ph.D's., Helen Tierney, Margaret Lawson.

B: Was Helen Tierney of the Tierney family of New York?

C: Yes, she was of the great Tierney family.

B: Sylvia Tierney's sister

C: Yes, that's not the only one that was here. I've forgotten...at one stage I did know how...what number the Tierney family I was teaching. I was told this was the sixth one, this was the seventh one and so on. It was a very fine family.

B: Heinz Otto was a student of yours wasn't he?
C: Heinz Otto was my very first major when I came here and then he left to go to war and came back after the war to finish his degree.

B: And is he not teaching?

C: Oh yes, he's been at the Blake School...he's taught in other private schools to begin with when he first started but for many years he's been head of the language department, classics and German at the Blake School in Hopkins, Minnesota. I am godmother to one of his children and hear from him and Libby regular.

B: What else would you want to say about the changes, the post World War II changes? You talked about a lessening in standards. Would you say that was across the board?

C: I wouldn't say that the lessening in standards began right after the war. I think right after the war beginning around '46 or a little later there was a tremendous growth in numbers at the university. This posed real problems. For one thing, we didn't have classrooms large enough to accommodate a good many of the students and I myself was so used to a class of let's say thirty or forty and having a not so powerful voice assured Clay Reid who was the chairman then that I could never talk to a huge class. But I had to give a lecture what they call graduate lecture in a graduate series and I spoke on the Emperor Julian in the only large room in Hulihen Hall. It held about a little over a hundred with no microphone equipment. But someone said later that at the sight of an audience I went down a fifth instead of going up high and shrill like most women so I could be heard all the way at the back of the room and all the way at far corners of the room. When the lecture was over Clay Reid came up to me and said,
"Don't tell me you can't talk to a large class." And that was the beginning of the large classes as far as I was concerned. I taught in that same room, one hundred or one o one or something like that Hullihen Hall, for quite a while thereafter and then in time we started using the chemistry auditorium and various other buildings. The classes then ran two hundred, three hundred, sometimes a bit more and of course are still running at that size. I went to Minnesota for the summer and I enjoyed that experience very much but what I particularly enjoyed was learning about possible equipment for someone with a light voice because the first thing they gave me at Minnesota when I had to lecture in Greek history to a very large class in a long, narrow room was a microphone to hang around my neck and I could walk back and forth and go to the map and write on the board and everything else and everybody could hear me all the way to the back of the room. So as soon as I got back to Delaware in the fall I pointed out the advantages of a microphone.

B: Were you in the habit of summer teaching in other locations?
C: No, generally I taught at Delaware in the summer.
B: You continued in your editorship of the Journal of Philology?
C: I continued in that for a total of thirty seven years, starting in 1937.
B: Do you miss that?
C: Very much. I started out working with Professor Tenny Frank who'd been my own major professor for my Ph.D. and then continued with Professor Harold Ternis now at the Institute for Advance Study and then with Professor Merritt when the war began and Tenny Frank by that time was gone and dead. Harold Ternis was in
the army, a volunteer. He refused a commission. He insisted on being a volunteer, a buck private. And Dr. Merritt was in the office of Strategic Services so he was usually in Cairo or somewhere like that and so all during the war years I did the journal myself. After the war, Professor Henry Rowell was at Hopkins and for the next twenty five years I worked with him on the journal until his retirement and I stayed on at his request for another couple of years to ease the transition from one person to another but I found it impossible to continue with whom I had nothing of the respect and affection that I had for the four editors with whom I've worked.

B: How did you do that? Did they send you materials? It was a Hopkins publication.

C: It still is a Hopkins publication. I should really write into the tape a letter I had from Dr. Ternis the other day in which he commented on the fact that the journal had gone down hill in content, format and accuracy since my retirement from the journal.

B: I think that sounds like the whole thing.

C: Yes, he did not see how it could do any more but stumble into oblivion which is a sad comment on a journal which was once the greatest journal in the English speaking language in classics.

B: Wouldn't it be possible for them to find an editor?

C: It is tradition at Hopkins that the head of the department be the editor of the journal and it was as chairman to succeed Professor Rowell when he retired that the present editor was appointed. He was just simply not of the stature of Tenny Frank, Benjamin Merritt, Harold Ternis, Henry Rowell. He also antagonized most of the rest of the department and in all ways was not what I
would call a proper choice in the great tradition of Hopkins.

B: Is Hopkins still a foremost classics graduate school?

C: I would have to say at the moment no, but there was a revolt in the department last year which resulted in the removal of this editor from the position of chairman. He is unfortunately still editor. A new person is coming in as chairman and when I'd learned who he was I promptly wrote him a letter in view of my long standing connection with the journal and told him that I hoped that with him at the university the classics department would return to the great tradition of C.W.E Miller, Tenny Frank and all the rest of them and that the journal would revive. Time only will tell. But I had to say what I had to say.

B: You mentioned that you were chairman of the university publications. Is that the University of Delaware?

C: Delaware yes, I was chairman for a great number of years of the faculty publications committee is what was called.

B: This was for separate faculty publications?

C: Yes, any books that they wrote would go through the faculty committee and we also published what was called the Delaware Notes which I tried for many years and finally succeeded just before its demise in having changed to University of Delaware Journal or something like that...I've forgotten what it was called...Studies.

B: Why did it die?

C: Again I can only say because of the administration. The attitude on the part of President Perkins who was president here for many of the years in which I was chairman, was that no one would pub-
lish an article in Delaware Notes if he could possibly get it published in a specialized journal in his own field. This was decidedly not true. Ernest Moine, for instance, who was one of the great scholars of the English department, feeling a loyalty to Delaware and himself having been chairman of the committee and usually if I was chairman he was co-chairman...not co-chairman but he would work closely with me or vice versa. We always worked together. He would...though he could have published in any journal he wanted...would submit something to Delaware Notes to keep it going and so on.

B: Did you find...

C: But Dr. Perkins could never realize this and one time at faculty meeting, the end of the term when I had to give a summary of the activities with him standing one foot behind me as I faced the whole auditorium in the chemistry auditorium, I commented on the fact that of the administration's lack of support on the part of...what was lack of support for Delaware Notes in view of the great loyalty on the part of the faculty in making it a good publication and contributing to it.

B: I think one thing that's coming out in your interview is special feeling that the faculty had for this school and particularly faculty that were before and continuing after the war period, when the whole student body was so different. There must be something that kept you from going to Hopkins and made Mr. Moine want to publish in Delaware Notes that might be a little difficult to explain. It wouldn't just be on the basis of students because you could find them anywhere.

C: Yes, you are very perceptive I think. I think all of us had the
feeling that is the group I was particularly concerned with, that I got along best with, Dr. Munroe, Dr. Moine and so on, Dr. Dunlap, Clay Reid, I probably could think of a few more people but anyway hard core devoted faculty members who felt that Delaware could really be a great university and I think we all knocked ourselves out to make it that despite the fact that we were stimied over and over either through lack of administration support or lack of any redognition. For instance, I was going to mention that some time or other the question of my becoming a full professor. That's a very complicated matter but it again shows the shall we say pig-headedness of the administration. I was a woman. I was the only woman in the history department. The history department grew larger and larger. I was still the only woman in the department and I certainly worked hard. But no recognition except from the students who gave me the pearls.

B: Well, you achieved your full professorship in 1962?

C: 1962, it had been promised to me ten years earlier. The circumstances of that were very complicated in a way. When Dr. Reid decided to resign as chairman, he hadn't been well because he had diabetes...he resigned in 1953 I think and the question of a successor naturally came up. This is before the days when they had search committees to get people from outside you know and so on, instead they looked to the department itself for the successor.

B: I believe that was 1951.

C: Was it '51? Could be. I'm a little vague on the dates at this point. I think that Dr. Munroe became chairman in '51 or '52 and that means that actually I waited still longer for a full professorship than ten years. I thought I'd been under the impression it
was closer to twelve years or thirteen years than ten years. The amusing part about it was that I was next to Clay Reid in rank but of course it never occurred to me that a woman would be chairman of the history department composed entirely of men. However some people in the administration seemed to think that I would make a fuss. The last thing that I would ever do where John Munroe was concerned since I admired him so much and I was told, having been summoned to the dean's office for a special conference, that if I went along...I'm sure that was the phrase...if I went along with having Dr. Munroe moved up over me as chairman, he would be promoted then to full professor as chairman of the department...They could not promote two of us in one year but I would be promoted the following year. It would never of occurred to me to question Dr. Munroe, the ideal choice as a chairman and raise any difficulties whatsoever. I did think however that I might have been promoted if not the next year then certainly the next. And it was finally about twelve years later that I was given the full professorship.

B: Well, were there excuses given to you in that time?

C: The only thing I ever heard I heard from John himself and that was he tried every year to get me promoted and all he got from John Perkins was you can promote anyone you want except Eve Clift. The reason being simply that Perkins thought women belonged in the home and he could see no reason for promoting them because after all they had to have a job, they'd stay anyway promotion or no promotion and they'd find it just as difficult in other colleges as in Delaware to get a job, and so why worry about them.

B: He had no respect for your college education.
C: No respect whatsoever. I remember an amusing situation...

B: Did you write to Dr. Perkins?

C: I talked to him one time just by chance. We were parked side by side in reserved parking spaces. I was at Hullihen Hall and that night, Betty Boney and I were both speaking at the AAUW on the question of women in the academic field and Perkins said to me just as I was getting into my car, "I hope you encourage the women to teach at the university." And I said, "Why Dr. Perkins, I'm taking the opposite side in this discussion tonight. Betty Boney will take the positive side. I am advising them to do no such thing." I said, "After all, all you really want is someone you can get cheap and I bet preferably on a part time basis to fill in." So, he had no doubts as to what I thought about his attitude.

B: Did he have any kind of rejoinder?

C: No, he knew it was perfectly true because what he was looking for were part time women who would come cheaper than men just because they wouldn't have a chance in those days to get anything better. Unfortunately...

B: You pointed out on our first tape I believe or perhaps it was before we began taping that you did not think of yourself as a feminist.

C: Never

B: This is an interesting question.

C: I have never felt a...as a matter of fact, I have no use for the Women's Liberation Movement. I think they make fools of themselves. I think they're all on the wrong foot altogether.

B: I think this is very interesting if you could expand on this a
little bit. In 1976 we’re hearing a great deal about the quota... what is it called... the afformation... what is that called?
C: Let’s see, Affirmative Action.
B: Affirmative action and we’re hearing some people say that women are being promoted simply to fill what is supposed to be, according to federal guidelines but you had to wait twelve years for an earned promotion and yet you say you are not a feminist.
C: Well, I’m not because I object strenuously to the government regulation that there has to be some system, some percentage, some quota of deprived races, Puerto Ricans, Negroes, what have you and women on a faculty and it is very difficult to appoint a man to a job unless you can justify to the hilt to an Affirmative Action unit within the university such as Ms. Sams for instance, today, that no possible woman was qualified. It simply extends the process and more often than not... and again this is all government interference against which I am very outspoken... it results so often in the appointment now of inferior women and the disqualifying of thoroughly trained men and I can’t see it. If there is any such thing as absolute equality without any sense of quotas, percentages and so on and no pressure and no insinuation that people chose a man because they wanted a man then, I would go along with it. But in the case of the hiring of my own successor, a thoroughly qualified young man who could do, even though he was young and didn’t have the same amount of experience, he still had the basic requirements for all the various things I taught, the philosophy, the ancient languages, literature, the history, the medieval history, medieval philosophy. He had all those basic qualifications. He was turned down for someone who had very few
qualifications at all. And this I must say I found very, very annoying after my thirty three years of building up the classics. I felt when I met him and talked to him that here was someone who would carry on the classical tradition and build it up even more as the years went by since I had started really from bed rock and I have no such feeling now.

B: What other reasons would you have? You don't like the idea of government interference but you also said you thought feminists were making fools of themselves.

C: Yes, when it comes to demanding that they go into jobs which are not proper jobs for women shall we say unless they happen to be husky Amazons, just to prove a woman can do anything, they're missing the point altogether. I've always thought and my long experience at Delaware convinces me of this, that women are different from men. I don't mean that a woman's mind is not as good as a man's, that she isn't just as capable of research work, good lecturing and so on. But when it comes to dealing with certain problems I think a woman has a totally different outlook from a man, a different approach. It's very difficult to pinpoint the difference in approach of men and women but I would say that a woman, as I've pointed out before, is just as capable of very clear headed, very logical, very scholarly work in any field. The fact that she is a woman isn't even necessarily known. If one always followed the British system of using just initials on a book instead of first names, it would very often be not known, as I myself understand from many years of journal work when at times I didn't know whether a book had been written by a man or a woman and in writing letters about having it reviewed, I didn't
know whether to say Miss, Mrs., Dr. so and so and so I compromised by simply giving the initials and leaving it up to the author. And then I set to work to find out which it was, man or woman. It would have been impossible to tell from the book. So I don't think when it comes to any kind of scholarly work or approach that there's any difference between a man's mind and a woman's mind. Where the great difference lies is in a relationship to students and relationship to administration. I would say first of all that a man has a much better chance of getting his point across if he talks to an administrator probably because of the centuries of tendency to underrate women. The administrators tend to be very polite but pay no attention and unless one has a mannish voice and a mannish attitude and pounds on the table which is not characteristic of the average well-bred woman, she is likely to get nowhere. Whereas a man can just talk directly in the language the administrator understands and he's more effective which is definitely the reason why I never wanted to be chairman of the department and thought that Dr. Munroe with his great acquaintance with all of Delaware and Delaware history and knowing just about everyone in the state, was perfect for the job and was the only one who should possibly have it. It never occurred to me anything else would be the case, realizing as I did that a woman does not fare the same way.

B: Do you feel that young women faculty members that you may have got to know in the last few years have a different attitude from yours? Some probably do and some probably don't.

C: I think they think they do but I don't think they're any more effective. I think they are maybe more confident but I don't
think they're any more effective.

B: That may take centuries of change.

C: But when I think it comes to dealing with other situations for instance, the advisory program at Delaware has always, at least it has until fairly recent years, has always been an important part in shaping what the student was going to do whether he would go on to graduate work, what he needed, what his background was, what the family attitude was to his studying, whether he had any possibility of doing more. So many, often as you probably know, students are forced by the family into science for instance because it's a more lucrative field than history teaching. And I've known students who were forced into a line that would lead them to a medical career because papa was a doctor when they had no more aptitude for medical science than Adam but made marvelous agriculturists. and I'm speaking of someone in this case that I know very, very well and whose father finally agreed with me. I think in dealing with many of the problems which often make all the difference in the world in how the student in the formative years is going to get through the university, a woman very often has far more success than the men in talking to them. I say this because I was sort of the general advisor. Every member of the department was assigned advisees but the advisees didn't always go to see their advisor. They came to see someone they thought would understand and be more helpful and so I had a tremendous number of unofficial advisees as well as my own load of advisees. And I was struck over and over again by the fact that I could do more to get them back on an even keel than any of the men could.

B: That is very interesting. That's what some psychologists... I
don't want to risk interpreting Freud as in our earlier discussion. but I think many psychologists recognize a special quality, the kind that you're talking about which is woman.

C: Well, in my own case, it was said to me many times by students, especially young men that they found it easier to talk to me because I somehow seemed removed from it all personally, removed from all their problems especially very personal problems but at the same time understood and therefore it was much easier to talk and I can see that.

B: One important part of...

C: I've mentioned this...

B: you weren't their mother but yet they wanted to talk to someone like their mother.

C: Yes, this is true. But also I was removed in the sense that I was not married and had no ideas on the subject at all or anything like that but somehow I understood things even without being experienced.

B: It could have been possibly your background.

C: Well, maybe so, it could be. I had a long span of history. I often think that that was the one thing I could do, really do better than anybody else in the department and there are many indications of practically saving the sanity of some of them.

B: What about now that since your retirement which happened in June of 1975...

C: Alas!

B: You are still working with graduate students are you not?

C: Yes, I'm still teaching Latin to one graduate student. I also... a number of the students still come to the house to talk.
B: Do you expect to continue working with graduate people?

C: I would doubt it. I think only so long as there are students that I had as freshmen let us say last year, my last year of teaching but after that I will not be known at all to them.

B: Oh, I was thinking that perhaps you might want to let it be known that you would be available for tutoring in Latin for example.

C: No, I think not.

B: Are you continuing editing at all?

C: Oh yes, not on the American Journal of Philology, I gave that up. I could not take the new editorship. But I am associate editor of the Classical World another classical journal now.

B: Is that a United States journal or is it a world...

C: No, it's published in the United States but it goes all over the world. It's sent all over the world.

B: That sounds almost a full time job.

C: Well, it's time consuming especially since I'm also Secretary-Treasurer of the Classical Association of the Atlantic States. That's very time consuming.

B: How many meetings do you have during the year?

C: Well, there are two official meetings of the Classical Association and one is representative on the American Classical League board.

B: What really important...you've talked about the...that you felt Delaware offered you an opportunity and excellent students and you have enjoyed your teaching career and your editing. What kinds of important thoughts would you like to be sure to leave for this tape?

C: Well, I would say first of all, I should like to see and this is in line with a tendency all over the country; one has only to read
the New York Times educational section day after day after day as I do and find one college after the other, Yale, Mount Holy Oak, so on, all the great colleges and universities going back to a more prescriptive program and tightening up on rules and regulations and above all on the curriculum instead of the mish mash free-for-all that it is now. One of things I had hoped to accomplish but unfortunately failed to do, was the revision of the curriculum which had been put into effect by the post war planning committee back in 1944-'45 somewhere around there. I was on that committee though I was a newcomer and we organized the program under which the university lived for a great many years until the early seventies in fact. And then there was a move to liberalize everything, do away with requirements. We'll all do away as much as possible with language requirements. Give people a chance in theory to experiment with a great many courses. But the net result and now I speak as the chairman of the committee that selects the members of Phi Beta Kappa which I've been chairman for many years and with which I've had something to do since the founding of the chapter in 1956. The result has been a growing lack of real solid education on the part of the students, a mish mash of just any courses sounded as if it would be fun, a course that wouldn't take too much energy, courses in American history on film and tendency also to take any number of pass/fail courses. The original point of the pass/fail was that it would give a student who was let's say an art major, history major, language major, a chance to take a really difficult course in science and granted that he had a brain he could at least get a D. I've mentioned this before but it seems to me just having read in this past Sunday's Times that
the whole thing is becoming of national importance. I would like to see Delaware take the lead in something like this in going back to a program that really is demanding of the students.

B: Are you referring to the new English study that shows that the so-called free classroom... I think this is about elementary school but it goes all the way through... that the free classroom did not provide the basic needs.

C: Very true. I'm afraid that at least two-thirds of our graduates in college now days can neither read nor write in intelligible form and as far as language training is concerned I know from talking to Dan Callahan who has talked to many of the great medieval professors, since he is the medievalist now, that most medieval graduate students are going into working charters, legal charters because that's the sort of formula kind of language and they can get by with just a modicum of Latin. But to do any work in let's say the church fathers when it comes to philosophy or literature in the Middle Ages, they can't handle the intricacies of the Latin language and they by-pass it. So, we're going to have a mass of charters.

B: Well, will you find that the need for the classics education is very real and will have to be reinstated as it were or do you feel that modern society will find that it can manage without?

C: It can't manage without. If it attempts to it will simply drop all the things that are worth investigating and stick to charters. Which is the easy thing to handle. It reminds me of the years, the six years that I was... I think I mentioned before I was... perhaps I didn't... a member of the American Association of University Women's committee on the choice of graduate students to hold
fellowships. They had to be through their graduate work to hold fellowships.

B: No, you didn't talk about that.

C: Well, they had to be finished with their graduate work and be ready to be doing the research for dissertation and I had the usual sixth year term doing the history, political science, economics, sociology and so forth applications, hundreds of them every year. The first thing I did when someone wrote a...what he or she would like to do...go to Italy and work in the archives was quickly turn to the record and see whether they had ever studied any paleography because without paleography, which is always handled by the classicists and which my Ph.D. candidates were trained in, without paleography one cannot read the manuscripts in the Italian archives or in the French archives or German archives or anywhere else till you know the styles of handwriting and learn to decipher them. Well, what are we going to do then, just by-pass all that? Just have a few senders like say Hopkins and Harvard where this will be taught? It's a loss of so much of the past which is valuable for the present unless these people are properly trained.

B: They will be continuing to be well trained in some of the great universities won't they?

C: One hopes so.

B: You were planning to take a trip to Europe weren't you at the end of your teaching last spring?

C: Well, as a gift to me on my retirement, in response to a note that was put into the University News, many students from the past contributed to a fund that would enable me to go to Europe. Something
which had never been possible on my university salary. And this was presented to me at Dr. Salisbury's home at a party in honor of my retirement. It was of course by then late spring and impossible to go last year. I had hoped that it would be possible this coming fall but things didn't work out well because of family problems and so it will have to be deferred till next year.

B: You will need to do it of course.

C: Oh, I'd love to do it. I've always wanted to see Rome. I always said I'm the only classicist who's never seen Rome. Most people don't believe I haven't because I know it by heart anyway just from studying maps and street plans and everything else so it comes as a surprise that I have never been there.

B: I'm sorry I interrupted you with that because you were talking about the important things you felt that you hoped would happen.

C: Well above all, I'd like to see an educationally sound program that required definite fields, a choice within fields. There must be some leeway. We can't just prescribe a set of courses. There must be leeway but given the broad categories science, mathematics, philosophy, history, which I do not class with the social sciences, the literature and the arts, the so called social sciences, a definite choice in each of those fields which would be going back to what we had before with some reorganization. A plan for instance such as I had worked out in which since I was convinced the university being what it was, would have more chance of being passed in opposition to the one that is presently in vogue when the two were being discussed, if it were presented by a man and not by a woman, and so it's always referred to as the Geiger Report. It was actually the Clift Report which I asked Professor Geiger, a
good friend of mine to present for me in all the meetings, so it goes under the name of the Geiger Report. But that was a modification, an expansion, a liberalization of the basic required program of the earlier days taking into account changes and new fields and so on. I still think, of course it's conceited to say so, I still think it was a very much better program than what they're operating under now which resulted in tremendously high grades and very little knowledge.

B: Do you believe that this university administration now will be hearing the kind of thing we're talking about? Are they hearing this?

C: I doubt it because one must first of all contend with the students. They much prefer the air and sunshine to any hard work. What I hope to see and it may come just because of the economic situation, a restoration of the hard work that students put in in the earlier days. Now this isn't just wishful thinking of looking back on the past and seeing it in a rosy glow. They did do more hard work and I can prove it because I have every exam I've ever given since 1942 and when I look at the exams that I gave and for which I have the complete record of the kind of grades they got from way back and then look at what people complained about in my last five years as being far too hard, so much harder than the rest of the university, I know perfectly well the earlier people did a lot more work.

B: And expected to...

C: Expected to yes. They weren't here to fool around. Of course we're still living in the aftermath of the hippies and the activists and so forth of the late sixties. It's waning but there's
still too much of it. That's not what the university is for. I hesitate to say very much more on this because I'm much more likely to just go on and on and on since I feel very strongly about it.

B: I'm sure that people at the university that respect your ideas very much will be taking this into account.

C: Yes, I think so. And of course there are still, thank goodness, a great many students who did not want the air and sunshine but purposely chose courses given by faculty members like Ms. DeArmond and I hope too like myself that required some work. They had more respect.

B: I certainly want to thank you very much for talking.

C: You're quite welcome.