

4-13-1984

Interview no. 680

Jackson Turrentine

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.utep.edu/interviews>



Part of the [Oral History Commons](#), and the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Interview with Jackson Turrentine by , 1984, "Interview no. 680," Institute of Oral History, University of Texas at El Paso.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Institute of Oral History at DigitalCommons@UTEP. It has been accepted for inclusion in Combined Interviews by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UTEP. For more information, please contact lweber@utep.edu.

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Turrentine Jackson
INTERVIEWER: _____
PROJECT: History of the University
DATE OF INTERVIEW: April 23, 1984
TERMS OF USE: Unrestricted
TAPE NO.: 680
TRANSCRIPT NO.: 680

BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

Historian, former College of Mines student.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

Speech: "Autobiography of an El Paso Schoolboy".

Length of interview: 45 minutes Length of transcript: 22 pages

Turrentine Jackson
"Autobiography of an El Paso Schoolboy"

J: I'm of course delighted to have the opportunity to be here and see so many of the undergraduates, members of the faculty and also some of my friends who were classmates years ago when I was on the campus here in El Paso. As has been announced, I'm making several appearances. If one wants to listen to history, I will be speaking tonight. I'll tell you what I've learned about at least one topic in the field of history or relative to prerailroad transportation as it relates to the city of El Paso, and tomorrow I'll be talking about professional concerns.

What I want to do today is just more or less talk about my career, as that career perhaps relates to some of the individuals who are here in the audience today. First of all, I must say that I was born in the redneck country of northern Louisiana, came to El Paso with my family when I was five years of age. I was an advantaged youngster where encouragement from my parents was concerned. Where economic matters are concerned, I would say even that by modern-day standards I would have been considered somewhat disadvantaged, because we were a working people from the very beginning of my career. We lived in a very small house on Hueco Street just across from Asbury Methodist Church for the first few years, and later the family moved to a home that I visited yesterday at the corner of Bisbee and Copia Street out in the Alta Vista section of town.

I went to kindergarten at Crockett School. I remember very well the woman who for years was principal there, Alicia Swann, the attempts that she made to try to shepherd all of us in our beginning education. I was something of a shy kid. (That's hard for you to believe now.) (laughter) We had taken a trip, I had collected a beautiful ocean shell. In those days they had what you call show and tell, and my

parents insisted that I should take this object and go to school and talk about it. I was so embarrassed I didn't want to do it, and so I decided to skip it. I hid the shell en route to school under a culvert in order to avoid this presentation. And much to my embarrassment when I returned home from school I found somebody had lifted the shell. Then I had a confrontation of explanation and one of the first things I learned was not to be deceitful, particularly where parents were concerned.

I was terrible in reading. I can remember Miss Gribble, who worked desperately with me in the first grade. She told my parents that I would not pass the first grade unless I could learn to read better. My mother assured her that I would learn to read so that I would get out of the first grade, and I managed to make it. So I, at that point, learned that reading the English language was very important. I tell my students now in the history classes in the university that they have no problems, that all they have to be able to do is to be able to read and write, understand what they read and be able to write on paper their understanding and they've got it made, that those are essentials in education.

I was in junior high school before I really became aware of the world around me. I went to Austin High School. I was by no means the athletic type. I was more, as some people here know, the yell-leader type. For years we suffered in Austin High School under the dominance of El Paso High School in athletics. I remember one year in which we thought for sure we might be able to win the football game against them for the first time, and I was desperately disappointed when once again we were defeated.

I was a member of the ROTC. I had a friend who still is in El Paso by the name of H. T. Etheridge. He worked in a tremendously

dedicated fashion to try to shape me up. He was a major or a colonel or some such in the ROTC. The time came when I should be made an officer. He tried very hard to place me in command of the company at Austin High School for a try-out, and I can remember that the disastrous fate that resulted because he barked out some long controversial command. And all I had to do was to say, "Squads, left," but I didn't know what to do and I almost marched the ROTC company off of the playing field until he finally halted the whole operation. And obviously at that point I was retired. (Laughter)

Again, I'm utterly surprised to have the information that Clymer has revealed about me here because in preparing for this presentation I was remembering all of these days, and those things he mentioned I had completely forgotten. So I'm sure there was a lot that went on that I no longer remember. But I was the business manager and the editor of the annuals in separate years. That was the type of thing that I was interested in as a self-starter. I can remember the sainted high school teachers that I had: Lena MacBee, who tried desperately to teach us something about literature and appreciation. I was so naive that when she became emotionally involved reading Shelley, I was perhaps somewhat irreverent as a male student who couldn't understand exactly what was going on. The Markov sisters that were there in high school with their aunt who taught us civics, a grand, grand lady.

Then I came to the College of Mines. And one thing that I would like to say to the undergraduates here /is/ that I hope that they would be as grateful as I was for the fact that the school was here, because at that time it was in the midst of the Depression. If this institution hadn't been here on the hill I would not have gotten a college

education because I could not have afforded to go anywhere else in order to get it. My father, who was a businessman here in town in real estate and insurance, had great dreams and hopes for me that I would become a professional person. The question was, what was I going to be able to do? In those days I came to the college with him as he went to work at 8 o'clock in the morning. I remember very distinctly the fact that we had a green-colored one-seated Ford with a rumble seat. He let me off down at the bottom of Mesa Street and I walked all the way to the campus, as everyone did in those days, because the people who had automobiles were few and far between. It was in those years, of course, that one of my friends who is here today, which is Ralph Marston, he had a car and this was because of the fact that he had very indulgent and very loving parents who provided him with this car. And he hauled all of us around, (a lot of the people who are sitting here today), and we always made arrangements to get home with Ralph's car. He was very, very helpful.

It's true that there was a great social life. I did belong to the De Molay Seniors. I learned something about the social scene as an undergraduate here. I remember Professor Dirk in the Physics Department who sponsored our social club, and I know also that I was a nightmare to him because at the time I had the symbol of being "Mr. Perfect." As a result of this it was always I who did the irreverent or the illegal as a front in social occasions. We had our dances at the Holliday Hall, what is now the gym. I also can remember, because of monetary reasons, I tried to get a job. One of my engineering friends, a man by the name of Jack Jones, was very close to Captain Kidd and we got a job. He got me a job trying to build the library stacks on the top floor of what is

now known as Kelly Hall or Old Kelly Hall. The whole idea was that this was a cement floor and you were supposed to take sledge and a metal bar that had some prongs on it and drive these holes into this cement floor in order to be able to get the bolts down in order to hold the library stacks up. And obviously the idea was to be able to twist this thing at the same time that you hit it. Well, except I didn't have the coordination necessary. And I can remember Captain Kidd coming over watching what I was doing, never saying a word, just walking away in silence, and Jack was much embarrassed. I lasted only a day in employment.

At that time the campus was somewhat divided where Old Main was concerned. On one side of the campus were the people that were in the Engineering School, studying Geology, studying Mining. The place that we largely met which was neutral territory was around the bookstore in the corner of Old Main. Otherwise, the so-called Peedoggies or the liberal arts students stayed over in the direction of Kelly Hall. The girls on the campus at that time, some of them are sitting here, I mentioned them: Erby Kristenmacher, Hannah Mary White, Betty Couis, Nadine Prestwood, Anita Watley. The reason I mention them is because of the fact that there was one woman on the faculty who had a great protectionist instinct, and that was Mrs. Quinn. Mrs. Quinn always had a bit of reservations about me because of the fact that she was very protective of all of these young ladies on the campus at that time. Now, Mrs. Ball, who was at the time in Art, was far more understanding. She had sons of her own and she understood the male world a little bit more effectively. And we, for those of us who were of the masculine gender, usually counselled with her because she was, well, much more sympathetic.

Now, what about the academic? I have a major debate going with Leland Sonnichsen through the years because I've always told you that I took English composition from him in my freshman year and he says it's not true, that he did not teach me English. At least if he didn't teach me English, I know that he taught my wife because of the fact that after I went to graduate school in Austin she was taking a class with Leland Sonnichsen, who was substituting for J. Frank Dobie at that time on the Austin campus. She was writing a paper on folklore in the west, and I was writing a doctoral dissertation at the time, and as a result of the few sources that she might be able to use relative to Jim Bridges' stories and lies about the Yellowstone National Park phenomena, I think at that point, why, Leland was somewhat impressed. I think he was more impressed with my wife's scholarship than anything that I had done at that time.

I also remember Leon Denny Moses who tried to teach me how to write the English language. He had a technique that was very interesting, and that is that he used to cut out clippings from the newspapers of current events and then he would pass them out to students. Then you take this and you write a short story and turn it in on the basis of this theme or outline of facts. Well, I made several attempts, and I just simply couldn't do it. I went to him and I said, "I just can't do this." "Well," he said, "you must do it, so get with it." And I just did the best that I could. Finally I turned in a paper that he thought was quite impressive. He had met me on the steps in Old Main and he said, "I thought you said you couldn't write that short story?" I said, "Well, I couldn't very well." And he said, "Did you do it?" And I admitted to him that it was something of a cooperative endeavor, and

he said, "I thought so." He was exceedingly compassionate and understanding. He probably could have sent me out of school at that point, but I do remember that. I remember Professor Knapp in Mathematics and how we all panicked when we suddenly discovered that all the classes were going to have the same mathematical examination. Some of the people here can remember the trials and tribulations of getting through Mathematics and Burton's Zoology. Ralph Marston remembers how we studied amoebas and parameciums, and put pins in frogs, and tried to remember what they were, and took laboratory tests and so forth.

Among the historians, I worked for Alvin Knoll. I read papers in the History Department for seventy-five cents an hour. I was glad to get the work. Dr. Bollard was largely responsible for my going into History. I frankly couldn't make up my mind whether I was going to be a chemist or a historian when I was an undergraduate, and Dr. Bollard was a student and friend of the chief of the History Department at Austin, a man by the name of Eugene C. Barker. He suggested that he would try to see what he could do about getting me a little financial support to go to Austin to do graduate work, and it ended up with his trying to get me a teaching assistantship. And Dr. Bollard wrote back and said, "Sorry we picked those six months ago. But if you want to send this young man down, we'll get a job for him reading papers." So I sold out and I became a historian because I earned twenty-five dollars a month. That's frankly how it happened.

I had a lot of personal friends here. Dale Wynn was a close personal friend of mine. We met often at the bookstore that was operated at the time, at least shepherded, by Speedy Nelson at the corner of Old Main.

I went off to the University of Texas. I thought I was going to major in Latin American History. I worked with Charlie Hackett for a period of time. I left the field simply because of the fact that I could not effectively master seventeenth century Spanish. I could do fairly well with contemporary language, but when I got into the period business trying to read documents, I thought, "This is going to take forever." I just vaguely at that point had some understanding of the stature of Walter Prescott Webb. His book on the Great Plains had come out and I thought, "Well, I better move over there and see what I can do." I was working with Webb at the time that the historians here will note the great historiographical controversy and confrontation between Professor Shannon at Illinois and Professor Webb. I was in the office working as an assistant at the time that this crisis in his career occurred. I also wrote a Master's degree with him, and he was working at that time on the book that was called Divided We Stand - The Crisis in the Frontier's Democracy, and was very interested in assigning seminar papers. I did one I can remember on the economic and sectional background of Supreme Court justices. The burden of the paper was to prove that all of them came from the Northwest and they were all corporate lawyers and therefore uninterested in the South and in the West. I can remember after having delivered my paper, which was unbiased in the right direction for his approval, he was coming down the hall and he said, "That's right, Jackson, give them hell. Give them hell, Jackson!" As he walked from the back to the front of the room.

Now, later on, I wrote a Master's thesis. And I am being irreverent and not very modest. I decided to write a book on aspects of Supreme Court decisions affecting corporations--in fifty pages, you

know. (Laughter) It hit the Political Science Department and they decided it was not going to be acceptable, so very quickly Webb went down and negotiated with some of the people downstairs in Garrison Hall, and the theme came out as "Some Aspects of Supreme Court Decisions Affecting Some Corporations," and I got a Master's degree. Then, the next thing...all of this is circumstance as to what happened. I wrote a doctoral dissertation on the early exploration of Yellowstone National Park, and the question is why did I do this? This was simply because in between books, Webb was interested...this was when he went down the river on the Rio Grande River in the Big Bend country and did what now is considered to have been a very dangerous thing to have done for a professor, and he became interested in the National Park Service and the National Park idea. And so it was his suggestion, "What you should do is to go into writing on Yellowstone National Park." So, nowadays, when they talk in sorts about environmental history, why, I tell everybody, "You know, I was the first environmentalist. I was into that before people even knew there was such a thing as environmental history." It was merely because basically of circumstance.

Now, I don't know here what I might say. I don't want to start talking about my professional career too much. But I got a Ph.D. at the University of Texas at 25 years of age, and I was so totally naive, I learned at UCLA what the professional world was all about. I'm speaking now to the faculty who've probably had their trials and tribulations. These comments are something of a reading between the lines that _____ as to what really went on. I decided I had to get a job. I was getting a degree and there didn't seem to be too much going on, so I would sit down and write letters. I wrote

everybody. I wrote Harvard and asked them if they wanted to have a bright young man who had a Ph.D. And I circulated the country, and lo and behold, one day I was called into the office by Charlie Hackett and he says, "Do you want to go to UCLA?" And of course I'd go to UCLA, of course. Well to make a long story short, I did go to UCLA, and it was there that I learned one thing about every type of graduate student which I had, that I was going to try to teach them something about what goes on in the profession and how you try to adjust to these things.

I went there. The year before I arrived, the Democratic Party, the chairman approved, vote of 9 to 6. They had a Democratic Party. Every time I sat down, they would have an argument. And everybody sat and looked at me because I had the swing vote. And it was a desperate time. Then one of the members of the former clique in the department came and knocked on my door, and says, "Won't you come down at dinnertime?" And so he took me into his study and he says, "I want to tell you Jackson, you're young, you need a little advice." And he says, "I'm telling you right now, if you're going to drink tea, don't spend your time drinking tea with me. I've got six votes. Go across the street and drink tea with another professor. He's got seven." And that is the way in which I started out. Now, I learned a lot there about faculty politics. And also the chairman of the department was a Latin American who had turned medievalist. He always referred to himself as Uncle Davey. It was at that time that he told me, "The best thing that you can do is that you can shed printer's ink every opportunity that you get." I took that advice, and sometimes I think

maybe I spill more than in my best interests of myself and other people, but that was the word that I got and so I learned what academic competition was all about.

One of my colleagues, again, was Ed Goodspeed of Chicago, translator of the New Testament, Goodspeed's issue of the Bible. I was called to the telephone one time and was told, "This is your colleague, Edgar Goodspeed. I'd like you over to dinner." And I said, "Well thank you very much." The dean had a tuxedo. And I went downtown to ask about this business of what I should wear. I was told that my dress would never do because of the fact that I had satin lapels and not even good lapels, and I got a tuxedo with single breasted and I needed double breasted. At any rate, I got graduate students who were my age to help me out and clean me up. This was in Bel Air. We got out, I got out my old car and we went up there. This was a family car, the hand-me-down, the only one I ever had, and tried to find the thing. Then my colleagues started kidding; one of my senior colleagues in the History Department said to me, "Well, Jackson," he says, "you know, you have to be careful. I saw the house up there right next to Harold Lloyd's place but I couldn't find it because the highway was where the street was. So I parked my car and I went across the golf course, and they turned on the sprinkling system just as I was going across." Well this of course was somewhat less than reassuring.

Well, anyway, to make a long story short, I went into this place with my old car, and there was a parking attendant. And as I walked down this ramp, this guy was trying to get the business of the car started and cranking it up. And it wouldn't go and it wouldn't go,

and I thought, "My, he'll never get that car parked." But he finally parked it. I went in and this fellow came to the door, and I looked at him and he was dressed just like I was. So never having met Professor Goodspeed I started to say, "Hi there, Professor Goodspeed." At that point he said, "Let me announce you." And so I went in, and you get this picture, you know--just a few years out of Texas College of Mines walking down this ramp with this man saying, "Professor and Mrs. Goodspeed, Professor Jackson." And I went into this affair, and everybody there had been around the world except one of my senior colleagues who went to Europe three times. We sat down. There was one woman there dressed in black velvet and diamonds around her neck complaining bitterly that she couldn't get a hundred people in Pasadena to match her \$10,000 dollars to the Pasadena Symphony that day. I sat down beside her. We had conversation. To telescope the whole thing, she finally thought I was terribly dull and turned to me and she says, "And where do you come from?" I said, "I was raised in El Paso." "Oh, yes." she says. "Interesting place. I stopped there in my flights. Nothing of a cactus and sand dunes, but quite interesting."

So anyway, the conversation went across the water. They spent their time talking about the comparisons of the churches of middle England and those in Italy, the stained glass, and I was asked to sign a guest book and I put my name there. I looked through this guest book and Alfred Noyes had been a guest the previous week. In formal society, when they separated the men from women after dinner, and Professor Goodspeed was trying to make me relax a little bit by showing me his sins. So he cooled his grapes and I thought I was going to see sin, you know--bunch of sex novels or something. And all it was was a group of mystery books.

But that was his idea of sin. Then, in addition to this, why he kept telling me, he says, "Wait till you see my Guggenheim Bible." So he went over here and he says, "You know, there's only two pages missing. One volume has sixteen pages missing." And he kept flipping these pages. I thought, "My Lord, be careful the page's going to fall out of that book for sure." But at the end of the party, why, I got ready to leave and so forth, and he walked out with me and said, "We appreciate your coming. It was so nice of you to come and to help make our party a success."

"Well, anyway, later on I decided I must pay a social call on Sunday afternoon, and when I was there I had a temporary license plate on my car. I drove up and went in, and Mrs. Goodspeed met me at the door. I would say that she is McCormick Harvester Reaper Company and that background, and so I came in and sat down and talked. All of a sudden I could see this _____. "Oh!" she says. "Mr. Jackson I know now who you are!" She says, "You know, I saw that car come up and it had this sign on the windshield, and I thought that's a delivery truck. I didn't know what to do because obviously you had been here and I invited you in." And then she said, "Edgar, Edgar! Come, come immediately," in order to try... Anyway, God bless them, John and Marie Croix, who had been at the University of Texas, were the only people in Southern California who acted like anybody I ever knew, and as a result their home became something of a haven for me. It was my pleasure when I was president of the Western History Association to bestow a joint-life membership on John and Marie Croix in remembrance of the way in which they took me in and sheltered me.

Well, obviously I lasted only one year at UCLA. It was a temporary job anyway, and I went on to Montana for a summer session and then I was

asked to come to Iowa State. There at Iowa State conservatism reigned. There was at that time no smoking on the campus. There was a closet down the hall that had been converted into a men's room, and all the faculty went down there in order to have a cigarette. You could scarcely breathe when you went in the thing because there was no ventilation. It was only when the men came back from the war, Second World War, had some worldly experiences, that they could challenge the administration on the smoking issue. They never changed it. They just put out little bucklets, sand buckets, and that was their symbol of adjustment to the new world. The chairman, a great German scholar, loved to have a little drink every now and then. There in the department, we met or went down to his house for dinner. He literally pulled the shades so that nobody would know what was going on when we had a glass of wine.

Anyway, if one could go on, I learned a great deal there. I taught a course there, History of Civilization, because it was the basic course. It was required for all home economics majors. We laughingly called it the course from Jesus Christ to Adolph Hitler. And for years after that I never could go into an airport anywhere in the midwest or any other place that some young lady did not come up and say to me, "Oh, hello, hello Mr. Jackson. I was at Iowa State and I took history with you," because of the fact that we had 800 students in this one course. I had to lecture three times a day, at 9 o'clock, 11 o'clock and 2 o'clock, because there was no auditorium big enough to hold them. And the big problem was to try to be sure you said the same thing, because then they dispersed all of these students into 27 quiz sections or recitation sections at the end of the day, and if you were going to have six causes of the war

or five causes of the Depression, why, you want to be sure that you /didn't/ have one class with /only/ three or four, because if you did, why, you were in real trouble.

It was at that time that I met another life-long friend of mine by the name of Gale McGee. Some of you may know him as the Senator from Wyoming. We were common peasants together. I was the bird dog and he was the hunter in those days. We went...he had been in a debate. (This is good for the undergraduates.) They had debate clubs in Nebraska and they had the pro and con on controversial issues, and he took a con side /on a/ famous speech, and some good citizen in Nebraska knew about this. So they wrote Iowa State about this and the Army decided that he was questionable in security, and so he got bounced out. It was ironic that this man was dismissed because of the fact that as an undergraduate in college he had debated some topic defending Russian policy or some other thing, or maybe German policy at that time, and he had to be dismissed. He went off to Notre Dame and I went off to Chicago.

Barbara and I were married during the war years in Washington because I was called into service. I returned to Iowa State. Boy, I was a hotshot. By that time I moved up from the instructor to an assistant professor and I got \$3,800 dollars a year. And that was big money. I had a course on the trans-Mississippi west.

/END OF SIDE ONE/

/Then the/ people of Chicago /called/, and they said, "We would like you to come through, come for an interview." Well, I was on my way to the National Archives. I stopped off and there I sat in /with/ the faculty and had an interview with people /who/ from my standpoint were the greats in the profession. Avery Craven was there, Jimmy Cate was there. They said, "We want you to come to Chicago and we want you to do

for the West what William B. Dowd did for the South." So anyway, I had gotten tenure at Iowa State, and I was so star-struck that I gave up tenure and went to make it in Chicago as assistant professor, with the understanding that in due time they'll probably give me tenure.

Then I found again another split in the department, just like I had at UCLA. One of the big Civil War historians (who will remain nameless) spent his time in doctoral examinations drawing caricatures of the other examiners on the faculty as well as the candidate, and showing them up behind the desk so other people couldn't see them. It was very difficult for me to try to handle the thing. Everybody took off on sabbatical that year, one after another. I taught Latin American history for Jay R. Ridley, I taught recent American History for Bessie Pierce, I taught the Civil War and Reconstruction for Avery Craven. Anything and anybody was gone. That was my job, and I was teaching in the graduate school. But anyway, that's when I went to work on Wagon's Road West. I had just about finished the book. Those circumstances happen there that, I think it's rather interesting. You learn lots about what goes on in the world. Hutchins, who was the president of the university, got cross with the chairman of the Board of Regents. That was Swift the meatpatcher. Some of you undoubtedly know Swift the meatpacker. I was away in Glasgow. Barbara and I were there.

That was another thing that happened. I'm just reminiscing now. I was at Texas, summer session with Webb. Allan Nevins wrote Webb and wanted to know if he wanted to go to Glasgow. Webb didn't want to go Glasgow. He went down the hall and talked to Eugene C. Barker, and they got their heads together. He walked out and said, "Jackson, you want to go to Glasgow?" And of course I wanted to go to Glasgow. I never

dreamed that I would be in Europe. In those days, students just didn't go to Europe very often. So we had agreed to go, and we were at the family home in El Paso here out on Bisbee street when a telegram came through from Sir Henry Cabot, University of Glasgow, Chief Administrative Officer, and he said, "I've just been named the chairman of the Fulbright Commission and I have put your name in as to be the first Fulbrighter at the University of Glasgow." He named the salary and stipends that were exactly four times what I had agreed to go for, and so off we went.

Well, anyway, that's where I was. Then the Swift, the big up fight came on in Chicago. And at any rate, bad luck, good luck. The decision was made in the History Department on the quota system. They had four assistant professors, three of them have to go. Going to have a big massive reduction because the university is going into red ink and we can't have this.

Now, it so happened, to gain timing in circumstance, a man by the name of Vernon Pardier /who/ wrote a book called The Dardanelles was there teaching for Lewis Gottachalh, and they were just getting ready to open the College of Letters and Science, the equivalent of your liberal arts college, at Davis. He was scouting around for an appointment and he heard that I was leaving and that I was interested in this, and he thought that was the very field that they should first /develop/ in the department at Davis, and we had the opportunity to go. Now, what appeared to me like a professional disaster, having been two or three years in Chicago losing out (the department was more distressed than I was about what was happening), turned out to be perhaps the greatest blessing in my professional career.

Now, as to Davis years. I just will really say this about what happened, and I think there is a lesson in here, too. Well, you have a professional ladder there. Their people are appointed at...everybody knows whether you are an assistant professor two, or an associate professor three, or a professor six, salaries are all fixed. There is no negotiation unless you get a step up in the ladder. Now, I realized sitting there in Davis that if I was going to get a recommendation for the National Foundations and try to do my research that the best that I would be able to do would be to get a bus ticket to Besheley, about 50 miles away, or perhaps a plane ride to the Southern California County Library, to do research. So the only way that I was going to be able to develop this career and climb the ladder was to try to broaden out my concept of Western American History. We were told that to become beyond professor in the ladder--to climb the last three rungs--one had to have first a national reputation, next an international reputation, and finally, a world-wide reputation. I decided, "How is a boy from El Paso majoring in working western American history going to be able to pull that off?"

So it was at this point, and this is how my books came about and I'm very frank about it, I saw in the American West in the 19th century United States what is considered today an underdeveloped country, that basically that there were the natural resources here for cattle, for mining, for land development, for irrigation, and that that was the key story, the 19th century. This made it possible for me to go back to the British Isles to work in England and Scotland. _____ for the book, it was called The Enterprising Scot, which talked in terms of the Scottish people in developing the American West. I knew I had it made when my chairman, who was on sabbatical at the time in Oxford, sent me a review of the book, a very flattering review, that was in the London Times book review section, front page. It startled me no end and it was nice that he said it to me. Then the next step was that I simply had to try to act

polite, and now I have The Enterprising Scot with national reputation. Then the big question is, "How are you going to go further?" I decided to work in the field of comparative frontiers. This sent me to Australia and New Zealand. It was this thing that led to my presidential address in the Western History Association on comparative frontiers, and this may put me up another rung.

Now, the moral of all this is as follows: If I had by chance not gone to UCLA and had the fortune of being in large and demanding universities, I probably would never have gotten off of first base with my career. The moral is that I think that every university and the standards [that every] university expects of its undergraduates all the way through its senior faculty have a major impact on making students and faculty members meet expectations. I'm thoroughly convinced that practically everybody in the academic world has far greater capabilities than they ever seem to exercise because they are not always demanded. I sometimes ask myself, what would have happened to me if I had never left Texas, where my career was concerned. But that is I think the thing that is basically important. Some people ask me when they read the bio-biblio, 28 universities, summer sessions, "What's the matter, are you a money grabber?" No. It's simply because of the fact that my wife has always enjoyed traveling. We've found that if we take a summer session across the country somewhere and establish a base there and travel from that area, that it's much better than taking any other kind of vacation. I know the summer that we spent at Yale and Rhode Island, we were thoroughly convinced that we knew more about New England, like what New England had to offer, than we knew about our home base in California. Why so many speeches? There are very few people and places where I haven't spoken at one time or another. But it's because we like different places. We like different

people. I learn every day and I ask questions. I've learned a lot this morning about this institution, about the people who are here, by asking questions and by listening and we certainly appreciate the opportunity of being invited here today.

Now, my roots, however, have always been in El Paso. My colleagues who come from Eastern prestigious universities know that my beginnings are in El Paso, for better or for worse at times. I think that I had an advantage here of a neighborhood public school system that built a sense of community, a sense of community that existed before and during and after school. And I also had the advantage of a smaller college where one could know the faculty and they could go there from the schools in the process of getting a college education, and I'm fairly convinced that those who are self-starters could find as good an undergraduate education here in El Paso as they could get anywhere. One can get what they want. But whatever I have been able to do, have done, I certainly owe to my supportive family, to my fellow students who were desperately understanding of me in all of my weaknesses, my teachers, and to the community. I'm happy to be home again. My only regret is that my parents, who had such great hopes for my career, could not be here, that they could not stay in this world long enough to see that their labor and their encouragement had not been in vain. Thank you.

QUESTIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q: According to my calculations, you graduated from this college at the age of twenty. Does that mean that you finished college in two years or you started studying much earlier?

J: No. I'll tell you what happened. I finished at the Texas College of Mines in three years because I went to school every summer, because I

didn't have anything else to do, I couldn't get a job in the summertime. So it was not two years but three years I was in school here, from '35 till I graduated. I graduated from Austin High School in 1932. I don't know how old I was then, I was about 17, and then I finished in three years. That makes it 20.

Q: You mentioned that Mrs. Quinn was very protective of the woman students. In what particular ways was she protective? Did she chaperone dances?

J: Well, she chaperoned dances. Some of the people in here would periodically propose suggestions of things to do and places to go, and were always in the process of quoting Mrs. Quinn to me. In fact, one or two of my confidantes who are here today warned me that I should be very careful because Mrs. Quinn had strong reservations about what was going on because of the fact that there were not too many women. Gladys Gregory was here, Norma Egg was here in those days, but it seemed that Mrs. Quinn took the leadership in working with the women students. Gladys Gregory liked the men. She was in Political Science and I got along very well with Gladys Gregory, no problems. Some of the people who are here could testify to all this better than I can because they had these experiences. I don't know whether I have misrepresented things or not, but Mrs. Quinn and I got on all right. Are there any other questions? I realize I've talked a long, long time. I like to really talk too long.

Q: What did the principal chase you around the commons for?

J: Mary, you remembered something I had forgotten. I wouldn't be surprised. There are a lot of things that I've tried to forget. The Lord only knows what I did. You probably remember. Are there any other questions that anybody has?

Well, it's very, very nice to be here. I appreciate everybody coming. I know people are busy and they have other things to do other than to be here. But if you want to hear me hold forth on history, I'm going to talk about history tonight. I'll have a statement and I'll be glad to talk about history if you want to see a historian at work. Then if anybody's really interested in what's going on in the history business, why, tomorrow morning, as has been mentioned, I'm going to talk about local history. This is where I've gone. It's a whole new facet of my career that I began to reach my seniority and began to work with graduate students, seeing the history of the world was changing and the importance of having what would be applied history as well applied mathematics that I again tried to develop those with my graduate students. As I've told some of the people, I have a number of Ph.D.s. I've never had an unemployed Ph.D. About half of them are now in the academic world and the other half of them are holding historical positions in state and federal government agencies specifically because of the basis of training.