

RUSSELL McCOMMONS

An Interview Conducted By
Dave Obringer

April 19, 1995

McKean, Pennsylvania

For the
Edinboro University of Pennsylvania

INTERVIEW: Russell McCommons (RMcC)
INTERVIEWER: Dave Obringer (DO)
PLACE: Mr. McCommons's home in McKean, Pennsylvania
DATE: April 19, 1995

DO: What I'll do is I introduce the tape first. Today is April the 19th. I'm interviewing Russell McCommons at Mr. McCommons's home in McKean. My name is Dave Obringer. It's about two o'clock in the afternoon. Then that's all for the introduction. That'll be fine for the tape. Could you start by telling me how it is you got to Edinboro? You know, what led you up to being here?

RMcC: On May 26, 1916, shortly before noon, I turned in my books and cleaned out my desk at the Albion Elementary School. Got my report card, which was endorsed "Promoted to seventh grade." I returned to an empty house which had been home for about seven years. When I went to school that morning, all of our household goods and worldly possessions had been loaded on Ray Thorton's dray hauled by two mules and were already on their way to Edinboro. Shortly after lunch, why, he piled my mother and five children into his Overland--one of about three cars in town--and we were on our way to Edinboro. So that's how we got there. My mother had planned the move with my oldest sister having finished the eighth grade. Because at that time many would go from the eighth grade into normal school. And that was the timing of the move. My father had died six years earlier in 1910. We arrived in Edinboro, and Mother had made contact with Harriet Chaplin, the secretary to Dr. Baker, through a relative in Albion. And she became a good advisor and friend. She said that although one could still enter normal school after the eighth grade, spend four years and get the normal certificate or diploma, she advised that my sister go through high school first. She said, "Things are changing. It would be more advantageous to go through high school because this is probably the last year we'll admit them out of the eighth grade of school." So that's how we happened to land in town.

DO: So a lot of your classmates were young if they weren't college age.

RMcC: Oh, no. I was only 11, not quite 12. I was 12 in the middle of the summer, July 26th. So that first summer I had a chance to do a lot of exploring, and the campus fascinated me. I saw the tearing down of old North Hall which stood behind Academy Hall and the Compton Building. It was a three-story building, and you'd see the roof over Academy Hall. That was torn down the summer of 1916. And Science

Hall, which was a building almost identical to Academy Hall, which stood near the corner of what was then Haven at the point on the circular walkway opposite Recitation Hall, that was torn down also. And I helped Mr. Snyder. I had nothing else to do. I helped him carry ~~physics~~, flasks, test tubes, petri dishes, Bunsen burners, and small stuff over to the basement of Normal Hall which had just been fitted up as the physics and chemistry laboratories. New construction, 1916. He carried the big demijohns of sulphur and the nitric acids there. And that building was soon down. I say, torn down, because in those days instead of demolishing buildings, they tore it down piece by piece and salvaged a lot of the lumber. Some of the lumber from old North Hall and possibly Science Hall still stands in three very small cottages at the beginning of Lakeside Drive, just off of Sixth Avenue.

DO: Oh, really?

RMCC: A manual training instructor there by the name of George Frost was also a carpenter, and he salvaged some of that lumber and built those three cottages with that material. Also a house on Water Street in which he lived, just next to what we know as the La ~~beauty~~ House. He built that house with that same lumber and lived in that for a while.

DO: Wow! Were you ever inside of North Hall?

RMCC: No, no. I was never inside it. But I was inside of Science Hall as we were carrying the things out before they destroyed the building. Another thing I noticed: Haven Hall, apparently, was a rectangular building about the same size and shape as Reeder Hall. It was a beautiful brown in the front. I noticed that what was the south wing, next to what's the old gym, apparently was new construction. I could see a vertical seam under the _____ corner of the building, almost indiscernible, but-- The mortar joining the brick was almost perfect, but still that was in evidence. Two years later it had completely disappeared; you wouldn't know there had ever been an addition. The ground floor, I could see through the windows along the walkway, was a concrete floor. There were a bunch of crates and boxes inside to begin with, and a door at the east end. Right behind that, just east of that, was a one-story building about, say, 25 feet square, with a metal roof. And the door was slightly ajar. Well, what was an inquisitive 12-year-old supposed to do but go inside? I pushed the door open. In the far corner, northeast corner, was a pile of firewood. There were four little laundry stoves, stovepipes, going up through the roof. And on each one was a copper wash boiler. There were four two-tub level ringer stands, two galvanized tubs on each stand. In one of the tubs was this old-fashioned scrub board, zinc

scrub boards. A short time later the building disappeared. They tore it down. And I noticed inside the ground floor wing of Haven, just inside the door, was a large rotary washing machine such as commercial laundries used for washing sheets and other laundry, two rotary ironers--we called them mangles--about a half a dozen modern washing machines, about a half a dozen ironing boards each equipped with an electric iron. So apparently they had been very primitive up until that time. The last of the primitive stuff was abolished about the summer of 1916.

DO: Now, by that time Edinboro had the power facility for running boilers and so that everybody would have hot water heat.

RMCC: Oh, they had a boiler house that stood right at the end of what would be the driveway and past Academy Hall, straight in, just before it makes the bend, just beyond White Hall. That is, far right at the end of the driveway. They had-- I think there were three moderately-sized boilers--I forget what they said, 40 h.p. boilers, something like that--in a pit underneath a trestle where they'd haul coal in with trucks and dump it down from what would have been the trestle at ground-floor level. On the southwest part was the generator room. They had two Merck Electric generators-- 110V d.c. Merck electric generators--powered by Skinner reciprocating engines. All made in Erie, 110V d.c. They also at that time had a transverse--they used steam from the boilers to power the generators. With the modernization, they had changed to a low-pressure heating system. They used the condensate from the generators to heat the buildings instead of wasting the exhaust steam. And they had a transverse switch where they could regular 110V a.c. power from the utility at night after they shut the generators down. I don't know when that was abolished. The brick smoke stack there, Pop Snyder later in earth science class as a junior, he took us out and by triangulation we measured the shadow and calculated the height, 100 feet high. We came up with 99.84 feet.

DO: You didn't want to quibble on that. _____.

RMCC: That's right. Now, Haven Hall, here's one thing where Dr. Vance's Portrait of Edinboro is in error. The north wing of Haven Hall, the dining room and kitchen, he reports it as a three-story building with student rooms on the second floor and guest rooms and infirmary on the third floor. Never happened. I watched the building of the dining room and the kitchen from the ground up. That was the summer of '17, I believe. And later Harriet Chapman told me that Dr. Baker had received a call from Harrisburg that the

appropriation for that building was cancelled, that wing was cancelled. She said Dr. Baker was in shock. He couldn't believe it. He called back Harrisburg. Yes, it's true. She said the steel for the work, for the second and third floors, was on its way out of Pittsburgh. They called the steel mill to cancel the order, but it was already on its way. She said they contacted the state police, and they flagged down the trucks around Mercer and sent them back, sent the steel work back. The second and third floors were never built, and they roofed over the first-floor dining room and kitchen. And that was reportedly the most beautiful school or college dining room in the Commonwealth. It was beautiful.

DO: You were in there?

RMcC: Oh, yes, yes. Many times.

DO: I understand that there were tables that you ate with tablecloths and you were served.

RMcC: Oh, yes, yes. They used some of the student boys as waiters, and the table service was elegant. The school started--

DO: How was the food?

RMcC: Oh, excellent, excellent, excellent. They used ladies from town as cooks. They hired them. And they had good home cooking. It was wonderful. Couldn't be beaten.

DO: I've brought with me--and you may not remember this, but before, I guess.... This is a 1915 yearbook. There's a man here who is named Harry Gracey, who was identified as the steward and chef.

RMcC: I didn't know him.

DO: No?

RMcC: No.

DO: Okay.

RMcC: What's that, 1915?

DO: This is the 1915, that's right.

RMcC: Yes. Hmmm. No, I don't know any of those people.

DO: Well, that's a year before your time.

RMcC: Oh, yes. Thought there might be a holdover.

DO: Do you know if they grew any of their own food?

RMcC: Yes. The new kitchen there had a big walk-in freezer, and they had a large basement. And I don't know just what year it was, but I remember that they out probably about where--let's see, what's the hall next to? Heather Hall, is that the one next as you go past Academy Hall, that small girls' dormitory?

DO: Haven.

RMcC: No, no.

DO: No? No, that's over behind it.

RMcC: It's a building that still exists there.

DO: There's White Hall right behind it.

RMcC: Oh, no, it's beyond that. Well, beyond White Hall and to the east they did have large gardens. They raised a lot of garden vegetables. And I remember seeing Amos Slee later on, he was Building and Grounds, with the dump truck hauling loads of potatoes from that field, and hauling them over and dumping them in the basement under the kitchen for storage. But they did raise-- They had fresh vegetables in season, cooked in the kitchen, served in the dining room. And they stored potatoes and other root vegetables in winter.

DO: They didn't have any livestock, did they?

RMcC: No.

DO: Okay.

RMcC: Although one rather interesting thing: We lived for two years on West Normal Street on the north side of the street about midway between Meadville Street and the creek. The second spring we noticed the whole lot was sinking almost a foot. We inquired, what has happened? Well, didn't you know? That's the cesspool for the normal school. They had excavated a whole building lot, put pillars in, floored it over by putting some dirt on top, and all the raw sewage was dumped in there and overflowed into the creek. Needless to say, we moved. [Laughter] Because we had our reservations.

DO: Yes. Of course now the campus is much bigger, and it extends farther--I guess it would be east?

RMcC: East.

DO: Okay. Where now is the lake, Mallory Lake, and the library and the fieldhouse, what was there?

RMcC: That was a swampland.

DO: Just a swamp?

RMcC: Just swampland. They cleared it out and enlarged the-- cleared the swamp--to make a small lake there. But it was just a small stream--I don't know where the headwater of the stream was--running down through there and on to the south. But it was swampland. The campus at that time, the other buildings, were Normal Hall, Recitation Hall, Avon, the gym, and Reeder, and of course Academy Hall which at that time was called Music Hall because the music was over in that department. That was old White Hall, near the ___ house.

DO: It was pretty compact there, huh? Who were some of your teachers when you were a student here?

RMcC: Well, when I first went there, I was in the seventh grade, and that was in a white building over on High Street. It was called the Model School. It was supported by the normal school at that time.

DO: It was on High Street?

RMcC: High Street. That's where the Methodist Church now is. It parallels Meadville Street, just one block. It runs right into the street past Academy Hall. About midway between Normal Street and Waterford Street was a large white building. Four classrooms on the first floor, two classrooms and an assembly on the second floor, two large basement rooms. I didn't think much about it at the time, but thinking about it later, the school board of many years ago in Edinboro should've gotten the leather medal for sewage disposal. They moved the outhouses into the basement of that building. They excavated a large pit below the level of the basement floor on the street side of the building, partitioned in the middle on the south side. That was the boys' room. Three steps up to a platform and six stalls that emptied out into a pit underneath the building. I assume the girls on the other side were in probably the same. How many years that went on, I don't know. But they moved the outhouse into the basement of that building.

DO: Like indoor facilities then.

RMCC: Right. I believe it was '35 or '36 when they got sewers up in that area, got sanitary toilets in the building.

DO: Well, was the ventilation adequate for this?

RMCC: Oh, yes. Yes, they had a large chimney up there that vented the furnace as well as the toilets. But I remember one hot September day some of the older boys, a prankster, lighted a piece of paper and dropped it down in there. [Laughter] They had to close the school for the rest of the day because the stink was horrible.

DO: I'll bet it was.

RMCC: One of the things I remember in seventh grade, Miss Pohl was the drawing and penmanship teacher, as they called it in those days.

DO: Miss--?

RMCC: Miss Pohl. She came in once a week. I can still see her wire-rim glasses on the end of her nose. One day she came over with a small pamphlet, copies of it for everyone in the seventh and eighth grades in that one room. And she gave us instructions as to what to do: put our names, but not to touch it until she told us. She had a stopwatch. Years later it occurred to me that I was a guinea pig. They were apparently standardizing the first Army Alpha Intelligence Tests. I learned later that when the war was imminent that some of the top brass in the Army went to, I believe, Columbia University and contacted a couple of psychologists: Furman and I forget all the others. They said, We're charged with the responsibility of raising an army of about three million men. We understand you have some sort of an intelligence test. We'd like to see if that could be used to classify them. They said, Well, that's an individual test. Well, could it be adapted to a group test? Well, yes, we think it could. So apparently they adapted that to a group test, and this was the first printing, the standardization. Because years later some of the same questions that I encountered in seventh grade in 1916 appeared years later, in an intelligence test I took years later. So I knew I was a guinea pig, and they were standardizing their first group of intelligence tests, the Army Alpha, I understand. That was the first one.

DO: So then you saw the school through the war, through World War I.

RMCC: Yes. Through World War I.

DO: Up to the beginning of World War II. But did World War I have much of an effect on Edinboro?

RMcC: Yes. My teacher, Ruby Anderson, married--his name was Austin--just before he went overseas. And he was killed the day after the Armistice was signed by a German sniper. So that sort of shook up the town.

DO: Was this one of the Austins that descended from Nathaniel Austin that built Academy?

RMcC: That I don't know. I have no idea. I didn't know him at all. I knew that she had supposedly married him just before he went overseas, and I didn't know anything about him. But all I know is that we got word that after the Armistice a German sniper shot him, and that sort of shook things up a bit.

DO: I'll bet.

RMcC: Also, Olivia Thomas, who lived right next door, and she was the music teacher, she came once a week and gave us music instruction. I still remember, she'd bring over classical records, and with the old horn-type victrola, she'd play "Traümerei" and "Barcarolle," and many of those. I've never forgotten them. She gave us a real appreciation of music. Got us through the eighth grade. Then I had the ninth and tenth there. The last two years were over on campus. That had been going on for several years. So on September 8, 1921 I set foot on campus for the first time as a student. The normal school was very small. I don't think they had more than a hundred students, and this was augmented, probably, by 50 or 60 junior and senior high school--upper secondary department. So I had normal school instructors give instruction in the last two years. About mid-morning that first day of school, I met a buddy of mine--he was a senior--as we were passing in the hall. He said, "Hey, Russ! We've got mechanical drawing this year. They got a new art teacher, Mr. Bates." We were right about opposite it then. And he said, "He's in N-3. Go rap on the door. He'll take care of you. Real nice guy."

So I met Mr. Bates for the first time and enrolled in mechanical drawing five hours a week. It wasn't long until I was in all my spare periods, ten, 12 hours a week. I was in there all the time. And he started the department with one special art student, Gertrude Bensing, from Oil City, a former student of his, one of his high school students. The school code was amended in 1919 and required art and music as part of the common branches, along with English, history, math, science, and all. And all elementary teachers were required to take two courses--one Art 1, which was drawing, painting, and design; Art 2 was handicrafts,

elementary industrial arts. Well, that was the backbone of the department those first two years. But, other than that, Mr. Bates ran a three-ring circus. Electives, you could take whatever you wanted. One person this, two people this. And everything was going on in a multi-media classroom, N-3: Mechanical drawing, lettering, pastel, oil painting, leathercraft, bookbinding, you name it, everything.

DO: This was all going on at one time in one classroom?

RMCC: All at one time. All at one time, yes.

DO: And Mr. Bates would go through them all?

RMCC: He'd put us all in there. There wasn't anything he couldn't do or demonstrate, barring none. He was gifted, he was a genius. More than a genius. Well, it so happened that it wasn't long until--he called me "Bus" because, for some reason, everyone at Edinboro whose name was Russell was called "Bus," nicknamed "Bus." My wife hates it. She'd hate it if she knew I was using it even here. It wasn't long at all before, Bus, will you show So-and-so what to do next? Or will help you So-and-so. So it wasn't long until I was an unofficial assistant instructor, helping here and there lettering. I was mechanical drawing/lettering mainly, although other things as well that I'd seen going on. So the end of that year, the summer school, he brought in Anna J. Lamphere from North Adams, Massachusetts, a friend, a professional acquaintance of his, to teach the _____, the industrial Art 2; he handled the Art 1. I don't know how many there were, but the enrollment was substantial. He had gone out--he'd talked to the high school classes when the flood came in. He really expanded the school.

DO: So Waldo Bates recruited students?

RMCC: Oh, yes. Yes. As a matter of fact, about that time, Edinboro was threatened with closing--twice. He literally saved the school from extinction. And one of those occasions--I don't know which one it was--Edinboro was scheduled to be a juvenile detention/rehabilitation center for juvenile offenders. It was already planned in Harrisburg. That was it. Well, I think that was the second year. Well, the summer of '21--it was when Miss Lamphere was there--he published a small pamphlet, "Art Education for Guidance of Elementary Schools." There may be one of those in the archives, I hope. In September of '21 we moved up to the third floor of _____ Hall; it was in the process of renovation. He designed the whole thing, gave the information to the architects and all. They put skylights in the roof. One main partition. There was one very large room, and another about half the size of

it. And they had little partitions dividing the two. September 1921--I guess about the middle of the morning--I had taken a class in advanced mechanical drawing. I'd milked him practically dry. He had me studying mechanical drawing, French's _____ drawing, field architectural drawing. I was just eating it up. I was way ahead of anybody else. Of course we worked at individual speeds, see. So in September '21, the first day up in the art room, he had a class. On one side of the partition there was a high school mechanical drawing class. On the other side he handed me the roll book and said, "Here, check the attendance, and keep your eye on this; I'll pop in once in a while." I didn't see him the rest of the year. I had the class, I taught. _____ did all the work, see. So that summer the enrollment, largely due to his efforts, swelled to 551 students. An unheard of number. These were the things that saved Edinboro.

There was a third attempt to close Edinboro--I don't recall the year--when they gave Indiana the right to grant bachelor's degrees in public school art, originally at Kutztown and Edinboro, east and west ends. Well, what was happening, they were determined to close Edinboro--someone, I don't know where or how. And apparently the question came up: What's keeping Edinboro alive? Waldo Bates in the art department. Get Waldo Bates. How do we do it? Kill the art department. Give Indiana the right to grant degrees. Starve them out. It didn't work. We became stronger. In 1923--well, that summer--Miss Lamphere and Mr. Bates published another guide to elementary teachers for elementary industrial arts in the elementary school. That was the second publication. [Change to Side B of Tape]

...the backbone of the department, the volume. The first year Gertrude Bensing, one student, special art. He developed the summer school in '21. Two elementary teachers, who were caught in these classes, they'd spotted them: Nina Gleaton of Edinboro; she'd been teaching in a one-room school. And Paul _____ M'Sherra. They heard of the art department's special art students, so we had three that second year. The third year, Elsie Shottey, a girl from Erie, transferred from Pratt Institute in New York to Edinboro, and Ruth Fulton Turner transferred from Carnegie Tech in Pittsburgh to Edinboro. A graduating class of five, 1923; the first three-year class graduated five of them.

Well, Mr. Bates did another thing then. He took the pictures, the plates, from the yearbook, of those five people. He had them printed in a brochure with a resume of each of them. He sent that to every school district, every school superintendent, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, advertising the five students. But advertising Edinboro. That continued until 1935. Every class. As a result, we drew students from Philadelphia, Scranton Wilkes-Barre area,

Harrisburg, all over the state, and some few from out of state crowded in. That was one of the big things that he did. He not only advertised her graduates, but he advertised Edinboro because they weren't supposed to advertise outside of their service area. [Laughter]

DO: That was a way of getting around it.

RMCC: He got around it. The whole state was blanketed.

DO: That's pretty clever.

RMCC: Oh, another thing. I think it was the first summer upstairs, '21. He was gone for three days. I covered some of his classes while he was gone. Nobody knew why or how, but a few days after he got back, he told me that he'd been to New York City. He had been offered a position as education director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He turned it down. He said he felt he could do more by training teachers to teach public school art than he could in a situation of that sort where he'd be dealing with a few. So he dedicated his life, really, to Edinboro. Going back to just before Christmas 1921, I'd usually meet him at the front of the building outside the principal's office. He'd pick up his mail. We'd climb the winding stairs up past the clock at the front entrance. Oftentimes we'd half run to break the monotony at his count of one-two-three-four, one-two, up the stairs we'd go. Shortly before Christmas a telegram in the mailbox. We got up to the head of the stairs. Ruby had opened it up, and he passed it over for me to read. "Waldo F. Bates..." And so on. "DUSETTE'S COLORBLIND. STOP. DO YOU STILL WANT HIM? STOP. SIGNED ROYAL BAILEY FARNHAM, HEAD OF THE MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL OF ART." Wait. That was in '22. Just before Christmas in '22. I had been teaching that mechanical drawing and lettering class and filling in. Well, he went in the office, and he typed the report and showed it to me. He had a lot of faith in Dr. Farnham because he apparently knew him quite well. The telegram read: "IF YOU THINK DUSETTE'S THE MAN FOR US, SEND HIM. SIGNED WALDO F. BATES." So Dusette arrived about mid-January '23. Young, rash, immature. One of his classes, the second-year class--Jimmy Townley, Bert Morgan, Clark Thomas, Linder Peterson, four or five girls. On the first day he gives them instruction, Jimmy Townley said, "Would you mind repeating that?" Dusette says back, "What's the matter? Don't you understand English?" Jimmy says, "Yeah, we understand the kind of English we speak around here. But you don't talk so we understand you." Dusette started down with clenched fists, and old Jimmy he's pretty stocky, and he got up to meet him half way, and he backed off.

Well, that didn't work, so he started wooing them

another way. He was living single then in a little house on West Normal Street on the south side of the street just next to the creek. He had taken the roll, given the class an assignment, taken the boys down to his pad. Home brew and cigarettes. Jimmy Townley told me later, he said, "I had my first home brew and smoked my first cigarette down at Dusette's place that year." Jimmy later became _____ Oil City on graduation. So it was a real pain, those first two years. He might have redeemed himself in later years, but...

DO: Well, that leads me up to about the right time period. I was going to ask about Prohibition.

RMCC: About what?

DO: Prohibition.

RMCC: Prohibition... Well, that's another thing. In 1922 Charles Larkin was still supervising principal. There was a problem of petty thievery going on around the campus, around the gym and other places. Stealing small amounts of money here and there. Dr. Crawford--Mister Crawford then--and Mr. Larkin got together and-- Oh, by that time they'd brought the rest of the high school over on the campus. Seventh grade through twelfth was one campus that last year, '23, right after I graduated. They hired a private detective to see if they could solve this problem. His name was Roy Hong. He later became county detective of Erie County. Well, he was enrolled as a special arts student, taking show card writing and lettering. Well, I was probably, besides Mr. Bates and Mr. Larkin and Mr. Crawford, I was probably the only one who knew this. Because I had charge of the stock room, and if you set up an account you could have anything you wanted, and I'd just charge a special account. Well, he was there for several weeks, long into the winter. His report, when he'd finished and was ready to go, was this: "You won't solve this problem unless you solve the liquor problem." Practically every other house in Edinboro was either making home brew or they had a still in the basement. And Dusette's house was one of those on the list.

DO: His being the home brew, I guess. [Laughter]

RMCC: Home brew. Later, dandelion wine. Well then, Dusette came about mid-January of '23. His field was design, and it became obvious pretty early that he wasn't going to be able to contribute much to the public school art program because he couldn't draw, he couldn't see color, although he got by. How he ever got through Massachusetts School of Art, I will never know. Because one summer years later-- Well, Mr. Bates always had a class in outdoor painting in oils, and he loved

to do that. That was his favorite. It wasn't indicative. It's the only time I've ever known that he attempted to put anyone in their place. He assigned Dusette to that class that summer. How can anyone paint or draw if he can't see colors? _____ the students. Dusette got empty tubes. He had his wife mix paints according to the Munsell Classification System, which is the American classification of color. The normal red was R5, 5/5, indicating the hue, the value, and the chroma. She mixed the paints, put them in tubes, sealed up the bottom of the tubes, and labeled the tubes, and he marked his palette. How can anyone paint anything when they can't see it? He came in after the first day with a painting--I never saw such a gosh-awful mess of purples and grays and mud. You can't imagine it. Well, that was the last time he ever painted with his class when he took them out. He told them how to do it, but he never touched the thing again. I can still see that painting. Awful!

Well, a little earlier--I think this was the summer of '23, toward the end of the summer school--he had contacted one of the northeast canning companies to make a design for a label for their tomatoes. Mr. Bates and I were up in the art department in the one west room. He came up right after he'd picked up the mail. He had this envelope which he hadn't opened up. He opened it up in front of us. Apparently he was going to show off something. Pulled out this print. He'd put a dimension on the top and on the bottom of the thing, apparently for some reason I don't know, but the whole thing length of the thing. Well, the printer misinterpreted it, so they pulled the picture as a trapezoid label. And a brilliant, flaming red tomato--I never saw a tomato that color in my life. He didn't see the color, but he saw the shape. He said, "Oh, they don't know what they're doing." And he slapped it back in the envelope, and that was the last after that.

DO: He was there for quite a long time.

RMCC: Oh, a long time, yes. How he got by, I will never know because one class, a couple of fellows, a friend of mine Paul Davids and John Davis, they roomed together. And Dusie had his favorites. He didn't like Paul for some reason. Paul later became art supervisor for Westmoreland County; at the end of 40 years he was all over Westmoreland and Allegheny; student teacher supervisor for Seton Hill. Real individual. Dusette didn't like him for some reason or another. Apparently didn't think he was good. One morning Johnny was sick--he had a cold or flu or something--and he didn't go. So Paul brought his painting in for evaluation. He came in, and he put his down first, and a little later on he put his own. Dusette saw him put that painting down, and he thought it was Paul's. Ripped it apart. Couldn't find anything good

in it at all. Terrible. Horrible. Who could paint anything like that? Paul didn't say anything. Went on. Finally came to Paul's. He praised that and said, "Well, whose is this?" Paul said, "That's mine." "Hey, I thought that was yours down there." "No, that's Johnny Davis's. He's sick; he didn't come in this morning. I brought it in for him." Well, so Dusie went back for a reevaluation and found everything good in that painting.

Another occasion, that same group--my sister was in the group, a fellow by the name of Wayne Martin (_____ Martin they called him), a very talented fellow except he was a bit eccentric. They had as one of the assignments was design the Christmas seal of the Tuberculosis Society. In those days they had competitions--high school and college--and then they send them into the county level. My sister designed one. It was--I can still see it--it was a ship in a foaming ocean, and the billowing sails with the double-barred cross on it. Dusie ripped that apart. Called it an Ivory Soap ad. Ridiculed it. Some months later when the-- Oh, this was at the county competition. She got first prize in the county competition--a couple of dollars, I guess. Wayne Martin got second, a dollar or so. Some months later when the _____ out, there was that design, almost identical. Well, the kids in the class spotted it. "Hey! We think you owe (they called her Mickey) Mickey an apology. There's her Ivory Soap ad." He said, "I don't know anything about it. I still think it looks like an Ivory Soap ad."

Well, one other occasion: This really was something. He severely criticized Abe Martin's painting or something. Abe shot back with, "What's the matter? You colorblind?" He didn't know he was. Oooohhhh. The next thing, a couple of girls ran in: "Mr. Bates! Mr. Bates! Come quickly! They're fighting!" [Laughter]

DO: It was a fist fight?

RMCC: Oh, they got to blows.

DO: Wow!

RMCC: Oh, and another thing now. About that same year, yes, I was-- June the 1st-- Oh, the latter part of May 1923, I got this letter from Dr. Crawford. "Dear Russell--" I lost the letter way back, but I remember it said, "Dear Russell Edward, I've been authorized by the trustees to offer you employment of instructor in the art department, effective June 1, 1923. Your duties will be assigned by Waldo F. Bates, Jr., head of the art department." A few other little things. I don't recall. Signed, "C. C. Crawford." I had been unofficially teaching in there, and apparently they realized that Mr. Bates was going to need some help which he wasn't going to

get from Dusette. So he added three years in mechanical drawing. That was the requirement for a normal school instructor, was three years in your special field. So I became a member of the faculty as an instructor in mechanical drawing two years before I graduated from the department.

DO: But you had like a normal certificate or something?

RMCC: No, you didn't have to have a normal certificate in those days. Normal school instructor, just so he had a high school education. Because they were training elementary teachers. Three years' experience in your chosen field: history, science, whatever it is. So they gave me credit for three years of mechanical drawing and named me as instructor of mechanical drawing. Well, I was teaching other things as well. But that put me in the back door, see.

DO: So you were on the faculty--

RMCC: And a student at the same time.

DO: And a student at the same time, right.

RMCC: That's why I wanted to see if-- It got in the yearbook, but I got in the faculty list of '25 or about '24.

DO: I'll send you a copy.

RMCC: Okay. But it was in the yearbook, the picture, as an instructor of mechanical drawing. So that's one thing. I asked Barb the other day after the awards. They had Dusette arriving in 1920. I said, "Hey, how come they never have me down as that?" She said, "You didn't graduate until '25, did you?" I said, "I know I didn't, but I was teaching before I graduated." [Laughter] I said, "Check the yearbooks. You'll find me in the yearbook there." So I attended all the faculty meetings. I was faculty and student at the same time. Unusual. I guess, as a matter of fact, the-- Let's see, '23. Yes. I had my first official class in the summer school of 1923. I think I had seven students. I remember it well because one of the students was the mother of one of my high school classmates, Mary Timmons. Her mother was in my class that summer, that small class. Well then, that summer, it was nine weeks, the session, at that time, the normal school. It was six weeks _____. Six weeks in the summer school. I spent a weekend over at Findlay Lake as a houseguest. I got home Sunday night late because I'd taken the train to Cambridge, from Findlay Lake to Cambridge Springs, and the trolley from Cambridge Springs up to Edinboro. I got home at eleven o'clock. Shortly after,

Mother said, "Mr. Bates has been calling all afternoon. He said if you got home before eleven to call him. If not, to be over at school seven-thirty in the morning." I went over back there the next morning. Dusette had an attack of appendicitis. Couldn't climb the stairs the last three weeks of summer school. So I took over his Art 1 classes, as well as my own teaching. Well, Mr. Crawford, I met him when he first came. I was a grocery boy in 1917 or '18, and delivered groceries there, got acquainted with his wife, and got to know him. And he told me a lot of things. He confided a lot of things in me through the years. After that summer was over, he told me, he said (I still remember that little chuckle), he said, "A lot of students _____. But Mr. McCommons taught us a lot better stuff. He taught us something we could use." Well, I was using one of Bates's outlines. Dusette refused to use his outline because he couldn't draw and he couldn't do these things. He couldn't see color. Drawing, design, and color. And he was teaching Principles of Design from a little book--I still have the book--Applied Drawing by Brown. Little squares and triangles. Repetition, alternation, little border designs in charcoal gray water paint, little borders. The stuff the public school teachers never used. Elementary school for six weeks of nothing, see.

DO: Well, how is it, do you think, that he became important enough to Edinboro to have a building named after him?

RMCC: Well, I think I know. And this gets back to another thing. In the beginning he started raising a family. He had another child every year, one after the other after the other, it seemed. He was raising a family on an income that he couldn't afford. So it wasn't long after he got there that he started-- He'd call the class to order, give an assignment. They were usually two hours, two-and-a-half periods. And then he'd disappear. He'd go out and do interior painting or wallpaper hanging in the wintertime and interior and exterior painting in the summer. He'd come back at the end of two hours, dismiss the class, take the secondary class, and away he'd go, see. Now, Dr. Crawford and Mr. Bates tolerated it in those early years because of his wife and ever-increasing family. But one summer-- Oh, almost from the beginning, he figured he ought to be head of that department. He did everything he could to criticize and stab Mr. Bates. As a matter of fact, two or three years ago I was talking to Rose Lanecock, another one of our assistants. Incidentally, Rose came in-- She graduated in '22, taught for a year in the summer school. Bates spotted her. She came to the art department in '23 and finished in '25 in my class. I was there until '26. I went to Westmoreland County. She joined the faculty in '25; she was

there until '28. They were pushing for degrees, and Dr. Crawford then told her--the teacher called her and said-- "Rose, you're going to have to get a degree, or I won't be able to keep you. The pressure's great." Well she went to Peabody for a year, and then as fate had it, she didn't return. I guess she went to California for a year or so, and then she landed at the University of Colorado at Boulder, Colorado, for forty years and was a professor there. Spreading Mr. Bates's philosophy. Rose and I were the only two that completely absorbed Mr. Bates's philosophy.

Well, the-- What happened here--? Oh, yes, along about '32 or '33 Dr. Crawford attempted--I don't know what Dusette did--but Dr. Crawford attempted to get rid of him. As a matter of fact, one summer Mr. Bates and two or three of them went to the state college for a post-session. He thought he'd get his master's degree down there. Dusette did something. I don't know what it was. But pulled some underhand trick. And Mr. Bates never left Edinboro again. I don't know what he did, but he was really something in those early years. But in '32 or '33 Dr. Crawford tried to get rid of him, and this is a secret I've kept for 60 years. Maybe now it's time to tell it.

DO: It is as far as I can see.

RMCC: He told me that word had come from Harrisburg to back off. He said the bishop of the diocese had interceded, and Eimee Dusette would never leave Edinboro "except of his own volition." Now shortly after that, Dr. Crawford asked to be relieved of the presidency (that's when Dr. Ross came in), and I believe he was assigned to the teaching staff for a year or so. His health failed, and shortly after that he died. I think as a result of that. Now I know that to be true because 20 years later, about 1952, I was at a fraternal organization meeting, and I struck up a conversation with a resident of Edinboro, whom I'll identify only by the initials B.F. We got to talking about Edinboro. When he found out I'd been on the faculty--"You know Dusette?" "Yeah." He said he tried to take all the credit for establishing Our Lady of the Lake Church, but he said a lot of others had had just as much to do with it as he did. And one thing led to another. I mentioned the fact that about '32 Dr. Crawford had tried to get rid of him, and I quoted what Dr. Crawford had told me. He said, "Yes, I remember the incident. 'We had very powerful friends in Harrisburg at that time.'" Catholic friends. So Dusette used his religion. I don't know what yours is; it doesn't matter.

DO: It doesn't matter.

RMCC: But he used it to the nth degree. And I think through the

Alumni Association, I think he used it to get that hall named for him, too.

DO: His religious connection?

RMCC: Yes. But he had-- Oh, another incident. A student by the name of Earl Kyles, Sr., there. He was a top student, an A student, right through. As a matter of fact, I used him some years later. When I was at _____ Extension Division, I brought him down there for summer school, off-campus teaching, for two or three or four years. He was tops. Dusette was going to flunk him in jewelry making and design. He asked him why. He said, "You didn't finish your chain." Gold and silver chain. Earl said, "I was waiting for you to show me how to solder it." He said, "I told you how." He said, "Yeah, but I don't understand. I'd like to see you do it." He wouldn't do it. He passed him with a D, didn't flunk him. Do you know why he couldn't solder that chain? He couldn't see the color of that tip of the alcohol burner changing color. He couldn't see the color. He could not do one single thing. He couldn't draw, he couldn't paint, he couldn't solder a link in a chain. He couldn't do anything. But he could tell anyone. He had it all right. And he got by with it.

DO: It's amazing.

RMCC: Well, I didn't mean to really get into that.

DO: That's fine, that's fine. Tell me more about Dr. Crawford. You knew him from the time you were a grocery boy. You knew him as an employee also.

RMCC: He was a prince, a fine man. I remember when he first came, he was assistant principal to Professor Bader. He first lived in what had formerly been the Wayside Inn, which is where the telephone building is located at Edinboro right now. I remember Mrs. Crawford and the three children: Wayne, Isabel--let's see, Stanley was a boy, and I got acquainted with him. But I don't know. He took a liking to me. Apparently he didn't think there wasn't anything I couldn't do. He was vice principal while I was in high school there and then on into college. I remember one day--I think it was the fall of 19....school had just begun; it's either '22 or '23--we're up in the art department. The telephone in Mr. Bates's office rang. He came out, and he said, "Russ, Mr. Crawford can't get into his desk. He wants you to go down and open it up for him." [Laughter] Well, I knew what had happened is that with these old-fashioned desks there's a bar that latched the drawers that's tied into the cam in the center drawer. So as I went past the sink, I picked up a

small bar of Ivory soap, and I went down. I crawled under the desk, I released the thing, soaped the friction points, crawled out from under the desk. I crawled out. I saw at the left-hand side of the door to his office a beautiful clock about 5 or 6 feet tall. [End of Tape #1]

...near the top. And just below it was another dial, a bunch of concentric circles and regular lines at every 15 minutes. And then they intersected at the drill point. And in some of those was a little pin like an old-fashioned metal phonograph needle, contact bar. And a full glass front. It was beautiful, golden, quarter-sawed oak. And in gold-leaf letters, down towards the bottom, "Presented by the Class of 1902." He saw me looking at it. He said, "Russ, so do you think you can make that work?" I said, "Well now, I think maybe I can if you'd send it up to the department where I can work on it. So he had the men bring it up to the art department. They took down the wall in the upper stock room, and I got after it to clean up the contacts, got another batter for it, a 6V hotshot battery. And got it going. He contemplated using that for ringing the bells in the classrooms and the dormitories now. But there weren't any conduits, no overhead wiring, so they abandoned the idea. Instead of returning it to the office, we left it there. I wired it up and put a big 6-inch gong to signal because we couldn't always hear the bells in recitation, see. So that called up the classes for a couple of years until I left. When I left, it was still there. I left in '26 for Westmoreland County.

But he appointed me to the faculty in '23. I graduated from the three-year course in '25, and they already had the plans for the fourth year. The curriculum was all laid out. So I enrolled for summer school in '25 for advanced work, expecting to get the degree when it was available. About the third day in school he came up to where I was working. "Russell," he said, "how'd you like to go to Clarion?" I thought he wanted me to drive him down to Clarion. He usually had me drive him down to Clarion when he had a meeting with the other principals. I said, "Okay. When do you want to go?" "Oh," he said, "I'm not going. You're going down there and teach the rest of the summer." Very _____. He said, "You can put your things away here. I've already arranged that Mrs. _____ remit your fees. And Miss Chapman's looking up train and bus schedules. When you get through, you come down, and she'll tell you how to get there." Well, I didn't come to for a few minutes. I started to put away - Mr. Bates came in and said, "What are you doing?" I said, "Well, I guess I'm going down to Clarion." "What do you mean?" I said, "Dr. Crawford's told me I'm going down to teach for the rest of the summer at ten-thirty in the morning." He said, "Well, you'd better get going. Your mother will have to get the laundry together and

everything." So that shook me up. I ran all the way home, got things together. Miss Chapman in the meantime had got the trolley schedule to Meadville and the bus from Meadville to Clarion. Ten-thirty in the morning. One-thirty that afternoon I was on the trolley heading for Clarion. So I taught there for nine weeks, minus two or three days. I was 21 when I went down there; I turned 21 the middle of the summer. I taught those nine weeks for the magnificent sum of \$375. The base salary for a bachelor's degree was fifteen hundred then for the academic year. So one fourth of that was \$375. So I was at that time told I was the only individual in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania ever having taught at two Pennsylvania--been on the faculty at--two Pennsylvania state normal schools before reaching the age of 21. They were always calling me for something like that.

Oh, incidentally, in '23--oh when they were building the art department--they remodeled the auditorium. They put in a new proscenium arch, and they made the height of the stage-- In fact, the toilets were on top of the stage, and the art department.

DO: The toilets?

RMCC: The toilets were up a few steps and occupied the--above the stage--the auditorium. That projected into the new part of the building, you see. The auditorium was the old part. The stage projected into the new part of the building. So we went up a few steps, and the toilets were in that part. We had a studio up here, you see. Well, at any rate, the pipe organ was installed at that time. And in between changing classes, I watched them install that organ--wires and the keys and everything with soldered valves. One thing I found, the architect had miscalculated. These were big 16-foot pipes. They were about 10 or 12 inches square and 16 feet long. They forgot the height of the rack a couple of feet, two feet _____ would have to go through the ceiling. You know what they did to those? They mitered them at a 45° angle, and turned it up--14 feet and then 2 feet out this way. They still had a 16-foot pipe, see. So all those 16-foot pipes were mitered. Well, that was powered by a d.c. motor because the d.c. on the plants, and they switched to a.c. at night. At times, when anyone would start to use that with the a.c. on, it wouldn't start. Well, they'd leave the switch on, and they'd burn out the motor. Well, they burned out several. Dr. Crawford called me one day. "Russell," he said, "do you think you can figure out a way to keep from burning out those motors?" [Laughter] Well, there wasn't any control that was selective at all. So I came up with an idea: a _____ receptacle around the base of the organ. I got a 120V neon lamp, which was a two-element lamp that had one plate and the other is separated. D.c. only one would glow;

a.c. both would glow. So I put that bulb in there, and I put a note on it: Do not start organ unless only one half is lighted. No more burnouts.

Well, getting back to the point where I picked up on this clock, Dr. Vance in his Portrait of Edinboro says that in 1905 the class dedicated an electric clock for the center of Normal Hall. That wasn't the clock at all. The class was in 1902. It was dedicated in 1905. It was the electric clock that was in the principal's office. The clock in Normal Hall was a weight-driven clock. After I got this one clock going--the clock was in a little cubicle right at the head of the stairs as you'd go to the art department, padlock on the door. It hadn't been running for several years. The only reason was that Mr. Culbertson, the elderly custodian, couldn't climb the stairs to wind the thing. I got that to run. I mentioned the clock. He said, "Well, maybe you can get that going, too." So he got a key to the place. I opened it up. There was the clock. The clock wasn't in the tower, incidentally. It was to the left of the tower. The only thing that was in the tower was the cable that went high in the tower with a weight hanging on it. So I took a look, and hand cranked to wind it up. Unscrewed the thing slightly _____. Wind it up and then put it back. Okay. So I set the clock briefly with a couple of light bulbs. Lighted it at night. And I kept that clock wound for a couple of years until I graduated and moved on. By that time they got a younger custodian, so he took over. But that reports that as the clock on Normal Hall. It wasn't. It was an electric clock, Class of 1902, dedicated in 1905. Electric _____ clock.

DO: But you came back to Edinboro, though.

RMCC: Yes. Now, I graduated in '25. I was still there at the training school the following year. I had that part time. In '26 I went to Westmoreland County as the county supervisor, one of the first countywide--the first countywide program in the United States--run by Katherine Cox who later came to Edinboro. She was faculty at Edinboro '28 to '30. Well, Paul Davids and I went down there, and there were two others at the same time. John Davis went to Unity Township. Paul and I were at the county office. We had a combine, and Elizabeth Patton Ligoneer. So there were four of us that year in Westmoreland County, right in on _____'s doorstep. In fact we had one school district, Salzburg; and then we had the county, we had supervision over that. So this is about the time that they gave Indiana the degree-granting privilege. Well, I don't know how many-- As the program grew, we had one after-- We had six, seven, eight supervisors in Westmoreland County all out of Edinboro, one after another. Well, I came back in '26-- Oh, '27 I was back

in Edinboro. Summer school finished the work for my degree. And there were two degrees granted in '27 in public school art; five in secondary education. I'm the only supervisor of the whole group. The public school art--the other was May Bush. She had continued her fourth year, but the fourth year she was living in Erie, and so she took her fourth year at the _____ branch, all academics and electives. She got the first degree because her name began with B with Bush. I got the second, but I was the first one with a full four-year art major. She had a three-year major and one year of electives. So I claim the distinction of getting the first degree in public school art. I was the first graduate of Edinboro State Normal School to receive a degree from Edinboro State Teachers' College in 1927.

Well, in '28 I came back to teach that summer, back to Westmoreland County for two years. Katherine Cox came to Edinboro then, and I took over as head supervisor of Westmoreland County. And then I came back on June 1st of 1930 for a period of seven years. I was supervisor of student teaching for the art students. We had them all over the City of Erie and almost got it all over Erie County. That first year I had, I think, 31 special art students graduating in the class.

DO: Now, it's not long after that that Carmen Ross came.

RMCC: Carmen Ross came in '34. That was after Dr. Crawford resigned. He was a fair man, but he wasn't very tactful in some cases. I liked him because he-- Well, in '35-- Up until he came, only a few had gotten their summer classes to teach; just a few were given the classes. So he said, "This isn't fair." He said, "Everyone should have a chance." So he got permission from Harrisburg for any special courses for which there was any demand. He asked all the faculty to write up any cases they thought might--not in the regular curriculum--but they thought might be useful. I wrote up three. They were all approved. And that summer we got the income from our classes. That was our pay. I had one class with five in it, I had another class with seven, and I don't know what the other class was. It was peanuts, but it was a little something. Those were Depression years.

Well, going back just before that to '32 and the Depression, I came to Edinboro on a master's schedule, 2400 base, 400 for the summer; 2800 was my base salary. 'Thirty-one I got an increment, \$140 master's increment: 2940. Nineteen thirty-two the banks closed and the cutbacks. The first thing they did from Harrisburg, they took away the increments back to '30; I lost my increment back to 2940. They took away summer school; they took that off: 2400. Ten percent statewide cut. Edinboro was 8 percent above the average of the other colleges; another 8 percent cut. I took

a 33 percent cut in one fell swoop, \$1968.

DO: Pretty big cut.

RMCC: Well, when Dr. Ross came in, he got me back another increment. And then he got to looking over things. I was paying my own transportation running all over the place: the _____ constantly growing. It never occurred to me to hit him up for it. But he found that so he got me another hundred dollars for travel expenses. But he set this business up in '35 with the summer school. Now, Dr. Vance records it as having total salary for the year and everything as the income from the classes. That wasn't true. We got our base salary during the year, but the summer school we got the income from whatever classes we taught. So he was wrong on the second. And incidentally, when he was writing his book, someone gave him my name, and he called me for an interview, set up a schedule. About ten days or two weeks before the scheduled time, I found that we were having--we got a call that our carpets were being installed that very morning in the other room there. I called Dr. Vance and told him that a problem had come up, could I reschedule? Boy! I'll never forget it. I never got such a dressing-down in my life. In so many words, I'm the Great White Father. My time is valuable, yours is nothing. If you can't keep the appointment I've set up, you forget it. I forgot it. [Laughter] I could have straightened him out on a lot of things.

DO: Sounds like it. So the Depression then cut your salaries back.

RMCC: Yes.

DO: What about the school otherwise?

RMCC: It held up pretty good. It held up pretty good.

DO: The enrollment, did that stay steady?

RMCC: What is it?

DO: Did the enrollment stay steady?

RMCC: I don't believe there's much of a thing there. Oh, another thing now: In the fall of '31 I got an appropriation to put in-- Well, wait. Let's go back to '26. They had a special supervisor in Harrisburg, and Dr. Holbein was appointed State Director of Visual Aids to Education--it wasn't visual education--Audiovisual Aids. That was supposed to be an adjunct to the regular techniques of learning, just an aid.

But Dr. Holbein came to Edinboro, and he sized up the situation. And Mr. Bates became the first visual aids instructor at Edinboro because your best visual aid is a chalkboard and a piece of chalk. You can create it right then and there, see. It's moved far from that in the modern. All they want is canned stuff, see. But Mr. Bates, he was put in that program, and Mr. Bates was the first instructor in that, and I became the second one shortly after that. But another amusing thing. Mr. Bates had a great sense of humor. There was an Irna Grassmunk--I'll never forget the name. She was the State Director of Social Studies. She came to Edinboro for a week that time. Social studies everything. Everything revolved around social studies. She had the normal school faculty and the public school faculty all herded together every afternoon after school, four o'clock, over in the assembly room at the high school building, preaching social studies everything. Everything works around it. Well, Mr. Bates and I, one day toward the end of it, we were sitting at the back getting bored. It came about five o'clock, and it was still going. Mr. Bates is doodling and drawing pictures of something and not paying attention. She shouted a question at Mr. Bates: "Mr. Bates, do you know why the Chinese eat so much rice?" "I don't know. It's to fill up the chinks." [Laughter] That broke up the meeting then. That was the end of it.

Well, early in the game, I just remembered now, in September 1920--Armistice Day was a school holiday in those days--and that morning I started-- The campus was a great place to take a walk in the morning, and I was wandering around the campus, and I met Mr. Bates. He was strolling around the campus. We strolled around together. He told me about his experiences. When the war broke, he tried to get in the Army, the Navy, the Coast Guard, Merchant Marine. His eyes. He wore thick-lens glasses. Turned down on account of his eyes. The first draft they took him. Oh, not only that, but he'd applied to the American Red Cross Field Service. They turned him down. Well, they took him in the first draft, Forty-second Division. And I understand from his daughters that he designed the insignia for the Rainbow Division. They called it the Rainbow Division because it was made up of the National Guard and draftees in all 48 states. I'm not sure, but I have a suspicion he may even have named it. But one of his daughters told me that he had designed the insignia for it. But he told me about this experience, about having tried to get in the service. And he said when he got over in France, he got this big official-looking letter from the American Field Service of the American Red Cross, a questionnaire. What's your present location? Are you satisfied with your present position? Well, when he filled out what's your present position--what's your present address? Somewhere in France. What's your present location?

Knee-deep in mud. [Laughter] Are you satisfied with your present position? No. He filled it out with a bunch of silly answers and stuff and sent it to them. But I remember seeing his duffel bag: Waldo F. Bates, Jr.--Sergeant Waldo F. Bates, Jr., Forty-second Division, the Engineering Corps. He showed me a piece of a map, a ragged piece roughly about a foot square. He said he was in a shack behind the lines, _____, plotting gun positions on this big wall map. He said he went outside to take a smoke, and he no sooner got out the door than a German shell hit the place and blew it all to pieces. That was all that was left of it. But he was through a lot of the major battles, the Rainbow Division, the Forty-second, in the war. And he told me about those experiences. He said when they marched-- After the Armistice they marched into Paris in open ranks through the Arch of Triumph and given a heroes' welcome. He was very, very patriotic.

DO: That was all World War I?

RMCC: That was World War I, yes. Well, let's see now. Oh, when I left Edinboro in '37, I was eligible for a sabbatical. I didn't know until later. Katherine Howell, _____ bursar, told me that Dr. Ross had \$1800 if I wanted to take a sabbatical. He didn't tell me that. But I discussed the possibility with him. He was interested in my getting a doctorate degree. And I sat over on the porch of the president's [house] one August day. The doctor's salary at that time was 4400 beginning. The increment was \$160. Bachelor's 120, master's 140, doctor's 160. And I was considering going to Peabody College. I said, "Well, suppose I go get my degree then. Do I go up to 4400?" Well, he said, "Unfortunately not." He said, "All you'd be getting would be the \$160 increment for having done that." I said, "My gosh, it'll take me 20, 30 years to get up there at that rate." I forget how long it was at \$160 a year. "The difference between \$1968 and \$4400, that's more than \$1500. My gosh, that'd take 10, 12 years. He said, "Unfortunately." I said, "Well, suppose I were to resign then, and then come back. Then you could start me at 4400." Well, we kicked the thing around, and I decided it would be better economics to take that course. And so I resigned, figuring I'd build up a little extra money in a year or two. I did get a teaching fellowship down at Peabody, and I went down a year or so later. I had a fellowship for a year. I was supervisor of fine and industrial arts at Peabody Demonstration School. I spent the year--I was going a year and a summer. I was preparing to go on into the second year when on registration day I was waiting in line to complete my registration, and Dr. Gore, one of my professors, came up. "Hey," he said, "have you see Otis McBride?" I said, "No." He said, "He's

looking for you." He said, "You better just stop what you're doing here and go down and check up with him. I'd be interested in what--" He was the director of placement. Went down to see him. He said, "I just got a call from the University of Virginia. They're wanting someone. I think you've got the qualifications." And he said, "Maybe money's running a little thin. You might want to make a little money to help things along." So I put in a call to the university, and they were looking for someone for summer school extension teaching. I went over that weekend for an interview, and I decided to take the job; we both thought it might work.

So I had met the language requirements and taken the qualifying examination. I had about a year to go in the dissertation. So I went over to the university. I asked about-- Well, they said, "We'd like you to teach at least the first summer on campus here next summer." I said, "I want to get back to Peabody." They said, "Well, if you agree to teach the summer, we'll advance your schedule. We'll start a little earlier in the fall so it'll be through by mid-March, and get back there for the middle of second quarter." I said, "Okay." Well, that was fine. That was in 1940. So I taught that summer, had my off-campus classes. Well, what had happened, Virginia had just come up with a study that they had-- As I recall, the study said that Virginia had a lot of potential for industry and chemical this, that, and the other thing. That to reach their full potential was dependent upon a solid-based course in fine and industrial arts in the elementary schools. Well, that was the crux of it, you see. They had four colleges: Madison, Radford, Mary Washington, and the university. Well, these four would take care of the students in transit, see. But they wanted someone to get the summer school at the university and off-campus classes to pick up the difference, see. So I went over there and taught that first summer. And come December 7, 1941, the picture changed. All of the professors left _____ here and there and everywhere. So to get back to-- So that was the end of the line for that.

DO: Well, Mr. McCommons, I have to stop. It's unfortunate.

RMCC: _____ a stopping place, right?

DO: Yes, the war. Sure. I'll just stop this....[End of Tape #2]

[End of Interview]