

SRU ORAL HISTORY

“SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY IN THE SIXTIES”

INTERVIEWEE: DR. WILLIAM MEISE

INTERVIEWERS: DR. JOSEPH RIGGS AND LEAH M. BROWN

17 SEPTEMBER 1991

R: We're going to begin with beginnings, freshman year at Slippery Rock.

M: My early fond memories of Slippery Rock date back to the fall of 1940 when fresh out of high school I had the opportunity to look forward to being a student at Slippery Rock. Those days in my undergraduate program extended from 1940, 41, 42, and during that time I remember the closeness of the campus. We had approximately 500 students, 350 women and 150 men. We lived in old South Hall which has been demolished for sometime now. We had a dean of men that lived on the first floor and I'd venture to say lots happened between the students and the dean of men over the course of an academic year. There could be a lot of dormitory stories; I would just narrate one. The dean used to like, keep order and would patrol the halls, and on this one occasion this one group was sort of rowdy, and so the dean knocked on the exterior door and demanded to know what was going on in there. One of the boys not knowing who it was said, throw a lot of water under the door and swim through. So this was the type of life that the dean lived in those days. The women had a similar situation having a women's dean whom they called Gummy because she was deft of foot, very quiet in her movements around the halls which, of course, caught some of the women in embarrassing situations. Our hours were rather rigid. Through the week, the women had to be in their dorms by a quarter to eight so the men might as well go study, and so that was the predication of the hours. On Saturday night, the women usually had twelve o'clocks, and so consequently that was social night. Friday night maybe ten o'clocks, and the rest of the time it was early socializing or none at all. The high part of the day, as I recall in those undergraduate years, was right after dinner when in the Hut, there was always records played and we could go up there and dance from the end of the dinner until a quarter to eight at which time the women had to be tucked away in North Hall. There were other stories that could be related since the security was rather tight in the girls' dormitory. Occasionally the men would tie bedsheets together and try to gain entrance through windows, first and second story windows. Sometimes we would be successful and sometimes we would be caught in the process. I would imagine that most colleges across the country were having things of that nature take place during that time. As I look back on it, the instruction was strictly a teacher preparation school. Elementary, secondary and health and physical education, that was it. The program was rigid. Everyone took the same thing in the same major. So if I were to enroll at that time, I knew that the second semester I was going to have chemistry as a health and physical education major. As a sophomore, I knew I was going to have anatomy and so on. There was no choice for electives. Of course, that way they were assured that you were well prepared and could meet all the emergencies of teaching which we were to experience

M: later on. The sports program was fairly extensive and back in those days we dominated because we were the big health and physical education school. We had probably more athletes than some of the other state colleges or state teacher colleges as they called them. I remember going down to California one year. Their big school major was industrial arts. Of course, they had a lot of good industrial arts potential, but many of them didn't have too much football potential. So if they did get their helmets on correctly, we intended to spin them around, and usually the games were fairly one-sided. Of course, as part of this, Coach N. Kerr Thompson is a legend in his own right. I was fortunate enough to play for Coach in his last two or three seasons before World War II, and of course, stories abound for years prior to that, since he was a long-time mentor of both the football and basketball programs, and baseball programs here at Slippery Rock. We had a great time. There were no cars. Well there was one car on campus and it didn't run. It sat out on the Morrow circle, and it was mainly for the kids who would crawl in there on cold nights, or it was there as a showplace. If the students went home, they maybe were picked up by their parents or they hitchhiked or they rode into Pittsburgh with the milk truck driver, or they sought out some type of transportation of that nature. So consequently, most of the student body went home at Thanksgiving, at Christmas, maybe in the spring towards Easter and that was it. The rest of the time they were here. The academic week extended basically beginning Monday morning running through Saturday at noon. Heavy classes. Classes were scheduled Monday, Wednesday and Saturday [and] Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, regularly. Of course, they took a dim view of anyone missing classes, period. And on Saturday they were particularly suspicious. That's about the way it was. So we had short weekends. I would say of the mores of the time, there were five or seven little older students and some of them smoked cigarettes on occasion, but that was about it. If a woman smoked, she was suspect, as far as the teaching profession was concerned. All our meals were quite formal. White tablecloths. Served. We had hosts and hostesses. We were rotated. Everyone got to eat with everyone else before the year was out. Manners and a proper cultural eating experience were emphasized as part of the educational process. After my freshman year, I was fortunate enough to get a waiter's job. You say fortunate? Well, we were paid twenty cents a meal, which was a great help with our college expenses, but the biggest fringe was we didn't have to dress as formally as the rest of the students. We had our white waiters' coats over our regular classroom garb. Everyone else had to dress for dinner. Women had to wear hose and suits or dresses. Men had to have ties and coats on. So it was a preparation time. As a result, some few students used to miss meals on occasion because of the dress code, however, most everyone attended. During meals sometimes there would be a pause in between courses, and there would be pep songs. Before a game there would be pep songs and rallies and that sort of thing, and announcements. Sometimes, some of the academic groups would make their announcements such as meeting tonight. So it was a time of communication and fellowship. Then right after dinner of course, everyone would flock to the Hut, which is now called one of the art buildings, I think. The Hut, which had a very nice floor, was originally constructed by the Y. M. C. A. and put there for cultural, semi-religious experiences. We had the chapel which you can hear many experienced Slippery Rock people talk about. It was a beautiful gray stoned, twin towered building at the top of the circle there at Morrow Drive. In the chapel, architecturally it was quite distinctive. In the chapel, weekly there was held, and every Sunday

M: night, there was held chapel meetings. It was interdenominational, but everyone was to attend. During the years 1940 to 1943, everyone had an assigned seat and they sort of took roll, and if your seat was empty too often, why the dean of men or social deans would bring that to your attention. Now if you were home for the weekend you were expected to get back in time for chapel, and it was usually an interdenominational church service. I could hardly see it functioning today in our climate, but in those days it sort of met its needs, and then throughout the week they would have, sometimes, special speakers and maybe special musical groups during what would be an assembly period. They would dispense classes at that time, and that would be part of it. Looking back on the whole procedure, it was a great opportunity for interpersonal dynamics. I mean your roommate and what he did, and the people across the hall was a great part of the educational process. And the Faculty members, they lived there, they ate there. It was an in-house type thing. The faculty members were also about as cloistered as the students. They lived in the dormitories or lived very close to the campus and they took their meals right there with the students. And if you wanted to engage over dinner a conversation about a particular subject, perhaps you were sitting with a subject teacher, and they did assign the subject teachers throughout the dining hall, maybe one at each table. If you happen to have the chemistry teacher for two weeks you could talk chemistry with him if you cared to, or with the English professor you could talk novels or whatever you cared to, to glean a little extra if you cared to, and some of that took place. I would suspect that by the end of the day the faculty members were happy to just have dinner and talk about something else. So it was an interesting time. It was a happy time. Students were all, I would say, that were there, they were there by choice, and they were going to be teachers, and it was a happy time. Then, of course, things rapidly changed. War became activated and most of us were reservists of one kind. We were called up, most of us, and the campus changed dramatically. It got down to the place where there were only a few men left who had physical problems, and maybe 200 to 250 women. It was shortly after that that the Air Corps got into arrangements. It so happened that we had Army units stationed here. I think they brought in 400 or 500 or 800 Army units and it became a military camp, with these 250 women and three or four civilian men still pursuing their studies. So, I don't know too much about that myself because I was gone for three years, and came back in 1946 and finished my senior year. I was taken out after my junior year and went to the military. I went to OCS [Officer Candidate School] and became an officer in the Navy. I came back in 1946, and there were some changes. There were a few more electives in the curriculum. Enrollment was up slightly, maybe 500, 600. I went on and took a semester of classes, which I enjoyed because I had a little different insight after those three years in the Pacific. I had a little better understanding of what I was really there for, and so I gained probably more from my studies. Then, when you went into it at that time, you had to have student teaching and preprofessional activities, which I enjoyed. I ended up, and teachers were it very short supply at the time, up there in Coudersport, northern tier, central Pennsylvania. The coach and physical educational teacher came down with undulant fever from consuming unpasteurized milk. This was in the middle of the school year so they had sort of an emergency. They called down at the time to the Laboratory School where I was doing my student teaching, wanting to know if anyone was available. The deal would be that they could go up there, finish their student teaching, they would supervise them up there, and also pay

M: them substitute's wages. I was halfway through my student teaching experience here at the Lab School. Dr. Wagenhorst, the director at the time, came into my class one day where I was teaching. He observed, and right after class he said, Bill, how would you like to go up to Coudersport? They have an emergency up there. He told me the deal. I had a car at the time, and I was on the G. I. Bill, so it sounded like a good deal, good experience. So I jumped in the car, went up there and was ready for the next Monday's opening of classes and took over there basketball team and had a good time up there in the north woods. It was cold, but it was a good professional experience. So I was fortunate. To reflect back, some of the classwork they sent. We had one class that we had to take in conjunction with our student teaching, and I met with the superintendent up there once a week, and he had a written exam for me over the content of the course. I remember that I had to study that text at the time, take this test every week, and then he would send it back here. At the end of the semester, they graduated me and gave me credit for everything and it worked out pretty well. I had good recommendations up there, so it worked out pretty well. Then I went off and worked in the public schools for seven years which was great and had the opportunity to come back to Slippery Rock in 1953 as a junior faculty member connected with the Laboratory School, which I accepted. I came in here in October of 1953 and set about settling in to the niche of a Laboratory School teacher. Back in those days, the Laboratory School was supposed to be a laboratory school. I mean out on the cutting edge of new educational methods with lots of glass enclosed anterooms in the back of the class for observations and that sort of thing. I also had student teachers from the college, roughly about 37 a semester. So I would have two or three student teachers with each public school class. These were really public school youngsters in the Laboratory School, and I enjoyed that because it gave me an opportunity to explore, with the college students, what was happening in the field and it kept us all up to date. It worked out very nicely. After about three years, due to financial problems, all laboratory schools were dispensed with pretty much starting here, and it pretty much happened across the state. So now what used to be combined educational effort including college and local community was distinctly separate, and, in fact, it almost went so far that never the twain would meet. Unfortunately, that carried over for quite a number of years. Then as I recall, later as I got into deaning and other academic activities, we strove to increase a number of laboratory activities that we could get together. So it sort of just ran full cycle. We almost had a complete separation, which then over a number of years, we were able to get our students back into some classes in the Slippery Rock school district, and gained some valuable benefits from that. Of course, in 1953 the enrollment was around 700. As a junior faculty member, the typical teaching load was 18 to 22 hours. If things were tough, or they had a lot of students in a particular area, why the chairman would approach you and say, well, gee whiz, we have all these students. You can handle another class or another five or ten, can't you? You really didn't have much choice but to shake your head and go from there. Here again the school week was Monday through noon on Saturday. Those of us in health and physical education coached three sports plus usually carried these 18 to 22 hours, so we were busy. You were either teaching, coaching, or you were preparing for one of the two. There was little coffee time or slack time. You had to love to teach. You had to love to work. So consequently, there was a turnover for I'd say the first ten years I was here. A number of faculty members came, maybe

M: lasted two or three years, and then would take off for greener pastures. I found the whole teaching experience sort of stimulating. You had lots to master. We had a philosophy in the health and physical education department that if you really wanted to be a well-rounded teacher, you should teach it all. So consequently, if you had anatomy, kinesiology, and a couple of activities one year, well, then next year we would give you a couple of other classes and some different activities. So you would learn to teach them all, you see. That's what really happened in the course of the first five years that you taught. I taught about every class offered in the health and physical education area, and I had files on all of them. I was smart enough that as I taught each class, I developed a file and resource material. So I had these reams of filing cabinets full of all of this stuff, which then, depending on the schedule I received, I'd pull out. I'd review them and oh, yes, here we go, this is what we do in anatomy. So we would refresh ourselves and get started, but you had to also study along with the kids, so to speak, to keep up with things. So research opportunities were minimal. You just didn't have the time or energy for it unless you got into graduate work, which, well, I had my master's degree before I came up. I started after my coaching experience, which I enjoyed very much, which included the first five years I was here, six years. Four years at football, four years assistant basketball, four years track and field. So that was 12 years of coaching there in four years. So I thought, physically this was going to be a tough sustain, particularly later in life, and I was interested in some of the other aspects. So I got into graduate study and went on and took doctoral work out at Colorado and enjoyed it very much. Never sorry. But during those days, we had a great camaraderie among the faculty. John Eiler was very helpful. When we had to change assignments, we would help each other. I remember John Eiler. There was a woman on the staff, and myself, had to go to teach swimming the following semester, which was very important because it was certified by Red Cross, and it was well-being at stake and safety and that sort of thing. John Eiler did a crackerjack job of teaching the swimming. But when we had to change teaching assignments, then we got together, the three of us, and he sort of laid out the program, the way to go about it. How do you handle this swimming? I mean, we could swim. *We were all certified and we were young people, but there's more to it than that. The techniques of it and the breaking down and the hand and arm movements, you had to be precise on this, which John Eiler took the time to go over with us in detail. We met almost weekly. That's just one example there and similar things happened when teaching assignments changed so faculty members really had to have good camaraderie and have a lot of support for each other. Otherwise, it was survive together or sink alone type of thing. But the faculty members were of the highest caliber, I would say. That didn't necessarily help in physical education, which is the area I'm familiar with. Not many health and physical education faculty had advanced degrees, maybe 1 or 2. Advanced degrees were more common in the other areas. But then, as time moved on, the health and physical education faculty also got into the higher education swim and now, I think today, probably hold the same number of degrees as you'd find in any academic area. [can't make out name], another fond memory, as track and cross-country coach was very dedicated to it. Unfortunately, with about 10 years left, he went out to California to teach in one of the California state colleges.* [tape skips from about 31:39 – 32:03]

We had, I remember as a student and junior faculty member, on May Day, we still had the May Pole dances and the May Day activities. So we would dance and frolic out on the lawn. This was

M: usually supervised and organized by the dance teacher and the gymnastic teacher. Everyone spent the day, the afternoon anyway, out on the front lawn in the May Day activities. Gymnastics was revered as a part, a representation, of the health and physical education program. I remember the gymnastic teams, men and women at the time, were not competitive teams. They were exhibition teams. So they would do all their stuff, back and front somersaults, horizontal bar, parallel bar, and all that was exhibition. And they would take these big trips to New Castle and down through the city, the city of Pittsburgh. City schools would love to have them for assembly programs and so on, and around the various public schools, along with some dancing. They usually had maybe a half a dozen dancers that were part of the program. It was a set program and this was an exhibition, and afterwards there would be a little explanation of how we have this program at Slippery Rock and we would hope that you all would want to get involved in it and so on. It was sort of a public relations thing and the students all went and put these on. So they would go around to the various schools and they maybe put on 12 to 15 of these during the course of a winter. That was really the purpose of it. Then as time went on, Wally Rose, who was a great colleague, came from Springfield and he got sort of into competitive gymnastics, and after a fairly short period of time the men's and women's gymnastics programs were divided and were strictly competitive teams. They would go down there and go through the intercollegiate events. The NCAA prescribed events where they were in competition with Pitt, West Virginia, whoever had a gymnastic team that wanted to schedule us, just like any other athletic teams. So it went completely full cycle from an exhibition to competitive, fairly highly competitive, till today where I think both programs have been disbanded. So there is an example, to follow the history of gymnastics, we would have seen quite a difference there. It would be interesting to take every sport and maybe every activity through music, drama, publications, library, whatever, of the current university, and trace it and see the ebbs and flows and see how it has changed to make it what it is today. As in the case of gymnastics, it is non-existent, and probably in some other activities the same would hold true.

Not digressing too much, getting back to the early days as a junior faculty member then, I taught all the courses and found it a very broadening experience. I got into research in my doctoral program, where I had the opportunity to use freshmen classes here, for which I was thankful and did my doctoral research and dissertation and thought it was great. I finished that up and now, rather than a junior faculty member, I am more of a senior faculty member. Having been here and having seniority and having known every president since President Miller, gave me insight as to what happens in these state teachers' colleges, state college, the university setting. Thinking back over it, I know I had as a student, President Miller was here the first year and then Dr. Entz, and I think upon record the succession of presidents, but they all had their strengths and weaknesses and they all had their trials and tribulations, and it was interesting to know them all, and see the impact that took place. History sort of indicates that ten years is about the maximum amount of time that the president can be real functional. However, I'm sure that can be disproven. Actually, I looked at Dr. Entz as a personal friend. I worked for him as part of my student employment and used to drive him and so I got to be very fond of him. When we all went off to service, he bade us good-bye, and when we came back I think he had retired. But it's

the nature of the beast that you have a dynamic interaction taking place. There are lots of influences exerting pressures, and I'm sure in today's situation the same holds true.

(7)

M: An interesting study would be the budget fluctuations that have occurred over the years. During my active years, I guess I was through maybe a half dozen budget emergencies and crunches, and they all pretty much ran about the same course. As a junior faculty member, I remember there were 700 students, and the buildings and facilities at the time and in three years we over doubled the enrollment to where there was about 1500 or 1600 and we didn't add a faculty member or a new building or a thing. Didn't add a thing. I remember saying to my colleagues, well, gee whiz, we must be pretty good. It's either that or we were overstaffed before, that we can double this operation and still not add anything. Well, that was the first budget crunch. Well, then things went along and things loosened up a bit on our budgets, improved a little, and people could see that roofs had to be repaired and that improvements had to be made and we had to have more facilities. Well, then we got the Field House off the ground. When we moved from the East/West Gym complex down to the new Field House, I think it was around 1960 or 1962, we filled it. There were no empty places in the new Field House. We had accumulated enough students and equipment and everything up in the little East/West Gym complex, in that little facility, that we could just move it all down into the Field House and we just filled it nicely. Well, we had some breathing room but not much. Then of course, since that time, the Field House has been filling. The same thing has taken place, and now I would suspect, I understand the students have added paddle ball and hand ball courts and some other facilities, But I would suspect that they are pretty full to the brim again. How soon the new facility, which was talked about years ago, will come into being is anyone's guess. Here again is the ebb and flow of the budget. Right now, we are in another budget crunch. These budget crunches usually come down from Harrisburg, usually involved in the statewide budget, usually result in severe cuts, and nonpayment and so on is not new with the recent one. It occurred a number of times previously. I remember our faculty paychecks were not forthcoming for a month or so there on occasion. Back in the seventies, we had a budget crunch. So that was something you sort of got used to and you rolled with the punches. An exciting and interesting time to me was during our time of rapid expansion and after the early sixties and through the sixties. We were expanding. We had the budget. We were hiring. We were booming. This was a lot different than I had experienced previously. I remember being charged with, and not just myself but a number of faculty members being charged with, the responsibility of in our travels, also recruiting. We were after faculty members, in any discipline with advanced degrees, who could really upgrade and contribute to the academic program. So if on occasions, I had become the department chairman of the health and physical education and went to a number of national meetings and so on, but in the process of going to these meetings, I was always asked to go to the University of Illinois, to the placement office, and they had the applicants lined up. We went there as well as going to the meeting, which was close by, which I think was in St. Louis. We went to the University of Illinois and was there for a week or ten days just interviewing applicants from any discipline, might be English, math, physics, any area. Our main objective then was to interest them in Slippery Rock. Tell them how nice it was and so on, and then get them to forward over their credentials and apply to, if it

was a physics teacher to the chairman of physics, or their committee or if it was communications, speech into that area. Of course, in health and physical education, we could deal directly with them. So that's what we did. We had, I'd say, about four or five interviews

(8)

M: every day at the center they had set up for us and we could meet with these faculty members, and we have faculty members on the campus today that got here from that process. But we were out, nationally, trying to recruit the best young people. They were mainly people coming right out of doctoral programs, graduate programs, who were willing to relocate or who were seeking positions. Yes, I'm sure that we have some on campus today that came out of those programs. But that was quite exciting. We had to increase our faculty. We were looking for maybe 40, 50, 60, 80 new faculty members with advanced degrees, at one time, because we were going to lose some. We knew there was a certain amount of attrition, we were expanding, new programs, new courses, new opportunities. As we expanded to gain faculty, now back on campus here, we were going through the rigors of expanding programs. Which programs were we going to expand, which ones were certainly going to contract. Mainly we were expanding, we weren't contracting many. So we're expanding everything and anything that we thought there was a need for, at the time, in health and physical education, I remember. But that time it was a school and I was serving as the dean. Rather than one program, we expanded to separate programs in recreation and resource management, into pre-physical therapy, into nursing, into health science as a separate program, as in health and physical education both teaching and non-teaching. And that was typical of every program on campus. So this was a period of rapid, exciting expansion which I think would be noticeable in any historic study. Continuing with that, now we have programs in physical therapy, nursing and accounting and business and those areas, which 20 years ago would have been overlooked by most. So it's amazing how we've grown, expanded, and developed as an institution. Always strong and peppy as a social entity. And I think it's still reflected by some of the activities, in the fraternities and down at the College Garden apartments, but we won't talk about that to any great extent. Always in athletics and activities. Although today we don't excel in certain athletic areas quite as much because parity has been reached and other institutions are also strong in that area. They are also the recruiting and scholarships, and back in the beginning days, the only scholarship anyone had was what their family could provide for them or what they could work, through the summer, to attain. That was the only scholarship available to you. Of course, now the costs are quite a bit greater. As an undergraduate, we paid \$400 a year. Two hundred a semester, and that included room and board and laundry. They had a laundry on campus, and so each week we had the soiled laundry in a laundry bag there and they picked it up and did it, and returned it back to your room, most of the time. Some of the students lost items so they were a little gun-shy of the laundry. They tell me before my time, they grew everything that pretty much was consumed in the dining hall, they grew on campus. So their meat, one of the local cooks also raised cattle and stuff, and that's where they got their meat. They had gardens and they grew a lot of stuff that they ate, so it was pretty much a self-contained, pastoral type setting. I remember, the first 10 to 15 years, there were big herds of sheep right south of campus that roamed freely there, and it was not until fairly recent times that the property was sold to the state and the sheep were eliminated. So we had a very pastoral setting in the early

days which led up to the current sort of quasi-cosmopolitan status. Here, we are sitting out in the country and can commute to the city and the students do commute there. So it's sort of a different situation.

(9)

- M: The trustees back in the early days, the trustees were all appointed. Trustees usually changed with each administration, and trustees were, I would say, more political and involved in local issues than they are today. The trustees' function is now changed to more of a longer tenure, and removed from the political day-to-day activities of the campus, and more as overseers responsible to the state board, which probably is an improvement.
- I would say memorable students, we've had our share, and I think we have more probably outstanding students spread over more professional areas today than could ever be imagined years ago. I think there have been lawyers and doctors and people of that sort that got there start here, where in the early days, we had some outstanding educators who of course came through the narrower program that was committed to education at the time. I'd say there would be a contrasting description of the faculty. The early faculty was pretty well locked into a set program as the students were, and didn't have near the voice that they do today. Now academic matters, and faculty interaction is a prerogative that the faculty can exercise to a greater extent. The role of the administration, in the early days the administration was pretty much, well, I remember as a junior faculty member we sent a slip for each class that we met, daily, to the academic dean in Old Main, and on there we put any absentee students, and that was a requirement. If you didn't turn in your slips for the day, as far as they were concerned, you weren't there. So there was a track, a close keeping of the attendance as far as students were concerned, as well as the faculty. There was no missing of classes. It was unheard of by either students or faculty. Through the evolution of this whole thing there was sort of a rebellion against that, and I remember after the first couple of years here some of the faculty members claimed that this was more like a high school than anything and that we needed to do away with that. And sure enough, we did away with it. So there were some needed changes made. Of course, in the early days, public support was total. Probably 90 percent of the budget was taxpayers' money and the students paid their \$400 a year. Now, I think the public supports maybe 50 percent, so the financial structure has changed quite a bit. The decision-making is, of course, much more diverse today. Back in the days of the education-dominated institution, why there weren't as many decisions to be made and, if they were, if they needed to be made, they applied to teacher education pretty much and were made by a relatively few number of people. Then it was concurred by the faculty. Of course, the objectives have changed totally from a narrow purpose to the multipurpose institution that Slippery Rock is today. So from that standpoint, I would say, I've just been thankful that I was a part of it, and I've been more thankful that I've been able to survive it, and enjoy these retirement years. And I still enjoy, very much, coming to campus and attending musicals and plays and athletic events and activities whenever we're in town. So I consider myself a supporter of the institution and one that has many fond memories.
- B: You mentioned Coach Thompson. I have a couple of questions about him. Was that a faculty position? You said he coached football and basketball, and did he teach besides?

M: Oh, yes.

B: Everyone did?

(10)

M: Everyone did. There were no such things as separate coaches. The coaches worked very hard, and Coach, of course he had the pressure sports. He would be running around maybe with the basketball team, get home maybe around twelve o'clock or one o'clock in the morning. He might have an eight o'clock or nine o'clock the next morning. In all likelihood, he probably would. None of us hardly started after nine. We were all over the East/West Gym over there. There were a lot of eight o'clock classes and by nine o'clock, sometimes if he was out on a basketball trip, they would maybe try not to start him before nine, but you had to be over there. Well, you don't have to be crazy to do this but it sure helps. In baseball or football, maybe someone would throw a pass and hit the receiver and the receiver would drop it, he'd say, hit him in a bad place, right in the hands, and then when he pulled the player out, he would say, that ball hit you in a bad place, right in the hands! Coach had a peculiar way of speaking. Food he would call "fud". He'd yell, boys, you forgot to get your "fud". We all joked about that. He had these speech mannerisms that were distinctive. He was a big guy. He had hands like a ham. Like he was back from the Jim Thorpe days of the Carlisle Indians, where you had to be. He was big in his prime. When it got to the time that I was playing for him, why he was getting elderly and he was in his sixties probably, but I could see when he was in his prime, he had hand on him.

End of Tape I, Side B

M: They used to always kid him. They'd say, Coach, is it true that you won the game? He'd laugh. He'd say, oh boys, don't believe those stories. He says, most of them aren't true anyway. They used to kid him about that. Sneaking into a uniform at half-time and playing the second half. Back in those days they didn't check on eligibility as close, but I don't think he did that. I don't know. They used to always kid him about that. But he was quite a player in his own right, and he was big and strong. He coached a lot of years here. As a result, he was revered by a lot of people. Well, the single biggest scholarship fund that the University has today was given in his memory. His players, not only his players, but the students, the kids he had in class, many of them women, so on, just remember old Coach and he was just a big, old, friendly bear, and that everybody thought a lot of. But he spent a lot of time, well, all the coaches did, spent a lot of time over there. Time you'd finish up it would be six or seven o'clock at night before they would get home for dinner every night through the week. His widow is still living over at Orchard Manor [Grove City, PA], and was called on by his players here, I think, last fall. They gathered up five thousand dollars in memory of Coach and contributed to the NKT [N. Kerr Thompson] Fund, which I forget how much we have in that fund now. Bob DiSpirito was probably here a year two, when Coach passed away. We used to take him out on recruiting. We started when Bob DiSpirito came. We got into recruiting more. We had to do that. So we would get in a car and go to various functions, around to schools, to meet with high school seniors and Coach would go along. He'd say to Bob, let's talk football, let's talk football. He was still interested right up to

the time that he passed away. He was quite a guy and no pretenses, no facades. What you see is what you get, and that's what everyone liked about him. He'd teach health classes and a number of classes. The kids would try to get him off the subject, you know, get him to talk about sports rather than talk about health. What are we going to do this week, Coach? Well,

(11)

M: you boys forget about that, we're going to learn our lessons here. Learn about our "fud" and how important it is. He was quite a guy.

R: Did you have Bob DiSpirito?

M: Yes. I think it was around that time we were having basically a football practice. We saw the need to upgrade the program so we had a lot of applications, maybe 70 or 80. We sifted through them. Bob was over at Bucknell and so we interviewed him as well as a number of other people. We thought that he could do the job for us. Got him from Bucknell and then we said to him, well, we were expanding so we had faculty positions that we could use. We needed a couple more. We told him that he could bring one assistant. So Rog Oberlin was his choice, who was also over at Bucknell. So we got those two at the same time. I told him it was going to be rough going, that he was going to have to work at it for a little while. The first game they played Waynesburg, and Waynesburg beat us 61 – 7. After the game he says, yes, it's going to be rough going. But the main reason, looking back at it, that they beat us 61 – 7 was that they had this wide receiver who, after graduation, went and played with the New York Giants for six or eight years. He was so fast and tricky, we didn't have anybody who could cover him. It got so that the first part of the game Bob had one guy trying to cover him and then it was two. I said, why don't you try three, and he tried three. We just didn't have anybody fast enough afoot to stay with him. He was catching passes all over the place. The kids got discouraged and we just didn't have the horses. But then the next year we got a little better. I think they won a couple of games the first year, and the next year we won a few more and the next, a few more, and then before you knew it, you know he had those three or four state championships and we had the bowl playoffs and we were running around all over the country playing people. But we had to work at it a little. We got so that we had recruiting groups in down there every weekend and we would all go in and give them pep talks about our various programs, and how they ought to think about coming to Slippery Rock. I remember going down. I was department chairman at the time or dean, and Bob says, on Saturday morning can you come talk to this group at about ten or eleven o'clock? He would give me a time. He had everyone scheduled. He even had some faculty members come in from various programs, if he knew the kids were interested in various faculty programs. So we might have 50 high school students in there, in their senior year, ready to come to college and we would literally sell them on the various programs and the value of coming to Slippery Rock. It took time and it would knock a hole in your Saturday sometimes, but that's what he had to do. So over a period of years, we got so that we were getting, now we were getting 24 or 25 or 50 pretty able-bodied students and some, by golly, had football ability. When you get that, he was getting some depth and it got so that he gathered together a pretty good squad there. He had good morale. Bob was a good organizer. He could rally the campus to support the program. At times, we didn't always have that. In fact, at a time or two, it's pretty easy for the coach to alienate the campus toward the program. But the

trick is to get someone who can win friends and influence people and get everyone working to support this program and show them that by having a good, let's say, football team, hey, we're going to spin off a certain number of able-bodied students in your area, and your area, and your area. So we weren't just recruiting football players, we were recruiting students in various academic areas. We made an effort to recruit the science student, too. All students, and if they

(12)

M: happened to be health and physical education students, why we would take them also. To have a successful program from, I'd say, Bob DiSpirito's days on up to this time, that's what you have to do. You have to have the whole college behind every program really, supporting it, giving and taking, and you can realize your maximum potential that way. Prior to that, we just had problems. It didn't reflect well on the whole college, and that's why we got into this concerted effort, and by golly it worked. Well now today, we have a solid program. There are a few of these opponents that we are playing, we don't have the manpower, people power, but it's a pretty solid program and we do fairly well.

R: Had I.U.P. [Indiana University of Pennsylvania] gone clear out of our league?

M: Yes. They are so strong, and Edinboro is awful strong. They gather up a lot of money there.

R: Alumni?

M: Yes. I would say those two, I.U.P. particularly, in football. Now basketball, why no problem. But football, it just comes along with a lot of resources and money, and it makes a difference.

R: Was Carter a supporter of athletics?

M: Yes. I would say he supported athletics. He supported, let's say athletics a little more than physical education, but I think he wanted a good projection. I think he wanted student athletes. I don't think he supported it to the extent that Al Watrel did, for instance. Al Watrel, I think presidential-wise, was the strongest supporter by far. More happened during his administration than any of them. He was a former football player himself. I think he enjoyed the action. He went down there and milled around there with the coaches.

R: Yes, Bob told me about him. He would read his mail, and he would do the clippings from the eastern newspapers, and he would underscore the good-looking crop. Some wonderful stories.

M: Yes. He would give him these newspaper accounts. It was great, but the only thing is, there was no way of doing it though. We could have channeled him, just smoothed it over. We didn't have to go as far as he wanted to go. He and I disagreed.

R: That's not the press box thing you are talking about. It's scholarships and the other problems.

M: Yes. He told me he wanted a strong program, and I said, well, fine, we do too, but we wanted a good strong academic oriented program. I'd say, well, we'd need maybe a hundred student workers, which we had jobs for down there. We could employ them all. He'd say, well, take 200. No, I don't want two hundred, just want one hundred. That caused all kinds of trouble because I felt that was sort of a disproportionate number. Not only that, but I had to employ and keep track of all these students, which was a heck of a job. I had to vouch and certify that

they were all gainfully employed, and that they put in the time. I could do that with a hundred, but it was tough with 200. He went on the assumption that if this was good, why twice as much would be better, and that isn't always the case. I tried to caution him that your academic image is going to be damaged. You're going to raise resentment here, as the thing up on the hill

(13)

M: turned out to do. A lot of people just resented that thing being there. Well, that didn't have to take place. If he would have just gone easy, softer on it, but he was hard to convince.

R: Did he ever miss any away games?

M: Not very many.

R: Not very many. It had to be a big-time emergency for him to miss.

M: He wanted to be there. He wanted me to be there and he wanted the athletic director to be there. Me and Bob Raymond. And we were there. Most of the time we were there. Occasionally we wouldn't be able to get there. Yes, if he would have just tempered it a little, hey, I think we could be floating along today. We really didn't have to go overboard then. We were doing very well. And I feel Bob DiSpirito would agree with me. But that was an interesting experience. Previously, I mean, we didn't put near the resources into the program. Now we are putting more in that we ever have, private funds. We have more scholarship monies. The alumni and various people have given these funds that have now grown to the place where we have more than we have ever had. But Indiana has twice as much as they have ever had. So if you want to compete with them, you have to do what you have to do to compete with them. If you don't, it's sort of an injustice to the kids to send them out there, sending boys out there against these grown men.

R: Does size of their enrollment impact on all this? They've got fourteen, fifteen thousand or so.

M: It's well over ten thousand but I think what it attracts, more than anything, is that they've got a bigger source of private funds. I understand that they've got an old oil well, and you know they've got some other things. They're pumping oil and bringing it in all the time. That just gives them more to do with.

R: Doesn't the NCAA place limitations and restrictions on the use of that money or how many scholarships they can support?

M: Yes. The NCAA Division II restricts the number of full scholarships that they can have, but we don't have enough money to come up to that level. California doesn't either, or Loch Haven, I'm sure. Shippensburg, maybe. And if you don't have enough money, and you're allowed thirty-five full rides in football, you don't have enough money to support that, well, that's your problem. So now you're going to have to function with 15 full rides, or how many you can afford. I don't know how many we can afford now. I don't know how many we have, but I would guess maybe 20. I think the NCAA, you're really allowed 50. I think Indiana has fifty without a problem, and they're all full rides. It doesn't cost them a cent. While our students,

they might only have half rides or a third. So now if you're a student coming out of high school with some football ability, and Indiana approaches you and say, well, come to Indiana it won't cost you anything, and we say come to Slippery Rock, it's going to cost you a thousand a year, or we can help you to the extent of a thousand a year. Your parents may say, hey son, you're going to go to Indiana. It's not going to cost me anything. That's about what it comes down to. Now that just applies to football and basketball and probably baseball now, and girls' basketball and

(14)

M: girls' softball. But when you get into the other ones, well even the tennis players and the golfers, there's two or three of them that get some help, and the soccer players. But those sports aren't as recruited as heavily so you can get by. If I'm a coach, I can get by better on a smaller budget in soccer than I ever could in football because the best football players are heavily recruited, but the best soccer players are just sort of recruited. I can probably find some for free, that if I coach them hard, I can bring them up to a level that would be competitive. In football, I could never coach them up to a level that would be competitive. It's about as simple as that. That's the way it is today.

R: Did the coaches have academic rank when you came? Had that been installed a long time ago?

M: Right. We were faculty members first, and coaches incidentally.

R: And now that's just changed recently.

M: Yes. During my time as an administrator down here, we pretty much held it at that. Now, they can be working someplace else and coach here. It was during my last year or two that it was changed, that you didn't have to. What happened, people got tired of coaching and wanted out of it, and we didn't have any new faculty positions. What could we do? But now I think that they pick up quite often, and all these schools do, they pick up their local high school coaches maybe or go ahead and get the fellow downtown, an enthusiastic rooster. Sign him on as a coach. Of course, it's the same with high school. It isn't as bad in college as it is in high school, you are working with younger people that are more susceptible to injury. So they're not educators. Of course, we might say the same thing about the scientist who was a lab person for a big chemical company, he's not an educator either, but we're putting him to have him teach chemistry, particularly if he's a Nobel prize winner or something. We don't look at his educational credentials. See that's the argument, but we always thought it was more sound if we had educators coaching. But now, let's see, on the current football staff we've got maybe three that are full-time faculty members and the rest of them, the one's from Grove City, a former coach over there. He was a teacher over there. One's a high school teacher from Moniteau and you get them from wherever you can get them.

B: Does that make a difference in their relationship with the rest of the faculty? Or does it not matter?

M: I think it makes a difference, like in some of the other sports, like the volleyball coach. She just comes and coaches volleyball and goes back home. Other than that, she doesn't know anybody on campus and they don't know her. She can't feel part of the academic program hardly, except

that they are representing an educational institution. So whatever effect that has. Probably on the college level, these kids are sophisticated enough to perform.

R: That's all written into the collective bargaining agreement, isn't it?

M: Yes. That's all part of it. That's the way it's been negotiated.

R: Were able to stay outside, pretty much, of the Carter firing and then Watrel's firing and all those kinds of hoorahs that we went through?

(15)

M: I was able to stay outside of the Watrel firing because, boom, I mean it happened and I was probably the last to know about it. But the Carter firing, I think I was a dean then and you know, people brought petitions to me and said, here you go, sign them. I said, no soap. I'm not signing any petitions. For what? And I'm sure that made some unhappy and others happy.

R: Well, you were part of the administrative team.

M: Yes. I was part of the administrative team.

R: You either support it or you don't support it.

M: Carter supported me in a number of instances, which I always appreciated. I can understand how Carter got into trouble, and what the problems were. But from the health and physical education administrator's standpoint, Carter gave me probably as good a support under trying, difficult circumstances as I had as an administrator. The worst thing in the world, you know, is trying to administer and have a very soft support base. Worst thing in the world. With Carter, I had the support base that I didn't always agree with, but I knew what it was, which is comforting. That's my preference. Maybe some other people wouldn't have chosen this way. I didn't always agree with it, and the same with Watrel. I didn't always agree with him, but I knew what it was. As I said before, I was always trying to get him to tone down his support of athletics, and telling him the dangers because I'd seen it before. I'd seen what happened, and I cited it to him. And he said, oh, it will never happen. If he had just listened and soft toned it a little bit, he probably would be here today, in my assumption. Because a lot of people liked him. He was pleasant. He got around campus. He just pushed so hard that some people resented it. Carter, after he was gone, came back a month or two later and we were talking and he says, Bill, I was disappointed in you that you didn't support me any stronger than you did. I said, what do you mean? They brought me petitions. You didn't see my name on any of them, did you? He didn't say anything else.

R: Was he terribly upset when you saw him after he left and came back?

M: No. He was sort of reserved.

R: Sort of handled it fairly well?

M: Yes. I don't think he looked at it as the end of the world or anything.

R: He had enough ego that he was going to land on his feet.

M: Oh, yes. He knew he had a niche waiting for him someplace. I think he went up to Ferris State, Michigan. Over at Dennison, he was very highly regarded. You know Dennison has a high academic program and he was highly regarded as an academician over there. But he dabbled in sports, and he used to go out and help officiate track meets, and do some things that small colleges like to see faculty do. Private colleges. He loved to mill around with the coaches, but he kept it in better perspective with academics. He knew that the heart of the University was academics. There were days when I wasn't quite sure that Al Watrel knew that. He'd get there and get to rah rahing and it was gung-ho. But we didn't need that. I told him we were going to

(16)

M: dominate this thing just with what we got. We don't need all this stuff. I couldn't talk him into it. But like you say, I'd rather know what my backing is than to have a very wishy-washy, weak backing, not knowing quite where you stand. You can't function that way. If you know what it is, then at least you can function. You may not be able to function the way you want to, but you know the way you have to go. But when it is wishy-washy, why then it's by gosh and by golly and the whole program looks that way too. I have a couple favorite expressions here that Bob Aebersold still quotes. I remember the President, a more recent one, who went to Maryland.

End of Tape II, Side A

M: We had these management meetings occasionally. So at this one management meeting, Bob Aebersold's there and we're all there and he said, now everyone write up a couple of slogans or something that were going to have to incorporate in our management style. So we were in a crunch at the time, and I thought, well, gee whiz, an appropriate one would be, frugality out of necessity. That's what I wrote, frugality out of necessity, it's our watchword. Well, I had a number of others down there and sent them in. He looked them over. The next day, we're meeting again, and he says, I've got one here. Now this is really something, frugality out of necessity. He didn't like it very well. Everyone sort of laughed. I thought that was very appropriate, and I stuck up for it. I said to him, I thought that was very appropriate, I think maybe it says something. He made a joke out of it at the time, and a couple of times joked with me about it, but Bob Aebersold still uses it today. Frugality out of necessity. Then the other one. We were up at Old Main once and I think it was during Watrel's administration, and we got down to a debate over what programs and how we were going to advise and so on and so forth. I got sort of impatient and it was late in the afternoon, long meeting, and I said, well, I don't care how you decide this but I'm sick and tired of trying to throw a blowout patch on a leaky program. It was the advertisement thing. So every time I came over, Bob Aebersold says, we still use that expression, throw a blowout patch on a leaky program. If our students aren't advised properly, you end up with them down the line, and now you have to try and patch it up and that's really what we are doing. At the last minute, in their last semester, we would go to all these lengths to advise them or change or make exceptions so they could meet the qualifications to graduate. I had a hard time buying that. If you have graduation requirements, well by golly, we have graduation requirements and we had it sequentially planned so that the student could meet those graduation requirements, not ill-advise them or somehow, they go astray over in these other areas and come up short, and now, at the last minute, you try to make maneuvers to make them eligible to graduate. So that was the main point and we had a

little fun out of it, and I guess that's why we were successful and maintained our sanity. We used to get some jokes out of it.

B: Were there some other people that you remember with affection or maybe lack of affection over the years?

M: Well, really every president. Dr. Weisenfluh probably annoyed me as much as any of them, but even the day he left campus, we shook hands and we were on good terms and I wish him well. I said we didn't always agree, which we always didn't for various reasons. He was subject to pressures and influences from other people and I was sort of idealistic at the time. I was fairly

(17)

M: young and I thought he ought to just recognize principles like I did and hey, follow them. There was nothing to it. Well, I found out it wasn't that simple and of course that's the way I approached him and he was being badgered and influenced by other people. The principles weren't really important as the pressure he was getting from the other people. As I look back on it now, if I'd have been a little more mature and smarter, why you know every president along the line, they're badgered by a lot of people, and some give a little more or a little less. I would say one of the most resolute, in their principles and their ideals, was Carter, and we all know what happened to him. But if you want to say, well, gee, the guy really sticks by his guns. Hey, that was Carter. I mean he had some ideas and he stuck by them and that's probably what got him into trouble. In other words, he could have been a little more flexible.

R: So Weisenfluh changed them from time to time?

M: Oh, yes, he'd vacillate quite a bit.

R: In management matters?

M: Well, yes, in administrative matters that affected the whole college. What affected athletics and physical education was the part, because I was sort of acting chairman at the time, but that's how I got into administration. He appointed me acting chairman. Back in those days, a chairman was an appointed position. It was an administrative position. To be a chairperson, someone, either in the academic dean's office or the president's office, had to look on you favorably and appoint you. That was the only way you could get in there, and Weisenfluh appointed me acting chairman at the time. When he left he said, Bill, I'd make you permanent but I think the next president ought to have that prerogative. Well, which is fine, but he was so soft and fluctuating in his support that I had a hard time figuring out where I was.

R: In terms of how much budget you had to work with?

M: Yes. Things would change in a hurry. Someone would go in and beat his ear and he was that way for a day or two. Someone else would beat his ear, and he'd be that way then. So you'd wonder who's going to go in next? By the time you got done with that, that makes it tough to function.

R: How did the Michigan Stadium thing evolve when we played those two games? We played twice at the University of Michigan?

M: Yes.

R: In a 104,000-seat stadium.

M: Yes. I was dean down here and Bob Raymond was the athletic director and he knew the athletic director up at the University of Michigan and they were talking and what it boiled down to is, the motivation was, that they wanted to fill their stadium to quite an extent while their team, the University of Michigan, was playing out on the coast. So they were out on the coast playing UCLA or one of the California schools and things were pretty quiet there around the University of Michigan in a 102,000-seat stadium. They said, well, how are we going to fill this thing? Well,

(18)

M: we could get two smaller schools with a name, and Slippery Rock was one of them, and a Michigan school, Wayne State. The other one's kind of a comparable program, Division II, Wayne State's a lot bigger institution, but football-wise we're fairly comparable. So okay, we get those two teams in there, and they bring their fans, but that isn't going to fill a 102,000-seat stadium. That's only going to bring maybe at the most maybe 10,000 fans between the two schools because Wayne's an inner city, they have no following, and they may have brought 50 fans. We had the rest of them. So we'll make this band day and all the high school bands around, any outstanding bands, and he gathered up all these bands and got them in there. Well then, each band brings a lot of band parents and they got them in there, and so when it was all said and done, we had all these bands which stood and played and made a tremendous musical sound, we had 65,000 people. That's the biggest crowd we've ever played before. We played Shippensburg one year and Wayne State the other. Yes, 65,000 people and we got a pretty good financial return, covered our expenses, and gave us a few thousand dollars to put in the bank. We were playing someone comparable and there we were in the 102,000-seat stadium with the AstroTurf and everything and it was a nice sunny afternoon. It wasn't that far. It worked out all right.

R: Great P.R.

M: Good public relations. I don't think we played very well either time. I think we lost both games up there, maybe not.

R: Shippensburg was a lop-sided score. The other one was fairly close.

M: That was close.

R: They won in the last little while.

M: Yes, the last little while. But 65,000 people, you know, for whatever reason. This guy was a promoter and I'm sure he made a few bucks out of it. He was trying to make his athletic program, I think, more visible.

R: Of course, Michigan has this great reputation as a music school like Indiana.

M: They have a big music following. I enjoyed the bands. That was something to see, that many bands all crammed in there.

R: How did you get to Slippery Rock in 1953? Who made the connection and all that?

M: Well, C. N. Long was the, I guess you would call him the local superintendent of schools, but he was also the director of the Laboratory School. Employed half by the local school district, and half by the college, and I think he asked some of the staff members at the time, Bob Smiley being one of them. I think I was winning at the time, and I was getting pretty good write-ups in the Pittsburgh paper for about seven straight years in both football and basketball. We were at the top so I think C. N. Long asked, well, hey we've got this vacancy on the physical education laboratory staff, who should we ask? I was in football camp up in Laurel Hill State Park, up in the mountains there, and someone called me long distance and said, hey, we've got this position

(19)

M: and would you be interested? I was right in the middle of trying to shape up this team. It was going to be a good one. I said, could I call you back? He said, well, we can't wait too long. You'll have to call me. I said, I'll be home that Saturday. About three or four days. When I got home I called him then. I had talked it over with my wife and so on. She was a Slippery Rock graduate so there wasn't any doubt in her mind. She said, we got to get there. But I hated to pull out. It was right in the middle. So I had to leave this school district in the lurch, but not until they found somebody. They did find someone to fill in.

R: What school was that?

M: Well, they call it East Allegheny now, but it was East McKeesport then. It was East McKeesport and so they put them all together. North Versailles, East McKeesport, Wall and Wilmerding they put together and made East Allegheny out of it. When I had left, I had been there seven years. I had a woman principal that I communicated really well with and she became superintendent shortly after I left, and a couple of other administrators they had there, we got along really well. They tried to keep me from leaving. They said, now if you choose to stay here, we're going to be combining and we'll have principalship and so forth and we'll make you the principal, and we're going to take care of you. So I had been involved in the public school discipline and I knew what principals did and I said, no, I don't think that's my bag, so they wished me well and I was gone. But I had had seven beautiful years down there, and probably learned as much as I was able to partake and give to them, I hope. I felt I worked a lot, but they worked my fanny off. That was back in the days of the smaller high school. Really, so I had all the health and physical education, football, basketball, and baseball, and all the tough disciplining, study halls, P. O. D. [Problems of Democracy]. I was certified in social studies. I had senior P. O. D., which I liked to prepare for. We studied the problem of democracy. Every year we studied statehood for Alaska and Hawaii, and that was one of the problems. Hey, which came about, and which we went through. There were a number of problems and we discussed them and researched them and so on. There was a lot of work involved in it. Then I had every study hall where there were liable to be kids that would act up. Then you'd like to discipline them, but they kept pressure on me all the time. So for seven years I had that, and it sort of got tiresome. Got a chance to come up here. When I went over to the Lab School it was a breeze. I thought it was a breeze. Because at the high school, I'd drag home seven-thirty, eight o'clock at night and have dinner and fall asleep in a chair, get up and have to be in the school at nine o'clock the next morning,

had a class, ready to go, and then right after school, coach again. In my spare time, I got my master's degree. I'd commute to Pitt.

B: That's when you were really young.

M: I think we all did it at the time. But I remember coaching basketball, and I'd have to quit practice, knock off practice a little early, five-thirty. I'd run out, jump in the car, eat a sandwich while I was driving because I had a six-thirty class at Pitt that night. I'd have two classes, six-thirty to eight-thirty, eight-thirty to ten-thirty. Then ten-thirty jump in the car again, drive home, get home around midnight or so and then I'd have to get up the next morning and be ready for class at the high school. That's how I got my master's. I said to myself, if I have to do this on a doctoral level, it will never happen.

(20)

B: Tell us a little about women's sports at Slippery Rock.

M: Women's sports at Slippery Rock, I think pretty much mirrored the trend at the time. We probably had more for women in athletics than the average university, but I mean we were still plagued by some of the restrictions of the time. They were debating whether it was good for women to play full court basketball. They played a game which was, they couldn't go over a certain line on the court so they were really only playing like half court basketball. It wasn't good for them to maybe swim or sprint at certain times, so they were hashing that out. The big thing here for years, when I was a student, for women, was women's field hockey. They went after that with a lot of enthusiasm, and gymnastics and dance and tennis. I would say that was the main extent of women's sports. Well then, as ideas became more liberal, as far as activities for women, why then we started to add more sports and we went to full court basketball and softball has come on. In the early days, they didn't play softball for women. Now they did have archery, back in the early days, and some schools actually had archery competition because women excelled. We had an outstanding woman golfer here, Janet Anderson. She could have played with the men's team. There was no women's golf. She's on tour now.

R: She won the L. P. G. A.

M: She's been scoring. I've been watching her making maybe five, six, seven thousand dollars every week at these events on the women's tour. She's a heck of a golfer. So there was a case where if we'd had a women's program, maybe she would have stayed and played. She played with the men, but she only went a couple of years and dropped out, and that might not have been the reason. But women's field hockey was big, and it's gradually grown. Back in those days there were some high schools without any physical education for women at all. My wife went to a high school where the only physical activity she had was cheerleading, I think. They had no gym classes or anything. I guess it wasn't legal for them to get too exercised. It's grown. It's a good thing. Then back in the early days the facilities just were not shared equitably. I mean the girls couldn't get on the boys' varsity basketball court. They either got undesirable time or something, but now there is equal sharing of facilities and there's an equal number of sports and the same varsity sports. When they cut them, they cut two men's and two women's. So everything is more equitable. But back in the early days, they debated and studied, and

physiologists, and anthropologists claimed that it could even be damaging to women to run around too much, but they've worked through all of that.

R: They were all out in the fields putting up the hay.

M: Some medical people even, at the time. They made these studies that women shouldn't be sprinting or conditioning at the wrong time. They forgot all about those covered wagons and stuff. They came across and maybe they'd have a baby and jump into a covered wagon and grab a musket and hold off an Indian. Now as we look back on it, it didn't make sense at all, but it was highly debated. When I was a student here in 1940, 41, 42, the women's program was very controlled. Gymnastics, field hockey, some half court basketball and some volleyball and probably that was about it. I don't think they had any competitive swimming. Today you got

(21)

M: these young girls and see these young girls here in New York recently playing tennis there, goodness.

R: A fifteen-year-old, seventeen-year-old, world class tennis players.

M: Yes. Every time she hits the ball she grunted, you know. She hit the ball 109 miles per hour, had to grunt them a couple of times. So that's been revolutionized. That's coming out of the dark ages.

R: How's retirement going?

M: Good.

R: We have three retirees here at the table.

M: Good.

R: Leah's been retired a year. I've been gone two years. You retired in 1982?

M: Yes, 1982.

R: You did 30 years here. Seven years in the high school.

M: With my military time, I was just a month shy of 40 years of service in the retirement system. I bought three years military time. I would have been teaching during those times if I hadn't been in the military. I was just about a month shy. I figured that was long enough. I've enjoyed myself since. Gives you a little time to do the things you always wanted to do. I go at a slower pace, and if you have your health, why that's the most important thing.

R: Do you have a benediction?

M: No. We really talked away the time!

R: Thank you very much.

B: Thank you.

