

**The David and Barbara Pryor Center
for
Arkansas Oral and Visual History**

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Arkansas Memories Project

Curtis Shipley
Interviewed by Scott Lunsford
February 5, 2008
Fayetteville, Arkansas

Objective

Oral history is a collection of an individual's memories and opinions. As such, it is subject to the innate fallibility of memory and is susceptible to inaccuracy. All researchers using these interviews should be aware of this reality and are encouraged to seek corroborating documentation when using any oral history interview.

The Pryor Center's objective is to collect audio and video recordings of interviews along with scanned images of family photographs and documents. These donated materials are carefully preserved, catalogued, and deposited in the Special Collections Department, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville. The transcripts, audio files, video highlight clips, and photographs are made available on the Pryor Center Web site at <http://pryorcenter.uark.edu>. The Pryor Center recommends that researchers utilize the audio recordings and highlight clips, in addition to the transcripts, to enhance their connection with the interviewee.

Transcript Methodology

The Pryor Center recognizes that we cannot reproduce the spoken word in a written document; however, we strive to produce a transcript that represents the characteristics and unique qualities of the interviewee's speech pattern, style of speech, regional dialect, and personality. For the first twenty minutes of the interview, we attempt to transcribe verbatim all words and utterances that are spoken, such as uhs and ahs, false starts, repetitions and encouragement sounds. Some of these elements are omitted after the first twenty minutes to improve readability.

The Pryor Center transcripts are prepared utilizing the *University of Arkansas Style Manual* for proper names, titles, and terms specific to the university. For all other style elements, we refer to the *Pryor Center Style Manual*, which is based primarily on *The Chicago Manual of Style 15th Edition*. We employ the following guidelines for consistency and readability:

- Em dashes separate repeated/false starts and incomplete/redirected sentences.
- Ellipses indicate the interruption of one speaker by another.
- Italics identify foreign words or terms and words emphasized by the speaker.
- Question marks enclose proper nouns for which we cannot verify the spelling and words that we cannot understand with certainty.

- Brackets enclose
 - italicized annotations of nonverbal sounds, such as laughter, and audible sounds, such as a doorbell ringing;
 - annotations for clarification and identification; and
 - standard English spelling of informal words.
- Commas are used in a conventional manner where possible to aid in readability.

Citation Information

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Scott Lunsford interviewed William Curtis Shipley on
February 5, 2008, in Fayetteville, Arkansas.
[00:00:00]

Scott Lunsford: Today we are goin' to be talking with William Curtis Shipley. We're at the Shipley residence in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Today's date is February 8, is it?

Curtis Shipley: Fifth. Fifth.

SL: Fifth, 2008. I'm Scott Lunsford. I'll be doing the interview. And—uh—we're here on behalf of the David and Barbara Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and Visual History, which is a part of the Special Collections Department at the—uh—University of Arkansas in the Mullins Library. And, Curtis—um—I'm goin' to ask you if it's okay with you that we're videotaping this today and that this will be—uh—reside in the Special Collections Department at the University of Arkansas.

CS: I give you my permission, Scott. [*Laughs*]

SL: Thank you very much. Now—uh . . .

CS: Pleased to do so.

[00:00:54] SL: We—we've actually got a couple of things to do today besides getting your whole life story or getting started on that. We're also here on behalf of the Washington Regional—

uh—Medical Foundation.

CS: Right.

SL: Which—uh—I believe—they're about to bestow an award to you or give you some kind of recognition.

CS: I—I certainly hope not. But [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Really?

Janet Moulden: It's the twentieth anniversary.

CS: It's the twentieth ann—twentieth anniversary . . .

SL: Oh, this has—this has to do with the twentieth anniversary.

CS: . . . of the foundation.

SL: So . . .

CS: I've already been honored many—many times over.

SL: That's right, you have the Golden Eagle Award, don't you?

CS: I do indeed.

[00:01:27] SL: Uh—so we're gonna talk about that a little bit, but before we get into that, the head-in of this—uh—interview—I—I do want to know—uh—first of all, we'd like for you to—to say your name and spell it in full, so that our editors will—will get all the spelling right and—and we know exactly how to do that.

CS: Okay. My name is William Curtis Shipley.

SL: Mh-hmm.

CS: *W-I-L-L-I-A-M.* Curtis. *C-U-R-T-I-S.* Shipley. *S-H-I-P-L-E-Y.*

SL: Thank you. Uh—y—you'd be surprised at how easy it is to not—misspell and . . .

CS: [Laughs] I can believe that . . .

SL: . . . how long it takes to find out the exact spelling.

CS: . . . in fact, you don't normally do that.

[00:02:11] SL: Um—the—um—now I need to know—tell me where and when you were born.

CS: Okay, I was born in 1933—July the thirtieth, 1933, in Fort Smith, Arkansas.

SL: At Sparks Hospital?

CS: At Sparks Hospital. Uh—my mother and father was m—m—uh—Harry Shipley, and my mother was Maud Curtis Shipley.

SL: Okay. And—um—did they—what—what level of education did they complete?

CS: Well, my dad had a fourth-grade education.

SL: Mh-hmm.

CS: And went to work in a bakery [CS edit: Edmonson Bakery in Van Buren, Arkansas] when he was twelve years old in order to have something to eat and worked hard for a number of years for a—a family. And then eventually [CS edit: 1920] he and his brother were able to start the bakery. My mother, on the other hand, had the opportunity to—graduated from—uh—from—uh—

high school and—and had s—a couple of years of college—uh—which at that point in time, was all that's necessary in order to teach school. So—and she was—grew up in Oklahoma—in Sallisaw, Oklahoma, and went to school at—I'm not sure where. She went for a while to the state school for women in Oklahoma—Chickasha 'cause the schools in Sallisaw were not accredited . . .

SL: Okay. [*Laughs*]

CS: . . . at that point in time.

[00:03:35] SL: Okay. I'm gonna—I'm gonna leave that lineage just for a while.

CS: Okay.

SL: But I wanna go back to that. I wanna talk a lot about your mom and dad and your . . .

CS: Okay.

SL: . . . grandparents and your relatives and—and your growing up. But why don't we go ahead and—and do some work for the hospital . . .

CS: Okay.

SL: . . . and the foundation right now. Um—uh—how did you first come acquainted with the foundation? How did that come about?

CS: Well [*laughs*], that goes back to the very beginning. I was on the board of the hospital—uh—back in the early—uh—twenty years ago. [*Unclear word*] well, I was actually—went on in the [19]70s. I'm not sure of the date now offhand. And—uh—I got involved in the hospital through—um—I—I was a new man on the—on the board of the First National Bank and Hal Douglas and Ellis Shelton told me that I was gonna be the—the chairman of the campaign to raise money to—to build the North Street hospital—the big addition there. So from that, a couple years later I was asked to go on the board, and so I was on the board when we decided that—uh—the board did—that we needed to expand our—out into the community more and we needed a way to do that because there were only seven of us on the board and we needed to broaden our base. We needed to have a larger constituency and—for the hospital. And we needed—needed to do more programs and needed more people to be involved in everything that the hospital was doing. So the idea became apparent to us that we needed to have—make, perhaps, a foundation to encompass all of that and to put it un—under the umbrella of the—of a foundation. So there—so the board then elected to start a foundation, and this is our twentieth anniversary—our twentieth birthday party of that.

[00:05:30] SL: Um—so you're—you—you kind of—um—kind of—
um—graduated into the foundation. You—you said that Ellis
Shelton and—and Hal Douglas kind of recruited you to do a
campaign for the hospital.

CS: That was before . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

CS: . . . before I went on the hospital board.

[00:05:48] SL: And—and they just kind of let you know that you
were gonna chair this campaign?

CS: That's right, they did.

SL: Did you have any say in it at all?

CS: I didn't have much say in it. I was—I was the new kid on the
block, and—and that was my assignment, so—uh—and I had a
lot of support. And—and people have always been very
generous to the hospital. Uh—we had City Hospital, and then we
had Washington General Hospital. And then we—when we got
into the campaign at—way back there, we just changed the
name to Washington Regional Hospital [CS edit: Medical Center]
because we were the regional hospital for the area.

SL: Mh-hmm.

CS: And—and it—uh—it took on a life of its own. It's grown over the
years and—uh—and to where we are today out on—on 540 and

the beautiful campus. And—uh—the foundation—uh—has played, I think, a major role in that. If you were to look at it over a—the twenty-year period, I don't know how many millions of dollars have been raised through the foundation for the—for a variety of pur—of—of s—of—uh—activities that en—enhance the health care of the people of Northwest Arkansas. It's just—it would be amazing to know—uh—the hos—the foundation's been involved in two fund-raising drives in the last ten years, which—which probably has netted over \$20 million. And then when you go into the foundation, you look at all the things they do for all the—their—the umbrella for all the various activities—hospice—uh—uh—all the wellness programs, all the various things that the foundation does and supports—it's—it's amazing. And then, too, we have—we started the gala back there and—which has become an annual event. And this event this year is the fifteenth anniversary of that. So the foundation has been a wonderful thing for—uh—people of Northwest Arkansas.

[00:07:44] SL: This kind of—um—work gets to your heart, doesn't it?

CS: Well, it's been a labor of love for a lot—a lot of us—uh—have been involved in over the years and—uh—it's been a real wonderful thing to—to b—to be associated with. I had twenty-

eight years on the hospital board, and I've been on this board for all of the time that we've had the foundation—the twenty years.

[00:08:07] SL: Um—what—is there—are there any—uh—particular success stories that are—are close to your heart in the work that you've done with the board?

CS: With the board or with the foundation?

SL: With the foundation. I'm sorry.

CS: Well, the—the—um—there are a lot of heartwarming stories if you look back over the years of things. Uh—I look back at all the philanthropy that we've been able to do for other organizations other than the hospital—uh—people associated in health care. Be it Life Styles, be it—uh—uh—the—the free clinic, be it—uh—whatever it may be—uh—the foundation yearly has been able to make some donations to outside organizations involved in health care that benefit the people of the area. And all of those things have been heartwarming. And when you see people that are—where a little bit of money or a—the few thousand dollars we're able to raise through the gala and other things that—what it means to 'em—it's just been amazing. It's—so that's been a real heartwarming sort of thing.

SL: Let's talk a little bit about all the folks that it takes to make the

foundation successful. Just how—how big is—how big is the foundation? And—and you—you've been with it from the very beginning. What d—what do you see about the—the nature of—of the folks that you're involved with on the foundation?

CS: Well, we started out with a very small staff of just a f—just maybe one person or two, and now it's got a staff of—I don't know how many—seven or eight, maybe—and it's grown in that respect, too. And people have different responsibilities to do that. And the main thing is we have had wonderful board members over the years—uh—people that are willing to give their time and their energy to it and have worked to make all these events take place and help 'em take place. And—uh—all those things have been very heartwarming—uh—sort of thing. It's—it's been—it's a very congenial group. Uh—we have turnover and—and—uh—times change, and it's probably time for this guy to go to—go to the barn, too. [Laughs] I'm—I'm sure I'm on my last term, probably. But—uh—uh—it has been a real pleasure to have been associated with it.

SL: Um . . .

CS: It's a milestone—this, too—this—this fifteenth anniversary of the—uh—gala and the twentieth anniversary of the foundation is really a significant event, I think, for the community.

SL: It's a real celebration, isn't it?

CS: It really is. Definitely.

SL: Um—what about—is there any—what's the—is there anything really funny that ever happened or really surprising that has happened in—in your tenure with the foundation?

CS: Oh, I don't know about being funny—uh—necessarily. Uh—we've had a lot of interesting entertainment over the years for the gala that we sponsor each year, and—and that runs the gamut of all entertainers that you can think of, and some of those people have had—what always amazes me is—one of the things that always amazes me is some of the special requests these people have [*SL laughs*] that are—that are entertainment. They want so—so many rooms at the hotel and certain size car and so—and—uh—so much this and that and so much in the back room and so on. I mean, it—it just goes on and on. And—and so I'm never amazed that—uh—at all the—uh—security and everything that you have to have to have the—uh—someone come in and be your entertainment for a two-hour show.

[*Laughs*]

[00:12:01] SL: Yeah, I've—I've had to deal with the—what we call the m—riders—contract riders.

CS: The riders. That's exactly what it is.

SL: And sometimes . . .

CS: Lots of riders.

SL: Sometimes it's—uh—you know, sixty watts incandescent lighting and a deli tray arrays in an a—arranged in an attractive manner.

[Laughs]

CS: Or a certain bottle of wine or whatever it may be.

SL: Right.

CS: There's always something.

[00:12:22] SL: Right—right. Um—what do you think the future holds for the foundation?

CS: Well, I—I see great things for the foundation in the future. I think that we're really just getting started. Uh—as—as it grows and as we grow in—in dollars in the foundation—uh—there'll be more that we can do for the community and more we can do for health care—uh—for people in this part of the—in this part of the state. We are the major hospital in Northwest Arkansas. We are a not-for-profit hospital, which is very significant. We're the only one that way, and—and—and so that's very important. And it's important that we support it. It's a community hospital. We need to keep our tentacles out. We're not accountable to someone in another place—in another state somewhere, or we're not part of a c—of a—for-profit chain of hospitals, and—and

that makes us—that gives us the opportunity to be strong. It gives us the opportunity to do things that other people can't do and won't do and it—it—it's a—it's a wonderful opportunity for our people, I think.

SL: It being organized that way—that provides a sensitivity to the community, doesn't it?

CS: Well, and—and—and—and good contact. You have the contact from the board to this community and then to the communities or to Northwest Arkansas and then the foundation. And our foundation has people from both Washington and Benton County in it.

[00:14:00] SL: Um—let me see here. Um—do you have—I kind of asked you this—not really—do you have a favorite success story with the foundation?

CS: Well, I can't think anything offhand—uh—that—that I consider—uh—my big success story or a success story. I—I would have to say in the last—uh—ten years, the—uh—the success of the campaigns to build the new hospital at North Hills and the expansion of North Hills in this last campaign are tremendous milestones and tremendous success stories. And there are a lot of people involved in that, and a lot of people in the—on the board and—and the board of the foundation have had—have

played very significant roles in that. So that would be my—the fact that we started off very small and—and have been able to do as much as we have in the last ten years I think is very significant.

[00:15:03] SL: You all have created, really, a medical community out there, haven't you? I mean . . .

CS: We really have. Next to—next to the University, the health care is our important industry in Fayetteville. And the hospital is a major employer with over two thousand employees and—and—uh—nearly four hundred doctors, and I'm not even sure of my numbers—how correct they are now. But—uh—it's—that's a huge impact on this area, and it's—health care is—is a critically important thing, and the fact that we can do these things here at home and not have to go off to St. Louis or Little Rock or someplace—Tulsa—to receive good health care is very—very important.

SL: Is there anything else that you want to say that we—you haven't had a chance to say? Is there something that I'm overlooking that you'd like to add or . . .

CS: Well, I'd like to say—I'd like to—I think we've had wonderful staff at the foundation through the years. They've provided leadership to us and—uh—we—it's been a wonderful thing for

me to have had the opportunity to serve on the foundation board with so many wonderful people and leaders in our community and—both men and women. And it's been a real pleasure.

[00:16:18] SL: Okay. Now, Janet?

JM: Curtis—Curtis, one of the things that I know that you was real big about—when the Center for Exercise was—was the swimming pool.

CS: Oh yes. *[Laughter]* I'm real . . .

SL: Tell me about that.

CS: I'm real excited about the new Center for Exercise that we're gonna have at North Hills. It'll open in April. And it's gonna have a swimming pool. And—uh—I've had two knee replacements, and swimming is a wonderful, wonderful therapy for your knees. And so I'm really excited about the—uh—swimming pool coming to—to the Center for Exercise. And I'm planning on being right out there *[laughs]* the first day jumpin' in it, and I'm looking forward to that. And I think that will be a huge asset to everybody in the community. The Center for Exercise does a wonderful job—uh—uh—giving people the opportunity to exercise, and as you get older, that's more important than it has ever been. And I certainly appreciate the opportunity to do that.

SL: Good question.

JM: And the ER. We have the busiest ER in the state. [SL clears throat]

CS: Yes, we do. Uh—uh—you know, the expansion at North Hills of the—of the emergency room has been tremendous, too, and people don't realize that over fifty thousand people a year visit our emergency room at Washington Regional. And—and the—the—the room has—the space has just been overcrowded, and—and we—you know, they built that—we thought we'd doubled or tripled it when we—when they built the original building ten years ago, and now it's—it's just grown tremendously. And the new emergency room is just gonna be a real asset. I hope that—and as they get into it and get it stabilized and the help there necessary, it's gonna make a big difference in health care for people coming to the emergency room.

[00:18:10] SL: That's good. That's really good. Anything else?

CS: Uh—there are a lot of wonderful things out there at the—at the he—medical center, and you know, and it takes a lot of—it takes a—a bunch of people to make something work and to—to go raise the money necessary to build—you can't—you can't do it on the backs of sick people, either. You've gotta have help from community—the citizens of the community, and—and we've had

marvelous support for our building projects at—at the hospital.

JM: Well, you ha—I think you can also—could talk about the employees, how they have donated big to the—it's—we—our campaign for this year wasn't going to be so much a—a—a dollar amount, but participation, and we almost had 50 percent participation. I think right—right now we're at 48 or 49 percent participation of the employees.

CS: Well, the—the employees—you know, you think of the employees—uh—whether they would contribute anything at all. And the fact that that many—50 percent—have contributed to the hospital cam—campaign is really remarkable. And—uh—and the doctors have done well, and it—it really has been a—universally has been a very successful campaign for the hospital. The foundation has played a major role in all of that. Think of . . .

JM: And we're—and we're eventually gonna have a clinic in Springdale also. [Laughs]

CS: Well, that's right, too.

[00:19:46] SL: Do you want to talk about that?

CS: Do you want to talk about it?

JM: I—I don't know too much about it, Curtis. I can't tell [*unclear words*] . . .

CS: Well, I can—let me just say that the—uh—uh—that Washington Regional now is gonna place a—a—a clinic in west Springdale at Har-Ber Meadows—in the Har-Ber Meadows area, and that will be a major addition to our facilities. It'll be a complete clinic with full services, and I think we'll be well received in that part of—in that west side of Springdale. 'Cause if you think about it, it's actually closer to come down I-540 to Washington Regional than maybe it is to go to downtown Springdale. So it's really be—it's—it'll be a natural thing. The hospital—you know, serves—when you think—if you live in West Fork or Greenland or Winslow or Elkins or out at the—on out—St. Paul or at the—Prairie Grove and Farmington—out that way, you almost have to drive by Washington Regional if you go somewhere else. So we are the ch—the hospital of choice, and they'll come to us as long as we do our job and don't—long as the hospital takes care of the people the way they should and give 'em good service and provide the medical care that they need. And I think that's the challenge of tomorrow and the challenge as it always has been, and hopefully we can—they can continue to do that at a—in the manner they have to this day.

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:21:25] SL: The clinic in west Springdale—is that the first effort—

kind of a—that's kind of a satellite effort, isn't it?

CS: It is a satellite, but it's not—we also have a clinic up in the Bentonville area that we've had for years and years and years where our specialists from here would go up there and provide services, so that's been up there as well. And it's a—the clinics are important, and they provide a service. And then the referral service, of course, is important to the hospital from the clinics.

[00:22:05] SL: Any other future plans for clinics elsewhere, or is it just kind of one brick at a time? You . . .

CS: Well, I don't know about that. You're gonna have to ask [laughs] somebody else that question.

SL: Okay.

CS: I'm not sure what the expansion plans are. But I have witnessed in my thirty-five years or so of experience with the hospital a tre—we've watched our community grow from a small city to a—to where we are today. We've watched our hospital grow from a small fifty-bed hospital to where it is today, where it's over four hundred beds and over two thousand—twenty-two hundred employees—something like that. And health care is just a huge thing for us in this community and it provides good jobs and good opportunities for people. And it mainly—it lets us keep our people at home to be—receive health care.

SL: That was a good one.

JM: Mh-hmm.

[00:23:09] SL: Anything else?

JM: No. Offhand, I can't think of anything. That's basically what—the foundation got the award that's—you know, the philanthropy award we just got.

CS: Okay.

SL: Well, let's talk about that.

JM: Mh-hmm.

CS: Well, we were real honored this year at the National Philanthropy Day program for Northwest Arkansas. We—the foundation got the award for the outstanding philanthropy—for the job we do and for the services we render and for the dee—good deeds.

And we were extremely honored to get that. This is a very prestigious award and very significant that we were able to win it, and we were just absolutely delighted to do so. So it was a big deal.

SL: Okay. Think we got . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . enough to work with here?

JM: Think so.

SL: Okay.

JM: Think so.

CS: That it?

SL: Good job. [Laughter] That's a good job. Boy, that was just kinda—wham, wham, wham, wham!

CS: Do you want do it over again?

JM: No.

CS: We'd probably think of somethin' else.

[Tape Stopped]

[00:24:14] CS: I just want to say one final thing about it, and the foundation really took off when it sort of took on a life of its own. In other words, when we expanded from the board level to the board of the—to the—and created the foundation, we were able to include so many more people involved in the work of the hospital that it gave—we broadened our constituency, we were able to reach out further, and we were able to do so many more things than we were able to do otherwise. So that was a very significant thing. I think the fact that the board is about twenty or twenty-five—I'm not sure exactly how many are on the board now for sure. We rotate off and rotate on, and it's been a very significant thing that to have—reach out into the community to the various aspects to include people on the board, so . . .

SL: Okay.

CS: I didn't . . .

SL: That's good.

CS: . . . I didn't say that exactly the way I wanted to end it, but . . .

SL: No, well, do you want to say it again? You can say it again.

CS: No, that's all right. I just—anyway, the idea of what I'm saying is you—the first board—and I'm saying this off the record—the first board was just the seven members of the hospital board.

SL: Right.

CS: And so we weren't able to do hardly anything because they're—we were consumed with running the hospital—trying to run the hospital and giving our time to that. So there was no time, really, for the foundation to develop. So once we got beyond the seven of us to include others in the community, we were able to grow the community—grow the foundation and make it reach out to other people and expand what we did, and when you look at scholarships—when you look at all the things we do, which is phenomenal. It's a fifty-item list of things that we support. It's just amazing.

JM: Great. That was good.

SL: Okay. I loved that. Yeah.

JM: Yeah.

[Tape stopped]

[00:26:18] SL: Well, Curtis, that was a great job for the hospital you just did, and I do want to get back to your earliest memories. And just to quickly recap, you were born in Fort Smith, Arkansas, and you had a father who—whose education level was fourth grade. You had a mom that got a couple years of college in. Wha—do—what is your earliest memory of your mom and dad? And you can talk about them separately. Do you have your earliest memory of your dad, let's say?

CS: Oh, I can remember—gosh, I don't know, when I stop and think about it, I can remember—I grew up in a very—what—I grew up at a time when—in the Depression everybody was living fairly conservatively and tryin' to get by and that sort of thing. However, the bread business was a pretty good business to be in. And so when I was four—three or four or five, I can certainly have wonderful memories of Dad, who would always carry me to Sunday school on Sunday mornings, and who fixed my oatmeal for me in the mornings for—before breakfast, and would do things like that. Mother ran the house. At that point in time, we had two live in—two ladies that lived with us—young girls who were from the Subiaco-Scranton area—German Catholics who would—there—they wouldn't let them work in stores, but they'd let them live in people's homes. So we had—Mother had

someone to help her with the cooking and someone to take care of the small children, myself and my younger sister. And in my family, we have two families. I have an older brother, Harry, who is eleven years older than I am, and I have a sister who is ten years older than I am. And I was a big surprise in 1933. [SL laughs] And Dad and Mother were so pleased about that that they decided to have another one or try to have another one. And so I have a younger sister, too, Sally. So there are four Shipley children, and we're all still living—this—here in 2008, which I'm very pleased with and very proud of.

[00:28:43] SL: That's a blessing.

CS: So we grew up in a big house where there were four children, and we had help. We had a lot of things. Dad worked all the time—the bakery—seven days a week. He would go take us to church on Sunday morning, and we'd go, as soon as Sunday school was over, we'd go down to the bakery and check to be sure everything was runnin'. Then we'd run home and get Mother and then come back to church—the Methodist Church—First Methodist Church—and I have a lot of wonderful memories of that. And course, the fact that we had help—and then when was church was over, Sunday dinner was ready, and that was always a major thing. And it would be sitting on the table

because my dad played golf on Sunday afternoons. [Laughs] So he would be off to the Hardscrabble Country Club to play golf. And after we had naps, which we all did in those days. There wasn't any air-conditioning. We all had naps under—on pallets in the floor in summer and winter. Then we'd go walk a couple blocks over to my grandparents' who lived just a couple blocks away, and spend some time with them. By the time my dad would get back in the afternoons, why, we would then go to the bakery and out to see my other grandparents, the Shipleys, who lived on—out on 39th Street in Fort Smith. So I have wonderful childhood memories of Mother and Dad, and that would fill a book almost. I could talk about them forever, really.

[00:30:15] SL: We'll, we're—I wanna talk about 'em a little bit. I wanna—I'm a little bit curious about the help that you all had. You said they couldn't work in the stores. Is that because they were too young to work in the stores?

CS: No, it was just—I really don't know why. They didn't want 'em—they wanted them to—I think the—I think this—the feeling was that they wanted them to live in a home—at home and learn how to be a housekeeper and a mother and a—to participate in the ru—the household—the running of a household, to learn those skills, and not to work in a store in public. In other

words—for some reason—now we had one girl that stayed with us ten years and one twelve years, and when the war came—World War II started, and soldiers came to Fort Chaffee both these girls married, and that was the end of that. I mean, they—from that day on, we had help—Mother had help some, but not live-in help.

[00:31:18] SL: Now you said you had a big house. Is this a . . .

CS: Well, we had a big two . . .

SL: . . . two-story house?

CS: . . . two—big—story house with four or five bedrooms and sleepin' porch. We slept on the sleepin' porch a lot in the summer and winter. Had an attic fan. That was—there wasn't any air-conditioning. We had a floor furnace for heat in the downstairs, and the heat would go upstairs. We had a couple floor—two or three floor furnaces. Had—I can remember—my earliest memories, too, were the ice truck coming with ice for the refrigerator. There—we had a refrigerator on the back porch. Everybody then had a back porch with a refrigerator, and you put ice in that, and then we had a regular refrigerator—electric refrigerator in the kitchen. But there were two refrigerators. One was—and for years and years and years, they'd—growin' up there in the thirty—early [19]30s—they

brought ice a couple times a week to put in the icebox, which was kind of an unusual thing. You don't think about that at all today, but that was just something that happened in those days.

SL: Did they have milk deliveries, too?

CS: Oh, milk was delivered. You bet. We got our milk from the Bellzon Dairy, which was a local dairy, and they brought milk two or three times a week and would bring it to the back door and put it on the back steps. [Laughs] And that's where you'd find it in the morning when you woke up and went out to get your milk and that sort of thing.

[00:32:47] SL: Now your mother's maiden name was Curtis.

CS: Yes, uh-huh.

SL: And her parents lived in Fort Smith as well. Is that . . .

 CS: They did. My grandparents were interesting—had grew up in Newton County, and they left Newton County—my grandfather was twenty-one. He was elected county clerk in Newton County, and he was studyin' for the law, which is what you did then, instead of goin' to law school. There weren't that many law schools, and this was back in the 1800s. And he studied for the law and passed the Bar exam, and he had married my grandmother, and they had one child. And they left and moved—went to Oklahoma in 1897 to Sallisaw. And my

grandfather was a great big, good-looking guy, and he was involved in the territorial legislature for the state of Oklahoma and went to the—he was in the first Oklahoma legislature. And because he was a good politician—big Baptist—good-looking guy—good on his feet—he gave up politi—the railroad hired him to be their lawyer for the state of Oklahoma—the Missouri Pacific Railroad. So that was just like a gold mine for a law—young lawyer, and he became—gave up politics for—to represent the railroad, which provided for his six girls. There were six girls in his—six children in the family—his family. And—but in—before he got out of politics, he was the Democratic National Committeeman for Oklahoma and led the Oklahoma Delegation to the 1907 convention—Democratic Convention in St. Louis. He was pledged to William Jennings Bryan, and I've got his badge—upstairs [*laughs*] in the den—that he wore.

[00:34:55] SL: That's a great story. Now you told me that he was a part of the territorial legislature. Is this prestatehood?

CS: Prestatehood. Oklahoma became a state in 1907. Or 1908—[19]07, I believe. And they—he was in the territorial legislature as a representative from Sequoyah County. Well, in those days, Oklahoma City and Tulsa were not very large—very small cities, really, and Sallisaw was considered a pretty good-size town—

Muskogee and that sort of thing. And so he was elected as a—to represent Sequoyah County in the territorial legislature, and he wrote—was instrumental in writing what is known as the code of laws, which are still in effect in the state of Oklahoma. And I don't know exactly what that is, but I've always been told that. And he had one set of books also written in Cherokee, which was important for Sequoyah County. 'Cause the Cherokees were the most civilized of the Five Tribes. And Sallisaw was still right on the edge of that, with Tahlequah and Stillwell and so forth—and where they were located. But he wa—he represented the railroad, and that was provided for—a good income for his family, and other people, too. And in 1920, he moved back to Fort Smith. They wanted him to move to Oklahoma City or—and said he could move to Fort Smith and handle the Oklahoma part of it—the railroad's business—out of Fort Smith, and that's what he did.

SL: Those were kind of wild days, then.

CS: Well, they were wild days. He was over there in the days of Pretty Boy Floyd in Sallisaw and others that were—it was pretty wild and wooly in Oklahoma in those days. Now Pretty Boy Floyd was later in the—around the twe—in the early—[19]20s, I think, but . . .

SL: Right. But he was there back when it was [*squeaking noise as door opens*] . . .

JE: Let's stop for a second.

[Tape stopped]

[00:37:16] SL: Okay. So we're talkin' territorial day—let's talk a little about territorial days and—does—did your grandfather ever tell you any stories durin' that territorial time when he . . .

CS: Not really. He died in 1944 in [*coughs*] Fort Smith. And I don't remember—the territorial legislature was at Guthrie, Oklahoma, and everybody thought that would be the capital of Oklahoma, and I think it was until it was—I think—and then I think it was then—in the first legislature or very soon thereafter was moved to Oklahoma City. And he was a politician, and he was a big Baptist layman and very prominent in the church and so on and had all the credentials of a—that you needed to be a [*laughs*] successful politician—good on his feet, talking, and that sorta thing. And he had a very, very good, prosperous law practice. And he had—of course, they had six girls to raise, so that was—that was a challenge, too. And they—the schools weren't accredited in Ok—and my grandmother, I think, started the public schools in Sallisaw, Oklahoma—at least she's been credited with having started—instrumental in getting them

started. And she sent the girls off to the state school for women at Chickasha through high school to get their high school educations and that sort of thing.

[00:39:00] SL: Well, six daughters kind of indicates to me that his wife must've been pretty strong-willed—pretty strong person. And I guess she was an educator if she started the schools, to—can you tell me a little bit about . . .

CS: My grandmother?

SL: . . . your Grandmother Curtis?

CS: Well, she was born in, Jasper, Arkansas, Newton County. Her father was named Robert Washington Harrison, and he had a store on the square in Jasper. It was known as Lightning Bob's. [SL laughs] And he was very successful, and they were—they had a general store. And my grandmother's mother died when she was just very young, and so her father remarried at some point, didn't have any more children, but apparently the second wife, the second mother, was only a few years older than my grandmother, so she didn't like that. So the first chance she had to leave, why—or get married, she did, and she married my grandfather and then they—who worked in the store and was studying law, and then they left to go to Oklahoma. But she was very strong-willed gal, and we all—we called her Nana, and Nana

was very important to all of us. She lived to be eighty-five or eighty-six—something like that. And we—anytime she barked, we jumped. [Laughter] That's for sure.

[00:40:41] SL: Well, let's—wha—let's talk a little about barkin' and jumpin'. Do you remember—she outlived your grandfather, obviously.

CS: Yes, uh-huh.

SL: So you probably do ha—you had a little more time to spend with her, I would guess.

CS: Well, I did. She lived only a block away, and—or a block and a half from where I lived in Fort Smith. So growing up, my grandfather and grandmother—my grandmother and grandfather both said, "If you marry my daughter, you bring her home for Christmas." So for all the years—early years of growin'—childhood, why, all of my cousins and my aunts and uncles came to Fort Smith for Christmas. And they were a block away, and this was a big three-story house, and we had a week of fun with the cousins. There were fourteen first cousins, and we all [SL laughs] are very close and even today, we're still close. And there are eight of us still living—of first cousins. And—but Nana and Papa were very strong that way. And then we all had to account for ourselves—the s—grandchildren. On Christmas Day

he'd call each of us up to the head of the living room, and we had to say what we'd done to be—we were proud of, how we were doing in school, and what we were doin' in—with our sports and activities and so on. And then his final question was always, "Are you being good to your mother?" And then the answer was always yes, of course. [Laughter]

SL: Yeah, that's a wonderful tradition.

CS: And then he would give us a silver dollar, and that was the—that was one of the highlights of Christmas was to stand up before your aunts and uncles and cousins and explain what you'd been doing—that you had good grades or reasonably good grades and what you were proud of in your—that happened to in the—durin' the year. And then answer the question about "Have you been good to your mother?" And then he would give you a silver dollar. So that was very significant. So all durin' the [19]40s—[19]30s and [19]40s—from all during that time frame, why, I can remember, Christmases were very important. Then these cousins would all come, too, in the summertime to visit their grandparents, and their mothers would bring them back to Fort Smith. And they lived in Oklahoma and Texas and around different places, and we'd all get together, of course. And then the big treat would be to—how to stay cool in the summertime—

to drive down Garrison Avenue and cross the Fort Smith bridge into Oklahoma and turn around and try to cool off before you'd try to go to bed at night and that sort of thing. And—or go down to Kress's and Woolsworth, and they'd give us all a dime or fifteen cents, and we'd see what we could buy for fifteen cents at Woolworth's or Kress's down on Garrison Avenue. So a lotta good memories of the early years in Fort Smith.

SL: That's back when Woolworth's would have a soda fountain.

CS: Oh yeah, they all had soda fountains. You bet. Then . . .

SL: Um . . .

[00:44:06] Trey Marley: Can you clarify the neighborhood that you grew up in? And you said you were walking back and forth to your grandparents' house?

CS: Yes, I lived at—our . . .

TM: Can you talk to Scott, sir . . .

CS: Okay. Our family home was on South 25th Street—708 South 25th Street. I was about a block and a half from what was then Fort Smith Senior High. [Coughs] My grandparents lived on the corner of Rogers Avenue and 26th Street, and my uncle, W. G. Shipley, who my dad was in business with, was on the school board. My Grandfather Curtis was on the school board. I lived next door to the Ramseys—J. W. Ramseys, who—he was the

superintendent of the Fort Smith School District. And my family doctor, who lived a block away—a Dr. A. A. Blair, who was a—founders of the Cooper Clinic—was our family doctor. He was on the school board. And my best friend's father, Tony Dyke—his father, Francis Dyke, was on the school board. So I had a lot of school connections goin' those early years. But I grew up on South 25th Street and 26th—24th, 25th, and 26th—right in the middle of town. And the home we grew up in was—Dad added a second floor to it as the family grew. And then—he bought the house, he says, for three reasons, and the three reasons are these: close to church, close to school, and close to the bakery. And I've followed that same thing here in Fayetteville.

[*Laughter*] I've lived—we've lived in this house since 1962, and I bought it for three reasons: close to church, close to school, and close to Dickson Street and the bakery.

[00:46:08] SL: That's good. Now we've talked about the Curtis side of your grandparents. Do we—have we—tell me a little bit about the Shipley grandparents.

CS: Okay. This is kinda interesting, too, and my Grandfather Shipley's name was William Lester Shipley, and he was born in Crawford County in 1857. Let's see, is—is am I saying this right or not? I think I am. Yes. And he—his—they were what I call

Northern Methodist.

SL: [Laughs] What is a Northern Methodist?

CS: Well, in the Civil War there were—the church split into two groups: Northern Methodists and the Methodist Episcopal Church South. And a lot of the churches in western Arkansas—north Arkansas were—stayed with the northern branch of the Methodist church. And my grandfather's family had a—his father had a brother-in-law that was a Methodist preacher, and I think that's why they did that. And anyway, they had a—my grandfather actually witnessed—a member of his family was hung in their front yard for being a—they thought he had tipped off somebody about the—some Confederates in the neighborhood or something, and so they came to the door one morning, and my grandfather actually witnessed his father and oldest brother hung—they hung 'em in the front yard of their home in—down in Crawford County. So that has clouded the Shipley politics [/aughs] from then . . .

SL: No kidding.

CS: . . . until now somewhat. They were Northern Methodist, and so they grew up—my grandfather went broke, and he grew up in a household where there was no father after the Civil War, and women couldn't own property. And even thought they'd been



fairly prosperous farmers, they really nearly starved to death. And they had a hardscrabble existence in that—in northern part of Crawford County. [00:48:48] My grandfather—my father was born in Chester in 1888—my father. And his—while they were building the tunnel on the railroad at Winslow, and he had a little store down there and he—about ninet—1890—a couple years later—1990—somewhere in there he went broke in the store, and they moved back to Fort Smith to Van Buren. And when they did, the—they had a farm on the Arkansas River. Well, spring came and the flood came and they lo—ended up losin' everything they had. So Dad was twelve, his brother was fifteen, and the two boys went to work for an old German in, then, the Edmondson Bakery in Van Buren, Arkansas. And about 1900 or 1902—something like that—they moved the bakery to Fort Smith, which was becoming the g—bigger city. So when that happened, why, my father moved across the river to Fort Smith and continued to operate—the two brothers operated—and by then they'd been with this guy fifteen years, and they continued to operate his bakery for him, and they work—stayed with him until 1920. And then they decided to go into business for themselves, and he died and left the bakery to sold to someone else, so they didn't get a chance to get it—to

buy it. So they went in business for themselves and started the Shipley Baking Company in 1920. And it grew immediately in Fort Smith, and in 1923 they built a bakery in McAlester, Oklahoma; 1924 in Muskogee; and then in 1926 bought a bakery up here in Fayetteville on the Fa—on the south side of the square. And that's how we got to Fayetteville. But in those days, the railroads ran a lot of places, and there weren't many highways and good roads and things, and so they shipped a lot of bread from Fort Smith on the railroad. And they used to send 'em in great big wooden boxes. They were about 5 x 5 or 6 x 6—wooden boxes. And you could stack a hundred loaves of bread in there. [Laughs] Of course, bread wasn't sliced or wrapped. And so you'd ship it on the train—they'd stop at Rudy and drop off a case of bread—a box of bread—a hundred loaves of bread, and the grocer would pick it up at the—on the train—the train station and take it to the store and sell it. Then people—when they started slicing bread and wrapping bread, then people quit making bread at home so much. And that was during the [19]20s, and the bakeries just grew like nobody's business. So all through the Depression, really, a bakery was a pretty good place to work because bread was only a nickel a loaf, but nickels added up and made dollars, and there was

commissioned sales for salespeople, and it worked out to be a pretty good thing. And that's been true even today. In recessions or in hard times when times get tough a little bit, the bread business is a pretty good business because people are gonna eat more sandwiches, and they're gonna—they'll—they eat less cake [*laughs*] and stay with the very basic bread and do that sorta thing. So it's kind of that sort—it's a good business in hard times.

[00:52:45] SL: So that product—that technology—that really gives a lot of weight to "the best thing since sliced bread," doesn't it?

CS: Well, it does, and sliced bread was a huge thing—huge thing. And the wrapping of bread was a huge thing. And—because they—for many years you didn't—as I stated, you just—you could make a loaf of bread, but they didn't know what to do with it. And the—it—bread stales if you don't wrap it or cover it up or something, and so it was real—it was—sliced bread was a—was a huge advancement in this industry.

SL: Yeah, it—of course, when the sliced thing came in, you had to wrap it.

CS: Yeah.

SL: Like, you couldn't . . .

CS: You didn't—yeah, that's right.

SL: . . . you couldn't throw 'em in the box.

CS: No, that's right. That's right.

SL: And so you'd send—you all would send cases of bread every day on the train. It was a daily thing.

CS: Oh well, the trains—Fort Smith was a major train depot there—had several railroads goin' different directions, and you could ship bread on the train and they—the bakery was right next door to the—or across the street from the Frisco Station, and a lot of the bread going north and south went up—it went on the train. And then you'd go east and west on the Missouri Pacific. And Oklahoma and so on. And so it wasn't far in the sense of the way it is today with trucks, but it—still at the time, it was fairly—you know, you could ship bread a good ways. During the Depression in the early [19]30s, we actually closed the bakery here in Fayetteville for a couple years and shipped all the bread up here on the train until 1936, and we built the building on Dickson Street, where the bakery was until about ten years ago.

[00:54:42] SL: Well, I kind of hate to leave the—I know we'll get back to the baking business here . . .

CS: Okay.

SL: . . . in a little bit. Let's get back to you growing up in Fort Smith. How big a town was Fort Smith when you were born and

growin' up down there?

 CS: Well, okay, I was born in [19]33, so by World War II, we had—
Fort Chaffee came to town. Or—which later became Fort
Chaffee. And there were 75,000 men out at Chaffee . . .
SL: My gosh.
CS: . . . in the early [19]40s, and people took in boarders and
families that would come to see their loved ones before they
went overseas. The 6th Armored Division was there initially and
the 14th Armored Division, two armored divisions, which later
became part of General Patton's Ar—Third Army. And I can
remember the soldiers ridin' the buses and being downtown on—
when they'd get a pass to come downtown and ride the bus into
town and go to the bus station. There'd just be hundreds of 'em
out there waiting on a bus to go back and forth. Growing up was
interesting in that sense during the war because nobody—World
War II—nobody had anything, particularly. Fathers were gone,
and brothers were gone, and families were broken bec—with
people in the service. So I was—I went to Peabody grade
school—six years there and then went to Fort Smith Junior High
School that way and then gr—and then—and high school at Fort
Smith Senior High. And now that—which is now Northside. And
I had a—I think growin' up was kind of interesting in a way, and

I often refer to this in that people in my age bracket—because of everybody being gone to war and the war goin', there wasn't any sugar. There wasn't any new cars. There wasn't any things to buy much, and we all kinda were in the same boat, so everybody was kinda equal. It was kind of a very pleasant thing. We were all very much aware of the news from Europe and the Pacific, and growin' up was kind of an interesting thing. You were grateful for the things you had. You were grateful that people were well. My mother was a Gray Lady out at Fort Chaffee. She'd go out once a week and work in the hospitals as a Gray Lady to help take care of wounded soldiers. The bread business was interesting in that there was only—there wasn't any sugar much, so you couldn't make sweet goods at all hardly, and you had a loaf of sandwich bread, a loaf of—one pound loaf of bread, a loaf of wheat and a rye and a bun and a hot dog, and that was it. And you didn't pick up any stale bread because anything—you made something you could sell it. As you'd get the flour to make it, that's—it was—I mean, and the flour, water, salt, and yeast are what you need in order to make a loaf of bread, basically.

[00:58:04] SL: Were those rationed as well, those ingredients?

CS: Well, some were hard to find and hard to get, and so it was

difficult time. And but anyway, it was a challenge, and Dad, course, operated the bakeries—he and his brother—the four bakeries. And we were very much involved with army life because there was—it—Chaffee—Fort Chaffee changed things in Fort Smith. I mean, there were lots of people there, and there were s—people there for a year or two, then moved on, or maybe for six or eight months or a school term. And then families would move on back home or whatever, and so that was fun, too. I mean, it was interesting time.

SL: So that influx in population and all the relatives that came in to be next to the soldiers—I mean, you saw a big influx in the school population? I mean, were there . . .

CS: Well, not particularly that so much. It seems like there were just a—the town kind of mushroomed from the [19]30s and [19]40s up until it became a pretty good-size city afterwards.

[00:59:14] SL: You know, the descriptions and the residents in your neighborhood sound like a pretty affluent group of folks. I mean, you had doctors and . . .

CS: We did . . .

SL: . . . school board presidents and . . .

CS: Yeah.

SL: . . . and business owners. And you mentioned that during the

Depression there was kind of a leveling . . .

CS: There was.

SL: . . . everyone was kind of in the same boat. So that . . .

CS: That's ri . . .

SL: . . . that's an interesting mix going on there.

CS: I think it was. And then I even think even after that, when World War II was over, I was—in [19]45, I was thirteen and getting ready to go to high school, and then very soon thereafter, the, when I was a senior in high school, the Korean War started. And a lot of the people in my senior class in high school, boys, went into the service. They had been exposed to the army and to the—to—with Chaffee and lo—and knew people there and knew about it and were comfortable with it, and so a lotta people joined immediately ri—as seniors in high school and went into the service. And I came up here to the university to go to school—go to college, and I had a deferment for four years to—while I was in college, but . . .

[01:00:42] SL: Now you had an older brother, right?

CS: Yes, uh-huh.

SL: Did he go to war? Did . . .

CS: Yes, he did. He was in ROTC at the university. He was a freshman in 1939, and then he graduated in [19]42. And

because he was in the Army ROTC program at the university, he got to finish—go ahead and finish school and graduate. And as soon as he graduated, why, he went to Fort Benning, Georgia, to a—some kinda school down there and then went overseas as an infantry replacement officer in the army. And then he was wounded in Belgium just before the Battle of the Bulge and, fortunately for him, and was removed back to England, or he probably wouldn't have made it. Or a good chance he wouldn't have made it. A lot of his unit was wiped out in the Battle of the Bulge. And then he came back to England and then came back to Brooke Hospital in San Antonio and was there for a while. He had shrapnel in his knee, and he's having a little trouble with that knee now. [Taps his knee] He'll be eighty-six years old in March.

SL: Is he still pretty sharp and . . .

CS: Oh yeah, he's doin' fine. He's—and we are—he wa—he and I were in business together for—from—our father died in 1965. From 1965 to [19]96 or [19]97, we were in business together.

[01:02:14] SL: You know, there's a—there's a Library of Congress effort right now to do oral histories with war veterans.

CS: Right.

SL: Does your brother ever talk much about the war? Did . . .

CS: Some. Not a lot. Not a lot. He didn't get involved until [19]42 or [19]43—went overseas, I guess. And then by [19]45 he was back. You know, he was in the hospital in England. He went to England and trained before he was sent—went to Europe. And not a lot . . .

SL: A lot of 'em don't. They—a lot of 'em don't.

CS: I've never heard him really talk a whole lot about it. [01:02:55] I can remember—I can remember very clearly the call from Western Union that they were gonna bring us a telegram, and we did not know what that was gonna be. And we were relieved to know when we got the telegram when the Western Union guy got there that Harry had been wounded but was fine—that he had been with—that he had been wounded in action. And course, so many people got telegrams with death messages that it just scares you to death.

SL: Yeah.

CS: The whole thing. And the first time he came home—I never will forget this 'cause this was a huge treat—the Ward family had Ward's Ice Cream in Fort Smith. And that was an old—I—they were the dominant ice cream manufacturer, and they knew that my brother was coming home for his first leave from Brooke Army Hospital. And they brought by five gallons of vanilla ice

cream. And that was just like gold from heaven. It was just really wonderful to—you know, I never will forget that. Mr. Ward was a very generous guy, and anyway, he came to the front door and was carrying five gallons of ice cream. I remember that very clearly.

SL: Um . . .

CS: And my—during that same time frame, my older sister was in school in Virginia in Randolph-Macon. And she was off—she'd have to ride the train in the fall and come home at Christmas and go back to—on the train and, you know, take several days to get back to school and so on. And so she was over there in Virginia with—you know, there were a number of people from Fort Smith in school over in that area, in girls' schools and whatnot, and so that was her experience durin' that—war years. And they all dated soldiers and ended up, you know, marryin' somebody that they had been in the service after the war or whatever.

[01:05:38] SL: Uh-huh. So I guess by the nature of Camp Chaffee—later Fort Chaffee—Fort Smith probably experienced a lot of emotional time during the war because . . .

CS: They did.

SL: . . . they—it was inevitable that all those guys would be part of

the community, and their families would be part of the community and . . .

CS: Well, they weren't so much part of the community as they were—you knew—you were aware that they were out at Chaffee.

SL: Mh-hmm.

CS: And—which is just outside Fort Smith, and they would come down on a bus to—down Garrison Avenue to the bus station 'cause none of 'em had cars, for the most part, or very few of 'em did. And there wasn't any gasoline either. And then there'd just be hundreds of 'em. It'd be this sea of brown or green—whatever with their army uniforms, depending whether they had winter or summer. And it was that kind of thing, and [01:06:39]



Fort Smith is a—is an interesting town. They had—originally, the fort was built, Fort Smith, to keep the Indians under control in the Indian Territory.

SL: Right.

CS: And became the dominant town from a trade standpoint for the West, really—from all of Oklahoma, all of New Mexico, all that panhandle of Texas and all that in there, southern Colorado was all serviced out of Fort Smith. Everybody knows the stories of "Hanging Judge" . . .

SL: Parker.

CS: . . . Parker and the stories of that, and the US Marshal li—
museum that's coming to Fort Smith. Fort Smith's always been
a big trade center, and the patterns for trade in that day and
time were—early on and even the [19]40s, up until really the
late 1880—1970s or [19]80s, it was—had a huge trading—
dry-good companies and hardware stores and all that sort of
thing for small stores in little towns in Oklahoma and Arkansas
were serviced out of Fort Smith. So there's always been a lot
of—a lot in Fort Smith. And another thing is—Fort Smith is—that
has come and gone in Fort Smith, basically, is the furniture
industry. It was huge in furniture. And at one time in the late
[19]70s and [19]80s and the nine—and the—Fort Smith was
probably the second-largest furniture manufacturer in the
country—made all kinds of furniture in various plants. And so
that influenced Fort Smith, too. But because of the original
association as a fort and then Fort Chaffee, we've always had
this kinsmanship with the military. And Fort Smith is a very
conservative town, as you probably know. And it's basically
connected to security and the safety of America and the—s—and
Fort Chaffee and the role that it played in everybody's lives
through a long period of time—National Guard and all the units
that trained there and that sort of thing. So it's a big, big thing.

[01:08:53] SL: Have we—before I forget, have we talked about your Grandpaw Shipley's wife?

CS: No, we haven't mentioned her. She was a Reed. Her last name—her name was Judith Reed. And they were—interesting family, and I don't—I knew her, but not—I don't know any of her family beyond her. There were nine children in the Shipley family. My dad's father and mother had nine children, and my dad was the fifth or fourth [CS edit: fourth or sixth] boy, and all of 'em histori—ended up, at one time or another, working for the bakeries. *[SL laughs]* Which is what you did in tha—and because their father and mother had had a hard time, the children *[sneeze in background]* basically took care of their mother and dad, which is the way people did it back in years ago. They—I know they made my grandfather a job down at the bakery, and he would come down, and they made him feel like the bakery wouldn't run unless he was there kind of thing. And he—and they were quite simple people and, you know, hard—had had a hard time growing up and that sort of thing. But my grandmother's family were Reed—there are a lot of Reeds in Benton and Washington County and then some still in Crawford County, and I'm sure we're kin to some of 'em through that connection.

[01:10:35] SL: So what do you remember about your Grandma Reed or Grandpaw Shipley? Do . . .

CS: Well, I remember this very clearly. On Sunday afternoons after Dad played golf, we went to the bakery, and then we'd go out to 39th Street in Fort Smith to see—the—my grand—his parents—my grandparents. And Grandpaw Shipley had a moustache and he was always sitting out on the front porch or sitting out on the yard in a chair, and if I would climb up in his lap and kiss him, he would give me a stick of Beeman's gum. [Laughter] And that was kind of the standard thing that he did. He always had Beeman's gum, and that was a gum that was very—was around for a long time years ago. And he was always kind of a quiet guy and never said a whole lot. And also had an aunt that lived—that had suffered from epilepsy, and she lived at home with my grandparents, Shipleys, Aunt Flossie. And so she would always be there, too. And we would come and see them. My dad didn't get married till he was thirty-three because he didn't have anything, and he wanted to get ahead in the world if he could before he got married. So he was thirty-three when he got married. My mother was nine years younger. And so by the time he and Mother married, he was—the bakery had started, and they were doin' fine, and he was a very proud guy, very

hardworking guy. And many of the things that have happened to Harry and I—to both of—to all of our family or have—were really tributes to him. He was a very strong individual, very solid guy—knew—worked all the time—s—very generous to his family—very good to his family and that kind of a person. And he never would accept things, too many responsibilities in the community because he felt like he wasn't prepared to—he wasn't a public speaker. He felt like he couldn't. He did fine when he would do it, but he just simply—he was recognized. He sat on the board of trustees of the [CS edit: First Methodist] Church for twenty-five, thirty years and did various things, but he was always reluctant to accept recognition or draw any recognition to himself. And so a lotta things that happened to us have been tributes to him.

[01:13:32] SL: Do you remember any particular conversation or moment you had with your dad when any kind of light came on for you that kind of pointed you in a direction or was it just watching him work as hard as he worked and just the way that he was that influenced you? Was there any—was there a moment—is there a moment that you had with him that . . .

CS: Not any single thing. I could probably think of one if I thought about it long enough, but I will say this about it, and that is this,

that he—anytime we wanted to do something that I—anytime I wanted to do something or had an opportunity to take advantage of something, if I would go talk to Dad about it 'cause it's gonna involve some time or energy or money or cost or something, and he would always say—if he said, "I—I'll—let me think about it a little while." Then that was a key sign that said, "Go ahead and make your plans. I'm probably gonna give you permission to do it, or I'll let you do it." But if he said, "No," then the show was over. [*Laughter*] I mean, there was no appeal for that.

SL: And you really . . .

CS: And no argument from it.

SL: It was expected that you would take these things to him.

You . . .

CS: Oh yeah.

SL: You would never just go off and . . .

CS: No, no, I wouldn't do anything. No. I—he wanted to be—he wanted to know what we were doing. He was proud of what we did, and he wanted to be involved in it, and he would say—but he never, never would say you could do it. Never would say you could do it. He would just simply say, "Well, let me think about it," or, "I'll see. We'll see about it, and I'll let you—we'll"—

whatever. But that meant that was a green light. And if he said "No," then that was the end of it.

[01:15:29] SL: Did he quiz you or question or, you know, keep up with what you had chosen to do? I mean, did he play a role any further after telling you he'd just think about it or . . .

CS: Well, sometimes—well, he'd want a full report. You know, you might be off on a trip somewhere or do something or have some no—something happen that you want—and then he'd want to know all the details about it and that sorta thing. Or he might go over and buy you a new suit, you know, to go on the trip with or to do whatever you're gonna do or that sorta thing. And he was very generous but—and he had a—he had—he operated by what is known as the golden rule: "He who has the gold makes the rules." [Laughter] And that was the wa—he made the rules.

SL: I like that.

CS: And there was no—there was no family vote [*laughs*] on anything. He—if he said, "Yes," then you—that was the way it was. If he said, "No," that was—that was it.

SL: Well . . .

CS: Very strong individual but very—and he had that persona, but on the other hand, he was very generous, too. I mean, we all have had very wonderful childhoods in many ways—in all ways, really,

with all the advantages. He wanted us to have the things he co—didn't have and he couldn't have. And he was proud of us, too.

[01:17:12] SL: It sounds like he probably kept you out of a lotta trouble and kept you steered right. I mean, it sounds like his judgments were probably pretty good.

CS: Oh yeah. I always knew if—he had a leather strap in the closet in the back living room [/laughs] if I got out of line too bad. He'd—I'd know that when he got home from the bakery, I'd be in trouble. You know, if I'd done something I shouldn't have done and—or whatever and I deserved a—some punishment, that he'd take me to the bathroom and give me a couple swats with [/laughs] that leather shaving strap. You know, the men—they used to have a leather shaving strap, and he'd sharpen his blades on that thing, and he'd—he could—he'd blister your bottom with it [/laughs] a couple times to make, you know, make [*unclear word*] he meant business. You didn't cross him very often.

SL: Well, I was just gonna say it doesn't sound like he abused that privilege. He . . .

CS: No.

SL: . . . he probably understood when that needed to happen and

when it didn't.

CS: I did.

[01:18:16] SL: Yeah. Well, let's talk about your mom just a little bit.

CS: Okay.

SL: What—do you have a—what's your earliest memory of your mom?

CS: Well, Mother always said that I was Mother's favorite. Now that may not be so [*laughs*] 'cause others would—my [*laughs*] ch—siblings would say the same thing. But I really do think that I was her—very special for her, and I was named aft—with the Curtis name, which is a family name. And incidentally, each of her sisters that have a son—had a son—have a son named Curtis in their name. And there are dozens of us, either William Curtis or Curtis or Steven Curtis or whatever. But anyway—so sh—I—my name was Curtis. My first name's William. My grandfather's name on both sides—both grandfathers' first names was William. So my name was William Curtis. And they elected to call me Curtis. Now some of the other cousins went by the name of Will or William or Bill or something else taking the first name William. But I'm the one that took the name Curtis, and so they gave me the name Curtis, and I think because of that I was real kind of,

you know, kind of—that she liked that. And we were very close, and she was very—always very warm and affectionate to us. And she lived—always lived within a couple blocks of her parents, you know, and she was the second of these six girls. And Mother was—you know, she ran the house, took care of the children, took care of those things 'cause Dad worked, and he worked on Saturday till five thirty or six. And on Sunday we went to church, and that—we had a routine of things, and life was much simpler, and there wasn't all the aversions that there are today, and you just simply didn't do a lot of things other than what was on the agenda and what was the expected and what was the order of the procedure of the—whatever you were tryin' to do. And that was the way things were. So Mother was a very generous person, though. She was a beautiful lady and very charming, and she had—they had a [coughs] good life. She liked to play bridge and do different things. She did a lot of charity work and different things, too, and . . .

[01:20:29] SL: Was she—you talked about your father's reluctance to be—commit to civic stuff extensively. Was your mother very active with the church or . . .

CS: Not particularly with the church as much. She didn't go to Sunday school. Dad was always in a men's Bible class, and then

he would come home and get Mother. Mother—we'd go to the bakery and then home to get Mother. But Mother was active in the church in that—she was in MYF—or not MYF, but in a church circle. I remember that. And she did a lot of things that way. The Curtis girls all liked to play cards, these six girls and their grand—my grand—their moth—my grandmother. And so they all—they had big canasta games and which was very popular then, and bridge and various things like that. And my Grandfather Curtis was very instrumental in all the girls getting good educations. And they all married college graduates except my mother, who married my dad.

[01:22:09] SL: So were you pretty self-motivated doin' the schoolwork or did—was your dad over your shoulder or your mom over your shoulder? Did you have a set time every evening when you did your homework or what was the routine? Give me a typical routine durin' the week, what . . .

CS: Okay. Well course, in the mornings you got up and get ready for school and have breakfast, and then you're off to school. And then during—when you came from home from school, why, I usually if I had homework, I took care of it fairly—tried to get it done before supper. And then if—and when we—because we had the four children at home and help, too, we always had a big

dinner. We had a full dinner every m—every evening in the dining room. And with everything—with meat and various vegetables and salads and whatever—dessert—some dessert—some sort. Mother's big job, I think, as much as anything was to get the—get all the food in for everybody and all that sorta thing. We had three meals a day if we—was during—if we weren't in school, we came home for lunch. I mean, we were there for lunch, so for three meals. And there would be the—you know, and Dad came home every day for lunch. And he also took a na—we took naps with him. He'd take a nap right after lunch and—before he'd go back to the bakery, and we had to do that.

[01:23:55] SL: Did you get a nap in before you'd go back to school or . . .

CS: No, not—this would be when I was growing up, before I started school. But then—and then—but when I was in school, I would—I'd try to get my homework done before supper, maybe if I could, and then after supper some. I had my own room, and I had a place to study. I had a stuttering problem when I was real little, and I've had an awful lot of extra help in the sense of having expression lessons and which was very popular at one time way back there. And a lot of public speaking lessons and

that sort of thing—to help me be able to present myself and to speak and talk and say what I thought and that sort of thing.

So . . .

[01:24:55] SL: When you-all would sit down for your meal, was there ever—did anyone ever say a prayer, or was it . . .

CS: Yes, we always had a blessing.

SL: Mh-hmm. And who usually gave those?

CS: And we all—well, Dad would do it if—most of the time, but we all would—we'd have a blessing, and then various members of the family would give a blessing from time to time, too, or he'd ask us to. And another thing we always did, which is connected to the church in this sense, is that we all had envelopes for Sunday school, and we had an allowance—all of us had allowance, and Dad would lay the money up on his dresser, and various ones of us would be responsible to make the envelopes out. And he'd set the money separate. Now he'd—out of our allowance, he would take out so much, which was our contribution to the church, and that's what we would put into the envelope and s—one of us would have to sign our name, "Curtis Shipley—twenty-five cents" or whatever [*laughs*] it was. I don't remember now. But that's—we—and we all took something to church to put in the offering, and that still is a very important lesson that we all—

all of us have been very gener—you know, we've been taught to be—that we've been blessed to have lots of blessings, and I believe that, and that we need to not necessarily tithe, but that certain portions of our incomes are—go to the church to support programs—the work of the church.

[01:26:47] SL: When you-all had your meals, did the girls that helped around the house—did they sit at the table with you?

 CS: No, they didn't. They'd—they would either eat before or after we did in the din—in the kitchen. We had a kitch—we had a kitchen table in a enclave or a little enclave off the kitchen, and then we had a big dining room. And you could put five or six people at the breakfast table, and then you could seat ten or twelve or—at the dining table. They would eat—their routine on Sunday morning—they were German Catholics. They would get up and go to the St. Boniface Catholic Church, which was the German church in Fort Smith on B Street and 15th or 18th, I believe. And then they would be home—they'd go to six o'clock Mass—be home by seven, walking, and would be there in time to fix breakfast for the rest of us. And so that was kind of a different kind of thing. It's a time of—sorta thing that doesn't exist anymore.

SL: I know.

CS: Anywhere. And they were—we considered them part of the family. They went with us different places and sometimes—I don't remember 'em—they were always either puttin' food on the table or takin' food off the table or doin' that sorta thing. And then the other one would—one hel—one did the cooking, and one helped do the washing and all the other activities, and that was before there were washing machines and all that sorta thing. So you had to—there was more work to do in a operation of a house, a home, than there is today, of course.

TM: Scott, we need to change tapes.

SL: Okay.

[Tape stopped]

[01:28:30] SL: All right. Good. Well, [CS coughs] we've been kind of talkin' about the home life, and before I get back to the home life, I'm not sure that we really said a whole lot about Grandma Shipley.

CS: Well, I don't really—she died at about—when I was about seven or eight years old.

SL: Okay.

CS: So I don't have too many memories, really.

SL: Okay.

CS: And he [CS edit: Grandpaw] did, too.

SL: Right.

CS: See, he was born in 1850. He was seven or eight durin' the Civil War—my Grandfather Shipley. And I've not told that story. I am—I really don't know the complete story about the grandfather [CS edit: my grandfather's brother]. They were [*laughs*]—[CS edit: after the Civil War] they considered themselves poor, white Republican Methodist [*laughter*] wi—because apparently they were sympathi—he was a—he had a brother that was sympathy—was—showed sym—apparently told the Union people where some Confederates were hiding or something. And the friends of—and they caught 'em. And then they came back. And Crawford and Washington County were back and forth [CS edit: between the North and South] with a lotta trouble in the sixties—1860s. And course, they probably came down through northern part of Crawford County where they lived. And anyway, he—some Confederates came one mornin' and got our grandfather's father and his brother—oldest brother, and they hung 'em [CS edit: in their front yard]. And that left an impression on everybody, and then they were poor from then on—very, very poor after the war. There wasn't any Reconstruction or Marshall Plan or anything to help anybody do anything, and they were—they really almost—you know, the

ones [CS edit: some of the relatives] that had the opportunity to go to California did. They could—when the railroads were building California, they would give you a boxcar, and you'd load up your goodies, and you could ride out on the boxcar to Fresno or someplace and start over. They [CS edit: my relatives] were too poor to get on the train. *[Laughs]* They were just too poor.

[01:30:57] SL: So the community probably ostracized them when they . . .

CS: Well, they were sort of . . .

SL: . . . were considered Northern sympathizers.

CS: . . . they were—they—there was one Northern Methodist church in Fort Smith down on 11th Street, and that's where they—the Shipleys went. And now my dad—my mother—my Grandfather Curtis was also the head of the board of deacons at the First Baptist Church of Fort Smith, and they had a big split down there one time in about 1920, [19]30, or [19]40—somewhere in there, and my grandfather started the Immanuel Baptist Church, which was the second-biggest Baptist church in Fort Smith. He led a couple thousand people out of the First Baptist Church to start another Baptist church. He was—but he was a big Baptist layman.

[01:31:47] SL: So do you have any idea what the big split was

about?

CS: Yes. They tried to vote a guy out as preacher, and my grandfather lost. [Laughs] So he—and so he had to leave. Got up and left. He got up and walked out.

SL: Got—gathered his flock.

CS: Got—took a thousand people with him.

SL: Hmm. That's somethin' else. You know . . .

CS: But he was quite a guy. He was on the school board and all—did a lot of different things, and he was also the lawyer for the Jewish bankers in Fort Smith—Nakdimen. Owned City National Bank. He was their attorney. And that makes sense, too. A good—you know, that connection, the Jewish-Baptist connection. If you're gonna get a [laughs]—you wanna get a good lawyer, you go get a good Baptist [SL laughs] or one that had a lot of strength. And my grandfather did—Cur—Grandfather Curtis. The Shipleys were very austere and very good people but didn't—I think when Dad and his brother became successful, they sorta—they didn't leave their family, but we were in different worlds, so to speak, in another sense of the word. And they really didn't—we saw 'em at special occasions and—but that was funerals and weddings and didn't see much of 'em, though some of 'em—all of 'em at one time or another worked at the

bakery.

SL: Well, I was gonna say—you mentioned that.

CS: Well, yeah. The younger brothers all worked at the bakery their whole life for their older—for their brothers.

SL: Mh-hmm. Well okay, let's get back . . .

CS: So I don't remember that much about my Grandmother Reed.

[01:33:46] SL: Yeah. Well, let's get back to the household, then, that you grew up in. Did you have—was music ever a part of your household?

CS: Yes, we had a music room and we had a piano. My sisters played the piano. We—I never did. I played in the band when I was in high school or junior high—I mean, in grade school and junior high. I didn't have time for it in high school s—for why, I don't know, but I didn't. And we had—we listened to radio an awful lot to music, the *Firestone Hour*, the various programs that were on Sunday night and wonderful music and that sort of thing. I did a lot of that.

SL: Did the family gather in the music room and listen to the radio, or was it just on and you kind of went about your business and . . .

CS: No, we had a—we had what we—a room we called the back living room. We had a living room and a—we had a back living

room, which is where—which would now be a den, I guess, and that's where the radio was. Now my father was also a huge fan of the St. Louis Cardinals, and we'd listen to the Cardinal games. He listened to the Cardinal games on the radio as long as they were—as long as he was alive, and he died in 1965. And he just loved the Cardinals. And then we were part of a—of the Holsum bakers nationally that had meetings in June in Chicago, and so we'd ride the train to Chicago in the summers in June, and we'd always stop in St. Louis and see the Cardinal—Cardinals goin' and coming from Chicago—game and the Fleishmann yeast people or the Budweiser yeast people would pick us up at the tr—Union Station—St. Louis—take us to a hotel and then take us to the Cardinal game and put us back on the train that night comin' home.

[01:35:57] SL: Do you remember a particular game or player or that you . . .

CS: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . I mean, what—were you enthusiastic about baseball like your dad was or . . .

CS: Well, yes and no. I'm going to the—I'm getting more interested in baseball, now it seems, like as I get older. But my highlight—well, I can remember being at Sportsman's Park in St. Louis

when the Cardinals be playing Brooklyn, the Dodgers, and that would be a very interesting thing [*laughs*] to see.

SL: Well, talk about that.

CS: Well, it—you know, there were—the outfield would be full of blacks. There were no—there were no blacks on this Cardinals team at all, and it just—it was a racial tension that the Dodgers broke that for everybody, and they were the first team to have blacks, and that was a interesting—you know, it was interesting to see that, witness it, because you'd hear about it. They'd come and cheer for Brooklyn—the St. Louis blacks would. And that was—it'd make people upset and mad, and you know, the Cardinals were [*laughs*] rivals of the Dodgers. So that was a big thing in that sense. But I also saw Stan Musial, who was one of the leading Cardinals. When I was in the university, I was up there for a trip in business school to St. Louis on a tour of a number of industries there, and saw Stan Musial hit five home runs in two games—two—a double-header on Sunday. He had five home runs, and that was a thrill that I'll always remember. And I've got a picture of Stan Musial autographed upstairs at the—in the office of him. But I—he's—so he's always been my big baseball hero from childhood.

SL: That's great history to see five home runs in a double-header.

CS: Yeah, that was something.

SL: That is something.

CS: That was a world record at the time. I don't know—I think it probably still is. I'm—in one day, five home runs.

SL: No, I don't know anyone that's done that.

CS: I think they were 3–2 or something like that.

[01:38:28] SL: So what—when the—when St. Louis was playing Brooklyn, do you remember—about how old were you then?

CS: I would be eight or nine, and it'd be in the ear—in the [19]40s.

SL: Early [19]40s.

CS: It would be—maybe it would be in the late—I don't know. Let me see—let me think about that a minute. Probably in the late [19]40s. I can't remember when Jackie Robinson and—I'm not a guy that keeps dates in mind, but it was durin' the Dodgers were the big—were the—Brooklyn Dodgers when they'd come to town.

SL: So did you see Jackie Robinson play?

CS: Oh yeah. Uh-huh.

SL: So all the blacks were sitting out in the outfield seats, and they just weren't . . .

CS: Oh, there'd be some [*unclear words*]—but they would boo the Cardinals 'cause they . . .

SL: 'Cause they were segregated.

CS: Yeah, segregated.

SL: What was it like when the black player went to the plate? I mean . . .

CS: Well, they would boo him. The other people would boo.

[Laughs] I gue—I don't remember—I remember seeing 'em out there and wavin' and carryin' on and so on, and I don't remember—I ju—I don't remember how old or how young I was for sure. But I can remember that being a—something I remember f—sh—clearly. And we went to St. Louis every summer to this meeting in Chicago, and we'd ride the Frisco train from Fort Smith to St. Louis. And then they had a midnight special out of St. Louis to Chicago. It'd be there the next morning. And then when we'd get to St. Louis in the morning at seven o'clock or seven thirty, we'd have all day in St. Louis until midnight, maybe, before the train left. So we'd go on our—we'd catch the Cardinal game. We'd schedule it so we could. And most of the time they'd be there, so we could see 'em. And anoth—in that day and time there wasn't any baseball team west of the Mississippi River, other than the Cardinals. They all were eastern school—teams, and so everybody in Arkansas and Mississippi and Oklahoma and around Kansas and Missouri and so on—they were all Cardinal fans. We were all raised that way,

and there's still a lot of tradition up there from Arka—this area.

[01:40:54] SL: What about the—do you remember much about race issues or relations growin' up in Fort Smith?

CS: Not really. We had, after the World War II, we had black help in the house. We had—course Fort Smith had two high schools. We had nor—Fort Smith Senior High and had Lincoln High—High School, which was the black school. And there was not much mingling at all, of course, until after they closed Lincoln and consolidated the two schools. Then they built Southside, too. Had two high schools.

[01:41:44] SL: What about movie theaters?

CS: Well, they were the same way. I mean, for whatever it was, it was the way of life, and that's the way people lived then. And we had a lady that did all the washing that we would take—black lady that—Minnie—that worked for our family for—cleaning and various things for thirty-five years. Her husband was a—was the—ran the—cook on the train—on the Frisco train—they—and they did pretty good. They had a nice home, and they sent their daughter to the university. And—but I never had—for whatever reason, Scott, I never went to school at all with a—with any blacks at all, in any classes I took here at the university or at Fort Smith or anywhere in that time frame.

SL: Well I mean, that's the way it was.

CS: Because this all happened about the time I got out of school, really. I graduated from the university in [19]55.

SL: Right. And we had—well, let's see—we had law school students.

CS: We had—maybe we did have law school student—we did. I can remember that just vaguely. And I think I've heard stories about that, too, that [*unclear words*] would be embarrassing today [*laughs*] to all of us.

SL: Well yeah, of course.

CS: But it was the way it was. And there was just—wasn't anything anybody could do about it. It was the way it was, so . . .

[01:43:28] SL: What about there on the border and all your ties with Oklahoma? Were Native Americans ever a mix—a part of your life at all?

CS: Not in Fort Smith. No. Not really. You just—you didn't see 'em much in Fort Smith. You go over in Oklahoma, you'd see 'em. I'd visit cousins and things. I'd see Native Americans, but not a lot, really. Because again, people stayed with people of their own kind, basically, and that was just the way life was. It was pretty simple. You couldn't—you didn't have the amenities. If you had one car, you were lucky, and you kinda did what you did, and you didn't—you weren't out lookin' for trouble or fishin'

around or doin' a whole lot of anything. Growin' up in high school, see, we still didn't have new cars much. And you were just get—comin' out of World War II. It was just different . . .

SL: Yeah.

CS: . . . than it is today.

[01:44:41] SL: Was there—did you see—were there any signs or any activism, you know, segregating activism, were there—I mean, did you see "whites only" or "blacks are here" or, you know, water fountains labeled or . . .

CS: I don't remember. I think it was just understood.

SL: Yeah.

CS: I don't remember any signs of anything like that. I can remember the buses, too. I mean, blacks went to the back of the bus. I didn't ride the bus very often, but did some because I lived right on the main street, Rogers Avenue, right off of it. There just wasn't—you just didn't have a lot—you just didn't see a lot of things that way.

SL: There wasn't that tension.

CS: Huh-uh.

SL: Yeah.

CS: There just wasn't. I grew up, and I had a wonderful time in high school, Fort Smith High School. I was in the Key Club, which

was a real important club to be in, and we did a lot of good things and a lot of—it was considered one of the prestigious groups to be in. I was in a high school fraternity. President my senior year. I was secretary of the Key Clubs in Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas my senior year in high school. On the debate team—did a bunch—on the honor roll, so forth. Spring of 1951, the Korean War started and changed everybody's lives, so to speak, from—you could see it coming. And people talked about what they were gonna do, and nobody had really made a lot of money or done very well after World War II. They were just gettin' started, so a lotta these—a lotta the guys in my classes—in my senior class—went in the army. And actually, a lotta them stayed for their working life and retired with the military, army and navy and air force. And there's still kind of a basic thing in Fort Smith, to me. You—our senior class has a party, and they have a party. They recite the Lord's Prayer and sing "God Bless America" and hold hands and that's about it. [Laughs] They're not real—they're a pretty straight group . . .

SL: Yeah.

CS: . . . 'cause life was pretty simple. And it was pretty straight, and there wasn't a lot of monkey business—a lot of other things to do. And that was just the way things were and still are. Those

people are still very—they're good people. God-fearing people.

[01:48:00] SL: I want to revisit your music room just a little bit.

Was that—did it just consist of a piano in the . . .

CS: Piano, mh-hmm.

SL: Uh-huh. And . . .

CS: And we had sheet music, and my sisters played. My mother played a little bit and we would gather around and sing around the piano. We always had a Methodist hymnal to sing from. And I still do, too. I always keep—Jane'll remark, I can go up and get the hymnal, and I can sing all the songs. I know the words.

SL: So was that just a Sunday thing or—when you'd do the piano and sing along, or was it . . .

CS: Well, it was just not that often, really, but you know, some. And music wasn't that big a thing, really. Dad didn't particularly—didn't—he enjoyed singing. We all enjoyed singing in church and singing at home when we—the occasion arri—when it called for it. But not—that wasn't something we did a lot of, really. It just wasn't part of it.

[01:49:17] SL: Well, okay. So it sounds like to me that you did very well in school, gradewise.

CS: Well, I did all right in school. I certainly was prepared to go

anywhere I wanted to go to college, and I had talked about going to Washington and Lee to school.

SL: My son went to Washington and Lee.

CS: Oh, really?

SL: One of 'em. Mh-hmm.

CS: And I—and when the Korean War started, I got a little cold feet about goin' off too far, and I thought maybe I better stay closer to home. And the intention was 'cause I was going to be in business in Arkansas, that I would come here anyway and graduate here. So I just came on up here to the university in 1951, and I was an SAE pledge in 1951. And our house was—SAE house was up where Brough Commons is, which is the old McIlroy home at that time. It was Hayden McIlroy's family's, where the headquarters for the McIlroy farm—before the university. And they had a house down on Ozark there—
[CS edit: SAEs] had an annex down the street [CS edit: on Ozark]. And by the time I got up here in [19]51, the veterans were still here, so we had a lot of guys in the chapter, and a big fraternity. And so it was—we called that the Whiskey Hill up there [*laughs*] and the home of the SAEs. And we had been there for—I don't know how long they were up on the mountain, but—of course, our dream was to build a new house, and we

eventually did—my—I moved in my senior year. But I was elected president—at that point in time, the governing body of the College of Business Administration was [CS edit: known as] the Commerce Guild, which they don't have today, I don't think. And the com—that was the gov—and so I was elected president of the freshman class in business school. And then was president of the s—vice president of the sophomore, president of the junior, and I was president of the c—of the Commerce Guild my senior year—president of the business school. So I had four good years. I was the president of Blue Key. Very active. I was SAE pledge—rush chairman my sophomore year. And I had . . .

[01:51:58] SL: You didn't recruit anyone of note, did you?

CS: I beg your pardon?

SL: You didn't recruit anyone of note, did you?

CS: Well, I've recruited a lot of people of note, principally, though, [SL laughs] David Pryor, your brother-in-law. I remember his—I remember when he was coming up from Henderson. I remember—and I was—met him on the front steps of the SAE house, and we worked on him. We—hopefully, we're gonna get even. We did, of course, and from that has come Mark and so on. And he's been a good SAE, too. He was in school with my son, David, who was president of the chapter, as David was after

I wa—after I left, I think. And so SAEs have been part of the Pryor network for a long time, historically, and have been a real solid base of support. And David will acknowledge that, I think [laughs] . . .

SL: Yeah.

CS: . . . without any question.

SL: Yeah.

[01:53:05] CS: But anyway, we had a—the university was about five, six thousand students then. And it was interesting being here in—at the university. I—we—nobody had any cars much. I didn't get a car till I was a senior in college, where now everybody seems to ha—come with a car or [SL laughs]—and so we walked a lot, and we you know, had to gang up with others and—that had a car, and double-date and triple-date and quadruple-date or what—as many as we could and . . .

SL: Right.

CS: . . . we'd go down to Jug's and Wheeler's, which was across the street from the bakery, and regardless of what you did at night, you'd swing through there to see who was there and who was with who, you know, which was a big thing. And that was fun. That was a lot of fun to do that.

[01:54:04] SL: Jug Wheeler's. Now it seemed like to me that

someone told me, at one point in time, they would deliver beer.

CS: They did. When I came up here in 1951, Jug could deliver beer, and he had a fleet of Volkswagens, those little Volkswagen Bugs. And they'd swing around the building there—you remember when I don't—do you remember when my thrift store was across the street there?

SL: Mh-hmm.

CS: Well, and they'd swing around there, and they'd just hand stuff out there, you know, a quart of beer, four hamburgers and cheeseburgers and a bunch of fries and stuff, and off the thi—he'd deliver for fifteen cents, so it was really a pretty good deal at night. Now I'm not a big beer drinker, but the veterans were, and they would—very often, you know, they'd order a quart of beer and hamburger or cheeseburger and some fries or something—onion rings from Jug's. And he delivered all over town. And I guess the ABC people, at some point, stopped him from doin' that. [Laughs]

SL: I guess—you know, I never put the two together, but there was a Wheeler Volkswagen at . . .

CS: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

SL: Was that the—it was the same family, I guess.

[01:55:24] CS: Well, I'll tell you a story.

SL: Okay.

CS: You know, Jug Wheeler was across the street from the bakery.

He first rented the D-Lux Cafe. You know where that is?

SL: Yeah. Mh-hmm.

[01:55:34] CS: Which is part of the Club 36 now, and that's where he was. And then he got the idea of building the drive-in, and he built the drive-in next door. So he owned that, and then he owned there where the Razorback Cleaners is and another building there. He acquired over a period of time. But anyway, he—that was a gold mine. Well, he had always had the bakery across the street from him. When he needed hamburger buns or something from the bakery, we could always, you know, he'd just signal and somebody'd [*laughs*] come across the street with it—deliver to him. And so we were really close. And when I came to town in [19]62, why, you know, I spent a lot of time with Jug. I'd be over there, or he'd—I'd—we'd be at the—by this time, he had sold the D-Lux and just had the drive-in. And Jim Bob was in it, and then for a long time, they lived right down this alley there on the corner behind where Jug's was. They lived down there for a long time, and Jug could walk back and forth, you know, keep an eye on things. Well, he was from Harrison, Arkansas, and he really—he played basketball, and they called

him Jug, Jug Wheeler. [Laughter] So he—when he got out of school, he got into—got his cafe opened up—D-Lux Cafe. And there was—and of course, he went—continued to be known all his life by Jug—Jug's—Jug Wheeler's drive-in, and it became the drive-in. And when he got older and much older—much, much older, and he didn't know what to do with it, with the drive-in, he—he's—he leased it to a couple different people. And it didn't work out and he—Pauline was his wife, and he s—told Pauline—he says, "You rent that to Curtis 'cause he wants it for thr—for some—he'll use it." And says, "You'll never have to worry about gettin' your rent check. But don't you sell it to him 'cause I want you to—I don't want you to spend the money." [Laughter] But he—"I want you to have that rent check every month." So for all—for a long time—I mean, I said, "Well, Jug, sell—I want to buy that. I'll buy that." "No, not gonna sell it to you."

[Laughter] "I just—I'll lease it to you or rent it to you." So I le—I rented that for a long time until he was gone, and then I rented it from Pauline till she was gone. And had the thrift store

across the street there, and I'd turn—I'd park cars over there and then pull across the street. But can you imagine at one time down on Dickson Street, I had twenty-five route trucks and four tractor trailers and some cars and other stuff—about a—totally



about 125 employees, but on—well, about 75 were based down there—all the production people. And can you imagine tryin' to do that today if—down there with all the—with changes that have taken place down on Dickson Street?

SL: Hm-mm.

[01:59:03] CS: And people don't realize that a bakery—bread is just like the mail. It's fresh bread. It's gotta go through every day. You gotta get the bread through. You need it at the hospital. You need it at the school. You need it wherever you're goin'. And so the bakery has been—and you never can shut the darn thing down. In other words, I—when we got ready—we co—we were trying to figure out what to do—I kept—over the time I was there I kept ex—every time I could buy another lot, I would, or something else to get us some room, I would. But—and when I first came to town—when I first came in [19]62—in [19]65, my father—I came to town as a twenty-nine-year-old young man of—head of one of the major businesses in Fayetteville, the bakery, Shipley Baking Company—been here since 1926. And so I was running a major business in town, and I was taken in by the leadership in Fayetteville and made a part of the leadership and given a seat at the table when the—where the decisions are made, and I've had that all for a long time—all—for years and

years I've been sittin' at the table where the decisions have been made that effect Fayetteville and Northwest Arkansas. So I was very blessed, very blessed. And the bakery, you know, we grew and grew and grew, and course, when I first came to town, there was Dyke Lumber Company up behind Collier's. There was Collier's Drug Store. There was Kelley Brothers Lumber across the street. There was College Club Dairy up in the block above me. The Coca-Cola bottling plant was up there about—next door to Collier's. The—the s—they had a locker plant up there. Down the street was McCord Wholesale Grocery on the corner where the parking lot is.

SL: Scott Hotel.

CS: The hotel there. We had the Arkhola Sand and Gravel, Campbell Soup. We had the locker plant. You know, that was the heart of the business community. That was where it was. [Laughs] And I think the bakery was the last one standing almost.

SL: Yeah.

[02:01:33] CS: We—when we shut, we just felt like—when the—well, I knew when—and I was for—you know, we watched the street. We watched everybody leave, and you always have to have bread tomorrow—the next day. You gotta have—you can't make it today for—and store it for a month and use it. You gotta make

bread today for tomorrow. So I could never shut the bakery down. And as time went on, all the—everybody left—moved—College Club Dairy left, everybody left, and there—and here we were. We were the only ones down there, or one of the very few. And course, Jug was across the street for a long time. Then he was gone, and we had the fire at Kelley Brothers, and they built a Minute Man and all that behind down there and everything. And then—so then we wanted to see about the—when the arts center was gonna come, why, a name I won't mention promised five hundred parking places [*laughs*] if they'd put the Walton Arts Center down there, and that was okay except the people doin' all the promisin' didn't own any property. So [*unclear words*] you have—you've gotta have an improvement district. So we got busy and tried to get the improvement district put together, and we did. Well, when I did that, I knew that the bakery was—we were on a timeline to have to make some other changes. And so anyway, after the arts center came—started to be built, why, we began to transform to a—we either had to build a new bakery here or one in Fort—or expand the one in Fort Smith. And Fort S—the city of Fort Smith closed a street that helped us. It gave us a whole bunch of room across the street and the street, and that permitted us to move

that production to Fort Smith.

[02:03:36] SL: Who was runnin' the Fayetteville bakery before you came up?

CS: My—well, in nineteen—after World War II, in 1945 my father and his brother, W. G. Shipley, decided—my Uncle Garvin, W. G., had daughters, and my father had sons and daughters, and we had four bakeries. We'd gone through the war, had done real well, had made a bunch of money and done—been very successful. And so they decided that they would split up the bakeries. They'd been in business from 1920 to 1945, twenty-five years. And Uncle Garvin wanted to bring his brother-in-laws—his son-in-laws in. You remember Frank Leach?

SL: Yes.

CS: Well, he was . . .

SL: He lived down the street from us.

CS: Okay. Frank and Martha Doris. Martha Doris was my first cousin. And so Uncle Garvin moved up here, and he bought the house that's up on the other side of Mount—on the other side of the stadium there—where Cy Sutherland lives now.

SL: Okay.

CS: There were two houses for sale that he looked at that—the house that the—up there on Markham Hill or the house up by the

country club—the big rock house. That is where the guy that owned the College Club Dairy lived. They still own it, I guess—the family does. Anyway, he bought that house and moved up here. And so from 1945 to 1958, Uncle Garvin and Frank Leach ran the bakery here. His other daughter lived in McAlester, Oklahoma—built a new bakery over there, and they ran the bakery over there. So in 1958, Uncle Garvin broke his hip and he was bad shape, and Frank—he was always into some—one thing and another. You remember he was a character—a real character.

SL: Yes, I do. Mh-hmm.

CS: So anyway, we ended up buyin' the bakery back. Uncle Gar—when I was getting out of the army out in California after being in the service two years, Uncle Garvin called and said, "I want Harry and Curtis to buy the bakery"—Fayetteville bakery. And Dad called me in San Francisco in the army and said, "Come home. I want you to—you and Harry to go up and see if you can buy the bakery from Uncle Garvin." So I—that's what we did, and Harry came up here, and I came home. I was gonna go to graduate school maybe and talked about going to the Wharton School of Finance in University of Pennsylvania, and ended up comin' home and goin' in business in Fort Smith, which is what I

did. So [19]58 to [19]62, then, when I got married, I came—we moved back up here. Dad just flip-flopped us.

SL: Yeah, I remember Frank's Donuts.

CS: Yeah, Frank had a donut shop. Frank's Donuts. After that.

[02:06:56] SL: Well, now we kind of bypassed your involvement with the military. What was the story there?

CS: What'd I do?

SL: Yeah, what happened?

CS: Okay. Well, after I graduated from the university in 1955, the—I was still single, and the Korean War was pretty much over. St—but they were still drafting, and my name went to the head of the draft list in Fort Smith—Sebastian County. So on Ju—November the thirtieth of 1955, I was drafted. Got on a bus—rode the bus down to Little Rock. Got up in a room over the bus station at the induction center and stripped down, and they gave us a—inspection, and it started snowin' in Little Rock. And there was—snow was piling up, and they sent—and they had a couple hundred guys standing up there, and they went, "army, navy, army, navy [*laughs*], army, navy." I had—and my—I ended up army. So anyway, [*SL laughs*] they put—got dressed and got our clothes back on, and it was snowing like—there was about a foot of snow out there, and they put us on a bus, about thirty of

us, sent most of the guys to Fort Polk, Louisiana. And they sent—and for some reason, they sent me back up to Fort Chaffee. Well of course, I didn't know—I might've—I g—arrived back at Fort Chaffee at about two o'clock in the morning and marched over to the induction center, and they gave me a blanket and an overcoat and put me in the top of one of those barracks that just burned down last week. And—I fell asleep, and it seemed like about thirty minutes later, the bugle blew to get up. [*Laughs*] It was about five o'clock, and we got—and by then the snow was about two—about fifteen inches. And we stood in the snow in line—you go in to eat breakfast. I never will forget that as long as I live. That was—crazy time for me. And I thought, "My God"—I thought I was the smartest guy that had ever been born when I was drafted. I had—I was big man on campus at the university, [*laughs*] and I was a big wheel and so forth, and I just thought, you know, I was—it was the most humbling thing in the world. And then the first thing they did was take me down and just shave my hair off. You know, just cleaned me off real good. [*Laughs*] And—so I went through basic training at Fort Chaffee, and that was real ex—you know, I never—I didn't know it could be so cold in Arkansas. We had—you know, you had to—you had—they'd hurry you up, and you'd

run five—you'd run a mile and a half—a couple miles from one place to another—put you in a building in January and February in the heat, the heat of the building would be hot to the point you would think that you were gonna, you know, you'd just almost fall asleep. [*Laughs*] It'd knock you out. [02:10:11] But anyway, I had—I went through basic training at Fort Chaffee—went through the clerk-typist school at Fort Chaffee, and there we were all college graduates, most of us. And then we got our assignments, and I was assigned to a missile site at the campus—at Grizzly Peak State Park above the campus of the University of California at Berkeley, California. [*Laughs*] And the guy—the other guy—my good buddies went to Camp Hanford, Washington, which was Korea. That was the jumping-off place for Korea. Of course, by then I had a s—car, so when I picked up my car in Fort Smith, and three guys—we drove out to California, and I went to—reported in at Grizzly Peak State Park to a missile battalion, and the other guys went on to Camp Hanford and went on to Korea, I guess. But anyway, I thought I thought I'd died and gone to heaven. I never saw anything so beautiful in my life—Berkeley. Can you imagine Berkeley in 1955?

SL: [Nineteen] fifty-five.

CS: And the bay area and looking across to the Golden Gate Bridge and Bay Bridge and all that. It was just wonderful, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful place. And I was there about a couple months, and then I went to the Army Information School at Fort Slocum, New York.

SL: [Laughs] Wow.

CS: Which is up on Long Island Sound . . .

SL: Okay.

CS: . . . by New Rochelle, New York. And this was for officers and enlisted men to be an information specialist. And I got [laughs] real lucky for s—and I still don't know how this happened, but I was real lucky, and I graduated number one in the class. And while we were up there for three months, why, we'd ride the train in to New York City, and we were datin' girls at the United Nations, and [laughter] we were having a ball. Of course, I was living on—supposedly living on ninety-eight dollars a month [laughs], which was what I was making. And I had to have some help from home, but anyway, had a good time, and I really—it was wonderful. Then I flew back to Fort Smith, picked up my car, drove back to California. Well, when I got back to my base in California, to the Grizzly Peak State Park, I was plucked up and transferred over to the Presidio of San Francisco

at—in San Francisco. [Laughs] So I moved across to San Francisco, and I went to work for a major general, who—was over—it was called sixth regional command. The sixth regional command is—was the air defense of the West Coast. We would have missiles—we'd have Russian submarines fifty miles off the Golden Gate Bridge practically every other week. I mean, it was just all the time. It was a very interesting time to be out there. And the army was in a battle with the air force over who was gonna control short-range and long-range missiles. And the air force had control of long-range missiles. The military had—army had short-range missiles. Well, we were trying to get long-range missiles, and we had missile defense—we had a missile system all up and down the coast, and this was the sixth regional command, and I worked for the guy that was head of it. He wanted to see his name in *Army Times*, and he wanted to see his name in the—I'd help him with his speeches and help him with his correspondence. I'd helped him do a bunch of different things.

[02:14:02] SL: So you were, like, public relations for the guy.
CS: Yeah, I was kind of a PR guy. And then I would precede him sometimes to his speeches that he'd make 'cause we had missile sites at these little towns around, sittin' on top of a peak or a

radar site or something. And I'd precede him and be sure the lectern was set up and the sp—you know, everything was all ready for him to appear. Anyway, I did—[unclear words] [laughs] two years doing that—couldn't have been better. I was like . . .

SL: Couldn't have been better.

CS: I had a chance to go to Germany, but I was afraid to start over.

SL: Yeah.

CS: I was afraid to start over because I had a good deal, and I was—and I—well anyway, I didn't intend to stay in it over two years anyway, and that's why I dropped out of ROTC my senior year at the university.

SL: 'Cause you didn't want to extend . . .

CS: I didn't want to spend . . .

SL: . . . past two years.

CS: . . . five years and go to—I was in the Air Force ROTC. And so anyway I did that, and I came home, and we bought the bakery in Fayetteville. My brother moved up. I was in Fort Smith with my dad. And then I spent two years in the 142nd—National Guard. I had a six-year commitment militarywise, and so I did that. And if I had to go tomorrow, I'd go with the Arkansas National Guard 'cause you can take these old boys from Paris

and s—Greenwood and Van Buren and Siloam Springs and—they all know how to shoot a gun.

SL: Yeah.

CS: And they can pluck off somebody at five hundred yards just like nothin', you know. We'd go out at Chaffee in the summertime and they'd just—boy, I mean, right at the top of the—cream of the crop. And all these guys in these little towns around were always trying to make a little extra money—they'd join the National Guard. And they were wonderful, wonderful units. Hundred-and-forty-second's been in every battle from World War I on, somewhere. They went to Korea—the first of the units that went to Korea. They been to—units have been in and out of Iraq for the last five years.

SL: And they're all good shots.

CS: All good—all good people, too, I mean—so anyway, I enjoyed that, and then I was—about that time, I got married and moved to Fayetteville.

[02:16:24] SL: What did your degree in, in Fayet—at university?

CS: I had a degree in—B.S. and B.A. I had a major in marketing and a minor in economics.

SL: Okay. So—all right, so you get out of the military—your military commitment, and you got to Fort Smith?

CS: Mh-hmm.

SL: And you get married in Fort Smith? Is that . . .

CS: Well, I got married initially in Fort Smith in [19]62. And then moved up here.

SL: And was that to Ellen?

CS: Mh-hmm, to Ellen. Mh-hmm.

SL: And so how did you guys meet? What was that . . .

CS: How'd we meet?

SL: Yeah.

CS: Okay, this is a good story, too.

SL: Okay.

CS: It's a Fayetteville story.

SL: *[Laughs]* Oh boy.

[02:17:07] CS: My brother, Harry, was up here running the bakery and his wife, Janis, and they invited us to come up here to a Town Club dance.

SL: Billy . . .

CS: And . . .

SL: Town Club. Yeah.

CS: And so I—there—it was a Christmas dance, and they had to get me a date. So she called over to Martha Brewer, who married Hugh Brewer, and said, "Why don't—can you find a date for

Curtis? He's gonna come up to this Town Club thing." So Ellen was still in—she had been a—graduate at the university—had gone to Denver and taught school a year and had come back to start graduate school. Said, "You'd need to find some—an older girl." [Laughter] So anyway, we—I had a date with Ellen, and then we had some more dates, and I was gonna take someone else to—invite another girl to go to the Sugar Bowl, and it turned out that that girl decided to go skiing instead with someone else [laughs], and so I said, "Well, I'll just see if Ellen wants to go." I had arrangements to go. I had a plane—I was going down on the ABF plane from Fort Smith with Robert Young and H. L. Hembree and families—their—Janelle, and Robert had a date with who is now Mary Carleton McRae, who is his wife. And I could room with Robert, and Ellen could stay with Mary Carleton, so that's what we did. And so I had to invite her, and she said sure she'd go. So we went down to New Orleans to the Sugar Bowl and Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans. And then we were having such a good time, we decided to stay another day or two. Come home on the Kansas City Southern train.

SL: Yeah.

CS: So we did that. And by—shortly thereafter, we decided we were gonna get married. I gave her a ring underneath a tree over

there in front of Old Main [*laughs*] that everybody uses from time to time, and did that. And then we were—we got married. So—and then Dad said, "Well, the Comptons are from Bentonville, and you'd be better off up there then, so I'll just bring Harry back to Fort Smith, and you can move to Fayetteville and run the bakery in Fayetteville." So that's what I did. And I've been here ever since.

SL: So the Comptons were out of Bentonville. I never knew that.

That's . . .

CS: Yes, they're from Bentonville.

[02:19:58] SL: Well, so when you came in, twenty-nine years old, took over the bakery, and you were talking about gettin' a seat—with the decision makers, the people that kind of were deciding what was gonna happen with Fayetteville—what—tell me about that. Tell me about how things were done in Fayetteville back then.

CS: Well, they were done a lot differently than they're done today, that's for sure. [*Laughs*]

SL: I know that. I know that.

CS: Well, the best thing that probably ever happened to me—the luckiest thing that ever happened to me is—was—and when I bought this house right here where we're sitting today, Hal

Douglas lived right next door—right across the—and Hal Douglas was—sort of became my mentor in more ways than one. I mean, in many, many ways. The Fulbright family, as you know, owned the newspaper. They owned the Coca-Cola. They owned Fulbright Industries. They had—they owned, at one time, the—a cable system. They owned the radio station, KHOG. They had multiple interests in town, and Hal and others—the Lewises, et cetera, kinda took me in and said, "Okay, we're gonna—here's a young guy. We'll use him and work him," and so forth, and—so they helped me—at the Methodist church, I was taken in and made a member of the board and ultimately served in all the capacities there at the church—Methodist church. And then Hal was really responsible for putting me on the board of the First National Bank. At that time there were only four young guys—Joe Fred Starr, myself, and John Lewis and . . .

SL: Shelton?

CS: Yeah.

SL: Geor—or . . .

CS: George Shelton. And so that's the way that worked. And so I was on the board there in the old building, and then we built the new building on the east side of the square. And then when we—the bank sold four or five times. Clark got out of it—Clark

McClinton got out of it. And then I was the next one to get out of it. And then I helped John start the bank—Bank of Fayetteville. So I've been on the board there twenty years—since—it's twenty years old now. And all this time, I've been involved in other things. I've been president of the chamber of commerce twice. I've been on the board of the hospital for twenty-eight years—led the campaign to build the hospital on North Street and was on the board when we built the new first wing ten years ago at—out at the—on the bypass. And been on the hospital foundation for—ever since it started. I've been on—I took Hal Douglas's place on Beaver Water District. So I've been involved in the water thing—twenty-eight years on that. I just resigned from that the first of the year, and Woody Bassett's gonna take my place.

SL: That's fitting.

CS: So I've been involved in lots of different things, but I've always been through banking or through one reason or another—had a voice—able to participate in the decision processes.

[02:23:49] SL: Let's talk about Hal Douglas just for a minute.

CS: Okay.

SL: What—you say that he was kind of your mentor. What . . .

CS: He was.

SL: What do you mean? What did he bring to you? I've . . .

CS: Well, he took me under his wing. He sponsored me. He helped develop me in different ways, in different areas of responsibility and different groups and different kinds of situations. And he's just—he was always there. And I remember him—when he—when I got into the hospital thing, which is kind of interesting in a way—Ellis and Hal called me up at the bank one day and they . . .

SL: Ellis Trumbo.

CS: Ellis Shelton.

SL: Shelton. Okay.

CS: George Shelton's dad.

SL: Dad. Okay. All right.

CS: And Ellis and Hal said, "Well, we need to build a new wing on the hospital. It's very important that we do it. Fayetteville's health care is the next important thing we've got in town next to the university, and we need to do this. And we need to build this hospital, and we've decided that you're gonna be the head of the campaign." [Laughter] And I was actually relieved [/laughs] because I thought maybe I'd done something wrong and they were gonna call my notes or something. Or call me up there to give me a lecture on something. [Laughs] I didn't know what

they wanted me for. [02:25:23] So anyway, I got into the business of raising money for the hospital to build the North Street ho—the last big expansion there. And at that point in time, the hospital was in politics, in a sense, because the board of the hospital was appointed by the county judge. And the Republicans had elected the county judge, and so they had kicked out all these guys that had been on the board, and there was quite a bit to do about it. And the bank wanted the thing to stabilize because we had all these young doctors coming up here—coming back here to practice in the clinics and things, and people would say—they'd say, you know, "Why—these guys that come up here and go to the university and become a Razorback follower and go off all over the world—become outstanding physicians and doctors, and they say, 'Where do I wanna live? I wanna go back to Fayetteville.'" So we had all these young doctors comin' up here, but we didn't have a good hospital.

SL: Right.

CS: So we needed to expand the hospital, and so we had a campaign to—you know, we were struggling to pay bills—the hospital was struggling to pay bills and meet expenses, and we had to do this. And so anyway, we had a campaign, and Hal kinda indirectly directed me through that, and for example, there were

only two banks in town then and two savings and loans. Okay.

The first thing was the First National Bank, so we agreed—they agreed that if I'd do this that we'd get \$75,000 out of the First National Bank. So that meant that we had to get—told—when I told Hayden he only had to give \$50-, he was tickled to death.

[*Laughter*] And there were two building and loans—First Federal—the McNairs had First Federal—I mean, they had the Fayetteville Building and Loan. And the Easons had First Federal Savings. [*Laughs*] So when I told them that they had to give \$35-, less than the two banks, they were tickled to death, too. And that was the way the thing went. But that was when . . .

[02:27:53] SL: So Hal gave you those numbers to take to them or . . .

CS: Yeah, he did, and he led—he held me by the hand all through all that. And others did, too, but he was the principal one. And at one point in the campaign, we got—we were stuck. We were tryin' to get—I mean we're talking about raisin' peanuts compared to what they do today. I mean, it's nothing. But it's back when a dollar was a dollar, too. And we were tryin' to get \$1.2 million or something like that, and we were stuck in the campaign, and Hal came up with a—he said, "I'm gonna—\$50,000 anonymously from Bill Fulbright.

[02:28:36] SL: He—we should explain who Hal Douglas is. Hal was married to Senator Fulbright's sister. Is that . . .

CS: That—that's right.

SL: And her name was—what was her . . .

CS: Okay. Yeah. I'm drawin' a blank now. She died . . .

SL: Okay.

CS: . . . when they lived over next door, she died very soon thereafter, and then he married Jackie Sterner . . .

SL: Right.

CS: . . . who was Dean of Women at the university, who is still living. And—but Hal married—I wasn't—I know it's not Rober—I don't—it's Helen or—I'm not sure what her name was.

SL: Okay.

CS: But he operated all of the Fulbright Industries.

SL: Right.

CS: Hal Douglas did. The senator was in Washington. The family—you know, they had Coca-Cola and Schlitz beer. They had a multitude of businesses.

SL: Coca-Cola was—is where French Metro Antiques is now.

CS: Yeah, that's right.

SL: And . . .

CS: It was there in the beginning, and then they moved out on

Gregg out there . . .

SL: Right. Right. And Kelley Brothers . . .

CS: Was over there . . .

SL: . . . was behind Rogers Rec . Is that right?

CS: Kelley . . .

SL: Or is that City?

CS: . . . Kelley Brothers Lumber ran all down in where the parking is now behind Rogers Rec.

SL: Right.

CS: And it also included where Jose's is.

SL: Right.

CS: That was a Minute Man. You remember they built a Minute Man?

SL: I remember Minute Man.

CS: Built a Minute Man right after the—when the fire—when it was all—when they cleaned everything up and built a Minute Man in there, and a family ran that for a while. Some family—I can't remember their names now. And then Jose—Joe Fennel got it and changed it and made the—Jose's out of it.

SL: Mh-hmm. I member that.

[02:30:25] CS: And so that's how that all developed. But I had—Hal got a—this anonymous gift for the hospital from Bill Fulbright, which kind of put us over another hump. And other people came

through, and then we were able to get the job done and get that built. And—from that, I—couple years later—year later, the county judge asked me to go on the board of the hospital, which I did. And I was on for twenty-eight years.

SL: And which judge was that?

CS: Well, I'm drawin' a—I oughta know this. [CS edit: Judge Vol Lester] He was the Republican judge—the first one—and then Charlie Johnson reappointed me three times, I guess.

SL: Right. I remember when Charlie was elected.

CS: Four times.

SL: I can't remember that guy's name either.

CS: He was from Springdale. Joe Mc—Joe McKim was head of the board.

SL: Yeah.

CS: From Springdale.

SL: Okay. Well, it—that's not . . .

CS: I'll think of it in a minute.

SL: . . . that's not really important.

CS: I'll think of it in a minute. But anyway, that's the way that happened.

TM: We need to change tapes.

SL: Okay.

[Tape stopped]

[02:31:34] SL: You know, in all—in talkin' about Hal Douglas showin' you how to do this stuff and really . . .

CS: Oh, I'll name some more names here in a minute if you want me to.

SL: Oh, okay, that's good. But I don't hear you mention anything about any city council members or—I mean it seems like to me that it was kind of these—it was the business leaders—the bankers and the . . .

CS: Chamber of commerce people.

SL: . . . chamber of commerce were kind of . . .

CS: They were.

SL: . . . determined what the next deal was gonna be—what had to happen next in order for the town to . . .

CS: That's the way it was, and I can expand on that a little bit if you want me to.

SL: Yes. Absolutely. We're goin'.

TM: Oh, we're goin'.

CS: Are we?

TM: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

CS: Are we on?

TM: Yeah.

CS: Okay. Well, you remember Wes Gordon, who was . . .

SL: Yes.

CS: . . . who was head of the chamber of commerce. When I came to town, Wes was still head of the chamber of commerce. And in those days you had what I call the boards of the two banks were the—were very influential. And on the board of the McIlroy Bank, you had L. L. Baxter from Arkansas Western Gas. You had Paul Young. You had . . .

[02:32:59] SL: Where was Shreve?

CS: Huh?

SL: Where was . . .

CS: Jim . . .

SL: . . . Henry?

CS: . . . Henry Shreve. You had—you know, you covered the basic—the basics were on Hayden's board. On our board were the Baggetts, the Lewises, the Clintons. We had Maupin Cummings [*laughter*].

SL: That's the judge.

CS: You know, different ones like that. Ellis and Buck Lewis and John and George Shelton, and you know, it—we would discuss things at the board level in the bank. You know, "We need a

new this or that in town" or "How are we gonna get this done?" or so forth. And then we'd decide who'd talk to who, and we'd pass the word along, and that usually would happen. And Wes Gordon was always a vehicle of communication, too. And the chamber board, whoever was on the board. And we all had people on—there were people out of the leadership in Fayetteville on both boards, I mean, on the chamber board, and both boards of the banks and savings and loans. And that's just the way it was kinda done that way.

[02:34:14] SL: How did that—how did those guys relate to the city council? I mean, back then it was a city council, wasn't it? It wasn't a mayor form . . .

CS: It was a city council.

SL: . . . it was a city council.

CS: But it was—I mean, we all had people that either worked for 'em or did somethin', or there was a connection. I mean you could—there wasn't any—you could—I mean, when the decision was made, it was passed along, and that was pretty well picked up and acted on. But—and they would come to us, too, and ask for support. It—the council would ask the chamber of commerce or the bank boards or the leadership of the two banks to help out on a project or whatever. And we would do it, and if it was in

the interest of the town. It's just like on the hospital board thing. I mean, we were interested in the schools, too. A lotta times way back there, I would be the campaign manager for whoever we wanted to put on the school board. It was kind of—I did this for a bunch of people.

SL: Yeah.

CS: I'd be a—and the way we'd—and what that was, was a signal to the old guard or the establishment or whoever—the town leadership or whatever—that that was the candidate. One of us that would be—put our name on the ad—you know, "Curtis Shipley, campaign chairman," or whatever, and that was a signal to—and people would call me and say, "Well, I always know—I wanted to know who to vote for, and I saw your name, and now I know," you know, "that's the ticket kind of thing."

[02:35:54] SL: Well, so between the city government and these—and the bank boards, it was really symbiotic. I mean, you kinda . . .

CS: Worked each other.

SL: But at the same . . .

CS: Worked each other.

SL: Worked with each other. I mean, if they're . . .

CS: Yeah, you did, and the chamber board. The chamber was very

influential, too. But life was simpler then, too. As I said, there were only two banks and two savings and loans. Now there's fifteen banks, [/laughs] and God knows how many—some of this stuff—and the problem we've got now, and it's a problem, is that there are not enough home-owned businesses. And that's my greatest fear, and that's why—one of the reasons we started the Bank of Fayetteville. We want to keep a hometown bank and hometown people. And the base of the bank is still the base of the old bank—the old First National Bank. That's where the money from that bank is in the Bank of Fayetteville. And we're gonna keep it strong and healthy, and keep it there for Fayetteville. If everything is owned somewhere else, you know, back in the old days we had—the lumberyards were owned by local folks. The Waldens owned Campbell-Bell, Lewis brothers—the—you had local people with local interests that could make a decision about something. Hal Douglas was on the board of SWEPCO, which is the electric company. John Lewis took his place on that . . .

SL: Baxter had the gas company.

CS: Huh?

SL: Baxter had the gas company.

CS: Baxter had the gas company. And they—if L. L. made a decision

on something, he made it. I mean, he didn't back down to anybody hardly. [Laughter] That was the way he was.

SL: Yeah.

[02:37:56] CS: You know, and things were different, and it was—I wouldn't call it a smoke-filled room at all, by any means, but you know, we wanted to keep Fayetteville—and I think we have kept Fayetteville as a place that's a desirable place to live. You know, the naysayers have always—I think we've done a pretty good job of keepin' it a good place to be. The other thing we had to do, which is interesting, I think—I'll tell you this story . . .

SL: Okay.

CS: . . . 'cause some of us are and aren't, and you listen to this carefully. We all had to be Democrats. And the why. Well, because we had to protect the university. They weren't gonna let a bunch of Republicans go down there and [laughs] get money for Fayetteville in the Arkansas legislature. So some of us are very conservative Democrats, but really you're closer to maybe being something else than that. But we all are registered Democrats because we had to be in order to protect the University of Arkansas, which was our most important thing in town. And so that's the way that's always been. Now we've never voted for a Republican up here for representative or for

state senator or so on. And you remember for years and years, Deacon Wade was our state senator. And when Deacon Wade and the little fox from Siloam Springs, John Elrod's dad, were down in the Arkansas legislature, they controlled things—Danny White from Fort Smith. Power has shifted around than—now than—from the way it was—used to be. But Deacon Wade was quite a guy. He took . . .

[02:39:52] SL: Let's talk about Deacon Wade.

CS: Yeah, he was a—outstanding senator—powerful senator.

SL: He was an attorney.

CS: He was a lawyer.

SL: Mh-hmm. And course, he has a son, Lynn.

CS: He has a son, Lynn. He had a—A. D. McAllister was in his office, who was a lawyer as well, who died four or five years ago.

SL: And did he have one or two daughters? He had two daughters, didn't he?

CS: Yeah, he had—they had—no, just the two children.

SL: Just one daughter.

CS: Lynn—Suzie.

SL: Suzie. Yeah.

CS: Caldwell.

SL: Yeah.

CS: And Lynn. And—but ev—the theory was on that, simple and straight, is that we gave as much business—everybody gave as much business as we could to Deacon Wade so that he had enough practice all the time to have a good income because he had to spend so much time away from here going down to Ar—Little Rock. And those days you couldn't get down to Little Rock in a half a day hardly. [*Laughs*]

SL: That's right.

CS: Before the highway was built.

[02:40:57] SL: And you didn't get paid anything, did you, at all?

CS: Well, you got paid. You got paid if you're in the state senate, but it wasn't like it is now.

SL: Yeah.

CS: And 'course now, it's more demanding now than it was then. But Deacon and Danny White from Fort Smith and Russell Elrod from Siloam Springs were the three most powerful senators in the Arkansas senate. And it simply was—when they wanted somethin' for Fayetteville, they—they're all Democrats, and they were there to protect us. Protect the university. And did. I can't say as much [*laughs*] for some of 'em lately. They're doin' as good a job as they could do. I—that's all I'm gonna say on that, but . . .

SL: It becomes personalities now rather than business.

CS: More personalities.

SL: Yep.

[02:41:55] CS: But Deacon worked for the group, you know, he worked for the—and he was on the board of McIlroy Bank, another member of the board of the McIlroy Bank. But that's the way it was. And the legislature—now today, I think some friends of mine that we'll still vote Democratic in the Democratic primaries, but some of us might vote Republican in November [laughs] in national elections.

SL: [Laughs] I remember a story my dad—or David Pryor used to tell about my dad. They'd be drivin' around town, and all of a sudden, Dad would say, "Now a Republican lives right there."

CS: Yeah.

SL: It was like it was a rare thing. The whole state was Democratic. It was all a Democratic machine.

[02:42:47] CS: Well, you—now you've got all the Benton County people are all Republicans, see.

SL: I know.

CS: Springdale's all—mostly Republican. But it's interesting here . . .

SL: Well . . .

CS: . . . here—politically, I think.

SL: Well, but now . . .

CS: It's not that way now.

SL: Right.

CS: I mean, I don't think people worry about that as much now.

SL: No.

CS: But we did then because we had to be sure we had people sitting at the table when they divided the pie in Little Rock. Whoever the governor was or whoever the head of the state senate or—and they had the budget committee down there that divided the pie. The legislature's always been about as powerful as the governor. Mh-hmm. And you had to have people sittin' at the table. If you didn't, you weren't gonna get your piece of pie. Or as big a piece of pie. Or your special project or your building or whatever.

[02:43:40] SL: So I can see how the philosophy was, support

Deacon . . .

CS: Sure.

SL: . . . so that he can take care of us down in Little Rock.

CS: That's right.

SL: And that pro—that kind of thought probably went in other areas as well.

CS: Well, probably did, yes, uh-huh. We always supported, you

know, we always supported our senators. Of course, Senator Fulbright bein' from Fayetteville was—up until Dale Bumpers came in—till he lost that election. And David has always had a—Pryor has always had a love affair with Fayetteville. And we've always supported him very strongly. And same thing with Mark.

SL: Yep.

CS: Uh . . .

SL: And . . .

CS: And we've watched the, you know, the poultry people grow. And water has been very important in our growth. The Beaver Water District thing is just critically important to Northwest Arkansas and will be more so in the future.

TM: Can we talk about that a little bit [*clears throat*]—the importance of . . .

[02:44:54] SL: Yeah, let's talk about water.

TM: . . . [*unclear words*] that.

CS: Well, if you remember, going back to the beginning of—talkin' about Beaver Water for a minute—I've been on the board twenty-eight years. I went off the first of January of this year. I took Hal Douglas's place, so Hal—my seat has only been occupied by three people: Hal Douglas, myself, and soon to be  Woody Bassett this month. And at that—way back thirty-five,

forty years ago, when Beaver was being built, Fayetteville had Lake Fayetteville and Lake Sequoyah. So we really didn't need to be part of that. And Hal Douglas insisted on it, and the leadership in Fayetteville—and sold 'em the idea that it was gonna be so much bigger and better that we couldn't afford not to be a part of it. So it's a two-county affair. Beaver Water has—it's—it really sells water to Fayetteville, Springdale, Rogers, and Bentonville, and the growth areas of the four cities. And what we did was—what they did, the founders did, was build a—five feet on the dam—additional five feet height on the dam, and that watershed all the way back is our water supply. Which we have rights to 150 million gallons of water a day from Beaver Lake, and that has made the difference in our life's—all of our lives. It saved the poultry industry. It's made a difference in everything in the food industry. So it's been real—critically important, and the thing has grown, and it's a—the ?thrill? thrust of the future, I think, is gonna be in how to protect the watershed—the White River watershed. And when you look at it, it's interesting because the West Fork of the White is where most of the trouble comes into the White River. It starts at Winslow, and there's no sewage treatment up that way, and it comes down. And Mud Creek and—not Mud Creek, but some of these

creeks around in Fayetteville end up in the—in—West Fork of the White. Lake Sequoyah catches the White River on the other side. So all the stuff comin' down from the poultry or from St. Paul—down that way—settles in Lake Sequoyah, so it doesn't really get into the lake, which is interesting. So we're really saved by the fact of the—of that. [02:48:02] So what we're—what Beaver Water District is now gonna do—be do—spendin' time on is trying to help stabilize the banks along the West Fork of the White all the way down and try to clean up the—not clean up, but if you can stabilize the banks, you'll prevent a lot of stuff from coming in—and—into the lake. 'Cause the more stuff you have coming into the lake, the more treatment you have to give the water in order to make it drinking-water quality. So that's a big issue. And in the future, I think that the watershed issues are gonna be important both in Benton and Washington County. And Beaver, course, is instrumental in protecting the lake because that's the water we have to treat. And we are finishing a new plant up there or will be finishing a new—we're retrofitting the old Joe Steele plant, which was the original plant. And when we get through with that in another year, it'll have a hundred and fifty million gallon-capacity water a day, which is a lot of water.

[02:49:19] SL: Now that's about equal to the five feet that you added to the . . .

CS: Well, supposedly. Yes.

SL: Yeah.

CS: Interestingly enough, the capacity of the lake is 600 million gallons of water a day. Part of that is in the power pool—Southwest Power Administration. In other words, they have the right to generate electricity and do—to the power generation at the dam. And then you have Two-Ton, another water authority that has some of the outlying areas, the western side of the counties—two counties. And you have Carroll-Boone that goes across to Boone—to Harrison from Beaver that has . . .

SL: So that . . .

CS: . . . some water rights.

SL: . . . that goes from Beaver, huh?

CS: That comes Beaver. And then you have Huntsville that gets some water out of Beaver. But water—as the lake continues to be developed around it, we're gonna have to be more careful with the watershed.

[02:50:26] SL: So are there—is that—just recently there started to be some control in Washington County on development. And that just got through really just recently, and there's always

been, you know, the oppositional landowners saying, "I can do whatever I want to with my property."

CS: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: And so now there's some control.

CS: That's an issue. And . . .

SL: And I would think that that ties in to the watershed in some way.

CS: It . . .

SL: Or maybe not now . . .

CS: . . . it does tie in. And I hope that we can work through those issues to make 'em palatable to everybody concerned. The farmer is concerned, too, about somebody comin' next door to him and puttin' in a subdivision and building fifty houses, you know, when he wants to maintain his farm and that sort of thing. And by the same token, the—you gotta have some control over some of that. So what they're tryin' to do is come up with things that are reasonable—that are—that everybody can live with. But in the end result, protect the lake if we can—the water—the watershed. The truth of it is that a lot of the stuff that goes into Beaver really comes from Fayetteville—comes from, you know, these creeks that travel down and go into the West Fork. And you gotta remember that our treatment plant out on the White River—the Fayetteville treatment plant treats an awful lot of

sewage. And there's a limit to what they can put into the watershed. And that's very tightly controlled. And that's why Beaver, in the long run, was very interested in building a treatment plant on the west side of town and using the Illinois watershed. 'Cause water from about College Avenue falls that way towards the Illinois River. The watershed here in town goes, where we are right here, it goes to the West Fork of the White—into the White River watershed. If you've got a huge rain, the treatment plant, which is still only the one treatment plant, can't handle all the sewage, so it just flushes through and—into the lake. And that makes it—when that happens, you got a whole big bunch of problems down at the plant. The plant was built at Lowell because it was as neutral a place as could be found that would be accommodating to Fayetteville, which didn't need the water because we had Lake Sequoyah and Lake Fayetteville. And our water is still the most expensive water of the four cities because we have to pump uphill to get it back to Fayetteville from Lowell. And Springdale has the cheapest water because they don't have to ship—don't have to pump very far. So it's a real—it's an interesting . . .

SL: So is . . .

CS: . . . interesting subject.

[02:53:56] SL: Is Fayetteville still the greatest consumer?

CS: We are, but Springdale is about to catch us. Historically, Washington County has been by far the big user of the water from Beaver, by far—twice as much—three times as much. And Rogers and Bentonville have just in the last year split into two lines. If there was a big fire in Bentonville, it might suck all the water out of Rogers. *[Laughs]*

SL: Is that right?

CS: I mean, it could. And so storage capacity in—above ground is also important. So it's a—there are a lot of issues involved.

SL: So how much of this do you think Hal Douglas saw, or did he just see it as a capacity thing? Did he—I mean, it sounded like Hal Douglas had to stand up and fight for Fayetteville's participation in that.

CS: I think he made it happen for Fayetteville, in that sense that we participated. They couldn't do it without us because we were the largest city, and they—there had to be an accommodation to that. And he worked that through—some of those guys made that happen because it wasn't in our interest necessarily to do it. In today's environment you probably couldn't do it. I mean, the way politics is today in the four cities. It would be difficult to do.

[02:55:33] SL: You know, what role—I mean—I—it seems like to me

that—it sounds like to me that the media really was not as big a player back in the founder days, that . . .

CS: The newspaper was, though.

SL: Yeah.

CS: I think the media in terms of television and—well, the only radio station in Fayetteville then was KHOG way back there.

SL: Yeah.

CS: And they owned that—the Fulbright family owned that.

SL: Had that.

CS: But the newspaper was a powerful thing.

SL: Yeah.

CS: And people read the newspaper probably more so than they do today. The independence of the newspaper I think is important—that we have a good paper. And [*laughs*] you could be subjective about that. I—whether it is or isn't. But I mean, I—the paper's important—was then more so than it is now, probably.

[02:56:37] SL: Yeah. Well, what is the big difference between now and then as far as getting things done?

CS: Oh, I think the—I think there're a lot of things that are differ—
 the big difference is that there's not as many home-owned businesses. S—everything's owned by somebody someplace

else. We're kind of a—more of a bedroom community with people working in Rogers and Bentonville, at Wal-Mart, and living here, and driving back and forth and stuff. So there's not the community of interest that there was years ago when we were smaller. The university is much larger than it used to be but still not as large as it needs to be to be really—do the job they need to do, I think. And I think that's—that—I think people are, you know—there are a certain amount of retirees that have moved into the area that have a—usually a more of a negative effect. I think we've got a dilemma in lotsa things, Scott. I think we have a dilemma in the school system here right now of issues that—some of those boards are not as strong as they used to be in co—in the community. I rule—I'm not in favor of—all the neighborhood groups. I just think that's counterproductive.

SL: Polarizing.

CS: Polarizing. And everybody thinks they've got to protect their own little this or that. And that's not good, really. And I think there're a lot of things like that that are different today than before. But I've lived in a very golden age, too. I think I'm very grateful to have had the—been here for forty-five years maybe or close to it. And I've had—I've been blessed. I've had lots of

nice things happen to me and my family, and I've en—you know, I don't have any complaints about anything. I'm still tryin' to help out. I'm still workin' on things for the university and . . .

[02:59:07] SL: Let's talk about the university for a while. How did . . .

CS: Okay. Okay.

SL: . . . when did you first get involved with helpin' the university? I mean, I—you've already told us how active you were when you were attending the university, and it sounds like you were very, very active and a very good student and very good . . .

CS: Oh, I don't know how good a student I was. I probably [*laughs*] spent too much time doin' other things.

SL: Well now, you know, there—I guess you—we could talk a little bit about the social life at the university when you were here as a student, but . . .

CS: Well, I had—I've been fortunate that way, too. I—in many ways. I was asked to join the—oh gosh, the National Development Council way back there—way, way, way back there and—many years ago. And one of the first things—well, the first thing I got involved with, really got active in, was raising money for the renovation of Old Main, and that was kind of an interesting thing. And I was the Washington County—Don Gibson and I

were the Washington County campaign chairmen for—raise
money for the renovation of Old Main.

SL: Save Old Main.

CS: Save Old Main. So we were sellin' rooms for \$25,000. And so
what [*laughs*] I would do is—would be [*SL laughs*] catch
somebody at church or catch somebody on the—walking out of
church and—or I'd take them to lunch at the—then the
restaurant in the middle of the square up there.

SL: Old Post Office.

CS: Old Post Office. You know, and I'd just present it that we were
tryin' to restore—"Old Main is the symbol of higher education to
the people of Arkansas. It is critical that we not let it get torn
down. We need to restore it. It is a symbol—will be the
symbol," [*unclear word*] . . .

[03:01:10] SL: So \$25,000 a room. How many rooms were there?

CS: Oh, I don't remember now, but I sold [*laughs*] a bunch of 'em.
[*Laughter*] I raised a bunch of . . .

SL: Sounds like a pretty good deal to me.

CS: Huh?

SL: Sounds like kind of an easy . . .

CS: Well, of course . . .

SL: . . . good deal.

CS: Well, it was easy. Yeah—yeah, it was fairly easy and, you know, people—there were people that had interest in it. I, you know, lots of different people. And I don't know whether you want me to [/laughs] start namin' names or not.

SL: Well, you don't, no. I mean . . .

CS: But people who maybe had a grandfather that had a little business that looked up there at the tower all the time and could see it from where they lived and worked and to somebody who's had a professor the—that—father was a professor, and they'd come and gone in business and done well and made money in the markets.

SL: And they're local alumna.

CS: Local alumni and that sort of thing. And anyway, we sold a ton of those things. And that was a huge thing at the time. And it was, you know, it sat up there with a fence around it. And it looked like it was gonna fall down before we could restore it. And that was a big move at that point. Then when Dan—this is when Dan got—Ferritor became chancellor. Willard Gatewood had been chancellor and got—had a heart attack in the first year or heart problems of some sort, and then Dan came in. And so we went through a lot of, you know, a lot of things during that era. I can't remember how long—I think Dan was there about

eight or ten years, too.

SL: Yeah, I thought it was nine.

CS: Nine.

SL: Yeah, I think it may have been nine.

CS: Okay. And we did a lot of different things. Bud Edwards was the development officer, and that's who we worked with. And then we started all these, you know, various other fund-raising things to raise money for various entities.

SL: Campaign for Books.

CS: Campaign for Books was in that time frame.

SL: Brought Dave Gearhart involved.

CS: Yeah.

SL: Dave was involved with that.

[03:03:19] CS: There were a lot of different things. Then Dave came. 'Course, came back after John. Dan stepped down, and John came. And then we've had—we had all the big campaign for the billion dollars and all that, which has just been—blown everybody's mind really. And everybody, you know, Arkansas is a small state. There're a lot of people that have—it's amazing the people that have gone to school here who have wonderful memories of it. I know durin' a lot of that time frame, Hugh Kincaid was in the planned gifts department at the university.

And I'd play tennis with Hugh for years, and he'd tell me, "Well, today we got a call from somebody from Florida who graduated in 1939, and he wants to go put us in his will for \$3 million," you know, or somethin' like that. And anyway, that's the way that thing works. A lot of that money is to come. It's not here yet. It will come as people—estates are liquidated when they pass on. But anyway, that's been an interesting thing. And I think we've done well to—so I got involved in all that. And then when Bud—before Bud left, Charles Scharlau had been the head of the development council. And when he was elected to the board of trustees, I took his place. So all of the last ten years, up until a year ago, I was the head of the National Development Council, and we had meetings a couple times a year. And then we appointed the committees to the—and I was—I was also on the—had been chairman and head of the University of Arkansas Foundation. I was on that for a number of years. Went through all the chairs in that and . . .

[03:05:22] SL: That's the private money for the university.

That's . . .

CS: That's the—that's for the system.

SL: Oh, for the system. Okay.

CS: And for the whole—well, and includes this camp—this campus—

most of the money in the University of Arkansas Foundation is Fayetteville money.

SL: Okay.

CS: Is for this campus. Almost 80 or 90 percent of it. The other big one in that is the med center in Little Rock.

SL: Right. Mh-hmm.

CS: And they all have representatives in the—on the board of the foundation. But the board is really—because it should be—basically controlled from the Fayetteville area. It's based here—was here. We didn't want it to go to Little Rock, and we've tried everyth—you know, we've kept it here, so . . .

[03:06:08] SL: Did Bud Edwards establish that? Was that his . . .

CS: No, no, no. It had been—it was—I don't who—when it was established. It was there—had very little in it.

SL: Right.

CS: And most of the money that would come into it would be spent in the next breath almost, you know. [Laughs]

SL: Right.

CS: So that—and that's the thing with the med center. They're—have been so ex—on expansions and things that they spend their money reasonably quickly and new buildings and projects and stuff. Where up here, a lot of our money is scholarships and

various things, so they need the money from year to year to year as it comes in. And a lot of it is in planned gifts, which are—they haven't matured yet, though the foundation is now over a billion dollars, the University of Arkansas Foundation.

SL: So . . .

CS: So I've been involved in that. I've been involved in the National Development Council.

[03:07:05] SL: The National Development Council has now become the . . .

CS: Board of Advisors.

SL: . . . Board of Advisors . . .

CS: Right.

SL: . . . University of Arkansas Board of Advisors. About fifty people or . . .

CS: Yeah, maybe fifty. And we're on ro—three-year terms, and we're gonna rotate in and out of that. I mean, we'll rotate off of it after two terms, and I think that'll be healthy. I really do.

SL: That's a little scary, isn't it? I mean, you have to replenish that kind of commitment every three years. It's kind of a . . .

CS: Well, you hopefully would stay on for six years, and maybe then you'd rotate off, and you could come back . . .

SL: Oh, okay.

CS: . . . I guess, after being off a term or something. But we needed more turnover. We needed some new blood. And that's needed in, I think, in the—we had sort of taken—had adopted the policy in the National Development Council we wouldn't add any new people. We'd sort of let it—keep it as it was and let it kinda—some go away as they died or whatever happened to 'em. And then we were more or less appointed for life, you know [*laughs*], somewhat. And now this is a better setup, I think. And the Board of Advisors will be the—it's gonna be fine, I think.

[03:08:31] SL: So you have seen a lot of changes in the university since you've been involved with it.

CS: Yeah, and I've been involved with my fraternity all fifty years, too. I've always been involved in that to—I was on the committee to help redo the Greek system not too long—cup—several years ago when we changed the men's programs to reflect—movin' the freshmen into dormitories, which I think was absolutely essential to do. And I've been involved in all kinds of, you know, different kinds of things over there. Every time they do somethin' I'm—I've got—I was treasurer of the Alumni Association for about ten years—seven or eight years—University Alumni Association. I went in as treasurer when Mike Macechko came, and we were pretty much on the ropes. And the idea was

I went in to try to help him get the thing on good footing, and we've done that.

SL: Mh-hmm. Yeah, they've increased their membership quite a bit since he's come on.

CS: Oh yeah, they've done real well. And we built a new building over there. Added all [*unclear word*].

SL: Kind of twice.

CS: Do what?

SL: Kinda twice. You built it kind of . . .

CS: Oh yeah.

SL: I mean, it was an initial building . . .

CS: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . and then it was added on to.

CS: I always said the old building reminded me of a—the boat in the—built by the Texas A&M Navy. [Laughter] Oh, it was a terrible building.

SL: Yeah.

CS: It was not functional at all, and I think that'll be another thing that'll need to be changed. I've been a Razorback booster forever.

[03:10:18] SL: That's a whole nother foundation—Razorback Foundation.

CS: I'm not on that foundation board, but I've been a Razorback booster. My dad took me to the—Mother and Dad took us to— took us in 1946 to the Cotton Bowl—Arkansas's first Cotton Bowl with Clyde Scott, and we played LSU.

SL: I was gonna say Clyde Scott, mh-hmm.

CS: Wonderful trip. I was twelve, thirteen years old and rode the train. Started at Monette—came down through Fayetteville, [laughs] Rogers, and Fort Smith. It was snowin', and there was probably a foot of snow and picked up twenty cars there. Had about a forty-car train—five or six engines pulling it. The people that left Fort Smith drivin' to Dallas never got there because of the . . .

SL: Roads.

CS: . . . snow in southern Oklahoma. And that was a wonderful experience. We played—they played the whole game on our goal line. That was when Y. A. Tittle was quarterback for LSU and John Barnhill was coach, of course.

SL: Yeah.

CS: So I—gosh, I've been goin' to basketball and football games forever.

SL: I guess when they played in the men's gym. [*Squeaking noise as door opens*]

[03:11:46] Kris Katrosh: Sorry.

SL: Hey.

KK: I waited till you spoke.

SL: [Laughs] Till—when . . .

CS: I've been to—I've been to . . .

KK: Lynn's out there.

CS: . . . probably half a dozen—probably been to . . .

KK: [Unclear words]

CS: Probably got all you need.

KK: How are you doing?

CS: I guess we're about through, hopefully, maybe.

KK: Oh, okay. Well . . .

CS: No, I don't know. I went to—I've been to half a dozen Cotton Bowls, three Sugar Bowls—a bunch of bowl games. Been to a bunch of basketball games—NCAA games—playoffs and things.

[03:12:19] SL: Well, tell me what your—what you think is gonna happen with the university—what has to happen with the university [squeaking noise as door opens] to make it work?

CS: Well, I don't know whether you wanna put all this on tape or not. [Laughs] I think that we've got to figure out how to ma—to handle the UCA problem, if you wanna know what I think. I really think that we're gonna have to make it a little easier to get

in up here somehow, and I don't know [*cell phone emits notification*] what that will be or should be. But I think that—and I'm not talking about lowering our standards any because I think that you lift from the bottom up. But I think there're a lot of people that are fallin' through the cracks that would make good—wonderful students here, if they could figure out how to get in here. A lot of people that are involved in several sports and athletics in high schools and lots of curricular things, they might be completely different if they got up here in sto—in school. And there may be—it needs to be a way for them to get in that's easier, like goin' to summer school or doin' somethin' to qualify to get 'em in. I think we need to be about twenty-five thousand students. And if we were, it would make the numbers work for everybody much better. In other words, we don't have—we've—we're doin' a lot of things, and we don't have enough students. We could support all these things we're doin' better and like they should be supported if we had another eight thousand students or six thousand students.

[03:14:08] SL: So you think that adding that many students would provide enough cash flow to add the faculty in order to accommodate that rise?

CS: Yes, I think it would. It'd make the numbers work. In other

words, instead of three students takin' German, you might have a dozen—or Russian or somethin'. Or you might have—you might—if you had another thousand students in the arts and sciences, you could—or another three thousand in arts and science, you'd have to have more people, and you'd have to—it'd be more money involved in it. The numbers would work better. You—we've got a lot of physical facilities, and we'll need some expansions there, but I think that—I think that we're—you know, we had planned on being at twenty thousand students by 2010. I don't think we're gonna get there. I don't think we can unless we do something differently. And I think that's why—I think we need to do some things differently, maybe. I'm not throwing cold water on anything we've done. I just think we've gotta reach further. And I see a threat to us, long range, from UCA.

SL: Well, 'cause their growth has been so phenomenal and . . .

CS: Yeah.

SL: And their . . .

CS: Well, it's in the central part of the state.

SL: Yeah.

[03:15:21] CS: They're getting a lot of kids from wealthy alumni from this university whose kids can't get in up here—who don't qualify for one reason or another or might be close to the

borderline—that kind of thing. I think there needs to be s—we need to examine that and see if there's anything we can do to enhance that. I think we need to, you know, we're getting a lot of students out of Texas now. And the Texas thing with instate tuition, in effect, is a hell of a deal for Texas students.

SL: Yeah.

CS: And so anyway, I don't know what it is, but I'd like—I think the great challenge is gonna be to continue what John's done—been building on and how to enhance that in a way to head off—and make sure that we maintain our position as the dominant university in the state.

[03:16:24] SL: UCA's gonna be Division I athletically here coming up, or is it already or . . .

CS: What, ours?

SL: No, UCA.

CS: Yeah, I—it's my understanding they're moving towards Division I. And that could change their p—athletic situation dramatically. And eventually if they're—keep doing it, people are gonna say, "Well, they're gonna have a football team and a basketball team that's worth watching and following." And people will start to bleed off towards that. And so I think Jonesboro, [*clears throat*] as an example, has kind of been—has kinda lost out in the big

scheme of things, or they seem—I know they're very partisan still, but—and very powerful in the senate and the legislature. But they're not getting—they're—they've dropped students. They're not getting the students. And the pool of good students in Arkansas is minimal to begin with. Because a lot of our schools are not as good as they should be or could be or need to be, and particularly in parts of the state.

SL: I . . .

CS: So we need to do somethin' to—we need to get all the good students we can get is what I'm sayin'. Either through scholarships or through something or making it a little easier to get in.

[03:17:47] SL: Or do you think there's any way that the University of Arkansas could play a role in improving the high schools in Arkansas?

CS: Well, I hope we are. Someone gave me—someone I was talking to this morning told—was talking about the—you can go to UCA and get a teaching degree in four years, and up here it takes five. Well, maybe you're [*laughs*]—maybe the five years is better. But if you're working your way through school anyway or your parents are—four looks better than five. And maybe you continue in graduate work after you start teaching. I don't

know. I'm just saying that . . .

SL: Yeah.

CS: . . . that someone was talking about that as a reason to go to UCA versus Arkan—Fayetteville because the programs are different. Now the program is better here, and I think it is better. And I think a five-year program is better, and you probably get more money when you start teaching. But that may not be the end of all for someone who is struggling to get through school in the first place. So I think there's a lot to that sort of thing, maybe.

[03:18:59] SL: You want to say anything about David Gearhart?

CS: Yes, I'm a David Gearhart fan. I'm—I've been with—I've known David for—and worked with David for years and years, and I think he'll be a wonderful chancellor. I'm real—my time goes back with David when he came here from Hendrix to be a—to work in the advancement—in development work—came from the development work at Hendrix. And Bill Nugent was the chancellor then, and right after David got here, very soon thereafter—a year after he got here, I think things started falling apart a little bit, and David had the opportunity—he couldn't see him—he couldn't see being successful under the circumstances. So he made the decision to go to Penn State, and that was a

good decision on his part. I was on the selection committee when we—as na—chairman of the National Development Council—when we interviewed him—and on the search committee to bring him back as the vice chancellor for development to help John. And he was—I'm pleased that he came back. He had a rough time gettin' started. [Laughs] I'm not gonna go into that. But anyway, he—I think he's done a wonderful job. And I've been pleased so far by what I call his reception in the editorials in the state papers and the news and so on. And I think he's gotten a good—he's been openly received in a very favorable way. And I thought the comment in the Faculty Senate was—by some of 'em were very favorable to him, really. Alan called me and visited with me about David's appointment. And I—first very affirmative in support of David. I do think that David needs to reach out to some of the smaller colleges or—and maybe arts and sciences, in particular, to see if we can't help them get over some of the hurdles that they seem to be facing. And make them more comfortable with things, and I think he'll do that. I think he'll try to do that. I told Jane, his wife, that David back three weeks ago needed to start writing his "I have a dream" speech [*laughter*] and get it ready 'cause he's gonna need it.

SL: Yeah.

CS: And I think if he does that in a way—and I think he will do that in a way that'll be well received by the people—by the university community.

[03:21:54] SL: Is there anything else you want to say about the University of Arkansas?

CS: Well, I love it. It's been wonderful to me. I've spent almost forty years on Dickson Street in the shadows of Old Main—looking up at the Old Main every day—every noontime—every time I walked out of the building across the street or whatever, looking up at Old Main and at the university. And so it's been very much a part of my life. And it's been wonderful to me and my friends. My close friends are friends that I made in the university and have been lifelong friends and people I've supported through the years and—in a—both—works both ways. And I've been blessed. I've had lots of recognition. I've had lots of good things happen to my family, and it's been wonderful, so—the university has been very much a part of what—who I am and what I am and what I've done and been a part of.

[03:22:59] SL: Do you want to say anything about your life now? I mean, we've started with your earliest memories. We've gotten you through all your life . . .

CS: Okay, I'm . . .

SL: . . . and we haven't really . . .

CS: Well, I'm—course, I'm—in 1996 we merged our companies into our family business that we'd been in business nearly seventy years—into another company. And I—we traded our stock for their stock. And so that enabled me to retire at the age of sixty-three, more or less, though I still had the bank—I'm still on lots of boards and was then and still am. But anyway, I've—and then I remarried again in—about six years ago.

SL: And you married . . .

CS: Jane Boyer . . .

SL: Jane Boyer, okay.

CS: . . . who was a schoolteacher here in Fayetteville, and Jane has two sons, and so I have two sons. We've got four boys to keep up with, and we're traveling and doin'—havin' a good time and doin' lots of different things. And I've decided to take a little more extra time to get out of some other things to spend more time doin' the things I can while I can. We made a trip to Australia and New Zealand two years ago and were gone five weeks. We're in Ireland a year ago for about three weeks. And we've been in California and New York and just—you know, different places traveling. And have a good time doin' that, and

I'm happy as a bug in a rug and livin' in [*laughs*] the greatest town in the world and enjoy life completely, and I've been blessed.

[03:24:40] SL: Have you got any grandchildren yet?

CS: I have two grandchildren, Sarah and Harrison. Sarah is ten, and Harrison's eight. And they're growing up too fast, I think.

SL: Are you doing your job in spoiling them as best you can?

CS: Oh yeah. I'm known as "Poppy," and Poppy gets report cards and everything. And it usually costs me pretty good by the time I'll get through. And both of 'em are good students, and I love 'em to death and take—you know, ta—I'm spoiling them, sure. I'm doing that, too.

SL: Do you have them report to you and present a silver dollar to them on a good report?

CS: I don't give 'em a silver dollar. I don't get out that cheap anymore. [*Laughter*] A report card the other day cost me twenty dollars apiece.

SL: [*Laughter*] Oh well, you know, that's probably about what a silver dollar would—I mean, that's probably . . .

CS: It's at least that.

SL: . . . equivalent. Yeah.

CS: And I said, "Will this do?" And my little grandson said, "How

about fifty, Poppy?" [Laughter] I—sometimes I'll take a hundred-dollar bill and tear it in two and give one to him [laughs] and the other one the other just to give 'em somethin' to play with . . .

SL: Yeah.

CS: . . . give 'em something to think about.

[03:26:00] SL: Well, is there anything that you wanna say? Is there anything else you wanna talk about? I mean, we—I know we've kind of—I don't feel like we've really covered all there is to cover. I know you've got a lot of stories that . . .

CS: Oh, I do. I have, but we'll have to save some of those [laughs] for another day maybe. But I don't think so. I don't know of anything particularly. I've had a good run and been blessed to do a lot of different things and make a lot of nice trips. Made a lot of trips with the hospital. Made a lot of trips in connections to the university and athletics and different things. And it's been wonderful to live in Fayetteville, and I'm so glad I got to live here instead of Fort Smith. [Laughter] I really think I came out on top on that, and—though Fort Smith is still home. But anyway . . .

[03:27:01] SL: Well, I think you have lots of things to be proud of—the contributions that you've made to the community up here.

And I suspect that you're probably not done with that. I . . .

CS: Well, I've got another wall upstairs in my office that's got all my university stuff on it.

SL: Yeah.

CS: It's kind of interesting—different things and plaques and things. I've been honored by the—be the volunteer of the year and from the Alumni Association and then from the National Development Council work, too, and from the university. And I've been recognized, and so I'm very grateful.

[03:27:42] SL: Any last piece of advice?

CS: Well, not really. I think—I'm pleased that David—I've known David and Barbara forever and the family. And I think the Pryor Center needs to continue, and hopefully you will and can and may—and we'll—maybe we'll find some money for you guys somewhere. *[Laughter]* We'll be sure that things don't stop. I think the oral history is the way to go. I think that's a good way to do it, and I'm pleased when I get to see one of these from time to time in one place or another of your interviews with various political—politicos, particularly, and I always enjoy listening to 'em. And most of the time and there—ones I listen to, I know a good bit about what they're s—talking about because I've either been on the periphery of it or on the sideline

or had a little part in it or somethin', so that's been fun, too.

SL: Well, thank you. That's a wonderful thing to say. It's been my honor to spend this time with you. Now if you think of some other stuff, I want you to call me.

CS: Well that'd be fine [*laughs*] . . .

SL: And we can get together.

CS: I could probably talk about various things—you know me, if you ever want to add anything to it let me know.

SL: Okay.

CS: Thank you.

SL: All right. Thank you.

CS: Okay.

SL: All right.

[03:29:06 End of interview]

[Transcribed and edited by Pryor Center staff]