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Bumpers College Centennial History Project

Interview with

Dr. Paul Noland
Fayetteville, Arkansas
20 October 2005

Interviewers: Teddy Morelock and Randy Luttrell

Paul Noland: I was born in central Illinois north of Peoria in a rural community—rural setting. I went to school in that area. I went to a two-room elementary school [unintelligible]. Then I went to high school and graduated. I was in both 4-H and FFA [Future Farmers of America]. My major project was a [unintelligible].

Teddy Morelock: So you grew up on a farm?

PN: Well, I really was not on a farm, but we were fifty feet from a cornfield, where our house was. My father worked for the railroad, and we were right in the middle of an agricultural area—mostly corn at that time. It's now [unintelligible].

TM: So you did not actually grow up on a farm, but you were closely involved. Where did you go to college?

PN: I started to college in 1942. I went one year to a [unintelligible] school [named] [Blackburn?] at Carbondale, Illinois. You had to work fifteen hours a week there,

and my job was to milk from 4:30 until 7:00 in the morning—7:30. After the service, I went to the University of Illinois and received my Bachelor's and Master's [degrees] there, and then went to Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. I finished my Ph.D. in 1951.

TM: Were you first in your family to go to college—or at least your generation?

PN: No, I was the first one. Well, my grandfather had gone to college for a year or two, but I was the first one [unintelligible].

TM: The first to graduate?

PN: The first to graduate.

TM: Who was the most influential person as far as your career choice? I see you grew up around agriculture, but . . .

PN: Well, I think it's kind of interesting. In the late 1940s, there was not much construction going on. A neighbor of ours, who graduated from the University of Illinois in civil engineering—he couldn't get a job. So I thought, "Well, there will always be a job in agriculture because we're going to need food." After I returned from the service, I had a class with a fellow named James Crider at the University of Illinois in swine production. He had graduated from Cornell some ten years earlier. The way he talked—his personality and everything—I think helped me make a decision, and then he helped me, in turn, to get into Cornell.

TM: That's how you chose animal agriculture?

PN: That's how I chose animal agriculture.

TM: So you served in World War II? Where did you serve?

PN: I was in northern Europe. We didn't get over to the continent until about January

1, 1945. Our unit was an armored division, and I was in an armored infantry company. We had about thirty-five percent casualties in our company.

TM: After you had attended Cornell—one thing I found rather interesting on your resume was that even though you're an animal scientist, you had a minor in plant breeding. How did that come about? That's a great combination.

PN: Well, at Cornell, if you were interested in genetics, you went the plant breeding route. So I rubbed shoulders with a lot of agronomists and horticulture people—this sort of thing—in the plant science area. But it was basically in order to get genetics-related courses.

TM: Did you ever have any contact with [Pete Berger?]

PN: No, I didn't.

TM: He was a vegetable breeder. Well, after you finished at Cornell, how did you wind up at Arkansas? Did you have several options?

PN: Well, there were basically three college jobs available. There was one at the University of Tennessee, there was one in [unintelligible], and there was one here at the University of Arkansas [Fayetteville]. The one in Tennessee was basically a laboratory job, and I welcomed the opportunity here at the University of Arkansas to teach, do research out on the farm, and—when I came here for an interview, the town appealed to me. It was about 10,000 people. It looked like a nice place to raise a family.

TM: That leads right into my next question. What was the university like when you came here? Obviously, it was smaller.

PN: Well, yes. We had approximately 5,000 students, I think. There was a great deal

of interaction among the faculty members in animal science and other departments—basically, because of suppers and functions that the wives had [unintelligible]. We would meet people from all the different departments. There was also more interaction or a lot of interaction between members of the ag [agriculture] faculty and faculty across the campus, because it was small enough that we would meet people from many different departments.

TM: What were the facilities like then?

PN: Pretty rustic. They were coming out of World War II and the [Great] Depression. Consequently, we didn't have a lot of facilities. Many times we'd have to make our own pens for experimental animals and things like that, but we tried to use what we had to get along.

TM: Where was your office?

PN: It was in the dairy building, which was at the corner of Maple Street and Garland—in the old dairy building up on the second floor. Most of the offices had two people in them. I was in an office with Dr. Ed Stephenson. Well, practically all of us had two people in an office.

TM: Basically, where [Silas] Hunt Hall is.

PN: About where Hunt Hall is located today.

TM: When was the current animal science building built?

PN: It was started, I think, about 1954 or early 1955. I can remember coming out here. It was so muddy up on the site that we stood down on the edge of the street and stuck our shovels in the ground, and that was the groundbreaking for animal science. It was built in two phases, actually. One phase was completed in about

1956 or 1957, and then there was another phase—the eastern wings were added on in the early 1960s.

TN: There was probably a significant increase in faculty at that general time.

PN: We had some increases in faculty, especially—we consolidated with the vet [veterinary] science group. When I came here, they were in the—the bacteriology department—we consolidated them into our department and brought in more people—brought them over here from where they were located in the middle part of the campus.

TM: [Unintelligible] in animal science for five or six or maybe more came roughly at the same time [when you?] came.

PN: That's true. We had a number of us—of course, there was a real backlog of open positions because of World War II, and they were adding [unintelligible]. One that I can think of right off is poultry products, because at that time poultry and animal science were all together with [unintelligible].

TM: Well, the list I have—Dr. Tom Brown came about that time and Dr. Stephenson, Dr. [unintelligible], Dr. [Nicholas Gyles?], Dr. [unintelligible]. I'm not sure of Dr. [Maurice] Ray.

PN: Dr. Ray had been here and went to the University of Illinois to receive a Ph.D., which I think he obtained in 1953. Dr. [Gyles?] came a little later. We had a poultry geneticist by the name of J. T. Gilbreath, who was here at the time I came. He coached the judging team very successfully, then left here and went to Oklahoma State [University]. At that time, we hired Dr. [Gyles?].

TM: [Unintelligible]

PN: At that time we had several faculty members that would come and stay one year or two years. They were in and out. But those are the ones that came and stayed.

TM: What was animal agriculture like in Arkansas?

PN: Well, of course, we had a number of small farms—many more farms than we have today, and most farms had a few pigs. A lot of farms had cattle. We were just beginning to use the poultry litter to improve the pastures, especially here in northwest Arkansas—down in the southwest part, around Hope and so forth. So there were very poor pastures—[unintelligible] pretty low productive plants in their pastures. We also had a lot of [unintelligible], though, at that time, for quail because quail-hunting was a very nice sport for a number of people. We even had pheasants on the university farm. We [unintelligible] pheasants out there.

TM: [Unintelligible] jackrabbits.

PN: Yes, there were a few jackrabbits out there, too. That's right.

TM: Your primary research area was swine nutrition?

PN: Swine nutrition—swine management—although early on I did quite a bit of work with cattle, especially when Dr. Ray went to Illinois, we did a lot of work with—one of the first projects I worked on was feeding ground rice hulls to cattle. A major author of a very widely used textbook had said that rice hulls were toxic to cattle. Consequently, they could not sell rice hulls to [animal] vitamin companies and others that needed a carrier for their other material. So we had to do some work, and they gave us a nice grant from the rice industry to do some work to determine whether or not the rice hulls were toxic. [We did some] logical work on testing the cattle, and the long-term effects of feeding them, and so forth, and

found that we could show no toxicity. And as a result of that, then, the rice industry could sell the ground rice hulls for carriers for vitamins.

TM: I know you have an interest in genetics. What did the cattle and swine herds look like [unintelligible]?

PN: Well, they were—of course, the lean movement was just starting. It was a controversial thing because we were changing something. Anytime you make a change, it's a controversy. We were trying to move the [unintelligible] of swine breeders, and we were participating in a regional swine-breeding project with some of the Corn Belt states. We had a crossbreeding program here using inbred lines and that sort of thing. The pigs probably had a lot more fat on them than they needed. We did not have the white breeds incorporated, like the [unintelligible] used today [unintelligible] especially in the maternal lines of the swine. People would feed them locally—maybe for their own use. During the 1950s and 1960s, there was a feeder-pig industry developed over in Carroll County, Boone County—over in that area. They would have a large feeder-pig plant at [unintelligible] Springs, at the fairgrounds at Harrison. We'd have 100 to 150 people come who were feeder-pig producers. Now, a feeder pig at that time was about a forty-pound pig that was produced here where we had better weather, warmer weather, and maybe a little cheaper labor, and then shipped to Iowa or Missouri, where they had grain [to feed]. We had some very successful producers in northeast Arkansas, where they were producing [unintelligible]. I was thinking about some people around Manila and in that area. That was a very well-organized swine farm at that time.

TM: [Unintelligible], do they go north or west?

PN: Probably more west. Some went north. We would have feeder pig or feeder calf sales. There was one here in Fayetteville that went for a number of years—where they could pool enough animals at one time to justify a truckload or several truckloads. That was the problem with some of the community offices—they would never have enough calves on a particular day to fill a large semi [truck and trailer], and we would try to pool these cattle to bring in buyers. That went on for a number of years. I think that has changed, certainly, now. We had one here, there was one in Marianna, one in Hope—feeder-calf sales. The extension service took care of them. Each feeder-calf sale, I think, was sort of a separate entity as far as financial organization.

TM: Early in your career was about the time the poultry industry [unintelligible]. All this poultry litter was being applied to the pastures. How did that change [unintelligible] cattle [unintelligible] Arkansas?

PN: Well, I think it's primarily responsible for the 90,000 cows that we have in Washington County, or something like that—feed cows, because the litter certainly increased the carrying capacity of the pastures. It enabled the producers to improve their pastures and improve their yield from litter application. One of the things that we did—it was a controversial thing, but it was a necessity at that time, I think—it was a very dry year—1952 or 1953. I was on a friend's farm out by Farmington, and he was spreading chicken litter. I noticed the cattle were eating the chicken litter he was spreading because they didn't have a lot of other feed to eat. So we did a number of experiments using the chicken litter as a

source of nitrogen for wintering cattle. Dr. Ray did a lot of this work later on, too. But we did that for a number of years. Eventually, they went through a composting [unintelligible]. But it was started because of watching cattle follow a chicken-litter spreader.

TM: Is that as common today as it was then?

PN: I really am not sure about that. I'm sort of away from that aspect, although there are people [unintelligible] composting [unintelligible].

TM: I know that you [unintelligible].

PN: Early on, I taught freshman animal science. Because of our heavy enrollment, we had two sections, a lecture section, four lab sections. That almost took up all of my time in the fall of the year, and then in the spring we would have about half of that. The freshman animal science course was the one I enjoyed teaching because you were able to meet freshmen coming in from all over the state, and follow them as they went through their university career. I really personally enjoyed teaching that course I did teach laboratory methods and analysis, swine production, advanced livestock production, and then a course that I taught for a number of years was inorganic materials—minerals.

TM: And this large number of students you were referring to—were these primarily World War II veterans or was that after the influx [following the end of the war]?

PN: Most of the students at that time were just out of high school—most of the freshman. We had a number of World War II vets that were up in the junior and senior level. I knew a lot of those that were here. They were certainly a different type of student than you might ordinarily encounter. But I enjoying seeing the

freshmen just out of high school. They were coming from rather modest educational backgrounds. Most of them were first-generation college students from families that came from all over the state, and they were very eager to learn. They had very positive attitudes, and, certainly, our educational and visual aids and other things that we had at that time were not the best. They had to tolerate some poor teaching facilities, visually. But they had wonderful attitudes. I've followed some of them in their careers. We're really proud of their achievements. I'm proud of their various achievements. The things that they've overcome—I might tell you about one student I had during those first few years. He could not write a complete sentence. He was quite concerned about that—very sincere. He dropped out of school for three or four years—went in the service, and I don't know whether he was able to get a GED someplace, but he came back and he was very well trained. It was a tremendous in his writing ability. He went into vocational education and was a teacher at a school for a number of years. Another thing I want to say is that a number of these students at that time went on to become leaders in *Fortune* 500 companies. They came from Arkansas, and there were very few employment opportunities here. You had the extension service that hired a number of students. The poultry companies might hire a few. But a lot of our students had to leave the state in order to find employment in a technical area. As they did so, they went on up in their companies. I could just name a number of students that were vice presidents or presidents of *Fortune* 500 companies. On the other hand, over the years I've run into a number of students out in the state—finished their work here, went back to their main community,

and were leaders in those home communities—school boards, worked in their churches, Farm Bureau—they’ve made tremendous contributions. We don’t read as much about those as we do about the higher 500 companies, but certainly there’s a large number of students that went by and made it. And I run into them all the time. People recognize me from time to time that I’ve forgotten but remember when we start talking. So especially in those early years—very few of them had cars. Most of them had to work. I might tell you about one student that came over here from Calico Rock in about 1940. This is a student that Dr. [Jeffries?] used to like to tell the story about [unintelligible] animal science when I came. This man came to him in about 1940, and he said, “I’ve hitched over to Fayetteville from Calico Rock. It has taken me two days to make that trip. I have \$50.” Dr. [Jeffries?] told him, “Well, maybe you ought to go back home and find about \$50 and come back in January and start to school, rather than start here in September.” The prospective student left, and he came back to Dr. [Jeffries?] the next day. He said, “Dr. [Jeffries?], it’s easier for me to stay here than it is to hitchhike home again.” So what he did was to get a job as a part-time fireman. The fire station was located where the administration building is now located. He worked at a sorority house serving meals, and he had a job in the university creamery, which was located in the old dairy building, where he was able to make a few dollars working for the university. That man went on to become a well-known poultry nutritionist at the university. He got a Ph.D., and he started out by hitchhiking to the university with \$50 in his pockets. I can give you a number of examples of that sort of thing. Another thing I want to mention about the students

is the rivalry that existed in the early 1950s and maybe even a little later between the engineering students and the agriculture students, especially around the time of the engineering day in March and the ag day that might come in April or early May—quite a lot of rivalry. Finally, the deans had to get together and say, “We’re going to have a truce and call off the exuberance the students were showing in their efforts to interfere in some way. One of the funniest things that happened in 1952 or 1953—the engineers were having a big engineering ball. Some of the agriculture students took a number of little white rats into the engineers’ ball and turned them loose. I think as a result of that, that ended the dance because the people—especially the young women—scattered. When about fifty white rats started running around on the dance floor, that ended the engineers’ ball. We had a number of little incidents like that. That’s just an example of one of the things that went on.

TM: And we had a big tug of war with them.

PN: There was always a big tug of war with the mud in the middle. Usually—more times than not, the agriculture students won the tug of war. One year the engineers inflated a big balloon and put it in the air down near the science engineering building, where it’s located now. Well, one of the ag students who had a car—he had a shotgun in the back of his car, which would be a no-no today. He went down there one night and he took one shot and brought the balloon down. This is another example, I guess, of the work that went on between the engineering and ag students. We had an agriculture rodeo on the Saturday of agri day. The students would do different things. I can remember an international

student from over in southeast Asia—a rather short-statured young man. They would tape \$1 bills and \$5 bills to the tails of these young calves—maybe 300 or 400 calves. As he was taking the tape off the tail of the steer, the steer turned and started chasing him. It was sort of a comical picture to see him with his little, short legs running with the calf chasing him with his head down across the rodeo arena. He made it to the fence, but the calf was right behind him.

TM: Was there a reason for that—work ethic, maybe?

PN: I think it was work ethic. They just seemed to have a tremendous desire to try to succeed at whatever they were doing. They were very competitive, and they knew they had some shortcomings in their training. I think they did everything they could to overcome that. The other aspect to that, Teddy, that I'd like to mention is the fact that I think the University of Arkansas—and I'm just going to talk about the agricultural part of it—has been very fortunate because a number of Arkansas students have gone away and gotten their Ph.D. elsewhere, and have come back here. They've been willing to work for less money, perhaps, than other schools in other states—in many cases, with fewer resources, because they're interested in improving the agriculture in their home state. I feel that the college of agriculture over the years has been much improved—has been better than the money they've had available—because of the contribution across all the departments of home-grown students who have come back here to improve agriculture.

TM: Of the interviews we've done, about [unintelligible].

PN: And I always appreciated that, too, because they had contacts out in the state.

And that's another thing I wanted to comment on—as an extension agent—farm families that we would encounter with our research as we'd go out on [study days?] or that might send their children here to school or for other contacts that we might have—it was just a tremendous experience for me to get to know these people and to talk with them. There's just wonderful people out there that we've dealt with.

TM: [Unintelligible] travel [unintelligible] Connell Brown [unintelligible] description of his background [unintelligible].

PN: Well, I think so. If we'd go into a community where he might have lived and said, “Well, we know Connell Brown,” I think it made the people more receptive to us. As individuals, we might be called foreigners, not being from Arkansas.

TM: Let's shift gears just a bit. You [unintelligible].

PN: Actually, I followed Park Waldroup.

TM: Yes.

PN: Let's see, it was William Kellogg, Park Waldroup, and then [unintelligible].

TM: [There was another one in there somewhere.]

PN: Well, Dr. Odie Stallcup acted as department head for about a year or two, I think. But I was department head from 1988 until 1994, when I retired. During that time, we split the poultry science off from animal science—during that six-year period.

TM: Some of the people [unintelligible]—Dr. Stallcup?

PN: Well, Dr. Stallcup had worked here as a student in the department prior to World War II. He went to the service based on his ROTC [Reserve Officers Training

Corps training here at the University of Arkansas, and then he went off to officer's candidate . . .

[Stopped]

PN: Actually, Dr. Stallcup was probably one of the most highly decorated men on this campus. You never knew it. He never talked about it. He made some tremendous contributions in the area of artificial insemination, semen preservation, digestive mechanisms in the rumen—trying to maintain the proper environment in there for [fibrous?] digestion. So he was working in two different fields most of the time—reproductive physiology and nutrition. He was a true scientist. He had a Ph.D. from the University of Missouri, and he was really an outstanding scientist. He just worked away day in and day out in the laboratory. He made several talks. I know he went to Italy and gave a presentation over there at some world organization on some of his work in the reproductive area.

TM: Was he working primarily with dairy cattle or beef cattle?

PN: Mostly with dairy cattle. He was mostly in the dairy cattle area, but some of his findings in semen preservation and nutrition were applicable to the beef industry as well.

TM: You were talking about people who came back to Arkansas.

PN: Well, we did have. After your family gets up about junior high or high school age—we had four sons—it's difficult to move at that age. You might be interested—when I left Cornell, several faculty members told me, “Now, if you go to Arkansas, don't stay over four or five years.” But I've about decided to stay.

TM: [Unintelligible]

PN: [Laughs] Yes. Well, their feelings towards southern universities—that was their attitude at the time, that you needed to move into some other area of the country.

TM: [Unintelligible] a lot of different things. What area did you [unintelligible]?

PN: Well, I think I said earlier that contact with the students, I think, is probably my most gratifying experience over the years. To see them come through the university, go ahead in business . . . But on the other side of that coin, you would see students come in that had tremendous talent and [yet?] they just did not apply themselves to [their studies like] a lot of the other people were, and they did not use or develop their capability. Some people were over achievers, some people were under achievers.

TM: I know that you did get more than one international [unintelligible]—international agriculture.

PN: In 1955—January or February—Professor Dwight Isley from the entomology department was [unintelligible] the program that the university had in the country of Panama. They had a contract with the U.S. Department of State to develop an agricultural extension, research, and teaching program in the country of Panama. There were a number of people down there from—like Chuck Caviness from agronomy—other people that had been there three years, I guess, and they were ready to come back. They were getting ready to change the number of people down there. So I talked with my wife, and we decided we would go down there. So July 1, 1955, we moved to the interior of Panama on a small research station out there. My duty was to try to change the type of research program they had or

to establish a research program in animal agriculture. We were supposed to be training Panamanian agricultural people in research techniques. So we lived out there on that experiment station for two years. It was a good experience. We learned something about the Spanish culture. We had to learn the language. Our children were exposed to Spanish-speaking playmates. When we came back here after two years, our children spoke more Spanish than they did English. As a result of that, though, we had an interest in Central and South America. Because of that I was able to make a number of trips down there for the American Soybean Association, trying to encourage the use of more soybean meal and other products in the animal agriculture area throughout Mexico and Central and South America. So I've made probably between forty and fifty trips down there. Some of them were two-day trips, two years, six weeks—went to Guatemala trying to help write a law to prevent the contamination of animal feed because some of the feed makers were putting sand and sawdust in their feed. We were trying to write some kind of law which [unintelligible] agriculture [unintelligible]. That was an interesting environment to be in—Guatemala [unintelligible] see how that would work.

TM: I believe a few years ago you won a rather significant award?

PN: Well, because of our long-term relationship with Panama and the friends that we had down there, I was given the highest award that they give to a non-military person that is not a Panamanian. Panama sent an envoy up here. He brought the medal and everything. It was an award that I certainly appreciated, but I think it really should be shared with all the members that were in this Arkansas [project

in] Panama back during the period from 1951 to 1957, because it was sort of a reward, I guess, for all that we did during that time frame.

TM: That sounds like a very nice award.

PN: Incidentally, my granddaughter is getting married next week. Some of the people that we met in Panama—the son and his wife of the people we met in Panama in 1950—the son and his wife are coming to the wedding. So we've maintained contact with those people for more than fifty years now.

TM: That sounds like a very nice relationship. Looking back, how has the university changed since you first came? Obviously, it's bigger.

PN: Oh, it's bigger—more impersonal. In my last years, I think we had less relationship interaction with other departments. I think there's more administrative overhead today than there was, and there's a lot more administrators than even during the time of [University of Arkansas President] Dr. [David W.] Mullins. Compared to the administration of today, there's an awful lot of administrative overhead. I know there are more reports and things like that—more accountability that people are asking for that someone has to track. I think maybe the faculty members themselves in my later years were actually less involved in university activities. We would often have departmental picnics and parties at Christmas time and this sort of thing. There was good participation, but I don't see that [today]. I think people just have more things to do. They live away from Fayetteville. At that time, most all the faculty lived right here in Fayetteville. Maurice Ray lived down south of Greenland a couple miles, but he's one of the few that lived out of Fayetteville. Now they live in Prairie Grove,

Springdale . . .

TM: Do you think there was more interaction within the department in those days?

PN: From what people tell me, I think there was. You know, we would visit each other's homes and go to dinner. Some departments seem to do that more than others.

TM: You mentioned Maurice Ray.

PN: That's right. They developed a lot of research work [with his] cattle-raising situation—supplementary, a rotational grazing program. Dr. Ray and Dr. [Stern?] were very good in their relationship together.

TM: How has the animal industry changed since you came?

PN: You know, we used to have people over in the delta country with cattle. As I drive through that country, I don't see the cattle today that were over there fifty years ago. They've gone more completely to row-cropping. The big industry is—instead of having a large number of independent producers, big industry has gotten a lot larger and more integrated. The independent producers have fallen by the wayside.

TM: Any regrets in your career? Would you do it all again or different?

PN: I don't know. I guess if I could, I would try to help students a little more than I did. I know faculty members in other departments—they have no children of their own, and I know that they were [unintelligible]. Maybe I could've been a little more—oh, what should I say—receptive to—and I don't ever remember a student asking for me money, but maybe I should've been a little more aware, because I know there were students that dropped out of school because they didn't

have enough money. What are the regrets? I probably have a lot of them, but I just can't think of them right at the moment. I probably should've done a little better job teaching classes—that sort of thing—worked on that sort of aspect of it.

TM: Do you consider yourself to be an Arkansawyer?

PN: Well, if Arkansas will accept me.

TM: I think []. Let's be a little philosophical. What would you think was your most significant contribution—to the state, the university?

PN: Well, at the time, I think [it] was very important to bridge the gap [from?] having inadequate [feedstuffs?] due to drought to having more balanced [feedstuffs?] so that they could use what roughage they might have available. I think that was a contribution at that time. Let's see, what other things? We did a lot of management work—helped develop the slatted floors for pig houses. In fact, I think we probably constructed the first pig house with curtain-type side walls. I know that the man in charge of Tyson's swine operation at that time was a little dubious of the using of curtain-type side walls on pig houses. One morning it was twenty [degrees Fahrenheit] below zero. You say that it doesn't get twenty below, but it was twenty below one morning. He was at our barn at 8:00 that morning to see what the situation was like in that barn at twenty below temperature. So I think the slatted floor development—we took the idea that other people had and moved it on, but I think copying the poultry industry and putting the curtain-type side wall on swine units in the mid-1960s, I think, was sort of a contribution to the industry. We did some research on them, but not a lot. I might have to think about other things that might be achievements.

TM: I'll bet there are a lot [more].

PN: Well, it probably was.

TM: Well, let's change gears again. You were quite active in a lot of different things.

You were active in Fayetteville city government

PN: Well, Joe McFerran from horticulture had been a member of the Fayetteville City Board of Directors when they went to a city manager form of government. I think he had served a couple of terms and was ready to stop, so a number of them came to me in the fall or summer of 1972 and asked me if I'd run for the city board of directors, which I did. I was elected and went through fourteen years on the city board of directors. Five of those years I was mayor of Fayetteville, and during that time we built the big sewage treatment plant that's out east of Fayetteville. That certainly interfered with my overall effectiveness here on campus. The administration was very supportive. No one ever told me that I should not participate during that time. I think because of the way we did that sewer plant, the impact on the university was minimized because at one time the university was really worried that the sewage treatment rates would go so high that it would make it very difficult for them to [leave?] it in their budget. We worked with a number of different agencies on campus with [our?] city relationship. I remember during the time that I was mayor, I appointed a committee from the city to begin working with a committee from the university to develop the Walton Arts Center. Frank Sharp was the chairman of the committee, and I think that was a real collaborative effort on the part of the university and the city to put their resources

together and come up with the Walton Arts Center—and all of the related developments that have occurred up and down Dickson Street because of the improved type of buildings that are down there.

TM: I believe that's the reason they wanted to name [the west side waste treatment plant] after you.

PN: Well, it is. I told them they could name it after me as long as it continued to work. If it quits working, why, take my name off of it.

TM: [Laughs]

PN: But part of that was the fact that we went through a number of meetings. I counted over sixty different meetings that we had in about a year and a half. We had about fifteen different alternative systems, and hopefully we came up with the one that will achieve what we want it to do.

TM: What do you see in the future for [university] agriculture [research] ?

PN: I think it's more or less inevitable that certain schools will specialize in beef or dairy cattle, others in swine, and others in poultry, and we'll probably see some reduction in the input. Hopefully, what I'd like to see, and we tried to work it out with the poultry departments in Oklahoma and Kansas and Missouri, is to let their poultry students come to the University of Arkansas and that they would have some specialty where Arkansas students could go to those schools. But that didn't work out too well. As far as I know, no formal arrangements were ever made, but we had committees working on that in about 1990 and that time frame. [So that schools could] really specialize—they've done it here in poultry—and someone else could specialize in swine because we don't enough swine here to

justify a large amount of financial input for research in the production of swine today. See what I'm saying? It seems like different colleges over the Midwest and the South would be specializing. Students from other states would want to come. There should be some kind of a reciprocal arrangement both for teaching and for the research and extension areas, where they have the particular expertise.

TM: Everybody thinks it's a good idea, but implementing it . . .

PN: Implementing it, as we found out in 1990, is difficult. But I think budgetary constraints [will encourage movement in that direction]. I think the students will become more sophisticated. I could see that in the last years that I was teaching. Certainly, the number of laptop computers that you see on campus today shows that they're a much more sophisticated student body. But I heard an interesting comment in relation to the election that they're holding here on Monday that the land-grant system was founded and finally enacted into federal legislation in the 1860s because the working-class people were feeling that their students were not being educated. It was the elite people that were being educated. Some people made the comment—people that I thought a lot about and were discussing this lecture that related to the land-grant system—that today we may be overlooking some talent because of our interest in ACTs and grade points and so forth—there may be students from some of these educational backgrounds and high schools who have not been trained to achieve the ACT scores that they need to achieve or whatever to get over that barrier. And they're losing some talent out there because we're so wrapped up in [test scores and grades].

TM: In your career [you've seen these changes back again over time].

PN: Well, that's right. We had Saturday classes several times. I might mention—I don't think I talked about this earlier. During the time that we taught Saturday classes, the students didn't have many cars. The corner of Sixth Street and School Street was sort of the hitchhiking center. Students would start lining up down there at 7:30 or 8:00 on Saturday morning trying to get back home. If they didn't have a Saturday class, they would be going to Little Rock or Mena or Fort Smith or points beyond. People would stop down there. It was just like a bus system. "I can take two" or "I can take three." Then on Sunday night they'd be at a filling station at Alma hitchhiking back to campus. So that was one of the things that we saw with Saturday classes—the hitchhiking center that developed down there on weekends. Students, then, were free, and the faculty was free at Saturday noon—we were supposed to be in our office on Saturday morning, and Saturday noon we'd take off and do things with our families.

TM: Go to Fort Smith or Little Rock .

PN: The way I drove it took about five hours to get to Little Rock because you had to go down through the small towns and this sort of thing. The roads were two lanes, and you'd get behind a truck, and things like that. For me it was about a five-hour drive.

TM: And it wasn't a forty-five-minute trip to Alma, either.

PN: No, it was not a forty-five-minute trip to Alma.

TM: Randy, do you have a question that you want to ask?

Randy Luttrell: Professor, I'm always curious about Calico Rock.

PN: I'd tell them to come up here and be exposed to as many faculty as they could and

to take some of these elementary, basic courses—kind of study what opportunities are available in the field. Because, frankly, when I finished high school, I thought that the only opportunities in agriculture were teaching vocational agriculture, extension service, and you had to choose between those two. But there are so many opportunities in many different areas—tell the student to find an area that they like because they'll have to do it a long time. Whatever they do, whoever they work for—they work for different companies—whatever they're being trained in, they have to do that a long time. One other point here is that when I first came to the university in 1951, having a female student in class in agriculture was really rare—very, very few women students. But today I think there's fifty percent or maybe more.

TM: There are more female students in animal science than there are males.

PN: Are there? Yes. I'm not surprised. Well, that's a complete change from what existed when I first came.

TM: [Yes, times have changed.]

PN: I hope so, anyway. I think that's something that I tell my grandchildren.

[Laughs]

TM: Anything else?

PN: Well, I just thank the people of the state of Arkansas for paying my wages—my contract for fifty-three years—forty-three years when I retired. It's been a great experience. I've really enjoyed the relationships and the people. It's been a great state to live in and raise a family. I'm glad I didn't leave after five years.

TM: Well, on behalf of the state of Arkansas, we want to thank you for the years

you've given.

[End of Interview]

[Transcribed by Cheri Pearce]