

Olin Wetzel, SIUE Promoter and Edwardsville Resident
Transcript for 50th Anniversary History of Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
Interviewer, Ellen Nore-Nordhauser
April 20th, 2006, for History of Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

Ellen Nore [EN]: It's April 20th, 2006. This is Ellen Nore. I will be interviewing Mr. Olin Wetzel for the 50th Anniversary History of Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. Yes.

Olin Wetzel [OW]: You were?

EN: Yes. I.

OW: Well, our family came from Alhambra.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: Um.

EN: Beautiful farm!

OW: Yeah, and uh. My parents moved down here when, uh, when I was five years, four or five years old. That be 19, uh '28, '29, '30. Someplace in there. And my dad worked then for the Florist Insurance Company back then.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: And I went to school here. Grade school and high school. Now, I went to the U of I [University of Illinois] for a couple of years.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: Then, Uncle Sam had me for three years.

EN: [EN laughs] Okay.

OW: And I went back for the equivalent of two more before I settled here.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: In '40, '47, I guess it was.

EN: So, you really are pretty much of a native of Edwardsville.

OW: Yeah. And then, Bob Wetzel at the Bank.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: He was my third cousin.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: And ah, his grandfather was my Dad's uncle. And we say we're third cousins but I don't?

EN: Okay [EN laughs].

OW: I don't know how people call them cousins.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: Tiers. Second cousin, third cousin, and so.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: I spent my career at the Florist Insurance company. I'm responsible for building the buildings that the county bought from us.

EN: Yes, that's a beautiful architecture. It was, it was more beautiful. I don't like. I don't really like what they'd done to it particularly.

OW: Oh, yeah. I built the little building.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: Which, I thought was a jewel.

EN: A jewel! I agree.

OW: And then, I built the. Had. Well, I said I, but. I was responsible for building the tower.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: Which, I never did like as well. I was always going to decorate it with a big flower on the backside.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: But I never did get that done. And then ah, I retired.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: And I've enjoyed retirement.

EN: And now the headquarters is out there...

OW: At Hortica. Out there on Marine Road.

EN: Yes, right. So.

OW: So, but as far as the University, I've had off and on relationships with it.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: I ah, I got to know Delyte Morris a little bit.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: And uh.

EN: What was he like?

OW: He was a fantastic individual. As far as I'm concerned. Well, he had a theory that you should educate everybody to their maximum capability.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: And I'm not so sure that's what the University should do, but that's what they did. And ah. The way I got started with this, I'll just ramble on.

EN: That's alright!

OW: Uh, I belonged to the Rotary Club. And sometimes out back before they started the University.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: George Wilkins Senior, not the one that's on the board now, but his father.

EN: Yes.

OW: Uh. He gave a speech to the Rotary Club. And it stuck with me because he said that this is the largest population area in the State of Illinois without a public college.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: And that struck me as something we ought to do something. Well, I was looking for a project that would make Edwardsville more successful.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: So, I thought about it a little bit and I thought, "Well, why didn't the Rotary Club try to promote that?" And I think about it a little bit more, I said, "That's just too big." we only had 50 members at that time.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: And you're not going to start a university. So, we ah, ah talked to the Chamber of Commerce. I think I was Treasurer of the Chamber at that time, and I don't remember and thought maybe we could do this. And then we decided that we were going to have a university or a college. Or whatever they would support. That we had to take a kind of philanthropic attitude. Let's get it in this area, not in Edwardsville particularly.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: Edwardsville was incidental to it. But, let's get the proper people to support it in the general area, and be it south of Belleville or north of Edwardsville.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: Or in Alton, or anyplace. Um, but, we thought this would be a good spot and good industry for the community. And after that, I didn't do much about it. And then, I think Harold See came here at that time if I'm not mistaken. And I got to know him a little bit, and we, we decided between us and somebody, that we'd sponsor a dinner at the Country Club. When that was, I don't know.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: And for some reason, I was asked to be the activator or promoter of that. And several things I remember about that. I'm a very poor reader when I speak. I kind of speak extemporaneously.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: I had written my remarks, and then I had to travel. And I think I lost it. I was on a train or plane going East. I got back the day before that, and in the meantime, I had lost my papers on the train. [EN laughs] Everybody...I said, "Don't worry about it. I'll speak off the cuff anyhow." So, we had a group of people there. I would guesstimate, and this, a good 75, or so.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: And is this going contrary to what you had?

EN: No, this is fine! This is all really remembering it.

OW: So, ah, they were from all walks of life. They were ah, labor leaders, and politicians and business people, and we tried to cover a lotta fronts.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: And just tried to sell this program.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: We had set up, like you guys do in these. A couple of people out in the audience: "You make a motion. And you second it." [EN laughs] And that, that was the way it was supposed to be done. After I got up and talked for 30 minutes or so. I think at that time, Dr. Morris was there. And I think he said a few remarks if I remember correctly.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: And ah, then I got up and gave them the pitch, to, "Let's get behind this and do something about it! Let's form a committee! And let's be open-minded about where the school goes, but let's get the start." With the idea that we had to raise *some* money to buy some land.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: That ah, would take, ah, eliminate that problem from the.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: Ah, the decision of where, exactly, it would go. Well, anyhow we had set up. All of a sudden, they started popping up like chickens out there, "I'm in favor!" "I'm in favor!" and everybody was in favor of doing things [EN laughs]. I have no idea how much money we raised or anything. I can't remember.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: And then ah, well then, it was decided, and that's when they leased or bought or stole Shurtleff college.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: To start a campus over there. And that was the beginning of the School, to the best of my knowledge.

EN: Yes. That's right.

OW: And then uh, they finally bought the Freund property, which I'm at right now.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: And that became the center. And I don't know what else is out here.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: Then I, that's about all I did.

EN: [EN laughs] Well, did you, did you feel? You were, um, you were a veteran. Did you feel like you were part of a new generation that had come out of this war and was going to change the world? And.

OW: No. No.

EN: No.

OW: I didn't, well. I, I'm not a reformer and I went to service because that's what came up, and I did as little as I could in service, [EN and OW both laugh] I guess. I ah, I was a Sophomore at the U of I.

EN: Um-huh.

OW: The first semester of my Junior year, and I ah, did one of these volunteer programs where you sign up, and you're supposed to get to finish school. Well, that didn't work out. They finally called me up, and someone came, whatever that was. I'll have to look that up.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: And therefore, I lost a half a semester.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: So, instead of two years. I spent three years in service, and then, I went back to U of I and took some courses over a second time. Only about half, being so that I had to take it over and get, get that credit

EN: Sure. Right.

OW: And then I graduated in '47.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: And uh, when I got here, I told them you know that I would prefer the U of I to be in charge.

EN: Yes!

OW: But, if they're not available. They're not available.

EN: Um-huh.

OW: Therefore let's go with Carbondale and.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: I think it should be an independent school. This is my feeling. Actually, I think there's no point in being part of Carbondale anymore. I think those days are passed, but that's what happened. I'm not going to politic about it. I'm not on any boards here...

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: ...and I'm not that active. Now, you ask me a question.

EN: Well, I was um, I was, well, you mentioned that there was local interest in a university and, and, and you, and you listened to the speech by Wilkins. So, Wilkins was kind of, had been thinking about it, and he was kind of spreading. Spreading this idea would you say, that, "It would be nice to have a higher education in this region."

OW: I, I guess I'd have to see. He'd been a local person in Granite City.

EN: Right.

OW: And was State Superintendent of Schools.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: At that time, if my memory is correct.

EN: Yes, that's right. He was. And your memory is wonderful, by the way.

OW: Oh! Oh, no. And uh, I, uh, Edwardsville was looking for an industry, basically. It needed something.

EN: Yes.

OW: And it. I don't think it struck the same with everybody, as with me, but when I went to Rotary Club, I said, "This is it! we're going to do something about it." And, but, my business was out of town.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: I spent ah, well at least a third of my time outside of my office, even if I wasn't President of the company. I was on the road a lot.

EN: You were.

OW: Flying all over the country and, and.

EN: And these old planes with engines and, not jets right, right away?

OW: No, no, we went on trains, and uh, those old consolation airplanes would go about [EN laughs] a hundred, two hundred and twenty mile and, something like that. Flying is different today.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: But uh, there was not a groundswell until we got the groundswell moving.

EN: Uhuh.

OW: And fortunately. And, I hope this doesn't sound wrong...

EN: Oh.

OW: But Delyte Morris was an expansionist in educational facilities.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: He was, I figure, one of the foremost educators in this area to promote things to go forward.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: And ah, we want. We wanted it as an industry and then ah, as a university.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: And ah, it was sold then. And this is not the university. We sold that night. We got a commuter school. And now we have residence students and all that nice stuff.

EN: Right.

OW: But ah.

EN: Well uh, how. There was a group of people, like you, that graduated from the U of I in Edwardsville at this time right?

OW: Oh, we. we went all over. Um, I went to the U of I.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: Because it was the cheapest place to go. My tuition was \$45.00. [EN laughs] And then, I managed to get a political scholarship, but the bursar didn't pay it.

EN: Oh, okay.

OW: For one year, and then, the government paid the.

EN: G.I. Bill.

OW: G.I. Bill. We, I got married before I went up there the second time, while I was still in the service. And so between. I always joke about this, kids talk about not having any money. I worked up there. My wife worked, we had, we lived up there, got through the school, and ended up with enough money to buy a brand new car when I graduated.

EN: That's nice! So, that was 1947?

OW: Yes. That's way back when.

EN: Yes, yes. Yeah, it is.

OW: So ah, we were not. Some people went up there, that was ah, public schools *and* considered one of the best schools.

EN: Yes! It still is.

OW: And I still think that. Today though, I don't know what tuition is now. But private school tuition is fantastic.

EN: Yes, it is. I agree.

OW: Did you graduate from here?

EN: No. I graduated, as an undergraduate, from the University of Nebraska, in Lincoln, and then I went to Stanford University in California for my...

OW: Congratulations!

EN: ...history degrees.

OW: How'd you get into that school! You must be...

EN: I had a ...

OW: You must be real smart!

EN: Oh, no I'm not. I'm not particularly smart.

OW: To get into Stanford, it's tough.

EN: Well, I had a, I had a Woodrow Wilson Scholarship.

OW: Oh.

EN: You know, so...

OW: What was that?

EN: Well, it's, it's a national competition for, for college, for scholarships. I got one in 1963.

OW: Well, that makes sense. My son the MBA.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: He applied to Stanford.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: He ended up at Northwestern.

EN: And Northwestern.

OW: Which...

EN: Is very good.

OW: When he got his MBA, it was a top MBA school then.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: Back a few years, but I think it's, it drifts up and down.

EN: Yeah.

OW: You know, I checked into that.

EN: No, I never. For my whole education, I, my, I never paid any money. No!

OW: You were smart!

EN: So. So I don't have a sense of tuition. We did pay for our daughter. Our son kind of paid-for himself, but our daughter, we paid for her to go to Earlham College.

OW: Earlham?

EN: A quaker college and then she.

OW: Yeah. You a Quaker...?

EN: She went to Case. No.

OW: Huh.

EN: No. not really.

OW: Well, Earlham is in Richard.

EN: Yes, uh-huh.

OW:...Richard, Indiana.

EN: Uh-huh.Right. And then I, I've done. I'm interested in, in, in your saying, "We were looking for an industry," because, as I'm...I'm with Dick Norrish, from the *Intellegencer*.

OW: Yeah.

EN: I wrote a history of Edwardsville, and, and I emphasized that, at the turn of the century, and into the. Until the 30s, it was an industrial town, really. It wasn't just a county seat with lawyers and then.

OW: We had a coal mine, and ah, N.O. Nelson company.

EN: And we had con, condensed milk, and had some clothing factories.

OW: And the Radiator plant.

EN: Yeah, the Radiator plant. Yeah. Right, it had, and it had um, a large um, a large number of, a really amazing number of war contracts.

OW: Which one?

EN: In both world wars, yeah.

OW: I didn't know all that.

EN: Right, so it was a, a it was a little industrial city, kind of on the model of maybe Collinsville or you know. But, most people don't want to remember that about it, but I like it when you said, "So we were looking for an industry. "Because after the depression and the, and the war, I think there weren't very many industries in Edwardsville."

OW: Well, you get on the streetcar and go to St. Louis.

EN: [EN laughs] Yeah! That's right!

OW: And I'm serious about that. You know, you get on the streetcar and go to St. Louis, right through here.

EN: It closed in '57.

OW: Is that when it was?

EN: Yeah, I think it was, uh-huh.

OW: Ride to the university too.

EN: Yeah. Now, we, now it's a bike trail. Now it's all bike trails.

OW: Yeah.

EN: Yeah. But, I just wondered how, how did Edwardsville look in those times. The streetcar was running downtown by the court house.

OW: Yeah, it...

EN: Yeah.

OW: I remember the day it dumped over, where the Bank of Edwardsville is.

EN: Really! That's where it had to turn and go down the hill.

OW: Yes. Yeah.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: Yeah.

EN: And then, and then the back of, the back of Main Street um, where all, where they demolished all that to build that thing there downtown, the.

OW: Mark Twain building?

EN: Mark Twain, yeah.

OW: Yeah.

EN: But behind the., behind the facade that's facing it behind the Bohm building and all those buildings.

OW: Yeah.

EN: There, there were a lot of trees back there, weren't there? In that parking lot?

OW: I didn't see any. I just don't remember.

EN: And houses and, yeah.

OW: We.

EN: Did it seem like a small town to you?

OW: Yeah, it was a small town, we were the biggest employer at one time.

EN: Yeah, Florists' Mutual.

OW: Yeah, until other things came along.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: The banks are a lot bigger than we are now or I don't know how many employees there are now. But, when I left, we had oh, 175 employees I think. But, that, and we just got here by happenstance.

EN: Yes, that's what I was just going to ask you. Did Florists' Mutual, was that founded by someone from Edwardsville?

OW: No. It was a strange operation. It was founded in New Jersey by a fella by the name of Essler.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: And secretary of the company. The manager of the company, the bookkeeper of the company was a man named Boerer, out of Lancaster, PA.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: And uh...when he got ready to retire, a man by the name of Ammann, A-M-M-A-N-N...

EN: Oh, yes.

OW: ...G. Fred Ammann, A-M-M-A-N-N.

EN: Oh yes.

OW: Built a greenhouse...

EN: Yes, that's where...right.

OW: ...on St. Louis Street.

EN: That I know about.

OW: And, and uh, he was like a secretary. He basically put the books in a suitcase and carried it to Edwardsville.

EN: Okay. Uh-huh.

OW: And uh...then, the company grew up.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: It kind of dawdled along. I became the promoting manager, I guess.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: A halfway promoter division, that's when we started getting bigger.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: Became more nation-wide.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: That's, we had our office first in the *old* Bank of Edwardsville building.

EN: Yes.

OW: Where the Administration Building is now.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: And then, in the National Bank Building, which is now the Mark Twain Building, and then, we moved on and built the building on St. Louis Street.

EN: Um-hmm. That's interesting. But anyway, wait, and you built that in the 50s?

OW: I guess.

EN: Yeah. On St. Louis Street. Well, that's really interesting, isn't it.

OW: That was a gem of a building.

EN: Yes, it was beautiful.

OW: A guy by the name of Charlie King designed it for us. He did.

EN: Was he a St. Louis architect or a local?

OW: No, he, he was an interesting guy. He had graduated from the University of Illinois.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: In Architecture.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: And he practiced in Belleville.

EN: Hmm.

OW: And have you ever heard of the Marsh Stencil company? They make labels to put on boxes. Well, anyhow.

EN: No.

OW: He married Audrey Marsh.

EN: Okay. Okay.

OW: And then uh, they got divorced something happened. I don't know. Last time I saw her was down in St. Louis at the meeting club. Then he was in business with Charlie Morris, which was Delyte Morris' nephew.

EN: Oh, really! Um-hmm.

OW: And uh, and that's when they designed uh...this building, not this one. One of these buildings that firm designed.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: Mark [inaudible] Associates of Belleville. And ah, Charlie King was involved in that.

EN: One of these buildings was designed by the Charlie King Associates.

OW: I think so.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: I don't know which one.

EN: Hm.

OW: They, then, they worked for H.O.K [formerly known as Hellmuth, Obata + Kassabaum. The architectural firm is now known as HOK Group] for a while. And that's why they did...

EN: Uh-huh. Hm, well, maybe H.O.K., maybe they were the, the east side offices of H.O.K.

OW: They could have been.

EN: I think, yeah, I think that might be what it was. So, did you pick the design for the building?

OW: I don't. What building?

EN: Yeah, no the Florist' Mutual Building.

OW: Ah.

EN: Were you the one that picked it?

OW: Well, Charlie King designed it.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: And he was a very creative architect and he did a good job.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: I was really pleased with it. I um, if he could take care of his private life as well as he did architecture, [EN laughs] I mean, it wasn't booze or all that.

EN: Yes.

OW: I mean. Creative architects don't make any, many money.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: Lousy architects make money.

EN: Yes, um-hmm.

OW: Good architects don't make money because they've put in too much time designing it, and then, they normally set your fee.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: He did a fantastic job.

EN: Did you like these buildings, when they were built?

OW: Uh,

EN: I couldn't

OW: I think they're fine.

EN: Uh-huh. Did you come out and look at them with, after they were built?

OW: Uh. Yeah, I've got a hard hat.

EN: Because, you seem

OW: I've got a hard hat at home, for breaking ground for this, or whatever was the first building. This wasn't the first building, I guess.

EN: No, this was. Maybe the library was the first.

OW: Yeah.

EN: Symbolically.

OW: I don't remember.

EN: For Delyte Morris, maybe it was second...

OW: I think it's still in the basement. Unless you wanna go down and rummage around [EN laughs]

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: I don't know. Well, am I helping you here? Is this...?

EN: Yes, you certainly are! You are really helping me. I wondered um, I wondered about the, about the financing of the land purchase. Um.

OW: That was. That was just kind of fund-raising. I don't. The record, they should have records around here.

EN: Oh, they do! I just wondered if I.

OW: I don't know how much we put in, the Florists' did, or I personally did.

EN: No. I, I was, I was thinking about um, it went through the foundation.

OW: Yeah.

EN: And then the foundation, I was thinking about there. It appeared to me in the records there was a deal that each local bank got a portion of the money.

OW: Well, they.

EN: From the foundation used the, that they divided...

OW: They divided...

EN: Yeah, they deposit...

OW: And then they spent it.

EN: Uh-huh. And many local banks...

OW: Yeah.

EN: Uh-huh. Until they spent it.

OW: Well, this was part of the deal to get everybody to participate, so they didn't deposit all the money in any one bank.

EN: No. No.

OW: Now, I don't recall how much that was. I don't think I was on a bank board at that time. I, I can't remember when I started. But I was there for twenty-five years.

EN: Uh-huh. Well, I don't, I, it was over...

OW: Yeah.

EN: ...it was several million dollars.

OW: Yeah.

EN: Which was a lot of money then.

OW: Yeah.

EN: Yeah. But ah, no I just wondered if I got it right about the deal. Between bank...

OW: Well, basically...

EN: ...distributing it.

OW: In, in the, in the presentation like this...

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: You deposit parts of the money in all the financial institutions because that makes them give too.

EN: Yes.

OW: Like, when we built the "Y", we spread the deposits around.

EN: Oh, okay. Okay. Well, that's nice to know. And there was, and then, I wondered about buying the land. You mentioned that as one of the um, one of the things that, that you, after you got a groundswell going, you know, just buying land, the U of I, people had bought land for the U of I. There was a kind of precedent for that.

OW: Well, um.

EN: So their expansion. So did you have that in mind or did you...

OW: You mean people outside of the University bought land for their personal benefit?

EN: For, for, it had been with other Universities that a community who wanted to help, help an institution or attract an institution. You know, in Edwardsville, when N.O. Nelson came in.

OW: Yeah.

EN: Came in here. Came here. They bought land.

OW: Yeah.

EN: And presented it to him. So, there was a local tradition of doing that.

OW: Yeah, well they, they raised money for it. Now, who signed the deeds? Myron Bishop was the, one of the...

EN: Yes.

OW: ...real promoters around here, of handling land.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: And I don't know what his background is, Professor or something. And he did a lot of the land acquisition work.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: And you had some people against it, as was natural.

EN: Yes.

OW: And I think most of em' were against it because they wanted bigger money for when they sold.

EN: Oh, okay.

OW: That's just my view.

EN: Okay.

OW: I mean, a lot of people had real sentimental reasons, until the price got up to a certain level.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: But I've seen that happen east of town out here.

EN: Right.

OW: This old property just sold recently. They were talking about, "Ah, I can't sell it! My grandfather and everything lived here!" When the price hits a certain level.

EN: They sell.

OW: They sell.

EN: Yes, right. Well, I know it, it, this Mrs. Lewis, that held out, you know for a very long time, her property was very small.

OW: She was right down here someplace.

EN: Yeah, she was a tiny little piece of the property, but she was very adamant about fighting.

OW: Yeah.

EN: It just seemed to me that in her case, they didn't have very much money. And so, they were.

OW: When you've got a golden opportunity, when you never had any money and you get an opportunity, you can't pass that up. You can't I mean.

EN: Well, she tried to pass it up. I'm just thinking she had a view that this was all they had.

OW: That's the way it could have been.

EN: Yeah. I, I've, her daughter-in-law, who works over at the beauty shop on campus, so I took my tape recorder over when Terry is cutting my hair, and she, the daughter-in-law that works in there too, and she...

OW: Harriet her name?

EN: Yeah.

OW: Her father was Harry Lumos.

EN: Okay, her father-in-law, yeah.

OW: I didn't know anymore.

EN: So, so she told, she said that that's, but her mother was particularly worried that they just wouldn't have anything. That even if they took money for the land, that, that they, it wasn't as valuable as having a piece of land. You know, that's what I...

OW: They're not going to make any more land.

EN: No. [EN laughs] Right! Well, what about the relationship of the university to the town of Edwardsville?

OW: Oh [OW exhales and EN laughs] I'll tell you; you get both sides of it.

EN: Yeah.

OW: You get a lot of the people, who don't want college kids running around, running a bunch of beer halls around here. You've got a bunch of this and that.

EN: Yes.

OW: You've got those people.

EN: Yes.

OW: Then, you've got the other side, kind of open-minded, and say, "Look. It can work out all right." Yeah, "Champagne's a nice town."

EN: Yes. It is.

OW: And Urbana, and why shouldn't it be?"

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: I'll, my, I'll say it. And I hate to say it. But we.

EN: Well...

OW: But we attracted ah, some people who didn't belong in college around here. Ah, they were just living off the G.I. Bill or anything they could use to get out of work. Because I hired a doctor from out here, a doctor...well, I'll tell ya, you start forgetting. He worked for me, came to the office and examined new employees and all that. And he told me that he had people registered in the school that could not read an eye chart. You had to take...

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: And that's the kind of people they allowed in this school.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: And that was bad.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: But, that was Delyte's theory, "Everybody...

EN: Everybody...

OW: ...to the maximum of their educational ability."

EN: Yes.

OW: Most of em' didn't even belong in the door. I don't think they even had sense enough to unlock the door, well, that's changed now.

EN: Yes.

OW: The educational standards, if you check the books on college, this is moving up almost every year.

EN: Yes, it is.

OW: When I go look at the college books. And it's getting more difficult to get in.

EN: Yes, it is.

OW: Because I, I've got four, four grandchildren, and I set up many years ago uh, funds to put them through college. And uh, I've got two of them done. One has one more year to go.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: And one's got four years, and I'm out of the college business. [EN laughs] But, when I go up and look at those books. I don't know what the name of them are. Big, thick book.

EN: Yes. I know what it is, it's a guide to colleges and universities.

OW: Yeah, it tells you how hard they are to get in.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: ACT scores. I don't know what an ACT score is. I have no idea.

EN: [EN laughs] No, neither do I! I wen't to college before that.

OW: But, anyhow, it went on a downhill track for a while, as far as I'm concerned, in the community. But I, there are no problems...

EN: Uh-huh.

OW:...hardly any problems.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: We're attracting people who are looking for an education, not for, for a free ride. And a lot of people are concerned with this, and rightly so. You're changing a, a community that was very staid and responsible and all that. Flushing a lot of people into it.

EN: That's true.

OW: And unfortunately, a relatively, well, I don't know, a relatively small percentage of the professors, the upper-level professors...

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: Don't live in Edwardsville.

EN: No, they don't.

OW: They commute from St. Louis.

EN: Yes, that's right. I'd say, in the history department, there where, there were quite a few that live in St. Louis.

OW: Sure.

EN: Yeah.

OW: Well, in the first place, when you start a new university, you've got to go recruit where you can get somebody.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: And uh, who's going to come to a school that's a no-name? They're not going from Stanford to come to Edwardsville. If you've got a, They're going to go from here to Stanford. But, ah, they're going to have to take what's local.

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: It takes a long time to build a staff

EN: That's right. They're getting many more that are not, people, students that are not local. And, and our faculty has really been really fantastic.

OW: Yeah, it's a lot better.

EN: Mostly that, mostly because it has been a buyers' market for faculty [EN and OW laugh] in the last twenty-five, thirty years. Yes.

OW: Well, what do you have. You've got a doctoral degree?

EN: Yes. Um-hmm.

OW: And, you're on the staff here?

EN: Yes. Well, I retired.

OW: Oh.

EN: I'm like, I'm like you, I'm retired but I'm still, still doing a little work. Yeah.

OW: Yeah. So, so uh, then, there was concern, and rightfully so...

EN: Um-hmm.

OW: ... and uh, but uh, I think we'd have felt more comfortable if a larger percentage of the upper faculty.

EN: Yes, had lived in Edwardsville.

OW: Well, or would've moved in there and brought big houses in.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: Now, Ralph Ruffner did. He lived in town and he had a nice house.

EN: That's right.

OW: And uh, let's see ...

EN: Well, the president's house for a long time was in, on Charles Street.

OW: Yeah.

EN: Umm. I know, when my husband and I were first, my husband and I first came here I wasn't finished with my Ph.D. yet. Because we had kids, you know, it's, I was on the mommy track for a while, which was fun. Uh, but we came here in 19. In fall of 1969 and we, we looked at houses in Edwardsville and we would've, but, but we ended up first of all living in Alton.

OW: Houses in Edwardsville. We had no housing developers in Edwardsville.

EN: No.

OW: We had old houses and nobody to developed. No developments until more recently.

EN: Uh-huh. Well, we looked at I remember looking at places in, maybe in Mont Clair.

OW: Yeah.

EN: Ah, Grandview was there at the, was there at that time, but we had, I had come from a big old house in Nebraska, you know, your price is set by.

OW: Yeah.

EN: ...how where you come from, so I think we had the notion. And he came from Brooklyn, so what did he know about houses. Of course, I knew nothing. So, we bought an old house in Alton first, but when we came to Edwardsville, the house we liked cost \$45,000, which was to us, like, "Oh my God! We could never afford that!" So, but.

OW: Well. Yeah. Yes, the first house I bought was in Philadelphia, well a half a house. It was a brick house.

EN: Oh, yeah, Philadelphia.

OW: Brand new, and I had three bedrooms upstairs, and three rooms downstairs, and a basement. And I always joke about it. Well, I had a half of a house and a fourth of a garage. Half a house with, the, the guy on this side of me...

EN: Yes.

OW: And there was another house half across from us this way. And they put a garage on the back of the lot that took care of four houses and I paid less than \$87,000, 8,700 dollars for that house.

EN: Oh, my gosh! Less than \$8,700. That's, that's wonderful.

OW: And paid a 4% interest rate.

EN: Yeah.

OW: Back then, I moved out here and built a house out behind Leclair Lake...

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: ...on a street called Roosevelt Drive.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: And then, we built the big house that Charlie Morris, the architect, designed for us. It was out in, in Grandview.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: And uh, then, after my first wife died and I got remarried, we decided we were going to get rid of both of our houses and give our land away. She sold or gave hers to her son.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: And I sold mine, and we both moved to a new one out in Steinmeyer Woods.

EN: Uh-huh. Those are beautiful houses out there.

OW: It's nice.

EN: Yeah, beautiful.

OW: Yeah, it's not. It's not as pretentious as the one we had out in Grandview.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: But ah. That was an architect's dream. It had a pool under the steps going upstairs.

EN: Oh, God!

OW: It was awesome. Built-in planters up above and all that.

EN: Oh, God.

OW: We let him get carried away.

EN: I guess I don't know Grandview that well. I will.

OW: Well...

EN: Patrick Riddleberger lives out there. So we.

OW: Who was that?

EN: Patrick Riddleberger.

OW: No. I don't know him.

EN: Um. Well, he was a faculty member for many years. Um, he came in about 1960. Um, .he's about 90 now. So, so but we...

OW: Yeah.

EN: Then, I visited Sturly, Eric Sturly.

OW: Yeah, I remember him.

EN: Yeah, Boots, he's married to Boots Mudge now.

OW: Yeah.

EN: And they live in a house back there. That's nice, very nice. But um, I haven't been able to, I can't get in there very much. I live, I always say, "I live in the inner city now."

OW: Where do you live?

EN: On Fillmore Street.

OW: Oh, Fillmore.

EN: By the Lutheran School.

OW: Yeah, I know where it is.

EN: It's kind of a, it's a, they don't build these neighborhoods anymore, yeah. They, it's a mixed class neighborhood.

OW: Yeah.

EN: I know, so...

OW: Well, that's all I can tell you. I can't tell anymore.

EN: Okay. Well, I think we've. I think this has been about. This has been really useful. About it. I asked you about financing the land. And um.

OW: I'm sure there's records of that.

EN: Oh, there's lots of records. I looked through lots of records, I just, what I saw, I just wanted to confirm that, yes, they did get funds to practice. I'm, I'm not a businessperson...

OW: Well...

EN: ... so I don't want to...

OW: We built the YMCA that way.

EN: Uh-huh. Yes, that's, that's very interesting.

OW: We just went out and got the bank and a couple of people to give you money and.

EN: yeah.

OW: It's surprising. You can get money from some strange places sometimes.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: And the new YMCA. It's amazing! Ever been out there?

EN: No, I've, I've only been, I've been out to the Madison County Historical Picnic, so I saw it.

OW: Yeah.

EN: We don't have a little kid anymore so.

OW: You can just arrive and walkthrough.

EN: Okay.

OW: It will be the finest YMCA you've seen any place in the country.

EN: Yes, I was really surprised of the way they raised money for it, so quickly.

OW: Well.

EN: I thought it was a wonderful example of a community devotion...

OW: Yeah.

EN:... to building institutions...

OW: There is money in town and uh, people are tight.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: Until they see something, they are really interested in.

EN: Right.

OW: And they'll write a check [loud banging noise].

EN: Yeah.

OW: We'll get to YMC. Well when I said we. I'm out of that. I'm a Trustee Emeritus and ah, I'm not out hustling money, but they'll raise it and pay it off. It will be clear.

EN: Oh, sure.

OW: With *no* government money.

EN: Yes, that's wonderful.

OW: Yeah.

EN: That is really wonderful. I was, I'd been on the Board of the Watershed Nature Center.

OW: You have?

EN: I, I just went off because I am working on this project and didn't feel I could volunteer as much as I needed to when I was a board member. But that's been a long haul, raising money for that.

OW: Oh, yeah.

EN: The board, but it's a nice asset for the community.

OW: Is it...

EN: It's very beautiful.

OW: I haven't been down there for a couple of years. And I uh, let's say, "Money. Time to quit."

EN: Yeah, sure.

OW: Now, you don't want to say.

EN: Anyway, I want to thank you for coming over here.

OW: Well, is that all I can do for you?

EN: Sure, that's fine! If. Unless you have anything less to say.

OW: No, I wish I had some notes. [Recording turns off]

EN: No.... ESIC?

OW: Yeah. ESIC uh...ESIC was at the wrong time.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: Lossie Morris, that was Delyte's brother, developed or started to develop that thing.

EN: How do you spell his name? L-O-S-S-I-E?

OW: I think that's right.

EN: Okay.

OW: And uh, ah they developed that thing. They sold a few people in Edwardsville some stock in it.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: And I was one of the original stockholders, well, I got a liberal education. I lost my money [OW laughs]. But uh, it was just ahead of its time. It came at the time when money was short. And you talked about no housing around.

EN: Yes.

OW: It, it could have been there, but it never got off base at the right time and we put the Y up there.

EN: Yes.

OW: Because we got the land for basically nothing, we were putting a building down across from the high school, and the highway department ah, decided they were gonna run that road wider, and they took the land away from us. So, we were going to be on leased property.

EN: Oh.

OW: We were able to talk Lossie Morris or the organizers into giving us or selling us, I don't remember what we paid for that land. But that's how the Y got out there. And that became a catalyst for starting the subdivision you know.

EN: Really?

OW: It ah, it was just timely. In the real estate business, time is all important, if things are building, booming.

EN: Yes.

OW: If not, you go broke.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: Know what else. Who else, I always joke about that. There were organizers and promoters. And for a certain amount of money, you could be an organizer. If you had a lesser amount, like I did, then you were a promoter.

EN: Okay.

OW: I never considered myself a promoter of anything, but that's how it ended up. There were about 25 people in town who were stockholders in that.

EN: Uh-huh.

OW: And then, but it didn't make it until um.

EN: Until the middle 60s.

OW: Yeah. The banks had to take it over. They finally really started selling off. And it's built out now.

EN: Right. It's very, it's quite beautiful. Even the first houses are really well kept and beautiful.

OW: There's some real good houses in there. Expensive houses.

EN: Uh-huh. Right.

OW: But that's uh, I don't think, and I'm willing to go on record, that there was no conflict of interest between Delyte Morris and Lossie in doing that. I think the fact that the school was here, a land developer like Lossie was, I think he thought this was the place to be.

EN: Oh.

OW: Rather than. And if there's anything, I just don't, I have this feeling. I trust people, I guess. And I don't think there was any, any connection. I don't think Lossie Morris, I mean Delyte Morris personally ah, benefited from any land or any of those transactions around here. I, I would be willing to say so. And I have no way of knowing.

EN: Yes.

OW: I think he, he lived on his salary and his benefits. And he made a big mistake when they built that big house down there.

EN: Yes.

OW: And who, whoever advised him to do that? It was stupid.

EN: Well, John Rendleman took the rap for that.

OW: Well, now. There was a promoter!

EN: Yeah. Did you know him?

OW: No, I knew his daughter. He knew me by name, and I knew him by name, but ah I didn't party with him [EN laughs]. That was a tough chore.

EN: Yeah. Well. I'm glad, I'm glad I asked you.