INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR ELLIS HAWLEY

Tyler Priest, David Showalter, and Jacob Donaldson
March 6th, 2014

Key
TP: Tyler Priest
DS: David Showalter
JD: Jacob Donaldson
EH: Ellis Hawley

Tyler Priest: Why don't you go ahead and introduce the proceedings.

David Showalter: I'm David Showalter

Jacob Donaldson: And I'm Jacob Donaldson. Today's March 6th, we're doing an interview for, on Ellis Hawley.

TP: For the University of Iowa History Project, and this is Tyler Priest. We won't try to have too many people talking so the transcriber can figure out who's who. Hopefully just Ellis will be talking. But, go ahead.

JD: Well Ellis, just start off, just want to have you tell us about yourself. Where you're from, your childhood, why did you come to the University of Iowa, just—

Ellis Hawley: I was born in 1929 on a farm in Kansas, down in the Flint Hills section of Kansas. My father was a farmer and a rancher, and I grew up on a farm, went to a one-room school, until the 6th grade I think, I moved to the town of Cambridge and went school there, and then I got after [noise interferes with dialogue] scholarship to the University of Wichita, it's Wichita State now, and I graduated from there in 1950 I think it was. And I took ROTC while I was there, so I was obligated to go into the Army and then the Korean War was going on so, I was in the Army a couple of years during the Korean War. That gave me the GI Bill and I decided to become a historian, I had already got my Master's degree by that time from Kansas University, and uh, well uh, I went to Wisconsin. Wisconsin at that time, was great at American History they had the big five there is what they called them, Merle Perdeem, Howard Beal, Fred Harrington, Merle Jensen, and Bill Heslteteen. And so, I worked with Howard Beal there, and, I was a Teaching Assistant and Research Assistant, that sort of thing, you know.

TP: What years were you at Wisconsin? This is Tyler.

EH: Let's see, it was 19, 1953 to '56 I believe. I hadn't finished my dissertation, when I'd left, I took a job at North Texas State University in 1957 and uh, finished up the dissertation a couple years later. And I guess that's how I became a historian if that answers the question. I at one time

thought I wanted to be a lawyer when I was in, in school at Wichita and so I took a pre-law course with an emphasis on history. And then I couldn't get any money to go to law school, but I did have a scholarship to go to Kansas University, so I went and studied history there. I studied with J.C. Malin. You may have heard of him, I don't know.

TP: Yeah.

EH: He was famous at that time for the grasslands, and one of the early people in social history. So at Kansas, I started on what I did the rest of my life there. I was interested in the workings of the National Recovery Administration primarily because of a course I took at Wichita. And he suggested that I write a, a Master's thesis on the relation between Herbert Hoover and the National Recovery Administration, that's what I did, that sort of thing ever since really. So when I, I began to pick out dissertation at Wisconsin, I wanted to work on the NRA. I read an article by William Hale in *Common Sense*, which was published back in 1938, talks about these different conflicts within our policy, within the New Deal and the NRA. And after, that sort of gelled with me, I tried to investigate that and that's uh, eventually what lead to the dissertation and the book.

TP: And the book being *The New Deal and the Problem Monopoly*—

EH: *The New Deal and the Problem Monopoly*.

JD: So why did you come to the University of Iowa?

EH: Well after I finished the book, I wanted to work on Hoover some more, and I wanted to do a study of trade associationism. Primarily, I didn't really see the full implications of Hoover at that time, but the Hoover Library was just opening, that was 1966. So I came up here that summer and did some work at the Hoover Library and my book came out in 1966 and people up here apparently read it. And they decided I might be the person to replace Christopher Leich, I think it was, he was leaving. So Larry Gelfand looked me up at the convention, I can't remember exactly where it was, but I think it was in Dallas. And he asked me if I wanted to come to Iowa and I told him yeah, yeah since I had been working at the Hoover Library. But I heard nothing more from him for awhile, and I had offers at that time from, Missouri and Ohio State, and I figured I better take something before here, so I took the offer to Ohio State and about a month later, Iowa wanted me to come up here. But I already applied myself to go there, to Ohio State. So I stayed out there for a year, but they brought me out for an interview shortly after, uh, uh the position hadn't been filled yet, so they brought me out for an interview and uh, offered me the job here, and took and, was here for 25 years.

TP: And Ohio State never forgave you?

EH: Well, they were kind of put off by it.

JD: I myself have actually done some research on Larry Gelfand, I'm doing a biography on him and it's kind of interesting you already mentioned him. I was just wondering, what you remembered of Larry, I know you guys did some research together on some of the Herbert Hoover stuff.

EH: You know Larry Gelfand was probably my best friend for years here, before he died, and we did a lot of projects together, some of which worked and some of which didn't. We , one year we got a grant from, don't know what the grant was, but it was a national endowment of—

TP: Humanities.

b Humanities!

TP: Yeah, yeah.

EH: Humanities, I guess it was and, we taught a course on history in the United States. Larry was much interested in planning, he did a book that dealt with planning after World War I, and I was interested in it of course cause of my work with the NRA and Hoover. And it was a course that brought in college teachers from around the country and, and they did papers here and we had a seminar-type course. That was one project. Another project we worked with, with people from Grinnell and Cornell and the Education Department here on a study of the teaching of history in the high schools. This was something I was sort of always interested in because I, when I got my degree at Wichita State, I thought I might have to teach in high school, you know. So I took enough education courses so that I could if I'd, but I never did. But I always interested in that sort of thing and I worked a good deal with John Hafner here, who was in the Education Department and supervised people who were preparing to teach in high school. So we did this study and uh, we came to two rather unexpected conclusions, or maybe they were expected. One was, how how, strongly it was dominated by men at that time, high school history teachers I think it was 90 or 95% were men, no women in the field. And the other, was that how many courses were taught by high school coaches, in other words they'd hire a coach and he'd get assigned the history course or the history courses. And that was a big percentage too, and we tried to do something about reforming high school teaching, but we didn't achieve anything.

TP: Really no fraction or no response to that.

EH: Well, you got responses from some people and we tried to set up an organization to push it, but it didn't go anywhere. That was another big project of ours. Another one, he and I were involved in getting the Center for the Study of Recent American History started. This was an idea of, the President at the time, was it Friedman? I think it was Friedman. He wanted to bring together the Hoover Library and the State Historical Society and the History Department here and create a sort of center here you could hold conferences and publish results of that and so-forth. So we helped him get started and Larry was head of it for awhile.

TP: What happened to it?

EH: Well it, after we left, it, after Larry and I life, Shel Stromquist took over and I don't know, Shelt emphasized. He had several conferences on Labor History, but the Hoover people didn't want conferences on Labor History, I don't think. I'm not sure what went on between them, but I think they had a sort of falling out and sort of deteriorated and I don't think in years. I think technically it still alive, but, but he did publish a number of books, a sort of collections of the papers given at these conferences.

JD: Yeah, he definitely has quite the, quite the number on it, it's pretty impressive actually. How was it working on the topics of the New Deal and Herbert Hoover? What was the main drive, what was it that you found most interesting about the New Deal and Herbert Hoover?

EH: Well, in history before this time, they're seen as complete opposites, Hoover and the New Deal. And what I found was that Hoover had many of these ideas about how, about how planning and how to regulate the economy, but he wanted to do it by pulling regulatory sections out of the Private Sector rather than using the state. In other words, Hoover was sort of a progressive, but he was also an Anti-Statist in the sense he was very skeptical of bureaucracy and that sort of thing. And I remember coming up here and to the Hoover Library to look at the Trade Associations it soon became apparent that it was much larger than that. He had a vision of, sort of a, a whole associational system, making all these Trade Associations as part of it. But, involving labor unions and of course they had to be responsible labor unions and go along with uh, what the Technocrats told them to and so on. And at the top, what amounted, Technocrats Engineers, who would figure out what should be done. Then these people would implement, that. And, it's that kind of thinking, it seemed to me, that comes into some business thinking, in the 1920s. There's a movement to try to, do away with the Anti-Trust laws, even establish these Cartels, that govern the Economy and that comes to fruition, in uh, the 1930s with the NRA. And of course the NRA was a failure and after that was the move away from it.

TP: Do you mind if I jump in here?

EH: Yeah.

TP: When you're studying the NRA and coming from a farming background, did that draw you to study the, the Triple-A, in Agricultural Adjustment Administration? Did, did, did, coming from a farm community interest you in problem, of the Agricultural Sector during this period or not at all?

EH: Well, yeah I was always interested in the farm problem and uh, dealt a good deal with agricultural policy on my course of the New Deal. But I never did much research on it, no.

JD: Did you think Herbert Hoover will ever be rediscovered?

EH: Well I think he has been rediscovered by scholars. The scholarly view of Hoover has changed, with my work and the work of several other people. But, that has not effected much of the popular view of Hoover. The kind that gets popular culture.

TP: He's become kind of a cultural meme in some ways, right? I was, I went to Wisconsin to, of course one of the first things we had to read was your essay on the Associative State and the New Deal and the problem of monopoly. But I also, you know, I studied William Appleman Williams, and I, I remember being surprised that, Hoover was a hero of his. I, I knew that you were one of the first and so was he, in trying to rediscover who Hoover really was. I don't if you can talk a little about Williams or, you know, this who were all thinking of Hoover at the same time?

EH: When I first came out here uh, I came out here in 1969. In the 1970s, there were a lot of people out at the Hoover Library, doing research. Probably more than any other time since. And they tended to fall into two categories. One was this organizational school that saw Hoover as part of the organizational development of the United States and the other was the New Left, people who had been influenced by William Appleman Williams and uh, were studying Herbert Hoover as um, having the answer than the New Deal having the answer.

TP: Hm.

EH: And there were, I, I, I can remember that now uh, is. So—

TP: And the two camps didn't see eye to eye?

EH: The two camps didn't see eye to eye except that, in a way they kind of, intermeshed because of the people on the New Left would take what the people in organizational history were discovering and were, were uh, discussing you know, and turned it into their story about uh…

EH: and TP: Corporate Takeover—

TP: Corporate Liberalism.

EH: Corporate Liberalism! Yeah.

TP: We modeled through, we read uh, Martin Schwarz's, you now, comments at your retirement.

EH: Yeah.

TP: Did you ever know or get to meet Williams?

EH: I have met him, but I never got to know him. He came to Wisconsin a year or two after I left to teach.

TP: I see.

EH: I knew a lot of his—

TP: But Fred Harvey Harrington you knew?

EH: I had a class with Harrington, yeah. And I knew a lot of Williams' students later on, Marty probably more than anybody else. But uh, a number of others as well.

JD: Since you're a farmer and your father was a farmer, we noticed in an article, *The American Working Class System at Iowa,* it said you were interested in the farming labor at Texas. Did you ever pursue farming labor in Iowa? Or did you find any family, or farming labor in Iowa interesting to you?

EH: I don't recall anything about Iowa, no. I—

TP: This is an article by John Schacht. Do you remember him? It was about uh, the history labor at Iowa. I think it mentioned something about you.

EH: Oh! Uh, yeah. Not about farm labor, but about, I served on the board and, of the Iowa History Labor Project for a number of years, and helped it get started. This was a project that, it got started but through Jim Wingert, who was the leader. He got his union, the Iowa Federation of Labor I think it was called, he got it to uh, access the union members a certain amount. I can't remember how much it was, it's not very much. But enough that, to finance this project that it, where we, they hired a historian to go out and interview labor, people who had been in the labor movement. It produced this whole set of Oral History.

TP: Over 900, right?

EH: Over 900 over at the State Historical Society. Yeah it ran for several years. And I was involved in that, I, critiqued some of the Oral Histories and was on the steering committee for it. I, and primarily Wingert, I think Mark Smith who was an official in the Iowa Federation were the ones behind it. And later Shel Stromquist got involved, after he came. And he became really more involved than I was, and that book Shel did came out of those uh, but that didn't have really anything to do with farm labor. It had to do with the labor unions.

TP: Yeah. Did you have much interaction with the State Historical Society, when you were here?

EH: Yeah. Off and on, the first thing was getting Bill Peterson out of there, I was really involved in that, that was really Larry Gelfand's big project, then I helped him as well I could.

TP: Because it, it had turned into something that wasn't a scholarly organization. It wasn't promoting scholarship, is that right? Was that a fair assessment?

EH: That's a fair assessment. It, all he was doing was rewriting his articles and publicizing Iowa a little bit, but uh, we wanted to get somebody in there to, hit it and change the direction. And it eventually did, and then, Mary Bennett was one of my students who's over there now I think. And I used to uh, have students who did work over there and uh, I taught a colloquium course for history majors over there at the State Historical Society.

TP: Just like these fellas. We did have an orientation with Mary, she's a great resource. Are there other students that, that you remember, that uh, that you have fond memories of that worked with you, as either a Graduate Student or undergraduates?

EH: Well yeah, uh, I had some great students through the years. Probably Trudy Peterson.

TP: The archivist.

EH: Yeah the archivist.

TP: Yeah, she's going to be coming back.

EH: She was one of my most successful students, probably. David Hamilton, I don't know if you, he did a book on Hoover and Foreign Policy and he's uh, at Kentucky and was Chair there for a while, but I don't think he is now. Guy Aleshon's at Delaware and he uh, he organized this thing that you read here. Who else? John Schacht was one of my students.

TP: Do we know what happened to him? I don't know where he is, I mean we read—

EH: He's right here.

TP: Oh he's in Iowa City?

EH: Yeah, he's, he got a job eventually at the library.

TP: But he's still here now?

EH: Well, he retired and still stayed in Iowa City, yeah.

TP: Okay. Because he had done some interviews way back in the 1980s with faculty in Iowa City, and he's, and so it might be worthwhile to see if he still has those.

EH: And, who else? Craig Lloyd did a book on Hoover and Public Relations that was pretty influential. He's retired surely by now, I think. He was at Georgia for quite a while.

JD: While we're talking about students, what did you look for in your students?

EH: Graduate students?

JD: All of them. Just kind of, guide us. Both, because obviously the Graduate students are going to be a little more stricter, but, yeah.

EH: Well, the, the, the ability to master the material and interpret it, I always gave a, I think almost entirely, essay questions with identifications questions along with them. Some short identification and a longer essay they had to write. And I finally adopted the practice of reviewing before, the exams, and I would hand out a series of review questions that might be something they might write an essay on, ya know? And then we'd take a couple hours in the evening and talk about those, those questions and, and I would pick questions that were similar, I wouldn't ask the same questions, but something that come across them. And that seemed to work fairly well, in terms of, being able to grade them and, I also had success with, what I call policy papers. They were paper for, they all had to write a paper in my upper division classes, I never taught the lower division classes here. And, I would assign, they could pick a policy issue that was being debated at the time that were studying in the 1920s or 30s, then, they would write a policy in which they would, spell out, uh, what might be done and different alternatives and pick one of them and defend it. And they would do research on it. That worked out pretty well, they seemed to like that sort of thing.

TP: You'd take a current policy issue, or something from the 20s?

EH: Yeah, something from the 20s, yeah. Or the 30s, wherever I was at. Uh, I would give them a list of books with each one, where they might look up what was being debated at the time. And the idea was to bring out the debate and decide what position they might take on it.

TP: So, uh, can you talk about other people in the department that you remember? We know you were close to Larry Gelfand, but, who were some of your colleagues, ya know, that, talk about what it was like here.

EH: Well, uh, I can remember, Sydney James I think was the most impressive.

TP: Most impressive?

EH: Yeah, impressive. From my stand point, than other people in the department, except for Bill Ayedollete. Bill Ayedollete wasn't here for too long after I came. Sydney died in the early 90s, '93 maybe, I don't know. Somewhere in the 90s. He was chair three years and then he was Chair again for one year after that But the most impressive thing about him was his way of accessing people, you always wanted him on a search committee, if possible. The judgment he seemed to have about people and uh, struck as being almost always correct. His ability to access someone, I never knew someone quite so good at it, except maybe Ayedolette. Other people, Linda Kerber, of course, has been very, very impressive over the years. I was on the committee that hired Linda Kerber. She, they wanted to hire her husband. I think it was Larry, Stow Persons, and myself. We

went down to the convention in New Orleans and she was there and we were impressed. We read some of, she had a few articles at the time, that we were impressed with. So we convinced the department to hire her and it turned out great.

TP: Had there, had there been any other women in the department before her, or?

EH: She was the first. Well, there had been women, it was all men when I got here, but there had been women before that. Stow Persons talks about, Bessy Pierce.

TP: Yeah that was a long time ago, yeah.

EH: Yeah. But Linda was the first.

TP: Was there resistance? Was there any resistance at the hire? You said you had to convince the department.

EH: No, they just, simply convincing them that this, this, this was against the usual rule of the search committee and that sort of thing. And they had to be convinced of that, but that was the only thing. They, it took a long time for the department to come around to the idea that you ought to hire spouses.

TP: Fortunately, they have come around.

EH: Yeah, I can remember several long debates about that and several times they turned them down.

JD: Is there anybody else?

TP: Stow Persons is another name.

EH: Stow Persons is another.

TP: Would you, they have, he had a draft of the history of the department that they read and—

EH: Yeah Stow Persons is, other than Linda, the most famous of the people that have been here. I think Stow is probably the only person that had more dissertation finishes than I did. I think he had 30-some and I had 24.

TP: But who's counting?

JD: What was the most rewarding aspect of being a professor?

EH: Most what?

JD: Rewarding aspect of being a professor.

EH: Most rewarding aspect of being a professor. Well, I suppose seeing, your students successful, your graduate students, is one of the most rewarding aspects. Being at Iowa, being able to work with this kind of a department is, is, was rewarding. See I came from North Texas, which was quite a different type of department. It had a head, and they had departmental meetings that didn't do anything, all they did was listen to, and maybe give some advice or something, but whole power was with the Head of the department.

TP: Like this department, before Ayedolette.

EH: Like this department, before Ayedolette, yeah. Uh…

TP: Did you find that unusual? We have an unusual way of, an unusual culture where the whole department meets and makes decisions—

EH: Yeah I found that astounding when I first got here, because I had never had anything like that. All the decisions were made by the Chair and the consultation at North Texas. They had meetings something like that at Ohio State, but it wasn't as democratic as it was here. It was more, it was a long time, do they, do they still have any Standing Committees? They for a long time resisted Standing Committees.

TP: There's a movement to start.

EH: Is that right?

TP: For, you know, admissions and for other things, yeah.

EH: They would appoint a Committee once in a while to study a particular problem and report on it. But, no Standing Committees and that uh, was—

TP: I don't think we have as long of meetings as you once had.

EH: Yeah, we used to have really long meetings.

TP: Wouldn't you break for dinner and come back?

EH: I think we did that sometimes, yeah. And it was sort of frowned upon if you left too, if you had to leave for some reason.

TP: Who's really responsible for this kind of culture?

EH: Bill Ayedollete I think. See, I don't know if you've read Stow Persons' history, but they had that, "Revolution," he calls it. When Root died and they took over and inaugurated this system and, I think Ayedolette was chair then, for ten to eleven years and sort of rebuilt this department and built this system into it. And then everyone sort of like it after that, I was, it was unusual to me. But once I sort of got used to it, I was a strong defender of it. And, tried, you always got these pressures from the outside to take over some of your power. I remember the big debates when I was Chair, were over leave policy. They had too many people on leave and they wanted us to devise a leave policy. And uh, the Dean sort of convinced me that, we ought to do this, and uh, I tried to persuade the department. I was unsuccessful and they manage to resist and they still didn't have a leave policy. I see they have one now?

TP: Well they, it's changed. It's not as generous as it used to be. But it, yes, there is a leave policy.

EH: They didn't have any of it and one of the arguments was that people on leave got these lap salaries and you could hire TA's or replacements, and that's what they were doing really.

TP: Well we got a lot of people who research abroad that, have a, need a leave, in order to that. I don't know if you had as many, I mean, the department was mainly American and European historians right? Probably started to change already, by the time you got here.

EH: Well they—

TP: More non-Western, yeah.

EH: Well they were adding, they had Asian, when I first came here, there was somebody in Chinese history I think. And then uh, people in Japanese and Indian History have been added, added since. Yeah and the other big issue when I was chair, had to do with these outside evaluations, for Tenure. I assume this—

TP: Yeah, external letters or?

EH: Yeah letters, yeah. You had to get outside letters and the department really resisted that uh, and, I got through chair without ever having to do it.

TP: What years were you chair? Do you remember?

EH: 1986 to '89, and shortly after that I think they finally forced them to do it, but I know we, we, we even had the Dean Ollenburger, was Dean then. And we had him, talk to the department about this in one big session, that's all, he talked about, and tried to persuade us and, we finally convinced him there was other ways of getting an outside evaluation, through, manuscript reports on, reports on manuscripts sort of thing or book reviews or that sort of thing. We would try to provide him with these kinds of evaluations instead of, instead of these letters. He said,

"Well, you can try it." And so, I don't know just how long it lasted after that, but I, through my Chairmanship without having to do it.

TP: Yeah, uh, yeah. Well you had outside letters. I hope you guys don't mind jumping in—

DS: I—

TP: Yeah go ahead—

DS: Ellis this is David Showalter. You said you worked at a lot of different Universities, for a good amount of time. What did you find interesting, or fascinating, about the other history departments, as compared to Iowa?

EH: Well I was only at three departments. North Texas, Ohio State, and here. And I was only at Ohio State a year. So I, this is much better than North Texas. When I first went to North Texas I taught five courses each semester, fifteen hours. They had a system in North Texas for, everybody had to take American History Survey, everybody.

TP: Still do.

EH: They still do, yeah. And it was taught, not in a big lecture session, but in smaller sessions of about thirty to thirty-five people each. So they had dozens of these. These American History sessions and that's what I taught my first semester, that was five sections of the American Survey. I think, two the first half and three the second half. And that was a job.

TP: You get burned out, yeah.

EH: It wasn't so bad after I got to teaching, upper division courses there and uh, a Seminar. We finally got a doctorate program there. But still, like I say, was run by the Head of the department. And, you didn't have any say to who was hired or who got tenure or anything like that. Ohio State was structured more, with a lot of Standing Committees that handled things like that.

TP: To a bigger department then? At least it is now.

EH: Yeah, it uh, about sixty people there I think when I was there. And, it was kind of a two-tier department. There was people who had tenure and there was a whole bunch of people who came in for three year appointments who might get tenure, but most of them didn't. And, it was kind of a Proletariat at the bottom and the elite at the top. I don't know, does that answer the question?

TP: That answers. Iowa, you found, to be a much more democratic department?

EH: Iowa was a much more democratic department, yeah.

TP: I had a question. So, you mind if I jump in? So you were retired in ’94, is that right?

EH: Yeah.

TP: Do you remain an active historian? At least reading, probably not writing…

EH: Not writing, I’ve yeah, I’ve continued to read some. I tried some and to read journals to keep up with the times. But uh, no the only teaching I’ve did since, I taught a course out at the Hoover Library for the Senior College one time.

TP: So uh, do you still keep up with scholarship on uh, Hoover?

EH: Oh yeah, I, I read stuff that comes out on Hoover, certainly.

TP: Did you, do the presses and journals still ask you to read manuscripts still or?

EH: They did for a long time, but they haven’t for the last 4 or 5 years.

TP: I’m curious, what you might think, I was looking back at the uh, comments at your retirement, Organization of American Historians meeting. Lou Galambos started off by saying, “During the next 25 years, the rise of the State will become the central concerns of American historians studying the development of their own nation.” You were a little skeptical about that then, are you going to, are you still skeptical about that? Or what do you, what do you think about that prediction?

EH: Well I’m still skeptical. I don’t think bring the State back in had made a lot of progress, do you?

TP: Well there is, people think, there is something called the New Political History, it’s not so much focused on the State or, not focused on the State in the same way you were.

EH: No I was, the new Political History tends to say that there is politics in everything. Ain’t that basically what it amounts to? So I don’t think, he, he is, of course, this was at a time when class, gender, and race was the big thing. And we were trying to save Political History. I was heavily involved in that effort to save Political History; heavily involved in getting the Policy History Conference started and that was another of my big projects.

TP: Well, they call it, “Policy History.” There is Political History and then there is policy and I think Policy History is more the study of the State and, you know, there are people doing it. There’s a lot more, more, looking at state and local government as well, you know, the federal system. That seemed to be a trend that was starting, you know when you were retiring too.

EH: Well there was a time when uh, when Policy History first started, that they had the idea to uh, they'd get historians into government and uh, policy and this sort of stuff. I had fairly close connections with Tom McCraw at uh, Harvard Business School. And he had, he organized a conference one time where we went down and talked to the Federal Trade Commission about the history and the idea was, they use this history and policy-making and there was a guy at the Federal Trade Commission that sort of bought this idea for a while. And then it changed after Reagan became President.

TP: But if you, if you—

EH: Or after Bush.

TP: If there was a direction in scholarship that you would like to see, you know, how would you, what would it be?

EH: Bringing state back in more, yeah. And—

TP: Any particular eras?

EH: Hmm?

TP: Any particular era, you'd like to see more work done?

EH: Hmm, I don't know, did they, I have gotten kind of interested in the 1970s in recent years. You know when the, people first started writing about the 70s they said nothing happened. And now, it's sort of become the crucial decade in recent years. This is where things began to change. The new eras are developing. So I think yeah, the 70s, if I were teaching now, probably try to put in a course on the 70s.

TP: There's a lot of people working on the 70s…

EH: Is that right?

TP: I just attended a conference, it was called, "Pivotal Year, 1973." It was about the Oil Crisis.

EH: I've been reading this book on uh, I can't remember the name of it now, has to do with the year 1979. As a key.

TP: I saw a review of that, yeah.

EH: Did you review that?

TP: I haven't read it, I looked at the reviews.

EH: Oh you looked at the review of it.

TP: It's pretty interesting.

EH: Yeah I'm reading it now and it has to do with the things that happened in 1979 in various parts of the world: Iran, Britain, China, Afghanistan, so forth that have shaped what the world is like since. I haven't finished it yet, but it's kind of interesting.

TP: Yeah those are the two years that people believe are turning points.

EH: Yeah.

TP: Do you guys have any other questions?

JD: Well, Ellis I have two more questions.

EH: Okay.

JD: The first one's kind of two questions in itself, but do you have a favorite moment at the University of Iowa, or a favorite story you'd like to tell us?

EH: I don't think so, no.

JD: Alright, and what was your reaction to find out there was an award named after you and your success as a historian?

EH: Well, I was really pleased I guess. Really surprised in a way. Again, Guy Alshon was largely behind that. He was, took the initiative I think. He didn't tell me he was doing it. But he took the initiative, in getting people to put up money and so on and so forth.

TP: I hope they send you a copy of the prize winner every year.

EH: Yeah, they didn't at first but they do now. They send me a copy of the book every year. I understand your wife is on the committee this year, is that right?

TP: Yeah, she is. So, she, yeah it's a prize that everyone aspires to—

EH: I don't know if you've come across this or not, but one of the projects that failed here. Has anyone every said anything about that? History series? No?

TP: A book series?

EH: Book series, yeah.

TP: I might of heard about that. But no, tell us.

EH: Well it, it, it, it doesn't, reflect greatly on the department, but at one time, again Larry Gelfand and I went along with him, but Larry Gelfand was pushing it. The idea was that we'd start a history series, published by the, the University of Iowa press. And the history department would screen these manuscripts and pick one. They'd recommend it to the Press and they'd send it out and then they would publish it. And we got it started in a way, we got the money for it through the Graduate school for publishing. And uh, I was on the committee and I was Chair of it for a while and screen the manuscripts. But the whole thing kind of fell apart, uh, you couldn't get the people to read the manuscripts, people got disgusted, the people that sent them in got disgusted because they had to go through the department and they had to go through an outside reader as well. And the first one, the first book in the series it got fairly strong reviews from the people that read it here, but two negative reviews from people that read it on the outside and one really negative review. But we finally persuaded the Press to publish it and it got bad reviews.

TP: Do you remember the book?

EH: It was called uh, *Arrogance and Anxiety,* and was the re-interpretation of World War I. Larry Lefore was on the committee at the time, he taught European history her, and he thought highly of it, but. And after that, we failed to get any good submissions, really. And about two or three years later they finally abandoned the whole thing.

TP: Did you, was there a theme? You know, or not really?

EH: No, they talked about that. Then they decided it wouldn't be any theme, then they talked about people who got Graduate degrees at Iowa, and they tried not to do that. And they, it was just open to anybody. And another issue that came up, one of the people in our department, Herman Rubble, wanted to publish a series. That was a big issue, should we allow people in the department to do it. And they finally decided well, okay we can do that as well if they want to. But Rubble moved about that time, I uh, have you heard of Herman Rubble?

TP: No, un uh.

EH: No? He was one of the big issues in the department for a number of years. He was hired into early modern European history. He had a book on some kind of Peasants, I can't remember, German Peasants, something. A really good book, got good reviews, But he took a job at Arizona, left here. And, about the time he wanted this book to be published, he got the book published someplace else. And we tried to get somebody to replace him. And the people were discussing, none of them worked out well and he wanted to come back. So they, so they apparently didn't do very well with his management of students. He would skip classes and didn't get a long with his students. Some problem with Sexual Harrassment with girls and that sort of stuff. So the women of the department and other people of the department, despite the

glowing reviews of this book, didn't want him back. So, and the department finally voted on, I think it was eight to six, or something like that, not to bring him back. But that was a big issue for a long time.

TP: Herman Rubble, okay.

EH: So uh, yeah they kept him at Arizona, he stayed there and finally retired now I think. He was a character and he was a Disk Jockey for a while, down in Arizona. He had a very popular program, on the, radio.

TP: He taught History and spun disks?

EH: And there was a problem too, he, he used Marijuana quite a bit and that was quite a problem with uh, bringing him back too. I thought maybe you'd heard of him.

TP: Well, I haven't heard of him.

EH: That's, the character of the department for a long time now.

TP: No one's volunteered any information. Yeah, um, there's been a few characters that have gone through right?

EH: He's the one I remember more than anybody, I sort of liked Herman, really. We got along pretty well and I think I voted in the affirmative to bring him back, but.

TP: Do you guys have any other questions? Well, we've taken, about an hour, do you have anything else you'd want to say?

EH: I don't think so, no.

TP: We could probably talk to you for a lot.

EH: Yeah.

TP: Pry stories out of you for a long time. But we, we don't want to pester you. We can stop there. You guys good?

DS: Yeah.

TP: Okay.

End of Audio