My name is Judee Showalter and it is December 14, 2007. We’re here today with Dr. Paul Wornom as part of the Randolph-Macon College Living Legacy Oral History project. Dr. Wornom is from the class of 1937 and he is going to share some memories of Randolph-Macon with us today. Following his graduation from Randolph-Macon, Dr. Wornom worked for eight years as a chemist and then went on to medical school at UVA and had a private family practice. Dr. Wornom, how did you first hear about Randolph-Macon College?

I grew up hearing about it. My oldest brother had gone and he graduated in ’22, I think it was. I’m not sure whether he graduated in ’22 or ’23, but anyway. So, as Methodists we always went to Randolph-Macon. So I was hearing about it ever since I was old enough.

And you have several family members. Your oldest brother Herman.

And then my brother John, who went three years, but he didn’t graduate, and then Marchant, her father, and then me, and then the other brothers went to the University of North Carolina.

Can you tell us about your first trip to the campus?

I went for my oldest brother’s graduation, whenever that was, but I was about five or six years old, I remember going up to that and then I went to, in June of ’33, I went to my brother Marchant’s graduation. And then I came as a patient in ’37, September.
JS: I like that, patient. Can you tell us how you, how did you afford a Randolph-Macon education? Do you remember how much a Randolph-Macon education cost?

PW: Well, my last year I sort of did it on my own and it cost 550 dollars. But I kept a record of what I spent and how much they charged. Because I had several scholarships and then I worked more in the summer than in the year, and made more money. But you got room and you got board. They didn’t have any dining room then, you ate out at a, in a boarding house for twenty-five dollars a month, but if you didn’t take breakfast, it was only twenty dollars a month for two meals. So that’s how we got through with that. But, what was your other part of the question?

JS: It was about the scholarships and the.

PW: Oh. After my first year, since I’d had four years in Latin, I got a scholarship for being an assistant for that and then meeting classes with Dr. Bowen when he didn’t get back from Richmond in time, he’d usually come in on the train to sign something. But anyway, and then after two years of chemistry, I had, what do they call them, an assistantship in the lab. So I had two of them. And at that time, along with it you got a free pass on the RF&P from Richmond to Washington. But, so I had two, you could only get it one-way. I wanted to get, since I had two I thought I’d be entitled to one coming and going, but they wouldn’t give me but the one. So I could get a pass to ride the train free going into Richmond, but I had to bum a ride coming back.

JS: Outside of the classroom, what activities did you participate in?

PW: Do you mean scholastic, college things?

JS: Yes.

PW: Well, there was the Franklin and Washington Literary Society, but we didn’t meet often. I started working on the annual. Charlie Romaine was editor one year. [5 minutes] I got to work with him on that. And then I started working on the newspaper and continued on with that, and was coeditor my last year of the newspaper, the Yellow Jacket. But at that time it only came out once a week, I don’t know how often they have it now.

JS: It’s less than that now.

PW: Oh.

JS: It’s supposed to be a weekly, but we don’t see it that often.

PW: So when I was the coeditor, I’d get all the copy ready and at four or five o’clock in the morning I’d walk down to Watkin’s printing shop, which printed the paper, and they’d get it out by noon time, so we’d distribute it about one o’clock on Fridays and have it available. But that was what they usually did. And Bill Armistead, M. William Armistead III, had preceded me as editor. I worked with him. He decided not to graduate and went on to work for the Roanoke paper, and ended up, worked for, in Waynesboro
I think, and then ended up eventually with the Landmark Publications as the publisher of the Roanoke paper. And he retired and gave money for the Armistead, what do you call it, the building?

JS: The Pace-Armistead?

PW: The Pace-Armistead. He and I started out in the same class and other things, so.

JS: Your yearbook says that you were the vice president of the Walter Hines Page Club, and we don’t know what that was. We know who Walter Hines Page was, but we don’t know what the club did. Do you remember that?

PW: Hm. I don’t remember that one. We had a chemistry group, and I forget what the name of that group, in Greek, was. They’d had one called Sigma Epsilon or something, supposed to be a literary group, and it sort of disbanded about the time I came up. But the Walter Hines Page Club I can’t remember.

JS: The chemistry group is Chi Beta Phi. Does that sound right?

PW: Yeah.

JS: Okay, we know who they are.

PW: Yeah, the year I was president, I think, of that, they had a national meeting in, at Morris Harvey College [merged with other colleges to become the University of Charleston] in Huntington, and I remember over Christmas Dad gave me money to go out to that, but that was just a two or three day meeting, the first time I’d ridden much on, slept all night on the train. I’d ridden the train, but never slept on one. We got the train, well it carried us home for Christmas, so I got the train here, which had an overnight trip to Huntington in those days on the C&O. What else was there? Let’s see.

JS: The other activity they list is your fraternity.

PW: Yeah, I was a Phi Kappa Sigma. They lived in the dorms initially, and then one year I lived in the fraternity house and then moved back to the dorm. So, Phi Kappa Sigma was in a little better condition when I was there than it turned out to become.

JS: They’re coming back though.

PW: Well, they’re trying. But, anyhow, they still have the house. It’s in the same place, but it’s a different house, on College Avenue. See, they had, had a, when my oldest brother was there, they had had a dining room, but then apparently they complained so about the food they did away with it and chose for... I don’t know if when Marchant was there they had it or not. But about the time I came, you ate out in town. There wasn’t any dining room. [10 minutes]

JS: So they had dormitories, but no dining halls. I always assumed that when you boarded, you roomed and boarded.
PW: No, I boarded with Mrs. West across the street, two doors from Dr. Ray’s office. Is his office still there? He was the college physician, he had a son, a couple of sons who became doctors, but one of those sons, Chay [Chambers], he came back there and was college physician for a long time. I don’t know, do they have a college physician now?

JS: We have a medical office, and he’s actually a nurse practitioner. And that’s new, we hadn’t had anything for a long time, you had to go into Ashland and use a local physician, but, I guess two or three years ago we did get.

PW: His office was on College Avenue just directly across from campus. And I didn’t doubt, he had an office adjoining his house; he had a big house. But he had four or five, four sons. Chay was the oldest and then Ed went into medicine. When I was there, he was working at MCV. Enos Ray was a couple of years, three years ahead of me. He became mayor of Ashland. A couple of years behind me was Bill Ray. He went into insurance and lived in Richmond, eventually. I kept in touch with him until he died. But I don’t know if any of the Rays are around anymore.

JS: I do not know.

PW: But the house is still there. Is there a big house there?

JS: It is. Dr. Scanlon has told me which house was Dr. Ray’s house, but I’m not sure I remember which house was Dr. Ray’s house.

PW: But it had, he had an office on the side sort of, so you didn’t go into the main house in those days.

JS: What about other people from the college, who do you remember the most?

PW: Well, I worked with Dr. Latin, Dr. Bowen, but he was a character taught Latin, so I remember him. I remember Dr. Webb, too, because I had an English major along with the Chemistry major. Of course, Dr. Canter was dean, he was teaching organic chemistry, and Dr. Updike was teaching analytical chemistry. Because of the math people, two Dr. Simpsons. And I think the other one, Grellet Simpson was younger, he stayed there a while and he became president of Mary Washington, I think, later on. And Dr. Haley taught German, I remember, I took German for one year.

JS: I thought Dr. Haley taught Latin. He taught German?

PW: Um hm. Dr. Bowen taught Latin. I had French too, Dr., I can’t think of his name. Your brother, your father used to date his daughter. I can’t remember his name now. But anyway, he taught French and Spanish. But they didn’t have French and German the same year, you had to take, one year you took French, the next year you took German, they didn’t have courses but every other year in that. And I don’t know how often they had Spanish, but, cause everybody had to take Bible, one year of bible.

JS: And who taught Bible?

PW: Dr. Tarry, George Tarry, I think his first name was. Do they still, is that still a requirement?
JS: No. Although I was a Religious Studies major, so I took a lot of bible. It's still [15 minutes] offered and it's still popular but it's not required.

PW: Oh, but I don't know about popular but essential, so you took it whether you wanted to or not. But I, it was smaller groups, the total enrollment when I was there, it was about 325, and you got to know everybody; you might not know all their names, but you knew they were there and you saw them around campus. And, of course, you went to school six days a week. You didn't have Saturdays off. You would try to avoid eight o'clock classes if you could.

JS: They still try to avoid eight o'clock classes if they can.

PW: But you tried not to get Saturday classes if you could, some courses you took you didn’t have to take Saturday classes. All the ones that I took were regular Saturday classes. Chemistry was eight o'clock Saturday morning, and then you had lab in the afternoon. I don’t know how they learn anything now, they’re in school so little.

JS: So, what did you do after graduation?

PW: I originally roomed with Reggie Jones, whose father was a lawyer in Hopewell and was on the school board. I was supposed to get a job with him; I didn’t have a job and he arranged for me to teach history and physics at Hopewell High for ninety dollars a month for ten months, but I decided that I’d try something else. A fellow a couple years ahead of me, John Holman, had gone, was in chemistry and he’d gone to work for DuPont in New Jersey and I wrote him and asked him about any jobs up there and he wrote back and gave me the name of the director of the lab, and, so I wrote him and he gave me an appointment to come up, which I did, and spent a whole day with him, and he decided he would give me a job. But I said when do I start, and he said you only get two weeks vacation so you better take what you want beforehand. So I wanted to set it for the first of September, and he said, well we could use you this summer, so I ended up starting the first of August in New Jersey. And it was a big job. I got 140 a month.

JS: Better than 90.

PW: It was better than 90 a month in Hopewell. Of course, it cost a little more in New Jersey, but not that much more. So, I did that for, let’s see, the war came along, I was essential. But by that time I decided that I wasn’t sure I wanted to stay in industry. At that time they instituted in Hoboken, New Jersey, I can’t think of the name of it, but in coming to Pennsylvania for so many days, and they’d give you these aptitude tests. So I found out about that and went over there and spent the day doing tests. And they gave me a report that I should be a violinist, a surgeon, or an accountant.

JS: That’s an interesting combination: violinist, surgeon, or accountant.

PW: I don’t know how they got to that I should be a violinist except that I have good finger dexterity.

JS: Well, violinist and surgeon kind of go together, I get that.
PW: And I don’t have any, I’m practically tone-blind, I can’t tell one note from another, so I decided that I’d maybe see about medicine. [20 minutes] All through the war we worked 6 hours, 6 days a week, sometimes seven. [Phone Ringing] Sorry, I’ve got an answering machine, probably someone telling me my car warranty has run out, but if it’s not that they’ll leave a message and I’ll take care of it. Anyway, I forget what I was talking about.

JS: Deciding to go into medicine.

PW: Yeah, oh. I had two weeks vacation and I came down to stay with my dad. Fortunately I had my, had gotten my transcripts from Randolph-Macon because I was going to apply to the University of Illinois to go there and do graduate work, but the war came on, and I cancelled that, or at least I was told to cancel it. So I had my transcripts and B.J. Hackman, when I was down there visiting my father, in York County there, and your father and your mother and you, I think, were, had a cabin up at Camp Pocahontas, one of the state parks up there and asked me to come up. I had a car at this point and drove up there to see them but I stopped by Charlottesville and decided to take my credentials with me and walked in the dean’s office and he saw me right away and he looked at my transcripts and said well, you got everything but don’t have any Biology, get a semester of Biology and you can get in the next class. So I’d always wanted to go to California, so after VJ Day, I was no longer essential. So I quit in the middle of October, and drove out to the University of California, I found I could get a semester of Biology, because they were on the accelerated program still at the University at Berkeley, in time to get back to Virginia in time for school starting in April. So I went out to the University and I wasn’t used to 10,000 students.

JS: That’s a big change from Randolph-Macon to Berkeley.

PW: 120 in a class and all that sort of thing. And I checked about going to med school out in California, but they were only taking five non- Californians at that time in med school. And the next class wasn’t till September. When I was out there I got official notice from Virginia that I was admitted and I better take the Virginia thing rather than take my chance at not being able to get in, in September. So that’s when I came on back here. So I sold my car, and decided to take the train south to Los Angeles, I hadn’t been there. And then I’d heard about Mardi Gras, they said it was a good place to stay away from. I took the Southern Pacific from LA to New Orleans and up to Charlottesville. I got to L.A., I spent a couple of days there. The Southern Pacific was talking about a strike or something, so I went to check in and they told me you better stay there, you might not get there. I said I checked out of the hotel I haven’t got any place to stay so I stayed on the train. But the strike didn’t occur, on the five day ride or whatever it was from L.A. to New Orleans, I counted on missing Mardi Gras on purpose because somebody said it was a good place to stay away from New Orleans around that time. And I thought Mardi Gras was over because I had counted up the time, but I didn’t realize that Sundays didn’t count in Lent. [25 minutes] So I arrived in New Orleans on Shrove Tuesday.

JS: Oh my, a nice Methodist boy in New Orleans on Shrove Tuesday.

PW: No place to stay. I’m glad the hotel, I kept going in and out and all the hotels that take furniture in the lobby all that sort of thing and it was already crowded. So I finally went to the Chamber of
Commerce, I figured that they putting on all this they ought to have some place so they found me some place over in the black section near the railroad track. And I stayed there one night. Coming, I took the bus in to see the parades or whatever was going on downtown and going back someone followed me from the bus home and I got to the house before they did. But it wasn’t a very good room, one light in the ceiling, and you could hear rats running up and down. So my ticket, I’d try to get to Charlottesville the next day but I already had the ticket on the Southern and they wouldn’t change it, so I had to stay for two more days. Finally, I found another place to stay the next night.

JS: That’s good, a little nicer place?

PW: Yes. The place I had the first time, they used the bath tub to store coal, bags of coal. There wasn’t any place to take a bath. So, because I’d been on the train for five days, so I didn’t have a bath until I got up to Richmond and your mother and father were staying at, on Monument Ave at the time. And I spent the night with them and was able to take a bath. Then I got the train on down to, well I stopped in Charlottesville on the Southern and tried to find, to see about getting a place to stay in Charlottesville. I didn’t think it would be any problem but everything was filled up. Finally got a room with somebody with somebody I didn’t know in one of the dorms in Charlottesville. That night I got the bus or something down to Richmond and then on. Spent the night with them and then came on down to there.

MR: 1946, right? 1946?

PW: This was spring of ‘46. So, that was my entrance to that school. But that has nothing to do with Randolph-Macon.

JS: That’s okay; it has to do with you, that’s what we’re.

PW: What other questions you got on your list?

MR: And you entered in April?

PW: Huh?

MR: You entered in April of ‘46?

PW: Yes, they were decelerating. They’d been on around the clock schedule. We were the first postwar class and so I believe we went back in April for two months and took first anatomy and such then, Anatomy and Biochemistry. And then we got off in June or such and went back in September and in September we were back on semester basis, September to January and then January to June. So actually it was four and half years I finished med school rather than just the usual four.

MR: 1950. Were you in touch with the Randolph-Macon chemistry professor or any old professors during this time? Or not enough time to go to Ashland I guess?

PW: No the, no I hadn’t kept in touch with any of them because I was in New Jersey and I didn’t get back often. So I didn’t go back to reunions till the 10th or 15th or something like that, I can’t remember now. But the 10th would have been in ‘47 while I was in med school and I didn’t go then. [30 minutes] I can’t
remember whether I went to the 15th or not. Because I didn’t go to reunions every year, so that was about the only contact I had to Randolph-Macon much. I came down here and would go periodically. And then I found out that the Phi Beta Kappa instructions they usually had a lecture and I had a notice about those and a couple of them I went to, and some guy I don’t remember his name, but he taught English there. But I wasn’t an academician and he didn’t recognize people if they weren’t academicians. He didn’t know what I was doing at the meeting.

MR: This is at William and Mary?

PW: Huh?

MR: Was the meeting at William and Mary since Phi Beta Kappa was founded there?

PW: No, no, they had that meeting was just the selection. It was Phi Beta Kappa initiation.

JS: All Phi Beta Kappa initiates are supposed to be invited every year when they initiate the new ones.

MR: Oh, you were back on the Randolph-Macon Campus?

JS: There’s a lecture series.

PW: No, no, I was working, that was after I came to work here. Of course I didn’t have time or any money either to run back and forth to Randolph-Macon. I didn’t have transportation because I sold my car in California and did without a car for eight years. So, I couldn’t have got to and fro on the bus so I didn’t go to Randolph-Macon then. But, this was after I got in practice I started getting invitations and after I’d been in practice there was a urologist from Washington who was giving a talk and I wanted to hear him and I went up there. I can’t think of this fellow’s name, I think he’s retired or something but he was teaching History or English or something. He was sort a nose in the air type.

JS: An academic snob? There are a few of those around.

PW: Yes, I thought he was the only one. My first experience with one. So I went to that one and I didn’t go to anymore until they had the 100th or the 75th Phi Beta Kappa anniversary. They had a big bash with that when Dr. Payne was there. I don’t know, I can’t remember when Phi Beta Kappa was established at Randolph-Macon.

JS: Early, I should know and I don’t but.

PW: This was either the 75th or the 100th. And they had a thing, well they, it was in the gym, but I can’t remember which year it was, which anniversary. But I haven’t been getting any notices since. You’re supposed to get one every year.

JS: I thought they invited all the Phi Beta Kappa graduates every year but I don’t remember a Phi Beta Kappa lecture series for a while, so maybe they only do it if they.

PW: Well, this wasn’t a lecture series. At the initiation they usually have a lecture every year.
JS: Maybe they’re not doing the lecture; maybe they’re just doing an initiation.

PW: I did get notices for a time after that, but I haven’t had any for a long time.

JS: I have to admit I’m not a Phi Beta Kappa graduate so I’m not sure. Didn’t quite make that. I was close.

JS: We’d also like to know a little bit about your scholarship and what inspired you to create a scholarship at Randolph-Macon.

PW: Oh, of course I didn’t have any money, and thought it might help somebody, in those days.

JS: Is there a criterion? I don’t know about your scholarship. [35 minutes] Is it for pre-medical students or is it just a general scholarship?

PW: It’s for premeds. My brother and I had one that was the Wornom scholarship from our parents and that’s sort of a general one. The one I set up recently is for premed students. But Carter set it up.

LP: Would you like us to pause for a minute? We’d be happy to.

PW: No, I usually don’t have this much problem with them, but I get a certain amount of post nasal drip, so.

MR: The general scholarship that you had with my father leans towards business majors and that’s because of my father, but hopefully it’s available for anyone who can benefit from it.

PW: Yes, that’s why I set up mine for.

MR: Specifically for medical students, I mean for pre-med type of.

JS: And there’s also a Wornom Chair in Biological Sciences, correct?

PW: Yes.

JS: And Dr. Knisley has that now?

PW: I don’t know who has that.

JS: I think it is.

LP: Yes.

PW: That’s when I thought that I wasn’t giving money when I left, died anyways, so I thought they might get it now. So I gave them a million dollars. I, Dr., who’s the guy preceding Ladell Payne, the one, one that just left?

JS: Before President Payne?

JS: Dr. Martin.
PW: Rusty, Rusty.

JS: Rusty?

MR: Rusty.

JS: Dr. Martin.

PW: And at that time they needed extra funds to meet, compete, with some grant, or to double the account with some grant so they could finish the Blackwell Auditorium. So 250,000 of it went to finish that and the rest of it, they said they didn’t have a chair in Biology, so he’s the one suggested that he could get a chair in Biology and that’s how that came about. [Chiming clock]

MR: It’s noon.

JS: : It’s noon.

PW: Does that answer your question?

JS: : That answers my question. Also with us today is Mariah Rippe, who is Dr. Wornom’s niece. And did you have any questions or anything you wanted to add about your family’s contacts with Randolph-Macon?

MR: Well, I guess what I would be interested to know is what impact the Depression had on Randolph-Macon in the 1930s when you were a student there. Not only from the point view of the students attending but the faculty. What was, marked that decade that you were there in the same decade when my father graduated?

PW: Well, the.

MR: Did the faculty stay generally during that time. Did the faculty that, was there not much turn over on the Randolph-Macon faculty during the 1930s?

PW: No, they’re the same ones.

MR: Same ones.

PW: Some of them were there when my oldest brother graduated in ’23. Some of them were. Dr. Canter was there and Dr. Simpson was there. Dr. Blackwell was the president, but he was never around. He was always off raising money or something. When I was there he was in his 80s and after I retired Dr. Moreland took over. But the faculty did their thing. I didn’t think they, I don’t know whether they even had faculty meetings, but I presume they did, but I don’t know.

MR: Did the student body enrollment stay about the same during the ‘30s?

PW: No, no.

MR: So students were able to attend?
PW: Yes, yes. It didn’t increase any.

MR: Stayed pretty much the same. So the economics of the country, of the nation at the time, didn’t have that much of an impact on the quality of education it sounds like. If, once a student was able to get there.

PW: Yes, but there wasn’t any rush to get to school because in ’37 they were still getting over ’30, the Depression, and it was hard to get a job. They were scarce, so, but it wasn’t till after ’40 when they started doing all the munitions stuff [40 minutes] and things built up for World War II helping the British and the French before we got, actually got in to it, but I don’t know, I never was on campus when Dr. Moreland was there. But you rarely saw Dr. Blackwell. We had chapel. Do you still have chapel, compulsory chapel?

JS: No.

PW: You had to go to, you had chapel five days a week, but you had to go at least four. You could miss one day a week.

JS: One of the things we have in the archives is the chapel rolls.

PW: Oh.

JS: Where they counted how many times you’d been there.

PW: Yes, if we, there was the guy who sat on the aisle had to check whether you were there or not. And if you could, if you had extra chapel time you could cut a class. If you had an extra day of chapel, you could cut a class.

JS: I didn’t know that.

PW: I think it was equal one for one. If you went to an extra day of chapel, five days in chapel, you could cut a class the next week.

JS: There’s incentive.

MR: We didn’t have that at Agnes Scott in the ’60s. We had to be at chapel and the rolls were still taken.

PW: Yes, but you had to be sure you had the extra time.

JS: They checked.

PW: And chapel, Dr. Blackwell if he was around and was on campus but he would come, but he wasn’t there and Mr. Hatcher sort of took over. He or Dean Canter were the chapel, sometimes they’d bring in a program but other times we’d just sing a hymn and have some prayers and whatever, but chapel was a half hour.
MR: I’d like to know whether the job market in the 1930s influenced your major. You said you were a double major in Chemistry. Well I knew you were a Chemistry major, but I didn’t know about the English component. Would you have taken more English if you could have used that, or?

PW: No, I just liked English.

MR: You just, yes.

PW: I liked English literature. I just took it because I liked it.

MR: And the chemistry was more, you took that for a career.

PW: Yes, I took that too but I didn’t want exactly to be a teacher. So I didn’t figure there was much point in an English major than teaching. Of course I had a Latin major, too. I took all the Latin then, but to be a Latin instructor I had to take Latin every year from Dr. Bowen, and my last year I think there was two of us in the class.

JS: Wow.

MR: Select group.

PR: Paul, I know you were a good student and worked very hard. I also know that you attended all those chapel meetings, but in Ashland, when you weren’t studying and weren’t in chapel, what did you do for fun? Where were movie theaters? What did you do for entertainment in Ashland?

PW: Well, when you could afford it you went to the movie every 25 cents, but they didn’t change the program but every so often. There was only one theater and they’d just have a movie sometimes it’d be three or four days. But the movies were better then than now, at least, I think. So I went to those. But I also, there was a, they had an active program over in Richmond then, at the Lyric Theater. And they had these traveling groups and I would, on Saturdays, I would just scrape enough money to get a gallery seat somewhere and thumb a ride over, and I saw Zimmerville in something, The Ghost, I think it was and You Can’t Take it With You with, Cohen was in it. And L’Aiglon, The Eaglet, by Eva Le Galliene. And frequently I’d run into Dr. Webb at the theater. I came out one door and he’d come and go out in the street. I’d come out for the fresh air and he’d come out to smoke. I’d see him down on the street smoking. The Lyric Theater was there somewhere out on.

All: Broad Street.

PW: Broad Street, right down near the Capital. And they [45 minutes] also had an opera season at the Mosque but I wasn’t enthused about the opera, but Charlie Romaine from Petersburg liked it, and his family got him tickets, and he’d give me one. So after I saw the San Carlo Opera House, the famous tours around, and that was my introduction to opera. And then we’d go over to the gym and play tennis when the weather permitted and go to the gym to swim and such, but also at the fraternity house we played bridge. You tried to get four people to play bridge. So that’s when I learned more about bridge. Of course it was strictly auction then, they hadn’t started contract. And of course a lot of people who lived
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Interview with Dr. Paul Wornom

near by would go home for weekends but, if you didn’t have much of a weekend, if you didn’t have a Saturday class you had to go home. William Jones, who lived in Hopewell, he had a car, and he didn’t have the Saturday classes so he went home every weekend. But, everybody, there weren’t very many cars around in those days. In fact I think that, well you couldn’t have a car your freshmen year and after that only one or two people had them that I recall.

PR: Were there sports rallies? What about the sports teams? Were there sports rallies or things like you would have now?

PW: No, they we didn’t have any pre-game, night before, rallies or anything. Sports were not a big item in those days. They had teams but, and you went to a game on a Saturday afternoon, there wasn’t a college group that was cheering, didn’t have any cheerleaders or such.

MR: How about the Randolph-Macon Hampden-Sydney game? Was there, Was that a contest?

PW: Well we talked about it but it wasn’t any different from any other game as I recall. I mean they didn’t have any special rooting section or, no gals to get things around. Because there weren’t any women, we had 3, there were 3 or 4 girls who lived in town in the class like that, but there were no full-time students. Well, they were full-time but I, I don’t know how those who were picked, who were allowed to come. Maybe they were the only women in Ashland who went to college, I don’t know.

MR: Was that Laughlin Spencer? Is now Laughlin Spencer?

PW: Hmm?

MR: Lark Spencer? Was she there? Laughlin Spencer?

PW: Yes, yes, yes. She was a couple of full years behind me. She lived down the end of College Avenue. A brown house, near the fraternity house. She was walking by down by the fraternity house. But there wasn’t the school spirit like they have now, in those days. Of course, they didn’t have any girls, occasionally if you had transportation you’d go up to Fredericksburg but the girls couldn’t leave you to sit in the parlor. Wednesday night was date night if you had a car and could go up there. It seemed quite further in those days; the road wasn’t as good. And I think I went once but I decided it wasn’t worth it. My blind date didn’t turn out.

MR: Will remain blind. Which of the faculty members that you studied with had probably the most impact on your future, or it sounds like all of them, actually that.

PW: I knew them all.

MR: You knew them all.

PW: Don’t know much impact they had collectively, I don’t remember any marked individual impact. [50 minutes] I talked with Dr. Webb and when I was, worked with Dr. Bowen, he lived on College Avenue, down from the fraternity house and a lot times if he was going to give a quiz, I’d give the quiz and he
wouldn’t come and then I’d have to both grade the papers and take them to him to check so I saw a fair amount of him.

The chemistry people were busy. Dr. Updike was doing research. Dr. Canter was the Dean and he was busy with that, and. the math people I stayed away from. I wasn’t real friendly with them, because I had trouble with college algebra.

MR: I can remember you helping me with my, when I was in sixth grade, with my math. I wasn’t doing very well with math at that point.

LP: Not my subject.

PW: Well anything else on your list?

JS: There is nothing else on my list. Anything else you want to share with us?

MR: Any questions that you may have?

LP: The library.

MR: Yes, the library.

LP: Can you tell us a little bit about what it was like to study at the library then? Or didn’t you go?

PW: You just went to the library to check out a book, you didn’t study in the library.

MR: Oh, Just a repository of books.

PW: Yes, as far as I know. But I used to, to check out, I’d go over there and read books and then take them out, check them out and read them.

JS: We don’t have any photographs of students studying in the library and we thought it was just because we didn’t have any. It was not a place where students studied?

LP: Huh.

MR: No. That’s interesting.

PW: No, not that I recall. It was, the library was right there back of the Old Gym.

JS: Yes, what we now call Peele Hall.

PW: Where’s the library now?

JS: It’s across the street, across from the Campus Center.

PW: Across which street?

JS: It’s across Henry Street.
PW: Henry Street.

JS: Yes, it’s over Henry Street and down a block from the, from Peele Hall.

MR: It’s very nice.

PW: The best place, you studied in your room. That’s why I was surprised when I got to Charlottesville and found in med school you went to the library to study. Go in the stacks and get a place and study. There was none of that at Randolph-Macon.

LP: Were the librarians nice? Did they go shhh a lot in the library?

PW: I just went in and browsed to see what new books they had all the time. There weren’t but two of them as I recall. The head librarian and one other. I never did run into many students in the library, but I’d hear about a book and that.

MR: Did you have textbooks for the classes? Did the, or did you?

PW: Oh, yes.

MR: What about textbooks, would you buy them, or recycle them?

PW: Recycle them, get them second-hand and such. Of course in that time, you had to furnish your room, too. You had to have your own room furniture.

MR: Bed? Bed included?

JS: Bed included?

MR: Bed? You mean the mattress?

PW: So, Marchant finished the year in June and I started in September and I just used his.

MR: Convenient.

PW: A chair and a desk, a bed.

MR: In the same dorm room, or?

PW: yes.

JS: Which dormitory did you live in?

PW: It was called the new dorm in those days. It was the new dorm and the old dorm. The new dorm is the one they’re remodeling.

JS: It was Thomas Branch?
PW: Thomas Branch. The other one was Mary Branch. Mary Branch was the old dorm. There was a
certain rivalry between the new dorm and the old dorm, nothing extensive. The new dorm people
thought they were better than the old dorm people.

JS: I don’t think the dorms were very different, where they? [55 minutes]

MR: Did you have exam books? Did you have what we had in the ‘60s, I don’t know I they still use them,
these blue exam books, when you would take exams.

PW: No.

MR: No, you just used whatever paper you had. I don’t know when exam books came in.

PW: You had the honor system. I don’t remember having any proctors or such. In fact, the president
gave out the exam and he left, I mean the professor did, as I recall he just left and you turned the pages
in when you finished. So you still have the honor system, don’t you?

JS: We still have an honor code, but the faculty stay in the room.

PW: As I recall they handed out the exams and left.

JS: They did that into the ‘80s. I had many professors who then would say, “I’m in my office if you have
any questions,” And they would leave

PW: Occasionally they’d come back to see if people had questions.

MR: So the train station in Ashland was a very active train station at that time, when you were coming
and going? That was used more frequently for transportation than cars?

PW: Well, the RF &P had more trains and, but all of them coming through didn’t stop, some of them did.
But there was particularly the Richmond –Washington trolley, electric line that came into Ashland and
went down Brook Run, Road and came in on upper Broad Street. Let me see.

MR: Broad Street Station.

PW: Broad Street. So they’d come into Broad Street Station. There was a special building, train, where
they came in.

MR: And they were electric cars?

PW: Trolleys, and they, but they stopped running at 12 o’clock, I think, or something like that. But we’d
usually get the bus out to the end of Chamberlayne Road and thumb a ride.

MR: And then thumb.

PW: In those days, people picked up fellows.
PR: Did you have to dress for classes? Did you have to wear a necktie or a coat, or? You didn’t?

PW: No, No, there was no dress code.

PR: There was no dress code?

PW: No, not like Charlottesville where you wore a coat. When I went to med school I found out you didn’t be in public without a coat on. That’s changed now, too.

PR: Randolph-Macon did not have a dress code?

PW: No.

JS: Well, you had to dress for chapel, didn’t you?

PW: No.

JS: No?

PW: No, I don’t think so, but you usually wore sweaters. Didn’t many people wear jackets in those days, at least when I came along. You may have one suit and some slacks and maybe one sport coat, so. Of course, Virginia when I got there was quite different. They all dressed and all that sort of thing.

JS: A little more formal?

PW: Well, in a sense. In Virginia, you didn’t speak to somebody unless you’d been introduced to them.

JS: Oh?

PW: When I went there. At that time of life, it was different. Then, at Randolph-Macon it was all informal. You knew and spoke to everybody whether you knew their names or not. In Virginia in those days you didn’t speak to somebody unless you’d been introduced. They’ve done away with that I think. There was quite a difference between the two structures, the two schools at that point.

MR: Well, speaking of that at Virginia, it’s first, second and third year. Were you freshman, sophomore and junior at Randolph-Macon? What did you, how did you call your years, was it first year or?

PW: Yes, at Randolph-Macon you were freshman, sophomore, junior, senior.

MR: They used that?

PW: Yes, they used that. And there wasn’t any college hazing but the fraternity initiation was [60 minutes] another thing.

PR: I was going to ask you about fraternity life in those days. Did you do any singing, or course you had to do chapter meetings and that sort of thing and your initiation, but what was fraternity life like?

PW: Well, it was a place to play bridge.
PR: Yes.

PW: On occasion we’d get around the piano and sing but that was rare, and then dance weekends when everybody came to the fraternity house, but most of the time you’d just sit around and shoot the breeze. If you played something, you’d play bridge. And of course you had to study too, so, and we didn’t have radios going loudly. You went to your room and studied.

MR: Did you use radios much? Were there many radios on campus?

PW: I don’t recall that there were at time, which was ’33. I didn’t have one.

MR: How about telephones? Were there many telephones on the campus? Or was it more telegraph or long distance communication, telegram?

PW: There wasn’t any place to send telegrams. I think there was a pay phone in each dorm, maybe, at the entrance. But that’s about all they were, pay phones. No room phones. Let’s see.

MR: How about laundry, how did you do laundry?

PW: I sent it home.

MR: You sent it home.

PW: Everybody had these little plastic laundry things and you’d pack it up and sent it home and you got it back.

MR: You’re kidding, really? And your mother would send it back?

PW: Yes. She sent it to the laundry room and.

MR: Would she put food in there too, would she add some food or cake?

PW: On occasion she’d put some cake in there.

MR: Some cake in there or some cookies.

PW: Most people sent their laundry home. If you had the money, you could, there was laundry in town you could use. But everybody’d take their thing down to the post office and mail it.

MR: Would even students who lived a greater distance than you did, they’d still mail it home.

PW: A lot of them did, yes.

MR: My, my.

PW: If they could afford it then they had it done in town, but that was too expensive in those days. There was only the one drug store, and then the one theater down, a couple blocks down from where the drug store was, and the drug store was right across from the train station. But I don’t know how, a
lot of those people went to other boarding houses. There was one, I think, right by the old dorm there were some two or three houses, some residence houses and one of those was a boarding house. I can’t think who ran it, and right behind the drug store was another one that was pretty good. I stayed at Mrs. West’s for a couple years, she was right there on College Place, on College Avenue, and then the other was Mrs. Carter’s, moved around behind the, I don’t know how the street is now, the street went up to ‘33, I think, going through, and right around the corner there was Mrs. Carter’s place. But there was no cafeteria, no restaurants downtown that I know of. If you could go down to Route 1, there was Peregoy’s, where you could get a hamburger. It was a service station that had hamburgers. There was one on Route [65 minutes] 1 right at the end of College Avenue., where it comes now.

MR: So the administration of the college was focused on the academics, they had little else to concern them like food service and.

PW: Well, the coach was around but he didn’t teach any courses that I knew about, but there was only one coach. You had a football coach, and he taught, coached baseball, and there was one coached track. I don’t know what they did about basketball. But see in those days you couldn’t dance on campus.

JS: It’s that Methodist thing.

PW: You couldn’t have any dances in the gym.

MR: Oh!

PW: In my last year there the board of trustees decided we could have dances in the gym. We used to have dances at the armory in Ashland. We had the dances and there was always one or two of us got gassed and loaded. They had bootleg. They had bootleg, so the dances, some of them, turned into big brawls at the armory. When we started having them in the gym they were more sedate.

JS: Better chaperoned, maybe?

PW: Well, they had chaperones too.

MR: Wow.

PW: Some of the ladies in town were chaperones. Faculty wives you didn’t see much of for some reason. I don’t remember seeing any faculty wives much.

JS: The only faculty wife we hear about is Mrs. Webb, but she was involved in several things.

PW: Well, they didn’t get married for years. She had a boarding house at the, she ran the Henry Clay Inn before she got married. I can’t think of her name. But she, she was. Dr. Webb was a bachelor and she was an old maid and heavens, they must have been in their forties when they got married finally. If that was the same, you’re talking about the Stanton.

JS: Stanford Webb.
MR: So she stayed involved after she married. She stayed involved with the community.

PW: I don’t when she gave up her boarding house, when she stopped running the inn. She managed the Henry Clay Inn. Name’s on the tip of the tongue. Pankoss or something like that was her maiden name [Woolfolk]. But I don’t know when they got married, because I left in ’37. It was 8 or 10 years after that, I think, before they got married.

MR: I’m curious to know if Herman ever came back. Your brother Herman, did he ever come back while you were there?

PW: No.

MR: No, he was off in New York or wherever.

PW: Yes.

MR: I know my father, it seemed, he kept going back, he never really left. He was always going out there.

PW: Well, he was in Richmond and it was convenient. And he was much more interested in sports and such and Herman wasn’t. I think Herman went back for some special reunion or something.

MP: But other than that he never went back.

PW: No.

MR: Fascinating.

PW: The Methodist Church was upstairs in the Old Chapel. I don’t know if that is still the way it is or not.

JS: The Methodist Church has built another building.

PW: Oh. And so Dr. Canter taught Sunday school, and that was upstairs in the church. A lot of students went to his Sunday morning Sunday school class and a number of us stayed for church, too, but they weren’t all Methodists. But, there weren’t many Catholics and of course there were no [70 minutes] blacks, and I don’t remember any Jewish students when I was there. At that time, I don’t think there were any.

JS: Never heard of one.

MR: Predominantly Methodist students.

PW: I remember Hatcher was a Methodist minister but he was a bigot. When they finally allowed dancing on the campus, he issued an order to all the members of the Clericus, the ones in ministry, that they couldn’t go.

JS: And Clericus was big. That’s a lot of the student body.
PW: And I wrote, when I was editor of the paper, I wrote an editorial about it. I didn’t get called in.

MR: Any other incidents like that on the campus?

PW: I remember that one. Of course, the dorms were in horrible shape. They were never clean. When I became the editor of the paper I wrote a couple of editorials about cleaning up the dorms. There hadn’t had a cleaning, so they finally did do something about that. They had people who were supposed to clean, but the rooms were just, well, you had to make your own bed, and furnish your own linens and all that, but they’d sweep, supposedly sweep. And some of them had these oil floors, too. Used soda oil or something on the floor instead of painting it and that was supposed to keep the dust down and all that. That seems so long ago.

MR: So what other editorials did you write or comments would you make as the editor of the paper?

PW: They’re the only two I remember particularly.

MR: Did you ever comment on any of the worldwide issues or the Virginia, any of the Virginia politics?

PW: We weren’t global at all. Nobody much was interested in politics.

MR: So as the war was fermenting in Europe and the.

PW: Well, you didn’t think about it in the ‘30s.

MR: You didn’t think about it.

PW: ’33 to ’37. Nobody thought about the war in Europe.

MR: It was ’39 when Hitler was beginning to.

PW: I wasn’t around. I was working.

MR: Oh, that’s right, you graduated in ’37, that’s right.

PW: I was working New Jersey then. So we didn’t hear any of that on campus. People did not spend all their time studying but I don’t know what they did do in other places. A few of them did have radios but everybody didn’t have a radio.

MR: Yes, that’s a little different from, you didn’t hear as much as we do today of what’s going on globally.

PW: Charley Romaine, who was pre-med, and had a radio and on Sunday night there was some special program I went down to listen to on his radio. I can’t think what the program was now. Eddie Cantor and stuff, as I remember, on some radio show. Oh, well, there was Jack, Fred Allen.

PR: Fred Allen and Jack Benny, yes.

PW: Jack Benny and Eddie Cantor occasionally, but Fred Allen’s show was Sunday night, I think.
MR: Was Amos and Andy on then?
PR: Not Sunday night. That was Fred Allen and Jack Benny.

PW: Yes, yes. But I’d go down to Charlie Romaine’s radio and listen to that with him. But other than that, everybody stayed busy doing something but I don’t know just what.

MR: I think that hasn’t changed either.

JS: Same thing we do now.

PW: But a lot of them didn’t, the guys [75 minutes] who went into Richmond frequently on Saturday, but what they did, of course, you couldn’t get beer then.

MR: That’s right.

PW: Well, Prohibition went out in ’34 but you couldn’t buy beer in only certain sections.

MR: Of Richmond?
PW: Yes. I mean certain cities.

MR: So was Richmond dry or not?
PW: No, You could buy it in Richmond.

MR: You could buy it in Richmond.

PR: You couldn’t buy anything hard though. Yes, they had the lockers and the bubba clubs in those days.

MR: That was true in our day.

PW: And Perigory’s down on Route 1 had wine by the bottle,

MR: Really?
PR: Really?
PW: But they didn’t have beer. That was after Prohibition.

PR: That’s right. You could get what they called a cocktail, only they put a sugar cube in some wine. Do you remember that? It was terrible.

PW: No, I never tried that.

MR: Sugar cube in wine.

PW: I didn’t like wine. So I never did have a bottle that I recall.
MR: There was no California wine in those days in Virginia, so.

JS: Well, thank you very much for allowing us to tape you today, and we appreciate you all joining in and helping us with this project. Thank you very much.

PW: I don’t think I’ve told you anything you hadn’t heard, probably.

JS: Yes, you have.

END OF INTERVIEW