Q. This is the Klohr interview recorded Friday, July 6, 2001. To identify the voices on this tape, the interviewer is Robert Butche. Butche is historian of the Ohio State University College of Education and a graduate of the Ohio State University School of which today’s subject, Paul Klohr, was director between 1952 and 1957. The interviewer and the subject therefore have known each other over a period of 50 years. The subject of the interview on this tape is Emeritus Professor Paul R. Klohr of the Ohio State University College of Education. On behalf of the president of the University, Britt Kerwin, and Ray Goerler, Director of the University Archives, Dr. Klohr, I welcome you to the Ohio State University oral history project. We are going to begin today’s interview with this question. Dr. Klohr, when did you come to Ohio State University and how were you received in the College of Education?

A. I came to Ohio State in the summer of 1940, which was the summer immediately after my graduation from DePauw University, a liberal arts college in Indiana. And I came here because at DePauw as a Rector Scholar, which meant that I had my tuition and an honorarium paid for the four years. And when a student graduated, a Rector Scholar, graduated, they gave him $100. And I didn’t have a job, and there were no jobs available. They would pull out openings in the teacher employment agency because I had taken a few courses in education at DePauw which was basically a liberal arts university. I got teaching certificates in English
and history and I have languages in French and German. I’m just glad I never had
to teach French or German because at that time foreign language was by and large
translation. You didn’t learn to talk it. And so, I applied for English and history
teaching jobs, and there weren’t any. So I was going into the summer with no
employment, but I thought I might as well use the $100 to start graduate school.
And since one of my professors at DePauw had graduated from Ohio State and
had done work with Boyd Bode and other faculty members at that time, I thought:
well, that would be a good place to go. And so, I took the $100 and came to
Columbus.

Q. For the record, who was the person who recommended you come here?
A. Earl Bowman.

Q. And how do you spell his name?
A. Bowman, a remarkable man. And he was good to me because I had to get a job to
stay in college, and his wife’s father lived with them and so one of my jobs where
I got a few extra dollars was to sit in their house when they went out in the
evening. Grandpa sometimes fell out of his bed. And my main job was to help
grandpa back in bed. So it was Earl Bowman largely who brought me here. And
of course, he taught everything, psychology, philosophy, the whole works. He
was very full of Dewey and Bode philosophy. And so all of this made me think
that Ohio State must be a pretty interesting place.

Q. Was he still on staff when you arrived here or had he gone elsewhere?
A. Bowman was back in my college rather than here, but he had gotten his doctorate
at Ohio State some years before. He was a rather elderly man.
Q. Well that first trip was for a conference, was it not?

A. Well, just by chance, there was a conference. I didn’t know there was a conference here, of course, because I certainly wasn’t up to date in the field of education. And so, I signed up for the beginning course that they often gave incoming people, working at the master’s level. And it was a very dull course, and it was a very hot summer. And there was no air conditioning in our hall, and I thought “I’m not sure this is the place I want to be.” And then quite by chance, I learned of an opening in a progressive education workshop. A friend and I were walking up the stairs in Arps Hall and Alberty was talking. A workshop had just started and they said “Well, this is going pretty well but it wouldn’t be a bad idea to have a couple of inexperienced teachers in the workshop with all these people who were doing all these things, so they could see what it’s like when you first start out.” My friend and I passed them on the stairs and we reported that we’re two inexperienced teachers that would be very happy to be in the workshop. And the workshop “thing,” this idea really started, by and large, with the Progressive Education Association, which is one of the big associations that had the Carnegie money to do the Eight Year or Thirty School Study, in which these thirty schools, the University School at Ohio State being one of them, were freed up of college entrance exams. And the thought was that secondary school curriculum had to be this and this, and this, or the youngster wouldn’t succeed in college. And PA took the position that you could have wide variation and experimentation in secondary education and the students could still do the college work. And so they “paired up” these groups of students who were in these thirty schools by intelligence,
background, and all of the other factors they could. And then they followed them through their four years -- their three or four years of high school and largely their four full years of college. The main thing was to see how they did. To see if schools that varied widely in the kind of programs that they offered could also be doing college level work. And so, they paired these students with kids of comparable ability and intelligence to see how they turned out. So this was 1940, and the study had been going on since ’32, the year University School started. They were beginning to have these so-called “workshops” where conferences of practicing teachers to, in a sense, report on the results of the Eight Year Study. And it was an amazing thing for me, because they had all the big names in American education coming through. There isn’t a one you could think of who wasn’t on hand to talk about it. And of course, it was a very exciting time for me to have stepped into that kind of a milieu.

Q. By the end of that summer, did you have a sense that you wanted to come to Ohio State?

A. Well, I didn’t know what I was looking for at the end of that summer was a job. Just a few days before Labor Day, there was an opening in Southern Illinois and I was able to get a job teaching there, Centralia, Illinois.

Q. Then came the war.

A. Then came the war, and it was a period when you signed up for a year of national service. And you would serve a year and get out. And my number was coming up in July, but I said to the local board, “Why don’t you take me in June, so that I can be ready to start a full summer the next year?” They said “We’d be pleased to take
you.” And so I entered the Army in June of 1941. And then, of course, after basic training in Wyoming, I was home on my first weekend pass, December 7, 1941. Then, of course, I was in the Army for a little over five years.

Q. December 7 being Pearl Harbor?
A. Yea, right.

Q. So you had a five-year period in the Army before you were faced with colleges and universities again?
A. Yes. And then I faced a decision of whether I wanted to go back to Ohio State because it had been such an exciting summer my first summer in graduate work or going to the University of Chicago which was very “large” at that time. Ralph Pyler and others were there. And then, of course, Teachers College. The University of Michigan was very prominent at that time. And so, I was trying to decide which among these schools would be the one that I would want to enter for graduate work. And as I looked at all the factors I could find, I chose Ohio State. And of course under the, not Bill of Rights, but under the GI Bill. Well, it was my Bill of Rights. I got an assistantship in the College and was able to make it through. At that time, housing was terrible. Around University School were old barracks left over from World War I, and some of our graduate classes were in these old buildings that didn’t have heat or much of anything. You wore your coats. But, it was a wonderful three years.

Q. Who were your immediate professors when you came to work at graduate school?
A. Well, Harold Alberty was because I was interested in curriculum, but I was interested in “foundations” which is a term they used for what you would now call
“cultural studies.” It was a combination of philosophy, history, psychology, sociology, and Alberty was very good at that. He had studied, of course, with Bode. Bode had retired at that time but fortunately he came back one summer and I was able to take one of his courses which was a remarkable thing. And then, I faced the decision of what to major in once I was admitted to graduate school. You had to choose at that time whether you were going into administration which I didn’t want or higher education or elementary or secondary. And I took the position that I wanted both elementary and secondary. And they said “Well you can’t do that. You have to choose between them.” And so I talked to Alberty and he said “Well, there’s a lot of commonality in the foundations and theory underlying these fields. I think it’s a good thing to do. Talk to the elementary person.” This was Laura Zirbes. And I went and saw her and she said “Well I think that would be a good thing to do.” So she got hold of Alberty and they decided that I could do both elementary and secondary. So I ended up with K-12 specialization in the field of curriculum, largely at that point also foundations of curriculum, philosophy and theory.

Q. Let’s identify here some people on the tape. You just spoke of Laura Zirbes.

A. Yes.

Q. You also spoke of Harold Alberty. Gordon Hullfish?

A. That’s right. Hullfish was a student of Bode when Bode was at the University of Illinois. Bode was in the Philosophy Department at Illinois. So it was rather unusual to have a professional philosopher join a college of education faculty, but he came over to Ohio State and Hullfish came with him as an assistant. So
Hullfish got his degree with Bode and carried on with Bode’s thinking. And Laura Zirbes was also the person that they brought. She had done her work at Teachers College and she came to head up the Department of Elementary Education and was the main figure in elementary education at the time. And Alberty had also come. His work had been in the field of law. He was a lawyer, but he became interested and he had an administrative job up in northern Ohio in one of those schools. But he became interested then in education, and he came to Ohio State and did his doctoral work with Bode. So both Hullfish and Alberty were Bode students.

Q. Could you identify who was the dean at the time that you started graduate school?

A. Dean Klein. I believe he had a military background. At least, he carried himself and performed administrative duties as if he were a brigadier general. A good man but not necessarily from an education background, I believe.

Q. During your period at Ohio State, you enrolled directly in the Ph.D. program. How did that come about?

A. Well, it’s not completely accurate to say that I enrolled in the Ph.D. program. Let’s put it this way. A master’s program and the Ph.D. program merged in that period and Alberty tested me out in writing, and he thought I wrote well enough and was ready to take on a research project. And since I was working with a heavy load the clock round, I had taken all the course work that we thought necessary to get ready for the Ph.D. exam. So we went ahead with that.

Q. Were there others that you know of common in that period to skip the master’s?
A. To tell the truth, I never checked on that. I’m not sure how many there were. Not many, I think.

Q. Had you completed your Ph.D. by the end of the 40’s?

A. I completed it in June of 1948 and got married the next week and then took a job at Syracuse University, which promised to be very exciting because in the American Council on Education, study of teacher education, it had one of the most interesting programs. Among other things, instead of all the small courses in education that were required, they put stuff together in an interdisciplinary way around larger blocks of time. And the other thing that was interesting is that they had a dual professorship. You had tenure and rank, not just in the School of Education, but also, in one of the regular disciplines. And so, I had a dual professorship in education and in the English Department, which was a fine idea bringing in the disciplines in the liberal arts content into education courses.

Q. How long were you at Syracuse?

A. I was at Syracuse two years.

Q. And then you decided to come back to Ohio State again?

A. No, I decided instead of that, that if I were going to pursue a career in education, particularly the field of curriculum, I ought to have some “hands on” experience in a position that actually made me responsible for curriculum. And I’m glad I made that choice because otherwise I would have been theorizing and talking about a field without really having had direct hands on experience. Well, the other thing is I had a very low salary, and the dean at Syracuse said, “Klohr, you’re doing a fine job but I don’t like to move people too fast too soon. I’m not
recommending you for an increase in salary.” I was hardly making enough to pay for an apartment and I had no car and it wasn’t an easy situation. I thought “I don’t want to pursue my work here with you, Mr. Dean.” But, Syracuse was a remarkable experience. I learned an awful lot about teaching there.

Q. So when you came back to Ohio State, you came back to a faculty position?

A. No, I came back to Columbus, Ohio, because the job market in those days was at the big school administrator meetings at Atlantic City. That was, what do you call it where jobs were, the “job market,” and I met there Novice Fawcett, who had just, I think, recently been made superintendent of schools in Columbus. And he had a very small central staff because of the depression and the war. And the school system growing. And he said “Would you like a job as assistant superintendent in charge of curriculum in Columbus Schools?” And I said “That’s just what I’m looking for,” because I thought it would give me a chance to work in the schools and also to relate to Ohio State because I knew the people there. And so, I came to Columbus then in 1950. I didn’t want a line assignment. He said “Assistant Superintendent.” I said “Let’s make that some other title. I don’t want to be responsible for salary and promotion and all the line functions. I want a staff function.” So my title was “Coordinator of Curriculum and In-Service Education,” which permitted me to work with school people without being responsible for their jobs and moving them around. And so I worked two years, 1950 to 1952 in the Columbus Schools as Coordinator of Curriculum and In-Service Education.

Q. And then you came back to Ohio State?
A. Yes, very unexpectedly. John Ramseyer who was the Director of University School at that time, was asked to head up the School Community Center, which was the first large Kellogg grant, that the College of Education had received. And so they were looking for, well no, they weren’t looking for a Director of University School because a job was not advertised. The University School’s faculty chose it’s own director. This was a very unusual situation, and John Ramseyer wrote an article on that, “Our School Chooses It’s Director.” Although these people were tenured people with rank, academic rank, they were separate from the rest of the College in that they chose their own directors. They had chosen Ramseyer in the years when he took over that job. And so the faculty chose me as director of the school and I accepted with rank of full professor and tenure at the school, which I was in charge of for five years, ’52 to ’57.

Q. Who was your sponsor on the faculty at the College of Education? The person that was helping to steer you to this rather dramatic career that you were developing?

A. I’m not sure. I think it was, it may well have been, Alberty and Zirbes, my two main sponsors for the doctorate degree. And also, Ross Mooney, who was in the Bureau of Educational Research and Service, and a good friend and a very remarkable man, who used the University School and also had quite a bit of influence in the school. And if the faculty council of the University School had asked these individuals who might be a candidate for the directorship of the school, I suspect these were the three people who probably knew me best.
Q. When you served as Director of University School, you did so under a new dean who had not been here when you had left. The new dean was Donald Cottrell.

A. That’s right. I’m not sure. He hadn’t been here very long because there was an interim I believe between Dean Klein and Dean Cottrell. And I think Ross Mooney, as he did several times when Cottrell left for some international thing, Ross Mooney would take over. People thought of him as an honest, straight forward person to be in charge of things. So I think, Mooney may have been an interim there for a year. But Cottrell hadn’t been long in the job as dean.

Q. What kind of a man was Cottrell?

A. Well, Cottrell, for me, was the very epitome of a dean. He was cultured, very well read, an excellent student himself, and a man who could very well administer and delegate things at the dean’s level. I think a very marvel of a Dean of the College of Education.

Q. You worked with him as Director of University School. What kind of relation did you have with him in your professional position?

A. Well, the Director of the University School, as well as the other departmental heads in the college, were on the dean’s executive committee. And so we met once a week as kind of his “working group” of administrators. A psychology professor, director of the School of Music, School of Art, and Physical Education. In other words, the executive head of these different departments.

Q. Well we’re painting a picture of Dean Cottrell as being a man that you liked and respected, but later in your career you had a substantial disagreement. What contributed to your decision to put your career at stake some years later by
confronting the dean and in fact your former boss at the Columbus Public Schools, Novice Fawcett, over the issue of closing the University School?

A. Well that’s an interesting question because I think the closing of the school, despite the excellent book that was written by Robert Butche on that, tended both college wide, university wide and locally, the College of Education had never had good local press in the long years that I knew. In those three areas, the general idea was that the parents were just upset because a good school was closing and their kids could no longer go there. And that was certainly true as a push that the parents made. That was the general perception, but the thing that caused me finally to enter it was the lack of due process for a group of tenured faculty members who were completely bypassed on the issue, violating every rule and procedure the AAUP, The American Association of University Professors, to which I belonged, not in any sense a union, but the only thing that college and university professors had to protect what I call “due process.” And, I finally decided that this was just a complete bypass of any logical due process, both for the faculty of the school and for the college faculty. No one had any direct say in this decision and as it was made, it simply went around anything that would be thought of as democratic due process, which violated the very essence of academic freedom.

Q. Would it be correct to say then that you made a conscious decision to take this risk to your career?

A. Well yes, it was a conscious decision, of course. But in some ways, they couldn’t fire me. Nobody could fire me unless they again bypassed due process.
Q. Were there others who shared your beliefs and joined in the struggle?

A. Oh of course, there were some, but by and large, the situation was that faculty were ill informed. People simply didn’t realize what was going on, I think. And the dean, whom I indicated that I admired and respected very much, was caught in a terrible trap. The poor man was immobilized for so many reasons, in large measure because the president didn’t like him, had never liked him, felt that he was snobbish and an “intellectual.” And then, of course, the personal thing that he didn’t bend down and give the president Fawcett go ahead with his doctoral degree without residency requirements. Well, Cottrell was absolutely right on that. In the University setting, you have to understand, a College of Education had never had the high level respect of engineering, medicine and even the arts. Many Colleges of Education throughout the country did then, and still do, give their own doctoral degrees within the college. They even give some Ph.D. degrees, but more often doctorate of education degrees. And there was always a thought that maybe College of Education at Ohio State should do that. But Cottrell and the faculty always said “no,” we want it to be a graduate school degree with people from other disciplines sitting in on the exams, on the final defense of the research, to make it an honest University degree. Teachers College and other major colleges throughout the country did it “on their own.” And I always respected Ohio State College of Education for making it a University degree. A professor of mathematics or foreign language or whatever sitting in on the doctoral exams and the defense of the dissertations. Well, so Fawcett was caught up in that. Plus, the fact that is the empire which had gone back as far as Dean Arps, was
disappearing and a restructuring of the University, the School of Art and the School of Music were to go to different units in the humanities and the Psychology Department which is the biggest psychology department in the country. People often said that there were more professors of Psychology got their degree at Ohio State than any other institution. So that was leaving, you see, Cottrell caught up in a disintegration of his college, plus the fact that he had become very interested in international education and setting up industrial universities in India. Like Harold Alberty, he was involved with Conant in the redoing of education in Germany after the war. And if I remember right, he was involved even in the east, not Japan and not Taiwan, but Korea, I think. Plus, he was looking towards retirement. He was an excellent artist and his wife was an artist-craft person, and they wanted to do those kinds of things for the end of their lives.

Q. Could you remember the Fawcett-Cottrell doctoral event as a staff member? Was it known within the college?

A. Oh yes, it was known.

Q. It wasn’t solely between Fawcett and Cottrell, the college itself was involved?

A. Oh in the college, a major professor, said “absolutely not.” He doesn’t warrant that kind of bypassing of the rules that we spent so long trying to defend to make this really a good, high level degree. No really, he would have rebelled against Cottrell if he given in on that. So he was caught, you see, between these fires. His own ambitions, the dissolving of his college into ways that no one knew about, the antagonism of his president, who kept down his salary, and his own budget
whenever he could. Plus the fact that his Bureau of Educational Research had to be redone because these were phasing out all over the country. The movement in education had been you shouldn’t have a unit doing that, doing research.

Everybody, every department ought go be doing research. So at the time when Foshay left to go to Teachers College, who was the Director of the Bureau of Educational Research, Cottrell also faced the question of bringing in a new person to head up this transition of what a Bureau of Research ought to be, so that it matched a more contemporary view of the role of research in a College of Education. So those are some of the things that were impinging on this man’s tour of duty. And as I say, he was looking for a new Director of the Bureau and two, he had undertaken a reorganization of his own staff. You see, I left the University School after five years to become Assistant Dean in charge of instruction and curriculum in the college. And Mooney was brought in as Assistant Dean at that time to head up research, and Jack Corbally, a remarkable young man, was brought in to head up service. So the three of us surrounded Cottrell in this period. I was there, I suppose, approximately five years after my leaving the University School in the Dean’s staff. This reorganization of the Dean’s staff with the three of us working in the field. And that was a terribly busy time because the first major federal support for education was coming in following Sputnik, the first National Defense Education Act and much of my last time was spent on trying to help Mooney process the proposals for National Defense Education Research. I think we had 33 that went in under our jurisdiction
at that time. Very specific proposals. They weren’t general. This, this, this and this. It was so called “scientific,” how to do research in these fields.

Q. During that period, there were two former directors of University School in the college.

A. Yes and John Ramseyer, you see the reason I got the job, was chosen to get the job, is Ramseyer was leaving. He hated to leave, but we had a Kellogg grant on the school community study, and he was the man to head that up. He stood for democratic administration. He, too, you see, had the flavor of Bode and Hullfish in his blood and had left the school. That’s really why I got the job. I had it for five years, and I left it to go to the Dean’s office to head up this restructuring of his staff that I told you about with Corbally, Mooney and myself.

Q. Perhaps a decade after you left the Director’s position, the proposal arose to close the school and you became embroiled in a very long and bitter fight towards the end of that. Wasn’t John Ramseyer one of your collaborators in that effort?

A. He was towards the end, but the collaborator that I would mention is the man that came in to head up the school when I left, namely Alexander Frazier from Teachers College background. And he came in at a time that we thought was very good because, working as I did out of the Dean’s office, and with Frazier, we set up the concept of a “center” for school experimentation. We thought since the Bureau is phasing out, it would be good to put the University School at the very center of a project which involved directly, we had influence on schools throughout the country but not a whole lot of influence on the schools of Ohio. And being a land-grant institution we thought this would be the thing to do. So we
set up this arrangement where schools, some 33 school systems in Ohio, joined us in a network with the University School at the center, and we were going to provide services to them in the field of curriculum, administration and whatever they wanted by way of school reform. And so this looked like a very strong union to keep going, and we were able to work on it for about five years after Frazier came in as Director of the school. I worked very heavily with him in setting up the Center for School Experimentation.

Q. That must have been a very exciting project.

A. It was indeed. And we spent our time writing “working papers,” the school would say what they were concerned about and we would write working papers, go to the school and study the problem. It was what was then called action research, where you would go and study the situation, you would make some proposals and then meet with the faculty so those schools could bring about some kind of change in whatever field -- they went all over the place. So it looked like things were in good shape.

Q. We’re continuing this discussion by speaking about the school’s last director, Alexander Frazier. Am I spelling his name right?

A. Z.

Q. Frazier. You had worked with him in putting together the Center for School Experimentation. What kind of a man was this?

A. Well, Frazier was, again, a remarkable person. As I say, he got his doctorate at Teachers College and came from Phoenix, Arizona, where he had had an assistant superintendency. He had been out working in schools and had lived through some
tough times in Phoenix with the whole problem of integration and the other sorts of things that were going on in education at that time. But he was the most “literate” man I think of all of the … well Bob Gilchrist wrote several books too. He had came after Alberty. They were all literate, but he was literate in a literary way. He liked to write poetry and narratives and had a way of expressing himself. When he retired finally and went back to Phoenix to live, he had a radio show in which he read poetry and literature and some of his own work. And so he was that kind of an eloquent speaker, with national leadership as president of ASCD, The American Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, a major curriculum organization. He was president of that in 1970. I worked with him to have a big conference in San Francisco. And he wrote a number of books and was constantly having periodical articles. But he knew how to talk to school people. That is when he would go out into a school and he could listen and translate the problems that people spoke about in some of a way where they could be tested out, and he could try to make changes in what was going on. The very best of a person to head up a Center for School Experimentation, I would say.

Q. One of the people that you worked with for many years was the other director on staff and that was John Ramseyer, and as we know now some years after the school had been closed, the former University school building was renamed in honor of John Ramseyer. What do you think he might have done in his career that would have warranted the University bestowing that honor upon him?

A. Well, I would say that of all of the people I have known in the field of education, particularly in the field of educational administration and leadership, Ramseyer
would rank very near the top. He didn’t write much. His main work was working directly with people and his guiding principle was one of democracy. He could sit in any situation and bring about some kind of closure between people who had greatly divergent views, the most unbelievable patience of anyone I ever knew in terms of letting people talk and meet and come together and arrive at some kind of a solution, which is to me the epitome of good administration. So, I would rank him about as high as anybody I’ve ever known in the field of educational administration and leadership. And of course, his handling of his years of the University School was a demonstration of that, day after day, year after year.

Q. What do you remember about John Ramseyer’s past?

A. Well, he was, I think of him as basically a country boy in a certain sense.

Q. I’m asking you about his death. Since he died while he was still active at the University. What do you remember of that event?

A. I thought you were talking about his early background. He stood at the sidelines some people might say, between the University School and the College, but he worked on the side with people in trying to formulate some kind of middle ground that would help the school continue in some way or another. He certainly was fully in support of the Center for School Experimentation. Another factor we mentioned here as if there weren’t already enough, one of the factors that precipitated the dispute right at the time was that there came up in the state committee that allocated money for buildings, the University School came up. It had been on the list for years and they just finally worked their way up to the top and so there was even a University architect plan for a huge new University
school building out along the Olentangy River along Lane Avenue. That built yet
even another fire under the problem that came to light with the closing of
University School and its relationship to the Center for School Experimentation.

Q. Do you think if John Ramseyer would have lived it would have made any
difference in the outcome of that?

A. Oh, indeed it would have because when things completely fell apart and people
began to see how David Clark, who was brought in as an Associate Dean and
Egon Guba, who had come up with what was left of the Bureau of Educational
Research. When they bypassed the whole problem by setting up a phony
committee to study the problem without people most knowledgeable about the
problem on the committee, Ramseyer, myself, Frazier, even the old timers you see
were left off. So they “faked” the committee. When that happened and things
really fell apart, Ramseyer was the man who stepped in, and I had left the scene. I
had had quite enough. I went on leave, well I wasn’t on leave, I retired. I
resigned. It was a dumb thing to do but I did it anyway, to be a visiting professor
at the University of California, Davis. That was the year that Ramseyer tried to
pull things together by having a conference of interested people focusing in on the
problems of the college and the relationship to the University School problem.
And I think, had he lived, he was skillful enough as a leader to have bypassed the
plot that Guba and Clark had taken and brought the complete college together
around some kind of a viable solution to these problems. But he, unfortunately,
didn’t, you see.
Q. We’ll let the record show that during the most difficult part of this battle that you were fighting in this last year, John Ramseyer had two heart attacks, was hospitalized for each, and died as a result of the second heart attack in August of the year that the decision to close had been made. Let’s move on to other subjects.

A. One final thing. But he was the guy who got hold of me in California and invited me to come back to Ohio State.

Q. Good. Let’s move on. You mentioned David Clark and Egon Guba. What kind of people were these?

A. Well these were both bright young men. As bright as anybody you could find and good in their fields. Their model was Robert McNamara. I don’t know whether people in this generation know about Robert McNamara, but he was the brains back of the Kennedy administration at that time and his thesis was “no square pegs in round holes.” So, in terms of personality, that means that you whittle off the square corners and make them fit. A kind of a notion that that was “personnel management” at that time. So he came in, and he was going to straighten out the whole thing. He saw what the problems were, and Guba was with him and he had his mind on becoming dean because Cottrell was leaving and he would make Guba his Associate Dean in charge of whatever was left of any unit called research, whether or not it was the Center. The Center for School Administration appealed to them, if you could just get rid of the University School because you would then have that budget, you see, to run the Center on. And it already had its ties in with the schools and that was a lot of basic leg work done to really
invigorate the notion of research in the college. So they thought things were pretty
clean cut if they could just get rid of some of this baggage like the school.

Q. Your painting them as being good and bright people who simply had a different
set of priorities.

A. Yes, I guess that would be the way to put it.

Q. And did you feel that way at the time or did you think they were …

A. I thought David Clark, he was an interesting person … well, Guba was too. They
just didn’t know how to use their brightness, I think, up against a person with the
philosophy, say like Ramseyer, who was the very epitome of democracy. Or Dean
Cottrell who was a humanitarian, scholarly, intellectual. And these two men were
products of a certain view of administration at that time at the federal level. If you
plow through and anybody who gets in the way, it’s too bad for him. “No square
pegs in round holes” was their formula.

Q. We know from the series of articles in the Ohio State Journal and the Columbus
Citizen in 1964, of your confrontation of the University and the College over the
closing of University School before the Ohio House Finance Committee. You had
worked for President Fawcett in two different organizations, the Columbus Public
Schools and the Ohio State University and you later would come to have a major
conflict with him. What kind of a man was Fawcett and what was your
relationship with him?

A. Well, Fawcett was an easy man to work with in some ways because he gave you,
it seemed he gave you room to make mistakes. He wasn’t an intellectual in any
sense. As a matter of fact, he wasn’t well read, and he rather looked down on
intellectual life and professors. He thought they were above other people. This kind of general view which cut him off for being the kind of leader he could otherwise be. I think, if I try to think of the most politicized people that I have ever worked with, I would put Fawcett very high on the list. Despite his charm and meeting him and general surface, he was highly politicized. He always had strings being pulled with political forces when he was superintendent of schools. He was selected for that job without any consultation with anyone. A small group of powerful business people met and picked him. And the same group met and picked him for President of the University. There wasn’t any nationwide search made as far as I can ever find out for the way you typically would in a major university. He came in, you see, by powerful political forces. And this didn’t bother him. He some way thought this was the way things occur. And I found those kinds of things very problematic.

Q. When you were working with Dr. Fawcett, giving him his honorary title now, while at the Columbus Public Schools, were you aware of any enmity he had towards the University School or its College of Education?

A. Oh yes, of course. Because he had kept trying you see, even then to get his graduate work done, and he felt they were against him some way or another. And then he looked down on them and he thought the University School was a school for the children of University professors, you see. And kids who couldn’t make it in the regular school. It’s kind of almost a special school thing. And he never tried to use it in anyway, although it was one of the outstanding schools in this major nationwide study. And he didn’t promote that kind of thing. And then he
had lived through these things, the student uprising and the free speech movement at Berkeley, which all of that kind of stuff, with the students “acting up” on University campuses. In one sense, he was very suspect of the University and especially suspect of the College of Education because he knew some of these people and how liberal they were. And you have to take into account what was happening in the nation at that time. The communist under every bed kind of thing, Kent State shootings and it was a time of real stress. And, he was even more fully controlled by people who didn’t want anything to “get out of hand.” They made up a board of trustees and other powerful business interests in Columbus including the press. So he was, in a sense, victimized by those things I think. If he lived in another time and in another situation, he could have made it.

Q. How was he regarded among faculty in terms of his effectiveness as President of the University?

A. Well they didn’t respect him. I’m generalizing. The ones I knew did not respect him. He made no statements that revealed that he had any sense of where the University ought to be going or what it ought to be doing. He always reacted to something, but he was never proactive in any way that I was ever aware of.

Q. Researchers listening to this or reading this transcript should be reminded that comments on these subjects have also been recorded in the oral history archives by Dean Cottrell and President Fawcett. And in both of their recordings, they refer to you in negative ways, in fact excoriate you for your behavior in defending the University School. As you look back now upon that period, do you think their criticisms of you have any merit?
A. Oh I understand why they made them. I can see how from their perspective they would have felt the way they did. I understand that fully, but I know I would have done basically the same thing that I did then, except that I would have done it much sooner and in a much better organized way. I kept thinking something will happen that will change the situation and then when I appeared finally before the state legislature, I realized it was the last straw in a certain sense. That nothing was going to change.

Q. What do you remember of the day that you met with John Bricker, former U.S. Senator and Governor of Ohio as a representative of the trustees in the final argument to save University School. What are your recollections of that day? How were you treated?

A. Well, to be quite honest, I pretty well over the years had blotted that out of my memory. I got what you call a Freudian blocking. I don’t remember too much of it, but I think a book was written about University School. This brought back more details of my memory than had been there in the intervening years.

Q. Was it a bad day? Did you feel defeated even before started that thing?

A. Oh yes. I felt it would have been nothing short of a miracle to have made any change in things because Bricker was clearly in charge of not only that day, but of the whole board. He was in control of the board, there’s no question about it.

Q. And what was it that Senator Bricker said to you before that hearing began that day? If you recall?

A. I don’t recall except as I read it in the your book.
Q. You mentioned earlier a very fine young man by the name of John Corbally in the college, who during your tenure at Ohio State and went on to become a close confident of President Fawcett and to work in several positions in the Fawcett administration. What do you think of John Corbally now as you look back on that period?

A. Corbally was the most interesting and one of the finest people and one of the brightest people that I think I ever worked with. He was just a delight to be around. He could cut through things and he was always right on target all the time, and I was not surprised when he went on in his career to become chancellor at Syracuse, President of the University of Illinois, and finally head of the McArthur Foundation. If I would have predicted it of anybody I ever knew who could rise to those heights, it would be Corbally. And a good sense of humor throughout it all.

Q. During your tenure at the University, you worked in the field of curriculum with Harold Alberty, Gordon Hullfish. What did your work accomplish? What did you do in curriculum over your career?

A. Well, when I came back after the University School, I worked with Jack Frymier in setting up a whole new sequence …

Q. Jack Frymier?

A. Frymier, who had come in, but I had taught curriculum as did John Ramseyer during his role as Director of the University School. There was a course called Education 704, a Laboratory Study of University School and the director of the school was responsible for that. It was taught every quarter including summer
quarter and with huge enrollment. Sometimes there would 100, 150 people
because every incoming graduate student at the master’s level or whatever level
he or she came in, usually took laboratory study of the University School. They
came over and observed in the school and wrote papers about what they were
seeing and hearing and then they met one night a week for graduate credit, where
we discussed and reported on what was going on. And the director of the school
was responsible for that course, which was a heavy teaching load in some ways,
even though it was just one course. But throughout the quarter, we had panels of
University School faculty talking about their part of the program. So this was
basically a curriculum course, trying to describe what the school was about. And
as far as the people who were doing graduate work in the college, the other part of
the teaching course was hundreds of thousands of observers who came in. And
the direction very often had to meet them in the morning when you were in the
school. And then, they would observe during the day and then you would meet
them after school. So there was a heavy teaching load there of describing what
was going on and answering questions about why it was such an unusual thing or
why we’re doing so poorly with these things. So you constantly were functioning
as a curriculum person. And then, after the school closed, we had a new course,
which I taught for a number of years, called Fundamentals of Curriculum. This
was basically the area that I was then most interested in, namely philosophy,
history, sociology, the social foundations of curriculum on which a program ought
to be designed at the elementary and secondary school level. And then after the
second course ,I taught in this new sequence of courses, was a curriculum theory
course. Curriculum up until about those years had been, you got together and you put together materials and books that kids were going to use at different grade levels. A very shaky kind of operation, and I think it was about at the time I started teaching that course that the whole basic question of curriculum theory came into the picture. Prior to that time, it was “what seemed to have worked” kind of thing in the selection of materials and getting what seemed to work into publishers, so books could be published. And so the whole thing was undergoing a basic shift towards theory development, which for me grew out of my interest in foundations, Bode and Hullfish and Alberty, of the philosophical and sociological cultural foundations that undergird thinking about curriculum. So that’s basically where I worked and my students in turn, of whom I had many over the years, tended to work in those areas, although they had wide variety in the particular research that they did.

Q. Were all of your students graduates?

A. Yes. The basic foundations course was open to masters and doctoral people and had some masters people, but after that the curriculum theory courses tended to be doctoral students.

Q. And what kind of course load would you have had?

A. Well, I had a very heavy course load and that was my own doing because I was unwilling to keep cutting it off and we never had the budget to keep hiring new people, so students would come in a class of 15 or 20 and they’d say “Could I come in?” And I would say “Fine.” And then another one would come in. Well, by the time you had five or six, you might as well have had ten. So I tended to
have very large classes. Except in the third level class and if there would be 30 people I would deliberately cut it into two sections and teach both of them as an overload, so that I had 15 people in a class instead of 30.

Q. Did your teaching load make it impossible for you do to writing or were you able to?

A. Well, I use that as an excuse for not writing more. But during all this time, I was very active in the National ASCD. I gave, I thought sometimes, almost as much time to it as I did to my on campus work. So I had a very heavy load. There were commissions set up where I had to go back and forth to Washington three or four times a year to meet at these. And then the big conference once a year. So I was very heavily involved. And I had a column going, “curriculum comments,” in the Educational Leadership. And I wrote a number of study papers. In-house papers for CAPCI. So I was giving a good amount of professional time to the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, while my doctoral load was increasing back on the campus.

Q. What did you think of the quality or caliber of the graduate students in the College of Education?

A. We had some excellent graduate students, at least in the area that I taught.

Q. And who were some of the outstanding ones?

A. Well, there were dozens and dozens of course. And then what I often did, which increased the professional load, is that I would be members of somebody else’s committee, which took sometimes almost as much time as they were your own. That is, if somebody went through and got an English degree with Don Bateman,
I would sit in as a second person in curriculum in all of those subject fields and in elementary, I would be a committee member. And you had those committee meetings you see, whenever the student moved through the program. So towards the end I had a heavy load. On the worse of days in June, as people are finishing up, I sometimes had four doctoral exams in a day, one from 8:00-10:00, 10:00-12:00, 1:00-3:00, and 3:00-5:00. And that proved to be a heavy day’s work.

Q. I would think it would be, yes. As you look back at your students in your area of specialty, that is those who were interested in pursuing a career in curricular studies or in curriculum development, where have they gone? How have they fared? Who are they?

A. Well, they became by and large college professors. There’s relatively few that went back to the field because most of the people who carry on curriculum work in the field are really people who went through in school administration. And most people mostly work at the masters level in a public school situation. Once in a while, in a very large city, there would be a doctoral person pursuing curriculum as such. Well, my students went all over, University of Utah, South Carolina, Louisiana State, I mean it just goes on and on.

Q. What’s the names of these places and what are these people doing?

A. Well, I suppose in terms of public notoriety and contributions to the field as a whole, I would have to put William Pinar, who is at Louisiana State, and he has written widely. I think he now has five or six books in the field. And he started a curriculum theory movement in 1973 at the University of Rochester, which eventuated in the publication of a journal, Curriculum Theory Journal, and annual
conference in Ohio called the Bergamo Conference. And now is involved in international handbook on curriculum theory. That’s Pinar.

Q. What do you remember of Pinar as a student?
A. Well, Pinar was a student who came in when there were student rebellions. He sometimes wore white canvas overalls and had long hair.

Q. Was he intellectually challenging?
A. He was intellectually challenging. If you talked to him, you were challenged on everything. But he turned out to be a real scholar, as is Robert Bullough at the University of Utah. He’s now a distinguished professor in charge of a research center for teacher education at Utah. And then there’s Craig Kridel at South Carolina, who is one of the foremost figures now in biographical and historical research, and is the head of a historical center at University of South Carolina. Janet Miller, now at Teachers College with part of the job that Maxine Greene left, when she retired -- Womens Studies and curriculum theory, and biography. She and Kridel are getting together at AERA and having seminars on biographical historical research. Leigh Chiarlott at Bowling Green, a fine, fine professor there. Bill Butterfield at University of Tennessee. And foreign students all over the place, in Romania, Iran, Egypt, Thailand, Libya, South Korea. Those are some of the ones, it just goes on and on as I dig back further into memories of people.

Q. One of your former students is a dean.
A. Oh, Paul Shaker, yes. Paul Shaker is at California State at Fresno and is very active in the national scene now. I think will, in the next few years, turn out to be a real leader in that field.
Q. When you have spent your life as an academic teacher and you look back on the production of students, what does it tell you about how you spent your life and how much you have enjoyed it?

A. Well, I wouldn’t have spent it any other way. It has been a terrific life really, to see these people come in and move out in different directions, way beyond anything I could visualize for them. It’s the way John Ramseyer tended to think of students, but you don’t know where they’re going, but you need to give them “room to go.” And these people all their dissertations, completely different kinds of dissertations, all of them moving right at the forefront of theory building and research in a way that I wouldn’t have imagined even ten years before they were doing what they are doing.

Q. As we are recording this in the summer of 2001, schools are in trouble. They don’t seem to be doing well. There’s quite a good deal of unrest. The College of Education at this University has changed dramatically just since you retired. How do you think the field has changed, for the better or for the worse, and how do you think the College has changed?

A. Well, the field has changed dramatically. I don’t know how to express it any other way. The whole field of theory has moved into a post-modern era. And the kinds of things we talked about here in this interview, foundations of education, philosophy of education, those kinds of terms aren’t even used anymore. People don’t take course in philosophy of education at hardly any major college. There’s whole new terms, technical terms coming into the picture. For example, major colleges of education now have most of these studies that I worked with under the
general rubric of “cultural studies.” Anthropology, philosophy, psychology, what
history there is, into a cultural study. And these studies are very fragmented.
There’s women's studies, gender studies, ethnic studies, and doctoral students
come in and they might move through a whole three, four five year period and
work in some one of these fragmented studies, without very much interplay with
other of these studies, which are under the general umbrella of cultural studies.
So if you then try to work out how do these highly fragmented fields at an
advanced theory level impinge on the development of curriculum reform at a local
school level, it’s a very far reach. And it used to be that in national organizations
like ASCD, which was a prominent one at the time, got together, university and
college people and practitioners. That no longer is the case. It’s completely now
ASCD, as practitioners meetings, professors are meeting at AERA, American
Educational Research Association, and others. Very low interplay between them.
And as a consequence, decisions are made politically about education and with no
recognized theoretical base in many instances. Because there are very few
agencies where these two often different worlds come together. And of course
locally, education is highly politicized and at a federal level continues to be. And
if you are a person in a leadership position in a big school system, you have all of
these diverse forces coming at you with very little commonality among them. Is
that a response to that question?

Q. It is but let me ask you further, is our College of Education today measuring up as
well as it did in prior decades?
A. That’s a very difficult question and I don’t know how one could answer it. The set up, you see, University School at Ohio State was unique, in that it wasn’t a student teaching center. People didn’t come and do student teaching there. And most of the other schools throughout the country were student teaching centers, where the faculty were not tenured people, did not have rank. So University School was very separate there. So now, there are very few situations where even that narrow role of the old lab schools is being fulfilled. There is theoretically a proposal that professional development centers, where a public school would meet with a college of education and there would be interns from the public school there and working with college people, but those would be the situations that would try to give ideas for reform in the local school district. But in general, these professional development centers, however interesting in theory, haven’t worked out. There are very few of them that you can point to where there’s anything going on really. And so education locally is controlled by big publishing houses, political interests.

Q. Dr. Klohr, we continue now with an examination of your years as Director of the University School, beginning in 1951, a period when the country was at peace, World War II was over, and everything looked easy. Was it?

A. Well, it was a period when the University hadn’t quite gone into yet the student uprising, the free speech movement in California and Columbia and other places. That was about 1964, the Kent State and of course the University had gone through sometime along in there the speakers rule, which was an unbelievable thing for a major university to not be able to have a speaker on campus unless the
president had approved it, which really upset the College of Education and Dean Cottrell in a very difficult way. But the school during those years had literally hundreds of thousands of visitors to observe, not much from Columbus, but from all over the country and from foreign countries. The U.S. Office of Education had a group of people from Germany. They had put them on a bus or a train and sent them out from France or from England or from wherever. So we had a number of international observers in, and it was the function of the school to meet with these people and try to describe what was going on and why we were doing it. Among the schools, it was one of the schools that had the advantage in the Eight Year Study or the “thirty schools study,” which was a major study in the country and still remains so, it was the one that started from scratch. The study began in ’32 and that’s when the school began in ’32, so in most of the other schools which were in the study, some as private progressive schools like the Dalton Schools in New York City, had been going for a long time, but University School was starting to put its plan together without any prior history. So it was available to do what seemed at the time to be “the best thing to do.” And it turned out in the final analysis of the schools in the study of which a number of books were written, was a major professional literature of that period. It turned out to be the most radical school among the 30 schools, which made it a very interesting place to work. And of course throughout its history, it turned out people who went on to achieve national importance in the education field. The list is long but the ones that occur to me are people like Paul Dietrich who taught language, who went to the Educational Testing Service in America, people like Bill Van Til who taught in
the school and later went to NYU and later distinguished professor at Indiana State University. Harold Fawcett, with his nature proof classes became a leader in the College of Education and headed a National Mathematics Association and his student, Smith, Eugene Smith, who did the same thing at Wayne State University and leadership in the National Math Association. Another famous name was Robert Havighurst, who taught at the school, and later went to the University of Chicago and was famous for sociological cultural writings and developed the concept of “developmental tasks” that became theoretically significant. And then, of course, a significant man who was on campus didn’t teach at the school, but used the school, was Ralph Tyler, who developed the Tyler Rationale. He was in charge of evaluation of the eight year study and that was centered at Ohio State before it moved to the University of Chicago. So most of his work was done in connection with the University School as a comparison school in the famous book that he wrote among others, Did They Succeed in College? which was the final report of the eight year study. Well you could go on. Gilchrist himself who was director of the school before Ramseyer, wrote widely in the field of education, became Assistant Superintendent in Pasadena and then in Minnesota at Minneapolis school system. Well, Lou Labrant in the field of education, English education. And of course I think of Ed Allen in language, who wrote widely and became a leader in language. The list goes no and on. Well, Ramseyer, himself, became the epitome of theory of democratic leadership in school superintendency and school administration in the Kellogg Foundation. So those are some of the people that were either in the staff of the school or used
Wells Foshay, of course, used the school, Mooney used the school, George Thompson, Psychology, used the school in their writings and as a kind of a laboratory for this is what these kids are like. And some of their own children were in the schools always.

Q. Did you feel when you came on board as Director, that the mission of the school was already well defined or was it undergoing redefinition at that time?

A. Well, the original bedrock philosophical, theoretical positions of the school did not change, but as everything else in a social science, it was revised from time to time. The school staff with the help of people like Alberty and Zirbes and to the extent that he was willing, Bode, constantly redefined the general statement of purpose and philosophy of the school. But there were no really fundamental changes of the major idea of a “democratic community” setting with students, faculty working together to define what they were up to and enough freedom to achieve it.

Q. Do you think the school was successful in reaching its goal and achieving its mission?

A. Well it seemed so to me. And the study that Tyler did, the major study, Did They Succeed in College, when they demonstrated, it was the most radical school among the 30’s and the students somewhat better than any of them who were set out to have a straight college three units of English, two of History, three of Math, or whatever. That students could have widely varying programs and still have great success in college. And the students of course at University School went to all kinds of colleges. The Dean’s own son went to Oberlin and then when his
father took a foreign trip, he felt he needed to stay home to be head of the house, so he finished up at Ohio State. And he became a distinguished professor at the University of Michigan at an early age. And that was true of student after student who had no trouble at all getting into major universities.

Q. Did your term as Director of University School have any impact on your career?

A. Well of course it did. I mean whenever I needed to try to work with some abstract idea, I found I could think of a student or a faculty member who was a “living demonstration” in my mind of a person who had coped with that particular idea or that particular theory. So I always had plenty of examples, anecdotes of stories of how people responded to this, that or some other effort to improve or to change the program of education. And then my own feeling of having seen people of all widely varying talents move through the school and succeed was in itself a pretty important bit of evidence that I worked with throughout my career.

Q. We’ve spoken at great lengths about the contribution of the school to the college and to the field of education. What is your appraisal now some 34 years after the school had closed about the quality of education that had been part of the students?

A. Of the students who were enrolled in the school?

Q. Yes.

A. Well, I moved around in the various aspects of the program and felt that it did a very effective job. I don’t know how they could have done better. If we were operating now, we would, of course, have high tech computers and those things we didn’t have. We had one of the first language laboratories in the state and
very few in the country where students made their own tapes and listened to them and corrected them. And we had very few situations were throughout the K through 12, the field of art played an important role. When art was not very widely and I mean art broadly conceived then, music particularly and visual arts, those were very minimal areas, particularly in secondary schools. But even in elementary schools. And throughout the University School experience, there was a mainstream of the arts, no matter what the subject being studied was. It played a part in the schools. That was a rather major contribution. I thought had schools picked up on it, it would have made a change in schooling, in public schooling. Boards of education didn’t want to hire art related people in programs. If any program would be cut, it would be music, art and dance and drama were hardly a part of any school unless it were a very special school.

Q. In speaking about the closing of school, Dean Cottrell is quoted as having said “One of the things the school did best was education. If it had a fault, it was that we comparted in education second to none.” Do you believe that he was overstating it?

A. No, from my point of view he wasn’t. The best test for me as a father, it’s the kind of school I wanted for my own daughter. And I was greatly saddened that she couldn’t enter the secondary level, but she got her major training at the elementary level and that was the best possible experience I could have provided for her. That for me is the test of a good education.
Q. I’d like to shift now and discuss the University as a whole. Let’s first establish your years of participation at this University began in 1940 and ended with your retirement in?

A. ’79.

Q. So it spanned nearly 40 years during the existence of this University. You’ve been retired long enough now to have an opportunity to look back and wonder if you spent your time wisely at Ohio State. Did you? What kind of an institution was this?

A. In the College of Education through most of my career until the University School upset, but even after, there was a real feeling of collegiality. That is, I could depend on people to support me, I supported them in working with students and in taking general positions and I doubt now in the year 2000, that there’s much sense of collegiality anymore. People now move ahead on their own to get promoted, to achieve importance, and you don’t have to care a whole lot about colleagues. “I don’t owe them anything, they don’t owe me anything.” I need to get ahead in my field. That isn’t the kind of collegial setting that I most enjoyed. We pulled for each other and I supported their students and they supported my students. I could then call on them to do anything, they could call on me. As I work with international students in an informal way now and have for the last ten years, I don’t sense that there is that feeling of collegiality. It’s “every man and woman for himself or herself and to hell with the others” is pretty much the way to get ahead. And if I can make some kind of dent, I can then move to even a better institution or I can get more money or I can get outside foundation grants. That
wasn’t the general feeling during the years that I remember about the College and the University. And I would say broader than the College. I had many good friends in the University that I could call on. They would be supportive in any way that they could, participate in any way. I don’t think that’s quite the way things work now in general. Because the fields have changed. They’ve become the high tech thing, they’ve become their own domain. And they work within that field and have absolutely everything in that field is there, but it’s compartmentalized out of relationship to some very related field right along the side. They move in parallel rather than any kind of a democratic community setting. That’s my observation.

Q. Any regrets over the time that you spent here or any thoughts that you should have stayed at Syracuse?

A. Oh no. I’ve been satisfied here. I think we have a fine library and Columbus is an easy city to live in. It’s big enough to have many aspects of a big city but it’s still, I live in an area which is almost a city within a city. That means I see the same people as I go to work, as I move out. It’s like living in a small community within a big city.

Q. When you were active professionally during your career, in professional organizations, was Ohio State respected?

A. The College of Education was one of the top four. Sometimes, there would be five, four, but I usually thought of four and during most of those years, Teachers College was there with Ohio State. And in much of the early days the University of Michigan and University of Chicago. Those were the four. Stanford and the
University of California never did very much in education. And Michigan State
wasn’t prominent at that time. The University of Michigan. And those four
tended to be the top four, I would say.

Q. How do you feel about how you were treated, both professionally and
economically, during your tenure at Ohio State?

A. Well, I started out at a fair enough salary, but then as I continued after the
Director of University Schools, and then on to the point of the closing of the
school, and I think in terms of just a very basic thing like salary, I was no longer
very well treated because there’s a clear picture that I was going to be here and I
wasn’t going to move. And there was no reason why I needed big salary
increases. So I was kept down pretty low. But then other people were too. A
man like Ross Mooney who had achieved national importance. Ross was never
going to leave Ohio State. And he made some additional money through his
educational testing and the Mooney Problems Checklist. So there were several
oldtimers like ourselves, and I never went into a Dean’s office an asked for an
increase in salary. I thought if I wasn’t clear that I deserved it, that I wasn’t going
to go in and ask why I didn’t get it. So there were several old-timers like
ourselves.

Q. Now we know the results of Dean Cottrell’s oral history, he also was held to a
salary?

A. Yes, Cottrell, it was very sad that his salary was kept way down. It was the hope
that he would leave or retire or something. And that was his own statement and
not my own.
Q. Do you regret that you didn’t earn more while you were at the University?
A. No, I made a go. I had a wife who was a professional person. And she wrote a couple of books and taught one class each year. She could have taught more if she wanted to, but she was a good manager and we got by all right.

Q. And speaking of her, you were married in ’50?
A. ’48.

Q. ’48. And speak of her and your daughter.
A. Well, I met her in a graduate class. She was being set up as a candidate for the deanship of a big school of economics at the University of Illinois and was here on sabbatical leave. And she was going to get her degree jointly and home economics here did not give a doctorate at the time. So, she was getting one in home economics and higher education.

Q. What was her name before you married her?
A. Mildred Chapin from Illinois. She had grown up in a little town about 20 miles from where I lived and grew up in Illinois.

Q. She was in the big town of Mattoon, Illinois?
A. She came from Sullivan. Her father was an editor of a local county paper and she had worked her way up. She was one of the students at the University of Illinois who thought about her bachelor’s degree and master’s which she took in chemistry, organic chemistry, made a straight A. Her name was on a plaque, and I thought a woman that smart ought to really be a good person to take care of me and make up for my shortcomings. So it worked out very well that way.

Q. Then your daughter came along in what year?

43
A. Well, I can’t remember dates very well. She was in the 7th grade in 1965, when I was in California.

Q. So she would have been born around ’52, when you were Director of the school?

A. Yes, along in there sometime.

Q. And her name is?

A. Amy.

Q. And she lives in?

A. She lives in England, Cambridge.

Q. And you have how many wonderful grandchildren?

A. I have two grandchildren. Laura has just graduated from the University of Canterbury, the ancient town of Canterbury, and is working this year in a publishing house as assistant editor. And that’s Laura, the older one. And the younger one, Helena, is waiting, as many high school students do, to see what university she is going to get into this fall.

Q. And you said Mildred had had a professional career. What was it and what did she do?

A. She was in home economic in nutrition.

Q. Was she at the University?

A. No, she got it at the University of Illinois and got medical nutrition training at University of Michigan.

Q. You said she was a professional who worked during your career at the University.
A. Well, she came over here to get her doctorate because she was in line for the Dean of the College of Home Economics at the University of Illinois, which is one of the major institutions along with Cornell and Iowa.

Q. Let’s continue this and change over to the area of your academic endeavors, both while you were active at the University and after you retired. Because I know you are still working with many of your former doctoral students and you’re still reading and writing.

A. Well, while I was still with the University, I think I’ve already indicated, my biggest endeavor was working in the national ASCD in Washington, which was the largest group that got together, practitioners and university people, gave a lot of time to that and prepared materials and headed commissions and all sorts of things. And since my retirement, I’ve kept in close touch with a network of my former students, and we meet regularly when they come through. And they always manage when they go someplace to come here and stop off in Columbus, and we work on some of the things that they’re doing. And back ten years ago or so, two of my students and myself established a journal we call Teaching Education, which started out as a quarterly and is now I think is doing even more issues and is now in the hands of an Australian, a national publication. And I work with Pinar and others in a series of conferences that start at the Rochester Conference in ’73 and have had one every year since. And now publishes a journal, a journal of curriculum theorizing. And this conference is called the Bergamo Conference, a place where young doctoral students can come and give their first paper. And it’s a smaller conference, but they can work with things that
are on the edge of theory and not yet face the matter of making a presentation at a huge meeting like the AERA, where there’s several thousand people. So that has continued. And as I say, I have informal relationships with, have had with a student or two, almost every year at the doctoral level, many of them international students. This was informal in that I helped them particularly with their writing. I don’t attempt to teach them but, indirectly, we teach because we talk about what they’re writing and they bring me up to date with a brand new literature that’s coming out. So I keep in touch with the literature.

Q. And are these all graduate students?
A. These are graduate students, yes. But then I’ve delivered, tried to get into a number of different things as a volunteer. I took an art course and was under the University’s creative living thing at the union. And I realized that my field is not visual arts, but I set up an art gallery with the instructor and ran it for a year and a half in the short north. And I volunteered with the AIDS group when there was just one small unit downtown and now there’s a whole staff working in. That was a very unbelievable experience early on. I worked with, I served as a teacher helper in the first grade for a year at the Clinton School. I helped organize a Jung Association of Central Ohio in which students, people, adults interested in Jung, student of Freud, I worked with that for about five years. So I’ve read all the books in that library.

Q. What are you reading now? In the last year what books have you read?
A. Oh I do three times as much in reading professional reading, journals, I go to the library about every week or ten days and spend the whole morning reading off the
shelf contemporary periodicals. Then I go to the main library and take home about six books, four fiction and two non-fiction, and go through those. Sometimes, they aren’t worth doing, but I get two or three out of the mix usually.

Q. Do you still do an extensive amount of reading in the field?
A. Oh yes, I read all day long. And then I do some consulting with a man like Shaker who has had several deanships. I worked with him at Mount Union College and then he went to Pennsylvania State at Slippery Rock. I worked with him. We got a national humanities grant and brought in humanities scholars to work with the faculty, and I was in charge of that. Then he went to Minnesota State at Moorhead. I went up, and we organized a “distant learning” master’s degree program to compete with some of the non-professional units which were doing master’s level work. And since he’s been in California, I’ve been out a number of times to consult in his program and just recently we’ve drawn up a doctoral program, if it’s granted, and I think it will be. It would be the first of the 22 state colleges to offer a doctorate. And let’s see, what else. I can’t think of other things. And then I’ve had the international students, Ping-chuan from Taiwan that I’ve met with now, meet with him once a week. And beyond straightening out his English, he’s an excellent student. I learned what he’s doing by way of research which is on the fringe, far out, kind of research in anthropology. And he’s back also with contemporary ways of working. And those tend to be informal. The more formal thing I did until a year and a half or two years ago was working with a group of students who dropped out of high school and were getting their GED diploma. I worked with English and History and somebody else
worked with math and science and it was an interesting thing because the big center where they could go is very bureaucratic. But this was a center down in the near eastside that was run by the old Godman Guild, the oldest social agency in Columbus. And it was a very informal thing. We took students who wouldn’t have gone to the main center and worked with getting their GED diploma. That was interesting work, to work with a very different group of students, unbelievable.

Q. If we were to focus on your years while you were active in the College of Education, you had many distinguished colleagues. As you look back now from where you are in life today and all of your active reading in the field of education, who do you think the people were who had an important impact on education on this country?

A. Are you asking people here at Ohio State?

Q. People at Ohio State.

A. Well, in elementary education I would have to say Laura Zirbes; in secondary Education, I would have to say Harold Alberty; Math education, Harold Fawcett; English, Lou Labrant – now I didn’t work with her, but Don Bateman who was a University School person did in English. Those were the people, Ross Mooney, certainly, in many ways.

Q. When Boyd Bode retired, the college did not continue to have a philosopher on its faculty.

A. Well Hullfish was. And Kircher joined him. Yes, there was a still strong philosophy department.
Q. Would you add them to the group that you think would have been distinguished for making a major contribution to education?

A. Well, they did in their time, but philosophy is not a field of study now at the doctoral level, really. There’s still a few around, but there aren’t major philosophers of education now.

Q. So it’s only in the field of education that philosophy is wanted today?

A. Well, I don’t know whether that statement would hold up. Major colleges are not turning out any. You don’t find much genuinely philosophical literature anyway. Well you do back when Hutchins and Mortimer Adler who died just the other day at 98 years old, and Whitehead. Those people aren’t in the picture anymore. And there aren’t young people replacing them. That isn’t to say there aren’t still some philosophy courses taught, but I think almost none in education and very few outside of education.

Q. I’d like to move now to another area. I want to go back to Mattoon, Illinois. You were born there in 1918?

A. Yea, 1918.

Q. And what was your family doing and who else was in your family when you arrived at Mattoon?

A. Well my family had five boys, but three of them were much older than myself and my younger brother. They had already left the family on their own, had their own family by the time I was old enough to remember them. So there were only two of us left in this little town, and most of my growing up there as a school child was in the depth of the depression, and it was really a depression. This little town
suffered tremendously. Railroads crossed it, and there were everyday people without jobs and without places to live who came through the town, not just two or three, but dozens of people on boxcars. So I lived through that period as a young person. And my father had a little grocery store and a bakery, and we lived at the edge of a little town. We also had cows and chickens and we produced truck farm vegetables to sell in the stores. It was a very small kind of operation, and my life growing up was spent in the store. And my younger brother was spent on the farm. From the time I started in school by just opening a big door in the morning and get customers out and sometimes helped them out to the car, and they would give me a penny for bringing the things out. So it was a very small time operation and growing up as a teenager, I worked completely in the store all the time, before and after, and Saturdays.

Q. And who were your parents?

A. My father was the son of an immigrant, a German.

Q. And his name was?

A. Henry Klohr. And he had only elementary education. And my mother was Irish.

Q. And your mother’s name was?

A. Wilby Blades. And she had only elementary education. She met him at the store because her family moved around in Indiana, her father and mother, and she came over to work in this little town of Mattoon, to help a boarding house person because these railroaders would come in and they would change shifts in Mattoon and go on to St. Louis and Kansas City then. But they stayed overnight at one of
these houses. And so as a young teenager, she came over to work in that situation and married my father and raised a family.

Q. So you and your younger brother really suffered through the depression?
A. Yes, it was very bad.

Q. And were you able to go to school?
A. Oh yes, I went to school.

Q. And you graduated from Mattoon High School?
A. Yes, in ’36, and I was head of my class, so I got a scholarship, which the high school principal sent in without saying anything to me or my parents. He sent it on his own.

Q. And you would have never gone on to college?
A. Well I don’t see how I could have.

Q. And did you choose then DePauw or was the only choice for the scholarship?
A. That’s the only thing that I saw that I might be able to make. I didn’t have any other choice really.

Q. And when you started at DePauw, what were your intentions other than to get out of Mattoon, which I suppose was high on the list?
A. I didn’t have a clear cut goal. Like most teenagers, I had rather romantic notions. There had been some films of a great surgeon. He would come in before a big amphitheater and he would put on these gloves and would perform. I thought that would be a good field, but it was so remote. And then after I took freshman chemistry, I decided that my career in medicine, if it included many sciences, I was so inept that I was afraid I would lose my scholarship, so I stayed away from
it. And then the other thing was after I graduated, if I had had the money, I would have gone to … there were writers schools at that time, the Breadloaf School, and the Iowa Writers Schools, and these young people were going to learning how to write and they turned out novels. So I thought it would be fine to go and write a novel and have it made into a film. And I realized that that was rather remote, so I had better go ahead and get a teaching certificate. You only had to take about six more hours of work then to get certification. So I got into teaching by the back door.

Q.  Well Paul now that we’re back at DePauw University we’ve come full circle in this conversation from where we started. It’s time to take a look back now at the years since you left Mattoon and went on to DePauw and later to Ohio State. What stands out now as you look back over your life as having been a specially important or significant and rewarding?

A.  Well, that’s a tough question because it’s hard to sort out. Oftentimes, there are influences that you aren’t aware of and I know that might be my case. But as the people who influenced my life at the most significant states I think were my teachers, my elementary school teachers, and my high school teachers. I thought they were the most knowledgeable people I had ever known, and they were so thoughtful. I remember them in great detail, what they looked like, how they dressed, what they said. And they, in a sense, were an extension of my family. Both parents worked like mad day and night just to keep things going. And school for me was an outlet from that kind of heavy work experience. And working in the bakery and the store you see. And I thought these people were so
knowledgeable and so understanding, that they were a significant part of my life, at a time when those influences made a profound difference. And, in a sense, I felt that way in college. I certainly felt that way in graduate school. So for me, the role the teachers played surmounted. I was never a religious person. I don’t think we ever had a discussion at home. We all worked all the time. Ate our meals at different times. This notion of family all sitting down you see and that influence, well there, of course, was an influence but it wasn’t that traditional sense of family you see. So schools, in a sense, I think took on the role of family for me. And I admired these people, and I must say, I think they must have been “placeholders” for family. Not that my parents weren’t kind and good and they respected the teachers too, had profound respect for my elementary, secondary teachers and for my college people. They just thought this was just the best of all possible worlds. And I guess I thought it was, too. I don’t know if that answers your question.

Q. So it may be the most important event of your life was discovering scholarship?

A. Yes, I think was is right. And the other key person, we had a little Carnegie library in this town, as many little towns did, and Blanche Gray was the wonderful librarian, wonderful woman there. And I read all the books in the adolescent section and she would slip in another book, a better book from time to time. She would say “Paul, I think you might be interested in this.” She functioned as a teacher to lead me on. My mother, despite her heavy work load, read books like Zane Gray, and these western books. I would go on a bicycle to get these books for her every seven days or so. And Blanche Gray would slip in a
book for her. She said “I think your mother might like Louis Bromfield’s book.”

And so, she was in a sense a “teacher” outside of school. And then later, I was interested in architecture and they had all these fine architectural journals, you know, very expensive ones there. They weren’t used and I said “Ms. Gray, do you think I could take one or two of those home?” She said “Well, I think you could.” So through high school, I took these architectural journals home and they showed a lot about culture and housing and stuff. And so Blanche Gray, the librarian, and her niece who worked there, were these two people who had profound influence on me. And that library was my second home really.

Q. Well the library is still your second home, isn’t it?

A. Yes. I don’t know what I would do without a library.

Q. This University and this intellectual experience for you has been a very rewarding life.

A. Yes, it has. I’m glad I didn’t become a famous doctor or a writer or an architect. I am very pleased with the way things worked out. I don’t quite understand how it was that they did, but they did.

Q. Well on behalf of your colleagues, both active and retired, and the University, I congratulate you on your distinguished career.

A. Well thank you.

Q. That’s the end of the Paul Kloehr interview for the Ohio State University Archives oral history project.