Q. Good morning. This is Kevlin Haire at the OSU Archives. Today is Wednesday, September 4, 2013, and I am here interviewing Tom Simpson about his time as a student at OSU. Good morning, Mr. Simpson.

A. Good morning.

Q. I’d like to start out, so that we know when and where you were born and just a little bit about growing up. I think you grew up in Lorain, right?

A. Right.

Q. So when were you born?

A. March 24, 1930.

Q. Okay. And you grew up in Lorain?

A. Right.

Q. And did you grow up with, were you in Lorain or was it more of a rural area?

A. No, we were in Lorain. A lot of houses but in Lorain.

Q. And your family, you had obviously parents, and how many brothers and sisters?

A. I have one brother who is five years older than I am. He’s still living. And a whole bunch of aunts and uncles and cousins.

Q. Now did any of them go to OSU? Did your brother go to OSU?

A. No.

Q. Well then, how did you get to OSU?

A. On the train.
Q. That’s very funny. Well, tell me about high school and how you decided to go to college. Or maybe you were in the Army first, right?

A. No.

Q. Okay.

A. No, I graduated from high school in 1948 in the class of 48-A. We recently had our 65th class reunion and there were 70 people there.

Q. 70 people.

A. Yes. I don’t know. I was a Bucks fan, not that I was athletic. Guys that I went to school with, Dick Field, for one, came down here.

Q. That name sounds familiar.

A. That was the year that 33 out of the 35 rookies came to Ohio State.

Q. Oh my gosh. Wow.

A. Out of the high school.

Q. And so you came with them?


Q. Had you thought about, had you always decided to go to college? We’ve interviewed some people who didn’t know what they’re going to do with their life, and then somehow they got to OSU.

A. No, I thought about going. My dad and mother encouraged me to go. At that time, tuition was very economical. It was like $75 a quarter.

Q. Yes, it was much cheaper back then.
A. Somewhere along the line, and I can’t remember exactly what quarters they were, I got thrown out for low grades twice.

Q. Did you really?

A. But I got reinstated. And I’m sure it was before I went in the Navy. So it had to be in ’48 and ’49.

Q. Okay, so you came here in ’48 and ’49, and then you went into the Navy?

A. Yes, Navy, and I went in the Navy because I had been in the Naval Reserve in Lorain and the draft board in Lorain wanted to draft me, and that was the Korean War era. But the Navy came up with a program they called the V-13 Program, where you could volunteer for active duty for two years and that keeps you out of the Army and puts you in the Navy. So that’s the way I went. And after two years I was back and I was re-admitted to Ohio State as a junior.

Q. Even though you had been kicked out twice?

A. Yes.

Q. And what was that like, getting kicked out? Did you get a letter in the mail?

A. They just (making a hand motion).

Q. It wasn’t very formal? Someone just told you, “You have to try again, son”?

A. Right. If you look at my transcript, you can see where it fell through. At that time, I guess they were re-instating. Partly I got back in because I was a veteran. And at the end of ’52 is when the Korean War was winding up and the enrollment at Ohio State jumped from like 33,000 to 50,000.

Q. Yes, it was a huge spike.

A. In one quarter. And I was in the mob [of students] at the time.
Q. You came in under the radar?
A. Right. And when I got here, shortly after I got back in school, I met the first wife and we got married and my oldest daughter was born at Ohio State.

Q. At the hospital?
A. Right.

Q. Wow. Now you had mentioned before that you lived in GI housing. Where was that?
A. Over here [Buckeye Village], which is now all brick and neat and all that good stuff, and before it was wooden barracks left over from the Army. In the winter, the wind would blow, and the carpet would come up off the floor.

Q. Did you have your own unit?
A. Yes.

Q. Okay, but it was part of the barracks?
A. Right, it was like four apartments in a building on one floor.

Q. Oh, wow.
A. And you know, they didn’t have much on the west side [of campus] at that time except Agriculture. But they did have a bus running from the GI village over to the main campus. And I’m not sure where I got off but I got off someplace. It was Business Administration and it was in Hagerty Hall, or as some people called it, Hagerty High School.

Q. Now why did they call it that?
A. The engineers thought it was easy. Engineering did.

Q. Sure, well I could see that attitude. But it wasn’t was it?
A. No, and we thought that Education was easy because the only thing they did was make ash trays and grade books.

Q. Well, now there’s a fancy new business college.

A. Yes, Fisher. And the trouble is you can’t park.

Q. No.

A. There’s no place to park.

Q. You really need to still take a bus.

A. I know of three or four parking places but they’re tough to get to.

Q. You’re more informed than I am.

A. There’s about three or four of them on the south side of the library. That street used to go through.

Q. Oh, yes. Well, if you have a handicap sticker [you can park there].

A. I’ve got handicap plates on my van. But the problem is, you have to go in at 12th and turn on campus and turn back of Orton Hall and go around it, and over through the woods and off to grandma’s house before you get to the parking. And if there’s no space there, you’ve got to turn around and get back out again.

Q. That’s true. It must have been just as crowded on campus when you came back from service, as it is now.

A. Yes, probably was.

Q. Were your classes crowded?

A. That depends on what you were in. The biggest class I had was 15 people because I majored in Transportation, which was not a featured deal.

Q. Okay. When you major in Transportation, what career do you go into?
A. Logistics and so on. Back then they didn’t call it logistics; they just called it Transportation.

Q. Is that what you had decided to go into when you came in ’48?

A. I’m a rail[road] nut.

Q. Okay, gotcha. Now you had most of your classes in Hagerty, right?

A. Right.

Q. And what was that like?

A. Hagerty wasn’t bad. What was bad was U Hall.

Q. University Hall?

A. Yes.

Q. That was still the original building.

A. The original building.

Q. And why was it bad?

A. You come down the steps and the steps would sway back and forth. And I had a class in the BNZ [Botany and Zoology] building, right after one in U Hall. And I had to come down three floors in U Hall and cross campus and over to BNZ in that ten-minute gap in there.

Q. So you were taking your life in your hands?

A. Right. That was the only classes that I had outside of Hagerty Hall. Everything else was in Hagerty Hall.

Q. Before you went into the service, were you in any extracurricular activities? Did you join a fraternity or anything?
A. I was in the cadet band. And then they eliminated the cadet band and I wasn’t good enough for the Marching Band.

Q. Did you try out?

A. Yes. My instrument was not the greatest.

Q. What did you play?

A. French horn and then in cadet band they switched me over to E flat alto, which is the same thing. But you don’t get your teeth beat up as badly as you would with a French horn. Marching with a French horn is dangerous.

Q. I didn’t know that.

A. The mouthpiece is so small.

Q. It keeps hitting when you’re marching?

A. Yes.

Q. Now you tried out for Marching Band but your instrument wasn’t good enough. You mean the quality of your instrument?

A. My ability. I was always second-chair something or other.

Q. Did you go to the football games?

A. Yes. As a student I had seats up between the two towers, where you get a nose bleed from being so high up in the air. Where the state police stood.

Q. So they kept you on your toes?

A. Right. I didn’t go to every game because it seems to me I shared my tickets with somebody else. And I can’t remember who.

Q. Was this before you went into the Navy or after or both?

A. Before.
Q. You probably didn’t have much time to participate in extracurriculars afterward.

A. No. I tried out for the whatever it is, The Lantern, and did a little dab at The Lantern. But that was kind of a closed group. They had their own little clique.

Q. When you were in GI housing, you were out on west campus and it was all Agriculture.

A. Right, the dairy herd was just north of the GI Village. It was fenced off but cows are smart. They know how to open gates. And they’d get over in the housing area and there were mornings when you’d open the front door and you’d be staring right in the face of a Holstein cow.

Q. So then what would you do, or would you just walk around?

A. I’d just walk around them and go.

Q. Wait for somebody else to deal with it.

A. Shoo.

Q. Well, your daughter must have liked that, although she was probably too young at the time.

A. She was too young.

Q. Now did your wife go to school?

A. No. She dropped out. She was in school but she dropped out.

Q. After you got married?

A. Yes.

Q. When did you get married?

A. I’m not sure.

Q. Why are you not sure? Trying to forget your first wife?
A. Right. Let’s see. My oldest daughter was born in ’51, I think, or ’52, April of ’52. And it was ’51, right after I got out of the Navy and got back to school.

Q. That you got married?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. And I went to school summer quarter also. In fact, it was very interesting because on the Oval, in summer quarter, all you would see is buggies and strollers, all the married students with kids would stay all summer to gain that time to get out.

Q. To get through quicker?

A. Yes. That makes sense. That’s funny.

Q. You were in the GI housing until you graduated in 1955?

A. Yes. And besides being a student, I worked in the Library, and that was when they built the tower and we moved all the books from down in the basement up into the tower.

Q. Did you? That must have been quite an operation.

A. It was a mess. Dust, because everything had been settled, then you put them on book carts on the elevator, up to the floor where they’re supposed to go, and unload them and put them on the shelf. It was just a chain of people doing that.

Q. Right. How long did it take?

A. It must have taken a couple of weeks anyway.

Q. Okay. And so you did that and did you continue working at the Library?

A. Yes.

Q. What did you do?
A. Nothing really, government documents and newspapers. Only after moving all of those books, I got a carrel and I would use it for my study and lunch and all that stuff. And a lot of them at work on moving books stayed in the Library that way.

Q. Weren’t those usually reserved for graduate students?
A. Theoretically.

Q. But you had paid your dues and earned one?
A. Earned one, yes.

Q. Gotcha. Okay.
A. I’m choking.

Q. That’s your water, have some please.
A. Is that what that is?

Q. Yes.
A. I thought it was gin or vodka.

Q. Could you tell who all the GIs were on campus?
A. Pretty much.

Q. How could you tell?
A. Their look. I can see a Veteran now and know, like you see people walking around and the guys have got long hair, they were in Vietnam. If they’ve got shorter, normal hair, they were either, if they’re older they were in the Korean or World War II, and the younger ones were in Desert Storm and so on. But they didn’t have long hair. The only ones that had long hair were guys that were in Vietnam.

Q. That makes sense. When you were here, do you remember any of your professors?
A. I remember one and I can’t remember his name. But I had a class in U Hall on the first floor and he was a History teacher. He was also a nut, but that’s another story.

Q. Well tell me that story.

A. He would come in the Library and take out 20 books and read them in a day’s time and turn the books back in and get another 20. And summer quarter I had him for a lecture on one of the histories, European, American History, somebody. And he was sitting on the window sill lecturing away, flapping his hands and talking, and he leaned back and fell out the window. But he was only that far from the ground. And he came around and came in the door and came back in the class and went on lecturing.

Q. I really wish you could remember his name. Oh, well.

A. He was something else.

Q. Now, when you came here in the summer, there were fewer people on campus, but were you still working at that time?

A. Uh-huh.

Q. It must have been hot.

A. Uh-huh.

Q. But you just kind of went through it.

A. Columbus only has one day of spring. It’s either winter or dead summer. And I worked off campus. I can’t remember the name of the company, but it was right on Fifth near Olentangy River Road. We made controls.

Q. I think I know what you’re talking about because I think they tore it down to build the Lennox Town Center.

A. Yes.
Q. I know what you’re talking about.
A. [The company made controls that] set off and on the thermostats, by the temperature.
Q. Why did you decide to be a Business major?
A. A what?
Q. Why did you decide to major in Business?
A. Because that’s where Transportation was.
Q. So that was your goal and that was the college it was in?
A. One of the places I lived in Lorain was right next to the Nickel Plate Railroad. And we grew up having trains go by and beat our ears off. But after you’ve been there a little while you didn’t notice them. The one good thing though was, and this was early in that stage, is they’d bring in watermelon in a box car, and we’d go over and help them unload and you’d get down to the last one or two that got dropped, so we could take them home.
Q. So that became your connection to the railroad?
A. Yes. Locomotives, No. 765 Nickel Plate Berkshire is still running now. It’s going to run this summer again or fall. A steam locomotive is a fascinating piece of machinery, because there’s over 100 points of lubrication in a steam locomotive.
Q. If you’re so interested in trains, why didn’t you major in engineering?
A. Because I didn’t want the engineering part of it. I wanted the moving part of it.
Q. Moving part, got it. You mentioned before as well when you came into the Archives a few weeks ago, that you also lived, this must have been before you went into the Navy, that you also lived in a group house?
A. Yes.
Q. Where was that?
A. At 99 Woodruff.

Q. And how many people lived there?

A. I don’t know, five or six and a Great Dane. And the Great Dane was spoiled because all the guys were there and they’d feed him and take care of him, and walk him. But between quarters, when the house would empty, you didn’t want to be the first one back because you’d open the side door to come in and you’d have a Great Dane on your shoulders.

Q. Whose Great Dane was it or do you remember?

A. He was, the name Frank keeps sticking in my mind, and he worked at a radio station here in Columbus.

Q. Okay, and he was one of your house mates?

A. He was the owner of the house.

Q. Okay, and did he live there? Or he was just the landlord?

A. He lived on the first floor. The rest of us lived upstairs. And one of the guys that lived there was in vet school and used to come home with smelly boots.

Q. Smelly as in?

A. Manure.

Q. Manure, okay. So you didn’t want to room with him?

A. No. Well, we got together and said, “Get your boots off or clean them before you come in here.”

Q. Even a group of guys couldn’t put up with something like that.

A. Right. If they were all vet students, it probably would have worked out fine.

Q. Did you stay friends with any of those guys?

A. Not really, no.
Q. You went off to the service two years after.

A. The only one I was friendly with at all was a guy by the name of Jack DeLong and we went through boot camp together. He was from Barberton. But I don’t know, I contacted him a couple of times after I got out of the Navy and he was not very friendly. I don’t know what happened, whether he got religion or what.

Q. Maybe he was just busy with his own life, you never know.

A. He wound up being an insurance agent.

Q. Okay. Now before you went into the service, you mentioned in your previous visit to the Archives, that you would drive home to Lorain with Vic Janowitz, who ended being a Heisman Trophy-winning football player. Was he from Lorain? How did that work?

A. He was from Elyria, which is nine miles from Lorain. And Dick Field I went to school with, it was Dick’s Ford Roadster. So there were three of us in it coming to Lorain, and I was the small one, so I was in the middle. Lorain this way.

Q. You were all scrunched?

A. Yes. Vic was a very nice guy.

Q. Was he?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. And he had a ton of brothers and sisters. It was an Eastern European family.

Q. So you guys would drive home and drive back during the breaks.

A. Right. We’d drop Vic off in Elyria and went on to Lorain, and then picked up Vic on the way back to Columbus.

Q. Okay, well that worked out pretty well.
A. Yes.

Q. When you graduated in 1955, then what happened?

A. I had several interviews but I wound up working for American Airlines in New York City. 99 Park Avenue.

Q. That’s pretty fancy, don’t you think?

A. It was okay. The commuting was terrible.

Q. Well, where did you live at the time?

A. We lived in New Jersey but New York would have been just as bad, or out on the island [Long Island].

Q. And more expensive too.

A. Yes. And it took an hour and a half each way every day. So you spent three hours working on the New York Times crossword puzzle.

Q. It’s too bad they didn’t have [computer] tablets back then, because then maybe you could have done some of your work on the way.

A. I don’t know about all that advanced electronics. I’ve got a phone that’s a phone.

Q. Oh, is it a land line?

A. No, it’s a cell phone but all it is is only a phone. There’s no pictures. There’s no music, there’s no nothing. It’s just a phone.

Q. I hear you. So then you were in New York for how long?

A. About two years. I couldn’t stand it any longer. That commuting was driving me crazy.

Q. I can understand that.

A. And my brother still eats at 8:00 at night because he lived about ten miles from where I did. He lived in Ho-Ho-Kus, New Jersey. We lived in Dumont and Bergenfield. By the
time you get home, it’s 7:00 and you’re eating at 8:00 at night. And you hardly get to bed and you have to get up and go to work again.

Q. It’s a hard life. So then did you come back to Columbus?

A. Went to Dayton, which is where my wife was from. And I managed to ruin a whole bunch of companies. I worked for Dayton Tire, and they sold out to Bridgestone. I worked for the Mead Corporation, and they closed half their stuff down. I worked at NCR, and they totally collapsed. And I wound up driving a school bus for a while. But we [my son and I] had friends that, I forget what the name of the company is [Joy Manufacturing]; they manufactured construction equipment. And I went over to Franklin, PA [Pennsylvania] for that, and I was over there a year. I lost the job somewhere along the line. They only hired the local people. They had the first choice. So after driving a [semi-tractor trailer] for a while, I gave up on that because my work was getting less and less. The man I was driving for lost several contracts and then I came back and I stopped here in Columbus for maybe a week or so, some friends were here, and then I went back over to Dayton.

Q. And then where did you end up?

A. Well, Dayton, and then after I got divorced I went somewhere. Back over here. My son and I worked in the Fawcett Center.

Q. Oh you did? For how long?

A. A year or so.

Q. What did you do?

A. I was in Alumni Information.

Q. Were you? And so what does that mean?
A. The Alumni Association mails out a lot of stuff. And I ran the labeling machine.

Q. Okay, so you got to see a lot of names.

A. And a lot of other things.

Q. Did you enjoy it?

A. Yes, that was good.

Q. Fawcett Center was fairly new, wasn’t it?

A. That’s where football tickets were distributed.

Q. Well, the Fawcett Center was fairly new when you were there, right?

A. Yes, it was fairly new.

Q. So that must have been a nice place to work on campus and you didn’t have to go on campus.

A. And my son and I lived together over on, not North Fourth, the next street over.

Q. Summit?

A. Summit. We lived on Summit. Summit and 12th or 13th, somewhere in there. Those houses. When I first came to Ohio State, the north edge of the campus was Woodruff, and on the north side of the street and going all the way down from High Street to the river were these duplex homes that the GIs were smart enough to buy, and they lived in one half and rented the other half out, and what they got in rent money paid their mortgage.

Q. Well, then they sold them to the University, right?

A. Yes. And then somewhere when I was gone, between my visits, they knocked them all down and moved the campus to Lane Avenue. Now they’re going all over town. They’ve got these medical centers.
Q. Everywhere, yes. Well the hospital itself is probably three times as big as it was when your daughter was born.
A. More than that.
Q. You’re right.
A. Because Starling Loving and Dowd were the only two hospital buildings.
Q. Yes, that’s true.
A. And she was born in Dowd. And now you can’t find Dowd because it’s buried in the middle of all these other buildings.
Q. That was going to be one of my questions, which was how campus has changed since you’ve been here. It sounds like it’s just gotten more concentrated to you.
A. More buildings. What it is, there is a guy who walks around with a bag like a paper route, only he’s got building seeds, and he throws them out here and there, and out comes another building.
Q. That is definitely, definitely true. You had some notes. Tell me what you were going to talk about.
A. Well, basically the wooden barracks.
Q. Oh, they were wooden. Oh goodness.
A. There was a cafeteria at Woodruff and the first street inside the campus.
Q. A University cafeteria?
A. A University cafeteria. And the building on the corner of Woodruff and High was University School.
Q. Right.
A. And it got eliminated.
Q. Yes, they closed that in 1968. We have a lot of their records here, luckily.
A. And then the other thing, when I first came, the Student Union was on 12th and it was the old President’s Home. And then my class voted $5 a quarter to build a new Union up on High Street. And then I came back to Columbus recently, in the last ten years, they had the nerve to tear it down and build a new one.
Q. And it costs a lot more a quarter to support it, let me tell you.
A. I didn’t know it. We had some friends that were teachers here but that building was built, it had water problems all the time.
Q. The old Union?
A. Yes.
Q. It was built over a culvert or near a culvert, I can’t remember the ravine that used to go through campus, and that was part of the problem, I think, with the water table.
A. Because that area used to be where the football field was.
Q. Yes. You know, time marches on. Did you vote for the fee?
A. Yes. And I was married and we did a lot of studying over in the Union.
Q. Yes, because it opened in ’51, I think.
A. We could take the kid over there and books.
Q. Do you remember the old Student Union? Had you gone in there a lot? The one on 12th?
A. Yes. You had to fight your way in.
Q. I bet. It was way too small.
A. And then you had to fight your way out. There was no place there to relax because there wasn’t any room to relax. Everybody stood up. It’s like being on a subway in New York City.
Q. Finally, we have someone who describes it, because we always tell people that building, the student population outgrew it, so they built the bigger building. It’s nice to actually have someone describe the condition.

A. Yes, it was crowded. And when the new one went up, everybody went over there real quick. And I don’t remember, well 15th was open then. You could drive all the way around campus.

Q. Yes, around the Oval. But that stopped after the riots in 1970. They closed that.

A. They should have shot the students [joke]. Down around 11th and 12th [avenues] was getting to be a bad area.

Q. It’s much better now. But I could see that.

A. Because they’ve cleaned a lot of stuff up and put other stuff in. The worst came was the people in Columbus, the bums in Columbus, that resented the University. And they were the ones coming up and picking fights and burning stuff and stealing stuff.

Q. That probably is an ongoing issue when you have a University like this.

A. What else did I say? Where we lived, GI Village, they called it Fertile Valley, because if you didn’t have some woman on your street that was pregnant and about due to go to the hospital, you just weren’t in.

Q. That’s where the baby boom happened.

A. That’s where it started. We were older.

Q. You needed to get started if you were going to have a family.

A. Yes.

Q. Definitely.
A. And as it turned out, my son, who was the second one, and he was born in New Jersey in the same hospital that the Lindbergh baby was in. And then when we moved back to Dayton – the “City Beautiful” [advertised] on all the garbage trucks. The youngest one was born in Dayton. She was born so quick I couldn’t get her registered.

Q. Oh, you couldn’t get your wife registered into the hospital?

A. I went downstairs to get her registered and when I came back up, there was a nurse walking down the hall carrying a baby and one of the other nurses said, “Who you got there?” And she said, “The Simpson baby.” I said, “What?” Boom. Oh boy. I’ve got to mention this. The corner of Woodruff and High, they’ve got a building in there now and I don’t know what it is, a restaurant or something.

Q. There’s the Commons there.

A. It would be on the southeast corner.

Q. Of Woodruff and High. I know what you’re talking about, but I don’t know what it is.

A. A guy that ran that place, his name was Ben, and at that time it was a combination drug store, restaurant, hardware, whatever. And he would put us up or give us money or feed us when we ran out of funds, the whole time I was there. And there were a lot of time I went down to Ben’s to get something to eat, because my money being sent from home hadn’t gotten there yet.

Q. So he would forward. Sounds like a nice guy.

A. He took care of a lot of the guys there.

Q. This is when you were still single? Before you went into the service?

A. Yes, when I first went to Ohio State.
Q. How did you pay for tuition at that time? I know you wrote a check but did you pay or your parents pay?
A. My parents paid.
Q. But it wasn’t that much? I’m sure it was a lot to them but not like now.
A. $75 a quarter. It was spending money that I got from my parents.
Q. So you really had to budget yourself?
A. Yes.
Q. Sometimes you didn’t budget so well.
A. Yes.
Q. So you’d go to them [your parents]?
A. Yes, they sent money.
Q. Do you remember graduating? Do you remember your commencement?
A. Yes. Three of my aunts came down from Lorain. One of them, her husband died 30 years ago.
Q. You mean, before you graduated?
A. Yes. And she still talked about him like he died yesterday. And she drove the other two aunts crazy because they were all in the same car, riding from Lorain down to Columbus. And we had a tent up because it rained a little bit. It always rains a little bit. But yes, I remember my commencement.
Q. You weren’t in the Stadium though. Maybe you were.
A. We were in the Stadium. And we were divided up by schools.
Q. They still do that.
A. Right.
Q. Do you remember your speaker?
A. No. But how they kept the diplomas straight, I can never figure out.
Q. They still do. It’s amazing.
A. And I don’t know how many we’ve graduated now.
Q. They had the biggest class this last time, which was about 10,000 in June. They had about 10,000 graduate. Back when you were here, it probably would have been around 3 or 4 [thousand], just to graduate, not total population.
A. All I remember is our class had the 100,000\textsuperscript{th} graduate in it. And I missed it by 40. I was one hundred thousandth and fortieth in the class. And whoever it was, some guy, that was the 100,000\textsuperscript{th}, got a lifetime membership to the Alumni Association, a plaque and all the rest of the stuff.
Q. And you missed it?
A. Yes, 40 people.
Q. That’s all right. Can you imagine being the 100,000\textsuperscript{th}-and-one graduate?
A. Good grief. The only other highlight of the whole deal that I remember was [OSU Football Coach] Woody [Hayes]. When I came back in ’53, I was over here by the ROTC building and I was cutting across there, and Woody came out of the door. And I stopped and talked to him because my wife was from New Philly when Woody had been a coach there. And I said, “I was here before you were,” and he got a big kick out of that.
Q. He had only been here a couple of years at that point.
A. Yes. [Wes] Fesler was the coach when I left, I think.
Q. Then he resigned and they hired Woody, which was at the time a controversial choice, because he didn’t have a lot of coaching experience.
A. Right. Well he was at New Philly, then he was at OU.

Q. Oberlin, I think.

A. Was it Oberlin?

Q. Something like that. Maybe Ohio Wesleyan. It had an “O” in it. I’ll look it up. That’s pretty cool that you got to talk to him.

A. He got a big kick out of that. He was a history nut. My filing cabinet is a miscellaneous mess, but I know a lot of trivia. Did you know that the Campbell’s noodle soup can has 32 feet of noodles in it?

Q. I did not know that.

A. Mark that up for your next cocktail party.

Q. I will remember that. Woody could tell you anything, especially about military history.

A. Yes.

Q. He had it all. His filing cabinet was very big on that topic.

A. Right. I read a lot of military history, too. The more I read, the more disgusted I get because the guys in Washington really screwed the two commanders in Pearl Harbor. They didn’t send them the information. There were a lot of things they didn’t tell them that were going on.

Q. That could have helped?

A. Yes.

Q. I did not know that. That’s too bad. What else do you have to tell me about your time at OSU?

A. I don’t know.

Q. If that’s it, that’s okay.
A. The wobbly steps at U Hall. The [new] building looks like [the old one] but not quite.

Q. No, it’s a little smaller and it’s doesn’t have as many fancy details.

A. Right.

Q. But it’s much better shape.

A. Yes, it will stand up. That building was getting rather old.

Q. By the time they tore it down they didn’t want people on the third or fourth floor. You weren’t allowed to go on one of the floors because it was so bad. They blocked it off.

A. That’s where you come down the steps and there was a class changing, everybody was on the steps at the same time.

Q. It would swing back and forth.

A. Yes.

Q. That is pretty scary. And that was in the ’50s and they didn’t tear it down until the ’70s. So they had 20 more years of that.

A. That was crazy.

Q. Are you glad you went to Ohio State? Do you wish you had gone somewhere else?

A. Yes and no. I wouldn’t live any other place but Ohio. On the other hand, there are some universities in the Big Ten that have better Transportation programs than OSU.

Q. But it would have probably cost you a lot more to go to them, right?

A. Uh-huh. The GI Bill would have covered it probably.

Q. That’s true. Well back then people, there wasn’t as much emphasis on going to the absolute best school for you; it was just going to school, wasn’t it?

A. Right.

Q. You just wanted to get an education.
A. For a while there in life we ran a winery and took care of a vineyard down in southeast Ohio. And [OSU’s] OARDC [Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center] in Wooster was the big information for that. Wooster.

Q. So did they help you?
A. Oh yes. The wine industry was just getting a boost when we were in it.

Q. When was that?
A. Had to be either the late ’50s or the early ’60s.

Q. Oh that was quite early.
A. Like Chalet Debonne up in Madison, one of the towns along Lake Erie. And at that point we had the Ohio Wineries, an association. And if you had trouble or something you could get advice from someone else. Tony Devevik lent me a pump several times when our pump failed. Pumping wine. So we worked together. And Doctor somebody or other was the wine man, the grape man. And he was at OARDC.

Q. Oh I see. That was his specialty?
A. Yes.

Q. So you would go to him to ask questions?
A. Yes, it was good. In fact, one year our white wine won first place in the Indiana State Fair.

Q. Congratulations.
A. But what killed the winery: First of all, we didn’t have enough money to run it properly. But secondly, it was in an old barn and the floor collapsed and I was on the second floor and I fell through the floor and hit the bar in the tasting room which turned me over and really saved my life because I would have been head first otherwise. And I broke my leg
in three places between the hip and the knee. It was unwound like this, spiral break. And after I went, they took me to Marietta to the hospital, and I was in traction for about two weeks I think before they could get the leg straightened out to operate. And then he put a pin, a plate and nine screws in that leg and sometimes I feel it now even, if the weather changes or gets cold. But two years after I had it, they took the plate back out and didn’t give me a refund.

Q. Well, Mr. Simpson, do you have anything else to say?

A. Not really.

Q. Okay.

A. I really feel privileged to do this.

Q. Well we feel really grateful that you’re doing this because you’re helping us a lot to fill in blanks about OSU history.

A. I’m a blank.

Q. No, I would not describe you that way. Well thank you again.