

CENTER FOR FLORIDA HISTORY ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

ORAL INTERVIEW WITH: Professor Robert MacDonald

INTERVIEWER: James M. Denham

PLACE OF INTERVIEW: Florida Southern College

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M= James M. Denham ("Mike")

R= Professor Robert MacDonald

M: Today is November 23 and we are resuming our oral history with Robert MacDonald. Mr. McDonald would you tell us about your time at Indiana University?

R: My biggest scare came in my last semester. I took this class but, hardly ever attended. I could ace all the exams anyway. It was a piece of cake. It was being taught by a graduate student himself; there was no teacher. I changed my course work, said good-bye to a girl I had been dating who thought for sure that I was going to become more of a permanent fixture later on than more so because when I was new in the Air Force, I got a ride to New York one time and spent the weekend with her. But that didn't work out very much.

M: I want to make sure that we understand. You went ahead and completed your master's degree at Indiana and instead of pursuing your career, you were drafted?

R: I was drafted.

M: And you began your Air Force service where?

R: I had to go to Columbia to be drafted. Everybody had to go and take a physical there. I didn't point out that Harold Andrews again figures here because he also got his master's at the same time.

M: So did you go together with him or did you just meet him there?

R: Just two weeks before I was to leave for the Air Force or to see if I could get in the Air Force instead of being drafted in the interim, I was at home and I got a notice from this girlfriend, Scottie, Thelma Scott, she hated the name Thelma so much, that was a nickname for her, that I had not graduated. I had come up with an incomplete in that one course. A guy had gotten vengeance on me, he realized that I was skipping his course and laughing about it.

So I didn't hitchhike, I borrowed my father's car and drove all night to Bloomington. You know that ghostly feeling you have when you haven't slept and you've been on the road all night and I got to see Dean Bain, we always laughed that he was the bane of our existence. I told him what the situation was and miraculously, he agreed with me. I think later on I learned somehow that that wasn't the first complaint he had about that teacher grad student. He had a meeting that late afternoon and got enough faculty to reassign me a grade of C although I could have taught the course myself. That settled the deal. So I graduated.

I was in a tent in Lackland Air Force Base on the hottest day in July they had had in a long time. Then when the mail came, I had notice from Scottie that I had graduated and got my master's. During that basic training, I fell in love with San Antonio. Do you know San Antonio? It's such a beautiful town. I realize from pushing a broom in a service club, which is all you can do as a PFC in the Air Force, the type of thing you can do, I thought: Well, I got to do better.

Harold and I were still in basic training. We both cooked up the idea one night when we had latrine duty, and you could put it off until whenever you wanted to, so at 2 A.M., we were in the latrine talking about what we would do. We decided that we would apply for OCS, Officer Candidate School. To my utter surprise, we were both accepted right away. That was six months. It was all fashioned after West Point. You had to get up at 4:30 in the morning, square all your corners. They had just dropped the habit of making you square corners at the table when you were eating because they learned from the local infirmary in San Antonio that we were getting lots of stomach problems from being so tense.

So I graduated from there and was assigned to Florida for the first time I had ever been to this fair state, to Cocoa Beach to the Air Force base there as a second lieutenant whom they didn't know what to do with. This one guy here was in charge of the assignments said: Oh, you're a musician. I think we're planning to get a band so we'll start a band squadron, which he probably did. I don't know why he had the power to do it then. I had to live in the BOQ and help clean up the BOQ during all of those years I wasn't assigned. But I finally got assigned to there. I became the club officer.

I came as assistant but it came to the fore that he had been cheating the Air Force out of thousands of dollars of money in some way. I don't know whether he was put in prison or not. But he was a colonel and I'm sure it messed up his rank. Suddenly I was the director of it. I don't know if you realize that officers clubs the world over are officer centers, the Air Force centers, you have to know everything about the operation, including the food service. I had never in my borne days ever thought of helping to order food and all this. I had to hire waitresses. I found two sergeants' wives who were interested, one of them a little bit too much in me. So I was club officer and the longest hours I have ever

had. I thought another theory, I won't have to practice the piano; I'll be free. The typical weekend was up until 2 and 3 A.M., of course. You had to hire dance bands, which I knew nothing about. Across the road from the Air Force Officers' Club were the officers' quarters. You had to run those too. I hated that because the officers in Washington had a habit of taking fishing trips to Florida and bringing their wives with them. These wives were wives of generals and colonels. They were really feeling their rank. I just hated that job.

I will never forget one particular time, I was home by myself and this general called up and nobody was meeting him at the quarters. I had goofed in some way and I came running. So I had the wrong key and I wasn't going to go all the way back. So I remembered that there was a bathroom window that always stayed open. I went around and I was the one that crawled out and fell in the bed with a couple who were illegally using officers' quarters.

But I enjoyed what I learned about planning meals and so forth. I had one chef who was a master sergeant who was a drunkard but he was very, very gifted. He would get furious at the other staff in the kitchen and start throwing things at them. When he was really drunk one night, I had to do something and he started chasing this busboy, who was very handsome and all the women were going for him, and this guy was jealous of him and hated him. He started chasing this busboy with a meat cleaver. I ran around the officers' club at 2 A.M., and the busboy ran into the liquor store because he had a key for that. The liquor store only had one entrance which was also the exit. When I got to them, the cleaver was in the air and this guy was blocking the boy from getting out of the door. I managed to kick him in the stomach and get him out of breath and got him out of that situation.

M: So you were mustered out of the military what year after Cocoa Beach? Did you go anywhere after Cocoa Beach?

R: No, that was when I went to Cuba.

M: Another time to Cuba, your second trip?

R: My second trip. We went to spend our mustering out pay.

M: And you were able to show them around?

R: Oh, yeah. I could show them around. I had already been to the winery and taught them how to drink wine and all this.

M: So in Cuba, did you ever go anywhere out of Havana or did you just stay in Havana?

R: No, we just stayed there the whole time. It was such an elegant town and

exciting and inexpensive for Americans. It's hard to believe. The only thing was that they still drove those Russian looking cars, those horrible cars. And I bet they're still driving the same ones. I'm told that they're all falling apart.

When I got out of the military was when I went to Chapel Hill. I enrolled in a couple of courses.

M: So you had your master's. You had a few years in the military behind you but you went back to Chapel Hill, what was your intention?

R: My intention was to take several courses for that semester while I was applying. I wanted to get the GI Bill. I already had it in my head from way back with Dr. Simmon and I had this romantic idea about the German language. By the way, at Chapel Hill, I told you that I flunked German.

M: Right, earlier on?

R: Yes, by cutting too much. Very near to my first days there was when I left for the post office and ran into Andy Griffith at the post office. He was out in the country and we started performing together. We did a lot of that. During that time, I remember once he had been to Greensboro before the Rotary Club.

M: Had he graduated by that time and was just kind of hanging out in Chapel Hill?

R: Yes, he had been teaching for the same number of years that I was in the Air Force.

M: So three or four years had gone by since you first knew him?

R: Yeah, right.

M: And then you came back and there he is again?

R: We really got to know each other because of performing together and Barbara and he had gotten married. He had taught for those three or four years. We hung out a lot in the lifeless house.

M: Did he still live in the same house?

R: He had rented this little house. They had a good station wagon which we drove around in and he did all the writing of the notices himself, he had no agent. I helped out on a few because of my being so interested in English and sort of wanting to minor in English at one time. But we got enough concerts together.

One time at Greensboro, and he had been there before, he had done a

monologue of Romeo and Juliet and he couldn't repeat it, so that's when he thought of, and I think it was within the time we were driving to Greensboro practically, he thought of *What It Was Was Football*.

M: The football monologue?

R: Yeah.

M: That's a great monologue. So he did that, those were two of his first real comic acts.

R: I've got to tell you something that sort of lights up in my mind, my one scholarship at Chapel Hill was playing The Carol at Bell Tower. Down in the woods at Kenan Stadium, I always had to leave a game a couple of minutes early to run like hell up to the tower. The bells in those days were not little electronic things where you play like C scale on, you had axe handles. The actual bell was attached way the hell up at the top by a manual metal stem to whatever pitch it was. So you had these axe handles, you were playing the weight of whatever bell. The bass bells were tons. So that was the one time I was really thin. I could really appear on the beach.

M: So that was your work study job. Did you have to play a tune? Was it like an alma mater tune or something?

R: You started out with the alma mater of whichever team won. That was just on the game days. My regular time was from 6:00 to 6:45 in the evenings to play hymns and whatever came to my mind. So my repertoire was getting pretty rather wide. I've always threatened to go back to the tower to see if they really did put my name down on the roster.

M: You did that before your first degree?

R: Yeah. The Duke/Carolina game was always the big game. This particular year, we were losing like crazy to Duke and I had to leave. Nobody had scored. It was one of those games where it was always nothing to nothing to the very end. So I ran up the hill and it looked very clear that we were going to lose and as I started out the alma mater for Duke University, I heard a scream: Wait! Wait, stop! They got an extra point. We won. So I had to change it.

M: What did you and Andy do when you performed together, did he sing and you play the piano, how did that all work?

R: He did his comedy routine mainly. He could play the guitar.

M: But did you play as well?

R: Oh, yeah. I had to sit at the piano there. But I also had to work the lights. Andy was so inventive with technical things because he had grown up in that tiny town and had to do everything for himself. The thing that we always got to eat was beans because those cookouts for the Rotary Club, they were unlimited. We got so sick of that stuff we didn't know what to do.

He had a friend of his back in Chapel Hill in the radio department, had recorded *What It Was Was Football*. This is later on. We were riding along one day and it was being played on Chicago radio. We pulled over to stop somewhere on a mountain road on our way to Asheville or something and heard *What It Was Was Football* for the first time and then the commentaries of the people who had called in about it and they were all loving it.

M: That must have been quite a thrill to have a Chicago radio station on.

R: It was.

M: Was he with you when you were listening to it?

R: Yes.

M: Was that the first time he had heard it like that?

R: Oh, yeah.

M: So it was just the two of you then on these circuits?

R: No, it was the three of us, Barbara, his wife.

M: His wife was also involved?

R: She had been this leading actress down at The Lost Colony. Year after year she had played the role of Virginia Dare. That's how she got him over all. You will never guess who he played. He was Sir Walter Raleigh. Andy Griffith, Sir Walter Raleigh.

M: Andy Griffith, Sir Walter Raleigh. Did you ever see that production?

R: Never did.

M: Do you think there's a copy of it that exists?

R: There might be. Barbara had a real temper by the way. I shouldn't tell this on her but she got real mad one time and her knee hit the windshield and cracked it. I stayed in that station wagon until its dying day I'm pretty sure. We had this star in front of us. Not her knee, her foot. She would have broken her knee.

M: Now, Andy Griffith, what was his personality like, was it mercurial, was it low key, was it upbeat?

R: Occasionally mercurial but always he made people think that he really talked like that all of the time. He would add the most stress on that: "Tell you what I'm going to do." But he wasn't so extreme. If you saw some of his first shows from Hollywood, he was still using that. Gradually I think whatever producers or whoever it was probably convinced him that it wasn't universal enough. It was so colored in the dialect that the later ones became a little bit folksy but not really dialect.

M: Did you ever in later years when he got to be really famous, did you ever speak to him or talk to him?

R: He came here. We got him to come as honorary chancellor. He is listed as one of the ones from about 15 years ago. He and Barbara were both to come but Barbara got a terrible case of the flu before that. I remember that they put on a supper at the Thrift's house the very night that Andy was arriving. His plane was late. So he came and Ingrid went to the door. I had got the flu on top of that. I was at home in bed. Ingrid was at the Thrift's to greet Andy and she said she'll never forget the look on his face when it was she and not me. She said: Oh, Andy, and he said: Where's Bob? He thought he had made a mistake.

But I got up out of that sick bed and played with Larry Stahl on drums and played the congo music.

M: With Larry Stahl?

R: With Larry Stahl, and Andy was the guest speaker.

M: Well, we want to get back to that but first we want to get to Florida Southern College. So those years with Andy it was about I guess one solid year that you were together on those various escapades?

R: Yeah, probably six or seven months. After that, I want to jump ahead a little bit, the first time I was back from Europe, he by then had played *No Time for Sergeants*. A friend of ours who had been my roommate, Bob Armstrong, was a Carolina playmaker. He moved to New York and invited Andy to operate from there. Andy had got a manager by then who booked him in all these clubs around the country. But there was no sign of a musical star yet. Bob Armstrong called him up one night, they were living on Long Island someplace in a one-room apartment I think, and he said I've got to cancel whatever you're doing tomorrow and come to a reading. It's a perfect role for you. It was the role in *No Time for Sergeants*. He said talk exactly the way you talk. Do the hillbilly thing and it will work. And they got it down to two people and the other one I think

probably wanted to commit suicide when they announced Andy.

I found out after many letters that I could use the GI Bill at the Austria Conservatory, actually The Academy of Music. That first fall, I was just feeling my way around. I got off the train in Vienna when I went over for the first time and I knew I could say: Auf wiedersehen and guten Morgen and maybe about three other sentences. That was it.

M: What year would that have been?

R: That was '64, '65. I was concentrating on trying to get the German. I wouldn't let my landlady say a single word in English to me, although she was quite an elegant teacher because I wanted to learn German also. All my American friends who had GI Bills and so forth weren't learning anything because they were hanging out together. But I had the courage to go out on my own and force myself. I had to pay for the pretense they call it.

I couldn't afford much on the GI Bill, \$110 a month. I was saving up to go home for my parents' 50th wedding anniversary that coming summer so I was hardly spending anything. The room was so cold I would have to get in bed by about 9:00 to stay warm. I would get in bed and I always had my German dictionary with me. What I would do to make myself fall asleep, I'd just read the dictionary, one word will lead to another. Your explanation led to something and you'd have to look that up. But that's the way I went to bed at night. Bless my soul, I learned that language. That whole year, I lived at that same place, one room. I had a little restaurant nearby that had a menu, which was a little weekly plan.

M: Okay. You're in Vienna and you're in your apartment and you're falling asleep as you read the German dictionary. Are you studying there, are you performing, what are you doing there in Vienna?

R: I was studying at the Academy of Music.

M: Are you going to take a degree there?

R: At that point, I had no idea about doing anything but just keeping that GI bill going. So I got this landlady to agree never to speak any English with me and I was getting a little bit better with my German. The first Christmas before a girlfriend of mine came to visit and we went skiing, that is to say she knew how to ski, I didn't know how. It was a wonder I didn't break my rear-end. I was still speaking English. I remember being so disgusted with myself after about 10 days of that, I came back and I vowed I was never going to utter a spontaneous sentence again.

I also knew that I was going to want to visit back, I had to start saving my money and start thinking about getting a ship back for the wedding anniversary of my

parents. I knew that if I'd go down the list, I'd find one or two things that I could report back to Charlotte where my brother, Donald's, friends – one of them was Viennese and she had made a list of some people that she knew very well. So I was literally important to that particular couple's name and gave them a call. Well, the lady of the house answered. Turned out her husband was a scientist who analyzes butterflies. He was in South America with his butterflies. She invited me to a Sunday lunch with several other people and I was just thrilled to learn that she didn't speak English. She had a niece who was at lunch that day, who unfortunately did speak some English and kept wanting to show off. You must remember that in those days right after World War II, the Viennese like many other Europeans, if you have an inkling of English, you wanted to use it and improve it and show off. This was getting nowhere and then desert came and I finished that. This girl said that she had to get going real fast because she is a prompter for a theater group. I thought that was my chance, I'll get out of here, I'll go with her. So I did.

We went to this small theater in * Jauresgasse. It was sort of a branch theater, a branch operation from the American Embassy but it was all run by Austria. There was a play going on because my prompter friend had to get to the rehearsal. The play was called *The Silver Cord*. The playwright was one of the writers on *Gone With the Wind*. This was his one single play that was successful enough to be known at all. As the girl and I walked into the theater, the rehearsal had begun. And on that stage were two women, one tall and one extremely short, and doing a monologue, angry at this other girl, reading the to her and she was just raising hell with her. That of course was Ingrid * Polenta. It was pretty much I was fascinated. You'd have to experience her on stage because she cannot make a wrong move. She is just so at home. Very few people I've known have ever had it.

So the next production, I was decent enough to audition for. It was an American play. I was a GI and Ingrid was my girlfriend and there was one other girl. I can't think of the name of it right now. So I got the part and that meant seeing each other for about four times a week for rehearsal and so forth. But still nothing all that exciting was --.

Meanwhile, to go ahead and skip a bit, I decided to go ahead and get my degree from The Academy of Music. For me to graduate from the academy, the rest of my family, they gathered the money for my father and my mother to come to Vienna, which is the last place you'd ever think my father would ever turn up with his fourth or fifth-grade education. That was an interesting experience because I had my final for it, you had to have like a three-hour interview with all the faculty of the academy and all of that of course was in German, which I was very fluent by then. But I remember that my father was so lost. It was such a mistake to have talked him into coming because my brother, Charles, who was the one who was in the military, he agreed to come with him and drive, because he was living in London at the time, and he drove him around here. I will never forget when he

delivers him to my apartment in Vienna, he says: Here, they're yours.

M: How old were they by that time?

R: They were quite elderly. Charles would tell me tales of every restaurant they were in. My father would wander over to a strange group and he would take out a dollar bill and say: Look there, you want to see some real money, you know, that type of thing. Charles spoke rather fluent French.

One more thing I have to tell you about him. In those days, the milk wagons were pulled by horses, sometimes if it was a large one, two horses but you could also hook just one horse up to those if you weren't going very far. I got home one day and got my final, I had lifted from my shoulders that I had actually passed it, and as I got near my apartment, I was horror stricken when I saw this large group and a police car in front of my apartment house. When I got there, it turns out that this milk wagon was in the center of it with a horse, one horse hitched up to it. My father, who was causing the whole thing, he had been there waiting on me and he had seen that the horse was hitched up to a two-horse wagon and was pulling the milk one-sided fashion. He later explained to me that that is terrible on one of the shoulders of the horse because it's an uneven kind of weight. I ran up to him and said: Daddy, what in the world?

M: So he was doing a good deed for the horse?

R: Yes. And he said he was trying to explain that he had a single horse hitched up to a two-horse wagon and there's a way to do that where it won't hurt the horse. It won't put all the stress on that one shoulder. The poor horse can't do anything about it. Meanwhile, officers from the police waited on me to do something to get rid of that crowd.

M: Tell us how things went after your graduation, after your parents came to your graduation.

R: I was doing concerts around different countries in Europe but I also was getting some concerts from an agency in New York from the states. Meanwhile, Ingrid and I had moved to Manhattan hoping to live at least for a year there. In the course of that tour, I was in a lot of places in the Northwest and the Midwest. One of them was the University of North Dakota. They had a wonderful Visual Arts Department at that time. The guy who was head of the concert committee was the head of the art department. He was going to take me to the airport and he arrived at the motel with a long package. It looked like a kite or something. He had rolled up the canvas of a marvelous picture which has an honored place in my house to this very day. He had painted a slightly out-of-strike-zone landscape, oil painting that he gave me as a souvenir for the University of North Dakota. The next date after that he was taking me to the plane leaving for Tampa.

It changed in Charleston, West Virginia, and I arrived in Tampa. The academic dean met me, not Ben Wade, but the one before him. We came to Florida Southern and I stayed in the guest house or something here on the campus. It belonged to some of the faculty members. I wanted to rehearse that night so he said: Well, I'll drop you off and you can put your things in the room and we'll go to the chapel. There was no auditorium at that time. All the concerts were in the chapel. He left me there and I remember walking out and heading to the campus to this estate and seeing the lights on those arcades and seeing the Frank Lloyd Wright architecture and I was just absolutely taken by it. It seems unreal. It's like a different world.

When I got to the house, there was a visiting basketball team there. They were dribbling right in front of my door. It sounded like a water faucet dripping. They were running back and forth and I couldn't get to sleep. I think they were partying too. So at like 11:30 or 12:00 at night, I called up the dean and said: I'm sorry, I'll pay for the motel myself if you'll take me to a motel. They took me to the Holiday Inn, which at that time was . . . near where that funeral home is. That was the last concert in that series and I went back to New York.

The Arts Program for the Association of Mid-Florida Colleges, they had their own office in New York. The lady who ran it was from North Carolina. So I was actually planning to live one year in New York but that managed to become two and a half or something like that, never thinking anything about Florida Southern. I had a couple of summer jobs in Buck Hill Falls, Pennsylvania. The residence had a large auditorium there. When the dean visited a friend near that campus, he contacted me and said he had an interesting idea for me.

... So that afternoon, he presented me with the idea of coming to Florida Southern, which was farthest from my mind. The day that I left for the interview, I remember so far back, just little scenes. I remember Sona, who was three, being escorted everywhere, to go to Central Park to play. As the bus for the airport pulled out, I looked out and Sona and Ingrid were about to cross over to go to whatever avenue that is on the west side of the park, Ingrid was holding her hand so hard that she started to cry. That became a very determining picture in my mind all the way on that trip. I'm convinced that it caused me to be very interested in saying yes to various things. Even if it was, it was just to be for nine months.

M: What was it about that scene that really touched you in that way?

R: The very fact that Sona was so young and so innocent and being held so tightly out of a sense of everything was so dangerous in New York.

M: You were thinking about the future and raising a child in a safer place?

R: You know how you have a picture that sticks with you, that was one that has stuck with me. It really provoked me.

M: The 1960s in New York were a pretty tumultuous time for the city, weren't they? It was a time when things were becoming pretty dangerous. More dangerous than they would have been in, say the '40s.

R: Absolutely.

M: So New York was becoming a wilder place.

R: Right. I still had my connection with that New York agency signed for a couple of more seasons. That helped me to get a good many dates.

M: If we go back, I want to end today's discussions with your beginning at Florida Southern so we will start with that the next time. Can you go back and talk a little bit about Ingrid and how you got married and when you got married and circumstances by which you got married and followed up that first encounter as a fellow after an actress? How many years did you date before you decided to get married?

R: I think Ingrid would answer that as endless because I was so hard to make up my mind. I had lived in several different places by then. Of course, Harold Andrews, my friend that had come that first year, was long gone. By the way, he got a job teaching bassoon at the Mozarteum. They had gone there for about three or four years. Ingrid and I, our first real date, we saw a movie called *Love is a Many Splendored Thing*. Do you remember that movie?

M: I've heard of it, yeah.

R: The title song was *Love is a Many Splendored Thing*. I hadn't remembered that in ages. These impressions are so potent that I'm not able to ...

M: They break your train of thought, right?

R: That's not hard to do.

M: So when you were married, did you come directly to the United States after that?

R: Yes.

M: Was it hard to convince her to come over to the United States?

R: We did live in Vienna for at least a half a year. The marriage itself was interesting because I was the only one absent for my brother, Donald's, wedding

which was to take place at Grandfather Mountain. So on the same Sunday in the afternoon, he was married on the mountain that's part of the Highland Games. We always laughed, trust Donald to make it to show biz and an audience of thousands. He had three pipe bands that played at the end of it. They came in. He married a young Scottish girl. He had done research on Scottish games in Glasgow and met his wife-to-be who was 50 percent of a very famous sisters singing team. Donald married her that afternoon and I married and so on in Vienna that afternoon. Six hours difference, I think he got me by six hours.

Then we lived in the *Apostelgasse, which is right near the edge of – are you familiar with Vienna at all?

M: A little bit.

R: The *Wien Schwechat is a very – where the wall used to be. Sections of it are still there. Virtually out of one of those sections was a place where I lived called Apostelgasse. So the only place I could afford was that. It was really a one-room apartment with kind of a kitchenette and the entrance. We lived there for about five or six months. I still didn't have a job anywhere. We moved to Killigrey, my parents' home, for about the first six or seven months.

M: And she lived in your parents' house?

R: Right. And it was healthy for the little one to have a place to run around and play because it's 12 miles from anywhere, the cotton fields. Ingrid and the black lady who was our maid for about 25 years got on famously for the first thing. I remember we lived upstairs in this Florida old orange house. It was built in 1880 something. I remember we came back to visit Vienna paid for by my father-in-law, who was the head of the Court of Justice as it was called. The name of the black lady was Carabelle. She had no idea where we had come from or anything. She had no education whatsoever but she and Ingrid took to each other immediately. They were just buddies.

I will never forget that first morning when we had been in Vienna for a visit and she came at the bottom of the stairs and called up to wake us up and Ingrid had just dressed Sona and you know how new mothers are being very possessive and they want to show off, well, they started down the steps toward Carabelle and Carabelle said the supreme compliment, she said: "Oh, look at that baby, ain't she fat?", which meant she was the product of a good life, she was filled out, she was not starving or anything. But "Ain't she fat" was a different sound to Ingrid. She was absolutely shocked. It took me a while to convince her that that's what Carabelle meant. Why couldn't she have said: Oh, she's so pretty?

The artist in residence before me had been there for one year. He was very unhappy here. I think there was a little altercation with a member of the administration, I'm not sure. We lived in an old apartment down on Park Street,

about two more blocks on down.

M: Okay. We're going to go back and you're going to discuss the job that you got that brought you first to Florida Southern College. It was a New York City job.

R: It was actually on an engagement here, playing a concert. The way we were living in New York was that I was hired on as an artist for this agency just as if I booked people later who were in the Columbia Artist Management. This was a smaller management, very collegiate. So it meant that I wasn't home in Manhattan, I'd go home there. Most of the Americans I knew were running elevators or something. I always looked up to it as being damn lucky that I was lucky that I could go out for concerts, two or three or four concerts and be back for one of my concert trips.

M: So you would go from place to place, colleges, universities?

R: Yes.

M: And you would play concerts and they would book you?

R: Uh-huh.

M: That must have been kind of a fun job. You got to travel a lot.

R: Oh, my, it was.

M: Did Ingrid go with you?

R: Very seldom because she was at home looking after Sona. It was a wonderful time because I was able to see life from a standpoint of the one who was being booked, and to know that many months after that I would start booking it myself.

M: You would be the one doing it all yourself.

R: Yeah. In that first year, the first three years, I was not chairing the music department. Then academic dean interrupted one of my lessons one morning and said that the then head of the department and Dr. Thrift had had an altercation. They had never gotten along particularly well. He was relinquishing the chairmanship of the music department, would I be willing?

I knew nothing about academe and I protested that to him. Dean, I have no idea. He said: Well, I'll put you on the curriculum committee and I'll give you a person to coach you and teach you how.

M: We'll pick up with that next time. We're going to end it for today and then pick

up with your first few weeks or months here in Lakeland and what it was like here in Lakeland and what was the community like and what was the college like and what was President Thrift like and all that.

This is ending November 23rd.