PAULINE ADAMS

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Jeff Charnley,
interviewer

Charnley: Today is November 16, 1999. We're at Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan. I'm Jeff Charnley interviewing Professor Pauline Adams for the Michigan State University Oral History Project for the sesquicentennial of the institution, to be celebrated in the year 2005.

Professor Adams, as you know, you can see we are tape-recording today. Do you give us permission to tape?

Adams: Yes.

Charnley: I would like to start out with some questions about your early impressions of Michigan State when you first came. What's your educational background and, obviously, professional background? Where did you go to school?

Adams: I went as an undergraduate to Brooklyn College, and I did my graduate work, which was a master's degree, at Columbia University in the economics department, where I concentrated on economic history. Then I took some more postgraduate courses at Yale University, again in economic history.

Charnley: What years were those, your degrees?

Adams: I graduated from Brooklyn College in 1942. I graduated from Columbia in 1945, and then I was at Yale from '46 until '47.

CharnIey: So, during the war years you were in--

Adams: In New York City. I lived at home during all my college experiences, so I never had a dorm experience, I never knew what it was to live at college or live away from home.

Charnley: Gave a little different perspective.

Adams: A different perspective. So I've been a sophomore ever since.

Charnley: How was it that you came to Michigan State? What were the circumstances?

Adams: Well, in those days a woman accompanied her husband, and my husband's first job outside of his graduate teaching at Yale was at Michigan State, so we came here in 1947, August of '47.

Charnley: Had you been to Michigan before?

Adams: Never.

Charnley: And never here?

Adams: Never here. I had really never been outside of New York except for the two years we lived in New Haven, Connecticut, when we were at Yale.

Charnley: Anything you remember of those early days that was striking about living west of the Hudson?

Adams: Oh, yes, a lot. When we arrived, we drove. It took us three days to get here from New York City. There were no superhighways then. We took a ferry, left Buffalo on an overnight ferry, and then disembarked at Detroit, and then drove up, I guess, Grand River all the way from Detroit, and arrived here, I remember, on a Sunday. We were assigned an apartment in Cherry Lane, the "brick apartments," we called them, 801 Cherry Lane.

Charnley: You remember the exact apartment.

Adams: Oh, yes, because I am still a member of a bridge group of women from 801 Cherry Lane.

Charnley: The same building?

Adams: Well, it started out that way, but there's been attrition along the way, and replacements, but I'm the only original member of that group. We were first tenants. The building did not have bricks on the building yet. They called it a -three-room apartment. It was

really two rooms because it was a bedroom and there was a living room and a tiny kitchen that you couldn't eat in, and that was the whole thing.

We had a child at that time, and we gave him the bedroom and we slept on a pull-out couch in the living room. Unfortunately, the bathroom--whoever designed that apartment did a lousy job. The bathroom was on the other side of the bedroom, so having a child who was a light sleeper, for the first hour or two that he was asleep, we didn't dare go into the bathroom if we needed to. This was very hard on us. [Laughter]

Charnley: [Laughter] The ultimate sacrifice.

Adams: Right.

Charnley: When you first came, were you teaching here?

Adams: Actually, the first year I was here, I did teach one quarter. I taught in the humanities department, or I think it was called History of Civilization then. I did teach a course in the winter quarter. Someone Greer--Tom [Thomas H.] Greer was on leave.

Charnley: You were his replacement?

Adams: Well, I didn't take his place, but I took his classes. So I did teach that one quarter, but that was all until I started teaching in this department.

Charnley: When you first arrived, how was the campus different as you remember it?

Adams: Oh, it was very different. It was very different from what it is today. It was very different from New York City. It was very different from even New Haven.

Charnley: In what ways, would you say?

Adams: Well, the day we arrived, it was warm. Our furniture hadn't come yet, and I remember I thought, well, to make supper, I'll go out to the store and get some vegetables and some sour cream and must make a salad for supper. There was a little store that was run by the Prince brothers, where I think the--no, I don't know. There are no buildings there now. It was right on--oh, what's the name of that? Kalamazoo and Harrison. And I went into this little store and I asked for some sour cream, and you wouldn't believe what the clerk said to me. He said, "Lady, all our cream is fresh." Well, I knew I was in a different country. I knew that this was a different world. And little things like that. It took a little while.

Our apartment, as I say, we were the first tenants there, and our apartment had an apartment-size stove. It was electric stove with three burners on the top. One of them didn't

work. So I called the housing manager and I said, "You know, this is a new stove, but it's defective, and I suggest you return it and get a fully operating stove."

And he said, "I'll be right over." And he came over, and he said to me, "Have you ever cooked on an electric stove before?"

Actually, I hadn't. We had a gas stove in the East. I said, "Well, as a matter of fact, no," and I was going to tell him it was a gas stove.

And he said to me, "That's the trouble with all you Southerners. You only know woodburning stoves." Well, I mean, it was a very different world than it is today.

We were the first group of faculty who came from outside Michigan. The university was expanding into a university, from a college into a university, and it was called Michigan State College at that time. The feel was completely different. We were foreigners and we were strangers, and it was very different.

Charnley: So World War II, the generation that went through and fought World War II, did your husband use the G.I. Bill when he went afterwards?

Adams: Oh, yes, to graduate school was with the G.I. Bill.

Charnley: So you were part of that influx of large numbers of students and faculty alike.

Adams: Absolutely. And many of the students were G.I. Bill recipients. They were veterans.

Charnley: Did you notice the difference even in the first class that you'd teach? I know it's been a long time since then, but attitudes of students on campus toward either their studies or the university as a whole, or college? Did you see any qualitative differences?

Adams: If I'm honest, I don't remember. I've always loved teaching, I always enjoy being in the classroom, and I enjoyed it, whatever it was. I don't remember any particular problems with the students, but it was only a one-quarter experience, and I really don't remember the student body that well.

Charnley: When did you first begin teaching in American Thought and Language?

Adams: In 1956. Yes, '56. It wasn't called American Thought and Language then. Our classes were over in Quonset huts on south campus.

Charnley: And the curriculum mission at that time, was it teaching writing, or was it a variety of—

Adams: It was teaching reading, writing, listening, speaking. I think it was called Communication Skills. Those were the four dimensions. I must say, it was a very disappointing program. I mean, I thought it was a very weak curriculum.

Charnley: And it was centrally designed? Would people teach from a common syllabus?

Adams: Yes, a common syllabus, common tests. There was practically no leeway for the individual instructor, and the students took it very lightly, and I don't think they got much out of it.

Charnley: That changes at some point.

Adams: Yes, it changed. We got a new chairperson, Blackman. Ed Blackman. He had the conception of a body of material from which we would work. That body of material, that core of common material, was chosen to be American Studies. So for me it was late in coming, but it was a wonderful, miraculous change from what had been. Theoretically the old syllabus sounded great, you know. We'll teach them how to read and write and speak and listen. But, of course, the whole thing was a farce.

Charnley: Were the class sizes large at that time?

Adams: As I recall, yes. They were in the thirties. We had a common section where we would meet. All our sections would meet together one day a week, in addition to the individual sections. I'm trying to recall what we did in that one common section.

Charnley: Did they bring in guest speakers?

Adams: No, no, no. There was a text that they used. I thought it was a very poorly designed course, as far as being effective, but you may get faculty here who thought it was excellent. I don't know.

Charnley: In those early years, were there any faculty, any of your colleagues that you worked closely with in your teaching?

Adams: Not initially I didn't. I spent little time on campus. I would come in, teach my course, and then go home and do my grading and etc., at home. Office space was very limited. When we were over in the Quonset huts, before Bessey Hall was built, we had a common office. There must have been four or five instructors in the same office. Well, you know that's very difficult to do anything, to do your own work, to interview or have conferences with students. It was very limiting. So I did a lot of my own work, preparation, etc., at home.

Charnley: Did you have a favorite text that you've used over the years that worked well or that students responded to? Did you have any favorite one that worked well?

Adams: No. I think when we started on the American Thought and Language, when we started on the American Studies core, we were given several books to help prepare us to teach that, like Horton and Edwards and others, that were very helpful, and our text--I'm trying to think, the anthology that we used. Do you remember the name?

Charnley: Was it the Norton Anthology, or was it a different one?

Adams: No, it was a different one. I have it at home. It was excellent, very good. And I've always believed that that course that came in to replace the original Communication Skills did as much for the faculty as it did for the students, because it rounded out the faculty in their background, and so they even began to do research and write in a field that they may not have gotten their advanced degrees in. It broadened them so. It did so much for the faculty, I believe, that it was wonderful. I wish I could remember the anthology we used, but it was a very good anthology and very instructive, wonderful to teach.

But we used very little outside reading in addition to that anthology, and in the early days we still had a common exam, which in a way was unfortunate, because if you are concentrating on writing, which we were, to have an exam that was a common exam based on the reading materials that counted 50 percent of the grade, left very little room for the individual teacher and the impact of writing. But then it changed. It changed in the late sixties as a result of student rebellion.

Charnley: [Laughter] You saw direct cause and effect?

Adams: Oh, yes.

Charnley: To the large classes and the curriculum.

Adams: And the country. Oh, yes. And then we went off into all different areas and instructors were allowed much greater freedom in choosing, and the instructor was given the full power of grade-giving, which is where it belongs.

Charnley: That had been lacking before?

Adams: Well, because 50 percent of the grade automatically was that common exam. So the instructor had just minimal impact, really, on things, which is unfortunate.

Charnley: Were there any areas of your own research and scholarly interests that you incorporated in those years, in the seventies?

Adams: Into the teaching?

Charnley: Yes, that you developed an interest.

Adams: Well, I'm trying to think, because most of my research and most of my writing, it was sort of parallel but outside the course we were teaching. It had all to do with American studies in one way or another, but it wasn't directly related. For instance, the book that I wrote together with Geri Thornton, A Populist Assault: Sara E. Vandevar Emory [phonetic] on American Democracy, 1862-1895, I never even mentioned her in my class, although one quarter I did use it, because it fitted into my concept of the way I set up the class. I always tried to change. Every year I changed a good part of my syllabus, just to gratify myself.

Charnley: How did students respond to the text?

Adams: They didn't like it. No, they didn't like it. They thought it was too boring. They wanted to read some light novel that they could be entertained by.

Charnley: In this text did you find your training as an economist helped you at all in understanding her ideas?

Adams: That's one reason I got--I'm not an economist.

Charnley: Economic history. That's right. They're different.

Adams: And any economist would tell you that's not being an economist.

Charnley: That's true.

Adams: So, yes, because she was a populist and she was mainly concerned with the economy. She was a monetarist, and early monetarist. Of course, Milton Friedman, the "great" modern contemporary--and I use "great" in quotation marks--economist looked to the populists, and he recognized them and acknowledged them as the source of his whole monetarist theory. So that, yes, my background in economic history helped me very much in understanding what she was writing, why she was writing it, and what the implications of her writings were.

Charnley: How did you first get interested in her?

Adams: Well, it's an interesting thing. When Bessey Hall went up and we got offices, many of us still shared an office. Now, if you can picture our tiny offices with two people in it, the person that I had as my office mate was Geri Thornton. Instead of killing each other off, we helped each other, discussed what we were working on, etc.

Geri retired long before I did. She belonged to the Unitarian Church, and she had found in the church the records of this woman, Sara E. Vandevar Emory, whose papers were in the church archives. She said, 'Pauline, I'd like to work on this woman."

I said, "Great! Why don't you do that. You're retired now. You should do it." And she started.

Then she called me and she said, 'Look. There's too much economics here. I need some help." And Geri and I had complementary minds. I had a more logical, organized mind. She had a poetic mind, and very imaginative. We worked very well together. As a matter of fact, we collaborated on many different articles together.

So she wanted me to join her, to work on all the different writings of this woman, and I could only work with her in the summer, because during the academic year, what with all the paper-grading and everything else, and having a life beyond Michigan State, as well, I only worked in the summer. So it took us a long time working on that. I think we worked on that for about five years. But that certainly helped me. But then we did a lot of other things. For instance, Geri was so taken with our experience as collaborators, that she wanted to do something on collaboration. We did some research on collaboration as a style of doing research and writing, and interviewed lots of people on that, and we did a couple of articles on that. I was interested in other things that we worked on together.

I also worked with John Appel. We did a couple of things. I worked with Marilyn Culpepper; we gave joint papers at various meetings. So that it was all some way related to the course, related to American Studies, but that didn't get into the course that I taught, if I make that distinction.

Charnley: I understand. This issue of collaboration, I think, is a key one, scholars working together.

Adams: Very interesting.

Charnley: It goes against the grain of the perception of the solitary scholar up in the ivory tower, and also looking at your husband's writings--

Adams: He does a lot of collaboration.

Charnley: I think that's maybe an important thread that maybe some people haven't looked at. In terms of the actual collaboration that you did with Geri Thornton and Marilyn Culpepper and

others, looking at the writing process as you did that, was one person responsible for a first draft? How did you organize that?

Adams: Well, actually, that's the question that's always asked of a collaborator, like, "Who wrote what and how did you do it?" My personal experience with my three collaborators, John Appel, Marilyn Culpepper, and Geri Thornton, each experience was completely different from the other and the process was different.

When we were gathering material for the little article that Geri and I wrote on collaboration, and I interviewed many people from different disciplines, each person's experience and attitude was different, but what we discovered as we wrote, if I remember correctly, in that article, is that the discipline they came from also had an impact on the experience.

For instance, we found people from the English department thought that collaborate writing was sort of dishonest, that if they didn't do it themselves, if they didn't write alone, that it really wasn't a true form of research and accomplishment; they had to do it themselves.

People in the sciences said they always wrote in collaboration, and that if you pick up a scientific article, you see a whole host of authors of that article. In the social sciences, there was increasing emphasis on collaboration because of, as in the sciences, increasing specialization, so that no one person could really cover different aspects of a topic because they were so highly specialized, the individual.

On a personal level, the experience was very different, too. Some people never saw their collaborators. The publishers would put together a group, asking people, hiring people from various parts of the country to work on texts for such and such. Some of them never met their collaborators at all, and they were just given an assignment by a publishing house, and that was their contribution to that text.

So the experience was so varied and brought with it varying forms of gratification. Some loved the experience and it was very meaningful to them on a personal level, aside from the scholarly level, and others disliked it immensely.

Charnley: What did you work on with John Appel?

Adams: It was a review article of immigrant tapes, and we did it for some publication that dealt with immigration, history of immigration. We would listen to these tapes together, and then I can't remember exactly, one of us would write up what we heard, reaction to it and a summary of it, and then give it to the other. Then that person would edit it or change it, and then it would go back to the original writer and become part of it. That's what we did. We did two articles.

Charnley: The tapes were immigrants' own experiences?

Adams: It was oral histories. Oral histories of immigrants who came over from all over the world and under all different circumstances.

Charnley: And with Marilyn Culpepper?

Adams: Marilyn Culpepper and I did several things. We did something on oral history. We did interviewing older women in their eighties, in the area.

Charnley: Was there a topic of focus of that?

Adams: Well, you know, the way I like to work in oral history may be against the form, because it's a little undisciplined. I like to have a series of questions that I ask them, but if the interviewee starts taking off on a train of thought, I just let them go. I don't restrict them. So it's more difficult to write it up, because you can't say, "Three people said this and ten people said that," and whatever. But we did some oral history together.

We also did an article on diaries and letters from the Civil War, and particularly we did one article on nurses and nursing during the Civil War, based on these letters. We also did a couple of articles on diaries of women that we got from the state archives, and we compared and contrasted them. One was a schoolteacher, another was a woman who worked in Lansing in a bakery in the latter part of the 19th century, post Civil War period. That's what we worked on, and other things as well. That's it, essentially.

Charnley: The poetry that Geri Thornton--did you write any poetry with her?

Adams: No, no. She was the poet. I did work with her. We wrote a very interesting article on her grandfather, who was an original homesteader in Minnesota, and he wrote for that local newspaper that was put out in the latter part of the 19th century. We went over all the articles from the newspaper and we did an article on that, and I worked with her on that. It was very interesting. And we did a lot of things together on the way. I, frankly, can't remember. I should have my bibliography here or my vitae.

Charnley: Let's turn the page a little bit toward talking about some of the presidents that you worked with. I also want to talk a little bit about the experience that you had when your husband was president of the university. Do you remember any of your first contact with John [A.] Hannah?

Adams: Well, yes. The university was much smaller when we came, and every year at the beginning of the academic year, Hannah would have a reception for the faculty at the Union Building. He would stand in the receiving line and welcome each person in the faculty. He took a very personal interest in those early days, of his faculty members, and that was the first time I met him. We arrived near the end of August, and in September was that--

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

Charnley: We were talking about first impressions of John Hannah, president, when the tape ended. Going back to some of his style as president in the early years, when you first got here, you were mentioning maybe the direct personal interest that he took in faculty.

Adams: Yes. It's not that he kept up with you, but he did have that opening reception where he greeted each person. I know that in the early days when some of the faculty that he wanted to keep--as I said earlier, he was building a new faculty and a new university, and so he was gathering faculty from all over the country. He loved to get people from Ivy schools and from the East and West Coast, etc. He wanted to retain these people. Very often some of them would get a good job offer and want to leave, and he would very often personally--and this is hearsay--take them up to his office and say, 'Now, you want to stay here." He would personally try to convince them to stay and share with them, I think, his vision of Michigan State becoming a great university, abandoning that 'cow college" image. So in that sense.
But he was a very--well, I hate to say "dictatorial," but he was an autocrat. He had a vision and he was out to realize it. On the one hand, he didn't see a strong faculty having a say in the running of the university as the way to achieve his goals, I think.

Charnley: So faculty were somewhat out under his administration. They were cut out of the governance, or it was limited?

Adams: Very, very limited. And the sixties brought about that change, those changes, and that's something he couldn't handle. When the students and the faculty became more rambunctious, it was very difficult for him, and that's why he really resigned, retired precipitously, without any provision for his replacement, and so it was because the times had changed.

But during his time, he was able to create, really go a long way towards fulfilling his vision for Michigan State. He did wonders for Michigan State. He was a remarkable person to have had in office. The university was very, very lucky. But he was a man of those times. He couldn't deal with the late 1960s.

Charnley: The change.

Adams: Yes. I remember the faculty used to call him "Uncle John" behind his back. Uncle John, he was always referred to.

Charnley: I'd like to talk a little bit later about your husband's experience. But Dr. [Clifton R.] Wharton [Jr.], if we can jump ahead, obviously, a few years. When you first met the Whartons, any impressions that you remember?

Adams: Well, yes, they seemed to be a delightful couple. They were very cultivated, both of them. They were very much Easterners, both of them. They brought a certain, shall I say, refinement, a certain sense of gentility to the campus. Yes, that was what I think of in terms of the Whartons.

Charnley: Any differences in administrative style that you saw in either approach to teaching or university?

Adams: Well, by then I was like most faculty, pretty much removed from the president and an administrative style. I mean, if someone were to ask you about all the presidents, who were presidents, most of the time you're not even aware of what's going on.

I think that Wharton was a more--how can I say it? I don't think he had the kinds of dreams for Michigan State University that Hannah had. He wasn't propelled by this desire to build a great university. I believe he saw himself as administrating a going concern, and to do it as well as he could, in a very--I keep using the word "refined." That's the way I think of him. I think of him as a cultured person.

Charnley: You had social contact with many of the presidents.

Adams: Yes.

Adams: Of course, in that time. Were there any special occasions that were almost always where all the presidents were brought together?

Adams: Occasionally that would happen. For instance, I think it was [John A.] DiBiaggio who wanted to have the board room up on the fourth floor of the Hannah Administration Building to have portraits of all the presidents, and at that point DiBiaggio had hired someone, a firm, really, to do these portraits. It was done with photographs that they then did something with, that made it look as if they were a painted portrait, but it really wasn't. At that time all the presidents were brought together for that purpose, and that was done.

At various affairs, for instance, when John Hannah died, I remember Wharton came back to attend the memorial service, and we saw them then, and we would occasionally run into them, because, you know, Wharton was an economist, as several of the presidents were, as it turned out. [Laughter]

Charnley: Cecil Mackey.

Adams: Cecil Mackey. So at economics meetings, I would sometimes see Wharton after he left.

Charnley: In looking at any of the provosts and some of the other people, maybe the board of trustees, were there any that you recall in your experience or in your husband's experience, any board of trustees members that you think might be good interviews, that are still living, that would be a good interview?

Adams: One person I remember that you may want to think about interviewing is Blanche Martin, because he lives in the area, he's still alive, and he was on the board when all the student activities took place. So he would have a very clear view of it. You may, if you could, interview Larry Owen, who is chair. What was his name--he was with the--what foundation was he a member of?

Charnley: Russ [Russell G.] Mawby?

Adams: Yes, you may want to interview him, because he would be close to--

Charnley: He was chair for quite a few years.

Adams: He was, and he was a person of substance and devotion to the university. Because he may be getting along in years, so you should put him on the top of the list. I have no idea about the state of his health.

Charnley: If we could talk a little bit about your husband's career here at Michigan State and his decision to come to MSU. Did he have several choices?

Adams: Two choices. One was at LSU [Louisiana State University] in Louisiana, and Michigan State at that time. We just chose Michigan State for some reason, I guess whatever reason. We didn't think in terms of LSU. So we came here thinking, like everyone else in those Cherry Lane brick apartments, "Oh, we'll be here for a year or two and then we'll take off. We're not going to stay here." So we came.

When Walter got the job and he told his fellow graduate students at Yale that we were going, they said, "Oh, you'll love Ann Arbor. It's a very interesting place." They'd never heard of East Lansing. They'd never heard of Michigan State College. Others who were a little more knowledgeable, perhaps, said, "You know, it's going to be very interesting. People will bring you farm goods. They'll bring you potatoes. They'll bring you chickens." Etc. So the whole Eastern attitude of what is in store for us, this is what we came with.

Walter was the kind of person who was--he believed, on his list of values, one of his highest values was loyalty, and once we came here, it was clear that he developed this very strong loyalty to Michigan State. It would have been almost impossible for us to leave after a while. He had some run-ins with his chairperson initially, and as a result, he was thinking of the possibility of leaving, but that was only very initially.

A friend of mine, a faculty person here who's retired now--I'm not going to mention her name--who was the daughter of a faculty person at Michigan State a long time ago, whom

Walter knew and worked with on university-wide committees, showed me a letter that her father had sent to her. She said her father's practice was to write a weekly letter to all his children, and she said she was putting his affairs in order. She came across this letter written in the early 1960s, and it was just three sentences devoted to Walter. She said, "Walter, a good guy, in my estimation, really blew his top at Hannah because the faculty wasn't being informed of decisions being made by the president and the upper administration, and he really blew his top. He'll have to leave."

I got such a kick out of that letter. It was typically Walter, and it was a misreading on her father's part of Hannah, because Hannah would not have--Walter believed that if Hannah thought that your best interests were Michigan State, that you weren't just, you know, shooting off your mouth just because you felt like doing it, but if you're doing it in what you thought was the best interest of Michigan State, he could tolerate it. Otherwise, he wouldn't. But anyway, I thought that was very amusing.

Charnley: This issue of loyalty. Was there any point where you knew personally that he was really committed to continuing his career here? Is there anything that stands out, where you recognized he had made his decision?

Adams: He turned down a lot of offers, academic offers and non-academic offers. For instance, he was offered the executive--I don't know what the title is--executive secretary or president or whatever it was, of the Independent Bankers Association. I remember its headquarters was in Sac City, and he turned that down. So he wouldn't go outside of the academic profession.

He had a pretty realistic understanding of his strengths. He knew that teaching was an area of his strength. He loved teaching. His focus in economics never varied, even though the fashions in economics changed over the years. He retained his focus. He had a strong belief that for a healthy society you can't have concentrations of power, and this was true of economic power, which is where he focused his attention.

He always believed that economics should really be political economy and that antitrust, as a discipline in economics, of course, given his beliefs, was the area that he concentrated on. So he knew that his strength was in writing. He was a good writer and he was a good teacher. It wouldn't be in administration. That's why he refused to even think of staying on in the presidency. But his loyalty to Michigan State made him agree to accepting that interim position.

The university was really in turmoil. Were you here at that time?

Charnley: No, I was at Central Michigan right at that time. I began in 1968, 1 graduated from high school.

Adams: That was just at the beginning of that time.

Charnley: Just at the beginning. I was there. I had a low draft number. Then I got drafted at the end of '72, right at the tail end of the Vietnam War. So I wasn't familiar with what was going on here. Then I came to Michigan State in 178.

Adams: So you missed the whole thing.

Charnley: So I missed all that, that went on here.

Adams: It was amazing, what was going on here. Of course, Hannah resigned or retired just like that, and consequently, Walter really felt, when the board of trustees contacted him, and the board of trustees was very divided. I mean, it was on political lines. It was political lines. The Democrats wanted him, and they were in the majority at that point. And the Republicans were against him. I don't think Hannah was happy to have seen him named. In fact, I know he wasn't. But Walter recognized his own strengths. He knew that he wasn't an administrator and cut out for administration, but he could operate in that tense situation of the moment. I think he did very well. But as a routine administrator, that was not his own strength, and he was lucky enough to recognize it.

I was teaching full time when he was in the presidency, so I really wasn't aware of a lot of what was going on. My students never knew that I was the president's wife. They never knew that.

Charnley: They didn't make that connection?

Adams: No. Adams is such a common name, you know, and I never said anything to indicate that I was.

Charnley: It wasn't on the syllabus. [Laughter]

Adams: Yes, it wasn't on the syllabus.

Charnley: It's interesting, I know we've talked before a little bit about his war career. At that time with you did he talk at all about the war, not so much about the Vietnam War, but I'm thinking in terms of what you mentioned about he wasn't afraid of the crisis.

Adams: No, he wasn't.

Charnley: I mean, his combat experience, he'd seen other things. But at that time do you recall him saying anything or making any illusions? He didn't fear students perhaps because he'd seen a real enemy?

Adams: He didn't fear students at all, and I didn't fear students either. I'll give you a little personal example. One day I was going out of my office on second floor you know in Bessey, down to my classroom, which was on the first floor in Bessey, and as I left the classroom, a colleague--that's all I'll say--a colleague said to me, "Where are you going?"

I said, "I have a class."

Meanwhile, there was a demonstration going on in the halls of Bessey on the first floor. And this colleague said, [whispering] "You can't go down there. It's dangerous."

I said, "It's not dangerous. These students are demonstrating and they have very strong beliefs, and they're carrying on. I know that there's a demonstration down there, but I'm not afraid of them. I'm going to class."

And that colleague went back to the office and locked the door. That colleague was afraid. I never was, in part because of my background. I came from a college that was very radicalized. I went to college from '38 to '42. It was in Brooklyn, New York, and those students were very radical, and we had demonstrations like that all the time. We used to yell at our teachers. I mean, once the police that were outside my history classroom were lining up getting ready for what we used to call County Fair Day at Brooklyn College. They were getting ready because just before noon they were under our window while we were having a normal history class, American history class. Professor Morase [phonetic], I remember. And all of a sudden the police come charging into the room, and they said, "What's going on here?"

Well, we didn't understand where they were coming from. I mean, this was a normal class that we were having. Of course, we drove our professor out of the profession. He could no longer take it. [Laughter]

So I wasn't disturbed. But, you see, someone who didn't have that experience, I could see why that person would be. But that was a funny experience.

Charnley: In your husband's writings on economics, was there any book that he considered his best, his best work, that he was most proud of?

Adams: Gee, that I can't answer. I will say that a text that he did is going into its tenth edition now, so he could consider it successful, but I think one of his earliest books, called Monopoly in America: The Government as Promoter, was one that he was very proud of. In recent years, he felt that all his articles was not making the impact on the profession and the society that he wanted. By this time he was collaborating with a former student of his, James Brock, who is a professor at Miami University in Ohio. He decided that he'd take an economic topic and write it up in play format, so his last three books, the last one of which he finished just a couple of weeks before he died, with Jim Brock, and they put it in play form. The whole thing is in play form. I think he enjoyed doing it. He did three of those books.

He did a lot of writing. He was a very good writer, but it didn't come easily to him. He took great pride in his writing, his writing style as well as--

Charnley: Did he involve you at all in any editing or any testing ideas?

Adams: No, no, no. I proofread with him, so I would proofread through things, and sometimes he discussed things with me, but I can't take any credit for any contributions to his work, and vice versa. He can't take any credit for any contributions to my work.

Charnley: Going back and also considering some of his attitudes toward the university, the broader university, also his attitude toward sports, what was it that you saw that maybe got him interested as much in that?

Adams: He was always interested in sports. He went to Brooklyn College, too. We met at Brooklyn College. Even though we went to the same high school, we didn't know each other in high school. But at Brooklyn College there were no sports. I mean, Brooklyn College was a whole different world from any university you might be aware of. I think he missed that, although at that point he was very interested in professional baseball. I mean, the Dodgers, the Brooklyn Dodgers, he really was a devoted fan of and knew every player and followed and listened to every game. I mean, it was a whole way of life. When we were at Yale, we went to all the hockey games, nearly got clobbered on the head with a hockey stick and the visiting team. And the first thing he did, the very first thing he did when we arrived in East Lansing is to inquire where he could buy football tickets and basketball tickets. We used to go to wrestling. They used to have prize fighting here in Michigan State. We used to go to all those prize-fighting bouts and take my little boy and neighbor kids. He was always interested in sports, when he was secondary, but he was always interested in sports, that I knew.

Charnley: Did you share that love of sport?

Adams: I can't explain it. I always enjoyed doing things with him. On my own initiative, no. As a kid, I played a lot of street games, which we played in Brooklyn, a lot of games like stick ball and Russian seven and stoop ball and things that I'm sure you didn't hear of in Michigan. I always played and enjoyed being active. But I didn't pay attention to any of the sports. But, of course, we did things together. See, it was a different time and life.

I had a wonderful, wonderful marriage, in that we were both able to pursue our own interests and yet be together a lot. I can't explain it. When I look back on it, it's a very interesting relationship. Very, very satisfying. And I would go to a lot of sporting events just because we'd go. I would be going to a football game, and I still go now. I've been to every home game this season. The crowd would fascinate me, and the band would fascinate me. Well, he loved the band. He just loved the band.

Charnley: What did you see as maybe the early source of his interest in the marching band? Was it the director? Was it the students? Did he have an interest in music?

Adams: I think it was the whole idea that here you have a group of young people, all working together as a unit. It was that whole idea of a group working towards a common and sort of

erasing themselves as they became part of a whole, and it was that loyalty to a group and to a disciplined group and a willingness to do it. I think that attracted him to the band.

He himself was the most unmusical person you've ever met. And this is a true story. When he was in the Army in 1943, in his Army camp one day the post band came to play for the raising of the flag in the morning and taking it down at night. It didn't come over a loudspeaker; there was a band there that played. He saw a classmate of his from Brooklyn College who was in the band and had a directorial position in the band. He said to Walter, "I will get you in the band. What instrument do you play?"

Walter said, "I don't play any instrument."

He said, "All right. I'll put you on the cymbals."

So Walter joined the band, and it got him out of a lot of miserable stuff in that Army post before he was sent overseas. Well, at the first time they had to play "The Star-Spangled Banner," he came in at the wrong place with the cymbals, and the officer in charge of the post said, "Who's that cymbal player? Throw him out of the band!" He said, "If only I had come in right, I would never have gone to Europe. I could have stayed here."

Charnley: [Laughter] That's interesting.

Adams: My son was a percussionist and he was very active in the band, and he loved the band. He was in his high school band, and we, of course, as devoted parents, attended all the sessions of that high school band as well as, of course, the Spartan Marching Band.

I don't know what attracted him, but he just loved the band, and he would go and listen to them practice. He marched with them, as you know. When they went to the Rose Bowl, I mean, he just loved the band.

Charnley: In talking about some of the coaches, did he have any relationships with in particular that stood out, that you recall, football, basketball, hockey?

Adams: None that stood out. I want to say that, for instance, again that was a part of his relationship that I wasn't necessarily a part of. Nick Sabin, the present coach, was extremely thoughtful when Walter was very ill. I didn't know him at all, and obviously Walter didn't know him well, because he came just recently and he wasn't someone from Michigan State, but he called. He would want to find out how Walter was, and he told me how highly he thought of Walter. Walter would go and sometimes watch them practice. Walter always stayed at the entrance to the dressing rooms when the team, at the end of a game, came through. He would be there and he congratulated all of them. Didn't matter whether they won or lost. Nick Sabin was unbelievably thoughtful when Walter was so sick and when he died. I was very impressed with that.

As you know, Walter had this relationship with Bobby Knight, which he struck up in a very odd way.

Charnley: How was that?

Adams: Well, this was when Michigan State--you know, when all the basketball games were over in the old Jenison Gym. We would go to the games with a group, a group of friends, and we'd always sit directly behind the opponents' bench. If you knew Jenison--did you know Jenison?

Charnley: No, I didn't attend.

Adams: Well, the bench was so close to the players' benches. I mean, where we sat was closer than the end of this table. I mean, it was--

[Begin Tape 2, Side I]

Charnley: This is tape two. We were talking about Jenison Fieldhouse and Dr. Walter Adams' relationship with Bobby Knight. So we're talking about the closeness.

Adams: Where we were seated. Bobby Knight is a very outspoken coach, and he was yelling at the boys. Walter said, "That's right! You teach 'em!' And he would yell about these things, but Walter never used obscenities, but he would really get under the skin of any coach there. I remember some Michigan State coaches saying that Walter's presence really helped with a few points' margin, made a few points' margin.

But anyway, at the end of the game, Bobby Knight came over to Walter and said, "What's your name?"

And Walter just said, "Walter Adams."

And he said, "Who are you?"

And Walter said, "You know, I'm a fan, a basketball fan."

And he said, "Well, what do you do?"

Walter said, "Well, I teach at Michigan State."

And he said, "Well, I'm the coach here in my team."

Well, the next year, when Indiana played, Bobby Knight looked for Walter as soon as he entered the arena, and he walked over to him and he had in his hands a bunch of mints, red and white mints that you get at restaurants at the end. And, of course, red and white were the colors of Indiana. He gave Walter these mints, and he said, 'You stay off my ass and I'll stay off yours." [Laughter] Well, he took Walter out of the game. Walter couldn't--

Charnley: His peace offering. [Laughter]

Adams: And ever since that exchange, they exchanged gifts every year at the game. In recent years, Bobby Knight would call and invite Walter to the dinner that he had here the night before the game, when they came into town, and Walter would be invited to the dinner and he'd be there with all the Indiana coaches. They really struck up a very good relationship. Bobby Knight also called and was very nice when Walter was so ill. He was amazing.

The thing that struck me funny was that David Halberstam was here on a lecture series last year. I don't know if you were aware of it.

Charnley: Yes.

Adams: Well, in the course of his talk, he mentioned Estes Kefauver. You know who Estes Kefauver is. Walter worked for Estes Kefauver one summer. He spent several summers in Washington, working for different senators on antitrust issues and things like that that he was interested in. So after the talk, and I went to the reception and met Halberstam, and I said to him, "I want to compliment you on what you said about Estes Kefauver and bringing him up. I'm sure that 99 percent of the people here have no idea who Kefauver was, but my husband worked for him as a volunteer several summers and thought very highly of him."

So Halberstam said to me, 'Well, who is your husband?'

And I said, "Oh, you wouldn't know him. His name is Walter Adams."

And before I could say another word, he said, "He's Bobby Knight's friend." That is a clear--I mean, here we're talking about Estes Kefauver. Well, of course, Halberstam had just written a book on basketball, so that's, I'm sure, in retrospect, that's how come he--but he knew about Walter's relationship with Bobby Knight. It was the funniest thing. I couldn't get over that.

Charnley: That loyalty issue, I think, must have been important for Bobby Knight, too.

Adams: Maybe that's one of the things that Walter respected in Bobby Knight. He has a lot of difficulties, and I think that he's probably out of tune with his times right now, and therefore I don't know what's going to happen to his basketball career, but loyalty, I think, is something he respected.

Charnley: Talk about some of the community activities that you've been involved in. When you first got here, anything that you were active in, in East Lansing?

Adams: Well, when I first came, I was a young, very young mother of a very, very young child. I was very busy with my home life. I did join Faculty Folk, and I was in the music group, the choral group and then Faculty Folk I played piano for. I accompanied them. They met periodically. I joined different groups like that, but I'm not much of a joiner of groups, so I wasn't particularly active as much as I guess a lot of people are, because I'm not a joiner.

And we did spend some time away. We were here five years when we were--we spent a year--Walter got a postdoc at the Harvard law school, so we spent a year at the Harvard law school in Boston, and then he was on research projects in Europe, and we lived in Paris for a year. I was involved in--I guess in family.

Charnley: And you were there with him.

Adams: Oh, yes, that's another thing that--

Charnley: Your son was there, too?

Adams: Yes. As a matter of fact, it destroyed my son's life.

Charnley: In what way?

Adams: Living in Paris at the age of ten for a year. He's an economist. He's a professor of economics at the University of Michigan, but his field is European economies with a concentration on France. So he goes back and forth. In fact, I am going to Paris at the end of December for five days only with my son and daughter-in-law, because he now has an apartment in Paris and he wants to show it to me. But his life was channeled by that year's experience in Paris. It's amazing. What you do with your children, you've got to be careful, because you have a stronger impact than you realize.

Charnley: The experience of being a faculty member or the research overseas, in terms of careerwise professionally, what were some of the things that you really got out of that?

Adams: I think I got a lot out of it, and I think I got a lot out of it by being an observer and a spectator as well, because, for instance, there was a little article I wrote called "And They Speak their Language Lovingly." That was written about the French and their attitude toward their language. That came from just living there, experiencing what it was like to live there, to observe what was going on around me. We went back to Europe nearly every summer for Walter's research, and I'd be observing and I would be involved. Some how or other that made me more contemplative. I was absorbing things that I didn't realize I was, and wondering about them and connecting them to the American experience, and sharpening my understanding of American experience and my knowledge of America in contrast or in comparison.

So I got much more out of it than I realized, given Walter's teaching at several European universities and observing the academic life in those universities, was very educational for me and gave me a much broader view, I think, than I would have had if I hadn't been there, even though there was no formal study involved.

Charnley: Was that the first time you'd been to Europe?

Adams: No. The first time I went to Europe was on Walter's first sabbatical, which was, I think, in '55. We went for a month. Then we began. He began teaching in a lot of places. He taught at the Salzburg Seminar twice. He taught at the Falkenstein [phonetic] Seminar. He

taught at the University of Ancona [phonetic] in Italy. He taught at the University of Grenoble in France. He taught at the University of Paris in France. And all these experiences I got a lot out of, and yet it was indirect.

Charnley: So you traveled extensively while you were over there.

Adams: Yes, but it was only in terms of his work. We both liked to stay in a place and get a feel of a place. We weren't always on the move.

Charnley: Always on the train or--

Adams: No.

Charnley: In recent years, have you traveled back frequently?

Adams: Well, not as frequently as in earlier years. That's because I brought my in-laws here when they no longer could manage for themselves. They were here for ten years. Then I brought my mother here, and she was here for five years. During the period that this older generation was here, we felt we could not be gone long, so we would sometimes go on a brief trip.

The last time I was in Europe was in '96, which was about a year and a half before Walter died. We went to Switzerland. Our trip next to that, our penultimate trip, was one that was extremely important to him, because in recent years he was going back to World War II, and he wanted to retrace his steps in Normandy. And we did that in '93. The fiftieth anniversary of the invasion of Normandy was in '94, June of '94, obviously, but he didn't want to be there with all the crowds and the formal. He wanted to just retrace the steps of his unit through Normandy, and we did go there in the fall of '93. We spent three weeks just going through.

He was also at the Battle of the Bulge. He wasn't interested in going there. He wasn't interested in any other part of his war experience; he just wanted that Normandy thing, which we did. And I'm very grateful that we did. But that war, in recent years, really just seized him.

Charnley: Did he attend any reunions of his unit?

Adams: No.

Charnley: That was more or less a personal--

Adams: Personal.

Charnley: --realization of--but he hadn't talked about much?

Adams: No. He didn't. The fascinating thing to me is he came back from Europe, from the end of World War II, in September of 1945. He was one of the earliest people back. When he got back, it was early September. He wanted to get right back to graduate school, and he got into his family's car and drove up the coast from New York. I was teaching in a New York City high school, and I wouldn't break my commitment. He went up the coast, and the first place he stopped was at Yale. He had had two quarters of graduate school at the University of Chicago when he was drafted, but he stopped at Yale and he said, "I'm a G.I. on the G.I. Bill of Rights, and I would like to restart graduate school. I had two quarters at the University of Chicago," etc. And they took him, and he started immediately.

He was just back days when he went on to graduate school, and there were quite a few people in graduate school who similarly were veterans. Those men worked together in a room no larger than this, in the library, because I was part of the group. And they were working, talking economics, talked sports, they talked everything, and they never mentioned the war.

One of those friends, two years ago, who is a professor of economics at Northwestern University, now retired, we met and had dinner together, and we discovered that they were in units side by side in Normandy. They never knew it until then, because when they first came back, they never mentioned war. And they were just weeks beyond that war experience. It's amazing to me.

Charnley: Interesting.

Adams: Amazing.

Charnley: In looking back at your career at Michigan State, any reflective comment that you can think of about your experience as a professor, things that stand out?

Adams: I am grateful to Michigan State for allowing me to teach, because, as you know, I don't have my doctorate, although I felt that I did a very good master's thesis that my professor, Carter Goodrich, said, 'Pauline, if you just add a few more dimensions to this project, you have a doctorate." "I'm not interested in a doctorate." [Laughter] I mean, at that time I was a kid. I wasn't interested in a doctorate. But I wanted to teach. I always wanted to teach. And I was grateful that at Michigan State I had that opportunity. Although there were times when I felt exploited. I must say there were times when I felt exploited. But it was wonderful. It was wonderful. And I love this department. I understand that it was cliquey and there were different groups. I was never aware of it. I would move from one to the other in utter ignorance, not knowing that I was violating some kind of territorial boundary. I really had a wonderful, wonderful experience, something I'm very grateful for. And I'm still grateful for Michigan State, because I'm teaching in the Evening College.

Charnley: You've been active since your retirement?

Adams: Oh, yes. I've taught every year since I retired.

Charnley: Every year?

Adams: Oh, yes. I've never missed a fall. In the spring, you know, when Walter retired, he began teaching.

Charnley: He began teaching again. [Laughter]

Adams: At Trinity University in San Antonio. We'd go down in January and stay until May. They asked me to teach there, but I said, 'I'm not grading another paper. I just will not grade another paper."

Charnley: You'd graded enough here.

Adams: And the other day the head of the Honors College asked if I would teach in their program in the summer for Honors College, teach a course, and I said no. I love what I'm doing in Evening College, no paper grading, nothing. I have wonderful students and I just love it. But I couldn't give up teaching completely. It means too much to me. But I was happy to give up the different committee meetings and the paper grading and that kind of stuff.

Charnley: I want to thank you, on behalf of the project, for the time we've spent. I appreciate your insights. Thank you very much.

Adams: I don't know if it was any help. I want to wish you luck in the project.

Charnley: Thank you.

[End of interview]

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