# JEFFERSON DAVIS FUTCH III

**August 19, 1996**

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**Mame Warren,**
**interviewer**

**Warren:** This is Mame Warren. Today is the 19th of August, 1996, and I'm very happy to be with Jefferson Davis Futch III, in Lexington, Virginia. Did you want to start right off, that you had something you wanted to say?

**Futch:** We can start with one little tip I want to give you. If you're interested in World War II photographs of people connected with W&L, I want to call your attention to Milton Colvin, who was in combat in World War II. His life was risked in Yugoslavia on a mission that I understand was very ironical, but he obviously survived. His wife was a German citizen at that time, who spent the war in Heidelberg, because I suppose they were hoping it wouldn't be bombed. That's the way it worked out, because the Americans had designated Heidelberg as one of their future headquarters. So the Americans did not want to set up their headquarters in a ruined town, and so Mrs. Colvin has told me about constantly diving into air raid shelters. But the American bombers always went on elsewhere.

Immediately after the war, he married her. So there may be some interesting stories there. But he undoubtedly has photos of him with other—conceivably with W&L guys. He was a faculty child. His father taught in the law school before the Second World War. So he could well have met some W&L boys in Europe in 1944-45.

**Warren:** That's a great tip. Thank you.

**Futch:** I did want to mention what has got to be a photo collection of Dr. and Mrs. Colvin.

**Warren:** That's a great idea. I will follow through on that.

**Futch:** John M. Gunn was in the Second World War, the newly—he's semi-retired. I started to say newly retired; he's semi-retired. And he very may well have met some W&L grads or guys who had interrupted their education in that war.

Likewise, a man who lives in the town now, Dean Finny [phonetic], who was in the class of 1945—now, I suppose that implies that he entered in '41, and perhaps his education was interrupted by military service. If you get in touch with Dean Finny, he might have some photos of that period, maybe overseas or maybe in this country, perhaps at a training camp in the United States. Maybe some W&L guys were photographed in front of a barracks at Fort Dix or someplace like that.

So those are some men from the World War II period who are still living. Don't tell them I said they're still living, but I think all three of them may have some photos.

**Warren:** All right. I'll follow through on that.

**Futch:** But I need to mention that.

**Warren:** I know from your interview with Richard [Weaver] that you arrived here in 1962.

**Futch:** Only yesterday. That's right.

**Warren:** Yes. Take me back to Washington and Lee in 1962. What was the campus like?

**Futch:** Well, of course, in many ways it was physically as it is now with the trees and the white columns and the red bricks, all of which dazzled both my parents and me. My parents were extremely anxious that I teach here, and I thought the red bricks and the white columns and the trees are nice, and then I saw all these young men dressed like young bankers in coats and ties, not usually suits, but a sports

jacket that didn't match the trousers, but nice shirts and ties and cuffs showing and all of that. And I thought, "Wunderbar! This is heaven on Earth." So it was what was called conventional dress, the coat and tie routine. It was that more than anything else that made me fall in love with the place. And, of course, I came to love the white columns, the red bricks, and the trees as well, but it was the extremely decorous appearance of the student body, and, along with that, their politeness, beautiful manners, obviously kids who'd been brought up very, very nicely. I simply fell in love with the place instantaneously. It was one time when I did not buck my parents' wishes. I said, "Absolutely. If they'll offer me a job, I'll be happy to come here." So the job was quickly offered, and all three of us were very happy.

**Warren:** So were you instantly welcomed in? What was the social scene in Lexington in the early '60s?

**Futch:** Oh, the faculty social scene—as we called it, the cocktail circuit—I gather that this may have disappeared by now, but how can I put this politely and discreetly? The faculty was deeply into liquid refreshment. Every afternoon at 5:00 or 5:30, usually at faculty homes, very seldom administration homes, and also the homes of—oh, yes. I'm glad you asked this. The old dowagers of Lexington, though I suppose a dowager refers to a married lady of stately grandeur and advanced years, some of these ladies, such as Miss Eleanor Gadsden, the late Eleanor Portia Gadsden, were unmarried ladies. And I don't know what title is given to a lady of extremely advanced years never married.

But, of course, Mrs. Francis P. Gaines was a widow after 1963 and was a dowager, and there was a Mary Tucker who was a dowager, a widow. And Miss Gadsden, aforementioned, was unmarried. These ladies were very much a part of the cocktail circuit, along with faculty members. And somebody called the faculty

social life a floating cocktail party because it was virtually every afternoon at somebody or other's home, and a good deal of fermented potations were taken.

I remember being very amused that all of these stately, dignified professors and their wives just got soused virtually every evening. So there was a lot of that, and I think in the 1990s' atmosphere of puritan disapproval of this and that, cigarettes and booze and whatnot, I think that this must have slowed down or maybe evaporated altogether.

One odd thing that happened quite recently is that a man who was a part-time teacher here and part-time teacher at VMI throughout all of the 1960s and who left in the '60s—pardon me, Christmas of '69—and worked in the Library of Congress for something like twenty-five years, all of the '70s, all of the '80s, and first half of the '90s, had now come back here for his retirement. And he thinks that the—how shall we say—the rather exuberant cocktail party life of the '60s is still here, and he is going to plunge back into this pool of alcohol, this great swimming pool of alcohol, of Lexington high society, the blending of Lexington society and faculty society. And I don't think it's going to happen. I think he's going to end up listening to compact disks at home, listening to Mozart quartets, because the whole tone of faculty life, I sense, has become very serious, very lacking in hedonism nowadays. I think that the socializing and the gossip and the boozing has either disappeared or been down-scaled very dramatically in the last thirty-some years.

After 1970, I sort of drifted into increasing reclusiveness, because one was expected to reciprocate, and the requirement of reciprocity, or the understood—it wasn't a stated requirement, but the implied requirement of reciprocity did not apply to bachelors, young bachelor professors, who lived in rented rooms, as I did when I first came here. It was understood that in a rented room one can't have fifteen or twenty cocktail party guests.

But after I got a fairly big apartment in 1970, I sort of sensed that the cocktail circuit would be pleased if I would entertain them on the basis of reciprocity, and I just was too lazy to do that. That's a lot of washing of glasses and plates. So I very gradually eased myself out of that. But certainly in the '60s, the social scene, 5:30 p.m., was extremely active and would greatly delight today's Lexington police department because, of course, all these drunks were driving home through the streets of Little Arcadia here, undisturbed by the cops, because the gendarmes would have said in the 1960s that it wasn't nice to arrest the old Professor So-and-so and his wife. So the obsession with drunken driving that we have now, or the phobia about drunken driving, of course, didn't exist then. So these people could sort of weave through the streets of Lexington in their 1965 gas guzzlers without any anxiety about the police consequences. So in that respect, as in many others, it was a very, very different scene at that time.

Of course, these people were extremely gracious, and the scene was very pleasant, but I will say it became quite repetitive. There was a lady here in town whose father was president of the university just after the turn of the century, and she was an unmarried lady of great wealth who was one of the queens of the cocktail party circuit. I remember once somebody gave a party that was so big, it was on the second floor of the Robert E. Lee Hotel, today known as the Welfare Arms, but it was the R.E. Lee Hotel in those days. And there was a second floor ballroom or banquet room or so with a little terrace looking out over Main Street. I met this lady at a cocktail party circa 1970, and she was throbbing with excitement and said, "Oh, isn't this thrilling?" meaning for us all to be together.

I thought, "Madam, you have been guzzling with these same people for the last forty or fifty years. How exciting can it be for you?" But I think she was quite sincere. I think she was thrilled to be reunited with the gossip buddies and booze flowing freely.

So it was a scene that we wouldn't find today, I think, among the faculty. Of course, the grand old ladies have died off now. *Les grandes dames* are now in Paradise, and the elderly ladies of Lexington society, I don't think hobnob as obsessively with the faculty.

**Warren:** I'm very sorry to have missed those ladies. I really would have liked to have interviewed them. When I saw that—was it Mary Monroe Penick died?

**Futch:** Mary Monroe Penick died about what, a year or two ago?

**Warren:** Yes. And I said, "Oh, I missed that one."

**Futch:** Oh, she was one. Now, I'll tell you something that you can't put in the book, but I'll tell you a very funny story. When I came here, Professor Crenshaw was the head of the History Department, and he arranged for me, I guess through the registrar's office, he got a list of ladies who had rented rooms. Of course, I couldn't afford an apartment, let alone to buy a house. Professor Pemberton, certainly he bought a house as soon as he arrived here or within a year. So I had to find a rented room, hopefully with a private bath, which I did find, for, I think, thirty-five dollars a month in a private home of a married couple.

But Dr. Crenshaw provided me with a list of landladies of Lexington, elderly ladies, widows and spinsters of very advanced age, such as Mrs. Gravit [phonetic], who rented rooms out. My mother and I divided up the list, and my mother went to Miss Gadsden's house. Miss Gadsden says, "Oh, I don't think that your son would be happy here. There's no private bath. He would have to share a bath with a student, and I don't think a faculty member would wish to share a bath with undergrads." Well, she would have said "undergraduates." So that, of course, did not lead to a rental arrangement.

But Miss Mary Monroe Penick's name was on my list, my mother and I splitting the list up. And so I followed this to the address 104 White Street, and when I got there, having never set foot on White Street or in Lexington before, Miss

Penick was down on her hands and knees pulling weeds out of a stone retaining wall that kept her front lawn in place. She was pulling the weeds, and I said, I thought rather reasonably, I said, "Excuse me. Would you be Miss Mary Monroe Penick?"

And she looked up at me with a characteristically feisty look and said, "And just who do I look like to you, the old colored mammy?"

So I was a bit flustered. I was sort of, "Madam, certainly not." So she was a character and very sarcastic, as you can imagine, and she would have been a great interview.

Was I going to mention somebody else to you who would have some—yes, somebody who might have photos of Miss Gadsden, maybe a student in Miss Gadsden's house in 1920, Miss Louise P. Moore of Lexington high society, who's a lawyer in town.

**Warren:** I need to talk to her.

**Futch:** Absolutely you do, because she is the closest living relative of the Gadsden ladies who rented to students for decades and decades and decades. Miss Eleanor Gadsden. They were twins, the Gadsden sisters.

**Warren:** How do you spell Gadsden?

**Futch:** G-A-D-S-D-E-N. They were related to the man who made the Gadsden Purchase before the Civil War, 1853, that sliver of land we bought from Mexico. After having ripped off a good deal of land from Mexico, we bought a little bit more to make southern Arizona or something. I don't teach American history. I don't have to know that. But the Gadsdens were old Southern bluebloods, the daughters of General Lee's artillery chief, the Reverend William Nelson Pendleton, a timid general known as Granny Pendleton, married—Granny Pendleton's daughter married a young man, a student or a brand-new alumnus named Gadsden, who lived just long enough to become the father of the twins in 1886 and then died, so

that the Widow Gadsden brought the twins back to her, the widow's, hometown, Lexington, from South Carolina, where the twins were born.

So one of the twins lived ninety-eight and a half years, died in December of '84, the twin that I knew, and the other twin daughter died in 1961, about a year and a half before I arrived in Lexington, in January of '61. They are buried closer to Stonewall Jackson's grave than anybody in the cemetery is buried close to Stonewall Jackson. So Miss Gadsden died in, as I said, in December of 1984 at ninety-eight and eight months, I think, born in April of '86.

And so the nearest relative, to my knowledge, is Louise P. Moore, and any photos that were in that house, I assume have passed to Miss Moore.

**Warren:** Good. I will check on that.

**Futch:** And there may well be photos of the Gadsden ladies with some students, the Gadsden twins with some students, in the 1920s, perhaps.

**Warren:** Well, their names have come up, so I would very much like to find them.

**Futch:** They were identical. I'm told they were identical twins. Miss Eleanor, whom I knew, had worked in the W&L library for many years. Miss Anzolette. The other one, Anzolette, A-N-Z-O-L-E-T-T-E, Miss Anzolette Gadsden, worked in the VMI library. And if a W&L student or VMI cadet would go to the desk of either library and ask for a certain book, the two sisters, who were librarians, might say to the student or to the cadet, "Well, we don't have that book." They had that very grand way of talking. "We don't have that book, but if you go to the other library on the next-door campus, the book is in their collection, and you will find it there." And so the student or the cadet would go to the other campus and find, seemingly, the identical woman, because they were identical twins, and they would wonder how this lady had managed to get so quickly from one campus to the other to be at the desk.

So the Gadsden twins were great town characters, and they remember the daughters of Lee, the last two surviving daughters of Lee, Mary and Mildred, because the Lee daughters frequented the Gadsden house, the Pines, that Dean Bezanson had, until I think he sold it a month or two ago, this summer perhaps, called the Pines at the corner of Lee Avenue and—is it Preston Street? Right across from the Phi Gamma House. The house still has the same exterior appearance as it had throughout this century. The inside, I'm told, was greatly and very necessarily rehabbed in the late 1980s, because the bricks and the wood and the mortar and all of those things were crumbling. A faculty wife, Nancy Roosevelt Taylor, sank a great deal of money into the rehabbing of that house. But Louise Moore can give you the history of the house.

**Warren:** All right. I'll talk to her.

**Futch:** And the Gadsden ladies, as I say, were the landladies of endless years of W&L students, and there may be photographs.

**Warren:** Okay. I'll follow through on that one.

Now, a while ago you mentioned a theme that I really am fascinated in pursuing and I've gotten a lot of interesting commentary on, the idea of conventional dress.

**Futch:** Oh, yes. Yes. That's why I'm wearing a tie today, in memory of it.

**Warren:** But you have witnessed so much of what has happened to conventional dress.

**Futch:** Yeah. Very depressing. Very, very sad.

**Warren:** Can you tell me what you've seen in your years here?

**Futch:** Well, of course, they now look like kids who have summer jobs at the beach, except in the dead of winter. It's just very, very sad that the administration of the mid 1960s did not insist on the preservation of conventional dress. What happened was that around '66, a student body president was elected in the spirit of '60s'

rebelliousness, who got rid of the enforcement committee. There was a committee, sort of named in Orwellian fashion, the Assimilation Committee. The Assimilation Committee imposed fines on boys who would have dared, if any did dare, to show up, I think in town as well as on the campus, without a tie or without a proper shirt. I don't know how often these fines were levied, because it was absolutely understood that conventional dress was required, and it was hardly a rebellious student body.

But when this kid was elected student body president approximately in '66, he got rid of the committee and sent a signal that he was against conventional dress, because the rebelliousness at Berkeley and Columbia University and places like that became an inspiration to students who liked to pose as radicals. So the signal was sent from the Student Executive Committee, or at many schools I guess it's called the Student Council, that conventional dress is neither important nor desirable.

But habit is a powerful thing. So for the rest of the '60s, the decline of conventional dress was very gradual, and only a very tiny handful of kids would depart from the tradition, and most of them sympathized, of course, with the tradition and had no wish to depart from it.

I remember around '67 or '68, there was some kid sunbathing in a bikini on the lawn directly before the front door of the president's house, of the Lee House, and I recall exactly who it was. He has now, I'm told, become a great conservative, but he was doing that in order to make a point, wearing not much more than a fig leaf on some spring day, I guess possibly September, but more likely a spring day. And that was a fairly dramatic revolt against conventional dress. But the others, of course, stuck with it until, I would think, if I can get this down right, the freshman class that entered in '69, I believe, was the one that—I don't think in any concerted action, I think it was just a zeitgeist and what they saw on TV, with ragged protestors at Berkeley and other places, other campuses around the country, I believe it was the

freshman class of '69 that deliberately, though spontaneously, went to the dogs as far as dress was concerned and, of course, drugs too.

It was in that four-year period of '69 to '73 that saw the end of conventional dress, though through the rest of the seventies, if you look at the yearbooks, you'll see that when they posed for their senior photographs, that most of them, even if they had long hair like a biblical apostles, as a number did, most of them would don a coat and tie for their senior photos, and when their mom and dad back home said, "You be very certain to have a coat and tie. We want to show your grandmother a nice photo in your senior yearbook." So on the rare occasions when they were photographed for the yearbook, the big majority did have a coat and tie, though they would go through the graduation line very often in sandals or less on their feet.

Sometimes in the graduation line in the '70s and later, you would see a kid who was obviously wearing a polo shirt—or what are they called nowadays—a T-shirt under the black robe.

But at any rate, getting back to the chronology, I would say '69 to '73 was the time when a sort of sartorial revolt broke out. The behavior continued to be very polite. They showed their good upbringing in their courtesy, their personal courtesy. But the question that you asked had to do with conventional dress, and I would say that it was at that point that it ended.

I continued to ask, obviously knowing that no administration would back me up, I couldn't order or demand or require, but I continued to ask for conventional dress throughout the '70s, and they went along with that, and kids who didn't approve or who didn't want to do that wouldn't sign up for my classes, which was fine, fewer papers to grade. So that was not a problem for me.

But in the '80s, what happened was, again with beautiful personal manners and deportment, they began wearing cruddy clothes, and eventually, by the end of the '80s, would wear T-shirts with neckties. And of course, a necktie on a T-shirt

looks grotesque and silly and particularly when they would wear this shirt every forty-eight hours, if it was a Monday, Wednesday, Friday class, a necktie that they loosened to the point where it could be put on over their heads without having to—it was never completely untied. It just looked like sort of a sailor's or enlisted Navy man's tie that is knotted sort of halfway down his chest.

And so at that point I quit talking about it, because I thought a T-shirt without a necktie looks better than a T-shirt with a half-tied necktie. So it was useless to insist on that. But I've always said if—when I become president of the university—not if, when—I will reintroduce conventional dress, and coat and tie, or jacket and tie, will be required.

**Warren:** Now, I found recently a photograph of some fellows standing out on the Colonnade, and two of them are wearing shorts, and I think they were wearing like an oxford shirt with a tie.

**Futch:** There was a lot of that.

**Warren:** And I looked at that, and I said, "I wonder if they just came from Dave Futch's class? Would that be a reasonable assumption to make?

**Futch:** In the seventies and '80s, that was a very reasonable assumption, but I would say more in the seventies, because I think they began wearing something less than oxford shirts, little sport shirts or something that were not really meant for a necktie, or T-shirts.

**Warren:** Did you stand alone in this stand?

**Futch:** Oh, yes.

**Warren:** Were you the only person who felt this way?

**Futch:** Yes. Well, I don't know how the others felt, of course, but I think American men are extremely wimpy, and the other faculty members didn't—don't use the word "wimpy," please, in the book. But I think that the other faculty members,

whatever they felt, I think they just said, "Well, we'll surrender to the zeitgeist." So I was the only one who insisted on it.

I was told—students have to tell one professor what other faculty members say. They carry tales back and forth, which is quite useful. Very interesting, in fact. They told me that other professors referred to me as a mental case. So some of the other faculty members were very annoyed because I was implicitly criticizing them for not doing the same, and I really don't know what the sentiments of the entire faculty were, but I was the only professor who insisted on this as long as I could.

**Warren:** It seemed to me that it would be very flattering that if the students never wore ties any other time but they just wear them to your class—

**Futch:** Oh, it was.

**Warren:** —that it would be flattering for them to sign up for your class, knowing that that was the price.

**Futch:** You're exactly right. I was very complimented that they did that, and it gave me a good feeling throughout, I guess, all of the '70s when they did that. When they began doing it with T-shirts, however, in the '80s, I was less flattered. But when they would wear the proper kind of shirt with a tie, I was quite pleased, so that's a perceptive thing for you to say. I was delighted.

**Warren:** Well, I've talked with several people who've been your students, and you're very well thought of.

**Futch:** Well, I'm thankful to be told that.

**Warren:** One person who particularly impressed me was Gene Perry. Do you remember Gene Perry?

**Futch:** Spelled—

**Warren:** Eugene Perry. P-E-R-R-Y.

**Futch:** Yes. Yes, I do remember him.

**Warren:** He really thought a lot of you.

**Futch:** Really? Well, I'm complimented. If you meet him again, give him my good wishes, please.

**Warren:** I was interested in that.

**Futch:** Yes. I'm delighted and very complimented to hear that also. I do remember him.

**Warren:** It was a long time ago.

**Futch:** Oh, yes. He was '70s maybe, 1970s?

**Warren:** Early '70s.

**Futch:** Yeah. Yeah. I was thinking of Commodore Perry, Admiral Perry, who became Admiral Perry. Yes, I do remember Gene Perry. Well, if you encounter him, I send him my warm greetings.

**Warren:** Good. Okay.

**Futch:** A very nice young man.

**Warren:** Now, speaking of your fellow faculty members—

**Futch:** Oh, dear.

**Warren:** You mentioned someone a while ago. I feel like I'm tiptoeing. I'm sort of tiptoeing. I can hardly say I'm filling his shoes.

**Futch:** Boatwright?

**Warren:** No, no, no, no, no. Ollinger Crenshaw.

**Futch:** Oh, one of my great—

**Warren:** I'm tiptoeing behind him.

**Futch:** Oh, yes. I thought you meant you were tiptoeing on thin ice.

**Warren:** No. No. No. I'm tiptoeing behind him.

**Futch:** Yes, as an historian. Yes.

**Warren:** Yes. Yes. I can hardly say I'm walking boldly in his shoes.

**Futch:** Well, you're unnecessarily modest.

**Warren:** Well, I feel like he's God around here.

**Futch:** It's a wonderful book. Well, he was God. You've read his book, of course.

**Warren:** Of course.

**Futch:** It's a wonderful book.

**Warren:** Of course. I take it off the shelf at least once a day.

**Futch:** Yeah. Well, he was one of my great heroes. You can't put this in your book, of course, but I had the great pleasure of getting an expression of his esteem for me, and he was not effusive at all. Verbally he never said, "I think you are fantastic," but when that book was published in May of 1969, *General Lee's College*, I, of course, asked him to—I think he gave me a copy, and I asked him to autograph that, and what he wrote—it was out at the Keydet General Restaurant at lunch, and he wrote on the flyleaf, "To Dave Futch," such and such a date, May—I think May the 5th of '69, and he said, "If I did nothing else for Washington and Lee, I brought Dave here," signed Ollinger Crenshaw, and I thought that was a marvelous thing for him to write in the book. And that was ten months before he died. So I was grateful, and later, ten months later, I was more grateful that before he died, he had something nice to say to me. So needless to say, his and my good feelings were reciprocal.

**Warren:** Tell me about what that time was like when the book was published. Was it a lot of hoopla here?

**Futch:** Yes, there was a lot of hoopla on campus. Indeed, yes. Sure. There was an autograph party in the bookstore, of course, and people were delighted to get it.

May I tell you something in confidence that will not appear in this book? He said that it could have been published many, many years before it was, but there was some material in it that would have annoyed some of the trustees, who were mostly—well, I was going to say when they [unclear], they were mostly curmudgeons at that time, and I think that although Dr. Crenshaw was a senior professor and nothing would have happened to him, nothing bad would have happened to him, there would apparently have been expressions of irritation from

some of the trustees about various details of this and that in the book, and that accounted for the delay in the publication by many years. And he may have done some polishing up. He wanted to wait for old Mr. So-and-so to die and old Mr. So-and-so to die and another Mr. So-and-so to die, as they all did, accommodatingly. In his lifetime, though only barely as I say, he did not live twelve months after the book was published. So he undoubtedly did some little addition of this or that, but the bulk of it was finished long before 1969, and he just wanted there to be nothing but good vibes. He didn't want complaints and criticisms from the trustees about the book.

You'll notice it went up only to 1930, which meant that Taylor Sanders has a running start. If his runs from 1930 to the year 2010 or something of that kind, then that'll be a big piece of history. And in a way, Taylor is lucky to have a big piece of history to deal with since Ollie Crenshaw stopped in 1930, but he felt that trustee toes would be stepped on if he dealt with matters later than 1930. I mean, that was not laziness on his part; that was a desire to avoid ruffled feathers.

**Warren:** What kind of issues do you think he didn't want to touch on?

**Futch:** Well, of course, coeducation and race never came up in those years, so I don't really know exactly what they were.

**Warren:** He does mention right at the very end, he just sort of has a foot or an end note where he talks about the first black students coming in.

**Futch:** Well, that was 1966, of course. But in a book that stops in 1930, that really is a footnote.

**Warren:** Yeah, it really is very much an end note.

**Futch:** So what the issues were in the '30s and in the '40s that he didn't want to deal with—remember, the book was in the making since the late '40s. And there was one thing I heard. I don't know if I heard it from his lips, but I heard somewhere or other that it was to have been published in 1949 for the two hundredth anniversary,

and yet it appeared twenty years later. So there were matters that I guess we would call unimportant today, or uninteresting, perhaps, today, having to do with the '30s and '40s that he didn't want to deal with at the expense of irritating trustees. But it was interesting, I thought, or it is interesting, looking back on it, that some of these people lived on, some of the trustees lived on into the '60s whom he did not want to irritate.

I mean, he had nothing to fear. He would not have been fired or anything like that. I think he wanted—in fact, I know that he did not like unpleasantness, and an unpleasant personal encounter would have been very distressing to him. He was somebody who liked personal relations to run very smoothly and all other relations to run very smoothly. I think that a man who was so diplomatic, who was such a master of euphemisms, wanted, above all, tranquillity. So we might be surprised today to know how trifling from our vantage point something in the '30s or '40s was that he did not want to have caused trouble in the '60s.

**Warren:** What was he like as a person?

**Futch:** Extremely affable, very convivial, very chatty, very conversational. He was a repository of anecdotes from the past, from the 1920s. He arrived here as a freshman in 1922. So he remembered all sorts of campus characters who had, of course, died off by the time I got here, as recently as '62. If you include his student and faculty years, he was here for forty-eight years, 1922 to 1970.

So an enormous number of characters had come and gone, such as De la Warre Benjamin Easter of the French Department, whose name you could never forget. Professor Easter apparently was an old sourpuss of the '20s and '30s on the faculty, and he spelled his name, the state of Delaware but in the eighteenth century way, Lord De la Warre. So if you look in an old *Calyx* you will see this little sourpuss, De la Warre Benjamin Easter spelled in that way, not spelled like the state of Delaware today.

And, of course, Professor Leyburn, who was Dr. Crenshaw's great *bête noire*. I guess in the 250th anniversary book you can't point to this, but Professor Crenshaw and Dr. Leyburn were bitter, bitter enemies for reasons that went back, again, to the time before I came here. Dr. Leyburn came in '47, I think. Ollie Crenshaw, of course, had been on the faculty for something like twenty years at that time and had another twenty-two years to go. I'm sure one of the distressing things in Dr. Crenshaw's life was that Leyburn was still around when he died. He would have been happy to see Leyburn head off to West Virginia. I think Leyburn had originally, when he retired in '72, headed off to some family acres in West VA, purportedly the world's biggest watercress farm, and Ollie Crenshaw would have been very pleased to see the east end of Leyburn on a horse going west, to West Virginia, because no love was lost there at all.

**Warren:** What were the issues between them?

**Futch:** I think, for one thing, he regarded Leyburn as a pompous and intellectually pretentious sort of character who was by no means—for example, in the cocktail circuit, one cannot imagine Leyburn relaxing at a cocktail party, exchanging gossip with the old dowagers of town society or with anybody else. Leyburn had a very structured sort of life, as you've probably heard. Between the hours of whatever it was, 5:00 to 6:00, he would be playing Beethoven's sonatas, and between 6:00 and 7:00 he would be dining, with his servant bringing the various courses to his solitary table or where he ate, at the table where he ate in solitary splendor like the Pope. Popes, until very recently, ate alone. It was a tradition. I think only in the last twenty or thirty years have Popes begun eating with other people. So Leyburn, although purportedly a Presbyterian, was very papal in his aloofness and his sort of majestic isolation.

**Warren:** You, of course, knew Leyburn.

**Futch:** Slightly. No one knew Leyburn very well. I knew of—

**Warren:** What do you mean by that?

**Futch:** Because he was a very unsociable sort of character, and if you passed him along the Colonnade, he would nod sort of like a Prussian general and almost inaudibly say, "Good morning," "Good afternoon," something like that. The idea of a conversation with Leyburn is almost a contradiction in terms.

Dr. Crenshaw, who was so convivial and so chatty and so loved talking to people generally about light topics, not about politics or religion or atheism, nothing heavy was to Dr. Crenshaw's taste, always what old Ms. So-and-so said in 1920 when thus and such a person arrived in Lexington, the chronicles of the town, he greatly enjoyed, in a somewhat condescending way. I mean, he realized that we were all frogs living in a very tiny pond. And so I think for a man who came from the suburbs of Atlanta, if I'm not mistaken, West Point, Georgia, that's where he was born, I believe, I think he knew that Lexington was a sort of a—what can one say?—an elegant little backwater, something like that. And so he greatly enjoyed anecdotes from the history of the upperclass of the town. He took no interest in the rednecks and in the lower classes at all, none. But what old Ms. So-and-so, Confederate granddaughter or Confederate granddaughter, perhaps, had to say to a VMI cadet when a cadet made a *faux pas*, a conversational boo-boo or *faux pas*, and said so-and-so to old Ms. So-and-so, that she came back with a snappy retort that annihilated a cadet forty years earlier, that was the kind of thing that he liked. If Leyburn had discussed anything at all conversationally—do you need to change the tape?

**Warren:** Yes, but go ahead, just finish off.

**Futch:** If Leyburn had indulged in a conversation, it would be about the formation of the Greek personality and the fact that the ancient Greeks had attached great importance to this or that personal trait and we must attempt to emulate the best of classical civilization. Dr. Crenshaw would have said, "Please, this is the cocktail hour. Must we talk about the Greek personality?"

**Warren:** We're going to turn the tape over.

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

**Futch:** They were like men who came not only from different planets but different galaxies. Leyburn was so serious, so intense. Ollie Crenshaw suspected that Leyburn was a Yale atheist, but in this town there was no place for overt atheism, and the only way to plug into the town, to acquire respectability—and I've got to tell you a funny story about this also—was to be either "Presby" or "Episcy," one or the other. And so Leyburn hooked up with the Presbyterian Church upon arriving here, and Dr. Crenshaw was absolutely convinced that a man who had taught sociology at Yale for twenty years was an atheist, and that the sincerity of Leyburn's Presbyterian attachment was completely phony, that there wasn't a single sincere fiber in Leyburn's body, first of all, and in his religious affiliation as well. Not that Ollie Crenshaw was religious. I suspect that he wasn't because of various sarcastic little remarks he made just fleetingly, but I think the Crenshaws may have gone to church once a year, to the Episcy Church, just to put the tiniest pinch of incense on the altar, the tiniest possible pinch of incense.

But Leyburn was more assiduous in going to the Presby temple, and Leyburn's only friend, and it must have been a somewhat aloof and rather stuffy friendship, if the word "friendship" fits, was a retired Presbyterian minister who lived in the town and who was pretty icy himself, I gather. These two icebergs would occasionally visit and perhaps have tea or coffee—no, no, not coffee; that's too low class—tea together. It was always a picture that sort of amused me, Leyburn and the Reverend So-and-so, lived here in the town, these two cold, cold, cold fish. Thinking that they were friends was sort of strange, because Leyburn, it's hard to imagine Leyburn—Leyburn, actually, I think, was probably a space alien, and the idea of his being friends with any earthling, any mortal on this planet, is an impossibility.

I'll admit my view of Leyburn is greatly colored by one lunch conversation after another, day after day and year after year, with Dr. Crenshaw, for whom hatred of Leyburn was oxygen. And I will say I've never heard or seen anything in Leyburn that contradicts what Dr. Crenshaw said. Everything he said was consistent with what I could observe and pick up from other people. I don't know that Leyburn was an evil man. I think he was just devoid of emotions and the psychological structure of an earthling, I mean, earth-born inhabitant. So a lot of Ollie Crenshaw's conversation was about this arch, archenemy of his. Obviously you can't put this in the book, because that would not be consistent with a pleasant portrait of the school.

**Warren:** No, but it's very interesting to know that dynamic.

**Futch:** Yeah. I think it is interesting for you, the writer, I assume the chief or the only writer of the book, for you to know this, that these two men who were born very close together, one in '02—Leyburn was born in '02 and Ollie Crenshaw in '04, so they were closely—what's the word—contemporary and coeval. I guess an old person and a newborn baby can be coeval. They're living briefly in the same time. But at any rate, these two guys hated each other.

**Warren:** That's interesting that you're bringing up this theme of people being in the same place at the same time, because one of the things—I'm going to jump here.

**Futch:** Yeah. Go ahead.

**Warren:** Two of the interviews that I've done recently were with people who attended Washington and Lee in the years 1969 to '74, so they were both here at the same time. One of them led the traditional Washington and Lee life, and the other one got involved in the alternative life style that was here at that time.

**Futch:** Doug Harwood would be such a one, for example.

**Warren:** Well, that's not who I'm talking about, but, yes, he would be.

**Futch:** He was very alternative.

**Warren:** He would. He still is.

**Warren:** He was highly alternative.

**Warren:** He still is.

**Futch:** And still is. Yes.

**Warren:** It was fascinating to me, because it was like these two people were talking about entirely different places, and yet they were talking about the same place at the same time. I'm fascinated by that time period here, because I think it's an extraordinary time here, and I mean that in the sense of it being extra-ordinary. It was not a normal time, and yet—

**Futch:** Oh, that's right.

**Warren:** —it was a very dramatic and historical time. And you were here.

**Futch:** Oh, yes.

**Warren:** What was your experience, especially of what went on here in May of 1970?

**Futch:** Oh, yeah. Well, I can say something about that. My feeling was that a surface minority of the students, a small number, wanted to reenact what they saw on TV at other campuses. I think very few, if any, were genuine radicals. The faculty, on the other hand, included a few such as Mario Pellicciaro. Excuse me. Mario is still here. This is a man who left after about three years. And you may have heard—what was his name? Henry Sloss, S-L-O-S-S. Have you heard about him?

**Warren:** Just people who were here then have mentioned his name.

**Futch:** Okay. He was in the English Department, and you can easily check this out in the catalog, circa 1968, 1972 perhaps, a rather short time. But he, I think, took the whole radical peacenik thing very seriously, hated traditionalism in every form, as Professor Boatwright did, although the Boatwright story is one I knew a great deal better, if only because he was here a long time, and Sloss was here very briefly. But those two men, I think, wanted to see every tradition in capitalism, sexual relationships, every single tradition of society ripped up and reshaped in a Utopian

way. I am told that Henry's—I, of course, have no personal knowledge of this—that Henry Sloss' leaving the faculty was a matter of departmental trauma in the early '70s and that the reverberations of his departure affected his department for many, many years, personal relations within the department. But the extraordinary radicalism of Henry Sloss was probably the most significant influence on the campus in May of 1970. He had been here a very short time then, and he was destined to remain a very short time after that period.

But there was no student radicalism to speak of, quantitatively, and it was significant that one of the rumors of Kent-Cambodia week, which I guess—ten days, the first ten days of May of 1970—I've always thought it was significant that the most interesting rumor was that radicals from UVA, which would have sounded like a contradiction in terms a couple years earlier, but it's a bigger school, so there were probably more, maybe not in percentages, but there were probably more radicals in absolute terms at UVA than here, that they were going to come down to W&L and vandalize the property, Lee Chapel and other places here, to let Richard Nixon and whoever—Melvin Laird, I guess, was Secretary of Defense and John Mitchell the Attorney General, these hate objects of the radicals of that day, let them know how mad the students were, and to my knowledge, no UVA radical has ever set foot in Lexington. But it was as though the rumormongers in May 1970 here were saying there aren't enough radicals here to accomplish anything, and therefore this network of peaceniks with, presumably, a foothold at UVA would send somebody here to stir up the pot at W&L in the absence of indigenous radicals at W&L. And, of course, no property was vandalized at W&L. I don't recall whether any was at UVA or not. But the radical impulse was extremely weak overall, though there may have been one or two virulent characters, and certainly Henry Sloss was probably a mental case.

For one thing, Henry Sloss and his wife both came from rich families, and so they had no reason to worry about job security, for example. If he made his colleagues or made the administration angry, it didn't matter, because they were both rolling in money, and what happened was that when Henry Sloss lost his job a few years later, he and his wife moved to Italy and bought a villa or some sort of house in Tuscany and lived sort of like Victorian English people who had so-called private incomes in 1850 living in Italy. So I guess it's easy and fun to play-act at radicalism if one has two big financial cushions to fall back on, his family and her family.

At any rate, the decision—one of the decisions—I guess the only memorable decision made was in May of 1970. There were two faculty meetings held in Reid Hall, which was not the usual place for faculty meetings. I don't know why a different building was used, but there were two nighttime faculty meetings held in addition to the regular monthly one in May of '70 to deal with the supposed explosive mood of the students, and the decision that came out of all this was that any student who was in a moral tizzy about the invasion of Cambodia and the shooting by the National Guardsmen at Kent State, any student who was emotionally or morally furious about this—Italians have a word, *sconvolto*, meaning overturned or turned upside down—about this could postpone the final exams, which were coming up, of course, at the end of May, could postpone the exams until no later than September the 30th, could take them any time at the beginning of the next academic year, which, when you look back on it, was not a very wise idea because people forget things, students forget material that they were supposed to have learned in one semester, they forget the material by the end of the summer vacation, all the beach fun and games.

So this academically was not a very wise idea, and I don't know how many or how few students accepted this arrangement, but some did, and during final exam

period left town, and a number of very conservative students, very conservative students told me that instead of taking final exams, they were going to leave and take the final exams in September. And I said, "Well, you're free to do that according to the faculty decision, but it seems academically unwise." I said, "So if you're leaving town, where are you going?"

They said, "Oh, Virginia Beach."

And I said, "Virginia Beach? You're not going protest the war at Virginia beach, are you?"

He said, "No. We're going to enjoy the swimming and drink beer and look for girls at Virginia Beach." And so their postponing the exams had nothing so do with war protesting or moral indignation against anything. They just wanted to hit the beach a few days earlier than they otherwise would have, maybe a week earlier.

So the radical impulse here was very weak overall, but Henry Sloss and a very tiny handful of students—there was a boy named Jeffrey Gingold, G-I-N-G-O-L-D, whose name you'll find, I'm sure, in the alumni roster and I'm told is still living out in the Pacific Northwest. So he was sort of a radical wannabe and play-acted at revolution, and Henry Sloss was play-acting or maybe more. Maybe he was a rebel, I don't know. But there was this one nutty student and one nutty professor and, I think, very few others.

**Warren:** One person I interviewed from that time period sent me an amazing making body of material that was published at that time on mimeograph machines, it looks like.

**Futch:** Oh, that may well be.

**Warren:** And there were probably 300 pieces of paper.

**Futch:** But a very small handful of people can do that.

**Warren:** Well, yeah, but they were all published within ten or twelve days. I don't know that that happened at other campuses. I was just impressed. It seemed like a lot was put out.

**Futch:** I would imagine. Now, the stuff may have disappeared that was at Columbia and Kent State and Berkeley, but I'm sure that if we had kids using a mimeograph machine, that a lot of campuses must have had it, because this campus was one of the least fiery, or what would you say—hysterical—at the time. So I would think that maybe five or six students in the space of ten to twelve days could grind out news releases.

**Warren:** Did you attend that faculty meeting?

**Futch:** Oh, yes. There were, I believe, two extra faculty meetings in addition to the normal one. The regularly scheduled faculty meeting is the first Monday of a month, so that maybe that was May 3rd. I'm sorry, I don't have a calendar here. So that was May 3rd. Then there was another one set on May the 7th and then another one on May the 10th.

**Warren:** And what was the mood in those meetings?

**Futch:** I would say surprisingly calm. The conversation didn't drag. I didn't say anything. Of course, I'd known for all these years that a conservative's opinions would be discounted instantly. So I have never spoken at a faculty meeting in twenty—in what—thirty-four years now. But I had the feeling that everybody—what am I trying to say? Every minute of the faculty meeting was taken up with contributions, but, I mean, there was never a time when the president said, "Do we have any other comments? Does anybody else want to say anything?" Somebody's hand was always up, but it seemed to me that the mood was not hysterical. It was polite, and I guess some people spoke with a certain intensity. It was not like the French Revolution. Those demented assemblies of the French Revolution were quite volatile. It wasn't like that.

**Warren:** Was your sense that the faculty was more or less or equally radical, than the students? Was it just one or two members of the faculty?

**Futch:** I think very few faculty members were radical. There was a man who is now still living, in his nineties, who was probably an outgoing department head at the time, who had sort of a fixation on the Russian Revolution. He remembered the Russian Revolution. If he's in his nineties now, of course, he remembers the Russian Revolution as a teenager, and he never fell out of love with the Bolshevik Revolution of November 1917. Students told me that he wanted the American students to create sort of a hammer-and-sickle revolution in this country, but he's so much older. I mean, he lived in Paris in the 1920s and used to see Gertrude Stein and Hemingway and Scott Fitzgerald walking the streets of the Latin Quarter. So he was a faculty member at the time, though on the verge of retirement, I think, and was sort of an armchair radical screwball. And then Henry Sloss, this very young man, probably in his—I think not over thirty at the time, probably, who was a radical. But I think most of the professors were sort of worshippers of FDR and JFK, and so that meant that they were armchair liberals and theoretical leftists, but they weren't one to go out on the barricades at all. So it was a faculty whose radicalism was limited to cocktail parties, praise of LBJ's legislation, that sort of thing.

**Warren:** You touched on this a little bit with Richard, but I'd like to pursue what I think is just a really interesting dichotomy that goes on at this school, that the faculty seems to be liberal and the student body is so conservative.

**Futch:** Oh, yeah. There's no doubt of that.

**Warren:** How does that work? Why does it work so well here?

**Futch:** Because people are polite. If the student body came, or if the faculty maybe came from a different socioeconomic background, there might be rudeness and shouts and insults, but I think that, whether by design or by happenstance, so many of the people come from similar backgrounds that politeness is a virtue that has

been respected here for a very long time, and I think maybe some of the people who come here from more humble backgrounds quickly realize that politeness is a cardinal—maybe the cardinal—virtue here, and they quickly get with the program. Rudeness and confrontation—confrontationalism—does that word exist? Rudeness and confrontations are not part of the picture here, and so that's how it gets along. The political differences are extremely deep between left-wing faculty, who are the majority, of course, and the right-wing students, who are the majority.

**Warren:** When you arrived in 1962, the faculty was liberal then?

**Futch:** Yes, oh, yes. Now, of course, you understand that in 1962 the definition of liberal was very different, because the Kennedys were just taking hold at that time. And so leftism in 1962 was defined as Roosevelt, Truman, Adlai Stevenson, and JFK. We look back on JFK as being a conservative in some ways because of his tax reduction and his confronting the Soviets, his risking war in Cuba over the missiles. So now, thirty-some years later, JFK looks conservative, but he was regarded as a big liberal at that time. So that was what liberalism was at the time.

**Warren:** And at that time he was embraced by the faculty, but not the student body?

**Futch:** Oh, that's right. And I'll tell you another story in a moment along this very line, so remind me. The students hated JFK because he was perceived—the Democrats were perceived as liberals at that time. The faculty, of course, bought into the *New York Times*-Arthur Schlesinger cult of worshipping JFK even before he was assassinated. They liked the idea of Camelot and this young couple, handsome Jack and lovely Jackie, who incarnated the hopes of a new generation. Remember he used the metaphor in his inaugural speech about passing the torch. The old tired, bald-headed, white-fringed, white-haired Eisenhower generation was tottering off into decrepitude, and the young, vigorous, World War II generation of JFK were coming on, and the faculty just ate that up. I very quickly realized that I had better not say a word about politics at these many faculty cocktail parties when I arrived

here, and, of course, kept very quiet and entered eagerly into conversations that had to do with Lexington and W&L and kept very quiet when the Kennedys or, later, LBJ came into the conversation. So the faculty was very politicized and liberal, according to the definition of liberal in the early '60s.

**Warren:** One of the first people I interviewed was Charley McDowell.

**Futch:** Oh, a big liberal.

**Warren:** Yeah. And I got the impression from him that his parents were considered really radical back in the '30s.

**Futch:** Especially his father.

**Warren:** So somewhere in there the faculty changed.

**Futch:** Well, yeah. I would imagine the faculty did change in the '40s and '50s, but, see, I wasn't here in the '40s and '50s. The only access that I have to the change in the faculty is what Ollinger Crenshaw told me at lunch, because we had lunch four days out of five.

**Warren:** So would Ollie Crenshaw have been a liberal?

**Futch:** No. Not at all. Now you have just hit on an interesting point, and again, I don't know whether you can put this in the book. Ollie was an old Harry Byrd Democrat. You know the history of Virginia politics.

**Warren:** Yes.

**Futch:** So Harry Byrd, Sr., was an extremely important figure in the political life of the '40s, '50s, and '60s. But, of course, by the '60s, by the time I arrived, Harry Byrd, Sr., was elderly. He had a stroke about 1964, '65, and his son, who was equally conservative, took over that seat. But the son did not have a forceful personality, and the Voting Rights Act of '65 prevented the son from taking hold of the state of Virginia in the same way that the father had done. Now, this is not irrelevant to the Lexington-faculty scene. Harry Byrd's position, of course, depended on white supremacy in Virginia, and that was a major part, along with not showing up any

state debt. Those were major components of the Democratic ascendancy in Virginia as it was understood in the '40s, '50s, and the early '60s.

But there was another element in the Virginia Democratic party that never took hold in those days, but W&L for some reason was very attached to this, and it was called the Francis P. Miller—Francis the male spelling, masculine spelling, F-R-A-N-C-I-S. Francis Pickens Miller was an alumnus of about 1910 or 1920, who was an advocate of racial equality and, of course, was a deadly enemy of Harry Byrd, Sr., the senator, who was senator for many, many, many years. And Francis Miller ran against the Byrd machine for—and we'll get back to Ollie Crenshaw. I haven't forgotten your question. The Francis Miller faction of the party, they couldn't defeat Harry Byrd, but they administered pinpricks for a senatorial election here, a gubernatorial election there. The cream of Lexington society was hooked up, for some reason, with the Francis P. Miller liberal brand of, at that time, unsuccessful intraparty rivalry with Harry Byrd. And so if one wanted to go to Lexington cocktail parties with the Penicks and the Paxtons, one would, of course, supposedly be on the Francis P. Miller and the anti-Harry Byrd wavelength.

Ollie Crenshaw, however, did want to go to cocktail parties, but he did not in any way sympathize with that faction at all. He was absolutely a conservative, an old-line Southern Democrat conservative of a very old vintage. But if he had said that at the cocktail parties, the invitations would have dried up. So this is what I meant by saying that he was a master of diplomacy and euphemism and circumlocutions and elliptical speech. And so it must have been an amazing performance for decades for him to be accepted as a Lexington Democrat while he was, deep down, a conservative Harry Byrd Democrat during all of those years. And that was done by talking about old Miss So-and-so, who said the funniest thing back in 1918, and on and on like that. And so Ollie Crenshaw was an ardent conservative.

Leyburn, for example was a great apostle of racial liberalism in the '40s and '50s, and Ollie very discreetly made—if he were living, I wouldn't be telling you this, and I trust this won't be in the book at all, but he was not sympathetic to that stance. And so just for a record that may be unsealed a hundred years from now, that was one of the problems between Ollie and Leyburn, and I doubt if they ever discussed it, because, as I say, Ollie Crenshaw was not into confrontations and quarrels and arguments. But at these lunches with me he made it clear, though in a rather oblique way, nonetheless clear that he disliked everything about Leyburn, everything. If you had asked him to say something good about Leyburn, he would say, "Well, he dresses nicely." That would have been it. "The white hair is becoming," perhaps. So Ollie Crenshaw was a—it's no wonder he taught U.S. diplomatic history in the courses, because he himself was an extremely skillful diplomat, and, of course, he continued with the cocktail circuit 'til the week he died. His son is still living. That's another reason I don't want anything said or printed.

**Warren:** I understand.

**Futch:** And his son is not old either. His son was born when Ollie was no kid.

**Warren:** I hope that this book will be inclusive but discreet.

**Futch:** Yes. Discretion is extremely important. I emphasize that I'm a great fan of Ollie. He treated me like a son. It was as though I had two fathers, the one in Baltimore and the one here. And I knew him for seven—no, for eight years, because I first met him in April of '62 during an interview, and he lived until March of '70. So for one month less than eight years, I knew him very well, and he opened up increasingly to me as the years passed.

**Warren:** Let's stay with speaking of academic things. Richard said I should ask you about—

**Futch:** A very nice boy.

**Warren:** —the H train.

**Futch:** The H train?

**Warren:** The H train. The history train? That that's apparently a term that the students use.

**Futch:** Not around me.

**Warren:** That you can take the H train around the world by taking different courses about different kinds of history.

**Futch:** They never—

**Warren:** All right. Well, then I won't expect you to tell me about that.

**Futch:** Oh, no. The students are very—something like that makes me think that they are more discreet than I realize.

**Warren:** No, I don't think it's anything critical, not remotely.

**Futch:** Oh, I thought this was something negative.

**Warren:** No, no, no. Oh, no.

**Futch:** Oh, well, good. If it's favorable, I'm happy.

**Warren:** Oh, no, no. You could take the H train and see the world through—

**Futch:** And see the world?

**Warren:** —through your history courses.

**Futch:** Oh, well, good. Well, that's fine.

**Warren:** I think that's he was saying.

**Futch:** I'm glad to hear that, but it's a brand-new term to me.

**Warren:** That's one of the interesting things, speaking to someone as young as Richard. He thinks that the way it's been for the last four years is the way it's always been.

**Futch:** Oh, no. Well, yeah. You and I know different. He's a nice kid. He's extremely smart and pleasant. He's a sphinx, though. You never know what he's thinking. He has a deadpan way about him.

**Warren:** He does.

**Futch:** And I sometimes look at him and wonder what's going on behind that face, behind the mask.

**Warren:** I think it's his journalism background. He keeps that blank look.

**Futch:** Maybe is something that they are trained or that they learn to pick up.

**Warren:** I think so.

**Futch:** But I'm very fond of him. He's always been very polite and nice, easy to talk to for me.

**Warren:** I think so, too. So how about this great legacy of students that you have taught through the years? Have you kept up with people?

**Futch:** Oh, with many, many of them, yes, going back into the '60s, very much so.

**Warren:** Tell me about that. How do you keep up with them?

**Futch:** Correspondence on a manual typewriter. I couldn't begin to deal with a computer. I would probably have to be institutionalized if I were put in a room with a computer. So I have a whole bunch of manual typewriters, which, by the way, are still being manufactured, I'm told from missionaries who go to jungles, and they can't plug a manual typewriter into a palm tree. So that's how I keep up with them. I'm not a telephone buff at all, because it's very time-consuming. I've found that very few people will talk for ten or fifteen minutes and hang up. So my telephone contact with alumni is extremely rare, but I'm very glad to write letters and love getting letters from alumni. And that's how it's done. It's a very 1930s' way to keep up with people.

**Warren:** Well, it's nice to know. You know, I often worry that those personal records, there just aren't going to be many of them from this time period because we're all doing e-mail and telephone.

**Futch:** Well, I don't do e-Mail. And I will say that I keep the letters of all of the wittiest students or alumni—alumni, I should say. So that is going to be quite something, if I leave those letters behind.

**Warren:** Well, I certainly hope you will.

**Futch:** I don't have any plan to destroy them, but certainly I would have to be six feet under before a lot of them are read, but, yeah, I have a great number of personal letters, and I'm making an effort now as I go through the debris that I live in. I always call my house the harbor bottom. I'm trying to put them all in one place, and I have some big stacks of correspondence, and I guess I will make these letters available to somebody, but I do not have any intention to burn them, as when Queen Victoria died, one of her daughters, Anticordia [phonetic], spent ten years burning papers. I guess the most interesting things are the ones that got burned. A huge lot is left, but they burned goodness knows what for ten years. Princess Beatrice and Lord Isher [phonetic] did the burning.

**Warren:** They weren't historians, obviously.

**Futch:** They were not. So I don't have any plan at all to do that, but I do keep up with the—getting back to your question—with considerable numbers of students, those who write letters. There are those who are not fond of writing letters. There are some with whom I've fallen out of touch because they are strictly electronic young men, and I'm absolutely terrified by anything having to do with electronics, and I tell people that, for me, technology is whatever existed in 1940, and, thank heaven, manual typewriters did. The technology of my elementary school days will be quite sufficient.

**Warren:** So what else do you want to talk about? What haven't we talked about?

**Futch:** Oh, what haven't we talked about?

**Warren:** We talked about a lot of interesting things before we turned the tape recorder on.

**Futch:** Yes, indeed. Indeed we did. I wondered if there was anybody I want to put you in touch with. In fact, I am going to contact a few people and say, "Would you be

willing to talk to Mame Warren about So-and-so, either on tape or otherwise, perhaps?"

**Warren:** That would be wonderful.

**Futch:** I will be glad to do that. Photographs. I will rack my brain to come up with somebody who might have pictures. Now, there's a professor who may or may not be mentally able to help you now. He graduated in 1923, taught math here, living here in the town, incidentally. He taught here, I guess, from the '20s until he retired. He was born, when? 1900, I guess. Winter Roysten. Do you know that name?

**Warren:** I've heard the name. Do you know what kind of condition he's in?

**Futch:** I do not know, but I'm sure you can find out from the Math Department. He lives on the street next to my street. I think it's called Edmondson Avenue, here in Lexington. R-O-Y-S-T-O-N-, or T-E-N, I forget. He and his wife live in a house that I sometimes drive by, and they are in their nineties now. Of course, I don't know whether he was born in 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, but he graduated in '23. He might have some photos, possibly. A very, very nice man, and he and his wife were driving their car around until even their late eighties, and I assume they're still living in that house. I'm sure that the senior-level math teachers could tell you whether either one of the Roystens is in a position to talk about the 1920s with you.

**Warren:** I sure would like to find somebody who can talk about that. I'd like to find out about bathtub gin around here.

**Futch:** Oh, well, Ollie Crenshaw told a story about the bathtub gin. He said that if a student would stand on the corner of Main and Washington Streets, where Grand Piano now is, that, as he put it, a black young man would—and sort of, if one stood there and sort of gazed around at the sky, a black young man would figure out what the W&L student wanted and would appear within a few minutes and say, "Anything I can do for you today?" And you'd say, "Well, yeah. I sure would like to have a gallon of this or that." And he'd say, "Well, if you want to go in the

drugstore and have a soda, I'll be back in about half an hour," and you would make the arrangement right there on the street corner. Now, whether the delivery was made on the street corner, who knows? I suppose very few blacks had automobiles in the 1920s, so it must have been within walking distance.

But he said that bathtub gin was very—well, I don't know that Ollie Crenshaw ever used a word like "bathtub gin," but he would have said illegal products were easily gotten in the 1920s.

He also told me another funny story that you might want to have. Are we still on tape here?

**Warren:** Yes.

**Futch:** He laughed and laughed over the fact that the president of the university in the 1920s unwittingly perjured himself before a congressional committee, because a committee of the House or the Senate held hearings on the effectiveness of Prohibition, and that President Henry Louis Smith of W&L was an ardent prohibitionist, believed in it very sincerely, and went up to Capitol Hill to testify before such and such a committee that Prohibition was working fine. He said, "I am the president of a school for young men, and I can personally assure you that Prohibition is absolutely successful in Lexington and on our campus." Ollie Crenshaw said that it was like a sieve, and that getting booze was the easiest thing in the world, and the president lived, as faculty members usually do live, unaware of how the students are living, that the president was just oblivious—or as they say today, clueless—and assured under oath to senators or representatives that Prohibition was completely successful here in Lexington, and it was anything but.

So that is an Ollie Crenshaw story that he told with great peals of laughter. He was anything but a Prohibitionist. I've always said that Ollie Crenshaw looked like the type who ought to be sitting in a white suit on the verandah of a white-

columned mansion with a mint julep in one hand, or maybe in both hands. He enjoyed the product of fermentation very much.

**Warren:** I don't have any pictures of Crenshaw. I would love to have a photograph.

**Futch:** I'm sure in any *Calyx* you ought to be able to find one.

**Warren:** Right, but I'm talking about that kind of picture of him sitting back with a mint julep.

**Futch:** Oh, no. No, I'm sure there are no pictures of him. I thought you meant just any photo. No. I wish he had posed for that, but I think he took the university and the professorship so seriously that he would never have posed humorously for such a picture. No. I misunderstood your point.

What else? Mr. [Earl Stansbury] Mattingly, the treasurer. There was another enemy of Ollie Crenshaw. Do you want to hear about Mr. Mattingly?

**Warren:** Well, sure. We're just about at the end of the tape.

**Futch:** Well, you want to meet another day?

**Warren:** We can continue on.

**Futch:** You have another tape?

**Warren:** Do I have another tape?

**Futch:** Yeah. Yeah. I should have known.

**Warren:** Of course, I have another tape.

**Futch:** Yeah. Well, by all means.

**Warren:** All right. I'm going to put in a new tape.

[Begin Tape 2, Side 1]

**Warren:** This is Mame Warren. This is tape two with Jefferson Davis Futch III, on August 19th, 1996. Actually, I guess it's tape three, if we count Richard's.

**Futch:** Yeah. This is the third tape this summer, but the second tape today.

I wanted to say something about a great campus character. In fact, I want to say something about his cremation and the disposal of his remains. Mr. Earl

Stansbury Mattingly, who was the registrar as an undergrad, if you can imagine an undergrad finding time also to be registrar, and then he did get his degree very belatedly and continued being registrar until 1940, and then he became treasurer from '40 until the mid 1960s. If I recollect correctly, he died the week of Christmas and New Year's of '66, but because he had no family, was unmarried, he lived a tennis ball's throw from the campus, he lived in what I think is now called the International House next door to what was the Sigma Chi house and is now Brian Shaw's P.R. office, Mr. Mattingly's life revolved entirely around the school, and he was undistracted by family, friends, or hobbies, as far as anyone knows. He was born—as Ollie Crenshaw, one of his great detractors, used to call him and turned his birthdate into a nickname, "Old 8/28/88," August 28th, 1888.

Because of lack of money, Mr. Mattingly entered W&L, I believe, in 1916 at the age of twenty-seven. He was born on a farm in D.C., if you can imagine a farm in the District of Columbia, on the site of the subsequent Walter Reed Hospital, Army Hospital, way out towards Georgia Avenue at 16th Street on one side, and I guess Georgia Avenue is the other side. So E. S. Mattingly, who would wind up rather affluent, came here as a poor boy of twenty-seven, a freshman, twenty-seven years old, in 1915, which was not unusual in the late nineteenth, early twentieth century. It did happen. He was so academically, shall we say, challenged that he couldn't graduate—I guess low grades and so forth—until 1925. Ollie said that the graduation—and they were classmates. Of course, Ollie, of course, graduated at age twenty-one in 1925. He graduated on time. Maybe he entered a year late. See, Ollie was an undergrad for only three years and got his degree 1922 to '25. But at any rate, he and Mattingly, who was then going on thirty-seven, when he got his bachelor's degree, graduated simultaneously, the same ceremony in Lee Chapel where the graduations were held in the 1920s. Ollie said a sarcastic round of cheers went up

when Mattingly was given his diploma, as though to say, "You dumbbell, we knew you might make it, but here you've actually made it."

So Mattingly had already been appointed registrar during his undergrad years because he was in his thirties at that time. He turned thirty in the year 1918. And so he got his degree after being the registrar, which, today, is inconceivable, obviously. But during those years when he was a student, apparently the faculty had said, "You nitwit, I'm giving you a D just to get you out of the course," and the professors apparently had been very impolite and sarcastic in their treatment of Mattingly. But once he got his degree and went on being administrator after that, he did not hide his hatred for the faculty, and the faculty members, for example, who were very poorly paid in the 1920s and '30s, would run out of money before the end of the month and would come to Mattingly, this young man who they had been insulting for his academic shortcomings not so many years before. The roles were reversed now, and faculty members had to sit in his office with him, of course, behind his desk and on the twenty-fifth of the month say, "Well, I would like an advance of next month's paycheck because we don't get paid until the thirty-first of the month, and could you find it in your heart to do this?"

Mattingly would give them sort of Calvin Coolidge–style lectures. "If you would handle your money more responsibly, you wouldn't be put in a position like this. Certainly I should think that a man of fifty years old with a doctorate of philosophy would be able to budget his funds for a thirty-day period in order to get through the month, at least that." And so he took great delight in humiliating faculty members who, in some cases, had been embarrassing him once upon a time.

While Ollie was never in that position—Ollie did not come from a poverty-stricken family by any means—Mattingly would sort of pinprick the faculty in other ways, turning off lights. Apparently Mattingly would roam the buildings late at night, having nothing else to do, and if Ollie Crenshaw were working in his office

and were leaving at 10 p.m. in Washington Hall, where his office was, and not turn off a hallway light, Mattingly might catch him at it and say, "Do you think this school has a $10 million endowment? It would certainly help if members of the faculty would turn off hall lights at this hour of the night." So Mattingly went out of his way to be unpleasant to faculty members, according to Ollie Crenshaw.

To me, as a young faculty member, he was certainly polite. Maybe it was because he did not equate the youngest of the faculty with his persecutors of once upon a time. He was always very nice to me in a rather businesslike way, but he wasn't unpleasant, certainly, at all and once even took me to dinner, which apparently was like Jack Benny taking someone to dinner. In the first year or two I was there, I didn't have a car, for a number of years, and so Mattingly pulled up alongside me when I was walking on Jefferson Street toward my rented room, the house where I rented a room, in this great long Cadillac or whatever he had. It looked like a White House limousine, and I think it was the mark of success for a boy who had arrived in humble circumstances in 1915. And now it was almost half a century later, and he had a very fancy long black car, and it pulled up alongside me. For a moment I didn't know who it was at first, and the window was automatically taken down, from the driver's seat, I'm sure, and I gathered somebody was trying to get my attention, so I looked in. It was Mr. Mattingly. He said, "Get in," rather brusquely, like that, and I, of course, obeyed, and he said, "Have you had dinner yet?"

I said, "Well, no, actually, Mr. Mattingly, I haven't had dinner yet."

He said, "I'll take you to dinner." So he was good-hearted. Late in life, perhaps, he was good-hearted, but there were many stories about other good-heartedness in the '30s and '40s and '50s, that if he became aware that an undergrad was hurting for money, the family perhaps was not rich to begin with or there was a family illness that had cut into the wealth of the family, Mattingly would either

anonymously or in absolute confidence give the boy tuition money. Many kids graduated in the middle of the century and before the middle of the century because of Mr. Mattingly's anonymous generosity. So in spite of the fact that he came across as a very terse Calvin-Coolidge-like, austere character, he very much had his good side, and I thought being invited to eat with this man of proverbial rigor and severity was a compliment. I was very pleased at that. And he continued until his death—well, he did not have a long nursing-home illness. He died after a rather short illness, maybe a week.

**Warren:** And you wanted to tell me about his cremation.

**Futch:** Oh, yes. Yes. Yes. I was told at the time that there was a city law that cremated remains could not be disposed of on lawns or in parks or in gardens or flower beds or anyplace like that, and yet Mr. Mattingly, I found out many years later, or some years later, had expressed a desire to be cremated and to have his ashes scattered on the lawn in front of Washington Hall. When I came back from Christmas holiday in the December of '66, came back, I guess, in the first days of January, I learned Mr. Mattingly had died a week earlier. So I asked a question about, "Well, was he buried in Stonewall Jackson Cemetery?" and was told, no, he was cremated. I said, "Well, I guess his ashes are there."

Someone said, "I don't think so."

People began talking in sort of, again, circumlocutious ways about the ashes, and I eventually found out, though not easily and not quickly, that the ashes were illegally scattered on the grass in front of Washington Hall, city law or no city law, and there are thus now the remains—the ashes, remains, of at least two faculty members there.

Did Richard tell you the other story about the professor whose ashes were put there?

**Warren:** I've heard that.

**Futch:** Fifteen years later, the young man who committed suicide.

**Warren:** Yes. I've heard that one.

**Futch:** And I think on New Year's Day of '81, if I—or am I deceived? Maybe it was New Year's Day of '82 that he committed suicide, but we have in the soil of the front lawn—

**Warren:** No wonder the grass is so green.

**Futch:** Yes, indeed. These two loyal—they loved the school so much that they both requested this, and, of course, by the time the younger man was put in the lawn, apparently the city law had either become a dead letter or had been repealed, but in the 1960s it was still a delicate matter to deposit Mr. Mattingly's remains in the wintertime grass.

**Warren:** You made a mention a while ago about turning off lights late at night. I understand there's quite a lot of activity on this campus late at night, that faculty members keep late office hours and—

**Futch:** I know of one faculty member. I don't know of many or of two, even, but I know of one faculty member who is, like me, a bachelor and keeps hours into the wee hours of morning, as I do at home. But I don't want to particularly run into the night watchman at 2 a.m., but there is one of the professors who is here now and has been here for many years who is said to be a late-night creature on campus, yes.

**Warren:** And you keep office hours at home?

**Futch:** No, no, no.

**Warren:** Oh, you keep late hours at home.

**Futch:** I grade exams into the wee hours at my house but not in the office. No. I keep normal office hours, the same daytime office hours that other people keep. And I don't know why, some little intuition told me that hanging around campus in the wee hours of the night is not a standard thing for professors to do, so I don't do it. No, I don't have students at my house. But my house looks like a landfill or,

as I say, the wreckage of the *Titanic*, or now the wreckage of TWA. So I can't have any visitors in my house ever, but I have office hours in the daytime.

However, your question was about this person who has office hours in literally in the middle of the night, and I think when he's not having office hours, he's grading exams or planning a lecture, something like that. I don't say he has students coming in every night.

**Warren:** So this is only one person.

**Futch:** Only one person, yes.

**Warren:** I got the impression there was a beehive of activity around in the night.

**Futch:** Well, there may be, but I know of only one person who does this, sort of an eccentric, beloved but eccentric person who has these very late hours. But I have never done that, and I don't know of any others who had office hours late at night. Most Americans, I guess, are TV zealots, and most people want to be at home watching the tube at night. So I would be surprised.

I have heard, with regard to the fact that I'd be very surprised, I have heard that amorous students are often aprowl in various buildings in the wee hours for reasons having little to do with scholarship, for reasons having nothing to do with scholarship, but that has nothing to do with the faculty, I trust.

**Warren:** I've seen signs to that effect.

**Futch:** Oh, yes. Student hanky-panky is reportedly quite active.

**Warren:** Do you have any good stories about that?

**Futch:** I don't know any. Students are very discreet about their personal lives with faculty members, and it's very probable that I know kids who've misbehaved in campus buildings in the wee hours, but, of course, they wouldn't tell faculty members that. So I can only imagine and envy them very much. When I was a student, I was a goody-goody and lived in the same town, always went home on the bus to my parents, and I never misbehaved. But, of course, these kids' parents are a

long way off, and I can well imagine that students take advantage of empty buildings after 1 a.m.

**Warren:** Are there any other stories you'd like to tell? What do you want to be remembered for here at Washington and Lee?

**Futch:** For longevity. [Laughter]

**Warren:** Well said.

**Futch:** Thank you. I don't know, other than for having an extremely long career, I would like to be remembered for keeping the kids awake and alert in class.

**Warren:** What classes do you really enjoy teaching?

**Futch:** Well, I guess Venice and the papacy most, which are spring semester courses, because Venice is a city that I came to love by roaming through it, street by street and alley by alley, in my youth, and the papacy because there is no institution more—what shall we say—more heavily chronicled with scandal than the papacy. So when you have a combination of scandal and art, it's a wonderful recipe. So while I know that you can't refer in your book to the scandal-ridden nature of papal history, that's what I enjoy about it. I suppose in a book, if this is quoted at all, you would say that the artistic history of Rome and the role of the Popes as the greatest art patrons of Western civilization, that I enjoy that, but, *entre nous*, the Popes were just wild men in the bygone times, less in the twentieth century and in the nineteenth century pretty bland, also. But that's a wonderful course. I don't know if the students think it's wonderful. I enjoy teaching it. And, as I say, Venice is a city I fell in love with from photographs when I was in high school and then was lucky enough to get stationed there in the Army, stationed on the mainland right outside of Venice. So every weekend for two years I went to Venice.

**Warren:** Oh, aren't you lucky.

**Futch:** Yeah. How about that? It was an incredible break. Some people get stationed on Korean hilltops waiting for the North Koreans to come back, and I got stationed

next door to Venice. It was a quick train ride to the city, and I learned the ins and outs of Venice and its history and its architecture and art collections and so forth very thoroughly. So I have never gotten bored and have never fallen out of love with Venice. So it's a wonderful course to teach.

**Warren:** So do you think your teaching style has changed through the years?

**Futch:** Only in one respect. Off-colored anecdotes cannot be told in a coed class. I don't think otherwise it's changed. There were many more off-color anecdotes prior to 1985. I guess I didn't have any female freshman at that time, because I don't think I taught freshmen in '85, because there was a period when freshman history enrollments may have been down. I taught the freshmen and sophomores early in my career, then there was a period when they said, "Well, we can get other people to do it. You don't have to." And then the enrollments may have picked up, because I've been teaching freshmen again in the last six or seven or eight years. I forget what. You'll be glad to know—everyone will be glad to know I don't keep a diary so I don't know exactly when. So I don't think I had any female freshmen at that time. But in a mixed class one can't tell smutty stories. But that's the only change I have made.

**Warren:** So why are you depriving the girls of your best stories?

**Futch:** Oh, because I don't want a young lady to go to—my bride-who-never-was, that hyphenated lady, to say, "He told a story about Marie Antoinette and So-and-so," or, "He told a story about Queen Victoria's daughter-in-law who did this and that." And I can be in deep doo-doo, as George Bush would say, deep do-doo. So, of course, that's a case where I would have to be very careful. One never knows when somebody might take offense at something.

**Warren:** And male students never took offense at anything?

**Futch:** Oh, no. Well, who knows? Maybe they did. Maybe the Sunday school type of male student just didn't take my courses.

**Warren:** One thing I was impressed by was I interviewed—and you can stop me if I'm going over the line of what we said we wouldn't talk about, but I interviewed some of the first women students who went through here. Of course, this is ten years ago. But I was really struck at how similar they seem to be to the guys who go here, that they seem to be the same kinds of people.

**Futch:** Yes. Yes, that's very true. Many people have remarked on the same thing, and, of course, a lot of the faculty members have been unhappy about that because they wanted female students who would be male-haters and say, "Men are all brutes and rapists and monsters and devils and patriarchal oppressors," and, of course, the young ladies who have been here the last ten years very seldom, if ever, say that kind of a thing. They will say, "I'm not a feminist." And you are exactly right. You are very perceptive, as always, to say that. So this is not an imaginary similarity at all. I fully agree with you on that. So, of course, I've had a number of them in my class and had no problems at all. But I still can't tell an off-color story in class because there could be just one person, one female student who's on a different wavelength, and there would be "H" to pay if I told a story. I mean, there are many stories, not about Queen Victoria, I hasten to add, but say the wife of George IV was a nymphomaniac, but if I said in class that Queen Caroline was a nymphomaniac, somebody might go to the hyphenated—my hyphenated future bride and say, "He was holding a woman, a female in history, up to ridicule." So I can't. There's no way I can run that kind of risk. So I simply say that George IV and his wife were both morally dubious and that each one was a great cross that the other had to carry, something of that sort, and just sort of pass quickly over anything else, or just mention George IV alone. And, of course, about him, he was a sex athlete, increasingly fat as the years went by. He was not a Brad Pitt. But, of course, I can say anything of the male characters. The male scandalous characters of history are seldom the problem. But one has to tailor—the French called it *chronique de*

*scandal*. One has to tailor that a little more carefully now, but otherwise, getting back to your original question, I think my teaching is the same, essentially the same as it always was.

I'm inspired in that respect by a philosophy professor I had over forty years ago at Johns Hopkins who was a very entertaining professor, and he is my unacknowledged model, long dead, of course, now. But he was a very delightful lecturer, and I remember him better than anybody else in my undergrad days, and he's the one I have attempted, with who knows what success, to emulate, Professor George Boaz [phonetic] of the Philosophy Department. Nobody fell asleep in his class.

**Warren:** Well, I don't think they do in yours either.

**Futch:** Thank you. My goal is not to have them fall asleep.

**Warren:** Well, let me ask you about—you know, I was here before and I've come back. Certainly what I witnessed in the late '70s when I was here, I was not in the classroom, but I was in Lexington, and I did not see a lot of gentlemanly behavior in the late '70s around here.

**Futch:** You mean at night, or out on the town, or on campus or what?

**Warren:** I mean walking by Red Square on a Wednesday night.

**Futch:** Drunk? Were they drunk?

**Warren:** Oh, drunk and just—

**Futch:** Relieving themselves on the sidewalk, something like that?

**Warren:** Very unruly behavior out at night.

**Futch:** Breaking glass at automobile tires?

**Warren:** Yeah, all that kind of thing. Very loud music all the time. And I wasn't necessarily an older person who would be offended by this.

**Futch:** You were a mere high school maiden at that time. [Laughter]

**Warren:** Not quite. I wish, but not quite. But from what I understand, part of the reason why coeducation was brought here was because the academic standards had been lowered, that the students who were coming through here weren't quite as good. Did you experience that?

**Futch:** No, I did not experience that. I think that a lot of the defenders of coeducation wanted to make it appear that they were academic deadheads, dunderheads. Deadhead, I guess, has another meaning now. Dunderheads. And there may have been some dunderheads here at the time, but there also were in the '60s, I guarantee you, and some of the brightest kids that I know here in the late '70s. So I think that a somewhat distorted picture is deliberately painted of that period in order to give alumni and trustees at the time a reason to go coed. It has always been a suspicion of mine—obviously I can't prove this or footnote this, because faculty members just don't talk to me much—that there could have been a lowering of the quality of high school kids who were let in here. I mean, history is not a tough subject to teach. Maybe if I taught math or physics, it would have been a little more noticeable. But the material of history is so familiar to start with, and it's easy to read, and it's not like physics or calculus or computers.

I heard somebody say this once, and I have never forgotten it, that they deliberately let in some high school boneheads in order to be able to tell the trustees, "We are facing a crisis of the quality of kids who are coming here, and we will eventually have nothing but morons here."

The trustees said, "Oh, dear. We don't want that to happen. What's the solution?"

The administration said, "Well, admitting female students would probably change things very much."

The trustees said, "Well, we don't much want to do that."

The admissions people said, "Well, it's that or simply apes and gorillas will be here, just people with no IQs at all, no detectable IQs, will be the students ten years from now."

The trustees said, "Oh, we don't want that to happen either."

And something of this sort may well have happened, and I'm convinced that it did happen, but I cannot possibly prove that. The ones that I got in that period seemed to be perfectly okay, and if anybody looks at the alumni magazine and looks at the graduates of 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, that you'll see they're having very successful careers. And it has been said also that there's no A, you know, the letter grade A, in the word "success," and that it is quite easy to be academically weak and still run a company or found a company or step into Dad's shoes and take over the family business quite successfully.

So if the graduates of the late '70s and early '80s had turned into BV derelicts, then I would say, "Uh-huh, yeah, there was really something wrong with the quality because these guys are all sort of leaning on buildings in BV," which is not the case. And so I'm very skeptical about the academic assertions that are made and the reasons for any academic falling-off in that period.

Now, as for their wild behavior, I think that has something to do with the fact that the Student Control Committee or whatever that took care of disciplinary problems might have been very lax, and what John D. Wilson did was to set up a fraternity system that is very, very tightly managed so that the vandalizing of fraternity houses and destruction of furniture, the breaking of glass windows and things like that, there is such a tight rein on the fraternities that wild behavior comes at a cost, that if a wild fraternity party takes place and the frat house is damaged by hurling full bottles of whiskey against the wall or the door or something like that, there is an immediate financial penalty, because a penalty is

assessed, and Mom and Dad will find that monthly bill for fraternity dues is doubled or is increased in some way.

**Warren:** I need to turn the tape over.

[Begin Tape 2, Side 2]

**Warren:** I hope I'm not overstepping the bounds of this subject, because I'm really glad to get your perspective on that, because I feel awkward, because I've heard so often that party line that things were going academically badly, and we've had about a ten-year span of alumni who are really being run down by that.

**Futch:** Yes. Very much, yes. I would be furious if I were one of those alumni.

**Warren:** So I'm glad to have a perspective of someone who doesn't necessarily agree or disagree. You know, I mean, I don't take any position on it at all.

**Futch:** You were out of town during so much out of town.

**Warren:** Well, and I also just don't take any position. I'm here gathering information, but I think it's important to get the other point of view.

**Futch:** I am convinced that there is something haywire about that. Now I'll tell you another thing. This cannot be in the book, obviously. I think that the previous president, the president previous to the current one, was very anxious to be credited with creating a new school, as he called it in a faculty meeting of September of '84 "The new Washington and Lee," and that—if you quote me on this, I am dead meat—that he wanted an enormous amount of credit for being the refounder of the school, and therefore, that assertion and claim could be best supported by saying the school had become a garbage pail of derelicts, that these guys were drunken morons, that they had IQs in the double digits, they were nothing but disgusting inebriates. And that party line was hammered away—I'm told behind closed doors it was hammered away at and hammered away at and hammered away at and that we now have a school of kids who talk about nothing but Plato and Aristotle in their free

time, in their off-duty—I started to say off-duty time—which, of course, is very far from the truth.

As far as alcoholism is concerned, alcoholic revelry, which I don't doubt existed in the late '70s—of course, I didn't live downtown so I can well imagine what you saw on the street those Friday and Saturday nights perhaps, or on some other night, but I didn't see that with my own eyes because, of course, I don't—I guess professors are well advised not to roam around on the streets at 11:00 o'clock on Friday and Saturday nights.

But when I was hired here in '62, one of my grandmothers was still living, and so I told her with some degree of pride that I had been offered a job at W&L. This was in May of 1962. I was offered the job in April, in April of '62. And so I said to her that this job offer had come along, I'd accepted and would be going down there, down to Lexington in September from Baltimore, and my grandmother's only comment was—she was about seventy-eight years old at the time—she said, "Don't the boys down at Washington and Lee drink a lot?"

And I evaded that by saying, "Do you think I would take a job at a place where the boys drink a lot?" But obviously she had heard other elderly ladies whose grandsons had come down here as students, she had heard scuttlebutt from the elderly ladies of that day. So this alcoholic reputation of the school, I think, goes back to the 1920s, if not earlier, and I doubt if it was earlier, because the South was so poverty-stricken after the Civil War that I don't think it was a playboy school before World War I. But with the gradual return of prosperity to some places in the South after the First World War, I think the South was fifty years getting over the Civil War and the impoverishment that came from that, but by the 1920s and '30s, W&L was in jeopardy of becoming a playboy school, and wealthy families from Atlanta and New Orleans and places like that had kids here.

So I think that that reputation does not particularly belong or uniquely belong to the 1970s but that the party line, as you rightly call it, of the '80s and now the nineties was that the school had become simply a pit of disgraceful "alkies" and that the changes that were made in the 1980s corrected that. And I think also probably that the admissions office was told to be on the lookout for high-schoolers, for twelfth graders who have been sort of—how can one say—goody-goodys, sort of the editors of the high school literary magazine if the high school had a literary magazine, editor of the high school newspaper, the kids in high school who were the least likely to be hell-raisers and the most likely to be bookworms from their possibly junior, certainly senior high school years, and that a kid who was editor of the high school poetry mag was much less likely to be hurling bottles of whiskey or burning piles of furniture in college.

There probably has been some toning down of that, not on the basis of grades only, but on the basis of kids who were very quiet. I mean, I was a high school goody-goody. I never got drunk. I never vandalized anything, was always in the bosom of Mom and Pop's nest, and I think that is, ironically, the kind of kid that I was in the 1940s is the kind that they began to recruit more carefully in the latter half of the 1980s, the goody-goodies who were—please don't use it in the book—the goody-goodies who were the least likely to misbehave.

For example, there was a case around 1990 or so when the SAEs and the Phi Psis, who were great rivals, the Phi Psis being mostly Northerners, the SAEs being mostly Southerners, and they have hated each other for decades, and their houses are very close together, and there was some incident, I guess in 1990, when one of them threw a soft-drink bottle, or more likely a booze bottle, through the window of the next-door house, and then the other guys reciprocated, and several windows were broken after the Fraternity Renaissance or at the climactic moment of the Fraternity Renaissance.

The president of the university in 1990 was very, very angry about this, and summoned the offenders from the two houses, not necessarily together, but some of the offenders who had broken the windows to his office for a tongue-lashing and said that they were bringing the violence of the Bronx in New York to Lexington, and they were suspended from school for either a semester or a year or something of that sort and were told as they left his office, these kids, of course, told their friends who told me that he said as they left, "I hope you enjoy bagging groceries for the next year," or the next semester, whatever it was. "You're fit only for that." So kids who would likely break windows would have been laughed off as just typical W&L guys in the '70s and '60s and '50s and '40s and '30s and '20s, but by 1990, kids who deliberately broke windows were equated with vandals in the Bronx, and so that had nothing to do with academics. That just had to do with self-control and the way kids spent their leisure time. He was extremely determined to exclude these roughnecks and—what would you say—kids who behaved in trashy ways, whether from rich or poor backgrounds. Of course, rich kids can be very bad vandals.

He was determined to put a stop to that and to make sure that not only were they academically motivated, but also they would behave like good little boys and, of course, hoped, as often happens, that the academic motivation and behaving like good little boys go together. Of course there are kids who are good little boys who don't have any candle-power mentally and, of course, can't be good students, however motivated they might be, and then there are kids who are very bright and can do quite well academically, but are crazy hell-raisers in their free time.

**Warren:** Have you seen a change in your students academically in recent years?

**Futch:** No, not academically. Not academically. I think I've detected kids who are less likely to break windows and less likely to smash up a car while drunk and less likely to run up on a sidewalk and hit a fence or something like that. I think there is less of that. But as for academics, no. For one thing, the high schools, I think, do

increasingly bad jobs with the teaching of English, and one thing I look for is good English, spelling, syntax, use of the right word in the right context, and, if anything, that is worse now than the 1960s or no better, certainly. And I don't think they're getting stupider at all. I think that the high schools are just getting—and maybe the prep schools, are getting worse and worse and worse. A lot of these kids don't come from public high schools.

So, no, I don't see any improvement in performance or any noticeable decline other than spelling, spelling mistakes that didn't happen in the 1960s happen now, and the running together of words that didn't happen thirty years ago happens now. But that's not an intellectual decline. That is a matter of very poor high school preparation. So I don't think that the intellectual caliber of the place is any different from what it was thirty years ago, certainly no worse, but very dubious that it's any better.

But the politeness is still there. That also is the same as the 1960s. I'm very grateful for that. Of course, good manners are extremely important in getting through life, and somebody who comes across as polite and friendly will go far. It's hard to mess up one's life with a reputation of politeness and friendliness, and these kids have been brought up in the right way, and they are polite and friendly and, therefore, a joy to deal with. So that is something, thank goodness, that hasn't changed.

But I think, getting back to what you said about the female students being so similar to the male students in the last ten years or eleven years, I think some of the faculty crazies were hoping that nasty females would arrived, and to my great delight, nice females have arrived. So another case where some of the faculty members have been disappointed, just as some were disappointed that a revolution didn't break out during Cambodia Week twenty-six years ago.

**Warren:** I feel like I've taken a lot of your afternoon. Is there anything more you would like to say? Is there anything you want to summarize?

**Futch:** Not that I can think of. No. Not really.

**Warren:** I feel like Richard got so many really wonderful stories from you.

**Futch:** On tape, now, you mean.

**Warren:** Yes. I have had great delight in sharing the Barry Goldwater story, and I will never walk through those boxwoods without thinking of Barry Goldwater. [Laughter]

**Futch:** Yes. Well, where the boxwoods come to a right angle. I pointed that out to some people yesterday afternoon and showed them the spot, and one of their kids—they were some people who were in town to usher their boy into VMI for his rat year, and these people also had a relative who went to W&L a very few years ago, and we were standing at the end of our discussion up in front of Lee Chapel. We met late in the afternoon, so Lee Chapel was closed, but then we went down to the parking lot, and I said, "Oh, by the way, this is where Barry Goldwater did this," and it was a mother and father and three boys, three sons. And they giggled and chortled at this. So yeah, that is a true story, the Barry Goldwater story.

Now, if you want to do this again in a week or two weeks or three weeks, I'm available.

**Warren:** All right.

**Futch:** If you think of some more questions, and I will certainly be on the lookout in my house for more things like the graduation. But as I say, there's an 1880 one. That's 1870, but there's another one someplace in the house, and I've got to find it. If I find any photos, I will certainly let you know.

**Warren:** Okay. I'm real interested in finding those.

**Futch:** Yeah. I will be glad to be helpful any way I can, and I'm so hard to get in touch with. Drop me a line in the U.S. mail if you want to—

**Warren:** That's what I understand, that's the way.

**Futch:** Yeah. Yeah. Thirty-two cents will do it.

**Warren:** How about campus mail? Do you read campus mail?

**Futch:** Sometimes.

**Warren:** I've got to pay if I want to contact you?

**Futch:** Well, I'll reimburse you, because I realize I'm very hard to get at. But sometimes I will pick up campus mail, and somebody will be with me as I go into the office, I'll lay the campus mail down and be talking to someone, and then that gets forgotten.

**Warren:** So best to write you at home?

**Futch:** Oh, yes. I'm alone when I get the mail at home.

**Warren:** Okay.

**Futch:** Because there's never anybody in the house.

**Warren:** All right. Well, shall we wind this up?

**Futch:** Okay. We can wind it up, and I appreciate all of your attentiveness.

**Warren:** Thank you.

**Futch:** You're most welcome.

[End of interview]