

Paxton: Yes.

Warren: Was it always a given that you'd go to Washington and Lee, or did you ever think of going anywhere else?

Paxton: I assumed it was a given. My family assumed I would go to Washington and Lee, and so they sent me off to secondary school. So I had my time away from Lexington in high school. I went to Exeter in New Hampshire. Everyone at Exeter assumed I would go to Harvard. They were sort of surprised when I didn't, but I think we all assumed I would go to Washington and Lee like the members of my family had always done. So that's what I did.

Warren: Did you ever consider, did you think about going other places?

Paxton: Not seriously at the beginning. I think there was a moment in my sophomore slump when I said maybe I should've stayed in New England or something. Everyone has a sophomore slump and Dr. Leyburn talked me around it, "Here's where you want to be," and he was right.

Warren: Tell me more. Tell me why he was right.

Paxton: Well, I think everyone has a sophomore slump. There's a lot of work to do, and I was in one of those troughs where you think that you've got too many papers and too few close friends. And later on I had many close friends and that made it okay.

Warren: Why was Dr. Leyburn right, though? Why was staying at Washington and Lee the right thing to do?

Paxton: Well, I think that the small-class atmosphere and the intimate contact I had with the people I worked with and their very high quality was wonderful for me, because they pushed me very hard and they made me do better. They gave me papers back and made me rewrite them, and they were probably tougher on me than they would've been in a big class in a big university.

Warren: Really? That's interesting.

LEGEND

ACADEMICS

Paxton: They were smart enough to know that I had to be pushed, and they gave me some rigorous criticism.

Warren: Now, who were "they"?

Paxton: Lots of people. I had an instructor in economics, Dr. Behrman, whose nickname was "Blackjack Behrman." He was a very tough grader. And he would call me in and say, "This paper is incoherent. You start with idea A and you go to idea B and you come back to idea A." And I would look at it and he was right. It's hard to do that with a class of sixty, but you can certainly do it with a class of twenty, and he kept me from being complacent.

He wasn't the only one. I remember my freshman year, my English professor. I thought I was going to have an easy semester. The first paper, he called me in and literally demolished my paper, and he was right.

Warren: Who was that?

Paxton: I'll come up with a name before we're through. I can't think of it right this second. I remember the occasion, but—

Warren: You mentioned Dean Leyburn. Was he dean at that point?

Paxton: Yes.

Warren: Was he an important person to you?

Paxton: Very.

Warren: Tell me about him. I'm just beginning to get the story about Dean Leyburn.

Paxton: Well, I took my learning pretty seriously. There's the Washington and Lee fraternities and good times and I had my share of that, and there's the Washington and Lee off-campus activities and I had my share of that, and then there's the scholarly Washington and Lee and that was important to me, because I really wanted a strong academic environment and Dr. Leyburn was the guarantee that that's what I would get. He had been there I guess six years when I graduated. I

think he'd been there maybe three years when I came. He had brought in some very high-quality young faculty, including Behrman and a lot of others that I worked with. And there were some that had been there already, like Bill Jenks in History. They were there already. But Leyburn was the guarantee that we were going to have the best possible faculty and the highest intellectual standards.

Warren: Why was he a guarantee?

Paxton: That was his condition for being there as long as he was there. He was going to see it was done that way, and he did. And not in the most positive kind of way. He brought people there who were fascinating teachers, and he was a fascinating teacher himself. He made people want to learn. It wasn't done in an authoritarian way; it was done in a welcoming kind of way. He welcomed you into his style of asking questions in class and examining the presuppositions of your commonly accepted wisdom, and he impressed everybody with his commitment not to rote memorization but to question-asking and to probing and to trying to get to the bottom of potent policy issues, how to understand your place and your time. He was doing that himself and he made the rest of us do it.

Warren: So you actually took classes from him?

Paxton: Yeah. I took most of the classes he taught. He came to Washington and Lee in part because he didn't want to teach in one department. He had lots of different courses he wanted to teach. He taught a Music Appreciation course. He taught a Classics in Translation course, which I think is the best course I ever took anywhere, including Oxford and Harvard.

And then, of course, his field was sociology and he taught sociology and anthropology and I took one of those year-long surveys, which was good. I took a lot of different things from him. And when I had a question about something or problem about my scholarly academic life, I went to see him. He was very accessible. He worked very hard but he was never inaccessible.

Leyburn

Warren: Why was the Classics in Translation class so spectacular?

Paxton: Well, I think first of all because he obviously enjoyed it immensely. He was having a ball. He loved this literature and he managed to transmit that.

Secondly, the literature was amazing. I mean, a lot of it would be X-rated nowadays. Lots of blood and gore, sex and violence, and so forth. So it was pretty heavy stuff, the Greek tragedies and Thucydides and so forth.

But he taught in such an illuminating way. It was Socratic. He'd ask you questions. You'd do the reading, you'd come in and he would say, "Now, why is it done this way? Why is it done that way?" Then he enclosed that in a very informative general framework. He would give us the dates of the author, what was going on at that time in Greek history, in Roman history, and what the circumstances were. So there was good solid sense of rooted [unclear] ^{and scholarly} and then he would start asking us what we thought about this, and why was it this way, and what the meaning of that term was.

He also made us understand the problems of translation. He made us do some translations from languages that we knew, like French or Spanish, and he would show what distortions there were in translation and that we had to understand that the translation was a creation and it wasn't quite the same as the original. So it was a mind-opener and an eye-opener on a dozen different levels. I couldn't wait to get to class.

Warren: You couldn't wait to get to class. That's what every teacher would want to hear their students say.

Paxton: Yes, but I can't say that for all my classes anywhere. And I'm certain it's not true of my students.

Warren: Well, that's an interesting question. A teacher like James Leyburn. Did you then try to take some of his techniques and incorporate it into your teaching?

Paxton: Well, I can do it in a seminar. Columbia prides itself on having a lot of small classes and we have lecture courses that might have 100 people in them. It's not that huge. For History majors, they have to take two seminars, so I have these seminars of fifteen people. And I do try to do his kind of thing. I insist that they do the reading beforehand. The whole class consists of asking them what this means and what that means and what do you think about this, what do you think about that.

I don't think I have as rich a fund of dynamite questions as Dr. Leyburn, but I do think that I make them do the reading and I make them think about it. And I'm doing what he taught me. He wasn't the only one. At Exeter we had only small classes, and it was taught that way. But he did it better than anybody I've had before or since.

Warren: I'm sorry I never knew him.

Paxton: The citizens of Lexington came, everybody came, dogs came. It was a great moment.

Warren: Well, there are a couple of people I've talked to who practically genuflect when they say his name.

Paxton: There were some people who thought he was too much. I don't know. I never understood that. He wasn't absolutely 100 percent idolized. There were some faculty who liked things before he came and—

Warren: I understand he actually had a plan that was known as the Leyburn Plan.

Paxton: He had the Leyburn Plan. I've never seen a text of the Leyburn Plan.

Warren: Were you aware of that as a student?

Paxton: Not really, no. I was aware of a climate and of a set of expectations that Washington and Lee would be at the very best of the small colleges for its teaching and what was expected of the students. That was an atmosphere more than a plan.

I've never seen a text of the plan and I think that he had to bend to realities. He didn't fire anybody. He would make replacements as vacancies opened up and as the finances permitted. He didn't bring all new faculty with him. There were plenty of good ones there already and there were some that weren't so good, and he gradually pulled things up.

Leyburn
paxton

Warren: Were you aware as a student that there were faculty members who weren't supportive of what he was doing?

Paxton: I think it was after. I was aware as a student that there were some students who thought the idolatry had gone too far, and who were more interested in the business school than the arts and humanities, and would dismiss it a bit. They knew that he was first-rate, but he wasn't their cup of tea. I heard that once or twice, not very often.

Later on I heard that there was some faculty who weren't absolutely thrilled with all the new ways and perhaps thought he was a little bit too much beloved. This came along much later, talking with some faculty.

Warren: Well, it seems like what he was trying to do was pretty revolutionary there, and so obviously there were people who had been there and thought it was fine.

Paxton: Oh yeah, oh yeah. I think there were probably some people who blamed him for the de-emphasis on sports. I'm not privy to those discussions, but I think Dr. Gaines took that decision to stop subsidizing football. I'm sure Dr. Leyburn was delighted with that decision, but I do not believe he took it. But I think some people may have blamed him for it, people who thought that it was wrong. It was definitely not wrong. Football was bleeding the university white and it was not fitting in with—I've always felt sorriest for the players, thrust into it when they're not quite making it and forced to provide big-time football for a small college. Very,

CHANNING SANDER
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very unfair to them. Anyway, that ended in '53, '54. I think some people thought that Dr. Leyburn was to blame for that, but he wasn't.

Warren: That was why I was asking when you graduated, because there was a cheating scandal involved in all that.

Paxton: It was '54, it was not '55. It was '54.

Warren: '54, right. Were you there when all that happened?

Paxton: Yeah, I was there. I was a member of student government.

Warren: Please tell me about it. I have not talked to anyone who was a student at that time and I'm very interested to hear your experience.

Paxton: Well, okay. There was a cheating scandal involving some of the athletes, who, as I say, were subjected to unfair pressures. They were not quite—the academic work wasn't easy for them and they had less time than the rest of us did, and so some of them found ways of getting copies of the exams.

The honor system was enforced by the student government and we had an Honor Court, and some of the football players were clearly involved in this theft of the exams, and so a lot of the football team had to leave. So the university faced a moment of truth. Either they were going to go out and recruit a whole bunch more semi-professional football players on football scholarships or we were going to re-think the athletic program. And at that point, Dr. Gaines looked at the balance sheet, and although a lot of alumni gave a lot of money to football, it was draining the university.

One of the things that happened was that crew disappeared during those years. It was all swallowed up into the ever-growing financial needs of big-time football. And I think Dr. Gaines and the trustees realized that Washington and Lee couldn't afford to play the University of Virginia and Army and things like that. It was absurd to try and would destroy the university in the process. I think that's what they decided. I obviously wasn't a fly on their wall.

Warren: Well, now, you were there, though, for dealing with the cheating scandal.

Paxton: Yes.

Warren: How was that handled? There were a lot of people involved.

Paxton: Yeah, there were a lot of people.

Warren: Did you handle it one by one, each case individually?

Paxton: Yes.

Warren: That must have taken a lot of time.

Paxton: It was very painful. There were a lot of sessions that lasted late into the night and it put the honor system under a great strain because the honor system has to be consensual and has to be accepted by almost everybody or it will be mocked and flaunted, and it was coming close to the point where we might have said, now, wait a minute, what is this one bunch of students expelling another bunch of students over, something that's not established in a court of law, but the system was not challenged, and it was accepted by enough people to survive. Dr. Gaines' decision to stop subsidizing football and to start playing other small colleges than the powerhouses was accepted by enough people without a lot of grumbling. So it survived.

But that was one of the very difficult decisions that Washington and Lee presidents have made. Dr. Gaines made the decision to bring in Dr. Leyburn and really strengthen the academic environment and he made the decision to de-emphasize, or stop subsidizing, football and those were decisions of a tough, intelligent, far-looking president.

I think that Washington and Lee's present strength rests on those two decisions as well as the coeducation decision. I think those were all a part of the tremendous strengthening of Washington and Lee that's gone on that began when Dr. Leyburn arrived and has continued. This now makes it one of the best small colleges in the country.

GAINES
RANKING

Warren: We like to think so. Tell me about Dr. Gaines. He must have been president, from your perspective as a student, your whole life.

Paxton: Well, he was a friend of my family and he was around when I was a child. I think Dr. Gaines came in the middle or late thirties.

Warren: 1930.

Paxton: It was '30. He came before I was born so it was all my life. I saw him at my parents' dinner table through the crack in the kitchen door as a child. I was in some awe of him, and later I knew him better and was more at ease with him.

He was a jaunty southern gentleman of the old school who would walk through campus flicking leaves with his cane, in a jaunty Panama hat. Marvelous gift for the right story, a serious point and then a joke. Wonderful speaker. And a man who could take—and then I learned he was that he was not just a sort of jaunty or debonair campus leader, but he was man who could take tough decisions when needed. So, I admired him a lot.

Warren: I've listened to some of his speeches. He really is quite an orator.

Paxton: I'm not sure that kind of speech would go over today.

Warren: I don't think so, but it's really something to hear it, and I just imagine he must have been a presence in the whole community.

Paxton: Oh, he was, he was. He was a personage, and outside the community. I think he was on some boards, maybe the Carnegie Foundation. He certainly had friends in Washington and was involved with something called the Alfalfa Crowd in Washington, which was senators and diplomats and things, and they got together for riotous dinners.

He began the money-raising because Washington and Lee had a real money problem when I was a child. And the earlier presidents—the son of General Lee wasn't much. Dr. Denny didn't raise much money and Dr. Henry Louis Smith

didn't raise much money because it was the Depression. Dr. Gaines began raising serious money—duPont Hall. He did that part of the job well, too.

Warren: You probably have a very kind of unique perspective on all this, considering who your family is in Lexington.

Paxton: I saw a little bit of behind the scenes. I saw some of these people with their hair down part way. I certainly saw the town and gown sides. I saw both.

Warren: Want to talk about that some?

Paxton: Well, I guess at first I pretended it wasn't so, and I still have some classmates who don't know I was a towny.

Warren: Really? [Laughter] With your name, how could you do that?

Paxton: Well, they didn't know. Where was I? Oh, well, I think my parents were aware that there were good ways of being a towny and bad ways of being a towny. And if you didn't handle it right, you would go home from school and never know anybody and never really have campus life.

So I lived in the dorm the first year. Mr. Gilliam, who was dean of students, and who worked very hard to make sure I went to Washington and Lee, got me a nice single room with a view of House Mountain, in the dorm, the old dorm. And my parents—of course—you couldn't have a car in those days, but I could borrow the family car and I saw my parents once a week or so, and we all pretended that I was off at college, as I'd been off at high school. I joined a fraternity, of course, and I had my lunches there, and I think a lot of people didn't know I was a towny.

Warren: Was fraternity life important to you?

Paxton: Well, yes and no. I think in those days when Washington and Lee was 90 percent fraternity, to not be in a fraternity was to be kind of a non-person at Washington and Lee. It's gotten much better. That's one of the things that's improved greatly. You don't have to join a fraternity to have a social life and to know people.

LOCAL STUDENT

FRATERNITY

But in those days, if you didn't join a fraternity, you were pretty much alone or a handful of the forgotten ones. It was a dreadful life. I think that was very bad, and things have been done since to improve that. So I wouldn't have wanted to be at Washington and Lee and not be in a fraternity, but I don't think that social life was as important to me as other things. But I think a fair number of people in our fraternity had similar tastes and priorities and I got along very well with them. I liked them very much.

Warren: Another part of growing up in Lexington at the time you did was that the School of Special Services was there during World War II. You must have been the perfect age to—

Paxton: Well, I think I was a little young.

Warren: Did you go to the shows?

Paxton: I don't remember going to the shows. I remember some of the classical musicians that played, and there were people like Red Skelton, but I don't remember hearing Red Skelton. I don't think I did. I think some of those people went through pretty fast and we were gone.

Warren: Well, it seems like it was such an accelerated program.

Paxton: I was only eight. I was nine when the war began. I was about ten. I was twelve when the war was over. So I was really a little young to make a big thing about Red Skelton.

Warren: Yeah, I guess so.

Paxton: Well, I would like to come back to the fraternity thing if it's all right with you—

Warren: Oh, please do. Please do right now.

Paxton: —because I like to think that as an alumnus that the steps taken to make life more bearable at Washington and Lee for non-fraternity people in the sixties and seventies was a very positive step. I've been a supporter for years for the plan to

have deferred rushing so that people don't arrive green and disoriented and be sort of swept up, and that they should join fraternities after they've thought it over and lived other ways for a while.

I think that there is a danger that the fraternity spirit and the partying side can be all there is. For some people it was that way in the early 1950s. I think Washington and Lee's moved away from that pattern, and I think they should continue to make it possible for part of student body to live outside fraternities and have every facility and a rich social life and to feel fully members of the student body. I think they've gone a long way in that direction.

Warren: The students are resisting it.

Paxton: As soon as authority speaks one way, then the [unclear] speaks the other. But I really didn't like the rushing experience. I thought that was—

Warren: Tell me what it was like for you and why.

Paxton: Well, when I underwent the rushing experience, I was, of course, brand new and I was bewildered and I wasn't quite sure what we were really supposed to do. I thought that it would be better if we were a little older and could judge these matters with a little more distance.

And then after getting in, when I was a member, we found ourselves judging the freshmen superficially on their manners and their clothes, and I thought it was training us to make snobbish snap judgments of each other. I thought those weren't the best values and they sort of ran against what a good college should do.

I've taken the opportunity to say, when I've been back on campus and spoken to students, I've usually found a way to say, "I hope you find a way to keep Rush Week from shaping your values, and putting it in its place." I think it's happening some.

Warren: Well, it is changing, but it's meeting resistance. I think it will be interesting to see five years from now how the students feel about it. Probably whatever the status quo is, is how it ought to be, from the students' point of view.

I know your brother went to Washington and Lee.

Paxton: Yes.

Warren: Were you there at the same time?

Paxton: No. He graduated in 1948. There was some war interruption, but he's officially—I think he—oh dear, is it the class of '47 or the class of '48? I think he graduated in '48, but he might be technically class of '47. Delayed by the war. I should know that and I don't have [unclear].

Warren: So there wasn't really—I should know it too. I've interviewed him.

Paxton: He's five years older than I am. Maybe he graduated in '49. But at any rate, [unclear].

Warren: Another thing that happened to you, and pretty uniquely to you and a small group of people, was the Quiz Show?

Paxton: Quiz Bowl.

Warren: Quiz Bowl. Tell me about that.

Paxton: College Quiz Bowl. In those days, it was a radio program. This was pre-television. Where it came from I have no idea, but suddenly one day we learned there was this radio quiz show which pitted four-person teams from one college against four-person teams from another college. We didn't see each other. It was done with microphones. And we didn't see the moderator, the referee, the emcee, who I think was in New York. It was all done by hook-up. The moderator would ask a question, and the first person to think he had the idea would push a button that gave you the chance to answer. And you had to get in first. And then if you answered wrong, you lost your—I'm not sure that I have these details exactly right,

but then you had a question directed especially to you if you got it right. And otherwise—

Warren: You as an individual, or your team?

Paxton: Your team. So that gave you an advantage. If you answered the first question right, then you got sort of a free shot. So it was great advantage to get in early.

I remember when we got a little overconfident and some of us were pushing the button before we were absolutely sure we had the answer, figuring somebody would have it. But we learned a lot of the questions came out of *Time* magazine, so we read *Time* magazine.

There was a kind of psychic high about it. We learned to dredge our memories pretty fast, really got it up fast. I think it was probably—I mean, that's really not what college is about. They were factual questions. It wasn't at all what Dr. Leyburn meant by education, which was to take unexamined assumptions and examine them. It wasn't that kind of thing at all. We were asked who was the author of this, or the year of that, or what was the name of this chemical substance or whatever. But intellectually it was kind of gathering facts. It was testing of memory. It wasn't really testing intelligence at all. But it was fun.

Warren: Had this ever happened at Washington and Lee before?

Paxton: I don't think it had happened anywhere before. I think it was a new program.

Warren: It was new.

Paxton: The formula is still around. I think there's a TV program like this, and now you can see each other.

Warren: So were you suddenly a celebrity on campus? Was there an audience there while you were doing this?

Paxton: Oh, yeah. It was done in Lee Chapel.

Quiz Bowl

Warren: Oh, it was?

Paxton: Oh, yeah. Our team was set up on the stage in Lee Chapel and everybody came.

Warren: Oh, my gosh. This was an event.

Paxton: In fact, one night they asked a question about the Mormons. I've forgotten the exact question, but the answer was Joseph Smith. I don't think the question was, "Who was the founder of the Mormons?" but it was something like that. And we hesitated, and Dean Gilliam, who was the heart and soul of the honor system, who was sitting in the front row, said, "Joseph Smith." And then he covered up his mouth. [Laughter]

But it was a kind of test of memory rather than a test of intelligence. It was kind of a stunt, but it did draw a big crowd and it filled up Lee Chapel for six or seven weeks running. I think we won—

Warren: So it went on week after week?

Paxton: I think we won six times and then we lost. We finally lost. I think we lost to University of Pittsburgh. We beat a lot of—we beat Princeton, we beat Smith, we beat a lot of well-known places.

Warren: Really?

Paxton: Because they were all fresh, and we had momentum. I think it was a bigger thing at Washington and Lee than it was at those places. But it drew a crowd. It filled up Lee Chapel once a week for about six weeks.

Warren: So, were you celebrities? I mean, wasn't this a big deal?

Paxton: Oh, I don't know. I didn't have the sense that we were great celebrities. I think everyone knew that it was a bit of a stunt. Also, we earned I think it was \$1,000 a time. Every time we won, it was \$1,000 to the university. So everybody was happy.

Warren: I'll bet you were popular with some people. [Laughter]

Paxton: It was an amusing stunt.

Warren: I think it was a unique experience. Did it ever happen again that you know of?

Paxton: Not to my knowledge. I don't think so.

Warren: I don't think so either. That's truly why I've been sent here, because you are still a celebrity from that, whether you know it or not. You're the only quiz kid that I know of.

Paxton: One curious thing I ^{ABOUT THAS} thought was there were two townies on the team. Fred Lachmann, whose mother ran a private elementary school, private kindergarten in Lexington. Anyway, I think Fred lives in Seattle.

Warren: What's his name?

Paxton: Fred Lachmann. L-A-C-H-M-A-N-N. And the other two, one is a History professor at Yale, and the fourth is a nose and throat specialist in Shreveport, Louisiana. But there were two townies.

Warren: I think I've actually met that fellow.

Paxton: Fred doesn't live in Lexington.

Warren: No, no. The other, the Shreveport guy.

Paxton: Harold Quinn.

Warren: I've met him. I met him at a party one time.

Paxton: I haven't seen Harold for years. He had a son ^{at} in college.

Warren: Yes. Now, there's a small world. I didn't know he was one of the quiz guys.

Paxton: Yes. He was member of the group.

Warren: Well, tell me about other teachers who were important to you.

Paxton: Bill Jenks was very important to me because I thought I wanted to be a historian and he was the main person in European History, and he was a wonderful lecturer. He was not someone brought in by Dean Leyburn, but he taught in ways

that made you think about it. He wasn't just imparting information; he was making you examine different interpretations.

He was a very dramatic lecturer. He would wind up the hour with a sort of major point. He would sort of wrap it up with a bang. Long afterwards, I asked him how he somehow managed to come out right on the fiftieth minute with this sort of whiplash point. "Oh well," he said, "I looked at my watch and if it's time, I'd drop whatever else I was going to say and I'd go to my final point." But it was very effective.

Warren: I've heard that about more than one teacher—that they had a tremendous sense of timing and they knew how to fill that fifty minutes in a way that was like going to the theater almost.

Paxton: Yes. Bill Jenks was less of a Socratic teacher in a Leyburn sense in that he was not constantly asking you questions. He had things he wanted to impart in that fifty minutes and he did it brilliantly. He was superb at the formal lecture.

Warren: So did you concentrate specifically in history?

Paxton: I majored in history.

Warren: Did you take lots of other kinds of courses? It sounded like you did.

Paxton: Well, yeah. There were various requirements—language, science, math, and so forth. I had to fulfill all those breadth requirements and I took a certain amount of English.

Warren: You mentioned a music appreciation course. That was fairly new at that point, bringing in the arts, wasn't it?

Paxton: No. That was ^{TAUGHT} started in the forties by John Graham, who was a professor of Spanish and a composer. A towny, a wonderfully cultivated man, a composer himself. He taught that course in my brother's time. So it certainly goes back to John Graham in the late thirties.

JENKS

Warren: I guess my understanding was one of the things that Dean Leyburn was trying to do was to bring an emphasis on the arts.

Paxton: Yeah. He created the department. There was no department. John Graham was in the Spanish department, if I'm not mistaken. And so Dean Leyburn founded the Departments of Music and Art and brought in Marion Junkin in art and in painting. I took his History of Painting. I've got a watercolor of his on my wall up here in New York. And Rob Stewart as the Music Department. And so that was the beginning of the fine arts as a department. That may have been part of the Leyburn Plan, for all I know, to strengthen that side of things.

Warren: So by the time you were there those things—

Paxton: Those things were in place.

Warren: —were in place. Are you saying that it was a single person for each thing at that point?

Paxton: I think so. My recollection is that Marion Junkin was painting and Rob Stewart was music, and that was it.

Warren: I found a wonderful photograph of an art class, and all the students are standing there in white shirts and ties, painting. [Laughter] And I just keep thinking, how did they keep the shirts clean?

Paxton: I don't think there was any practice in the arts. Maybe Marion Junkin had some students. I may be mistaken on that point. But the course I took from him was a history of art, Art Appreciation. Sort of like what Columbia does with the core. We have at Columbia the famous core courses, part of which is art humanities, and there's music humanities. Those are required. Sort of an introduction to the history of the Western musical and artistic tradition, and some of the other traditions as well. That's sort of what these courses were.

But I think the practice, the teaching of the practice of the arts, came after '54. Rob Stewart certainly gave private lessons and Junkin probably did, too. There may

have been instruction. There may have been formal instruction in the practice of the arts already. It was just beginning.

Warren: You know, probably—shift a little bit now—probably more than most alumni, you have the opportunity to come back very regularly and see Washington and Lee and the changes that have occurred. And it's dramatically different now. What have you thought as those changes have happened?

Paxton: I've just been delighted, thrilled. It's enormously fulfilling to have your college get better and better and better. It's very important for an alumnus to have his college grow in prestige. It's in very different terms like a good investment almost, but it's also personally very satisfying to watch the place develop and enrich and get stronger and meet some of the younger faculty and see how good they are. I very often do some chores in the library when I'm there. The library is quite extraordinary.

Warren: It's really amazing for the town, isn't it?

Paxton: Oh yeah. I mean, every alumnus has everything to gain when his college strengthens, but I'm especially pleased with it because I have known a certain number of faculty members. I guess I know few of them now.

Warren: I need to turn the tape over. I just have a couple more questions.

[End Tape 1, Side A; Begin Tape 1, Side B]

Warren: Pursuing this idea of coming back, do you come back to reunions with your class?

Paxton: I haven't come back for a true reunion for a long time, and I'm not terribly keen on—

Warren: Well, you do college all the time, so...

Paxton: But I come back to Lexington three times a year.

Warren: The reason I ask that is, it's delightful that you're so supportive of the changes of Washington and Lee, but I'm curious what your classmates have

ALUMNI

thought and what your sense is from other people, say, on the fraternities, the changes in the fraternities, and the changes in coeducation.

Paxton: Although I haven't been back to reunions and I think that reunions don't—well, maybe they do—but reunions are mostly small talk among friends and gossip and stuff. And I think the people who come are the people who feel good about the place. I'm not sure you'd hear that.

Members of my class that I continue to see off and on, like Henry Turner at Yale and Ray Smith here in New York and so forth, are so delighted with what's happening to Washington and Lee that I never hear a negative voice.

I know there were some strong negative voices about coeducation, but I thought that most of those would not be disaffected for very long. Because in my wife's family, my wife's uncle had gone through the same thing at Amherst and I knew what happened. A lot of complaining and shouting and two or three years later the complainers and the shouters were trying to get their daughters into the place.

So I know of some people, some Washington and Lee alumni, who are bitterly hostile and I expect there are still some who are unreconstructive, but I think a large number of people who thought it was a terrible thing have come around, because they understand as practical people that when you double the size of a pool, you get a lot better students. And also, most of our alumni who have children have a 50 percent chance of having daughters. I've never known a college that went back to being all male, and I think that every experience of that transition has been a positive one. I told the Amherst story to the president and what I thought about coeducation. I told him, "They're all going to yell at you and then two years later they'll be asking you to get their daughters in." And I think that's what's happened.

COEDUCATION
X

Warren: That's exactly what's happened. As John Wilson said, they all discovered they had daughters and granddaughters.

[COEDUCATION]

Paxton: So I think that's been a great improvement, and it's led to less driving across the mountain at ninety miles an hour on Saturday nights—another positive spinoff. And so I think that when you come back to a college and you read about the college, it's just a very dynamic place with everything going right.

Warren: Have you followed the succeeding administrations? Have you remained close to various presidents?

Paxton: Yes. Close is saying too much, but I've known them all and we've had real serious talks about it and I think they've wanted to know what I thought. I stand in John Wilson's office to have a chat with him and I think we've talked for more than an hour. I think I ruined his morning, but he definitely wanted to listen and I wanted to talk.

I've known all the presidents since Dr. Gaines, and I guess I have the feeling that I've been consulted by all of them. All have had the gift to make me think they were listening to me.

Warren: I've had the privilege of interviewing three of them so far. I guess that's all I'm going to, isn't it? And they have such charisma. I can see how they got to where they are. They really are remarkable people. They make you feel very important. And they're very forthcoming, as you have been.

Is there anything more you'd like to say about the town-gown relationship? Because I love the fact that you grew up there. Did you play on campus as a child?

Paxton: No.

Warren: And your house is a little—

Paxton: Now, that's not right. I did play on campus. I have a very distant memory of riding my tricycle on those cement walks which had a street down the middle. It

ROAD TRIPS

was just like a highway with a line down the middle. But we lived pretty far away and I didn't go down there very often.

But my parents' friends were mostly professors. Not entirely. They had lawyer friends and doctor friends and preacher friends. But they had a lot of professor friends and they knew Dr. Gaines very well.

Warren: Would you go to events at Washington and Lee?

Paxton: Oh yeah. But, I think the town-gown relationship was much more distant when I was a student than it had been in my parents' time, because in my parents' time, a lot of the students boarded in town, and that's not the same as renting an apartment in a house that some investor has decided to sacrifice to the student trade and has calculated that by the time they've torn it down, which is about seven years, he will have recouped his investment.

This means actually boarding in someone's—you know, being in the family. And so a lot of the gentlefolk of Lexington who didn't have lots money to throw around would take in a student boarder. And so they were in the family, they got to know townspeople, which is not the same as renting a farmhouse.

Warren: That's a very good point.

Paxton: And so my parents' family and their friends' families all had alumni who would come back and say, "I lived in your mother's house." There was a little bit of that left in my time, but not much. So there wasn't much of elderly lady and student boarder kind of rapport. By my time, everybody had cars and they were all trying to go over the mountain, and their social life was outside of town.

In 1920, social life was in town and I think it was probably pretty spartan for some of them. But the town-gown relationship was pretty distant, and it grew even more distant. The tax dispute and so forth made it even a little bit contentious and conflictual, which it wasn't in my day.

BOARDING IN LEXINGTON

But most of the students didn't notice the town very much, and when they did notice it, it was to dodge the tobacco juice on Saturday morning when they came around the courthouse corner. The town was pretty rustic. In the Depression years after the war, we had pretty well gotten out of that, but in the Depression years it was—Rockbridge County was a poor place. People came into town barefooted and in rags, and I think a lot of students—for them it was pretty distant.

Warren: What were the hang-outs in town?

Paxton: Oh yes. The Corner. Diagonally across from the post office, I think it's—is it a vacuum cleaner store?

Warren: Not much of anything.

Paxton: It was a restaurant for a while. But in my day it was a beer joint. Of course, you had to be twenty-one to drink, but the faculty drank there and the older students, ^{LAW} most students drank there, and you could go and eat there. That was certainly one.

Then there was Jabbo Morris, who was in the site of the present Willson-Walker restaurant. He was a beer wholesaler. I went in to get some beer from him once and he said, "Get out of here, boy. I know how old you are." [Laughter]

Warren: And you probably had a hard time trying to pull anything off.

Paxton: He delivered beer in a Model A Ford Roadster that was permanently listed to the left because he was a very large gentleman. And he drove beer around to the fraternity houses. But The Corner was the main kind of hang-out.

There was something called Liquid Lunch also, which was across the street from the ^{L - WALKER} Wilson Parker House. It was a kind of a hamburger joint. Then there was Steve's Diner. I forgot Steve's Diner. Shouldn't have. Steve's Diner was where—oh dear—on North Main Street, going down just below campus. There's a kind of mall, covered—

Warren: Deaver's Alley?

Jabbo Morris

Paxton: Deaver's Alley. Deaver's Alley is on the site of Steve's Diner [sic].

Warren: That was Steve's Diner?

Paxton: That was Steve's Diner. Steve's Diner was a real diner. It was a shiny, stainless steel dining car replica where you went in when you got back from Sweet Briar or Hollins at 2:30 in the morning, you would go in and have a Steve's burger, which was solid cholesterol, a really drippy, gooey hamburger, and that would bring you around. Steve Neofotis.

Warren: What's the name?

Paxton: Niafotis. Steve Neofotis. Greek restaurant. Typical greasy spoon.

Warren: Well, when I first moved to Lexington in the seventies, that was a gas station just going out of business.

Paxton: There was a gas station right next to it, and there's still a gas station.

Warren: That was a gas station.

Paxton: Okay. Well, it had been Steve's Diner.

Warren: That's interesting. Because somebody had mentioned Steve's Diner.

Paxton: And there was one other place I'll mention, which is long gone, and that's Mike Brown's. Mike Brown had a zoo and this was pretty much ended. I think this ended about 1951 or 1952, so it didn't really affect my classmates very much. But my brother's crowd, in the late forties and right at the beginning of the fifties, Mike Brown had a slightly mangy, tame bear, I think a monkey or two, and a beer tavern, which was at the corner of Thornhill Road and Country Club Road, where you turn in to go to the country club. There's some little houses there now. But there was a beer joint there.

Warren: And a zoo?

Paxton: A little zoo. Couple of slightly moth-eaten animals. And that was Mike's Place. I think his name was Mike Brown. That closed up about '52 or so. He probably had a few licensing problems. But that was a place where people drank too

STEVE'S DINER

much. I remember that was a place where you were likely to run into something on the way home.

Warren: Did Zollman's exist?

Paxton: No. The Zollman family did. The Zollmans lived out there. But Zollman's Pavilion wasn't going yet. That was a boys' camp in those days, run by "Tex" Tilson, the father of Jim Tilson.

Warren: Really?

Paxton: He had a boys' camp out there. So that's where Zollman's Pavilion is, if I've got my addresses straight. That was a boys' camp in those days, but Zollman owned the land.

Warren: So that really came into its own in the sixties.

Paxton: Much later. And, of course, we all went to Goshen Pass.

Warren: Tell me about going to Goshen.

Paxton: Well, I don't think going to Goshen Pass is very different. There's more tubing probably now, but we just swam and sunbathed, and drank a little beer and read, picnicked.

Warren: So you would've known Goshen Pass, but bringing people from elsewhere—can you remember taking somebody for the first time? Were people impressed by it?

Paxton: Oh yeah, I think they were. I saw it first when I was very small, and so Goshen Pass seemed to me very large. But I'm sure seeing it for the first time as an adult, it's just a nice stream going through the hills.

Warren: Oh, it was spectacular the first time I went.

Paxton: I did indeed take people there.

Warren: Did students coming from other places—did you have a sense that they appreciated the beauty of Rockbridge County? Did they talk about that?

Paxton: I think so. I think so. A lot of students climbed House Mountain. I knew the way up. I took a lot of students up to House Mountain. I think there were a fair number who liked the hills and the woods.

Warren: Now, do I understand, is there something called Student Rock?

Paxton: Yes. Students' Rock, if you climb the front face of the front mountain, there are the two mountains that make the front mountain. A road goes up the back, but at the front you climb—I know how to get up to the trail, but it would be hard to explain. But you go up that way, half-way up, there's an enormous ledge. It's not really a rock. It's a whole ledge that comes out of the ground and then goes back in again, with an overhang. And if you were caught in a rainstorm you would get under there. It was this high overhang. It was like a sort of cathedral and you got under there.

There were lots of places where fires had been made. People had obviously cooked hot dogs and things like that. It was about half-way up. And it was called, and is still called, as far as I know, Students' Rock. It's about half-way. You'd catch your breath there or get in or out of the rain. And then the other half of the climb is above you.

In those days, I think more people climbed it than do now. My mother claims she carried a lemon meringue pie up to Students' Rock. [Laughter] I don't think as many people go up now as did.

Warren: I've been up in the saddle, but that was an easy walk.

Paxton: There's a road up into the saddle, but there's a little building that used to serve as a Sunday school, and you go in there. It's before you get to the road that goes up to the saddle, and you go on the front side. You go up in there to a dead end and there's some people named Moore who live up there, who weren't glad to see you at all. I suspect they had a little side business up in the hollow they didn't want you to see, but they weren't at all glad to see you. And I would tell them who I was

and they knew my father who taught in the little Sunday school down below. They would say, "Okay, go on up." And we would go past their houses and go on up.

Warren: And there obviously was an established trail?

Paxton: Oh yeah. It was an established trail. I haven't tried it for years. I bet the trail is overgrown. We just sort of went straight up. I have no idea. I haven't done that in years.

Warren: Well, all the references I've seen to Student Rock seem to be older. I don't hear people talk about it.

Paxton: I think people now go up to the saddle, because that's where the road goes.

Warren: That's what I hear people talking about now. Well, I just can't imagine going to school in such a beautiful place. I wouldn't think I would get any work done. I'd just want to go out hiking all the time.

Paxton: Well, I remember a lot of temptation spring days, doing papers or studying for an exam, wanting to be out of doors.

Warren: I understand classes were often held out on the front lawn.

Paxton: I don't think it happened much in my time.

Warren: No?

Paxton: We have some of that here. There's a fair number of classes when the weather gets warm where people—I don't ever remember a class out of doors. I don't think I ever remember that happening in my time.

Warren: That's interesting. Because somebody was just telling—I guess that would have been just a little bit later, someone was talking about it.

Well, I've gotten all the things I wanted to talk about. Is there anything more you'd like to add?

Paxton: No, I don't think so.

Warren: This is just wonderful. I've got some real quotable quotes here. I'm delighted.

Paxton: Probably all my indiscretions.

Warren: Well, hardly. Thank you very much.

Paxton: Yes. Well, I'm terribly sorry to be late. I didn't really think I would have such a problem.

Warren: You were worth waiting for.

Paxton: Thank you.

[End of Interview]