

# PARKE ROUSE '37

December 15, 1996

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Mame Warren,  
interviewer

**Warren:** This is Mame Warren. Today is December 15, 1996. I'm in Williamsburg, Virginia, with Parke Rouse. I'm just real pleased to be here, because yours is a name that has come up a whole lot in the last year while I've been doing these interviews. One of the things you mentioned in your talk is that you arrived by train, but you didn't say where you came from.

**Rouse:** I boarded the C&O train in Newport News in the morning. My father put me on, I think about eight-thirty or nine. We went on up to Staunton, where I got off the C&O and then I boarded a little train that used to run, I think under the auspices of the Baltimore and Ohio. It was called the Virginia Creeper, and it only went from Staunton, I think, to Lexington.

When we got off at the station, I remember there were three or four guys from the Phi Kappa Sig house, who were down there to meet the train to Rush. In those days we had fraternity rushing immediately. The train was a little Toonville trolley thing, very simple, rustic. It folded soon after I came up there. There was an engine and then a train that was divided. Part of it, I think, had coal to feed the engine and then another part of it was the postal car. It seemed to carry the mail. And then I think there was one other car that was half freight and half passengers. The passenger part was up front and it was very austere and simple, and I realized that we were back almost a century earlier. Wouldn't have anything like that down

here in Tidewater. But that was the train, and the station was torn down, I believe, to make way for the Lenfest Center.

**Warren:** No, the station's actually still there.

**Rouse:** Is the station still there?

**Warren:** Right next to the Lenfest Center.

**Rouse:** One of the stories I heard later about the station was that Mr. Greenley Letcher, who was the son or grandson of the Civil War governor, John Letcher, Mr. Greenley Letcher was a lawyer in Lexington, and who'd gone to VMI with my uncle, Mr. William E. Barrett of Newport News, and who was very kind to me. Mr. Letcher had a law office downtown, but it was small, and whenever he got a year's files of his correspondence, he'd put them in what we call a nail keg and tap on the top and write on it with a big heavy pencil, "Greenley D. Letcher files, 1935-1936," and take them down and store them in the old railroad station. I think that was true. Other people used this railroad station for storage after it closed.

**Warren:** I didn't know that. That's news. That's new information.

So you were arriving at Washington and Lee during the Depression.

**Rouse:** Right.

**Warren:** What was Washington and Lee like at that point?

**Rouse:** Well, the university itself seemed very beautiful and well kept. Most of Lexington was pretty rustic then. There was the McCoy's Grocery there at the intersection quite close to the university, and it was very colorful. They used to have chinquipens, which were little chestnuts that people got in the fall. I love chinquipens, but I hadn't seen many of them except in Lexington.

And right next door, maybe two doors away from the McCoy's Grocery, which was a locally owned grocery store, was the Dutch Inn, which a Mrs. Owens ran. I think Mrs. Owens was connected with—I think her mother was a Mrs. Christian, an old Lexington family, and that was a very nice, small inn, with very good food. It

was famous for its food. It handled small dinners for maybe eighteen or twenty people, plus a normal dining room. But the rest of Lexington was helter-skelter.

Right next door to the Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity which I joined was a tombstone cutter's business, Mr. Remsburg, R-E-M-S-B-U-R-G, I believe, and he would cut tombstones and exhibit them there in the yard. All of that lower section of Main Street, which is not sort of boutiques, was either closed or occupied by small local businesses, and that part of the Main Street seemed mostly devoted to black business. They hadn't restored any of those old houses that are now pleasant little B&Bs further up Main, and they hadn't reclaimed a couple of them that are now restaurants. So I'd say it was a very plain town.

A VMI alumnus named Wise, who wrote a book, I think called *The End of an Era*, says Lexington was a typical Presbyterian valley town, and he at some point says, "It was as cold as a dog's nose." I didn't feel it was necessarily cold. I thought it was an interesting collection of architecture, very unlike what we had down here in Tidewater, and yet very attractive in its way, the combination. And that still exists. Some of it looks like Germanic stuff from Gettysburg further up the valley, and some of it looks more like Scotch-Irish. But it was a hodge-podge of everything.

An awful lot of people on the street that looked like they'd just come in from House Mountain. We always thought of House Mountain as being an area where a lot of derelicts lived. I'm not sure that was true, but it was said that in those mountains around Lexington were the descendants of Hessian soldiers who had abandoned the Hessian Army during the revolution, and taken up farmsteads in the mountains, and they were the people who made bootleg whiskey. So the story went. I would see a lot of those on the street on Saturdays.

Marshall Penick, who was the daughter of the treasurer, Dr. Paul Penick, P-E-N-I-C-K, she would go to House Mountain every Sunday while I was in college and

teach a Sunday school class. A lot of people seemed to be involved in Presbyterian good works in the rural parts of Rockbridge County.

**Warren:** I'm glad you mentioned the Dutch Inn, because I just recently found a picture of the interior of the Dutch Inn, and today it just has some shops in it, but I never really had a picture of it, an idea of what it was like inside. Was it one of the fancier restaurants in town?

**Rouse:** Yes, the Dutch Inn was one of the nicer places to dine. Up the street there was the Southern Inn, I believe. There were one or two other places. The nicest place was Forest Tavern over near Natural Bridge, or you could go to the Natural Bridge Hotel. There weren't too many stylish restaurants, though, in Lexington. Most of them were aimed for the college trade, the boys that didn't belong to fraternities or didn't eat at the college dining hall.

**Warren:** But most people belonged to fraternities?

**Rouse:** My guess is that when I was there Washington and Lee in the period '34 to '37, it seems to me it had something like 1,300 students, of whom, I think, roughly 1,000 would have been undergraduates, and 300 would be law students. My impression is about 70 percent of the undergraduates belonged to fraternities. Fraternities in those days, there were either nineteen or twenty. Maybe the figure varied while I was there. But they fed an awful lot of boys. There were a couple of nice boarding houses around the campus where you could get pretty good meals, but there were not many restaurants.

**Warren:** Tell me about fraternity life.

**Rouse:** The fraternities were very strong and they had fairly—I think the rules governing them were fairly liberal. As I said, when I arrived, a bunch of fraternity men were at the train station either to meet me or someone else who apparently didn't come. But the fraternities were highly competitive. I got the impression there were really more fraternities than the situation warranted, and some of the

fraternities on some years would come up with a very small class. The SAEs were, I think, the biggest.

To me, the most appealing were the three or four that were called Red Square, right down in front of W&L, because they were close at hand. Some of them, like the Phi Kappa Sigs, were way out on Main Street, which was too far to go. The ATOs were fairly far out. The SAEs were fairly far out. The Phi Kappa Psis were fairly far out. But the Betas and the Phi Kaps—I've been saying Phi Kap, it was Kappa Sig—the Phi Kaps were close to the campus. The Sigma Nus and the Pi Kappa Alphas, which I joined, and the Phi Delta Thetas, all those were close to the campus and very desirable.

One thing that struck me was how many students had cars. I was a pretty poor guy and my family never was able to afford a car, and I really didn't want one, but a fair number of students then, and I suppose everybody now, had an automobile.

**Warren:** What kind of cars?

**Rouse:** Well, most of them in those days, people liked roadsters with rumble seats. When you'd go to a girls' school, sometimes you'd take a couple of guys and they'd ride in the rumble seat if there were four guys, two up front and two in the rumble seat.

There was an awful lot of weekend visiting at girls' schools. I think now the girls come over there more. Also, they have women students. But you would hear your classmates talking about they were going to Mary Baldwin on the weekend, on Saturday, or going to Hollins or someplace. The sad problem was that in those days there were an awful lot of accidents. A fair number of students were killed while I was there. That was a big worry for the administration, because the roads were winding, and a lot of those boys would come home late at night in a hurry and run off the road or have an accident.

But the fraternities did have housemothers, which seemed to me a good thing. I'm real glad they've got it back. Most of the fraternities had little suites on the first floor for the housemother to live in. We had a wonderful lady named Ms. George Otis Mead, whose husband has a relative in town now, Otis Mead the real estate man. He was not their son. But she was the longtime housemother for the Phi Kappa Alphas.

I remember once during Fancy Dress, she told us at breakfast one morning during Fancy Dress, she said, "During the night I heard a noise in the phone room, and I went over there and I opened the door, and out came a dead drunk young man completely naked. I knew at once he was a University of Virginia student."

And all of us burst out laughing, because we said, "How can you tell whether a guy is a University of Virginia student as opposed to W&L?"

She was indignant. "Well, I knew I'd never seen anybody like that on the campus, and I was sure he was a University of Virginia student."

But the housemothers seemed to have a good time. They would play cards together. One of the housemothers over at the Sigma Ki House had been an interior decorator, and I was a house manager one year at the PiKA House, and I engaged her for some small sum like twenty-five or fifty dollars to help us get decent curtains and rugs and pictures to redecorate the PiKA lower floor.

Our housemother, Mrs. Mead, used to say that if we ever altered the rules to permit girls to go upstairs, that is to the two upper floors where we had bedrooms, she would leave. Fortunately, we never had that come to pass. The rules did permit girls on the main floor, then on the basement floor where the chapter room and sort of a relaxing room and a bar. But the girls couldn't go above the first floor. I think that sort of rule existed in all of the fraternities.

Every fraternity, as far as I know, had a faculty advisor, and he was supposed to see that the rules of the university were carried out.

**Warren:** How was the food in the fraternity?

**Rouse:** Food at most fraternities was said to be pretty good. At our house we had an elderly black chef named Tibbs, T-I-B-B-S. He had been the main chef at the Hotel Roanoke. Tibbs had been the personal chef for, I think it was President McKinley, and he was present on the railroad car when McKinley was shot. He had then gone to work for the Hotel Roanoke in Roanoke, and when he got too old to work there, one of our members, a guy named Edwards, Dick Edwards, used his influence with the fraternity to get him the job as the chef.

He was awfully old and he was forgetful. Once when we had Fancy Dress, he forgot to prepare a lunch meal, and when the boys all came down the hill hungry after examinations, they found only hogs' ears. Tibbs had cooked some hogs' ears that he was going to use in a salad with hard-boiled eggs and hogs' ears vinaigrette. We had to serve the hogs' ears raw. I don't know whether this story's worth—but he served the hogs' ears on the plates. When I came down the hill, I was met by thirty or forty angry PiKAs who said, "What did you do this to us for?"

I said, "What is that?"

"They served us whole hogs' ears." They all had hairs growing out of their ears.

I said, "I don't know, but Tibbs can tell me."

I said, "Tibbs, what in the world?"

He said, "Mr. Rouse, I got so involved in making tonight's salad that I clean forgot to fix any lunch." So he said, "I'll just go out and collect them."

So I went out and announced to the guys they could all go and have lunch at McCrum's and give me the bill. I was the house manager. But then that night when I went to bed, there were fifty pounds of hogs' ears all jellied and running in my bed. I didn't do anything but take the sheet, which was clean, and hogs' ears, carry them down and put them in the refrigerator.

And the next day, Tibbs went on and made his vinaigrette salad, which was a big hit that night. Everybody said, "What in the world is this good salad?"

I said, "You'll never know." [Laughter]

**Warren:** That's marvelous. That's a great story.

**Rouse:** I got called "Hogs' Ears" by most of the guys who were in the fraternity. For the rest of day, I still, when I go back, somebody will say, "Pigs' Ears Rouse!"

[Laughter]

**Warren:** Great. That's wonderful. You mentioned Fancy Dress. Was Fancy Dress important back in the thirties?

**Rouse:** The big thing there in those days was Fancy Dress, I suspect more important than it is now. That was before individual fraternities started having combos play for smaller dances. The Fancy Dress weekend, which came between the first and second semesters—they only had two semesters then—would be around early February, and you'd ask a date early on in the season, and you had to book a date fairly early in the year to be sure that you got the girl you wanted. If she went to one of the women's colleges, they arranged for her room, and usually each of the major women's colleges would send a chaperone with the girls from that school, and the chaperone sat on the sidelines at the dance, and the girls from Randolph-Macon would all have to speak to their chaperone, and Hollins, ditto.

There was a whole lot of politics going on. Being president of Fancy Dress was a very desirable honor, and there was a lot of political scurrying-around. In those days we had an alignment of the bigger fraternities called the "big clique," and the smaller fraternities called the "little clique." Those contested for offices, and one of the most desirable offices was president of Fancy Dress. He got to choose the orchestra, and very often he would have to go up North and talk to the booking people. When I was there, Hal Kemp was a great favorite. Russ Colombo [phonetic] was a favorite. Isham Jones [phonetic] was a favorite.

There was a dance set at finals, too, but Fancy Dress was really the big one, because not everybody stayed for finals. The seniors always, but not necessarily all the underclassmen.

**Warren:** Were there any themes that were particularly memorable?

**Rouse:** Well, they always liked themes that involved beautiful costumes. I think the Court of Louis XIV was one that I remember. One of my fraternity brothers, named Billie Young, hadn't planned to go, but he found a costume in a closet somewhere and he went. I think he was a cardinal, a French cardinal of the Louis XIV period.

But the costumes were all rented by a firm from New York called Hooker and Howe. Hooker and Howe had a man on the scene at the dance, and when he spied Billie Young dressed as a cardinal, he went down to the dance floor and grabbed him and said, "This costume has been missing for years. Where have you been keeping it?" [Laughter] Poor Billie had to give up his costume.

I remember that Dick Byrd, one of the sons of Senator Harry Byrd, was a student in those days. He was younger than I. He was a PiKA. Dick was sort of an unconventional guy, and he had no black dancing shoes or other black shoes to wear with his full dress. He wore brown shoes that he wore every day. We all thought that was an odd thing that a guy would have gone and gotten that far along in life and not had a pair of black shoes.

But it was all very formal. They had a box where the president of the university and guests would sit. One night, Dr. Gaines, the president, had as a guest Mrs. Alfred duPont, who had given W&L a lot of money, and also John Stuart Brown, who was publisher of the Richmond papers and also then president of William and Mary. The evening wore on, and Mr. Brown and Mrs. duPont began playing patty-cake like you play when you're a little kid. One of the professors said, "Look, Mr. Brown is patty-caking Mrs. duPont out of all her money."

I said, "Dr. Gaines better get on the ball."

Well, we laughed about that, but she continued to be very generous.

We used to accuse Dr. Gaines of being awfully close to a lot of widows. He said, "It's not the widows that interest me, it's the widows' mites." You know the story in the Bible about the widows' mite.

Dr. Gaines was very popular, as I'm sure the records all show. While I was there, he was invited to be president of Tulane, and the news got out. We put it in the *Ring-tum Phi*. All of the student body gathered outside the president's house, and the president of the study body got on the porch and urged Dr. Gaines, when he came out, please not to leave W&L. And the trustees felt the same way. So Dr. Gaines agreed to stay on at W&L. I'm told he was given a considerable bonus by the board for changing his mind and agreeing to stay on.

**Warren:** Tell me about Francis Pendleton Gaines. What do you remember about him?

**Rouse:** Well, Dr. Gaines had a wonderful manner and had a marvelous low, throaty voice, and his speeches were very emotional, and he could tell a marvelous story, but he could also get very moved by circumstances. He loved to tell incidents about Lee's presidency, and on Founders Day to talk about George Washington's gift of canal stock. He'd make it very moving. He was very much in demand around the country as a speaker. He was hard put, I think, to keep all of his speaking engagements and his university chores. Some people complained that he was away too often, but the fact was that while he was there, the endowment greatly increased. He was sort of a pioneer, it seemed to me, in this business of attracting wealthy people to endow the school, and he was especially good, apparently, with widows, with these ladies in the historical societies who'd give money to W&L because it was a historic school.

He had a charming wife and they entertained beautifully. She was from the Deep South, I think from Louisiana, and her name was pretty Deep Southern, Sadie Duvergne, D-U-V-E-R-G-N-E, I believe. She was a wonderful hostess, and she served marvelous dinners.

Incidentally, the student dining hall was in those days run by Mrs. Cy Young—Ruth Young. Ruth Young was also a wonderful cook. The food in the dining hall was really superlative. I never had any complaints at W&L about the food. The fraternity house I was in had excellent food, too. As a matter of fact, there was not very much need for local restaurants, because people were happy to eat where they were supposed to.

**Warren:** It seems to be the case today, too.

Now, we've talked about Fancy Dress. There's another big event that's pretty uniquely Washington and Lee. Did you get involved with the Mock Convention?

**Rouse:** No, I was not much involved with the Mock Convention. I never cared very much for politics. Somehow or other I wasn't really involved in the Mock Convention, but it was very big in those years. I think we selected Senator Vandenberg of Michigan as a Republican nominee, and I believe he was a Republican nominee, but I think that he didn't win. That year, which was my last year at W&L, I think, it was a matter between Taft and Vandenberg, and Vandenberg, as I remember it, was a candidate of the moderate Republicans, and Taft of the conservative Republicans. I think Taft got it, but I think he lost to Franklin D. Roosevelt, as I remember.

**Warren:** But you didn't really get involved?

**Rouse:** No, wasn't much involved.

**Warren:** I think one thing we ought to start talking about a little bit here is academics. That is why we're supposed to go to school. I always find it very

intriguing when I'm doing interviews, it always takes a long time to get around to the classroom experience. Why do you think that is?

**Rouse:** I don't know. I guess everybody assumes the academics are going to be good and important. I would normally have gone to the University of Virginia, I guess, being a Virginia boy, but I went up to Washington and Lee to the Southern Interscholastic Press Association. I was editor of my high school paper and I liked it a lot. My father had gone to VMI and wanted me to go there, and he'd taken me to VMI for a trip, but I knew I wouldn't like VMI. I had no interest in military stuff. I found out that Washington and Lee had a journalism department. As it turned out, after I got to W&L, I decided really to major in English rather than in journalism, but to take some journalism courses, so I ended with an English major.

I had excellent professors, and the thing I really liked was at W&L you get the best professors sometimes, even in your freshman year. I had people like Dr. Shannon, who was chairman of the English department, and Dr. Robert Tucker, who was dean and taught economics. You'd have those in any of the four years that you were there.

The grading seemed to be fairly severe. Math was always my [unclear]. I had Mr. Paxton, and I had a hard time getting through it. One of the arduous courses was Anglo-Saxon under Dr. Shannon. Dr. Shannon had gone to Harvard under a famous Harvard professor who believed that English majors should study not only Anglo-Saxon, but Chaucer and all of the early versions of the English language, so I had to go through all of that, a year of Chaucer, a year of Anglo-Saxon, Shakespeare, and all of that. He was excellent.

The faculty had some really popular people. One of them was Lawrence Watkin, who was an English prof, ended up going to Hollywood and writing scripts. He wrote a script, I think called *The Bishop's Wife*. He wrote a novel called *On Borrowed Time*, and that was made into a Broadway hit, and later into a movie. He

ended his career, I think, living on the West Coast. Once Larry Watkin had a house on the side of the campus and he'd sit on his front porch and watch the boys go up and down the campus hill by the Lee Chapel. My friend, Lewis McMurrin, who was year ahead of me at W&L, lived at Larry's house, so I would go by and often we'd see—we'd sit on the front porch with Larry and Lewis, and he would say, "Look at that little guy. That's Charley McDowell's son, Little Charley." He said, "Big Charley was a big football player at Centre. He loved Little Charley to be one, too, but," he said, "he's a little skinny kid. See his big head?"

But Little Charley would be bouncing a basketball or dribbling a basketball part of the time. He turned out to be a pretty good basketball player, but more important, he became a good newspaper man and columnist for the *Times -Dispatch*.

Larry had a great sense of the ridiculous. One night I came down to his house as he was having a faculty party, and everybody'd had a little bit to drink, and he'd say, "Hey, Rouse. You remember those limericks you were telling me last night that are going around the dormitories? Come in and tell them to this group."

Well, here I was in front of ancient professors of all kinds of subjects, several of whom were my teachers. These were perfectly awful pornographic limericks of the kind college kids are apt to tell. I had to stand there in front of those guys and tell those stories. They guffawed, but I think Larry's enjoyment, which was really pretty cruel, was the fact that it was such an ordeal for me. [Laughter]

**Warren:** Was he a good teacher?

**Rouse:** Yes, Larry was an excellent teacher. He had a wonderful sense of literary style, and he and another English professor named George Foster were both excellent teachers of writing. They helped you to get rid of clichés and try to write with a more good style, and personalized, and honest.

Tom Riegel was head of the Journalism Department, and he was an excellent teacher. The best course I think I had at all in W&L was one Tom Riegel taught. The

first semester was called Literary Criticism, and the second half was called Critical Writing. He introduced you to all these modern writers, Hemingway and Dos Passos and all others, Gertrude Stein, and that was important, because although I loved Fitz Flournoy's reading course and the novel, which was an unusual course, we met at Professor Flournoy's house the Thursday night of each week, and I think the course was limited to about twelve students. Each of us during that week had to read a novel, a novel that was an important novel in the history of the novel.

I would come up to modern times, so when I took Tom Riegel's course in Critical Writing and Literary Criticism, I had to read all these modern things that were good for me, and which a lot of people never got around to reading. I later met and interviewed Dos Passos. He said he would only see me if I had read at least three of his books and, fortunately, I could tell him I'd read half a dozen.

**Warren:** Well, that was very handy, wasn't it?

**Rouse:** Yes.

**Warren:** I bet you got a better interview as a result. That's great.

**Rouse:** I was a great admirer of Dr. Robert Tucker, who was the dean of the university. The dean of students was Frank Gilliam, who was also a very able man. What struck me so much about W&L then, I don't think it's half as true, unfortunately, was that somebody up there kept up with whatever happened to the alumni, and when my brother was killed in Korea, Frank Gilliam wrote a lovely letter, and wrote to my mother. I'm sure it was some nice lady in somebody's office who just made a point of it, but there was always this sense that somebody at W&L was conscious of the lives of the students that had gone out and would keep in touch when anything important happened, particularly Frank Gilliam and his wife Louise.

Louise and Frank would entertain students all the time. I'd go over their house for dinner. When I got married, they invited to come and stay with them in

Lexington. The Gaineses were great on having students to dinner, and a number of the other faculty. Deshas. Very often, I think, the professor would tend to entertain and know best the students in his department, and that was understandable. I never sensed that other schools did that as much.

One of the things that helped W&L is that there was no restriction against faculty and students having a drink together. Well, some denominational schools will not permit faculty members to drink with undergraduates, but, to me, it was just a normal part of growing up, and it was nice that we were able meet at a common level and have little drink and talk and not feel any inhibitions.

**Warren:** I think that would make a difference. There seems to be today just a wonderful rapport between the faculty and the student body.

**Rouse:** There is.

**Warren:** So you've mentioned a lot of names. One name I'm curious to know, did you know Annie Jo White?

**Rouse:** I knew Miss Annie Jo a little bit. She had been active with the Troubadours, the dramatic group, though Larry Watkin had taken it over when I was there. She showed great interest in the Troubadours. She'd also, of course, been the librarian. I think by the time I was there, she was pretty well retired, but she had had a strong influence on the library.

In fact, the librarian when I was there was Blanche McCrum, a native Lexingtonian who later went on to Wellesley. Lewis McMurrin and I were on a trip to New England once, went by and took Blanche McCrum out to lunch in Boston, and we had a grand reunion. She then went from Wellesley to the Library of Congress, where she had a very important role.

But going back to Miss Annie Jo, there were wonderful stories told about her. She was said to have said although she had never married, she wished she had a baby. She said, "People would have forgotten it by now." She was then seventy-five

years old. She was quoted as having made a lot of funny quips. She also had once rented a room to John W. Davis, and then later the same room, I believe, to Lewis Powell, both of them very eminent lawyers. She said it just seemed very natural to have Lewis Powell as one of her roomers, because that room was dedicated to genius.

**Warren:** That's marvelous. I need to turn the tape over.

[Begin Tape 2, Side 2]

**Warren:** Well, Miss Annie Jo is legendary, of course. So I'm interested—were you involved with the Troubadours?

**Rouse:** I was a press man. I wrote all the publicity. I never acted, but I was on the board, and I saw a lot of Larry Watkin in that connection.

While I was there, we took a little brick building that was on the corner near Mr. Remsburg's funeral establishment and grave stone establishment, and made it in to a small theater, and I believe it's still there, isn't it, the Troubadour Theater.

**Warren:** Yes, it is, at Henry Street and Main Street.

**Rouse:** Henry Street and Main. We managed to raise the money to fix it up, buy seats and put them in there. We did some pretty good plays.

**Warren:** Did Miss Annie Jo come around? Was she actually involved still when you were there?

**Rouse:** She would always come to see the shows. As I remember, she had collected a lot of the costumes for the costume collection. But she was, by that time, pretty well retired from that. I think she was always honored at Fancy Dress. She was invited by Dr. Gaines to sit in the President's Box, because she was said to have originated Fancy Dress. I think once somebody proposed that we do the Court of Queen Victoria and let her be Queen Victoria and have the students represent the ambassadors from the various nations that had to deal with Queen Victoria, but I don't think that ever happened.

**Warren:** Oh, but it was a great idea. She would have loved that. What was she like? What was her personality like?

**Rouse:** She was small, and she had really bright eyes, and she was fairly unconventional. She'd say things like she wished she'd had that baby. A lot of the professors enjoyed her and liked her because she was not insipid or self-effacing or any of that. She was a feminist who believed she was just as good as any man around, and she could hold her own with the faculty.

I was a great admirer of Blanche McCrum, too. I had a sense that she felt that as a woman librarian, she was not accorded all the dignities and salary she might have been if she'd been a man. But that was just the impression I had.

She used to hold play readings on Friday nights. There was a nice room in the McCormick Library, and each week of the play for the next week would be chosen, and people would be chosen to read various characters. Then we'd come back to that room. One night we were reading a play called "Men in White," which is a story, I believe, of interns in a hospital, and they were talking pretty frankly about anatomical parts, and when we got to the first one, somebody inadvertently read the word. "Oh," she said, "Skip it, skip it, skip it." From that time, we'd call Miss Blanche "Skip It McCrum," because if it was a four-letter word or anything anatomical, she'd say "Skip it."

She even—this I disapproved of—there was a theater magazine then published called *Theater Arts*, a monthly, and they'd often have pictures of theater women, actresses, or nightclub performers, virtually nude, and she would, apparently, or somebody at the library, would cut them out with a razorblade so that you couldn't see the page was out. She didn't think that young men should be exposed to all those temptations.

**Warren:** Well, I suspect they found their own ways of being exposed to those temptations.

**Rouse:** Yes, they did.

**Warren:** One thing that amused me was that there was a quotation from Robert E. Lee that someone had made into a printed card. He said, "Young men should at an early age get used to drinking alcohol, because they may find that as they get old they will need the stimulus it provides, but if they've had it all their lives, it won't be that stimulating." That was a favorite display in most of the fraternity bars, I think erotically, because we were all drinking, or most students were drinking, yet that was there. I always assumed from that that Robert E. Lee must not have abhorred whiskey or wine, although I've never heard otherwise.

**Warren:** I don't even know the answer to that. Now, by the time you got there, Prohibition was over?

**Rouse:** Prohibition ended while I was there. A liquor store opened on—I can't remember the streets anymore, but it opened quite close to the lower end of the campus, and it was said to be one of the very top liquor stores in Virginia. In terms of the population, it was a very successful, very busy ABC store.

**Warren:** How did things function before the store opened? During Prohibition, what happened?

**Rouse:** Well, I was told that bootleggers from the county would call and delivery whiskey to boys in the various fraternities. There was a story I remember hearing that once a bootlegger was being followed by a policeman of some sort, so when the bootlegger delivered it and told the boy buying it that the policeman was coming right after him, the guy took his hooch and went up and sat on the roof for a while of the fraternity until he felt the policeman was gone. But I can't honestly say. I think it must have been just about the time I got there, because I never remember a time when whiskey was not available.

As you know, Dr. Gaines didn't like to serve whiskey in the president's house. I think he said Robert E. Lee had not served liquor, and he didn't like to

serve anything in the president's house. Maybe this is something if you want it you'd better check. It seems to me that he and Mrs. Gaines generally arranged for the whiskey to be served somewhere else before you got to dinner at the president's house, but later on, before the Gaines left the president's house, my strong impression, after I left school, my impression is that they did begin to serve liquor. The practice was so universal by then, you couldn't stop it.

**Warren:** Was there any celebration that you remember when Prohibition was repealed?

**Rouse:** No, I must say I don't remember any change there, but I do think the ABC store in Lexington was a great success. There was only one, and I believe people had to come from nearby towns like Buena Vista to the liquor store in Lexington.

One of the things I liked, townspeople took an interest in the university, and I got to know Matt Paxton. I saw a lot of Mary Monroe Penick and Marshall Penick and their father, Mr. Paul Penick. He was treasurer of Washington and Lee. Sam Rader, R-A-D-E-R, he was in one of the banks. Sam Rader was a very nice, modest guy. When I got elected manager of my fraternity, I asked him to take over the records with me. I was elected house manager, which paid my dues and room and board, which was very welcome to me, but I never kept records and never had any interest much in mathematics or bookkeeping. So I went to see Sam Rader at the bank and I said, "Mr. Rader, what'll you charge me to take the books I bring to you every month and reconcile the income with the outgo?" I think he said twenty-five dollars a semester, which was more than it is now, but it was still a very modest charge. So that year he kept me from being sent to prison by looking after the records.

**Warren:** Another thing that makes Washington and Lee not unique, but unusual, is that one of the governing themes is the Honor System. Can you remember first

learning about the Honor System and what kind of import it had when you were there?

**Rouse:** Yes. I always thought one of the reasons the Honor System worked so well is that the law school was such an integral part of the university. I hope it still is. But so many of the boys in the undergraduate school were headed for the W&L Law School. I don't think that's as true anymore, because the American Bar Association, for some absurd reason, wants law schools to have a wide mix of students coming from all kinds of schools. They tell me it doesn't help you to get into W&L Law School at all if you've been to W&L undergraduate. But I think there were a lot of people who knew something about the processes of law and the rules of evidence and all that.

It's very sad, but I knew several people who ran afoul of it. The most tragic, I thought, was Pendleton Gaines, who was the son of Dr. Gaines, who was kicked out of Washington and Lee, I believe, for violating the Honor System. There were other cases, but, on the whole, I thought they seemed to work very well.

**Warren:** Was it something that people were always aware of?

**Rouse:** Yes. They would do things like take their examination out of the examination room and go sit in the grass outside the building and answer the questions, and there were no really serious problems except in a very few cases ever arose. What bothered me a good deal more was the fact that a lot of students were chronically behind in their fraternity dues and paying for their board and room. When I got to be house manager, I found that a tremendous number of people owed, graduates who'd gone on, some of whom were now well-to-do, and owed the fraternity. I tried writing them letters, but I didn't get much. Then I got permission of the fraternity to hire a collection agency, but the collection agency couldn't do very well either. But that was not an Honor System matter, so people got away with that.

**Warren:** I hadn't heard that before. So that wouldn't have been considered stealing to not pay your room?

**Rouse:** No. I guess that that was a matter between the fraternity and the student rather than the university and the student.

**Warren:** I see. Well, you've done a marvelous job of describing what Lexington was like, but we didn't talk about the characters of Lexington. I brought you this picture. Tell me about the characters of Lexington.

**Rouse:** Well, one of the most obvious one was Herb the dog man, who sat on a wooden box halfway between the Robert E. Lee Memorial Church and the president's house, and he had another box full of puppies. He'd usually get the puppies quite young, so that they would be cute, and everybody who came by, "Hey, mister, you want to buy a dog?" Often girls coming there for dances would be infatuated by these little dogs and ask their date if they'd buy them one. I'm afraid a lot of the dogs had a bad history after that, because once they got home, their owner would realize he really didn't have a place for the dog.

But Herb lived out in East Lexington. Somebody said that his house was a breeding ground of [unclear]. He would just put these dogs together and let them cohabit, and then collect the puppies and let them age two or three weeks, and then put them in this box and bring them up and sell them. VMI boys would buy them and try to sneak them in their rooms, and then somebody'd come around on a room inspection and find the dog, or so the stories went.

Incidentally, VMI was right much a part of my W&L life, because being from Tidewater Virginia, where VMI was very strong, I knew a lot of the guys there. They would march up Main Street to church on Sunday, and one or two of them would often drop out of the rear ranks. I think the student running the parade didn't care if they did. And would drop out and come up into the PiKA House and sit in the living room with me and read the *Richmond Times -Dispatch* on Sunday and have

coffee, and watch through the window for the group to come back after church, and then run out.

There was a whole lot of the business of VMI cadets asking their friends to come over and sleep in for them after a dance, a VMI dance, so that they could stay with a girl. I never got asked or never accepted, I don't remember which. But that suited me. I wouldn't want to have run that risk. But it was quite common for girls who came up to VMI for a dance, after the dance was over to be invited to a W&L fraternity house, and they would stay up a couple of hours later. I think the girls from the girls' schools were not permitted to do that.

Some of those chaperones got to be very familiar people at W&L. They would be there three or four times a year. Some of them were good friends of the housemothers, and apparently enjoyed coming over to W&L a lot.

We were talking about characters in Lexington. Mr. Letcher was an amusing person. He would come out of his house, which was between W&L and VMI, in the morning, and on his way to his office, which was on, I think, Washington Street, he would drive his golf ball with a golf club across the W&L campus, and with maybe six or eight or ten strokes, he could get himself from his house to his office. In the afternoon, Mr. Letcher would go back from his office to his house driving his golf ball.

He had a charming wife. They were very old-fashioned, and they had me to lunch a couple of times because I was my uncle's nephew. I used to see Mr. Letcher in Richmond later when he would come to Democratic party gatherings, and he always wanted to ask about my uncle. He and his wife lived in a style that I imagine Lexingtonians of maybe the Robert E. Lee period would have recognized, with dark rooms and lots of Victorian furniture.

There were—let's see, other characters that lived around.

**Warren:** Did you know Jabbo?

**Rouse:** Yes, there was a business called Joe and Jabbo's, and they served food and beer all night, or at least beer after you would get—they would serve it as long as the law permitted them. That was a little store down there right by the corner of the W&L campus. I can't remember anything particular about Jabbo except everybody knew his name.

There were some faculty characters that were much talked about. John Higgins Williams was a political science professor. Everybody called him "Higg." He was a bachelor, and he always wore a pipe out of one side of his mouth. He was a very droll man. He would say very funny things in a quiet sort of way.

The law professors were a rather bright group of men. I think McDowell was very bright. Charlie Light was a well-liked professor. He later became dean of the law school. "Skinny" Williams, Clayton Epes Williams, was a tall, thin man. He was the faculty advisor for the Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity. He was also a dean of the law school. Then there was one man named R.I.T. Johnson, and he was called Red I. Turkeyfoot. R.I. was supposed to be Red I., and the T was supposed to be Turkeyfoot. All those law professors were pretty thick together.

Catherine McDowell, who's Big Charley McDowell's wife, was the secretary to the dean of the law school, and she was there through about three or four deanships, and she really was extremely knowledgeable about the law and about the students. In fact, I've been told that one of the law deans was really quite jealous of the fact that everybody spoke of her as Dean McDowell, and found it a little frustrating that her word was sought before his on certain issues.

I remember the night the old law school burned. It was the strangest thing. The biggest lumber company in town, which was right there by the old railroad station, burned, and all the fire wagons and everything went over to it and were absorbed in it, and then all of a sudden they found that across town a little way the law school as on fire, the same night. That's led a lot of people to think that the

whole thing was sabotaged. Some people felt that somebody high up in W&L wanted the law school destroyed, because it was a granite structure totally out of context with the other buildings, which were brick and white, and that he had evidently burned the law school. I find that hard to believe. But it was on, I remember, a night about eleven o'clock, I believe. The lumber yard went up, and we all went over to that. While we were there, they found that a fire had started at the law school.

There was a very successful campaign. This would have been in the '36-'37 era, to rebuilt the law school. A man named John D-A-W-something, who was an executive of Proctor and Gamble, came from Cincinnati, paid for by one of the trustees, and he ran a campaign to raise something like, I think, a million dollars to—no, it wasn't a million dollars, it was something like a couple of hundred thousand dollars, because I've always been amazed that the law school was said to have been built for a hundred thousand. That was the law school building that's at the end of the Colonnade at Lexington. Now that is used for some other purpose, because the law school is all back down in the ravine.

As I mentioned, the train used to come down that ravine. There was a trestle that crossed the North River. I was looking at a picture of it the other day. The trestle crossing North River near the covered bridge—you know where the covered bridge is?

**Warren:** Yes.

**Rouse:** Then it went along Woods Creek valley up to the train station. It went under a hill behind VMI and W&L, and stopped at that station.

I'm trying to think of other curious people. There was a real stout black man, who actually was a mulatto man, who was in charge of the bell at W&L. The school bell was rung, I think it rang ten minutes before an hour, that meant that classes were about to change, and then it rang on the hour, and that meant you were

supposed to be in your new class. I think later that was all electrified, but when I first went there, it was all done by hand.

The old Washington College buildings were getting quite old, and they were very much in need of repair. I had geology class on the third floor of Washington Hall, and it had great high ceilings and great big windows. The windows were very poorly insulated. Wasps used to get in from the outside and buzz around the head of the instructor. I wrote a letter about this to the W&L magazine not long ago. Dr. Henry Donald Campbell, who was a small man, whose father had been on the faculty with Lee, we had a great domed head which was bald, and the wasps would come around his head and buzz, and he would take one hand and make motions to deter the wasp. With the other hand he would hold what he called a trilobite, and the trilobite was a little prehistoric growth that had been found in the rock of Lexington years ago. He would say, "Little trilobite, what was life like in Lexington four million years ago?" Then he would put his head down near the trilobite. [Laughter] It was a marvelous, unforgettable scene to me, and the other hand batting the wasp away. Then he would tell us what the trilobite said about life in Lexington a million, three million years ago. As I said, I wrote a letter that was about three issues back.

His son who was a distinguished Washington lawyer, died, and this man, Dr. Campbell, is shown in a photograph in the saddle on Traveller. Robert E. Lee hoisted him up one Sunday, because his father was dean of the faculty, and he wanted the little boy to see what it was like to ride on Traveller. There's a picture of that somewhere.

**Warren:** Have you ever seen that picture? Everybody tells me about it, but nobody seems to have seen it.

**Rouse:** Isn't that funny.

**Warren:** I actually went to his wife, Mrs. Campbell, trying to get it.

**Rouse:** You know all about that.

**Warren:** Well, I've heard about it, but she doesn't know anything about it.

**Rouse:** Isn't that funny.

**Warren:** And Ed, of course, died last year.

**Rouse:** Did you know them?

**Warren:** Well, I just a few weeks ago went and met Mrs. Campbell.

**Rouse:** She's still living.

**Warren:** She's still alive, very good shape. She's wonderful. I had a marvelous time visiting with her, and she shared some really wonderful things. I have a picture of Ed as a little baby being rocked in his mother's arms.

**Rouse:** Oh, that's nice.

**Warren:** It's a really charming picture.

**Rouse:** I was always interested in hearing about Lee as president. One story I heard was that the Lees didn't have the money, or the inclination, maybe, to give wedding presents that were new, so they just took things they had in their house, and she'd inherited a great deal of good stuff from the Custises, and would just wrap them up and give them as a wedding present to their friends. So that a fair number of people when I was in Lexington claimed that such and such an item in his house had been given by the Lees as a wedding present to Uncle this or Uncle that.

I was also told that Mrs. Lee said once when she was asked why none of their daughters ever married—they had four daughters, four or five, and none of them married—she said, well, they were Anglicans from Tidewater, Virginia, and at the time they were of marriageable age, the country was either at war or they were at Lexington in a Presbyterian society, and that apparently accounted, to her mind, at least, for their not marrying. Somebody else in a recent—I think Mary Coulling—said that perhaps it was because they were so closely allied with their father, that he

was sort of their god, and they never made room for anybody else. But I don't think that would hold water. But anyway.

Somebody said that once there was a gate there by the street right next to where the Episcopal church now stands. You'd have to go through that gate to cross the W&L campus and go on to VMI, and that Lee was walking along from his house one day, and he saw a colored woman with a huge basket of laundry. So he got off Traveller, or walked, or whatever he had to do, in order to open the door for the woman. Somebody commented on it, and he said, well, he thought that was a duty that he owed to an older person and a woman, and it didn't strike him as anything gallant at all.

I used to hear a lot about the Franklin Society, which had gone out of—I think the Franklin Society was a really remarkable element in Lexington, but, of course, that went out, I think, even before the end of the last century.

You see a lot of pictures of the two boat clubs that used to compete on the North River. Have you gotten into that?

**Warren:** Nobody's talked about it. I've seen pictures.

**Rouse:** That had ended before I got there. I've often wondered why they didn't keep it up. It seemed to me to sound like a nice form of athletics, and there are other schools around there that have crews.

**Warren:** I think it's because of the dam that was built on the Maury River ruined their course. They no longer had a course on which to row.

**Rouse:** I see.

**Warren:** Then later when crew was revived after World War II, they went down to the James and rowed on the James.

**Rouse:** Oh, I see.

The fraternity housemothers were interesting old ladies. There was one named Mrs. Beverly Dandridge Tucker [phonetic]. Well, now, actually Mrs. Tucker

wasn't a housemother, but she had a sister, Mrs. Lee, who was a housemother of the Phi Delta Thetas. They were, I think, born—they were Grahams. They were kin to John Graham, who was a professor when I was there, and the Grahams were old Lexington Presbyterian. Mrs. Tucker had beautiful flowers and a very pretty house. Two of the guys and I had an apartment right next door to her, and she bred a rose which she put in a flower show. You undoubtedly heard this story that she said—put a little tag to identify, "Mrs. Beverly Dandridge Tucker, good in a bed, but better against a brick wall." That was what she said. You know that story?

**Warren:** Well, you had it in your talk, and I have had more fun telling that story. My husband loved that story.

**Rouse:** That's right, I did put it in there. Larry Watkin was a real hellion and was a real jokester. He wrote a limerick. Did I put that in there? "Old lady Moffat sat on her toffet under the UDC, from thinking how stinking was Abraham Lincoln, she clean forgot Robert E. Lee." He was a great—well, he was an agnostic. He sent his kid—has a son named Parke. The odd thing is, Mrs. Watkin's father had been a Congregationalist minister, and here Larry was an agnostic. I said, "Why do you send your kid to Sunday school?"

He said, "Well, this is Lexington. If you don't send your kid to Sunday school, everybody thinks you're an agnostic." [Laughter] So he sent the boy.

Parke grew up without an "E" on Parke, and later Larry put an "E," before he got grown up he started using the "E." I said, "Larry, you damn snob, what are you trying to cash in on a Southern connection?"

He said, "No, but everybody assumes it's got an 'E,' and puts an 'E' on it." So he decided it was easier to be Parke with an "E" on it.

I don't know, unless you want to ask me questions.

There was right much drinking at W&L, but I'm told that men's colleges in small towns generally have this. Our rector here went to Sewanee, and he said they

did a lot of drinking in fraternities down there, but that was because they couldn't get out and go downtown to a restaurant or a bar or something, so they had to make entertainment at home.

One thing that struck me was the impression of age and dignity that you got from the senior faculty. Dr. Howe, James Lewis Howe, who taught chemistry, was a greatly admired man. He was a big deal in the Presbyterian Church, and he'd gone to Amherst, in Massachusetts. He got his graduate degree at Harvard, and he was a great believer in having high academic standards.

Dr. Hoyt was a biology professor. I had him. He was excellent. Dr. Tucker I mentioned. Dr. Shannon I mentioned. There was a professor of modern languages called Dr. Delawa Benjamin Easter, and he was very erudite. He left all his books to the W&L library. It was fascinating—I worked in the library for the NYA one year—fascinating just to go through his books and see how he had edited things. He would write under something, "Not true. The author's in error. That should be so and so." He was so erudite that he could pick up on all kinds of small—all kinds of details how people had erred in.

That's about all I can think of, but you—

**Warren:** I have a couple more questions. Is it okay if I pop in another tape?

**Rouse:** Sure.

[Begin Tape 2, Side 1]

**Warren:** This is Mame Warren. This is tape two with Parker Rouse on December 15, 1996.

My last couple of questions. Did you get out into the country much? Did you get out to Goshen or House Mountain?

**Rouse:** Yes. One of the nice things about Lexington, we thought, was the surrounding area. Some of us would go out and camp all night on House Mountain. I remember once going with a guy named Morton Brown from

Louisville, and Jim Andrews from Norfolk, and somebody else, I can't remember. But we built a fire and cooked our dinner, and sat around, I guess, and had a little beer. Then we tried to go to sleep, but it was cold, and our bed packs were borrowed from somebody. They were awful. They didn't give you any softness, and we couldn't sleep. I began to think about the wildcats. We kept the fire going, the embers of the fire, so we'd have it in the morning, and then I remember that I read that wildcats were attracted to fire. But it was a very unpleasant experience. I think we did it two or three times.

In the summertime, we'd go down and swim in Goshen Pass, but the water was hideously cold. I was a Tidewater person used to water temperatures about 78 or 80 degrees, which is comfortable, but up there the water in the Goshen Pass was always impossible.

Marshall Penick had a racehorse. It was the son of—it was of a family of horses that had been sired by Sun Beau, S-U-N B-E-A-U. Dr. Lee, Dr. Bolling Lee, who was a grandson of Robert E. Lee, he was a physician in New York City, and a fairly well-to-do man, Dr. Bowling Lee was given this racehorse by somebody, and he, in turn, gave it to Mr. Penick. Dr. Lee was on the board of Washington and Lee, so he gave this little colt to Mr. Penick. Marshall used to go out in the country where she boarded the colt, and take friends to feed the little horse sugar cubes.

We went out, Lewis McMurrin and I, one Sunday. She had taught her class at the little Presbyterian chapel at House Mountain. We went out to feed the horse, and there was another colt of a common variety in the stable with him, because they said it made a thoroughbred horse more amenable to being trained if you had it with another horse in the same pen. But when Marshall tried to feed her horse sugar, the other horse came up and bit her on the bosom. It was a crisis, because she was a young lady and we were two young men, and we couldn't do but so much. [Laughter] We rushed her back to town where she saw Dr. Reid White. Dr. Reid

White pronounced the damage to be superficial. But we used to go with Marshall occasionally to see her horse.

Occasionally, when theater events would occur in Richmond, some of us would rent a car and go down. One year Francis Letterer was performing in a play by S.M. Veerman [phonetic]. I can't remember the name of the play. It was a very successful play of its time. It was being done in Richmond, and four of us rented this car. Believe it or not, we had four flat tires coming back. We got there in time to see the play, and then as soon as it was over, we started home. But first one tire and then the next. The car was old, the tires were terrible. So the last time we had given out of all the material you use to repair blowouts, so we just had to leave the car in Amherst and get a taxi to take us to Lexington to try to get to class on time.

I'd go over to Hollins occasionally. Once I went to Hollins, and the girl I was going to see was all dressed up like a boy, because in Hollins in those days, they had student dances and the seniors went as girls, but all the lower classmen went as boys, dressed up as boys, and broke with the seniors and danced with them. I said, "Good Lord, I never expected to see you like this."

The girls' schools were very snippy. One night some of us went to Mary Baldwin. It was wet and the car had a lot of antifreeze in it, and the antifreeze had got hot and the fumes had come back in the car, and there was somewhat alcoholic-smelling. When we got to Mary Baldwin, Dean—she had a German name—the dean of women, who had to interview you when you came in for your date, she said, "You have been drinking alcohol."

And we said, "No, ma'am."

She said, "Well, you smell of alcohol."

We said, "That is the antifreeze in the car."

One of my fraternity brothers was a law student. He said, "Madam, if you persist in saying we've been drinking alcohol, I can bring a suit against you for

defamation." He said, "We haven't touched it." We hadn't, really. I think her name was Dean Pfohl, P-F-O-H-L.

Another one of the deans in Mary Baldwin married Dr. Campbell, was the lady you saw.

**Warren:** Yes. That was Dean Pfohl.

**Rouse:** Dean Pfohl. Okay. All right. I can't say I remember her at all, but she evidently is a very superior lady.

**Warren:** She was very impressive, very impressive. She told stories like that, so it's fun to hear the stories from both sides. That's what I love about doing this. I get stories from both sides.

**Rouse:** I don't know. The last year I was there, Europe was beginning to go crazy, and also, I believe while I was there, the British ditched Edward, King Edward, and the affair with Edward and Wallis Simpson was going on, and my fraternity housemother, Miss Mead, was absolutely torn up by that. She just thought the Prince of Wales was the most wonderful guy in the world, and we would sit in her suite in the fraternity house listening to this thin little international broadcast, when he would talk about, "I cannot marry the woman I love," or something like that. "I'd be king with the woman I love," and so on, going to leave. Anyway, my Lord, she cried, she cried and cried. It was terrible.

I said in that little talk I made, I don't think we really appreciated all the things that were happening in Germany and in Europe. We were so absorbed in ourselves and school.

Oh, there's one other thing. When I was in my last year, I did a survey of the senior class that was published in the school magazine. I asked them all these questions about what do you expect to earn and what do you expect to do. It was pitiful. We all thought that we would perhaps be lucky and earn as much as \$10,000 a year, because at that time the professors at W&L were making \$5,000 a year. Dr.

Gaines, I think, as president was making something like \$15,000 or \$16,000. The whole salary scale was sort different. This was before the great leap in World War II in prices and everything, and our ambitions seemed very modest. I had a copy of that thing somewhere, and it really reflects, if you want to go that much in detail, reflects what college kids were thinking in 1937.

**Warren:** I'll look that up. That sounds very interesting.

**Rouse:** The magazine is the *Southern Collegian*, and it would have been an issue for either '36 or '37.

**Warren:** Okay. I'll get that at the library. I'd like to see that.

Well, what happened? You mentioned what you all thought was going to happen. What happened after college? What happened at graduation?

**Rouse:** Oh, Dr. Gaines, as always, made the most marvelous farewell. In those days, and I think it's still true, the president made the farewell address, rather than have somebody come in from away. Dr. Gaines started that. Really, all of us just really hated—my brother, who came along two years after me, cried all the way from Lexington to Staunton when we were going home. I'd gone up for his graduation. Because there's something about being at that school. Maybe other people feel the same way about their schools.

And we got out at a very poor time. I got offered a job for twenty dollars a week at the *Daily Press* in Newport News, and I talked to Tom Riegel in the journalism school. He said, well, he thought that was about the starting rate for newspaper jobs. So I went down there. After three years, I was offered thirty-five dollars by the Richmond paper, so I went on up there. But the salary scale after World War II then suddenly really began to jump. Now, newspaper reporters must make \$25,000 or \$30,000 a year.

**Warren:** So what was your first job out of—

**Rouse:** As a reporter on the *Newport News Daily Press*.

**Warren:** Okay. That's what I thought. Well, let's jump way ahead, because one of the questions I like to find out from everyone is what your feelings are about the big change at Washington and Lee about coeducation.

**Rouse:** Well, although I'm an old alumnus, I was much more prepared for coeducation than most of my contemporaries. I lived here in Williamsburg, and William and Mary was the first Virginia school to go coeducational, and it was drawing some very good students by the 1930s, and constantly increasing the level of its academic demands, and its SATs suddenly got way ahead of W&L's, and it really hurt my pride that Washington and Lee, which, when I entered college, had been much the superior of the two schools, was now way behind William and Mary.

And when Colgate Darden became president—I liked him and knew him in Richmond on the paper—when he had become president of the University of Virginia, he reluctantly—he said he hated the idea—concluded that they ought to go coed, and they did, and he said, "Parke, it's made all the difference in the world. This is a much better institution now because the competition is much greater. The pool of applicants becomes huge, and you can pick and choose, and then once in school, the boys and the girls sort of compete for positions." He says, "Rather than upsetting the campus with rape, with sexual enthusiasms, it's stabilized it, because the children, the students, are living in more or less natural circumstances, the way they would live anywhere, boys and girls all here together." So he said it's done great things for the University of Virginia.

As I said, I hated seeing us—we were taking some people from Williamsburg and places around that I didn't think were up to W&L standards. In fact, W&L has always—I don't know whether this needs to get in the book—always had a problem of getting the best people in Virginia, because Virginia has very good publicly supported colleges. Today I could go to Virginia for about half of what at W&L, and William and Mary the same thing. I try to talk young people into W&L and they say,

"Yeah, but my father says he can't afford \$20,000 a year at W&L, when he can afford \$10,000 a year at Virginia."

I just think it was a matter of necessity, although I'm sorry to see it. My brother in Washington, he just hasn't had anything to do with W&L since then, because he dislikes it so.

**Warren:** Have you been back to campus since coeducation?

**Rouse:** Yes. I think it seems fine. I'm surprised. It seems to me that with the big fraternity houses that the boys have, the girls would expect some similar accommodations, and I'm wondering whether that's ever going to become an issue, because—

**Warren:** Oh, it's an issue right now.

**Rouse:** I bet it is. Actually, I think the fraternities became a little overambitious for a while. They didn't keep the buildings up the way they should have. Most of them were shambles when I was there.

**Warren:** When you were there as a student?

**Rouse:** Yes. Anyway, I think from all I can see, I know that it's raised the academic standards. If W&L is a private school which has to charge more than public schools, to attract superior young people, it's got to be a highly superior school. It can't be a highly superior school if it has to take people with grade levels that are only mediocre.

**Warren:** Well, those numbers seemed to have changed recently.

**Rouse:** Yes.

**Warren:** They're much better.

**Rouse:** I see a lot of academics in Williamsburg, good friends of mine, and they say, "You're always talking about W&L. Look at our SATs are so much better than anybody in Virginia." Now they don't say that anymore.

The chairman of the board of William and Mary, about six years ago, got some bad information. She said William and Mary has the highest SATs of any school in the country except Harvard. [Laughter] Actually she's had the highest SATs in Virginia, I guess, of any school except Washington and Lee and the University of Virginia. She got hold of some wrong dope.

**Warren:** Well, we've gotten through my list of questions. Is there anything more that you would like say?

**Rouse:** I have a great respect for the Scotch-Irish who settled the valley, and I think, by and large, the record those people made in colleges and schools was a good one, in Princeton and Davidson, and the levels of schools. The Scotch-Irish, or the Scottish never were as rich as the English, but they seemed to put a big emphasis on scholarship and academic work. I think that shows up in schools like—Dr. Tucker, the dean at W&L, used to say he didn't think Washington and Lee should ever be too rich. He thought that the old saying that the best university was Mark Hopkins at one end of a log and a student at the other, had a lot of truth, that luxurious surroundings, beautiful buildings, expensive trips and so forth, were not necessary for education, that what you had to have were really dedicated profs and dedicated students. Well, I don't know whether you can say that anymore, because education's become a more expensive thing.

I do think Dr. Gaines did a great job of establishing a sort of support body for Washington and Lee, and I think he had to do that by showing that it was a serious school. When I went to work with Virginius Dabney on the *Times-Dispatch*, he said, "Look, Parke. Everybody knows Washington and Lee's a good-time school, but we don't think of it as a particular academic school." It was known in Tidewater by a lot of people as a place where people went to Fancy Dress and things like that. I sometimes wonder whether Fancy Dress was an asset or a liability. But I think it's

taken seriously there. You look at these magazines that attempt to rate schools, and most of them seem to think W&L's a very good place.

**Warren:** These days it's way up there, isn't it?

**Rouse:** Sure is.

**Warren:** I'm very proud to be associated with it.

**Rouse:** I hope I haven't talked you to death.

**Warren:** You have not at all. You have just been a marvelous interview. I can already see the quotes on the page. Thank you so much.

**Rouse:** You're very welcome.

[End of interview]