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Oral History Interview with Dr. Jack Lane

Jack Lane
Rollins College

Wenxian Zhang
Rollins College, wzhang@rollins.edu

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(5/5/2005)

Zhang: Today is Thursday, May 5, 2005. My name is Wenxien Zhang, head of Archives Special Collections. Today we have Dr. Jack Lane here, going to be interviewed by me in the Rollins College Oral History Archive project.

My first question, Doctor Lane: I understand most of the people who live here in Florida today come from somewhere else, so could you please share with me some of your family background?

Lane: Yes, I did. Like others, many many others, I come from someplace else. I was reared in a rural part of Texas about twenty miles from Austin, the capital. I was born in 1932 at the depths of the Depression. After I started teaching American History I found out how bad things really were. I didn't particularly realize it that much when I was a kid, but my family were [very poor]. We lived on a brick manufacturing company where my family worked as common laborers. The company provided all the housing. They had a company store there. I do remember a couple of times my mother saying that they had received no sal[ary]—My father'd received no salary because all of the money that he had made that month had gone into buying groceries and clothing and things from the company store. So often we had—there was just no—there was just nothing but bills in the pay envelope. My family were not educated people at all. They were literate, all of them could read or write, but I think no one in my very large extended family had gone past the eighth grade. I think my mother did go as far as the eighth grade. That was my extended family from uncles and cousins. I was the second one to graduate from high school, and no one in my family had gone to college. I was the first to go on to college, and my family didn't even know what a Ph.D. was. I mean they'd never even heard of one when I got a degree.

So I came from that sort of background. There was never any discussion as to whether I would go to college or not. No one ever mentioned it to me. A history teacher in high school asked me if I thought about college and I told him, "No, for one thing my family couldn't afford to send me." I got a job. I'd left this little home, this little country town, and gone to Austin to work. And when I was drafted in the Korean War, and it was—that was really a kind of launching pad for me, in a way. I got away from that world; met other people. Ended up after the war going [to college and] getting the G.I. Bill. They offered it for Korean Veterans and so that gave me an opportunity to go to college. And while I was in college I got the bright idea that I might like to be a college professor. I loved what they were doing—without really even knowing whether I could.

So, [I went to school] at Oglethorpe University [for] my undergraduate [degree], and then I got my masters at Emory University, a Ph.D. at the University of Georgia. That was a time when a lot of jobs were available. I had that year, that I was getting my degree, I had six interviews for jobs. I could have probably had any one of them and very late in the year there was a notice on the bulletin board that Rollins College had an opening. And so I investigated a bit and I had gone to a small liberal arts college, that's where I wanted to go. These others were all state schools. So I came to Rollins in 1963, thinking that I would probably stay here a while because I was very much interested in getting a research university. I was writing, I was wanting to write, and ended up staying here for thirty-five years.

Zhang: That's fascinating. Let's go back just a little bit. You mentioned you were in the Korean War, so you were around twenty, how old you was there?

Lane: I was— Let's see, I was drafted in 1951, so that would have made me nineteen.

Zhang: Nineteen?

Lane: When I was drafted.

Zhang: How many years did you serve?

Lane: Well, I was drafted for two years, but about six months before I was getting—going to get out, they came around asking everyone who's time was up if they wanted to reenlist for one more year. If they did, any one who did would be exempted from reserve duty, any reserve duty, when you got out after one—after one more year. You would complete entirely. And I'd already heard information about people who had gone into reserve and gotten called back, just as they're doing right now. And I was not interested (laughs) in staying in the army or having anything to do with it anymore. I was in the paratroopers, so I made jumps. I had about fifty jumps out of planes. And I was already getting scared to death of that, so. I stayed one more year, so I stayed, actually stayed three years. I'm glad I did because the war was winding down and there wasn't too much. The last year was not bad, was not a bad decision.

Zhang: So you were actually in Korea?

Lane: No, I wasn't. We were getting ready to ship off to Korea when I got discharged. And then, six months after I got discharged, the outfit was shipped to Korea. Trained for it, though.

Zhang: So you, uh, were admitted to the college through the G.I. Bill?

Lane: Yes, and that was a really magnificent help to me because I would've never been able to. I was also a musician so I was traveling as a musician when I got out. So I worked my way through college as a musician. So that was a big help also. But the G.I. Bill paid for everything. My tuition—well not for room and board, but for tuition and books and everything. So that was a really a big—that was really a tremendous help to me.

Zhang: Okay, can you tell me about your undergraduate institution? Is that a liberal arts college?

Lane: Yeah it is. Oglethorpe University in Atlanta is a small liberal arts college, a little smaller than Rollins. And a beautiful setting in Atlanta. And was really fortunate decision on my part. The reason I decided to go there was that a friend of mine, whom I'd met in Atlanta, had taken some courses there and when I told him I wanted to go to college, he suggested it, and it was really a fortunate because it was small, experimental little college where they were doing some interesting kind of educational innovations. I got a wonderful liberal education

there. I can't even begin to tell you how helpful that was to me not to have majors at that college. It was literally a liberal education without majors. If I were interested in literature, which I was then, I took a huge number of courses in it. In fact, when I went to graduate school I could've gone either to American Literature or American History. I was accepted in both fields.

Zhang: So what made you decide to pursue history as your career and your major?

Lane: I had just had an inclination for it, a little bit stronger than literature. If they'd had an American Studies at the university where I was I would have gotten into that, but they didn't have one. I just had a little stronger interest in it—in history. Not quite sure. But, you know, I mean I really remain dedicated to literature anyway.

Zhang: Um-hm. So you mentioned that you, after you graduated in the early sixties you had several job interviews, you chose Rollins instead. And that's your first and only professional—

Lane: (Speaking at the same time) That's right

Zhang: —Job

Lane: Um-hm

Zhang: So what made you decide to come to Rollins and what's your first impression of the school at that time?

Lane: Well I'd gone to these state schools. This was the time when these huge numbers of people were pouring into the colleges and the states had begun to expand and to build universities. You know they'd have the large state university and then they started building them in smaller towns. And then in some cases, I came across colleges that had been private colleges that were taken over by the—one of them was in South Carolina. And these were all state schools that were just, you know, just getting started, [ones] that had been in existence about ten or fifteen years. And huge things with big classes and I just—it just did not appeal to me at all.

I would have gone to one of them, but then all of a sudden this job came. I came down; it is really kind of interesting. I thought—this is pretty late, this is like in May when I saw the notice. So I thought, this is pretty late for somebody [to be interviewing]. So I was the first, and I think the only, person they interviewed. And this is in May. And I came down for the interview and I was just shocked at the beauty of this college when I walked on it. There was, where the bookstore is, there was the student center at the time. And it was a beautiful room with ceiling fans blowing and palm trees in pots. You know, you walked into it and it looked so Florida. And I was taken over there by one of the professors to have a cup of coffee. And they would have coffee and students and faculty were all mixing around. There must have been two hundred people in that room. And just the kind of conversation that [I had experienced at Oglethorpe] was going around. I thought, This is exactly the kind of school I'd like to come to. And then I saw the town and saw the location of it and when I went back I told

my wife, “You know this is really a nice place to go. We’ve got to really work on getting this job.” And I was hired, so it’s very nice.

Zhang: So that’s the life before Disney, so you—

Lane: (Speaking at the same time) Oh yeah.

Zhang: —Were fortunate enough to experience that—

Lane: (Speaking at the same time) I did. Oh very much. Oh yeah. I could not afford to come back down to find a place and so the college very generously directed me to a real estate agent. And so she asked me what I wanted and I said, “Well I’d like to have an apartment before we look around and for a few years so we can find out what areas we really wanted to live in,” or something of the sort, or maybe buy later. We were anxious to buy as soon as we could. And so she called me about three weeks later and said, “I’m sorry but I’ve looked everywhere and I can not find an apartment here in town that will take children.” And so she said, “However I do have a house that is about fifty dollars more than you said you could afford. And it’s about, about ten minutes from the college, about five or ten minutes from the college.” So I said, “Well, you know, go ahead and rent that.” So she rented it and we never saw it till we got down here.

But this town was so provincial and was so directed toward retired people, wealthy people who would come down here in the summer, older people usually, that you couldn’t get a place around here to take children. It’s almost like no dogs and children allowed. Amazing, it was amazing. The house happened to be off Lee road over here. It was a pretty nice house and a nice neighborhood.

So that was a very fortuitous—and what was so amazing about that is the college was really helpful in that. This was a very, very, very sleepy little town. Rollins was absolutely the only thing that was happening in Central Florida. There was the only theatre. Winter Park virtually closed down in the summer. Everybody, all the merchants closed their doors after about twelve o’clock all summer long. Some of the hotels—the hotel where the plaza is now, it closed down all together. Many professors left, didn’t even stay around. It was a—it was a very very unusual sort of laid-back sort of place that was just sort of sleeping in a way.

Zhang: So how has student life been?

Lane: I had taught for a year at Georgia State while I was getting my P[h.D.]. Between my masters and Ph.D. I taught at Georgia State University, which is a big state school. I taught many courses at the University of Georgia while I was getting my Ph.D. so I taught state school. It was a kind of shock to come down to a place where it was clear that this was a very, very affluent student body. And a kind of student body that was interested in college and interested in classes, but it was clear that the social life here was much more important to them. I found that they were very good students, certainly the equivalent of the ones I was teaching in the state schools. But not as driven, not as course-driven as even some of the state schools. Of course you know some of those kids in the state schools were just barely in. It was, in a sense, a kind of struggle for me at the beginning to try to figure out these students and how motivated they were. But as it turned out I found that many of them were very, very bright. After a

couple of three years here I got used to their attitudes and their approaches. And I began to more and more enjoy the students. It was a good student body when I got here. It was small. Classes were always extremely small. And then in the, uh, late sixties and early seventies, the government provided the college with huge amounts of money for scholarships. And the college managed to pull in here some really high quality students. And in between 1968 and 1975, the level of Rollins students increased dramatically.

The level of academic quality increased dramatically. And there was in this period too, this period of the sixties, where there was this kind of student revolt against authority and upheavals ever going on on campus, there was a much more serious attitude toward the classes. Rollins, when I came, had a very, very strong reputation of being a play school. Rich kids from the northeast coming down for the sun. And in the late sixties and seventies that began to change. Not only the nature of the student body but the quality—academic quality of them. And I think Rollins made a quantum leap in the quality of the students. And in addition to that there was a huge turn over of faculty at the time. A large number of faculty coming into the college, which changed the nature of the faculty also. When I came here there were there were three of us who were the same age as I was at that time when I came in. Three. One was in the philosophy department; one was in the math department, and myself. And the rest of them were faculty just on the edge of retirement. So there was a huge turn over in the faculty between about 1965, 1966, and 1975, about that ten-year period there was just a virtual transformation of the faculty from one group and one generation to another.

By the way all those people are now coming up for retirement so there's going to be another one of those transformations taking place. So there was—not enough people, but a real transformation in the midseventies, between the late sixties and late seventies that really I think helped to transform this college. And many of us were very, very anxious to develop the kind of atmosphere around here that would allow Rollins to lose this playboy attitude that was spread. And God we worked hard on that over the years. And you know it's coming to fruition. It's been very pleasing to me to see the way, how we were struggling in those other early years, to do this, we worked very hard at it, to see it come to fruition.

Zhang: You mentioned the faculty structure. How large was the faculty back then, the faculty percentage, or how that system worked back then?

Lane: Well the faculty of course was geared toward the number of students who were coming in. And I believe when I came here there may have been less than a thousand students here, so the faculties were very small. Let me give you an example: the history department and the political science department were merged. And there were two people in political science, neither of whom had political science degrees. One of them was a former president, I think—I think he had gotten a degree in something called government. And the other one was a former ambassador. Those were the two people in political science. And then there were three historians, two in American History and one in European History. And that was it. We had the history department and the political science department had five people. So we had to teach everything, and that was pretty typical of all the departments here. These were—it was a very small department. It was almost small enough that it was almost literally a family.

One of the things that attracted me to the college was the ways in which I interacted in my interview here with people from various departments. And after I got here, particularly in the social life of the faculty, you couldn't distinguish at a party what department that anyone

was from. It was in our conversations and the ways in which most of us at one time or another during the day ended up at the student center. You were a professor of Rollins then; departments made very little difference. There was no sense of belonging to—no real sense of belonging to a department. You taught history courses. Of course, you know, we did things, we had to put our courses together, we had departmental meetings and that sort of thing. But in my interaction with the faculty, I interacted with people outside the department a lot more than I did with people in the department. In fact I developed a pretty strong relationship with the English department from the beginning which still continued throughout. For my generation, and then I think a few more in the people that came right after, that continued for quite awhile. That some of my best friends and relations were always—were usually outside the department.

After I'd been here about three years, about four years, I was coming up for tenure. And I almost didn't get tenure here. I was, in the first place, I was pretty forward in my ideas. This was a pretty conservative faculty and I came here with some pretty far out ideas, for them at least. I think they didn't really like what they saw, in that sense. And particularly in my opposition to the war in Vietnam and my encouraging the students to be opposed to it. Students, and some of the faculty too, got into all kinds of difficulty on that. But anyway, after I'd been here about four years I finally got tenure. And then the members who had been here and had been running the department retired. I was the only one left (both laugh) for head of the department. So I was made head of the department. And between—this was about, I'd say about 1968-69, I began hiring members of the department and within a period of about five or six years I'd hired everybody who was in the department. And I think we strengthened the department immeasurably in those years. I think the history department finally turned out to be a pretty good department.

Zhang: So you came in under the McKean administration, right?

Lane: (Speaking at the same time) McKean, yes. President—he was the president, McKean, when I arrived here.

Zhang: Tell me about the history of the administration.

Lane: Well, you know I ended up writing the history of the college, and so I had to deal with the McKean administration. I just couldn't ignore it. But it was very, very difficult to write because he was a wonderful wonderful individual in person. It was hard—I mean I can't think of anyone who didn't like Hugh McKean. And he was so dedicated to this college. He loved this college. He went to school here, he was an art professor, and became president. And he had just incredible affection for this college and he made all of us feel welcome here. He was in the faculty social life; he was always involved in it. He was always having people over to his home. And it really didn't make any difference who you were, you know, I mean you could be a part of this whole thing. So he just made life here so enjoyable.

But he was an artist and it was clear that at a time when there was huge amounts of money coming out of the federal government and from donors because the economy was burgeoning, the college was just desperately in need of money. And Hugh had no development director. He used to tell us, this is at faculty meetings I've heard him say it over and over again, "I do not have anybody in development because if this is a good college people will contribute to it without being asked." And that was—you know that was one thing to say this

and we to be able to say, Yeah well that's okay. But the fact of the matter is that I did not get a raise at this college for three years after I got here. Not a single raise. And I think that I wouldn't have gotten one if I hadn't—after I'd gotten tenure, I hadn't really made a big case for myself. In fact, I made an appointment one year because I was getting pretty desperate. I was having a very difficult time making ends meet. And I was getting desperate and so I went in to see him about this and I walked out of the office with a big raise. And I went home and told my wife, I said, "Jan, I just got a big raise—" I said that, "I have good news and bad news (laughs). I just got a big raise for next year. The bad news is that's a sorry way to get a raise to have to go in and tell the president and then you walk out a raise." And I said, "What about the poor devils who are not doing anything, or am I going to have to do this every time I want a raise?" (Laughs) You know.

He was that kind of a president where you'd walk into his office and you might come out with anything. You never know, I mean, he was so personal in his approach to the college. He had no sense of kind of administrative order where you'd set things up and you—And the college is run with some kind, with some kind of meaning rather than it's kind of personal. So, I had a very difficult time writing about Hugh in that sense. In the sense that many of the faculty felt that we could be doing a lot better and that Hugh had just been here much longer than he should have been. But I'll tell you I never lost my admiration and love for him. I never lost my admiration and love for him. He was a wonderful individual. In fact, after he left, we used to have a caroling group during Christmas, with the faculty, and we would go over to his house and carol and have eggnog with him. So whatever happened to him, I never lost my good personal relationship with Hugh. He was an interesting person.

Zhang: That's fascinating. Besides McKean, what were other some more important or prominent people here at Rollins, faculty or administrators?

Lane: When I came here, uh, I at least was wise enough to say to myself, Okay who—I took about six months to keep my eyes and ears open finding out, Okay who are the movers and shakers at this college here, because I needed to know—for one things so I didn't step on anybody's toes here very early. And I found one of the people who was and I tell—he's still alive—and I tell him often, a man named Herb Hellwege who was in the physics department, and he was one of the really interesting people here at the college and was—had an interesting background. A German who just had a wonderful, wonderful personality. He and I hit it off very early so we became friends early. I really hated to see him retire. He was an interesting person and has an interesting background. We'll be interviewing him and I hope, I hope we get some interesting things from him. The faculty as a whole, I thought, was one of the most congenial faculty that I had experienced in my very short career. Outstanding people who, outside the president, hm, that would be—that would be difficult. I'd have to think about that one for a while.

Zhang: That's okay. You mentioned about the Vietnam War. I'm reading this story from the *Sandspur*, October 20, 1967. You had a letter to the editor. I don't know if you still remember this. So the campus was so deeply divided during that time?

Lane: (Reading silently) Oh, what—let's see, what was I complaining about here (laughs)? (Reading) "I heard some faculty members— (unintelligible) —about a few students

deprecating the protest.” Oh yeah, right. Yeah, well, this was the kind of student upheaval that was going on here. Somebody brings a—Some recruiters come on campus and students protest the students being on campus and I was supporting them (laughs). I—There may be an article in there I wrote. I wrote a couple of articles for the *Sandspur* on the Vietnam War, and what was going on there and students being drafted into the war. I can’t recall exactly what those were. But yeah, that was an exciting period, in some ways, at the college. Students in that period were quite a bit different than the ones now, I’ll tell you, in that sense. In their interest in what was going on in the world, in the public world, and their willingness. Student center, as you can see, the student center was the place where there was always somebody making a big speech in the student center over some issue (laughs). And not just faculty either, there were a lot of students.

Zhang: Besides the Vietnam War, what are some of the other significant or memorable events during your tenure at Rollins?

Lane: Well one of the things that had excited me about the college was its—When I began to detect that there was something here that was quite similar to the world I went to school in at Oglethorpe University where there was a sense that, you know, education is something that you can try new things with and try different ideas and be welcome. So I got that sense and when I came here, the college was in the midst of a curriculum revision. And, you know, faculty meetings were places where we discussed this and, you know, I was here for only a few months and I could stand up and say anything I wanted to and the fact that people would listen, it was very exciting in that sense. My introduction to the college was that the college was changing its curriculum. And that became, I think, a kind of pattern that I saw over and over again at the college.

At one time or another, the college would say, Wait a minute we’ve had this curriculum long enough, let’s try something new. And we would form a curriculum committee. And, in fact, the curriculum that they have now, which has lasted longer than any other, I can’t believe it, is one I chaired. I chaired the committee that put this curriculum in place. So that there was always a sense here, of—In conversations with faculty and the kind of atmosphere in the college, that we were constant—Some faculty members constantly looking around to find some new way to do something; some new way, some new approach to the classroom. And we were constantly having conversations about that and that was something that, I guess because of my experience at Oglethorpe, that was of deep interest to me from the very beginning. And it was this, I think too, that allowed us to cut across departmental lines because we were constantly involved in some kind of discussion on these sort of things, that had nothing to do with teaching history, but just simply the pedagogical role.

Zhang: Now since we are on the curriculum, tell me about what courses you’ve taught during your tenure at Rollins.

Lane: When I came the— This was really a little bit disturbing to me. When I was in graduate school at University of Georgia, in order to prepare us for a—In addition to taking courses, I had a teaching fellowship also. And so, in order to prepare us for the world out there we’re going in to, at the University of Georgia they required us to teach outside our field, even outside of American History. So for two terms there, while I was there, I taught a course in

Western Civilization. And that was very very helpful to me. I think everybody knows that you learn more by teaching than you do by being a student. And so when I came to Rollins, I was taking the place of a woman named, wonderful name, of Geneva Drinkwater. And she was retiring. And she had taught the Western Civilization courses. And so when I was being interviewed they said, they asked me if I could teach those. And I said, “Well yeah. I’m teaching one of them now.” And I just assumed that they needed it taught, and that would be the—that would be just one of the courses that I would teach. We never talked anything about the other courses I would be teaching. Now that I think of it, that’s probably a good reason why, because when I got here, when I finally got my teaching assignment, that’s all I was teaching, was the Western Civilization courses. And no upper division courses whatsoever. And so I said to myself, Well, okay I’ll do this for this year. And next year comes along and I’m still teaching the same thing.

So finally I went to the head of the department, a guy named Ray Smith, character, and I said, “Ray, you know I’m an American Historian actually.” And he said, “Really? No kidding.” No, I mean, he didn’t know it, he actually didn’t know it. And so he had paid no attention to, apparently had read nothing about my background or anything, paid no attention to it. In fact, he was head of the department at the time I was hired and he was the cause for this late entrance, of trying to find, but— And so finally at one of our department [meetings], I said, “You know, if I can’t start teaching in my field,” I said, “I don’t mind teaching these survey courses, but if I can’t start teaching my field pretty soon, I’m going to start looking for something else, because I’m not a European Historian.” And that seemed to surprise them that I would be—it was just very strange.

But as it turns out, Ray retired the following year. And one of the guys, who was the American historian, turned out to be an alcoholic and had to leave the college. And so all of a sudden, just at the point I thought, Now, just I can’t stay here and teach. You know this—I mean I don’t know how long this is going on. Things sort of opened up. So I started teaching American History then and started really opening up—opening up the field that I had been trained in and started very early to teach American Foreign Policy, which I’m still teaching, as a matter of fact, in the Holt School. So that’s been one of my great loves. I was also, I had written my dissertation and later I got a book on military history, so I was also teaching some courses in military history. But mostly because of such a small department, you know we had to cover all of American History, so I taught, in my years here, just about every field of American History.

Zhang: You created some modern history, I see. There is a write up about your course on Watergate.

Lane: Oh well, you know, when we— In that revision of the curriculum when I came here, we had a short winter term course. And I think they just about dropped that over the years. But for, oh I would say, a decade or more we had short winter term courses, which lasted only four weeks. And so in those courses we sort of, each of us sort of made up interesting courses that we wanted to teach and they usually changed every year. So what would be a topic that’s not broad enough for a large course but could be taught in a four-week period that might be interesting to students? So really we would attempt in every way to offer courses that were interesting, that students were interested in. One of the guys in sociology, I recall, offered a course on the automobile, and part of it was repairing an automobile. Actually learning about

it, but looking at the automobile in American culture. And there were some really fascinating courses because we would simply start thinking about them in the fall term and just make them up.

And so when Watergate was over and Nixon was gone, there was a real interest on the part of the students, I had a course on Watergate. We had a great time in that course, I loved that course. You know, the interest finally waned with students who had come in and I taught it about two or three terms in a row. And we would see the movie, *All the President's Men*. I had the students take a character in the Watergate and do an in-depth study of each character. And so at the end of the term, they would all present the character. And then we were in a large classroom that was an old elementary school building over here, and we were in one of those old elementary school classrooms and it had a blackboard all the way around the room, and so we put a chronology of Watergate on the blackboard and students would construct that chronology. So we, it was an interesting course. We had fun with that.

Zhang: So what course do you feel was challenging or frustrating for you? Do you have any?

Lane: Well, you know, every class has its own personality. And some just go so smoothly, and then some just absolutely fall to pieces. And I've had all kinds of them. I've had classes I just absolutely couldn't wait for them to be over. And classes that I just was sorry to see them end. I think my most exciting experiences came in that period where I was telling you when we had the students—they still are very much my friends. By the way, Mike Del Colliano, I don't know if you know him. He's on the board of trustees and spoke at the president's, at President Duncan's inaugural, was one of those students. One time I was teaching a course on America between the two wars, and we were looking at the New Deal, and a couple of students we found out that there was a, one of these camps that was started by the Roosevelt administration during the New Deal in the 1930s, where there was a kind of communal living where they built a community center, they built some houses around it, and the people farmed the land around it up in North Florida. We were simply reading about these communities that were all over and we saw, well one of them was up here in North Florida. Without any direction from me or any suggestion what so ever, three students actually went up there, collected all kinds of information about it, came back and then one day said they'd like to present something to class, and presented. It was a very exciting time in that sense where students, when they would get interested in the class, were self directed. They were just on their own and do sorts of things, which was— That's a nice time in class.

Zhang: So do you remember any other students, that you will always cherish their presence in your class?

Lane: Well, you know, yes, and over the years there were many. Some that I've kept in close contact with. I see occasionally and I get a lot of emails from them. But, you know, over the years, all of a sudden, all of these students start fading from memory (laughs). And so I will be at some gathering or here in town somewhere. Just the other day it was over at the museum the other night, and this student, this person comes up to me and says "My name is Richard Rinehart, remember me?" I said "Well for God's sake, Richard! What are you doing?" I didn't even know he was in— And so many of them are here in town, so I have a lot of those.

I had a little drawer in my desk that I kept all the time for letters from students who would write to me in one way or another. And so when they would write letters, all the nice ones of course, I would throw it in this. By the time I finished my career, I must've had fifty of those letters. And it's a kind of collection that I think all professors ought to have. If you ever sit down to wonder whether or not— Because many of them were written years after, several years after students, and so they would— Many of them are saying, You know, I was sitting down thinking the other day, one of the things that gave me direction in life and I thought about my relationship with you or the class or something of the sort. And so if you ever want to find out if you're making any difference, because we don't get that quite often, those kinds of letters really do. Maybe I ought to put those— Bring those to the Archives.

Zhang: That's great; we would love to have that.

Lane: Yeah, I will bring those. 'Cause I'd been wondering what else to do with those. But I think they probably belong in a folder. I'll bring them in.

Zhang: Thanks. Now we have a couple of your books here. Tell me why are you interested in the military history?

Lane: Well I had, when I was in graduate school, my field was in foreign policy. And that was my major field, and I was intending to write my dissertation on it, when— And I was going to write on the period at the turn of the century in the period of American Imperialism, a very hot topic in this time while we were in Vietnam, and there was question as to why the United States should be extending its powers in that direction. And an interest in where all of this started, how did America began to move out from the continent, out into other areas. And so I got into that field and there was a very good professor there, at the University of Georgia too. I came across these letters, I was researching a Theodore Roosevelt Papers, I came across these letters from a man named Leonard Wood, a general. And many of them were letters from this general who was talking about foreign policy and what American policy should be in the Philippines and various others and I thought, This, you know, this might be of interest. So I researched a little further and found out that no one had really done anything on him and they had just opened his papers at the Library of Congress.

So my dissertation director and I decided I'd do a study on the relation, on Wood and the relationship between defense policy and military policy and foreign policy. So that was my dissertation: Leonard Wood and the shaping of American national security policy or something like that. I can't remember the exact title. And so I went to Washington, researched through his papers, wrote my dissertation on that. And then, I had— He, my dissertation advisor, knew several publishers and they said, You know, this could be good, and so they told me, Oh why don't you do a biography? No one's done that. And I said, "Well I've never really done a biography." So anyway I decided to. So I worked for about, let's see that was about '63 I worked until, let's see, when was this published? Seventy-eight? So I worked from about '63, over ten years. On the biography. And because I had to write the biography I had to learn a lot about military history to do so. So really, I just sort of— It wasn't my field in graduate school so I just sort of drifted into it, and the more I got into it the more I was sort of interested in it. Most military history is written by, were written by people with a very kind of patriotic view toward the military and I thought there needed to be another perspective on the military. So I

decided to get into that. So I've got some pretty good mileage out of military history. I wrote not only the book, but this bibliography and, oh quite a few articles on military history.

And then I sort of got tired of it. Just about that time Thad, Seymour the president, asked me to do the history of the college. And so I started getting into—I had to learn something about educational history, higher education. I wanted to see where Rollins fit in all of that. That led me into thinking about writing in that field and doing some things. I saw some opportunities there so I wrote in it. And then, sort of, just became interested in generally in American cultural history and so sort of drifted away from military history. The key point came in the early eighties when the, you know the military has a lot of schools, when one of the schools asked me, and they usually had a historian there for a year, asked me to come there for a year. So I went up and interviewed at the Naval War—Army War College and they offered me a position for a year and I had to turn it down because my wife, for one thing, my wife could not leave her job, my kids couldn't leave. I couldn't take my kids with me. And so I had to turn it down and at that point when I did that I thought, Well, you know, maybe I'm not that interested in military history anymore. So I sort of drifted out of that and my scholarship too. I became quite scattered in my scholarship then. I didn't focus. I've told people I thought my attention span was pretty short in that sense.

Zhang: Tell us about the occasion you'd been appointed by Seymour as the college historian, and your work on the pictorial history of the school.

Lane: We were coming up, this was in, must've been '83 or something of the sort, we were coming up to the centennial of the college and it was clear that there was—no one had written a history of it. And so, I can't exactly remember how it came about but I think Thad Seymour approached me with the idea that would I be interested in it. And I said, "Yes, very much." And he said, well, interested in the sense that I would be given a year off, to write the history, from my teaching chores. And so, this is when the archives were in the old library building, and fortunately, fortunately, I don't think I would've undertaken it, except that several years earlier Fred Hannah had organized the archives and they were pretty well organized, you know? And so I went up there to look at them and I knew what archives looked like because I'd been at the National Archives for many years many, many times. So when I saw that the organization was there, they had the presidential papers, they had the faculty papers, they had all the material that you would need that was organized so that it was accessible. I mean, if they had said write the history and I'd gone up there and all these letters and things were just in boxes that hadn't been organized, I don't think I would've done it because you have to spend a couple of years organizing it before you can ever write.

So I spent the entire year in the archives. I had more fun doing that than anything that I've ever done in research. It was just fascinating to read the history of this college. To read it in the documents. And to be able to sit down and put together a narrative on it. That was just really most exciting because, you know, I was finding out things about my own institution and I was finding out, moreover, that this college has a rich, rich history, an interesting and fascinating history, and an important one in the history of American higher education too. So then I was talking to the archivist at the time and I said, "You know, we're going to have to have some photographs for this," and so she said, "Oh, well come look at this." They had two cabinets of photographs there that were also organized pretty well. So once I saw those and started working with them I suggested to Thad that I put together a pictorial history and so we

did. That has been a very successful project also, I thought. So in about a year I had it completed. I have nine chapters still in manuscript form, but I wrote nine chapters and finished in the process this pictorial history, which has about a hundred pages.

Zhang: We so much enjoy reading it and people always tell us that they love this book.

Lane: It's helpful. I mean, this has really been helpful for the college. I mean, if you don't have the full history of the full narrative, or this sort of summary of it, it's quite helpful.

Zhang: Tell me about your work with Socky [Maurice O'Sullivan] on *Visions of Paradise*. How'd that come about?

Lane: Oh yeah. Well, the Florida Humanities Council, oh in the mideighties I guess, had just gotten some grants from the national government to do some work with secondary school teachers on Florida to sort of give them some more information than they had about it. And they called us up and that's— I don't know which one they called, I think it may have been Socky, I'm not quite sure, and asked him if they could put something together. Or we saw that they wanted somebody to put something together, so Socky and I did it. Socky and I got together and said, look, you know, we can do this on Florida. And so we put together a little workshop that lasted two weeks. And one of the things we wanted to do was to read some of the literature on Florida. Well we could find nothing that was put together so we had to go make the collection ourselves for the workshop. So we did that workshop for I think about three summers in a row and by the time we had finished it, we had a pretty good collection of Florida material, of literature. So it was obvious from there, why don't we see if we can get this published. And so we did a lot more work on it too and put it together. That has been very successful with the Florida reader. And as it turns out, it was one of those cases where just at the right time, somebody needed to do something like this and it's filled a niche that was vacant there. And so, this book, it's still in print. It's still being published. That's been very successful. And then Socky and I decided to teach a course. Why not teach a course? So we teach one in the Holt school every summer.

Zhang: So your latest scholarship work is Winter Park Hospital history?

Lane: Hospital, yes. Right as I was retiring, I had looked at material in the archives on Fred Hannah and how he and a very famous novelist, James Branch Cabell, had written a history of the Saint Johns River. And I found some correspondence between them so I was wondering if there wasn't more. So I wrote somewhere, I think it's in Virginia, where Cabell had his papers and asked if they could— If there were any papers between these two men because it sounded interesting the way they had constructed this book. And they said, Oh yeah we have about a hundred letters. So I got them to— Archives to copy them and to have these letters. And so I'd always intended to go back and see if I couldn't write something on this. And so I wrote a little essay on this collaboration and putting this together and it was published a couple of years ago by *Florida Historical Quarterly*.

And then one time on one of my sabbaticals the director of the hospital, Winter Park Memorial Hospital, called and said they were celebrating something like the thirtieth anniversary of Winter Park Hospital; would I be interested in, they had some records, would I

be interested in writing on how the hospital was founded? And I said, “Well I’m on sabbatical, yes that I might be interesting I’ll do that for you.” This would be a kind of public service for the hospital. So I went over there for about two or three months and researched it and wrote up a little fifteen, twenty page essay on the founding of Winter Park Hospital which was very interesting because it was connected so much with the community, the Winter Park community.

Just as I had finished it, Winter Park Hospital was sold to this for-profit Columbia Hospital. And Columbia had no interest whatsoever in this and so I tried to contact people and nobody said, “Well, no, I don’t think so.” So I just had it in my, I just put it in my files. And as I was cleaning out some stuff in my house about a year ago, I said, “Here is this I’ve written?” And now it’s owned by Florida Hospital. Florida Hospital took over; they might be interested. And I was just— One day I had typed out a letter to the administrator that I was going to send him these things, and here they were and he could do what he wanted to with it, when I got a call from Harold Ward saying, “Oh, they want to do a fiftieth anniversary history of the hospital. Would you be interested in doing it?” And I said, “Well, funny you should ask, I was just thinking about that.” So they set up a little office for me over at the hospital and got all the records I needed, and so I wrote a history. Yes. And that’s proved to be— In fact they just submitted that for an award, the history of Winter Park Memorial Hospital. Pictorial History.

Zhang: Yes, we added it to your collection.

Lane: Did you get one? Get a copy? Good. Okay, great.

Zhang: So what is your next academic adventure?

Lane: I think a strange— An unusual thing happened to me when I retired that I didn’t really expect because my plan was that I had several, about five or six projects in mind. Now that I’m free from my teaching responsibilities and others, I would spend a lot of time researching and writing. This would give me a chance to do some of these projects. Well I did one: I did the Hannah/Cabell book, essay on that. And then I just sort of lost interest in it, and I cannot understand why. Writing the history of Winter Park Hospital sort of renewed my interest in it. So right now I’m trying to put together a essay on Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings on her environmentalist attitude, imagination in her novels and short stories. How she deals with the land, Florida land and so forth. So I’m working on that now. Thinking about it.

Zhang: I wish you the best.

Lane: Well, thank you. Very much.

Zhang: Okay, what service activity have you performed while you were a faculty member at Rollins?

Lane: Oh, faculty at Rollins. Oh well, you know, thousands and thousands of committees!

Zhang: (Speaking at the same time) That's a big part.

Lane: Yeah, right, that has been a part of the community service here at the college. There's no telling how many committees I've chaired and how many committees I was on. I never was deeply involved in the community outside of Rollins in doing things. Though, at various times, I went to schools and gave talks and was asked and did give talks around at the University Club and various places around town, particularly after the Florida book came out I did a lot of talks. And then, shortly after the book came out, I was appointed as speaker for the Florida Humanities Council and I made talks on the book around the state. All over the state from Fort Lauderdale all the way up to Tallahassee. So I did that for a year. That was nice; that was fun.

Zhang: Now, forty years later, how do you view your Rollins career?

Lane: Well, you know, I've thought about that a lot since I retired and how, what my career meant here. Well, you know, I was very pleased at the end of my career here to receive the William Blackman Award for my service to the college. I think somehow or another, you know, when these things happen in life, which is fortuitous I think because there's no way to plan things like this, but I think I just hit the right place at the right time for my personality and the kinds of things I wanted to do so that— And this was a time, too, when young professors came into a college like Rollins and it became a part of their lives. I mean I had very little interests outside of Rollins so that most of my energy and interests and whatever imagination I had was poured into this college. And it became a kind of central outgrowth of my life. I could not distinguish my life from the life that was going on here. I think that I probably could not have found a place, a college that was more in tune with the kind of life that I wanted to lead. And it has been a wonderful experience for us because the family became involved with it and they still feel as much apart of Rollins as I do. I do have one gap that I think I would've liked to have experienced but I didn't know how to do it without losing my Rollins life and that was to have gone to a graduate school and to have taught graduate students, and directed dissertations and that sort of thing. I would've liked to experience that but it wasn't enough of a desire to make me leave here. I did have a couple of offers one time at a big university. It's been a wonderful experience. I like it.

Zhang: I'm so glad to hear that. So what would you consider your most proud achievement during your Rollins career?

Lane: Well, I could point to a couple of things. One of the things that I think that I have, that I was instrumental in getting started was the American Associative Colleges Workshop [Associated Colleges of the South] here, that's still going and I think is still one of the most exciting things that I was ever involved in and did.

I started a number of programs here at Rollins and I always said that programs have a lifespan just like humans. I mean, you start them, they have their place at this time, but sooner or later they need to disappear. So I never was a person who was tied to any certain thing and thought, Well if this doesn't continue or somebody else takes this over, there's something missing. I was always willing to say, Okay it's time for somebody else to do something else. And I think partially that might be my personality: short attention span. But this workshop,

which is still going, I think, I would hate to see that disappear because it is so helpful. But in a certain sense I've been that way with my career too.

However much I've loved Rollins, it wasn't traumatic for me to let go of it and to realize that I'm not going to be involved in it deeply. It may be because I live so closely to the college that I know what's going on all the time, but even there, just knowing what's going on is not like being here, involved here. I always thought that was one of the big problems that Hugh McKean had. He couldn't let go of the college. And I always thought, I want to make sure I'm not like that because you do have to let go and others have to come in and have to start. And so I was determined to leave here with a really good feeling for my life at the college. And I did. I worked at it.

Zhang: Tell me about your involvement with the construction of the student center. I see you have this in your article.

Lane: Oh yes, yes. Well this I explained in my article here how, when the student center disappeared, how disappointed I was because that was one of the things that had drawn me to the college is the atmosphere and that student center and the way in which faculty were constantly intermingling with students. And then we watched the administration, which for reasons of efficiency and financial reasons, began to take steps that finally killed the student center. And, you know, as faculty we could say, No don't take the coffee, don't take the— They had a little grill there and a little coffee shop. Don't take the coffee shop out because that's so important. Well, we can't afford it, the argument was. It's costing too much money and so forth and so on. And so the post office was in there, and all of us would go get our mail and then take it over and sit down and have a cup of coffee. So soon— as I mentioned in the article, they took the post office out. And I walked in that day when they took the post office out, and this thing, there was nobody in there. I mean here was this place, which was a wonderful center for the college, and had a place of interaction that you just couldn't replace. You absolutely could not have replaced it. And yet it was taken out. And it led me to say, You know, there are some things that you ought not to make a judgment on the basis of money and finances. I don't care if you're losing money on it; it may have a value that's way beyond that.

And as it turned out, it did, because when the student center disappeared, the community began to, the community that I knew when I came here, began to disappear with it. And I was disgruntled, just very sad that this had happened, and determined that I was going to bug the devil out of the next presidents who came in to create another student center, which I did. I finally got Rita (laughs) to do it. (Laughs) And she still talks about always, that every time she looked around, I was standing, "What about the student center?" (Both laugh)

Zhang: I was intrigued by this letter you sent the *Sandspur* about faculty promotion. Tell me a little more about that.

Lane: (Reading) Need to show no ability to generate ideas— (Reading) Students— (Reading) The faculty, they passed an amendment. Oh yeah, well this is when we just began our sabbatical program and— (Reading) Mostly justified by the individual exception— (Reading) Need not indicate any effort toward scholarship. Well, yeah okay. This was a time when, you know— This was one of the struggles we were having, this was the part I was talking about, a struggle to build, to uplift the standards here, the academic standards here at

the college. And my view was one of these things is scholarship, you know? Come on. And we had many arguments in the faculty about how the connection was through scholarship and teaching, that they weren't separate. They were part of a process. Faculty who went out and did research, got out and wrote, were better teachers. They brought this into the classroom in one way or another. Maybe not specifically but in the way they approached the class, this sort of thing. So the faculty, there was— You couldn't be a good teacher— You could be a good teacher without research but let's establish this as a criteria for doing it, to encourage faculty.

This was my response to when the faculty rejected that and put some vague language in here about teaching. I was obviously very upset (laughs) about this inability. So, I mean, it was a struggle here, now it is. Now we have something. So it was a kind of struggle that I thought we were having at various times, and it was not only the students who were resisting this. The faculty was resisting some of it too. So I always thought that I was at least one in the forefront of this, of helping. And I think that's when I would look back and say my contribution to the college was that I wanted to keep out in the forefront to this college that it can be better academically than it is, both faculty and students.

Zhang: Here we have the citation for your plaque and your medal. You were also an endowed chair for A.W. Weddell?

Lane: Yeah, right. Well I was, yes. I had an endowed chair and that provided money for scholarship and for my work. The Weddell Professor of American History, yes.

Zhang: I see. I have a couple of more questions. You already mentioned about your involvement with the ACS teaching workshop, which I participated in, and I really benefited, so I thank you for that.

Lane: Oh, you're welcome.

Zhang: I want to ask you what is the occasion of your naming man of the year by *Sandspur*.

Lane: This is, this is—

Zhang: —1982

Lane: Yeah. This is one of those, as you can see, the name here has no meaning whatsoever. I never did figure out where this came from. This is kind of a tongue in cheek. And it was a kind of thing that when you're out front like this and there's always something going on there's going to be some— In a way I saw this as a kind of satire on my career at Rollins, which is in a way, a way of approving. I think, my view is, I've always thought, I never admitted, I think Gary Williams wrote this if you want to know the truth in that (both laugh). But I thought it was funny.

Zhang: What about this one here? You are offering the Winter Park boat tour?

Lane: Was this in the *Sandspur* also?

Zhang: Yes.

Lane: Oh I have no idea (laughs). Well, it was again— I don't know. When was this printed, '82? I have no idea. Can I get a minute? I don't remember this one at all!

Zhang: This makes historical research more interesting, eh?

Lane: I have no idea. I mean, I'm looking for the satire in here and I can't find that. I don't know what that means, to tell you the truth.

Zhang: Tell me about your involvement with the Master Learners. I read this article.

Lane: Oh yeah, well that's one of those programs that I started. And the idea was that we would have professors actually taking classes with students and becoming one of their sort of mentors—not mentors, but participants, facilitators. And they would take three classes and in one of the classes they would have a general discussion of what's going on, where they tried to draw the classes together. That lasted a fairly short time, but it was interesting. Several people who went through them: Barbara Carson went through it, became a Master Learner; Thad became a Master Learner, I think. I never became a Master Learner. I didn't mind starting it, but I had no intention of becoming a Master Learner (both laugh). So I started that program and ran it for about three or four years. Yeah. Just one of those things that we thought, Oh this sounds like a good idea; let's see what we can do with it.

Zhang: Okay, couple of pictures.

Lane: Ah. This, I swear to goodness, I don't know what we're doing there. I think, I know, I think we may have been re-enacting the founding of the college and I was Reverend Hooker or something like this reading one of his speeches. I think that's what that was.

Zhang: What's the historic value of this picture?

Lane: (Laughs) Sir Helton. That is at Hugh McKean's house. And I have no idea what I'm pontificating there.

Zhang: It's the sixties, huh?

Lane: Yes. Yeah, just after I came here. I've never seen that one.

Zhang: What is the occasion of the three of you?

Lane: I don't know. Who is this? I don't know, I can't remember who that is, to tell the truth. Barry Levis already has gray hair so that's pretty late. Oh, this is one of the classes. Yeah, this is one of the classes. What year? No year on that one. This was, oh this was here where this library is right now. Oh well, this is Knowles Hall. That one I've seen. I think I've seen this. That was in one of the— that was in one of the—

Zhang: Well, Jack. Thank you so much for your time and contribution. I really enjoyed the conversation and you helped us definitely document the history of the Liberal Arts education at Rollins College, and we appreciate it.

Lane: Okay, and when I get some time, I'll try to put down some thoughts myself so I can add some things that we didn't cover here, or something of that sort. Thank you so much.

Zhang: Thank you.