

CHARLES ROWE

March 8, 1996

—
Mame Warren,
Interviewer

Warren: This is Mame Warren. Today is the 8th of March 1996. I'm in Fredericksburg, Virginia, with Charles Rowe.

My first question to you is, I need you to set me straight. The alumni directory says you're class of '45.

Rowe: Right.

Warren: Does that mean you were there during the war, when there were very few students?

Rowe: No. The Alumni Office, I guess after the war, gave those of us whose careers had been interrupted by war service the option of saying our class was the original graduating class or the actual year in which we got a diploma. I started there in 1941, which meant I was class of '45. I was gone for three years and came back in '46, got my A.B. in '47.

Warren: Now, you're the first person I've talked to who falls into this time span. Tell me what it was like at Washington and Lee at such an uncertain time. What was it like when you arrived there in '41?

Rowe: I get very personal here.

Warren: Please do.

Rowe: I was a sixteen-year-old scrawny little kid from a tiny high school in a small town of Virginia, and I was scared to death. I really was. And I was intimidated in the

early days and weeks of my time there because so many of my – [Telephone interruption]

Warren: Okay. You were back to being a scrawny little boy.

Rowe: Yeah. One of the intimidating things to me, besides just the general idea of college, was the fact that so many of my good friends were people who had gone to prep school after getting a high school degree, and most of them were about two years older than I was. So I really was scared, but the campus atmosphere of collegiality among students or between students and faculty, administration and everything, really helped, and so it wasn't very long before I felt very comfortable there.

Warren: You said you came from a small town. Were you coming from Fredericksburg?

Rowe: Came from Fredericksburg.

Warren: But Lexington is a small town. Did it feel like a very different place to you?

Rowe: Well, but I was on this campus with people who were from New York City and Chicago and Dallas and Atlanta and all this kind of thing, and I felt – this was my just personal insecurity problem, I guess – that they were far more sophisticated worldly-wise than I was. But I caught up fast, I think.

Warren: Can you walk me through your first day at Washington and Lee? What did you see that was new? What were your reactions?

Rowe: In those days, you started with a freshman camp, which was about a three-day camping experience out in the Natural Bridge area, as I recall, somewhere around there. You slept in cabins, and it was the entire freshman class. It was an opportunity to get to know each other, to bond, and also to have lectures explaining a little about the school and what it was going to be like and all that.

You wore name tags, and at the end of the three-day period they had a contest to see who could remember the most names in the class, which of course it was very helpful in enabling you to know people on campus. By the time I finished my freshman

year, I bet you I knew ninety-five percent of the people on campus by name, including middle names of most of them, I think.

Warren: That's really impressive. So how many people would have been in your freshman class back then?

Rowe: I'm going to guess about 250.

Warren: That's a lot of people to know. Let's finish on. You went to the camp at Natural Bridge, but then when you really got to campus.

Rowe: Came back to campus, and I must say, my memory is just blank on any particular events or anything. I mean, we went into the classroom and into rush week, of course, another very intimidating kind of thing for somebody was not real well developed socially.

Warren: Tell me about that.

Rowe: Well, you know, it was a very heady experience to have these upperclass college people soliciting you and fawning over you and everything like that. I, for a long time, have felt that having rush early is not a good idea. I fortunately made a perfect decision on a fraternity choice, but I could just have easily made a very unwise one and regretted it.

Warren: What did that fraternity experience mean to you? How did it interact in your life? How did you spend time there? What happened there?

Rowe: Well, even as freshmen we ate all our meals there.

Warren: This was before there were dining halls.

Rowe: That's correct. I guess there was a small campus dining hall located somewhere in the area, I think maybe where the library is now. But that was for the non-fraternity students, so there was some university-provided meal service for them. But everybody who belonged to a fraternity ate in the fraternity house, and so you got to know the entire group of people, upperclassmen as well as your freshman class.

Warren: What were those meals like?

Rowe: Very nice food, as I recall it.

Warren: Socially what happened around the dining room?

Rowe: Of course, with the housemother there and everything, it had, I'd guess you'd call it, a very genteel atmosphere.

Warren: Tell me about that.

Rowe: Of course, number one, you were always there in a coat and tie, which tended to keep you on your better behavior, I guess. I guess we opened every meal with a blessing. Everything was quite proper. I don't recall any wild meals, although it may have been the last meal before a holiday break or something like that it might have gotten a little raucous. But generally, out of respect to the housemother, you were on pretty good behavior.

Warren: Was the housemother a real presence? Was she there all the time?

Rowe: Yes. She lived in an apartment in the fraternity house and sat in the dining room at every meal. Maybe not at breakfast, because breakfast was spread out over a long period, but lunch and dinner she was there.

Warren: And you say you made the perfect choice. Were there people who didn't make the perfect choice? Were there people you knew who didn't have a good experience with fraternity life?

Rowe: I think there were some, but there were not many, and the unpleasant aspects I don't think were significant, really. You know, young people of that age are pretty doggone adaptable and everything. There were other choices I could have made and probably in retrospect would have said they were perfect choices. There were some fraternities I don't think I would have been happy in, but not many.

Warren: What made one fraternity different from another?

Rowe: Hard to tell. The fraternity I joined, I knew a couple of the members of the senior class who had stayed at my house a couple of years before when they were in Fredericksburg to play in a tennis tournament, so I had that personal knowledge of two

people, and then I liked many other members of the fraternity. And then I found that, in our discussions in the freshman dorm about what fraternities we were going to join, many of the people I really liked in my class had this fraternity as their first choice, too. So all those things came together, and I picked that fraternity.

Warren: And they picked you.

Rowe: Yes.

Warren: One of the things, going back to that freshman camp when you first arrived, I presume one of the things that they talked to you about was the Honor System.

Rowe: Yes.

Warren: What did they tell you, and what did the Honor System mean to you in your time at Washington and Lee?

Rowe: Well, to answer the second part first, it was a very important thing to me, and it's something that just stuck with me the first of my life.

I guess – Lord, this hasn't been on my mind for a long time. I guess during that period at freshman camp when they were talking about the Honor System and the importance of it, I had tremendous guilt feelings, because when I was a kid, I don't know, eight, nine, or ten years old, I had stolen a battery from Woolworth's five-and-ten-cent store, and I got to wondering, "Is that going to ruin me for the rest of my life, having done something like that? Am I tainted forever because of the lack of honor in my character?"

Well, in high school, we had no Honor System, but I sure did not want anybody cheating and making it just tougher for me in the academic competition, and I got very upset when people would ask me, "What's the answer to this?" or "Help me with this question before the teacher comes back into the room." I was uncomfortable with that.

So I felt very good in the Honor System environment, and I went on to serve on the Executive Committee after the war, so I presided over some trials involving violations of the Honor System. I felt that the students involved in making the decision

about guilt or innocence in a Honor System case really were working very hard to be fair, honest, and everything in their judgment on these things, and to tilt in favor of the student if there was doubt about whether there was really a violation.

Warren: Was it really a trial? How were those conducted?

Rowe: Well, conducted in a less formal way than they are now. For one thing, the alleged violator had no one there representing him. Nowadays I think there are advocates in behalf of the defendant.

But he was there totally alone, and that had to be a traumatic experience to be called into this room with eleven or twelve students to judge you, and people with the ability to kick you out of school and perhaps ruin your chance for a college education, because it was very tough to get into other schools after you were kicked out for an honor violation. But in the years I was on the Executive Committee, I really felt that the—I say years. I guess it was only one year I was on that. But the students involved really took the job seriously and were determined to see that justice was done.

Warren: Now, would there have been witnesses called in?

Rowe: Yes. Yeah, sometimes there were witnesses. Sometimes we had to conduct what we thought were fairly sophisticated investigations after we had knowledge of a possible offense, but in order to gather the evidence we felt we needed. In connection with thefts of money, we had some kind of powdered dye or something we'd put on bills that we planted in a wallet and left lying around, so that if somebody picked that up and took the money out, this dye would get on their hands and it was almost impossible to get off with soap or anything of that sort.

Warren: You were setting traps?

Rowe: Well, yeah. Sometimes if you felt there was a violation, that was the only way to get the evidence in a continuing situation where money was disappearing over a period of several days.

Warren: I think that's one of the things that I'm most impressed about about Washington and Lee is this idea of student self-government, and it seems that that gives a tremendous responsibility to the students, but that it prepares you for real life.

Rowe: Yeah. Many people might say it's too much responsibility too soon, but I don't know how you draw any age line and say you suddenly become eligible for a responsibility at a certain age. From what I saw and from what I see of current students, I think they do a beautiful job of running student affairs, and I admire the administration and the faculty for their almost totally hands-off approach to those matters.

Warren: It's very impressive to me as a relatively new person there. Now, one of the things that you mentioned, jumping back, you mentioned these two tennis players who had stayed with you. Is that how you picked Washington and Lee? Why Washington and Lee? Why did you go to Washington and Lee?

Rowe: My father was in the newspaper business. I felt at that point that I wanted journalism to be my career. Never having been very far away from home, I wanted to go to a Virginia school. W&L was the only school in Virginia that offered any journalism courses.

Warren: Well, that simplified your choice.

Rowe: It did indeed.

Warren: Getting back to the idea that this was 1941, what was the atmosphere with war looming? What did that bring to the mix of your arrival on campus? Were people talking about it?

Rowe: Yeah, people were talking about it. This was the fall of 1941, and things—I think virtually all of us had the feeling that the U.S. was going to be in the war sometime certainly before we finished college, and so when Pearl Harbor came in December, I think we were prepared to head off to war. We had known it was going to be coming, and that just gave us the starting date.

Warren: So what happened? Was there just a sudden disappearance of students?

Rowe: I can't say that a bunch of them disappeared on December 8th, but I think on December 8th a lot of them went to recruiting stations and places like that to sign up. Of course, the military quickly began setting up all kinds of programs aimed specifically at college students.

I ended up enlisting in a navy program called V-12, which told us, for people in my situation who were finishing their second year, that they would give us two semesters in a civilian institution, where we would take roughly half civilian courses, regular college courses, and half navy courses, and at the end of those two semesters, we'd go to midshipmen's school for four months, I guess, and be commissioned.

And that had an appeal to me. It was an opportunity to continue my education. I was not heading into the trenches somewhere and all that kind of stuff. So the chance for the education, and the navy, for some reason, had an appeal to me. I'd never been a sailor or anything else like that beforehand, but it sounded like a good place to be.

Warren: Was there anybody in Lexington who was really recruiting for the navy? Was there some connection there?

Rowe: I'm not sure there were any armed forces recruiting officers in Lexington. They certainly had touring officers who'd come by and make a pitch for their particular branch of the service. And then Jimmy Barnes, who taught political science at W&L at that time, went into the navy and was in recruiting.

Warren: Barnes?

Rowe: Yeah, Fletcher James Barnes. He may have been head of the Richmond navy recruiting office, I don't know, but probably after he went in the navy he came back to W&L on campus, and so that was a little extra navy connection for me.

Warren: When did you actually leave Washington and Lee? Did you finish out that freshman year?

Rowe: I finished my sophomore year. See, I was only sixteen, so I was not in danger of being drafted during my freshman year. I wasn't seventeen until the end of my freshman year. I guess the draft age was still at that point eighteen, so I was able to get through my second year.

Warren: So you were there when – my understanding is a lot of the faculty went off right away.

Rowe: Yeah, faculty left. You know, with each passing day there were more and more students leaving. The bus station was at McCrum's Drugstore, and the buses would come in there, heading to various places, and it would be every day students there with their suitcases, heading off to the service and leaving.

Warren: Did you ever go down there for that to say goodbye to anybody?

Rowe: Yeah. I can't remember specific individuals, but I know there were some farewells there and, of course, farewells in the dorms and the fraternity houses and stuff like that.

Warren: Was that real emotional? What was the ambiance of that?

Rowe: For me personally, there was just this wonder, "Will I ever see these guys again?" Not only would we ever come back to W&L if we were still alive, but would we survive the war.

Warren: That must have been really intense to have friend after friend go away. And the teachers. What happened in the classrooms when all the faculty went away? How did they continue to have classes?

Rowe: I don't know. There always seemed to be enough faculty, and I don't recall the class sizes got to be enormous or anything. Somehow the university was able to keep the class sizes relatively small.

Warren: I think that's very intriguing that they were able to do that.

Well, let's jump to the end of the war, when you came back and I presume a lot of other veterans came back.

Rowe: Oh, yes, great reunion time.

Warren: Well, tell me about that.

Rowe: This, for me, was September of 1946, and that was just a real joyous period to see these people you had been separated from for three years or more and reconnecting with them, telling all the exaggerated tales that you come back from military service with and all that.

In my case, I was just so much more mature. I was far too young when I had started there, and coming back after three years of military service at age twenty-one, I had a whole lot more confidence. I had no better idea of what I wanted to do. Instead of getting a journalism major, I ended up majoring in economics, because of the civilian courses I'd had in my navy V-12 were in the economics/business area, so the quickest way to get a degree was to switch majors from journalism to economics, and I did that. Still wasn't sure what the heck I wanted to do, and also felt that I had been cheated of the real college experience by having the interruption after my sophomore year. Since I had a lot of G.I. Bill time and the government would pay my tuition and expenses all the way through law school, I enrolled in the W&L Law School.

Warren: Oh, I'd forgotten that. You went through the law school there.

Rowe: Yeah. Did not finish law, because just as I was starting my final year, my father had a heart attack and died, so I dropped out and came back to take over the newspaper with my brother.

Warren: So you were in I guess it was old Tucker Hall.

Rowe: Oh, yes, indeed.

Warren: Was this the stone Tucker Hall? No, that had burned.

Rowe: No, that had burned before I got there. That was sometime in the mid-thirties or whatever. So that was Tucker Hall as it now appears.

Warren: You're the first person I've talked to who went to law school in Tucker Hall. Can you tell me about that? It's so different from the law school experience today.

Rowe: I don't know what the size of the student body was in the Law School, obviously not nearly as great as it is now, because trying to fit all those people into Tucker Hall now would be impossible. But I felt there was enough space for us and everything.

I enjoyed at least my first year of law and some parts of the second. I particularly enjoyed criminal law and constitutional law and a couple things like that. When it got into real estate law and things of that sort, I was really getting bored. So frankly, I don't know what would have happened to me had I had the opportunity to get a law degree. I then would have been faced with the choice of law or journalism, and I don't know what the choice would have been. But the law experience, both the time at W&L and the people I was with and the academic part of the law experience, were very helpful to me in the rest of my life.

Warren: I bet. Were there particular professors who were very influential to you?

Rowe: Yeah. Charley McDowell, Charlie Light, "Skinny" Williams, Smedley [phonetic]. I hate to use nicknames like this. "Red Eye" Johnson. They were, I felt, wonderful professors.

Warren: Do you know why he was called "Red Eye" Johnson?

Rowe: He had red eyes, and I think the red eyes were a result of overconsumption of alcohol.

Warren: And yet he was a good teacher.

Rowe: He was superb, yes. He taught criminal law. I fell in love with that subject in law school, and I think a lot of it had to do with just the way he presented it.

Warren: And you mentioned some of the other professors. Why were they important to you? Did you get to know them personally or just in the classroom?

Rowe: I did not go, except on very rare occasions, to a dinner at their home or anything. I didn't go to dinner at their homes, that I can recall, but there was opportunity to stop in the office and chat and talk in the hallway or in your classroom

after class, which is sort of typical of the W&L experience, undergraduate as well as law.

Warren: So these days when you go back for reunions – I presume you do.

Rowe: My first reunion was my fiftieth.

Warren: Really!

Rowe: Well, I guess I went to one the year before, just not really to attend the reunion, but to be with some classmates who were there. But, no, the first real attendance at a reunion was my fiftieth. I was always busy and the springtime was just a time of year when I had lots of newspaper meetings and stuff, and I just said I don't have the time to get to a W&L reunion. I regret that. I am just so sorry, because the ones I've been to, my fiftieth in May of last year, the October homecoming gathering of all the World War II classes were just wonderful.

Warren: I came just after that. I'm really sorry I missed that. It sounds like it was a spectacular time. But surely you came back to campus. You were a trustee.

Rowe: Well, yeah. But I had not been back to the campus very much until I became a trustee in, what, I guess 1984 or something like that, and, again, I regretted the fact that here I was, a two-and-a-half-hour drive from Lexington, and why hadn't I done something to get back? I got back to campus a number of times in the first year or two I was out of school, because I still had friends around there, you know, and I'd go back and party with them and stuff, but then I had a long gap of no visits at all.

Warren: So how did it come for you to become a trustee? How did that come about, and what has that meant to you?

Rowe: I guess I was invited to become a trustee – well, a number of reasons. Probably one that they think about with nearly every potential trustee is their potential financial contributions to the university. They may have made a little misjudgment in what was going to be my wealth and ability to contribute financially.

I had a number of friends on the board. After the war, I had been something of a student leader, head of various organizations and ultimately president of the student body and stuff, so that may have put my name at the top of several lists. So when I was invited on the board, I was just overwhelmed and then very quickly said yes, I'd do it. I'm glad to have had the experience not only just being a trustee, but also having a responsibility that got me back to Lexington so frequently.

Warren: Were you a trustee at the decision for coeducation?

Rowe: Yes.

Warren: Can you talk about that?

Rowe: That was really the first major vote I cast. That vote was in, I guess, at the May meeting of '84, and my first meeting had been the February one, so the second meeting I'm attending.

Warren: That's a big one.

Rowe: Oh, yeah. I was really getting tired of the whole darn topic, because we were bombarded by letters and phone calls from alumni, just an overwhelming amount of correspondence, much of it opposed to coeducation, because there was some very strong, well-known alumni who were bitterly opposed and just conducted a campaign that was amazing.

On my own vote, I think I tended toward the idea of coeducation as the best choice because, among other things, we were having increasing trouble getting decent male applicants to apply. I mean, the quality of male applicants was going down. I knew from my own family experience, I had two sons who were eminently qualified to go to W&L and who, as a courtesy to me, looked at the college briefly, but for several reasons, including this business of no women on campus, they opted to go elsewhere. When I saw what was happening in this regard, I just felt that coeducation had to come ultimately.

The debate – debates, really – on the board about this and all the discussions sometimes made me sort of waiver. I said, “Gee, I still feel this is right, but, God, I have got to think about the other side.” When I made my decision, I felt very comfortable with it and was one of those who voted in favor of coeducation.

Warren: Once the votes were cast, what was the feeling among the board?

Rowe: That was really amazing. There were some of them who were very adamantly opposed to coeducation and argued long and eloquently to maintain the male tradition and everything, but once that decision was made, the board was solidly united.

I was just – I don’t know why it’s bringing tears to my eyes. But the way those people joined with the ones who had voted in favor, and there was a clear majority, was just – well, I guess my feeling was that they showed how much they loved W&L, what it really meant, because had they decided they were going to wage some kind of guerrilla campaign or something against the decision, even though it was a legal and official decision, but people could have battled it and really wrecked the university, I think. So I had great respect for the ones who were opposed, but the instant the vote came, they said, “We’re with you.”

Warren: You know, I think that that is what impresses me most about coming on board at Washington and Lee is the level of devotion to the institution. I’ve never seen anything like it, and I wonder what it is about this place. I mean, I know I’m already getting sucked into it. What is it about Washington and Lee that inspires that kind of devotion?

Rowe: I’m not sure I can explain it.

Warren: You were away for that long time, and you came back at this very crucial time, and so you were sort of an objective person at that point who came into this very dramatic event. But you felt it, too, obviously.

Rowe: Oh, yeah, without question. I hadn’t thought about this, but that is interesting in that, whatever my level of affection for the university was, it was not something strong

enough to get me coming back there year after year to homecoming or anything else, and yet when I got back as a trustee, I think I picked up right where I had been as an undergraduate or whatever. I felt the same way.

Warren: It's a potent place. It's a very potent place.

Well, there's one other thing I know, that Frank has mentioned to me, that you were involved in, and certainly it's relevant to your life today, that you were very involved with the *Ring-tum Phi*. Is that right?

Rowe: Yes.

Warren: Can you talk to me about your experiences working with the newspaper?

Rowe: That was really the major part of my journalism education, because – you know, I said I went to W&L because I wanted to major in journalism. For a variety of reasons, including timing and the fact that the basic course I felt I already knew, I ended up never taking a journalism class at W&L. I started out in a couple and ultimately dropped each of those. So the only, aside from having worked at this newspaper as a kid, it was working on the *Ring-tum Phi* and having these upperclassmen teach me that became my real journalism education.

Oh, God, I don't know how many hours we worked or anything. I don't think it was a huge number. But we were really dedicated to that job. I've not had a chance to reread it, but in looking through some jumbled files of W&L memorabilia that my mother had up in the attic, I happened to come across a column written by this friend I saw in Tucson two weeks ago about me and another friend. As I say, I've not had a chance to read it, so I'm not sure what story he's recounting in there. But working on the *Ring-tum Phi* was a real bonding experience, because here was this guy I hadn't seen for fifty years, and yet it popped in my mind he might be in Tucson and I just had to go see him.

The *Ring-tum Phi* was a twice-a-week paper in those days, so a little more demanding schedule than they have now and a little more sense of the urgency of news

and everything because you wanted to get it in that Tuesday edition and all that and not wait 'til Friday.

Warren: What kind of news? What was your beat?

Rowe: Oh, you just covered any and everything. I was looking in these jumbled boxes of memorabilia I was talking about. I saw my mother had saved a whole lot of either full issues or tearsheets from the *Phi*, and it was sort of a variety of things or selections. I happened to see a story this morning about a selection of a band for final dances or somebody like that, and then you'd write about politics and everything. We didn't really have any specialists in those days.

Warren: So you were writing about politics at the same time you were president of the student body? Was that a conflict?

Rowe: No, no, no. I was not working for the *Ring-tum Phi* when I was holding political office.

Warren: I haven't talked to anybody else who was president of the student body. What are the responsibilities of being president?

Rowe: Well, you preside at meetings of the Executive Committee, and the Executive Committee is the overall governing body of the students at W&L.

Of course, I guess the most vital responsibility of was that of administering the Honor System, but also it had overall responsibility for financial matters, deciding how much would go to the publications board and overseeing dances in general, although there was a dance board that specifically ran the dances and everything. But far and away the most important thing, and certainly the most time-consuming aspect, was the Honor System.

Warren: Would you have weekly meetings, or how often did the EC get together?

Rowe: I cannot remember. I have a feeling it was more often than once a month, but I don't think it was every week. Of course, the Honor System cases were always special

meetings. That had to come up. They had to be heard very quickly. They didn't wait for a regularly scheduled meeting.

Warren: That must have been an effort to pull everybody together quickly.

Rowe: Oh, it was indeed, but everybody took that responsibility very, very seriously. If you had to have an emergency meeting because of an Honor System case, I don't recall anybody ever saying, "Well, I have these other plans. I can't be there." They'd come even if they'd been sick or almost even if they'd been in the hospital.

Warren: I need to flip the tape over.

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

Rowe: I don't think I could have attended W&L financially unless I had had the benefit of a scholarship from Mrs. Alfred duPont. My recollection is it was a full-tuition scholarship. I don't think it went beyond tuition into any living expenses or anything. But I do remember, that was almost critical in my being able to go to W&L, this full-tuition scholarship. I look in this catalog, and the tuition for one full year was two hundred dollars. A two-hundred-dollar difference, a two-hundred-dollar scholarship, in a sense enabled me to come to W&L. Now, maybe they could have been some way I could have found the money, but that was an overwhelming amount of money to me at that time.

Warren: Was Mrs. duPont a real person to you? Did she come on campus when you were there?

Rowe: I think I may have met her one time, yes, and I remember writing letters to her, thanking her for her generosity and everything. But I believe I met her. She was a good personal friend of Dr. Gaines, who was university president, and I think he may have had a group of us who were beneficiaries of her monies over to meet her at maybe a lunch at his house or something like that.

Warren: As president of the student body, did you interact with President Gaines very much?

Rowe: Yes, although probably more than I had previously, but I had been fairly close to him all the way along. Well, number one, the school was so small, you know, he could be close to an awful lot of the student body. There was probably around 1,000 of us. But also, his second son was a classmate and fraternity brother of mine, so I had an opportunity to be over at the Gaines' house many times.

Warren: What was he like, not as president, but as just around the house?

Rowe: He was always the president, even around the house, I must say. I never saw him, and probably he didn't spend that much time with us when we were at the house, but I never really saw him unwind. He, at least in my vision, was always President Gaines, by golly. He was not Bobby Gaines' dad.

Warren: Did Bobby Gaines think of him as President Gaines?

Rowe: I don't know what was going through Bobby's mind.

Warren: Speaking of family, you have a brother who went to W&L, too. Were you there at the same time?

Rowe: Yes. We overlapped for two years, I guess.

Warren: What was that like? W&L seems to be such a family thing. Did he go there because you were there?

Rowe: That probably had a lot to do with it. He may have had other reasons. When he started there, I was not on campus. I was away in the navy then. He started there in the summer of—I don't know whether it was the summer of '44 or '45, but there was only a handful of civilian students on campus. I mean, most everybody around there was in this army unit that was on campus.

Warren: So would you have helped him through when he arrived and gotten him through rush week and that kind of thing.

Rowe: No. As I said, I was not on campus when he got there. He had really finished two years.

Warren: So you didn't get to be big brother very much at all, then.

Rowe: No, not really. I was coming back as a war veteran and all this kind of stuff. He'd not been in the service. I sort of viewed him as just a young kid or something. I had my own friends my the pre-war days and everything, and he did not socialize as much as I did. So while we were fraternity brothers and all that, we did not have a lot of activities together outside of the fraternity activities.

Warren: I've asked you the questions that I have. Is there anything you'd like to summarize or anything you'd like to say about Washington and Lee that I haven't asked?

Rowe: No. I think if you could pull it together from this part and that of our conversation, I've pretty well given you my feelings about W&L and the major recollections. I could ramble on and on about recollections of this and that event, but they're highly personal-type things and I don't think would add to what you're trying to do.

Warren: Was there any specific event that you remember that was real important to you? Was Fancy Dress going on when you were there?

Rowe: Oh, yes. That was a big deal. I have some of the stuff my mother collected over here. Why I saved them I don't know, and then why she saved them beyond that is beyond me – all kinds of letters from girls accepting invitations to dances or saying they couldn't come and all this kind of business. I've got to organize this stuff at some point, because it's all in a great jumble and everything.

Warren: Oh, I'd like to take a look at that.

Rowe: You really want to see some of it?

Warren: Absolutely.

Rowe: When we're finished, I'll dig them out. Just this morning I came across this letter from Dr. Gaines to my father, just saying that my high school principal had written about me, and so Dr. Gaines wanted him to send some information and all that kind of stuff.

Warren: He was quite a letter-writer. I've read a lot of his correspondence. Well, thank you. Let's wind up this part of it and take a look at what you've got, because I know you're on a limited time schedule.

Rowe: Right. You know, should anything major come up, I'll drop you a note, give you a call, and if you want to get together again, I'll come on over to Lexington.

Warren: Great. Okay.

Rowe: All right.

[End of Interview]