

# O.W. and JANE RIEGEL

December 5, 1995

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**Mame Warren,  
interviewer  
near Glasgow, Virginia**

**Warren:** This is Mame Warren. Today is the fifth of December 1995, and I'm at Gulchleigh with Tom and Jane Riegel. Tom Riegel has been on the faculty of Washington and Lee. He began in 1930, is that correct?

**Riegel:** That is correct.

**Warren:** What I would be really interested in hearing from you is what your impressions were when you first arrived. I know very little about Washington and Lee in that time period, in the thirties. What was it like when you first got here?

**Riegel:** Well, I should immediately respond that I didn't know much about Washington and Lee either when I arrived here for the first time. I really had not been south of the Mason and Dixon Line very much, if at all, at that time, and I came down for an interview primarily because I needed a job. This sounded attractive, so I came down here, and I was fascinated by the journey here, taking a sleeper, I think, in those days, down the valley of Virginia, and waking up in the morning in Buena Vista, among those mountains, and I was impressed. I thought this was really sensational.

Well, anyway, I went to the university and was very warmly received. I liked everyone. It seemed to be a very friendly place, one that had promise for useful work, with a chance to develop some of my own ideas. So I said, "Well, why not try it." I had, of course, to discuss this with my future bride. I think I came first in the spring, didn't I, for an interview?

**Jane Riegel:** Yes, you did.

**Riegel:** I believe.

**Jane Riegel:** At Eastertime.

**Riegel:** Yes. Then I came back in September. By that time I had accepted the position, I presume.

**Jane Riegel:** Oh, yes. I think you had accepted it on the spot, I'm not sure.

**Riegel:** I had a chance that fall, before we were married, to introduce my future bride to my friends and members of the faculty and so on, and she seemed to be quite happy with everyone we met. So we said, "Why not. Let's try it." It turned out quite well.

**Warren:** What did you come here to do? What did they invite you to do and what did you have in mind to do when you arrived?

**Riegel:** Well, they had a recently established Department of Journalism. That was established, I think in 1925 or in 1924 because of an endowment raised by the Southern Newspaper Publishers Association. The first director, I think, was —

**Jane Riegel:** Ellard.

**Riegel:** Ellard, yes. Roscoe B. Ellard. He had as an assistant William L. Maple. They were both from the University of Missouri School of Journalism. Ellard left at the time I came. In other words, it was essentially a two-man department with a printing assistant in charge of the printing laboratory, but when the head of the department, Ellard, left, Maple became the head of the department and I was hired as an assistant professor.

**Warren:** Where did you come from?

**Riegel:** Well, my dubious career before that time included youth and early youth in Reading. I was born in Reading, Pennsylvania, and we lived in Missouri and Iowa and Wisconsin. Most of my high school days were spent in Wisconsin. I went to Lawrence College there for two years and then to the University of Wisconsin. After graduation, I came back East to Reading and worked on the newspaper there, the *Reading Tribune*, for a year, and then went to Paris. I wanted to see the world, and I belonged to the so-called

Lost Generation, I presume, but I was a contemporary of some of the well-known expatriates. In Paris, I ran out of money, so I dropped in at the *Chicago Tribune* Paris edition to see if I could get a job, and they offered me one at once. I went to work there, and I was there about a year, I guess.

Do you want all of these details?

**Warren:** Sure.

**Riegel:** And I decided I had been in Europe long enough, that I was an American and I'd better get back to my own country. I came back and got a job through my brother. My brother was an historian teaching at Dartmouth College, and he suggested to the head of the English department that I might be interested in a job there. So I was offered one, and I worked two years as an instructor in English in the English department at Dartmouth.

Then I had to do something, because they didn't want to keep me on there unless I had further education, so I decided somewhat reluctantly to go to graduate school, and I enrolled in Columbia for an M.A. in American Literature. Then when I got out in 1930, we were having a Depression. I have a little trouble remembering exactly what was going through my mind, but I decided that this was a good time to get a job and work for a little while until I decided what I wanted to do. I was quite sure that I didn't want to go on in graduate school, so I had to find an alternative. So when I heard about this job in a remote, small university in the South, I said, "Why not. Let's try it." And that is what happened.

Is that the story, my dear?

**Jane Riegel:** [unclear]

**Riegel:** But is it plausible? That's the question.

**Jane Riegel:** Yes.

**Warren:** Will they buy it? Will they believe it?

So when you arrived, what was Lexington like? What was Washington and Lee like?

**Riegel:** Well, this is, of course, difficult to recall. There's been a lot of memory made since those days, and it sometimes gets a little confusing. But we found it very quiet, agreeable, friendly, social. In fact, it became almost too social later on, a few years later. The faculty was young, active, and somewhat alcoholic. (You don't have to put that in.) [Laughter] But it was a gentler age, and there seemed to be very little professional envy, jealousy, empire-building, and that kind of thing that I have since encountered in various places. I think we were remarkably free of it. Most of us, at least in our group, were young and relaxed and not driven by demons of ambition or scholarly approval and all that kind of thing. There wasn't the pressure. That suggests the important point that there wasn't a great deal of pressure on members of the faculty, as I knew it, to produce or perish. Do you think so, Jane?

**Jane Riegel:** [unclear]

**Riegel:** Actually, I was a producer. I did a lot of work all the time, but this was voluntary. I was aware of no pressure to do it. Other members of the faculty, I think, were notable for being very humane, tolerant, easy-going, I don't know, in a sense a kind of ideal Mr. Chips-type of professor. Characters, too. Individuals. People like Easter, for instance, a professor of French, a very likable, lovable little man with a rubicund smile. Do you remember him?

**Jane Riegel:** Yes.

**Riegel:** And who were some of the others?

**Jane Riegel:** Dr. Howe.

**Riegel:** Dr. Howe in chemistry. These were all decent, civilized people with whom it was a pleasure to be.

**Warren:** You mentioned that the journalism department had just recently been established.

**Riegel:** About five years.

**Warren:** Can you straighten me out? I thought that there was some connection with Robert E. Lee himself having established some School of Journalism, but that didn't last long?

**Riegel:** Well, on that table over there I have laid out any amount of material for you, if you're interested. That on the left is personal. On the right is the department, and some general things on some of our outside activities in the department are in the middle. Among other things, I have a pamphlet that gives you the history of Robert E. Lee and so on, and I'd better look that up.

The story is that Robert E. Lee – I've heard Gaines tell this story so often that I should know it by heart – after the war – well, you know the story of how he came to Lexington to become the president of Washington College. He thought that the new South rising from the troubles of the Civil War needed primarily wisdom and guidance in professional fields – law, business management, and journalism. You needed good newspapers and informed editors. His idea was a little nebulous as far as journalism is concerned, except that he thought of setting up, and did set up, scholarships for young newspapermen or editors, maybe they were, of the southern newspapers, giving them a year at Washington College, which included working for the local paper, the *Gazette*, I guess. I'm not sure what the paper was. They were, in a sense, printers, these young people.

Ellard claims to have met people who had actually come here on a Robert E. Lee Scholarship under this plan. At any rate, this was the inspiration for the SNPA, the Southern Newspaper Publishers. I'm giving you a very bad account of this thing, but I just want to convey the idea, the main idea. They saw in this bit of history a possibility of a useful memorial to Robert E. Lee by founding a school where he was and which had the same ideal of training good men to run the public media of the South, so they raised some money in said school.

**Warren:** Was it Ellard who was the moving force behind this?

**Riegel:** No. There was another chap whose name I've forgotten, who preceded him, who raised the money. I had those records for a while of what they raised and from whom.

**Warren:** I actually found a reference to that in the alumni magazine just this morning, so I do have some of that information, but it was presented as an established fact, so it didn't give too much background. So I'm very interested in what you're saying.

Frank asked me to ask you about the Lee Memorial Journalism Foundation. Is that what we're talking about here?

**Riegel:** Well, that's why we gave it that name. Who gave it that name? Did I give it that name? I can't remember.

**Jane Riegel:** I have a feeling you might have . . .

**Riegel:** Well, this happened early, with, of course, the approval of Gaines and the Glass family.

**Jane Riegel:** You came in 1930.

**Riegel:** He and I came the same year.

**Jane Riegel:** It was after that, after 1930. And you raised money from the SNPA, too.

**Riegel:** I used to give an annual report to the Southern Newspaper Publishers Association, and we had a very active, close relationship. That began to change, of course, when all the states, many private colleges, developed journalism courses, so these papers felt a primary loyalty towards their own state school.

**Jane Riegel:** This was the only journalism school for a long time.

**Riegel:** At any rate, the idea of this title, Lee Memorial Journalism Foundation, was to memorialize the reason for its existence, which was, of course, true, legitimate, and also to have an entity to which contributions could be made in honor of General Lee and in the pursuit of improved education for journalists in the South.

**Warren:** When was this foundation established?

**Riegel:** Now, there you've got me.

**Warren:** But that was some ways into your tenure, when you were here? You'd been here for a while?

**Riegel:** Yes, I think so.

**Jane Riegel:** I have a feeling it was. There just came a time when you needed a name for it.

**Riegel:** I believe that's right. It's, of course, very inconsequential in my memory. That in itself was no great thing, just a matter of printing a title.

**Warren:** Frank was curious about what happened to that foundation and why it doesn't get talked about much anymore.

**Riegel:** Well, because my successors ignore it, I would say. I used the stationary as long as I was there.

**Jane Riegel:** [unclear]

**Riegel:** There was a period when somebody came in. Who was it? One of the more corporation-minded presidents. When any departmental initiative in raising money was discouraged; it was all supposed to be under the university.

**Jane Riegel:** The general fund.

**Riegel:** I'm sure there would have been objection to a separation foundation for raising the money if it had ever come to it.

**Jane Riegel:** I think the idea was to have the Lee Memorial Journalism School and that did not turn out because it actually was not a school but a part of the university.

**Riegel:** It wasn't a school.

**Jane Riegel:** [unclear]

**Warren:** Explain the distinction you're making there.

**Riegel:** Between the school and a department? I am not a good academician. I'm serious about that. I paid very little attention to the niceties of academic protocol. But a school means several departments, I think, plus a dean and an elaborate claptrap, an

elaborate system of organization, whereas a department just deals with one subject and has no dean, just has the head of department. That's my understanding, but I am no expert. Is that what you understand, my dear?

**Jane Riegel:** I have a feeling that it came from the top. There was some talk in the administration that this was not a school.

**Riegel:** Well, in the organization of this university, for instance, the deans are responsible to the president, and the department heads are responsible primarily to the deans, and then on up to the president. But the heads of departments would report to the dean. Am I comprehensible?

**Jane Riegel:** Actually, it seems to me that in the '30s the journalism department was behaving like a school. You didn't report to the deans ever. You reported to Dr. Gaines.

**Riegel:** Not really. I was given great liberty. I don't think it's that way anymore.

**Jane Riegel:** [unclear]

**Warren:** When did you become the head of the department?

**Riegel:** Well, I came in 1930, and the next year, Maple went on a leave of absence to the American [unclear], and then he came back, then left again. So I became the acting head of the department in 1934. I was left in this sort of limbo as acting head. I guess I was pretty young for it. I hadn't been here very long. At any rate, nobody did anything about changing my title until a professor of history – I remember this quite well – what was his name? Hilderman.

**Jane Riegel:** Leonard Hilderman.

**Riegel:** Yes. He brought it up to the president or somebody and he said, "This is ridiculous. Why don't you make him head of the department since he is that and has been?" So I suddenly got a promotion and a new title, and then I became real, not acting head, but head, about when, 1938?

**Jane Riegel:** I don't have any idea.

**Riegel:** About three or four years later.

**Jane Riegel:** [unclear]

**Warren:** We can look it up. So what does it mean to be a department head?

**Riegel:** What does it mean?

**Warren:** Yes. What does a department head do?

**Riegel:** I can't speak for the university or other departments at all. All I know is my own limited experience with one department. I happened to be associated with a department which was very ambiguous. That is, this was a new discipline, to use the terrible cliché, in the academic world, and the curriculum had not yet been frozen in cement, as I think maybe it has begun to become in recent years. In other words, what was taught in departments of journalism depended a great deal upon the special interests of the people who ran them and were very different. The one at Washington and Lee is certainly a good example of a department reflecting a major interest of the man in charge.

When I came to Washington and Lee, in the first year I was teaching courses in short-story writing and literary criticism, because Ellard came from an English department and he had introduced those courses, and I just kept them going. Well, that's just an example. They were dropped very quickly. I was sort of feeling my way, and I had my special interests were, of course, the other media besides print, literature. I was interested in visual arts, graphic arts, which made me very much interested in introducing something in motion picture and, of course, later in radio and television as they developed. Also I had a very great interest in political manipulation, the way masses with people are moved and what moves them, and the strategies and techniques and effects of all kinds of attempts to mold opinion, to form opinions, and to change opinions, and to solidify opinions. All of that, of course, appeared when the department introduced courses in such things as public opinion and propaganda and subjects of that type.

**Jane Riegel:** That was early on, too. His book came out in 1934.

**Warren:** Oh, really?

**Riegel:** My book called *Mobilizing for Chaos*.

**Warren:** So that must have been very topical as the years developed. I would think that you would be very much in demand as World War II came along.

**Riegel:** I was pretty busy. I did a lot of lecturing, writing of articles and reviews in the '30s. In fact, I had a dozen irons in the fire, to coin a phrase, and sometimes – well, wait a minute. I signed a release. I guess I'd better not say it. [Laughter] I may have neglected my primary duties a little because of my numerous duties elsewhere.

**Warren:** They're going to come get you now. The bogeymen are going to come get you.

**Riegel:** Well, so many things happened then. I became one of the editors of *POQ* about this time. That was before the war, wasn't it?

**Jane Riegel:** Yes, it must have been.

**Warren:** What's the *POQ*?

**Riegel:** *Public Opinion Quarterly*, which is still being published. I was on the original board of editors. Then, of course, when we entered the war, quite early in the war, I was approached and asked to join in the Propaganda Information Agency. You know about that, I guess.

**Warren:** I wish you would tell me.

**Riegel:** Well, let's see. I got the call about the end of 1941, shortly after Pearl Harbor, and people were beginning to scuttle around to quickly build up an agency to carry on the information and propaganda services. I won't go through all of the changes that occurred, but just limit it to my story. I was asked to come to Washington, or was it New York? I guess it might have been Washington, about January of 1942, and then I left the campus, on leave in February, I think, and went to Washington for a while and worked for the OSS, the Foreign Information Service, a branch of the General – what in the hell was his name? OSS. Until June or July, I guess. Yes. The OWI was established in June of 1942, I believe.

**Warren:** Office of War Information.

**Riegel:** Yes. I transferred to that. I was in Washington for a little while and then went to New York as the principal propaganda analyst, was my title, and I worked there from then on in New York. The next development within the organization was the language sections directed toward different parts of the world, and I began by being made the director of the section for Central and Southeastern Europe. Don't ask me why. I was just standing around there and they said, "Why not." [Laughter] Anyway, this was a very useful and educational experience for me, because I found myself more or less supervising the work of our propaganda for all these countries, including Italy, by the way, at the beginning, and then all the others – Poland, Hungary, Greece, etc., down the list.

I did that for a while, and then we established a review board in New York which I had general supervision of all of the different propaganda sections. For instance, there was one for the British Empire, one for the enemy, Germany, and so on. Then we had a central board in New York which approved all the projects which initiated propaganda projects to these places, or if they originated elsewhere, we studied them and either approved or disapproved of them.

I eventually became a member of the board for a while, representing Central and Southeastern Europe, and then I became the chairman of the board. I was there until I went to Europe, during most of 1944. When did I go to Europe?

**Jane Riegel:** [unclear]

**Riegel:** January of '45.

**Warren:** So you were in New York most of the time?

**Riegel:** Yes, I was in New York.

**Warren:** You were fighting the Battle of the Hudson.

**Riegel:** That's right.

**Warren:** My father fought the Battle of the Potomac.

**Riegel:** Am I boring you?

**Warren:** Not at all.

**Riegel:** Then we were beginning to move people to Europe, behind the troops, and somebody had gone to Italy ahead of me, the guy from *Time*. What was his name?

**Jane Riegel:** Linsen?

**Riegel:** [Jim] Lennon. I followed not long after that as the general representative of OWI for Italy and the Balkans, and I was told that I was the first purely civilian person to go to the Mediterranean theater of war.

**Warren:** So you were never in the military in all this time? You remained a civilian?

**Riegel:** I was never in the military. I did have a simulated rank. I had an ID which identified me as a colonel.

**Jane Riegel:** In case he was captured.

**Riegel:** Yes, in case I was captured. I was to be treated like a colonel. But otherwise I was never in the military, no. I was to represent the coming civilian personnel that would follow the military. The military was so-called – well, forget it. But at any rate, there was a military-directed organization composed of military propagandists and the OWI and the British were represented in it, too. In the Mediterranean theater, this was.

Well, then I was in Italy until the end of July, wasn't it?

**Jane Riegel:** Late July, yes.

**Riegel:** I'm writing a memoir now and I was going to show you what I have so far. It's a book this big called *Hacking It*, and you find all this stuff in there.

**Jane Riegel:** You mean you're going to let her read it? [Laughter]

**Riegel:** No, I have more kindness than that. Well, I went there in July. When did I leave Italy?

**Jane Riegel:** In August, I think.

**Riegel:** Yes. That's right. I am now in Slovakia in December of 1945. From Italy I went to Hungary as special assistant to the minister, Schoenfeld [phonetic], and I was also the

press officer and the cultural attaché. I stayed there until the following June, June of 1946. Right now I'm writing the Budapest part of the memoir, and it happens that on December 2 I made a side trip into Slovakia, [unclear], and some of those places, and I found it a very dramatic experience. I'm spending a little time on that. But that's a sidetrack. I'm getting off the subject.

Then I was told that President Gaines was very happy to see me leave in 1942. He didn't conceal his elation, because he had no students and he was trying to get rid of his faculty.

**Warren:** Is that true?

**Riegel:** Oh, yes, yes. I remember that last interview with him when he said, "Professor, I certainly am sorry to see you go, but we have to do our patriotic duty, and we're glad to give you a leave of absence." And I knew all the time that he was tickled to death. He wanted to get rid of his faculty.

**Warren:** Tell me about that period when that transition was happening. Did you stay in Lexington through the whole war?

**Jane Riegel:** No, I stayed in [unclear].

**Riegel:** Let me finish this and I'll go back. So in the summer, I checked with Gaines, did he want me back. Oh, yes, he sure did. Students were coming back from the Army. So I came back and was here and resuming my duties in the fall of 1946.

Now we go back to 1942. Well, as the war approached, there was a lot of recruiting going on, and a lot of people, of course, saw the writing on the wall and tried to get in, get an early start in the armed forces. One of the chief actors in this scenario was Larry Watkin, who joined the Navy and became a recruiting officer, and it was because of Larry that many of the Washington and Lee faculty enlisted in the Navy. We have a lot of them, as you probably discovered.

**Jane Riegel:** And students, too.

**Riegel:** And students, too, yes. So during the season of '41-'42, there were a lot of defections. A lot of people were beginning to leave the university. Some of them had commissions, reserve commissions of some sort, reserve people like Charlie Light [phonetic], who had a military status of some sort in the Judge Advocate General's office, he went away fairly early, I think, as I recall, because of that. And those who didn't have military connections, as I say, were recruited. Rollie [phonetic] Nelson was another one who joined because of Larry Watkin, and Larry got him a pretty good job as a naval attaché in Brazil.

**Warren:** What did that feel like at that time in Lexington? Were things in real turmoil? Was it feeling like a ghost town? What was happening?

**Riegel:** Well, while this was going on, some of us were pacifists, like myself. I was opposed not to this war particularly, but that's another story. At any rate, I had no objection to serving my country on Pennsylvania Avenue. As long as I didn't kill anybody, I was happy. So this suited me fine, because I was interested in what we were trying to do. I was certainly an ardent opponent of the Nazi movement and so on, so I could do this with good heart and sincerity. But I think this is true of most people the same way.

But then the university, as you know, fought to get these special schools, School of Special Services. You know about that.

**Warren:** I'd like you to tell me what you know.

**Riegel:** Well, I don't know anything about it, because I left, but there was one and there are people around here who could tell you about it, who were in it.

**Jane Riegel:** Nobody anymore.

**Warren:** I have some names of people to talk to, but I'm real interested in this transition period and what that was like.

**Riegel:** We lived on McDowell Street at the time. Jane stayed here until I moved to New York, and sometime after I was in New York in 1943 –

**Jane Riegel:** [unclear]

**Riegel:** She packed up her five children –

**Jane Riegel:** No, I didn't either. We only had two children.

**Riegel:** There were only two then, weren't there?

**Jane Riegel:** Yes.

**Riegel:** And took them to New York, and we got an apartment at 460 Riverside Drive.

We lived there as a family until I went to Europe.

**Warren:** But here in Lexington, was it a very gradual thing that the members of the faculty were leaving, or did everybody just go quickly?

**Riegel:** I'd say the answer is yes to both of those.

**Jane Riegel:** Yes to both. That's right. [unclear]

**Riegel:** So she was here and I wasn't.

**Jane Riegel:** I was here for a year after he was. People were pouring out.

**Riegel:** We had the dean of the Columbia School of Journalism there for a while. I never even met him. That all happened when I was away. Remember that?

**Jane Riegel:** What was his name?

**Riegel:** I can't remember his name.

**Jane Riegel:** Was it Skinner?

**Riegel:** No. Skinner was a printer. He was fairly well known. He was as well known as the other one whose name is on the end of my tongue and I can't remember.

**Warren:** What was it like to see the students go, especially if you were pacifist and you knew that these young men were headed off to really fight in this war?

**Riegel:** I left before most of the students, I think, so it's hard to answer. Well, I have no particular recollection, except that I felt the general mood of the time, which was one of cooperation and patriotism, if you want to call it that. I'm not a patriot, but I think there was a general agreement with the policy, and people were interested in getting it over with, and we respected people who went to war then. I do remember that I had many

visits in New York from students who would come to see me in their uniforms – Jack Neal [phonetic], as an example, and Bob, the Missouri publisher. What was his name?

**Jane Riegel:** White.

**Riegel:** Robert White. Yes, Bob White and others would show up in their Navy uniforms, and we would have very nice reunions. But I don't remember any trauma or any special –

**Jane Riegel:** It was obvious the student body was decreasing. Not only the student body, but the faculty was leaving.

**Riegel:** Yes.

**Jane Riegel:** Then suddenly the School of Special Service came along, which took care of the physical plant. Seems to me there was a building out back of the print shop there that was hush-hush.

**Riegel:** That's right. I think that was an alternative communication center.

**Jane Riegel:** Yes.

**Riegel:** In case ones in Washington were demolished by atomic bomb, communications would go through Lexington, through the campus of Washington and Lee.

**Jane Riegel:** It was rather gradual, then the School for Special Services came and they were here for six-week stints.

**Riegel:** I just happened to think. Bill Buchanan gave a paper to That Club on that operation during the war and his attempt to find out what was actually going on in this building, and he found two or three elderly women around here, contemporaries of ours, as a matter of fact, who had worked there, and whose lips still were sealed.

[Laughter] They thought they had to keep this quiet. Bill was in a quandary – what can we do about this? Should we introduce a bill in Congress to release them from secrecy pledges?

**Warren:** [Laughter] I heard that. Somebody at a party told me that there's some woman in town who, to this day, will not talk about what she did for Special Services.

**Riegel:** That's right.

**Jane Riegel:** [unclear]

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

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

**Riegel:** ... let you have his paper. You know him, don't you?

**Warren:** No, but I'm sure Frank can get me in touch with him. Bill Buchanan.

**Riegel:** Yes. He was a professor of politics. He is now emeritus.

**Warren:** I want to jump back eleven years, because you mentioned something a while ago that I was intrigued by. You said that you and Dr. Gaines arrived on campus at the same time. Obviously I know very little about Dr. Gaines. He's way before I ever came around here, but his name sure does keep coming up. Tell me something about Francis Pendleton Gaines. What are your impressions of him?

**Riegel:** Well, this is when I should remember my release [form], I guess. Well, this is not thought out and organized in advance like statements should be – well, not should be, but discreet to do. Gaines has been much criticized as being kind of a hypocrite and a professional praiser of Robert E. Lee and a fundraiser, somewhat lacking in integrity and so on. I found this to be untrue. I admired Gaines, realizing, of course, that he was an expert actor, performer. He was the best. He was from the school of Southern Baptist ministers, and he was eloquent, a real orator, and he could move people.

I remember one night going out with him on a speech tour of the county where he spoke to a couple of Ruritan Clubs, and in the [unclear] of his talk on Lee or some subject at Kerr's Creek, he began to weep a little, had tears in his eyes. Well, he gave the same speech about an hour or two later on the other side of the county, and I was with him, and he got to the same point and he then began to weep a little while delivering this thing. I thought this was amazing. He was a real – what kind of actor do you call it? Method actor? He threw himself into it and believed these things.

Well, underneath this, so I recognized a certain amount of showmanship in this, but he was fundamentally a very decent man, very fair, I thought. He was also a little – well, he was always cooperative with me and sympathetic and never tried to embarrass me, and I was under attack once or twice from right-wing conservatives, and he came to my defense. I was never aware that he ever did anything really mean or ugly or unprincipled to anybody on the faculty. He would listen to criticism of his faculty, but he'd always find a way of taking care of it without doing any harm to the members of the faculty.

As a good example – I don't remember the circumstances – but somebody in the School of Commerce was bitterly denounced by a prominent alumnus because reportedly this faculty member had advocated in class a 100 percent death tax, which confiscated the fortunes, and, of course, the wealth of the affluent alumni. Well, I don't know what Gaines did about this, except that the poor guy, you remember they called him –

**Jane Riegel:** That was [unclear].

**Riegel:** Yes, that was [unclear]. I think he did leave.

**Jane Riegel:** He did leave [unclear].

**Riegel:** Yes, under pleasant circumstances. There was nothing mean about the treatment he got. I think Gaines treated him quite well.

Well, what else can I say about – oh, I know what I wanted to tell you. Once in a while when he had to say something about some project in which I was interested and had some little special information, he would ask me to write a draft for him to rewrite and put into his speeches. I discovered that I was writing in his style, this foreign oratorical style, the big round words came flowing out. This is awful. That is what I mean about being infectious. It's easy to fall into that.

**Warren:** Would he have liked bicenquingenary?

**Riegel:** I think so, yes.

**Jane Riegel:** [unclear]

**Riegel:** Yes, he was very popular.

**Warren:** I've read a couple of his speeches and they're beautiful. They're very quotable. They're very eloquent, they really are. Was he naturally that way? Was that his personality or was it when he got up to give a speech?

**Riegel:** Well, I think he was brought up in the Southern Baptist Church tradition. His father may have been a Southern Baptist minister. They are good orators, most of them, I'm told. In fact, many of the black Baptist ministers follow the same pattern. You know how eloquent some of them are.

Gaines was a professor of literature, wasn't he? I think that was before he became president.

**Jane Riegel:** While he was here, he taught the Bible as Literature

**Riegel:** Yes, yes.

**Jane Riegel:** [unclear].

**Riegel:** The things he had to do as part of his job, like being nice to very rich elderly ladies and so on, would incite some satirical comment, you know, among the more cynical members of the faculty, but he never actually stole any money or anything like that. He was very nice to them, and they should have been friendly toward Gaines, because he was so good to them.

**Warren:** Who were these dear old ladies? I keep hearing references to these women.

**Riegel:** Well, Mrs. duPont was one, but there were others even more important to the university, and I don't remember their names.

**Warren:** Why were these women so enamored with an all-male university?

**Riegel:** Well, partly because of Gaines. He was very courtly and very gallant to them, I'm sure flattered them a good deal.

**Jane Riegel:** Maybe it's the Lee connection.

**Riegel:** Yes, I'm sure it did.

**Warren:** Connection to General Lee?

**Riegel:** Well, he was so unimpeachably correct and nice, genteel. You can't do better than a college president of a school and college for the sons of affluent southern families. That's the height of correctness. [Laughter] No danger, no threats involved in that.

One of Gaines' favorite stories was that when he went out to see one of our rich alumni in Chicago, they'd have dinner and then go to the billiards room [phonetic], and this man would always say, "Don't mind, Dr., if you walk ahead of me. I carry my wallet in my back pocket and I've had experience with college presidents." He liked to tell that story.

Another of his favorite stories, one of his graduates married a very sweet girl, but they broke up and got a divorce, and Gaines would say, "Yes, they were incompatible. He didn't have enough income and she wasn't patable." And this was a sure-fired joke that everybody would laugh at in student assembly.

But I'm beginning to wander like an old man. What else?

**Warren:** It's great wandering. You mentioned that there was a bit of conflict from your political persuasion and the persuasions of some of the other people at Washington and Lee. I'm intrigued by that idea, because you and I probably come from the same direction, and I'm trying to make my way in this very conservative environment. How did you do it? How did you last that long and be comfortable in such a conservative environment?

**Riegel:** Well, I had a feeling that I was considerably more liberal, if I may use that word, than most members of the faculty, although I may be wrong about that. There were a lot of them that sort of *sub rosa* they were covert liberals and didn't admit it. But I had the impression that I was relatively left on the faculty. But I never talked politics. I never used the classroom to propagandize or to advocate anything. I was always very careful to give both sides of every subject. I would expose my students to the most

radical ideas, but it was always radical on both sides, radically left and radically right. I never had any complaint, really. Do you recall any, Jane?

**Jane Riegel:** No.

**Riegel:** Except once I was criticized. The Glass [phonetic] family got criticism from the publisher of the national paper, whose name I've forgotten, very well known at the time.

**Jane Riegel:** The Glass family?

**Riegel:** Yes, the Glass family when they were on the committee for the Lee School of the SNPA. This publisher complained about me, and I've forgotten what it was, but I think it had something to do with the American Newspaper Guild. I think I had said something either favorable about the Guild or at least not condemning it. It was the labor union through the publishers, and the Nashville publisher was pretty upset, and he wrote to Carter – no, not Carter. Who was the Glass I dealt with? Tom's father. Well, anyway, he described me in one passage as "like a bird dirtying its own nest." Glass and the president just laughed about it, paid no attention to it. But that's the nearest thing to an overt political issue I can recall for my entire career here.

**Warren:** How about the student body itself? Did you find them conservative?

**Riegel:** Oh, yes, yes.

**Warren:** Why do you think that is? Why do you think Washington and Lee attracts?

**Riegel:** They come from affluent conservative families, most of them, and it's always been a rabid Republican place, I think. [Laughter] I don't talk politics with these members of the faculty. No, the other thing is, I don't say so with any pride, it's sort of craven, but I've avoided politics and religion during our whole time here. Do you remember any discussion of this at all?

**Jane Riegel:** No, no, I don't.

**Riegel:** I am not very churchly, either. In fact, I never go. [Laughter] But I never mention religion; it never comes up. I guess that's the answer to your question. There

has been no problem. Gaines, I think, was curious about my religion, and I remember an interview with him when I first got here and he was asking me about various things, my views on this and that. I could see him getting more and more nervous and more and more agitated, and I thought, "What's he going to ask next? About sex?" No. It was about religion. He said, "Professor, you aren't actively opposed to religion, are you?" I said, "Oh, no. In fact, if you are interested, I am a baptized member of the Presbyterian Church, and I have at home a diploma with twelve gold seals, each indicating a year of perfect attendance at Sunday school." [Laughter] Well, Gaines looked greatly relieved, smiled, and changed the subject. And that was that. But that was true.

**Warren:** I put in twelve years of Catholic school, so I know exactly what you're talking about. [Laughter]

What about these rabid Republican students in 1970? I understand things got a little different here in 1970.

**Riegel:** We weren't much involved, really. I don't recall very much about it. We personally were FDR's New Dealers in our politics.

**Jane Riegel:** What year did you say?

**Warren:** 1970. I'm leaping around, aren't I?

**Riegel:** Well, let's see. But in that tradition, liberal and Democrat. We didn't get involved in any political fights. Did we work for anything?

**Jane Riegel:** [unclear].

**Riegel:** I did some publicity for —

**Jane Riegel:** [unclear].

**Riegel:** I was on the Democratic county committees for a short time.

**Warren:** When the students closed down the university, were you involved in that at all?

**Riegel:** Well, not directly, because my students were very nice to me. I remember it vividly because I marched in an anti-Vietnam parade. Was that during the war? Yes, I guess it was.

**Warren:** Yes.

**Riegel:** And Betty Munger was marching with us. We were about the only ones that I recall. We started at the courthouse and went to the campus, and I felt very brave and expected to have a shouting mob out there on the side, but nobody was there. Nobody paid any attention.

Many of these radical students were good friends of mine. They left me alone. I tried to find out about that, if they had me labeled as a "red" or something, but that didn't seem to be it. I remember asking Aunt Bertha – what was her name?

**Jane Riegel:** [unclear].

**Riegel:** [unclear], a perky little girl that worked on the campus for a while, and [unclear] humorously calls her his Aunt Bertha. But anyway, I said, "I don't understand why these radical students, the hippies, the laid-back ones, why they treat me with respect and are nice to me."

And she said, "Well, you aren't a prick."

[Laughter] And I said, "That's very nice, but why am I not?" And I never could find out, because I didn't smoke marijuana. I tried it once but didn't like it. [Laughter]

**Jane Riegel:** Didn't inhale. [Laughter]

**Riegel:** Didn't inhale.

**Jane Riegel:** I recall that era. They did have a lot to do with the so-called hippies.

**Riegel:** That's right, yes. I had quite a circle of friends among these radical students.

**Warren:** Tell me about the idea of forming friendships with the students. Did you socialize with students?

**Jane Riegel:** No, not very much.

**Riegel:** No, not intimately. We didn't go out on drinking parties with them or anything like that.

**Jane Riegel:** I remember we had this one group out here. Eli Fishpaw was one, wasn't he.

**Warren:** John McCleod?

**Jane Riegel:** Peter O'Shaughnessy.

**Riegel:** O'Shaughnessy. Do these names mean anything?

**Warren:** Yes, yes. Was it John McCleod?

**Jane Riegel:** Yes, John McCleod was here and his wife —

**Warren:** Winifred Holt.

**Jane Riegel:** Winifred.

**Riegel:** Did you know them?

**Warren:** Yes, very well. I went to their wedding.

**Riegel:** Their wedding?

**Warren:** Yes.

**Riegel:** So did we.

**Warren:** Then we've met before. Out by the river.

**Riegel:** What do you know. We were there watching the priest from West Virginia with the scapular or whatever you call it around his neck. Are they divorced now?

**Warren:** I heard they got back together.

**Jane Riegel:** They did. They're in California.

**Warren:** I heard that. I don't know the current status, but I heard they got back together.

**Jane Riegel:** [unclear].

**Warren:** That name is very familiar to me, but I don't remember why.

**Jane Riegel:** Because she was there.

**Warren:** I can't picture her, but the name is very familiar. Did she work in —

**Jane Riegel:** [unclear].

**Riegel:** Yes. I don't know what outfit she was in.

**Warren:** Did she work in the press office with Bob Keefe?

**Jane Riegel:** She might have.

**Warren:** I bet that's how I knew her.

**Jane Riegel:** That may be [unclear].

**Warren:** So you did socialize with students.

**Riegel:** Yes, but it was very limited.

**Jane Riegel:** Very limited, yes.

**Riegel:** Not really free and open sort of thing. I think we looked too formidable to them.

**Jane Riegel:** [unclear].

**Warren:** Generation gap.

**Jane Riegel:** Generation gap.

**Riegel:** I had the feeling that they treated us with respect, not especially with affection. They felt that we had liberal views, I think, and liked that.

**Jane Riegel:** Not like the usual faculty member. [Laughter]

**Warren:** I have some very specific questions that Frank would like to hear you talk about. He wants to know about your involvement in the evolution of the Southern Intercollegiate Press Association and about the conferences that used to be here.

**Riegel:** Well, we really should show and name some of this stuff, I think. Well, when I became head of the department, I inherited the Southern Intercollegiate Press Association, which had been formed about the same time as the school, as the department, in the mid 1920s. There had been some state associations of school editors, these were editors of newspapers, magazines, and yearbooks primarily. And then there was the Columbia Press Association, which covered the country, and then there was a national one.

Ellard or somebody got the idea of having one for the southern schools, and it worked very well. There were 75 delegates to the convention the first year I had it, 1934, I guess, and the last year I had it, we had 1,800 delegates. It seemed to be a very viable, active, interested organization. It was done with our left hand. We didn't spend much time and effort on it. It more or less ran itself, but we did arrange a big conference every year, with the critics of the publications and all that, and we had a big program of speakers, which was good diversion for our students, and it gave me a chance to bring in outside speakers.

**Warren:** What kind of speakers?

**Riegel:** Oh, newspapermen. We had everybody there. Who were some of them? Reston. Who wasn't there? We always had a cartoonist every year, the man who did "L'il Abner" and "Mandrake the Magician." Who's the guy from Connecticut? Hal Foster.

**Jane Riegel:** Yes. "Prince Valiant."

**Warren:** How did you get these people?

**Riegel:** M\_\_\_\_\_ was here and Mrs. Ogden Reid [publisher of the *New York Harold Tribune*], and Margaret Bourke-White. I'd invite them. I knew most of them from other contacts. Well, then I left as head of the department, and my successors gave it away immediately, first to the University of Georgia and then to University of South Carolina, and there it is now and thriving, doing even better now.

**Warren:** Who were the delegates?

**Riegel:** They were editors of these publications, and writers, staff members of secondary-school publications, public schools and private schools, and their faculty advisors.

**Warren:** I attended the Columbia all through my high school career and I can remember it being a very important part of my life every year.

**Riegel:** Yes.

**Jane Riegel:** This was particularly attractive to the girls who came, because they got to see all those Washington and Lee boys, and the journalism students were helpers.

**Riegel:** Would you mind showing Mame those two we brought down? I have quite a few reports on the conventions.

**Warren:** I'd like to look at those. Let me ask you the other question that Frank had. He wanted to know about the Alfred I. duPont Award for Broadcast. [Jane leaves room to get material.]

Was it all girls who came?

**Riegel:** No, no, boys and girls.

**Warren:** Was this an annual event?

**Riegel:** Yes, yes, it was a convention here. It began in the fall and later was in the spring.

**Warren:** Where would all these kids stay?

**Riegel:** We got everybody into – we took advantage of every room we could find, and sometimes they had to go a distance away, like Natural Bridge.

**Jane Riegel:** There weren't as many hotels then. You had Hope Laughlin doing housing for them in private homes. [Tape recorder turned off.]

**Warren:** I think you were involved in the founding of the radio station, WLUR.

**Riegel:** Yes.

**Warren:** What happened there? How did that come to be?

**Riegel:** We just decided that Washington and Lee should have a radio station.

**Jane Riegel:** Radio was the thing.

**Warren:** When was this? About what year was that? I found the date. '67, was it, '68?

**Jane Riegel:** No, before that.

**Warren:** I just found a reference to it, so I do have the date.

**Jane Riegel:** It was way before that.

**Riegel:** The origins of it go back to right after the war when various people and I talked about starting a radio operation here, which everybody was doing. I mean, that was the thing, the new means of communication. Particularly influential was an alumnus by the name of Nunn, whose family owned a radio station in Lexington, Kentucky, and he gave me all the help and encouragement possible. He sent us our first tape recorder, a rather elaborate one, which was actually our first radio station. We used it to originate programs which went out over WREL.

Then there was a period in which we had a radio editorial room in Payne Hall, and the boys would walk their copy down to WREL downtown office in the bank building in Lexington, and then later we began to take it out. The boys went out to the station to give the program, and then we got a telephone loop in and we sent it out from Payne Hall by telephone to the radio station. And so on, one development after another, until finally I said, "We have to have a station," and the administration was very much in favor of this, or at least didn't oppose it. I can't remember any enthusiasm, as a matter of fact. They had no objection, so I proceeded.

It happened that I had a good friend on the FCC [Federal Communications Commission] by the name of Rosel Hyde, a commissioner. He was a Mormon from Utah. He gave me a lot of help, and we got all the clearances and got the license. We had a commissioner down here to give the address at the opening of the station. That's probably in one of these books somewhere. There's a portfolio over there on the radio station.

**Warren:** Why did you think this was important? What did the radio station do for the students?

**Riegel:** Well, of course, we had a major interest in familiarizing our students with the medium and learning all about it, including the use of it. Then it had a subsidiary, I would call it, value to me, a primary value to the students, as an outlet for their talents

and interest to programming. One of my students in those early days is still on WLUR, Doug Harwood. Do you know him?

**Warren:** Very well.

**Riegel:** I think he began his radio work in his student days, and he's still doing the Third Ear program.

**Warren:** I thought his Anti-Headache Machine was absolutely brilliant. I used to love listening to that.

**Jane Riegel:** I think it's still on.

**Warren:** Yes, but I'm out in the country now.

**Jane Riegel:** We've never heard it.

**Riegel:** So we got all the clearances and raised the antenna on the roof of Reid Hall. I think it's been moved since then. I think it's somewhere else.

**Warren:** It's on top of Reid Hall.

**Jane Riegel:** [unclear].

**Riegel:** Well, my first book of instructions on station operation is in there somewhere, too.

**Warren:** You have rather illustrious alumni who have gone through your program.

**Riegel:** Yes, and some illustrious who didn't go through the program.

**Warren:** Was Roger Mudd one of your people?

**Riegel:** No, he wasn't a major. He was a major in history, I think. I think I had Roger in class. I'm not sure about that. I know one of the sensitive subjects in my life is Tom Wolfe, who is supposed to be one of my students, and he was in my class, he says, and everybody says, and I have no recollection at all. In fact, I looked him up in the registrar's office one time to be sure that this was true, if he was here. I used to get telephone calls when he became famous, from people. I remember some newspaperman in Baltimore calling me up and he wanted some funny stories about Tom Wolfe as a

student, and I said, "Well, I'm sorry, but I don't remember Tom Wolfe as a student, and I certainly don't know any funny stories."

**Warren:** That's a pretty funny story, that you don't remember him. [Laughter]

**Riegel:** Yes. Well, anything else?

**Warren:** I think I've gotten plenty of good stuff for today, and if I may, after Frank and I listen to this, I expect it's going to bring up more questions, and I may give you a call back and see if I can come back again sometime.

**Riegel:** That was a pretty wretched performance, wasn't it?

**Warren:** It was just terrible, Tom. I'm really appalled. I'm terribly disappointed. Will you disappoint me again sometime?

**Riegel:** [Laughter] Yes.

**Warren:** Let's take a look at some of these scrapbooks and albums that you have here. I'll turn the machine off now and set you free from this microphone. Thank you very much.

**Riegel:** Well, I hope it wasn't too bad.

**Warren:** It wasn't too bad.

[End of interview]