AN INTERVIEW WITH ROSE GREAVES

Interviewer: Calder M. Pickett

Oral History Project
KU Retirees= Club
University of Kansas
ROSE GREAVES
B.A., History and English, University of Kansas, 1946
M.A., American History, University of Kansas
Ph.D., History, University of Kansas, 1952
Ph.D., European History, University of London

Service at the University of Kansas
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Q.: I am Calder Pickett. I am going to interview Rose Greaves, who retired this past year from the history department. We are in Lawrence, Kansas on June 5, 2001. Rose, were you a full professor? You were, weren’t you?

A: Yes, from 1979 on.

Q.: Okay. Soviet and East European Studies.

A: Well, I belong to the Soviet and East European combination, but I was a history professor from the very first, from the time I came here.

Q.: That, of course, is how I first knew you when we traveled together over to Fort Leavenworth. Rose, I would like to start by talking about your background. Tell us your date of birth, place of birth, the names of your parents, and what your father did for a living and so on, and also some of the family background to get us started.

A: I was born on the 12th of February, 1925, at a farmhouse on the Mitchem farm, which is the first house lived in by my great-grandparents, William and Phoebe Mitchem. My father was a farmer on the Mitchem/Coughlin farm. He was born in August, 1890. Mother was of German and English ancestry. She was born in Hamburg, Iowa, the 14th of February, 1898. They both died a long time ago. Mother died in 1954 and my father in 1963. This was in Shawnee, Kansas.

Q.: It was farm country where you were brought up, right?

A: Yes. The farms that my great-grandfather and my grandfather had and my father carried on were fruit farms. One doesn’t associate this with this part of the world so much, but
we raised everything from cherries through pears. There was always something to pick. One of the nice things about it is that I grew up on this farm and everybody worked. When I was just a baby, my mother would take me out, fix a pallet, and tell me very firmly not to get off the pallet. There was some kind of superstition that snakes would not crawl over the pallet. There were rattlers and occasionally they killed rattlers on the farm. The thing I remember was looking at the birds, their beautiful songs, and the lovely blossoms in the fruit trees. To this day, I really like that man who colors these fruit trees in the East. I have two or three of them. His name is Wallace Nutting.

Q.: Do you have brothers and sisters?
A: Not until I was 13, when a brother came along. We really had two different lives because 13 years is a lot of difference in age.

Q.: Were your parents what we call educated people? I mean, did they have education beyond high school?
A: My grandmother was one of the first women to graduate from Baker University. She was a teacher too. My great-grandfather helped build the first schoolhouse and the first church in the area where we lived. My grandmother taught in that schoolhouse. When I was in grade school, my aunt was principal of that same two-room schoolhouse. The family was very keen on education.

Q.: Did you have a lot of books in the house?
A: Yes. When we moved into my grandfather=s house, my grandmother=s books were still there, and I have one of the bookcases that she had. Family furniture got scattered around, both the Mitchem and Coughlin furniture. But I really treasure one of her bookcases.
Q.: What did you read? What were the books that you liked?

A: When I was just little, mother read to me the stories of *Chatter the Red Squirrel* by Thornton W. Burgess and *Sammy the Crow* and all that.

Q.: And *Paddy the Beaver*?

A: Yes, and *Paddy the Beaver*.

Q.: I remember I had that.

A: I liked the Waverly series by Sir Walter Scott, which I think I read when I was about 13 or 14. I am sure I didn’t understand them, but the Scottish scenery and the adventure, I loved that. I still do love that.

Q.: Lots of us didn’t get to things like Scott until we were older, but when I discovered him, I went through quite a few of those books. I must have been in college when I was doing that. That’s when I started reading the classics.

A: I think I read Scott before I was really through high school.

Q.: You mentioned grade school. Where did you go to grade school?

A: Oak Grove Grade School. It was just a country school. It was a two-room school with two teachers. My aunt had the fourth to the eighth grades, and she was the principal.

Here name was Rose Puhr, and she was a wonderful woman. My mother used to cook supper for her and my Uncle Steve. That meant not only did I see her in school, but also she would come to supper. My parents would ask, *Did Rose Louise behave today?* One wanted her to say yes, because in those days if the teacher said you had done something bad, the parents always took the teacher’s side and one was disciplined. For me, it meant being sent up to my room, but that didn’t bother me because I just read.
Q.: Was that a good experience? I have talked with so many people who went to just the one-room school, and they think it was better for them than if they had been in a larger school.

A.: Oh, I am very grateful for having the education I had to start with. We knew geography. We could do the rivers in Africa easily. We could draw the maps and they were accurate too. One never forgets that kind of thing.

We used to play games. We would choose up sides, and then we would have these geography and history questions. The person who could either write the answer on the board fastest or say it fastest, would always be chosen first. Along with spelling, that was one of the subjects where I excelled. They would always choose me first. I don’t know if that kind of thing is done much any more or not. I think it is in some schools. I am very grateful to this day for the wonderful family I had and, too, for the education.

Q.: What did you like in school when you were a little girl?

A.: I liked geography, English, and history, the things that I stayed with all my life.

Q.: That is always interesting. I am always interested in learning what it is in a person’s background that might have impelled that person to become what that person is now. I have talked with people who hated mathematics, but who became good in science. This is an interesting aspect of that. Was Oak Grove school near your home?

A.: It was about a half a mile to three-quarters of a mile to school.

Q.: So you could walk to school.

A.: Yes. We walked to school and we got right home too.

Q.: Where did you go to high school?
A: Shawnee Mission North. It was called Shawnee Mission Rural High School in those days.

Q.: Where is that over there, Rose? I just don’t know much about Shawnee Mission.

A: Just off Johnson Drive, before you get to Fairway.

Q.: Now, you were brought up in Depression times.

A: Yes.

Q.: Did the Depression affect your family?

A: Well, yes, it affected, I think, everybody, but not desperately because we were fruit farmers. It wasn’t so dry that the fruit didn’t mature, so we made money in the Depression years. I am sure we were poor, but we never felt poor. One of the things I am grateful to my family for is that we had childhoods, that is, my cousin and I were children, and so many people miss being a child today, I think. Whatever problems the family had, they didn’t tell them to us, so we were able to grow up without being burdened by grown-up things. I had a wonderful childhood. I loved the animals on the farm. We all had to work, but everybody had chores. When my grandmother came out to visit, she worked. My mother always worked on the farm.

Q.: What games did you play? What did you play with, dolls and things like that?

A: I never played with dolls. I played with my grandmother’s old sidesaddle.

Q.: Didn’t you ever make dolls out of hollyhocks?

A: No.

Q.: That’s something that my sister used to do and I used to help her.

A: No, I never did anything like that. I rode my bicycle with my boy cousins. I had two
cousins who lived on the same farm. One was about 18 months older, and one was about
a year younger. We played together in the barn, and we rode our bicycles all over. I am
sure that people today would find it very boring, and I regret to say we played with guns.
I was really quite a good shot. I could always beat my cousin. Women or girls were not
allowed to enter that kind of competition in my day.

Q.: Did you ever have a horse?
A: No, but I wanted a horse desperately. My father's view was 'Well, the way you are, you would kill yourself. Your mother would get awfully upset.' I think that John Wayne said something like that in one of the old movies I saw not long ago. He would never allow me to have a horse of my own. Now I rode the farm horses because I would take them from the home lot over to the pasture in the orchards. I never had a saddle until I was 60.

Q.: Did you continue your interests when you were in high school, the classes I mean?
A: Yes. Now in my family one had no choice. There was no question. We would go to school and we would do well. I will never forget that once in high school I got an A in English but a C in attitude. That set both my parents alight. My father was very angry and my mother was so terribly disappointed that I will never forget it. It was just anguish, but, yes, I did. I made the National Honor Society, but I didn't participate in many outside activities because when we farm people went home, there were jobs for us to do. Then after we finished them, we had to study, so we didn't have time to fool around.

Q.: You did get good grades?
A: Oh, yes.

Q.: That’s more than I can say.

A: I chose to go to a junior college in Kansas City, Mo. It was a really tough school, and that’s where I learned to buckle down and work hard in school. The people who went there worked full-time jobs so often in the city. There was no school newspaper, no clubs, no activities, nothing. There was just school. I got honors in the two years I spent there too.

Q.: Did you live at home when you were going to junior college?

A: Yes. We all got up by 5 a.m. when it was light. I would work on the tractor until about 9 a.m. because I had a 10 o’clock class over there, and I would stay until 3 p.m. at the college, come home and work till dark. My mother would have the meal ready, and then I would study.

Q.: That would have been the early 1940s, right?

A: 1942 to 1944.

Q.: Okay, now that was during the war.

A: Yes.

Q.: What do you remember about the war?

A: One of the things I remember is that all the men really wanted to go. The young man I was engaged to, not with a ring but with wings, crossed the days off the calendar until he could go. In high school I never dated anybody. My cousins would take me wherever we were going, to the movies or to a dance. In junior college, we went around in a group, but when the time came for the young men to go, at least he and I paired off. He was
with the 509th bomb group. I still have stationery from Tinian, which says we dropped it, we did 509th. It was a time from >44 on, I came up here after junior college. I will never forget, Professor Sturdeant gave us a German exam on new year’s Day. It was really a time when one gave one’s attention to getting through college. I took flying lessons to join the Women’s Ferry Command. It was disbanded, as you know, in 1944 because some of the men had finished their missions, and they took over the ferrying of planes. I enjoyed my college time, my undergraduate time, but I didn’t do a lot of playing around, in fact, none.

Q.: Where did you live here?
A: I lived at Corbin Hall.

Q.: Corbin Hall, now there were just the two of them when I came here to teach in 1951. The big dorms out there still didn’t exist. It was mainly Corbin and North College were the ones, weren’t they?
A: Well, in my time, there was only Corbin. There was a small hall called Jolliffe, and then there were the scholarship halls, Watson and Miller, I think. I liked Corbin very much. The girls there were very pleasant. The housemothers ran it efficiently. We had to check in and check out, but I never minded that.

Q.: You graduated in 1946?
A: Yes, 1946.

Q.: What was your major?
A: History. I had a double major in History and English. I took quite a bit of Political Science.
Q.: Who were the teachers then?

A: W. W. Davis for American History, and I wrote my master’s thesis with him. Charles Realey was not here during the war. He was up in Leavenworth soldiering. C. C. Crawford was the English professor, a wonderful man. Clarence and Elizabeth Crawford used to have students over for meals, chow mein or chili or something like that. It was just marvelous. Then professor Sandelius in Political Science and Professor Chubb in Political Science.

Q.: Did you have John Ise?

A: I took one course with him in Economics. Maybe it was because I had too many other things to do. I liked him, but I just didn’t like Economics very much.

Q.: Neither did I, but I took quite a bit.

A: I don’t think I took any other Economics course, but the mainstay with me was W. W. Davis, a wonderful support, and C. C. Crawford in the war years, and then Sandelius in Political Science. Oh, and Natalie Calderwood. She was a wonderful person.

Q.: All of these people are gone. In fact, I was just wondering whether there is anyone around here teaching who was here then.

A: I don’t think so. They have long departed and Professor Patterson, David Patterson for Ancient and Medieval History. He was a wonderful, wonderful man and teacher. I will never forget him. I was told he didn’t like women; don’t enroll in his course. Well, I never found that. What he didn’t like is if he thought you took him lightly, which I never did. But when I was having my flying lessons, I had just soloed. I was just about five minutes late. He was giving an exam, and I apologized at the end of the class. He
said, ‘Oh, that’s all right, Miss Coughlin. Just come in whenever you find it convenient.’

Q.: Where did you take flying lessons?
A: Just out here at the airport.

Q.: Did you fly then for many years?
A: No, it was too expensive and this was a government project that was subsidized. Chancellor Malott started it. There were about 20 of us students, and he got his license too.

Q.: Any other girls?
A: Yes, there were two or three girls, and I don’t know what happened to them. I got my private pilot’s license. You had to have that, and you had to get in some other hours before you could join the Ferry Command. Those pilots were very, very, good.

Q.: What did you do when you got out of school in 1946?
A: I didn’t get out. I just went on.

Q.: Oh, you just stayed there?
A: I stayed. I was here from 1944 to 1952. I got my master’s and my doctorate here.

Q.: Well, that sounds like a long time, Rose.
A: Well, it was a long time.

Q.: How come you were here so long?
A: I took a test for the University of Chicago, and I got a place, but the difference between how much it would cost in Chicago and how much it cost at KU was just dramatic. My people were just farmers and there was no way I would put them through sending me to
Chicago. We had good teachers here, and there was no reason to go somewhere else.

Q.: When did you get married?


Q.: That was a few years after you got through here.

A: I took a second Ph.D. from London.

Q.: I saw that and I was interested in that. You got a master’s degree and also a Ph.D. here. Were they both in History?

A: Yes, but the master’s degree was in American History. The thesis I wrote was on coastal invasions of the Confederacy and how much of a distraction they caused the Union forces. My doctorate was on British policy in Persia under Professor Realey. It was an empire subject. I took a second doctorate in England because the person who was my Fulbright sponsor was Dame Lillian Penson, and she had recently been the vice-chancellor of the University of London. She would only see students who were enrolled with her. I simply enrolled for a doctorate, and then she would see me every two weeks because I wanted to get her comments on my work. I hadn’t intended to take a degree, but I was far enough along it seemed just as well to go ahead and do it, which I did.

Q.: So you got a Fulbright just after you were out of school?

A: I got a Fulbright in 1952 and it was renewed so I could finish.

Q.: That’s quite remarkable. Weren’t the Fulbrights relatively new then?

A: Yes. Senator Fulbright didn’t get the law into being until after the war. It was a wonderful experience.

Q.: The University of London. You know, we spent quite a bit of time over there a number
of years ago, but where is the university there?

A: Well, the Senate House is just off Russell Square. That is the administrative part of it. I was at Bedford College. It was in Regents Park. It was established in 1849.

Q.: Do you like London?
A: Very much.

Q.: I do too.
A: I still do.

Q.: I think London is maybe my favorite big city.
A: Yes, and it has so many parks. One can get out of London, and in many ways it is like a lot of little villages put together.

Q.: Well, it is also quite comfortable. We always felt that it was easy to get around and the people were nice. There was almost a small town atmosphere you would get in some of the shops you would go in.
A: That is certainly true, and I always felt safe in London. I like Edinburgh too.

Q.: Oh, isn’t that lovely.
A: Yes. Well, one can go to a little book shop, and what they have are books on Rob Roy or Wallace or something. They are the kind of things one might want to read.

Q.: Were you there during the music festival?
A: No, I have never been there during that, but I always stopped after my work in the libraries or archives. I always stopped and watched the Scottish country dancing.

Q.: We were there for the Military Tatoo. That was one of the most wonderful evenings we have ever had. Up there in the grounds right outside the castle they have bleachers.
There was a full moon and all of the bagpipe music and big bands playing John Phillips Sousa. Ok, now the University of London, you were studying what branch of history?

A: European.

Q.: European History in general?

A: It was mainly Britain and Europe. Dame Lillian stressed diplomatic history. I went to her lectures, but I didn’t have to. The main thing I was supposed to do was my work, which was in the public record office and private archives. I certainly did work.

Q.: When did your emphasis in Persia, the Middle East, come about?

A: Well, the interest in the Middle East came about once I was able to work at the oil company. You see, Dame Lillian asked me to come back after I had my degree and teach at Bedford College, which I did. It was there I met my husband, though I had no classes with him. I didn’t see him for the first two years I was there. Once Dame Lillian invited me back to teach and I was a member of the History staff, people invited us out. He was a single man and people invited us out to dinner, so I suppose the inevitable was inevitable. But I was very lucky to have met him.

Q.: Was he English?

A: Yes, he taught at Bedford College.

Q.: Didn’t he teach here too?

A: Yes. It wasn’t because of me. Henry Snyder was one of the people who was attending his colloquium in London. He said to Bob, ‘Why don’t we exchange a year?’ and so Bob came here for >64->65, but I couldn’t come because I was already at the oil company. I didn’t join him until Christmas. Then we had a wonderful semester. I
didn’t teach, but I looked after the yard, and did all sorts of fun things that I hadn’t been able to do earlier. I was in school until I was 30. He liked it here very much. He was most impressed with the kind of students he got in Constitutional History. Henry Snyder and George Anderson asked him if he would be interested in coming back permanently. Dean Waggoner had a lot to do, I think, with him coming here. So in 1968 we came back. He was able to teach here from 1968 to 1979 when he died. He retired in May and he died in August.

Q.: What was the cause of his death?
A: Multiple myeloma. It’s the same thing that Geraldine Ferraro has. With him, there was no treatment. Once it’s diagnosed, the prognosis was three to five years, and the Med Center gave him three years, and it was a good quality life. In the summer that he retired, we went out to Colorado. He walked at 10,000 feet. He could walk a mile and be happy. We had a wonderful two weeks out there. As soon as he got home, his kidneys failed. He died within six weeks.

Q.: I don’t think I ever knew him.
A: I don’t think so.

Q.: I think you and I might have talked about him when I first knew you. How did you get lined up with the British Petroleum Corporation?
A: Well, once I married Bob, the History Department at Bedford College was only eight. That meant it was impossible for both of us to teach in the same department because two votes out of eight is a lot. It was up to me to find something else. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, which became British Petroleum in 1954, was involved in a research project to
try to reconstruct what actually happened in the oil dispute in 1951.

Q.: That was when Mossedegh seized it.

A: I had some contact through the work I had done, which ended up in a book called *Persia and the Defense of India*, with Sir Reader Bullard, because he liked the book. He recommended me to the British Petroleum company to be the historian for this project, and one thing led to another. They asked me to stay on permanently as company historian. That's what I became. There was no choice, if I was going to stay there.

From 1951 on, they had backed off their interest in Persia, and they started to look for oil in the coming years in Alaska and in the North Sea. Their main interests were in the Persian Gulf. Abu Dhabi oil came on at that time, which has a lot of oil still. I was put on for them, not just writing up the Persian oil dispute because as far as they were concerned that was ancient history, but to look into some of the things they were doing in the Persian Gulf. They sent me out to a place called MECAS, Middle-East Center for Arab Studies, but it was a language school to learn Arabic. I was sent there for a year. They didn't expect me to be fluent in Arabic. All they wanted me to be able to do was to talk to the kind of Persian Gulf visitors they had come in. That's when I became interested in the Persian Gulf. It was simply part of the job. My office was next to the head of the exploration department. He was one of the main people in the British Petroleum's interests in Abu Dhabi, and so every day he would come into my office and there was something new and exciting going on.

Q.: I was listening the other day to a radio program that I did years ago about Ernie Pyle. He was in Tunisia. This column that I read, he was talking about some of the advice that was
given to the soldiers to try to learn Arabic. He said for him it was an impossible language. He said it was terrible to try to learn. Well, there was no reason really for him to have to do it. But I guess that he wanted to be able to do some communicating, and I guess that it was really a hard language. Is it a hard language?

A: It is hard and you need a teacher because it has an enormous vocabulary. In my opinion, it is a young person’s job. Now, I was older and I could read the newspaper quite easily, the Beirut newspapers. If I was out in the country, my husband and I used to pick up hitchhikers. I would practice my Arabic on them. I could get along very well. Once I was in Beirut at a dinner party, where people were very well dressed and sophisticated. I hated to try and speak Arabic because you knew they were going to pick up on everything that was wrong. Out in the countryside, it didn’t matter whether you make a mistake.

Q: You have been using the word Persia. That, of course, was the word that I was brought up to know. When did it become Iran?

A: 1935. Reza Shah, the old ruler, the first of the Pahlavi dynasty, changed the name from Persia to Iran in 1935. Sohrab Rustum was the ancient name and that was the basis of the old stories, Sorab and Rustum and many others. It was called Iran in those days. The Shah thought that taking it back to its old name would help build a national spirit from the people, and they would take pride in their old history, which they do. You go out in the countryside in Persia, even today, at these tea shops and that kind of thing where people sit around and tell stories. These old stories from the Shab Namch, the Book of Kings, are recited and acted out. If you happen to be in a camel caravan, there will be
somebody in that caravan who will recite from the old epic poem. Any taxi driver will know the stories from it. They are wonderful stories. They deal with real people who do valiant deeds and have tremendous adventures, and they appeal to everybody.

Q.: Did you have then an opportunity to do quite a bit of traveling around there in the Middle East or did that come later?

A: No, when I was sent out in 1961 to Shemlan, it was in Lebanon. It was a mountain village just above Beirut, and I lived in that mountain village for a year. The course was very hard, and so we worked very hard. We would go down to Beirut maybe Saturday afternoon to get our hair cut or something like that. We were back in the village by evening.

Q.: How did some of the really extremist Arabs, and here I am betraying ignorance, because I don’t know a whole lot about this, but how did they feel about you, a woman, doing these things?

A: Lebanon in those days was still very almost French, and also one of the things in that part of the Middle East you didn’t touch a foreigner, and you certainly would never touch a foreign woman. I was far safer in that Lebanese village than I ever would have been here in the United States on the streets in Kansas City.

Q.: Did you get into Afghanistan when you were there?

A: No, I put a foot in Afghanistan, but when I was elected to the Royal Society for Asian Affairs, every summer they used to take a trip to the Middle East. They went to Afghanistan in the early 70s. I tried to get the chairman to let me go. I had even arranged for my classes to be taken over, but in the early 70s a professor traipsing off to
Afghanistan in the midst of term was not really done.

The chairman wouldn’t let me go. I liked the chairman very much, but it was the only time I would have been able to go to Afghanistan, and I would have been with people who had lived their lives in Afghanistan. I missed a great opportunity, and I am sorry about it, but I had lots of other opportunities.

Q.: Well, you wouldn’t want to be there now.
A: No, I certainly would not want to be there now.

Q.: It’s appalling what they are doing over there.
A: The Taliban is certainly a step backward. The foreigners, I don’t know. They might just expel them. I have been lucky to be able to travel a lot in the northwest frontier areas, mainly in Pakistan. I have been in Pakistan, I should think, probably eight or ten times.

Q: Did you get up into the setting of some of my favorite movies when I was a boy, the Khyber Pass?
A: Oh, yes, yes, I have been there.

Q.: *The Lives of the Bengal Lancers.*
A: And *The Man Who Would Be King.* We actually went to that area. It’s rough getting there, but we went there in 1995. No, I have been very lucky to travel to the places I have been.

Q.: Now Rose, when did you come back to KU to teach?
A: 1968.

Q.: Had your husband been with you most of the time while you were in Iran?
A: No, and when I was in Beirut, he only came over for Christmas, and then he came for the
summer. I stayed for the summer and did some more studying, but we also traveled around in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. It was completely illegal, but I rented a Volkswagen from one of the villagers and we drove all through Lebanon, a lot of Syria, and all through Jordan. I never had any trouble. People were very polite and helpful. The old VW sprang an oil leak in Syria in an area where there was nothing. I saw a farmer and I showed him my problem and talked to him a little bit about it. What he did was put a piece of chewing gum in that oil leak, which enabled me to get back to a village where they could do a more permanent job. There was nothing but kindness and tremendous hospitality.

Q.: When you came here, had you made arrangements ahead of time to come here to teach?
A.: No. The last thing I wanted to do was teach anybody anything. I was very tired. The work at British Petroleum, where I had been for just about 10 years, was exhausting, and all I wanted to do was fiddle in the garden and do other things. I did agree to teach a summer school partly on the Middle East, team teaching with people like Charley Stansifer, Ted Wilson, and Grant Goodman. That was fun. My role was just the Middle East. In the fall, Ben Brown, who was in Italy, found this massive group of papers on Sonio. He didn’t want to come back. He wanted to continue to work on the papers for a biography. Francis Heller allowed him to do that. Stitt Robinson called me and said, “You have been teaching European History at Bedford College. Would you agree to teach a class for us?” I said sure. We all taught, the whole history faculty, including Ozzie Bachus, who taught a course called 3X. It was a five-hour course on Europe from 1500 to the present. Believe me, I had never worked so hard in all my life, because I
wasn’t up to date on the most recent literature of Charles V and this kind of thing. Every
time I would finish a unit, I would find the book I thought I should have had all the time.
I taught that course for, I guess, four or five years. The thing that really was very
important and rewarding to me was what you talked about.

Q.: You said that one of the things that you liked was teaching at Fort Leavenworth. When
you came here, what were the expectations? What was your job description? What were
you expected to be doing?

A: I wasn’t hired, my husband was. I wanted, after I wound down a bit and maybe fished or
something like that, I wanted to write on Persia and the defense of India. One thing after
another happened, and the first thing was that Ben Brown stayed in Italy. I was asked to
teach this course on European History from 1500 on, but in the meantime, there was a
Colonel Royal Brown at fort Leavenworth. They had no course on the Middle East, and
he thought they should have an elective on the Middle East. He asked Tony Burzle if we
had anyone down here who could do it. Tony told him about me and my work with the
oil company. He asked me if I would work up a course, which I did. That was the
summer of 1968 and the fall of 1969. A group came down from Leavenworth and sat
around the kitchen table and talked about what they wanted in the course. We worked
out something they thought would be useful up there because I had done all this work on
the Persian Gulf for years at British Petroleum, so I knew the Persian Gulf very well.
The exploration head used to come into my office and talk to me about speeches he had
given in Europe on the Persian Gulf and speak to the company chairman, Maurice
Bridgeman, who had given speeches on oil in the Persian Gulf. I had a good grip on
where the Persian Gulf stood in the world oil picture. This was not very well known in
the United States. I am sure lots of people knew about it, but it wasn’t generally
recognized. I got to give this course up in Leavenworth and loved it. The students were
so good. They would study and read what one asked. They simply may not have been
academically qualified, but they could turn their hand to anything.

Q.: It sounds as thought you just kind of fell into teaching at KU then.
A: Well, that’s true. That’s true.

Q: You didn’t have to go through all of the interviews with the dean of the College and all
the other people? Also, affirmative action didn’t exist yet, did it?
A: Affirmative action didn’t exist, no, no.

Q.: Back in this days, you could just be hired.
A: I was just hired, but then you see the chairman, Professor Anderson, knew me from
undergraduate days. I was here when Professor Anderson came, and Stitt Robinson. I
remember all of Professor Anderson’s graduate students had to go to the presentation
given by Amby Saricks and Stitt Robinson. I remember his initial interview when he was
coming for the job right after the war. I remember when Jim Seaver came.

Q.: Reese Saricks used to say that George Anderson must have been a really tolerant,
understanding man because in one year, he hired a man named Stitt, a man named
Ambrose, and a man named Oswald. I always thought that was quite funny the way that
she put that. Well, you then became a full-time member of the KU faculty.

A: Yes, in 1973. I think it was Cliff Ketzel who made this happen, but in 1971 I was invited
to one of these Rome conferences on oil with the AUFS. Those were wonderful
conferences. There were three of them on oil, and I was down to be the on the fourth one, which they never got financial aid for. Ned Bayne was a wonderful host.

Q: That was a great program.
A: I think it was one of the best things we ever did.

Q: I used to have these fellows always come over to the School of Journalism. I was on the planning committee for a good many years of the AUFS. I got to know all those fellows.
A: They were good.

Q: That was a great thing. You and your husband then got yourself established here in town?
A: Ozzie Bachus’s house, which Henry Snyder owned, and we bought.

Q: You did start to live there then. Is that so?
A: We bought it in 1967 and we moved there in 1968.

Q: Well, where had the Bachuses moved?
A: They had moved up on the hill.

Q: That’s right. I think I know where they were. We left there in 1965. That’s when we moved to the house that we are in now.
A: So you were out of the neighborhood before we came.

Q: Yes, that’s right. Okay, then, what other classes or what were your teaching responsibilities then? You were teaching how many classes?
A: At first we were all teaching three, and then the load went down to two. I have taught a lot of different classes. I will give you a list sometime, but the classes I worked up for the Middle East here, you see there was a big sort of controversy on having a course on
the Middle East taught for the Army in the History Department. We had a number of young Turks who were opposed to teaching for the military. There was a department meeting and it was decided, and I never understood this myself, but it worked out well for me, that I could teach a course at Fort Leavenworth for History Department credit with a History Department member if they were enrolled down here, but only if I also gave that same course on the campus. That suited me fine. I worked out three courses. One was called "The Middle East since World War II." The other one was "The Middle East in the 19th and 20th Centuries," which is much more of a survey. The other was called "Oil, the Great Powers in the Persian Gulf from 1900." Well, in 1901 the Darly Concession was given and that gave the British control of all of Persia except the five northern provinces. Persia became the first great oil producer. Now, calling it Persia, it should be called Iran. If you go out to Persia today, you would want to be sure to call it Iran, because that=s what the revolutionary government likes it to be called. So one doesn=t want to get in jail because one has called it Persia. The oil course I have enjoyed very much, but I was well prepared for it. I lived it for 10 years.

Q: Rose, define Middle East for me, will you? Does that include the Arab nations of North Africa?

A: I don=t include North Africa. Some people do, but North Africa is really a different geographical entity, and they are very different from the proper Middle East. The term Middle East didn=t come into being until 1900, when a British Indian office wrote an article called "Problems of the Middle East." Now, at that time, the British were in India, and what they were concerned with was the Russian movement south through
central Asia and down to Afghanistan and Persia. The first concept of the Middle East was very limited geographically, and it included a specific question of the two countries, between the rapidly expanding Russian Europe and British India. Then when World War I came, it spread out and the other country was the Ottoman Empire, and the Ottoman Empire is based on Turkey. During the course of World War I was the first time I have seen the Middle East pushing over to the Levant area. The Middle East used to be simply Persia, Afghanistan, Northwest Frontier, maybe into Iraq. The Middle East was expanded when the Middle East Committee started to include parts of the Levant area and Egypt. Then in the course of World War II with the Cairo command and the importance of North Africa, the Middle East went westward further. It is a very elastic term, and I go from Egypt over to Afghanistan and the two provinces in Pakistan, which is the Old Northwest Frontier area. One is the Northwest Frontier Province and the other is Baluchistan in the south. Not the Punjab and Sind. They belong more to India.

Q.: So what you were just talking about is your definition.

A: Well, it is what I use in my classes, but it is the proper historical definition, and I have written that in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*. I got to insert an article on Thomas Edward Gordon, who was the first person to use the term Middle East in print. It had not been used since Medieval times, and that Middle East included Central Asia. The proper usage of the term is simply Persia, Afghanistan, the borderlands, and part of Central Asia. You still have the Russian movement south, or you had the Russian interests. They are different now, and include the Russian interest in the Central Asian independent provinces, Russian interests in Caspian oil. The British aren't in India, both the United
States and Britain have to take a close look at that area all the time.

Q.: Rose, what were the expectations about the amount of scholarly work you were supposed to do? I shouldn’t say scholarly work because I think teaching is scholarly work, but I mean research or the publications and the like?

A: Well, I had just published a book when I came. I published four articles in the School of Oriental and African Studies Bulletin, and then I published a fifth article in that. I have done two major articles in the Royal Society for Asian Affairs, which was the old Central Asian Society. I published two chapters in the *Cambridge History of Iran*.

Q.: Did the History Department specify that you were expected to do a certain amount of research?

A: No, they didn’t. I taught a lot of courses with a lot of students. In my oil class I used to have nearly 100. I graded all my papers. I had assistants, but mainly they were Middle East assistants.

Q.: What rank did you have?

A: I was a visiting assistant professor the first year, associate the next, and in 1973 I was full.

Q.: I don’t remember a whole lot of what it was like then. I was on the University Promotions Committee a couple of times, and, boy, one thing I learned there was that unless you had a list like that, that there were people on that committee who were not going to let you have promotions. I don’t think I could have gotten myself promoted if I would have had to come up for it in those years because the kind of work that I did was not the kind of work Frances Horowitz would have approved of.
A: I don’t know what she thought of mine. Didn’t Amby Saricks hold her position for several years?

Q: He wasn’t in the graduate school, he was a vice-chancellor and, of course, Amby was a great scholar, but I don’t think he had a very extensive list. This was not his big thing. He was one of those people who were able to become a full professor back before all of that pressure began to come about.

A: I became a full professor in 1973, so that probably was before all that took place.

Q: Were you writing especially about the oil question?

A: No, I wrote mainly about the relations between British India and Britain and Russia, and the two chapters in the *Cambridge History of Iran*. I did all that work from original sources, and believe me, there are thousands of these big volumes in both private collections and in the public record office that I went through, dusty old big volumes, page by page. Well, I did the work. My work was based on an enormous amount of research to back it up.

Q: Did you go to India?

A: I never went to India. Well, I have been in India, but not to use the archives. The archives in India are pretty well...really the archives for Persia are in the British archives. There was a man who tried to use Persian archives in the days of the Shah, and he was much more forthcoming than this government or other governments. He went over there, and there was an old man in charge of the archives. He went through quite a number of things and asked if they send Xerox and microfilms. Yes, of course, they did that. Well, he got home and got his stuff, and none of it was relevant to what he was doing. He spent
all that time, paid all the money, and got the archives sent to him, but they had no bearing on what he was writing about. There are lots of British archives left in India. The thing you get on them, which would be useful, is that documents that were sent to India from Britain had comments on them by the people out there. Those comments you don’t see in England. They weren’t sent back to England. I used the British archives before they got all the weeders in and before they re-sorted them all. I got to see a lot of stuff that if you go to the India office records now, Commonwealth Relations Office, they give you out huge pieces of things that have been printed, but you don’t get to see the originals with the comments on them.

Q.: Have you been to Iran recently?
A: I was last in Iran in 1999. The revolutionary government, believe it or not, invited me out to a conference on World War II, and I dealt with the American policy towards Iran immediately after the war. That was that crisis when Truman got so mad. That was a fun paper to give. There were five Americans at this conference. We were given eight-day visas, and I got to go to Ispahan, which was nice. I spent only one day there. It was a good conference. There were people from Japan, Romania, and all kinds of places, but five Americans, and that was good.

Q.: You were teaching here when the hostage crisis took place?
A: Yes.

Q.: How did that, well, that’s a silly question, I guess, to ask how you responded to that.
A: Well, as an historian, it looked pretty bleak because there are in Persian history two lines amongst the religious teachers. Most of the religious teachers are really like ours over
here, and they are just religious teachers like our religious teachers. There is an extreme right wing, and they are very fundamentalist and they are very anti-foreign. They are both anti-dynasty and anti-foreign, and this trend goes right through the whole from the 18th century clear through the 19th century and down to the present time. The historical precedent was when the Russians, in the early part of the 19th century, were pressing down on Persia and taking territory. Well, the Persians were not a match for the Russians, although the Persians put up a much better fight than most people think they did, but the war of 1826 to 1828 was fought by the Persians against the Russians and the Persians lost. The Russians sent an embassy down to Teheran. The religious teachers worked up the masses, and every one of the members of the Russian mission were killed, were murdered. The precedent historically was not good. I don’t think the Persians, at that time, the religious leaders, would go as far as to massacre any foreigners, whether they were British, American, or Russian. The theme of anti-foreign, anti-dynasty revolution and hostility of the religious teachers goes back over 200 years.

Q: Our relations with Iran right now are somewhat better than what they have been in some recent years, aren’t they?

A: Well, the fact that Khatami has five Americans out of this conference would show you something. I get teased violently by people who say you know here you are invited out by the revolutionary government in Iran. What is this all about? Khatami is not pro-American. He doesn’t want close relations with the United States. He’d like better relations with the United States and he’d like sort of softer government in Iran, but he’s got a terrible road to hoe because the hard-liners controlled the law, and they controlled
the security forces. They can arrest at will newspaper editors they don’t like or any partygoers. Going to parties is not a good thing in Iran.

Q.: How about Iraq?

A: Oh, Iraq, it’s terrible. You see, it is so sad because Iraq has a very talented people. It has water and it has land and lots of oil, but under Saddam Hussein it is just a tyranny of fear.

Q.: Yes, oh yes, it’s terrible.

A: It’s a terrible thing, but I think Iran also is probably one of the most dangerous countries we have to face these days. I think they are further along in the atomic field than we care to think.

Q.: Yes. Rose, can you talk a little about some of the honors and awards that you have had? I know I found a number of articles here. Can you do this off the top of your head?

A: Well, I got an AAUW fellowship and I really appreciated that because I could never have got some of the research done for my work if I hadn’t had time off. There is no way at least I could do this. I can’t combine teaching and research. I can in the sense that my research helped my teaching, but I can’t write at the same time I am teaching, not if I am going to give my students any time. I loved the honor students I have had here. I’ve got John Brobst, who now is up at Ohio University, which is an excellent diplomatic history place, and Rob Davis recently is going for his doctorate up there. He’ll do very well. I think the thing I have enjoyed the most in my years at KU is the honor students I’ve had going back even to the old days in 1971 and Steve McFarland, who’s got a job teaching Middle Eastern history at university level, and the teaching for the Army that I got to do
at Fort Leavenworth. And then I got to spend three years at the foreign office center at Fort Bragg.

Q.: Now when was that?

A.: From 1984 to 1987, and then two years at West Point, 1991 to 1993. I loved West Point. I think the honor students that I have had and the Army work that I was fortunate to be able to do, I was just lucky, I guess. Those were the highlights of my life and career, I think.

Q.: What was the Army award that you got?

A.: The Commanders Award for Public Service. I got the first one at Fort Bragg, and I was very surprised because the commander was not keen on civilians. He wasn’t keen on women, and when I got that, I am sure there were people who deserved it far more than I did, but I wouldn’t give it up. Nobody else can have it.

Q.: I think maybe you have a feeling similar to the one I had when I taught over at Fort Leavenworth. They were such good guys and so easy to work with. I didn’t get a lot of nonsense from them. They were far more understanding, and one of the things that I found was that most of them had the same kinds of reservations about the war in Vietnam that a good many of our students on our campus had. They were in doubt about a lot of that stuff. They were not the hard hat types that a lot of people thought they were.

A.: They were very good students. I remember one of the first years I taught there this guy cam in with combat boots. He said, ‘What is this thing >term paper=?’ I explained what the term paper was, and he did a good term paper. They were able to put their hand to whatever they were given to do and they did it. They didn’t complain and say they
would rather do something else.

Q.: What I found here in teaching was that a great number of students who would become juniors or seniors had never heard the term *term paper.* What did this mean? And I wondered what kind of classes have you had that you have never had to do things like that. Here I was expecting them to do something that I thought they all understood.

AA: They don’t have a clue. That was one of the reasons at the end of last year I was so relieved to retire because the students were simply not prepared to do the work that students had done for 30 years before. They hadn’t had to work hard in high school, and they didn’t have the will to try to learn anything new. I always enjoyed reading. Well, if you give them a book to read, they practically faint. Going to the library is a lost skill.

Q.: Well, it’s going to be even more that way because they are teaching that in school these days, if you want something you can get it on the Internet. I am not saying that the Internet shouldn’t be used, but I keep wondering what’s happened to books.

A: Well, it’s not a substitute for books, and so many of these things on the Internet that my students show me are already pre-digested, and the conclusions have already been set out. That’s not scholarship or knowledge. They should pay attention to who they are reading, what right does he have to write about this subject, and what does he know about this.

Q.: Rose, did you have to be on university committees and things like that?

A: Well, that was the reason that I didn’t get a lot of raises, which would have been nice. I was away quite a bit, and when I was here, I was spending my time teaching my students or grading my papers. Professor Saul was very firm about this because I hadn’t served on committees that he thought I should have at the University of Kansas. You can’t
have everything. I've enjoyed my years at the University of Kansas and I have had some wonderful students.

Q.: One of my big reasons for retiring a bit early was that I was tired of being put on committees where I had no capacity. There was no reason for me to be there. I didn't have any interest in what they were doing, but they just felt maybe that somebody from Journalism, so I would get a call from Strong Hall or somewhere to be on a committee, and I just got tired of that. I understood promotions, although I did have a lot of difficulty comprehending some of the scientific stuff that we were supposed to be able to evaluate. Some of these other things were kind of hard for me to comprehend. How about here in town, have you done much in the community?

A: I've done some things for the Humane Society. I was on the board for several years, but, again, I would be gone for a semester or something like that, and what they really wanted were people who were there all the time. After Helen Melton left, I sort of lost interest. All my dogs are Humane Society dogs, but I see the people out there quite a bit and I like them a lot. I think they are really doing their job and trying to look after the animals and the sort of public relations things they try to keep going. I say they do a wonderful job.

Q.: Do you participate in a church?

A: I go to the Trinity Episcopal Church with the Shirers. We have had some difficulties down there in recent years, and I don't know why it is that when people get together they seem not to be able to get along. One of the things that was nice about the history department up until recent years was that it was a very congenial department. You could disagree without having it being taken personally. In the >60s, >70s and into the >80s,
but I was away in the >80s half of the time. I thought that the university had more collegiality to it. One could disagree with people violently in department meetings, but you would meet them somewhere like the Burzles or somewhere else. They would have a party and one wouldn’t snarl at the people you met. One would be cordial and congenial. I think that’s gone a lot.

Q.: I think it has too.
A.: That’s a pity. The Robinsons were so good at having small dinner parties where they would have two or three historian couples and then people from all sorts of departments.

Q.: Rose, I know you have traveled a lot, but have you traveled just for fun sometimes, or has it been mainly for things you were doing over in the Middle East?
A.: Oh, the Middle Eastern travel had been for work, but I loved every minute of it.

Q.: How about Europe itself? Did you travel much in the European continent?
A.: Bob and I went to Italy two or three times, mainly to get some sun because if you have been in the rain for a year or two without much sun, one really needs sun. I didn’t travel much in Europe. I went to Switzerland once. Last summer on Semester at Sea, we did this journey which started in Greece and went to Spain, up to Norway to St. Petersburg, back to Belgium, Portugal, Italy and then the thing I was so glad about was that we hit Egypt for a few days, and Israel, just about three weeks before the thing went to pieces. The main reason I wanted to go was I had never been to St. Petersburg, and I wanted to see that very badly.

Q.: That’s something we would like to do, but I don’t know whether we are ever going to make it.
A: Oh, I hope so because after all I just did and it’s well worth the effort. Then I wanted to see Egypt and Israel again. I hadn’t been in Egypt since the 1960s and I had only been in Israel once and that was on a Semester at Sea. When I worked for British Petroleum, I couldn’t go to Israel. I could only go to Arab countries. I am so glad to be able to see Jerusalem again. That was nice.

Q: What do you think is going to happen over there?

A: Well, nothing good, Calder. I mean it’s just not to be settled. The thing that worries me so much about these peace negotiations that Clinton had was that it brought up hopes, which have no basis or foundation. Whatever happens, everyone is going to be disappointed. I don’t see that the Arab/Israeli thing is to be settled. It’s pie in the sky to expect it’s going to be. One of the things that’s difficult now is that most of the scholars in the United States today are Arabist. You don’t have anybody that I know of who’s writing on Middle Eastern history who’s a Persian scholar. There are very few Ottomans, and they are not writing books. We have a few good Ottoman scholars, but they aren’t publishing. Almost all of the Middle East textbooks are written by Arabists, and that is too bad.

Q: What do you do to enjoy life?

A: I ride horses.

Q: You ride horses. Now you said you have dogs.

A: I have four dogs.

Q: What kind are they?

A: They are all Humane Society dogs.
Q.: What are the breeds?
A: Two Shetland sheep dogs, one German short hair pointer, and one mix. She is a puppy I got when my Alexander died. He was a Shetland sheep dog from England. She is part elk hound and part Collie. I called her Elkie.

Q.: Do you garden?
A: I do. I love it.

Q.: Do you have a computer?
A: No.

Q.: You don’t? Neither do I. I keep telling people I am not going to.
A: I am not going to either.

Q.: I haven’t felt a need for it.
A: Well, I haven’t either. At West Point we had to use computers and we had to use e-mail. We had to read our e-mail three times a day. They are wonderful things, but I don’t want to spend my time that way. If I were younger, it’s one thing. I don’t have that many more years left, and I don’t want to spend it at a computer. I really don’t.

Q.: That’s the way I feel. How’s your health?
A: I had a stroke about 18 months ago, but I have made a good recovery, I think.

Q.: I don’t see anything, just looking at you, watching you move and so on.
A: It’s in my left side. I reconstructed, apparently, my motor skills pretty quickly. It hit the message center. It was a small stroke, but it was way down deep. The doctors are very pessimistic in the way they say once you have had a stroke, you are never the same. I’m not going to worry about it too much.
Q.: Well, you know, I have reached the point I am not going to worry a whole lot because I figure when you are 80 that you have already had a pretty good life.

A: I've had a wonderful life.

Q.: Well, yes. Is this a place that you were glad you were able to live in?

A: Yes, I wouldn't have come if I hadn't. Well, Bob wanted to come, and I was perfectly happy at British Petroleum. I was very tired, but I was glad to come home. I was also very happy in England. A house we had just looked at in a village in Norfolk had just come on the market when he was asked if he would come here. We didn't regret saying goodbye to that house, but if I had to live there, I would have been happy. You know, if you have to carry the coal, and we had to carry it upstairs and use those old boilers they had. It's nice to have central heat. It's really nice.

Q.: Well, we didn't see much of it when we stayed. We went over there for a semester in 1979 and it was one of the coldest winters they had ever had, and on top of that there was a dustmans' strike in London. We were out, oh, Rose, I am having an awful time remembering little things like that, it's out in the west. It was kind of cosmopolitan. It seemed to me it was so dirty because everyone was throwing things around, but no one would pick it up. We went up to Hampstead Heath once. We wanted to go see the John Keats home, and we got up there and the heath was covered with garbage bags. That's the place where they were being stored during that strike. That was awful, but I think that it is a lovely place. Rose, I am sure there are things that we ought to get included that we haven't talked about. I would like you to copy some of these things for me and send it to me. I will just include that when this is wrapped up. What will happen, the
way this is done, I will give the tape to a typist and it won’t be done for a few weeks.

A: That’s all right. That’s fine.

Q: After it is transcribed, I will get a copy to you and you will have an opportunity to go over it and check on things. There will be some spellings and things like that that these young gals who type just don’t know. Some of the names you have mentioned and things like that. I have really enjoyed talking with you today.

A: Well, it’s been a pleasure to talk to you, Calder.

Q: I haven’t seen you for such a long time and I have been looking forward to this, and I was really glad when I called you and you told me that you would be willing to do this.

A: I am happy to have been able to do this.