

INTERVIEWEE: JIM WOODWARD

INTERVIEWER: Michael Gorman

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MG: Good afternoon, my name is Michael Gorman. I'm the Dean of Library Services at California State University and we're here this afternoon to talk to Jim Woodward about his family and their contributions to Fresno. And his own contributions to Fresno. It's two o'clock on Tuesday, January the 9th, 2007. Let me begin by going all the way back to your great-grandfather, Oscar James Woodward, who was born in 1849 and came here to Fresno from Clinton, Illinois. Was he born in Illinois? Did he come there from somewhere else?

JW: I don't know for certain, but that is the first place that I'm familiar with where he resided, so I assume – I've always understood it was at least in that general area.

MG: And Clinton is what, down state Illinois somewhere?

JW: I have never been to Clinton. I'm not sure.

MG: Okay. Well, we can establish where that is and for a future event. Did he have a business partner in Clinton, or did he acquire his business partner in Fresno when he came here?

JW: My understanding he had a partner – his father actually was in business, and then went through some difficult times, as I understand. So my great-grandfather had to sort of step up and take the lead for the family. He went into the variety business, clothing and shoe business, and so forth, I understand. And then again I believe he

did have partners. Later, he actually went to Arizona, to the Phoenix area, I believe, and was also in business for a short time before he came to Fresno.

MG: So he came West but not directly to California.

JW: Apparently, he had come out just looking for opportunities, but on the way he did spend some time –

MG: When would that have been?

JW: Well, as I understand it, he came to Fresno in 1885.

MG: So he would have been thirty-five or so.

JW: Right. But he apparently got more into the land and possibly cattle or ag business in the Phoenix area for a couple years, and then apparently sold property at a fairly substantial gain and came to Fresno, where he stayed, of course.

MG: Do you know what brought him to Fresno?

JW: No, I don't, other than when he – apparently, when he came out sort of prospecting and looking for opportunities, it somehow attracted him. Of course, Phoenix, in many ways, has many similarities to Fresno in a variety of ways.

MG: Very much so, particularly in those days I would think. And he had a partner here called Jacob Vogel?

JW: I thought that was prior to being in Fresno, but he, I know, connected very quickly with some partners here in business, which eventually led into the banking area.

MG: So he was thirty-five years old. Was he already married when he came to Fresno?

JW: I believe so, because of the dates involved. I don't know for certain, but that was always my impression.

MG: Do you know where your great-grandmother, Anna Rudolph, came from?

JW: I don't, but of course she died quite a bit before my great-grandfather passed away.

MG: Yes he lived a long life.

JW: For those days.

MG: So its 1885 when he came to Fresno, and he turned his hand to banking? Is that right?

JW: Really, real estate and land development was his primary activity, as I understood it. The banking was more incidental, even though it was early on. He was, I guess, the cashier at the beginning for the First National Bank of Fresno, which later was sold, or merged if you will, to the Bank of Italy. He went on that board and was still active to some degree in banking. I know when he passed away in 1935, about three months after I was born, he was still by then on the Bank of America's board, because we received a letter from Giannini, and et cetera.

MG: The Bank of Italy became Bank of America.

JW: Exactly.

MG: And there's a Bank of Italy building just south of downtown in Fresno, is that right?

JW: I hadn't heard that reference to it, although it may have been. The old Bank of America building, of course, has been relatively vacant for – it's kind of amazing – for many –

MG: There is a building down there, if you look up it says Bank of Italy at the top. Fresno would have been quite a small town in those days, and agricultural center, so, presumably, all his real estate and banking activities were connected with agribusiness.

JW: Yes, although he did, I know, begin developments of small subdivisions in southwest Fresno. I think there was a reference to Woodward additions, and you'll find a Woodward Avenue down south, and so forth.

MG: That's actually a county boulevard?

JW: Actually, I think it's south.

MG: Further south?

JW: Yes, uh-huh. I know he and the rest of the family tended to purchase real estate outside the borders of the town to the north as the town grew to it. That was kind of a pattern that I noticed for several generations, actually.

MG: Before we leave his wife, you say she died relatively young. There's a fountain erected in her honor in Courthouse Park?

JW: Right. That fountain was actually designed by my aunt, my father's sister. I've forgotten the exact year. It originally was located west of the courthouse rather than sort of southwest, where it is now. It was relocated when the new courthouse was built, but for many years it was out more on Van Ness.

MG: Was that put there by your great-grandfather?

JW: Yes. And then restored by my father until, unfortunately, it was vandalized quite a bit, particularly because of the metals and copper, and so forth, in the fountain. It's a constant challenge to keep it in good repair these days.

MG: So he rose from being just a cashier to being on the board of the bank.

JW: I believe he became president about a year later, actually.

MG: From a cashier.

JW: Obviously, I'm going on other people's accounts, but that's my understanding.

MG: I understand he had a business maxim, "Early to bed, early to rise. Work like hell and advertise."

JW: Yes, I've had that – and I've had a couple of attorneys in town say that they followed that. After attorneys started advertising more, that's what they were falling back on as a reason. (chuckles)

MG: He also was involved in community affairs in what was then a growing town. Do you know what his – was he a philanthropist, or was he in service clubs, or –

JW: The only thing I recall specifically, I believe he was on the first board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce. I know from accounts, and even people that actually knew him and banked with him – when I first came out of law school, I had an opportunity to run into people for the first few years who actually had banked with him. Then, of course, from what I've read and so forth, I know he was very active and participated, I think, in a number – I don't know the specific ones in those days. I do know one, the Nutritional Home, I think that was one. And, of course, the charities and the needs were a little different in those days than they are now, but I know he was active in that type of thing.

MG: I suppose the bank wouldn't have had a great deal of competition at that time. I don't know how many banks there would be in Fresno, but I can't imagine there were very many.

JW: From what I've heard – in fact, at one time I thought this was the first bank, but I think there were actually several small banks.

MG: But the president of what was probably the largest bank would have been a very important person in city life.

JW: And banking was very different in those days, from the accounts, certainly, that I got from some of the customers. Of course, we recognize that the Depression was well upon them, and there were some very difficult times. There's quite a few stories related to that and his activities there in terms of dealing –

MG: Did he remain active until the end of his life then? He died in 1935.

JW: He was. As I say, he was, I know, still on the Bank of America board, and others. So my understanding and the pictures would indicate that he was in pretty good health and was still traveling right up until his death.

MG: Did he ever play any part in public life? Did he ever seek office be on the council? Very often in cities at that time, the banker became the mayor.

JW: Not to my knowledge.

MG: Very often in cities at that time, the bankers became the mayors.

JW: I sensed – and again, I just sensed – that he was a more behind the scenes type. Although, quite outgoing and pretty sure of himself, and so forth, you know, pretty confident, is my impression from what people have said and the photographs I've seen.

MG: Where did they live?

JW: Well, the homes that I'm aware of, one was on O Street, and it was well gone before I came back, or was at least aware of it. Then I believe another one was on Home Avenue, which is farther north. That's up near Fresno High, but below that area. Those are the only two –

MG: Were they substantial houses, large houses?

JW: I don't know. For the day they may have been. From the photographs I've seen, they were fairly typical of those homes down in that part of town at that time. As you know, there were some pretty nice homes.

MG: Very nice homes.

JW: Yeah, like the Meux home, and so forth.

MG: Well, before we move on to another generation, there's a couple of things about him. I have a note that he traveled quite extensively. Is that correct?

JW: That was my understanding. I know occasionally we'd come across articles, and I don't recall specific ones, which he apparently would have brought back from various parts – but I guess, again for that time, it was a little more unusual. But he did enjoy it and apparently traveled quite a bit.

MG: To Italy among other things I would assume? How many children did they have?

JW: They had three children. My grandfather, of course, Roy Woodward, and Ralph Woodward, and then a daughter, Abby Woodward Parker. So there were three that I'm aware of. Of course, in those days, they've lost the – so I may not even be aware –

MG: So they were the ones who achieved adulthood. Did they all three stay in Fresno? I know your grandfather did.

JW: Two out of the three. Roy and Ralph, of course, did stay in Fresno. I say of course because they went in business together and did a variety of things. Abby married a fella by the name of – I believe it was Graham Parker. That was also, I believe, the name of her one son. But she lived a great deal of time both in New York and in San Francisco.

MG: Do you mean successively, or they had homes in both places?

JW: No, I think successively. She was single – I never knew her husband or anything. I met her son, who had gone to Harvard Business School, and so forth, and came out a few times, but not often.

MG: He would have been about the same age as your father, I suppose.

JW: That probably would be about right, yeah.

MG: Good. Well, your grandfather was Roy J. Woodward, so the sequence of Oscar James Woodward was broken by one generation.

JW: And the interesting thing to me was – at least I was told that the J did not stand for James. It didn't stand for anything, it was just J. So I don't know. At least, that's what I was told.

MG: Harry S. Truman was the same, wasn't it? The S. didn't stand for anything. Maybe it was a habit in those days. He was born in 1878, so only about three years or so after they came to Fresno. Was he the oldest of the three?

JW: I was just trying to think ahead, anticipating that question. Ralph was alive longer, so I knew him, so he probably was younger, although that's – although, my grandfather died at a relatively young age, Roy did. As I recall, in 1940.

MG: He was only sixty-two.

JW: Mm-hmm. I was about five or six years old, roughly, so I remember him but not with any specifics. Whereas, Ralph I hunted with and knew quite well.

MG: Where was your grandfather educated?

JW: That I don't know. I don't know the extent of any really formal education. I know my great-grandfather graduated from high school with honors, as I understand it,



but was probably more interested in formal education than my grandfather. I say that because my dad always mentioned that it was his grandfather who really helped him through school, and particularly the Harvard Business School. He was more interested than his father was.

MG: Now, before we leave your great-grandfather, there is something else, to go back to Illinois and before. Woodward is an English name. Were his ancestors English?

JW: I have some material, and at one time I was gathering more. One of my cousins has gone to quite a bit of an extent to try to develop more. But I don't recall ever really knowing a great deal other than just general – yes, and you're right, it's a –

MG: It's interesting to have this partner Jacob Vogel, and I was thinking if Clinton's in down state Illinois, down state Illinois is very heavily German. If you go to some of these small towns and go to the graveyards, it's not only the name's German but the headstones have German words on them. So just wondering if maybe there was a German connection.

JW: I looked into a little bit of that, but not as much as I probably should. I know some of it's available. I did have an interesting conversation with Bob Woodward, the author, whose family also came from Clinton, Illinois. Now, we didn't go beyond that. He was out here at the library for a function some years ago. I probably should take a little trip back there and check things out.

MG: That would be a remarkable coincidence if they weren't related, both from Clinton, Illinois.

JW: Yeah.

MG: Your grandfather, he obviously graduated from high school. Are you saying he didn't go to college?

JW: I don't believe so. He may have, but not to my – the first reference to college that I'm aware of was with my parents, and both went to Berkeley for undergraduate. I probably would have heard is all I can say.

MG: But it wasn't they lacked the means because your great-grandfather was very successful.

JW: No, and Roy was very, very interested, as we all know, in his library and all that came with it. And he was much more focused, apparently, on that than he was in the business world, although he, as I say was in –

MG: He was very interested in art and reading and books and the library.

JW: And particularly the – I would think to have a library to the degree he did at that time was somewhat unusual, a whole separate library.

MG: I imagine there's a story there. Heaven knows what it is, but – did he, as far as you know, ever think of following his father into banking?

JW: I never heard anything along that line. My understanding was that he was much quieter, softer, more interested in the literary aspects. What little bit I remember of him was being very mild and not so much business-driven as I know that my great-grandfather was, and I think Ralph was. As I knew him, he certainly was.

MG: What did your grandfather do as a young man?

JW: He and his brother, I know they had a farm implement business.

MG: Oh, he went into business as quite a young man, then.

JW: Well, that – and again I don't know the exact age reference, but I know that, and the real estate development pattern, I think, involved them all. They apparently did quite a bit of business together, as I understood it.

MG: So he and his brother, Ralph, had an implement business of selling to the farmers, and so on?

JW: Mm-hmm.

MG: Did they have a store?

JW: I've seen photographs of a – and I know they're out there somewhere. Either we have them at the library here or the Historical Society, I know. But very definitely. Now, how long that business was in existence, I don't know, but it was a significant building and employees, and so forth.

MG: But eventually he moved on from that into some other businesses?

JW: Well, again I'm not sure when that terminated, but I think mostly it was real estate after that. That was the pattern, I think.

MG: So they played a part in the development of Fresno, the building of new houses all that kind of thing?

JW: More commercial than – although, I think some of the earlier subdivisions that my great-grandfather was involved with were definitely residential. Several buildings of which – like the Temple Bar building, which is an old building in Fresno. I'm not certain whether the First National Bank of Fresno was owned by – but there are a number of downtown properties over the years that were owned. That's when some of those buildings were really quite attractive and quite special. I know you've seen the photographs. It was really neat.

MG: The old Fresno photographs, they're wonderful. Your great-grandfather would become a real pillar of the community, a prominent person in Fresno, so I imagine that your grandfather and his brother knew all the other old Fresno families and they had relationships going back over a number of generations, I would imagine.

JW: I think very much so, because even I felt that when I was young and in grade school and junior high school and high school, and then came back. Some of the relationships go back a long way, and they involve a lot of the names which everyone's familiar with. But I'd say the only difference, other than in the banking area – well, I was going to say there wasn't as much agriculture involvement as with many of the other families that I'm familiar with. However, having said that, they did have the farm implement business, so maybe there was.

MG: When I think of the Peters family, for example, didn't he make his money on agricultural machinery or something of that nature?

JW: And other types, and the foundry. Well, I think everything, as we know, pretty much can be traced to the agricultural base that we've had here for so –

MG: It bound them together, the banking, the land and everything else. Now, your grandfather married a Miss Deely[?]. What was her first name?

JW: Saida.

MG: Was that a contraction, or was that her full name? Do you know?

JW: That was her full name, as far as I know. I knew her and was very close to her. She was a very important part of the family. Of course, with my grandfather passing so soon, relatively young. She was great with her grandkids, I can tell you that.

MG: She was a widow for quite a while.

JW: Yes.

MG: Where did the Deelys come from? Do you know?

JW: I don't recall. Some are from back East, for sure, because I can recall from just people visiting and their connections with the Washington senators and some of the old (indecipherable), and so forth. But I don't recall the specific area.

MG: It sounds like an Irish name. Maybe they were from Massachusetts. But they met in Fresno, as far as you know?

JW: As far as I know, yes.

MG: So, your grandfather was successful in business with his brother and had the means and the time to take an interest in the arts and literature and book collecting and other things. Was he at all involved then what then was Fresno State College?

JW: Not to my knowledge. He could have been, although I don't know on the timing. He may or may not have been. I don't know what the timeframe there is. But, of course, later, as you well know, his library became a part of –

MG: Certainly. That's his connection with the university?

JW: Yes.

MG: Where did they live in Fresno?

JW: They lived on Wilson in Old Fig Garden at the northeast corner of Saginaw Way, right across from Judge Gilbert Jertberg, who was one of his closest friends, by far. They both built adobe homes, which had some problems in the thirties when that canal there overflowed and created – because in those days, the adobe homes weren't built the way they are today, so they basically dissolved. I have seen films of people in the boats and floating pianos. Not pretty. But they rebuilt.

MG: They rebuilt an adobe, or they built with brick?

JW: Yeah. They rebuilt adobe, but I think a little different form. By then I think they'd developed techniques that worked a little better.

MG: Do you know why they did that? Was that for esthetic reasons, where they liked the look of it?

JW: My guess is that they – I think they had learned the benefits from temperature, living here and so forth. I'm sure that –

MG: Not a lot of air conditioning at the time.

JW: Exactly. Although, my understanding is that my grandfather actually developed a form of air conditioning system, of fans over blocks of ice. Of course, I can remember blocks of ice being delivered during the icebox days, because that's what it was, you know. But in those days, of course, they had the fans, and my grandmother, I still remember – and I have some of them, the old black rotating fans, which worked pretty well, except for little small kids that want to put their fingers in the blades doesn't work quite so well.

MG: Can you remember this house?

JW: Oh, very well. I almost purchased it, actually. It had been on the market once or twice way back. It was built in a U-shape, as was very common, with the more Mexican-type approach, and that's where I think the influence came. In fact, their summer home was similar, only completely surrounded by –

MG: Did they live there their whole married life in this house?

JW: Well, for many years. I don't have the exact dates, but they were certainly there when he passed away.

MG: And your grandmother stayed there?

JW: She stayed for a while, but then moved over to a home on Wishon that was a little easier to take care of. This was a pretty large home. It was actually purchased by Sandy and Agnes Crockett when they came to town. They had a large family, and they were very active. A lot of the boys are still around. So that was perfect for them.

MG: They lived in your grandparents' house.

JW: For quite a few years, mm-hmm.

MG: Where on Wishon was your grandmother?

JW: She was up between Collins and Indianapolis, on the east side.

MG: Is that house still standing?

JW: I think so. Probably well remodeled, as most of those homes in there are now.

MG: That's on the edge of the Old Fig Garden area.

JW: Yeah, although some people will go to Maroa, depends on who you're talking to.

MG: And you mentioned their summer home. That was up at Huntington Lake?

JW: Huntington Lake. They built that in '22 or '23. They had, before that, one of the very first homes up there while they were actually building the dam – the dams, there were three or four. But as soon as that was done, then they decided to build on the other side, and the road wasn't even there, so they brought all the materials by boat, actually, across, to build that home. I have photographs of that under construction.

MG: Was it literally a log cabin?

JW: Well, we called it a cabin, but it had five or seven bedrooms, whatever it was. I had another opportunity to buy that also, but it was a little much. I did have the good fortune to visit that a year ago, and they've kept it almost – the only thing they had to change, of course, was the kitchen, a little bit. But they've tried to keep it exactly the same. Of course, the Forest Service demands certain things anyway. But they've kept it – it's only had – this is the second owner, actually, after my dad sold it in 1964. A lot of us spent all our summers up there.

MG: Well, your family had it from 1923 to 1964.

JW: Mm-hmm.

MG: It was important to get out of Fresno, if you could, in the summer.

JW: My dad would literally pack up in June and not come back 'til September. I learned more, in many ways, about history up there than anywhere. I mean, we had all these old kerosene – and one-sided records. We had no regular telephone. Of course, we'd go down the market and crank. It was a great experience, actually.

MG: How many children did your grandfather have?

JW: Two, my dad and my Aunt Atha, who I've mentioned, who had designed the memorial fountain for my great-grandmother. After leaving Fresno, and exactly when that was I'm not sure, but she lived primarily in the Bay Area.

MG: Your Uncle Ralph was born in 1881, I see, so he was three years younger than your grandfather. How long did he live?

JW: Well, boy, I'd have to go back and trace it back to the park of course. He was the one that was primarily responsible for the park, and left the funds, and so forth.



But again I can't put the exact years together. It would have been the fifties, early sixties, somewhere in there, late fifties.

MG: So he was eighty-something. He was, of course, very well known in this town because of Woodward Park, that he is the Woodward of the Woodward Park. When he gave it to the city, was it just land, or was it landscaped in any way?

JW: There's a lot of misunderstanding along that line, which is only natural, I suppose. Actually, what happened, he left the funds to create a park, which had to include a bird sanctuary, because he was an avid hunter, but very much a sportsman and outdoor – there was a trust established, basically, to develop something. What was kind of interesting is, they were all ready to go out east of Fresno, out to Belmont and that area. They had some land they had identified. But, fortunately – some of us feel fortunately – one of the trustees had to be replaced, and Lou Eaton replaced him, who was a good family friend, as well as knew the community extremely well. It was through his leadership that we were able to identify the land out north. And it was largely because he was president of the U.S. Savings and Loan League at the time, which was headquartered in New York. The owners of that property, Santa Monica Land Company, were actually headquartered in New York, so he was able to do some lobbying and negotiating, because they'd held that property back for a more public use from their prior sales of the rest of the ground out there.

So anyway, that was put together, and I've always felt that Howard Holman, who was the director of Parks and Recreation here, was never given maybe quite enough credit, because he really helped put that whole package together because it did involve some federal help as well, eventually. It was just that he was able to

coordinate a lot of forces, and as we know, a lot of projects don't always go as well as we would like, but there was one that really worked.

Regarding the status of the ground, it was completely bare. I remember very well. I mean, it was just rolling hills, with no trees. Fortunately, the city had, and probably still has, a tree farm. So they gained a number of years' growth by being able to plant fairly good-sized trees. There are a lot of stories along with anything like that development. One of them that's always tickled me that one of our city councilmen, probably more than one, but one didn't even want to accept it because he felt it was too far out. They were concerned about police protection, and so forth. What they did is actually they annexed it by doing a two-foot or a three-foot wide strip right out Blackstone to connect with the park. I got to see that develop, which again I think was a very successful park.

MG: And I assume a much better piece of land from the park's point of view because it's hills and undulating, much more interesting terrain.

JW: Exactly. And, of course, the bluff itself is terrific, with the airplanes and everything else that they can do.

MG: So the land itself has no connection with the Woodward family.

JW: It was purchased by his trust.

MG: And your uncle didn't have a sort of vision of a particular park, he just wanted *a* park with a bird sanctuary.

JW: The bird sanctuary, I believe, had to occupy a certain percentage of the park.

MG: Does it still?

JW: Yes, absolutely. The only thing I'd like to kind of watch – because the intent was very clear that it was to be a passive park. That is, it was to be more for the picnics and the families and not a lot of machinery, and so forth. I certainly don't have any say whatsoever, but the only time I've spoken up is when there have been attempts to get a little too commercial, whether it be restaurants or other things, which I think is totally inappropriate and not right. I'm out there enough to know that when you have these kinds of activities – I mean, even the light show at Christmas, which is a wonderful idea, except you put up all these strings of wires, and then the runners are tripping over them. So you've got to be very careful. The amphitheater was one of the big issues. The Philharmonic wanted – which is a great idea – an outdoor – and we eventually did it, through Rotary, in which I participated – again it was scaled down. If that becomes a destination, then you've missed –

MG: You've got (indecipherable) crowds and car parks and –

JW: I think the Japanese, the Shinzen Garden is terrific, but I don't think you should put a restaurant in. That's where I think you have to speak up.

MG: We're getting ahead of ourselves. Can you talk about the Japanese garden? I think it is one of the great amenities of Fresno, and how it came about.

JW: I wasn't very much involved at all in that stage, but a group of citizens who felt that that would be appropriate, and particularly in connection with – I believe I'm correct here – with one of our sister cities, and so forth, but perpetuate it. And it continues at a rather moderate pace to grow. In fact, I was just talking to a fella today that's on the board, one of the judges, Dale Kidd. They continue, but in small

steps. They've had a few challenges, unfortunately, again with vandalism and things. But it's terrific.

MG: It's the one place I always take visitors in Fresno. There are a number of other things to see, but I always make sure they go there.

JW: There again, they've been careful with the teahouse, and so forth, not to get overdone with it. But, no, I couldn't agree more. It's just a great benefit.

MG: And as it turns out, it's now surrounded by housing and developments and it's not too far north at all. Then they thought that this campus that we're on was too far north at the time.

JW: No question. It's interesting.

MG: I have a note here that your great-aunt Abby, who didn't stay in Fresno, was a benefactress at the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Fresno.

JW: I knew Abby quite well. When I was at school in the Bay Area, she was living there in San Francisco. I have a lot of stories as far as Abby. She's been called a lot of different things. Eccentric might be one of them. Many of us thought she probably really preferred animals to human beings is probably the essence of a lot of that. But she was quite a gal. Very independent, very businesslike. The only kind of sad thing, which I will share with you, is that she wanted to set up a foundation, and with some encouragement from some others, she was in the process of one that would be more ongoing and more – unfortunately, that did not occur before her death, so her estate basically went to the SPCA, and to even some fire departments in New York and San Francisco, and wherever. But it was just one of those things that never got quite put together, which was just kind sad only

in the sense it probably would have benefited more people for a longer period of time.

MG: Did she come back to Fresno?

JW: No.

MG: But she used to visit here.

JW: She lived next to the Mark Hopkins up there in that Stanford Court.

MG: In the Mark Hopkins, I know exactly where that is,

JW: It's pretty well known.

MG: Beautiful place.

JW: But she was never dull. She was very interesting.

MG: But she did come down to Fresno to visit family?

JW: My dad. She liked my dad. She didn't like everybody, to tell you the truth.

(chuckles) She only liked certain people.

MG: But you as a child liked her?

JW: We got along fine, yeah. I think – well, she probably preferred men anyway, just in general.

MG: I noticed that your father, who was Oscar James Woodward II, not junior because his father wasn't called Oscar James Woodward, was born the same year as my father in nineteen hundred and three.

JW: Right.

MG: He was one of, you've already told me, two children, right?

JW: Mm-hmm.

MG: And the older of the two, I think. Is that right?

JW: Yeah.

MG: Did he go to school in Fresno as a child?

JW: He went as a child. I don't know the exact sequence in years, but I know he used to talk a lot about where Fresno State was, where the city college was, which was in the normal school, and this and that. But there was a lot of different stages on that same property, apparently, at different times. He always felt quite close to all – and stayed very involved. He may have gone to Fresno State, but I'm really not sure, before he went to Berkeley. If so, it would have been for a short time.

MG: Take some preliminary classes or something of that nature.

JW: I don't know what the status of schools were at that time, but I know that he always felt a close connection and stayed involved with both schools.

MG: And he grew up in the house in Oak Creek Gardens.

JW: Right. Then not too long after his father passed away in 1940, we moved. We were actually living up in Oakland at the time. That's where I was born, in Oakland. He was working with Blythe Company, a stock brokerage house, at the time. He'd just come back from Harvard Business School. So we came back, and then he built the house on Wilson and Indianapolis. We were in there by the end of 1941, only because I can remember listening to the radio on Pearl Harbor – those things you don't forget.

MG: So your father went to Fresno public schools?

JW: Yes.

MG: Then after possibly a brief time at Fresno State College as I guess it would have been in those days, he went to Berkeley to study –

JW: Probably business or economics. I don't know his exact major, but I would have believed it was business, or possibly economics.

MG: And he got a bachelor's degree there?

JW: Yes.

MG: And then what, came back to Fresno?

JW: I believe he came back for a short time and was branch manager, I believe, for the first Bank of America branch in Kingsburg, is where I think they settled. For how long I'm not quite sure, but not a particularly long period of time. They were here for a while and then went back East to go to the Business School at Harvard.

MG: He went to business school at Harvard. So then he would have been in his mid-twenties, or something like that?

JW: Yeah. I know when he went to Harvard, it wasn't like he was twenty-one. I think it was more like twenty-five or something.

MG: So that would put him at the end of the twenties. So he got his business degree just before the great crash. (both laugh) Not a very good a very good time to be going into that line. What did he do after Harvard?

JW: He came back to the Bay Area and worked for Blythe until his father passed away.

MG: They're a construction company?

JW: Blythe was a fairly high-end, if you will, brokerage company. Charlie Blythe was, I believe, from the San Francisco area. It was quite well known. It no longer exists, obviously. But it didn't really merge as far – maybe it merged with something, it probably did, but no one that I'm familiar with. He was basically a security analyst at that level, I think, at that time.

MG: So he worked for someone else, but then in 1940 came back to Fresno after your grandfather died?

JW: Right. I know his primary activities at that time would be to sort of take care of the family, his mother and sister and their properties, which they had here, which involved a certain amount. But also he was involved – actually ran a family owned company that the ownership was a family in the Bay Area, through some school connections, kind of a typical deal. But they owned property in a number of places, actually, including Kern County and other places. It's called Portals Corporation. So he served as their president, or whatever, for a number of years.

MG: In Fresno.

JW: Mm-hmm. And did develop shopping centers for them, as well as for himself. It was just a family that had some assets but needed management, because their properties were kind of spread out and mixed. At the time I remember there was a lot of consolidation that had to be done. When they finally got that worked out, then he, as I said, began doing some new properties for them, first in Ashlan and a number of places. I don't know how many exactly. Well, the University Portals subdivision out here, where many people, professors and others, have lived, he did that.

MG: Where is that?

JW: Well, it's bordered by – it's been a while since I – I've got to think now – Cedar and Barstow on up to Bullard, I guess. There's quite a – they purchased it out of an estate at a very attractive price and were able to – a lot of young professionals were attracted to it. It's hard to recall the exact timeframe, but it was very successful.



MG: That was the far northern edge of the city at that time.

JW: And the university, of course, was just coming. That's why it's University Portals. It had, I guess, those almond trees? I think that's what they are. Which made a very nice development. They farmed it for a couple years to pay taxes. That used to be part of the scheme. I mean, if you had something like that, you could carry it for a few years while the town grew to you. Then that changed a little when the taxes started getting well beyond what you could farm the trees, and so forth.

MG: I think it's probably time for a break. Shall we take a break for five minutes?

JW: It's fine with me.

[pause]

MG: Your father coming back to Fresno in 1940, but we need to go back a bit before that to when he married. He was married twice.

JW: Right.

MG: To Beatrice Denke, and she was from –

JW: From San Francisco. They met at Berkeley, at the University of California.

MG: And her family, were they from San Francisco?

JW: Yes. And for some time pretty well established and had quite a bit of history there. But that's where she grew up.

MG: He was born in 1903, so they married in the 1930s?

JW: It must have been. I'd have to write it down to figure all – but they were certainly married when they – I think right out of school and when they came back here, before they went back to Boston. And again I just don't know.

MG: He was married when he went to the Harvard Business School.

JW: Yes. My sister was born back there.

MG: And she's your older sister?

JW: She's a year and a half older, yeah.

MG: Beverly?

JW: Yes.

MG: Does she still live in Fresno?

JW: No. Actually, she lives in Waltham, Massachusetts.

MG: And did she marry someone from there and move away?

JW: She also went to Berkeley for a while and then went back to the East Coast and has spent most of her life back there, either in the New York area or in the Boston area and Waltham. She's married to a math professor who just retired from Brandeis. They live just a few blocks from Brandeis there.

MG: Beautiful campus. So there was you and your sister, his children, were born in the 1930s.

JW: Yes.

MG: Then your father was married for a second time?

JW: In approximately the – I guess the early fifties was when he was remarried. So I have two half-sisters, two girls, Deborah and Carol.

MG: So your stepmother, Nadine, is she from Fresno?

JW: She was from the Fresno area. She was actually from Biola. Her family was the Lund[?] family. I don't know how close a relative was on our city council, some years ago. But she's from that area.

MG: And your father is in Fresno in 1940 in a house also in the Old Fig Garden?

JW: On Wilson and Indianapolis. It's been interesting that people have shown an interest in tracking the homes there and the architects. You may be familiar with the Powell who – so it just came up the other day. That's why I was thinking about it.

MG: Did he have a son or a grandson who is also an architect?

JW: I don't know.

MG: And your father built that house?

JW: Yes.

MG: So what did he stay with his mother or something when he was building the house? How did that work?

JW: I'm sure we stayed in the house there. I was about five or six years old, but I'm sure we stayed because there was plenty of room, and that would have been the logical – then once we were settled in is probably when my grandmother eventually sold the home and moved over on to Wishon Avenue.

MG: So your father came back here having left the brokerage business in the Bay Area and went into business for himself?

JW: Yes.

MG: As well as working for the Portals company, managing that company then.

JW: Right, exactly. He referred to it basically as property management, which nobody understood what it was. I'd always have to try to explain it to my schoolmates because they only knew about real estate agents, they didn't know property management. But he then, as I say, got into the actual development as well, both for his own account, for his family and for this other family.

MG: And he was doing commercial and residential development?

JW: Primarily commercial. He inherited some residential. In fact, some property right at Blackstone and Shaw, for example. I believe at one time or another he or the family owned every single one of those corners at different times, but it presented a lot of challenges, that particular corner, because of the access, and so forth.

Speaking of the residential, he quickly determined that he didn't enjoy dealing with residential property because of the personal difficulties, and, as he said, it's very difficult when you have a family, and with children, and they're not paying rent. So he wasn't comfortable.

MG: The residential business was developing rental properties rather than for sale?

JW: Yes, that was the difference.

MG: Develop it and then manage it.

JW: Because I think, particularly in those days, and it's true to a degree now, although maybe because of the tax laws it's a little different in terms of how you're going to manage your properties. But in those days, judging from the properties they had, they were looking more for steady income as opposed to turning them. For a number of years, more recent years, the capital gains tax has made it more attractive to turn property off and then just keep a flow. But that's always subject to change, too. But most of the focus, really, was on commercial, mostly on small shopping centers, Cedar and Shields, I mentioned Shaw and Palm, and First and Ashlan, and a couple of others. But they also owned some buildings, retail, downtown as well, just commercial buildings. I remember at one time Toys R Us was one. The whole block of Kern, Van Ness, to Broadway, to whatever the one is

south, the family had for quite a while, but it had different retailers at different times.

MG: Did he inherit a lot of properties from your grandfather, then?

JW: He definitely inherited a certain amount, particularly the downtown properties.

MG: So he inherited, and then developed more, and then sunk the money into developing some more, and so on.

JW: Yes. And then again he and his mother and sister, of course, were all parts of a lot of those properties, so they had to be managed, and he always took care of all that for them.

MG: Was there a company that he headed, or was it just his private business?

JW: Well, it's interesting you say that because today – well, particularly with the legal exposures that we have, I can't imagine not having a number of entities. That's somewhat what I do for a living is create them because you almost have to. But it's interesting. No, he really didn't have too much. They had the Woodward Family Properties, as they call them, or the Woodward Properties, and then the Portals Corporation, which I mentioned, that was a separate situation.

MG: Did he have a staff, people?

JW: Well, just very limited, some secretary or two –

MG: An office?

JW: On Kern Street again between Broadway and – it was right in that building for a number of years.

MG: He owned the building. He owned his own office.

JW: Yeah.

MG: Were there a number of other offices in that then as well?

JW: His was pretty separated because there were other uses, and again, mostly retail and other types. I don't recall the specific ones. I'm trying to think of the different corners, because they've changed so many times over the years. Luftenburg's used to be a department store type, a women's store, whatever. Then that was I think sold. Berkeley's for a while was down there, which was – but again, all that's a long time ago.

MG: Bill Patnaude told me a little while ago he bought an office down there. He has his office. He owns it.

JW: Right, exactly.

MG: I can't remember. He did tell me what it was before, but it obviously it had other interests.

JW: And I should remember, yeah.

MG: Your father, was he very immersed in his work? I mean, did it take up most of his time? Did he compartmentalize, as they say in these days? Go to work and come back and it would be behind him?

JW: From the time I can recall, once we were back here, and I can't recall prior to that – probably my age mostly – but he would go to the office relatively early every morning and work usually just through lunch or just after lunch. Then most of the rest of the day was taken up on community activities in general. I mean, he never, I would say, was committed full time to his – and certainly during the summer when he went to Huntington Lake all summer. But he had a lot of flexibility so he could do that. I always would express that he would spend about two-thirds of his time,

actually, and the other third – later in his life it was probably much – because he'd just go to the office a couple of hours.

MG: And, of course, in those days, if you were out of town then you were away from the office. There wasn't any e-mail or –

JW: Good point.

MG: Anything of that nature you really could shut it off. Actually, it occurs to me he's the same age as my father was. My father was a soldier in the war. I was wondering how the war affected your father.

JW: Well, I remember going down Mariposa and stopping at the draft station, or whatever they called it at the time, and being in the car and waiting for him to come out with the results and what the situation was. But because of – I'm not sure of the exact reasons – but some health reasons, he couldn't enlist, and so forth.

MG: I can't remember now – I don't really know about the Americans, but I know he'd have been thirty-eight at the beginning of the Americans entering the war. He would have been of draft age in Britain, but I suspect he might have been a bit old to be of draft age in the U.S. I think they were taking a lot more people in their twenties, I think.

JW: Except, possibly, I suppose that for certain needs, and so forth.

MG: Sure, with his business expertise -

JW: It's interesting how you remember those specific things.

MG: Well, it was probably something that was on your mind as a child. Was he going to go away? Do you think he wanted to take part in the war?

JW: Oh, absolutely. I think he felt a little frustrated. But, you know, that particular automobile trip – I was reminded this morning, I was talking to a fellow that they are going to do a plaza, a remembrance plaza out in Pinedale for the internment of the Japanese, and that's also some of the people involved with the garden out there, and so forth. But I remember so distinctly driving with that family, because my grandparents – of course, my grandfather had since passed away. But they had a family, a Japanese family living with them. They would do different things around the – and it was a whole family, though, with daughters and the couple, and so forth. And I remember having to take them out there. That's another drive you don't forget. It's just interesting how it just impacts, and you really don't know what's going on, but you certainly feel it and you never forget it. It stays with you.

MG: Did your mother die?

JW: No.

MG: They were divorced.

JW: They were divorced in – I guess it would have been the latter forties. I don't recall the exact dates, but –

MG: You stayed living with your father?

JW: Mm-hmm. My mother moved to Pasadena, to Southern California, and lived there, really, until just a few years before she passed away. She moved back to Fresno, and we kind of got things set up.

MG: She still had family here?

JW: Not really. I mean, just myself.

MG: Of course she was from the Bay Area anyway-



JW: By then she had a sister in Southern California that has since passed away, and then she had a very close cousin in San Francisco, in the Bay Area, but again, she had passed away. So she came back and was comfortable in doing that.

MG: So your father was, obviously, extremely successful in business. He came from a very successful business family. But he chose quite early on to do a lot of community work as well as business work?

JW: His objective was never to accumulate, it just wasn't. He got to a point and he made it very clear. It just wasn't in his mind. His concept I think was that – I mean, he always certainly took care of the family and everything, but his idea was not to build a lot and to pass it on. I mean, it just wasn't his objective. What was very interesting to me is that – he passed away in 1979, and it was just after an incredibly good real estate run, one of the best we had, until this last one. And he chose, really, not to get in it. I know he would have if someone had encouraged him or he had a reason, and so forth. It wasn't that. He just was not motivated by –

MG: So he stayed active in business, he was seventy six when he died?

JW: Pretty much. I started taking over a few things that just needed – but he was pretty much –

MG: He never actually retired as such?

JW: No. He reduced his hours and his secretary's to a couple hours, a couple days a week, and kind of got things in order where he didn't have to spend a great deal of time. He traveled a little bit more, but that was never his great interest. He particularly enjoyed traveling to the Orient and to that area, a lot of it because of his interest in art and various things. But it always surprised me that he only traveled

to Europe a couple of times, in spite of his considerable interest in art. Then, of course, as one gets a little further on, it's not as much fun. (chuckles) That was the only thing that kind of surprised me sometimes, that he didn't.

MG: In his community work what were his particular interests, I mean which features of community life was he particularly interested in?

JW: Well, one of the things that he expressed, as interested as he was in health-related and social issues, and so forth, he often felt that there were more appeal, more people willing to support health issues and some other issues than they were the arts and other things. He felt he ought to focus more on those areas where it was more difficult to get the kind of support that he felt was – I think that's one of the things that impressed me right from the beginning in terms of the fact – and also probably how much a difference it can make through that mechanism, whether it's in education – and affecting human behavior. A lot of people don't recognize that. I mean, they see it, they like it, but they don't really understand how it does affect motivation and initiative, all the important things to a human being. Anyway, I think that's why he tended to focus more on the cultural arts. And within the cultural arts, he probably was more focused and interested in visual arts, and so forth, than he was performing arts.

MG: Which institutions would he have been involved in?

JW: Well, the Art Center, called now the Art Museum, was one of his primary interests, and that carried over to putting together the group that obtained the resources to get all the sculpture on the Mall and some pretty – for that time, particularly, it was kind of unusual.

MG: Are we speaking of the Fresno Art Museum or the Metropolitan Museum?

JW: The Art Museum. The Met came a little later. Of course, Lou Eton really spearheaded that, with the McClatchy family's help, and so forth. But there were many people at the old Art Museum – Art Center as we called it – who resisted that a little bit, particularly initially, but they got more comfortable as time went on. The Art Center actually was originally downtown in one of the old homes, the Vanderboro or Vanderberg home. One of the first projects I know my dad got involved with was actually moving it and building it out there on First at Radio Park. That was kind of a big deal at the time.

MG: It's a very nice setting.

JW: It's certainly grown and, I think, created a really nice benefit to the community. But it's gone through – like any of these situations, it goes through its cycles, I mean in the leadership.

MG: I've never quite understood, not being from here, why there are two art museums—are you saying it's based on personalities?

JW: It's been a long time since I've thought about it, but I think it was because of timing as well as personalities as well as interest. The Art Center was really established for, I think, the purpose more of – I won't say modern art, but for teaching, for classes, for – and it certainly had its limitations, with size and, as I say, location. The Metropolitan came along, again out of just circumstance and having a building available that the McClatchys had and that Lou Eton could get a hold of. Then, from that, developed the concept of art, science, and history. That has been interesting to watch because for those of us who have been involved over the years,

it's taken on different emphasis at different times. I mean, a lot more science in recent times. The history's kind of never been there, and they've been kind of leaving that to the Historical Society, which is a whole other story. (chuckles) But then the arts always to some degree, kind of competed with the Art Center. What eventually kind of happened, I believe, is the Art Center – Art Museum as we call it today – it's taken on the more modern – and their mission statement, which I should remember, but I don't exactly, tends to focus more on that. Of course, they've gotten very involved – I say very involved – because of certain collections they were able to obtain, circumstance again –

MG: Excellent art.

JW: Exactly. Some of that, as well as the new Russells and stuff, it's just an excellent start. But, again, it focuses on different areas. The Met got a Salzburg collection, which was entirely different. It was European, totally different. Then, of course, we all know that as each director comes through, they're going to have their focus and their interests and their expertise. And you can't be everything to everybody. That's a long answer, but I think that's kind of why you end up with this. My feeling is, there's plenty of room for everybody, but you better determine what you're trying to do before you go on and try to do it. That's where the confusion is.

MG: What about other institutions? The county library? What about Fresno State itself, was he involved in either of those?

JW: Of course, he was a very good friend of Henry Madden's, and he was also a good friend of McKee Fisk, who was in the business area at that time and the varying presidents. He always stayed connected. I know he taught classes here. I don't

know if he also did at the city college or not, but I know they gave him an honorary degree because he got involved in something down there for them. But he stayed very much involved, I think through the presidents, and so forth, frankly and others. I think it's safe to say once he connected with an idea that really seemed to – it usually got done. (chuckles) Sometimes over several bodies, and so forth. But he was pretty goal-oriented, and that's just his personality.

MG: Henry Madden got to be practically a neighbor of yours, didn't he?

JW: I think so, yeah. Well, McKee Fisk, I know, was right down the road, too. Yes, he was definitely an influence. But my dad always held education at the highest priority. Probably too much for some of us who kept going to school for longer than we should have. (chuckles) But he really just totally supported it for my sisters and myself. That was never an issue. That was just a priority, period. I think particularly he was affected by the fact that maybe his grandfather saw more interest than his own father did. I don't know the real –

MG: Was he fond of his grandfather you think, maybe influenced by him?

JW: No question. There may have been very good reasons for that, but I was never shared those –

MG: Your grandfather was alive until your father was in his thirties.

JW: Yep.

MG: Had a long relationship with him.

JW: Yeah. They'd go in the back country a lot, which is something else that I continue – from the Huntington Lake, that was another common real interest that they

shared, so it carried over later. I think we went twenty-two years in a row for a week or so. It was special.

MG: What about other cultural institutions, the county opera, the Philharmonic and those things?

JW: As I say, some of that might have come also from the need aspect, because the Philharmonic was always well ahead. It was the lead cultural group for many years, and it was always ahead of the Art Center, it was always ahead of the others. Carnie Hodge[?] and others, Charles Bonner[?], they had resources and they, I think, had that pretty well under control. I think my dad tended to, again to look to where he would see a need. It didn't always just have to be in the arts. He, for example, ran for the Board of Education at a time when it was really kind of a coveted thing, a lot of interest. The time he ran, I don't know how many were on the ballot, but there were a lot. But it indicated his interest, a very, very high level of interest in education, all levels. And not just the higher end. He was very concerned about vocational education and that it be available and be given more credence and more of an importance. So he's pretty sensitive to that.

MG: He's obviously a civic leader and patron of the arts and so on. Was he sort of vocal, did he write for the *Bee*? You said he ran for office at one point.

JW: He didn't have a personality that lent itself to that so much. He was more behind the scenes. Although he had his group. In those days, a small group could very often find a person to be mayor, and find this and so forth. It was a very different environment.

MG: He wasn't particularly political as such.

JW: No, and sometimes not very political at all. (laughs) But, as many people have said, they always knew where he stood.

MG: Did he belong to the club, city club – what's it called, the place in downtown?

JW: The Downtown Club?

MG: The Downtown Club, yes.

JW: Yes, but, of course, prior to that, the so-called Downtown Club was part of Sunnyside Country Club, and they had for many years in a couple of locations, but they had the downtown. Then eventually, like with most country clubs, the golfers and non-golfers get into it, and a lot of different stuff. So they finally completely spun it off. But, no, he was involved. He enjoyed that part. Most of his activities were more – he was not a golfer, and he wasn't so involved in the social part even of a country club. He was much happier up at Huntington Lake or up fishing.

MG: Was he involved with fraternal organizations?

JW: Only in college, he was. He was quite interested in those business fraternities. I know that he helped establish either the one here at Fresno State or at city college, or both, or whatever. I've forgotten the name. There is a –

MG: A business fraternity.

JW: Yeah, just like the –

MG: He wasn't a Rotarian or –

JW: For a while, but it wasn't his kind of group particularly, even though he knew everyone. He may have gone in and out a couple times. He again tended to be more interested in just getting to the result, maybe not so much the journey as the destination. (chuckles) I don't know, sometimes I think maybe the journey is

better than the destination. That's more important. But, no, he just tended to – I think once he saw a need and fixed an objective in his own mind – he also, though, enjoyed hunting, and so forth, as my great uncle did. He used to do a lot of that. But many of us did in this area because there sometimes wasn't a whole lot –

MG: He never went into business with your great uncle formally?

JW: He was not inclined to go into partnerships. He went into a couple, but that was another one of his – which I've paid a lot of attention to it, and I think it's good. I mean, there are those occasions. But he did go with Milo Rowell and Jack Patterson, who were both very successful businessmen, very successful. He did a building, and so forth. But he wasn't tuned into that at all for maybe a lot of obvious reasons. It just wasn't his way, which I can understand.

MG: But he was, by any standards, a successful man, I mean very successful in business, successful in civic leadership and the arts and so on.

JW: Another area which I haven't mentioned is – we'll go back to the animals. He was the first president of the SPCA. And we used to raise a lot of dogs, hunting dogs as well as show dogs. We always had a kennel in our place. He'd take a puppy to bed with him if it was necessary. That was one of his –

MG: Seems to run in the family.

JW: I was going to say – apparently. (chuckles) But, yeah, we were brought up with lots of pets. That was another interesting thing. He helped to establish the first – We were very much, my sister and I, into competitive swimming at a young age, and he got involved in that and helped start the whole first set of swimming competition in the valley. He and Frank Knapp really put all that together. He



also, I think, put together the first dog show that they ever had here, at some big kennel club, and so forth. He loved to initiate and get it going, but I think once it was off and running –

MG: He didn't want to run it. Micromanage.

JW: Which I totally understand. It's sort of like creating the yard, but who wants to maintain it. I think he was more that kind of an individual.

MG: Did he have hobbies, you know, stamp collecting or any of those things?

JW: We always had a complete woodworking shop, (indecipherable) and always one up at the lake, too. He never tried to carry tools back and forth. But he got into woodcarving and some other – which sort of connected with his interest in art anyway and so forth. So there are a lot of stories, things he did. He spent a lot of time in the shop.

MG: Do you still have some of his things?

JW: Oh, yeah. So that was a real hobby, along with – he had a lot of different interests. Sometimes you know, you forget until you start kind of talking about it. But there were quite a few.

MG: It sounds like he was very active.

JW: Yes, he had a lot of energy. He was always working on something. One of my favorite – as I say, if he saw a problem, he was very apt to get all over it. One of his big concerns from way back, frankly, was Social Security and how the system was totally messed up. He wrote articles, I think, in *Reader's Digest*, or a couple – he had articles. He got into that. One thing that I wish I still had, among other things, was the response one time from the then director of Social Security, this

three or four page single-spaced letter explaining how perfect it was and how it could never fail. So many times I've just wanted to have that and to send it to a few people. But there again, that became a cause of his. Obviously, he didn't get that one resolved. But those things bothered him. When he saw something that really made no sense, he wouldn't just forget about it, he'd really work and do what he could, even though he probably knew he couldn't do a whole lot. That didn't-

MG: Was he friendly with any of the local politicians?

JW: Oh, yeah.

MG: Congressmen, and so forth.

JW: But again, I think mostly behind – oh, yeah. He worked with most of them over the years, but it usually involved some specific –

MG: Some project, rather than political life.

JW: Right. And I must say, as much as he may not have agreed with a number of presidents – and we don't need to go there (chuckles) – he would always listen to them. I don't care who it was, if they were really involved – I mean, we listened to them. Of course in those days, it was radio.

MG: So he wasn't a sort of party loyalist kind of thing.

JW: Yeah. He might scream a little bit, but not that much. He wouldn't just turn it off, he would listen.

MG: You can probably remember Roosevelt's radio broadcasts.

JW: That was coming in my mind. (chuckles) We heard a lot, obviously, during those years. I heard a lot. So that's kind of interesting.

MG: Is there anything else you wanted to add about your father?

JW: No. I think I've tried to cover what I can remember most importantly. Family was – maybe it's just a sign of the times, but family was big. You always got all the support, and I mean not just financial, I mean support for what – what I feel most benefited from, among all the things, is it was just absolutely a part of you that you give something back. It's just what you do. And not everybody, obviously, can do the same, but most people can do a little bit. It's the same old story. If they just do a little bit, it would make life a lot more pleasant and easier for many people. But it was just – it wasn't talked about, it was just by example, it's just what you do. So it was only later that I realized that some people aren't maybe necessarily as motivated that way.

MG: Before we wrap up this session, I, really we should have dealt with this before, but I'd like to talk about the Woodward Collection and the special collections in the Henry Madden Library. It was gathered together by your grandfather.

JW: Right.

MG: Roy. He had an interest in books, I know. We've talked about that. But did he have a particular interest in books on California? Did he just wake up one morning and discover he had several hundred books on California? (chuckles)

JW: I've never been able to determine what particularly drove that part of his library. As you know, he had a rather extensive one and enjoyed all kinds of things, crime stuff and all types of things, is what it would look like with the list. But somehow that California history obviously evolved as a part. No, I don't know, and I don't recall conversation about it. What happened, when he did pass away, he gave – there were five grandchildren, including myself, and we were given the library.

Well, we were all quite young, so of course our parents really were the ones that were able to direct that to the university here, as far as to the Madden Library. And I'm sure my dad's connection with Henry –

MG: Because of Henry Madden.

JW: Yeah, there's no question. And of course that was able to kind of start things off for the special collections, and we were all able to participate. I think I was twelve, thirteen, fourteen years old, whatever it was, by then. Because it was several years later that that all happened. I'm not sure why or –

MG: Your grandfather died in 1940, and Henry Madden came to Fresno State College, as it was, in 1949.

JW: I was going to say, I know it's the early fifties when the actual transaction took place because I saw the dates on all of that.

MG: So your father probably kept the collection together for a while.

JW: I'm sure it was all stored somewhere. Of course, the older grandchildren have more interest. I know my sister, who's just a year and a half older but was probably more focused on it. But we did have our chance to be heard, and that's when I pulled out *The Winning of the West* and some other things. So everybody got a chance just for one set or one thing.

MG: In a formal legal sense, the Woodward Collection is a gift of your and your brother, sister, and cousins.

JW: Right, exactly.

MG: And it was a bequest, it wasn't purchased by the library. It was given to – a very valuable collection, for people who don't know. And we've added to it, of course,

over the years, so it's now one of the premier collections of that topic in the country.

JW: As you know, we were fortunate a few years ago to start a small endowment – and have added and will add, if they don't keep building new libraries. (laughs) But what's been very gratifying is to see the list each year that Tammy provides us of new things. And, as I think you know, we've expanded the use of those funds so that in the future we can very safely add more and it won't be tied up just for one purpose, which is always dangerous, I think. It should be as flexible as the dean needs. I'm sure you would agree with that. But I think we've addressed that problem. You've pretty well –

MG: Right. I think we should close on noting that it will have a very good home in the remodeled south wing of the library when the building project is completed. There will be a very nice Special Collections Library, and the Woodward Collection is one of the jewels in that library. Well, thank you. We can pick up early next month talking some more about you and your involvement with the university and with the community.

JW: Thank you dean.

MG: Thank you very much.