

Marge and Ed Nesman
8/25/16

Ed (E): Yeah we had offices that were two offices apart.

Samuel (S): Well he sends his warmest regards.

E: He's a great guy. Oh he's so prolific. Prolific.

S: Yeah he's incredible.

E: Sign here?

S: So you write your name there and then if you want me to use a pseudonym or something like that or if there are certain restrictions you want. But if not then you can click no restrictions and then...

E: Okay.

S: Just the date is the 25th. I'm pretty sure. Yeah it's a new watch so I wasn't sure if I did it right.

E: Here?

S: Unless you want a pseudonym you could just write your name and signature there and that's fine. Then if you could just sign right there. Awesome. Thank you so much. And Carol English says wonderful things about you. I just got... she's been corresponding with me. I haven't talked to her on the phone or anything but she's a writer. We have 50 or 60 pages at this point. An interesting life.

E: What's the main focus?

S: Alright so my project is just generally looking at Americans in Cuba in the 1950s. So looking at US institutions. Because Paris is my advisor, culture is obviously very important so religious institutions like the Methodist church have proven pretty significant. I just finished a grant at Drew University at the United Methodist Archives where I was tracing people like Victor Redkin and Ira Sherman and Richard Milk, Ulila Cook I think, and Carol English actually. Then I met with Virginia Schofield, I don't know if that's a name you know?

E: Yes. Yes yes yes. Her father was an employee and official at United Fruit Company.

S: Sure. So that's been one aspect of this and then I'm also looking at educational institutions and actually the religious stuff has been really helpful with that because schools like Buena Vista and Candler and then also the agricultural school you worked at, what sort of lessons, values, goals and then other cultural institutions like Ruston Academy. I've become very close with Chris Baker whose father was James Baker. I don't know if you were associated with the Havana community at all. And so because of that I've been interviewing a lot of former Rustonians. So that's

how I've run into a lot of people. So many different angles and trying to make sense of it all and that book, *Telex from Cuba*.

E: I can give you the names of most of the people there.

S: So do you know Kushner?

E: No. I never met her but I knew most of the people in Nicaro very well.

S: How did she get all that information?

E: Well I think either her mother or her grandmother was living there and part of her... you know the tone. A lot of the information about the head of the United Fruit. That's not true. I can give you some further information and there's some local history that goes along with it. I mean, here in Tampa because his son was here for a long time and that's sort of a long, complicated story. Each one of these stories goes long but he was headmaster in a school here. Just interesting that when I read the book, no it was before that... there was an author, a fellow named Liana that somehow was interested in the Smith family because they had a farm in Indiana and so he started looking at the history of the Smith family and then he went back to their time in Cuba so he asked me for all kinds of details about the Smith family that I knew. Then I realized that the son was here and I hadn't seen him for many, many years. And anyway, I made contact with him but he didn't want to continue. One of the reasons may be is because I gave some of the information to the writer and I'm sure he checked out with the son and not all of it is very... It was part of that kind of...

S: You were honest.

E: Well not really. I told it like it was.

Marge (M): Hello.

S: Hi. You have a nametag. I appreciate it.

M: Everybody around here has to have one. Except him. Would you like to have something? Coca cola, ginger ale?

S: I'm good.

M: Ice water?

S: Water would be fantastic. Thank you so much.

M: Do you want some?

E: I'll wait a little while. Thank you.

S: Thank you so much. I really appreciate it.

E: Anyway, that's sort of a long story.

S: So did that book get published by the guy in Indiana?

E: You know, I don't know?

S: Do you remember his name?

E: Yeah I think I have it here.

S: Sorry to keep making you move around.

E: No. I should bring some of these things out. If it's not too hot out we could just go here.

S: Yeah this is great. Lovely.

E: There are so many stories.

S: Well I'm excited to hear some of them.

E: Well there's an overall context to this whole thing that you're working on and I'm sure you've gotten into it. Let me start out there because Smith comes in. There's a convergence of an awful lot of things that end up at the agricultural school and the Methodist church in general. Not long ago, there was somebody on the staff of the Friend's committee who was preparing to go to Cuba and he hadn't been there before so he spent a day or so with me. And he brought a book with him that I have passed on to somebody else but it's fantastic. You really need to get a hold of it and I'm not sure I have the name of it anymore but there's a great convergence of the Friend's and the Methodists in that area, in that Mayari, Preston, Bahia de Nipe area. Just briefly and you would need to go back to document it because it's just very well documented and it talks about the beginning of the whole thing related to United Fruit, the coming of the Methodists, the coming of the Quakers. A ship's captain with a real fervor, Christian fervor, came in there because the property that United Fruit bought originally was for bananas. Over on the northern coast, if you remember the map, Antilla, over on the northern coast, and that's where they actually planted banana plantations. But anyway that's how the ship captain was there because he was the one, you know, this was way before the Great White Fleet that used to carry bananas for United Fruit Company but here was this ship captain and he was interested in getting the gospel into this area. And so Methodists and the Quakers and there's an intermarriage. In his book, I still remember some of the people and I remember he said they were Quakers but they finally ended up to be Methodist pastors. Well probably because the Methodists had a system of payment and everything. Anyway that's part of that classic movement. The year I can't tell you but it was before Cuba was a country. So it was before the Spanish American War.

S: So I'll look into this. So it was a book that discusses the Quakers and the Methodists.

E: That's it. It's the Quaker beginnings.

S: It's in English or it's in Spanish?

E: It's in English.

S: And it's an American author?

E: Yes and I probably have it somewhere in my stack of stuff. Anyway, I was sitting down this morning and seeing you're interested in the culture and things there, let me start out with a global kind of thing. There was a convergence of a lot of things that the agricultural school was there and the Methodist work was there. First of all, United Fruit captain and it is documented so well exactly what they did and the interesting thing is, if you trace it in to more modern times, I told a fellow who was here, "Do you know that Batista went to one of your schools?" I said, "Yeah. That's where he started out." The other thing, we have to go, in the Methodist but probably from the other mainland churches as well, but particularly the Methodists and their emphasis on education but remember a lot of the countries they went to, that was the only way they could get in. They could not have gotten in with preachers. They got it with, "We're going to build a school for you." Anyway, way off as an example of the convergence, the Methodist church had agricultural schools in different parts of the world. One of the big ones, and it was a model for the agricultural school in Cuba, was El Dorjeo in southern Chile. That's a story in itself. El Dorjeo was the training school for Chile of their agricultural engineers for many, many years. Agricultural engineers and forestry. That was the only one that was really reliable. So we had El Dorjeo but we had others in different parts of the world. We had different agricultural schools. There's another convergence also and this is United Fruit. In the early days of United Fruit in Central America, I don't know if you've ever heard of El Zamorano, the Pan-American School of Agriculture.

S: No.

E: Okay. That was the source, in addition to El Dorjeo, was the source of many agricultural engineers from many different countries.

S: Ramano?

E: No it's Zamorano. Zamorano is the location and it's the Pan-American School of Agriculture. And its still there, still operating, very important. I did a recent study for US AID. No it wasn't US AID it was Kellogg Foundation. They were changing some of their emphasis. So what about Zamorano? Zamorano was started before the Methodist agricultural school in Cuba, sponsored by United Fruit. Smith and others knew very well about Zamorano. It was a learn by doing and if you know anything about what was in the philosophy of the school in our Methodist school, learning by doing. The students all had to work part time in Zamorano. They still do as a matter of fact. And so Zamorano had been in existence I don't know how many years before that. So when Mr. Smith, a very good Methodist, a very good, strong old time, he said, "Oh yes Methodists, I'll help you. I know just the model. Its Zamorano." As a matter

of fact we sent one from Preston over here to be trained. When he comes back, he can be on your staff. As a matter of fact, he learned a lot of habits that didn't go over with the Methodists so well even though he had come from a church background. So anyway, there's another convergence where you had Zamorano. Each one of these stories has so many branches I have to be careful not to get too far but anyway...

S: So if I could ask you a question. United Fruit paid for this school to be constructed?

E: Oh yes and continues to pay for it.

S: Okay. The one in Cuba as well? They completely funded it?

E: Oh no no no. Oh no. A small part. I don't know what part but you see they gave the land. They gave us water, which was scarce. They gave us electricity. They gave us a telephone.

S: So did they ever exert their influence?

E: Oh yes.

S: In what ways?

E: Oh my... There was always somebody on the board meeting and the board meeting was going to be held in Guaro, which was inland a little bit. Preston was where most of the colony lived and where Mr. Smith had his... anyway Mr. Smith comes along with his driver in his brand new whatever it was at that time and he was furious because Dick was not ready to go with him to the meeting, and he let Dick know. And Dick said, "I'm not one of his... He thinks I'm one of his employees. I'm not one of his employees." I don't know if you want to publish that but it was a kind of... and there were a number of people, some great people in the company, even if you want to call it paternalistic. They had a very vested interest. Smith also, he really wanted the school to succeed and he added his influence a number of times. Another convergence and I'm sure you may have got into this, way back, a little ways back but not too far back, John Arnott.

S: Yeah.

E: Okay. What would John Arnott have to do with it?

S: It's just a name I've heard.

E: You need to look at it. It was a great time in that it is now time that we have to save the world. And we... so it's part, they didn't say that but that it was the white man's burden was very much evident. Now a little bit later and looking at convergence of another, and this goes into the culture of the church, the social gospel. This is a new wave and when I went to in 1950 when I went to Cuba, an agricultural engineer without very much if any knowledge of the theology and history of the Methodist church, we were driven by the social gospel and there was

sometimes a bit of conflict for those who were still driven, fervently driven by John Arnott. We often used the word paternalism. Of course our version of paternalism was a little bit different from theirs but it's easier to see somebody else's. So there was a little bit of conflict that was part of the theology of the time. So that's another convergent issue and we at that time, almost all of the officials in the Methodist church in Cuba were American. It was a mission. It became an autonomous church. If you want to say it, it was forced to become an autonomous church. But anyway, in 1950 there was a little bit of conflict and a little bit of resentment, who are these poor things, you know.

S: Was that meant against Americans?

E: Against the missionaries.

S: Why?

E: There was so much paternalism. The Methodist church in Cuba was run from outside the country.

S: By Branson.

E: Yeah. But no. Not only that. We had other bishops also. Bishop Candler. And these were... but it wasn't a mean kind of thing. Well it was like a calling. And so those of us who would come out a little bit different kind of background and maybe from the social gospel and so that was a pretty strong convergence in the church. Now the other reason for the other organization to be there... Although they were also connected to the church. They had services and things that we were expected to attend and maybe lead for them. So the other thing, if you begin to look at other convergent factors and I'm sorry for taking time with this, but if you're looking for culture, you know, there are aspects in the culture that override and drive these kind of movements and these kinds of things that take place. World War II was over. I came back from the war. I'd been in the Pacific in the middle of the war. I was in there during battle time.

S: What division were you?

E: I was in Merchant Marines, under the Coast Guard. And I came back with the conviction, as did many people that were out at the same time that there has to be a better way. And the conviction was so strong, you know. And we have to help in other ways, you know. What could be worse than what we've seen? The devastation. I was so completely wiped out with the devastation. I couldn't... anyway. So we had this cultural factor or the timing factor that affected the culture of the people that were there at that time. The other thing and probably we've already talked about it. Manifest destiny has never really died and it was very much alive. Particularly in the church. Particularly the older group, the John Arnott group. They didn't use the word. They didn't even want to think about it. So manifest destiny and paternalism, you know, I admit as I look back, I'm guilty of it but I have my own brand. By the

way, if you want to read the best reading of manifest destiny, do you know William Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*?

S: Yeah.

E: Okay. If you read chapter 8, one of the best statements that has ever been made, not tongue in cheek but really believed, these people with dark eyes and dark hair, they really can't take care of themselves. It's we who have light hair and light eyes, we're destined to take care of them. He used that excuse to become... to run Nicaragua.

S: Emperor of Nicaragua. Right.

E: That's another story.

S: Was this language employed, maybe not the language but the mentality of these people can't take care of themselves? Do you think that was something internalized by people who were working for the Methodists, working for United Fruit Company?

E: Oh sure.

S: In what ways did that manifest?

E: Well, it was difficult for anybody who wasn't an American to live on the Avenue in Preston. If somebody married, and there are one or two that did, they shouldn't have done that you know? I mean, married into Cuban. They really shouldn't have done that. Well they were subtle, you know, they were subtle. Often times it was done sweetly. And well, you know, but you know. In talking why somebody couldn't do the job, well we need to look for somebody else. Anyway, there are more convergent factors I'm sure but in terms of the things that come to bear on life for the expatriate in that area, particularly the ones that were church related, I think all of these things were part of the culture. Some were more deeply embedded than others.

S: Where did you live in Cuba? Were you on the Avenue or no?

E: Oh no. I was on campus at the Agricultural School.

S: Which was about 10 miles away?

E: Yes. Eight or nine miles away.

S: What about somebody like Richard Milk?

E: Oh yes. He lived there also and he fought many battles with this old... you know he was older than I was. He also fought many battles with some of the district superintendents. They were still at the old school.

S: Now the Methodists were a little different in that way right? Because the American Baptists and the southern Baptists, they had more Cuban representation and the leadership of the churches was in the country. Was that right?

E: Yes. And you have to separate completely the southern Baptists and the northern, American Baptists. American Baptists were in Oriente. They were the ones that we dealt with. They were very compatible but they had a different way of sustaining their church. They sustained their church that each one of the pastors had to have a school and he lived on his school and what offering he could get at church. So it was... from the very beginning I think, now I don't know the history of this, but from the very beginning their financial picture was one of not being dependent on external and when we were there the superintendant, the main person, was in himself a Latino. He was from Puerto Rico.

S: Oh wow. What was his name?

E: I think his name was Rodriguez but not Rodriguez Hidalgo.

S: Yeah Oscar something... I'm blanking on it.

E: Something like that.

S: Now you were talking a little bit about the ship captain. Now was this the tie between the Methodists and the United Fruit Company and the Quakers and the United Fruit Company? How did those two end up on United Fruit land whereas other denominations did not.

E: They were given property.

S: Why were they given property?

E: Because we have to establish a school for these poor people.

S: Got it. What did they want from the school? What did the people from United Fruit Company want from the school?

E: That's a good question. You know, what did they want? I think. Oh my goodness. The word barbarian came out a couple of places. Oh we have to... I remember some of the writings where there would be a page where one of the writers, the lady missionaries in this case, they said, "Oh these barbarians." The style of life and everything was so different you know? You can imagine the Quaker background they probably came from very austere and here we have... very familiar. "Oh don't touch me." But anyway, I noticed that word in a couple of places where some of the ladies said, "Oh my. I just can't live out there. They make too much noise." I think you would really like that book.

S: So it gets into those details?

E: Yeah it does. He writes very good and very straight forward and he's writing oftentimes from documents. Really it's from the best documented because it's full of letters. They were written back to wherever and why this person didn't want to return to Cuba after and why it was anyway... it was very well documented.

S: I'm going to have to find this and if you find the name of the author at some point. Don't worry about it.

E: I lent the book and its in South Carolina right now.

S: Could you tell me a little bit and maybe we could start with how you ended up in Cuba? What is your background?

E: Sure.

S: Where were you born?

E: Michigan. Yeah. Both my wife and myself.

S: Where in Michigan?

E: A little place called Springport, which nobody's ever heard of where there is neither a port nor a spring but it's near Albion. As a matter of fact, my mother went for a few years to Albion for music. And it was near Lansing. My father is a son of immigrants, Swedish, Finnish really. Large family. My grandfather and grandmother met in the United States, which was very common where there would be people from a given place would know there was somebody there that they could meet and that's where they met. They came from the same area in Finland and really, we found out later, had been in the same church even though they didn't know each other yet. There were nine children in the family. The family had to be 110 percent American. None of them spoke any Swedish or Finnish and they struggled very hard and from that little farm my father graduated from university, Michigan State in Agriculture. My uncle graduated from Michigan State and was the superintendent of schools in northern Michigan area for thirty years I guess. And another uncle was head of all vocation education for Michigan. So he was the famous one. So they did very well. Hard work. My mother was from a very Methodist background. Yeah, I think my father... I don't think they were Lutheran. I think they were Evangelical reform. Which seemed to be a number of people in that area and so as a matter of fact, great uncle on my mother's side, Mead was his name and was a Methodist preacher and the old homestead was where the church was built in Michigan. It's still there, still a going church. Anyway, he was something else. He married my folks and he married us. He was part of the culture also. Both Marge and myself were very active. She was from Detroit, completely different. I was from the farm. But both of us had been active in our Methodist churches. Youth fellowship and we met at Michigan State and I graduated two years ahead of her and she finished and worked for one year in Chicago. She's trained as a home economist. As a matter of fact she worked on Maxwell Street for a while if you know anything about Chicago. That's where she lived. So that was our background and it wasn't strange that... we had a

interdenominational group at Michigan State. Mostly veterans. Of that group there were 23 that went into some kind of overseas service. So there was that atmosphere. You know, you name some of the great speakers of the church at that time, and they were part of the program. They were invited in. There were a lot of...

S: So then how did you end up in missionary work after the war? You got back...

E: Well, you see that was after I got back. I had not gone to school until after I got back from the war.

S: Okay. Was she in Cuba with you? Does she want to...? I thought you were there by yourself. Does she want to come and sit with us?

E: Well she might. We can ask her.

S: Sure.

E: I'll ask her if she wants to come and confess.

S: Yeah? Wonderful.

E: Two and a half of our four children were born there.

S: Wonderful. I didn't realize you had gone down together.

E: Well we weren't. Part of the... I was there under what was called the LA3 program. Do you know at that time the church was recruiting non-pastoral teachers, musicians, engineers for all of Latin America and it was called the LA3 program? I think it was more than one year they were doing that. That was before the Peace Corps and also J3. We were all, when we were recruited, we all went for a short course in Connecticut someplace up there? A seminary in... I probably have the name of it here. I'm sorry, both my wife and myself have had a stroke so our minds are...

S: You've been so helpful already. Trust me.

E: So we were, we had I think six weeks of training. That was my language preparation.

S: Wow. So you didn't speak any Spanish before that?

E: No. Nothing in school. I took the agricultural route and the pre college route and I was... when I came back from the war I was given credit for my pre-service training so I was given credit for years but my undergraduate, I mean my high school and everything I didn't have a Spanish background. I did have Latin.

S: That must've been helpful.

E: So, I mean I have a ton of questions. Do you want me to just throw them at you?

S: Sure.

E: Yeah? So I'm still pretty interested, maybe your wife can help think about this also, do you think that the people working in the school and the United Fruit Company who donated the land for the school, that they had different goals for the school?

M: Is it too hot for you out here?

S: No, not unless it's too hot for you. I'm sorry I was unaware that you had been in Cuba as well. So you don't mind doing this with us? That's okay?

M: What do you want to know?

S: A thousand things.

M: I don't know much.

S: You spent ten years in Cuba as well?

M: No not that much. Five years.

E: You see, LA3's were required three years single.

M: Right out of college.

E: Right out of college. It didn't work out that way for all of us. We found that some of the singles became doubles. So it was a headache for some of the people in board of admissions but we had well...

M: I had two years of college to finish.

S: At Michigan State as well?

M: Yes.

S: I actually went to Wisconsin so I'm a little mad at your football team but otherwise... The question that I just asked is: do you think that the United Fruit Company who was funding the school and donating land to the school in some ways, did they have different goals for the school than you guys did as missionaries? Like what did you think your purpose was at the school and do you think they thought it was the same thing?

M: I would think so. I don't know. I didn't talk to them about it. What else would they want?

E: You know, the idea might have been that they'd be good employees but I believe that there was a stipulation that said that nobody who graduated from the school could be a United Fruit employee.

S: Why would that be?

E: To prevent... I believe there was that. You might find that in the Milk document.

M: You can get me my pillow.

E: Your what?

M: My pillow.

E: Your pillow. Oh okay.

S: Where would I find the Milk documents?

E: Are you in contact with the Milks at all?

S: I'm not. Should I be?

E: Oh yes. Robert Milk is doing a history of the agricultural school.

S: Of that agricultural school?

E: Yes.

S: Robert Milk. He's in Texas is that right?

E: That's right. I wonder if I have it here. While you're asking her questions...

S: No worries. So do you remember some of the other missionaries that were down there?

M: Yeah.

S: So like the Milks and somebody I'm talking to right now is Carol English. Do you remember her? Was it a close-knit community between the missionaries?

M: Not the company no. Just the missionaries. Yeah I guess so.

S: Was there a southern culture? I know you guys are from Michigan but were most of the other people from the south?

M: Missionaries you're talking about. I don't know where they're from.

S: The reason I ask that is because I know initially it was part of the Methodist south church and then it sort of emerged as it's... when it united in the late '30s but it was still representing the Clanders and all of them. They were from the South.

M: The who?

S: The Clanders?

M: I don't know them.

S: I think he was the first bishop of the Methodist Church.

M: When you talk about missionaries are you talking about the ones on the whole island, not just the school.

S: Right.

M: Okay well we would only get together about once a year.

S: Where would you get together?

M: Trying to think... see we were also in Costa Rica so I'm getting them mixed up.

S: Afterwards?

M: No I guess I never met with them. Ed would meet them if he would go to the church's annual meeting.

S: In Santiago?

M: No I don't know.

S: How often did you go back to the United States?

M: Just once I think.

S: In the five years you were there? Wow. Your kids, what years were they born? Cause two of them were born in Cuba, is that right?

M: Yeah. I think our first year there and then two years later.

S: So did they grow up speaking Spanish?

M: Oh yeah.

S: How did they think of themselves? Did they think of themselves as American when they were little?

M: You'd have to ask them. They fit in with whatever was going on.

S: What was your role at the school?

M: I mean it would've been different maybe if they had become school age. They would have to choose which language. Okay now you said?

S: What was your role at the school?

M: I taught an English class and I taught childcare and what else did I teach? We had vocational components, a cooking and sewing thing. So I did that. I guess that's about all I did. Oh, I took care of the nursery. So much of us were young that we were having children. I could show you a picture of all the little kids and we put them in a group and had one of the students take care of them while we were all teaching and I was in charge of that, which can take a lot of time. I guess that's all.

S: How old were the kids that you taught?

M: I didn't teach. Oh yeah, the teaching, the students. You don't know what age the students were there?

S: No.

M: He hasn't told you that?

S: We're just getting started on that and I actually just found out that you have a memoir also. Is that possible?

E: Sure.

S: I found it's donated to a library that I'm going to be at later so I'm going to track it down.

E: Well yeah, there is in the Methodist Archives but it's in that form... but I think I have an extra disk that you can have.

M: He's asking about students. They were different ages.

E: They were. Mrs. Milk was probably one of the people who knew more about... what would I call education? Progressive education. She was our guide and very soon, one of the main people who would come to be with us on the faculty went to school in the states where they had a summer school and he came back really, not only understanding but he had the practice. So that gets back to their ages. Our youngest was 13, that was Jose Maestre. Eduardo was one of the older ones.

M: How old would he have been?

E: And he was as old as I was.

S: Wow. So it wasn't traditional students?

E: Yeah I was 25 or 26 and...

M: And different preparations.

E: And different preparations but it was progressive education so they could progress and so within two years all of the people came in. We had many people who had never been to school before, didn't know how to read and write. Consequently, within two years usually they came up to the level where they could start the vocational- vocational agriculture, vocational home economics, bible things that were in the curriculum. And I think all of them came up to that level within two years so it was sort of... they progressed and their motivation was so high. You know, we had a lot of stars as I can remember. Well Eduardo Martinez, he became an international director of literacy programs and he came barely knowing how to read and write and had never been to school.

S: How old was he when he came?

E: 25.

S: Wow.

E: And he was an ordained pastor and he started out as an agricultural technician.

S: How would the students select him?

E: From the local churches more than anything else.

S: So the local pastors would say that this is a good person to take?

E: The philosophy behind the whole establishment of the school in the eyes of the church was and that's why it was so appealing, they found... so many things come into the picture. They found that young people in the local churches in our area, in Oriente, if they got a little bit of training they went off to the cities and their parents wanted them to go. So the pastors were concerned that the churches were being bled of their leadership so at least ideally that was one of the main thrusts of why the church was interested in starting an agricultural school.

S: Got it. Were all of the students Methodists?

E: No.

S: Were they Protestants?

E: Some no. Some yes. Very. They had been part of the church and had been leaders in the church, but not all. No we had other people who came through other doors also.

S: How many students were there at any given time?

E: Maybe our maximum was 100 at any given time.

S: Okay and they lived on campus right?

E: They lived on campus.

S: And they had to work?

E: They had to work four hours every day and study at night in study hall and in their later years they had to have a community project.

S: What does that mean?

M: Chickens.

E: For the girls they would go with the nurse and help. Some of them became, I don't know if they became midwives but they were in on the process because our nurse

was on call to all of these barrios. A lot of them because of their church background, we had people going in all directions on Sundays. There was a little Sunday school and they were sitting around in a barnyard with kids.

S: So you guys would go out to the villages and go around?

E: Yeah but it was the student's program. Maybe we would go but they were the ones that did the message or whatever was being done. We had a... I guess I have one other thing, I'm sorry. Things keep intervening. If we look at the World Church which was... I don't know whether you've heard anything about the women's division?

S: I've read a little bit about it.

E: Okay. There was a certain amount of, you know, they came from different headquarters and they weren't always happy with each other but as far as the work was concerned, it was the women's division, the women missionaries that were fantastic. So they were out in these kinds of areas. Sometimes our graduates would go to help.

S: That was run by Marianne Derby? Is that right?

E: Yes at one time. She's not the only one.

S: Right. And Lee was another one?

E: Oh yeah. I remember her. Lee, she was the short one. Really feisty.

S: Would they come out to visit you guys?

E: Oh yeah. Not often, you know, about as often as the bishop would come from the United States.

S: Would someone like Ulila Clay, is that how you pronounce it?

E: Oh sure.

S: Would she have been in the women's division?

E: Oh she wouldn't have gone into the country for anything.

S: She ran Buena Vista is that right?

E: Buena Vista? I don't think you ever met her. She was there to train ladies.

S: Well that's an interesting dichotomy in some ways right? You have schools like Candler and Buena Vista, which are training more middle class, upper middle class folks.

E: Oh yeah.

S: In some ways those two styles of training had very different goals. They were very different projects. So what do you think the overall goal of the Methodist Church in Cuba was? Or was there an overall goal or was it just...

E: Well I think the overall goal was training local leaders. I think that was their overall goal. Training local leaders for someday an autonomous church. Someday.

M: Local Christians.

E: Yeah. Someday they... and of course, I'm trying to think of the one who became the first almost bishop. Unfortunately he was killed in an automobile accident before the church became an autonomous church. You know about Armando Rodriguez? For 30 some years he balanced the church through the most difficult years with the government.

S: He was the first Cuban bishop right?

E: He was the first Cuban bishop.

S: And that was '64?

E: Yeah. He's still alive. As a matter of fact I think he lives here in Tampa.

S: He lives in Tampa? Do you talk to him?

E: Once in awhile. We get together. He can't sit still so the last one that he wanted me to go with him to start a Methodist work in Honduras.

S: Recently?

E: No. Well not in the last year or so. He lost his wife. Oh he's dynamic. Interesting you know, each one of these. I'm sorry. I don't want to lead you off but Armando is part of the kind of thing you're talking about. The Methodist church in Cuba was a very well trained church. There were old pastors who were bible... but the goal was that every pastor have a theological degree on top of his regular studies in the university. That was the goal. The Methodists were instrumental in getting a seminary, the Union seminary in Matanzas. Armando was one of the first in Havana at the big Methodist church in Havana and there was a hostel set up for students going to the University and Armando was one of those. He was an engineering student and he really had a dramatic conversion and decided he wanted to be a pastor so he went into the seminary and became a pastor. Very dynamic. When the revolution came, he had this great vision. Oh he had lots of visions but he was one of the ones. He was the one that when Ulila Cook was asked to leave the home that she loved and go and teach in the seminary. Oh she didn't want to do that. Anyway, he was assigned there and I don't know whether you want to publish this or not, she had been so used to running the budget that she'd been doing special projects through the side door.

M: And she was out of it.

E: She was out of it. She was off in Havana and all of her little boys and girls and men and women and all these things, "Oh let me help you." And here's Armando trying to live on a pastor's budget but he's very clever. His great goal when the revolution came was to follow the 70... that were sent out and he recruited 70 people to live on 70 cents per day and go on without many things to the mountains. And he pulled it off until... I'm sorry.

S: No no no. This is very helpful. If you have his contact information... is this Milk's information? I'll write him an email today. Thank you so much. Yeah and Rodriguez, that would be fantastic to talk to him because especially as a graduate from the Union Seminary which I've read a little bit about...

E: Why did the Methodists leave the Union Seminary?

S: What year did they leave?

E: About five years ago.

S: Oh just recently.

E: This I don't think you can publish.

S: Okay.

E: Armando finished his term. It was time to elect another bishop, one of our former students. Agricultural students had decided that he wanted to be a pastor, went to seminary and he was elected bishop. What happened was at that time the Pentecostal movement was beginning to emerge in this church. Not only that, there were two factions in the church. The Presbyterians had been very close to the government, the seminary very close to the government.

S: The revolutionary government?

E: The revolutionary government. So there came a time, and now with a growing Methodist church, which is growing faster than probably any place in the world. They were only allowed their quota of probably three students a year going into the seminary and they were producing students ready to go to seminary by the dozens. So ideologically and practically, the bishop was of the Pentecostal group and had a very hard time but they broke. The deal was, they made a deal with the government through a lot of negotiations. You probably don't want to publish this but the deal was that they would give up the Methodist territory, the Methodist property, exceptional property, they'd give that up, and the government would allow them to use again some property in center of Havana in the central church.

S: So to start a seminary of their own.

E: To start a seminary. So it was an ideological battle. It was an ecumenical battle and a logistic battle.

S: That's interesting. The seminary was founded late '40s early '50s is that right?

E: I always remember being there but it was new when I went there.

S: I have it written down somewhere. Who were the partners in it? Was it the Presbyterians, the Methodists?

E: Quakers, some of the Pentecostal groups.

S: Even then?

E: Yeah. Oh Episcopal, very strong.

S: Blankenship. I interviewed his son actually. He lives up in Virginia.

M: Will you take some water now? Do you want more water?

S: So Quakers...

E: The story goes so many directions.

S: This is all very helpful. You're filling me in on a lot of gaps for me. I just find it so interesting because you're living between two worlds and especially being motivated by this social gospel, it's interesting working in a place that's so dominated by foreign capital. So this contrast, if you could speak to that a little bit I think that would be really helpful.

E: Well I can't say that they bothered me but as a matter of fact as the engineer, I depended on their stores. They had a plant where you could build a locomotive. They had everything. So I depended on them a lot for parts and things like that. Even when I was two years interim, we got along alright, I was in the board meetings with them at the same time. Oh, Smith was not there. Mr. Lafferty was there then. Smith had gone home.

S: What was Smith's first name?

E: Russell.

S: Russell Smith. And he was the head of UFC in Preston?

E: In Preston yes. I'm trying to think about Banes and if he was the head of Banes, Cuba also. It seems like he may have had a sub in Banes because they had a big mill there and shipping and it was all on Nipe Bay, Preston on one side and Banes on the other side.

S: I'm sorry I cut you off there. And it's been interesting talking to a lot of people, the individuals there were lovely people it seems like but did the surrounding communities at all...

E: They were not our social friends.

S: They were not. Why not?

E: Well we were nine miles apart and we... who did we run around with all the time? We ran around with the other couples on campus because they had young children. Gerardo came back to teach there, he and his wife. Humberto and his wife and Cutino and his wife and Waldo and his wife and we all had young children at the same time so that was our social group.

S: What percentage of the faculty was American and what percentage was Cuban?

E: Almost all Cuban.

S: So who were the Americans there?

E: Well lets see, Ms. Earnest was there.

S: Elizabeth Earnest?

E: Yeah. She was there living in the girls dorm. Elizabeth Beal and she was a nurse and really worked throughout all of the communities and took the students with her and treated staff, treated workmen, treated everybody that walked in. She was not what you would call a loveable person, but she sure was available. She wasn't ornery. Sometimes Elizabeth Beale got ornery.

S: Got it.

E: Another one who came there a short time was one of the old institutional leaders and that was... now that I want it I can't find it. Miss...

M: I don't think I know anybody else.

E: She was there... She took Milk's place the first time they were gone. Oh you weren't there then. Ms. Gabby.

S: Ms. Gabby. Francis Gabby.

E: Francis Gabby. Yeah. She was there. She was but she was not quite like Ms. Clay.

S: What do you mean?

E: Well halfway. She was a strong one but she was... did you remember Ms. Gabby?

S: Are these all southerners? Is everybody from the south except for you guys?

E: Hmmm. I don't have that. That wasn't an important thing I don't believe.

S: Just curious because I know the history of the Methodist church in Cuba was dominated by southerners so I'm curious if that had lingering impacts.

E: Well we certainly felt the southern influence of what's his name, Barbara's father. The one I made an error in talking about him and forgetting she was the daughter. He was very much southern.

S: Barbara Smith?

E: No. You probably wouldn't have them in your list because she grew up in Havana. Her father had been there forever and he was district superintendent in our area and he was the one that tried to convince me that if I was there I needed to be a local pastor. That's the only reason I should be there.

S: Got it. What was your role in the school?

E: I had charge of the shop and all of the grounds but my job, my main job was teaching. We taught from... our boys, the only tools they knew how to use, almost all of them, was a machete. So we started out and went through woodwork and went into tinsmithing to well the whole thing up through motor mechanics and building construction. The whole thing. And they had to do the work. They built buildings on campus and they fixed machines on campus and sometimes not too well. I had an excellent local, very black, local helper who... his name was Lemonta, probably came from...

M: The other island.

E: But he and his father had worked for the United Fruit Company. His father was known as El Capitan, a respected man who used to ride horseback around the country but he was very respected.

S: Like an overseer?

E: Yeah that's right. He would ride around...

S: And its L-a-m-o-n-t...

E: Lemonta. Yeah. Le-Monta. Anyway, he was an expert at what I would call a bench... well anyway I would start the boys out and he would supervise all the work and he was really a gem. So my job was taking care of all of the animals. I also taught agriculture.

S: What animals were there?

E: Well, my father was an ag teacher and I remember one time I was riding with him and I couldn't understand because vocational agriculture is quite different. That was a major change in agriculture in the United States and I couldn't understand how he knew how to develop his curriculum because you don't just start at the beginning of the book and go through. You do it by projects. And I remember riding with him all the way from Miami to Michigan and he was explaining how to develop the curriculum. So Waldo, who was Cuban, and he was hired as the agriculture... crops and animals were separated in Latin American agriculture. Two different. You don't

put them together. And so he was brought in to teach the animal. Here's the standard as we did in ours, the standard procedure where you have a textbook... anyway, I experimented with using the vocational agriculture system of determining the curriculum by the agricultural year. So you would have included in the total curriculum would be everything: gardening, beekeeping... and based on the year, there would be a project. That was the part I did and the upper level courses were taught the traditional way. So I taught agriculture, what do you call it? Vocational agriculture.

S: So there were lots of chickens and cows?

M: They would each have to have their own chickens.

E: Yes, that's right. Every student. And they would get jealous and say, "Can't we have..." and I'd say, "You're going to have to build a hutch." "Oh." "And you've got to take care of them." And everything was fine, each one of them was able to raise 12 chickens, broilers. "We don't want to kill them. Do we have to eat them?"

S: What were the gender dynamics? Were women and men taught the same things?

E: Yes. Same classroom. Now I don't think you had any men in your child development courses.

M: Just English.

S: So they chose their own classes or there was a standard curriculum?

E: No, I think... you see with this kind of... trying to meet the needs of each student it took a lot of juggling. So we spent a lot of time with each student. All the way along, you know, during the course and when we would have, if you want to call it, counseling with each student, usually there would be two to three teachers when we went over their grades and everything. Another very interesting thing was Humberto, who was the one who learned this whole philosophy of learning by doing in everything you do. He was, if you want to call it, the dean of boys and he worked very hard to get them involved in the whole governance of the... and the recreational program. So that was part of the learning process and he did it consciously and it was an interesting process because students who had had a little bit of formal learning, maybe had gone to school a couple years, one would say, "Look I'm not learning anything. There is nothing in my cuaderno. There's nothing in my..."

S: Yeah. It's just a different process. What about race? How did those dynamics play out at the school?

E: Race. Well all of our students were lily white right?

M: There wasn't any brown in there was there?

E: No except we had ... because in a setting like this you begin to find. And our recreational program was another issue that we needed. Parents sometimes yes. But as an example and as the best example we were showing slides someplace in the United States and somebody said, "Oh!" Maybe it was in the south. I don't know. "You had white and black students." And I said, "Yeah I guess we do." But that wasn't the issue. The individual was the issue.

S: Was there white and black faculty as well?

E: Sure.

S: What language did you guys teach in?

E: Spanish.

S: So did you speak Spanish when you came down?

M: No. I learned it there.

S: Wow. So you couldn't teach right away then? Or you could?

M: Well I was teaching English.

S: Okay so you spoke to them in English during English class and otherwise everything was in Spanish.

M: Yeah. One of the women was tutoring me so I learned a little bit every day and used what I learned. I wasn't funny.

E: No you weren't. I was thinking about the learning process. Teaching shop was a great way to learn Spanish.

S: I can imagine.

E: The only thing was the boys taught me words and then they said, "Now when you go ask for the milk this is the way you ask for it." Oh they had the greatest time.

S: When you first arrived, is this what you expected?

E: Well I had traveled a lot. I had been in Cuba before. Lets see, I'm trying to think of the chronology. I have the chronology of life all mixed up.

M: You'd only been there as a sailor.

E: Yeah. As a sailor.

M: Which is a different thing.

E: Yeah. I had to go back to sea after the war. The merchant marine did not get the G.I. Bill.

S: Wow. Really?

E: It was forty years later that more time was approved and we got veteran status. So I ran out of funds after a full year and had to go back. So this was before I went to Cuba with the church. A couple of years before I had been on a ship and we were going magnesium on one trip and sugarcane on another trip. So I guess I was used to the jabbering and I thought everybody was always mad at everybody. Yeah. Both of us, because we had had no formal training, after we were married and there for a year married and we had our first child, we had asked to go to the international language school in the summertime in Costa Rica and that helped. But by that time we'd learned a lot of bad habits.

M: You never finished how many animals were there? What did you have besides chickens?

E: Well each one of the students had to have a garden.

S: Their own garden?

E: Yeah. They had to work with the pigs, had to castrate them, had to butcher them, had to help make ham and everything else. And we had a dairy and milk went into town every day and some of the students had to get up at four o'clock to milk in the morning. And that's another whole story about our bull. That's a long story. It goes with Henry Wallace. You don't even know who Henry Wallace was.

S: No.

E: Henry Wallace was...

M: Vice president.

E: Secretary of Agriculture then he was FDR's vice president.

S: 1948 election.

E: Yep. 1948 election and I was in Washington when he came back to town and Truman was on one side in the old Buick and I don't remember who was on the left side. Anyway, Henry Wallace was our graduation speaker in 19...

S: He came down to the school?

E: Yes. He was the commencement speaker.

S: How did that happen?

E: Well that's what everybody asked. The students would say, "No." And as soon as he got there he was out in the field with the boys showing them how to select corn. He said, "You don't want to hybridize," because his family had served on hybridization of seed corn and he said you don't want to do that. Here you have to have a corn that they can keep using. He said here's how you select. And the

student's said, "Who'd you say he was? Vice president? Have you seen the calluses on his hands?" Anyway when he got there, the first thing he said was, "I want to see your bull." And we had a special bull, one of a kind that had come from Allahabad in India. And so, the history of the story goes that when he was minister of agriculture during the war, as the war ended, he asked Admiral Nunez to take his battleship around the world, come back by way of India and pick out the father of that bull and it was in Beltsville, Maryland where they did the experiment. We had one of the daughters of that experiment.

S: So because of that visit...

E: That was one of the reasons he was there we realized later. But it was interesting because, you know... United Fruit Company had a number of people that were doing experimental work with sugarcane and they wanted to talk to them you know and everything. They come back later and say, "I don't think he's a communist." But it's a small world and I'm sorry to go off on tangents.

S: No. Henry Wallace is somebody I'm very interested in.

E: But he gave his talk in Spanish.

S: He spoke fluent Spanish?

E: How in the world would this hick farmer that ended up in the White House, why would he be able to speak Spanish? Come to find out that he was on the board of directors for Zamorano.

S: Wow.

E: Small world.

S: What year was that?

E: 1957. Castro was in the mountains.

S: Did he talk about that at all or no?

E: No. He talked about the opportunities that our students had in new Cuba with agriculture and home economics and everything and what a great challenge and opportunity it was.

S: Who invited him?

E: Well, Dick Milk.

S: Did he know him or no?

E: I don't think he ever met him. He may have been inclined in that direction politically. And I have an idea that there was some talk also in the United Fruit Company, "Oh yeah. He's on the board."

S: Wait. So Wallace was on the board of UFC?

E: No no. Zamorano.

S: Oh Zamorano. Yeah. I was like, that would be surprising for me. Okay.

E: Well maybe he was. Maybe he was on the United Fruit board. Might have been. I don't know.

S: Maybe. Yeah.

E: Have you read the large book?

S: Casa Domino?

E: No on Wallace.

S: No. The biography?

E: You know the southern democrats got rid of him. Tried to bury him.

S: For Truman. Yeah. It would've been interesting if he had been president instead of Truman. My dad always talks about that. That's why he's a very interesting figure in my household.

E: Well that book... Is your dad still alive?

S: Yeah.

E: He'd like to read that book.

S: I'll buy it for him. That's so interesting. Wow. Well that's going to make it into the dissertation.

E: We're running you off on tangents.

S: Well I've got to piece it together at some point anyway. Where was town? Was town Preston?

E: Where was town? When we went to town where did we go?

M: For what? We shopped in Mayari.

S: How far was that?

E: Where was your doctor?

M: Preston.

E: And? Your latest pregnancy? You had a doctor in Mayari.

M: No I didn't.

E: Oh okay.

S: So this was a United Fruit Company doctor? And that's who would...

M: That's where the hospital was.

S: And that's where you gave birth to your kids? Yeah.

E: Two kids.

S: Did everyone on campus have access to that hospital? Just the Americans?

E: Well the hospital was open to Cubans. It was a company hospital. Dr Ortiz was the doctor. Yeah it was open. The kind of service we got I'm sure it was kind of special. Yeah. It was good.

M: The company store we went to occasionally.

S: In Preston?

M: Mhmm. But usually in Mayari and we shopped at the Chinese farm. It was the only place you could get celery, the only place that grew it.

S: How far was that?

M: On the way to Preston.

E: It was right across from what's her name that you had that you had talked to... where she had grown up.

S: English? Oh that I talked to. Schofield.

E: Schofield was head of animals a little bit out in the country right across from where the Chinese had their garden. Not quite in Preston.

S: Did you know the Schofield family?

E: I did. He spoke with, I think he was Swedish.

S: British.

E: British yeah. Very British.

S: Scottish maybe.

E: Yeah. But his wife was not. His wife was...

S: Chinese Cuban.

E: Chinese Cuban.

S: A mix.

E: So I'm not sure if there would've been a place on the avenue for him.

S: Yeah they didn't live on the avenue.

E: I'm not sure there would've been a place for him there.

S: Tell me about the avenue. Swimming pool on one side I heard?

E: It was pretty nice. It was pretty nice. Did you ever go to eat at Smith's house? No. I was invited soon after I got there. I didn't know how to handle things, a farm boy. It was the first time in my life that I had a what do you call it? Finger bowl? You know a finger bowl.

S: To wash your hands?

E: Yeah. On our farm, you know you had coffee without a saucer and bare basics, we'd eat in the kitchen.

M: The dentist was in Preston.

E: That's right. We did go there sometimes. We were friends with the dentist. He had...

M: Yeah we'd eaten with him.

E: When we all had to leave, he became director of the school for a short time, then he had to leave.

S: He was Cuban?

E: Cuban. Zunica was his name.

S: Did he live on the avenue?

E: He did. Yes.

M: Wasn't there an American part and a Cuban part?

E: There was yes.

M: But it was in the town of Preston.

E: Zunica was a product of the northern Baptists. Grew up in Quito which is a town just north of the United Fruit area and...

M: Where was it where we went to movies? Cueto?

E: Mayari?

M: No.

E: We used to go to Eden.

M: They had movies there.

E: Could be.

M: You don't remember.

S: What was the industry in Cueto?

E: There were sugar mills all around. In fact the Castro farm is not far from there. Interesting that whole area, each one of them is worth a thousand stories but the railway went through there and just a little bit to the north, that railway went from Santiago, through Cueto up around into Banés. It was a spur line. And a little bit north of Cueto is the connecting line to United Fruit Company. And so we would take the guest car out to Hererra, which was a little bit north of Cueto, take it out there and then wait for the train to come. I don't know whether you remember the music of the social club?

S: Sure.

E: The theme music. Not many know the theme music was written about that rail line. If you look at the rail line and look at the names... Santiago, it goes to the place where there's a split in the line, it goes to Havana and then it talks about the different times and then Biran, where the Castro farm is, and Cueto and there's a different word there because if you want to go to Mayari, you get off in Cueto and take the rock road into Mayari. So if you look at that again and look at the map, you'll see marked out. It was an enjoyable ride. There was an old guy who looked like Charlie Chaplin who used to go around with coffee and he would come after the train would take over and had a little mustache and everything.

S: Did you guys have to pay for the train as missionaries?

E: Oh sure.

S: Were there reduced rates?

E: Well we didn't pay for the guest car. Nobody did. The guest car was free.

S: But you just had to be invited by United Fruit?

E: No no no. It was open to everybody and it went from the old national rail line, it went all the way into Preston. It went all the way to Guaro and had stops along the way also at the other main... And Guaro was sort of a main outlying area for United Fruit. That's where they had their experimental work.

S: Is that where their school was? Where did their kids go to school?

E: Yeah. That was it.

S: In Guaro?

E: Yeah. And one of the official's wives was the teacher.

S: Wow. Did anybody...

E: I'm not talking about Milk's children now.

S: What do you mean Milk's children? I was talking about the United Fruit Company's employees.

E: Oh. Employees.

S: So Milk's children went to Guaro rather than staying on campus and going to school.

E: Yes.

S: That's interesting.

E: They may have gone to Preston some. They have a pretty good view of what Preston is like in contrast. Robert can tell you many, many, many things.

S: What was Banes like?

E: Banes. Not as big as Preston. Sugar mill was smaller.

S: Was there an avenue? For the Americans?

E: Could've been. I didn't really know it that well. By the way, I've been back four times. The last time, I don't think I was there. But the last time I was in Banes, the early school was still there, the Quaker school. I shouldn't say that because everything was confiscated after that.

S: Were you familiar with the El Cristo also? El Cristo the American Baptist school.

E: Oh yes. Of course. That rail line, one of the stops was El Cristo and one of the prettiest views in all of Cuba was up near El Cristo which is... I can't think of it. Where you look down and you see all of Santiago and the entrance to Santiago and all of the land. Beautiful. When I went back the first time, I left not happy because I expected more from the revolution and I went with a friend from Washington and we were at this beautiful spot at the top of the mountain waiting in long lines for something to eat which was very common with the revolution. The two people I was with, one of them was from El Cristo, a former student who had been a student of mine. He was our guide and was very much enthused by the government and so they started pushing me and I said, "Okay. What about communists in Fuegos?" And they looked around and said, "If we're going to talk about that we need to go over there."

S: Wow.

E: Enough aside stories.

S: This is what this dissertation is built on. I cut you off a little bit when you were talking about the avenue. What else... was it fenced in? In Preston? How did these people live compared to the people around them?

E: Oh the avenue. Do you remember about the avenue?

M: I don't even know what you're talking about.

E: Where the Americans lived in Preston?

M: I didn't go there. The only place I went to in Preston was the store, the company store or to visit...

E: No it wasn't fenced in.

S: That wasn't on the avenue that was just in town?

E: It was in town.

S: What was in town like? Was it...? American style buildings and homes?

E: I don't know if whether you've ever... it seems where I've seen English colonization and American colonization and colonies, very much the same kind of... wooden.

M: What was the town? I don't know any town.

E: Preston.

M: Yeah but what was there besides the company store and the homes.

E: Well that's where the big sugar mill was and all of the other things.

M: That's not a town.

E: Well it was right in the center.

M: But there wasn't anything else to the town.

E: And then there was the docks and all the things that went with the docks. And there was a golf course.

M: Alright. That's town I guess.

E: There was a swimming pool and there was some schools and there was the Methodist church, the Methodists.

S: Was that Victor Rankin's church?

E: No no no. Oh no. This was a company building and there was a Methodist pastor there, named there, and there was... that's where Mr. Armstrong had his congregation. English.

M: Same church?

E: Same church. His English congregation. Mr. Armstrong was another one of the institutions. He was very black.

M: And very English.

E: He was very English and he let everyone know it. People would come up to him and he would say, "I'm sorry I don't speak Spanish."

S: He was black? He was West Indian?

E: Yeah. And he had a hat, white, always had a cane, very proper.

S: He ran the church that United Fruit Company employees went to?

E: The ones who were... yes. There were many... the ones who were from the islands.

S: The West Indies?

E: Yeah the West Indies.

S: Not the Americans.

E: No.

S: The Americans had their own church?

M: Same building you said.

E: Same building.

S: Different pastor.

E: Yes. Who went to the Spanish speaking church? Middle level.

S: Middle level employees.

E: Middle level employees.

S: How did they live?

E: Pretty good.

S: Would you call the Schofields that sort of middle level?

E: I think so. I think striving middle class. A lot of the ones they'd call the middle class wouldn't accept them as middle class. Maybe they would. I guess they would. But no, Schofield was kind of outside of it. That's my opinion. No for example Tomayo, one of our student's father, was head of the railroad and he was very active

in that church. They were... yeah. It was, as some people said, it was a church of convenience. I didn't say that.

S: Why did Cuba never have an autonomous church?

E: Methodist?

S: I mean any of them. The Quakers I guess were the closest.

E: Pentecostals their churches were almost autonomous from the beginning.

S: Okay. Why do you think, after 60 some odd years, Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, the mainline churches didn't create an autonomous brand?

E: This is pure opinion.

S: But you're an informed opinion. Yeah, absolutely.

E: I think some of the older missionaries didn't want them to. They would lose their jobs.

S: So it was about individuals not wanting to.

E: Yeah. Now that's a dirty... but I think some, not all of them, but I think some... they get a lot of respect and so... but we saw that in other places also. We saw that in Costa Rica.

M: I'm not sure I know what you're talking about.

E: Why didn't the church become autonomous before the revolution? What was the reason that it didn't become a church on its own? I think the Northern Baptist was pretty close to being on its own. Yeah I think it was.

M: And they were getting money from the U.S.

E: That was it. Oh they were getting a lot of things. Schools would've had to close down.

S: Because they were U.S. funded?

E: Yeah.

S: Was there a paternalistic aspect as well or no?

E: As I said, each one of us had our own brand of paternalism and we always looked at the former generation as being very paternalistic.

S: Did you have any American students?

M: I didn't get that.

E: At the school.

S: Were there students that were Americans?

M: No.

S: No. Okay. Cause even Milk's kids are going to school in Guaro yeah?

E: Yeah. But the Milk's kids, they grew up on campus and they're so Cuban.

S: I'm going to enjoy conversing with Robert. Does Robert prefer to email or does he like talking on the phone?

E: Well I think you'd have to ask him. He's got some beautiful children and grandchildren all over. He was in the Peace Corps and he married his wife. Let's see, Richard is the oldest one. His wife is from... well anyway I think Robert's wife is from Peru. That's where he was in the Peace Corps. Beautiful lady, beautiful family. And the oldest, one of the daughters was in the Peace Corps. And one of the daughters is a pastor's wife up in Virginia also. She would be able to help you a lot also. She's been back a couple of times and has maintained a very strong interest. Well her and Robert in the family are the ones who have maintained a really strong interest.

S: I really appreciate this. He's kind of somebody who I've been looking around and so...

E: Oh yeah. And they were right in the middle of it. They were in the culture.

S: Were there cane workers who lived around you?

E: Oh sure.

S: How did they live?

E: Well we were surrounded by cane workers. Six months of work and then nothing. Nothing. And that's why our nurse was busy all the time.

S: Was she treating malnutrition a lot?

E: Yeah and you know, all kinds of other things. They tried to raise maybe a few small animals or something in the margins of the fields but again there were strong rules against damaging the cane fields. So that's what the capitas was supposed to do when he was riding around and make sure somebody wasn't planting corn in the cane field.

S: Like Lemonta's father?

E: Yeah Lemonta. That was his...

S: What would they do if they found something in the cane field?

E: Well I don't know. I don't have any cases to know. We had another capitas that lived... because we were right beside the cane village also. No a railhead. We were beside a railhead and there was a capitas that lived there and he was a little bit more ornery and I think he would really... if people wouldn't pay attention he would call the police to do something about it.

S: Sorry. I have a thousand notes to myself.

E: You're going to have such mixed up notes.

S: It's... I'm excited about it. Where did you guys live when you were there? You lived in the dormitories or you had your own home?

E: Which time? What year?

M: We had an apartment in the dormitory.

S: That your whole family lived in? You and the two kids?

M: No. By the time we had two kids, Milk was gone and we stayed in their house.

S: Why did Milk leave?

M: For work.

E: Yeah he was gone for two years working on his doctorate. Finishing his doctorate.

S: Where did he? At what school?

E: He went to Ohio State. He's an agricultural economist.

S: What was your doctorate in?

E: Sociology and Latin American Studies.

S: Where did you get that?

E: University of Florida.

S: After?

E: Yeah.

S: You said Batista went to a Methodist school is that right?

E: Pardon?

S: Did Batista go to one of the religious schools?

E: He went to the Quaker school.

S: Batista went to the... he was very Quaker-y.

E: Oh you bet. Very pasivo during the hard days. During the hard days when we saw the bodies being taken off and when we saw the fisherman village that got shot up and we realized how pasivo he was.

S: Sure. And that was the late '50s? When did you start feeling the revolution around you?

E: Well, we were in rebel territory. We were in rebel territory at night for four years. Army territory during the day. So we walked... one sort of dynamic, we were out in the country and during this time our camp was sort of a, I don't want to say a meeting point, but sort of a destination point for the rebels coming down. I knew every time there was one because you could sort of feel it in the air. The students knew and everything. And during the last year, most of the young people in Cuba wanted to go to the mountains.

S: Including your students?

E: Including our students who came from those mountains. They knew what it was like and they knew the situation so it came to a point where we could have lost a lot of students. And if students are going, the army would know about it and we would've been... We had one of our staff members who was very much involved in the rebel movement, still is as a matter of fact, and I talked to him and I said, "This is what I'd like to do. I'd like to talk to them and if he feels like we do and we've talked it over a lot as faculty and everything, for the new Cuba, agricultural technicians are extremely important. And if he feels that way, if he would be willing to talk to the students." That was a big gamble. And here's this guy...

S: Were you running the school at this point?

E: Yes. So I talked to him and I said, "This is the situation. All of us feel that the sacrifice is worth it for the future and we have felt that our students and what they offer for the future of the new Cuba in agricultural development is very important. If you think that's true, would you be willing to talk to the students."

S: What year was that?

E: Well...

M: That was one of the rebels.

E: That was one of the rebels. He was bearded and dirty and scruffy. That was probably at least a year before the end, maybe two years.

S: So '57, '58.

E: Yeah. Maybe '57. Maybe '58. And I said, "I need to tell you and I need to tell the students also. If somebody came from the army, we would offer them an opportunity also to speak. You can understand why. You know that the army knows everything that goes on here just like you know everything that goes on here on

campus." And he said, "Okay. I can do that." And it was very rustic. He did. We never lost a student.

S: So no students went into the mountains to fight?

E: No.

S: Because in some ways... they felt they were preparing for a new Cuba?

E: Absolutely. This was important.

S: Did you... It sounds like the politics of the campus were very sympathetic with the revolution.

E: Oh yes.

S: Including the faculty?

E: Yes but you had to walk the line and the students knew this and the faculty knew this. You had to walk the line because we know everything that goes on here, the army will know the next day. And another case in point, each one of these goes into a big story. One of our faculty, who at that time was serving as... she was with the girls in the dorm, a former student that graduated and came back to help. Her father had an important position in Nicaro and he made some real rough statements about the rebels. So she begged me to go to try to get him released. So that meant, I talked to our faculty member who knew what was going on and said this is what I'd like to do. I'd like to go to the rebel camp.

S: You knew where it was?

E: Yeah I knew where it was. It was way up in the mountain above... we had a church and it was above that. Way up.

S: Did the army know where it was?

E: The army was on the coast. It was in Preston. That's where the barracks were.

S: So you knew more about the rebels than they did in some ways? Or did they know where the camp was too, they just couldn't get to it?

E: They just couldn't get to it. The rebels were strong at that time and they were starting to use guerrilla warfare and the army wasn't prepared for that. So he said, "You can go on Tuesday." You've got to go... There was an army barracks in Mayari and I had to go through that to get up. So I got to the front, got through the lines in Mayari and said, "I need to go to our church. I need to go up." I don't know what excuse I used. Anyway, they said, "Well, you know, you'll get shot." And I said, "Well I don't think so. I think I can tell them that I'm coming." Anyway, I got through the army side and as I started to move toward the front on the rebel side, shots come at me. And I don't know if Eduardo was with me or not. I think he was. But anyway, he says, "They don't want us to come today." So we scrubbed it and another day he said,

"Well you can go such and such a day." So I got through the lines and traveled way up. I forgot what I was driving. A jeep I guess. I got as far as it would go and I see these scrubby looking rebels and I said, "Where is..." And I knew the name of the rebel who was the commander. And I said, "I need to see him." And he said, "He's up in camp up there but your jeep won't go." So we walked and anyway I talked to him and he said, "What are you talking about? That guy... he's a scoundrel. We're not going to let him go." He said, "We'll probably shoot him." And so he said, "Okay. I'll tell you what. He has been denounced by this number of people. You've got to find ten times that to stand up for him. If you can get that list of people who stand up for him we'll release him." Anyway, here I am way up there walking and then, down below, shots. Things start blowing up and the guys said, "You've got to get out of here." So we walk, get in the jeep, drive down, drive down. The guy at the top said, "You know what I'd like? I'd like a new testament." And I said, "Well I've got one in the jeep." And he said, "Well leave it with the guys down below when you go." But he said, "You've got to get out of here." So anyway, I go through this and go through this and walk and drive and everything and I get down to the line and I said, I forget his name, "What's his name wanted a new testament. This is for him." "Oh well you can give it to him. He's right over there." That was the kind of mobility they had.

S: So he had followed you down?

E: No he had got there ahead of me. I had a jeep. I walked. And that was part of the new... that's what later happened in all the different areas. They were everywhere. If they were anywhere, boom they were there also.

S: Was there anything else that you did? Maybe providing food? Maybe providing shelter in support of the revolution at any point?

E: I don't know. I certainly didn't try to hurt them in any way. Oh. During the last days. I don't know if you'd call it provide or not but what happened is things started to get close. We knew things were about ready to...

S: You knew? You knew that this was happening?

E: Yeah. We knew pretty much ahead of time. I would go into down and I remember specifically there was a Spanish, very Spanish, Gallego, very Spanish guy who ran a hardware. And you know when the revolution was going on and you're talking about politics and, "oh things were terrible," you know... That was the other thing that there were key people that were in and out of these camps and were very much a part of the rebel movement and you know they were living ordinary lives and pillar of the community and everything.

S: ...How they would fight at some points and slip into the mountains?

E: A lot of dissolution unfortunately. One of the people I've had the most problem with when I talk about Cuba... and in our church are people who were also prisoners under Batista. In other words, they gave everything for Castro and then to be that proud you don't get rid of him. And that's how I felt when I left Cuba, you know, we

really put our life on the line many times. I don't know if we gave things, well, they took all of our wheels away from us.

S: The rebels did?

E: Yeah.

S: Why?

E: Well they wanted everything that moved and we had opened... when things were getting rough we had opened up the school. We finally decided we needed to close the school and we finally got all the students home by boats and by this and some by the other and going through the lines and all kinds of junk. And in the midst of that, I forget the point I was going to make.

M: We had refugees at the school.

E: That's right. We opened up the school for refugees.

M: When the town of Mayari was attacked.

E: Yes Mayari was attacked.

S: By the army?

E: By the rebels and got rid of the army. That was shortly after I had gone to the town.

S: And so they got rid of the army and you took in refugees who were sympathetic to the army?

E: Well, we said, "We're open."

S: This is a peaceful place.

E: That was a problem because one of the secretaries of the army sent his family up but we said, "No, we're open to everybody." But a few days after that the rebels came and decided they needed our campus for a base of operations and we had a long meeting to say, "Look we tried to open this up." And the head of them, a bearded director said, "No we need this. We can't... leave it." And I said, "Well that means you want to hide behind the skirts of children and women. That's what you want to do is use them as your barrier so the army won't invade." He said, "Oh no." And I said, "Well, at least you ought to let them out." And we got everything on wheels... Ah but he said, "You can't leave." And I said I didn't think I could leave anyway but Marge and the children and all the others, we loaded them up and all that we could find and sent them off to Guaro, which was in rebel territory but sort of a safe area.

M: And did the refugees leave then at that time also?

E: Sure. Everybody. I don't know where the families went but I think they also... I don't know.

S: So then you lived in this rebel camp? For how long?

E: How long were you there in Guaro?

M: Just a few days.

E: Two or three days because all hell broke loose. Our last vehicle got out and then the remainder of the army was trying to escape on a highway that went just over the hill from our pasture and the rebels went from our campus to that cutoff point and so we were getting all the bullets. And that was when we still had one vehicle, and that was when we... ah and we still had for some reason, we still had a telephone line and the priest called up from Preston and talked to a person who was more involved with the rebels and they agreed to come together with the troops at that point and the rebels agreed to the troops if the army people would be put in jail and I forget all the other stipulations. Well that's what happened and we had one vehicle with a few bullet holes in it. It was like a novel.

S: Did you ever write about it?

E: Some is on the disk.

S: So all of these documents are on the disk?

E: Yeah I think so. Lets see. I think so.

S: You're handing me an archive. I appreciate it. I'm sorry I've kept you for so long. I have a few more questions if that's okay.

E: Sure that's fine.

S: Are you holding up okay both of you? Are you alright? You guys are good?

E: You need to see this. It's related to this. Look on the inside. A local reporter writes about the son of Smith, the one who was local and if you look at the second column he starts to talk about Cuba.

S: Why did this guy write this? This is so mean. Have you read this?

M: I don't know.

E: It's the story about Smith's son who was the headmaster at Berkeley. The one that when I was writing for this newspaper reporter about the Smith family and about Cuba and I called him on the phone and he wouldn't call back. Well I called him because this could not have been written without this guy, without Smith. This could not have been written. But, unfortunately, I'm sure that a lot of the things that he said are not what he wrote about his father. They're, to my knowledge they are

certainly not true. They had, in here, do you remember this one? It had Smith of all people had a whole bunch of mistresses.

M: Well you wouldn't know.

E: Well I wouldn't know but he was so straight laced that would've been... and I don't think he was one... I think what you see is what you got.

S: Wow.

E: That story, knowing the Mayari area is just hilarious.

S: So this disk is these documents?

E: Well it's these documents but it's a lot of these.

S: So this is your writing?

E: Yes. Using these and a lot of other documents that by now I've thrown away. I had to get rid of it when we gave up the big house.

S: Got it. How long have you been living here?

M: Five years.

S: It's beautiful. I really like it. Driving in...

E: Well if you want to hear another story, we were two years ago invaded by a corporate raider so we're in the middle of the litigation and have documents like this you wouldn't believe.

S: A developer or what do you mean?

E: Yeah. An *aprovechado*. He's got quite a history and anyway, we're right in the middle of it.

S: That's happening all over the country. It's disgusting.

E: Of course. It's a culture of greed.

S: We're at a point now where it's scary.

E: We're right in the middle of it here.

S: If Henry Wallace had been president, who knows? What did you hope for in the revolution? What did you both hope for when you found yourself in these faculty meetings where you're talking about, you know, that maybe we are a part of this new Cuba, what did you hope for?

E: Well one of the things that we had always hoped for, you know, putting it in context that some of the land that was owned by foreign sugar mills would become

available for family farms. So maybe our view was unrealistic but family farms was I think, we were training our students... well in rural community and rural community development and at least as far as agriculture is concerned, I think our great hope was that there would become land available for families to have very small family farms. There were some, but it was so dominated by the sugar mill, sugar was... some of those sugar fields had been in for 40 years. It was a perfect crop for Cuba. 40 years without having to be replanted. And of course when Cuba had the advantage of having the sugar quota it was a gold mine.

S: What was the responsibility of these U.S. sugar farms or U.S. sugar plantations? How did you view their role in Cuba?

E: Well they offered employment. In our areas that was the hope for everybody, "Well maybe I can get a good job with the sugar company." I think probably there were more small family farms in the area that Uleli Cook was in. Part of it is related to the topography, the topographic... one of the things you find is this beautiful, level, fertile land and that was sugarcane. It was a mountain... that's where revolutions always start, up in the mountains because these were a different type of people. They were family farmers suffering the economy of the sugar mills but they were family farmers and so the people thought much differently. Much like Appalachia I'm sure. Small, some of them were doing pretty well. It was always a pleasure to work in the area. We would have a community night. Uleli Cook would invite us and put her lamplight out in the country someplace and all the farmers would come and we'd sit around and talk about problems, simple problems and their crops. It was always a pleasure to go to that area because you found a different kind of... now some of those who had family farms also had employment during the harvest with the company so it wasn't completely...

S: How about you Marge? What did you hope for?

M: Just the fighting to be over. I was not thinking about the future.

S: Yeah there was too much in the present in some ways. The present was too violent and tumultuous maybe.

M: Yes.

S: Did bodies appear around you guys during the last... were their reprisals against cane workers around you? Is that something that you experienced?

E: Close enough to where we knew some of the people. And at Christmas time 1956, Christmas, there were 30 some people taken out and shot in Mayari some of whom we knew but not well. And it was a warning. They had rebel sympathies. The other one was between school property and Preston. There was a very poor area where fishermen lived and those fishermen were accused of some kind of rebel sympathies and they were wiped out. It was close enough so we heard. We knew about it, maybe we knew some of the people but it was... And there were one or two that were strung up in the worst kind of way as examples. Strung up by the army. Hung on a

tree or mutilated and of course we heard about those because they had been former students. When the battle took place at our place, some of them went out in the morning and came back in the jeep at noon... so it got pretty close sometimes.

S: Why do you think the revolution happened?

E: Let me see. I had it all figured out once.

S: Then I don't have to write this dissertation.

E: Why did the revolution happen? Well a couple of things happened that had they not happened it might have been a different picture. Batista the last time he took over, and he wanted the legitimacy and so... I hope I don't have my dates jumbled and rejumbled but he wanted legitimacy and during the last legal government there was one fellow by the name of Chibas that was head of public works, very highly regarded, completely clean and articulate and everything. And so Chibas was running against Batista as I remember and you would want to look at the date. But the Chibas factor may have made a difference but he committed suicide. At least, that's the word, suicide. So that, the ones that had hope, gave up hope. And Castro, 1952 made his declaration and he was taken into prison, put in prison and through the intervention of the... he was sent off and he came back with his group. I think the Chibas factor might have made a difference. Would one person have been able to get rid of the corruption? I'm not sure. But there is a lot of money in the sugar business. And it doesn't go very deep to find out how much that money affected legislation, how it affected everything. Batista survived one round of trying to... fools everywhere and he tried to do a lot of other things but also... and I think this was part of Castro's strategy, if I can provoke Batista to become violent, then the violence will turn the people off and the revolution will be possible. The big argument of whether Castro started out a communist, I don't know. There is some evidence in our area where he had a big discussion with his brother Raul and called him a communist in disrespect and everything but we don't know.

S: Why did it become anti-American? Why did there develop a sort of anti-Americanism?

E: Well that existed for years.

S: What is the cause of that?

E: I think domination in every sense of the word. Politicians and particularly young people studying saw that the country was dominated. I remember a neighbor one time after the revolution said, "Well as Marti says, we may have to drink vinegar but at least it's our vinegar."

S: That's a great quote.

E: There's a Spanish clause that makes it sound even better.

S: Sorry I'm just writing it down. Why did you guys leave? What caused you to leave?

E: They wanted somebody to turn the lights out. Those were interesting days.

M: Didn't we leave because the mission board said they wanted us to?

E: Yeah they did. Everybody else was gone. As a matter of fact I was doing a three day seminar at El Cristo on agricultural development or something and this was in 1960 so we were well into the new world and they had asked for an agricultural seminar for their students and I had gone and came back and nobody was there except my family. Which was often the case when Marge needed me the most I wasn't there. So we picked up as fast as we could what we could carry in our hands.

M: Well that's all we were allowed to take.

S: Did you get out through Santiago?

E: Took the train line all the way across the country to Havana.

S: Then you flew out of San Martin?

E: No. Doctor Chivago.

S: Wow. Did Americans live in Mayari or no?

M: The pastor.

E: The pastor did.

S: Who was the pastor?

E: I got an interesting... let me look I've found some profiles of the different people who were in Cuba. I didn't even know I had it.

S: Oh wow.

E: The reason I want to find this for you...

S: I mean anything you don't mind me taking a look at I would love. You know us historians love documents.

E: This is one of our ex alum who came to the United States but this is the one... The Strouds.

S: They were in Havana though no?

E: Oh no. The Strouds started the school.

S: The Strouds started the school? What year?

E: '50s and '40s. Yeah. It was... he was a hustler and so it was one of those things that was sort of linking along and I don't know all of the things that went on but I

have an idea that the church said okay look lets get this thing straightened out. Or maybe the people at United Fruit said lets get this straightened out. So I don't know.

S: Can I hold onto this?

E: Sure. You can have this. This I got, you may find this interesting. This came from the seminary. You may find this interesting. You can have that.

S: Oh this is an interview with her.

E: You may have it already.

S: I don't. This is great. I tried to contact her and she wasn't having it.

E: I thought about contacting her.

S: This is so helpful. Just really quickly, who provided your equipment? Was that the church or was that UFC? Like your truck and stuff like that.

E: Well we had a school budget. Our school budget was made up in three parts, students paid a third, our sales of agriculture products a third, and a third was from gifts. I think we had money from the states also.

S: Got it.

M: Wasn't there a dairy barn?

E: Yeah.

M: Didn't you sell milk?

E: Yeah. Every day went down and milked at 4 o'clock in the morning and then... he used to be the one from the village who rode the mule in every day and sometimes the mule would go and sometimes it wouldn't.

S: Where did you get that bowl from?

E: It came through the hands, maybe not the direct hands of what's his name? The guy himself. Indirectly it came from Bellsville. All of the hands that touched the bowl, I'm not sure, but it's not touched by... we've been talking about the vice president and now I can't remember.

M: Wallace.

E: Wallace. It wasn't touched by Wallace but it came pretty close. You have the Cuba constitution.

S: The 1940 constitution? Yeah.

E: I have a number of these. My first trip... this is a paper I presented.

S: Did you ever read Merrill Davis, Jay Merrill Davis? Is that right? He wrote a study of rural Cuba in the '40s. Maybe '42.

E: Well I didn't read that one but there is one. The one that was written by a professor from... Rural sociologist who studied Cuba in the '40s.

S: Cuba and the sugar economy? Something like that?

E: Something like that. The basis when I was doing comparative studies with some of these figures, they were the best that were available.

S: Do you remember the coup in '52? When Batista took power?

E: Oh yeah. 1952. Oh yeah.

S: What was your reaction?

E: As a matter of fact, I was... I couldn't understand it. I said, "How in the world would they let him get away with it?" I was on the bus. I was in Holguin or Havana or someplace. Probably in Havana because it was on an overnight bus trip and the news came that there had been an overthrow and I got back to school and said, "How in the world can people let this happen?" They said, "What can you do about it?" I said, "I don't know. It seems like people would be up in arms." You can have that.

S: Wow. Thank you these are such gifts. Is this you? Wow. Is this you guys?

E: See how pretty?

S: Oh man. You've seen that I'm sure.

E: That got me into a lot of trouble.

S: This article did?

E: Yeah. That was when we were on furlough. We had just gone through the revolution. We'd gone home and we were home and I was speaking to a group and I still had high hopes in the revolution so one guy, when I finished he said, "Who pays your salary? Castro?"

S: Wow. Were you getting pressure from Methodists like Ellis or Short?

E: No. Not that I recall.

S: Or Smith? Do you know those names? Ellis Short, Bishop Short?

E: Yeah Bishop Short. No not that I recall. I don't recall any pressure was coming from...

S: On how to talk about Cuba?

E: No I don't think so. I don't remember. Anyway, I was probably outspoken in the wrong way at that time. I remember we were in Miami and I was going back to Cuba and the annual conference was going so Marge stayed in Miami. We weren't supposed to go back as a family for a few weeks yet. I said, "Let me go. I want to go to the annual conference because I need to get a feel for what's going on." So this Gerardo and he sees me at the annual conference and I said, "What's that?" And he said, "That's a rebel's saludo." And I said, "Oh. I don't believe I know that." He said, "Yeah. With Batista it was up to here. With Castro, up to here."

S: Wow. Did you guys ever feel at the end that it wasn't your home anymore? That you were no longer welcome there? No. It always felt like home.

E: Yeah.

M: Until we had to leave.

E: People, even in the difficult times, they wanted to protect us.

S: You were well known in the community by Cubans?

E: Yeah and we were well known in the rebel community and they knew us well enough and I would say the other side in Preston, they knew us well enough and so no. And our group, you know, all of these young teachers with their young families, that was our social group.

M: But there were Russians there by the time we left.

E: I guess so yeah.

M: And they didn't know what we were there for.

S: What did you guys think of them? Did you feel this conflicting loyalty to the land and the people and then patriotism or something?

E: Well we had been away and pretty much when we got back it was pretty obvious that things were not going as expected. It wasn't only this, but when we began to talk to other church people, and many of them had been prisoners under Batista and we realized that things weren't quite... there was a lot of not knowing what's next.

M: That's right. I forgot we'd been away and came back to a new type of Cuba.

E: And we went back thinking it was going to be at the school, business as usual and things were not quite the same.

S: When did you leave for good?

E: Lets see. We went back in the summer of '60 and we had to leave before Thanksgiving. That was hard. Marge was head of the library also, she didn't tell you that and did a great job. In the years that we were there, we had collected one of the best agricultural libraries. I've never seen some of the books and things that we had.

That was hard. Some from our own personal... but the ones that were in Spanish, that was hard.

M: We probably made a wrong decision not bringing some of those.

E: Right. But how? I don't know how we could've done it. Maybe not bring my golf clubs. That's a joke.

S: Priorities right?

E: Well we had been in the states for a while and I used to play golf. I used to be a caddy and I bought a cheap set of clubs. There was a golf course there.

S: At Preston?

E: Yeah.

M: Did you ever play?

E: I played once I think when we had one of the visitors, one of the high rollers that visited the school. He wanted to play golf so I called, I don't know who it was, but that was the only time I played golf.

S: What do you mean one of the high rollers?

E: We had some people who helped the school a lot. We had one named Sheffy and we had a number of other people that over the years had really helped a lot. As a matter of fact, there was one here in Seminole who owned all of Seminole at one time. He started out as a grower of citrus and gradually sold a little bit of this a little bit of that and he was one of the donors to the school.

S: And these were Methodists?

E: Yeah. Farmers. Particularly with a farm interest.

S: Do you remember, and the reason I'm asking is these are people that are becoming big characters in my dissertation, Ira Sherman and Victor Rankin?

E: Oh yeah.

S: These two wrote really powerful letters both during and after the revolution that caught my attention. Can you tell me a little bit about them?

E: Well Ira Sherman was in Guantanamo. He did pretty good for a bumbler.

S: What do you mean a bumbler?

E: He wasn't a great speaker. He was a great thinker and they loved him.

S: He has a plaque there now actually.

E: I know. Don't put that in your... We didn't know him too well.

S: He lost his son is that right? A chapel fell?

E: It could be. Maybe that was when we were gone.

M: I didn't know him in Cuba. I met him here.

E: That's right. We knew him here.

M: Through Echo.

S: What's Echo?

M: Another story.

E: Echo is an interdenominational, agricultural... it plays for plants the same way that... in fact often times they have fundraisers. They're not as old or as famous but they've been very effective and they now have centers in different parts.

M: But Sherman was in the beginning.

E: He was, wasn't he. He said you ought to be on the board. I had forgotten.

S: What was his family like?

E: Well, they weren't bumblers but they weren't dynamic people. I mean, they were just very common.

S: Where were they from originally? Do you know?

E: I don't remember. I probably knew but I don't remember.

S: And he was very into the revolution initially right?

E: I'm sure he was. I'm sure he was.

S: He seems to have done some work to hide some people and then he had to run to Guantanamo for a bit. Yeah this is why I'm trying to trace him a little bit. He had to hide from the Batista government.

E: Yeah I know he was quite committed. As a matter of fact I think he did his undergraduate work in sociology and he was very socially, I don't know what the right word is, involved. Victor Rankin. Victor was something else. Victor was well... he and Pinson went together but more than that. Almost, as I recall, almost all of his time was in Camagüey and left a great heritage there. His son, you know is in... you need to talk to his son. He is very much involved. I think he's retired from being a pastor.

S: What's his name? Do you know?

E: Larry Rankin. You know Larry.

S: Do you have his contact?

E: I do yeah. I can give you his email.

S: That would be awesome.

E: He is a must. As a matter of fact, I was on his dissertation committee. He became very interested in literacy and was in Latin America for a while living in Costa Rica and his Spanish is impeccable.

S: Did he grow up in Cuba?

E: Yes he did. Very much. He's more Cuban than American, at least by identification.

S: Were you close with Elizabeth Earnest?

M: I don't remember. No.

S: Who were the women that you were close with at the school?

M: It's been awhile.

S: Mrs. Milk?

M: Maybe. At the school?

S: Or in Cuba generally?

M: I wasn't far away from the school...

S: It sounds like you stayed more often at the school so your experience of Cuba was framed around the school, the town of Preston, the town of Mayari.

M: Yeah and the ones of I mentioned, you know, Cueto. Our big vacation would be to Santiago.

S: For what? When did you go there?

M: For a weekend.

S: Was there a holiday that you would go for?

M: I just lost a battery on my hearing aid.

S: No worries. I can yell.

M: Near Christmas. Sometimes we would go and shop there and eat out at times, have a hot bath.

S: Did you not have running water at the school?

M: Not hot.

E: I heard that.

M: I'm going to go get another battery.

S: Where is Lakeland compared to where we are right now?

E: Straight east.

S: So on the way to Orlando or Miami?

E: Orlando.

S: Great. I'll write him tonight then. Right now I'm staying in Winter Haven. Do you know Winter Haven? It's an interesting town. My girlfriend's father has a house there so I've been staying there for a few days and now I'm going to Miami.

E: Winter Haven is not far from Lakeland. You head almost straight north and you'll run into Lakeland and on the way you'll get one of the best birding spots in Florida.

S: Good. I'll pick up a new hobby then.

E: That's another story.

S: What am I missing? How did I do? Do you think that I'm beginning to grasp this? Are there names I should think about more?

E: I think... we more than covered the waterfront. I wrote some things down. I think we covered everything you might want. Yeah. I think so. As I sat around thinking I though, you know, oftentimes working with students I've found that without understanding the context, it's so easy to pull in individual data in a given time and there is a bigger picture. I guess that's the thing that came to me as I was thinking about it. So it seems to me, someplace there needs to be... you asked some very key questions you know, like why the revolution, why Castro, and I think the context and I only touched that a little bit... I think that's a valid thing to look at more. Larry can help you with a lot of those things. Larry has probably a better grasp than I would have. He and Robert Milk, they grew up in it. That was part of their lives and particularly Larry. Well also Milk right now is spending a lot of time doing research. There was a rather interesting person we had on our faculty and that was Mr. Van Herman. He was an old man. He's interested in Mr. Van Herman, because he's an interesting person. He's the one who did the landscaping on the... in Havana and also the Dominican Republic and he's famous because he and the people at Zamorano were in contact for years, way back. He was the first director of agricultural experimentation before Cuba was a country. And he was on our staff.

S: In the 1950s?

E: He retired from all these things and said I want to train young people. So he came, built a house, paid his own. He was on his own and Mr. Van Herman was a gem. They

made fun of him because his Spanish was still strongly American after years and years but agriculture he knew and he used to drill the boys. He had 42 varieties of sweet potatoes that he was testing at one time. At 90 years old, I was in the hospital when he lost a leg. He had an embolism or something. And he kept going, hobbling around on crutches after that. He said, "Well I can't go to class anymore but bring the boys over here. We'll sit on the front porch." We had some great people like that.

S: Was there any... there was no drinking right? Not where you guys were?

E: Oh no.

S: But in Preston there was?

E: Oh sure. Oh yeah.

S: Was there any, after the revolution the crackdown on the gambling, the prostitution, and on the... what did you guys think of the tourist industry before and how the Castro government...

E: It didn't affect us very much. We were out of the tourist... our visitors from overseas, it was a certain sacrifice to get there. At some point we didn't know if they got there if they could get out. One of the big cooperatives that Humberto, this guy unfortunately died two years ago. He would've been something. He became a bear under Castro because he expected so much and he left the country, he and his wife. He became the person who made all the paint for Disney World. Chemist. A good chemist. Anyway, you would've enjoyed talking to him but he became very bitter.

S: You don't seem very bitter.

E: Well no. I'm not. To tell you the truth, I didn't want to go back. Didn't want to go back. I had that trauma and I felt jilted and that's the trauma if you want to look at the reason why the hard-nosed people in Miami, the real hard-nosed people are the ones who expected an... the worst ones are the ones who were in prison under Batista. I didn't want to go back. It's interesting. That itself is interesting. I was on the board of directors for a number of years of Agricultural Missions Incorporated, which is part of the Council of Churches and their work throughout the world in agricultural development. I was at one of the conferences and they had invited someone from United Nations. What's the agricultural branch? He was an economist. He had spent a long time... He had just come from China and it was the first time that I began to hear, they had been an importing nation of agricultural goods was now exporting. The question I began to... because in the history of agriculture, particularly from the land tenure center of your university, which I know very well because I spent a lot of time there.

S: At Nelson?

E: I knew that we generally saw that there is a type of agriculture, which is very productive where the person has control of decision-making, work, labor, buying

the products and selling the products and owning the land, that seemed to be the highest production. So as far as I know that's the first time we've ever heard of group agriculture- there's another word for it- has been productive. And so that peaked my interest and when a friend of mine, he was head of agricultural mission and he was in Washington and he said I want you to go to Cuba. I said, "I don't want to go to Cuba. I don't want to go back." He said, "I need you to go with me because you know Cuba and I want to know about agriculture." So it took three years because... finally I said, "I'll only go if I have free access to all the farmers I worked with before." It took three years to get that. I had to go all the way to the central committee. Anyway, we went. I had to fly all the way from here to Montreal and then down there. So part of... our guide was this young student who wasn't so young anymore that I'd had from El Cristo and he was our guide.

S: So you taught at El Cristo also?

E: In seminars only. And he had been at one of the seminars and had come into our school also. Also, so that we wouldn't get in trouble, he was accompanied by someone from the government small farmer agency, so they were to watch over me to make sure I didn't get in the wrong places. The last day or during the last time I was there we were in the office of this guy who was the head of the small farmer agency in Havana. So launched out and said, "Why is it? Are you following the same program as China?" And he said, "We don't know anything about China." Because he was telling me about the farmers cooperatives and they were cooperatives but not cooperatives. So that was part of the tour they had directed me to besides the places that I wanted to go to make sure I saw all of the farmers cooperatives. Anyway, I was interested. So there wasn't any connection with that and I was hoping there was because that was going to be a breakthrough. At a later time I spent a summer teaching in China and talking with the minister there, I was also working with the minister of agriculture and that was one of the things we were working on and he was gung-ho for privatization. Oh my goodness. That's ten more stories.

S: Well I can't thank you guys enough. This has been so informative for me. I'm very excited to meet these contacts and look through these documents. You guys have really been superstars and have sat with me for three hours now. So really, it went very fast for me. I hope it was not just work for you.