

Interview Transcript by Kay McLaughlin
February 1, 2006 through
Side A

WK: Wayne Kernodle
EM: Edward McCarthy
Date of interview: December 15, 2005

EM: Interview by Edward McCarthy of Wayne Kernodle in Williamsburg, Virginia at the College of William and Mary on December 15, 2005. What is your full name?

WK: Rigdon Wayne Kernodle.

EM: And where were you born?

WK: I was born in Greensboro, North Carolina. Often called the pivot of the people and the home of beautiful girls.

EM: Alright, and when was that?

WK: That was February the seventeenth, 1919. That's five days after Lincoln's and five days before Washington's birthdays.

EM: Good. What was your father's name?

WK: My father's name was William Edgar Kernodle, and he was born in a place called Brown Summit, North Carolina, which is near Burlington, North Carolina.

EM: What was his occupation?

WK: He was with, first, was with Pepsi-Cola early on and he worked with a man, another gentleman named Brunt also of German background and they had the Pepsi-Cola franchise in Greensboro and my father developed a drink called "Green River" which is a pre-cursor of Seven-Up and Sprite and the whole other stuff and later he went out with Mister Brunt and sold out, well not from him, with Coca-Cola in Greensboro and he was with the Coca-Cola company in Greensboro for the rest of his career.

EM: He didn't develop any more drinks?

WK: No, he was busy with Coca-Cola, he said that there were few employees at that time, Coca-Cola was just getting started, he and a friend would take Coca-Colas around to grocery stores, you know, green grocers and those kinds and leave six bottles of Coca-Cola and said "We'll be back in a month, and if you haven't sold them, we'll pick 'em up." But he said the company never picked up a Coca-Cola they left at work.

EM: So he sold them well.

WK: Yeah, it went well.

EM: And what was your mother's name?

WK: My mother's name was Lena Florence McClain, she was Scotch-Irish and the McClains came over from Scotland to Ireland and married, she married, her background's Lenahan and McClain, so she was Lena Florence McClain.

EM: And where was she born?

WK: She was born in Covington, Virginia, near Afton, really what I think she called Greenfield and it's near Afton and Covington, Virginia. Not far from Wintergreen, as a matter of fact, I think they had some property below Wintergreen which was adjacent to what's called the Rhodes Farm where now, a big golf course belonging to Wintergreen, and they sold that too soon.

EM: Do you have brothers or sisters?

WK: I have five, four brothers. I was fourth in line so there were five brothers and I am the only surviving of that bunch.

EM: And no sisters.

WK: No sisters. But we had a big house in Greensboro, three-story house and we always seemed to have cousins, one kind or another, a couple of male cousins from Rainelle, West Virginia, and girl cousins from up in Virginia, down in Virginia, and so on. So we usually had some male and female cousins coming down and getting started, doing what they wanted to do.

EM: You grew up in Greensboro?

WK: I grew up in Greensboro, went to grammar school there, elementary school, grammar school and called David Caldwell after one of the leading North Carolina educators and I went to the first junior high school that started in Greensboro, our first class of junior high, Gillespi Park, not far from our home.

EM: That was the name of the school.

WK: That was the name, there was a name of the park called Gillespi Park and they named... but it was within walking distance of... as a matter of fact the elementary school was across the street from my house and I could walk back and forth. My mother was a grade mother for years, five boys, and so we, I went to that and transferred from the junior high when I finished there, went to high school in Greensboro and graduated from there, was valedictorian of the class in '35 and it was always some question as to

whether it was a tie or whatever. Being a good, young Methodist Christian, I said “Let him have it.” His name was Bill Meroney and Bill went on to be a doctor and became Acting Surgeon General at one point in his career. But we were good buddies.

EM: So how was life in Greensboro those years?

WK: Greensboro was a small, relatively small community in those times and it was very close and you knew pretty much a lot of people and so community life was friendly and you could walk around or play around all over town and people knew who you were and if you were doing something you shouldn't be doing, they'd just say “Wayne, stop, stop that.” And it's just like being another relative and whatever. And there were a lot of woods not far from our house and we'd go out hiking and taking our dogs and running through the woods and watching birds and picking blackberries and so. But it grew very rapidly, it became one of the, textile, there was a textile mill outside the place called White Oak on the edge of Greensboro which became larger and larger and then as time went on, the schools there, the Women's College, the University of North Carolina, the Methodist School, Greensboro College, Guilford College, [indistinguishable] College and something that we called “clean industries” started coming in, like insurance, Jefferson Life insurance, and things of that kind and so Greensboro began to grow very rapidly and developed some suburbs and whatever. So, but it was a very interesting, easy town to grow up in.

EM: While you were going to school, did you have any jobs or work in any of those places?

WK: Yeah, I worked for the, well, first I had a paper route, and I had about, I guess, 125, I remember, customers.

EM: Is this morning or afternoon?

WK: Mornings. And I was up at 4:30 every morning and carried the papers and I had a bakery on the far end of my route and they took three papers and so I could have anything I wanted in the bakery. Rolls, cakes, pies, cookies, whatever, so by that time my paper bag was somewhat getting empty so I'd fill up and take home and my brothers and whatever loved that. We had also, the five of us really, had an evening paper route. My older brother stripped down a T-Model Ford, no top, whatever, and we'd carry papers throughout the rural area, you know, Greensboro, and two or three of us would stand, you know, (be inside the Ford T-Model folding papers) and driving the others and throw I developed a good throwing arm. But one morning I sailed a paper up into a farmyard and a guinea hen was standing there and the paper went “whhhhhssh” like, and the head of the guinea went flying off, so I said “Step on it!”

EM: You cut the chicken's head off? Guinea.

WK: It was a guinea, guinea, yeah. It went “fhhshh.” I had folded it into a big square and it was sharp so I “fhssh...” but we had a good time with that and made some money off of it.

EM: How old would you have been during those years?

WK: Oh, let’s see, my brother was about, my older brother was about sixteen, I guess, and the next one was about fourteen, thirteen, I must have been about nine, eight or nine.

EM: And did you have other jobs after the paper?

WK: Yeah, I worked for the A&P store on weekends and so Friday and Saturday I would go, you know, the shelves were stocked, do stocking, whatever, and weigh up, brown sugar and white sugar and beans into one- and two-pound bags and put a rubber band around them or tie it with a string. Then later, you know, I’d set up after the store closed about one or two o’clock in the morning, Saturday night, Sunday morning, and I was responsible for setting up the window display and do the window display. I did take out what was in the window, advertising, put in the new cereal or beans or whatever, so I’d get home about four o’clock in the morning. I’d walk about a mile from the A&P to home and of course all of my family were asleep or whatever and I would go in and listen to the radio, no television of course. And obviously, I was so tired, I’d go to sleep and one time I suddenly woke up, guns going off, I thought the house was being robbed and burglars and whatever, but it was a cowboy movie, I mean cowboy radio program, bad guys were shooting up. Then I was very involved with the Methodist church in those days as the young people’s meeting Epworth League, they called it.

EM: I’m sorry?

WK: Epworth League. Epworth. As a matter of fact I became president of the Western North Carolina Methodist youth group that met at Lake Junaluska in the mountains of North Carolina, they arranged a summer campground for adults and whatever and as president, I had to be there when all different groups came. So it would be all summer, the one group from Charlotte would come one week and another group from wherever, so I had all summer at Lake Junaluska all paid for. Of course, because I was “quote” the leader. So I would wake up and go to Sunday school at 9:45 so I would try to get a shower and dress differently and get to Sunday school and we’d have church and then go home and have a big meal my mother would fix by that time and then we’d always have to go back about 6:30 or 6:00 for Youth Supper at the church and have a little supper there with the young people. So I never got over getting up at 4:30. I still wake up at 4:30, I don’t get up and carry papers, but I did that even in college, I would get up at 4:30 and run and whatever. And then I worked, after that, with Piggly Wiggly. Piggly Wiggly was just starting, Piggly Wiggly all over the world and it was really an innovation at that time because this was way back, it had turnstiles and customers come in, go through a turnstile, pick out their own stuff, you know, and go around and come back through to the counter where they check you out.

EM: So the innovation was a self-service aspect?

WK: Yeah, self-service, yeah. And so then they had a meat counter in the back, which wasn't self-service, but a butcher, and I was assigned one time to help the butcher, and I learned to cut meat and learn to do... I had one lady across the street named Mrs. Cable, and Mrs. Cable was always very persnickety about her meats and she wanted to smell everything. Wanted to smell every piece of meat from the butcher. I was in there by myself and she came in one day and ordered a chicken. And so I had this breast chicken and therefore she wanted to smell it and the devil got into me and I turned the chicken right up under her nose. Well, that was my final day at the Piggly Wiggly.

EM: You got fired for that!

WK: (laughs) Well, I... but later on, before I went to college, I graduated, it was depression time, whether or not any of us were going to college, my mother was insistent that we were going to go, some way or the other. One of my brothers, my older brother, had started working for the Coca-Cola Company to make money to go to college and whatever so I stayed out after I graduated, I was only fifteen years of age. I became fifteen on February seventeenth and graduated in June at fifteen years of age. And so things were tough in that period of time.

EM: You're speaking of graduating from high school at fifteen? Let me ask you...

WK: High school, yeah. I had skipped two or three grades. I don't know. Schools were very good, we had teachers who all had degrees in subject matter and most of them had masters degrees, at least. And so I always said I didn't know whether or not I was skipped grades because, well I had these brothers ahead of me, I was fourth in line, and they'd come home with their homework and their stuff and I'd push in there to see what they were doing in English or math or stories or whatever. My mother was a great storyteller, my aunts were. And so I got into first grade and by the middle of the semester, a note was sent home that the teacher wanted me to be moved up to the second grade. And also, the note said "Please stop teaching him things at home." (laughs) So I was elevated, put up, and then again in the fourth grade. I think it was probably I talked a lot and they were... because one of the teachers said to me "Wayne, I don't know what we're going to do with you. All your brothers that I've had were very nice, quiet young men and you talk all the time." So I ended up, and that was some disadvantage because I missed fractions one year. I've never been good at fractions so...

EM: Let me ask you just...

WK: When I finished the, I forget it, when I finished high school, I went to work for the American Optical Company, they wanted somebody to, oh, to mail out glasses, you know, that had been produced and things of that kind, and I did that for a while and then they taught me how to figure curves on Wednesdays and to take a doctor's prescription and translate for the shop and how they were to do it and put it together and I was taught to grind glasses. So I had a couple of years in there with the American Optical Company,

and at that time I designed, they had rimless glasses, no rims but a nosepiece, and I was fitting frames for people by that time out front and we'd have people come in with long lashes and so I figured out how you could grind a lens on it, how to curve without changing, you know, the Rx, and then I created a frame, a nosepiece, and it was called E-6493 Wayneflex. Out of Southbridge, Massachusetts, the vice-president for American Optical Company came down to Greensboro to visit and he took a shine to me and I drove him all around town whatever and he said "I want you to come to Southbridge and show the shop up there what you've done and talk to them, whatever." And I was only seventeen years of age. So it looked like I was headed for a career as an optician.

EM: Did you go up there?

WK: Yeah, oh yeah. I was up there for about three months. So, I remember that guy's name was Adams, not bad for Massachusetts, Southbridge. And so I, my buddy in high school, I mentioned, became surgeon, acting surgeon general, he had worked there in the summer times too. He was a couple years older than I was, big, tall, good-looking, half-Indian. Well, not half, but part Indian. He said "Wayne, you're not going to want to do this all your life. As good as this might seem to you now," he said "this, ultimately you'll know this is a second-rate job." He said "You'll want to go to college."

EM: Now you mentioned your mother was insistent that you go to college. Had your parents gone to college?

WK: Neither one of them went to college.

EM: What made her feel that way?

WK: Well, she had a sister who had, they had all come down from the mountains in Virginia, Covington, and my aunt Mabel, her sister, had gone to college and another sister who lived in High Point had gone and she was a very bright woman, my mother. She was extremely bright and creative and intelligent and also the world's greatest cook. But she had in mind that her boys would, you know, have the opportunity to do that. And my father came from around Burlington, whatever the Kernodle family, many of them were doctors and one was a journalist and one was a commander at the Naval Academy and the Kernodles also, they started Elon College. So you know. There was the Women's College was in Greensboro and the Methodist Women's College was there and Guilford College, so, she just felt like we needed...

EM: Did all of you boys actually go to college?

WK: No, they didn't... only three of us went to college.

EM: Another topic here... Greensboro, in later years, became noted for a racial incident leading to the civil rights movement. I'm wondering, what do you recall of race relations during those years you were there?

WK: Race relations were kind of interesting there. Certainly, white people by and large, at least that we knew, had come out of families with backgrounds in the Civil War and all that kind of thing and so blacks were viewed as inferior and different. We had three sisters, black sisters, that worked for our family and every morning that they'd be there - they would sit around the kitchen table with my mother and plan the day.

EM: They were maids in the house?

WK: Well, one cooked, Hattie, and Hattie was an intelligent woman. Had three sons, all of whom went to college, one got a Ph.D. in philosophy and one got a degree in medicine and one got a degree in journalism. So Hattie was very bright, she became a minister on the side, Josephine, her sister, washed clothes. Big pot out in the big back yard with a fire underneath it, boiling water, scrub board, and whatever. Hand-wringing, hanging up. And Etta, the younger sister, I remember she had a leaky heart so she couldn't have too much work but she could mind children and tell stories and things like that. There was a black church across the town, mile and a half away and we would have them over for Epworth League supper and then we would go to their church, you know. The Christian move towards better race relations. And we had a young minister at West Market Street Church, who became well-known for trying to develop better race relationships. He also became a Bishop.

EM: Were there racial problems that you were aware of?

WK: Yeah, there were some. And the Ku Klux Klan had marched through Greensboro. I can remember seeing all their horses and their hoods and whatever and it was, burning torches, and that was scary, a very scary kind of time so they were showing. And there were some incidents. They're kind of vague in mind, now, but I guess there were some of that. But my mother always was very clear in what we were doing and what neighbors were doing, that our women, our cook, maid, whatever, needed to be treated right and with dignity and whatever. But there were... Greensboro, I remember, the Kress' Store had fountains, in the store, the back of the store, that said "white" and "colored."

EM: Separate fountains. Drinking fountains.

WK: Separate fountains. Drinking fountains. And so as little kids, I remember wanting to drink out of the colored fountain because I thought it was colored water. And there was some woman that snatched me back and said "Don't drink out of that fountain!" Some woman customer. So there was, and of course they couldn't ride on the buses and they couldn't...

EM: Couldn't ride at all on the bus? Not even in the back?

WK: Yeah. Later on, they could, but first...

EM: They couldn't even get on.

WK: No, no. They had to... because Hattie and Josephine and Etta lived, oh, about two miles, I guess, from the house, my house. And they had to walk

EM: Did they come every day?

WK: Hattie came about three days a week, Josephine came every day, and Etta came when she felt like doing. And Hattie also worked for a lady across town who, very wealthy family, called Leek and she used to talk about Mr. and Mrs. Leek. So she had two jobs plus preaching. But it was some time, and they had a different school system, of course. They would, Dudley High School, there was no mixture at all in education, at all, a long time ago.

EM: Yeah. In your high school, how many years did you actually spend in high school?

WK: I spent, well, junior high school, two years, and I was three years in high school.

EM: So you did the full high school. But you got out at fifteen.

WK: Yeah. And I had, there were twelve of us that were taking French, and I had already had some French and Latin and so they arranged for Jacques, the major professor of French at the Women's College in the University of North Carolina, to come over and teach one class for these twelve students and I was lucky enough to be one of those. So that was pretty heavy.

EM: So you learned French well.

WK: Yeah, and Latin. Latin and French.

EM: Latin, too.

WK: I played basketball and soccer. Soccer was really big in grammar school and high school.

EM: Back then?

WK: And then as the war came on, soccer suddenly disappeared. We had football and basketball and certainly baseball and soccer and basketball, baseball I played most and then basketball. Soccer was really big, I mean, grammar school and junior high school. You had big crowds come and watch, you know, soccer. And it kind of disappeared and came back.

EM: I'm surprised that it... that was in high school you played those sports. In considering going to college, what were you thinking of, while you were still in high school?

WK: Yeah. Well, I always, well first, you know, the family had had background, doctors and journalism, I had a cousin, an older woman cousin who had gone into journalism and was a columnist for the Washington Post. So Margaret, she worked for the Greensboro Daily News first and then went to Washington Post and so I thought maybe that's what I would like to do.

EM: Be a journalist?

WK: Be a journalist. And then as I got into the Methodist church, and got elected as president of this North Carolina group, and I was dedicated to go around to different churches all throughout western North Carolina to talk to young people, and to... I had to become a folk dancer and leader of that and, and so the superintendent of young people was based in Salisbury, and a minister named Kirkpatrick in my home church said "Wayne, you ought to think about going into the ministry. You have a gift for talking, like the church and whatever, young people..." and so I said "Well, maybe I'll do that." So they said "Alright, well, go to Duke and go into theology and whatever." Well, maybe I'll just do that. So I went down to Duke at their behest and talked to the registrar, whomever the person was at the time. And he looked at my grades and whatever, said "Fine, you'll get right in here." I said "Fine, I'll come in in September." He said, "Well now, about financing," he said "will you be able to finance it?" I said "Oh no no no, I thought maybe going into the ministry." He said "No, not really." And so I said, "Well." He said... I said, "How much is it?" He gave this figure, at that time... "What you ought to do, young man, you ought to go to another little school, like Brevard College in the mountains and maybe you can get some help, you know, Salisbury and whatever, and if you do well there, then if you come back and see us then maybe we can find something." So I went to Brevard Junior College.

EM: And you would have been still fifteen or sixteen?

WK: No, I had been out for a few years.

EM: Okay, so, you didn't go right after high school.

WK: No, no, that was, I think I was nineteen, as a matter of fact.

EM: Were you working during that time?

WK: I had been working at the optical company. And so all, I pulled up stakes and thumbed up to Brevard College.

EM: Where is it located?

WK: In Brevard, North Carolina. That's near Hendersonville, Asheville, thirty miles from Asheville. And so, big trunk full of whatever I had and that's how I thumbed up to... well, Mr. King in Salisbury had written ahead and had me a scholarship, they supported the tuition and fees and board the first year, which would be, for the whole

year, would be \$375. Which I was to pay back, you know, ultimately, if I could. So I did that and I had a great time. We had good faculty at that little school. A lot of, some of them had retired from having taught at the University of Illinois or Chapel Hill or Duke. And so I was there two years, I was president of the freshman class and the sophomore class, I wrote a column for the newspaper, I played basketball and baseball. Matter of fact, I did well enough in baseball that I was supposed to go to Chapel Hill, I mean, go to Duke after that, and play for Duke, I never got back to Duke until later. I got one year at Duke. So I had a good, and I loved the mountains. I just really fell in love with the mountains. I did a lot of hiking, and a lot of meeting of native people, and I still have friends now, their families that I met during that time, and I met a wonderful guy, a Presbyterian minister, who was young and oriented toward young people, and a musician who was a naturalist, a musician, pianist, a concert pianist. Those two were friends, and he would take me out into the mountains and hiking and whatever, meeting people that he knew, mountain sings and whatever. Matter of fact, he took me out so many times I almost got shipped out of the college for being absent. The dean said he would write me a permanent absence excuse, but... this minister, a lot of Chapel Hill people, professors and things, went to Brevard in the summer time. They had summer places in the summer and they went to his church and he's so bright that when they had a vacancy in the Presbyterian Church in Chapel Hill, they attracted him to go down there. And I didn't know he was going down there, I graduated, I was going to head for Duke, and my roommate was going to go to Chapel Hill so I stopped by Chapel Hill with him, he was talking about, and I met these people, they said "You don't want to go to Duke, you want to go to Chapel Hill!" So I changed my mind and I went to Chapel Hill. Lo and behold, Charles Jones, the minister, had just come by invitation to take over the church in Chapel Hill.

EM: And you didn't know that?

WK: I didn't know he was going. So Ruth was down there, just had come down, she had graduated from Madison.

EM: Your wife.

WK: My wife. And she came to the Presbyterian church (although her father was a Methodist minister). And we had a group that formed around this minister. And I called them the "Snuff-Buckets" just for fun, and we started a cooking co-op in the basement of the church, and two of us would shop and two would cook once a week. And Ruth and I ended up, my wife, my future wife, cooking and shopping together. And we could put out a real entrée and it was steak, or pork chops, two vegetables, coffee, tea, dessert, 25 cents a piece, a meal, and so he began to, this was in the 40's.

EM: The minister?

WK: The minister. Before '54, ten years before that, he began to move into desegregation efforts. And we went along with it, to do that with this group, and so, nip and tuck/a bit tough, it was bad times, and he got to be well-known throughout the south

for doing this. And when he would go off to make a talk, people would come and throw lit torches on the roof of the Presbyterian manse and rocks and whatever. A couple of us "Snuffbuckets would stay in the manse to try and protect the minister's wife and small children.

EM: This is in Chapel Hill.

WK: In Chapel Hill. So a couple of us would spend the night, nights, we would take turns spending nights in the manse to be there with his wife and three daughters. And it was nip and tuck/a bit tough.

EM: Where you ever attacked?

WK: I was in the house when they threw torches on the roof, had to get buckets of water and that's all, I went with him out to Carrboro which is an adjacent town in Chapel Hill to a restaurant with a black person that he knew. And the three of us went in and sat down on the stool, the counter stool, to have breakfast together. And the man that owns the place and his wife, the man was thinking, he came and grabbed the black guy, threw him down on the floor of the restaurant, and his wife came, lo and behold, stood over him and lifted up her skirt and let go right in his face. It was tough times. Later that woman, when somebody was interviewing her after desegregation had occurred and things had calmed down and whatever, and she said "I'm sorry that I did that, I really am ashamed that I did that, but you know, I grew up in the south in Carrboro Mill Village and blacks were not supposed to come in anybody's restaurant or come in the back door of the house or whatever and I just didn't know what else to do." Well, that's the way she put it. The dean of the medical school, and his sister and some other members of his church were insistent that he resign and that he be put out of the church and whatever.

EM: The church wasn't segregated, or desegregated?

WK: Yes it was, it was segregated.

EM: It was segregated. Was he trying to desegregate it?

WK: He was trying to desegregate it. One Sunday morning, the sixteen of us in this Snuff-Bucket group had some black students come over from Durham, the college over there in Durham, the black college in Durham, to the church. And Charles Jones, the minister, was part of this. And each of us took one of the black students and spread out in the church. I took black students, sat here, Ruth took one, sat there.

EM: You sat next to them.

WK: We sat next to them. So that caused a real hullabaloo. And ultimately, he was called before the Presbyterian in Greensboro and tried and whatever and they decided that he may be a great Christian but he wasn't a good Presbyterian. So they bullied him out of the church. Out of Chapel Hill. So we and professors and some other people in

Chapel Hill who were strong supporters and also trying to help desegregate the community and the church, helped him form a new church called the Community Church in Chapel Hill and so the membership would be people who were Episcopalian or Methodist or Baptist or whatever and formed this new church called the Community Church and made him the minister and it's still...

EM: It's still there?

WK: Yeah.

EM: Now, when you went to Chapel Hill, were you, you had already had two years of college.

WK: Yeah.

EM: And so this would be the third year of college that you were going into? So you were intending to spend two years in Chapel Hill?

WK: Yeah. Right. Two, Chapel Hill and then go to Duke theological seminary.

EM: I see. So did you take courses at Chapel Hill?

WK: Yeah. I majored in sociology.

EM: Sociology. I was going to say along the lines of theological orientation.

WK: Now, the head of the department at that time was Howard Odum who was a giant intellectual person and also very much in favor of desegregating the university.

EM: Was the university itself at that point segregated?

WK: Yeah.

EM: So there were no black students at Chapel Hill?

WK: This was all ten years or so before the '54 Decision. Frank Graham who became president of the university helped move that and he became senator of North Carolina and head of the U.N. so it was very heavy at times during those years.

EM: Did you have any dealings with him at all? Frank Porter Graham?

WK: Oh yeah, he was, The President's House was wide open to the students. Particularly on Sunday afternoon, he would have students come by; sit and talk about anything they wanted to talk about. And he was from North Carolina, he knew, he had this capacity to place you in whatever county you came from by your inflection.

EM: Really?

WK: Yeah. So the first Sunday I went over to Mr. Frank's house for a talk, I went in and I said "Mr. Frank," and he said, I just said a few words and he said "Oh, I call you Alamance. You must have been born in yonder in Alamance County, which is right up there near my home. But he was a very wonderful man. I used to drive him and the dean of the faculty to the airport all the time, neither one of them drove a car.

EM: They couldn't drive.

WK: No.

EM: But you had learned to drive.

WK: I learned to drive, yeah. Well, I had a T-Model and an A-Model Ford at home.

EM: How'd you get that job?

WK: Well, Frances Bradshaw who was dean of the faculty, I had a course, world religions, and he was a member of Charles Jones' church and so he knew this bunch that we had in the basement, whatever, very friendly. So when they needed to go to New York, Washington, whatever, go up to the Raleigh-Durham airport, I would frequently be called to drive them over, pick them up. Some wonderful, wonderful times I had listening in on the conversations, what was going on. Paul Green was there at the time and I had courses under Paul Green and I drove him to New York one time along with another professor.

EM: Drove all the way to New York? How long did that take?

WK: Oh, about ten, twelve hours I guess. Something like that. But we were, Paul Green and a math professor whose biography is of Shaw, I can't remember his name, he went along. And we drove, we go into the hotel and there was this drunk sitting on the curb in front of the hotel and Paul Green said "Stop, let's take this man up to our room." And this great, stiff mathematician said "No way is he coming!" and Paul Green said "Yes he is, too. This man is drunk and out of his mind and vomiting." So I came up to the room, whatever, it turned out to be William Faulkner. Paul Green knew him as a writer himself.

EM: Green knew that.

WK: Well, he knew him well.

EM: So what did the rest of you do?

WK: Oh, we were just something. So yeah, that was some interesting experience. So then at Chapel Hill, I didn't play any varsity sports but I got onto writing for the student newspaper, the Daily Tarheel, and it was a very invigorating paper, Dick Adler was there

at the time. So I wrote a column, a feature column called "Incredible World." And I wrote some stories for the Carolina Magazine and I helped a friend of mine, two guys, start a new humor magazine. I got involved in classes and with church group and writing.

EM: You kept pretty busy.

WK: Pretty busy, yeah.

EM: As far as...

(tape stops, skips possibly?)

WK: On the job of being circulation manager of the Daily Tarheel and the magazines and I had a fleet of urchins in town who delivered the papers to the dormitories and to professors' houses and whatever. So that was pretty much how I supported myself.

EM: Was that a problem at all? You couldn't pay to go to Duke and you got a scholarship to the other, Brevard.

WK: Brevard.

EM: How did you pay to go to Chapel Hill?

WK: Well, I paid for it partly by this circulation manager's job and I borrowed some money and Dr. Odum, head of the sociology department, once I got involved in that, and so he decided that I needed to continue so he found some money somehow or another and paid tuition for a year and so that was, there were days in which, except the evening meal in the church, I could go pretty well with that. I did work at the dining hall, I remember Carolina Inn was my first wait job so I was black coat. And the Carolina Inn was the only place to eat in those days, you could hardly eat anywhere else without getting ptomaine poisoning. So I worked there for a while and then I liked that job so I got some money out of that. And I would work in the summertime, back at the Optical Company.

EM: You went home during the summer.

WK: Yeah.

EM: After your second year at Chapel Hill, did you graduate from the university?

WK: Yeah, I got an A.B. in sociology. Odum decided I needed to be at Chapel Hill, not Duke - at that time, I got an A.B. and I went over to Duke for... also, I forgot to tell you, I ran the Recreation Center for the Pre-flight School which was in Chapel Hill. So Ted Williams and Johnny Pesky and a whole bunch of outstanding athletes were in the pre-flight school and they needed, in addition to what they were training, pre-flight, whatever, a recreational, it wasn't USO, it was a recreational unit set up for the Pre-flight

school particularly. And so I was helping with that and ultimately I took that over. I got a little bit of money from that.

EM: I was going to ask you, how did the war influence those years at Chapel Hill?

WK: Well, there were a lot of people that were friends of mine that were suddenly called and whatever, more women, you could go to a women's college in Greensborough for two years and come to Chapel Hill as a junior, you couldn't come to Chapel Hill as a freshman if you were a woman.

EM: You couldn't.

WK: No. But then, that's changed so women were coming, it changed in terms of the gender ratios.

EM: So women could go there all four years back then.

WK: Right. And it was, of course some things were diminished, some classes were not offered at the general head, they went on a trimester system where you just went quarter, not quarter, trimester. And that was a little bit of a shift, whatever, so I went over to Duke for, I was going to go, but I decided by that time is I would do a doctorate in theology and teach in Chicago or Duke or something like that, not preach. At that time I met Ruth and she had been a Methodist minister's daughter and I wanted to marry if I could and she said she was interested but she was not going to marry anybody who was a preacher. She had that.

EM: Was she going to school in Chapel Hill?

WK: She went to Madison and then she came down to Chapel Hill to graduate school. Matter of fact, she came and she was an assistant to one of the professors in "Community Organization." And I took that class as an undergraduate and lo and behold, she was teaching assistant of the class. But at any rate, so she got her advanced degree there and we got married in 1945 in the Presbyterian Church.

EM: In Chapel Hill?

WK: In Chapel Hill with Charles Jones and the snuff-buckets, the main people in the wedding.

EM: So did you go to Duke?

WK: I went to Duke for a year and I would still live in Chapel Hill and thumb over to Duke, twelve miles, and was headed to do theology and re-enrolled and just began to get disenchanted with the way the courses... I had one great professor in "Church History", named Ray Petry, I would count as one of the top scholars and teachers that I have ever known. And I had one professor of Greek language, I like languages. Other than that, I

thought it was pretty barren. And you know, I questioned a lot of stuff in class and one professor said, openly, in class, "We'll name Mr. Kernodle our class heretic."

EM: Class heretic.

WK: Heretic. And as a matter of fact, the professor said "My advice would be that he not continue in the pursuit of theology." And I said "Mr. Cannon, I agree with you." So I went back over to Chapel Hill and told Dr. Odum and he said "Well, you lasted a little long over there than I thought. It was time you came back," so I came back and did a masters and Ph.D. in...

EM: In... sociology.

WK: Sociology, Sociology and Anthropology, and a minor in psychology. And I did, where I came up, the reason I got married in '45 in February and Sharvey Umbeck, who was head of the sociology department here and ultimately dean of faculty, Pomfret was president, Princeton scholar, and the war was just ending, they needed somebody to come and be part of a research project that they had developed on the impact of the war on the whole Hampton Roads area. So I studied the family and changes in the family system and that sort of thing, they wanted, interviewed me to see if I would come and be part of that research team and teach sociology, and we came up here on a snowy day and went to Richmond and in the bus station, picked up the newspaper, the Richmond Times Dispatch, and read a headline that the editor of the Flat Hat at the College of William and Mary was being dismissed from the College for she had written an editorial in which she had said that someday, she didn't know when, but someday blacks would attend the College of William and Mary as students. So she got the "Oh no, that will never do!" We came and we thought well of it, they thought well of us, went back to Chapel Hill and decided, well, we won't come because we know what that problem would mean and they offered me \$2,200 the year to teach five classes and be a part of the research project. So I finally called and said I can't, I just can't do it. Then I got a call a week later, Umbeck, he said "We talked to Mr. Pomfret and Dean Miller" and they wanted me to come read the agreement of what they had worked out. They liked my wife, she had a degree in sociology, good skills in editing and whatever, and they wanted me to come, us to come really badly that they would arrange to increase. I said "How much?" They said "To \$2,400." I said "All right!" And they would arrange for us to find a place to live.

EM: Did they offer her a job?

WK: Yes, see, the Hampton Roads project, the Hampton Roads study was published ultimately, Charles Marsh, Earnest Pate in government and I in sociology and Warner Moss did a little bit on government. So we did the research and published the study. So they reduced my teaching load to twelve hours and they gave Ruth a job as a research associate for \$1,800. Well, that was...

EM: That made the deal, huh?

WK: That made the deal.

(tape stops)

(continue on side B)

WK: After I got here, summertime, I taught one summer at William and Mary, it was hot, you felt if you fell from here to hell, you'd freeze to death, sweating and no air conditioning and it was just absolutely the worst experience I've ever had. And I had been, one summer after Brevard, this man I met, musician and stuff, he said "Wayne, I'm going over to this camp, over near Hendersonville in the late summer and me and Charlie are hiking there, take the kids out into the woods and show them nature and something or other and they need a tennis counselor over there and do you want to come and go to this camp?" And this was before I was married and I said I'll do it. So I said "When are we going?" He said, "Well, I'm due over there tomorrow to talk to the chief owner." I said "All right, I'll go with you."

EM: You're still over at Chapel Hill now.

WK: Yeah, so he said, I said "I'll meet you at nine o'clock in the morning." He said "Make it six." "All right." So I went over to his house in Brevard at six and he came out of the house with a knapsack on his back and started walking. And I said, "Where are you going?" He said, "I'm going over to this camp." "How far is it?" He said, "Well, through the woods, I'd give it about 32 miles." I said, "You mean, you're going to walk?" "Well, how else are we going to get there?" he said, "I don't drive a car." So we walked over.

EM: You made it?

WK: Through the woods. Well, I was in pretty good shape, I'd been hiking with him anyway. So we got to the chief and whatever, he hired both of us on the spot, so I did camping work over there and ultimately became head of the personnel and hired counselors and did their relationship and all that for ten years. Even after I came here...

EM: After you were working here you went out there in the summertime. Really? For ten years.

WK: Yeah, right. And my kids got free camp and Ruth was working in the office of the camp and I was being paid and both of us were getting food and a place to live and I made more money, cash money, in the summertime for two and a half months than I made at William and Mary in the whole year! Plus at camp I met some wonderful people from New Orleans, Mississippi, campers who came. It was one of the best camps in America. A girls' camp and a boys' camp. They had a good stable and good canoeing and the rapids and hiking. So I did that for ultimately, well, ten years. I never taught summer school. I became head of the department, I'd just hire somebody else.

EM: Are there any thoughts you have about the things we've already spoken about that you would like to add to?

WK: I'd like to talk about my maternal grandfather who was a railroad man and an engineer and he helped to design and supervise the development of the railways through the mountains.

EM: He was like a civil engineer?

WK: Yeah, Virginia and Tennessee and that kind of thing and he would always remember, when he'd come to visit us that he had this great coat on or vest and this beautiful gold watch that I always had my eyes on. It had a face on it and he'd press this button and it would come open and he could make it chime and ring and whatever and it was this big something, it had two chains on it, and of course that's become a family heirloom. And I have that.

EM: You still have it?

WK: I still have it. Well, he came one time, it was snowing in Greensborough, he came to visit.

EM: Where was he living, in Virginia?

WK: He was living up around Covington, Virginia. And he had four, five daughters and two sons. And three of the daughters had moved to Greensboro and one to High Point which is only twelve miles away so we'd visit. It was a snowy day, I must have been four or five, whatever, and I went out into the yard, backyard, where the birds were, I took some of my mother's wonderful biscuits and crumbled them up and the birds gathered all around and I came back in and he pulled me on his lap, he said "Son, that's a nice thing for a young boy to do. Take this." And he gave me a gold dollar.

EM: Gold dollar. You still have it?

WK: I have a gold dollar. But he was, his oldest son, Tom McClain, T.S. McClain, worked for him for a while but then he started a lumber business in Rainelle, West Virginia and so he had a big, big lumber operation, big farm that went back to the river. We used to go up there for vacations and he had several children, some of them who came down to Greensboro and lived with us a while. So that was an interesting kind of time to be with... We were going up there one time, just one story, and my mother took three or four of us when we were really little kids, about two, to Covington. And the train, you had to get on with what they called a mountain car of some kind and one car that ended, that backed up the mountain. But we got off the main train, a Pullman, and this black woman with two little children on there, white dress on, I remember, and we all got off and everybody had their own chicken dinners, whatever to eat, and it had been raining, and so this poor woman trying to get off and children and get her meal out and she slipped and fell into the mud and she was teary and the kids crying. And these men,

white men on the train started just absolutely dying laughing, talking about these little pick-a-ninnies. My mother looked at them, she took out her pocketbook and took her handkerchief out and started wiping the mud off this woman's dress. And looked at these men and said "If you don't stop laughing at this poor woman, I'm going to take my pocketbook and knock each of you in the head." And she was a big, strong Irish woman who could get more sense into us with a flyswatter through the seat of our pants and they stopped. So Ed, that's one incident I remember. My father's mother died, I just barely remember. Grandfather was a tobacco farmer. And here, what's called Brown Summit, really the German colony was named, called Ossapie. That's where the Kernodles, three brothers who were coming over from religious persecution in Europe, and shipwrecked on the coast of Pennsylvania, two of them drowned and Brooks, fifteen, was saved and taken in to Philadelphia. And the German colony there befriended him and took care of him and took him down to North Carolina, to Ossapie, near Brown Summit. And he grew up there and the family were tobacco farmers and he married and by his first wife he had eleven children, all male, and not surprisingly his first wife died early. Married a second time, and by his second wife he had nine children, all male. So they spread out in Alamance County, Burlington. A few went west into Arkansas, some to Tennessee, one family went to Brownsville, Texas and one went to New Orleans and opened the first family hotel in New Orleans. So that was an interesting family, but most of them stayed right around.

EM: So you had a lot of family and relatives in the Greensboro area.

WK: Right, yeah, right. One of the families that stayed in Burlington, five boys in that family, like in my family. They all went to Duke and became doctors. And each one specialized in something different. And they opened a clinic in Burlington so whatever got wrong with anybody in the Burlington area, one of the Kernodles got you. And it's still there.

EM: It's there. The clinic's still there?

WK: Yeah. Every once in a while when somebody sees my name, "Oh! Do you know the Kernodles in Burlington?" I said, yeah, Burlington Clinic. "Yes! Charles Kernodle delivered all three of my babies!" So yeah, but most of them stayed around that area.

EM: Okay, good, thank you.

WK: That's... I can't think of anything else to put in there unless you have any other questions.

EM: Wayne, from what you said, your childhood, growing up, young adult years for the most part sounded as though they were happy years in your life.

WK: Yeah, they were, we had so many people around, it was like an extended family. We always, somebody was doing something all the time, fun. We had big family gatherings, Christmas, New Year's, birthdays, whatever. Most of it, with the relatives,

occurred at our house. I guess because we had the most boys and children and my mother was a good cook. She grew up being in charge of her family because her mother died early so she took over a little bit and one of the reasons she didn't go to college, she really took over and ran that big family, whatever. So they were happy times and sometimes I go home from school, college, and twenty-five, thirty people at the table and kids in the hall. And one Thanksgiving I went in and everybody's eating and having fun and there's a little boy sitting next to me and I said to my brother, I said "Whose kid is this?" He said "I don't know, I don't know." And my mother just hovered over the table and helped out with things and I said "Mom, who is this, who is this little kid? Whose is he?" She said "Oh, he's not any kin to us, he's a little boy from across the street, his mother and father are both doctors and they're gone all the time and the poor little thing comes over here and I feed him and take care of him, whatever, so he just came over." We had picnics at the Guilford College, Guilford Battleground, which was in Greensboro, General Green in the Battleground, and go out there for big picnics and other places like that. So there was always something fun going on. And the church was something I got involved in, my brothers and family and always having interesting things going on there, and young people's meetings and retreats and whatever. And we had a little gang one of my brothers started called the "Rangers" and we took different cowboy names, you know, in those days, he was Tom Mix, I was Art Accord, somebody was Hoot Gibson, we played the role and whatever so we had a good time doing that. And he set up all kinds of things we had to do to earn merit badges. We didn't join the Boy Scouts but it was a good game, we did good things for people. I don't know what it amounted to but we had fun doing it. And we had a drink stand, because my father could give us a break on the cost of Coca-Colas and Green Rivers and Strawberry Pop and we set up a stand in front of the house. People would come by and for a nickel they would get a bottle and I decided one time to start a contest. Whoever could drink six bottles fastest would win a prize. And the prize of course would be another drink. But they'd pay five cents for every one they drank. So we had two brothers on the street and one of them would take two bottles at the same time and pour them down and so he drank six bottles in record time and he got the prize but he paid, he got business going! Well, we did a lot of interesting things, little things like that. We had a deep pool, we had close woods by the house and then there were deep woods and we would go camping and hiking and take our dogs and whatever, fishing, there was a creek, big creek back in through there. We'd catch catfish, perch. So we had a good... and then there was hard times, the Depression came along and there was a time in which money was really very difficult to come by and we were stretched a good deal.

EM: Your father wasn't out of work, though, was he?

WK: He was losing money all the time, business was, people weren't buying drinks and business was having problems. That's why he went from Pepsi-Cola to Coca-Cola so it was tough going for a while but we made do and eat. I've made friends out in the counties and whatever and we'd trade things, eggs you could get for twelve cents a dozen or you would swap something for that. My mother canned a lot so we had a pantry full of preserves and jellies and snap beans and butter beans and whatever so... but we had a big house but it was not centrally-heated. We had fireplaces in the bedrooms and had a cook-

stove, a big, old cook-stove, a wood-stove. And so one of my jobs was to split some wood and tend the fire and whatever. That cook-stove was always going. And when you came home from school, grammar school or high school, that stove was still going and there's warming closets up above where you cook here, in warming closets. And there'd be warm cornbread up in there, whatever, and on the stove would be a pot, a big pot of pinto beans. And [indistinguishable] get a cup full of pinto beans and a piece of cornbread and then we played games and the streets were not full of traffic and whatever and we played baseball, kick the can, and it was a big, big lot at the end of our property and kids used that as an informal playground, a lot of stringball games and kick the can and hide and seek and so on. It was a good neighborhood. And there were some cute girls in the neighborhood. We enjoyed...

EM: So you didn't get bored.

WK: No, we didn't. And I was reading a lot by that time also, my aunt Mabel was a very literate person and loved literature and I would go by her apartment, she lived in an apartment house near the church for a while before she bought a house. I would go by there every Sunday and she would give me something nice to eat and then she would read to me. Shakespeare, Edgar Allen Poe, you name it. So I developed a really wonderful sense of joy listening to all this and that's what...

EM: So that set you on your scholarship trail.

WK: Yeah, it did. I remember telling one girl I was dating in high school, she said "What are you going to do?" and I don't know what she had in mind, but I said, I don't know why I said this, I said "Some day, some day, Virginia, I'm going to get a Ph.D." She said "What? What's that?" She was in my class, a pretty girl. I said "Well, it's an advanced, it's the highest thing you can get in education, and I want one." She said "Whoa. Goodbye."

EM: Have you ever thought of that yourself?

WK: No, I never thought of it, you know. I'd thought of theology and [indistinguishable] discussed and all that but my sense of appreciation for literature and poetry and I was writing poetry in high school.

EM: In high school.

WK: Yeah. And so that's what hung to me and then I'd known a man in the church named Elmer Yost, a young people's friend and was he was always trying to help young people go further in education and he kind of said "Follow what you like. Don't do what somebody else tells you to do. Whatever it is, no matter whether it pays money or doesn't pay money or fame or anything else, what you want to do is get yourself involved in what you want to do."

EM: That's good advice.

WK: I think that's what kind of guided me. But all through school, Brevard, thinking about if I should go into theology or whatever, this thing was in my head.

EM: The Ph.D.

WK: Yeah.

EM: And you did.

WK: I got one.

EM: Good. Thank you.

WK: Your original question – even in the tough times, some of them sad, we never went hungry. And we couldn't go off and go to college right away and we couldn't have all the new clothes we might have liked to have. And we waited on getting from a T-Model to an A-Model to something else but we had fun. My father was a quiet, good-looking man, quiet, kind, generous, kind. I can't even remember his saying anything harsh at all. My mother was the disciplinarian. She didn't have to do much to... nearly over 6 feet, and Irish, and strong. I don't remember her ever slapping me. She took a keen switch to bottom of our legs once in a while or the fly-swatter. But that's it.

(end conversation)