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Orlas Semler Schwallie interview, Wright State University Employee

Lewis Shupe

Wright State University - Main Campus

Orlas Semler Schallie

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WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY
Retiree Association Oral History Project

Interview date: March 1, 2012

Interviewer: Lew Shupe
Professor Emeritus, Department of Communication

Interviewee: Orlas Semler Schwallie
Former Staff

Lewis Shupe: This is Lew Shupe, Professor Emeritus from the Department of Communication at Wright State University. Today is March 1, 2012 and I am interviewing Mrs. Orlas Semler Schwallie, a staff member from Wright State University's early days, as part of the Retiree Association's Oral History Project. Orlas, thank you for being here. Would you tell us how you learned about Wright State?

Orlas Schwallie: Well, there were many articles in the newspaper. I was working in downtown Dayton and had begun a class at Miami University Extension thinking maybe I would go for my four year degree. I had a two year degree. I lived in Beavercreek and was hearing of the new university and I thought this would be a perfect place to work.

LS: And this was in?

OS: 1964.

LS: 1964.

OS: I was interviewed by Howard Bales to work for him, and he was the Assistant Director of Science and Engineering for the Ohio State University part. I started working August 3 in 1964 in the Warner House. I was there I believe for just one week.

LS: Okay, but describe the Warner house for us.

OS: We worked some in the kitchen at the kitchen table, we had offices in the bedrooms and in the living room, we would go outside if we were doing some types of work, it was a nice place to sit outside and do some work. It was a very pleasant place, and I knew the people who lived in the Warner house, Blanche and George Warner.

LS: Now did they donate the home to-

OS: That I'm not certain. I do know they moved to Fairborn and lived there for a while before they passed away, but I'm not sure if they gave the house or the farm to the university or if it was sold.

LS: And when you moved in to start the work there, they were not living there?

OS: No, they were not living there, yes.

LS: Okay. Alright, what were some of your first tasks?

OS: Well, I think I was doing typing for Mr. Bales. He had to plan the equipment that the Science and Engineering Department needed and at that point I think that's all I was doing for him. But Verna Graves and Vicky Stofer needed help in getting paperwork and so forth ready for the first registration.

LS: So that was the place where you started to organize the first registration at Wright State.

OS: Yes, and they were the ones who actually organized it. Possibly Katie Stofer, since she did that sort of thing for the Ohio State graduate school at Wright-Patterson. She probably had done this before. I remember interviews from Dayton Daily News for an article for Katie Stofer and the interview was in the kitchen. It was in the Sunday paper, it was supposed to be a special article. I'm not sure if I have seen it; if I have I don't remember exactly what it was. So I don't have many memories of actually working in the Warner house but it was nice for me that I knew the family, and I knew it was important to them that the university was using their farm.

LS: You mentioned you were working mainly with Bales from Ohio State.

OS: Yes.

LS: Was there also a relationship with the Miami people?

OS: Yes. I had very little contact with the Miami people at that point.

LS: So it was two separate units.

OS: Yes.

LS: Okay, now bring us up to the campus for the first registration.

OS: Okay. The first registration was August 10 and I'm not certain but I think it lasted for two weeks and it was a very, very busy time. I can't remember how many were in the hallway of Allyn Hall but we had long tables in the hall and we each had a loose leaf notebook containing the classes. It might have been by... I don't know if it was by department, but each class had a page and we tallied by hand, and we had a capacity number on our page. When we reached that capacity the laboratories were across the hall on the west side of Allyn Hall and there were many typewriters in there, and I don't remember how many of us would do this but there were many typewriters and we would go in and fill out paperwork for a closed class. Apparently we didn't have computers

except the large computer on the south end of Allyn Hall, and I think someone took the paperwork to the computer room. I'm not quite sure how often they would do that. But each time a class would fill we'd have to go in and write a closing list.

LS: Describe Allyn Hall during this time.

OS: Allyn Hall, the doors... from what I can remember, if the doors were open I don't know if they could open windows then but we had no air conditioning yet and it was very hot in August. The parking lot was not completed so it was very, very dusty, and I remember coming in with dark clothes and leaving with light clothes, [laughs] it looked like a dust bowl had hit us. It was very intense because there were so many students, each day. But it was fun. It was very hard work but it was fun. And there were closets that people were working out of, for supplies and offices and so forth. Everyone was very, very busy.

LS: You started to tell me about the tables down the hallway.

OS: I'm sorry, I can't really remember how many we had or if it went by major... that part I don't remember. I just remember a loose leaf notebook with tallying by hand.

LS: It'd be nice to know if they still exist, some of those early notebooks.

OS: Oh, wouldn't it? Yes.

LS: Okay, after the registration, now what happens?

OS: After the registration, the admissions office... I believe it was Dr. Hardy, he was in the admissions office, Ritha Tirpack was his secretary. Let's see, at that point the bursars office was in the fishbowl-

LS: I don't know what the fishbowl was.

OS: The fishbowl, it was offices and the switchboard and glass almost all around us. The conference room and some of the offices were closed in but the registrar's office- and I sat outside the registrar's office in the very beginning- but the first office after registration for me and for Mr. Bales was on the top floor of Allyn Hall and that was all faculty, and then there was a large room that was a secretarial pool. I don't remember how many were in there; there was a secretary, Betty Snell Givens. She was from Tipp City. She also worked at Warner House, a couple weeks before I was there. She was in the secretarial pool and I believe Betty Lowry, and Don Brumbaugh had a little cubby hole with a Xerox machine around the corner, and those girls typed the exams for the faculty. My desk was in the secretarial pool but I did not do that work unless there was a rush for an exam. And sometimes we would all be collating, we didn't have automatic collating machines and so we would all pitch in so the exams were finished in time. We weren't upstairs very long before Dr. Redden was hired as the director of Science and Engineering; he was a geology professor from Harvard University and he was very active

in the US Geological Society. He had an office downstairs in the fishbowl and so did Howard Bales, in the closed-in offices, and Fred White. There was a conference room downstairs between the offices, a switchboard, and I believe Verna Graves and Warren Abraham and possibly Dr. Bordinat were in that large area. It was a very, very large area.

LS: Now if I walked into Allyn Hall, where was the fishbowl?

OS: Well, it depends on which door. [Laughs] I don't know if I remember exactly. There was a door to the west and it was to your right a few feet after you walked in the door. And the computer room was beyond that in the west corner.

LS: And who named in the fishbowl?

OS: I think everyone did, and the students.

LS: Did they? Okay.

OS: We thought we were on display. But it was just... everyone wasn't in that, it was just the registrar's office and the admissions office. And my desk was around the corner because Mr. Bales and Dr. Redden were down the hall to the right. There were many important meetings in the conference room at the time because that was our only conference room, and they would have the president of Ohio State come and the president of Miami, and you always knew when they were in the building. And there were important meetings-

LS: How did you know?

OS: Well, my mind is going blank on the president of Ohio State at the time. Dean Moulton was over our department-

Chris Wydman¹: Was it Fawcett?

OS: Yes, Dr. Fawcett. He was a very, very tall man. I believe... I know Dr. Moulton was, Dean Moulton was the dean that was over our science and engineering and he occasionally came to visit, of course more than Dr. Fawcett, and Dean Moulton's secretary trained me on the recording and the filing and so forth for the faculty records, as Ohio State did them at that time. And, um, I think I was at Ohio State for a day or so for her to train me and then we were on the phone often of Dean Moulton's office every day. Our mail from science and engineering or anything from Wright State to Ohio State was picked up by a, um...a limousine that brought Ohio State faculty here for the graduate school. I believe the graduate school from Wright Patterson came to ...Wright State and and, um, in late afternoon the limo would bring the professors here and take our mail back to Ohio State and we received mail.

LS: You mean to the early faculty came by limo?

¹ Chris Wydman, WSU archivist, was present during the interview.

OS: No, I'm talking the graduate faculty.

LS: The graduate faculty?

OS: Yes.

LS: Oh, okay.

OS: Yes.

LS: [Laughing] That's something to, to get in the books. Okay.

OS: Yes, yes. It was very distinctive because there weren't many limos like that in the area. You see more now, like that but it-

LS: Tell us just a little bit about the graduate program at Wright Patt, would ya?

OS: I wasn't that familiar with it. I just knew that, uh, Katie Stoffer worked there and Dr. Binger, Paul Binger.

LS: Okay.

OS: Um...

LS: So there was that early connection?

OS: Yes, yes.

LS: And they arrived by limousine. [Laughing]

OS: Yes. Um, and the Miami extension in Dayton, um... of course dissolved to the Dayton campus. But some of the faculty, I assume, were also faculty, in fact I know they were, uh, faculty that were also at the Miami extension; when I took a class there it was at Roth High School in Dayton. And my professor was Dr. Stempeck or something like that, and he one night, he was teaching here at Wright State in the very beginning, he was killed on his way home from class; he was teaching here one evening and, and was killed, um, in the very beginning of Wright State. He was an English professor.

CW: Was it a car accident?

OS: Yes.

CW: Right out front?

OS: Yes. No, I don't remember where it was-

CW: I think we've heard somebody mention that before.

LS: Yeah...

OS: Yes, he was one definitely that was at the Miami extension and was here. I don't know for sure about the others.

LS: So that was one of the early tragedies of the university.

OS: Yes, yes.

LS: What were some of the high light, the fun time that you had that first, very first registration? What do you, do you remember something you enjoyed?

OS: It was...I, I can't think of any one particular thing. It was just, it was very hard work but it was fun.

LS: Okay.

OS: Everyone was so enthusiastic.

LS: They were?

OS: Yes.

LS: Hmm-

OS: Except there were, I'm not sure I should say this. There were some faculty that didn't understand why they had to be counselors. And that became a problem.

LS: You mean that in counseling students, the new students?

OS: Yeah, for their classes. Yes.

LS: What do you remember about the students? The type of students?

OS: Most of them were from Fairborn or Beavercreek or Dayton of course, at that point since there was no housing. Um, I knew some of them, since I was from Beavercreek but I also have a Fairborn connection and, um, so I knew several of the students and they weren't that much younger than myself. So that made it fun. Um...I can't remember-

LS: Do you remember, were there any problems or hurtles that you had to get over in that first week, that first year here at the campus?

OS: Well, I can't think of anything in particular right now. Except the counseling, um, because I had a few problems of complaints from faculty, um, at times because they,

there were students who wanted to see them for counseling for their classes and, um, that was a problem at times.

LS: Oh, okay.

CW: Some things never, change.

OS: Yes, yes.

LS: Huh-uh, that's fun. Oh, okay. Tell us a little bit about how the first year went, would you, and how-?

OS: Well, it was very exciting because for me it, and for many of us if we moved to a different office we probably got a new desk and a new typewriter and...because all these facilities needed to, they needed to keep the desk wherever the desk was and so you got a new one when you moved to another office; that was only in the very beginning and a new type, and new typewriters. Um-

LS: Now whom did you work with after you got started?

OS: I worked for Howard Bells in the very beginning. Then after Dr. Reden came I worked for both of them until the work became too much to do both and um...Barbra Bingem became Mr. Bells secretary and I was Dr. Reden's secretary. And um, and then we moved to Oelman Hall shortly after, probably, I'm not sure when that building was finished in '66 or, '66 probably. Then we were downstairs in the um, in the office downstairs, Mr. Bells, Barb, Dr. Reden and I and I don't remember if there was anyone else in there. Um, and then when Dr. Golding came, he took that office and our offices went upstairs on the top building of the Oelman Hall.

LS: Oh, so now you were at the top story-

OS: Yes, at the top, yes. And, um, I remember the first convocation. It was out in the commons and I remember there were, it was on news on the TV, on the nightly news. I think that was shortly after school began here and it was just faculty if I remember correctly. I was here for the first inauguration. I helped with the first inauguration.

LS: Tell us some details about the first inauguration.

OS: Well, I knew the girl, there was this, um, a girl hired who was a recent college graduate I believe maybe learning how to do events similar to that was hired. And it became so stressful that she did leave. And, I believe it was Fred White who asked me to take her job and I was also planning a wedding and so I chose not to take the job, however, Pat Whinship took the job and I worked for her in between doing my regular job.

LS: Okay, and so you planned that first event?

OS: Well the other, the first person did most of the planning, we had just finishing touches. But it, it was several months that we worked on it; on mailings and that sort of thing.

LS: Can you describe how it went over?

OS: I don't, I'm sorry it's been so many years I don't remember very much.

LS: It was out where did you say?

OS: The inauguration was, it was outside in a large tent. I don't remember the exact location. But it was here on the university grounds. Um, and um, I believe that might be where I received this Medal of Independence.

LS: Describe that medal would ya?

OS: It has a picture of Orville and Wilbur Wright and um it says Wright State Independence and this Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce with the Ohio seal. And, um, it's a special, someone gave it to me that day. We were very busy so I'm sorry I don't remember. There were only a few of us that were hostesses at the inauguration, um, Fred White's secretary Millie Wadell and I believe Verna Graves and I believe Joyce Sprink and I'm not sure-

LS: Katie Stoffer?

OS: Excuse me?

LS: And Katie Stoffer.

OS: I'm sure she was there.

LS: She was there-

OS: I can't remember, I didn't see her as much after the first, after registration. Um, we also had, at that same time, that Dr. Golding came, there was a faculty reception at the Moraine Farm, Colonel Deeds farm in Kettering, and um, the president's secretary and Fred White's secretary Millie Wadell and I and...uh I'm sure Verna Graves and I'm not certain who else was there. But I'm sure there were maybe six of us that were hostesses at the reception, that was a special occasion. It was another first, so many firsts.

LS: Did the university, did they use that location for other events?

OS: That particular location?

LS: Uh-huh.

OS: I think they used that because NCR had such a major part of Wright State and, um, and Bill Ingler from NCR worked very closely with Wright State. Bill Ingler was in a nursing home that my parents were in, just a few years ago. And um, he didn't remember me, but occasionally if I had my Wright State University sweatshirt and it said... I forget the exact words but 1976 was on it, he would say "I was under that flagpole that day," and I said "I was under it also." I know through our office we sent so much correspondence to Bill Ingler. He was a big part of the opening working with Fred White and Dr. Reden, um, Dr. Bredino and Warren Abraham.

LS: Um, introduce me a little bit to him, Ingler. Was there any relation between Bill and Charles Ingler?

OS: Yes, it is one in the same.

LS: Oh, it is?

OS: Yes, yes.

LS: Oh, okay. The... and so he was instrumental in a lot of this early history?

OS: Yes. I don't know if he worked for Mr. Oelman. I'm not sure, I'm not sure of the background. I typed many envelopes to his office. But I don't remember what office it was at NCR at that point.

LS: So, but there was-

OS: But Wright State was very important for him.

LS: That was an important relationship.

OS: Yes.

LS: That's nice to know for this history.

OS: Yes.

LS: I see that you brought some memorabilia with you.

OS: Yes. I have a newspaper article of Katie Stoffer.

LS: You were close friends?

OS: It says she's, um, Den Mother to thousands. She was, she was an angel.

LS: Well, that's nice that's okay.

OS²: I'm sorry...

LS: It's important to remember those close friends.

OS: Yes. She was so devoted at the opening, just so devoted.

LS: And so I think the title of that article says a lot. She was Den Mother to thousands.

OS: Yes she was.

LS: I know that students really related to her.

OS: Yes.

LS: Did they?

OS: Yes.

LS: Oh well that's, I'm glad that, I'm glad that you brought that-

OS: She was a friend to many.

LS: I wish that she were still here so we could interview her for this oral history.

OS: Yes definitely.

LS: The... you have the early photos of the-

OS: The early photos?

LS: Uh-huh.

OS: Yes. Let's see...this would be the west side.

LS: (To Chris) Will you be able to get that okay?

OS: And of course the, um, over here was the library, on this- And the, um, vending area and we had tables for our, tables and chairs for studying or for eating and um, then there was the um, the pond around.

LS: The moat?

OS: Yes, the moat. That's right the moat. And the first spring it was, um, all kinds of fananig, fanannigans going on around the uh, the pond.

² OS has become emotional.

LS: What were they?

OS: Yes. They would, they had canoes and they were dressed having so much fun. Sorry I got-

LS: I think I saw a photograph of Fred White in a canoe at one time.

OS: Yes. Oh, is that right?

LS: Uh-huh.

OS: I missed that. And uh...let's see. And this would be from the um, north side looking towards what now is, or I assume are still the administration offices. And um-

LS: That parking lot looks like it's got a lot of ruts in it.

OS: Well, I think it's a new parking lot. It would have to be so, um. I remember when the tunnels were first built for um, I don't know if it was the library. I remember it was open and there was a plank across. Um, that was interesting because there was, it was open for some reason in the very beginning. You weren't supposed to be there but I was.

LS: And it was an open tunnel?

OS: Yes it was. It was open and there were some boards going across it and I was showing someone the university and we walked across the planks and it was, I won't do that again.

LS: You have the catalog there, the first catalog.

OS: Yes, and in the catalog, um, since we didn't have computers as, um, came later, we had to do so much typing every time a new catalog came out and we had to retype all the classes all the faculty and I did it so many times that I could, I remembered where many of our science and engineering faculty graduated from. And it was, some of them I still remember. But it was a lot of work at that time.

LS: You, you have long hours, right?

OS: Yes we had many long hours and I also think we worked on Saturdays if I remember right, particularly Saturday mornings. And we were way over our forty hours, however, we were told that we would make them up, we would be able to make them up when things slowed down but I never saw that happen in almost five years. It wasn't time.

LS: What did it, how were they going to make them up for ya?

OS: We were supposed to have a day off, so many days off we were to keep track but we were so tired that, I don't know, I know I didn't keep track of my hours very well, but it

was a part of our lives. So, um, we have faculty and staff picnics. I did some of the work for some of the faculty wives.

LS: Let's go back to the picnic, describe the faculty, some of the early faculty and staff picnics.

OS: I think the first one might have been at Warner House if I remember correctly.

LS: I know they still use Warner House.

OS: Do they?

LS: They did.

OS: Oh, okay.

LS: You know and-

OS: Okay.

LS: And so one of the early picnics was taken, was at Warner House?

OS: Yes, I think that's where the first one was held. And, um...I mostly remember that first one. When Gordon and I were married in 1976, Mary Mays was a part-time employee for Dr. Redden and I, to help with my work. And she had a wonderful tea with Orlas, um, let's see it was held in what at the in the beginning I think it was a room...a conference room maybe for the faculty of the top floor of Allyn Hall. And, um, I have many names on the, many people signed the card for me and it was very nice that she had that and many faculty and staff came to my party. And um, that was, I'm sure that was on the top floor of Allyn Hall. Um...I'm trying to think of some other things. Did I mention last night I was looking through, found a...it was a postcard, um, I laughed so hard last night when I looked at this, a postcard of Allyn Hall and just as they had come out with postcards, a first another first. And I was in Hawaii for two weeks and a bunch of people signed the postcard of Allyn Hall and sent it to my hotel in Hawaii and they said "Wish you were here. We're having fun." [Laughing] So, we did have good times, we had a lot of fun.

LS: Oh, that's nice. Well, there's a good history to Wright State. You know those are good memories for you aren't they?

OS³: Sorry.

LS: That's okay. In fact it, that that tells me-

OS⁴: He said I would do this.

³ OS has become very emotional again.

LS: That, do you need the handkerchief?

OS: I have one here.

LS: You know in a way, in a way that adds to your interview because it speaks to the importance of that, how-

OS: As I say, we were like one big family.

LS: Yeah.

OS: Yes.

LS: It really is.

OS: Yes.

LS: I think that's very touching.

OS: And it was new to everyone.

LS: Uh-huh.

OS: Everyone. So-

LS: And because everyone who talks about the early days talks about the whole community.

OS: Yes. I'm trying to think of any...some other memories that. I have the first Guardian also, but I'm sure you have that in your file.

LS: But mention it with yours because it brings memories to you.

OS: Yes. It was, it was exciting when the first Guardian came out. And...

LS: That's one of the very first Guardians right?

OS: Yes, it is number one.

LS: That is the number one?

OS: Yes, yes.

LS: Oh, what's the headline?

⁴ OS is referring to Chris.

OS: Um, “New Faculty Named”, and I believe I have one with Dr. Redden’s assignment on it, but I’ve let that at home. “Phase Two Nears Half Way Mark” and that was Oelman Hall.

LS: How often did the Guardian come out?

OS: I think it was once a week but I’m not certain.

LS: Once a week and that’s the very first edition?

OS: It’s the very first edition, yes. And I remember a couple of the students that worked closely on that. Um, I don’t remember them by name but I remember what they look like. So...

LS: Well that’s nice. You know I think, I think that the fact that you get teary-eyed about your early memories speaks volumes. And you should be very proud of what you did.

OS: Yes. It was fun but it was a lot of work. Yes.

LS: Well that’s okay. Do you have any other questions for us here?

OS: No, I don’t, did I mention the academic council meetings?

LS: Oh, no.

OS: Okay, that was interesting because I remember the first one was in Allen Hall in the lecture room which was, um, to the...east side of Allen Hall in the, out towards the administrative offices now. And Dr. Redden asked me to take minutes word for word. I didn’t know all the faculty on the Miami side and I had no one sitting near me to identify the faculty member. I should have had them identify themselves but I learned that later that, to do that. Um, it was difficult at times because the faculty, I was very good in short hand but it was difficult with some of the words some of the faculty would use. But, I did that for several months and I had to transcribe all of the minutes. I did ask for a tape recorder so that I had a back-up if I had a question on, on what was said.

LS: Did they get you-

OS: It was very interesting.

LS: Oh, was it? Describe one of the meetings would ya? I would like to hear that.

OS: Well, I really only remember the first one and I don’t remember very much about it really. It was well attended from what I can remember. And, uh, everyone had their own point of view and made their point known.

LS: Do you remember any of the issues that were important to that?

OS: No I don't. It was definitely the beginning. I probably did that for six months to a year, but I don't remember specifically what was talked about, so...

LS: So, that was the first academic council?

OS: First academic council, yes.

LS: Wow. That's amazing.

OS: It was a proud moment in some ways but I didn't know quite what to expect. And I don't think Dr. Redden realized that either. So, it was interesting.

LS: Do you, what about the facilities for food here?

OS: The facility for food was in the commons area with the library, of course it was very small then and there were vending machines.

LS: Now where was the library at this time?

OS: The library was...

LS: It was on the first floor, wasn't it?

OS: It was on the first floor and it was over here on the, um, south side...south side of the building, yes.

LS: And they had vending machines?

OS: Yes, vending machines, only. Then it went to the basement and I don't remember if we only had vending machines at that point. I...I think we only had vending machines then, in the basement. And uh...I don't remember what else, the bookstore was also in the basement of Allen Hall, in the very beginning. I don't remember anything else. I'm trying to think of what else was in that building. The computer room was very large at, with all that large computer equipment at the time, so and that was upstairs. I'm trying to think. Well we were told that, we should question people that were on the elevator because some students wanted to use the elevator, too many students.

LS: You mean students rode-

OS: Too many students wanted to ride the elevator that didn't need to ride the elevator. And so we were told to, I guess this was a funny incident although I was embarrassed. There was a student on, on the elevator that I didn't realize had a heart condition and that's why she was on the elevator. And I questioned why she was there and she did, she was upset with me. And...

LS: Well, was there a mandate then that all, not everyone could use the elevator?

OS: Yes. It had to be-

LS: Was it written?

OS: That I don't really remember, for sure. But it was, we only had one elevator and well one of the funny things in the very beginning was that it wasn't working right yet and it would stop and you would have to step down about that far. We had several incidents like that in the very beginning. If you were a secretary you were walking so many places to deliver, things to different departments you almost needed roller skates. And of course we had to take the stairs most of the time, if we were in a real hurry we're allowed to take the elevator. So, I mean as far as the staff. Because one elevator isn't sufficient for that many people and of course in Oelman we only had the freight elevator.

LS: Oh, you did?

OS: Yes.

LS: Well, were you allowed to use it?

OS: Yes.

LS: So in the early days you almost needed a doctor's prescription to use the elevators.

OS: That's right.

LS: Did you have many disabled students at that time?

OS: No, not many. Not many at that time.

LS: See because it's interesting that now with so many disabled students that this is an exemplary university for special needs.

OS: Yeah right.

LS: I just, it's interesting. Did faculty complain if they had to use the stairs?

OS: Well, faculty may have been allowed, it was just the students that weren't supposed to be riding the elevator unless they had special permission. Yes.

LS: Oh, and did you have-

OS: And this was an older student.

LS: That's news. I'm so, you're telling me things that I really enjoy hearing, ya know? Then, the uh, once it went to Oelman, is that where you went next?

OS: Yes, when Dr. Golding, well, we were, as I say we were on the first floor of Oelman, and I noticed that it still looks the same on the outside, that's where our offices were, of the corner window. And the faculty were science and engineering faculty were all moved in that building. When we were on the uh, when we were on the fourth floor they were beginning to work on the radiation for, there was a department for, one of the classes that they had to bring in, um, we had, I typed...correspondence for the Atomic Energy Commission in Tennessee to put in a, the uh, some atomic um, some radiation upstairs and it was actually right around the corner from where our office was. Not quite sure which class it was for but that was something new for the university. I also remember-

LS: So there was-

OS: Excuse me?

LS: So there was a real connection there?

OS: Yes. I also remember much correspondence with Miami Valley nursing program wanting to come here, and Dr. Redden and the staff going, having many meetings on bringing Miami Valley Hospital nurses. I was, it was just so many new, everything was new, it was very different.

LS: Well, that was exciting.

OS: Yes, very exciting for everyone.

LS: Were you ever discouraged that it was just one building and not much around here?

OS: No.

LS: You weren't?

OS: No.

LS: Did you feel like a pioneer?

OS: Yes, yes. I even knew, I also knew the family that lived on the farm along the road, where the, um, what do you call the Wright State sign that was out in front on the main road? I can't remember what you call that. 10:50:00

Gordon Schwallie⁵: The bilong?

OS: What?

GS: The bilong.

⁵ Orlas's husband Gordon Schwallie was also present for this interview.

OS: I don't remember what they called that.

LS: So you remember the farm?

OS: Yes, I knew the people who lived there. And, um, I knew the...again from our church in Fairborn the Hoagland family lived there and it was before all that was sold to the university or whatever. And so I would be coming to work in the morning and they would be bailing hay or whatever. It was very different from what it is now.

LS: Yeah.

OS: Very different.

LS: If you could think of maybe one of the, the most touching things about your experiences at Wright State, what would it be?

OS: Oh, wow.

LS: And it's okay if you get teary-eyed.

OS: Oh...I really don't know.

LS: You know, it's marvelous that you have these memories and that you were one of the first persons-

OS: Yes, it made it so interesting. Started every file in that office. We did have some scary moments that I will tell you. When I was in the administration offices, it was just around the time of Kent State problems. And we would have some students occasionally go on beyond the receptionist, forcing their way back to our offices. And I was told by Dr. Golding that I need to grab the keys to the files quickly and hide that key because I had so much information behind me that the students might want to get in to. And they would force their way to his office. That was about the time I left.

LS: You were the keepers, the keeper of the key.

OS: Of the, keeper of the keys, vital information of the faculty. Yes, yes.

LS: That's marvelous. Okay well, Orlas, thank you so much.

OS: Oh you're welcome.

LS: This was delightful discussion with you. And you, you have such interesting stories and memories of Wright State.

OS: Yes, yes.

LS: Okay. If you think of anything else all you have to do is get back to us and we'll add it to this.

OS: Okay.

LS: Okay. Thank you very much.

OS: You're welcome.

LS: That was-

OS⁶: I shouldn't have brought that, I think that's what got me.

LS: You were a delight, ya know?

OS: She was such a special person, to everyone. And-

LS; May I have this, may I keep this?

OS: Yes, yes that's yours. But I shouldn't have brought that before because that's what hit me I think. Gordon said "I know what'll happen to you."

⁶ OS is referring to the article mentioned earlier about Katie Stoffer.