

Reminiscences of John E. Saffell

May 1, 2008

Interviewed by Joseph Zelasko, Jr.

ZELASKO: Today is Thursday, May 1, 2008. My name is Joe Zelasko. I will be interviewing Dr. John E. Saffell, Professor Emeritus from Mount Union College. We'll be talking today about Georgetown, Homeworth, Alliance, Alliance Public Schools and Mount Union College, and also about Dr. Saffell's book, *Wake The Echoes*. Welcome, Dr. Saffell. Dr. Saffell you were born in North Georgetown in 1916 and you started your education in Georgetown?

SAFFELL: No, when I was only like two years old, my family moved to Homeworth, Ohio; just another little town a few miles away and at that point originally in North Georgetown, we lived on my grand, my grandfather's farm then we went over to my, to be close to my mother's family farm and it was there that I lived or had my basic residence for the rest of my life. I still own the land out there, but I've sold off the house and the barn. We've been there like 150 years or so, so we feel right at home.

ZELASKO: Originally from Scotland?

SAFFELL: Yes, on my mother's side, there's a heavy Scottish influence, but on my, on my father's side, it would be more Germanic.

ZELASKO: Elementary school then was where?

SAFFELL: Excuse me...

ZELASKO: Elementary school was...

SAFFELL: Well that's sort of interesting. You see my father was a long time administrator on the principal level, in the Alliance Schools and he didn't want me to go to a country school with just the one room so, so I rode along with him to school all...actually through, even through college.

ZELASKO: So you went to...your elementary education was in Alliance.

SAFFELL: In Alliance.

ZELASKO: What was the elementary school you attended?

SAFFELL: You'd be interested in that...North Franklin.

ZELASKO: North Franklin.

SAFFELL: You've heard of North Franklin?

ZELASKO: Yes, I have. Can you tell us a bit about North Franklin when you were there?

SAFFELL: Well, of course, for somebody with my Nordic background, it was very interesting because there were at that point like a hundred blacks—it would be quite different now—but there was a heavy Italian immigration. So I was exposed to very, very different cultures. That had an advantage, of course, for the long term. The disadvantage was that I never had the experience of walking to school...

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: ...And that's a serious problem. You learn a lot with your, with your peer group, you know, if you walk to school.

ZELASKO: Sure.

SAFFELL: In that sense, I lived a sort of insulated life. I didn't have any friends my age.

ZELASKO: And that was eight years at North Franklin?

SAFFELL: Uh, seven and a half...

ZELASKO: Seven and a half...

SAFFELL: And I went to Alliance High School.

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: I graduated from there in what, 1934.

ZELASKO: Right.

SAFFELL: And then I went to Mount Union.

ZELASKO: What was Alliance High School like back in the 1930s?

SAFFELL: Well you'd be interested at how much bigger it was, you see. Actually, at one time my father was principal at Alliance High School, and as I remember when he was there the enrollment was like 1700, you see, and they didn't have the facilities. It was a terrible problem. He would have to work out schedules and have people, in effect, in study halls in the back of recitations and they used the auditorium as a monstrous study hall. It was a terribly difficult time.

ZELASKO: Why was enrollment so high?

SAFFELL: Well, the difference is we brought in the people from now West Branch, Marlinton and all these places, you see, so it was a real city system at this point. The whole demographic has changed.

ZELASKO: How about the curriculum at Alliance High School then?

SAFFELL: Well, they had what we call what was it? Classical and scientific, these would both be college preparatory, and then there was something called a commercial department; shorthand, typing that kind of thing and then industrial arts.

ZELASKO: Can you recall any teachers?

SAFFELL: Oh, sure. I remember my Latin teacher, Miss Hendershot, for instance, she was a very effective person. Marcella Doyle. I don't know whether you've heard of her or not, but she was a lot of fun. She came from an upper class family in Alliance. And I remember she sometimes wasn't terribly sympathetic with us farm boys. I remember on one occasion she said, "You're probably the kind of people who have supper at 5:30, aren't you?" (Mr. Zelasko laughs) Of course, we were. But, we got back at her one time. She was reading us a short story and there was the word, h-e-i-f-e-r, heifer, and she called it hifer. That was the day for us. (Mr. Zelasko laughs)

ZELASKO: How about as a teenager in Alliance in the 1930s, as far as recreation, as far as what the town was like for a youngster?

SAFFELL: Of course, I wouldn't know a thing about that...

ZELASKO: Is that right?

SAFFELL: Because I lived in the country.

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: I didn't take part in sports. I have a remarkable incapacity for physical coordination, (Mr. Zelasko laughs) and so I can't be of any help to you.

ZELASKO: Well, how ...

SAFFELL: You'd be a lot better source than I am.

ZELASKO: How about life in Homeworth then?

SAFFELL: Well, you see I wasn't a part of Homeworth because I didn't go to their school.

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: So here I am, I've been an outsider all my life.

ZELASKO: Okay, on to Mount Union College then sir. You went to Mount Union College then out of...after Alliance, okay.

SAFFELL: Yes, I really enjoyed Mount Union. Somehow or other it seemed like home.

ZELASKO: How about, Mount Union was much smaller at that time?

SAFFELL: Oh my. Only like five hundred students and I suppose the thing that would impress me the most would be the present prosperity in comparison with how grim things were back then. For instance, when I enrolled in Mount Union in January of '34, was it, and practically nobody else from the high school had enrolled. My father had a job in public schools so I could do it. Then with the NYA program more people came in, but to get back to what I was really thinking about, I worked in the library for 30 cents an hour, and professors during the depression, many times they received very limited salaries but

local businesses they would take, credit some of them—would be issued vouchers—they wouldn't be paid much of a fixed salary but they'd get maybe a \$50 chance to go to the drug store or something. It was a very, very difficult time.

ZELASKO: How about the cost of going to Mount Union back then...

SAFFELL: Oh my tuition...

ZELASKO: Do you recall?

SAFFELL: Semester tuition was like \$125—\$250 a year. I forget what it is. The total cost up there now is like \$35 or \$40,000.

ZELASKO: Right, right, that's exactly right.

SAFFELL: It's a whole different game. I can hardly believe the building or the prosperity. When I was in school, there hadn't been a new building for I don't know 40-50 years, you see. Now new buildings are hardly newsworthy.

ZELASKO: How about the curriculum at Mount? Was it limited more than it is today?

SAFFELL: It was very, very much more limited of course. It was strictly liberal arts, strictly liberal arts, kind of thing. Now we're into all kinds of things like accounting, sports medicine, medicine, marketing, everything.

ZELASKO: How about student activities at Mount Union College?

SAFFELL: A great difference I would guess on that score would be that the fraternities really ran the extracurricular life you see. Now the whole drift has clearly went away from that.

ZELASKO: Were you a member of a fraternity?

SAFFELL: Oh yes, I was an A T O.

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: That's the great football fraternity.

ZELASKO: (Laughing) Right.

SAFFELL: The reason I was an A T O was because my father was an A T O and the poor devils had to take me.

ZELASKO: Legacy. (Both gentlemen laughing)

SAFFELL: To tell the truth, they were glad for my grades.

ZELASKO: Did you live on campus or live at...?

SAFFELL: Oh no, I milked cows in the country.

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: So you see that moves right along with the point that I've always been an outsider. I wasn't much of, I was in very limited campus activities. I rode back and forth with my father and helped with the farm chores.

ZELASKO: Were students back then required to attend the weekly chapel?

SAFFELL: Oh indeed, indeed every day.

ZELASKO: Every day.

SAFFELL: Five days, five days a week you see. Then after I got into teaching it was slowly, slowly cut back to two or three days.

ZELASKO: Were they religiously oriented?

SAFFELL: Oh, yes.

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: And it was taken very seriously. I remember at one point even after I was a faculty member, Charlie Ketcham said—the President at the time, he said he'd resign rather than give up the chapel requirement. It was taken very, very seriously. The whole tone of the campus was quite different, you see. There wasn't supposed to be any smoking or drinking, for example.

ZELASKO: You said, "Supposed to be."

SAFFELL: Well, (Both laughing) yes. There always are ways, but when we'd—if I'd be off of the Mount Union Square and smoking a cigarette or something, I'd throw the cigarette down as I got near the campus, faculty members did the same thing. The drinking thing was taken very, very seriously. As I suggested, there always seemed to be a, seemed to be ways.

ZELASKO: Then it was on to Western Reserve for a Master's Degree?

SAFFELL: Then I went to Western Reserve for graduate work there, and then I had a brief stint, it was hard to get history jobs back there as it is now, and I had a job for a time as principal in a little elementary school in Stark County. Then I went from there to senior high school in Painesville, Ohio. And it was while I was in Painesville that I was drafted and went into the army.

ZELASKO: Okay, you were principal in East Greenville?

SAFFELL: East Greenville, that's the little place.

ZELASKO: That's the little place, okay. Well, what was East Greenville like?

SAFFELL: Oh, it was just a little bit of a spot out on Route 30 there was a lot of traffic. They were in a sense part of the main stream, but it was a very, very small place. As I remember, an active Methodist Church. A very, very nice farming areas – it was all farm-based. Most of the kids came from farms actually.

ZELASKO: You said you were on the faculty when Dr. Ketcham was President?

SAFFELL: Right.

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: See he was President when I joined the faculty.

ZELASKO: Right, okay.

SAFFELL: I have great admiration for him.

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: Perhaps he wasn't a great administrator, but he was a great person.

ZELASKO: In your book you refer to the controversy when Dr. Ketcham was replaced.

SAFFELL: Well, let's see there were problems following Dr. Ketcham. That's when, when some people wanted Dean Wesley there.

ZELASKO: Right.

SAFFELL: And there was somewhat confusion over that.

ZELASKO: And then, then of course, World War II intervenes.

SAFFELL: Well, you see, I hadn't been to Mount. I went from the war to Mount Union.

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: In other words, it was while I was at Harvey Painesville that I was drafted. So then I went on, I went from there to basic training down at Mineral, Mineral Wells, Camp, Camp Wolters, it was, and while I was there, they didn't know what to do with people who had been to school as much as I had and so they found a spot. We were training illiterates. We take people from the Hispanic or Negro backgrounds and try to bring them up to the fourth grade level so that they could read signs and they make some kind of contribution to the war effort. So I was with that thing for something I suppose like a year and a half. I helped develop the program that was used all over the Fifth Service Command. We had our lesson plans, tests and all that kind of thing and they thought because I'd had that experience as an elementary principal that I knew something about, of course I never had any experience with elementary education. But, I teamed up with a, it was a Texas school superintendent and a, somebody from a town in Iowa or someplace and they decided we could develop this program that apparently worked. We won the war; which we had to do with it. But it was to me a great experience actually.

ZELASKO: This was a, this was a widespread problem with illiteracy among draftees?

SAFFELL: Oh, we put through I suppose hundreds of thousands of people in the whole Fifth Service Command on this. It was a major operation, right.

ZELASKO: And also it mentions that you served as research analyst from the general intelligence section for the supreme allied command of Douglas MacArthur.

SAFFELL: No, that's quite a bit later. See after they, they closed down the special, the special training unit where we were working with the illiterates, and then again they didn't know what to do with me so they put me in to a program on medical technology

and the fact that we're all here today is probably the result of the fact that I never was assigned to read any of those slides. I'm not sure how I adept I'd have been.

ZELASKO: What kind of work did that involve for the military?

SAFFELL: Oh, you were supposed to be able to help with diagnosis, and read—especially take tests, read slides, that kind of thing and I'm sure I had no special aptitude towards it. But, I met a lot of nice people, a lot of pre-med people were there.

ZELASKO: And then it was during the occupation of Japan then that you were assigned to MacArthur's command?

SAFFELL: And after, after my training with medical technology instead of being assigned to a general hospital or anything, I was just put into a waiting pool out of Fort Lewis, Washington, and was there doing nothing much at all for two or three months. It was sort of lucrative because I could go out and work and worked for a fishery—They didn't know what to do with me—with us and so we could go out and make a little money on our own. That sort of thing and then eventually, they of course, caught up with us and I was assigned to go overseas. They shipped us down to Camp Pendleton was it and I went to the Philippines, and fortunately it was while I was in the Philippines that I was assigned to the Intelligence Service.

ZELASKO: How long were you on MacArthur's staff?

SAFFELL: Well, I was never on MacArthur's staff.

ZELASKO: Oh, Okay.

SAFFELL: I was just an analyst.

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: You read about those people anyhow they're sometimes doing their jobs; and sometimes influenced by political forces but, in Manila when I was with those people, it was a very interesting thing because a lot of those people had come up through New Guinea and had been through an awful lot and it's a very brave and honorable...

ZELASKO: Did you serve in Japan at all?

SAFFELL: I haven't got there yet.

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: And, it was while I was in Manila the surrender came and it was at that point that I was shipped to Japan. I was pretty early actually, I forget just the date but it wasn't very long after MacArthur had got there. Everything was just taking shape at that point. I suppose one of the sort of interesting things in a way is that while I'd been in Manila I hadn't had anything to do and there was something called, I forget the name of it, but an arrangement whereby we could borrow or buy books and so I looked this place up and bought a book on the Far East by Harold Vinacke. I thought while I'm here I might as well get to know something about it so I had plenty of time to read that book on the history of the Far East. Well, to tell the truth, it came in extremely handy after I got to Japan because when I got there, there hadn't been time to bring the real Far East experts in you see eventually we had extremely influential and impressive people. Some of the great Harvard scholars came with everybody and his brother. But when I first got there they hadn't arrived and so for me having read Vinacke, I looked like a genius you see and it got me a good spot before those other people who knew anything had arrived. And it

was from my standpoint extremely interesting and frankly lucrative experience. Not that I made any money by present standards but for somebody who'd been making \$13 to \$1,500.00 in the high school. When you got to making \$5 or \$6,000.00 it was pretty good.

ZELASKO: What was Japan like right after the atomic bomb—the attitude of the people toward us and so forth?

SAFFELL: It was an interesting thing. They were just completely scared, completely defeated. There was no question about it and they're smart and they figured they might as well cooperate with these people. What other chance do we have and things will go better if we cooperate than if we cause trouble so in general the relationship was very cordial I would say.

ZELASKO: You didn't sense any animosity towards Americans?

SAFFELL: Not really. They tried to hide that—I'm sure it was there. They didn't love all these conquerors, but they were shrewd enough. They were so grateful you see that we behaved as we did. When I first went in, one occasion I remember I walked, I was walking around and walked into the lobby of one of the fancy hotels and apparently there was some important event going on, a wedding or something of that sort, gals all dressed up, but a couple friends and I walk in, of course, in uniform, and I suppose within three minutes the place was bare, they thought the girls would be raped.

ZELASKO: Oh, my goodness.

SAFFELL: But that, that sort of attitude didn't persist very long actually.

ZELASKO: How about Douglas MacArthur?

SAFFELL: Well, that's good, of course, I can't say that I ever met him.

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: But I saw him every day. He would walk in from his limousine and look straight ahead never look in either direction. He'd salute the two guards at the door. And I sometimes compare that with Eisenhower. Eisenhower came over to visit and I was standing out and I knew he was on the way and he stopped to talk. That's why Eisenhower got to be president and MacArthur didn't. About the presidency, I could tell you the story. You see there was a point when MacArthur thought that he would be a good presidential candidate and he was--MacArthur's closest confidant was perhaps Courtney Whitney, who was the head of the government section. Well, I knew Courtney, Jr. pretty well. Some of my friends, we knew Courtney in a passing kind of way. Anyway, we all had the hopes you see that MacArthur in with Courtney's good word, we'd end up in the White House instead of that I would always say once in 1948 I thought when I had had visions of being a White House, some sort of, administrative assistant, in 1948, instead of that I was at home with hauling manure.

ZELASKO: (Laughs)

SAFFELL: That's, that's the way it is.

ZELASKO: Well, sometimes this is different from politics is it really?

SAFFELL: You never know, things can change very fast.

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: No, you see I came back to this country because of my father's premature death. There were things to do around here and it was at that point that I was picked up

at Mount. I came back here in the fall of '47 and worked on some of my family's stuff through the next year and then joined the Mount Union faculty in 1948.

ZELASKO: Okay. Now let's talk about post-war Mount Union College, if we can.

SAFFELL: I suppose the most impressive thing there is the, the influx of the veterans you see. Mount Union was in bad shape financially. We were really in trouble. There were people who wondered whether we'd survive, but with the influx of the veterans that all changed you see we had the enrollment up to a thousand or so. We hadn't been to a thousand since the 1870s so this was a real bonanza, but then especially significant was the background of these veterans—with all due respect to the people of your generation, but the background that those people had they'd been various places in the world. Many of them had administrative experience, they'd been through all kinds of wars and you can't imagine trying to teach a group of people who had been through all that.

ZELASKO: Plus, the student body then with the families, White Hollow, and living on campus and so forth.

SAFFELL: You've probably heard, I forget how many people, but a lot of these students were living with their wives and children in these, what did you say, I can't get the right word, but a trailer kind of...

ZELASKO: Yes, they were trailer...

SAFFELL: ...Of a facilities. But they were great people and great students.

ZELASKO: But their attitude was quite different than the, the other students prior to that?

SAFFELL: Right, right. Well they were, they were really curious and they were—many of them hadn't had the view they would be able to go on to college. They were grateful for this opportunity. It was a fun time to teach. It took quite an adjustment then to get used to the people who didn't have the maturity and the background that those people had. It went back to the pre-war days and it did require some adjustment.

ZELASKO: Now, and you were teaching Modern European History and European History at the time.

SAFFELL: Right, I did. Well, essentially I suppose it would be fair to say I did all that was offered in the non-American field. I remember I started in doing Russia, Far East, Modern Europe, Renaissance, Reformation, everything. I didn't do any Ancient Egypt. It seemed to me it was a pretty difficult schedule. We would teach like 15 hours a week you see.

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: So if you talk 15 hours a week and all these preparations and went to some committee meetings in Chapman. You had a damn full day.

ZELASKO: Yes, you did. In your book, *Wake The Echoes*, and by the way it's called an updated history, why is it called that, sir?

SAFFELL: Well that's because Yost Osborne had done a history of the college. He had done the first hundred years and I had great respect for Yost's book. I wasn't going to go back and repeat and try to improve on what I regarded as an excellent work so I just did the last 50 years.

ZELASKO: One of your chapters, your early chapters, you cover 1946 to 1953 and you entitle it, “Old Dreams for Mount Union.” Do you recall what those old dreams might have been?

SAFFELL: Oh, that’s a good question. I suppose there had always been an element of optimism and idealism, but we’d been through a period when there wasn’t very much advance. I have great admiration for President McMaster. He came here in 1908 and stayed until 1937 and did a great deal for the college, but towards the end of his tenure, he was getting tired and things deteriorated. Many people felt we weren’t—he wasn’t bringing in the money and we were falling behind. And then there was a group of Trustees along in the late forties, early fifties headed by George King and they really grabbed a hold of the situation and George, I remember, made the statement, we decided it was either a matter of giving the place up, forgetting the whole operation or moving ahead and he spearheaded the effort to move us ahead.

ZELASKO: And that’s with Dr. Ketcham replaced...?

SAFFELL: Yes, they were, they were making these dreams while Ketcham was alive.

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: Some of them, I suppose frankly, weren’t quite sure that Ketcham had the skill, but still he was a great guy. But then with his demise, they said we’re gonna, we’re gonna, get this thing on track. So Bracy was brought in with the idea that it’s “up to you” to implement this stuff.

ZELASKO: And I noticed in your chapter on the early Dr. Bracy years you used the term, “Make No Little Plans.”

SAFFELL: That came from one of his speeches, you see.

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: And that was the, really the hallmark of his approach, I suppose. He then, he was very aggressive planning for larger enrollment and building program and increasing the endowment. It was a sort of “full speed ahead approach that we’re going to take.” As I remember, he wanted us to get to be a sort of a fancy place. It seems to me I remember him saying on one occasion, “The more we charge, the more admissions we get.”

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: Makes the people think it’s that, it must be that much better.

ZELASKO: (Laughing.) And then you refer to the “Golden Years 1959 to 1965—The Golden Years.”

SAFFELL: Well, that would be the years when...

ZELASKO: Right after I left. (Laughing.)

SAFFELL: That isn’t quite the way I’d phrase it, but those would be the years when Bracy was getting a lot done. He was able to really increase the giving. The Rodman Family as, I remember, they gave us what I supposed wouldn’t be so great today, but it was a very substantial amount in those days—Got the ball rolling.

ZELASKO: And then 1965 to 1975 or 1970, “Storm and Stress.”

SAFFELL: We’re getting into the period, aren’t we, of the Bracy problem, you see.

ZELASKO: Would you like to comment on Mount Union College during those years of “Storm and Stress?”

SAFFELL: It's sort of hazy. Maybe it's better if I not talk about that.

ZELASKO: (Laughing.) Okay.

SAFFELL: There was quite an episode of course when Dr. Bracy had the affair with his daughter's friend and it went on from there.

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: Many people were critical of Ermal Elaine, his wife. I always felt sort of sorry for her.

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: She was of Indian descent and back there that wasn't quite as well received as it would be today. She didn't have the educational background as a lot of faculty wives so she suffered from insecurity. The whole thing was just, it's quite fair to say unfortunate.

ZELASKO: Right. Following that you refer to, "The Search for Normalcy," borrowing a phrase from words from Warren G. Harding, I see.

SAFFELL: Oh yes. I'm sure you know --

ZELASKO: What was normalcy do you think for Mount Union College? What were they, sir?

SAFFELL: Who knows, who can define normalcy, but I suppose we hope we'd settle back to somewhat less tumultuous time, kind of thing.

ZELASKO: Okay. I noticed, too, here that you gave the first faculty lecture.

SAFFELL: Oh, that was in 1959.

ZELASKO: Right, and, and...

SAFFELL: That series goes on.

ZELASKO: Right and the topic was, "*A Historian Looks at His World.*" Do you look at the world any differently now than you did back then, sir?

SAFFELL: Heavens yes. I'm much more scared even than I was then.

ZELASKO: (Laughing.) Oh, is that...

SAFFELL: I was probably born scared.

ZELASKO: (Laughing.) Oh, is that...

SAFFELL: It does seem to me that we live in an extremely fragile kind of world. As I sometimes say, we've got to the point we can push buttons and destroy a lot of the world, but there aren't any buttons we can push to make it a better world. And that's a pretty important thing, actually.

ZELASKO: Right. Can I mention a few names of, of people who were at Mount Union College and just get your...?

SAFFELL: I'll try to be as discreet as possible.

ZELASKO: Reaction to... And, and some of those are maybe personal, but they shouldn't be. How about Dr. Eric and Mary Eckler?

SAFFELL: Well, they were really idols of the campus. They were extremely highly regarded. They brought a lot of class. We all looked up to the Ecklers.

ZELASKO: Lyle Crist.

SAFFELL: Right. Well Lyle, of course, and I were old friends and, he did have a knack at P.R. He certainly was an extremely effective teacher.

ZELASKO: Dr. Robert Bader.

SAFFELL: Oh yes, Robert and I were, he was the head of the department during most of the time that I was there, and, he was a very fine person in a lot of ways. A, a devout “New Dealer,” and had a streak of genius. The Bader name is better than a lot of names. After all there is Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

ZELASKO: Right.

SAFFELL: And Kathleen, there’s a Kathleen Bader who’s a significant person in the Halliburton Oil. There’s a streak of real capability. Robert though suffered from some sort of mental disorder in his later years.

ZELASKO: Yes.

SAFFELL: And he it was unfortunate to watch his deterioration.

ZELASKO: How big was the history department in the ‘50s?

SAFFELL: Oh, in the ‘50s we just had three people; Bader and my aunt, Ruth Weaver Costell,

ZELASKO: Sure.

SAFFELL: And myself.

ZELASKO: Okay. Hugh Jae?

SAFFELL: Oh, Hugh was an awful lot of fun, right and I certainly enjoyed Hugh. Hugh made a great contribution to the College with his philosophy of education approach.

ZELASKO: That was a program he added?

SAFFELL: I think, or at least he was certainly extremely effective in implementing it. I give Hugh a lot of credit.

ZELASKO: And what was that program, sir?

SAFFELL: Well, trying to give people credit for experience out in the real world. I suppose it's the sort thing they called, "internships" now. I'm not sure they call it that back then.

ZELASKO: You've already referred to Yost Osborne.

SAFFELL: Oh, well, Yost, of course, and I were, we were in school at the same time, we were both A T Os. We were very, very close friends, and it seems to me he was awfully important in maintaining a sense of community on the Mount Union campus. I have an extraordinary respect for the contribution that he made. Of course, he developed the, carry on the great tradition of Bob Stauffer in the library. He was a real boost there and then he was influential with the Brush family. The Brush family may not mean much to you, but you see back; the first Librarian of the College was somebody by the name of Brush, and we had a Brush, well, it was the Brush-Moore newspapers; the Canton Repository.

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: And at one point, Louis Brush was President of our Board and Louis's boy ended up, of course, with an awful lot of money and Yost was able to cuddle up to this boy and we got, seems to me a half million dollars for the library. So it was a real contribution, all right.

ZELASKO: Dr. William Morgan.

SAFFELL: I have extraordinary respect for Bill Morgan. A wonderful, wonderful guy. He served as acting Dean on a couple of occasions and I've always wondered, been curious, why he never became the permanent dean because the man had real capabilities—a great sense of dedication to the college. I have extraordinary admiration for that man.

ZELASKO: And very community minded?

SAFFELL: He was President of the city council.

ZELASKO: Right.

SAFFELL: It seems to me he held high office in the International Red Cross.

ZELASKO: Right.

SAFFELL: He went to Geneva or some place for meetings. We were very fortunate to have Bill. The reason, oh, that was tuberculosis--.

ZELASKO: Tuberculosis, right.

SAFFELL: And, the reason that he was so committed to that was because he, himself, had tuberculosis early on, early in his career at Mount Union. And now that you mention it, I remember seeing letters that the dean was writing to people to get money to help the Morgans through this difficult time. Dean Bowman appreciated what he had in Bill and wanted to maintain the connection.

ZELASKO: Cecil Stewart.

SAFFELL: Oh yes. Well, he too, I suppose the best way to appreciate; point out the contributions of Cecil Stewart is to refer to his funeral. People—former students just came in in droves. There were an awful lot of people who had extraordinary respect for Bob Stewart. He was a class act. He was a great char—Didn't he would fly his own airplane?

ZELASKO: I, I don't know that much about him.

SAFFELL: I think he directed, what seems to me, directed the Choir at Chautauqua and would fly his own airplane to those meetings. He was sort of interesting—I think he came from an entrepreneurial background. There was, I've forgotten the name of the company, but he had a family that had been quite successful financially.

ZELASKO: And I have to, I have to mention Rocky Rice.

SAFFELL: Oh.

ZELASKO: (Laughing)

SAFFELL: Well, again, I have extraordinary respect. He wasn't always beloved by all the faculty.

ZELASKO: (Laughing)

SAFFELL: But a...

ZELASKO: Why was that? Can you comment on that?

SAFFELL: Well, you could make an argument and, damn, he could always find a hole it.

ZELASKO: (Laughing) Okay.

SAFFELL: But, in retrospect his view—a lot of the larger issues of this world—they bear up pretty well. His father—one interesting thing about Rocky, I always had the feeling that he probably suffered from an inferiority complex because his father had been an extremely highly regarded person at Ohio Wesleyan and was taken seriously in some of the higher realms of the scientific community and his grandfather had been President of Trinity College in Connecticut it is, and here was Bill at Mount Union you see, but a...

ZELASKO: And his teaching methods were at sometimes a bit different?

SAFFELL: Yes, he'd have his cigarettes while he wasn't allowed to smoke in the building and so he'd open the window and sit on the ledge and all that kind of thing.

ZELASKO: (Laughing)

SAFFELL: But, in retrospect, he was a class act.

ZELASKO: And, and how about, this is not a faculty member, but about the time—Richard Kinney?

SAFFELL: Oh, he of course, had the disabilities that everyone's aware of, and I was, again, terribly impressed with the capability of the man, the way he was able to adjust to college life.

ZELASKO: And for our researchers, could, could you talk about his disability—Richard Kinney?

SAFFELL: Well, let's see he couldn't hear and couldn't see so he had a companion who would bring him around and help take the notes and he then would take the tests and very, very well. He was very, very impressive.

ZELASKO: And he went on to, I think, found the school or something for...

SAFFELL: Headley School, he went to Headley School.

ZELASKO: ...Headley School.

SAFFELL: It seems to me. And it seems to me he was Dean there for people with similar, similar afflictions. One person I noticed you haven't mentioned is Madam Eynon.

ZELASKO: Yes, ok.

SAFFELL: Oh, you're getting there.

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: Of course, she was a fabulous character in many ways. She was a native of France and then come over here as a result of having met an American service boy in France. Well, she had her own special ways. Some of the faculty didn't like her very well and we were afraid of her because she could develop such close relationships with the Rodmans and where the power was and I remember on one occasion, I asked if she was upset about something and I said, "Are you going to talk to President Bracy about this problem?" And she just scoffed at that and President Ketchum or whoever it was, "No, no I'll see Hazel Rodman. I don't fool around with those people." You see that sort of approach, but my favorite story about her—she took, of course, a dim view if people went to sleep in the class and one day somebody went to sleep and she came over and gave him a good kick and that took care of that she thought, but the next day he came in and sat, sat in the front row and again went to sleep but he was prepared; he had put

ketchup on his leg and wrapped it in gauze and as she approached him he raised it and said, “No, no, see what you did to me yesterday.”

ZELASKO: (Laughing)

SAFFELL: That’s the time that stopped her. But, she was a lot of fun and [inaudible] I think she was a very effective teacher. She didn’t just teach language she taught French culture.

ZELASKO: Right.

SAFFELL: Oh, another story about her, she—in the advanced classes, she didn’t have people just sit around and translate in the old traditional way she’d assign them 25 pages of a French novel or something, and then they’d come and discuss the novel and she was going to help if there was any problem. Well, one day this Bob, Bob Kegarise—I’ve forgotten what happen to him—a very able kid. And one day he came in, she asked if there were any questions and he said, “Well, yes he did. Here on page such and such, line such and such, I can’t seem to, I have trouble with that.” Well, that turned out to be a very explicit bedroom scene and he was just trying to get her embarrassed by having to read in translation and this and as she got into it, she said, “Never you mind, never you mind, you people work this out for yourself.”

ZELASKO: (Laughing.) How do you see the direction that Mount Union College and education is going at this point—first decade or so of the 21st century in comparison to..?

SAFFELL: I supposed at Mount Union it’s pretty clear, that we have more of a vocational emphasis than we did, but recently haven’t they put in something called a Physician’s Assistant?

ZELASKO: ...Assistant, right.

SAFFELL: ...program—That kind of thing. And a nursing, and all kinds of career opportunities, and in my day it was more a strictly Liberal Arts kind of emphasis. I was just in a group last night when somebody was asking, “When is Mount Union going to become a University?” And we are beginning to offer Master’s...

ZELASKO: Master’s degrees.

SAFFELL: ...degrees. Well, of course, he have no alternative in a way because Walsh and Malone are doing this sort of thing, but the other side of the coin, somebody of my years, I look back at the time I remember how proud we were when we stopped offering Master’s and Doctor’s degrees. We were getting Doctor’s degrees a hundred years or so ago, but of course, it was pathetic. We had no idea of the research institutions that were developing, Johns Hopkins at that point, you see. Our Doctor’s degrees would read a few classics, take a test or two, and we took it as people of my generation would take it as a great test of our wisdom in recognizing there were limits to what we could do and saying we’ll be the best liberal arts college again.

ZELASKO: And Mount, is that a history of emphasis on teacher training and ...

SAFFELL: Very traditional, yes that’s true.

ZELASKO: The normal school approach at one time?

SAFFELL: Right, well I think that started very early in its history and has, has continued. As far as I know, we’ve always passed the tests and have a, have a good ranking for our program.

ZELASKO: How would you compare, can you compare today's students to the students of your time and at Mount Union College?

SAFFELL: You mean the students right now?

ZELASKO: Yes.

SAFFELL: I don't know them.

ZELASKO: Okay. How did the students change during your career at Mount Union College?

SAFFELL: Let's see...It would almost

ZELASKO: Were they more serious or less serious about their reason for being?

SAFFELL: It seems to me it's a little hard to generalize it might come in sort of waves.

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: In other words it would be hard to compare the students of the 1970—back when the radicals were there you see and other times that would be a special time. The veterans would be a special time and then it would seem to me they were a little on the indifferent side right after the influx of the veterans went out. Then we had somebody like for instance Dean Francis Christie who was going to make us the Harvard of the mid-west.

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: And we had quite a surge, so it just shifts; it's a little hard for me to see an evolution from my standpoint. It may well be there.

ZELASKO: Do you think we are going in the right direction?

SAFFELL: ...In education?

ZELASKO: Yes.

SAFFELL: Who knows? You don't know anything about what world is emerging it seems to me. I'm not sure, but I wonder sometimes if we don't lack some of the old time discipline when I see bridges falling and bad things happening I wonder how much that's the result of a different attitude in the classroom. For instance, I will go back to the time when your professor would say, "Rise and take your recitation," and he would quiz you—that sort of thing. Well, from anything I know that sort of approach is pretty well, pretty well out.

ZELASKO: You're not a proponent of Dewey's Progressive Education?

SAFFELL: Well, one does somewhat wonder. We had a dean here—This was Dean Hyde—he was an advocate of that. He also supported the neighbors when the kids—his kids who were brought up with a progressive education approach threw tomatoes on the neighbors fresh laundry and they didn't quite think progressive education worked, but the other side of the coin is one of those kids became a professor at MIT...

ZELASKO: Okay.

SAFFELL: ...So, who knows the answer.

ZELASKO: Your years here in this area—Alliance and Homeworth and so forth—can you comment on any of the major changes that you have seen as far as the economy, as far as the town is concerned?

SAFFELL: Well, I often think about my little town of Homeworth. It's not that my family had so much money but most all of the money we had was spent right there at

Homeworth in the general store or at the hardware store or the feed mill or the lumber mill. Well, there's no business there at this point and that tells something about the social change but the trouble is it's not only Homeworth, it's Alliance. In my time places like Morgan Engineering, Alliance Machine, there's another one, those were the bulwark of the community. They made the money and the town really and provided the good jobs and had no doubt considerable political influence. Now they're gone. That's the sad tale. That's what's happened this whole 150 miles between Cleveland and Pittsburgh that used to be described as the rural valley of United States.

ZELASKO: Right.

SAFFELL: And now all you have to do is look at the *Canton Repository* and you'll find nine pages of sheriff's sales.

ZELASKO: Right, right.

SAFFELL: Here we are. I don't have the answer.

ZELASKO: I was just going to ask you, can you, can you see anything down the road?

SAFFELL: I'm tempted to reply once I was in a graduate seminar we'd been talking about all of these problems and some activist student said to the professor, "Well what's the answer, what's the answer?"—and it was a history class, and he said, "Our job in history is to gather facts, point out trends. It's up to people in other disciplines to find the answer."—Now, that's a cheap way out.

ZELASKO: Well, and we are searching for answers. Just to sort of wrap this up and I know I'm—again I go back to you know your, your Mount Union faculty lecture of the historian looks at his world. How...

SAFFELL: I'd forgotten what I said.

ZELASKO: How would you look at it today?

SAFFELL: I do remember that I was predicting. I did predict the rise of China. There is one key in there, let's go on.

ZELASKO: Okay, good. (Laughing)

SAFFELL: I suppose today what scares me is the fragility of things. There's so much; I have no idea what's going to happen in the financial world with all these complicated financial instruments. It looks to me as though nobody really knows where we are right now in terms of this credit and housing crunch. To me, that's all very scary. To say nothing of the way we're viewed by the world. We've lost the—Think of what an image we had a hundred years or so ago because of our—the philosophy expressed in the Declaration of Independence. A lot of liberals throughout the world look to us as saviors in fact and now we're anything but saviors—we're the big devil. And that's extremely important.

ZELASKO: And as an educator what do you think education should be looking at as far as what the students coming out of our system should be like for the 21st century?

SAFFELL: Well, if we just did better what we've always been trying to do get people to find facts, look at facts objectively; being willing to analyze—being—to face up to the real situation—do a lot. And I suppose fill out the moral outlook that Christianity provides certainly go right along with it. If you had that sort of disciplined intellectual approach plus an emphasis on moral values might be hope. And I shouldn't leave this

with the idea that it's only the Christians that have sound, moral values. I'm sure we should look with great respect on other traditional systems.

ZELASKO: As far as Mount Union is concerned, how large do you think Mount Union should grow? Do you think Mount Union should be growing any, any bigger than it is today?

SAFFELL: Well, I—When you talk to the President, he points out that you have to have the larger size to provide the kind of opportunities that people are demanding. Of course, for somebody of my generation that's emphasized the personal element, there has to be a limit. We're all looking for just where that balance should be.

ZELASKO: How about the place of religion in Mount Union? You talked about every day going to chapel and today...

SAFFELL: Oh, it's been, no question—that it's been an important, important part of our tradition, but I suppose it's, it's under pressure in a way with the modern secular as no question with what there are major tensions.

ZELASKO: How about the rewards of being a teacher?

SAFFELL: Well you've got a certain sense of satisfaction and now here I am at 92 and it's gratifying to meet people like you, many students who give me a ring, come and see me, keep me from getting lonely.

ZELASKO: Would you do it again if you had to?

SAFFELL: Oh, I would. No question about that.

ZELASKO: (Laughing)

SAFFELL: (Laughing.) I never quite took the view I had to, but it's been a fine, fine experience from my standpoint.

ZELASKO: Are there any words of wisdom you'd like to end our little interview with today for those scholars who will be perusing this in the future?

SAFFELL: Oh, just work hard and do your best.

ZELASKO: Work hard and do your best. That'll get you where you want to go?

SAFFELL: Well, at least you'll have the satisfaction of having worked hard and done your best. (Both gentlemen laughing)

ZELASKO: Well, Dr. Saffell, I can't tell you what a pleasure this has been and we thank you so much for taking your time and being with this, this, this wonderful day.