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This interview was conducted with Ms. Mary Ann Fisher, alumna (Graduate Normal Diploma 1938) and daughter of former college president, Charles H. Fisher (1923-1939). The interview was conducted in a conference room at Suzzallo Library on the University of Washington campus on August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2004. The interviewers are Tamara Belts (TB) and Sonja Chorba (SC).

**TB:** Today is Wednesday, August 18<sup>th</sup>, my name is Tamara Belts and I am here with Mary Ann Fisher. We're down here at the University of Washington to do an oral history. She has just signed the Informed Consent Agreement. Sonja Chorba is also here with us today.

How did your family happen to come to Bellingham? I know that's because your father came to be president, but how did he happen to decide to accept the position?

**MAF:** My father always liked to do something new and different. He'd read Horace Greeley's, Go West, Young Man, Go West! That was very popular in that day. Greeley's book just intrigued my father so when he got this offer -- and I don't know exactly how, evidently through educational channels he heard there was a vacancy in the presidency of the college in Bellingham, of course it was the Normal School then -- he just jumped at the chance.

It was a real shock to all of his family that we'd think of leaving Pennsylvania for the "wild, wild, west." They wondered about the Indians and how undeveloped the country was. My mother and her family weren't really enthusiastic either. However we heard the daisies were big as plates and roses bloomed at Christmas. We heard about the high mountains and beautiful Puget Sound. Somehow my father knew a professor who taught, I believe, at the University of Washington. He came to our house for dinner (I remember that very well); he talked to us about beautiful Seattle, Bellingham, and the whole Puget Sound country. So we were on our way.

My dad decided that we would see as much of the country as we could on the trip west. I believe we took a cruise ship across the Great Lakes as we started out. We boarded the ship at Buffalo, NY, cruising to Duluth, Minnesota. We did some sight-seeing in Minneapolis, we went down into a silver mine in Montana, then on to Yellowstone Park for four days. That was a wonderful trip. I was 9 years old; my brothers were 13, 11, and 7.

When we got to Bellingham we were just thrilled. It was all so different from inland eastern Pennsylvania where we'd lived. We loved the water. We loved the view from the president's house because we could see the whole bay, the San Juan Islands and snow-capped mountains. At that time there were a lot of ships, big freighters coming into the bay. Mostly they came to deliver or pick up lumber. We'd call each other -- *Hey look, here comes a big ship!* We'd run to the windows. That's the story of our early arrival.

**TB:** Where did you attend school when you came to Bellingham?

**MAF:** I went to the Campus School.

**TB:** Could you talk a little bit about your memories of that time? What the Campus School, the Training School was like?

**MAF:** It was really a fine school I know because the teachers were all master teachers. The families in Bellingham were very eager to get their children into that school because there were so many advantages. For instance we had access to the assemblies. The Normal School had scheduled all student assemblies every Tuesday and Friday mornings 11-12. Programs that were suitable for youngsters we would attend.

Of course we did have the student teachers. They were practicing on us but we didn't mind, we knew the master teachers were always in control. We had smaller classes than other elementary schools in the city. We used the resources of the Normal School quite often. In the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades we were given access to the Normal School students' library for our chosen or assigned reports. And I believe student teachers, under Mabel Zoe Wilson's supervision, taught us some rudimentary library science.

I loved going from our Campus School in the south wing of Old Main to the quite extensive Normal School art department on the top floor of the opposite (far north) wing. Miss Marie Druse and Miss Hazel Plympton of the Normal School faculty were our fabulous art teachers. It was thrilling and inspirational for we campus school kids to see the displays of the Normal School students' artwork in those sky-lighted art rooms. I made friendships in the Campus Elementary School that have lasted a long time. One of my friends of the present and I were together in the Campus School.

**TB:** Did other faculty children also attend the Campus School?

**MAF:** Yes.

**TB:** Was that a lot of your social circle there at that time, other faculty children at the Campus School?

**MAF:** Well yes, and no. We were very well integrated into our neighborhood and played with the other neighborhood children a lot. For example, one of our best friends was the son of a shoemaker who had a busy shoe repair shop – actually in a small building just below Edens Hall on High Street –Berg's Shoe Repair. Mr. Louis Berg repaired many of the Normal School students' well-worn walking shoes. The family lived in a house beside the shop. They were Norwegian people. Lafe was their only child. Of course he attended the Campus School. Mrs. Severena Berg clung to many of the "old country ways" – never did learn to speak English. But both Lafe's parents were very cordial to we neighborhood children. I remember his mother giving a wonderful 10<sup>th</sup> birthday party for him, serving delicate Norwegian pastries and ice cream to us on her beautiful best china.

The son of the dietician and the head baker for Edens Hall dining room played with my younger brother, "Chuck," and myself a lot. He was a much younger child in the family, the only child residing at Edens Hall so he just about lived at our house on the corner of High and Oak Streets, Phil Crimmins. We did at times socialize with the faculty families; we knew all the faculty children, some quite well and some not as well. We all saw each other every spring at the renowned annual Normal School faculty and staff "Salmon Bake."

Besides being known as an outstanding math instructor, author of widely used math textbooks and leader of the Normal School's Mount Baker country weekend hiking, camping trips and the summit climb, Professor E.A. Bond had an additional calling. He was chef for the Indian style (so he said) "Salmon Bake" dinners that were held on the beach below the railroad tracks about a mile beyond what is now the Alaskan Ferry Terminal. Professor Bond, his crew of several other professors and a few men students worked hard wrapping very large, whole fresh salmon – first in seaweed, then newspapers. All was buried under a covering of sand and large smooth stones -- kept very hot by the embers from blazing driftwood fires the crew tended for several days. The digging up and unwrapping of the salmon seemed to me almost a sacred ritual as the whole crowd drew close to watch. Pungent salmon aroma mingling with the briny breezes of the salt water beach made for great outings as we congenially consumed the flaky delicacy and accompaniments prepared by the Normal School home economics department.

Other than at the "Salmon Bakes," the faculty children we saw most frequently were Professor and Mrs. Philippis' who lived just a few blocks down High Street from us. The eldest, Herbert Philippi, interestingly, was one of my English instructors at Fairhaven High. Jean, an accomplished pianist, spent a lot of time practicing. Doris (about my age) and I sometimes went biking together. We saw Dean James Bever's family of three children quite often, their home on Ivy Street being very close to ours. My mother and Mrs. Virginia Bever were close friends. I remember especially our acceptance of their kind offer to share all the cherries we could pick from their very big pie cherry tree, the fun tree climbs and delicious cherry pies. Dean of Men Professor William Marquis, Mrs. Marquis and their children still remaining at home, spent every August at a summer cottage next to ours at Olga, Orcas Island. We often went swimming, fishing, played tennis, cards, board games and gathered (along with other young people summering at Olga) to enjoy beach fires in the evenings.

Weekends my father usually came out to Olga on the "daily mail boat" from Bellingham to the San Juan Islands (Olga's only direct commercial connection with the mainland – the car ferry running from Anacortes to the island village of Orcas about eighteen miles from Olga). A few weekends Dad and some of our family (always including me) would get on "the mail boat" at Olga to continue to its daily last port-of-call, Friday Harbor, on San Juan Island. Dad was very much interested in the Marine Biology Lab established at Friday Harbor by the University of Washington for interested summer students. Eventually he was able to arrange for Bellingham Normal students to attend classes in marine studies jointly with UW students there. An outcome of this later was the establishment of Western Washington College of Education's marine "lab" at Shannon Point solely for the college students. The venerable, longtime WWC science professor, Leona Sundquist, was most instrumental in bringing this about, I believe. I don't know if Shannon Point Lab is still in existence for summer school students.

Bill Hussey, son of Mrs. Ruth Burnet, journalism instructor and the Normal School's newspaper advisor, came from California for the Campus School reunion in the early 1990s, I believe it was. Bill and I renewed our friendship there – reminiscing of the many summer "tennis times" we'd spent at the Western Washington College of Education tennis courts. He graciously spoke of my younger brother, "Chuck," regularly defeating him and regularly winning the Bellingham City Tennis Tournament. He even remembered one of my older brothers, Bill, and I losing the tournament's mixed doubles finals to my brother Chuck and his partner! Bill Hussey has donated over the years thousands of tennis racquets to underprivileged youth of Southeast Asia. He and I currently exchange Christmas letters.

Neal Miller (only child of Dr. and Mrs. Irving Miller), we saw a lot - particularly as his mother often invited our whole family for dinner and socializing in their home. Many times the three Millers were guests in our home, and always for New Year's Day dinner.

**TB:** I was thinking of this picture of Neal Miller and his birthday party. You were just talking about the Kibbes and two of your brothers are in that picture.

**MAF:** Neal Miller was a good friend of both my older brothers all their lives. Professor Kibbe, his wife and son, Merle, lived on a little farm out on Twenty-First Street. Mrs. Kibbe had chickens so my younger brother, “Chuck,” and I had to go for our eggs there twice a week, I remember. They lived not too far out on Twenty-First Street. We’d get vegetables, too. Mrs. Bond, Professor Bond’s wife, had a chicken farm. The Bonds lived on the Mount Baker Road. Sometimes we’d go out there to pick up eggs and to visit. We were really great friends with that family particularly because they had boys who were close in age to my brothers. They **played tennis a lot together**. Mary Bond was their only daughter; I think they had four sons and one daughter. Mary was quite a lot older so I didn’t really know Mary well. But one summer when I went back to New York City to visit my brother Bob I did stay with her in a Columbia University dorm, so I knew her too. Elden (“Nick”) was the youngest son. He was a real tease, a lot of fun. He taught at the college later, didn’t he?

**TB:** He did, in education. What other schools did you attend in Bellingham? I think you went to Fairhaven High School?

**MAF:** Yes.

**TB:** How was that? Was that very different from the Campus School?

**MAF:** I became friends with girls and boys who hadn’t gone to the Campus School, although one of the friends in my high school chums’ group had been at the Campus School with me. She’s the one I spoke of who has been my friend from then on. Her father was a Bellingham doctor, Dr. Conner Reed. They had a cottage at Doe Bay on Orcas Island. We had a cottage at Olga. These two villages are just about six or seven miles apart, that’s kind of diverging, but my brothers and I visited back and forth regularly with the Reed young people. Often we had musical jam sessions, singing the latest jazz tunes to Betty Reed’s or my brother Chuck’s ukulele strummin’.

My brother Bill had entered Fairhaven High and wasn’t too much further ahead of “Chuck” and me, then. We had already gotten acquainted with some of the kids who were at that high school. But my oldest brother had gone to Whatcom; that was the larger high school. You see, we were right on the line so we could go to either. My next-to-oldest brother, Bill – I don’t know if this is of interest – but he and my brother Rob both went into Whatcom High School the year we arrived in Bellingham at relatively young ages (having skipped grades in Pennsylvania). But William wasn’t happy because he was so small. He was a very sociable kid and he couldn’t make it at all with the girls and he couldn’t really compete athletically. But my oldest brother Rob was just as happy as a lark because he was big, tall and always fit in. So one day my brother Bill just walked out of Whatcom High School, went over to Lowell Grade School and said he wanted to be in the seventh grade there. You can see how independent he was, he didn’t talk to my parents about this at all. He just did it. So he was with those younger students who went on to Fairhaven.

**TB:** How did you happen to choose to go to Western then when you were going to be a freshman in college? Did you originally plan on transferring to the University of Washington?

**MAF:** Yes. So many of my friends did that who lived in Bellingham. That was just the thing to do. You’d go to Western for two years and then if you were going to go on, you’d go to University of Washington or some other

higher institution. But almost everybody coming right out of high school went to Western for two years. It was a good way to get oriented to college, and it wasn't as expensive. Even one of my now best friends, whom I originally met in high school, never wanted to do anything but go into nurses' training in a hospital, at the insistence of her parents went to the college our freshman year. She is Louise Bulow Hecht, whose daughter's husband – Cole, later became a vice president of Western and was tragically killed with President G. Robert Ross and several other staff members in a private plane crash.

**TB:** Did you live at home then?

**MAF:** Yes.

**TB:** Could you talk a little bit about your days at the college? I know that you were very involved in things like the *Klipsun* (annual) and the student newspaper. Do you have any favorite memories of those times?

**MAF:** This isn't one of my favorite memories but I spoke to you previously about some of my friends who were in the Mount Baker avalanche. My campus newspaper editor, Julius Dornblut, lost his life in the avalanche. But that was, I think, probably about five or six years later. He'd been out teaching and had come back for summer school. And Verne Fisher, no relation, and his fiancé both lost their lives. I believe about six students altogether. But you want me to diverge to that a minute because I wanted to tell you how hard that was on my father. One father of a girl who lost her life came out from Montana for ten summers looking for her body and every time he would talk to my dad. My dad had to inform the families. It was very hard. But I believe they continued those hikes. It wasn't really anyone's [fault]; no one who had any connection with the college could take any blame for it.

Do they still have those Mount Baker summit climbs do you know?

**TB:** Not formally sponsored by the school. But I think it did pick up again after that. I don't think that was the last one. But I'm not sure.

**MAF:** I was active in the campus; Valkrie was the women's pep club. *The Viking*, wasn't that the name of our paper? My "beat" was the Campus School. I had to get an article in every week about the Campus School. Mrs. Burnet was the faculty adviser. She was very good. I remember particularly our initiation as new members of the staff. We all had to go down to the printers – all we new staff members – where the "old staff" put us through this terrible ordeal – gave us raw oysters that we had to gulp down quickly and grapes that had been dipped in some awful stuff. It was kind of a hazing, but it was fun. I think it was Sutherlin's Printers; they're probably not there now. It was on the corner of Holly and Cornwall. We had a "party weekend" at one of the Lummi Island resorts that was fun. The whole *Viking* staff and advisors, (*Klipsun* staff may have been included in that too). We went over Friday afternoon and spent the whole weekend having a good time – swimming, playing volleyball, hiking, dancing, playing shuffleboard and EATING. The resort was famous for great food.

**TB:** What about the Women's Chorus?

**MAF:** Oh yes, double quartet. We sang for a lot of affairs at the college. I liked that.

**TB:** And you were on the committees for the dances and mixers.

**MAF:** I did quite a lot of that. We had good dances. They were so formal. We would have our programs filled out before the night of the dance. We girls wore long formal dresses. The boys didn't have to wear tuxedos but they wore their best suits. I remember one particular dance – I don't know if this is of interest but we always had a college girl living with us, to help my mother with cooking, etc., especially after my oldest brother had gone away to Stanford University in California because that left an extra room in our house. This girl — and I think it was a “tolo” dance — had a brother who was a Navy Ensign stationed then in Bremerton. Being so young and rather “uniform struck” at that time I thought it would be so thrilling to invite him. He would wear his uniform! So she wrote to him, inviting him. I talked to him on the telephone. He came bringing a friend, so I asked a friend to date his friend. We all had a great time.

**TB:** Who were some of your favorite or most influential teachers and why?

**MAF:** When I was in the Campus School I believe my favorite teacher was Bertha Crawford who taught eighth grade. She was so inspiring; she just had a way about her that made you want to do your best. That's the way I felt. She was living with Miriam Snow Mathes. They were great friends.

**SC:** I know about that. Do you know that Miriam set up a scholarship award; it's actually an award for outstanding student teaching in the name of Miss Crawford.

**MAF:** She did! I'm not surprised. They were great friends. I remember it was very hard for Miriam when Bertha passed away. She told my mother that was the saddest day in her life.

**TB:** So she died young? Miss Bertha Crawford died kind of young?

**MAF:** Well, she never seemed young (laughter). She was just a lovely personality but she always had white hair as long as I knew her. I think she had been at the Campus School for years already when I had her in the eighth grade so she was probably in her seventies. It was kind of a surrogate mother-daughter relationship between Miss Crawford and Miss Snow, because there were a lot of years between them, I know that.

**TB:** Well Miss Snow had come out from the east so she probably could have been a little lonely. I can see some kind of relationship developing.

Are there some other favorite teachers?

**MAF:** I liked Miss Plympton especially, Hazel Plympton, art teacher. I had Miss Spieseke in the fourth grade and in the seventh grade because they switched her position to the seventh before I got there, so I had her for two years. She was good. She was very good.

**TB:** Do you know what her first name was?

**MAF:** Winnie.

**TB:** What about Dr. Hicks? What are your thoughts on Dr. Hicks?

**MAF:** Oh yes. When I went from the Campus School to the higher institution classes—

Dr. Hicks, Lucy Kangley were favorites, and Mrs. Burnet, who was campus newspaper advisor and taught journalism too. So I took a couple of journalism classes with Mrs. Burnet. She had been Mrs. Hussey, a widow, but remarried while she was teaching at the college. Because she taught just part-time she being married was accepted.

**TB:** You were kind of interested in theater weren't you? I was wondering about Victor Hoppe?

**MAF:** Victor Hoppe was a gem. The college was fortunate to have him on the faculty. He directed a fabulous drama production every quarter. In the summertime his department produced Shakespearean drama outdoors on the High Street side of the knoll. Attendance became so overwhelming that almost a whole week of performances was scheduled.

Oh yes, I was in the Thespian Guild. I wasn't really in many plays. I was in a few little skits that we gave for the assemblies. I really didn't do a lot of drama. My sister-in-law to-be did, Christine Albers. She was in almost every play.

**TB:** Lillian George? Did you know Lillian George?

**MAF:** Yes. I once rented her cottage at Olga, Orcas Island for some visiting friends.

**TB:** You were in the Women's Athletic Association. I think you did some hikes with them.

**MAF:** I wasn't very active in that.

**TB:** Anybody else?

**MAF:** Oh, did you hear about the Recreation Hour ("Rec") we used to have?

**TB:** No.

**MAF:** Every Friday afternoon from 4 to 5 we danced in the gym.

**TB:** Oh wow!

**MAF:** Yes, that was just great! Sometimes it would run over to 5:30, but everybody converged in the gym at 4 pm. We had live music. It was a good way to relax on Friday afternoons.

**TB:** Now was that when the gym was behind Old Main?

**MAF:** No, that was a little boys-men's gym. There was a bigger gym.

**TB:** Yes, I didn't know when that was built.

**MAF:** It was always there as far as I remember. The Campus School used it a lot. It was over by the ... well things have changed around so ... but it was big. It gave us a lot of space to dance.

**TB:** Nice. What are some other things that you were going to comment on? Share your list -- that would be great.

**MAF:** I remember going to all of those games, in the rain, some of them. I wondered why my daughter was like that. She was in the Pep Club in high school. She would come home and tell me, “*Mom I don’t have time to eat, I might just have a sandwich.*” And off she would go.

**TB:** She got that from her mother.

**MAF:** I guess so. It was important that we support the school teams.

Oh, did I say that one of my favorite teachers was Miriam Snow Mathes? I worked in the children’s library one summer. I think that was between my junior and senior years at the university (University of Washington). I had enjoyed my classes at the college with Miriam and was considering a children’s librarian career.

**TB:** Did you know Mabel Zoe Wilson?

**MAF:** Oh yes.

**TB:** What was she like?

**MAF:** She was good. I liked her. But we joked a lot about her because she was so tough on us. She was really tough! We said that she had eyes in the back of her head. She had these favorite sayings, something about, “*Always keep your spine straight,*” and “*Hold your head high!*”

**SC:** What about Katherine Casanova?

**MAF:** I didn’t have her. She taught second grade didn’t she?

**SC:** It was the early years.

**MAF:** I know she was very well liked and considered a very fine teacher. Did you know her?

**SC:** I didn’t know her, no. I knew her brother, interestingly.

**MAF:** She was very well liked.

Oh, we had I believe a Ski Club. Did you see anything about that?

**TB:** There was a Ski Club.

**MAF:** I belonged to that but just in the later years I think. I went around with a boy (a college student) who was very active in skiing. We’d go up to the mountain. He was in the Mount Baker Ski Club, too. They had a cabin built about nine miles down from the lodge.

**TB:** Is that Kulshan Cabin?



**MAF:** Yes. It wasn't a very big building. It was actually quite small. But we would go up to the fields above the lodge, ski the downhill runs then cross country ski back to the cabin.

**TB:** Nice.

**MAF:** Oh yes, I enjoyed going out to the Lake Whatcom facility, too.

**TB:** Lakewood.

**MAF:** Lakewood.

**TB:** It was also called Normalstad.

**MAF:** Normalstad! Especially it seems to me that the *Viking* staff went out there quite often for weekend parties.

**TB:** How did you get out there? Did people drive or did you take the trolley?

**MAF:** No, we drove. Somebody would drive – sort of early “car pooling.”

**TB:** Any other memories of your college days?

**MAF:** A display of ongoing interest to students, faculty – really everyone entering Old Main, particularly from the front entrance -- directly to the left hanging on the wall of the hall was an architect's version of the college's campus of the future. Up and down it was [quite wide] across, framed and glassed in muted colors. It was drawn up by Bebb and Gould a leading architectural firm of Seattle. The Wilson Library and Carver Physical Education building were of their design as were also Suzzalo Library and other buildings of the University of Washington campus.

I know my father and Carl Gould as well as Miss Wilson, Coach Sam Carver and other faculty spent many long hours together working on campus buildings' planning. In the course of this, Dad and Carl Gould became quite close friends. He and Mrs. Gould were guests in our home for lunch or dinner several times; when Dad passed away in 1964, Mrs. Gould, then widowed, sent my mother a fine letter. I can't remember how many buildings were shown on the architectural “mural” – many, I know, some reaching out on 21<sup>st</sup> St., others down on High St. (as they actually do now). I've often wondered what became of that plan – “the physical framed piece” and how much it's been followed, if at all. It was very sizeable. Perhaps Dr. Flora or some of the other “old timers” connected with the college might know.

That's all I jotted down.

**TB:** You've already mentioned a little bit about the Mount Baker avalanche that happened in the summer of 1939. But we were also talking about it a little bit before I turned on the tape so maybe you could tell us about how you first heard about that and what that was like for your father?

**MAF:** Yes, I was visiting my grandparents in York, Pennsylvania that summer. My Dad called to tell me the terrible news. He said he was glad I had gone east otherwise I might have been on that climb. I told a friend of my grandparents who was night editor of the York Gazette Daily newspaper about the tragedy. He wrote an article for the York Gazette Daily, then he called the AP – it was in the papers, you know, all over the country. So I got a little

write-up back there of how fortunate I was not to have stayed home that summer (and probably gone on that climb). But I was sad over my friends' demise.

**TB:** What was your father like, just as a man?

**MAF:** I know that he was a wonderful father and family man. Perhaps he did somewhat "spoil" all of his children but we never in the least lacked for love from both our parents, their attention when we wanted and needed it, companionship, though the latter as we were growing up always had an element of guidance on a more adult level. When we were quite young children, I've been told, it was my mother who did most of the serious disciplining – my Dad always backing her up in a sort of detached, but impressive way. Spanking was still in order those days – even with "enlightened parents". My mother would use "butter paddles" for spankings – mostly the threat of them, I think – and actually mostly on my brother William – who was always kind of a maverick. I believe I, surprisingly, never was a recipient of the "butter paddles."

My dad wanted us to enjoy our lives, especially our young lives, though not often to be really "frivolous." We had lots of fun together at home with each other. We were all very close. There was never any favoritism shown by our parents. As the only girl with three brothers I was treated completely as an equal – they had their chores around the house; I had my "fourth," sometimes we'd switch.

I never could understand some people saying CHF was "so dignified," they were almost afraid to be around him. He was totally approachable to me and those who knew him well. He loved a good joke (never missed a chance to fool us on the first of April) and had an infectious laugh – though he didn't really come out with it a lot.

He loved Christmas time – being of pure German ancestry that was typical – the "gamer" he was good although not oft a player (except during holiday time). He liked being the caller for the simple game of Bingo. He didn't really have an active hobby, except walking and that after much persuasion by my mother (a great walker!). The college "to be the best," his community leadership with the YMCA, the Community Chest and his family life fully filled him to satisfaction.

He loved following Major League Baseball and sometimes took us to Bellingham's team games at night or Sunday afternoon in the summers. Other times we traveled with him to Seattle to see the Seattle baseball team play. We occasionally drove with faculty friends to Seattle or Vancouver, B.C. for entertainment events – "light," as Bo Jangles in Tap Dancing and Banjo, even some Vaudeville. "Heavier" events would be a drama such as "Dr. Faustus" and especially for my mother, to hear great musicians such as Marian Anderson, Paul Robson, Sousa's Band, etc.

Dad would often go back to his office on campus in the evenings. A few times when I had occasion as a student to be at Old Main in the evenings, I would see CHF walking slowly alone, sometimes meet him (not by appointment) on the narrow, outside walk close around the front of Old Main. I knew he was planning, dreaming how to make the college the finest possible. I think his spirit still lingers there sometimes.

**MAF:** I brought some papers along – did the college get a copy of Dr. Hick's speech at the dedication?

**TB:** We think we did, and yes [referring to the copy that MAF displayed], that's exactly what we have.

**MAF:** He was selected as one of the *One Hundred Distinguished Citizens of Washington* during the centennial of Washington (1989).

**TB:** Now was he physically a really big man?

**MAF:** About six feet one.

**SC:** He's taller than I thought. I don't know why I always envisioned him as being a shorter man.

**MAF:** No, he was tall.

**SC:** Maybe because he was so fine boned.

**MAF:** I take after my mother in height. All of my brothers, fortunately, were over six feet. My mother was five feet three so I'm just the same height she was. All of my brothers took after my dad, which I thought was kind of fortunate, although I've sometimes regretted not being a little taller.

**TB:** Did he have a sense of humor? Or was he a serious person? I suppose that you could be both.

**MAF:** He had a great sense of humor.

[Presents a paper] This is from—people would send in these—when they'd send in their donations for the fountain (built in CHF's memory). They would write letters, some of them, and so this is a potpourri of the comments.

**TB:** Yes, a collection of the comments by the donors. Maybe we can get a copy made of this.

**MAF:** Yes, surely.

Oh yes, I wanted to mention about Orpha McPherson. Have you ever heard of her?

**TB:** Sounds sort of familiar.

**MAF:** She was supervisor of the student teachers who were in the country schools of Whatcom County. She was a real personality, everyone just loved her. She was from Missouri and she never let us forget it. Just to illustrate how fun she was I remember she went with us up to the Mount Baker Lodge (I want to tell you some more about that). There was still some snow at Heather Meadows, and on the hills around. "Orpha Mac" said, "*I want to slide down on that snow!*" I can't remember if she found something to slide on or not. It might be in your picture book.

**TB:** Yes, there's a picture of someone sliding down here.

**MAF:** Then that's probably she. Oh she was much fun!

**TB:** There it is!

**MAF:** Yes. Did you see this?

**SC:** No.

**TB:** Sliding right down!

**SC:** Who is this?

**TB/MAF:** Orpha McPherson!

**MAF:** She was always a madcap -- doing fun things. She was very, very good at her work. After she left college she became supervisor of the Indian Schools, all over the Southwest – Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. In Bellingham she had an apartment a block from us. She was often in our home – a great friend to us all. She kept up friendly connections with our whole family long “after Bellingham.”

**TB:** Wow!

**MAF:** Many individuals and businesses of Whatcom County contributed towards building of a beautiful lodge—Mt. Baker Lodge—in Heather Meadows, at about 5,000 feet altitude. My parents were among the contributors. A plaque in the lodge’s popular dining room listed names of the contributors. CHF was especially fond of taking family and friends, particularly visitors from U.S. eastern states, (including speakers at the college assemblies) to the lodge for lunch or dinner. In the middle of its second summer the Mt. Baker lodge burned to the ground. My two oldest brothers and Neal Miller were working there as “bellhops.” Mart Peters, a cousin of ours visiting from Pennsylvania, was an overnight guest. They all had some real excitement! The fire started in the middle of the night. The “bellhops” (our cousin also) worked fast getting all the lodge guests and their luggage out safely! There were no casualties. As far as I know, a lodge equal to the original in style and size has never replaced it. Is there a hotel-type lodge there now?

**SC:** I don’t think so. I don’t know.

**TB:** Just the ski lodge, not a hotel.

**MAF:** Just a kind of annex. (I think the annex was there when the lodge burned down.) The lodge had been gorgeous. The ceiling of the dining room was of Indian design –bright colors – red, blue, orange, yellow, purple. Very similar to the ceiling of the college’s Wilson Library main reading room.

**TB:** Now did all of your brothers also attend Western?

**MAF:** My youngest brother, Charles (“Chuck”) attended the college one quarter, his other undergraduate studies being at Stanford University and the University of Washington (music school). My oldest brother was my student teacher in the eighth grade of the campus school and I of course gave him a bad time (laughter). He went there for two years, then he went to Stanford. Later he taught Political Science at New York City College. Eventually he joined the staff of the United Nations.

My next oldest brother Bill – Will had a really rough time – he left Fairhaven High School and did his senior year back in the Pennsylvania town where my grandparents lived because my relatives back there were really kind of worried about us in the west. We weren’t getting “the proper kind of upbringing,” they inferred. They were always kind of needling my parents about this, so they decided to send “Bill” back there for his last year in high school.

There he fell in love with his first steady girlfriend. He wasn't really sturdily enough built when young to be an athlete (except for tennis) but he became sports manager and also threw himself into many other activities in the York High School. After graduation when he had to leave, it was hard for him. He had a breakdown on the train coming west. My father had to go to Madison, Wisconsin, where they had taken him off to put him in the hospital. He really had a nervous breakdown and my father thought it would be good for him to be in the infirmary of the College in Bellingham. So he lived there for about a year. He gradually began to pull himself out of it. He enrolled in the college. I think it took him about two years however to come out of that illness completely.

I'd see him downtown just walking around. He devised his own diet. He rightly thought fresh vegetables were best for him. He'd walk around the streets of Bellingham eating carrots and celery. But he pulled himself out of it; when he met Christine Albers at the college that helped him a lot. She was a very outstanding student and a fine pianist. She won the Washington State pianist contest for young people several years in a row. Will came down here to the university after two years at the college and I think he stayed right on to get his Master's before he taught at – his first job I believe was in Wapato, Washington. Will and I were going to the University of Washington for two years at the same time. In 1937 he and Chris were married after his second year teaching in the Wapato High School.

They had a very large wedding – six bridesmaids and six groomsmen (our youngest brother, "Chuck," was best man) at St. James Presbyterian Church in Bellingham. Many College faculty families and most of the College Board of Trustees were guests at the ceremony and the rather elaborate reception in The Blue Room, on the top floor of Edens Hall. Christine's Dad, Jerry Albers, owned and operated a large grocery store near Cornwall Park.

After their marriage Will and Chris both taught in the Kirkland High School. He taught history, she taught music. Then they went east together for Will to earn his Ph.D. at Columbia University. Their only child, Charles Albers Fisher, was born in New York City in 1948. Christine passed away when she was 44 years old; she just sort of burned herself out. She was an organist, choir director, and taught public school music in the Spanish side of Las Vegas, New Mexico. Will remarried in about two years, a very lovely person; she'd been a principal of an elementary school in El Paso, Texas. He had been superintendent of schools in Las Vegas, but after Christine passed away there he wanted to leave Las Vegas. He got a position at the University of Texas at El Paso teaching education and history. He met his second wife, Ruth Dwyer, in the Presbyterian Church he attended. She was a widow with three late-teenage children.

But Bill's (Will's) life is another whole story. He earned his Ph.D. at Columbia University, taught at the University of Montana, Missoula for 30 years, passed away in 2002. There's a Bill Fisher Reading and Conference Room now in his memory in the education department of the University of Montana. My brother Will's career paralleled my Dad's most closely as being in the field of education on higher institution faculties, although my oldest brother, "Rob," (Bob) seemed to have inherited my Dad's high scholarship and administrative abilities the most.

My youngest brother, being musically talented became a professional musician after earning a masters degree in music at Columbia University on the G.I. Bill (having served in World War II in Europe in Headquarters Band). His wife passed away at age 38. They had no children and he never remarried.

I have been married twice; have one daughter, two grandsons, and four great-grands. I've taught public school levels from second grade through community college, have been a high school librarian and have tutored ESL from first grade through university levels.

Perhaps I'm expanding this to include too much of my brothers' and my lives. But my father was a devoted family man and while being immersed in his professional life and his community volunteer non-profit organizational leadership work, state and national educational committees' work, the concerns and joys of his four children and his wife, Mary, were his concerns and joys, a major part of his life, too. Although he offered advice mostly as we sought it, we knew he was always there for us, never didactic, never unforgiving with us. Always we were strengthened through our various perils by his love, wisdom and optimistic nature, all stemming much from his religious faith, even while going through perils a-plenty of his own. He certainly earned, being [devotedly loved] by we, his children, the students and faculty of the college and older people, of his days working with the Washington Old Age Pension Union – "The Rock of Gibraltar."

Also I've tried to convey that a very congenial spirit existed between my father, our whole family, other faculty members and their families (the "Faculty Wives" organization helped to contribute to this spirit too). We were a sort of "tightly bonded college community on the hill." That is not to say we felt aloof, much-apart from the rest of the town, because there was constant mingling with town groups and individuals through many cultural, social, etc. channels, but the workplace bonds were strong and loyal – almost "to a man and a woman" between my Dad, our family, his colleagues and their families.

I've been researching my files for the notes (or copies) of the speech CHF gave at the banquet held as part of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the college (about 1950). He was invited to be main speaker—my mother and myself to be guests. Many of the faculty who had been with my father in his administration and many alumni of those years were present. He gave an upbeat talk mainly predicting how the college in the years to come would develop into a much larger, more prestigious educational institution of our state and nation. He lived to see much of his prediction happen.

**TB:** Now what about you, what did you do after you left Western?

**MAF:** I came here to the University of Washington. My brother Will and I were here for two years at the same time. We lived together for one quarter, and then I pledged a sorority – Chi Omega.

**TB:** And then what did you do after you graduated from here?

**MAF:** I was going to go to library school in Pittsburgh, Carnegie Institute. But it was discovered I had a mild case of Bright's disease. They called it Nephritis and I couldn't leave home. I had to stay home to be on a special diet. It was kind of [a] fun time for me because I didn't feel ill, I felt all right. I just was having fun. Playing bridge and going to parties. I'd go with friends to the San Juan Islands, Vancouver, etc. Finally I tired of that because most of my friends weren't on their dad's purse strings anymore, they were teaching, doing something more constructive. So I enrolled at the college again—this time to get my teaching degree. I already had BA in literature from here (University of Washington).

**TB:** Here you are the Graduate Normal Diploma in 1938 (referring to a copy of the commencement program).

**MAF:** Yes.

**TB:** So that's what it was – your credentials to teach because you hadn't gotten that at the University of Washington?

**MAF:** The University of Washington didn't issue elementary school teaching certificates, just high school teaching certificates at that time.

**TB:** What was your first job then?

**MAF:** I taught fourth grade at Boulevard Park in King County now known as in the Highline District. My principal was Oscar Thorsen. He had been a big football player at Western.

**TB:** That's fun.

**MAF:** It was alright, I liked it. Oscar's office was joined to my 4<sup>th</sup> grade room by a door with a window. At first I thought I wouldn't like that too well but I didn't mind it because he was just really, really so nice. One weekend I'd gone skiing at Paradise on Mount Rainier, when I got home, my face was a mess. I'd ridden in the rumble seat of a car coming back from the mountain and that together with the day's bright sun reflection from the snow had swollen my face like a balloon with blisters all over it. The place I was living, such a nice landlady there kept bringing these ice packs or whatever; she didn't quite know exactly what to do. Anyway I went to school the next day and Oscar was just shocked. He said, "*You can't teach like that!*"

He called his wife who was a nurse to come to school and she put tea bags on my face, but that didn't help. Oscar took my class. Somehow I got wind of a good skin specialist in downtown Seattle. About noon I went to him. He gave me an ointment, put it on my face. Amazingly I was completely normal by the next day. I went to the same dermatologist (a special trip from eastern Washington) 25 years later for a bad burn. The same kind of miracle occurred.

**TB:** Could we go back to your father? He was very instrumental in building the library and the physical education building at Western. You talked a little bit before we turned on the tape about how hard it was getting all of the property condemned, the process that he went through ...

**MAF:** I really don't know too much about the legality of that, but there is a certain process. But the thing was – and it's something that you can sort of sympathize with -- these ladies – because this was their livelihood – they were close enough to the college that they were renting out their rooms to students. So when they had to sell their properties, there went their livelihoods. Some of them were widows. But Dad tried hard as he could to get enough from the state for them to live on.

However a certain "landlady" always held condemnation of her property *against* my father. She would regularly attend town and county meetings, where he was often asked to be main speaker, harass him unmercifully from the audience. In other ways she kept up a constant campaign to discredit him. And she had allies in several local people – former college faculty members who had been let go by my father during the Depression years [because] of the College's necessarily tight economizing (Dad himself voluntarily took a several thousand dollar cut in salary). These were people with some influence in the state Governor's political party or people who ingratiated themselves with influential people of the same political party. They kept up a barrage of letters to the Governor and to the Trustees of the College. They cited speakers at the aforementioned bi-weekly all-student assemblies as being "subversive" – whereas the speakers were actually many of the foremost, nationally prominent thinkers, writers, scientists, philosophers, and explorers of that day whose lectures CHF felt gave students a broad educational spectrum to maul over. They constantly stirred up discontent with CHF's administration with as many people, in as many ways as they could.

**TB:** And do you know very much about his relationship with Mabel Zoe Wilson? He was a big supporter of the library and there are lots of stories ...

**MAF:** Well that was a kind of love-hate relationship as it was with everybody with Mabel Zoe.

Did you know her?

**SC:** No, but I've heard lots of stories. I've talked with Miriam Snow Mathes about Mabel.

**MAF:** Did you?

**SC:** Yes, because Mabel was Miriam's supervisor. And it was the same kind of situation. I think a lot of people who worked in the library were fearful of Mabel Zoe Wilson because she was so stern.

**MAF:** Oh she was. She'd say, "*Keep your spine straight!*" And she always wore tailored suits, blouses with high collars. But she was really a pussy cat. She really had the best interest of the college and every one connected with it, at heart.

**TB:** There's a story about your father having a door out of his office that was called the Fisher Door, and when Miss Wilson would come over to see him often times he would leave (sneak out). That's at least the story I've always heard -- that there was this door he could go out when he heard she was coming.

**MAF:** Oh really! Well I might have known about that [but] I've kind of forgotten. I know I heard enough about Mabel Zoe Wilson. I got so I just kind of turned it off (laughter).

**TB:** Well could you tell us a little bit more about how your father or how your family felt about his experience when he left Western?

**MAF:** You see I wasn't really at home then because I was teaching. I know it was hard and my father was quite bitter. I can't really tell you a lot about that except that it was hard for my father I know that. That was in 1939 wasn't it?

**TB:** Yes.

**MAF:** Well, he was offered a position here at the University of Washington--it tells about that here in one of these articles--but he wouldn't make that kind of compromise. He went to New York City where he was appointed a distinguished professor at New York University. My mother, my brother Chuck and I rented a little house in Seattle; I was teaching then at Boulevard Park in the Highline District, "Chuck" was going to UW majoring in music.

Father was in the east. He went up, I think, almost every night—he would go probably about fifty miles to—a branch of New York University – up from New York City to teach. So he was busy in his field.

You know (or not) that he had graduated from Union Theological Seminary in New York City (three years additional after earning his BA). And I do want to include that as an ordained minister he quite often was asked to substitute for absent ministers in various Bellingham churches (mostly Presbyterian and Congregational) and to



include also that he had participated in a YMCA Street Ministry while a student at Union Theological. I believe that particularly fostered his volunteer work for the benefit of the YMCA in Bellingham for many years.

I believe it was about 1941 Dad was appointed dean of a private college in South Dakota. That was through his church connections because it was a Presbyterian college – Huron College – Huron, South Dakota. My parents really enjoyed themselves there. It was a little town, about 10,000. It didn't take my mother -- always outgoing, friendly -- long to make friends. And with her music she would ... It used to sort of embarrass me when I was a child because whenever she came to a room or place where there was a piano not being played she would play it.

**TB:** Oh nice!

**MAF:** She was quite happy in Huron. During the war my Dad was appointed administrator of the Civilian Aeronautics Program [Civilian Pilot Training Program] at Huron College. That was to train pilots for home defense. I had come out to Seattle because that's where I had lived with my husband, who was flying for the U.S. Air Corps Transport Command. He was stationed in India. He wanted me to come to Seattle where we had always lived. We had a little daughter then, born in Huron, South Dakota.

In the meantime Dad had been appointed by the newly elected Democratic governor of Washington State, Mon Walgren, to be State Priorities Director for the war effort. Dad and Walgren were of the same political persuasion. The war was still going on. [My husband] "Van" was still flying troops from India over the Himalaya Mountains to China and I was living at Burien, Washington. I had rented a house in Burien for my baby daughter, my mother and me. My mother had come from the east to help with the baby. Dad would come home from Olympia weekends.

**TB:** That worked out good.

**MAF:** Yes it did. We were so surprised to see him return to Washington State. We didn't know he was coming back. He liked to give people surprises. We had no idea he was coming back to the state.

Oh yes, he had another prior appointment – it was when I was in Chicago and my husband at that time was flying the "hump" China-Burma-India airlift. My dad wanted to come to Chicago. That's where Judy and I were — also my oldest brother who was a US Army Major. I think, at that time, he was a Major in Intelligence. He was stationed in Chicago. So my dad said, "*Why don't we all live in Chicago?*" He got a position as head of an optical store in Milwaukee and rented a large apartment in a large brownstone-front house near Lake Michigan. Every morning, 7 am, he'd take the fast train up to Milwaukee from Chicago. Then he was transferred to Kentucky, to a town right on the Kentucky-Tennessee line, to manage two or three stores.

My mother had a good time there. One of my girl cousins was in college in that town, majoring in music. But "Van" wanted me to go back to Seattle so I brought Judy back. After my mother came out, then my dad wanted to come back too; he wasn't happy by himself. He did this optical store management alright but he wanted to get back to Washington State so he got the appointment by Governor Walgren as State Priorities Director for the war (WWII) effort.

The day I saw him walking up the street, I happened to be sitting by the window of our house in Burien and I said, "*Gee that looks like CHF,*" and sure enough it was. So he'd commute to Olympia for the work week and that worked out well.

**SC:** CHF? Who called your father CHF?

**MAF:** A lot of people.

**SC:** Really.

**MAF:** Yes, because that's the way he signed so many times. "CHF", he just signed CHF! He got so he could hardly write longhand. Later he taught himself to type. Although he used the "hunt and peck" system, he rarely made a mistake. He was pretty fast at it. When he was at the college he'd had a "C H Fisher" stamp and a secretary of course, so we'd kid him about this. He had these little "fat" shortened pencils. He always had a box of them in his desk drawer. He'd keep them all sharpened to use when he wrote something in longhand. He wrote the notes for his speeches with them. He had quite large hands, large fingers and somehow these worked handily for him.

**TB:** Do you have anything else you would like to make sure is recorded?

**SC:** I have a question if it's OK? I'm interested in the relationship that your father had with Arthur Hicks? I know Arthur Hicks was such a good friend and supporter of your father's.

**MAF:** Yes, Arthur Hicks was a good friend. And I want to ... this is Shirley Rogers tribute to Arthur Hicks ... [referring to a paper].

My father was an ordained minister and as Dr. Hicks said in his speech at dedication of the Fisher Foundation, he was a religious man. He wrote numerous prayers that he gave at Wesley Terrace Retirement home where my parents lived in their latter years. I brought a few of them.

Now you talked about the portrait ... I have a lot of correspondence about that portrait. I'd forgotten how much I have. Here's a snapshot of it ... [referring to a paper]

None of us in the family liked it. But Dr. Flora liked it.

**TB:** That's on campus then, that portrait.

**MAF:** Dr. Flora has it because we didn't like it. None of us wanted it. I'll show you a letter about that [referring to some papers. You might want to read that, it's from Dr. Flora.

[Back to Dr. Hicks], the Hicks' daughter was about seven years old when they came to Bellingham. What was her name? *Editors note:* Clarimonde.

Clarimonde; she was a cute little girl. We socialized some with the Hicks family but their daughter was considerably younger than my brothers and me at that time so we didn't socialize much. At first the relationship was mostly professional, mutual admiration. Dr. Hicks was so talented, not only as a fine English teacher, but also as an accomplished concert pianist. He'd made a difficult decision, he told my father, to teach English instead of music at the college level. My mother and Dr. Hicks were close friends, both musicians.

**SC:** The daughter was there in their lives growing up. I think she left home quite young and then came back some years later with her husband. I think there had been some kind of an estrangement when she was married.

**MAF:** When she was quite young, Clarimonde married a considerably older man, a Canadian from Vancouver, B.C. I don't know if she ever went to college. This was after I left Bellingham for teaching in the Highline District. Later my parents filled me in on Clarimonde and the fictitious granddaughter. In away it was quite sad.

About five years after her marriage when Clarimonde and her husband were vacationing in the Methow Valley she ate spoiled food. A few days later in Yakima, Clarimonde died of food poisoning. There were no children of the marriage. I think that at that time, my father helped the Hicks. He went over to Yakima and, you know, just helped them, because they were devastated. That I think is in the background too of the relationship. Some years later Mrs. Hicks fabricated the whole story about a granddaughter -- long, lost granddaughter.

**SC:** Yes, that's what I heard because Dr. Hicks had passed away and Mrs. Hicks was living in the retirement home and wasn't well and ... I never talked about it because I didn't have any information that I could rely on; but there was some discussion that there was a child and that she couldn't be found or something. Maybe that was the fabricated granddaughter who couldn't be found.

**MAF:** It was just fabrication because Dr. Hicks told me so. Nobody was really sure, you know. It was a big story going around in Bellingham for quite a while wasn't it?

**SC:** Well yes. Someone at the University who had been there a long time – did you know Fran Titus?

**MAF:** No.

**SC:** Maybe not. Fran Titus is a long time Bellingham resident and she worked at the University so she told me. But I never ever talked about it because I didn't know and it was just rumor.

**MAF:** No, no, people didn't want to talk about it. But the story went around. I really admired Dr. Hicks because he went along with it. He just went along because he knew how much his wife missed their daughter and had wanted a granddaughter. But he told me one day when I was in Bellingham walking with Dr. Hicks in their yard. I said, "*Oh this sounds like a fairy tale.*" He said, "*You know it is, Mary Ann. It's a fairytale.*"

And even when Mrs. Hicks passed away they had it in the paper about this granddaughter, so that's alright.

**SC:** But Dr. Hicks was such a devoted friend wasn't he?

**MAF:** Oh, he was he really was. He was just so loyal. He was a great friend of mine too, and of my brothers. After my dad passed away, Dr. Hicks wrote me letters. I'd sometimes stop to see them in their home when in Bellingham. Then I went to see them in the retirement home – The Parkway Chateau. They were wonderful people really.

**TB:** Are there other people who had been faculty at the University that your family kept in contact with beside the Hicks?

**MAF:** Well Miriam. I'd always kept in contact with Miriam Snow Mathes. And my mother, whom did she write to? Mrs. Miller! They're gone now. Neal Miller passed away, too. I heard, a year or two ago.

Let's see. My mother wrote so many Christmas cards she probably continued to send Christmas cards to some of those people – the Hoppes', for certain.

Have you heard anything about Joanne Hoppe? Did you know the Hoppes' daughter?

**SC:** No, no I didn't.

**MAF:** Very bright and good looking, I heard she married her sweetheart of Western college days who later became a prominent educator of Whatcom County. I heard also Joanne lost most of her eyesight in latter years. If she's still living in Lynden I may look her up next time I'm up that way. She and her brother Russell Hoppe. We were quite good friends with them and the Millers. We always had New Year's dinner with the Millers and the Philippi.

**TB:** Philippi was very much a supporter of your father also. He was the one who was the head person on representing what the faculty wrote in support of your father. Did your father end up still in good relationship with a lot of the faculty? Did he feel warm towards them and recognize that they had supported him?

**MAF:** Yes, very much so.

**TB:** Did he ever really come to terms with the dismissal or accept it?

**MAF:** Not really. None of us did.

**TB:** It would be hard.

**MAF:** A lot of it was that Governor Martin -- their politics were at loggerheads -- that was one reason. Dad really hadn't been at all active in Democratic Party politics as such – in Bellingham, Whatcom County or the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District. He felt that in the best interests of the college his position required he take a personal – public non-partisan stance. Actually when we first arrived in Bellingham he listed himself as a Republican (as his family in Pennsylvania) and is so identified in his biographies in the Who's Who volumes. But Governor Clarence D. Martin was a very conservative Republican from eastern Washington and interpreted some of Dad's progressive policies for the college as alien to his (the Governor's) party's politics. Also the Bellingham Herald at that time was owned and dominated by a definitely very conservative Republican family. The newspaper began a defamation campaign against CHF. The governor constantly put pressure on the three member Board of Trustees of the college. They held out against him for many months but I think finally two (a majority) "caved in," voting for dismissal of CHF as president of the college. I think this scenario is also described in the findings and publishing's of the investigating committee of the American Association of University Professors.

During Dad's last summer at the college a movement developed for him to run for U.S. Congressman for the 2<sup>nd</sup> District. That was the time of the Washington Commonwealth Federation. I don't know if you've heard of the WCF. It was a segment of the Washington Democratic Party that had a lot of influence in this state's politics in the late '30s and the '40s. Hugh DeLacy, a popular Democratic Congressman representing the 7<sup>th</sup> District (Seattle) drew good support from the WCF. Dad would be running in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District (Whatcom, Skagit and Snohomish counties) against Henry "Scoop" Jackson of Everett (his first foray into politics). A lot of finagling went on at the meetings of the Washington Commonwealth Federation concerning supporting CHF for primaries candidate for Congress.

My brother Rob came out from New York City – my oldest brother. He'd been a political science major at Stanford University before teaching political science at New York City College. Later he became a United Nations administrator. The thing was my dad had never gone on a picket line; well, that just wasn't his style. I can't imagine him on a picket line – although he would be in support of some of the causes they were picketing about. The Washington Commonwealth Federation finally supported a minister of Bellingham who had been on several picket lines. There were a lot of union people in the WCF. My brother figured that nevertheless the minister would not do well in the primaries – that he wasn't enough known throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> District. The results were exactly as Rob predicted – the minister was overwhelmingly defeated.

But there were people telephoning and writing us from all over the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District and the state saying they would support CHF with their votes and financial contributions. It was an interesting time. Henry Jackson won the finals in November against the Republican candidate to become 2<sup>nd</sup> District Congressional representative. We will never know if CHF could have defeated Jackson in the Democratic primaries and won the finals.

**TB:** Do you have some other questions?

**SC:** I can't think of anything. But what about you? What else would you like to say?

**MAF:** I was just going to look over my notes. I'm just wondering now are you an archivist too?

**TB:** I'm the Special Collections Manager so I'm in Special Collections.

**MAF:** Do you have a file for my dad?

**TB:** We do have a file for your father.

**MAF:** Do you have the things that are at the Archives/Special Collections here at Allen Library of University of Washington?

**TB:** No we don't have any of those materials. We have several clippings from the papers at the time that talked about [your father's dismissal], we have the dedication speech [for the fountain] that Hicks [gave], and we have the journal article that was done by the big teacher's organization – they did an article about it.

**MAF:** American Association of University Professors.

**TB:** Right. Then we have this book (referring to the Faculty Christmas card to Dr. Fisher in fall 1939), mostly we just have the clippings of the time.

**MAF:** Well you see there's a lot -- quite a lot here.

**TB:** I know I need to see that sometime.

**MAF:** Yes. I did get this letter from one of the librarians, Michael Barnhart; he was the assistant to President Flora. He wrote me this letter. No, this letter is actually from Robert Lawyer.

**TB:** Oh that's the library.

**MAF:** Yes.

**TB:** Oh, he was obviously trying to get the papers to come to Western.

**MAF:** Yes, so I finally talked to my brother Will about it. He was pretty bitter. He didn't want the papers up there. I don't know if you want to get those. I did say it was OK with me now that Will's gone. He was the one who held out against it the most. But I don't know if you want those or if you just want to look them over and see if there's something.

**TB:** If they were willing to do it. Possibly if we told them that you were supportive of that [it would help]. It would be great if they could be transferred to Western because this is one of the most researched topics. Every year, almost every quarter, a student does research your father, the whole thing. It would be wonderful to have everything. All we can do [now] is point them to the newspapers, the Bellingham Herald, the Western Front, and these clippings probably from the [Post Intelligencer] or some other papers. It's a very hot topic. Always they come back supportive of your father and appalled at what happened, from the community point of view. Now we're obviously a very liberal environment; I think it's probably safe to say, no one can fathom the politics of the time that would lead to something like that really. That would be really great [to have those papers].

**MAF:** It's all right with me.

My daughter, Judy Bahl, had a wonderful relationship with my father. She went here to the university (UW) for a year. My parents were living in north Seattle, North-East 95<sup>th</sup>, so that was nice for her. She would go out to their home often. But she attended the university just for a year. Then she married, much to my concern, because I feared that might interfere with getting her academic degrees. She was always such a good student. After Judy married I was willing to finance her education down there (because they moved to Vancouver, Washington). But her husband said he would.

He wouldn't let me put a penny in towards her education. I was really unhappy about that. My incentive for working shifted in a way. She went on though. And he did what he said. *"I'll support her, she'll go to school and she'll graduate,"* he said. Gunter worked in the lab of Crown Zellerbach Paper Company in Camas, Washington (now James River Paper Company).

Judy went a year to Clark County Junior College in Vancouver. Her first baby – a boy – was born in just a year. Her parents-in-law caring for the baby, she was able to continue studies at Portland State University for her BA. After teaching five years in Camas, Washington, she returned to Portland State University. It was a question of which would come first – her second baby or her masters degree. The baby – another boy – came first! She didn't go through any of [her] graduation exercises. I was disappointed about that – except high school of course. She taught special education, loved teaching. She and my dad were just great, great pals.

**TB:** She's very into music also, right? Piano?

**MAF:** No.

**TB:** She's not?

**MAF:** No. No, she was into special education. She worked for the Federal Government. She had a room in her school in Camas, Washington called the HOSTS room – Help One Student to Succeed. Her program received a lot of financial assistance from the Federal Government.

**TB:** My boss met her once down at Portland State.

**MAF:** Who?

**TB:** My boss, Marian Alexander, met her a few years ago, or thought she did, down at Portland State at the Piano Festival. And I was thinking that would fit if your mother was very into piano music.

**MAF:** Maybe she was Kathryn Fisher. Was she a Fisher? She was Kathryn. She's my brother Will's granddaughter – my grandniece.

**TB:** OK, that's probably who it was, because somehow she was a granddaughter of Charles Henry Fisher, and it was at the Portland Piano Festival.

**MAF:** Kathy Fisher is the great granddaughter of my father. Yes, she's a musician. But she doesn't keep up her music much now. She's a science teacher at a high school in Oregon City. But she does have the grand piano that belonged to Helen, I don't know if you've heard of those people – Helen and Chauncey Griffith?

Chauncey Griffith was a well known musician of the Bellingham area when I was there. Besides being a fine classical pianist he had a popular jazz band. He'd been a student of Edith Strange who taught piano at the college. He eventually became Edith's assistant. Chauncey's sister, Helen, also a talented musician, graduated from the college about 1936. After teaching music in Seattle schools Helen went east with her husband, Bob Schoyen, who had been appointed a professor at Cornell University. When Helen's husband passed away in the 1970s, she returned to Washington State, settling in a condo in Olympia. My oldest brother's wife had passed away recently. My brother Will's first wife, Christine, and Helen, both musicians, had been very close friends. So here were my brother Rob and Helen both recently bereaved and retired. My brother Will took it upon himself to be matchmaker! Helen and Rob married in 1980, subsequently enjoying life in their lovely Tumwater, Washington home – entertaining their extended families and active in the Audubon Society and Democratic Party of Thurston County.

**TB:** Oh wow!

**MAF:** Helen was very interested in Kathryn Fisher taking piano lessons. At that time Kathryn lived with her dad, Charles Fisher, 3<sup>rd</sup>, mother, Diana, brother William in Beaverton, a suburb of Portland. Charles and Diana both taught at a Portland high school. But Helen wanted to finance Kathy's piano lessons with her friend – “the best piano teacher in Portland.”

Now, how did you know of Kathy Fisher?

**TB:** My boss always goes down to this piano festival at Portland State University every July. She met there the woman who is probably Kathryn – just a couple of years back. She said that Kathryn was there one year and she's not been back. And she's always been sorry that she didn't follow up more, visit a little more or something. Probably at intermission of something they met and then my boss never ran into Kathryn again. So when we were talking about this and I knew you had a daughter – I thought -- *Oh it must be Mary Ann's daughter!* (Laughter)

**MAF:** No, Judy just didn't go into music much. For teaching primary grades "music" she did alright; she always got A's in those courses on teaching music. I did have her taking piano lessons at Cornish School of the Arts in Seattle where they offered a scholarship to her. But we moved to central Washington so she couldn't follow that up. She and her husband Gunter Bahl got an organ for their boys and Judy was going to have them take organ lessons. But that didn't happen. The boys weren't encouraged to go into Glee Club or anything like that. There's very little music in her family. Sometimes I play their organ when I visit them. And then Kathryn – if this was just two years ago maybe she's somewhat keeping up her music.

**TB:** I would definitely say it's within the last five. Time passes by quickly sometimes.

**MAF:** Well that's good. She has the grand piano. I thought maybe she was going to teach music, but no, she teaches science. But she may keep it up as a hobby. I don't keep up much with Kathy nowadays, although I do see her father several times a year. Maybe musical talent will come out in one of the younger ones again. My youngest brother, "Chuck," was a professional musician you know – played clarinet, saxophone, piano, and was a vocalist. He had a Masters Degree in Music from Columbia University in New York.

Well I wanted to talk to you about the portrait. How long do you have the room for?

**SC:** We have all day.

**MAF:** Oh really.

**TB:** We have the room until 2 pm.

**SC:** Sorry. I was wrong. We have it until 2 pm.

**TB:** I don't know if anybody's coming in after but I know we're until 2 pm.

**SC:** Tamara and I have all day.

**TB:** Yes.

**MAF:** I suppose that Dr. Flora still has that portrait of my father.

**SC:** We'll ask him.

**MAF:** Did you read that letter?

**TB:** Yes.

**MAF:** It was kind of interesting, wasn't it?

**TB:** Yes.

**MAF:** Did you want to read it?



**SC:** The letter from Dr. Flora? About the picture?

**MAF:** He liked it. But to me, my father looks so much older in the portrait. Dr. Flora liked it and I suppose he still has it. How's he doing?

**TB:** Pretty good.

**SC:** I think so too.

**MAF:** I like him – a great fellow.

**TB:** He's got a lot of good energy.

**MAF:** I suppose. I don't know if there's anything else here I want to show you. If you want to get the material that's here in the UW Allen Library Archives of my dad, you have my approval. I'd really you'd rather get duplicates of everything—if that wouldn't be too expensive. I could probably help with the cost.

**TB:** We'll have to work through the channels. But it might be good leverage to know that the family would support it, because it really does seem appropriate to our collection.

**MAF:** This is the Bicentennial biography piece [referring to some papers] clipping from the Seattle P.I. newspaper, but you have that.

**TB:** Maybe I will just say thank you very much for right now at least and we'll shut off the tape. It really has been a treasure to meet you. We will transcribe this and I'll send you a copy. Thank you.

*ADDENDUM.*

**MAF:** My dad loved baseball. He belonged to a team when he was a little boy in York, Pennsylvania. The name of the team was -- Little Potatoes Hard to Peel. He kept up his interest in baseball always.

On Campus Day, when the students worked hard to clean up the campus in the morning, they played in the afternoon. The faculty men always played the student team. My dad always played first base.

Also I want to tell you that every spring, a bunch of faculty men would go salmon fishing to Campbell River, Canada. My dad would always go on that although he wasn't much of a fisherman. He didn't seem to bring home the biggest fish but he had a good time.

And I was going to tell you about the music. My mother wanted my dad to sing, he really wasn't musical, but she trained him enough so that he could sing about three songs very well, had a very good voice. When we'd have guests she would always say, "*Now Charles, you're going to sing for the group.*" And he would do it.

**TB:** What were the three songs?

**MAF:** *The road to Mandalay*, *Oh promise me*, and I can't remember the third; I think it was a gospel song.

**SC:** What a remarkable memory you have Mary Ann!

**TB:** What is one of your favorite stories of your father growing up?

**MAF:** He worked in a bakery. He had such poor eyesight when he was a boy it was doubtful he could further his education beyond eighth grade. So he worked in the bakery until he was sixteen. With the advancement of ophthalmology, glasses enabled him to go on with his studies. He secured a scholarship to a private high school in his home town of York, Pennsylvania. He always kidded about that school telling us it was “dummies’ refuge.” He graduated from York Collegiate Institute in two years because he was so much older than the other students. From there he went to Lebanon Valley College, a private United Brethren Church school where he was active in debate—being team captain. There my mother and he became acquainted, continuing a casual friendship until graduation. She admired his debating skills particularly. Actually he was dating a lady on campus who later became my mother’s brother’s wife (and my aunt). “Charles” and “Mary’s” friendship blossomed after they left college—he for N.Y.C., she for Hanover, Pennsylvania to teach public school music. She never wanted to marry, wanting always to be a music teacher. My father wooed her for three years, persistence finally winning her “I do.” They were married in the rose garden of my mother’s family home in Lebanon, Pennsylvania.

*END OF TRANSCRIPT*