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This interview was conducted with Mr. Howard Wilder, alumnus. The interview was conducted in the Cascade Room, Best Western Lakeway Inn, Bellingham, on Friday, November 14, 2003. It was a combination oral history/press conference. Those present were Tamara Belts (Libraries), Al Froderberg (Foundation), Jo Collinge (University Communications), Kay Hoyt (Friend), Paul Madison (Sports Information Office), Mike Allende (*Bellingham Herald*), Pete Kendall (*Bellingham Herald*), Zeb Wainright (*Western Front*), and Howard Wilder.

**PM:** I'll introduce the different people here. This is Tamara Belts. She's with our Western Library. We're taping you for a historical piece so we don't lose...

**HW:** I'm getting pretty old; I have a very poor memory. I may not remember very much about the Twenties.

**PM:** You know Al Froderberg, Jo Collinge with our [University] Communications Office. And you know this lady [Kay Hoyt], and then Mike Allende from the *Bellingham Herald* [reporter]. We [have] Pete Kendall [photographer] from the *Bellingham Herald* and Zeb Wainright from the *Western Front*, the school newspaper.

Howard drove halfway up here; he drove from Hoodport to...

**KH:** He drove from Olympia.

**HW:** I drove from Olympia to Mount Vernon.

**PM:** I heard that you play sixty five rounds of golf a year. Is that true?

**HW:** So far this year I have in 88. However, the last few years, I only play nine holes. A few years ago I was playing eighteen, and about five years ago I think it was, I played 212 times.

**All:** Wow.

**HW:** But I don't have anything else, that I have to do, and that's what keeps me going. I get out there, I get some exercise. Otherwise I'd just be sitting in that easy chair at home and I don't think I'd last very long.

**PM:** Anybody that has questions, we'd just like you to just say your name ahead of time so that we have that on the tape, is that correct? That's how we want to do it? Okay. So we're just going to have at it with questions, and then we'll go from there.

I know Howard [you were] originally from Blaine,

**HW:** Yes.

**PM:** Went to Blaine High School.

**HW:** Yes.

**PM:** And then from there did you come up to Bellingham Normal? Is that the progression?

**HW:** Yes, that's right. Sam Carver was coach at the Normal School at that time and I had talked to him about coming and told him I needed a job. But then it got fairly close to the time for school to open. I hadn't saved enough money. I wrote to him and told him I would wait a year. But there was a group that was down there for two weeks before school started, for football practice. After the two weeks, one of the fellows that I knew got me on a Saturday night and talked me into it. Sam wanted me to come down and they had a job for me. So I had to quit the job I was working on. I had to work Monday and I think I worked Tuesday until noon and then went down.

**PM:** You played during the 1923 season?

**HW:** '23, yes. '23 and '24. And then I taught school for five years and took a year off, went back to do my third year work. I turned out and I played football again. I shouldn't have turned out. But anyhow, after the season was over with, there was a group of us in Sam's office discussing things and I said, "Well, after the second turnout, I realized that I shouldn't be turning out. But Sam was a very good friend of mine. It was in 1930, the depression, and the enrollment was down, and his squad wasn't too hot. I thought I'd be letting him down if I dropped out."

When I said that, he kind of chuckled and he said, "Well, after the first turnout, I realized you shouldn't be out here. But I was afraid it'd break your heart if I suggested that you turn in your suit." (Laughter)

**PM:** Well, take me back to 1923 though - our first conference title. I think that was the first year we were known as the Vikings.

**HW:** Yes.

**PM:** The first year that we played at Waldo Field.

**HW:** Yes. Waldo Field was dedicated that year at one of the games I think when we played the Ellensburg Normal, as I recall. The Vikings, I remember, that was adopted that year. Blue and white was officially adopted as the colors; it had been used some before that but as I understood it had never really been adopted. I think it was during that year that the song I want to say...

**JC:** The alma mater?

**HW:** Yes, yes, was written. I understand that they had the words but not the tune for it or something now? I'm tone deaf, so I don't get into music at all, but as I recall, at the time it was one of the students that wrote the song -- the words. And then they set it to a tune of a song that was well established.

**TB:** Cornell University. The melody came from Cornell.

**PM:** Can you tell us a little bit about Sam Carver?

**HW:** Well, I did know he was quite intense -- he was so busy and all. He coached football, basketball, track, baseball, and had gym classes, and he coached tennis as well. They hadn't gotten into golf yet at that time. Personally I liked Sam very well. There were some that didn't care for him. If they didn't make the squad or something, they didn't get to play enough, well, it was the coach's fault, you know.

**PM:** What position did you play in?

**HW:** Fullback.

**PM:** Fullback?

**HW:** Mmm hmm.

**PM:** What kind of formation did we run? What did Sam Carver do as far as...?

**HW:** Well that first year in '23, it was formations that Sam had picked up. Penn State had [played] the University [of Washington] the year before and we used the formations that Penn State used. When we went down and played the University freshmen, there's a man that watched that game that said it was just like watching Penn State! He worked in some things. He lost two games with Ellensburg and then Cheney and I think that was the first year they'd ever played Cheney. I'm not certain, but they played Ellensburg I think before.

We had a very small squad. I think there was only fifteen that made letters. Of course, we played both ways then.

**PM:** Right. What did you play on defense?

**HW:** It was offense and defense.

**PM:** Right. What position did you play on defense?

**HW:** I played fullback.

**PM:** They had the same terms for both.

**HW:** Mmm Hmm.

**AF:** Did you travel by train?

**HW:** No, we traveled that year by bus. We played both Ellensburg and Cheney in Bellingham and took the bus down to Seattle for when we played the University freshmen and two other teams [(St. Martins and the College of Puget Sound)]. We only played five games.

**PM:** It was a good season. You never lost.

**HW:** No. We tied two games I think. St. Martins I believe it was, we tied 3-3, and the College of Puget Sound it was 7-7. Ellensburg, 19 or 20 to nothing. With Cheney, I think it was 26-13. Any other year, I wouldn't be able to tell you what it was.

**PM:** You scored a few touchdowns in those games.

**HW:** Well, in those last two games I scored three touchdowns in each. That was kind of a quick play in away...we'd go down, get inside the ten yard line and going back – we didn't huddle then – but just going back to positions, the quarterback would start it out and "let's make it, let's make it this time" and that was our signal and we got down and when he said signals, the snap signal, and the ball was snapped to me and the other team wasn't set and it was easy for our linemen to open up a hole. Against Ellensburg we used a play three times and made three touchdowns all from it. Against Cheney, we used it four times and made three touchdowns. My fault that we didn't make three for three on that but when it is just a split second that I didn't get started and so we ran it again and there was no hole there and I went off to the left and cut in and [got tackled].

**PM:** Can you describe the campus at that time?

**HW:** Well, everything was in Old Main practically, except the Industrial Arts Building. The library was in Old Main, it was on the second floor and afterwards they divided it up and made two large classrooms out of it when they got the new library. Edens Hall -- that was [the] first year for Edens Hall to be open. [I seen something here a few years ago saying] that Edens Hall was opened in 1924 but it was opened in 1923. I know I worked in the kitchen washing dishes!

**PK:** Well, I wanted to ask something if I may. My name is Pete and I work for the Bellingham Herald. I was wondering do you follow football at all today?

**HW:** Not very much. I don't care much for watching pro football. On TV I'll follow college football somewhat. I used to follow it a lot, for years, but I've kind of gotten away from it.

**PK:** Is that right. Are there certain colleges that you tend to follow that you've been a fan of?

**HW:** No, not really. It's what ones I find on TV (laughter).

**JC:** Is there a reason you don't follow pro football? Is there something you don't like about it?

**HW:** I just think college football is more interesting. In pro football, the good passers [are] back there passing on every play almost, and you almost know it's going to be a pass. You don't know just what kind of formation they'll use but... But I just think college football is more interesting.

**PK:** Do you think that perhaps college football was more interesting when you were playing?

**HW:** Well, we didn't have pro football then. (Laughter)

**PK:** If somebody went to a Western game and watched you play and watched you run with the ball, how do you think they would describe your style of playing?

**HW:** Oh, I have no idea on that one.

**PK:** You never ran scared with the ball though, right? You were always very confident in what you were doing, right?

**HW:** Well yes. I'd grab it, I didn't fumble very often. I'd go as hard as I could. If there was a hole there, fine, and if there wasn't I just kept pushing as far as I could go. I had very few long runs. I think probably the longest one I ever had was when I was back there in the Thirties, and I forget who we were playing but they had the ball and had the punt and it was partially blocked and at that time I was kind of like a wing back on defense, and the ball went out here, and I ran out and caught it and went about, oh I don't know, forty, fifty yards for a touchdown with that, but that's the only time I had a real long run.

**PK:** Okay. Did you have a nickname? And if so, maybe you could share that history with us.

**HW:** Well, I haven't heard it for long time, but it was with me for many years, from the time I was [in] about the second grade I think. I'd said something and I guess I didn't say it very plainly and a fellow said, "You sound like a Dutchman!" He said, "I'm going to call you „Dutch!“" And it stuck with me. Maybe you heard that before.

**PK:** Well, I'm wondering, when is the last time somebody called you „Dutch?“

**HW:** Oh, it was during the Fifties. I worked for Columbia Valley Lumber Company and a man that had known of me, one of the officers at that time he was vice president, and he used to call me Dutch.

**AF:** Where did you teach from '25 to '31?

**HW:** Well, I had quite a few places. I often taught one year and moved on, if I didn't get the kind of deal I wanted for the next year or something. But I started out in Anacortes, then I went to Orting, and from there I went to Lynden for two years, and then I went to Centralia. That's when I took the year off then after that [and] went back to school. Then I went over to Grandview, Yakima County. On that one I was principal of an elementary school with fourteen teachers. I made \$1,400 a year.

**AF:** At Grandview?

**HW:** At Grandview. I taught one class. We were on the same grounds as the high school and the freshmen had practically all of their classes in the elementary school building. I taught a class in algebra. But the depression had hit pretty hard on the farmers over there. The next year they wanted me back, but they would only pay me \$1,000 and I would teach a full course. I passed up on it. I didn't find another teaching job, but I happened to run into a job in Seattle. It was an athletic supply company. It had just started. The man that had the company had worked for another firm and I was in town and I dropped by to see the other man because I knew him. When I asked him, he said, "Oh, he's down here some place," and told me where he was and [that he] had a business of his own. He just opened up in Seattle in the spring sometime and he said in the fall he'd be on the road calling on schools and so on and his wife would work in the office and handle things in there. He thought he would get a high school kid to come and do some of the stuff, the shipping out of stuff. I asked him if I could have that job. I got it. I was there for a couple years. No, for one year I should say, and then I got a job in education at the state reformatory at Monroe. I was Assistant Director of Education there. It was my job to pick out the fellows in there that had more education or high IQs or something and use them for teachers. What I had was anything that was needed, starting with first grade work up through eighth grade. I remember I had one man in there, he was forty one years old, he couldn't write his own name. But while he was there, he learned enough to write a letter home to his sister. I had an opportunity to read it before he sent it. It was like what a first grader would write. But he was so proud of the fact that he had written a letter.

**AF:** That's pretty neat.

**HW:** Then I left there and went to Ellensburg and taught junior high school teaching industrial arts. I was there for four years. Then I moved over to Highline High School, teaching industrial arts. That was during the war time. It got into the spring of the year of '44, and I had signed my contract for the next year and I gave it up. I decided the kids were irritating me and I thought I was irritating them. All winter long I had been working another job with a quartermaster depot in Seattle. I would work there from six to ten, five days a week and eight hours on Saturday. After I was away from things for a while, I realized that I was just all in, tired out and so that's what caused me to quit.

**AF:** Did you do any coaching when you quit?

**HW:** The only time that I really coached... Well, when I went to Anacortes, I knew the man that was coach there. He had been a baseball player and a basketball player. He had been an All-Conference Guard on the University of Washington team. I did a lot of coaching of the football team [there]. I worked with him doing other sports [too]. Then the next year, they were going to (and I was teaching elementary school) hire a junior high school coach and a high school assistant coach, and I wanted to get one of the jobs. I didn't get it, so I left and went to Orting where I coached. The only thing they had down there for sports was basketball and track. I had them. Then, when I went to Lynden, I coached a second team. The superintendent there wanted me to stay because the coach that was there was going to be retiring and they wanted me to take over. But I didn't want that job.

**PK:** Did you play other sports in high school besides football?

**HW:** I played basketball.

I turned out for baseball, but the coach was hitting fly balls (I was supposed to be an outfielder) out there. One of them came down and hit me in the chest. Another one hit me in the head. He said, "Wilder, why don't you turn out for track." (Laughter)

So I did. I ran the mile. I placed third two years.

**PM:** Was football pretty popular at Bellingham Normal at that time, when you played?

**HW:** Well, you mean with the town folks and so on?

**PM:** And the school.

**HW:** At school, yes. I don't remember about others coming too much. I may be wrong on that, I'm not certain.

**PM:** Do you know where Bellingham Normal played their football games at home before Waldo Field?

**HW:** Probably on the high school field. The fact is, there was Battersby Field and the one at Bellingham High School now used to be known as Whatcom High School and they played their games there and that belonged to the city, I think. And then basketball, when I was at Normal School, played their games either in the Whatcom High School or Fairhaven High School gyms. They just had a little room a little bit larger than this that was a gymnasium.

**TB:** Where did you live most of the time that you were at Western?

**HW:** Well, a lot of homes around there took in roomers. My first year there I was way out on 21<sup>st</sup> Street quite a ways. Then the second year, I got an apartment that was -- I don't know if any of you knew where there was a tunnel across the road from the school, right across High Street. There was a bank up there and a house up on top of that. Then there's a tunnel going through and some steps going down to a house that I guess faced out onto Garden Street. In this tunnel, there was a door to go into the basement of that house and it had windows looking out over the bay and so on. I made arrangements and rented that and got three or four other fellows to come in with [me]. We all ate over at the dorm.

**MA:** What kind of things did you do for fun in 1923?

**HW:** Well, I don't know. You could go to a movie, or they'd have a dance at school. [It] used to be four o'clock every Friday there was a dance in the Women's Gym. Different organizations would have dances. Some [might end up] as more formal dances and they were held in a room up in Edens Hall.

**TB:** Did you ever participate in the Chuckanut Marathon?

**HW:** Once. I didn't care to try it again!

In the summertime though they had quite a hiking program, I enjoyed that. In fact, I went to the top of Mount Baker seven times.

**AF:** With Dr. Bond?

**HW:** Dr. Bond, yes. The year after I graduated (got my degree finally there in '37, I started in '23, so I was a slow student), in '38 I was back there and handled the detail work for the hiking program and I taught a couple classes in industrial arts.

**KH:** Didn't you belong to the Mountaineers at one time?

**HW:** At one time I did, yes.

**KH:** Was that later?

**HW:** Well, I joined them when I was teaching at Orting, which was my second year of teaching. I joined the Mountaineers and kept my membership for oh...not too long. In Bellingham there was a -- I don't know what they call theirs now -- hiking organization, mountain climbing. It seems to me it was the Mount Baker Club, maybe. I belonged to that for a time.

**TB:** But you weren't a part of the group in 1939 that went to Mount Baker?

**HW:** No, I wasn't there. I'm very happy that I wasn't there. There were some reasons, [things] that had happened the year before when I was handling things. I didn't want to go back. I remember hearing about it and I remember I called President Fisher and I asked him if there was anything I could do to help out. He said they had all the help they needed -- maybe some money to help support them while they were searching.

**JC:** Do you gentlemen know what we're talking about? Tamara, do you want to...

**TB:** The students had hiked up Mount Baker, it was a hike that they did annually. I think it was the twentieth annual in 1939 when there was a big avalanche and six of them got killed.

**HW:** Five of them were killed I think it was, five.

**TB:** Something like that, five or six.

**ZW?:** Did you know anybody that was up there that year?

**HW:** Yes, I knew some of them that were killed. They'd been on our hiking trips the year before and so on. There's one lady that was killed and her father was desperate to try to find her. He tried to get them to get somebody with a bulldozer to go up there and bulldoze that snow off, see if they could find the body.

**AF:** Some of them were never found.

**HW:** Yes, that's right. It was a terrible thing.

**TB:** What about Dr. Fisher, what was Dr. Fisher like?

**HW:** Well, in some ways I thought he was pretty stiff. Dr. Fisher started there as President in the summer school of 1923, and I came along in the fall quarter, so he was only a quarter ahead of me. But I remember one thing that came along -- they were going to have a big New Years' Eve dance -- and President Fisher had suggested it and that kind of surprised everybody I think. They rented the Armory and had the dance down there.

He made a lot of changes. My first quarter there, there were four hour courses and two hour courses. But starting in the winter quarter, we had five hour courses and maybe two or three hour courses, I don't remember which now. Things started changing. At that time, in 1923, there was only one professor with a doctorate degree that was Dr. Miller. Some of them I don't believe had a bachelor's degree. I don't know if Dr. Bond did or not. But some of them they'd gone out and taught in public schools for a year or two and came back and were teaching there. He'd start urging them to go on and get more education. Dr. Bond just kept plugging along until he had his doctorate degree. He did very well and was very well thought of nationally.

**AF:** I think he went to Columbia's Teachers College.

**HW:** Yes. He told me one time that he was back there taking eighteen hours work one quarter, and he was writing a series of mathematics books for elementary school, and in that quarter, he did the one for either the fifth or sixth grade. He was gone to Boston for several weeks making a survey of their school. And he got all As. But you had to know Dr. Bond to appreciate him because he was just as common as an old shoe, you might say -- a very fine man. He had a daughter and three sons and he had one son that was teaching and was principal of a school in Seattle and I never knew him. His daughter had taught in the high school in Blaine one year and I knew who she was. And then he had two other sons. They went through Normal School and then they went on to college.

**AF:** At least three of them went to Columbia Teachers College.

**HW:** Yes, they all did. I think they all did.

**AF:** All did.

**HW:** Yes. And they all ended up teaching in colleges. They pooled their money together at times to put somebody through school.

**AF:** Oh yes.

**TB:** Yes, Guy Bond I think taught at the University of Minnesota and he played on your football team.

**HW:** Yes, yes I knew Guy. He was there when I was there.

**AF:** His widow still lives in Bellingham.

**HW:** Oh, is that so?

**AF:** Yes.

**HW:** But I guess the whole family of them...

#### **END OF SIDE ONE TAPE ONE**

**HW:** ...at the school and ran into Bill Fisher, President Fisher's son. He told me something about them that they thought all of them had died.

**AF:** And Mary Bond is still alive.

**TB:** Yes.

**AF:** She was married to the one who taught here.

**HW:** Who was that?

**AF:** Eldon Bond. His widow is still alive.

**JC:** Excuse me. We're doing two things here: We're doing an oral history, but we're also doing an interview for the *Herald* and for the *Front*, so are there any more questions that you gentlemen would like to ask, for your purposes, and then perhaps we could continue with the oral history.

**MA:** I was wondering, when was the last time you went to one of the college's football games?

**HW:** I think that was '91, when I was invited up. At least it was the year when they had re-established Homecoming. They hadn't had it for a few years and it started [up again]. I'd had notice of it and I thought



it'd be nice if I could get together with some of the fellows that I played football with in 1923. I talked to, I don't recall his name, but he was...

**AF:** Chris Goldsmith I think it was.

**HW:** Yes, to see if there were any of them around. He found one that lived in Snohomish, and I talked to him. I thought we maybe could get together and have lunch before the game. But that one had been ill and wasn't able to come. I think that's the last time I've seen a game. I think that was '91, I wouldn't swear to it.

**MA:** Are you excited about seeing them tomorrow and being a part of the last game?

**HW:** Well sort of, yes.

**MA:** Have you decided if you're going to call head or tails in the coin flip?

**HW:** (Laughing) I don't know anything about that.

**PM:** Well, I know that we didn't call the right one for the first seven games. (Laughter)  
Dr. Morse called it down at the Battle in Seattle.

**AF:** Yes she did, didn't she?

**PM:** And we didn't get it -- but the co-captain said it's no problem; we haven't gotten it right this year yet.

**HW:** You mean that I'm supposed to call heads or tails for it?

**PM:** Yes. They're going to have you call it. You're going to see if we win the coin toss before the game.

**HW:** I didn't know that. Al here hadn't told me. (Laughter)

**AF:** We're going to put you to work tomorrow.

**ZW:** Actually I have two questions. One is, how has football changed? Like the style of play.

**HW:** Well, of course, the big change I think probably was having offensive teams and defensive teams. Let me go back to the way it was before then. If you were in the game and you went out in the first half, you couldn't come back in to the game until the second half. And if you went out in the second half, you were finished. You couldn't go back in again.

**AF:** You couldn't come back?

**HW:** No.

**AF:** For goodness sake.

**HW:** And a sub going in couldn't talk to anybody on the team on the field out there until after they had run one play. That was so the coach couldn't send a sub in to tell the quarterback what play to run. And then of course, passing has improved and plays a bigger deal in it than it used to. Kids grow up with a football now and they learn to pass and some of them do pretty well.

My senior year in high school we did quite a bit of passing. I should say a lot of it. I remember we played Whatcom High School and the coach -- he really wasn't our coach, our coach wasn't a teacher. So, at the game one of the faculty members was in charge. He had coached some before. He told the quarterback not to do any passing, so he didn't until Whatcom High School had run up a score of twenty six points and

there was eleven minutes left in the game. In that eleven minutes we decided we were going to pass anyhow. We scored two touchdowns and were down to about the fifteen yard line for going for the third. And of course, Whatcom High School at that time had around 1,000 students. And Blaine, we had I think that year maybe 200. The year before that Whatcom had played up at Blaine. We won the game there.

Things you can't do now, the rules have changed some, but there was a time out for some reason, somebody might have been injured or something, I don't know or remember why, but a halfback went out, stood out right along just inside the sidelines. In those days a lot of places it was a half field. The fans were lined up, they weren't back in grandstands, bleachers or something, they were right along the sidelines. So anyhow, I had this play set up for that, it was a forward pass. We got lined up. When the referee would blow his whistle to indicate that time was in again, his whistle was our snap signal. The quarterback got the ball and threw it to the fellow out there in the sidelines and he went long, 40, 50 yards for a touchdown. They cried their eyes out about it. They said that it was illegal because they claimed that time was out, we couldn't do that. And then we made a second touchdown, too. We beat them thirteen to nothing.

**MA:** What do you think of the salaries that athletes are making today?

**HW:** Well I think it's kind of ridiculous. I think it ruins a lot of them. Some of them can handle it and some of them can't. The owners were making big money and the players decided they should be entitled to some of it. I don't know what's fair and what isn't on that part. I think all of the football, basketball, and baseball people I think get too much money. But who am I to say?

**MA:** Did you follow sports when you were growing up? Were you a fan of any particular teams or anything?

**HW:** Oh, some of them. Before I was in high school you mean?

**MA:** Or even when you were a young man.

**HW:** Oh yes, I followed them, yes, some then.

**MA:** What was your favorite sport?

**HW:** Well, I think probably I like football the most of all, and then baseball. Basketball I didn't care too much for watching it. If I was in there playing it, I enjoyed it, but I didn't care to watch it so much.

**MA:** Did you have any favorite teams or players when you were growing up?

**HW:** In baseball, yes – Lou Gehrig was my favorite.

**JC:** Did you listen to the games on the radio?

**HW:** Oh yes.

**AF:** Golf has turned out to be one of your favorite sports.

**HW:** Yes, yes. But it wasn't...way back then it wasn't popular. The year I went back to school in 1930 is when I was introduced to golf. I went through school fall and winter quarter and I dropped out and worked the spring quarter, then I was back there in summer school. There were four or five of us that got out. I think maybe we had [classes] up to one o'clock. We would go right out to the golf course. I guess this is, right here, might have been part of one of the courses [Best Western Lakeway Inn]. We played here and we played Riverside at Ferndale. We would come up and for thirty five cents we'd play -- forty five holes was very common. I don't think we ever played less than twenty seven.

**PM:** Is that right?!?

**HW:** One day I played fifty four holes.

**AF:** (Laughter) That was a long day!

**HW:** Well, that day they had an excursion deal, a chartered boat to take them [(students)] to Vancouver. I was down there with some others to see everybody off. We didn't go. The ship pulled out, we started walking away, and somebody said, "Let's go play golf." So we went out and we played twenty seven holes of golf and went back in.

I was eating lunch at the little place that used to be on the corner that had a stationery store and soda fountain, lunch counter. I was having my lunch there and some of the fellows that I usually played with came by and they were just getting ready to go and I said, "Wait for me!" I finished my sandwich. We went on and played another twenty seven holes.

**PM:** What are some of the inventions or different things that have happened during your lifetime that ...?

**HW:** Inventions?

**PM:** Yes, anything. I'm stealing this from Al.

**HW:** Well, I don't know. I should have brought a sheet with me I guess that I have about some of the things. Back in the time when I was born, 1903, I think there was less than 200 miles of paved roads.

**AF:** Is that right?

**HW:** It stated how many automobiles there was in the United States. A telephone call from Denver to New York City, a three minute call, cost eleven dollars! I think in the whole United States that year there were something like 250 murders. This article said, *think what the next hundred years are going to be like!*

But the inventions...the automobile was very new of course. The Wright brothers made their first flight a few days after I was born. Radio came along, new thing. Wireless first, and then radio was developed. Automobiles were greatly improved. I can remember riding in one. They were built like a buggy with wheels that would be up maybe this high with hard rubber tires on them. Some of them were chain drive. I remember seeing one that had a belt-driven to the back axle. [There are] so many things that we take for granted now that wasn't even thought of back then.

**AF:** The highways have certainly changed.

**HW:** Oh! I don't know what they're going to do about highways, they can't build enough.

**AF:** No. I think that's right.

**HW:** They're clogged all the time and they build more of them, more lanes, more automobiles take them up. The population is getting so big. It used to be if you had an automobile that was great, but now a family will have at least two, maybe more.

**ZW:** Do you remember what your first car was?

**HW:** Yes. My first car was a Model T Ford Touring car. I think it was a 1918. The top folded down and it had side curtains to it. I think the gas tank was underneath the front seat. (Laughter)

**PM:** Where did you buy it? In town? Did you buy it here?

**HW:** Oh, no, my dad bought it and he decided it wasn't for him. It was a used car then when he bought it. He wanted to get rid of it, so he talked me into buying it from him.

I had it for about a year and traded it in and bought a used Model T Coupe, then I had that for a while.

**JC:** How much did you pay your dad for the car?

**HW:** \$100.

**JC:** That was a lot of money.

**HW:** That's what he had paid for it.

**JC:** What year was that when you got it?

**HW:** When I got it, it was 1927.

**AF:** What was your starting salary in your first teaching job?

**HW:** \$1,200 I think it was.

**AF:** A lot of money in those days.

**HW:** It wasn't enough! (Laughter)

**AF:** A hundred dollars a month.

**TB:** Who were some of your other favorite teachers when you were at Western?

**HW:** Well, Miss Keeler [Delia L. Keeler, Rural Education] was there, I don't know if you've heard that name. But later on, Herb Ruckmick in the industrial arts department was one of my favorites. We were good friends. Fact is he wanted me to get a masters degree and come back and teach with him there. But the war came along, he left and went into the service, and I quit teaching. Some of the others, I can't remember their names.

**TB:** Do you remember Mabel Zoe Wilson? In the library?

**HW:** Yes, yes.

**TB:** Any special memories of her?

**HW:** Well, some people thought she was very strict. I never had any run-in with her or anything of the sort, so as far as I was concerned, she was okay.

**TB:** Did you have any thoughts about Dr. Fisher? He was kind of removed from being president in '39?

**HW:** I was sorry for that because he had made so many improvements in the school and the curriculum, and all in all I thought he was doing a very good job. He was accused of being a communist, but I'm sure he was no communist. He may be a liberal, but not a communist. Not too long before he was removed, I had written a letter to the governor urging him to not fire him. There was a lot of flack out there -- complaining about him -- I think they were the Birch Society.

One thing that happened, there was a communist paper that came out, and as I understood, it was dumped on the campus, up at one corner of the campus, and students could get it. They blamed President Fisher for it. They thought he should put a stop to it. But I don't think educators think that way. The students should have an opportunity to read those things and draw their own conclusions.

I thought that was a shame because I think he did a lot for the school. He was really the only one I ever knew because after I got my degree and so on there were several different presidents in there but I've never known any of them.

**PM:** What prompted you to write that letter?

**HW:** Well, I was hearing this grumbling and people urging the governor to fire him, and I thought I'd write a letter supporting him.

**TB:** A lot of people on campus kind of heard it through the grapevine or whatever as rumors, because there's nothing in the student newspaper ever about it.

**HW:** Oh, is that so?

**TB:** Yes. But you obviously then all knew that there was a lot of talk about it.

**HW:** Yes, well I wasn't in school then. I was teaching over in Ellensburg at that time.

**TB:** Okay.

**HW:** But I had heard it, I suppose it was in the newspapers.

**ZW:** There was a school paper then? The *Western Front* was around then too?

**PM:** No, it was called the – was it the *Collegiate* at that time?

**TB:** Probably. It had different names.

**PM:** Even before that there was the *Norseman* or something like that.

**TB:** Yes. *The Messenger*, [too].

**PM:** Yes, you can take a look at them all; they're all in the archives there. It doesn't really take you that long to go through them, it's really pretty interesting.

**ZW:** Can I ask one more question before I go? What was Waldo Field like?

**HW:** Waldo Field? I played in the first game that was played there, in the dedication game anyhow. Well, I played some in the first game, too. I was told that there had been a swamp that had been filled in, and it was crowned up nice in this grass field. By the time the season was over with, instead of being curved, it was down this way! It had settled, and pools of water were around. It was okay, and other than that it was a good field. We had a grandstand on one side and that had a track, a quarter mile track around the [field].

**ZW:** How many fans would show up to the games?

**HW:** I don't think I could answer that; I wouldn't even want to make a guess on it.

**PM:** Did you like the idea of not having the face masks, or do you think that was a good invention to have a face mask?

**HW:** Oh, I never gave it much thought. Of course I never wore one. I think at first I wondered if I would like it or not. And of course now it's just acceptable. I think especially in the pros, they hit so much harder, it's a rougher game. I think it's necessary.

**PM:** Did you have a few broken noses?

**HW:** No, I didn't. However, when I was in high school, they used to say I never played well until I got a bloody nose. (Laughter) I remember one game I got one of those, everybody jumping up and down on the sidelines. As the quarter was changing, it was changing from this position on the field to that position over there, and as I was walking across, my brother came along and asked me if my nose was broken, and I said I didn't think so. Somebody from the other team heard it and they went to their referee and complained that somebody was talking to me out there, and that wasn't to be. And so the referee asked me about it, I just told him, my brother asked me if my nose was broken.

But I took some other hits in my time. When I was a senior, I was playing halfback that year and it was a kind of off-tackle play, and it didn't look like a hole there and I made a lunge at it, and just then the hole opened up and I went down and I put my hand down and back up and started forward and the defensive back came in fast and I think he hit me with his knee in the head. I was down for a bit, they had a time out for me. Finally I got up and went back on playing. But the referee was the superintendent of schools in Lynden, and a few years later I taught for him over there. He told me about that. He said he didn't think I would get off the field under my own power. He thought they would have to carry me. He said I started to get up once, and I dropped back, and he said my body quivered all over and he thought I was a goner. But I finished the game!

My first year at Normal School, I remember I was practicing on kickoff returns. I went to block a man, and I got two men. I got one man I guess with my shoulder, and the other one, my head hit him. The one that my head hit, he hobbled around but he played all the rest of the year. The one that my body hit, he didn't play any more football.

**AF:** Is that right?

**HW:** Yep. He got banged up. When he was home at Christmastime he'd gone to a clinic; he was from Tacoma. They couldn't work things out for him, but eventually he got over it and he played for CPS. I think my neck got hurt on that play, too.

The next year, we were practicing on the tackling dummy. It was up there, and this one went up with a rope that went up over a pulley and to a weight, where the tackling dummy itself was hooked to the rope. There was a spring arrangement in there, so if you hit it hard enough, you would trip the spring, and the dummy would come loose. Sam Carver was on leave of absence, he was working for his degree. The coach that was there had some blocks down so we'd have to dive over some blocks to make the tackle. I came up and he said, "You're hitting it a little bit too low, hit a little bit higher."

Things just was wrong, I don't know what happened, but that dummy was supposed to be hanging up here just so, not touching anything on the ground, but when I went up to hit it that time, it was just like this. And I hit it too high, I hit it way up here, and it couldn't swing. There was a place cut out of the sod and filled with shavings where we would land, and my forehead just hit where the sod was cut out. I spent a week in bed after that. The fact is I think it was the last game I played. The coach sent me to a chiropractor (well first I was in bed for a week). If I wanted to turn my head from one side to the other lying down I had to do it this way. But I went to a chiropractor and he'd straighten [things] out and I'd go up, skip school and practice, and go back down the next day, and things were all knocked out of shape again. After a few days, I guess he told the coach that I shouldn't play anymore. [I turned out, played around, throwing passes back and forth with somebody.]

Then there was the year I went back to school. We were playing Monmouth Normal School. That's the same school that's going to be here tomorrow, isn't it?

**PM:** Yes.

**HW:** And on the kickoff for the second half, I got clipped. I think that was the first year that clipping was illegal. And from then on, I was in a daze. I think, I'm teaching school in Centralia, but here I am in a

football suit. It doesn't make sense. Why am I in this football suit? But I played all through it in the second half until about two minutes before the game was over. I went out and I went up and caught a pass and two fellows clobbered me and I was down for a little bit, got up and went back to the huddle. A sub came in for me, and I went over and sat down on the bench next to the manager. I said, "Bill, where are we?"

He looked at me, got up and went over to Sam, and he said, "Wilder wants to know where he is."

He told him to take me up to the dressing room – and this game was played in Portland at Multnomah Stadium (or something like that that they used to have, I don't know if they have it now or not). On the way there – there were very few people at the game I remember – but this announcement came on inquiring if there was a doctor in the crowd. There wasn't, but the trainer from CPS was there and he came in tried to help me. But I just lay out on the floor for about two hours before I was able to come around. All the players, most of them had come in and showered and dressed and were gone. But I finally got out of it. I didn't know what was wrong with me until, oh, years later I was telling a doctor friend about it and said, "Well, you had a..." Now I can't think of the name of what it was...

**TB:** A concussion?

**HW:** A concussion, yes.

**AF:** Pretty tough games.

**HW:** Yes.

**TB:** Why did you choose to come to Western in the beginning? Did you come just to play football, or you came because you knew you wanted to be a teacher or...?

**HW:** Neither! I wanted to go on to school, but I didn't know what I wanted to take or what I wanted to do. But I knew a man that we had there that had gone to school, and he taught there for two or three years and he left, got into something else. I thought well, I can do that. Maybe I'll find out something that I wanted to do. That's how I got into it. So I just went on teaching until the time that I got tired out and I quit.

**TB:** Were you ever sorry that you quit teaching?

**HW:** In some ways, yes, in other ways, no. I had got into the business end of things and the experiences I had there was something I enjoyed.

**JC:** Where are you living now, sir?

**HW:** Olympia. I lived on Hood Canal for several years. Then I lived over in Alderbrook for a while. But I got so all the doctors I had were in Olympia. I was getting to the place where my eyes were bothering me and I was afraid I wouldn't be able to drive much longer, and I thought I should move into Olympia. Shortly after I got in to Olympia and moved, I had a note from the eye doctor that it was time for me to have another exam. He told me I needed tucks in my eyelids. He took pictures up close of my eyes, and then he took the tucks, and after it was all over with, then he took another picture. And I could see that before he had taken the tucks, my eyes were less than halfway open. I was seeing so much better afterwards. If I had had it done before I moved, I wouldn't have moved.

**AF:** (Laughter) For goodness sake, it wouldn't have been necessary.

**PM:** Well Kay says he drives fifty minutes to play golf. Is that right?

**KH:** Yes, about fifty miles.

**PM:** Fifty miles, I'm sorry -- fifty miles to play golf.

**KH:** You drive up to Cushman [near Hoodspport] to play golf. It's about fifty miles.

**HW:** Fifty? No. About thirty six, thirty seven miles.

**KH:** It takes me an hour to get down to your place!

**HW:** Yes, I know. But some of that road's only forty five miles an hour, and sometimes in traffic, you can't go very fast. A lot of it is on a road that you can't pass anyone because it's two-lane.

**KH:** I think you should tell them about your property on Triton Head, that's real interesting.

**HW:** Well, my wife, and this happened before she was married, she and her sister, [and] her sister's husband came up from Arizona. This was during the depression. He'd lost about everything in the automobile business. He was in business in an Arizona mining town that became a ghost town, and now it's a tourist attraction. I can't think of the name of it, but anyhow...He was a Chevrolet dealer and he sold cars, business had been gone, the depression hit, and then the mine closed...

#### **END OF SIDE TWO TAPE ONE**

... folks were turning their cars back. So the bank wanted their money back, and it wiped him out. They came up with the lady that I married a couple years later, leased a piece of ground up on the canal with a few cabins, four or five cabins on it, a tourist camp. My wife had always wanted to run a dining room. She taught school, she was a home economics teacher. She worked there during the summer months. Her sister and her husband lived there the year round. But anyhow, after two or three years – we had gotten married in the meantime – the owners had a chance to sell the property, and when they leased it they had an option to purchase. So they had a chance to sell that property, they offered a piece of property at a very reasonable price. We had got over a half mile of waterfront and quite a big piece that went out from the highway, out to the water and around. Then up across the highway there was more land, right in the neighborhood of two hundred acres, I've forgotten whether it's a little less or a little over. They sold it to us, all of that property, for \$2,000 because they broke the lease.

We sold lots down there in the waterfront pea gravel, just a nice slope down, sold for \$10 a front foot. This was starting in the Forties. The last beach lot I sold was along in the early Nineties. There was a seventy foot piece of land that was in what we bought originally, but the survey didn't show, the surveyor had made a mistake. Later [when] the state [was] making some surveys of the land up across the highway they tied in with us and it showed a little narrow strip on their map. I asked them who that belonged to. Well, the court would have to decide that. But the more I thought of it and studied it; I decided it was part of the property we bought. But anyhow, that seventy foot strip I sold I think for \$83,000.

**AF:** (Laughter) My goodness.

**HW:** We had a four-year contract to buy that property. We made it for two years and got on to the third year and I didn't know how I was going to pay my part, and made a deal with the people that had bought the property where the motel was, because we had property right in back of them going up on the hill. Sold them eighty acres for \$1,000. That \$1,000 paid off the balance of our contract so everything was clear. But the other eighty acres that we had up there, a few years later I sold for \$100,000. (Laughter)

**TB:** I think you've answered all my questions.

**AF:** Well this has been very enjoyable.

**PM:** Thank you very much Howard.

**HW:** Yes.



**AF:** Pretty long session!

**HW:** Something I'll tell you just for your personal interest: I think you all know the Peace Arch in Blaine. I worked on the project when that was built.

**AF:** Is that right?

**HW:** Yes, for about a week and a half. My brother had a contract with them for doing grading work.

**AF:** That was Vince? Your brother Vince?

**HW:** Yes, Chuck's father. He hired me. I worked in the gravel pit with pick and shovel. We'd load a wagon with the gravel; there were a couple men there. The team would come up and hook onto that wagon and leave the empty wagon. By the time they'd get back making a round trip, we'd have the other wagon loaded. I worked there for a week or ten days until they finished that particular job. Then I worked for a cannery for the rest of the summer. I worked for two summers in the cannery.

**AF:** Right there in Blaine.

**HW:** I did that one summer, then I worked three summers in Alaska. I went up there in 1920 for the first time. The group was high school kids, there were twenty of us. Then I went up in 1930 and I was very fortunate; they were going to put me on a job outside which wouldn't have been very pleasant a lot of the time because it was when the boats would bring in the salmon, and a lot of times it was at night. Of course, it rains a lot in Alaska. You had to be out there when they were unloading the salmon.

But I was up there three weeks before they started canning. The foreman, maybe it was two young fellows there, kind of had us working together. He'd tell us something and I remember one time he was setting something up on a machine and [he explained] how it had to be lined up with the pulleys up above. I said, "Okay, I understand." And a few things went along that way that he said, "Do what I said."

And I said, "Okay, I understand."

Then he got to a place where he said, Well, Wilder get your crew and do this."

So anyhow, he gave me a job by myself. It was the clincher machine. The clincher machine puts the cap on the can and it just clinches it a little bit, just clinches it enough so they don't come off when they're in the vacuum machine. While they're in the vacuum machine, they're sealed.

But this clincher had been taken apart and the parts had been spread out on a table. I suppose that they had been covered with oil, but some of them were rusted and so on. He told me to clean them up; I'd do that with emery cloth. This foreman, he had the greatest knack of coming around just the time you'd get finished. I'd just finished that cleaning, and he said, "Oh, well, you might as well put it together now." I thought he was kidding me, but he seemed to be serious, so I said, "Okay."

Some parts I could see where they fit on there because of the way the paint was pressed and so on. We had three of those machines. Two of them had been taken apart at the end of the season and the third one hadn't. So sometimes I'd take a part and go over to that machine to see where it went! And then there was a place that had a thing that came down and out over where the cans went through, but there was a slot in there where it was fastened that could be adjusted. I didn't understand it, but I looked at the one that hadn't been taken down and I put it on as close as I could to that. The foreman came by just then. He said, "Oh, all done." "Did you get this adjusted right?"

He grabbed a can and turned the hand wheel on there so the machine wouldn't run by itself. I was lucky I had it just in the right place! But anyhow, when we got to canning salmon, I looked after the clinchers and

ran the vacuum machines, but I also ran the steam engine that ran the cannery and took care of all the pulleys and belts in the cannery. I didn't make much money, but I got my board and room and transportation up on a passenger ship paid from the time we left Seattle until we got back.

**AF:** And that was during the depression.

**HW:** Yes. That was in '30 and '31, those two summers I worked up there. I had the same job again for the third year and then Sam Carver was going to take the summer off to go to school some more, working at his masters. I was offered the job of being assistant in the PE department and I took that. In some ways I kind of wished I had gone back to the cannery, but...

**AF:** Where was the cannery in Alaska?

**HW:** That cannery was in Cordova.

**AF:** Oh yes.

**HW:** The first one I worked in was at...I can't think of the name of the little place...it was on the first island off of the mainland in Aleutian group.

**AF:** Oh, way up north.

**HW:** Way out west, too.

**AF:** Yes.

**HW:** We were just about due north of Honolulu.

**AF:** Wow. The first one in the Aleutian group.

**HW:** Yes. Unimak Island.

**AF:** Oh yes.

**PM:** He is something else!

**TB:** Yes. (Laughter)

**KH:** You've got a better memory than you thought you did.

**JC:** Yes he does.

**TB:** Thank you.