

UNCG CENTENNIAL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: Helen A. Thrush

INTERVIEWER: William "Bill" A. Link

DATE: September 20, 1990

WL: Okay, I'm sorry. If you could tell me the first time that you came to UNCG [The University of North Carolina at Greensboro]. And what brought you here? And what the circumstances were?

HT: Well, as I said, I came in September 1939. And Mr. [Gregory] Ivy was head of the art department. And he and I had been students in a class at Columbia [University, New York, New York] together. And we both graduated at that time, and then he came—he went to—wait a minute, in Pennsylvania, a college there, and I went to Florida State College in [Tallahassee] Florida. And we used to meet at the Southeastern College Art [Conference] meetings every time. And he wanted me to come and teach for him in Greensboro. And every time I would say, "I'm not interested. I'm very happy with where I am." Well, that went on for several years. And then finally he'd always meet me at the door, so finally I said, "Well, I'll come up and look it over." So I came up and decided the only reason why I changed—I can't imagine anyone else having such a reason—was I got tired of the nice weather all of the time. I was from Pennsylvania, and I like a little cold weather and a little bad weather. And that's the only reason why I came up here. So I came up here in '89—I mean '39, and I retired in '69.

WL: You were here thirty years.

HT: And I loved it all the time I was here.

WL: Ivy—was this—?

HT: Gregory Ivy.

WL: Right. I gather talking to other people that he was a very important force in building up the art department.

HT: Oh yes, he certainly was.

WL: Yes. He attracted a lot of people.

HT: He was an excellent administrator, as well as an excellent artist. And I don't know whether we'd ever have had a big art department without him

WL: How big a department was it when you first arrived?

HT: Let's see, I had—there was—Ivy—I guess there were four. And then Mary Leath Stewart and I came the same year, and we were the next ones.

WL: So, it was a fairly small department.

HT: Yes.

WL: With only four?

HT: Well, he had just been here, I think, two years. And, of course, before—he started the department really, so it, you know, it had only been in existence two years when I came.

WL: I see. It started in '37, and then, I guess he was brought in to expand, to build up the department and expand.

HT: I don't know how he got, how he came here.

WL: Could you give me a little bit more detail on Mr. [Gregory] Ivy [first head of the Art Department]? What kind of person was he? How would you describe him? Was he—?

HT: Well, I would just say that he was one of these people that just seemed to have a great talent for doing the work that he did as an administrator. And he—the thing was, I guess you had said that the right man came at the right time. Because, you see, before he came, there had been very little art in North Carolina, in this school. And so, like all those things you see—the soil is very rich and ready for this type of thing. And he was one of those that was able, had the ability to inspire people and also just was the type that was able to talk administrators and all people in his way. I don't know how to explain it, except to say it's something that's just something—I would say a natural gift.

WL: What kind of students were art students?

HT: Oh, we had wonderful students. I mean, it's always been called since then, the years 1940 to '50, has always been called the "Golden Age of the Art Department." You know, just like you have the Golden Age of Greece and all of those things because, as I said, we just had the students who were ready and hungry for art, and a fine faculty that was able to give it to them. And when you've got that, you had everything.

WL: Were there differences among students to the extent that—?

HT: Of course, it was all girls.

WL: Yes. Did some students go into art education? Did most students—?

HT: Oh, yes.

WL: Was there—?

HT: We had them in all the different fields.

WL: Yes. Since the overall mission of the university, of the college, the Woman's College [of the University of North Carolina] at that point, was one of the main functions of it was to produce teachers. Did you tend to get a lot of—?

HT: We did have quite a number in art education. The only thing was that those students who were more primarily interested in education majored in education. They didn't major in art. And then they just took the few required art subjects because most of them were planning to be grade teachers, things like that. And, of course, their art, in that case, was more education oriented. So that we—most of those were matriculated into the education department. And they just took courses from the art department.

WL: I see. So they were education majors rather than art majors.

HT: That's right.

WL: And you had a core of art majors who would be very different group of people, presumably.

HT: That's right.

WL: I wonder if you could describe how it felt coming from—originally from Pennsylvania.

HT: I was born in Philadelphia.

WL: Born in Philadelphia. Went to school in New York?

HT: I went to the Philadelphia College of Art, and got my—graduated from there in teaching. And then I went to the University of Pennsylvania [Philadelphia, Pennsylvania] and got my BFA [Bachelor of Fine Arts], which I got in a year and a half. And then I taught for two years in Stroudsburg [Pennsylvania] in the high school. But I decided I wanted to teach at the college level, so I left and went to Columbia [University, New York, New York] and got my master's. And that's where I met Mr. Ivy.

WL: Okay.

HT: And then I went to Florida State College [Tallahassee, Florida], and I taught there for nine years. And then I came here. It was very similar because both colleges are about the same size. And it was both all-girls' college at that time. So as far as the change was in the art department, it was just about what I'd had before.

WL: Then you were used to—

HT: So I had no reservations about that.

WL: It wasn't a great shock coming from one women's college to another women's college?

HT: No. [chuckles] It was just almost like the same—as far as your whole environment and set up and everything else.

WL: How did Florida State College compare in terms of quality?

HT: Very similar.

WL: Similar?

HT: Yes. Of course like I said, when I came here with Mr. Ivy being the head of the department, naturally as there was only one Mr. Ivy, and so the whole thing of the department began to be growing at a much bigger level. At Florida State College it was a little smaller department, and they had the person, the head of the department, was not outstanding like Mr. Ivy. But then, as I said, nobody else could have done what he—I mean similar to what he was. But as far as the size of the college and the students and things of that kind were very similar. And I was given about the same freedom in both colleges.

WL: Where was the art department located when you came in 1939?

HT: When we came?

WL: Yes.

HT: [laughs] We had no room at all. I mean, we located—we were all over the campus. Things like that. And Mr. Ivy was in the old science building, in old McIver. And he had this one little place there. Mary Leath and I, who came in, we had our office over in Curry [Building], like that. We taught—we had our classrooms—one classroom was in the old McIver Building, and one was over in Curry. As I said, being a new department, and they didn't have any place for us, practically, so we just went all over the place. And that was true for several years. But, like I said, when you find that as important and helpful it is to have a good surroundings and rooms and things like that, it's not near as important as the people and the spirit of the thing. And, of course we had that. And although other people would probably thought we couldn't even teach in those surroundings, we all had this love of teaching and things like that, the surroundings never even seemed to bother us. And I never thought anything of going way over a couple of blocks to where—here's my class, here's my office, and going half way across the campus to my class. [clears throat] And all that, as I said, that just seemed to be immaterial.

WL: It wasn't a constraining influence [unclear]?

HT: Of course, as I said, if we hadn't—if I hadn't loved what I was doing and interested and things like that, why then of course it would have been a terrible hardship probably. But when your mind is on something much bigger, you don't even worry about those things.

WL: Yes. Did you have studio space, as well? Was there adequate studio space?

HT: No—Well, all of our rooms were just make-shift rooms.

WL: Right.

HT: Classrooms and everything. But, like I said, it was so unimportant compared to art that it didn't bother me.

WL: How would you describe the—a little bit more, in a little bit more detail—the student body?

HT: It was a wonderful group of students. They all were so interested in art and just so hungry and thirsting for it. It was—you couldn't have had nicer students. If you had just come to something, and here you had something the people were starving for, you didn't have to worry at all about trying to interest them or get them started. A marvelous group of students.

WL: What about the rest of the faculty outside the art department?

HT: Fine faculty. Then we were just a little faculty; we were sort of like a family. And when we'd see Dr. [Walter Clinton] Jackson, who was chancellor then, and we had our faculty meeting in just a little classroom over the home ec[onomics] room. Just an ordinary classroom.

WL: The whole faculty?

HT: And the whole faculty would meet there. And we'd sit around, and it was just wonderful, like a family. And when college opened in the fall in September still, we would open with a dinner in the dining room. And everybody was just like a family, come back. And then people would get up and tell what they did during the summer and things of that kind, you know. You just couldn't imagine it being like it was—like faculties are now.

WL: Yes. Would this dinner be all faculty or also students?

HT: What?

WL: Would this be only faculty or—?

HT: I thought you were talking about faculty.

WL: Yes. That's what I mean.

HT: Well, this is our faculty meetings.

WL: Yes, but when you had this dinner—the dinner you just described, was that—?

HT: Just the faculty.

WL: Just the faculty. That's nice. Who would be some leading figures in the faculty that you remember?

HT: The what?

WL: Who were some of the leading figures that you remember?

HT: Mereb Mossman [sociology and anthropology faculty, vice chancellor of academic affairs]—you know, who was [unclear] of women, things like that. Of course that was fifty-one years ago, [laughs] so it's a long time for me to remember way back then.

WL: Sure.

HT: The—can't even think of her name, who was dean of women.

WL: Katherine Taylor [dean of women, dean of students, dean of student services, director of Elliott Hall]?

HT: No. What's the building?

WL: Elliott.

HT: Student building.

WL: Harriet Elliott.

HT: Harriet Elliott [history and political science faculty, dean of instruction, dean of the College, dean of faculty, dean of women], and then, let's see. We had Jane Summerell [Class of 1910, Class of 1923, 1978 Honorary Degree] in English. And—[pause] It's hard for me to remember right now. And I never was good at names.

WL: Yes.

HT: I mean, if you gave me a list of the faculty, I could tell you.

WL: So there were a lot of very strong women.

HT: [Dr. Richard] Bardolph came in history, but he came several years after I was there. But when he came, I mean he was—and what's his name? [pause] [Dr. Marc] Friedlaender

[English faculty].

WL: Friedlaender, yes.

HT: And well, people like that—they were all very good.

WL: Yes.

HT: And, as I said, we were all just like one big family.

WL: Yes. Did everyone get along pretty well with each other?

HT: Just fine.

WL: There weren't serious divisions in the faculty?

HT: Not that I knew of. [chuckles] No, I meant everybody was just at that place where they—that the faculty and college was just growing. And we were all so excited about it that we all just loved everything about it. We didn't have any time for any bickering.

WL: Right. There were a lot of very strong women faculty there, as well as—Gregory Ivy was male, obviously, but—

HT: Yes. But—what's her name in physics?

WL: Anna Joyce Reardon?

HT: Yes. Reardon in physics. And—I mean they were all people of that caliber.

WL: As a faculty person, were you expected to participate in campus activities, or campus service?

HT: Well, of course, your participation was mostly in your own department. I mean like in the art department you would have various things. And, of course, they usually—the heads of the department—it was more their job, you see, to go to specific meetings of some kind, and the rest of us faculty, fortunately, didn't have to do that. Because I was acting head for two years, and I was so glad to be able to get back to just plain teaching. I only did it then because for my love of the college because they couldn't get anybody at the time. But then, as I said, I'm not an administrator, I just love teaching. And then at faculty meeting we would bring up different things.

WL: How did Walter Jackson, Dr. Jackson, was he well loved by the faculty?

HT: Oh, yes. We all loved him.

WL: I gather he knew everybody, too.

HT: Oh, yes. As I said, the whole faculty would get into one of those classrooms, like in the home ec building, and we'd all just sit around in these little chairs and things of that kind.

WL: He was succeeded by Edward Kidder Graham [Jr.] as chancellor?

HT: I guess so. There was a time there we had Graham, and [Gordon] Gray [second president of the Consolidated University of North Carolina], just for a year, I think—

WL: Pierson, you mean? W[illiam]W[hatley Pierson? Following Graham?

HT: Maybe—I guess Gray was at [University of North Carolina at] Chapel Hill.

WL: Right.

HT: Well, I remember even that type of thing when Gray was faculty at Chapel Hill. At that time, too, we, I think, probably had a much closer rapport with Chapel Hill than we do now. Because I remember one time there was a meeting and Gray—it was a certain number of faculty that were chosen from different departments, and I happened to be chosen from my department, and Dr. Gray paid for us to come and spend the night in the inn there to go on to these things like that—that type of thing. So there was a very nice feeling. But it's difficult for me to compare what it is today with those days because as I said, I retired twenty-one years ago, and I'm talking about things that happened fifty years ago.

WL: Sure. Sure.

HT: So I can't compare them.

WL: Yes. But you did have a lot of contact with the Chapel Hill administration.

HT: Yes, and the art department in Chapel Hill. I can't remember [unclear] now. And we would go back and forth. And we knew each other real well.

WL: Weren't there occasions that the faculties would get together, such as the [O. Max] Gardner Award Dinner [member of the faculty of the Consolidated System of the University of North Carolina, who, during the current scholastic year, has made the greatest contribution to the welfare of the human race]? Was that a—that was a regular?

HT: Yes. We had various things with things would come together.

WL: Do you remember Frank [Porter] Graham very well, as president [of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and first president of the Consolidated System of the University of North Carolina]? He was president when you first got here.

HT: Not too well. Well, he was president at Chapel Hill. He wasn't at our college.

WL: Well, he was president of the whole thing.

HT: Yes.

WL: But he—I guess he didn't have—you didn't see him that much, though, did you?

HT: No.

WL: [William] "Bill" Friday [president of the Consolidated System of the University of North Carolina]? Did you see him very often? Do you remember him?

HT: Well, I knew him better than Graham. A little bit. But we never saw—they had so much—mainly our contact with Chapel Hill was the art department, the art people.

WL: I see. Directly with the art department. I gather the Graham administration was a period of some controversy and division in the faculty. Did you—?

HT: Yes. No, as I said, we were so busy and loving our art things that we didn't pay much attention to that. [chuckling]

WL: So the art department wasn't affected very much by the—because other people have told me the faculty was split right down the middle.

HT: Oh, I remember that Ivy and—the name in the English department?

WL: Friedlaender.

HT: Friedlaender, and things like that. There was this thing, but I didn't get involved with that. I mean, that was my main thing, not that group. So I didn't get involved with that. Though I would hear about it. But I wasn't involved in it. So I can't tell you much about him.

WL: You were able to stay neutral on the question. And you stayed to your teaching and tried to—and that was probably very smart. [laughs]

HT: Well, as I said, I never did want to get involved in things like that.

WL: Yes. But I gather Ivy was very involved.

HT: Yes. He was very involved. And Friedlaender. And, of course, we would hear them talk about it. But it was in such a way that I didn't personally have to get pulled into it.

WL: I see. And you avoided getting pulled into it.

HT: I just would listen. [chuckles]

WL: Yes. A very, very smart thing to do, I'm sure.

HT: And just go on and say, "Go ahead, it's not bothering me any." [laughs]

WL: Ivy and Friedlaender. There seem to be people in the arts generally that they were together.

HT: Yes.

WL: Was there a feeling that people outside—?

HT: Of course, Friedlaender happened to be a very wealthy, well-rounded person. And, of course, he had had contact with art, as well as—generally you might say higher education. And therefore he was interested in that type of thing much more than most of the faculty, who naturally had not had contact with it. And things of that kind. And then it just happened that personally Ivy and Friedlaender seemed to have a very good friendship.

WL: I see.

HT: And they appreciated each other very much. And so I think that was the basis of that.

WL: I see. There was a tradition of kind of interdisciplinary art involvement, wasn't there? For example, the arts festivals that went on in this period.

HT: Oh, yes. I mean, we, of course—all the art department, at that time—like I said, the Golden Age, we were just growing and producing so much that we started all those things. And we started the Art on Paper Show. I remember when the three of us got together in the office and decided that this would be a good place, you know, to have that kind of art. As I said, the whole thing was just—I don't know how to explain it. It was so fertile at that time, you know, that every day was a day of excitement. And you never knew. Every day something new would happen. And we'd start these new things. Like the gallery. When we started that—when we started the gallery [laughs] you see, have you seen our new gallery? Have you?

WL: No.

HT: I wished you could compare—it just shows that great oaks from little acorns grow because our first gallery—when we started the gallery, we were still, of course, in the old McIver [Building]. And we were just using other people's leftover space that we could use and things like that. And when the science people got their new building, of course, then we were able to get a couple of [unclear]—and this building was an old science lab in the old days when the teacher did the experiment, and the students were in tiers, up like that. And that was what this old building was. And it wasn't the—the room wasn't more than twice the size of this room, if it was that large. And so here was this round wall here and then there was this old pipe and, of course, everything was falling apart and the plaster and everything. And there was this wooden wall here, and then there were—well, they used to have these tiers, where the level of the chairs, three of those, and then behind that. So the only space that we had to show paintings on our wall was this one curved

wall, which was about the length of that wall and about half of that. Now that was the beginning of the Weatherspoon [Art] Gallery. And we had—but the thing was for our first exhibit we had [Robert] Gwathmey [social realist painter], who was one of the outstanding American painters. And when we started the Art on Paper Show, and the Art—what's that thing that started where you had English, dance?

WL: The Arts Festival?

HT: Well, I'll say Arts Festival. I can't think of the word right now. But the art and creative writing and the modern dance. I guess those were the three. No, there's more creative or something like that. We got together, and we had this art festival, I'll think of the name; we started every year. And that became—I guess it gave to the whole student body a contact with contemporary work in painting, and dance, and writing that I guess no other students in North Carolina, around here, was able to have. And we had these outstanding people. Like, I know the second year [Walter] Gropius—well, you know Gropius. He was the famous [German] architect, the founder of the Bauhaus [German art school]. And he came, and I guess he was teaching at Harvard [University, Cambridge, Massachusetts] or something. Well, I don't want to be quoted on these things. But anyway like—he came down and talked to us. And I remember I sat beside him at lunch, and I just had that feeling that I've never had sitting beside anybody else. I just felt that I was in the presence of greatness. You know, things like that.

WL: Right.

HT: And then we had [Franz] Kline [American abstract expressionist artist], and all of those great New York expressionists come down that now—. And they—there were four of them that came down for that thing—I don't know why I can't think of the name of that thing—it wasn't called art festival, but anyway and like I said, even then we still—all we had was this measly little science lab for the gallery. And I remember we sat in the gallery, but it just shows again that so many people think it's so necessary to have all the latest equipment. You know, all of these fine buildings. And as I said, they were all very good, but it's the people and what's going on, and the hearts and souls of the teachers and the things that will make a department great and will give the students great, and not all this material stuff.

WL: Right. Whose idea was the gallery? Having a gallery? It came out of the whole department?

HT: These things just seem to grow. We get together and talk. I know that this arts festival, which I hate to call that name, just happened to grow one day when we were sitting in Ivy's office. What was your question?

WL: I was wondering about the gallery. How that originated? Whose—if there was—?

HT: I don't remember. [pause] Another thing that Ivy did, of course, he not only gave North Carolina the great art department, but he would have classes where you'd have to go, say

to Chapel Hill, and these older women that were interested in wanting to paint, learn to paint, and he was such a marvelous teacher, he would have this class—who was the woman that wrote about the artists in North Carolina? [pause] Well, I can't think of her. But anyway, it's people like that, these women would take his class, and that meant he had to drive all the way there. And he'd go like once a week or something like that. But he was such an inspiring teacher that he inspired that all these like wives of faculty in Chapel Hill and all of these places. And these people were able to have the means and the interests to develop art in all of North Carolina. And it was through that, when he'd go all over the state into that kind, and start these, plant these little seeds of art all around. And then it was through them, of course, that art began to blossom, and we got the art museum. And everything in art that just happened, all came as a result of that.

WL: Ivy seems to be a person with great imagination, a person of great character.

HT: Oh yes, you [unclear] call him. He was just the perfect person for his job. I mean, he was a genius in that type of thing.

WL: When did he leave? Under what circumstances did he leave?

HT: Let's see. It's so far back. Let's see. I came there in '39, and when was the war?

WL: The Korean War [between North and South Korea] in 1950[-1953]?

HT: 1950?

WL: The Korean War. Is that what you're thinking of? Or the Second World War [1939-1945 global conflict]?

HT: Second World War.

WL: 1941 to '45?

HT: Yes. '41 to '45. Well, he—no, that was—he did go off a year or two of absence for that war. And he wanted to be in the [United States] Air Force, but because of his eyesight, he couldn't be accepted. So he was sent out to California and was in the—he wrote and illustrated books in the camouflage department.

WL: Oh.

HT: And so then that's where he was during the war. But then he came back in '45—yes, that's right, because I was head of the department from [pause] around '51 and '52. But anyway I guess it came about—it probably started part of the time when they had that split that you were talking about. And then—it's too bad when you get something like that; it always leaves scars that don't seem to be able to heal. It was sometime after that that he—I don't know what it was—it was something that he wanted for the department, something like that—and because of some split or something, jealousy, they wouldn't give it to him.

Or do anything like that.

WL: I see.

HT: He said, so I mean—he had always, of course, had, I think, very good cooperation with the college, with higher ups and things like that. And so anyway, it was something that he wanted—and I never was too clear about this—and he, for some reason they wouldn't give it to him. So he was miffed and things like that. I guess he had been a little spoiled, getting his own way, although he'd have to work hard to get it. But anyway, he just said, "Well, if you don't—if I can't have this I'm going to resign." And, of course, he thought they would give it to him, and instead they took him at his word, and they said, "All right, we accept your resignation." [laughs] Well, you can imagine what a shock that was. So then, Mr. [Edward] Lowenstein, who is a well-known architect. Did you ever know of him here?

WL: Yes.

HT: In Greensboro?

WL: Right.

HT: Well, he taught architecture in the department for a couple of years before this. And he and I, we were very good friends, and he—as I said he was—and Mrs. [Frances Stern] Lowenstein, they were very active and very helpful in the whole department, the whole set-up. So then there was Ivy. He had to get a job. And so Lowenstein gave him a job in his architectural thing, his architectural something. And just at that time was when they built the library on Greene Street, the new library. Do you know it?

WL: Right, sure.

HT: Well, Ivy was the one that designed that and designed all those panels and everything for it.

WL: Oh, really?

HT: Yes. So that was the kind of job that he had. And he—at the time, it was something new and something different, and he was kind of interested in it, and was having a good time. So he had that job, I guess, for about two years. Well, of course he was a born teacher, and then like that, and then he began to miss his teaching about that time. And so he had this friend from college days, Olson, I think his name was, who taught in California at—what's the name of that town right near Los Angeles that they have a college there? Well, anyway, he got a job at that college, teaching. And so, then he left here. And that was the end of Ivy in Greensboro. [Editor's note: Mr. Ivy became chair of the art department at California State University at Fullerton.]

WL: I see.

HT: [unclear] involved in any of that. So then, this all happened, I think, at the end of the summer when he resigned. And the school was about to open for the fall semester. So here they were without a head of the department. And so they asked me to be head of the department. And I told them, "Well, I'm not interested, and I have no desire to be head of the department." And things like that. But they were desperate, and things like that. And so they begged me, and I said, "Well, it's only because of my love for the department that I will take this job." So, and I said, "It will just be a year." So they said, "All right." And so I was head of the department. And I think that was around '50, or something.

WL: In the 1950s?

HT: Fifty—No, it was '60. Yes, it was in '60. I happened to remember '61 because I know my mother—my father died in '50. And my mother came to live with me for twelve years. And I know that she died while I was head of the department. And she died in '62. So it must have been around '61 or '62. And so, I was head of the department for the year while they went around hunting for somebody. And so at the end of the year, "This is fine. I can go back to my teaching and everything." And so they got someone—he was from the state of Oregon. Portland, Oregon. I know it was out west. And he had come and had come to look about getting a home for his family and things of that kind. And so he was supposed to arrive just about a week before school opened. Something like that. And he hadn't been feeling too well. And he thought, "Well, before I come, I better have my doctor give me a check-up." And so he went to his doctor to get a check-up, and the doctor said, "You're not going to do anything for the next year." I forget what was wrong with him, but anyway, he had this terrible thing where he couldn't work. And they had to put him in someplace for a year. And so, of course, there they were with the college ready to open the second year and with nobody for head of the department. [laughing] Well, well, well. So then they came to me again. Well, what was I to do? Here it was—he already had a job, and I think he was getting his house and everything. So there I was left with the head of the department for a second year. And so then the next year they got Mr. [Gilbert] Carpenter. [unclear] And he was teaching out of [University of] Hawaii [at Manoa] at the time, a Hawaiian university. So then Carpenter came, and I was able to go back to teaching until I retired.

WL: I see. Let's go back a little back to one of the things we haven't talked about, the Second World War. Since you mentioned World War II, Second World War, did that have much effect on campus life? How did the war affect things? Was there—did it have—?

HT: Not—

WL: Some faculty left and were—

HT: The main thing in ours was the fact that Mr. Ivy went to California in the art department. And left me with the department. [chuckles]

WL: That's the thing remembered?

HT: Yes. The things like that. But we were still, you see, still a girls' school.

WL: Yes.

HT: And a few of the faculty, of course, left. But, as I said, there wasn't much too much difference.

WL: You described this Golden Age.

HT: Yes.

WL: When do you think that Golden Age ended?

HT: I think it was—it ended just about the time that Ivy left. In fact, when they had that kind of what you called a "split" or something. Things of that kind. That probably hurt a little bit. But from 1941 to 1950 or '51, that's when everything was growing, growing, growing. And then it already started down a little bit when Ivy left. He didn't quite have his—the reason why he left, you see, was he wasn't able to get what he wanted to do. He wasn't getting [unclear] like that. And, of course, before that he was able to get anything that he wanted. As far as I know. I mean, as far as things like that.

WL: Yes.

HT: So that already—it's like anything, you can only be up there at the top for a short time.

WL: So Ivy wants—the things that Ivey wanted to do—

HT: Of course, I don't know what it was. I mean, I never heard, I don't know what it was. I just know that it was—that's how he happened to leave.

WL: Yes. I see. You're not sure of the exact circumstances?

HT: No. I just know that—all I know is there was something that he needed or wanted or something of that kind. And anyway, he couldn't do or want something. And so he said, "Well, I'll retire." And they said, "All right, we accept your resignation." [laughs]

WL: So the Golden Age sort of coincided with Ivy's tenure.

HT: Yes.

WL: And he contributed a lot to it?

HT: Well, he was the one that made it.

WL: He's the one that made it? Yes. And his decline, in turn, was connected to a number of things, but this big fight over Ed Graham, I suppose, had a lot to do with it. The scars, as

you mentioned before.

HT: Yes. It started because that was the one that—you started these cliques on the campus.

WL: Yes.

HT: And then, of course, when you have cliques, you see, why then it depends upon which side—which clique you're on, as to what you can do and what you can't do.

WL: Yes. And that's something you really begin to notice. Something that—

HT: And that's what began—of course, I don't know. I mean it's like anything else. You can't stay on the top all of the time. And if that hadn't happened, and if Ivy hadn't gone, I don't know, whether things would have gone or how they would have gone. We can't—we don't know those things.

WL: Do you think it might have been possible that Ivey wanted to bring too many changes at once?

HT: Well, I have no idea about that. I honestly haven't the slightest idea what it was about.

WL: Yes. What you've described is a whole bunch of changes he had. He was a person that had a lot of ideas, I gather.

HT: Of course, most of those have already—but then it had gone on—. But like I said, I can't tell you because I haven't the slightest idea what it was. I mean, you know, you just hear these things by hearsay. And that's all I know. And I never—I don't know whether many people knew about it because I never heard anybody say what it was.

WL: Yes. Things began to change a good bit in your last years?

HT: Well, then, of course, when we became coed—

WL: Yes.

HT: That was a big change. No, I don't remember when—that was right after the war from the Bill of Rights, what year would that have been?

WL: There were some male coeds here, weren't there, in the '40s? 1946 or so? Did you notice? Did you have male students in the '40s?

HT: Say what?

WL: Did you have any men, any boys, as students in the '40s?

HT: I don't remember. I know that when we got men, I had a couple of men students. In the

meantime, another thing that had happened was that we used to just give a bachelor's degree in art, and then they started that we could give a master's degree in art. And, of course, that made a lot of—some changes too, you see. Because then we began to get older students. And it was just about that time too when the men students came in, and they came in under the Bill of Rights. And I remember my first couple of years of teaching graduate students—were these boys that had come in from—through the [United States] Army at that time.

WL: The G.I. Bill [provided a range of benefits for returning World War II veterans]?

HT: Oh, and then before that, we had the big change of having colored students.

WL: Oh, yes.

HT: And I remember when we first had our first colored students. And I remember the first time they had colored students—I think I just had this one colored girl in my class. And her father, I think, had been Dr. Graham's or whoever was head of the college—I mean the school then—had been his chauffeur. And she was one of the most intelligent—of course, you see they were very closely screened. So we only got the very cream of the crop. And we just had a few of them. And as I said, I just had this one girl in my class, and she was number one in the class, and things like that. And she was so talented. And as I said, I never did have many colored students. I just remember I had this one, and she was so talented, one of the most talented students I've ever had. And she is number one in her class.

WL: Was that accompanied by a great deal of tension?

HT: No. I mean, she was a superior girl.

WL: Yes.

HT: Because she was brought up in the atmosphere.

WL: It was an all-white school up to that point, wasn't it?

HT: Yes. But, no, I didn't hear of anything, and in my classes, I never thought of her as being any different from the others. And she was, being the head of the—being better than anybody else, they couldn't—things like that. And they accepted it. And I didn't see any difference. To me she didn't affect me any different from any other student. And all of the students seemed to treat her all the same too. But you wouldn't—if it hadn't been for her color, you wouldn't have known she wasn't white because she was a very well-educated, fine person.

WL: Yes. Right. Did coeducation, the coming of men to the campus, how big of an impact did that have by the time you left? By the time you retired?

HT: Of course, by the time I retired, there were still just a few men there. There was such a small amount in some ways. But I enjoyed them very much, and I was glad to have them because I thought they contributed something. And the rest of the class seemed to work in too, and I had some very, very fine—

[End Side A—Begin Side B]

No, I welcomed them, and I thought they were a big addition to the class. I didn't notice any problems with them at all. It's just the—as far as me as a teacher, I didn't have any problems or noticed any difference either that they were men or women.

WL: Yes.

HT: I just know they were exceptionally good students. And they—see, being a little bit older, and having a purpose, why they worked very hard. And they were some of my best students.

WL: Yes. Was coeducation something that the faculty wanted, do you think? Was there a—?

HT: I think so. I was all for it. And I think almost anybody—these days, and things like that. Of course, there are advantages, a little fewer advantages with the other, but having all the other all my life, as I said, I—when I heard about it, and when I first had them, I was very pleased. And I welcomed them. And I thoroughly enjoyed them.

WL: Looking back on your time at UNCG, what do you think were the biggest changes that came between?

HT: I didn't hear.

WL: What do you think changed the most between 1939 and 1969, when you were at Woman's College and then UNCG?

HT: [pause] Well, it's very difficult to put in words. I don't know how to put it in words. As I said, in '39 you felt that you were—the college was your own family and that you were a member of that family. You know, just like your family at home. And the other faculty members were like your brothers and sisters and things of that kind. In '69 when I graduated [sic, retired] it was much larger, so you could not have that personal contact with everybody and the things of that kind. And it was much more impersonal. And that seems to me—so that it was more like, you might say, a school or a college. And there you were, while when I first came it was like—this is my family. Do you know what I'm trying to say?

WL: Right. Yes. There was a closer feeling and a sort of feeling of family.

HT: This family feeling that you're all a family, and you're close like that and very personal. And I mean everybody on the faculty and the whole college, all the students, everything was just almost personal, I think. And when I left thirty years later, it was much less personal. I mean, there were so many people there. So many people, I didn't know some of them. I never had any contact with them or anything of that kind.

WL: Right.

[End of Interview]