

Interview with John (Jack) S. Boyce
January 5, 1993
Interviewer, Bob Potter

Bob: Tell me your name and where you were born.

Jack: I am John S. Boyce, the S for Shaw, and I was born in Portland, Oregon, in 1921. It seemed to me that it might be worthwhile to contact Art Favrick, aka Arthur, and I have his address, which I will give you. He's in Florida. Art was one of the early people in the fellowship, and Art and Pat were very active. I think if you were to send him a tape with questions, he might well be able to fill in some information. I know this from your time line, Bob, that he was president -- and I had forgotten this -- after I relinquished it. I was president the first two years and Art Favrick was president the 3rd year, 1953.

Bob: I think it's a good suggestion. Now there's a picture of where you were meeting right at the beginning, the Congregational Church.

Jack: That's right, the Congregational Church on Merrimon Avenue. I got to thinking about that recently. The Reverend Frank Ratzell was minister there, and he allowed us when we began to meet on a more formal basis, to use the church, and it probably was an act of some courage in a sense, because I think Unitarianism might have been lumped with some other suspect groups back in those days. That was 1950 and '51, something like that. Mr. Ratzell was very cordial and most gracious about lending us the church. You may not know this, for example, there was quite a move afoot for desegregating Asheville, and we can get to that a little later, but as a sign of the times, the churches were sometimes rather conservative. For example, Eleanor Roosevelt came and addressed the United Nations Association, and I happened to be president at the time that she came. As a matter of fact I was installed for that purpose. We had to have some kind of a group, you see. We tried to find a place for Mrs. Roosevelt to talk because she was a noted public figure. None of the downtown churches, which we really needed would allow us to have Mrs. Roosevelt because she said she would not speak to a segregated audience. She insisted that blacks be allowed to listen, and as a consequence we ultimately wound up in the YMCA, or the YW, I forgot which, downtown.

Bob: Maybe at this building. Was it at this building on the left in that

picture?

Jack: Looks sort of like it. This, of course, is where we met. We met, that is the Unitarian Fellowship, we met actually with Mrs. Roosevelt at the YWCA, as I think of it now. So Mr. Ratzell displayed some courage possibly by throwing open his church and saying, yes, you can meet here on Sunday nights if you like.

Bob: Were you a member of that group right from the start, or did you join shortly thereafter?

Jack: A little history there. I had written to the fellowship office in Boston expressing interest in Unitarianism. That was, I guess, in the summer of 1950, and I received some information. A friend of mine had suggested, after we had talked about religion at length one evening, that I might be interested in Unitarianism, so Boston sent me the information and some weeks thereafter, we had moved here in July of 1950 from Durham, some weeks after came a person to our door, Ruth Melcher. Ruth said that she was given my name as a possible Unitarian, someone interested in it, and that she was most interested in getting together enough people to have a fellowship. At that time it was difficult. We did meet, several of us got together with Ruth's help, and met in living rooms. We met in my living room, we met at the Melchers, and so on. We finally got together 10 names. We had to have 10 people sign up as the initial charter members.

Bob: So you were really there before the charter was made.

Jack: Oh, yes.

Bob: But your name is not on the charter.

Jack: Well, I don't know why it isn't.

Bob: You just missed that meeting or whatever, or they got ten without you.

Jack: Well, I don't know what the situation was.

Bob: What you describe is prior to the charter. You are talking about that first group.

Jack: Well, I recollect what a difficult time we had getting names. We had, among others, Ruth and Woody Melcher, Woody being Ruth's husband. I think George and Muriel Cornell. Who is on the charter?

Bob: I don't know. I have a list, but I don't know if it's accurate.

Jack: I don't know whether this is accurate either. Then we have Walter Adams, who was editor of the -- I don't know if it was the Citizen or the Times, and his wife, Dorothy, came, but I'm not sure whether Dorothy was an initial member. Russell Wooden, who was right there from pretty much the start, Tate and Lisa Andrews. Tate, as you may know, had the Yellow Cab Company at that time. As an interesting little aside, Lisa was a school teacher who came down here to see the area, and Tate drove her around in a taxicab, and they apparently fell in love and married, and it wasn't very long into my presidency, so to speak, of the fellowship, that Tate suffered a severe heart attack, and I remember going to visit Tate and Lisa in my capacity, you might say, not only as a friend but as president of the fellowship, and having a nice visit with them. I've forgotten when Tate died, but it probably was within several years of that time. So I was counting those up, if we got everybody in there, including Ann and Jack Boyce, you would have eleven names. If we subtracted Dorothy Adams, and I'm not sure she signed up, we would have ten. But you say, Bob, that I'm not on the list, so I don't know how to explain that.

Bob: Well, it's an ambiguity that I have encountered in looking at the membership records, and I'd like to clear it up.

Jack: Well, I don't know that it's . . .

Bob: Well, I'm glad to know that you were involved. That's the important thing.

Jack: Well, I definitely was because I recollect the difficulty of getting even ten people.

Bob: How did you acquire our orientation to life, your religious way of thinking?

Jack: Very circuitous. I was not a member of a church formally at all. I attended the Congregational Church from time to time in New Haven,

Connecticut, where I grew up. My dad had been an Episcopal choirboy and he vowed that no child of his would be made to go to church because he evidently had to sing at funerals and weddings and Sundays and so on. You call these people acolytes also, I think he was an acolyte. So as a consequence I roamed pretty freely on Sunday mornings and just went to church when my mother felt the need. My dad never did go to church. So I went all through the formal education years without any church affiliation, and, as I say, I got to talking one time with this relative of my first wife, Ann, and Francie said, well, it sounds to me like Unitarianism would be interesting to you, and it was on that basis I contacted Boston.

Bob: And that happened in Asheville?

Jack: No, Ann and I were traveling up on the eastern shore of Maryland and Francie was related to my first wife, Ann, by marriage and so on, and we were spending the night there, I guess, and we just got into a deep conversation. So that was fortuitous, and that was very nice. Ann, by the way, to whom I was married for a little over 40 years, was raised part Methodist, part Episcopalian, in this little town of Marion, South Carolina, where she grew up. She apparently divided her time between the Methodist Church, where her mother attended, and the Episcopal Church, where her dad was a figure, and so as she tells it, she would go to one service and then run like the devil and get to the other church in time for something else there. So I'd like to put in a plug and say that Ann was very supportive considering that she had this Methodist and Episcopal background. But at any rate it was, I think, largely Ruth Melcher who was the cohesive force who got the group together. It was her determination, and she worked very hard to get this thing going.

Bob: That I've heard from other people, so I'm glad to hear you say it.

Jack: Very definitely. She deserves a lot of credit for that. Let's see, what else might be interesting. In that early group, Russell Wooden was the organist, and Russell and I often walked home together from downtown, at least part of the way. He was a bachelor and I think the church was really the love of his life, and the music, the fact that he could play the organ on Sunday. It meant a great deal to him, and he was assiduous in attendance, never missed. We would talk about Unitarianism and other things as we made our way from downtown. I worked at the post office building, the old post office building. That's where the Southeastern Force Experiment

Station was lodged, and Russell must have worked somewhere close by. I'm not sure what he did. He was a government employee, and I think he was close to retired at that point, possibly. Russell, by the way, was a somewhat courtly gentleman, very well dressed, quite refined, and nice chap to be with.

Bob: Who were the people in that quartet that sang in one of those early years at Christmas service -- Russell Wooden played the organ, and these people in the quartet -- were the Fabricks and Guthries the ones. I know that the Fabricks were musicians.

Jack: It may well be. I have no recollection of that, not a bit. But to go back then. We started meeting first in living rooms and then we were able to meet at the Congregational Church for awhile, and according to your time line, and I had forgotten that, the church school, Sunday School, was separated and met Sunday mornings, and we met in the evening, the adult group. Isn't that funny, I don't recall that a bit. But then we had this young man, Don Stout, who came -- I think he was a Harvard divinity student, who spent, oh, maybe not over two months with us during the summer. We raked up enough money to pay some of his expenses, I guess, and it was Don who pushed for meeting elsewhere than at the Congregational Church, and of course growth was not going to take place until we were divorced from some other denomination, so that was a smart move. Then I remember we moved down to the YMCA, and it was a big step in a sense, because we paid \$10 each Sunday to rent the Y. They weren't about to give it away, and it also meant a lot of lugging of stuff back and forth because, of course, we had to clear the place out when we finished, and we had to get there early and set up chairs. We had folding chairs, of course. We just had a room at the Y really, but I think that was probably what launched us as far as people feeling free to come who might not have come to the Congregational Church. We might have advertised a little bit, I'm not sure. Somehow I think we did spend a little bit on newspaper advertising.

Bob: I saw a note about spending money for advertising, and Wooden. . .

Jack: Russell Wooden?

Bob: No, not Wooden -- this man Adams . . .

Jack: Oh, Walter Adams.

Bob: . . .was getting publicity for you that you didn't have to pay for.

Jack: Yes, that was great.

Bob: Looking at those years in general, just think back now. Is there a single event that you would say was the most important cause of the success of the fellowship, its continual growth gradually for year after year?

Jack: I think it was simply sticking to the objective of providing a fellowship and ultimately a place to worship. I do recollect, and I made a note, that we had from time to time very interesting people, and one man, a Unitarian from Monroe, North Carolina . . . his name was Ray Shute. Ray Shute was mayor of Monroe. He was also a Unitarian, and I can't remember the name of a small volume that he produced at his own expense, a thin book, but I think it was something like, *The Mayor is a Heretic*. And we got Mr. Shute to come twice, as I recollect, and this focus -- this book was a defense of his beliefs, and I think it had caused some controversy in Monroe at any rate, so this might have given us a little boost as far as curiosity seekers were concerned. Horace Westwood, I remember him as a very outstanding minister who gave freely of his time. I'm not sure whether we paid Horace Westwood. If we paid him anything, it was darn little. He had retired and he and Mrs. Westwood were in the area, and he gave talks, sermons, some Sundays in the summertime, as I recollect. I remember Horace Westwood, very outgoing, smiling, gentle kind of person, quite erudite, coming to our home. I think we got on the subject of baptism, and I don't recollect how many children I had at that time, I ultimately had 4 children, but in the early years probably just 2, and Horace said, well, he said, would you like to have your children baptized? So he did it right there in the living room. That interested me a lot. He was that kind of person. He also put together a very nice collection of original poetry, and at Christmas time sent this out to members of the fellowship. He was a first class chap.

Bob: There are many quotations from his pastoral letters when he was not here, and would write back to the fellowship, in those early notes.

Jack: I think Horace Westwood gave the fellowship an enormous boost in the early years. Another thing that struck me as rather interesting too, and that is the movement that I mentioned about desegregating Asheville. My

wife Ann was very much involved in that, and Roger Guthrie, one of the earlier members of the fellowship, and Edna -- I'm not sure whether Edna, his wife, was as involved, but Roger definitely was. I remember Ann and Roger spearheading some meetings with blacks, and it seems to me the Favricks were also in on that, and of course Helen Reed probably. I did not participate in the desegregating activities. I was a federal employee at the time and it seemed the better part of wisdom not to do that. I had already come under a little censorship from my boss because my wife was rather outspoken and she made the newspaper a time or two. So I kept a low profile there. The point is this might have been again kind of a focus for some people who were interested in some of the concepts of Unitarianism and here were these Unitarians, among others, working for desegregation.

Bob: That was not generally popular.

Jack: Oh, my gosh no, it certainly wasn't. And as I say the attitude of the big churches, like Trinity Episcopal and the Presbyterian and so on, no indeed. Mrs. Roosevelt again, you see. So they were not in the forefront of desegregation efforts, but I would say the Unitarians had a very strong role there.

Bob: Did the United Nations Association invite her here?

Jack: Well, that's quite a separate thing. What happened was Mrs. Roosevelt developed a strong interest in promoting the United Nations, and she consequently supported this United Nations Association, which is really a group that promotes the activities, the understanding, the education of people, about the UN, and she was spending her own energy and money going around the country helping chapters get established, and somehow somebody got word that she would come for nothing if we had a chapter that we were trying to get going, and my wife, Ann, was very active in the YWCA, among other things, and the League of Women Voters and so on, I think primarily the Y. At any rate Mrs. Roosevelt said, yes, she would come, but we had to have a chapter. So by jingos, we founded a chapter, and I happened to be the person who was in position to be the first president of that United Nations Association chapter here. This is a digression, in a sense -- I don't know how much digression you want.

Bob: Because the UNCA Library is interested in your interview, I think you can say anything you want to say about the community in general, and

particularly about a thing like the United Nations Association. I don't think you should restrict yourself to the church.

Jack: It's rather interesting that Mrs. Roosevelt agreed to come, and in making the travel arrangements she was going to come at a time of the year when we might have bad weather in Asheville. I could look it up, I have old clippings and so on, and she wanted to fly. She was going to come from Raleigh or someplace like that, and I urged her through her secretary, I didn't deal directly, or we didn't deal directly, with Mrs. Roosevelt herself, by all means to take the train. Well, by jove, fortunately she did. Because the day she came it was snowing, and she arrived by train, spent a full day here, and then Ann and I drove Mrs. Roosevelt and Clark Eikelberger, who was the executive director of the UNA at that time, down to Spartanburg to catch the train from Spartanburg on. But it would have been an absolute disaster, she could not have flown in here that day, and we had set up a big public meeting, a luncheon at the old Manor on Charlotte Street, which at that time was quite an elegant place still, and in the afternoon she had interviews with people, and then that night we had a public meeting, a large one, set up for the YWCA. I think -- the figure sticks in my mind that there were 800 people. I don't know whether that's true or not. I do remember that Mrs. Roosevelt was absolutely charming. I had grown up hearing disparaging remarks about her, and I found her to be one of the most delightful people -- of course I was just with her for that one day. And that night when she got ready to talk I was on the speakers' area with Clark Eikelberger and Mrs. Roosevelt, and I was flabbergasted to overhear to Clark and say, Clark, what shall I talk about. Now so many people had packed themselves into the YWCA auditorium that kids were seated on the floor, folks were up against the walls. It was just jam packed. And when she began I thought, oh, my goodness. This is going to be something. Imagine, addressing a group like this without any notes, no plan. She had the audience in the palm of her hand. You could have heard a pin drop for about an hour. And she spoke as though she was speaking to every single person individually in the audience. I've never seen anything like it. It was just marvelous. So that was an experience for me. Actually, you see there was kind of a group of people who were movers and shakers, you might say, in the community. They were people in the YWCA and the League of Women Voters, and some other groups. They all kind of overlapped. I think, as I say, that the segregation situation was such that some of the Unitarians were able to stick their necks out and it probably called attention to the group as time went on. This might have been quite

beneficial.

Bob: Before that time, or near that time, you had given talks to the fellowship on the Quaker proposals for peace. How did you come to know those?

Jack: Ann and I belonged to what was called the Wider Quaker Fellowship. Ann was very much, she was really broad gauge with regard to interests, and she had become a member of that years earlier, and then I became a member, and they sent us materials from time to time. I have to tell you, Bob, that I was definitely hard put at times to figure out what to talk about because one of the things that really became burdensome over a period of time was, we were pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps, we would have occasional people like Don Stout one summer, and Horace Westwood and Mayor Ray Shute, but generally the programs were our own, and it seemed to me that I would up conducting a lot of the Sunday programs myself, having to come up with something to talk about. So that was a burdensome task in a way.

Bob: Especially as you increased from meeting every other week to meeting weekly.

Jack: Yes, that's right. Then as I recollect, I think the Sunday School met at the Y at the same time we did.

Bob: Which meant that you had to staff that in addition to having the service. So you're spread pretty thin about then.

Jack: Yes, I found myself ultimately just pretty well pooped after . . . see I was president for two years, and then Art Favrick took over, and we were all involved though. Even though I was no longer president I was fairly active, and it just seemed like there was a lot to do all the time, so I think I just plain burned out, as the saying goes, after awhile. I was looking back to see when -- this is a funny thing -- when I became confirmed as an Episcopalian, and I looked at a certificate, noting that it was in November of 1956, so it means, I think, that I was tied into the fellowship from, say 1950 until maybe '55, something like that, but I did not ever attend meetings on Vermont Avenue in the house there. What was the fellow's name who was . . .

Bob: Dan Welch.

Jack: Yes. I remember meeting Dan Welch, and we held meetings for awhile, of course, elsewhere because we didn't have the house on Vermont Avenue. I think it was Dan's push that led to that, but he came over -- I think he was somewhere in Tennessee -- and he came over for awhile and conducted services, and I believe they were probably still at the Y. So by the time the house was purchased on Vermont Avenue and he was ensconced as a fulltime minister, I had left. I think that -- well, it's a little hard to explain now, but I had met a very interesting man, John Tuten, who was rector of Trinity Episcopal Church, a big church downtown, and Jack and I served together on the mental health board, and we got to talking about things and I found him to be a delightful person as an individual and very liberal in his outlook, and I think at that point I was groping because this Unitarianism had become ephemeral, it was a little hard to put my fingers on just what it involved. So I spent some time reviewing the New Testament primarily. Actually I worked downtown and I would do a little studying when the office closed after 5:00. I would sit there for a half hour or so and meditate and read, and then the fact that Ann was also an Episcopalian, she was confirmed, added incentive, and we switched over to the Trinity Episcopal Church, and at that point I think we had four children, so it was kind of a relief too to be in a well organized, nicely financed, comfortable environment, which certainly was not the case in the early years of the Unitarian church.

Bob: Would you describe this change as basically a private, personal journey on your part? It wasn't an open conflict . . .

Jack: Oh, not at all.

Bob: No politics involved.

Jack: No, I was quite literally burned out. I just was tired of pushing and so on, and I think that probably was a major factor, and actually since that time, not only was I confirmed as an Episcopalian, but attended Episcopal churches, not only here but in Athens, Georgia, then switched over to the Lutheran Church, the liberal synod, and it wasn't until I came back to Black Mountain on retirement in 1983 that I learned there was a Unitarian Church, by jove, a real building, on Charlotte Street. One of my daughters lived in the area, and she said, dad, you ought to go to the Unitarian Church. I think you would find it very nice.

Bob: One of your daughters lived on what street?

Jack: She lived in Black Mountain.

Bob: Was she Olivia?

Jack: No, this was Jackie, Jacqueline. And Jacqueline was the one who urged me to look it up, so lo and behold, I did. I had become somewhat uncomfortable with the Episcopal service as time went on. I was a lay reader, by the way, in the Episcopal church. I did some lay reading when we lived in the small town of Marion, South Carolina, not far from Florence.

Bob: When you moved to Athens was that to take a professorship, or had you resigned or retired from . . .

Jack: No, I had spent 11 years working here in Asheville at the experiment station, and my field was forest tree diseases, forest pathology. I was invited to join the faculty at the University of Georgia as a full professor, and that was quite a nice thing, so I did so. We moved to Athens.

Bob: That was in the biology department?

Jack: No, it was in the department of plant pathology and plant breeding, and we were housed in the food science building on the campus, but my students were primarily forestry students. I taught a general forest pathology course for forestry undergraduates, and then I had masters and doctoral students also, with whom I worked on special forest pathology problems. I left here simply because it was an interesting prospect of being half-time teaching and half-time research at the University of Georgia. Then to carry that further, my first wife, Ann, had an interest in property on the coast of South Carolina, her family, and after we had been in Athens for about five years it seemed probable that this property would be developed and we thought it expedient to move over there to Marion, South Carolina, where she grew up, so I resigned my professorship, much to the surprise of most people, I think. We moved over there. After awhile this property development did not go forward so I stopped in at the branch campus of the University of South Carolina at Florence one day, and said, would you like anyone to teach biology, because I knew that my specialty of forest pathology was too much. No, not a chance. A few days later came a frantic

phone call from the director of the campus there, a two year branch campus of the University of South Carolina, and he said, well, there's been a change and we really would like to have you come and teach the intro biology course, which I did. One thing led to another and eventually I became, you might say, the person in charge of the biology offerings at the branch campus and then that became a four year independent state supported college, Francis Marion College, which is now Francis Marion University. I was asked to be the founding chairman, so I stayed there for some years. Finally decided it was time to yield the field to someone else. It was no longer as much fun. I loved the planning, the equipping of the labs, the planning the layout and that kind of thing, staffing it, getting the biology faculty, but I found eventually the teaching which I liked to do was receding and I was spending increasing amounts of time on administrative things, so I thought, what the heck. At that time my wife and I were able to retire. I retired at the ripe old age of 61. And stayed in Florence a year where we were living at that time, near Marion, and then we came up to Black Mountain and settled there for awhile.

Bob: Have you ever regretted retiring so young?

Jack: Yes, I have, but again I think I had reached the point where it was no fun and there was no way for a person to kind of retire a little bit. They hadn't instituted a Sabbatical system. I was chairman of the department, I was a full professor. No one else in my group was a full professor. I couldn't say, now look, I just want to teach microbiology and botany, which were areas I was teaching, and let someone else do it, because that would have meant a mix-up in the ranking and so on, so the best thing seemed to be to just go out. And the department has gone ahead, it has been wonderful. The school has expanded and it's done very well indeed. One of my friends, a co-worker, became chairman, promoted from within, and he's done a splendid job. So it has been most gratifying.

Bob: This is off that subject, but you first retired to Black Mountain, and then you moved to Asheville. What caused you to do that? Black Mountain is a very attractive place for a forester.

Jack: Black Mountain is extremely attractive, but my first wife Ann, I mentioned we had been married 40 plus years, and we moved from Marion to Florence and then from Florence to Black Mountain, and we were not here -- let's see, she died in 1988, October of '88, and in the meantime I had

married Jan and we had our own place here. Ann had -- we had divorced, by the way. Without going deeply into that, we divorced as good friends. Ann had pursued a very spiritual path. She was deeply involved with the so-called Light Center on Highway 9 near Black Mountain, and I was not able to make that pilgrimage with her, you might say.

Bob: You had made quite a few already.

Jack: Well, maybe. So we divorced in April of '88, and Ann had moved back to South Carolina to her home, and I stayed on in Asheville, and I remarried in July of '88, and Jan and I then, I moved into her house which was over at Oteen, that area, east of Asheville, and then two years ago we bought this place, so here we are in Chunn's Cove.

Bob: I think we ought to take a break because we're at the end of this tape. This is the second side of the tape. You were going to tell me about George Cornell's house burning down.

Jack: Yes, it was about '53 or '54 when they lost absolutely everything. George and Muriel with, gosh, I don't remember now, maybe three children, lived out in the Leicester area, as I recall, and George was extremely active, they both were, of course Muriel handling the Sunday School and George very supportive and doing what he could for the fellowship. George, by the way, supported them by having a very large newspaper delivery route. He told me at one time that he had something like 500 papers to deliver, and he and one of the daughters would get out very early in the morning and do this. George had been injured in, my understanding was, in an accident where they were putting a caisson into the earth, trying to extend a tunnel or something like that, and he had a very bad limp and he was unable to work after that. I notice that some notes you had made, Bob, indicated that this might have been a war related injury, and possibly it was, but I don't know. At any rate George was cleaning their furnace downstairs. They had a one story house above a basement. Some fuel oil, I guess, got on the floor and somehow it caught fire. Muriel was upstairs, and George simply had time to yell to her to get out, and they got the canary bird and that was it. There was not another thing that was recovered from that. We all in the fellowship banded together as best we could and helped out with whatever, food, clothing and so on.

Bob: Do you know where they stayed?

Jack: I don't remember.

Bob: Was it insured, do you know that?

Jack: I really don't know. Somehow I have a feeling that it probably wasn't, because they were living -- they weren't affluent -- pretty close, they were sailing close haul to the wind, as the saying goes. But that was, I remember, a landmark catastrophe as far as the fellowship was concerned. Then, as I mentioned earlier, Tate Andrews died at some point. I think those were major happenings.

Bob: How did people raise money to help the Cornells?

Jack: I think we simply contributed what we could. We didn't have any bake sales or anything like that. We were way too small. We were still a fellowship. I understand that at least one of the daughters still lives in the area, Gail Gomez.

Bob: I'll have to look that up. I haven't heard that before.

Jack: Her name might be Karen, Karen Cornell. And Ruth Melcher has a daughter-in-law, Betty Cromwell, -- no let's see, it's her daughter Betty married a Carroll Cromwell. Ann and I used to socialize with them a bit, and Betty, I think, is still in the area.

Bob: I've met her. She lives over toward Kingsport, Johnson City.

Jack: There's another daughter, Mary.

Bob: That's the one I met.

Jack: You met Mary, but Betty, I think, lives in Asheville.

Bob: Yes, Mary has told me about her. She comes over to visit her often. I'll look for a Cornell daughter.

I had heard about this fire of the Cornells. They were fortunate to survive it. Do you know anything about the family after that disaster?

Jack: I really don't. They apparently recovered and things must have gone

forward OK. I notice from your timeline that George Cornell became the president of the fellowship at some point later on. George and I were called for jury duty at one time, and it's rather interesting, he was excused because of his physical disability, and it was a murder trial, a rather well publicized one that went on for a week. I had another friend who was also a part of the venire, they call it, the fifty names from which they draw the jurors, and in waiting to be seated this chap was a dapper, very smooth looking individual who worked for Merrill Lynch. His name was Jack Simmons, very nice chap. Jack and I were there, along with George Cornell, and I was dressed -- since I was in the forest service, and I had just stopped by on the way to my job -- I thought I'd be going out in the field, I did a lot of field work in those days over in east Tennessee particularly. But I had a lunch bucket with me and I was dressed in khakis, and I looked like a working man, which I was in a sense. Well, Jack Simmons, as they examined the prospective jurors, Jack Simmons was excused by, I forgot whether it was the defense or the prosecution. But I passed muster because the man who was on trial was kind of a blue collar fellow, and I guess they thought that I was blue collar and maybe I'd be a little more sympathetic, I don't know. That was a funny murder trial. The man's name was Ramsey who was on trial. I never will forget that, having spent a week being sequestered, and finally coming up with a not guilty verdict. The community was outraged. They were convinced that Mr. Ramsey had done what he was accused of doing, namely murdering his wife so that he could consort with a girlfriend, but we didn't have that evidence. The jurors were excused from the box when some of these things were being presented and argued, so it came as a bit of surprise to me, and to this day I don't know whether Ramsey was guilty or not, but there's no question in my mind that it was a very circumstantial evidence case and I would not have felt right voting for conviction. But one of the guys on the jury was a man named McIntosh, I think, and he was a former wrestler. He actually was the jury foreman, and at one time he had a wrestling barn, he called it, and Thomas Wolfe, the author, used to come and work out there. I thought that was an interesting aside.

Bob: A wrestling barn.

Jack: Yes, a wrestling barn. But imagine Thomas Wolfe who wrote *Look Homeward Angel* showing up at . . . so . . . And I can remember Helen and Hal Reed were early members, and as I mentioned, Roger and Edna Guthrie. I see that Norman Poultney is down here on the time line as serving as

president. His wife Effie, of course, survives at this time.

Bob: I'm hoping to interview her before it's too late.

Jack: And Hal Reed . . . I was shocked to learn that Hal had died.

Bob: I think about 1972 or something like that. But the members of this fellowship wanted to have a church right from the very earliest period because they began saving money. Was that something that they talked about and was acknowledged?

Jack: Oh, yes. I think that, again, it was people like Ruth Melcher who persisted. She was untiring in pursuing that goal. I think that was a great desire. We certainly got pretty tired of meeting in the YMCA and then, as I understand it, when the house on Vermont Avenue was purchased and the Reverend Welch installed there it was a real boost. The church really began to take off.

Bob: I have talked to only one person who knew Welch personally and that person thought he was a marvelous man, but didn't care much for his wife -- insisted that she was a Methodist at all times. She would rustle papers all through church.

Jack: I may be confusing her, but she might have been -- I think she stayed in the background. She was supportive of him, and I guess she might have been an unwilling participant. I don't remember if it was she or Mrs. Horace Westwood who wore the most interesting hats with lots of imitation fruit on the top and that kind of thing.

Bob: I'll have to ask somebody about that . . . wife of ministers' hats. I appreciate this, Jack. I think you have given me some good background and some good stories. If you're satisfied, I am.

Jack: Oh, I'm fine.