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DATE April 5 1986

Tom Woodruff
(Signature - Interviewee)

(Address)

DATE April 5 1986

Johanna Woodward
(Signature - Witness)

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MARSHALL UNIVERSITY HISTORY

AN ORAL INTERVIEW WITH: Tom Woodruff

CONDUCTED BY: John C. Hennen, Jr.

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DATE OF INTERVIEW: April 5, 1986

Tom: ...when I went to that Campus Christian Center debate, I think I'd been to one meeting at that point in time. I think there was one meeting earlier, and some of the people that were involved, like in the fall semester, uh, by that spring semester weren't...weren't around.

John: Were you a student there in ...in the fall of '68 (yeah), when the first SDS first appeared on campus?

Tom: Yeah, I went, that was my first semester here at Marshall, was the Fall of '68. I'd been two years at another school, and transferred there in the fall of '68.

John: Where did you come from?

Tom: I grew up in Charleston. Uh, the, I'd spent two years at Wake Forest, and then transferred from '66 to '68, then transferred to Marshall in '68.

John: What high school did you go to in Charleston? Or did you go in Charleston?

Tom: Yeah, I did, I went to uh, Charleston High, and I also went to George Washington.

John: This is, let me get a little intro here. This is April 5th, 1986. I'm in the home of Tom Woodruff, 2136 Tenth Avenue in Huntington. This is the Oral History of Appalachia Project, focusing on the SDS, Students for Democratic Society at Marshall, and the controversy over recognition in I guess you have to say the anti-communist movement in the community at that time. Now, Tom you say you're from Charleston, were you born over there?

Tom: Yeah, In 1948.

John: Grew up and went to public schools (right). Then went to Wake...did you know a fellow named Joe Kruger from Huntington, he went to Wake Forest, started just about that time, I think.

Tom: I don't, I ...several people from the state went there (yeah), but I didn't happen to know 'em.

John: Yeah, it seemed to be a popular place for....

Tom: And people still, I think, I think still people go from here and from Charleston; not a lot, but several. Uh, I didn't like it at all, and left after a couple of years.

John: Uh, was there any kind of activity akin to anti-war movement down there at Wake Forest, at that time?

Tom: There might have been in, in '67, I don't remember any open activity. I remember reading later in '69, and '70 that there, there was activity. I certainly wasn't involved in any activity there.

John: So the SDS at Marshall was . . . had been organized, when you came here, uh, but the recognition, were you beginning to be involved with the organization while the recognition controversy was going on, is that when you got active with . . . (yeah).

Tom: I think there may have been a student senate debate, and there was . . . may have been considerable publicity. I remember that the first major event that I remember and participated in was the debate at the, at the Campus Christian Center, over the question of the recognition so I know it hadn't happened at that point, and I remember that as being in the winter. You might, do you know the date of that?

John: I think February (February), I'm not for sure of the exact date (yeah).

Tom: And that's really when I began publicly participating in SDS.

John: Now, when you came up, came over to Marshall from Wake Forest, were you, did you have a personal history of political activism, were you looking for a group to be affiliated with? Or did you just happen to . . . ?

Tom: No, (meet some of the people?) no, I didn't. I think like a lot of students, and like a lot of people in that particular time, you know, the war in Vietnam was, was the major _____ for a lot of activity. I think a lot of people were, were sick and fed up with that war. I think at the same time, civil rights activity was, there had been some civil rights activity obviously earlier, at Marshall, with Huntington and other places. I think those two, those two issues, civil rights and the war in Vietnam were what led me to . . . to get actively involved, and I looked at SDS as the group there that . . . that was doing something about both those issues. (mm-hmm)

John: Now, I know that from a national level, the SDS at least initially, was organized around community action and economic rehabilitation, those sort of issues, but are you saying then, what mobilized Marshall SDS, was primarily the anti-war movement then?

Tom: I think the anti-war movement and, and civil rights. The SDS there was involved in other activities. I remember picketing with state road workers when they had the strike, and uh, that must have been '69, yeah, uh, and there, were you know, members were involved in other organizations and other activities, but the primary focus was the war and civil rights.

John: Was there any other political action, organization, that you recall on the campus at that time, that was addressing the war issue?

Tom: Well, it really depends on what period, I don't think there was really in the fall of '68. There was another group uh, that

got started around the SDS controversy, they called themselves SDI, I don't know if you'd seen anything in any of the stuff you've done. Uh...which was in some ways, a parallel group and they were around certainly in the spring of '69. Uh, by the fall of '69, the student government itself was pretty heavily involved in anti-war activities, and there were, there was an amazing change that happened in Marshall, as I remember it, between '68 and '69, uh, politically and culturally. Uh...I used to have kind of long hair and I remember in...in the winter of '68, spring of '69, you'd walk about town late at, you'd walk around campus late at night, uh, you know, and get a lot of shouts and people'd stop their cars and a lot of threatening to...to beat you up and that kind of thing, and something happened that summer, because when those same students came back in the fall of '69, they'd either been to the beach or somewhere because they came back with long hair and started going to Washington protest marches, and uh, but I think the whole tide in the country turned in that period of time, too. I think it was significant. There was real growth in the uh, nationally, and certainly in Marshall where really you, you went from being a minority uh, very distinct minority to representing a majority of opinion of students at least about the war, and the other major themes. That's not to say the majority of students were members. I don't remember there ever being any distinction of who's a member and who's not. You held meetings and who came were, were members (laughs), and participated in the activities with uh, I'd...I don't, I don't remember myself ever signing a card or having or asking anybody else to sign a card, it wasn't that kind of organization. I remember that in the uh, I guess that was in the uh, summer of 1970, when they, the attitude had changed so much that in the summer of '70 I was involved in the orientation program they do. I'd graduated at that time, but I was involved in the orientation program they do for new students and there's a part of that program where everybody can go to some organization that they're interested in, and I remember that more students came to the SDS than went to ROTC (is that right?) in that year. And I obviously, two years earlier that wouldn't have been the case, and my case is it wouldn't be the case today.

John: I think you, I think that's a pretty safe guess. What do you think, do you have any opinions as to what really mobilized, what caused that change, I mean, that is a particularly significant year, I think, as far as maybe the _____ offensive occurred in December of '68, and there was the Kennedy and King assassinations, of course that would have been before that, that would have been in the spring and summer of '68, wouldn't it?

(yeah)

Tom: But I think those were the beginnings of it, and I think then generally, more and more people got fed up, I think over...the war just continued and uh, more people uh, there were a lot of people in school just to avoid the draft. In fact, I know when they put in the lottery system, I knew people who were in two months from graduating and as soon as they got a high draft number, just left school (mmm-hmm). See, you had people there specifically in school to avoid being drafted. You know, and

having to go to Vietnam. I think there was just a general growing reaction to that war, and uh, and in culturally to things that were happening in the country. I don't, I can't explain it any better than that. I'm sure people have written and will continue to write books on the subject.

John: You mentioned the flexibility membership requirements in the SDS. I noticed from the newspaper article that I read, most of 'em, it seemed like your meetings were held at night, rather than in the afternoons, and that struck me as unusual because I think all the student organizations meet now in the afternoons, when people are guaranteed to be on campus. But at that time, in the evenings, is that right or...am I just imagining that?

Tom: I remember both meetings in the afternoon and, and at night. Uh...and I don't know that there was, that there would have been any reason. I just don't recall the reasons for doing it either way. But I think there were meetings both at night and in the evening.

John: For awhile you all had trouble finding a place to meet, didn't you? Or I know there was a controversy over the SDS meeting at the Christian Center for awhile. I think even the city council got involved in that, didn't they? Do you remember that?

Tom: That, that was earlier than my time. The first meetings I went to I remember being at the Christian Center (mmmm-hmm), and then I guess that's what the controversy around recognition was, other than a political issue. I think to us the recognition was just the free speech issue. Uh, the only other thing formal recognition did was to allow us to meet on campus. (mmmm-hmm) But with the group, we could have met on campus anyway, we could have gone to the student union, or we could have gone outside or inside anywhere uh, inside around, and had a meeting and had a discussion. Uh, that's, that's what particularly aggravated me initially, was the, was the attempt to deny recognition when uh, in fact, it was, it was a free speech issue.

John: And that issue eventually came to embroil well, actually an opposition from the community more than any opposition you encountered on the campus, didn't it?

Tom: I think the opposition in the campus was early, and I think once the community got involved, it actually solidified the campus around a pro-recognition policy. I think the positions taken by the opposition were so ridiculous and it was, it was a small right-wing group, and that's not to say that they couldn't generate and didn't generate a loud scare. I went to a couple of meetings, I remember one at Huntington High School where the auditorium there, both downstairs and upstairs was totally filled and I was amazed at Paul Warren's ability to ...to because half the meeting was about taking up a collection, his being a preacher, that was part of his... (laughs)...his talent, but half the meeting was that. I was amazed that, that, that people, at the number of people who were scared into making contributions you

know, and the kind of thing that was being run. There was also a big meeting down at his church, where they brought in a uh, I think he brought in somebody from...that was part of what the money was supposed to be used for. I only remember them bringing in one person. I think the person's name was Dan Smoot and I don't remember what his particular claim to fame was at that time, but I do remember him coming, and also went down to that church and that was packed. But at that point in time there were a lot of people from campus that were going, and were uh, you know, even mixed, mixed audiences. But I think that uh, the involvement by Warren and Mrs. Payne and others uh, really solidified the campus, around a pro-recognition position. At the, at the Christian Center debate and that whole chapel was filled, I think there was probably 3, 400 people there, uh, I think anybody, any of the students who were there were, were certainly for recognition. I think any opposition came from the, from the community and that wasn't solid either. There were a lot of people in the community who supported the recognition, but, but because it was the anti-group who was trying to organize in the community, certainly much more so than we were or anybody on campus were, at any of those events, the community people I would say would have been a majority of them would have been against recognition or against inviting Aptheker, whoever, that was another issue that was going on at the same time. Actually, the SDS had nothing to do with, in other words, the student government had that program and brought in both right wing and left wing and middle road speakers.

(mmmm-hmm)

John: But the SDS sort of got lumped in together with that as far as the uh... (I think it helped)...community...

Tom: ...the community with the red scare and with the witch hunt kind of psychology, and I think that's what, that's what that whole thing was about (mmmm-hmm).

John: What uh, now did you participate in that debate, you were in the audience or were you on the panel?

Tom: No, I was on the panel. That's probably the first thing I've done for the, for the uh, publicly, I was on the panel uh, and again the issue was simply a free speech thing. I think uh... I don't obviously remember any comments I made at that point. But I remembered making an analogy of allowing ROTC on campus. You know, people then being part of the war effort and if that was right to do, then it certainly was right to allow peace group or a you know, an anti-war group to exist you know, to use rooms and what recognition...that was the use of a room for a meeting and not the same thing as ROTC, where that recognition meant use of whole buildings and taxpayers' money for professors and you know, the whole...credits for classes and so on. That obviously we weren't asking for and we wouldn't have gotten.

John: Now, one of the big factors in the growth of the, as you put it, and I think justifiably the red scare, that was whipped up around the community, would have been the reputation of the

national SDS, or other chapters of the SDS involving violence. And uh, from what I can tell, Reverend Warren and others in the anti-movement used that argument rather extensively.

Tom: Yeah, I think, I don't think that the national SDS groups got, got uh, actually particularly crazy after that; that's when they broke down into different factions. The weatherman faction was (mmm-hmm), that was later, and what ...there was something called RYM I and RYM II, and all of that was later. I think there might have been a reaction to the, I think clearly there was, to the Democratic convention, which happened that summer, that fall and in Chicago. And I'm sure SDS was one of the groups there, but, but not, not the only one, certainly. SDS is and you probably know more of the history of it than I do, but as I remember was a uh, was a moderate, not moderate politically, but moderate tactically, initially in its formation. And it had a lot of older and community people involved in it. Progressive politically, but not you know, certainly not violent.

John: Yeah, this split that you mentioned seemed to come out of frustration of the continuation of the war, and I think it led a lot of the people involved in the movement to ...

Tom: You can't, at this point and somebody ought to write that history if it could ever be written, but you don't know how much of that was uh, I'm sure there was a lot of frustration, but you don't know on the particular incidence of violence, how much of that were provocateurs or government agents.

John: Mmm-hmm. A significant amount of Chicago demonstrations, anyway.

Tom: I just saw the PBS thing on that era nationally, and they said that there were 500 government agents in the crowds and at the Democratic convention. (mmm-hmm) So...how much of that was the case with that whole thing that happened later, is anybody's guess.

John: How did the SDS at Marshall see its role? I mean, did it see itself as a ...an educational organization, strictly an activist organization or ...?

Tom: I think both. I think uh...there were constantly activities planned and again, I think, as I remember it, the two was not only the anti-war effort but uh, there were serious problems there for black students, and they had an organization, Black United Students, and had some significant problems, uh, I don't remember that there were any black faculty or any black administrators there at the time. And I think there were a number of other issues uh, and I remember when uh, when Nelson was inaugurated, that was another big event, black students took the podium and uh, and uh, made a statement of the racism that existed there at the campus. You know, we were, we were uh, and as I say, by certainly if not by the spring of '69, by the fall of '70, by the fall of '69, the student government was involved in the anti-war

moratorium was involved in a lot of those kinds of things. And I think our role was more to push them, push that along and uh, uh, you know, we, we, we had different activities. We had ... I remember putting up crosses on the campus at Marshall, just as constant reminders of the, of the war.

John: Was that ...something that, you did several times or was that a one, one-shot deal?

Tom: I remembered several times (yeah?) uh, uh, also remember calling boycotts of classes that I think, I think there were some national days...and I remember the National Association of Student Governments or whatever had at one point a national boycott or strike day where people didn't attend classes and that was, was done at Marshall. They also had continued the forum series, I remember in '69 and '70, also, uh, and there were activities. And as I remember it the uh, that week where they brought in, they had one week where they brought in a speaker a week, I think was the week of the Kent State shooting of the students there. But I remember there I think that week at Marshall was when they brought the speakers in and there were either national demonstrations just before or after that, uh, and at that point, there were probably three, four hundred students from the campus who were going to Washington when there was a major demonstration, and uh, obviously before that there....in '68, '69 schoolyear, there were not anywhere near that number. \

John: Yeah, I remember, you mentioned the speakers during the Kent State week, I was on the campus by that time, and as I recall, John Froines, who I think was one of the Chicago 8, was speaking and the way I remember it, the green there in front of the old Shawkey Student Center was packed. There were probably hundreds of people there.

Tom: Yeah, yeah, and people came from both sides, you know, uh, when Aptheke came uh, that might have been the year before, I think it was. (mmm-hmm) Gullickson Hall was packed. And in fact, didn't they put that on t.v., I don't think, I think Channel 13 put that on t.v. I didn't go to that one. I don't know why, I just...yeah, I guess I did go to that. I remember Robert Welch speaking in the spring. That might have been the same week as Froines was there, and it was packed, all those speakers would have a thousand, two thousand people and there'd be a mix of students and people uh, from the, from the campus. Actually, Dave Dellinger was supposed to have come and whoever was in charge of it had, had apparently messed it up, and they got, they got Froines at the last minute to, to uh, because they hadn't made the arrangements. Dellinger was the announced speaker on the, on the program.

John: Now, when the, when the SDS did receive recognition, that was, of course, that was during Dr. Nelson's tenure, were, did you have any association with him during that period? I asked that because I mentioned...I know I saw you mention him during some of the correspondence about a membership list or something like that.

I wondered if you had any meetings with him or ... as a group or as an individual?

Tom: I remember...I forgot the issue. I remember as a group going but I think that was in March, possibly, uh, and not meeting with him, but meeting with the ...with Olen Jones, who was around at that time, and then came back later on. Uh, (he was ...assisted the president or something, at that time?) yeah, he was, he was uh, I think that was his title. I didn't know Nelson personally, and uh, I don't remember any meetings with him, you know, over the issue. I remember uh, one meeting, it may have been with the committee, and their biggest concern was the guy that was the head of the Journalism Department, their biggest concern was, was in the language in the publication that we put out, I think he was attempting to get a guarantee that no four letter words would appear in the (this is the journalism person was trying to get guaranteed?) yeah, yeah. And I know that that didn't happen. That may have been the meeting that resulted from us giving a list, and list officers or whatever, I don't remember, as I said, I don't remember really a clear distinction of who were members and who weren't, it was generally who came out to the meeting. And I remember I was elected president of the organization some time in the spring of '69, but I don't, I don't know exactly when and I think at that point in time the whole recognition issue was somehow settled. I know that Nelson got a lot of pressure from people in the community. I also know he got pressure from people to ...to recognize the organization. I'm sure there were people who were threatening not to make contribution to Marshall, there were also other people who were willing to make contributions and urging him to, to you know, recognize the ...

John: Yeah, one letter I saw to Nelson said he, I think this was after he recognized the organization, he said he's, the person writing this letter was confident that Dr. Nelson would be _____ whatever decision he made. You were right. The pressure that he got from the organized right, I guess....

END OF SIDE 1 - TAPE 1

John: ...you at one time, were the present of the organization (inaudible)....Danny Stewart, or uh, _____

Tom: I don't know who I succeeded. _____was the president, apparently in '68, '69, I never met Dave Caspers. I remember that he was the president. He started to back out because he was doing his student teaching. And there was a controversy over that. And he basically quit participating, because he couldn't have got his degree. In fact, that happened to one woman, Sherry Edwards, who was doing her student teaching in 1970, and the spring of '70, and not at the objections of really the school where she was, she was an art major, but Hayes was the, at that time, was the head of the education school, and he pulled her out. Students that were in the Education Department had a real problem, because if they

couldn't do their student teaching, they couldn't graduate. And so Caspers I think some arrangements were made, and he was graduated, but I know Sherry Edwards never, never graduated as a result of anti-war stuff. I don't think she was involved with SDS, may have come to some meetings and stuff, but uh, that happened in the year I....

John: So she was denied...she was pulled back from her student teaching program because of anti-war activities?

Tom: Right, right. And if she graduated, she went back and uh, and uh, got enough courses to get, to get a B.A. in something else. As opposed to education.

John: Mmmh.

Tom: She later had, she, because she later got a teaching job and uh, and something was done to take that job away from her. That was even a couple of years later, she'd gotten a teaching job, and someone from Marshall found out about it, and got the county school system to dismiss her because she hadn't completed that student teaching stuff. They had obviously much more of a hold on students in that program. (mmb)

John: I never heard that one. Mmmh. Uh. I had something I wanted to ask, but I forgot. When did the Free Forum makes its initial appearance, and how did you all arrange publi...you had to send that out of town to get it published, didn't you, or drive up to Louisville or something?

Tom: No, we uh, I wasn't involved when it initially first came out. I was involved with it later, but it was printed by a local printer here who brought, got himself into some trouble as a result, a decent guy, Johnny Clark printed the thing. We later because of, because of expense actually, took it down to uh, to a place in Kentucky, and got a couple issues printed there. I remember that, uh, and then in 1970, I guess in the spring of '70, we bought, no that was probably earlier, it was probably the fall of '69, uh, bought some printing equipment. And then somehow that word got out, I remember going over to pick up the equipment. I hadn't been involved in buying it, but was going to pick it up, and I remember the guy coming out and screaming and yelling about communist this and that and the other thing. And finally just telling him that if he wanted his you know, if he wanted his money for the equipment, he could (laughter)...

(both speaking at once)

Tom: ...yeah. And if he wanted his money for his equipment, he could be quiet and let us take it out of there. And if he wanted to try to sell it to somebody else, he could go ahead and do that, so he shut up at that point and took his check, and we got the stuff out of there. But...

John: Was it a personal check or an organizational check?

Tom: That was probably a series of checks. I don't, I don't remember. It might have been... I don't remember whether there was an account in the name of the organization or not. I tend to think that there wasn't. Because if there had been, I would have had to turn that over to somebody and I don't, I don't remember doing that. I don't remember taking it over from somebody else.

John: How did you all sustain yourself? Did you do fundraising or did you depend on donations, primarily?

Tom: Donations, personal contributions, I mean a lot of it, there weren't a lot of expenses. The only expense that I remember was in the publication of the paper. (mmm-hmm) You know, and that was always a contest trying to get money. It might have been a hundred, hundred and fifty dollars, to put out an issue. The paper followed the same trend in terms of its... how receptive it was. It was uh, thinking back on it, obviously those were some exciting times, because there was a lot of change in attitudes in a very short period of time. And uh, initially in late '68, early '69, puttin' it out, most people would take it and go on. Most people would uh, would thank you for it. More people than would thank you for it would refuse to take it, and a few people would crumple it up and throw it back at you, and try to start a confrontation. By not much later, and certainly by the fall of '69, people would wait in line, they would be out inside of you know, the main classroom building there, and uh, you know, you could have one person with the, with the Free Forum and people would line up. And hardly anybody would walk by you without taking one, and like they'd pay a price in terms of losing some time to stand there in line to get one.

John: What sort of runs did you put out? 500, 600?

Tom: No, I think it was 3,000. (is that right?) As I remember is was 3,000 copies (per issue?) Yeah (wow!) Yeah. Uh, you know, we, we, we concentrated on gettin' the thing out and sometimes we'd pass it out, a couple or three different times, different days, to you know, get it out and around. Those were individually passed out, because obviously to leave it anywhere (somebody grabbed 'em all?) yeah.

John: Once you got your printing equipment, then did you have...

Tom: I think by the time we got our printing ... from the time we got our printing equipment, we might have put out one issue. But we didn't get the printing equipment operational until the, until at least the spring of '70. And if we put out more than one or two issues, on that equipment, I'd be surprised. I don't, I don't think that function is you know, really the press to put that out.

John: What sort of editorial policies did you have? Did you have anybody that made decisions at what went in and what didn't? Or did you pretty much print everything that you got?

Tom: It...pretty much printed everything that we got. And uh, you know, certainly told as many people as possible when an issue was coming out. And to get their stuff in and there'd be a different group probably on most issues working to put the thing together and to you know, get it finalized and get it put out. It wasn't certainly a well-done you know, paper, and it would vary anywhere from two sheets, front and back, to four sheets, front and back, based on how much stuff there was, and uh, what we wanted to do, you know.

John: I noticed in the copies that I've seen, one issue at least was uh, given over to issues that concerned black students on campus. And it was put out by black students. Did the SDS work pretty close...were there blacks in the SDS, and did you work closely with the BUS, and the minority, student minorities?

Tom: There were blacks involved in SDS, certainly that came to the meetings, and participated. We supported the Black United Students. I think they had a justifiable concern of not being totally linked with SDS. They had their own program and uh, there was not resistance to ...to support on issues or activities that they were concerned with. Uh, and so those relations were friendly, but uh, you know, they were concerned that they have an identity of their own, and uh, and that's right.

John: One person you mentioned before we started the interview was Dick Houstead, and I know that he...he was a really, I guess, an influential person around town, at that time. I know he had a pretty popular radio program. What was his stance on this, SDS and the Aptheker affair?

Tom: Oh, he was opposed certainly to the recognition and was part of, at that time, fanning the flames. I remember that I was never on his show, I know that Danny Stewart was. And possibly somebody else with him. But he also had I'm sure, the opposition on a show, and he tended to fan the flames. It was talking show; I don't know how much, how popular the thing was. I think it's like any other talk show. I think there's a certain audience that listens all the time, and beyond that some people may listen for amusement occasionally, but generally don't. Uh...

John: Did SDS have a public relations committee, a liaison with the local press or the uh, t.v. stations? (no...) I mean, that you ...had a mechanism for letting them know when you were gonna have a demonstration of some kind. I know you had the Dow Chemical action, and the CIA, well, the CIA was gonna recruit on campus, but didn't. Uh...I think, because...

Tom: Yeah, I don't remember trying to think of the CIA and the Dow Chemical thing, I was not at the Dow thing. (it might have been before you uh, came) yeah. The uh, there weren't any

committees that, the organization was, was not structured in that way at all. Now, I remember that people from the media would get in touch uh, and uh, then if there was an activity or an event or whatever, going on, we would, we would call the media sometimes. Uh, as I remember it, and I don't remember names, there were uh, there were friendly, there were a couple of friendly reporters at least on the Huntington paper. It may have been later; it's only two years, so it's hard to talk about earlier and later, but there was such a significance of differences I remembered between those two years. But I remember getting photographs of I believe one was my live massacre of getting a photograph from a reporter who you know, kind of slipped it to us and we used it in the Free Forum. Uh, but I don't, there were not committees that I remember. There weren't any committees. There were regular meetings and there were a lot of informal meetings and uh, uh, those, those activities went on...a lot of the stuff we just participated in, they were our activities at all, forums, they used to have those impact series, obviously, but they also used to have discussion groups at the Christian Center; now they're just discussion groups around campus. Occasionally, we would be asked to speak. I remember being asked to speak at the uh, wasn't social work, they didn't have it, but one of the social sciences, at their faculty meeting, I can't think of what it was. It wasn't Geography, oh, it was what Geography would have been in. It was not the Sociology Department, anyway, you know, occasionally you'd be invited to speak at a, at a group like that. Uh, and then, during, particularly during the spring time when there was a lot of anti-war activity and the impact series, there were often debates. I remember participating in a debate with uh, someone from the American Legion uh, probably was in the spring of '69, that was sponsored maybe as a part of that series, or was impromtu. But people you know, even for something organized with very short notice and often _____ would often have four or five hundred people out in the afternoon (yeah), to attend. Different times of the week. (laughs) It sometimes sad to think about it, because you know, the times today in terms of Central America and South Africa, uh, are not all that different, and my guess is it would be harder to get a group of four or five hundred people out to an activity.

John: I was gonna say, well, do you think it'd take a direct physical threat to, to mobilize people like that? I mean...the war obviously, as you implied, stimulated the level of activism at Marshall.

Tom: There's no question that the, that the drafting and the number of people who were being drafted in the military, and there were students...students were directly threatened in a way that they are not. And there's no question that that had some impact. Although earlier at Marshall during the, somebody should do that one, during the, and I wasn't around, there was a significant civil rights movement in the early '60's here, if I remember the stories of the integrating the White Pantry, which was downtown (mmm-hmm), and also I think Bailey's cafeteria and several

restaurants but I remember the White Pantry guy was the worst, (yeah) and uh...

John: Fortunately, there is another graduate student doing work on the civil rights movement (is that right?) yeah. So... How about the draft counseling service on campus? Was SDS, was that a function of SDS? Or was that a different...?

Tom: No, I don't, I think there were a lot of similar organizations. I think SDS was seen rightly or wrongly, as one organization that a lot of others would steer away from, and would not have direct involvement with, because it was, had come under all of this, certainly, but I think all of it tied together around the anti-war stuff, and I remember that there was the draft counseling and yet there would be protests or demonstrations downtown at the courthouse around the draft that a lot of different groups would participate in. And again, outside of a really handful of people, in various organizations, there were a lot of other people that participated in different activities of all of 'em. And there wasn't happy identification probably outside of the leadership of particular organizations. You know...that, that this group or that group or the other group was there. Unless it happened to be the organization that was you know that had called the event or the demonstration.

John: I think it's a pretty good indication that the broad-base of acceptance or tolerance of the organization was the fact that something over 700 students signed a petition or signed petitions to give to Dr. Nelson, recommending recognition. And that's, that's significant, I think. Considering it was such a small group, as you said it was a free speech issue above everything else.

Tom: But again, I think that, that once the community got involved, and the segment of the community got involved, it was so ridiculous in the eyes of the most moderate faculty or student person on the campus uh, that that created a lot of positive feeling about the recognition question. And I think if you'd done poll in the spring of '69 uh, certainly much faculty and uh, and students, too, I think the majority would have supported recognition more so of a, out of, out of reaction to the, to that community effort. And the community effort was led by a small handful of people that were really just on a scare and a witch hunt, and uh, uh, I mean, I still don't know what they did with the money they raised at that meeting at Huntington High School. It'd be an interesting thing to find out, because they raised a lot of money.

John: Probably gave it to Dan Smoot.

Tom: Well, they gave some of it to Smoot, but he was the last one they brought in and they took up a collection at that meeting, too, and, and uh, what in the world they did with the money is anybody's guess, but uh, uh, and I remember talking to people outside of that, that debate at the Campus Christian Center.

People from the community who ... who got, had a much different idea after they had been there, although the scene was kind of wild, but even after that, had a much different view of what was going on than they had before. And uh, uh, ... just didn't seem to scare them. I mean and uh, that's, that's the way with a lot of those kinds of things. If you see the people involved are people, and as opposed to the marchers pointed out, it's you know, it has a way....

John: Now when you say the scene was kind of wild, you mean there was a lot of verbal battles going on in there or...?

Tom: There were a lot of verbal battles. As I remember it, and there were not total factions, but there were, we would say something, and there'd be a big cheer (laughter), and Ms. Payne or Dr. Warren would say something and there'd be some cheer to that. And uh, so there, it was, it was a polarized audience. And probably pretty evenly divided between students and uh, and people from the community.

John: So, what you, you said, would it be fair to conclude I don't want to put words into your mouth, fair to conclude that in a sense then Mrs. Payne and Dr. Warren really helped you all out?

Tom: Well, I think the whole debate was helpful for Marshall. I think it did something. You know, if you don't do that on a university campus, I don't know where, where...where else is a better place to have that kind of open debate and that kind of issue that crystalizes it. I think the whole controversy was helpful, you know, to the university. I think it shook it up, woke it up and uh, you know, I think was totally helpful. But yeah, there's no question that the...the forces uh, opposing recognition were so ridiculous. And I think that's one of the things that Nelson, that the university itself had to deal with, because by the spring, and that's reflected in a letter as I remember in one meeting, there just was no basis upon which to deny recognition, and recognition meant nothing except at that time it was an emotional issue. And there was just no basis upon which to deny it, except if you were gonna knuckle under to this very right-wing anti-intellectual, anti-university _____, and I think it put anybody that does much thinking in a position. I'm sure they would have liked to avoid it. I'm sure Nelson would have wished the issue never came up and there are a lot of other conservative faculty members who wished the issue had never come up, but once it came up and it came time to, and an action went through the process and they tried to obviously put it off from this committee to that committee, but once they had to deal with it, uh, they were in a...in a position where they couldn't do anything except grant the recognition. But to do otherwise uh, just would have been ridiculous.

John: Mmh.

Tom: They didn't have moderates in the community taken, taking that position (yeah), and it was not the uh, I don't know what

happened privately, but you know, I don't think any mainstream people in the community got involved in the thing.

John: Yeah, I certainly haven't got that impression.

Tom: That's the other thing I remember and I used that quote, but Mrs. Payne, who used to attend a lot of our, any time we had a forum, or had a speaker, she used to attend and you know, on a personal level, she wasn't too bad. She just was somebody that had nothing better to do with her time, and had plenty of money, she would just go around. But she had been quoted in a couple of books that had been written, and she, there was some quote about where she said if anybody calls you a fascist, stand up and take a bow, because a fascist was just a uh, a patriotic nationalist and you should be proud to be one, and I remember reading that, and I think that was probably printed 2 or 3 times, but I mean, that was the, that was the politics of the opposition, so I don't and I think that was obviously helpful to recognition, but I think it was helpful to the, to the whole issue and the issue was, those were good times at that college. There were times when people had to deal with the intellectual confrontation. There wasn't anything physical, but uh, people had, were confronted with, with issues and had to deal with them and shake out on one side or the other.

John: Now, I've heard from other sources Mrs. Payne was a pretty prominent voice, I guess, in the Huntington Women's Club, but that a lot of the membership was embarrassed by her, even though I guess, personally they wouldn't, they couldn't confront her with it.

Tom: I don't remember her organizational base, and the Women's Club may have been it. I don't know why she was what you know, what she was, other than you know, I don't know that history, but you know, you would have to, you would have to be embarrassed with what she said, and the ideas that she expressed, because they just didn't have any connection to reality. (laughs) But she was a nice person and uh, probably attended a lot of meetings, and could have, would be the type of person that would be in the leadership of uh, of non-political community organizations. And may have used that base then, to take her political stands, but I don't think most of the membership would have supported her though.

John: She used to go to I know, a lot of the free university meetings. Did you ever go to any of the free university classes off campus?

Tom: I don't remember that. (yeah, I know)

John: Keith Peters was involved in that. I know Mrs. Payne used to show up at a lot of those.

Tom: I remember that she'd show up at a lot of the stuff, maybe those were, maybe those were what I referred to as forums at the Christian Center.

John: Mmm-hmm, I think you probably, that's....

Tom: I remember once a month they'd have somebody come and speak on a particular subject, and that may have been what that was. And she would show up at most of those. I know that we uh, had someone come and uh, who'd been to Cuba and speak and she, she came to that. and uh, and I remember asking, her asking very detailed questions, not political at all, but about how people farmed and maybe that was her husband. I guess that was her husband who came and asked, was asking questions about farming and the equipment used (mmm-hmm), and those kinds of things. Just from an interest of how you know, people live in different countries and so she would show up a lot.

John: I'm gonna change this tape. It's about to run out.

END OF SIDE 2 - TAPE 1

Tom: ...as I remember that debate, and that was...probably a pretty major thing. I hadn't, I hadn't spoken to a group that large in my life, and I think in addition, and I gave the opening, the opening talk for us, and in addition to the ROTC thing, you know, I made that comment, or I made that quote and uh, then made the analogy that obviously Mrs. Payne could speak on campus, and uh, so that a fascist should have recognition and be able to speak and then ...then certainly people were against the war in Vietnam, for Civil Rights ought to be able to

John: Yeah, that's something I noticed in ...in all the, in a lot of the newspaper coverage, the Huntington paper and The Parthenon, and letters and petitions to Dr. Nelson. The opposition was always bringing up the point that this was, they didn't object to, for instance, the Aptheker speech, they didn't object to a communist speaking in Huntington. But they didn't want the use, the taxpayers' money being used to support it, they didn't want a public facility that was paid for by taxpayers money to host him. But they had no qualms whatsoever about Robert Welch coming in, from the John Birch Society....

Tom: No, Robert Welch spoke uh....

John: ...and using taxpayers money.

Tom: And the uh, that forum group, and that was run by student government, was real concerned to keep some balance, so that there was any balance in the speakers that went to the other side, therefore Aptheker was the unusual one, one of the _____ he following year, and most of 'em were, were uh, far more conservative than that.

John: Just...I have one personal question about Reverend Warren. He uh, from what I've heard about him, he seems to be sort of a master of crowd control, in that even from something you mentioned

earlier, uh, about his ability to generate the donations that was coming in, was that a valid assumption?

Tom: OH, yeah. He was uh, there was not question. He was the best speaker of anybody involved in that forum. I don't remember him doing well in the forum, because that wasn't his audience. He particularly shone where it was his event, the two things that I saw, the thing at Huntington High, which they staged, and it was their audience and the thing in his church. Although there were a few people who went (that was Jefferson Avenue Baptist), and right. And uh, his pitch for the money made me reach for my wallet (yeah), (laughter), so...and uh, uh, (a man with a gift), I don't, I don't remember how he led into it, but it was, it was a wonderful job. He could, he could ...he could easily compete with the t.v. evangelists.

John: So you were at Marshall until spring of 1970, is that when you said you finished....?

Tom: I graduated, I actually went to graduate school, started in graduate school in the fall of '70 and lasted about three months.

John: What was your degree in?

Tom: Political Science.

John: And you went to graduate, did your graduate work in political science, also?

Tom: I started in uh, in political science. I later went back uh, probably a couple, three years later and started into a master's degree in economics and uh, I didn't finish that either. They did away with the master's degree program, and there was some dispute about whether I was in it or not. Uh, the uh, I was in the program, but I had to take a couple of advanced level courses in the, in the B.A. program that I hadn't taken when I was in undergraduate school. And so, when they ended the program, the Regents ended the program, the rule was that if you were already in it, you could finish, uh, and there was a dispute there that I wasn't in it, and I didn't you know, I just left. I have a few, I completed a few courses, but ...

John: Now, did you get involved in union work right then, or did that come some time later?

Tom: No, I uh, worked for an organization called the Council of Southern Mountains, out of Berea, Kentucky. And that's when I left school in the fall of, in the fall semester, in 1970, and worked there for uh, six or eight months probably and uh, then had a press here, Appalachian Press, that uh, that existed probably from 1970 to, to uh, I would say '76, probably.

John: Really? Where did you operate from?

Tom: Uh, we were initially in a, in a house over on 7th Avenue, and moved to a building on 16th Street and 8th Avenue, and then moved down to 8th Avenue and 7th Street.

John: I read a ... a book you all put out, that David Corbin did on Huntington Socialists and _____, what other publications do you remember right off hand?

Tom: We put out a number, probably a series of 30, 40, pamphlets uh, in the, in the area of Appalachian studies. I'm trying to think of some of the others. We did uh, we did a series on uh, on the uh, coal mine organizing and strikes and in the '30's uh, that was really the history of the National Miners Union. We did a series on the uh, on the organizing in the textile mills, in North Carolina there was as I remember, a series of four; one was about an organizing effort to strike in Elizabethton, Gastonia was another. Some of the stuff that Don West has written, in fact, we published his it's not his last book, he's put one out since then, but we published a collection of ... of his poetry in a paperbound and hardbound volume. And then we did printing for, for other people (mmmm-hmm), contract?), yeah, we printed football programs for Huntington High, and uh, uh, stuff for the League of Women Voters, stuff for the (mmmm-hmm), the UMW....

John: Was Don West involved with the National Miners Union?

Tom: Yes. Yes. And I don't know to what, to what degree. I think he was an organizer uh, and I know I talked to him about and somebody ought to do, spend some time, spend a lot of time with him (yeah), ...

John: I understand he's in poor health, so... somebody really should.

Tom: ...somebody should do that. This summer he may be back up here. I saw him this winter, he came by, but he's in, he's in bad shape. For the first time that I've ever seen him.

John: He's 75, is he that old?

Tom: He's older than that, I think. He's between 75 and 80.

John: Has he still got his place over in uh, is it Mercer County?

Tom: Uh, Summers County. (Summers County) Pipestem. And he'll probably be there this summer. I know he's in Florida uh, for the winter.

John: What exactly was the na...was the National Miners Union a, a fashion that started off the UMW? Or what...or was it...?

Tom: No, that was a period of time, it was a period of time when the, when the UMW had been wiped out. Of course, the UMW came back later in the '30's, but the UMW's history was being organized in the late 1800's and being wiped out, and coming back and being

wiped out, and it wasn't until, until the late '30's that they really solidified...the National Miners Union was organizing really in east Kentucky, and was not in competition with the UMW.

John: Okay.

Tom: But I know that Don was involved in, he's told me stories about uh, you know, working at, working as an organizer during some of those strikes, and even at one point of his job being sent, as his job was to go to work and try to convince people to work and come out. I don't know how long he was involved.

John: Uh, now was your work with the press and that research, the publications you put out, did that influence you to get involved in the union work?

Tom: Well, I'd been interested in it since school, really, as being involved in union work. But there was, uh, you know, I don't know what opportunity there really, there really would have been, you know, at that point. Uh...and I got involved just because the, you know, I had the interest and uh, the opportunity came up.

John: Was that with the 1199? (yeah) When was that, that you got...?

Tom: '74. (un-huh) Uh...

John: So you were still, the press was still operating while you were involved with the union?

Tom: Yeah, the press continued to operate for a couple of, a couple of years after I left. Uh...and then it you know, it folded. But uh, uh, I guess October of '74 was when I got you know, went to work for the union.

John: And uh, just briefly, what was your progression there? I mean, now you're the president of the union, is that right?

Tom: Yeah.

John: This is National Hospital and Health Care Workers?

Tom: National Union of Hospital Health Care Employees. I'm the president of the district that covers West Virginia, Kentucky and Ohio. (right) That's different from the national president, obviously. The, the uh, I was an organizer with the union and uh, we successfully organized at Cabell Huntington in well, we had a fight there too because it was a public hospital and you couldn't file a petition with the labor board. We had a public fight around those workers right to vote. Which was a, which was a free speech fight, too, in a sense. Uh, and there was a decent community support around it. In fact, Dick Houstead was ...was a supporter of the people's right to vote. I was on his radio show in those days. The other person who was involved in uh, in those

early days on the other side, Dewy Parr, later became a delegate to the labor council, and uh, has been supportive (let me turn that down just a little bit). Uh...so we were successful in organizing there, and then began to build in some other places, and uh, I became the president of the district in 1980, when the district was created. Prior to that time, we had been in the area, which is a structure in the union, where basically there's not enough members to uh, you know, have a district. We're an area, and we became a district in 1980 and I was elected president at that time, and have been, have been since.

John: Are there any other of the people that work here in the union that you know of, that have background not necessarily in the SDS, but in student activism? Seems like a real activist group of people you've got over there. (oh, I think uh...) I guess anybody in labor organizing would be.

Tom: I think there are a lot of people in the labor movement who were involved in uh, in anti-war activities and student activities. I think there were a lot of people at that time, in unions who were involved. I remember going to the national demonstrations and there would be big delegations of people from uh, you know, from a lot of different unions. (mmm-hmm)

Uh...the famous construction workers demonstration in New York, uh, you know, created the impression that a lot of unions, and a lot of workers were...were...were opposed to students, you know, I don't think that was the case. (mmm-hmm) I remember when we were, one of the activities when we were picketing with the, with the state road workers, there was, there was a very decent reception to that, people welcomed the help and the participation and so on. And it's something that we had asked them whether they, whether they wanted us to participate (yeah), because we didn't want to I mean, we believed that, that they were right, but you don't want to mess somebody up, and you don't want to be where (right), trying to help somebody if they, their feeling is what you're doing is not helpful (yeah).

John: Uh...now the SDS, you mentioned earlier, I know on a national level started to disintegrate, I guess, about 1970, a little bit after that....

Tom: I remember a lot of those factions, uh, uh, starting in '69, '70, I don't remember the uh, the weathermen being around until after '70; they may have been. And of course, that's the one that a lot of people know of, and then the whole underground feature of that was, was later. As I remember it. (mmmm-hmmmm)

John: Now, how long did the SDS as an organization last at Marshall, do you...know? Were they still there when you graduated?

Tom: I don't think they really existed after that year. I think that the Free Forum was put out by one guy who kind of turned it into an artsy, poetry-kind of thing. I mean, I think he put it out kind of on a personal basis. But I don't think it existed after, after that year; I may be wrong. (mmmm-hmm)

END OF INTERVIEW