

CWU Living History Project

Daniel Ramsdell

Interviewer: ODETTE GOLDEN

Camera Person: ELDON JACOBSEN

Golden: I m Odette Golden retired Professor Emeritus from the Department of Foreign Languages, and today the Living History Project is interviewing Professor Dan Ramsdell Professor of History. He's going to tell us about himself and his journey through life at Central, Dan.

Ramsdell: OK. Do I have to confine it to my life at Central?

Golden: No.

Ramsdell: Yeah. I came to Central in 1969. I had previously taught in the History Department at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. Prior to that I went to school at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, finishing up there in 1961. So I have a thirty-five year teaching career in academia. Anyway I came to Central in 1969; been an Associate Professor of history and toiled in the History Department until 1996. I was Chairman of the History Department from 1984 until 1991. I also organized and headed the Asian Studies Program most of the time, on and off, but most of the time from its founding in 1974. That enough of a...?

Golden: Yeah. Well, you've covered, ..that's very nice, very good, very well organized. You've covered some of the information in question number two. So I think we'll just go on to number three. Question three... The years of your arrival and departure, and the question here, did you officially retire?

Ramsdell: Yes. Yes, I officially retired, fully and completely.

Golden: A year ago?

Ramsdell: In June of 1996.

Golden: You came here with your Doctorate?

Ramsdell: Yes.

Golden: The next question asks, did you complete any higher degrees after coming here? Did you teach in any Department other than your original assignment?

Ramsdell: Well, no, but Asian Studies became a program and various courses were listed as Asian Studies, and I taught those courses regularly from 1974 on.

Golden: Which areas of Asia interested you in particular? Ramsdell: East Asia. My training was in, primarily in Chinese and Japanese History, and I guess I ended up considering myself a Japan Historian more than China, though I taught both Chinese and Japanese History. But my publications are pretty exclusively in Japanese History.

Golden: Do you speak Japanese?

Ramsdell: Yes.

Golden: And you've lived in Japan.

Ramsdell: Yes.

Golden: Did you teach while you were living in Japan?

Ramsdell: No, I never taught formally. I taught a lot of people informally, but I never had a teaching assignment in Japan.

Golden: Did your stay in Japan in any way affect your personal life?

Ramsdell: Oh, yes. Of course. Many, many ways, including meeting my wife there, for example.

Golden: Tell us a little about your wife.

Ramsdell: Well, my wife is from Japan. What more do you need to know?

Golden: Well, what I remember is that she was the best dressed woman on campus. Really.

Ramsdell: Well, it's kind of you to say. But I'm sure that she would deny it.

Golden: In terms of periods of history, what years would the Japanese History period begin?

Ramsdell: Do you mean my interest in it, or my teaching?

Golden: Your interest in it, yes.

Ramsdell: Well, I have primarily specialized in modern history. Pre-modern Japanese is much too difficult for me for one thing. Training was available in Japan long before it was in the Western World, BUT that doesn't make it easy to read, the stuff a thousand years old. So, for various, for that and perhaps other reasons I have specialized in modern history, principally Twentieth Century.

Golden: Do you recall any significant problems that came up during your tenure at Central?

Ramsdell: (Sarcastic laughter) Who doesn't?

Golden: It's question number six is why I have to ask it.

Ramsdell: OK. Well, these were, as both of you know, tumultuous years. Especially the early years that I was at Central. Sixty-nine, seventy was probably the most difficult year in American academia overall. 1970 in the spring my first year here was the invasion of Cambodia, the Massacre at Kent State, which was the sister University of one I had just come from in Ohio, and it was difficult to, campus life was difficult. At least that was my experience, especially if you were a political animal, and I am a political animal. It's one of those things I can't help.

Golden: Could you explain that in a simpler form because I really am not a political animal, but I'm interested.

Ramsdell: Well, OK, and also as an Asianist, and when this Vietnam War was taking place in Asia, not the area of my own particular specialty, but never-the-less in Asia. It was difficult for Asianists not to care, and get involved, and also to take sides. This was a very decisive period in American History, and a lot of that division was experienced on campuses including this one. And by a political animal, I mean a person who,

again I have to repeat myself, who can't help but care about national politics, about local politics, about campus politics. And sort of get involved in it willingly. So I guess what I'm saying is I, you know, I couldn't be just an "Ivory tower" scholar, ignoring the tumult of the times.

Golden: Did it seem to you as though most people in this country took a kind of "Ivory tower" position with regard to the War in Viet Nam?

Ramsdell: No, not necessarily. I don't mean to really imply that, but, and there is something to admire among those who were able to detach themselves as "Academics" are supposed to be able to from the goings on of the (?), and do their work, whatever their work was without getting involved. I just couldn't be like that. I...

MICROPHONE SHIFT-DIFFICULT TO HEAR.

I thought Central was a rather conservative campus politically. The one that I was at in Ohio was also, compared to many others, many sister institutions, and it seemed to me a fair number were detached, Ivory tower, like here. I don't know if I would say most. It was about what I expected. The interviewee isn't supposed to turn around and ask the interviewer, what do you think, the two of you think?

Golden: Well, I was busy trying to build a Department from nothing, and that took me about 25 hours a day, and my life isn't of interest to this interview.

Ramsdell: OK. Eldon, we were talking about this before you came in, was the acting President in 1969 for some of that year.

Jacobsen: We were involved in wanting to hang the flag upside down, at half-mast, so we had worked with the student body, Ron Simms happened to be the Student Body President, and he was able to put over more or less to the unruly ones that, "OK, we'll put it down halfway now that we had my approval and the Board's." As long as we didn't hang it upside down. Which was supposedly, an emergency.

Ramsdell: I remember some raucous meetings in the Spring of 1970, you know with idle and profane language, and I remember the first Faculty Forum in the Nicholson Pavilion at the time of the Cambodian affair as well. Jim Nylander was the Faculty Senate Chair, so he presided over. That went pretty well, and the year ended with a whimper, sort of as I recall. But still it was an interesting and volatile time. Most of the people in history and Political Science and so on, you know, were political animals and so.

Golden: That's very interesting. I was very much involved in my own area, too much so I'm sure to be a really good citizen, but I did enjoy answering the next question, which is number seven, which humorous events do you recall?

Ramsdell: I saw that one, and so I thought, there's lots of little ones, but the two I came up with were, one, I don't know of this is a humorous event, but... I've got a great kick out of the many strategic plans that have emanated from, mostly from this building, over all the years that I've been here. Everyone gets real excited about every one of them for a time, and then almost before we know it, we've got another one superseding the previous one. It's funny. The other one I find humorous in a major way, is the, in fact I kind of suggested this to Eldon earlier too, the tendency here to never use your own experts when expertise is called for. Is that humorous or not? I mean it is to me because here's an academic institution that hires experts who have Doctorates, or you know, the terminal degree in their respective fields. And then every once in a while there's something to be done internally. Do those people, are they called on for planning, for example. We have all kinds of Departments that train planners, who graduate people who go out and become city planners and this kind of planner, and what have you, but do we ask them? No way! That would be unthinkable. Another good example, in fact this is a more specific incident, one year, this is probably in the Garrity Administration, Central got itself involved in the Summer Program in China. Do

you remember that at all? (No auditory response) OK. An elaborate flier was prepared, advertising it. I happened to be over in Bouillon with the President and several others at some kind of a meeting, and somebody trotted out this flier, so proud of it. (?) Apparently they had asked some Chinese students to write in Chinese, but, BUT, both of them had written the name of Central Washington University in two different ways in Chinese. When what they really wanted was Anwei University, the sister University, and see, the point is they hadn't asked anybody who knew Chinese about this. I happened to have studied Chinese as one of my doctoral languages. I noticed right away, this is embarrassing if this goes out anywhere. It was changed forthwith. Sort of related to that, although not as funny as that, in my estimation, we suggested that when President Garrity went to China, this is another embarrassing matter, but I won't bring that one up, we suggested that he take with him "Tom Yeh", a faculty member in the library, native of China. In fact even born and grew up at least to his teenage years in that part of China, we suggested that they take him along as an interpreter, but they wouldn't take him. A member of our own faculty, for heaven's sake. That's an example of, I know this is coming out as negative criticism, I guess, more than humor, but it's an example of what I find, maybe ironic more than humorous. Irony can be humorous.

Golden: Do you think, I've never thought about this at all myself until this moment, but it occurs to me that perhaps the reason for that is that they would want a dispassionate opinion, or something that would not conflict with interests of people on campus?

Ramsdell: Well, that could be, in certain kinds of cases, but as far as I know in most of these cases they never even ask the appropriate Department for their recommendations.

Golden: Well, that seems to me unprofessional, not to have done that.

Ramsdell: Yeah. Doesn't it seem strange, I mean, at least the one example I've mentioned, a specific example here, that you wouldn't ask anybody who knows Chinese, or you think knows it to go over it?

Golden: Well, don't you think the mind of administration is inscrutable?

Ramsdell: Yeah, lots of things are inscrutable. But this is a funny part of academic life to me I guess. I don't suspect this is greatly different elsewhere. Although you read about famous Universities that have these wonderful programs in this and that, and if you look into the past you find out, well, they happened to have some really aggressive person there a number of years ago, and then they got it going and so they listen to that person. I often had a feeling here that many people not just administrators, have a low opinion of the quality of the people they had hired. And, you know, I don't... the purpose of these Living History Project is not to bring up negative things all the time here, but, but, I feel like many faculty felt the same way, about their colleagues, or persons in other Departments. Our Departments had some good quality, but...

Golden: Well, your Department and mine are notorious in various ways probably. When I think of humorous events that happened during my own teaching career here, the faces of my students come flooding back to me. Have you kept up with some of your students?

Ramsdell: Oh yeah, sure. Sure.

Golden: Are they turning out properly?

Ramsdell: Well, we had a modest graduate program for a number of years, and I've kept up...I directed 17 M.A. projects here. Many of them in the last ten years, and so I've kept track of almost all of those people. Some from the early years I haven't. And yeah, I've been in touch with several of them. In fact one of them was on our staff for a while, actually. By chance. He went into the Army and rose to the rank of Major and then got assigned here to the ROTC program. And then we brought him in had him, he didn't teach history

classes, but I was able to use him. Chinese kid, as a matter of fact. So that's one example, but yeah I've kept in touch with a number of undergraduates as well.

Golden: Do you feel that we gave them a pretty good preparation on the whole for, perhaps graduate study, or their chosen area of work? Thai's not one of the questions, but it's on my mind.

Ramsdell: Well, I don't want to say no. The ones who, you know, you keep in touch with, or I've kept in touch with, I think I would say yes, because they're the ones who appreciated what, you know, since staying in touch with your old professor is pretty much up to the student, right? And we're not going to go over old grade books and say, "Now I wonder where that guy is?" And look that person up. And so the ones that do remember you and continue to stay in touch, correspond and so on, are the ones who, I think, appreciated what we gave them. But I would find it difficult, thinking of the thousands in my classes collectively, to say that all of them, or many of them were well prepared for what line of work, or what they did after they left. That's a sad thing, I think to me, after thirty-five years of academic teaching. I was an Idealist. Weren't you?

Golden: Yeah, it's true. Still am.

Ramsdell: Still am.

Golden: I'm a Romantic, which is worse.

Ramsdell: I try to be an Existentialist, but I'm not. I can't. but I'm sort of saddened by the fact, in truth, you know, most of them, probably most of all of the students, are just putting in time. Well, my measure of that is society. Which is still anti-intellectual, which is still parochial, which is still uninterested in the outside world as a whole, in a foreign language...teaching. I don't know about Frank (?) or any thing of that sort, but America's still not very much interested in Asia. It's still ignorant of the area. And still the same old clichés, and stereotypes abound in the popular, in popular culture. This is the thing that is most disappointing. Since I started in 1961 there weren't very many people in academia in this country outside of the major institutions teaching Asian History and other subjects including languages. Now there's lots, BUT has it made any difference in the National attitude, and I think it hasn't. I think collectively, we are as ignorant as we were forty years ago. What do you think about. ..All right, OK... probably don't want to do that.

Golden: I'll tell you, but I'm not supposed to have an opinion here.

Jacobsen: Why not? Go ahead.

Golden: It just seem to me that before you learn to run, you take little bitty steps, bit by

Ramsdell: Yeah, but forty years of taking steps, it's been marking time.

Golden: I think we've progressed just recently. I'm referring to the local attitude toward Spanish speaking people, Mexicans in particular. I think that the problem that Americans are now expressing toward minority groups from other countries is based on ignorance.

Ramsdell: Yeah.

Golden: At least here.

Ramsdell: Yeah. But that's the point. Forty years ago. A hundred years ago. Chinese immigrants, I don't know, a hundred and fifty, I guess, now, here, the official attitude has changed quite a bit, but the ignorance

is still there. Now, those of Spanish speaking Americans, or immigrants, and so on, I think you have a point there. The quantity has been so great...

Golden: And their contribution positively...

Ramsdell: That it can't be collectively ignored however, you can still get Californians passing Proposition, was it 189? And also voting out Affirmative Action. Who's that aimed at? Well, Spanish speakers and Asians in California, but mostly Spanish speakers, I'm sure.

Golden: Well, of course, when you're talking about voting against, what you were just saying, I think, there's another point of view that comes into play, and when it hits the pocketbook. And in California that's been the major concern, of course. Also people from California are different, you know. Well, I hate to leave that question. I think we could explore...

Ramsdell: Yeah, it's a lot of fun.

Golden: Cause I don't think the next one is quite so exciting. Which administrators and faculty come to mind as important leaders while you were teaching here?

Ramsdell: Can I think of any?

Golden: I did.

Ramsdell: Well, faculty members, among administrators. Well, I suppose I should begin with administrators. I think Garrity made a difference. He was...I locked horns with him, but he was internationally oriented to some extent. And I think he made a difference, especially in the first six or seven years of his tenure here. I'd like to say, Eldon, but that was my first year here, and I can't remember, you know, I didn't have much to do with the administration. Burt Williams from our Department was a good friend. We came at the same year, and I locked horns with him, too, see. Almost every administrator I had contact with I had disagreements with. But I also thought he made a difference as Dean by promoting certain kinds of things that I think were good things to promote. Scholarship, for example, and standards. Everybody argues about that kind of thing, but I thought he made an impression on me, and we were good friends until we started arguing too much after, can I say this? Parentheses, it's still on tape- most administrators stay too long in a position- end of aside.

Golden: How long would you give the average administrator to be at his most favorable?

Ramsdell: Well, I don't know. It takes a while, but it seems to me eight to ten years is maximum effectiveness here. The school I was at previously, I was there for eight years, and that doesn't count because the President resigned the same year I got there and then there was a fill-in person for two years, and so, you know, I can't compare it to that, but here it seemed to me (?...).

Golden: They want to know, do you recall any significant differences which arose between students and administration?

Ramsdell: Well, I don't know how significant the one about closing the library early was. That was only a few years ago, wasn't it? Of course, a few years ago means five, six, seven, or so. There was that one. There were the disputes in the very first years, 69-70, and a little bit after that, it died down pretty quickly after that in my recollection. That is students vs. administrators. Those are the only ones I can think of

Golden: React if you can to the following list of subjects as you probably would have at the time you were teaching at Central: Salary schedule.

Ramsdell: I was glad they had one when I came here because they didn't have one at the previous school I was at, and everybody was, you know, it was every person for themselves. It's still like that under a salary schedule to some extent, but at least they had one. And you could say you were on step... it kept changing the number of steps, but you know, step seventeen, or thirty-eight, or whatever. So I liked that idea, and! still do. The idea of having a salary schedule. One's position on it...OK, I didn't, I was Chairman for a number of years and, well, most of those were years when there wasn't any extra money, but as Chairman, I didn't have many things to quibble about with the administration on that score.

Golden: How do you feel about the Faculty Code?

Ramsdell: It has become over-written. I know when I say that, I'm... because I know who wrote it the way it presently stands, Beverly, Beverly Heckart, who is my dear friend, fellow historian, but I think it is over-written. That's all I'll say on that.

Golden: Well, it's probably one of the adjuncts of the legalistic frame of mind that over-writes, I think, the federal government's laws.

Ramsdell: Oh, yeah.

Golden: Look at the IRS. Over everything. Academic Freedom. important? Do we have it?

Ramsdell: Yeah, and good. Yeah, I never felt any restraints. I thought some people almost went too far using profanity in class. I've sat in classes where people did this routinely. But I never felt any political pressure in class. So I feel like we've enjoyed academic freedom in my tenure here.

Golden: Do you think, do you consider that academic freedom is one of the most important areas in which a college faculty can...(?)

Ramsdell: Absolutely.

Golden: Faculty-Administration Collegiality.

Ramsdell: Well, not bad. When you think, when you've been here a long time, you know, I guess, (?) There's some with whom, some administrators with whom you have good collegial relations, and some of them you don't. But you see then, the same thing among colleagues. Some you will get along with better than others, so I don't really have any complaints. I know some persons when they became administrators seemed to become less accessible then, I don't know, that's a two way street, I feel. I think, an example here again, to take the Garrity Administration, at first it was quite collegial, but it slackened off after a while. Like Garrity inviting everybody over evenings to voice their issues. I thought that was a great idea, and I enjoyed that, but then it dissipated fairly quickly.

Golden: How about the Faculty Senate?

Ramsdell: Well, I was on it lots of times, and then I thought it was just tine, ...uh, boring. And when I wasn't on it, I thought it was a joke. And I think most of my colleagues did too. When they were the Department representative, then it meant something, when they weren't, it didn't. I got more interested in the union than in the Senate in my last five or six years, or whatever.

Golden: How about "Town-Gown" relationships?

Ramsdell: I never had any run-ins personally. I thought it was better here than in Bowling Green. Now Bowling Green was a city about as small as Ellensburg when I first went there in 61, and the student population was about the same as it was here when I went, sixty-five hundred, or something, but then it got

very big. That University is up to fifteen-seventeen thousand, and then it sort of overwhelmed the town. And here, in all the years I've been here, it's been pretty, the enrollment of students, it's been pretty stable hasn't it? It's been pretty steady; it's gone up a little bit. And just thinking of that, I felt that the student, or the Town-Gown relationship was OK, if not great. It's common for the faculty to think of the Red neck mentality in the town, but you find that lots of places.

Golden: Long range planning.

Ramsdell: Well, I already commented on that in the Strategic plan joke.

Golden: Yeah. Building naming policy.

Ramsdell: Never thought of that. Well, let me...I do have one. A great friend, and apparently well-liked colleague, Floyd Rodine, died in 1977 and the new library had just been built, and it was suggested that the library be named after him. Then the President changed from Brooks to Garrity, and so on, and then they said they, well, no, we want to name it after someone who gives a lot of money. But they still haven't named it after anyone. Maybe they won't; maybe you shouldn't. That's one anecdote. The other thing though, I've opinions on lots of things. I don't think, basically, I don't think buildings should be named after people. I think they should bear some more generic "L&Lis" OK, although I suggested changing it to the History Building after we moved up there. I only suggested it to my colleagues.

Golden: Academic organization.

Ramsdell: No comment.

Golden: Publish or perish.

Ramsdell: Well, I have (?). That's nothing. Not a feature at Central in my estimation.

Golden: Do you feel that there's more or less emphasis on publishing now than there when you came?

Ramsdell: Yeah, a little bit.

Golden: A national trend.

Ramsdell: Yeah. Though, when I first came here I thought the faculty was very unambitious compared to what I had experienced in Ohio on that score. But it took me a while to sort of realize why, I mean one of the main reasons why, well, how can you be otherwise with this horrendous teaching load?

Golden: Perhaps, even down-trodden? That was my impression.

Ramsdell: Yeah, it's true. Course, when I came, those were the years of fantastic growth, I mean, when I did that little study of faculty here, I think, this came out in '91, the centennial. I think I found that three years, I think it was '67, '68, '69, more than 40% of all the faculty who had ever been here were hired in those three years. Unbelievable.

Golden: Do you, did you find increasing emphasis on the Doctoral Degree as a prerequisite?

Ramsdell: Well, I thought it already was when I got here in my Department, anyway. I recognized there were some fields, or some Departments, where there were people who'd been hired many years ago without, but that's not, I didn't expect anything other wise than that. So I don't think there's been much change, except there's no doubt that we have far fewer Doctorates teaching now than we did twenty-eight

years ago because we have so many adjuncts, part-timers, and the like. With pressure to hire graduate students to teach classes fully, not just to be TA's, we were pressured to do this in the History Department when I was Chairman. "If you do that, you can have more assistants!" You know, we could only have one or two, that was in the early nineties and after, and so, but beyond that, I don't know the last year I taught, we had four or five adjuncts without Doctorates teaching one, two, or more courses. None of them on tenure track, but still, my guess is the percentage of courses now taught by people without terminal degrees is higher than it was. And I may be guessing there, but twenty-five or thirty years ago...

Golden: That sounds a little like one of the issues in the United Parcel's strike, really. Part-time...

Ramsdell: Yeah, yeah, and they're treated, if they're good enough to teach, they deserve to be treated decently, salary-wise, and otherwise.

Golden: Otherwise?

Ramsdell: Well, you know, perks and

Golden: Emotion-wise?

Ramsdell: Yeah, well, yeah. And service on committees, and so on. Golden: Research vs. classroom teaching.

Ramsdell: What about it?

Golden: It's K" under this question. You don't have to answer it, but...

Ramsdell: Well, I liked to do research all of my career, I didn't publish an awful lot, but I liked to do some. Nobody, probably, is going to say that they sacrificed their classroom teaching in order to do research, probably no one's going to say that in an interview, but I suppose some do, some have.

Golden: What was your average class load as a professor in History? Hours?

Ramsdell: Yeah. Well, when I first came here, in fact this is one of the reasons I came, I was promised ten hours, big classes, ten hours. You know, papers and then that changed pretty quickly, so the average after the first couple of years I was here was twelve hours. Which has become standard.

Golden: Except In Foreign Languages, it was fifteen to seventeen at times.

Ramsdell: Was it? OK. To my knowledge, maybe, you know, Eldon, this kind of stuff was never in a contract. And even when I became Chairman I looked all over the place for somewhere in writing to see what my load was supposed to be. And I never found out, so I just decided, well, this is what I'm going to do and, you know, nobody ever questioned it even. Don't send that in to somebody to, for reciprocal, or "Ex post facto".

Jacobsen: It might be very helpful somewhere.

Ramsdell: Yeah.

Golden: Campus emergencies.

Ramsdell: There were some, weren't there? The ones I remember are ones of a personal sort that some how I got. It's not my job. I remember there was a girl who was raped, and she didn't tell me, but her relative of

hers did, and that was quite a long time ago. She was a foreign girl, too. And to me that was the tragedy, I suppose, more than an emergency. There was another similar case where a girl was attacked in a dorm that I remember from early in my career here. I happened to know her because she was the, she too, was the daughter of someone I knew. And so I heard about those and commiserated. Otherwise, you know, major emergencies, I don't think we had any that I can think of, do you?

Golden: No, I was just wondering, I must have skipped that completely in my own interview.

Ramsdell: Campus-wise. Yeah, campus-wise. You know that thing in 1970, it turned out not to be here. At some campuses it sure did. Like Kent State and Jackson State, and so on, but not here.

Golden: I wonder if relative physical isolation of Ellensburg had something to do with it.

Ramsdell: So many students go home for the week ends.

Golden: Hiring policies and practices.

Ramsdell: Normal. I think they were normal, and to have gotten better because of Affirmative Action, I think.

Golden: Pre-college preparation and quality of students who entered Central.

Ramsdell: Well, I think it was about the same as it was at the previous school I taught at when I first came here. I think it's deteriorated some. I think it had when I left, maybe it's improved dramatically after my departure. I measure this by what I felt I could demand in the students. I did go over my grade books, though. I looked at the very first year I was here and then the last year, and my grades for comparable courses were almost exactly the same. But I feel like I'm demanding less. Less reading. I used to demand in a five credit History class, beginning History class, a text book and four or five paperbacks on fairly specific subjects, and I couldn't do that the last year, last few years. I could only get away with only maybe two.

Golden: Do you feel that the students would not have complied?

Ramsdell: Well, they didn't. Some of them didn't even with two novels, historically relevant novels. Like George Orwell's *Burmese Lays*, for example.

Golden: Do you think that students, perhaps, don't read as much before they come to school, to college?

Ramsdell: That's my thought. I suspect that.

Golden: What would be the roll of the computer in that?

Ramsdell: We used to blame it all on television.

Golden: Well, that crossed my mind.

Ramsdell: Yeah. What's amazing to me is that I have known students and other young people who are sort of proud of the fact that they don't read. "I haven't read a book in years." Golden: Don't know how to read, or...?

Ramsdell: No, but they don't like to and they're sort of proud of that fact. Just like, well, I don't, maybe there are some other things they don't like, you know. "I don't like Rock," I guess I wouldn't say rock music, but 'Classical music or something. I don't like that."

Golden: Don't eat meat.

Ramsdell: Yeah.

Golden: What do you think about faculty organizations including unions?

Ramsdell: I'm all for it. I was a union member from the organization of it, and I'm a strong supporter of the union.

Golden: Were you a member of AAUP?

Ramsdell: I used to be. I was in Ohio. I can't remember if I dropped it when I came here, or somewhere along the line, I guess.

Golden: See, we were black-listed by AAUP for ten years...

Ramsdell: Yeah, that's right.

Golden when I came here. I didn't know that, or I would not have come here.

Ramsdell: Maybe I wouldn't have either. I was quite a strong AAUP supporter, the academic freedom side of things, back in Ohio. Of course nobody told me that they had been... When did the black list end? Do you remember?

Golden: The local chapter appealed to the National Organization to ask them to take us off the black list because we were doing better. We couldn't hire...

Ramsdell: Yeah.

Golden: . . . Respectable people. We couldn't. Who knew about it. I didn't know.

Ramsdell: Do you remember when that was?

Golden: I'm sorry, I don't. I probably will...

Jacobsen: About '49, '50, '51.

Golden: Well, I came in '49.

Ramsdell: OK, yeah, so...

Golden: But the case in particular involved dismissal of a tenured faculty member on an apparently trumped up charge by the President.

Ramsdell: McConnell.

Golden: Yes.

Ramsdell: I heard a lot about him from Floyd Rodine,

Golden: Dr. McConnell never discriminated against women, and I think someone ought to mention that once in a while.

Ramsdell: He didn't.

Golden: He did go around measuring cubic feet of air.... There was a lot of air in Ellensburg. Were you the recipient of any awards or honors?

Ramsdell: No.

Golden: What specific contributions do you feel that you have made to the progress to your Department or School? Do you want me to read their examples, development of new courses...?

Ramsdell: Yeah, I saw that one. Well, I am willing to take credit, the major amount, I suppose, for establishing the Asian Studies Program, and promoting it.

Golden: We were markedly lacking in that area.

Ramsdell: Yeah, ...It's had a lot of set-backs and some of the people in it died. Usha Mahajani. Do you remember her?

Golden: Yes.

Ramsdell: And some were fired. Shahid Refai, who was one of the two persons, two tenured people dropped in 1982, but aside from that we struggled through for twenty years and it's still an on-going program. So I take some satisfaction.

Golden: Revisions of majors or minors.

Ramsdell: Well,...

Golden: Well, you had a new major.

Ramsdell: Yeah. That was the first that we formed a minor and then a major in that. But, oh, then the History Department revised it. Here's one. Soon after I got here, and I don't take all of the credit for this by any means, but the Department changed its basic course from Western Civ. to World Civ. And I think that was a positive step.

Golden: Coming out of our isolation a bit.

Ramsdell: Yeah.

Golden: Notice the rest of the world.

Ramsdell: So that was something I did campaign for, in fact the school I was at previously, we also did that. I don't think it has made a particle of difference, except to those who taught.

Golden: What major campus committees did you serve on?

Ramsdell: Well, I'd like to say that historians of the future should look at the documents and find out, but I was on the General Ed. Committee a number of times, I was on the Faculty Research Committee, and I was on the Graduate Council, is it?

Golden: Yeah.

Ramsdell: ...Quite a bit. I can't remember if that was the name of it. Those were the main areas of interest to me, and those were the major committees I can think of I was on some Ad Hoc Committees, including one to deal with a proposal to allow local clergymen to teach the History of Religion on campus back in the early Seventies. Somebody ought to look into that. Somebody'll look into the documents on that someday.

Golden: Dr. Rinehart offered a class on the Bible as Literature.

Ramsdell: Yeah, Well, these were local clergy persons, several of them, including the local Roman Catholic Priest, but I can remember the names of several of them, and they came up with a proposal to teach courses through Central, as regular credit courses. And an Ad Hoc Committee was formed by Bernie Martin and I was the History representative on it. And I'm pleased to say that we stifled that because these were not faculty people.

Golden: I was just going to ask you about the separation of Church and State in the same Institution.

Ramsdell: Yeah, right. They wanted to teach stuff like "New Testament Times", as history, and I can't remember what other Departments they...

Golden: Well, I think you made a significant contribution by stifling.

Ramsdell: Well, that was, you know, the committee.

Golden: did you ever serve on a building committee?

Ramsdell: No, thankfully.

Golden: So you didn't make any key decisions on these things.

Ramsdell: No.

Golden: Did you ever serve as an administrator, well, you did of course.

Ramsdell: Well, I never thought of the Chair as an administrator.

Golden: Well, the people who are not Chairs do. The Non-Chairs.

Ramsdell: OK.

Golden: You know that. I went through that, too.

Ramsdell: Did you?

Golden: Oh, yeah.

Ramsdell: Well, I could still belong to the union. I wasn't a member of management like a Dean. Or, you know, so many of the other, I was going to say supernumeraries.

Voice: My time is up. OK, five minutes. OK This is just like a TV Studio.

Golden: Well, it's been interesting talking to you, maybe you could come back and we could do it all over again.

Ramsdell: Yeah, well. I turned over a number of things to Tim Eckert when I retired because, is this thing still on?...

Jacobsen: Because we want to get anything that you might not have thought of also.

Ramsdell: Yeah, well, as you probably know in the difficulties with the Provost in the early nineties, I was involved very much in that. And so I had a number of documents that, or minutes of meetings that were held, of Chairs on that issue, and also the meetings we had with the President and the Provost, or Vice-president for Academic Affairs which were not made public by the President. I turned those over to Tim Eckert. They best be kept there for a while, I think.

Golden: They should be a matter of record.

Ramsdell: Yeah, well, but there's one in there that's, I hate to do this but it may be my only chance, where I have a letter from President Garrity saying he doesn't want this to be a matter of record. He thinks this meeting should not be a meeting of record. After I sent him in a detailed set of minutes. We met with him alone at that one point, and

Golden: I don't think that's a question of what anyone wants to do, it's a matter of record, if it's official.

Ramsdell: Well, maybe it wasn't an official meeting, exactly, I suppose. We have the right to assemble, really, and so we did, on campus. And we followed Robert's Rules of Order. We followed procedures, and so on. And we took detailed minutes.

Golden: And the outcome of that was...?

Ramsdell: Well, the vote of confidence in the Provost, which was overwhelming. I don't

know. 75% to 25%.

Golden: I certainly wish we weren't out of time because you have a lot to tell us about. A lot I don't know about.

Ramsdell: Well, you know, I'm sure everybody does. I mean, everyone of us has our own perspective on all of this, and like you said at the outset, I mean, this is our life here was very important to us. I mean, this is what we did.

Golden: I do have a couple of questions about your personal life. Were you married before you came to Central? You have an unusual wife. Could you in two minutes tell us a little about that? That's all the time we have.

Ramsdell: I don't think that necessary, really. But let me just say it's satisfactory. I have three children, and six grand children at present.

Golden: A big success.

Ramsdell: So I don't know if that's a success, or not.

Golden: Oh, I think that's a success. Thank you very much.

Ramsdell: Yeah, OK. Thank you.