

Transcription of Oral History Interview with
PEGGY FOUKE WORTZ

April 28, 1998

The following oral history interview is being conducted on Monday, April 27, 1998, at the desert home of Peggy Fouke Wortz, who is the granddaughter of the inventor and founder of Oldsmobile. She has been a generous benefactor to many organizations, including the University of California at Riverside.

My name is Jan Erickson. I work in Chancellor Raymond L. Orbach's office. He is the eighth chief administrative officer of the Riverside campus.

Erickson: Peggy, I wonder if you would start by telling us where you were born and a little about your mother and father?

Fouke Wortz: I was born at Elbamar which is at the very south, south end of Grosse Ile right where it goes in to Lake Erie. That was Grandpa Olds' summer home.

Erickson: You were born at the summer home.

Fouke Wortz: Yes, and Grandma and Grandpa invited the doctor down for two months, because I came in July and my cousin Ed came in August.

Erickson: Oh.

Fouke Wortz: I have never found out what happened to his other patients.
I have never found out what happened to his other patients!
(laughter)

Erickson: Did you have brothers and sisters?

Fouke Wortz: Yes. I have an older brother, two years older.

I wanted to say one more thing about Grandpa.

Erickson: Oh, please. I want to hear a lot about Grandpa.

Fouke Wortz: Well, he held the chloroform for Mother.

Erickson: No, kidding.

Fouke Wortz: Yes. He always wanted to see what went on, so he held the chloroform.

Erickson: Oh, my. That was really something in those days—the use of chloroform.

Fouke Wortz: Yes, it was. They were just beginning to use it.

Erickson: I see.

Fouke Wortz: I think Queen Victoria started it, and when she didn't die, then it became fashionable.

Erickson: Well, tell me a little about your Grandfather and your Grandmother.

Fouke Wortz: Well, I spent a great deal of time with them, almost came to be their third daughter. I would go down to Florida in the winter, and if Mother and Bruce didn't come down—I called my father by his first name.

Erickson: Oh, really.

Fouke Wortz: ...at his request.

Erickson: Do you know why, why he wished that?

Fouke Wortz: He said when I turned thirteen that it was my privilege.

Erickson: I see. Well, how nice.

Fouke Wortz: When Mother and Bruce didn't come down to Florida, I stayed with Grandma and Grandpa. And I spent a lot of time with them on the yacht and up north in Charlevoix where Grandpa and Grandma had an interesting summer home, a lodge, Oldswoode Lodge.

Erickson: So, you had a huge home in Michigan, is that right, and then a summer home in Michigan and a winter home in Florida.

Fouke Wortz: Yes, and as we grew older, we all got so noisy and so much bigger that Grandpa went out and bought Mother and Bun a lovely home right on the ocean in Daytona Beach.

Erickson: Oh, in Florida. So, you had your choice of all kinds of places to go.

Fouke Wortz: During February...I don't know if it were February or March or April, when my father came down, Mother would sit at one end of the table and my father at the other, and Mother ran the house. When Uncle "Blondye" came, Auntie Bun sat at the head of the table and ran the house.

Erickson: Interesting.

Fouke Wortz: Yes.

Erickson: Was your Grandmother a dominant force in your life?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, I really think so. I have thought more and more, especially this year about what Grandma wrote...When I was baptized, she gave me a New Testament carved from olive wood, from the Mount of Olives. And on the fly leaf

Fouke Wortz: she wrote from Matthew 5:16, I think it is, “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works.”

Erickson: That’s beautiful. Do you still have that?

Fouke Wortz: Well, I gave it to my daughter when she was christened.

Erickson: Oh, how nice. That is wonderful.

Fouke Wortz: It was almost prophetic.

Erickson: Umm. Isn’t it. Well, let’s talk about the yacht that you mentioned. This was your Grandfather’s yacht?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, he really had several yachts during his lifetime, and at Elbamar, he had a boathouse. I was too tiny to enjoy it then, but in 1923 or 24, he found a big huge boathouse in Charlevoix that had a flowing spring in it. Ice never formed around the yacht in the winter, so he bought that and we all started going to Charlevoix for the summers.

Erickson: That sounds lovely.

Fouke Wortz: Just recently, I sold my interest in Charlevoix to my brother. It’s too far for a weekend for us.

Erickson: Sure, it would be.

Fouke Wortz: But we loved it, and I am so glad that Jim loved it, too.

Erickson: Oh, he knew it, too. That’s great.

James Wortz: Well, we divided it up, and you gave the part that is yours to Hillsdale...

Fouke Wortz: My Charitable Remainder Trust.

Erickson: You gave your portion to Hillsdale College?

Fouke Wortz: Umm. Grandma was on the board there for many, many years and gave a dormitory, the Metta Woodward Olds Dormitory, and so I thought that was fitting.

Erickson: That's nice. Absolutely.

Well, you just had quite a lifestyle, didn't you, when you were a younger person? Not that you don't now, but quite different. What was it like, Peggy, growing up in a huge mansion?

Fouke Wortz: Well, it was normal for me.

Erickson: Because you didn't know anything different.

Fouke Wortz: No, although I knew none of my friends lived that way. You know that never bothered me.

Erickson: How did your other friends live? Were they from wealthy families, too?

Fouke Wortz: No, not in Lansing. No. I finally, you know, in boarding school, had a good many friends. For instance, my roommate came from Hawaii, one of the Cookes.

Erickson: So, you were growing up in Lansing. Was it a public school system you went to there?

Fouke Wortz: For a little while, but only until the fifth grade. And then Mother decided that I was being passed simply because I was who I was. So then I went to a private school in Lansing with tiny little classes. And then I was a charter boarder at Kingswood School Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills.

Erickson: Which is nearby, isn't it? Bloomfield Hills?

Fouke Wortz: Yes. Well, now it's an hour away. In those days, it was two hours away. My brother and cousins were at Cranbrook School for Boys, and we would see each other at the movies

Fouke Wortz: every Saturday night, the boys on one side and the girls on the other. Not the way it is today.

Erickson: Oh, it's quite different. (laughter) When you had social occasions, were they formal?

Fouke Wortz: Well, we had tea dances. Occasionally, we would have a ball.

Erickson: What was that like? Do you remember one?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, yes, we had dance cards and filled them out. I wish I had saved some.

Erickson: Would that have been when you were a teenager?

Fouke Wortz: Yes. I went to boarding school when I was thirteen.

Erickson: That's right, you said that.

Fouke Wortz: And from there, I went to Bennington.

Erickson: Was that a good experience?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, but do you know much about Bennington?

Erickson: Well, only that it is a prestigious college.

Fouke Wortz: Well, you know, it opened early in September and closed at Christmas time. And then we had January and most of February to pursue our own interests in whatever we wanted to major. And then we would come back at the end of February and write papers on what we had done, and it would go until, I think it was the end of May.

Erickson: Do you remember what you wrote on one of those occasions?

Fouke Wortz: Well, I was going to be a—my family was horrified—a veterinarian.

Erickson: Oh, that horrified them?

Fouke Wortz: Well, that upset everything, so I decided to be a biologist.

Erickson: What would they have liked you to be, do you think? What would they have chosen for you?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, something literary, no doubt. But, you know, nobody thought I would ever have to work or do anything. And, in fact, I didn't even decide to go to college until the eleventh grade.

Erickson: Related to the wealth of your family?

Fouke Wortz: Umm.

Erickson: We are sort of moving all around, but let's go back to the mansion because I find that fascinating. What was it like? Were there several rooms?

Fouke Wortz: Several. (chuckle) Jim can tell more about that. And Phil and I went back for one Christmas, and one man burned it.

Erickson: Burned the mansion?

Fouke Wortz: Umm. It had become Lansing's most fashionable restaurant.

Erickson: Oh, it was turned into a restaurant?

Fouke Wortz: And the owner fired a waiter, and the waiter went in and poured kerosene or gasoline. The oak floors were about that thick (four or five inches), and it really burned. I was so glad that Phil and I were there to be with Mother, because, you know, it just broke her heart. Auntie Bun had bought it from Mother the day after Phil and I were married. Talk about a Golden Tongue!

Erickson: Now, Auntie Bun was your...

Fouke Wortz: My Mother's sister. And the man burned the thing. So, I took Jim over to the ruins one day, and he stood up in the fireplace. You could stand in the fireplace.

Erickson Oh, my goodness.

Fouke Wortz: It was big. This was one of the carpets (referring to the carpet in her present-day dining room).

Erickson: Oh, it's lovely.

Fouke Wortz: It's mate is in Michigan. My brother has it.

Erickson: So they did salvage some things.

Fouke Wortz: Mother sold it and took what she wanted.

Erickson: Oh, before...

Fouke Wortz: Umm. And Auntie Bun bought that rug from Mother (referring to a very large carpet in the living room). That was made in Peking. These were both made in Peking. They each have matching rugs to go with them, but that one (presently in the living room) was for the dining room, and it had a very wide border. But Cousin Buny gave it a haircut. It didn't suit her! (laughter)

Erickson: Well, it is still very large. (laughter) I can imagine what it would have been. My goodness.

Fouke Wortz: It was a Chinese dining room with panels of beautiful Chinese paintings that were made in Peking, really a lovely room.

Erickson: You talked about oak on the floors.

Fouke Wortz: Yes.

Erickson: Gosh, that sounds wonderful. Today, if that were still in existence, I am sure it would be ...

Fouke Wortz: An orphanage.

Erickson: An orphanage!

Fouke Wortz: Or something like that.

Erickson: I was going to say something open for the public for tours, you know, that kind of thing. Because some of the old mansions are used for that now.

Fouke Wortz: It would. It had a beautiful staircase of granite. And all of Mother's friends, for years said, "When Peggy comes down as a bride..."

Erickson: Did you get married there?

Fouke Wortz: I was married in that house, but my brother carried me down the back stairs. He was afraid I would trip. (laughter)

Erickson: Because your dress was wide... Oh, my. Were you and your brother very close? Are you?

Fouke Wortz: No, not very.

Erickson: Well, tell me if you would, please, how it was to live in that mansion. Did you sort of wander around? Did you have an area that was yours.

Fouke Wortz: Oh, I had my own room and dressing room and bathroom with lavender tiles, and a little maid's room off of it.

Erickson: Did you have a maid assigned to you?

Fouke Wortz: I put up such a fuss they gave that project up.

Erickson: (laughter)

Fouke Wortz: And my bedroom opened into Mother's. She had a really, well, it was almost the size of our living room (approximately 20 x 30)—Mother's bedroom.

Erickson: Oh, that's quite large.

Fouke Wortz: And then she had her own dressing room and bathroom.

Erickson: Did you play the piano?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, I did.

Erickson: What other kinds of things did you do as a youngster?

Fouke Wortz: Well, I was a great reader, so I really did read a great deal. And Mother collected books of which we have a few and many of which we gave to Hillsdale.

Erickson: Very nice. Do you remember a favorite toy or...?

Fouke Wortz: Well, as I grew older, I had a little English Austin, and Olds had an American Roadster. And my cousin had a coupe. Those were both American cars—Austins.

Erickson: I see. Austin is American? No, I didn't know that.

Fouke Wortz: Well, that was quite a while ago. I don't think they still make them in America.

Erickson: Well, tell me about your Grandfather, please.

Fouke Wortz: He was a very interesting man, and he came as soon as Phil and I arrived in Riverside. He and Grandma came out for Christmas. Grandpa couldn't stand it until he saw how we were living.

Erickson: And where did you live in Riverside?

Fouke Wortz: Do you know Knox Mellon?

Erickson: Yes.

Fouke Wortz: Right there.

Erickson: Oh, in that home. On Ladera. Oh, that's lovely.

Fouke Wortz: Yes. We gave a small party for Grandpa and Grandma and Mother. That was the one time Jim couldn't come, so he never met Grandpa.

Erickson: That's too bad. How old would Grandpa have been when he came to Riverside?

Fouke Wortz: He must have been 82.

Erickson: But in fairly good health.

Fouke Wortz: Remarkably good. Well, let's see. That was '46, so he would have been 82.

Erickson: So, you passed the test? You passed Grandpa's test?

Fouke Wortz: Well, not really. He wanted me to get off the hill, because he thought it was dangerous in earthquakes. But it is still standing.

Erickson: Yes, very much so.

How many children do you have?

Fouke Wortz: I have three. I have Phil Fouke III who is a broadcaster in the upper desert. He is on from 6:00 a.m. until 10:00 a.m. He loves it.

Erickson: How fun. Can you get that reception here?

Fouke Wortz: He says that we could with our computer. They have developed it so that we could hear it down here, but we haven't tried.

Erickson: Well, how fun. Phil and who else?

Fouke Wertz: Roberta lives outside Seattle, and she is about five years younger. And Lee is nineteen years younger than Phil.

Erickson: Oh, my.

Fouke Wertz: Phil was in college when Lee was born.

Erickson: That's like two families for you then.

Fouke Wertz: Believe me, it was. I refer to the older children ...

Erickson: And Lee.
Is Lee a boy or a girl?

Fouke Wertz: Lee is a boy. I have two sons and a daughter.

Erickson: And where does he live?

Fouke Wertz: Santa Barbara.

Erickson: So you have lovely places to go to visit.

Fouke Wertz: We really do. And Jim has a daughter outside of Washington, DC. So we have a nice circle.

Erickson: Yes, you do.

Erickson: Let's talk about your education. You mentioned you went to boarding school.

Fouke Wertz: Well, before I went to boarding school, every winter, you know, we went to Florida for about ten weeks. For a while we had tutors, the same tutors every year, and then another school was opened up which was set up precisely for children like us who came down from the north. We would bring our own books and our own courses and be tutored at that school. It was wonderful. I learned more there.

Erickson: Really?

Fouke Wortz: Um hmm.

Erickson: Well, the classes must have been quite small, too.

Fouke Wortz: They were almost individual. We all had different books and different programs.

Erickson: So that was a good experience. And then Bennington.

Fouke Wortz: Yes, well I had five years at Kingswood.

Erickson: That was the private school.

Fouke Wortz: That was where I went to boarding school, and I was a charter boarder. It's still going.

Erickson: Do you ever go back?

Fouke Wortz: Jim, did I take you back to Kingswood one time? I think I did.

James Wortz: Yes, you did.

Fouke Wortz: Have you ever heard of Carl Milles?

Erickson: No, I haven't.

Fouke Wortz: He is a well known Swedish sculptor, and he designed the school and Saarinen drew the plans and Carl Milles designed all the statues and most of the wall hangings were hand woven. It was really a cultural experience. It was beautiful.

Erickson: I am sure.

Fouke Wortz: And in those days, we each had our own bedroom and it was connected by a bath to your roommate's. Now, it's two in

Fouke Wortz: one little room and two in the other little room and four in the bathroom! (laughter) It's terrible.

Erickson: You appreciated your privacy, I am sure.

Fouke Wortz: That was after the war.

Erickson: When did you meet Phil Fouke?

Fouke Wortz: Mother went quite often to St. Louis to visit friends and one man said oh, he knew just the man for me. Well, it was Phil's brother.

Erickson: Oh, for goodness sakes.

Fouke Wortz: I went down to study piano, concert piano, in St. Louis one fall and met Phil.

Erickson: And where were you, age wise? Were you out of school then?

Fouke Wortz: I was twenty. I decided instead that I would much rather go over to Berlin for the winter season, because my father's sister and her husband lived there, and he was Treasury Attaché. So, I got all fixed up, new wardrobe, new trunk, and we went to New York to get on the *Breman*. And our Ambassador was not returned to Germany. Both my parents came to New York and said, "No."

Erickson: They didn't want you to go?

Fouke Wortz: They were divorced by then.

Erickson: Your parents?

Fouke Wortz: Um hmm. They were divorced when I was a senior in boarding school. But it was amicable. They both came to my graduation. And so did Grandpa and Grandma, and that set all the tongues wagging in Detroit.

(chuckle)

Erickson: They always have to talk about something.

Fouke Wortz: Yes.

Erickson: So, how long did you know Phil then before you decided to get married?

Fouke Wortz: Two years. I met him in St. Louis, but his family had a cottage across the lake from the lodge in Charlevoix.

Erickson: Oh, my goodness. But you had never met him there?

Fouke Wortz: Well, yes I did, after I met him in St. Louis. I would see him up there. And for some unknown reason, Grandpa decided to hang a red light on the corner of the lodge so that we could see it when we were coming in by boat at night after we had gone to the movies, and we would come across Lake Charlevoix. And Father Fouke thought that was the funniest thing. (laughter)

Erickson: The red light district.
What did Phil do for a living?

Fouke Wortz: He went to St. George's and then Yale and then entered his father's business which was dressing and dyeing Alaska seal skins.

Erickson: My goodness.

Fouke Wortz: And the lodge in Charlevoix, we had seventeen bedrooms.

Erickson: That's huge.

Fouke Wortz: And the table, the dining room table would seat thirty six. We often had it full. We had great big house parties.

Erickson: Now, who did you say owns that now?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, somebody burned that. Only the fireplace remains. Somebody has built a cottage around the fireplace. It was a point of land, a beautiful point of land, and we all had visions, you know, of having our own cottages there in the summer, and then we would have one main place for dinner. After I announced my engagement to Phil, Grandpa quietly sold it. Everybody in the family was upset.

Erickson: Do you know why he did? Did he ever say?

Fouke Wortz: He never would say, but I think he thought that since I was leaving the family that nobody would come anymore.

Erickson: Oh.

Fouke Wortz: It was very upsetting.

Erickson: Well, it was his to sell.

Fouke Wortz: He sold it to the family, the Garwood family. I think their name was Smith. Anyway, Garwood couldn't make the payments, so he got it back. Everybody rejoiced, but Grandpa sold it again.

Erickson: Oh, dear. He just didn't want it.

Fouke Wortz: And that's too bad because we all would have enjoyed it so much. It was not only a point of land, but up in the woods, there was an area where we had games, but that was an old Indian area.

Erickson: Were there burial grounds and that kind of thing?

Fouke Wortz: No, they apparently met there. It was a place of peace. And we had trails through the woods and we had wonderful treasure hunts.

Erickson: Oh, yes, that sounds like a great place to be when you were growing up.

Erickson: Let's get back to Phil. You were engaged for two years and then you got married?

Fouke Wortz: Well, no, we were engaged for only a few months, but I knew him for two years.

Erickson: And where did you marry?

Fouke Wortz: In Lansing. In the big house.

Erickson: You said your brother took you down the back stairs.

Fouke Wortz: Um hmm.

Erickson: Where was the actual ceremony?

Fouke Wortz: In the living room. And we imported the minister, a family friend from New York. So, we had to have the ceremony at 3:30 in the afternoon so he could catch the train back to New York for the sermon the next morning.

Erickson: Well, you made it all work. How many guests were there?

Fouke Wortz: Well, there were only a hundred at the ceremony at Mother's house. By that time, Father ran the Hotel Olds in Lansing, and that's where we had the reception. That was huge. But only a hundred at the ceremony.

Erickson: But you had a larger number at the hotel.

Fouke Wortz: Yes, and I can't remember whether it was 500 or 700.

Erickson: Oh, my goodness! That was really large.

Fouke Wortz: Big.

Erickson: That must have been the event of the year.

Fouke Wortz: It just about was, but I refused to make a debut.

Erickson: And why did you do that?

Fouke Wortz: It was not on my agenda.

Erickson: You just did not choose to do that.
Were you happy with the wedding? Everything went nicely?

Fouke Wortz: Well, it was beautiful. It really was.

Erickson: Did you plan it, or did your mother?

Fouke Wortz: Olds put it this way: “Peggy is getting married, and Mother is having a wedding.” Auntie Bun loved it so much that ten years later, she planned her daughter Buny’s wedding all around everything, except different colors.

Erickson: What were your colors?

Fouke Wortz: Mine were pink and wine, burgundy.

Erickson: Oh, that’s pretty. What month of the year was that?

Fouke Wortz: December, the week between Christmas and New Year’s.

Erickson: Oh, really?

Fouke Wortz: Yes. Crazy, wasn’t it?

Erickson: Well, that must have been an event! How fun.
Now, how did you and Jim meet?

Fouke Wortz: Well, it’s a long, long story. Jim came to Riverside in 1946, in March, and Phil and I came in September.

Erickson: The same year. Isn’t that something.

Fouke Wortz: And I was pregnant. Jim said the first time he met me, I was wearing a little dress with a bow on the end of my tummy,

Fouke Wortz: and Roberta would go (Peggy gestured that the baby would move and the dress would move outwards).

Erickson: You were very good friends, weren't you?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, yes. Jean Adair, Jim's wife, was the sustaining member on my Junior League board. And Phil and I played cupid for Jean Adair and Jim.

(At the time I was president, it was really the "Junior Aid" Jr. League came later, another long story!)

Erickson: Oh, you did. Tell me about that.

Fouke Wortz: Well, Phil kept saying, "I want you to call your friend Jean Adair and we will double date." He said, "You know, my friend Jim is lonely." Well, I took the hint and so we double dated, and then we discovered that we weren't included in all the dates. So, we gave the engagement party.

Erickson: You and Phil?

Fouke Wortz: Yes. At our house on the hill where the Mellons live now. Those were days, you know, it was a different world. For amusement after dinner, we played musical chairs.

Erickson: So, that was the excitement in Riverside then, playing musical chairs.

Fouke Wortz: Jean Adair and Jim were married in Minnesota, and when Jim and I were married, we were married in San Francisco in the Cathedral.

Erickson: Oh, how lovely.

Fouke Wortz: When Jim proposed, I said, "You know, marriage is so involved. Just move in." And he said, "It's the church or nothing."

Erickson: Oh, oh.

Fouke Wortz: I thought if it's going to be the church or nothing, it better be a cathedral.
(laughter)

Erickson: How many years has that been?

Fouke Wortz: That was twenty three years ago. We were married in '75.

Erickson: Let's talk a little about your grandfather and how he started Olds. Has somebody passed on all that history to you?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, yes, volumes. He developed the first car that was really successful. Was it one cylinder?

James Wortz: Yes.

Fouke Wortz: In 1897, and that's why we went back a year ago for the centennial. It was a straight dash, and then he came out with a curved dash.

Erickson: That was really innovative then?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, very. And it was a cute car. There are still about 120 left in this country.

Erickson: Is that right?

Fouke Wortz: Sixty of them came to the centennial party last year.

Erickson: Oh, how fun. From all across the states?

Fouke Wortz: All across. And, Jan, you can't believe it. Various Oldsmobile clubs would get together and they all arrived in Lansing on the same day. These cars were from the 20's, 30's, 40's, 50's, 60's, 70's and 80's. You know, people kept their cars. Some people arrived in the most elaborate wagons or trucks to bring them.

Erickson: Oh, yes, because it is such a treasure, you wouldn't want it out on the highway.

Fouke Wortz: Yes. One man drove his yellow roadster convertible from—it was a 1929—from San Francisco. And when all these cars came up, I think they were four abreast on Michigan Avenue, I burst into tears. I really did. I was so touched. And then Lansing did a very clever thing. They chose certain decades for different parks, so if you wanted to see the 30's cars

Telephone Interruption.

In the parade, the man who was to drive Jim in the curved dash. You know, they are two seaters. He went off to get “a little strengthening” for the parade apparently. Well, he never reappeared. (laughter) And by that time we were all each assigned a car for the parade. So, they didn't know what to do with Jim, there was nobody to drive him in the curved dash, so they put him on the engine part of my sister in law's curved dash.

Erickson: That was quite a ride.

Fouke Wortz: He saw Lansing from an angle.

Erickson: So, your grandfather invented this in 1897.

Fouke Wortz: Well, he started actually in 1887. He had been working on it a long time.

(Editor's Note: The background sound one hears on the tape is Peggy and Jim's dog Bootsy, who was very disappointed to be confined to the kitchen).

Erickson: What did he do before that? What kind of work did he do before he was an inventor?

Fouke Wortz: Pliny Fiske and Sons were in the engine business, so it was really almost a natural.

Erickson: I see. He had probably been thinking about that for a long time.

Fouke Wortz: Oh, yes. He would get out and drive it early in the morning, you know, before the horses were up, because the horses were so scared of the noise.

Erickson: Oh, they were.

Fouke Wortz: He would go out at four in the morning on test runs. And then there was a famous hill going over to Grand Ledge. And Grandma would get out of the car and run right behind it with a rock or a brick, and if the car refused to go uphill, she was supposed to stop it with...(lots of laughter)

Erickson: That's quite an assignment.

Fouke Wortz: And, of course, there were a lot of hills it wouldn't go up, so Grandpa would go around and back it up.

Erickson: Was it easier?

Fouke Wortz: There was more power.

Erickson: Because of the engine being in the back. Interesting. Ok. He invented this. Now, was the Ford already in competition with him?

Fouke Wortz: No.

Erickson: No, he was first?

Fouke Wortz: Grandpa was the first. Grandpa and Duryea on the east coast. And Grandpa moved Mother and Grandma and Auntie Bun down to Detroit and he built a factory there. In the evenings, Henry would come over and study Grandpa's plans.

Erickson: What did Grandpa think about that?

Fouke Wortz: They were friends, but he stole many of Grandpa's ideas. I read somewhere how many patents Grandpa had—unbelievable. And Grandma and Clara would sit and sew.

Erickson: Now, who was Clara?

Fouke Wortz: Mrs. Ford.

Erickson: Ok. While the men were talking about the automobile. Interesting. So they were friends?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, yes. And they remained friends, but not ...

Erickson: Not when Grandpa realized what he was doing.

Fouke Wortz: Yes. So, Grandpa ultimately in 1904 sold out to what became General Motors.

Erickson: In 1904. Did he remain on the board then or as a consultant?

Fouke Wortz: I think he got off it completely. I would have to look it up again, but many of his friends in Lansing urged him and said they would put money into another car if he would do another car. So, he invented Reo. Those are his initials. Ransom Eli Olds.

Erickson: When was that, Peggy?

Fouke Wortz: I think it was about, wasn't Reo invented about 1906 (she was asking this of Jim Wortz)?

James Wortz: About that time.

Fouke Wortz: I know that Jim and John Miller have a 1908 Reo Runabout.

Erickson: Oh, really.

Fouke Wortz: Not that Jim (Wortz). Jim and John Miller, the two brothers. They put in a Chevrolet motor. (laughter) It really runs.

Erickson: Is that ethical? (jokingly)

Fouke Wortz: Well, not if they want to have it as an antique.

Erickson: Do you remember any famous visitors coming to your home?

Fouke Wortz: I know there were some, but I really (pause). Isn't that awful I don't really remember.

Erickson: Well, you were young and so you probably didn't realize ... but I am sure you did have some.

Fouke Wortz: I certainly remember Rockefeller.

Erickson: Coming to your home?

Fouke Wortz: No, Grandpa would see him on the golf course. And they wintered at Ormond Beach which was near Daytona Beach. And they also were Baptist. And Grandma and Grandpa were Baptist.

Fouke Wortz: Listen to that little engine (referring to the dog Bootsy in the kitchen).

Erickson: Did you ever consider going into the business, Peggy?

Fouke Wortz: No, Grandpa ultimately ran the R. E. Olds Company and that was a holding company for all sorts of things, all the family trusts and stocks and bonds.

Erickson: Did you consider that?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, I did. In fact, I worked for the company without pay during the Second World War. I answered the telephone,

Fouke Wortz: but I got demoted after I answered it and said, “Hello.”
Grandpa said, “Peggy, you are in bookkeeping now!”

Erickson: How many employees did he have? Do you remember?

Fouke Wortz: No, I don’t. He had quite a good sized office. It was an entire floor of the Olds Tower. The secretaries all went off to bigger and better things, you know.

Erickson: This was downtown Detroit?

Fouke Wortz: No, this was in Lansing. I was living at the Hotel Olds with my eldest son and his nurse, who was Nisei.

(“Nisei” – second generation Japanese, born in the U.S.A.)

Erickson: How old would your son have been?

Fouke Wortz: Well, Phil was born in 1942.

Erickson: So, this was during the war. And was Phil, Sr. in the war?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, he was a Photographic Interpreter in India. He was on the Burmese border. And when they wanted to bathe, they would go down to the Irrawaddy (*River*) and push the Japanese bodies out of the way and clean up.

James Wortz: This is where Peggy was born. (referring to a photo in a book written on the life of R.E.Olds.)

Fouke Wortz: Oh, yes. That’s where I was born, Elbamar. It had a cute little nine hole golf course on it.

Erickson: Well, this is a mansion, so it must have been a fairly good sized golf course.

Fouke Wortz: It was like an Italian villa with marble hither and thither. And I have one piece of furniture from that house.

Erickson: Oh, what is it?

Fouke Wortz: It's in the other room. It's that red chest in front of the mirror.

Erickson: You answered the telephone. Did you do anything else?

Fouke Wortz: Well, I did bookkeeping, which was certainly much more interesting. You know, everybody's accounts. And I learned a lot.

Erickson: Oh, you would. Did you take Phil into the office with you during the day? Or was he with the Nanny?

Fouke Wortz: No, he was with his nurse. And they would go to the park.

Erickson: I know that so many people hold you in such a high regard, Peggy. I wonder if you have any heroes?

Fouke Wortz: Well, I certainly admired Admiral Byrd going to the South Pole.

Erickson: Did you ever think about such an adventure?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, I still do.

Erickson: Oh, you do. What would you like to do?

Fouke Wortz: Well, I would like to go down and see it. I really would.

Erickson: Is that on your list of fun things to do? Well maybe someday.

Fouke Wortz: Yes. And I loved history, I still do. And biographies and what makes people tick.

Erickson: It is fascinating.

Fouke Wortz: So, I didn't have very many particular ones singled out like a role model.

Erickson: You had a lot of role models.

Fouke Wertz: Plenty of them.

James Wertz: Peggy, mention Cappy.

Fouke Wertz: Well, Cappy and I were roommates for two years at Kingswood. Then she went to Sarah Lawrence and I went to Bennington. She was, I told you, born over in Hawaii.

Erickson: Yes.

Fouke Wertz: After we both graduated, I went back with her.

Erickson: To Hawaii.

Fouke Wertz: To Hawaii for a month. And I was so excited! It was wonderful! I packed my ticket in my luggage and had them all transferred to the ship, and so I had to get on as a visitor. Ten cents extra. (laughter)

Erickson: Was it a big ship?

Fouke Wertz: Yes. It was one of the Matson ships, the ~~Mariposa~~.

(Correction: Malolo).

Erickson: Was that a fun time?

Fouke Wertz: Oh, yes. It was great. In those days they had slot machines.

Erickson: No.

Fouke Wertz: That paid for the trip for the Matson line. (laughter)

Erickson: So, I take it you didn't win very much.

Fouke Wertz: No, just a handful.

Erickson: How old would you have been about that time?

Fouke Wortz: I was eighteen. I turned eighteen over there. We went over to the island of Molokai to go deer hunting. The Cookes, I read not too long ago, they sold their ranch over there where the Sheraton is. Well, anyway, they had a huge ranch that took up most of the western end of the island. So, we went hunting, and it really was a thrill at 5:00 a.m. in the morning to see those deer, Axis deer.

Erickson: You didn't shoot it?

Fouke Wortz: No.

Erickson: Good.

Fouke Wortz: But it was a lot of fun.

Erickson: One month sounds like a great trip.

Fouke Wortz: We were there only a week.

Erickson: I meant the whole trip.

Fouke Wortz: Um hmm. To fly over, it was 1936, you know. Anyway, Cappy thought we should wear our jeans. Well, Aunt Muriel had a fit. "You young ladies in blue jeans!" Nobody cared that we carried our guns!

Erickson: But it was the blue jeans.

Fouke Wortz: But we did wear...Cappy won. We wore our blue jeans over and carried our guns on the plane.

Erickson: Now who was Aunt Muriel?

Fouke Wortz: Her Mother. And Uncle Teddy was her Father.

Erickson: So you were quite close?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, very. Yes.

Erickson: And she didn't want to go to Bennington?

Fouke Wortz: Well, she liked the sound of Sarah Lawrence. And I liked the sound of Bennington.

Erickson: Did you remain friends?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, yes. Finally, she was my matron of honor when Jim and I were married. She couldn't come back when Phil and I were married. Finally, I couldn't get over there in time for her wedding, because Dick was sent off to the South Seas. He was an aviator, and you know, in those days we didn't fly very much. But Jim and I got over there for Cappy and Dick's fortieth wedding anniversary, and I had it arranged with her daughters to pick us up at our hotel, the Colony Surf. So, we went down and waited for them. When they came in to get us in the car, they were having such an argument in the front seat, that they never noticed that Jim and I were in the back seat. (lots of laughter) And we were the surprise guests!

Erickson: Well, let's get to Riverside. You mentioned that you and Jim came in the same year, a few months apart. What was it that brought you here?

Fouke Wortz: Well, Phil did not want to go back into the fur seal business. He wanted to be off on his own. He had been on his own, really in India, and he rather liked it.

Erickson: Did he sell that business?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, his father and *two* men owned the business. And so finally his father said, "Well, Phil when are you coming back to the plant?" He said, "Well, I am not coming." So, he looked around for something to do and found nothing out here was air conditioned. And so when we got here, he discovered that nobody wanted air conditioning.

Erickson: This was in the forties, you said.

Fouke Wortz: Yes, '46.

Erickson: Well, Riverside evenings usually cool off.

Side B of tape

James

Erickson: (referring to an earlier statement) When you considered going to Berlin, Hitler's reign in Berlin was current at that time.

Fouke Wortz: Oh, very much so. In fact, he was there in 1934 when we visited Maysie, my auntie. I called her Maysie and Uncle Erwn. And it was pretty uncomfortable. It really was uncomfortable. And you know our government knew what was going on. Even we knew it.

James

Erickson: And his hatred for Americans, too, left you vulnerable.

Fouke Wortz: Very much so. But then, my aunt and uncle went to Sweden and ultimately were posted to Montreal. The family thinks, and I think also, that my uncle was murdered because he knew too much.

Erickson: Oh. Was he murdered in Montreal?

Fouke Wortz: No, he was murdered (pause). He had gone to a place outside of Washington, DC which was hush hush, similar to where my son Phil trained when he went into military intelligence.

Erickson: Why did Phil choose to do that? This is the one who is now a broadcaster.

Fouke Wortz: Oh, this was my son, Phil.

Erickson: Yes.

Fouke Wortz: Oh, why did he? Well, remember that was during the Vietnam War. But since he spoke Spanish fluently at that time, he was chosen to be a plain clothesman in Puerto Rico.

Erickson: How long did he do that?

Fouke Wortz: Well, he did his tour of duty. Is that three years?

Erickson: Probably. He could tell some stories, too.

Fouke Wortz: Yes. And it was really fascinating, because being a plain clothesman, we would go into a bar, and he would eavesdrop on everybody's conversation.

Erickson: Well, let's see. We are back in Riverside, and you had just come here, and Phil (pause). Did he start an air conditioning business?

Fouke Wortz: Yes. He did, but it failed.

Erickson: But it just didn't go.

Fouke Wortz: Nobody needed air conditioning.

Erickson: What did Riverside look like in the forties.

Fouke Wortz: It was a charming place, I thought. It really was.

Erickson: Well, Magnolia (Avenue) would have been all developed with all the palm trees and Victoria Avenue...

Fouke Wortz: Magnolia had what we called the Black Dragon running down the middle. The Black Dragon was a train running down the middle every night so that the railroad company could keep the tracks.

Erickson: Down the center of Magnolia which is now...

Telephone interruption

Fouke Wortz: now paved over.

Erickson: What did Victoria Avenue look like?

Fouke Wortz: Um. Well, the side going into town was gravel, and it was originally really a bridle path. And then, I can't remember what year it was, but it was decided to make each side available to cars. Do you remember what year it was when they changed the traffic on Victoria to a boulevard?

James Wortz: Before I came.

Fouke Wortz: No, there was gravel on one side.

James Wortz: I can't remember.

Fouke Wortz: On the east side, it was gravel. West side, it was paved.

Erickson: For the Oldsmobiles to travel. (chuckle)
I know that you had spent time in Florida, but had you ever been in the desert area before?

Fouke Wortz: Well, Jan, let's see. My father was married in 1942 to ... I just loved my stepmother. She was wonderful. Anyway, after the wedding, Phil and I, along with Olds, came to Riverside because Olds was pursuing a damsel. And the girl's mother drove her down to Palm Springs. And we had a taste of September weather.

Erickson: Was it lovely?

Fouke Wortz: It was hot.

Erickson: Yes. September can be warm.
So you liked it?

Fouke Wortz: Well, at first...No, I didn't. I really didn't. But I did. I do.
(chuckle)

Erickson: What did Phil end up doing ultimately?

Fouke Wortz: He went into fiberglass trays and nose cones for planes, and he had materials in the first (pause) Oh, you know.

Erickson: In space, you mean.

Fouke Wortz: Um hmm.

Erickson: Interesting.

Fouke Wortz: And then one Christmas while we were in the Midwest, there was a railcar right by the plant in Highgrove. And it was loaded with stuff for the military. And you know how fiberglass burns—quite hot. And it burned. The whole order. So, he kept on with that for a little while making trays and bowls and things.

Erickson: Now, did you help out in that business at all?

Fouke Wortz: (shook her head negatively)

Erickson: No. You were busy raising three young children.

Fouke Wortz: Well, you know I was busy and I really believed in being at home at 3:30 p.m. for those children. And I managed it somehow.

Erickson: Good. Were you involved (pause) Had you set up your foundation by that point?

Fouke Wortz: No. I had an office at the White Park building and on that floor was Phil Boyd and Fred Jennings, Jim Pitchford and Don Stevning. We were quite a chummy bunch! And Fred Jennings came over and talked to me one day about using funds for a chair, the Phil Boyd Chair.

Erickson: Oh, is that right? That's how it all started?

Fouke Wortz: To the best of my memory, yes. But we were all back and forth, and after Phil died, well, I can't remember (pause) that was after Phil died, wasn't it?

James Wortz: Yes, I think so.

Fouke Wortz: And Phil Boyd would come in almost daily to make sure I was all right. He really did.

Erickson: Oh. You really had a special friendship. Well, you were credited with conceptualizing the Foundation Board of Trustees for UC Riverside.

Fouke Wortz: Was I really?

Erickson: Yes.

Fouke Wortz: Well, thank you. I wasn't aware of that, but I had many chats with Fred Jennings, you know, and we both agreed...

Erickson: He was also on the board. Fred was on the board.

Fouke Wortz: Oh, yes. Bob Toll was our first Executive Director, and he came from Michigan State.

Erickson: Oh, he did?

Fouke Wortz: Um hmm. And he had known Mother and my brother.

Erickson: Were you instrumental in bringing him here?

Fouke Wortz: No, not I.

Erickson: Just happened, coincidence.

Fouke Wortz: Um hmm.

Erickson: Do you remember what those early discussions (pause) what they were like? Did you meet with Bob Toll?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, we met with Bob Toll, but they were so informal, I don't think anybody kept any kind of minutes. I really don't.

Erickson: So, there were you and Fred Jennings. And was Phil Boyd involved?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, but not with his chair, because we wanted that as a surprise.

Erickson: No. I meant as the foundation was started.

Fouke Wortz: Yes. He was very much involved.

Erickson: Who were the others, do you remember?

Fouke Wortz: (pause) We were all older.

Erickson: We can come back to that, too.
Ok, let's go back to the chair then. That's interesting that you thought of a chair to honor Phil.

Fouke Wortz: Yes, um hmm.

Erickson: What was the thought behind it? His commitment for helping found the campus or...

Fouke Wortz: Yes, for getting the campus going. Another one was John Babbage.

Erickson: And they both had been in the Legislature, had they not?

Fouke Wortz: Yes.

Erickson: At that time when you were talking about the chair, is that when Phil lived here in the desert or would he have been in Riverside?

Fouke Wortz: Well, they were just about out of their house up on the hill.

Erickson: They lived near you?

Fouke Wortz: They lived near where the Mellons live now, yes. They built a house, Phil and Dorothy did. It was a lovely home, and (pause). Gee, I have got to think about those dates. When they opened the home, some of us were invited to be tour guides, and they would have open house, and we would take their friends through.

Erickson: How fun.

Fouke Wortz: We did.

Erickson: That's great.

Fouke Wortz: And they had an interesting window made by Judson—is it Judson Glass?—Judson Windows, anyway. And in it were depicted some of the family's things and their children, little pictures of their children. I was thinking this morning about it and I wonder where it is?

Erickson: Maybe they were removed.

Fouke Wortz: Well, I know they were taken out when the Boyds sold the house.

James

Erickson: An interesting thing, Peggy. Both you and Dorothy Boyd came from automobile pioneering families. Did you ever visit about that, and did you know her earlier? Your families knew each other.

James Wortz: Honey, while you are talking about Phil Boyd, tell them about Mary Morey.

Fouke Wortz: I was just about to. Mother got a couple out of Manzanar during the Second World War.

Erickson: She was able to get them out from living there.

Fouke Wortz: And they came to work for Mother, and Mary was the cook and Morey was driver, gardener, everything. Their daughter, Mary's daughter, not Morey's, was my child's nurse. And she really was Nisei, she was an American. Morey had worked for Mary Pickford. Anyway, when they retired from Mother's employ, they came out here where there were more Japanese. One day I got a call from Morey, and he said, "Oh, Miss Peggy. I am so bored. Do you know of an older couple?" He said, "I'd love to work for you, but your children are too strenuous." And they were. (laughter) And that was before we had Lee. Anyway, the Boyd's were just moving from the house on Sixth Street into their big new house on Ninth, and so I said, "Yes, I know a couple with no children at home." So, I called Dorothy right away, and I said, "This couple worked for my mother for, I have forgotten how many years." And Dorothy said, "Oh, isn't that wonderful. Tell him yes. Yes."

Erickson: Oh, how nice. That's wonderful for that couple, too.

Fouke Wortz: So they went to work for the Boyds. When we would go over for dinner parties, you know, Morey always bowed. But Mary would come out of the kitchen, and I would have a chance to "kiss the cook." (laughter)

Erickson: Jim was asking you how early you knew Dorothy Boyd.

Fouke Wortz: Oh, well, when we moved in 1946 into our house, the (pause). What did they call it then, the Community Chest was having its drive. So, I wrote the check out and somebody knocked on the front door, climbed up all twenty nine steps to the front door, and I opened the door and she said, "I am Mrs. Philip Boyd, and I would like to talk to you about the Community Chest." And I said, "Well, I am Peggy Fouke, but never mind the talk. I know what it is and here's my check."

Erickson: You were all ready. (chuckle)

Fouke Wertz: And so from that time on, we were good friends. And then, of course, they went to Northern Michigan in the summer.

Erickson: As you did.

Fouke Wertz: Um hmm. So we would see each other up there.

Erickson: Did they have a big mansion there also?

Fouke Wertz: Well, they had, really it was a lovely summer cottage. We call them cottages—pretty big cottages!

Erickson: Yes. I saw the picture of that.

Fouke Wertz: But it was very nice.

James

Erickson: Did your two families know each other from the automobile industry years and years before?

Fouke Wertz: (Nodding her head negatively). No, but Dorothy and her sister and Mother and her sister would all get together for several luncheons during the summer, and I would be there some times and some times not. One year Dorothy and Phil bought all of our groceries. We came in the middle of the night. They put everything in the refrigerator for breakfast.

Erickson: Isn't that nice. Good friends.

Fouke Wertz: Yes.

Erickson: You mentioned your office in the White Building in downtown Riverside. How did your foundation become established? What I am getting at is what was a typical workday for you?

Fouke Wortz: Well, in 1915, Grandpa set up Ransom Fidelity Company and as we grew up, we were all members. You might say lifetime. And Jim, bless his heart, said you know, this is crazy because you are all going to go in different directions. So, with the blessing of the IRS, we broke it up.

Erickson: You broke up the foundation?

Fouke Wortz: Yes. And Olds and I took half, and our cousins took half. Then Olds and I divided our half, and I brought mine west. I really wanted to put it into the Riverside Community Foundation, but it was very small then, really small. And so, Jim picked out the California Community Foundation and we put it there.

Erickson: Is this after you and Jim were married?

Fouke Wortz: After.

Erickson: The California Foundation is in Los Angeles?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, and they are a huge foundation. I think they are capitalized at—is it a hundred million now?

James Wortz: More than that now.

Fouke Wortz: He doesn't know, and I can't remember. And I was on that board for ten years, the Board of Governors.

Erickson: What was a typical day for you, Peggy? Did you get up every morning and go down to your office?

Fouke Wortz: Generally.

Erickson: You still have a secretary?

Fouke Wortz: I do. But as the years went along, the people died off, and I became more interested in trusts. I am co trustee in many of the family trusts.

Erickson: When an organization asks you for help, what are the primary considerations that you have for determining whether or not you will help someone?

Fouke Wortz: Well, it depends on how many it will help. You know, whether it will have a big ripple effect or if it is just a little tiny group. And if it's one little tiny group, then I am not really interested, and I say no as politely as I can. But I never give to an individual.

Erickson: Oh, I see.

Fouke Wortz: The closest I have come to that is scholarships, but I never give to an individual. What they plan to do with the money and what kind of an age group, for instance, I really like to help young people and children.

Erickson: Oh, that's nice. Do you ask them for a proposal, for them to submit a proposal to you?

Fouke Wortz: Well, generally, I prefer a written proposal, but in the beginning and this still goes on, they come and talk to me at the office or we have lunch.

Erickson: They just make an appointment. So you would definitely need a secretary.

Fouke Wortz: Oh, yes. I really do.

Erickson: Now, do you make that decision yourself? Do you have a board to help you?

Fouke Wortz: I make it myself.

Erickson: You do.

Fouke Wortz: Jim and Vic Karidakis got so sick and tired of seeing me struggle with books and typing and whatnot, they both talked me into getting a secretary.

Erickson: When was that?

Fouke Wortz: Must have been in the 80s. Or maybe it was in 1979.

Erickson: You went for a long time without one.

Fouke Wortz: Yes.

Erickson: Well, life must have been better. (laughter)

Fouke Wortz: It was. Generally, unless I am meeting people after lunch, I only go in before lunch. And especially now, because Johnnie really is pretty good. (Peggy knocked on the wooden dining room table). I have to knock on wood because her husband isn't well, they have seven children. He's a professor at Redlands. You know.

Erickson: Has she been with you for a long time?

Fouke Wortz: About ten years.

Erickson: That's pretty good. You have been so generous to so many organizations.

Fouke Wortz: Well, Jan, you know I do like to help things get started. And then once they are started and established, I like to just pull out and look around and get something else going.

Erickson: Well, some of those organizations have honored you in various ways. Have some been especially meaningful to you?

Fouke Wortz: Well, it always amazes me when they rattle off what I have done. I can't believe it.

Erickson: Which is a very long list, isn't it?

Fouke Wortz: But one thing I really want to do is talk to Giles about it, are the gates in the Garden.

Erickson: Now this is the Botanic Gardens, and Giles Waines is the person you are referring to. What would you like to do there?

Fouke Wortz: Well, we need new gates for one thing. We need better fencing. I know that firsthand because I heard about Lee Fouke and his friends going over the fence. (laughter) They don't know I know it, but I know it.

Erickson: Is this after hours?

Fouke Wortz: Yes.

Erickson: I see.
I do have another question about that hundred year celebration in Lansing. I am getting out of the context here, but you mentioned the Hotel Olds in Lansing. Is it still in existence today?

Fouke Wortz: Well, the building is, but the family sold it after Grandpa, was it Grandpa? Yes, after Grandpa died, it was sold to some Texan, I can't remember his name. Anyway, now the state owns it, the State of Michigan. And it's the Romney Building, the George Romney Building.

Erickson: How nice. Are there all sorts of landmarks in Lansing and Detroit to the Olds family?

Fouke Wortz: Yes. There really are. And one that I always like to go back to is the mausoleum.

Erickson: And where is that?

Fouke Wortz: In Lansing. Somebody, kids, broke into it not too long ago during winter.

Erickson: Does it have big gates or something?

Fouke Wortz: We had to put a new solid door in. And they moved as many bodies as they could. But the kids were caught. They had invaded I don't know how many cemeteries.

Erickson: Well, maybe they learned their lesson.

Fouke Wortz: Well, let's hope.

Erickson: That hundred year celebration. I understand you were the Grand Marshall for that.

Fouke Wortz: Well, truthfully, all the grandchildren were Grand Marshalls.

Erickson: So you and Olds...

Fouke Wortz: And Cousin Woodward... Well, Cousin Woodward refused to participate.

Erickson: And Woodward is?

Fouke Wortz: Auntie Bun's second child.

Erickson: Why did he choose not to do that?

Fouke Wortz: But anyway the youngest, Armin, participated. How he ever got into that curved dash, I don't know. (chuckle) And Cousin Buny never got into it. They had to get a beautiful new convertible and put her in that.

Erickson: Oh, a brand new one.

Fouke Wortz: (laughter) But Olds and I rode in the front of the parade followed by Doris and her funny little curved dash with Jim on the back (laughter). And I didn't know that until

James Wortz: I had one of those curved dash cars (pause). I can't say it.

Fouke Wortz: His driver (pause)

James Wortz: My man came out and decided he had to have (pause)

Fouke Wortz: a nip

James Wortz: He went out and it got so bad that he couldn't drive.
(laughter) But I had never driven that thing, so...

Fouke Wortz: They do drive differently.

James Wortz: So, we just left it on the street there, and it happened to be her cousin's.

Fouke Wortz: It was my sister-in-law. But I didn't know this until the end of the parade. And we got all the way up to the front of the capitol, and I thought, oh, I've got on a tight skirt and how am I going to get out of this thing? Luckily the man went putt, putt, putt and we went all the way around the other side of the capitol where I got out.

Erickson: Oh, good. What kinds of other celebrations were there?
This was a parade that started the whole celebration.

Fouke Wortz: That was THE big parade about three hours long. But the whole celebration was four days. And they had spent three years planning for four days. It was beautifully planned. It really was. Everything. Well, you know what Lansing is like (referring to James Erickson).

James

Erickson: Yes.

Fouke Wortz: It was so well planned, and Jim and I wore these little things around our necks. Mine is in Riverside right now. You know, "Peggy Wortz, Granddaughter." What did yours say, relative or friend or something? (referring to James Wortz) We were referred to constantly as the grandchildren which tickled all of us, especially Jim. You know, the grandchildren!

Erickson: So four days of celebration.

Fouke Wortz: Um hmm. Luncheons, dinners. It was beautifully done. And they had a cutout. That was the picture in the paper. They had a cutout of Grandpa. And that's when I said to Jim, "Now take my picture standing next to Grandpa."
(laughter)

Erickson: That would be a treasure. That's great.
Let's talk a little about your relationship with Phil and Dorothy Boyd. You were friends for many years. Did you two, you and Phil, have lots of discussions about the university?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, yes. Up in my office.

Erickson: And it's direction.

Fouke Wortz: Yes, but I don't think he ever envisioned. He envisioned it as a just a small college.

Erickson: As it started out.

Fouke Wortz: Yes.

Erickson: It started out in 1954 and in 1960 it changed to a general campus.

Fouke Wortz: Yes. And we were all great friends of the Spieths, because Phil Spieth and my Phil were classmates at Bryant School. Excuse me.

Telephone interruption

Erickson: You were talking about Herman Spieth and your children.

Fouke Wortz: Well, when he was going to be named.

Telephone interruption.

When he was going to be named that weekend, young Phil was so excited. You know it was really...

Erickson: Of course he would have been.

Fouke Wortz: And while they were building that Chancellor's house, I would go over the plans with Evelyn.

Erickson: Oh, you did?
How much leeway did you have? Was the design already there? The architect had come up with the plan. And then did you get to work on each of the room individually?

Fouke Wortz: No, Evelyn did that. But we talked mostly about circulation of people and holding large functions there.

Erickson: In the public rooms.

Fouke Wortz: And going in one door of the kitchen and out the other and getting people out onto the terrace and into the living room.

Erickson: Yes, that's a lot to consider.

Fouke Wortz: Um hmm. And then you know, Don Bell built it.

Erickson: Oh, no, I didn't realize that.

Fouke Wortz: And we are great friends.

Erickson: Yes, I know you are.

Fouke Wortz: And we were there for the first Christmas that it was open and the Spieths moved in.

Erickson: I am trying to think when that would have been.

Fouke Wortz: I can't remember that either.

Erickson: I am sure that's written down somewhere and we can find out. Which other Chancellors did you know?

Fouke Wortz: The Hinderakers. And well, for instance, with Mrs. Hinderaker, we started the Affiliates. And a lot of that went on in my office.

Erickson: Oh, really. The planning started then?

Fouke Wortz: And Edna Lockhart was one of the members of the original committee—well not the original committee. There were only four of us. But she was on one of the committees.

Erickson: She was very involved. What was your thinking.

Fouke Wortz: Well, I had four antique chairs in that office that we didn't want at home because Lee was little and banging around, so I had taken them to my office. And Jean Adair would laugh and say when Edna comes, we would direct her to this other chair which was sturdier.

Erickson: You had your meetings down there, your planning meetings. What was the idea behind Affiliates? Was it to bring the community to the university?

Fouke Wortz: To bring the community together and to help the wives on both sides get to know each other. And I think it is working very well.

Erickson: Absolutely. It's a wonderful organization.

Fouke Wortz: And there were just four of us in the beginning. (pause) Oh, I can't think of Mrs. Hinderaker's name.

Erickson: Birk.

Fouke Wortz: Birk, yes. And we had a good many luncheon meetings at her house which was very pleasant.

Erickson: What are the areas of the University which interest you a great deal?

Fouke Wortz: Now?

Erickson: Well? Both.

Fouke Wortz: You know, they all do. It's just been wonderful to watch it grow. But I am partial to the Botanic Garden.

Erickson: It is lovely, and you have been a benefactor. Why don't you tell about the walkway you established. The pathway, I should say.

Fouke Wortz: I was on the Riverside Community Foundation when I heard...I can't remember who left the money for the walkway for the wheelchair uphill walkway, but she didn't leave enough. And I was happy to pick up the tab.

Erickson: Oh, that's how it happened.

Fouke Wortz: Yes. Both my parents were in wheelchairs and so I knew a lot of those problems and after we opened the walkway, I had some lovely letters from people who were in wheelchairs. And, oh, that Sunday that we opened it, it was such fun to stand back and watch them all "putt, putt, putt" right up the walkway.

Erickson: That must have made you feel really good.

Fouke Wortz: Oh, yes.

Erickson: You said you are excited about the growth of the University now and the direction it is headed.

Fouke Wortz: Oh, I think it is remarkable. I really do.

Erickson: Are there some programs that you would like to see established?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, I think they have done well covering a great deal. And I think University Extension is splendid.

Erickson: Yes. It is. And they are growing also.

Fouke Wortz: But I think we will have to check into a new hearing device. I will talk to Marion about it (Marion McCarty) because it is not working for Jim.

Erickson: Oh, it's not working now?

Fouke Wortz: Well, I guess it works for others. But Jim has really a difficult time.

Erickson: Do you think that you could ask Jim for his comments on the University?
Would Jim like to give comments about the University?

Fouke Wortz: I think so. Would you like to give comments on the University?

James Wortz: Would I like to hear them?

Fouke Wortz: No, give comments.

James Wortz: I think no. It's too hard for me to talk.

Erickson: Ok. Well, thank you very much, Peggy. This has been wonderful. Do you have any other comments or some little stories that you could share?

Fouke Wortz: No. I will probably bubble forth during lunch.

Erickson: Then I will just have to record those later.

Fouke Wortz: But I think we have covered almost everything. But yes, I have had a very different, unusual life.

Erickson: Yes, you have. Quite a variety of things that have gone on in your life.

Fouke Wortz: And I really do love the work I do at my office.

Erickson: Yes. Well, it's so important for everyone in Riverside. You have helped so many people.

James

Erickson: When you started, you talked about the biblical statement from your family about giving to others. Has that influenced your own commitment to giving to others?

Fouke Wortz: Not consciously. What Grandma said was "Let thy light so shine before others so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father." In other words, don't hide your light under a bushel. And so many people have told me I am too shy about what I have done.

Erickson: You have been very generous.

Fouke Wortz: Well, it has been a pleasure.

Erickson: Thank you very much, Peggy.

Fouke Wortz: Well, thank you, Jan. I have enjoyed it.

Erickson: Good. We have too.

Fouke Wortz: And I hope I covered everything more or less you wanted.

Erickson: Oh, you certainly have. Thank you.

(pause)

Fouke Wortz: You asked if we have any concrete comments to make. Jim and I certainly were interested in Watkins House.

James Wortz: Oh, yes. We set up that corporation and I was on the board and then when we finally... This was to be a non religious center, and then one of the ...
I can't talk.

Fouke Wortz: It was a minister in Riverside. I'll never forget his name, Loudermilk.

James Wortz: He was advising the kids on how to avoid the draft. When that word got around, then people who were supporting it, just quit making any gift. And that's when I talked to Ivan about giving Watkins House to the University, because by that time, there were only three or four of us left and the people like Peggy said who were supporting it quit after they heard about Loudermilk. So Hinderaker talked to the Regents about the University accepting it. That's how we gave it.

Erickson: I know Jim was very involved in CUC for a number of years, wasn't he?

Fouke Wortz: Yes. But I think that was before we were married.

James

Erickson: Jim was one of the early leaders of CUC that helped bring the campus about.

End of Tape

(Text printed in *italics* indicates edited portion).