Dr. Richard Brown  
April 10, 1978

SMJ: This is April 10, 1978. I am interviewing Dr. Richard Brown, Distinguished Service Professor in the History Department here at the State University College at Buffalo. Dr. Brown, I sent you some questions, and I know you are prepared to answer. The first question is to give us a little bit of background material information including your information including your education. What you did before you came to the college.

RB: I would be glad to do so Sister. I was born in a small town in Southeastern Ohio called Logan and I grew up in Ohio where I went to Ohio State University. I am often reminded of my own undergraduate career because there is a great deal of concern now with people who drop out of college for some reason or other. Actually, it took me several years to finish my undergraduate career because I had it interrupted twice by poverty and then by serving in the military service.

SMJ: Where were you in the military service?

RB: I served in the European theater war. I was over there about something better than two years. This was an important experience to me, as I think it was to most young men who served in the military service. I was able to complete my education, really because of my GI bill. I sometimes refer to myself as a GI Ph.D because I was able to complete my education down at Colgate University in Hamilton, New York where I got a Masters Degree and at the University of Wisconsin where I received my Ph.D in American, Social and intellectual history. I am sure I wouldn’t have been able to do this if it had not been for the support of the GI Bill. Most men who were my age on the staffs of the universities throughout the country would find the same thing is true that we benefited in the same sense. I think the GI Bill was the desirable thing.

SMJ: What drew you to history?

RB: Again, I am reminded of people who switch majors, because in all honesty, actually I started out in the College of Journalism at Ohio State. It was really through military service that I got interested in teaching. I hope I still am somewhat idealistic, but I was even more idealistic after I came out of the army. I thought that I could help save the world through teaching better that I could as a journalist. Actually, I was a major in political science (or had been) but for one registration period, the required course in political science happened to be closed and I couldn’t get in it. There was an equivalent course in history at the same time, so I suddenly switched my major form political science to history only because I could get in a 9:00 course on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
SMJ: When you mentioned you had been in Europe, I wondered if your visit to Europe had influenced you. Have you been back?

RB: No, I haven't although I was younger and unmarried at the time. I did stay in Europe for better than six months after the war was over so I could enjoy a little travel. But you're quite right it was different traveling in those times. You could see some of the famous sights of Europe, but I'm sure it's different in peacetime.

SMJ: What brought you to Buffalo State College? How did you get here?

RB: I think I was attracted for a number of reasons. Actually, the salaries paid by the New York State university system at that time were better than they were in other places. I remember exactly how much money I got in my first here as an instructor - $4,138 which doesn't seem like very much but in comparison I was offered a job at Wooster College and that was only $3,300. By that time I was married, and I think a higher salary helped attract me. Another thing, too, many of us who came to what at the time was Buffalo State Teachers College early in the 1950's, assumed that we were going to become the University of Western New York. This was when UB was still a private college, and it wasn't until the 1960's the State University took over UB and bought an existing graduate school. I was influenced, as I sure other people were, by the opportunity to become part of a State University center.

SMJ: It had a good reputation, too, didn't it?

RB: As far as I know, yes, in comparison to some of the other State Teachers College.

SMJ: What did you find when you got here?

RB: I was interviewed in the summer, and I remember it was a nice summer day, Dr. Peterson at that time was the chairperson of the Social Studies Department. I met him, but he had to go up to class and said, "Would you mind taking care of yourself until I get out of class?" I walked around the quadrangle of the four older buildings here and sat down on a bench. This was August, 1952 and I remember I was sitting there. It was a nice summer day and quiet and I sort of looked around and thought this looks like a nice little college. Maybe I could be happy here. Harvey Rice was the president then and he had been a graduate assistant at Ohio State in the History Department when I was there before WW II. I don't think our paths had crossed there, but I feel that the fact that he was connected with Ohio State and my going to school there gave us an empathy that was enjoyable. He was the president, Ralph Horn was the Dean, and Harold Peterson was the chairperson of the Social Studies department. I remember we had maybe 1700 students and possibly 150 faculty members. There was a part-time Dean of Students and the next year Gordon Klopf, who was our first full-time Dean of Students.
SMJ: Did you find out right away that you had the position, or did you have to wait several weeks?

RB: I don’t recall exactly, but I think when I left here, I was pretty sure I was going to be offered the position. As a matter of fact, I recall I made arrangements for an apartment while I was still here, I must have been pretty sure.

SMJ: The reason I question that is that recently people remarked that it's quite different now to get a position than it was years ago.

RB: There was another thing, too. Funds are tight now. I would think anybody invited for an interview then, or now, would be pretty certain unless he fell flat on his face.

SMJ: Did you find the student body a happy one?

RB: When I first came here, we were under what was called a section system in which all of the members of the freshman class were divided into sections, and they traveled around from class to class in that section. I remember the first section I taught was Section 14, and I got very acquainted with then throughout the four years they were here. The student body was much more homogeneous then it is now. I recall only one black student with whom I came in contact.

SMJ: They were younger people, too, weren’t they? There weren’t as many older students.

RB: There was an occasional wife of a faculty member which I had. Eleanor Robison, who is the wife of one of my members of Social Studies was in my class. I wasn’t used to having wives of faculty members in my classes, and I didn’t realize that was Robie’s wife until later. I began to think about what I might have said. There were a sprinkling of older people, wives, who might have interrupted their education.

SMJ: What about the faculty? It was a smaller faculty.

RB: Oh, yes. For the first five years here, I could call all the faculty members by name. Obviously, this place has changed as we got larger. We were then, and remained for about 10 years, purely a teachers training institution.

SMJ: You have seen your own department grow, too, haven’t you?

RB: I was a member of the Social Studies department which included political scientists, mainly historians at first. We hired some political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists, economists, and so on. As a matter of fact, like all of us, sociology was required for one semester. Most of us taught some sociology. I was the last chairperson
of the old Social Studies department. It had gotten bulky and unwieldy. I was sometime in the early 1960's that we divided into six different departments.

**SMJ:** When you were a chairperson of the department in those days, did you teach anything?

**RB:** Yes, I taught. I taught at least two courses each semester.

**SMJ:** Did it add anything to your salary?

**RB:** No, it didn't. We only got a reduced load. We were guaranteed 8% of our salary for being here in the summer, so, in that sense, you could get more money.

**SMJ:** Is there anything else you would like to say?

**RB:** There were a lot of differences. Ralph Horn perceived the idea that every faculty member ought to be here every day from 9-5. You could get schedules to have classes on Monday, Wednesday, another one at 11:00 on Monday, Wednesday and Friday or maybe Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. Usually we were here five days, and our schedules were spaced so that you almost had to stay on campus all day. He made out every schedule for every faculty member. It became a department prerogative sometime in the early years I was here. We all taught at least 15 hours, and we had what at the time was called extensions, at which you could make extra money by teaching an extra 3 hours usually out at a school somewhere. Often the younger members of the department would teach an extra 3 hours.

**SMJ:** Would you have regimented faculty meetings?

**RB:** Harvey Rice demanded a faculty meeting every week on Thursday afternoons. I've seen him several times call the roll at faculty meetings. A departmental chairperson, if someone in his/her department wasn't there, would have to explain why he/she wasn’t there.

**SMJ:** I understand he had a phenomenal memory.

**RB:** That quite possibly is true. I heard that, before he was president at Oswego (before he came here). Someone told me that he and Dorothy got the Elms, the college yearbook, before they came here and looked at the faculty pictures in there, and in a sense memorized them. As I say, since he had been at Ohio State when I came in, I was interviewed by him and I think he probably remembered me.

**SMJ:** He was a historian then.

**RB:** He was chairperson of the History department at Oswego, and then he became president at Oswego before he came here. You’re right. He was a gracious and
personable man. So was Dorothy, his wife. I remember another thing connected with early days here. We did a lot more, since there was a very small Dean of Students office. The faculty was required to a lot of chaperoning and this kind of social events. We didn’t really mind, but there was one dance called the “White Rose Dance” in which there were six queens nominated for queen of the White Rose Dance, and she was chosen at this dance. There was quite a formal affair. I, along with President Rice and some other faculty members were chaperoning this White Rose Dance. At this appropriate moment, the six queens were introduced. As one of them came down the stairs, those of us who were chaperoning had to go over and twirl around the hall with her a couple of times. Rice was a very nice looking man and he wore tails. At the first girl came down the stairs, he approached her and took her in his arms and waltzed around the hall a couple of times. I was standing there and looked up. The girl that I was sure to draw was about 8 inches taller than I was. All I could think of this poor girl and what chance does she have?? There’s Harvey Rice dancing, and sure enough, I drew this poor girl who was a bit taller than I. She hunched down as much as she could, and I stood up as straight as I could. She couldn’t possibly have won. I’ll never forget that. I think I sort of half-way apologized to her and she laughed.

SMJ: Where was the dance?

RB: I think it was at the track and field club, somewhere off campus. These were really formal affairs, and both the males and females dressed in formal dress.

SMJ: They don’t do that any more, do they?

RB: I think the White Rose Dance went during the Black Liberation Front Movement during the 1960’s. I’m sure of that. What would happen is all of the students, for four years, would pay a student fee and then those people who graduated really benefit. All the freshmen and sophomores who might have paid this fee and then dropped out of school didn’t go to the White Rose Dance. There were a whole series of events that were very well financed and free to seniors, but it was only for the people who happen to stick it out for four years. I don’t know what the logic of it was. I remember “moving up days”. Actually, all the colleges around here had them. I had never heard of that before in the Midwest. We didn’t have “moving up days”. At Christmas time, we had each class decorate a floor of Rockwell Hall and they decorated it. You were supposed to judge what class had done the best job.

SMJ: It reminds me more of high school spirit. School spirit has changed so much. You have seen the college grow from medium size, and I wouldn’t say it was a small college when you came.

RB: I’m pretty sure it was about 1,700 students.

SMJ: That was small then.
RB: It grew very rapidly.

SMJ: What positions have you held through the years?

RB: I've gone through all the ranks - instructor, assistant professor, associate professor. I've had all sorts of faculty government offices. I have been active in several community organizations outside the office. I have been active with the Historical Society, for example. I've headed some committees over there, especially the Landmark Society of the Niagara Frontier. I was on the Board of Trustees for the Landmark Society of three years. Most recently, I have been a University Senator and I was a Bicentennial Officer of the college in 1976. I think I have been active in other things besides classroom work, reading and writing.

SMJ: Have you written articles and books?

RB: Yes, I have been active as I can be. In writing, I have had articles published in a number of different scholarly journals: Social Education, Military Affairs, Military Affairs, Military History, Mississippi Valley; what's now the Organization of American Historians, The Old Mississippi Valley Historical Association, American Heritage, American History Illustrated. I have had a number of articles publishes over the years. I have written an number of textbooks, too, and I consider this really an extension of my teaching here. I was just estimating the other day, and probably have helped to teach over a million students in secondary schools in the United States the past ten or twelve years through textbooks that I have written.

SMJ: Are any of your books being used now?

RB: Oh, yes. I know that the Sweet Home School district here just outside of Buffalo is using a book that I'm senior author along with two other authors as well, call Man in America. It's an eighth grade social studies book although my part in it is mostly the history part. I didn't have anything to do on choosing the title of this book. When I learned that it was to be called Man in America, I told my editor that we're going to get in trouble with that word man in this title because of women, feminists, will react unfavorably to this. It turned out to be true. Although it was adopted at a number of places, some places objected to it because of the title. So another editor and I revised the whole thing. We went through it and took out all the sexist pronouns the "his". We turned policemen into police officers and so on and changed the title to Let Freedom Ring and it is being used in the Akron, Ohio public schools.

SMJ: Have you ever been invited to talk to the students who have used your book?

RB: I haven't been invited by students, but I have been invited to a number of teacher meetings for the Assembled Social Studies Teachers of Northeastern Ohio or whatever it might be where I have spoken to them. I find this a really frightening
experience because they all have something against us. I really don't like to do it. I was invited down to a county outside Washington DC, a county in Maryland. I spoke to the Assembled Social Studies Teachers in this particular county at one time, and one of the frequent complaints you get is teachers who are particularly interested in Chinese immigration. Maybe they have done a Master’s essay or something like that, and they say “Why is there only three sentences on Chinese immigration?” and the obvious answer is you have to pick and choose what you are going to put there, and that happens quite often.

SMJ: What is your favorite period in history?

RB: My favorite period in history. Actually I took my doctorate degree in social and intellectual history which is not a period kind of study. If I had to name a favorite, though, I think I am very attracted to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As far as my teaching is concerned, I really taught almost all different periods. Right now, my main courses are History of American Immigration which covers a whole span of American history in colonial times, in a course called ‘American Leaders’ which I sort of pick and chose.

SMJ: Are there any books for that?

RB: There are books for immigration history. The ‘American Leaders’ is a bit of a problem. Mainly I have read biographies, such as Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, etc. I choose different leaders of different times.

SMJ: Are you doing any writing now?

RB: I have written a number of articles recently. About three years ago, I had to revise this Man in America to Let Freedom Ring. I have written, and then I was busy as you know, with a series of articles, none of which have been published. I’ve been turned down by some of the most respected journals in the United States. While, I have been writing, I haven’t been published.

SMJ: Where do you get your ideas? Do you get inspiration?

RB: The textbook kind of thing is already laid out for you. You have some opportunity for creativity within the framework specified for you. I like to do biographical writing, story biographies. There was an individual with whom I have been interested by the name of Mark Sullivan. He was a giant in American Journalism in the early 20th century, and I have written some about him. I did have an article published about him several years ago in the Pennsylvanian magazine History and Biography. He was an opponent of the New Deal and Franklin D. Roosevelt. He was a Pennsylvanian by birth. The article was about his opposition to the New Deal. I think recently I tried to do a bit of a biographical sketch.

SMJ: Your journalism background has helped you out a great deal hasn’t it?
RB: I think so. Actually, I was only a sophomore when I got into the military service, so I really didn’t have any formal journalism courses, but all through school, I have been interested in writing. As a matter of fact, next fall I am going to teach in the Journalism Department on writing magazine articles. This small department which has a large number of majors and it is asking for help from other departments. I volunteered to do this. I am looking forward to it, and I hope I can be helpful.

SMJ: We talked about professional activities. Have you said enough on the changes you have seen?

RB: I could comment a great deal on the changes I have seen. I was talking to my class the other day when we get into the 1930's and 1940's. I like to play 'I remember' with them and I tell them what I remember in the 30's and 40's and try to impress upon them the things I am talking about. As I said, I am a social and intellectual historian, and I tend to notice changes which may not seem very significant to other people, but I think they have a great significance now. I was talking about the big band era of the 1939's and 1940's and Benny Goodman, Glen Miller and they knew what I was talking about. They know what big bands are. I was saying that one of the things I always noticed between, big bands and current musical groups today is that the big bands always dress the same. Each member of the band would be wearing the same clothes. They would wear dark jackets, white shirts and red ties and gray pants or something like this, and they looked very uniform. The rock bands of today dress differently. If you saw them separately, you would never dream they were members of the same group. The students were very interested in this. I asked them why is this and they understood. They said, "It's because today we're taught to be individuals. We're taught to do our own thing. It's reflected by the fact that people in bands dress differently." I think it is the matter of dress is significant. I've seen some remarkable changes in this. I came here in the 1950's, and I really don't think very many girls wore anything but skirts in the 1950's. I have a girl come every Wednesday with a skirt on, very nicely dressed. I thought it was because she worked somewhere on Wednesday and she had to wear a skirt. She said liked to dress up every once in awhile. Is that significant? Yes, I think it is. I think the change in the way girls dress in the 1950's and 1970's is in a sense a reflection on the unisex movement. It is a reflection, so dress in different clothes, length of hair, of course. Hair gone up and down. When I first came, the brush haircut was still in existence. In the 1960's men wore their hair very long. Now it's shortening some. Beards and mustaches are still popular. The summer before last, while they were taking a test, I counted 16 students in the class, or men in the class, and I think 13 of the men had either beards or mustaches. I don't think it's that high of a proportion now but you're right. I started wearing a mustache as part of the bicentennial project and it hung on.

SMJ: Do you find the attitude of the students change over the years? Are they still just as respectful and eager to learn now, and are their study habits still the same?
RB: As far as I can tell, there are differences. One difference and I've talked with other faculty members about this I'm sure students aren't so good about attendance as they once were.

SMJ: You don't have to keep an account of attendance, do you?

RB: No longer, no. At one time we had to do so. I do. Usually, classes have 50 or 60 people in them and you can't spend time calling the roll. I try to get to know my students very quickly, and most of the students attend regularly enough. If I find a student who seems to be absent more than he or she should be, I try to speak to him/her. I have noticed that difference. Students, don't, regard attending class to be as significant as it ought to be, and I think it used to be in the past.

SMJ: What about their work?

RB: Several things have happened there. One big change was that has come about is that our first semester no longer extends past Christmas. It used to be that you could assign people term papers to write for the semester, and they had the Christmas period plus two weeks after Christmas. I think it made a difference. I'm sure we required less writing of students that we once did. I know I do. Although I am still in upper division courses, I try to have them write some kind of paper. I am sure the students aren't any less intelligent than they were in the past.

SMJ: I was wondering whether you are discouraged as a teacher. Have you found it less satisfying teaching now or is it still the same?

RB: Of course, one has to balance. I'm in my 26th year of teaching here, and I suppose one has to take that into account. I think what has happened Sister, at least it's happened to me, is that I beginning to suffer from self doubt and I'll explain what I mean. When we were, for example, a teacher training institution, I knew that everybody in there would at some time or another be teaching social studies. A lot of people were elementary school teachers, but the elementary to teach social studies. Then, we started training secondary school teachers, so we would have seminars in which everybody in there was going to be a secondary history teacher or social studies teacher. You can say my mission is to help them teach, but they someday are going to be teaching. Not that I am going to tell them how to teach, but they are going to get some of their content material from me. So, I could zero in, so to speak, on that particular goal. I have teachers who would come back to me and say I remember that I did this with my class, and I told them about something or other. And you felt there was a direct relationship between what you were doing in class and what the students were going to do. I don't get this feeling today, because of the wide variety of programs we have. I think most people in my classes have some doubt about the real unity it is that I am doing, and they are not going to teach history. They are taking this class because it comes at 10:00 on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday or because it looks interesting. I sometimes find myself thinking
what good am I really doing here with these people and that’s what I mean about suffering from self-doubt.

SMJ:  Don’t you find it diminishing in interest in history too?

RB:  Some people at least take courses because they are interested in history. I have lots of non-history majors.

SMJ: It must be very encouraging to know and stimulating for you to meet students who are vitally interested in history.

RB: Yes. Although as I say, most people in the classes are taking it because they see a history course because that looks interesting, and they will take it. But, then, you do have much bigger percentage of people who just don’t care; they are just taking it to take it. That’s one reason I’m looking forward to teaching this class in journalism because it’s limited to people in the journalism department, so I assume there is going to be a considerable amount of interest in it. I don’t want to sell today’s students short. I really respect their intelligence and the kind of things they are interested in. I’m comparing what I knew I was an undergraduate with what they know and kinds of experiences they had. Their attitudes have changed, they are less regimented, less structured, less organized than students used to be.

SMJ: You certainly have seen a lot of changes in the administration too. It is gone from a small one where you really had more contact to the administration than you do now.

RB: That’s true. Some of my friends who have been members of departments then gone in to administration. I sometime joke with them that they disappear in Grover Cleveland Hall, and we never see them again. There is that aspect to it. I had a chance to climb the administrative ladder, and I’m not sorry that I didn’t.

SMJ: What honors have you received?

RB: I have had some State University Research Fellowships. I have had a fellowship or two from other sources and named Distinguished Service Professor Which I consider an honor. That was last year. Dr. Czurles and Dr. Greenwood, (who is now retired) and I, we three. John Urban and Bob Drew already were Distinguished Professors. There were just five of us. Since Walter Greenwood retired there are just four of us. Four out of a faculty of 500, I consider a very good percentage.

SMJ: Did you get a plaque or what did you get?

RB: I thought I was going to get a $2,500 raise, but I didn’t get anything. None of us did. I got a letter form the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, but outside of that it was all. We were invited to Commencement and introduced.
SMJ: That was a lot of work out into that, wasn't it?

RB: Well, Monroe Fordham, in our department, acted as my sponsor. I suggested people he might write to and ask letters of reference and testimonials, but he is the one who actually did it. I'm very grateful to Monroe; he was very helpful, and I appreciated his help very much.

SMJ: There was a question I didn’t ask you but wanted too. Do you have any particular person in mind who stands out in your memory as a very fine professors or administrators?

RB: Yes, I can name several of them. As I suggested, I think Harvey Rice, probably because he was President when I came here. I have known him. Then there's President Paul Bulger and President Fretwell. They were different kinds of people, of course. I have had close relationships with all three of them, but I remember Harvey as kind of a childhood hero. For many of us who belong to the Social Studies Department, Harold Peterson was sort of a father figure, and we have had a very close relationship with him. He is a very fine man, and he certainly influenced me. I have been very close friends with my fellow Brown in the History Department, and we have a lot of fun. It's even more complicated than that because his wife goes by the name of Babe and my wife goes by the name of Bebe, Babe and Bebe Brown really gets confusing and even more than Edmond and Richard. We have been good friends.

SMJ: Is he still on campus?

RB: Yes he is. He still a member of the history Department. He is a European Historian and I'm an American Historian.

SMJ: And then Dr. Bulger is New York.

RB: He’s an American Historian. Eric understands and enjoys teaching local history, New York State history. He teaches a course in the American Frontier. He doesn’t look much like a cowboy, but he does the frontier bit in that regard.

SMJ: And then Monroe Fordham. He’s Afro-American, and he teaches American History too?

RB: Yes, he teaches Afro-American History and general American History.

SMJ: Is there anyone in your faculty that stands out?

RB: Well, those are people within my own department. In the Sociology Department and History Department have had a close relationship. Fred Hollister, who is now retired. There’s the former chairperson of the Social Studies Department, a man from whom I learned a great deal I’m sure. Ray Stone, in the Political Science
Department, an old colleague in the Social Studies Department. Stanley Czurles had been here since the Civil War, practically. I remember how Rockwell Hall was built, there are little offices halfway in between each floor, and Stanley ran the Art Education Department from one of these little cubby holes for years and years and years. I remember that particular because when the Art Education people moved out of there, I inherited one of those little offices. I think it was the office that Stanley Czurles used to be in. As a matter of fact, the Art Education Department. I have had a close relationship with some of these people because when I first came here we traveled around. The students traveled around in sections, and I was a member of the Social Studies Department that topped the Art Education students. So every year, I would have two or three classes made up of art education students. I got to know a number of the students and the staff members, Joe Hubler, Roland Weiss.

SMJ: And this was required American History, wasn’t it?

RB: That’s right. Actually, this course in our General Studies Program called Ideas and Social Change which was really a history course. The Art Education students, I don’t believe were required to take any American History, but the did have to take this course.

SMJ: One advantage of that, Dr. Brown, I think, is that you got to know and got a closer connection with the students over the years.

RB: I think that is probably true. Also, presumably, the students got to know each other better. It was particularly for the freshmen. It was kind of a security blanket to be traveling around with the same group all the time. I’m not sure whether this is bad or good but it has both bad and good points.

SMJ: I think you have answered that last question I have here, do you have a pet project or interest? Was there anything else you would like to add?

RB: I have probably too many interests. I like a lot of different things. I like to do new things, go to new places, try new ideas, create new tasks, and that sort of thing.

SMJ: Do you have plans for the near future?

RB: I would like to do more writing. I have a little office at home. It’s a real mess because I have things piled on the floor here and at home. There is a single bed in there, and I use the desk and numerous files. I would like to cut down on some of my activities.

SMJ: Get all that in order before you retire so when it comes to the archives it will be in order.
RB: I sent you some materials about the Bicentennial. I still have some
Bicentennial Leftovers cluttering my office.

SMJ: What do you feel had been your main contribution to the History
Department?

RB: My main contribution is, I'm not sure. I regard with some suspicion,
people who say they have made contribution. One metaphor or symbol that I remember
and I read this somewhere that, actually, someone was getting fired, and the person who
was being retired or fired, said "You are going to miss me here and it's not going to be
the same." The person who was telling him about change in status happened to be
drinking a glass of water and said "This is you and look what happens when I take you
out." He pulled his finger out and of course the water was the same as before. I never
have forgotten that. I would hesitate to say I have made any contribution. I'm sure, and I
hope people will remember me. I don't think any of us can say what impact we have had.

SMJ: What part have you played in the history of the college? I think you have
influenced thousands of students. You certainly have given books and educated millions
of children indirectly. So I would think that would be a contribution.

RB: Let me tell you a story about this. I remember once I was teaching a class
in American History and I was talking about Warren G. Harding. Harding is infamous in
American History for having advocated a return to normalcy as he put it. I remember
talking about this class and saying that the problem with this is that no one can resume a
former relationship because you can't go back or you can't go home again. When I said
this, I remember a girl raised her head looking at me and obviously this had made an
impression on her. I thought I had really made a very strong impression on this young
lady and I found myself embroidering this "you can't go home again, you can't resume
your former relationship." She was paying very close attention. After class was over, she
came up and said, "You know that really made an impression on me - that you can't
resume a former relationship." And I said, "Yes I see you are affected by this." And she
said, "I was talking to my boyfriend last night and he wanted to go back to our former
relationship. I didn't know what to tell him but now I know what to tell him." I have
always been very suspicious of people who have said that they have made a profound
impression. I don't think any of us can predict the impact that we have on people. You
may not even notice it at the time, particularly in teaching, some little, inconspicuous
person out there. One thing that you say may really change their whole life.

SMJ: But you have enjoyed your years here?

RB: Oh yes, no regrets.

SMJ: I there anything else you would like to add?
RB: I can't think of anything else right now, Sister. I appreciate this opportunity to share my thoughts with you future generations in case anyone ever listens to this tape.

SMJ: Thank you, Dr. Brown.