



Erwin Pearson Oral History Interview, July 8, 2016

Title

“A History of Ups and Downs for Veterinary Medicine at OSU”

Date

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Location

Valley Library, Oregon State University.

Summary

In the interview, Pearson discusses his family background and upbringing on a farm, his decision to attend Oregon State College, and his memories of studying Animal Husbandry at OSC. In reflecting on his undergraduate years, Pearson also comments on campus life and his social activities as a student in the mid-1950s, as well as his experiences in ROTC. From there, Pearson shares his memories of studying for his Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University, and the two subsequent years that he spent in the Army Veterinary Corps.

Next, Pearson traces his career in private veterinary practice, noting stops that he made in Astoria, Woodburn and Stayton over the course of about eighteen years. He likewise shares the details of his decision to study for a master's degree at OSU and to become board certified in internal medicine, work that ultimately led to his receiving a faculty position at Cornell University.

The remainder of the session is devoted to Pearson's return to OSU as a faculty member, and to a recitation of his institutional memories of the College of Veterinary Medicine from the early 1980s to present day. Major topics discussed include the lobbying and legislative efforts that brought the college into being; Pearson's heavy engagement with OSU Vet Med students as a lead instructor in the college's teaching hospital; colleagues within Vet Med who made an impact on Pearson and on the direction of the college; and major research projects with which Pearson was involved.

The interview likewise includes Pearson's memories of the near dissolution of the college in the early 1990s as a result of budget cuts; the lobbying effort that saved the college; the administrative tumult that plagued Vet Med for much of the 1990s; and the work of Kelvin Koong and others in securing state funding for a full four-year veterinary program at OSU in the early 2000s. Pearson then shares his perspective on the crafting of the curriculum for this new program, and also describes the impact that a \$21 million gift made on the college in 2005.

The session concludes with Pearson's thoughts on the current direction of the OSU College of Veterinary Medicine, and on the broader direction of the university as a whole.

Interviewee

Erwin Pearson

Interviewer

Chris Petersen

Website

<http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/oh150/pearson/>

Transcript

Chris Petersen: OK, today is July 8th, 2016 and we are in the Valley Library with Erwin Pearson, and I'm very pleased to have him here. We are going to talk about his experience as an alum of Oregon State College and then his life as a private practice veterinarian, and then as a faculty member in the College of Veterinary Medicine here at OSU, and gather a lot of institutional memory about that college of our project. But I'd like to begin by developing a bit of a biographical sketch of your life and I'll ask you – you were born in McMinnville but raised in Carlton, is that correct?

Erwin Pearson: That's correct; it was on a farm outside of Carlton.

CP: Can you tell me a bit about your family background?

EP: Yes. My grandparents on my father's side both immigrated from Sweden – they met in the United States and got married here, and were farmers all the time, actually worked for a dollar a day and saved enough money to buy part of a farm, which you couldn't do nowadays, obviously. On my mother's side, my grandfather immigrated when he was a six-year-old, from Switzerland. And my grandmother on my mother's side was a Barton, and they actually came to the United States back in the 1600s. Actually, one of my great grandparents was a cousin to Clara Barton, so we had some medical, and several of those were doctors back in the old days too. So that's where I came from. Mainly farmers.

CP: What type of farm was it that you grew up on?

EP: It was a mixed farm. We grew a little bit of everything, some livestock, some crops. Crops were mainly grains – wheat, oats, barley and clover for seed, and then we used clover for hay as well. Raised sheep; they were probably the main livestock we raised, although we had a few dairy cattle which we milked, and some pigs always.

CP: Did you have any siblings?

EP: I have one brother who is two years younger than me.

CP: So tell me a bit about life growing up on the farm. I'm sure there were plenty of chores.

EP: Yeah, as soon as we got old enough to do anything there was chores. I guess that's why farmers have boys, so they can get the work done. So yeah, to start with, we could start hoeing the garden and things like that in the early years, and soon as we got big enough that we could lift something, we ended up on the combine sewing sacks or on the hay truck setting hay forks and bringing the hay up into the mow, and plowing up the fields and working on things. We did this even after school when we got older; we would come home from school by 4:00 and they would get two or three hours of work out of us before it was time to have supper and go to bed.

CP: Did you have horses?

EP: When I was young we had draft horses. There were twenty draft horses in there when I was two-years-old, and they did most of the farming with draft horses until they converted to tractors. I owned a pony when I was older; I think I was six or seven years old, I had a pony. But other than that, I didn't have any pleasure horses at that time, they all worked, they were necessary for running the farm.

CP: So it is safe to assume that you started to develop your interest in animals growing up on the farm?

EP: Sure, that's true. I certainly had to take care of them and it was a chore, but I still liked the animals and thought about, at one time, coming back to the farm and raising animals.

CP: Were you engaged with what we call Extension now in 4-H or FFA?

EP: Yes, I was in 4-H for a number of years. I wasn't in FFA until my senior year in high school because Carlton High School didn't have an FFA unit. But I did one year of FFA and a number of years in 4-H, raising sheep and beef cattle mainly, showing at the county fairs and state fairs.

CP: What do you remember about community life in the Carlton or McMinnville area?

EP: Well, we're on a farm, there wasn't much community life. There was nobody to play with to start with. I invented playmates when I was real young, and I named them Oats, Wheat and Barley because those were the words I heard all the time. Neighbors most of the time didn't have children and when they did have children, my mother didn't approve of them, so I was by myself until I got into first grade. Except, I guess, on Sundays we went to Sunday School, so I'd have an hour with some other kids my own age. And socially, it was during the Depression, we couldn't do a lot of stuff. We drove the Coast once in a while. There was no television, we didn't have television until I was a senior in high school, so we listened to the radio. It may be better in some cases than it is now, where people are stuck on to the t.v. or games all the time.

CP: How was school for you?

EP: It was alright. In grade school, it was fun, I enjoyed it. There was some bullying going on. I'd know if I got a good grade on a test, they'd beat me up before they would let me go home. So I got the idea that maybe I shouldn't be studying in those days; I changed my mind later, obviously. Classes were about thirty kids in the class and, in fact, one year at Carlton Grade School they combined two classes because they didn't have enough rooms or enough teachers. So it wasn't like the big cities or the way things are going now, but we learned, obviously, enough to get by.

[0:05:05]

CP: Was there an expectation from your family or from you that you were going to go to college?

EP: Oh yeah. From as early as I can remember, I was going to go to college. And I never doubted it or questioned it, and I was planning on it for my whole life. My parents were in favor of education. My father was neglected from education because he was taken out of school to help run the farm when he was a freshman in high school. My mother finished high school and actually went to business college for a while, part time at nights. But they definitely wanted to go to college and a lot of the neighbors had gone to college too.

CP: Were you always angling towards Oregon State? Or were there other-

EP: No, in those days it was always Oregon State because that's what we talked about. And some of the neighbors had gone to Oregon State and graduated from Oregon State. So that was, I don't think there was any doubt or any other place I was going to apply to, from when I was really young, as early as I can remember.

CP: And your brother?

EP: He went to Oregon State too, yeah, of course.

CP: Well, tell me about the transition to being a college student and living in Corvallis for you.

EP: Well, it was a little bit of a transition on the size of the town. Carlton had about 900 people population, so Corvallis was a big city to me in those days. And Carlton had one movie theatre and Corvallis had three. I didn't have a car until I was, I think, a senior, so we had to walk every place we went, which was a little bit further. But I was in town too and I had never lived in any town before, since I was on a farm outside of Carlton. So it was a little bit different but no great problem because I'd been down here before, I came down here to 4-H summer school, which I think lasted a couple of weeks, which maybe going on right now, I don't know. So I had some idea what the campus was like and everything. Much smaller in those days; there were 5,000 students, was the number that they had.

CP: So you had that acquaintance already with the campus and with the community?

EP: Yeah, I knew a little bit about the community and a little bit about the campus.

CP: You majored in Animal Husbandry, was that always your intent?

EP: Yeah, because I was planning, I guess, at that time, on going back to the farm and raising animals, so Animal Husbandry seemed like the logical courses to take. In earlier years, I thought about being a doctor or a pilot or an Army person, but the animals probably were higher on my list, by the time I went to college at least.

CP: Can you tell me a bit about the curriculum that you experienced as an undergraduate?

EP: Yeah, in Animal Science – you had to take so many Animal Science courses in your major, and I can remember some about some of the professors there. Dr. McKenzie, I believe, was head of the Animal Husbandry department. Dr. Nelson was also in the department. Al Alder taught meats, Dr. Bogart taught genetics and animal breeding, and Dr. Oldfield, who is still around, taught nutrition. In fact, I think I was in probably one of his very early classes of animal nutrition in those days. And then we had to take some regular courses like English and stuff over on campus; English and speech and economics and business law and biology and things like that, in addition.

I can remember, in those days there weren't that many people in the class, but there were several sections of some of the English classes, and the word was out about who you should get, if you could, for each class. In English class, you should get Malamud and for economics you had to get Friday, and if you were taking history you had to get Dr. Smith. So at the registration, we'd all try to get into those. There wasn't as many politically correct courses in those days that you had to take; those have been added on in the last few decades I think.

CP: Did you take an English class from Bernard Malamud?

EP: I think I had one English class from him. That's a long time ago, this was in 1950, so I can't remember for sure, but I know I tried to. I know I did take classes from Smith and Friday.

CP: Where were most of the Animal Husbandry courses located relative to the campus now?

EP: Some of them were in the old Ag building, I think they've even renamed that one now, the one out here on the quad next to the MU building.

CP: Strand Agriculture Hall.

EP: Yeah, Strand Agricultural Hall. Some of them, the meats classes of course were out in the abattoir which is out on Campus Way, I think, to the west. I think Withycombe Hall was just built at that time and I think we did have some courses in there, I can't remember exactly what year it was constructed.

[0:10:03]

CP: I feel like I've heard that they actually brought animals inside Strand Ag Hall.

EP: Yeah, not very many in my time, but when some of my neighbors went to school here, yeah, they brought animals in. Which is good. I mean, if you're teaching about animals, you better have animals to look at. I wish they still did.

CP: It must have been designed in a slightly different way than it is now. [laughs]

EP: Yeah, they had more help to clean up poop and stuff like that I guess.

CP: So was it mostly large animals that you were studying?

EP: Yeah, because it was Animal Science. Actually, in those days, Animal Husbandry and Dairy Husbandry were separate; now they're all in Animal Science. So it was just farm animals, basically, that we were studying in my major.

CP: Do you have memories of Oldfield as a professor or maybe later as a colleague? He became a pretty important person.

EP: Yeah, I don't remember him as a colleague but I remember him as a professor, and it was a good course and I enjoyed taking it and I think learned a lot of nutrition that I still remember sixty years later. So it was good. And I know he did a

lot of work – he did work with one of my advisors, Dr. Muth, on selenium and he actually became famous for that along with Dr. Herb Muth.

CP: You were a very good student; I've looked at your transcript and you got good grades.

EP: Yeah, when I got to college I figured, "well, I should be learning something, nobody's going to beat me up, so I should do some studying." So I studied when I had the opportunity; I didn't cram the night before the exam and I think this paid off, because I think sometimes I remembered it more than one day after the test. And the next year, when the same thing came up, I still remembered it. So I think that helped me some.

CP: Was the library a place where you spent a fair amount of time?

EP: Some but not a tremendous amount. A lot of it, I guess, we had study rooms in our fraternity and I spent time there between classes even; a lot of people, between classes, would rush off to a coffee shop or something and gossip. Well, that was wasted time, I didn't need to do that, so I went back. But then at night, I could take off if I wanted to because I already had my work done.

CP: You were in AGR, correct?

EP: Yeah.

CP: And you were the president of that fraternity your senior year.

EP: Yeah, my senior year and actually part of my junior year even. That was a good experience. I enjoyed living there, we learned how to live on our own, that was the first time we could live without what the dean called "emotionally mature ladies" to supervise what we were doing, because we did everything on our own. We bought the food, we hired a cook, and policed ourselves and everything.

CP: You were also four years ROTC.

EP: Yeah, you almost had to in those days. It was during the Cold War, there was universal military training, every able-bodied male had to go into the service for at least six months, and two years if you finished all four years of ROTC. So I decided that rather than go in for six months and get \$87 a month, which what I think they were getting in those days – in addition to housing and the nice clothes and stuff – that I would go in as an officer and get two hundred-some dollars a month in addition to some housing and so on. And I enjoyed it. I was in the infantry. Actually, my senior year, I was appointed cadet colonel and I was commander of the Army ROTC regiment here. We did a lot of parades downtown and stuff, on Tuesdays I think it was. It was a good experience. I was actually offered a regular Army commission at the end of the time. I didn't take it because, at that time, I didn't think I was going to spend my whole life in the Army, although sometimes I look back and think maybe that would have been a good thing to do, I don't know.

CP: Can you tell me a bit more about the obligations in ROTC at that point? You were involved in drilling, I'm sure.

EP: Yeah. Well, we had classes I think either three or four hours a week, and then one hour of drill. Always in the afternoons; I think it was always at 1:00. But on spring term, when we had all the parades, everybody had drills at 1:00 on Tuesdays and that's where we went down to lower campus or downtown on some days and doing it. We also had to go to summer camp. I went to Fort Lewis, because I was in infantry, and spent six weeks or two months with field training and learning basically Army drill and training discipline and so on, and also infantry tactics, because we'd be an officer in the infantry.

CP: How would you characterize the culture of campus in the early 1950s? What was it like to go to school here at that point?

EP: Oh boy. Well, it obviously was different than high school because every class you went to was in a different building instead of just in a different room. You had different people in every class. You didn't get to know everybody, there were that many people here. The dress was fairly casual, I guess, in those days, but I think there was more discipline in the

classes. The students didn't get up and yell at the professor during the lectures and stuff like that. You were expected here to be able to get decent grades and you were also expected to stay out of trouble. I don't know how to characterize it.

[0:15:26]

CP: How about social life?

EP: Most of the social life that we had was in the fraternity where we would have meetings and have discussions with the other fraternity members. There was usually some type of social event every month at the fraternity. And then the college had all-school dances, one at least every term. I know they had the Foresters' Ball and they had the Military Ball, and I think the girls put on the Mortar Board Ball or something like that, which was held in the basement of the MU. And with 5,000 students, you would get most of them that had dates into that dance hall all at one time, usually with a band or orchestra up on stage.

CP: Were you interested in sports?

EP: Yeah. In high school or college or both?

CP: Sure, both.

EP: Yeah, in high school I played basketball for Carlton and for McMinnville. I ran track in McMinnville. In Carlton, I really liked baseball but I was no good at it. But if you only had nine boys in the school, you had a chance to make the team. It's a little bit of an exaggeration, but that's probably why I was on the baseball team.

At Oregon State, I did try out for track and I was on the freshman track team. I ran the 880, the half mile, and the mile relay. But I gave it up. I worked so hard – Doc Swan was the coach in those days, people probably have heard of him, and he was pretty tough on you. You'd work so hard for two or three hours, running faster than you should if you could and longer distances, and you got so tired that you couldn't even eat after you got done. And to do this, you were trying to prove you could run faster than somebody else. Well you know, after you run so many meets, you what times people were running in. You knew who was going to win unless somebody was sick. And so why do I need to spend all this exertion proving I can run faster than somebody and showing, yes, that somebody can run faster than me? So I did drop out. Maybe that was a mistake, but I just did it for my freshman year. So at the end of my track thing, I did intramural basketball after that. That's all the sports I did.

CP: How about attending OSC games?

EP: Yeah. I think students got in free in those days and we went to most of the basketball games and some of the football games.

CP: Was this still in the era of Bell Field and the Men's Gymnasium?

EP: Yeah. Well, no. Actually the Men's Gymnasium, Gill Coliseum was just finished. It finished in 1950 and I just started, so the games had transferred to Gill Coliseum in those days.

CP: That must have been exciting.

EP: Yeah. And there was a group of us, they called them the Tail Flappers. We had to wear white shirts and then these sort of beanie-type hats which were black and orange, I think, or maybe orange and white, and we would wheel those around in circles whenever our team scored something, just to get more team spirit. I've still got the hat at home. I don't think they do that anymore.

CP: [laughs] I'm pretty sure they don't. What was Bell Field like?

EP: I can't remember an awful lot about it, really. Different than now, obviously.

CP: Yeah. Pretty modest and muddy, I've heard.

EP: Yeah, right.

CP: You were also involved with the Educational Activities Board. Do you have a memory of that?

EP: Yeah. I was Business Manager of the *Beaver*, the yearbook, during my senior year. I had been on the staff the year before, I think it was, and so we sold pages and sold *Beavers*, the book itself. I think it was the only year in a long time that we actually made profit, when I was doing this. I had an office up in the MU. Irwin Harris, I think, was director of Educational Activities at the time, and so he basically was my boss.

CP: Can you tell me about him? He's somebody we wanted to interview but he passed away. Do you have memories of Irwin?

EP: Only so far as the *Beaver* was concerned. He was always checking up on us and making sure that we were getting the work done, because he was responsible, basically, for the budget, although I was to get the money in and did the spending. He had his office downstairs and I'd talk to him, but I don't remember that much more about him. He was always kind to me and friendly, I had no problems, and he would do a lot – I can't remember, was he the one that did tennis too?

CP: Yeah, he was the tennis coach and lots of other things.

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EP: Yeah, and many other things, but I can't give you too much more about him other than what he had as far as supervising me.

CP: So at some point you made a decision to pursue an advanced degree, do you remember how that progressed? I mean, initially you were going to go back to the farm but you decided to go to Cornell.

EP: Yeah, during my junior year here I think I decided maybe I can do other things than just go back to the farm. Maybe I could still deal with animals and maybe be a doctor besides, that's another thing I wanted to do. So I thought, "well, maybe I'll go into veterinary medicine." So I applied and went.

CP: How did you decide on Cornell?

EP: OK, that's a good question because most of the people here were going to Washington State, which was the closest school. California had just started – I think they only had one class out at the time. But what I did was ask other veterinarians what the best veterinary schools were and they all named their own school, but they also all named Cornell. And so I sort of got the in that maybe Cornell would be a good place to go if they'd take me. It's back there in the Ivy League a long ways away, and I hadn't lived that far away ever. And also, I looked at some of the ratings and Cornell was at the top of the ratings and had been for years. So that's why I chose Cornell. I applied and I didn't know if I would be accepted, but they did accept me, so I went.

CP: What was the environment like there for you? A big transition.

EP: Yeah it was a big transition. The college was different. It was Ivy League. Here you wore, I don't know, short sleeve shirts and then jeans to class, and if you were an upper-classmen – I think at Oregon State in those days you could wear cords, you couldn't wear cords until you were a junior, if I remember right. And when I got back to Cornell, we wore a coat and tie to class and we were expected to learn something. If you drank a beer here, they'd probably throw you out of the college. There, you'd go to the MU and buy a beer if you wanted to. So it was a different environment. They weren't caring about what you did in your private life as long as you studied and learned what they were teaching you.

So it was a somewhat different environment, and it was an older place. I don't know that they're that much older than Oregon State is, but the halls are old and stone, mostly, back there. They're up on a hill above Cayuga Lake, the weather is different in the wintertime. I mean, I can remember when I was student it being thirty degrees below zero lots of times. When we were going out on ambulatory as seniors, there would be huge amounts of snow. In fact, my senior year I got part of my apartment free if I would shovel snow, and it had been a good deal every year except my year. My year, I think it snowed over six inches every day for more than thirty days straight and eventually it got ahead of me. And we don't

have that much snow out here obviously, even in those days; I think we had more snow then that we do now. But it was different, yeah.

CP: I'd be interested in learning a bit more about what the training is like for a DVM – you're the first I've spoken to for this project. What were your memories of learning to become a veterinarian?

EP: At Cornell, ok. It would be similar at most veterinary schools I think, even now, although some of them do a little bit different way of organizing it. You have to learn normal, to start with, what the normal is like, and that's very important I think, and I still push that. So you get anatomy and physiology – the normal structure and the normal function of the animal. Then you've got to learn a little about the causes of disease, so you get bacteriology, virology, toxicology and so on. You have to learn a little bit about pathology; how the anatomy changes in disease. So you get that the first couple of years.

And then usually in the third year you get some of the clinical courses like we do here now. You get medicine – large animal medicine, small animal medicine – you get surgery courses in large animal and small animal. You get courses in reproduction. You get courses in pharmacology, because you have to know something about the drug you're prescribing. And then in most schools, during the last year, you're spending in clinics – in a teaching hospital or on field service – where you're actually assigned to a professor who is a clinician, and you go with them when they look at their cases, and they teach by seeing and doing, which is a good way. Now some places, they start a little bit earlier in the clinics. I know medical schools now start at the end of the second year, but they have a different situation because they have a chance for their students to see every disease that they're likely to see in a lifetime. And we can't do that here, or they couldn't do that then, so they had to talk about some of them and show samples of them and pictures and so on.

CP: Was there a research component to the curriculum?

EP: No, not in vet school, there wasn't time. I mean, there were professors who were doing research in addition to teaching, but the students weren't involved in research unless you had a part-time job. Now, I did a part-time job working for a profess of anatomy and he was doing research, so I helped stain slides for him and stuff like that. But that had nothing to do with my instruction, it was so I could get enough money so I could stay in vet school.

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CP: Was that your first exposure to laboratory research?

EP: Yeah, I think so.

CP: And I assume there was no teaching component to being a DVM student? A lot of graduate students teach classes too.

EP: No. The interns and people who had graduated did some teaching. Residents, of course, did some teaching, but the students didn't do any at that time, no.

CP: Well you graduated second in your class, so this must have come pretty naturally to you.

EP: Yeah, I don't know if it came naturally. As I say, I tried to learn stuff so I could apply it, so I didn't cram the night before the exam, I studied ahead of time and relaxed the night before the exam, and then I didn't forget it all the next day. If you took, say, physiology and the next year we took applied physiology or physiology lab, it was a lot of the same stuff. Well, I remembered the stuff because I didn't cram. So I think that helped me some. We had a good class, I think. We had fifty in the class and I think ten of the fifty were on faculty at veterinary colleges later on in life, which is a high percentage I think.

CP: Were you coming back to Oregon during the summers?

EP: No. I did one summer; I did after my sophomore year. But the first summer I worked at the college and the third summer I worked for a veterinarian up in Vermont. Of the four years, there was only one time that I came home and it was that second summer.

CP: So there wasn't much occasion to apply what you were learning to the livestock on your family farm.

EP: No.

CP: So you finished up at Cornell and you entered the military for two years. I assume that you had a deferred obligation from ROTC?

EP: Yeah, every six months they deferred me so I could stay in Cornell. I might have gone into the military right away if they had taken me, but my time of reporting was in the spring. So what was I going to do from when I graduated at Oregon State until the following spring? Just sit around and do nothing? I could work on the farm, maybe. So I thought, "no, I'll start Cornell." I was accepted there, but every six months I had to get a deferment so I didn't have to report. Of course, when I graduated they wanted me right away.

CP: So you went to infantry school and then you were stationed with the Veterinary Corps.

EP: Yeah, I went to – my commission was in the infantry, so I went to infantry school at Fort Benning, Georgia. It's not the most pleasant place to live – the humidity, I think, is ninety-nine percent as is the temperature all summer. And the red mud and fire ants and rattlesnakes and stuff is down there as we were crawling through. But yeah, a lot of the stuff that they taught at the infantry school, I had already learned in ROTC here, so it wasn't that bad. But then I told them if I had to go inspect meat, which they do in the Veterinary Corps a lot, I was going to stay in the infantry. Which is sort of a rash statement in those days, but that's what I said. But then they said, "ok, we'll get you someplace where you can serve better if you take this commission," so they basically talked me into transferring into the Veterinary Corps. If I hadn't transferred, I was on orders to go to Korea. The fighting was all done there, but I would have sat on the demilitarized zone for a year and a half, doing maneuvers and stuff. Actually, they changed my orders the day before I was supposed to ship out from San Francisco, and changed the orders to go to the Army Chemical Center in Maryland.

CP: And what were your duties there?

EP: Necropsying goats, mostly. This sounds bad and I probably shouldn't be saying this, it's probably all military secret or something, but they were using goats to test weapons. So when they test the weapon, then we do a necropsy, autopsy the goat, and I worked under a board certified human pathologist actually, he was in charge of the laboratory. He wasn't in the military, but they hired him to do this. And he was actually the expert on wound ballistics. In fact, we used to go into Baltimore sometimes, to the morgue, when they found somebody that had been murdered, and he would look over the wound and tell them all about how it happened and everything. But I was basically doing this on goats and learned a lot of pathology, and that's where I actually started – my first publication came out of what I was doing there in the Army. Because these goats had a lot of things wrong with them; I think we went through 1,200 goats, and so you're doing to find some diseases if you look at that many animals. So it was a better experience than going and inspecting meat, and probably better experience than sitting on the thirty-eighth parallel, watching the North Koreans across the line.

CP: All manner of weapons? Rifles and other?

EP: Yeah. Different people were testing different things. We were mainly testing rifle ammunition. I didn't do the shooting or anything, all I did was open them up. But I think that's where they developed the current Naval rounds which are used right now.

CP: You also were practicing veterinary medicine during the evenings and weekends during this time?

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EP: Yeah. That was illegal of course, the Army owned you twenty-four hours a day, and in the infantry it would have been impossible, but they didn't care what I was doing after I left the laboratory in the Veterinary Corps. So this one veterinarian, Dr. Ross, had some illness where he couldn't do a lot of his work, so I basically did all of his farm calls, nights and weekends. It was stupid. I mean, I shouldn't have done it. I was just out of school and so eager to get into it and eager to start practicing veterinary medicine, and this was an opportunity to do it. But I could have waited and I could have enjoyed my time rather than overworking in those days by going in the Army all day and then, half the night, out on

farms doing what he normally would have done during the daytime. I learned; I mean, it was good experience I guess, but it was stupid of me at that time to do it, looking back at it.

CP: You came back to Oregon after your discharge, that was always the plan I assume? To come back?

EP: Well, sort of. I still had family in Oregon and I sort of wanted to get back here, and my idea then was to go into practice. I had an opportunity, if I didn't have to go into the Army, I could have been an intern at the ambulatory clinic at Cornell, but I couldn't do it because I had to go to Fort Benning. So I came out here. I actually wrote a whole bunch of veterinarians in the state asking if they had jobs, and some of them did so I interviewed with them. So I did end up with a position, to start with, in Astoria.

CP: Can you tell me a bit about that? Your first true veterinary position in Astoria?

EP: Yeah, it was a mixed practice. It was over there on the coast. We had a bunch of clients who raised mink because they ate the dead fish. We had lots of salmon poisoning because the salmon were there and the dogs would get that. A lot of dairy along the Columbia and some along the coast too; it's sort of a dairy area. His practice was probably half large animal – which is mostly dairy and horse – and half small animal, and what we started to do, he took one week doing small animal while I did the large animal, and then the next week we switched over. And whoever did the large animal was on call for both large and small for that week; any emergency calls that we took. Well, it wasn't too many months down the line until he decided that maybe I could take all the large animal calls, which was great with me because that's what I wanted to do anyhow is livestock. So he still took half the emergency calls but I did most of the large animal from then on, from the end of the year. He wanted to sell me his practice at the end of the time; I think that was his idea of hiring me in the first place, but I wasn't quite ready to buy a practice then.

CP: You stayed there for about a year, were you looking to go somewhere else? You wound up in Woodburn.

EP: Yeah, I ended up with Dr. Schwenke in Woodburn, which is a three-person practice and it was probably eighty percent large animal there. At that time, he had I think eighty Grade A dairies that he was servicing. There's not nearly that many there now, some of them that are in that area are a much smaller number of clients but much larger dairies, a lot more cows in each dairy. And it was a good practice, I stayed there for five years and I learned a lot from him and his other associates.

CP: Why did you decide to leave the coast?

EP: Well, I didn't want to buy his practice.

CP: Oh, so it was an either/or situation.

EP: It was either buy the practice or leave, and so I decided to leave. So Dr. Schwenke offered me a job so that's why I went to Woodburn.

CP: And Woodburn was all large animals and it was mostly dairy?

EP: Well, no. It was probably twenty percent small animal in those days. Since then, they've got this retirement home up there, so there's a whole lot of pets in there now, so the practice, I think, is different. I've talked to some of the people that work up there and it's maybe fifty-fifty or so. But it was eighty percent, probably, large animal in those days. We still did small animal. I did spays and vaccinations and looked at sick dogs and stuff.

CP: So I'm assuming at some point you started to think about your own practice, angling towards your own practice.

EP: Yeah, I guess it had always been a vision that I would own my own practice sometime, so eventually I decided to start one. So I went up to Stayton and actually started a practice on my own from scratch. I didn't have many clients to start with, but I went around the community and every time I saw a mailbox I wrote it down and I sent cards saying I was opening a practice. You couldn't advertise or anything in those days. And so eventually I got a fairly decent practice. And there again, it was probably twenty percent small animal and forty horses and forty food animals. And I was there for a number of years, it turned out alright. I was by myself most of the time. I got to the point where I was going to hire

somebody and then somebody else would come into the area, so I was thought, "well..." I should probably have gone ahead and expanded but I didn't.

CP: Why couldn't you advertise?

EP: Oh, AVMA ethics. You aren't supposed to advertise, in those days; now they do it all the time, but in those days you couldn't have a sign bigger than so many inches tall in front of your building and you couldn't be lighted up or anything. They had all these stupid regulations on advertising.

[0:35:11]

Actually, I'll tell you how I got a lot of my clients, when I started I bought a house and I started practicing out of this house; the back part of this house I made into a clinic. But the people down the street were upset because I had a small sign outside saying "veterinary clinic," so they complained and it was zoned a veterinary practice, so I was breaking the zoning laws. So there was a local paper in town and I was on the front page of the paper for weeks and weeks by breaking these zoning laws. So I got free publicity by doing that and most of them felt sorry for me rather than thinking I was doing something terrible for the town. So of course I had to get out of there, so I bought a place outside of town and built a small clinic on the Santiam River there.

CP: It stayed pretty small then, it sounds like.

EP: Yeah. I don't know how many people are in Stayton, maybe 3,000 or so, but I did farm work all the way up to Detroit and into Salem. There wasn't anybody at that time doing very much horse work even in the east Salem area at least, so I came down there for horses and went north, probably, as far as – well, there was a veterinarian in Silverton so I didn't go clear up that far. But south, certainly past Scio and way down into dairies down there. I don't think there was a veterinarian even in Sweet Home in those days or Lebanon. There is now. I guess there was one in Lebanon but it was open for a while. So I did a lot of driving to get to the cases.

CP: So you were mostly out in the field then instead of people coming to you.

EP: Yeah, well they came to me with small animals; I had short office hours, just a couple hours a day unless it was an emergency. And then tried to work the farm calls in some logical way so I wouldn't have to keep backtracking; I could make some circle around and catch all the animals. A lot of dairies – up there at that time, a lot of Dutch dairy farmers, which were very good dairy farmers, they really looked out for their animals and they were fairly progressive, so they would take veterinary advice about preventative medicine procedures which I would recommend at that time.

CP: At some point you became a member of the Oregon Veterinary Medical Association political action committee? I believe this was during this time?

EP: Yeah I was a member of the OVMA as soon as I came to Oregon, I think I joined when I was up in Astoria so I had been a member of the Oregon Veterinary Medical Association for a long time. But they wanted people on different committees and so I guess I volunteered or was appointed a member of the political action committee. And this was the time that the veterinary school was going to be formed. The chairman of the committee was Dr. Glen Schwenke who I worked for in Woodburn for five years, so I knew him. I think Dr. Herb Muth who was here in the Veterinary Science department of the School of Agriculture was also on the committee. So it was opportune that that was the time the MacVicar wanted to get a veterinary school here. So our committee came up with grassroots plans to work with the legislature. I didn't go to the legislature, the chairman of the committee went and we contacted people to write letters and things like that.

CP: So just to set the context then, there was a Department of Veterinary Medicine within the College of Agriculture at Oregon State at that time, and MacVicar wanted it to expand into a college unto itself or a school unto itself.

EP: That's correct.

CP: Do you know why?

EP: Well, I'm not sure why he wanted to, but we wanted to because we thought there would be better service to the agricultural community here, that people at the college – there would be more people to do research. There would be a better chance for Oregon students to get into veterinary school. When I got in there was no school here, you had to go out of state. So if there was a school in state, there would be an opportunity for them to enter it. There would also be a referral hospital, so if somebody wanted to send something to an expert, we'd have experts at the school to take care of. So there were a lot of reasons. I don't know what MacVicar's idea was, but I know he was probably the most instrumental person so far as getting the vet school started here. He hired Dr. Ed Wedman as the first dean and then Dr. Wedman organized the school and worked on stuff. We can probably get into that later.

CP: Did you know MacVicar at all? Or meet with him at all?

EP: I may have met him once. I heard him speak. But I certainly didn't know him personally.

CP: What do you remember about the process by which this maneuvering happened with the legislature and the college came into being?

[0:39:46]

EP: They didn't have enough money to have a full four-year college here, so what they decided to do was form a WOI – Washington, Oregon, Idaho – joint college. So they would spend so many years at Washington State and so many years here, and some of their time at Idaho, and so they would cut the cost of it in half but we still have our own students, we'd accept a certain number each year. Dr. Wedman's original plan was probably the best and it would be that you would go to Washington State for the first two years and take your anatomy and physiology and etiology type classes, then come down here for your clinical courses – anatomy and surgery – in the clinical years. And this would have worked better I think; you'd have one move. But the small animal practitioners in the state didn't want a small animal practice, small animal teaching hospital here. They thought it would be a threat to them. I don't know why – all the large animal people thought it would be good. So they said they wouldn't support it in the legislature if they had a small animal clinic here in Corvallis. A stupid thing, I think, and I don't think many small animal people now would say that.

So then we went to this idea of, "OK, we'll take the first year here, they'll do the second year at Washington State, they'll do the first half of the third year at Washington State where they'll get all of their small animal experience, including the senior year hospital-type experience. Then they'll move back here to Oregon State, get the large animal stuff and the large animal clinical experience and the externships and so on." It was two long moves and we got people in wrecks driving that distance, even killed, injured. This wasn't a good deal. Nothing wrong with Washington State, I have a lot of friends that are up there and taught, I'm sure they got an excellent education, but splitting it up that was shouldn't have been done. It may still have been in existence today if it had been different, I don't know.

So anyhow, that's how it got started. And then he went to the legislature and, of course, that was when Dick Magruder, who was a veterinarian from northern Oregon – I think Clatskanie, I'm not quite sure – but he was on the legislature, he was a representative, and he's the one who pushed it through the legislature. And then that's what Magruder Hall, of course, is named after him. Unfortunately, he died in a tractor accident where a tractor rolled over him on his farm and he didn't get to see it the way it is now.

CP: Yeah, he died very shortly after the college came into being, it sounds like. Age thirty-one.

EP: Yeah, very young. But he's the main one responsible for it. He and, of course, MacVicar was working for it and some of these committees and other people who were on the Veterinary Science faculty here.

CP: Did you know Magruder at all?

EP: I met him once and I can't remember that much about him. I didn't know him very well personally. I think one of these meetings with the committee, he was there and I did meet him, but that's all I can tell you about him.

CP: It's clear that he was very important to making this come into being.

EP: Oh yes. The most important, because he was a veterinarian and on the legislature, and did agree that we should have a college here.

CP: Well not long after the college came into being, I think, you became a student in the college. Is that correct? A master's student?

EP: Yeah, I don't know if the college was even in existence at that time, but yeah, because I had visions of going back into academia; maybe not doing private practice anymore. So I came down here and I talked to Dr. Wedman about maybe getting a Ph.D., I thought maybe I'd need that to teach. And we talked about it and to do that part-time, I think, would have taken fifteen years or so, which I didn't have, or else I'd have to quit and starve for a year. So I gave up the Ph.D. but I said, "well, maybe I can get a master's and do it part-time," and just take one course at a time and maybe do it one afternoon a week or something like that, come down here, if I had to take a lecture course maybe come down for a short period of time. And then I'd at least learn how to do research, because I knew if I went back into academia I'd have to do research.

But he also told me at the time that if he was hiring somebody here in the clinics, he'd much rather that they have a specialty – be board certified in a specialty – rather than having an advanced degree. And I said, "ok, I guess I'll try to do that then. I'll become a specialist in internal medicine," which took a little doing in those days.

CP: So you were studying part-time and you were doing some research, and your research was on tansy ragwort poisoning?

EP: Yeah, I was put in that project because there was money for it, obviously. They had funding to do it because a lot of animals were dying from tansy poisoning around the state, so that was just plugged into the project. I added something to the project because I could do biopsies, which the other students weren't able to do. I did other diagnostic tests on them and tried to improve different things. So that was my thesis, basically.

CP: And you worked with Morrie Craig?

[0:44:58]

EP: Yeah at the end. I started out with Earl Dickenson, who was associate dean at the time, but as soon as he got me as a graduate student he made west for another position. And then I got Jack Schmitz as a major professor, but as soon as he got me as a student he went to Nebraska and took over as head of the department in Nebraska. And then I got Lauren Koller as a major professor and then as soon as he got me as a graduate student, he went up to Idaho as an associate dean. And finally I got Morrie Craig who finished it up and could stand me for the rest of that time, I guess.

CP: [laughs] I definitely sense a trend there. Well, so you finished that up and then you did pass the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine exam.

EP: Yeah, I had two exams actually: a qualifying exam and then a final exam, and I ended up sending in a whole bunch of case reports. I had sort of been grandfathered a little bit so that I didn't have to take a two-year residency. I think I was one of the end people who could do that. If I worked for reputable veterinarians for ten years or something like that, then I could get by without the residency. But I would have to send in a number of case reports – I think twelve the first time and then three the second time, which had to be approved, that I did proper on. And then passed these tests, which were all day tests – there were four sections, each one lasting two hours. So it was a fairly decent test to pass. And I had study for that at the same time too. It makes tired thinking about it now; I couldn't possibly do that at my age now, any of that stuff.

CP: So essentially the master's degree and then this board certification was the credentials that you needed to find an academic position.

EP: Apparently, because I found one.

CP: And it was at Cornell.

EP: At Cornell. Of course, one of my classmates was head of the department there, so maybe that helped too. He knew me, he knew what I could do.

CP: So was this a situation of you were ready for an academic job and there was one available at Cornell and you applied and got it?

EP: Yeah, I actually applied there and California too, but the Cornell came through first and it was both equine and food animal. In fact, I had another classmate who was head of the teaching hospital at California at the time, so I had ins at both places. But I'm glad I went to Cornell, that was probably the best for my career.

CP: Can you tell me a bit more about that? You were there for a couple of years.

EP: Yeah, three years actually; maybe a hair over three years. I got into academia and I knew I would have to do some research, so there were people there who could help me with research. The only other experience I had was the tansy project, basically. And I got to start out doing teaching and I've improved, I think, since that first time. When I was giving lectures I talked way too fast and went into too much detail and a bunch of things like that. But on field service, it's dairy there, there's a huge number of dairy cattle in upstate New York, and so it's probably the best place to go if you wanted to learn about dairy diseases. We did some horses and a few beef cattle and sheep and stuff too, but it was a good experience. And I always had back-up and the back-up there were experts in the field who had been on the faculty for some time there.

CP: So this was your first experience of teaching?

EP: Yeah, basically. I mean, I guess I did some little lectures on odd things beforehand, Jaycees and stuff. I taught parliamentary procedure and things like that, and would sometimes give talks to 4-H groups and things. But actual teaching that was important and counted, that was my first experience.

CP: Was that a process for you? I mean, you talked about improving but at the initial stage, was it difficult?

EP: Yeah, a little bit. I mean, college professors don't take any courses in education. You can't teach in grade school or high school without getting an education certificate. College professors don't have to do that. So for some people it may come natural, but it's different. And maybe it shouldn't be that way. And another thing – and I probably shouldn't say this – but some people that are hired now as professors at colleges just because they've got a lot of research grants and can do research, which is very important, but they're not always good teachers. Sometimes they can't even speak English. And this isn't the best thing for students, in my opinion, but still it happens and it's probably going to continue to happen as long as bringing money in from research grants is that important.

CP: So you came back to OSU, what prompted this?

EP: Well, I had family in Oregon, I was raised in Oregon, I liked Oregon and I always had some idea that if they ever had a vet school here, I'd like to be part of it.

CP: The Vet school was starting to really come into being at the point.

[0:49:57]

EP: Just started. I taught the very first class; taught large animal medicine. The first class graduated in 1983 and I think when they first started the building wasn't even complete, I think they did some of the stuff over in the Poultry Building, which is next door, as far as some of the lecture courses. But Magruder was finished by the time I got here, and we taught that, and then I started a medicine service in the teaching hospital.

CP: Were you recruited to come back? Or was it just a matter of seeing, again, an open position?

EP: I saw an open position and I applied, I don't know that I was recruited. I applied there, I actually applied at another place too in Virginia, and I guess I could have gone there – at least that's what they told me – but I guess I wanted to come back to the West. I had a lot of family here and ties here and thought I could do things that would be helpful here.

CP: What were the duties of this initial position?

EP: Teaching the course, and I think I was in charge of a couple of other courses – an Introductory Clinics course and I think a Dairy Health course. And then I was in the clinic, of course, the teaching hospital. And I spent a lot of time in there; probably 1,200 hours a year I was on the clinic, actually most of the time. And I was on emergency call every third week, which senior professors don't do now, they get residents and stuff. But I was taking care of referred cases in medicine. If some veterinarian had a horse or cow or something that had a real complicated disease or needed a lot of intensive care or something, they would refer down here and we would take care of it. So I was responsible for those cases.

I didn't have much help to start with. I eventually got an instructor, another veterinarian, that helped me part time. But they didn't get two professors until a few years later, so I was basically – well, Dr. Shires used to introduce me as chief of medicine, which I guess I was, there weren't very many people in medicine and sometimes I was the only one, so I guess I was chief of myself during those years.

CP: [laughs] Default chief. Well it's clear that the teaching hospital was central to your career and very important, I'd be interested to know a little bit more about your life there and your work there, and how it evolved over time. What is it like to teach in a teaching hospital?

EP: Well, it's different from the didactic teaching, of course. You have students assigned to you, you have cases that you get, and you can't teach, really, without these cases. You can talk to them some and go over old cases, but the importance of a teaching hospital is having a good case load, cases that they can look at and actually experience and learn by doing. And so when the cases would come in, I thought my primary job was teaching the students and doing proper treatment on the animals. So what I would tell the students is that they can do everything that needed to be done on the animal as long as it didn't have a chance of killing the animal. If it was going to kill the animal, I was going to do it because I could probably get away with it and they couldn't.

So they got to do a lot of stuff. In fact, when we had a case come in, I'd have them take the history to start with. I'd listen to it; they still do that some now, but the professors aren't always there listening. You've got to listen to see if they forget something or have something wrong. So if they forgot something, then I would ask. Then I'd have them do a physical exam on the animal at the same time I did. And when we got done with that, we'd talk about what they found and if they missed something I would ask them a question about it. "Did you hear anything wrong with the heart?"

"No."

"Well, maybe you better listen again." And so they'd go back and do it again. So that most of that part of the teaching was by asking questions. And actually, I was hoping that they would make a mistake because you learn by your mistakes. If you got it right, you aren't learning anything, you already knew it. But if you make a mistake, then you have a chance to learn something. And they need to make their mistakes then and not a year from then when we turn them loose on the unsuspecting public and they make a mistake and kill something. So they need to make it with me there so I could correct it. So this was my theory at that time.

And then we would talk about possible diagnoses based on what the problems were. And they'd kid me later on, I'd always say, "what else?" And they'd give me a diagnosis and I'd say, "what else?" Because there's obviously a lot of rule-outs that we would have for what the problems would be and then when we finally reached one, did we need the laboratory work? Ok, you go do the laboratory work: you draw the blood, you take it to the laboratory, fill out the forms so you get the practice actually doing it. And then when we got a diagnosis I'd say, "how are you going to manage the course?" So I keep asking questions: "what about this problem? What about this?" And by asking questions they eventually came up with a plan that was agreeable to my plan and then they carried it out. So this is basically how clinical teaching goes.

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It takes a lot of time. I did this at Cornell, of course, in the field when I went out on the farms, and I think it took me three times as much time with students as if I did it by myself. And so this is a problem in making a profit. I mean, we charge

money for cases that come into the teaching hospital, but it takes a long time to do it. So if we're spending three times as much time, who's going to pay for that? So it is subsidized to some extent. The hospital takes in a fair amount of money but you've got all experts there which, if they were in private practice, would probably make more than what they would if they were here in the hospital. But they still have to be paid something, so it is subsidized to some extent.

So that's sort of a base of what we did in the hospital. All kinds of cases come in, mostly horses. Some of the cattle probably couldn't afford us because it was – they decide what the price would be, which would be logical, but the dairymen can't afford to pay \$200 to treat a \$50 calf. It's just not in the cards. And so we didn't have as much of that. The field service, of course, which went out on the farms, they could do it economically even though it took them a little extra time. So they had the case load there.

CP: And you were less involved with the field service at OSU?

EP: Not here. Well, I think once or twice I went out on relief and did it, and I could still do it I guess. But that was my entire job at Cornell. But here I was in the hospital all the time taking referred cases.

CP: And the teaching hospital work was complemented by lecture too.

EP: Yeah, they had the lectures the year before, usually. But if we had a slack time in the hospital, sometimes we'd talk about some other case and maybe improve stuff that they were going to see fairly often, because you can't predict the cases you're going to get. I mean, some days you're overloaded with cases and you can't get them all done, especially when you're teaching the students. And sometimes you don't have any cases, so what are you going to do then? Well, you've got to talk about the large animal medicine in some respect, yeah. If you can say, "ok, I need exactly six cases every day to take care of these students," but that doesn't happen.

CP: So you were in the classroom and then the next year the students that you had in the classroom were next to you in the teaching hospital?

EP: Right, yeah.

CP: How did they schedule that with the students?

EP: [laughs] The teaching hospital schedule?

CP: Yeah.

EP: Well that's changed a little bit over the years, and we can talk about that when we talk about changes, but they had to sign up – everybody in those days had to take four weeks of large animal medicine, four weeks of large animal surgery, four weeks of field service and reproduction; and four weeks of laboratory, maybe a couple weeks of post-mortem examination; and they had to take so much out in the field with private practitioners, I think they had to take four weeks or something like that, and repeat it. So they'd divide the class up and say, "ok, you three or you four are going to be here at this time," so it was a job. And the students weren't always happy with what they decided because they couldn't always get the right service at the right time, or the services that they wanted at the right time.

CP: Let's talk about a couple people. The first I'd be interested in knowing more about is Dean Wedman, the first dean of Vet Med.

EP: Yeah, he was probably one of the main people other than Magruder and MacVicar, so far as getting the veterinary college here. And he's the one actually who hired me to come back. He set it up and organized the school. He was more valuable in public relations; he hadn't actually done any veterinary work for a number of years. He came from Iowa and was at the lab at Iowa, the USDA lab there, before he came here. I don't know too much more about saying about him. He took care of his part, he didn't get involved very much with the teaching or the hospital – Dr. Shires was the first director of the hospital. He was actually originally from South Africa, but he set it up and was responsible for getting a lot of the teaching hospital started and going. He was a surgeon so he taught most of the surgery course. He did have another surgeon that he hired to help him out as time went on.

CP: Shires, I would have to assume, was a pretty close colleague of yours, since you worked together for-

EP: Yeah, we worked together for as long as he was here. He eventually left here and went to Tennessee, where he was head of the department and eventually a dean of the college at Tennessee. But yeah, and he was the one that actually assigned us emergency calls and who was doing what and who was going to be on service so far as the teaching hospital was concerned.

CP: And it was just you for a long time, it sounds like.

[0:59:56]

EP: Well, yeah. It wasn't too long until we get an instructor to help me, because I couldn't be there twenty-four hours a day, especially if I'm spending two hours every morning – I was teaching an eight-hour course, eight credit hours, in large animal medicine at the time, and I couldn't be there. They needed somebody in the hospital to make sure the students didn't kill something while I was out there teaching.

CP: Another name that comes up, who I think was emeritus by the time you showed up, was Jesse Bone.

EP: Yeah, he was. He actually advised me when I was a student doing my master's, he's the one who taught me how to do liver biopsies, which I've used extensively since then. In fact, when I was an undergraduate, we had to take an animal anatomy course and he taught that animal anatomy course. If your name's Bone, I suppose you should be teaching anatomy, it just makes sense. We had to take an animal physiology course and then sort of a preventative medicine and disease course. We had people in Veterinary Science in the Ag school, back when I was an undergraduate. But then when I was a graduate student, I had also come into contact with these people – Dr. Muth was another one who was emeritus by the time I got back here, but he was probably the first person who actually got into selenium as a requirement for animals, and then got some help in later years. But he was probably the primary person on that. He retired and then moved up to San Juan Islands and lived up there after he retired for a while. But I didn't know him very well. As an advisor – at the fraternity at the time, I was president of our fraternity, because he was also an AGR – he actually wrote me letters of recommendation so far as getting into Cornell. So very influential so far as my life is concerned.

CP: What was the connection between Vet Med and Animal Sciences at this point?

EP: When the school started?

CP: Yeah.

EP: Well, you obviously had to cooperate. Animal Science used Vet Medicine for the veterinary service for their animals, the dairy and the beef herd and sheep herd and so on. That was considered necessary. We used some of their people to teach a little bit of husbandry in some of our courses, because a lot of the people had no experience whatsoever with the animals, and you've got to know a little bit about the animals themselves if you're going to learn about medicine and disease. So some of them came in and gave lectures, especially in the specialty courses. I know I had a course I taught later on in sheep and goat medicine, and we had the people from Animal Science talk a little about sheep husbandry and how you raise them, feed them, and stuff like that, just to give them the basics of it. They still wouldn't be real good at it; most of the people that took the course probably had farm experience anyhow.

And then we did, for a while, teach a course in animal diseases and prevention to the Ag students, like the same one I took when I was an undergraduate. They asked us to do this, teach one, and I said, "well, we should probably split it up, one on horses and then one on food animals, instead of having them all together," and which we did. The trouble was we couldn't find anybody to teach it very well. I ended up teaching it for a couple of years and actually I think Sue Tornquist, who is now dean, helped me teach it one of the years. And that's not really her – she's mainly laboratory and small animal, most of her experience. I guess after I retired, they sort of dropped the course. I think it's a mistake, I think they should be doing it as a service. They help us teach, we should help them teach, but you can't find anybody that wants to do it because they're still expected to do so much research and spend all this time in the clinics and stuff.

CP: Let's talk a little bit about research. I know that teaching was a focal point for you, but you did have to do some research as a faculty member.

EP: Yeah, I figured that out even before I went to Cornell, that I had to do something.

CP: Can you tell me a little bit about some of the major projects that you were involved with?

EP: Well, a lot of them, I guess, were involved with the tansy and liver diseases, just because I got started and that's where I ended up doing, later on, different tests and exploring different toxins which would affect the liver. And I published enough stuff on it that I ended up publishing chapters in a lot of the textbooks on liver disease. The opportunity – I didn't think when I was young, "well, I'm going to learn a lot about liver or be famous on liver," it came because I got assigned to the tansy project here and had to deal with livers. So it was a matter of taking advantage of an opportunity.

CP: So it emerged out of your master's degree.

EP: Yeah, sort of emerged out of that and I kept on going.

CP: And it became important, it sounds like.

EP: Yeah, well it seemed to, but not because – I mean, there's other systems in the body or organs that are probably more interesting than the liver to some people, but it was there and I knew something about it, so it carried on.

[1:04:52]

The same thing happened when I was doing some stuff with heaves in horses. I didn't have the equipment to do very much, but we have so many heavy horses that have what's called recurrent airway disease, but basically it's heaves, it's like human asthma. In some respect it's inhaling an antigen, an allergen, which causes bronchial constriction, so they have difficulty breathing, especially expiring. And you know how many allergens there are here in the valley – I certainly have allergies – and here and on the coast there were huge numbers of horses with heaves that I could work on. So we could do experiments on them and treat them for free, so we developed some things along that line. But that was, again, just taking advantage of the opportunity because there were so many cases here.

CP: Something I'm interested in asking you about is an event that a lot of people – their main connection, I think, with the College of Vet Med is Pet Day. The first one was in 1988. Do you know how that came about?

EP: I'm not sure how it came about. I know it's important. I never took part in it because I don't teach anything on pets. I think I was on the dunk tank one year, but other than that I don't think I did very much for it. The freshmen basically set it up. By the time they become sophomores, they know it's an awful lot of work so they get out of it. It is important so far as publicity. I think it's on Mother's Weekend usually and a huge number of people come through there and see all the things that we're doing, so people were supportive of the college because of it, and get to learn some things and stuff too. I'm not sure who's idea it was; I'm sure somebody came up with but I don't remember who. Probably somebody on the faculty and some student agreed to take it on.

CP: Well, we have arrived at a point that we have to talk about; it was the low point, probably, in the history of the college, in 1992, when everybody was fired.

EP: We were all fired. We had one year to find another job and go someplace else. I saw the pink slip and all.

CP: Can you give us the context in which this happened and your experience of that?

EP: OK, the context of what happened: they wanted to save money. It's always money. And we had a dean, sunken sailor dean, who was mainly interested in Oceanography. And we had an uneducated governor who agreed that we should save some money and they thought the best way to do it was to eliminate the Vet school because it cost more to educate veterinary students than it does an English student, because you've got all these labs and all this experience that you have to go into. So they said, "well, we'll eliminate it," so the governor didn't put it in the budget. And it comes to the legislature which, of course, can override the governor's budget, and the provost sent us all these letters that we're done. And actually, we only lost two faculty members even though it was only a month to go until we were out of work. One person went back to Pennsylvania, I think, because he had family back there, and one person went to Colorado where

later became dean and is now, I think, president of the Colorado State University. So he no doubt made a good decision to make that move at that time. The rest of us stayed here, in spite of having no job security whatsoever.

So what happened then, they knew they had to convince the legislature that they needed to save the veterinary school, so it was a grassroots program, I think, that saved it. We had all the farmers and even pet owners, even though we didn't have a small animal clinic here, write to their legislator or go in and talk to them. Demonstrating – some of the llama people brought llamas in and had signs on them, "Save the Vet School," and they paraded up and down the capitol steps. I hope there was somebody behind them picking up the poop, I don't know, so that the legislators didn't step in it. But it apparently did some good, because eventually when it came into the legislature for a vote, it passed the House – I can't remember by how much – and it passed the Senate by all but one vote, and the person that voted against it was the governor's husband, and he died of cancer the next year. That had nothing to do with it obviously, but that's the facts. And so then – I don't know where they got the money, it may have come from the lottery at that time, it was another source of money, I think it was a line-item budget even at that time on the legislature, when they saved it.

So then we're rehired. I only had a month to go before we had to get out and we're all rehired and so it went on. But that was a low point, certainly. The Faculty Senate voted to not have that school there. But, you know, they voted not to have a Vet school here in the beginning when MacVicar wanted to have a Vet school. They said, "no, that school's going to compete with us," so a big majority said no Vet school. Well, luckily the Faculty Senate doesn't have any power, so we still have a Vet school. They made a few other stupid decisions, I guess, in the Senate, and luckily those didn't all take effect either.

CP: Compete with what?

EP: For money. I mean, there's only so much money in the university, if we've got to dish out to another school then we won't as much. So, see, we'll get rid of them and then we'll get a part of what they're spending on them. I think that was their mentality.

[1:09:57]

CP: I can't imagine what it must have been like to be a member of the faculty staring down this one-month deadline to none of us having a job.

EP: No, there were a lot of discussions about it at the time, but that made us even more eager to call our representative or call anybody we knew that had money out in the state or was influential as a livestock raiser or pet owner, to talk to the legislators to get them to pass the thing and override the budget. But yeah, I'm sure a lot of us were looking for possible places to go if that didn't happen, but not many of them left.

CP: Was there any sort of optimism that it was going to work out? I mean, if that many people stuck around – was there any reason to believe?

EP: Well, not in the early part of it, not in the first months of it. Later on, when we were doing all these things and we would talk to legislators and find out how they were going to vote and so we had some idea that maybe we would have a majority to save us. But in the early months, no, we sort of thought we were going to go. Some people wanted – well, they said, "the veterinary teaching hospital is important," so they said, "well, we'll keep the teaching hospital but we'll get rid of all the rest of the school." Well, that's stupid; what's the good of a teaching hospital if you don't have nobody to teach? You'd have a bunch of specialists there competing with prior practitioners, competing with prior industry, but paid for by their tax payer money, which is absolutely stupid. So obviously that didn't happen, but that's what some people were proposing.

CP: So the pink slips came in '92, my understanding is that the college was cut again in '94 in the governor's budget but saved by the legislature.

EP: Yeah, we weren't all fired at least that time. They got the money from somewhere – maybe this was the place where they got it out of the lottery, I don't know – but it was saved again and then eventually they haven't tried it, I guess, since then. And I don't remember who was governor then, but it was a different one.

CP: Perhaps not coincidentally, this period that also seems to coincide with a phase of administrative tumult within the college: several deans coming and going.

EP: Yeah. It's a small college and there's obviously going to be some cliques in any college and people who don't agree with each other, but with smaller it makes more of a problem, I think. Yeah, some of the deans were fired, some of them gave up on us and left, we went through a lot of deans in the short period of time that we've been here – what, thirty-seven years? – because of the turmoil. They were fighting with each other and people were fighting with the dean. I know that Roy Arnold was the provost at the time and I'm sure he got a stomach full of the veterinary school, all the problems he had to come over there and solve because of this. But they did stay in business and eventually got set up. There was so much paranoia at the time about who was going to be in charge and who was going to be dean.

I remember one time they were going to have a new dean – I don't know if the dean was fired or quit, but they had a new dean – and everybody was so worried that they would get a bad dean in, and they didn't want to do it. So they thought I was impartial, so they had me preside over a meeting to select a committee to select a committee that's going to get the dean. Well, we did this. The committee was basically selected by the provost, but we had to provide names that the provost could do it from. I don't know if they were happy with it, but we did get through it, I think fairly. And we did select a dean and obviously got another dean. But that's how the attitude was in those days about how worried they were about somebody was going to get in that wasn't going to favor them.

CP: Well the arrival of Kelvin Koong in 1999 as interim dean seems to have been an important moment. Am I correct about that?

EP: Yeah, that's right, because at that time we wanted to move this on as a four-year program and teach at the small animal clinic here as well as the large animal clinic, and teach the first year as well as the first part of the – and the second year, as well as the part of the third year that they were teaching at Washington State. And I don't remember why the – I think the dean quit at that time, I don't think he was fired, but then when the deans quit there's nobody there for the dean, and so you have to bring in an interim dean. And of course, Kelvin's not a veterinarian, so we lost accreditation at the time but it was just a temporary thing.

But he was important in order to get this through the legislature, because Kelvin Koong knew many of the legislators. I went there with him once or twice, because I was chairman of the four-year planning committee and my committee came up with a plan on how we would organize the four years and what buildings we would need and how we would pay for it and who would be in charge and stuff like that. So I went with him and I did meet some of the legislators, but when he met them they'd go, "oh Kelvin, how are you?" and they slap him on the back, "what can we do for you today?" A perfect person to be dean at the time and get this four-year program through the legislature. And him not being a veterinarian wasn't too much problem because he took advice from some of us who were and that knew how veterinary medicine needed to be taught and everything. So it worked out great, yeah.

[1:15:15]

CP: So this is a program you had a very important role in developing, the four-year program?

EP: Yeah, I think our committee had a lot to do with it. We had three practitioners and five faculty members on this committee, and we met, I think, every week for all morning and came up with the plan of what the curriculum would be, what buildings we needed, how much it was probably going to cost and things like that.

CP: So Koong operates in Salem and acquires funds to build the small animal clinic and expand to a four-year program?

EP: Yeah, and hire more faculty too because we needed the small animal faculty to come in there. And we were going to teach the second year, so we needed the faculty to teach the second year, the pathology and bacteriology and virology and all those courses which were being taught at Washington State up until that time. So it was quite an investment actually.

CP: So that was the end of students driving back and forth?

EP: Yeah, in addition, the students not having to drive back and forth, yeah. And having an in to the small animal people. We'd have people who could bring small animals in here that needed expert care, plus the pet people would identify us

and it was a money-raising thing too because we had no thing that was going to put us with the small until that time. The large animal people appreciated and, yeah, they would go to the legislature and support us and everything, but we didn't have a connection with the small animal people at that time.

CP: Did this change in organization have much of an impact on your work?

EP: Yeah, some. It may not have had much impact on my work but it did change the organization. When Wedman first organized the school, there were no departments, it was just all College of Veterinary Medicine. He had an associate dean in charge of instruction and student affairs, and then he had an associate dean in charge of research, and he had a director of the teaching hospital. So basically, if we were in the clinic we had three bosses, and they didn't always know exactly how much time was allotted to their part. Some thought we should be doing research all the time, or teaching all the time, or in the hospital taking care of cases all the time. It did work out alright because we could convince them of that. And this is worked fine until we got the small animal clinic and the four-year program, and then they did establish departments. Department of Biomedical Science, which covers anatomy and physiology and the other etiology courses, and then the Department of Clinical Science, which covers medicine and surgery and the stuff they get in the teaching hospital. So we basically only had one boss, the department head, at that time.

There were some problems as far as the curriculum was concerned, though. The departments each wanted to do their curriculum but the departments don't give a DVM degree, the college gives a DVM degree. So I always thought that the college should be deciding what that curriculum is. The departments can decide the graduate students – yeah, they give their own graduate student degrees, a master's and Ph.D. – but the DVM comes from the college, so the departments have got to be organized and work together on what the students are going to get. It's not like some of the schools here on campus where you can take a lot of different electives and every instructor can decide what he wants to teach himself, but in Veterinary Medicine you've got make sure they get the essentials someplace. And I know when we went to a four-year program some things were left out – and the curriculum committee picked it up right away and corrected it, of course – because somebody thought somebody else was teaching it. Or it was taught two or three times because they thought nobody else was teaching it. So that coordination has to continue going on. And it still does, even with the two departments; all the departments are probably good because you're just working for one department head.

CP: And you were the chair of the curriculum committee, correct?

EP: Yeah, for a number of years. Actually, I was on it, I think, for the whole time, from the beginning, but not chair then. But especially during the time when we went to the four-year program, I was chairman of it. The faculty determines the curriculum; this is standard procedure at most universities and it is here, and I wanted to back that up and not have just a few people decide the curriculum. And so our curriculum depends on being approved by a majority of the faculty, and this is not that easy because we don't always agree on stuff. So the curriculum now, some people say, well, it's my curriculum. It's not my curriculum; I'd do it entirely different. But it's the curriculum that I could convince the rest of the faculty to approve. And it works and it has worked. And it changes; we changed it a little bit even a couple of years ago.

[1:20:15]

CP: So yeah, there must have been some negotiation happening there.

EP: There was negotiation. I mean, yeah, you've got to go out and get the votes: "we're going to put this in. OK, we need to have a majority faculty vote – are you going to come to the faculty meeting?"

"Yeah."

"OK, well you'd better because you're in favor of this and so, ok, we get this change in." I know in some places deans sort of take over and control the curriculum because they can because they control the faculty, because they can fire them, they can give them raises, and they can promote them. And so they've got a little control that way over the faculty. If the dean really wanted that certain thing taught, I'm sure they could get it in there. They'd say, "well, if you want to keep working here, you're going to vote for this course." But I was able to control that a little bit, so the faculty was basically in charge of doing that. That's why we've got it the way it is now. It'll change, it has to change, and there will be more specialization. In fact, some schools have gone to what they call tracking, where if they're going to go into small animal

practice and just treat dogs and cats, you don't have to learn anything about large animals. Well that's not good because the board, the examination, where you get a license to practice, gives you a license to practice veterinary medicine, it doesn't give you a license to practice doggy medicine.

And so we haven't gone completely on that; they all take the same thing up through the first three years but there are a lot of electives in there that they can take. So they have time now to take electives in the species that they're interested in, to enhance that. And we just changed – I think it just started this year – where we do what we call, we call it something other than tracking but it's basically the same thing. If they're in small animals, you don't have to take four weeks of large animal surgery, you only have to take two weeks. But if you're interested in doing large animal, you've got to take at least those four weeks and preferably two weeks more, which makes sense. But everybody has to go out on field service for two weeks, everybody has to do large animal medicine for two weeks, and everybody goes up to the Humane Society for a couple of weeks, and some of these other things. So they aren't completely devoid of this education, but they do get to concentrate on what species they intend to work on, because they get a license to practice veterinary medicine so they need to know a little bit about everything.

CP: My understanding is that there's a relative shortage of students who are focused on large animals.

EP: Yeah, probably. We don't have very many now compared to the old days. Well originally, I guess, it was all our general – back in the 1800s, before my time. But yeah, there's not too many. They make more money doing small animal practice, obviously, and they probably have better surroundings, they don't have to walk in the mud, they don't get kicked in the face, they can determine their hours a little bit better. There's enough of them that they can probably even get out of emergency because they have emergency clinics in small animal now.

But large animal has advantages too. As you know, I like to get out of the house, out of the town, out in the country, so I'd see the animals first-hand, get on the farms and stuff. It's a challenge and the finances are a little bit different because the dairyman has this cow that's worth so much money and he's not going to put more money into that cow, especially if he can get so much for meat prices out of it, you're competing with the abattoir, with the butcher, for work on some of these things, which is different from small animals because there's a sentimental attachment, they're a member of the family, price is no object – sometimes because they don't tend to pay anyhow – but still no object. So they get to do a whole lot of things that you can't do.

Now horses, you get to do a few more things because some of these horses are extremely valuable. And so if you can do something to save them, then price isn't an object. But the food animals, it's economics pretty much. I mean, even the owners that – when I was in private practice, we had some dairies that had names, first names, I remember one of their cows and they knew them by name and they knew exactly where they had to go. They were almost part of the family, not quite, but still they had to make a living and so they couldn't put \$2,000 into a \$500 calf or something.

CP: Well, getting back to the institutional memory of the college, in 1992 everybody's fired, 2001-ish, the four-year program comes into being, and then another big moment in 2005, a \$21 million gift from Lois Bates Acheson.

[1:24:56]

EP: Yeah, that was important. I didn't obviously have anything to do with it. I don't know all the people who were involved, I'm sure a lot of people will take credit for it. It established several chairs. The hospital is named for that because they did some improvements on the hospital from the money. So yeah, it was obviously the biggest gift that the college has ever had, and we have some trouble getting a lot of gifts because we don't have very many alumni. I mean, our first class was '83, and these other schools have classes out in the 1800s. They're dead of course, but they still have a lot more money that they could donate to the college. And we haven't even had any contact with the small animal people until just a few years ago.

CP: Who was Lois Bates Acheson?

EP: She – ok, you're testing me – she owned a ferry business out of Seattle, I think, Seattle to San Juans. And she was always, I guess, interested in animals. I can't tell you an awful lot more about her.

CP: There was no connection with OSU though?

EP: Not that I know of. I don't know what the contact was; there must have been some but I don't know what it was.

CP: Yeah, that's interesting. I have to imagine it was a big moment or it was a big deal for the faculty when they learned about this.

EP: Oh yeah, it was. And it was tied up for a while before the money could be released. But yeah, it was important and we all celebrated doing it, because otherwise all our money came from tuition or the state.

CP: What year did you retire, technically?

EP: Technically I went on half time in 1999. I worked half time for a while, I don't remember how long, and then I cut back more. I'm not completely retired yet, I guess. I still teach in two or three courses a little bit.

CP: So are you emeritus now?

EP: Yeah, I'm emeritus. I'm emeritus, so supposedly I get all the things that regular faculty get. I don't know if it's completely true, but that's what it says on my emeritus thing.

CP: What year did your status change?

EP: I guess it was '99 that I officially was emeritus, even though I was on half time for a while.

CP: Can you tell me about the activities – you're obviously still closely connected to the college, still teaching a lot – but what have you been doing since you retired? [laughs]

EP: I don't know, it's sort of boring in some cases. I don't have as much as I should be doing. I enjoy the teaching. I've been even on some committees since I retired. I do a lot of traveling. My wife and I have traveled; we've been to all seven continents and probably over sixty countries, so we do that some. And I've built some things, done some gardening.

CP: But you're still teaching basically a full complement of classes it sounds like.

EP: No, not a full complement. I probably give fifteen to twenty lectures a year, and that's way less than the hundred lectures a year I used to give when I was teaching the entire large animal medicine course, or most of it anyhow.

CP: Well as we start to wrap up a little bit, it seems to me that the college is in a good position right now. It seems to have momentum. It certainly is larger and has better facilities than it has had. Is that your sense?

EP: Yeah, it's got momentum. It still has problems. It's probably in a better position; I don't think we're in trouble of being taken out of the budget right away. One problem is probably our case load – it hasn't increased quite as much, I don't think, as other parts have. The small animal has increased because it wasn't even in existence before. But you can't teach in the teaching hospital unless you have cases to teach with, and so this is a problem. Part of it is maybe brought on by the faculty. When you're in private practice, you've got to keep the clients happy or you don't eat. I know that because I was doing it for twenty years. But here, you don't really have to keep them happy because you're on the payroll and you get a paycheck anyhow, and sometimes the communications and everything isn't as great as it should be, and some other practitioners in the state have told me this. So that's a problem. And keeping the case load enough is certainly important.

We aren't rated real high so far as veterinary colleges, but most of that, again, is because of money and we don't have the people and the money to do all the research and put out all these reports; our faculty isn't that big. But I do think our students are just as good as any students anyplace, and sometimes I think they're better. For example, they spend a couple of weeks up at the Humane Society up in Portland where they all do, I don't know, fifteen or twenty or so spays and castrations on animals. Other schools, they're probably lucky if they get to do one before they graduate. Well the new graduate, that's what they're going to do a lot because they're low man on the totem pole, they get to these practices, so they're going to do the spays. Well in the other schools, somebody's going to have to supervise them on the first ones. Our students, you can turn them loose, they can do this unsupervised because they've successfully done it a number of times.

[1:30:22]

Our students get probably more practice doing rectal exams on large animals, which is what large animal practitioners do a lot. And since they have more experience doing it before they get out of here, they probably are more competent when they're hired right off that bat. And the small class size helps because they have more contact with the faculty. So I think our students are actually better than a lot of them that come out of other universities.

CP: We've talked a lot about change, I just want to give you the opportunity to reflect any more on changes that we haven't touched upon in the college that you think are important.

EP: Well, we've talked about the organization of it, how it changed to departments that they didn't have to start with. It's increased, of course, in size; we take more students, more out of state students. And the facilities, of course, were increased when we got the small animal people here. We designed it basically so the labs would hold about fifty students at a time, so they are able to do that. They've lost some dairy clients just because they've gone out of business because they couldn't make a living. We have more research being done now than was being done originally. They hired people that came in with grants and were interested in doing some of these things. We're doing more, we certainly aren't doing as much as, say, California or Cornell or Iowa which have huge faculties and huge endowments to do these things. But for the number of people here, we are...

CP: How would you say OSU compares to Washington State in terms of the Vet school?

EP: Well, Washington State is still bigger and they're probably putting out more research. I think our clinic is probably as – well, one problem that we had when we had the four-year program and they did their small animal work up there, they didn't have the case load there in Pullman which isn't that big of a community. And even the large animal, originally when they started a school up in Washington State it was in cattle country, and they had beef cattle and horses. Well, now it's all wheat country and the cattle and livestock moved someplace else. So I think we have a better chance of having a caseload and having animals for them to see. The people there are great; I mean, I think their research comes out in very substantial findings that they report and they're good teachers. Our students that were up there, they say that they got a very good education. They are a larger school, somewhat, than we are and they're up there in the Palouse country in wheat country instead of here in the valley, where it's more dense of course.

CP: Well the last question I have for you is one that we've been asking a lot of people. This is a sesquicentennial project for OSU and we're asking people to provide their thoughts on where they think the university is positioned right now as it looks toward its 150th anniversary. You've been associated for a long time so you have a lot of context.

EP: Yeah, well basically the position is good and getting better. They're certainly a lot bigger than when I was an undergraduate here. They would probably be closer to 20,000 rather than 5,000 students, and they've got new departments – Oceanography and Veterinary Medicine to name a few. They're a Land Grant college of course and they need to remember that, that they need to do the research and help the people like the Land Grant universities are supposed to and have been. They can't be tops in every field, obviously, nobody can. The Forestry school is probably way up on the top because we have trees here and that helps. I know the president would like them to be more famous so far as Engineering is concerned and they probably will be. The Agriculture school has been here for a long time and we'll continue, probably, to give support to it.

I think they've done some things that I wouldn't have wanted to do by closing down the dairy temporarily and stuff like that, because you teach by having these animals to teach with if you're doing animal husbandry. I mean, the Forestry department actually owns forests, so they have lots of forests to go out to and teach their students in. We obviously don't teach medicine here or law or things like that, which is good because you can't be that diverse, you need one in the state to do something like that. The Vet school, I don't think, will never be number one in the nation or something, but I think we will continue to put out good graduates as part of the university.

Finances is a problem. Oregon's got, I don't know, a couple million people or so, and compared to states that have forty million to help finance it, they're always going to have problems on that. More endowments like the Lois Bates Acheson one for the College of Veterinary Medicine certainly helped, and if the university gets more like that, it will also be quite helpful. But I see them as improving and, in certain areas, being tops, at least now and probably in the future too.

CP: Well Dr. Pearson, I want to thank you for this. This has been very valuable and I appreciate you sharing your memories of the colorful history [laughs] of the College of Vet Med over the years.

EP: Thank you, glad to help. I hope that people will appreciate what's been done.

CP: I'm sure they will. Thank you.

[1:36:07]