

OK This is April 8, [2015] and it's Carol Fowler and Donald Shankweiler in Connecticut, Lloyd Morrisett in California

CAF: Lloyd, as I said in my note, we really didn't know what we should ask you, and so

LM: I'm not sure I know either.

CAF: Yeah, But let's just start with the first question, because you can answer that one: When did you meet Caryl Haskins and how did the meeting come about?

LM: It's a little uncertain. I was on the staff at Carnegie Corporation, that is, Carnegie Foundation for 10 years between '59 and '69. John Gardner was President of the Corporation when I first came; he left in '65 when I became Vice President. (Excuse me; it's a little early in the morning for me still.) And during the years that John was there when I was there, that would have been '59 to '64 or '65, there were several meetings at Carnegie to think about and possibly plan various important national initiatives. One, for example, would have been the National Assessment of Educational Progress. At those meetings, which were generally convened...oh, to brainstorm about the idea, assess its viability, try to develop the outline of what might be done, there were a variety of people that were invited. And I'm sure that Caryl Haskins was invited to at least one and perhaps more than one of those meetings when I was present. So that would be the first time that I met Caryl, would have been sometime between '59 and '64 or '65, but I can't get better date for you than that.

DPS: Well, he was already the president of the Washington Carnegie.

LM: He got appointed president of that in, I believe 1955 or '56.

DPS: Yeah, that's my impression.

LM: And John Gardner had been appointed president of Carnegie Corporation in '56. Whether or not they knew each other before those appointments I don't know. But I'm sure that both of them being presidents of Carnegie institutions, they did meet each other and knew after that. So my speculation is that, while they probably didn't know each other before being appointed to these posts, they certainly did know each other and liked each other after that.

CAF: Did you have any kind of professional relationship with him? Was it more of a social relationship with him?

LM: With Caryl?

CAF: Yeah

LM: That's a little hard for me to answer. As I said, as I just said, I certainly met him at least once and probably more than once at those Carnegie meetings.

CAF: Right.

LM: Then, in '69, I left Carnegie to become president of the Markle Foundation. There we specialized in communications and information technology. And my...one of your questions was; why do I think I was asked to join the Haskins board?

CAF: Right.

LM: Well I think that I had some acquaintance with Caryl Haskins as I've already mentioned. But my guess is that Caryl talked to John [Gardner] about the need to have someone on the board who was a psychologist, because he saw that the Lab

was somewhat going in that direction. Or for what other reason? My guess is that John recommended me for the board and that's why I was asked to join. But he did know me in advance.

CAF: OK.

DPS: What were the dates that you were on the board; can you tell us that?

LM: At Haskins?

DPS: Yeah.

LM: I joined in 1976; I'll have to look. I can't give you the ending date yet. But I can easily tell you in a moment....I think.

CAF: If not, we can get that information at Haskins Labs.

LM: Yeah. So when I had joined the Haskins board, the speech research group had already emerged. I met Franklin Cooper, but he was...his tenure was coming to an end. I don't know exactly when he left the board. But Al Liberman was certainly appointed and was leading the speech research group. And that particular area was the one I was closest to in terms of professional background.

CAF: Yeah, if you joined in '76, I think that Al had just stepped on as president the year before. Frank had...

LM: That sounds right.

CAF: The kind of thing we're trying to get at in the 3rd question [We are under the impression that CH had little direct participation in research at Haskins Laboratories after the war. But he was an occasional presence and kept an office there. Moreover, he continued to make substantial gifts annually at least into the 1960s, and he funded an endowed professorship at Pace University for Seymour Hutner when the Laboratories in East 43rd St was forced to find new quarters and the three research groups went their separate ways. What can you tell us about CH's attitude regarding the evolution of the institution he founded?] I guess is: Caryl Haskins' training had little to do with the direction that our kind of research took, speech and language...

LM: That's exactly right.

CAF: and reading. And neither of us knew him well enough to know what his view was of that direction. Did he kind of lose interest? Did he think it was a good way for the Laboratories to go? Do you have any idea?

LM: Well, that gets to the nature of who Caryl was as a person. And so, going on the board on '76, Caryl would have been 68. He was born in „,um.,,

CAF: 1908.

LM: Yes, 1908, so he would have been 68. My impression of him from the first, particularly after I joined the board because then I got to know him much better than I had before, was that he was I'd say a very gentle person. He and Edna were a very devoted couple. They... In the early time I was on the board, Edna certainly came to the board meetings.

CAF: Yes.

LM: I'm not sure if in the latter part she did. But they were both gentle people. They were interested, they were observant. I never heard Caryl say anything detrimental or critical of anybody. And my impression was that Caryl was interested in the direction the lab was going. He obviously did not know much about the speech area, but he certainly fully supported it. And the meetings of the Lab board at that

time...Seymour Hutner came and made presentations. That was an area that Caryl clearly knew more about than he did about the speech area. But Seymour's activities were quite dissimilar to anything else that was going on at the Lab, in the main part of the Lab. I remember one board meeting when Seymour made a report on his research on some kind of small organism, and I don't remember the name of the organism, which changes sexuality depending on the nature of the food supply. And Caryl was clearly highly interested in that. For those of us who didn't have that background, it seemed like a very strange set of activities.

8:47

But I think that Caryl believed, in what I know of his background before then, which then I did not know much about, was he believed that if you found good people doing interesting work, they should be supported.

CAF: Yeah, I...

LM: And I assume that Seymour Hutner had a personal relationship with Caryl prior to the time that he joined the lab.

CAF: Seymour was located by Caryl Haskins and Frank Cooper when he, Seymour, was still a graduate student at Cornell. They were doing some work on effects of radiation on biological organisms, was that it, Donald?

DPS: Yes.

CAF: And they needed a biochemist and...

DPS: They needed a microbiologist.

LM: Right.

CAF: microbiologist, and somebody, who later got the Nobel Prize...

DPS: It was McClintock, Barbara McClintock

CAF: Barbara McClintock, at CUNY, he had been a student of hers. Was it CUNY or Columbia?

DPS: CUNY, I think.

CAF: Anyway, she recommended Seymour to them. And so they go back practically to their graduate student days themselves, the three of them.

LM: Right.

DPS: Did you get to know ..., Seymour yourself?

LM: Only to meet him and only during his presentations at [Haskins] board meetings.

DPS: Uh huh

CAF: I just want to go back to what you said about how Caryl Haskins thought that if you found good people, you should support them. That's one thing that I saw a lot in essays written about him. That he had this ideal of what some of them called the undirected or self-directed scientist. That you should seek out those people and support them. And that's one thing that I wondered about whether that's what allowed Haskins...our version of Haskins Laboratories to take the direction that it did. That maybe Al Liberman was one of those people that he discovered these findings about speech that none of them had expected to find and wanted to pursue them. And maybe Caryl Haskins and Frank Cooper said: This is one of those guys who you should give him his lead because he's he knows what he's doing.

LM: Yeah. I think that's part of it Carol. In thinking about those times. When I was at Carnegie, this would have been probably in the later years I was at Carnegie, let's

say '60- '64, '65, we supported a man named Omar Khayyam Moore who had developed what he called a talking typewriter. As I remember, O. K. Moore was at Yale, I could be wrong about that, but I think he was. And the ethos of the time also, for example, Herbert Simon at Carnegie Mellon and his colleagues were developing Information Processing technology that simulated thought. It seemed to me that all of that fit in with what AI was doing. Now whether AI knew OK Moore or not, I don't know. I expect he did. But part of the ethos of the times supported the general area of research that AI was even though the specialty that he developed was very particular to Haskins.

CAF: Right, right.

DPS: So your branch of Carnegie supported people in information technology? That branch of science sort of in that time?

LM: Well, we were trying to find ways to help improve education, and the idea that a talking typewriter could help children learn to read seemed promising. And OK Moore did pretty well with it. I don't know what happened to him in the long run, but he did pretty well with it. So that we were interested in that, yes. We were interested in linguistic research to some extent. I had not known AI before he was appointed at Haskins though.

CAF: OK. Um just returning to the idea of Caryl Haskins sort of seeking out talented sciences[scientists] and supporting them. I sort of have the sense that that made him a good person to be the president of Carnegie Institute of Washington. Is that the kind of role he could serve there? I really don't know

LM: I think so. I think that probably he had considerable amount of latitude about the directions the Carnegie Institution took.

DPS: They did not support any of the linguistic sciences there, is that ...

LM: Not that I know of.

DPS: Yeah, I'd read that his predecessor, Vannevar Bush had rejected anthropology, had sort of kicked it out or something.

LM: Well, Bush's interests were quite different than anthropology.

DPS: Yeah, yeah. Did you know him?

LM: No. The years that I knew Caryl as I said when he was 68 and older...I probably knew him 'til the end of his life after that. I come back to the thought: he really was a very gentle person. I mean if he found your research interesting, he would be interested in it. And he was interested in a lot of things.

DPS: He was very unusual in having the capability of being interested in so many things, I gather.

LM: Yes, I think so. And as you know, he and Edna developed their own nature preserve in Westport. And we visited them there.

CAF: Did you?

LM: And, in addition to the botanical specimens that he and Edna had collected from around the world...of which he was very proud...I remember him showing us a pine or a fir that had come from China. And he also, which doesn't happen there now, he also maintained quite a collection of exotic birds, particularly ducks.

CAF: I didn't know that.

LM: And he was very proud of the fact that they had made their home there and were able to reproduce. So that, it was quite an undertaking. Both he and Edna were

very proud and happy about that. That's just another example I think, of the kinds of interests, the broad interests, that he had.

CAF: Yes, I re-read Alice Dadourian's biobibliography, and hadn't remembered that Edna also collaborated with him on his research on ants.

LM: Yes.

CAF: Donald and I found a pamphlet that was produced in 1953, and no one claims authorship of it. It was about Haskins Laboratories. But there is a statement in it that, at the founding of the Laboratories, the founders wanted to served as kind of scientific catalysts. They wanted to identify important research areas and begin to do research in then until they got other people involved and working on it, and then they would jump to the next research area. And it seemed to me that Haskins Laboratories didn't sort of pursue that route, not surprisingly. I mean it did jump to the field of speech and language because of the reading machine work, but it never jumped away from that to the next new area. But again, I wondered if he saw his role at the Carnegie Institute as sort of perpetuating that or fostering that kind of influence.

LM: My guess is yes, but I think that the possibility of doing that at Haskins Lab depended upon having sufficient resources.

CAF: Yes.

LM: And during my time on the board the main concern was always the renewal or the seeking of government grants to support the speech and other research at the Lab. So that the idea that you could do that independently of that external support never came up. That was always the concern.

CAF: Yeah, I think that's a good point, yep.

LM: The other...thinking about that time... The other part, in terms of the management and the administration of the Lab, the other part that frequently came up was the connection with Yale or the lack of connection with Yale, and that apparently depended on the particular provost that was in office at the time. When the provost changed, there was a considerable effort to renew that tie, and it was important, because, Carol were you...you were certainly there, guess, when the housing for the Lab changed.

CAF: Yes.

LM: That was a big event.

CAF: That was a huge event. Yes it was. We ended up moving out of a Yale-owned...if you mean the move in 2005.

LM: Yes.

DPS: I thought he meant the move from New York. No I guess not.

LM: No, I meant the one the Carol is talking about.

CAF: Yes, that was a huge event.

LM: The reasons for bringing those up were that the concerns about the administration of the Lab as revealed in the board meetings were mainly around the financing and the securing of the grants, and, two, the relationship to Yale. The part of the board meetings that were devoted to reports on scientific research were: Al would give a report; Seymour would give a report; there might have been a third person occasionally. Pat Nye did later. That was of interest and Caryl clearly took an

interest in it, but that was not the main concern of the administration and management.

CAF: Right. I think that's a very good point, because when Caryl Haskins founded the Laboratories as a young man, I think he had an inheritance, and maybe he had ambitions there that he could sort of make more independent decisions about what he could devote his resources to. And once we became dependent on government grants, we really couldn't jump around. We had to pursue our strengths. And that made....

LM: I think that's quite true, Carol. The other part I would add to that is that the relationship of scientific research support from the government and the amount of it changed dramatically over the course of Caryl's career.

CAF: That's true, Yep.

DPS: Up until...around 1960 a substantial proportion of the Lab's funding came from private sources.

LM: Right,

DPS: And that...all that changed. The 60s I think was the decade when it all changed so much.

CAF: Well, that would be the decade in which we got our first program project grants, right?

DPS: That's right. We've had continual support from NIH for coming up to 50 years, which is a sort of a record.

LM: And unless your inheritance or personal resources were much greater than I believe Caryl's were, you cannot personally manage that.

CAF: No.

DPS: We have a tape recording that was made at the end of the 1980s, conversations between Cooper and Haskins and Liberman and some others. And Haskins commented that an institution like the Haskins Laboratories couldn't be created today and today was now 30 years ago, but still. I wonder...

LM: Well, I think he was right.

CAF: Well, aside from Alfred Loomis' Tuxedo Park and Haskins Laboratories, were there really many independent laboratories founded with personal funds? Maybe not.

LM: Not that I know of.

CAF: Yeah.

LM: There was of course...commercially funded laboratories. Bell Labs, for example, was a sensational semi-independent lab for a very long time. Doesn't exist any more.
23:25

CAF: Right.

DPS: And Haskins and Cooper got their start at the laboratories of General Electric in Schenectady.

LM: Right.

DPS: Yeah. And I don't know whether those exist any more as a research...as a basic research...

LM: I don't know either.

CAF: So, Donald, what do we need to ask...

DPS: Well, let's consider 9, see what he...

CAF: OK. so 9 is: "Caryl Haskins has been described as a visionary. Do you find that an apt characterization? Tell us what you can"—you've already told us a bit—"about his personality, his values, his achievements and his impacts"

LM: Well, I think that, in terms of his being a visionary, that probably related more to his earlier career than his later career when I knew him. Because at 68, he was getting close to the time when he was retiring and of course somewhat later than '76 when I joined the board, Edna's health deteriorated, and he had a different set of concerns, or more concern in that area than he otherwise had. So that I, looking back, course I hadn't thought too much about some of this til I got your letter with the questions. Looking back, it seems to me that he was much more concerned in supporting the areas of research that other people knew more than he did. And much less, if., of fostering his own ideas of where the Labs should go than he might have been earlier.

CAF: Yup. And likewise, I guess, that was his role at Carnegie, of fostering the research of other people.

LM. Yes. Would have been.

DPS: Can you fill us in....We don't know much about his activities after he left Carnegie. That would have been in the 70s, I guess, middle 70s. I think he was President from '56 to early 70s.

LM: Well, in his biography, I see that he served on the board of a couple of organizations for some time after that. Caryl was a thoughtful person so that if as a board member or at the Labs for that matter, if there was a question of how to proceed, he would think about it and give his judgment in a very nondirective manner. But he was thoughtful and a wise man. I suspect that in the other activities that he pursued after he left Carnegie Institution, those qualities were very important. That's what you look for in a board member.

CAF: Right

27:20

DPS: And he did continue to pursue his interest in entymology, and may have made trips, further trips to Australia; we knew he made a number.

LM: I am sure he did. And I am sure during those trips to Australia and elsewhere, he collected sam...specimens to bring home and plant, OR in some cases, for example, importing birds.

CAF: Yeah, I hadn't been aware of the birds. I thought Alice Dadourian told us about fish. Didn't she?

DPS: Fish.

LM: There were fish too. Definitely.

DPS: May I, when I said Australia, I was reminded that he made some of those trips with EO Wilson, the population biologist, who was also interested in ants and species like that.

LM: Yes, I'm sure that's right

DPS: Did you know him?

LM: I did not.

DPS: No. Would you have any idea...We tried to solicit information form Wilson, but we haven't been able to do that. He hasn't responded to our queries. We're sort of at a dead end there.

LM: He's quite an old person now isn't he?

CAF: He is, yeah

DPS: He is, it might be illness that's prevented him from responding, but I don't know

LM: I was startled when you wrote that...thought that Caryl's papers had been destroyed. I wonder who did that, because Alice certainly would have never done that.

CAF: Well she did do that.

LM: She did!

CAF: What she told us...It's just too bad that she didn't contact the Laboratories. But she was in charge of emptying out their house.

LM: That's right. She talked to me at that point.

CAF: She told us there were 17 dumpsters full of stuff that she ended up getting rid of.

LM: Good grief.

CAF: And she just said to us: I was just one person. And she had this job and she didn't share it with us. You know, we would have been glad to go through the papers, but she just felt it was a huge job. And she couldn't do it. And not only did Caryl Haskins' and Ednas' papers get destroyed, but also some of Frank Cooper's because they had been housed at the Westport home. So, it's a really unfortunate loss, but she was just overwhelmed and felt that she couldn't do anything else.

LM: But, I think in thinking about Caryl and Edna both, because I knew them as a couple as well as knowing Caryl independently, the faithfulness of Alice illustrates the way that Caryl's personality developed affection and connections with people. He was a person that you liked and that helped enormously in what he did.

CAF: I think you're right. Alice certainly, when she retired from Haskins Laboratories, devoted many years to helping them. And..

LM: That's right

CAF: And Edna, I think a lot of that time, was not well and very difficult, and Caryl was an excellent mediator, I think. And Alice was very loyal to them.

LM: No question

DPS: Alice also had the job of emptying out their huge apartment in Washington.

LM: Oh my! That was a labor of love.

CAF: Yes it was.

DPS: Yeah. Do you know how they divided their time between Washington and Westport?

LM: Well I think they in Westport most of the time. Partly because taking care of the nature preserve and maintaining it required a considerable amount of their attention.

DPS: Right. That would be true.

CAF: Well, another thing we wanted to ask you that we didn't remember to put down was: We're just trying to think of other people that might have known him besides EO Wilson. Can you think of people that we might be able to get in touch with?

LM: Gosh. That's a hard question I'm 85 now, and one of the things that I deal with regularly is that, practically speaking, all of the people that created my intellectual world are either dead or very old.

CAF: Right.

LM: So I really can't answer that question very well. What I would think of....It's been so long since.... I doubt that anybody connected with the Carnegie Institution would be very relevant now.

CAF: Phil Rubin recommended Maxine Singer. Do you think she knew him well?

LM: I don't know. Possible. Well, wish I could help on that front, but I'm afraid I can't.

CAF: That's exactly what we've been confronting.

DPS: Yeah. We realize that we started this project around 15 years too late. At least.

CAF: Or more

DPS; Or more, yeah.

LM: Well, but you did start it. And I think it's a great thing to do.

DPS: And Carol sent you our paper from the beginnings of speech...

L M: Yes, she did. I appreciated it.

DPS: Yeah, good.

CAF: Good.

DPS: I'm still a member of the Haskins Board and we're always on the lookout for really good people to be members. And I was wondering if you could suggest anyone who lives here in the Northeast region that you'd like to recommend. If so, we'd be grateful.

LM: What sort of expertise would you want.

DPS: Well, we'd be interested in someone with a background from one of the major foundations, because that sort of background isn't represented on the board now. That was one of the things I thought about.

LM: Well, let me think about that. If I have any reasonable thoughts, I'll pass them on.

DPS: Sure. That would be great.

CAF: Well, Donald is there anything else other than the last question,

LM: (laughs)

CAF: Which is what should we ask you that we haven't asked you?

LM: I don't know whether this is true or not. But I suspect that both Francesca and Stephanie Gardner knew Caryl Haskins, because John Gardner's friendship with Caryl was not just professional. And Stephanie and Francesca are both John's daughters. They're probably 50 or 60 now. I would at least ask them about it. They may not have any information for you, but I would ask them.

CAF: Great. Thank you.

DPS: And where do they live?

LM: (laughing) I was afraid you were going to ask me that, Donald.

CAF: And is their last name Gardner?

LM: That's a good question. One of them lived in San Francisco. Let me think about it. If I have any information further on that, I'll pass it on too.

DPS: That would be great

CAF: Thank you so much. Anything else, Donald, that we should ask?

DPS: I think we've covered the ground as well as we could.

LM: Well, I congratulate you a on what you are doing and wish you well. And as I said, either about the [...] Gardner daughters or any other the board members that I think you'd be interested in, I'll pass those on.

CAF: Thank you so much.

DPS: Thank you. We really appreciate your willingness to talk with us

LM: I appreciate your willingness to take the job on.

CAF: Great. Well, thanks so much. Bye

LM: Bye bye.