

UNCG ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: Alonzo C. Hall

INTERVIEWER: Virginia Ford Zenke

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VZ: This is Virginia Ford Zenke of the Class of 1946. It is my pleasure to conduct an interview with Alonzo Cleveland Hall, professor of English at the present [The] University of North Carolina at Greensboro from 1916 to 1956. Lonnie, I have many happy memories of our student-teacher friendship and I am honored to be asked to have a verbal visit with you in a somewhat limited edition of your thoughts about the college we have both loved so much.

AH: Virginia, I don't know of any one of my former students whom I would prefer to interview me than you because I remember very well your place in the class and your interest in anything literary and artistic, too, by the way.

VZ: It was 1916 and the college was already twenty-five years old. Mr. Hall, please tell me about your arrival and your reasons for coming here to teach that preceded that arrival. There was so much opposition to the formation of a state-supported school for women. Did this opposition offer you a challenge?

AH: I had followed the history of the college. I remember that the legislature in an act of 1891 enacted legislation for the organization of the college for women ["An act to Establish a Normal and Industrial School for White Girls"], then, of course, [under] the leadership of Dr. [Charles Duncan] McIver [president from 1892 to 1906]. I came here in 1916. The college had just opened in 1892, the fall of that year, with about 175 students and a faculty of fifteen. Dr. McIver of course, as head. I was interested in the college because it was nearby—my own home was in the country north of Burlington, Alamance County. I just wanted to line up if possible, with a college that was also young, and starting out.

VZ: What were your impressions of the quality of the early students and what were their interests? There must have been a rather youthful approach to everything about the school. Did the fact that the school, the students, and the faculty were all young together inspire them to meet a particular challenge?

AH: I think you're right. We were young together. There was a proposal that few colleges have ever had in the very organization, the very purpose of the college and the extension

of education to women, that is an interest in the education of women which the establishment of this college recognized and [unclear] so the faculty and the students were serious and to be sure it was organized with the idea of educating women teachers but the years came and the view of education would be broadened and was broadened, of course, but to begin with there was a seriousness of purpose on the part of faculty and students and a closeness because there were not many students and very few faculty members, as a matter of fact.

- VZ: It has been said that the early students were close and more concerned about each other's welfare. Do you think that the typhoid epidemic of 1899, with such a loss of students, and the influenza epidemic [world-wide pandemic of 1918 and 1919 killed between twenty and forty million people and] World War I [global conflict from 1914 to 1918] presented a common bond of survival that made them a closely-knit group?
- AH: When I came to the college in 1916, in the fall of [that] year, they were still talking about the terrible epidemic you referred to, and the seriousness of purpose undoubtedly continued for a good many years following that striking and devastating epidemic.
- VZ: Do you feel, as I do, that religion was more a part of their backgrounds then, and therefore, more of an influence on their behavior even to the point of providing some degree of social activity for the girls? For example, the frequency of chapel exercises.
- AH: There is no doubt about the seriousness, the moral seriousness on the part of students and their parents and family relations, that they were very religious in [the] sense that they knew much about, say the Bible. I can't say they were any more religious than any other group I have known. Does that answer your question to that?
- VZ: Is it possible that these factors combined [made] the early students know that they had an opportunity to learn and serve the communities that other earlier women had not known and that this, too, was a challenge [for] them?
- AH: That was in the air, the idea that the institution was being provided for the education of women alone. It has developed an air of seriousness of purpose and fidelity to certain ideals, but there was the idea of making a living and contributing something to the social, ethical well-being of the state through the school room.
- VZ: But it was an opportunity to serve. Dr. [Julius Isaac] Foust [president from 1906 to 1934] was the head of the college and was at the helm for a longer period of time than any other leader. Would you care to elaborate on his qualifications and contributions to the school? He seemed far above and is mentioned far less often than others in that position, or is it even fair to compare him with others who came after him? You were asked by the faculty to represent them with a few remarks at a dinner honoring Dr. Foust in recent years. Please recall some of your thoughts at that time.
- AH: Virginia, on October 4, 1941, a dinner was given in honor of Dr. Foust and the faculty asked me to represent them at this dinner. In the audience that evening there were

dignitaries of the state, the governor and the president of the universities, et cetera. Among other things, I played upon the idea of [Ralph Waldo] Emerson [American essayist, lecturer, and poet] when he said that [every] institution is the lengthened shadow of one man. That is true if there are other men to affect that thinking. Surely the shadow of Dr. McIver is so fused with that of his successor that there is no break, no diminution in the extending and expanding shadow of the founder.

Dr. Foust came to the college in 1902 when it was ten years old but with the death of Dr. McIver in 1906, he became president and for the next twenty-eight years he built upon the foundation laid before him. He watered what had been planted and he planted much for others to water. He came into a goodly inheritance adequately meeting its responsibilities, and he left even a greater inheritance with correspondingly greater responsibilities. Thus, the shadow of the founder was lengthened.

I feel that I can speak freely for the faculty of those twenty-eight years, for I came here in 1916 and from the beginning was filled with the spirit of service and seriousness of purpose which pervaded the campus from dormitory to classroom, [and] from classroom to the president's office. In speaking, it would be easiest to comment on the most obvious development of those years: the expansion of buildings, equipment, student body, and faculty. Neither let it be said in this connection that Dr. Foust was a genius in securing money from the legislature; but his was the money wisdom that aided the cause of higher education in all the other state-supported institutions.

Less obvious but more important in this great expansion was the internal development in the college, changes toward a more liberal college of arts and sciences, resulting in the recognition of the college by the university. Motivating this internal development was Dr. Foust's firm belief that the spirit of democracy should be applied to the education of the young women of North Carolina. With all the growth and buildings, he never—to use his own words—he never lost sight of the intellectual and spiritual side of college life [which] is more important than any other consideration that might be named.

Paramount with this concern for student development was Dr. Foust generous freedom for the teachers that they can speak without fear of hypocrisy. He held that no limitation should ever be placed on the faculty or student body whose [minds] are endeavoring with honesty and sincerity of purpose to find the truth. Many of us here who labored with him have personal knowledge of the fact that he stood [in] back of those words and protected our freedom against certain partisans who from time to time would have banished us from the state.

Let it be said that this scholar makes us feel all the more at home today in The University of North Carolina [of North Carolina] whose crowning glories are freedom of thought and speech. It is a pleasure, Dr. Foust, to speak for the faculty of your twenty-eight years of service. Service characterized by positive character and unanswerable faith. You live the college, you embody the spirit of this campus; it was your thought awake, it was your dream asleep. We respected the total unselfishness of your labors, we admired your political [insight] and your educational foresight. We appreciated your stand for freedom of the searcher after truth and tonight we rejoice in the abiding love that you have for this Woman's College of the University of North Carolina [now, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro] and for all it has meant and for all that it portends, thus your shadow lengthens.

- VZ: That's a beautiful testimonial. He comes through as an intellectual and a scholar. Are there any personal anecdotes you can recall about the man that would appeal to us who did not know him?
- AH: I remember one thing pretty well. I remembered about this later on, Dr. Foust was president of the college. There was a great battle down in Tennessee over evolution. Dr. William Louis Poteat [professor and seventh president of Wake Forest College, now Wake Forest University] from here in North Carolina was one of the leaders in the freedom of thought when it came to, say the idea of evolution, but William Jennings Bryan [American orator and politician] fought the battle of evolution
- And one of our own faculty members, who is still living, was jumped upon by a group of, shall we say, illiterate narrow-minded Bible lovers in Charlotte and they were trying to make it rather difficult for this professor and I happened to be a member of the Bible class at this time of the First Presbyterian Church. And a certain individual got up there and moved that the class petition the legislature, which was in session at that time, to pass anti-evolution document of some sort. That is a resolution opposing the teaching of evolution in public schools or colleges. I got up and I hardly know what I did say but I talked for about fifteen minutes defending this same fellow professor who by the way—whose father was a minister, and the result of it was it the class didn't pass the resolution. It died right then and there.
- The next day, Dr. Foust called me into his office because he had heard of what had happened and I wondered—I could not imagine him defending the act of the class like that or any emotion of that sort, and before I could say anything, he broke into a broad smile and I congratulated me.
- VZ: A nice reward for the. courage that you had, to speak out in favor of the teaching of this theory of evolution. I expect this was a part of freedom of thought imparted by Dr. Foust earlier and you were on safe ground when you did this.
- AH: I surely was.
- VZ: Any other things you would like to recall about him?
- AH: He had a fine sense of humor—sort of Abraham Lincoln type of humor, I guess, but he was a sort of man who drew you to himself, to his ideals—more important, the sort of man you would never forget if you were ever associated with him.
- VZ: You spoke of William Jennings Bryan. He was supposed to have spoken in Greensboro under a tree behind my house when I lived downtown. Were you here then or did you come here after that episode?
- AH: I was [not] here when William Jennings Bryan came through and I believe Bryan was on the train with Dr. McIver when Dr. McIver died.
- VZ: That's right. Did you go to hear him when he spoke under the tree behind my house?

AH: I don't know, Virginia, whether I heard him under the tree behind your house or not but I heard him several times and I thought he was a great orator but of course, I didn't fall for his idea on evolution.

VZ: The school was obviously growing. Perhaps your personal development will reveal to others how the faculty and student body was growing in and developing during this post-World War I period.

AH: Well, the college was making a place for itself herein the community. For the commercial advantages, if for none other, it was making a name for itself. Unfortunately, however, there were too few of the faculty members who participated in community affairs. Very few belonged to any of the civic clubs and very few took any large part in the churches of the city. That, I think, is unfortunate not only for the city for they need the participation of leaders such as we have and always have had at the college, but it is unfortunate for the faculty members themselves who do not choose to become a part, an integral part of the city.

VZ: For years, you have had crowded classes on the history of the Bible at the college and the First Presbyterian Church. How did this interest develop?

AH: Well, I began teaching here at the college. I had a course in creative writing and then I had charge of freshmen and sophomore English along with creative writing. I had a course in story-writing, just one class in that but as the years passed and the classes grew larger, the faculty grew larger, too. I had more time, there was more time for greater expansion in the classes.

As for my teaching the Bible, I taught a literary study of the Bible. That came about because Dr. [William C.] Smith [English professor and dean of faculty], who had been head of the department. After his passing, there wasn't anyone seemingly in the department to take over the literary study of the Bible but me. I had had some courses in the Bible so that I honor or duty fell to me and I am glad that it did because I enjoyed the course that I gave in the literary study of the Bible. I had always had good classes in it. A good many of the times, ladies, at least, joined the class.

VZ: It was always a very stimulating class for me. I'll bet you had a lot of practice when you had to plan those chapel programs all week for the girls in the early days.

AH: Yes, indeed. It fell to my honor or duty or something to preside over chapel programs from the earliest days of Dr. Foust when we met five days a week, chapel compulsory attendance [was] required, chapel exercises five days a week, presiding five days a week and if anybody failed to show up, I had to do whatever honors that had to be done.

Then the years go by and we cut it down to four times, and Dr. [Walter Clinton] Jackson [dean of administration/chancellor from 1934 to 1950] cut it down to about twice a week. I was still chairman and finally, of course, about the time I left the college, there was no compulsory student attendance at all. I guess there is no where they could attend now if they had it.

- VZ: Sounds like they lost their religion, doesn't it? You have been credited with helping to start or found a college newspaper, *The Carolinian*. How did this come about?
- AH: Well, in the class in writing, we had a group of lively students very much interested in starting something and I was interested in starting something, so it is just rather inevitable the question of a student's newspaper should be established. And all that I contributed to it was my own interest and enthusiasms for it and the students took it up and it did materialize and ran for a good many years and so far as I know it is still published.
- VZ: Well, it was certainly a great way for future students of journalism to get a good start, I am sure.
- AH: That's quite right.
- VZ: Gradually, other areas of learning were incorporated in the scheme of things and amusement and entertainment other than chapel exercises appeared. Please talk to me about the Play-Likers [student and community theater company], your interest and participation in that group, and tell me when men were first permitted on stage with the girls.
- AH: The history of the playwright group here at the college is long and distinguished, and the one that has been honored by the building having been named after him. And just recently a portrait of him was placed in the Taylor Building, that is the history of the Play-Likers of the department is Mr. W. Raymond Taylor [professor of English, speech, and drama]. He was a genius in putting on plays, really one of the best scholars, one of the more versatile scholars here in my days at the college. He just had a way of doing plays that has never been surpassed.
- As far as my own part in the play, in 1921, I think it was, men, faculty men, were permitted to take the role of male characters and during that year and several years following that, I did have minor roles in plays and was always interested in playwriting and play producing at the college. I remember having a part in the play called *Fashion*. I guess it was 1921 when it was put on. I played the part of T. Tennyson Twinkle. That name might suggest something to you. It had a song in there that I was supposed to sing. I surely wouldn't call it singing because it is not one of my virtues at all, but anyway I had a lot of fun. Later on, I played in *Blue Diamonds*, a play written by Dr. [Leonard Burwell] Hurley who was in the English department and altogether it was a very happy experience through the years with the Play-Likers.
- VZ: I recall seeing a photograph of an early set for *Craig's Wife* and you were in that. The sets were good and the people looked fine and the whole thing looked very professional. Don't you think it is rather interesting that someone with the talent of Raymond Taylor stayed here to impart his knowledge at the local level rather than to go at the commercial aspect of his field at a time when enormous amounts of money were being made in the early development of the movies and stage in New York, [a] much more commercial approach?

- AH: Incidentally, you are paying a tribute to W. Raymond Taylor because he could have easily made a lot of money. He chose to stay right here because it was a great deal to putting on a play, that is to staging it, he was a past master when it came to pulling it off.
- VZ: All a matter of timing.
- AH: Timing and so many things that enter into a play. I learned that much from the little acting that I did.
- VZ: It's not all just being on stage, is it? I can't help but wonder if the Faculty Wives Club stems from this period when they first let men appear on the stage plays with the girls at Woman's College or was it from World War II [global conflict from 1939 to 1945] when so many of the college boys were overseas and the campus was shocked when students invited the male faculty members to be their dancing partners for the junior-senior prom one year. How did your wife react to this? You were one of the popular ones and much sought after.
- AH: I was invited to one of those dances and it was rather interesting, a little embarrassing to me maybe, maybe a little shocking to my wife. I would be invited to be an escort at a dance with one of the students and I [wouldn't] say that I always participated, I want [to] say I participated through sympathy, but I rather liked it.
- VZ: It was rather flattering, wasn't it? I wonder whose idea it was. I never heard. It happened the year before it was my turn to go to the junior-senior prom.
- AH: The dance was very, very popular and during the war there were very few available males around and it was the logical thing to do.
- VZ: Oh, how I loved the lecture-entertainment series. For fifteen years, you guided the group that brought such stellar attractions here. And about all of them were great individuals of tremendous personal magnitude who could hold the audience spellbound. All alone, they had no supporting actors and you were there with them on stage, sort of a one-to-one relationship. Let's dream about them for a few minutes. I'd like to.
- AH: That was one of the pleasures I had as chairman an of the lecture-entertainment course, and it was fun, it was fun for the students, it was stimulating and I can imagine the pleasure students had in my pleasure in having introduced to them Edna St. Vincent Millay [American poet and playwright], whose poetry is as beautiful and fragile as she was a person and little anecdotes I could tell about her, any number of others whom it was my pleasure and honor to introduce. Robert Frost [American poet], for example, who was really almost a part of the faculty, he came so many times. Carl Sandberg [American poet and author], I sat up in the old King Cotton Hotel half the night listening to him read his poems, a new volume of his poems. Vachel Lindsay [American poet], he was a curiosity but a genuine poet and just a whole long list of them, really.
- VZ: Did Thomas Wolfe [American novelist] ever come in this capacity?

AH: No, Thomas Wolfe was never here.

VZ: Do you recall introducing my friend [Sam Stoney], the one who always appeared in full dress, black tie, and no socks?

AH: I sure do remember him and I also remember Archibald Rutledge [American poet and educator] and another South Carolinian, [a] Charlestonian, who wrote a play that became famous, DuBose Heyward [American author]. I will never forget.

VZ: Tell me about him. I have a volume that once belonged to his library.

AH: He was a genuine poet and he made his living during the winter selling life insurance and in the summer time he lived as he wanted to live, writing. A good many of his summers he spent in the mountains of North Carolina and some of his beautiful poems have to do with mountain people, like "A Yoke of Steers," "A Mountain Woman," and others. It was an inspiration to have those men here and those women, too, a number of those.

VZ: He brought out such a lovely volume of South Carolina poetry called *Carolina Chansons* with [William] Hervey Allen. Did Allen ever come here?

AH: Hervey Allen never came here.

VZ: He had written *Anthony Adverse*, I believe. They were all such interesting people and oh, John Mason Brown [American drama critic and author]. You haven't mentioned him. He did make us laugh.

AH: We had John Mason Brown for many repeat performances. He was always a delight, quick-witted, very versatile, widely-read individual and a good critic, too.

VZ: Very suave.

AH: Yes, he was very suave, suave plus.

VZ: I shall never forget one evening he mentioned something about the jet-propelled ladies and you could just see exactly what he meant at that time.

AH: I tried to get Edwin Arlington Robinson [American poet] here but I couldn't get him. He just didn't lecture. He didn't do that sort of thing.

VZ: The fun always started after the lecture was over, and they would always ask if there were any questions from the audience and that's when the fun got started.

AH: Yes, that's right.

VZ: They were happy times. I would love very much right now to be able to look forward to being entertained by just one of them for an evening, wouldn't you?

AH: I surely would.

VZ: On a person-to-person basis. I have heard you refer to your trip to Europe in about 1939, was it, when you came back, on just about the last boat load that got back before war was declared, and didn't you make a talk at the college sometime after that. You made the remark that [Benito] Mussolini [Italian journalist, politician, and dictator] had cleaned up Rome and you got everybody upset and they thought bad-things about you, thought you approved of Mussolini cleaning up Rome, getting rid of the fleas, I believe.

AH: Yes, you had to be careful in those days but I just did get away from over there in time but Mussolini had cleaned up Rome and he had done a number of good things but I never hope to leave the impression that the good had overcome the evil.

VZ: So much reference is made today to the publish or perish syndrome. I know that much research is accomplished by this method line but sometimes I feel this is a mixed blessing. Can you help me understand how it affected the campus and the quality of teaching here as it appeared on this campus?

AH: We are getting over now in later years of teaching experience at the college. I will say the college has grown, it was the Woman's College of the University of North Carolina, we were admitted to the high [unclear] of colleges recognized by the institutions all over the South and North, too, as far as that's concerned.

And there was an increasing emphasis upon PhDs and naturally a lot of PhDs were looking for jobs and easily found them in the South and before they were dry back of their ears, they were attempting sometimes to change the whole curricula of a department. They no doubt meant well but they were, I guess, trying to make a name for themselves and make it quickly while they jumped on from here from some other position. But as far as publish or perish idea is concerned, that never did obtain too strongly here at the college although I will admit myself, I yielded to publishing. I had to give up the idea of finishing. The work upon taking a PhD degree. I wanted to very much but I only had very little between the [unclear] degree so I decided I would publish.

The first volume brought out was *Outlines of American Literature* which, after all is a pretty good little volume and served its purpose and then more important I and more ambitious is the *Outlines of English Literature*, which was my idea, but a volume to which Dr. Hurley, my colleague, provided the pros, that is the discussion of the novel, the drama and all the poetry, but the Anglo-Saxon period, et cetera. was mine, so we got that volume out. It was published by D.C. Heath and Company and incidentally, that little volume was used at Columbia [University], The University of Texas, and the University of Chicago, used widely all over the U.S.A. It really served a grand purpose. For two or three years, we used it here at the college, in the sophomore English. It is still a volume that I am proud of and I was proud to begin with when a company like D.C. Heath published it.

VZ: Then you do feel as I do that very often some of the faculty members did not come here to build and add to the steady growth of the school, but rather to gain attention and move on quickly after they had spent themselves in our midst, in just a short period of time. For

by this time the college had gained in stature and had achieved a wide reputation. It is just possible that it was used sometimes as a stepping stone by some of these people?

AH: That, indeed, is true. For a period of years any number of teachers would come in and use it as a stepping stone to a better paying job somewhere else. You see, when I came to the college it was an inspiration to me to work with men like Dr. [Eugene W.] Gudger [biology professor and head of the Department of Biology] and Miss [Minnie Lou] Jamison [Class of 1896, domestic science and extension division professor] and Dr. [Wade R.] Brown [music professor and dean of the School of Music], others who were here to make their home, made Greensboro their home city. It was rather discouraging to see what was happening to a good many of the newcomers, here today and gone tomorrow. Some, of course, later on the scholarships of some sort or another awards the young faculty members got, kept them abroad for a year or two and they would be back here and then off again somewhere, that sort of thing hurt, also. But it is not too much of that now.

VZ: But there were the ones who came and stayed and contributed to the steady growth of the college.

AH: And that is really what counts, it seems to me, and what has always counted.

VZ: You mentioned your publications on English and American literature and I know they are more than acceptable but your delightful and long awaited book on epitaphs called *Grave Humor* was very appealing. How did you become interested in this subject and what motivated you to make a collection of these things? I suppose you haunted old graveyards.

AH: Well, almost. Especially in the summer time when I wasn't teaching, which wasn't so often, I would spend a lot of time meandering through the South and especially in New England. I spent two solid weeks at Old Plymouth in the old burying ground up there in the hills. What started me in collecting epitaphs is somewhat incidental. I had always been interested in the birth place of great men, great writers, and I had been interested in the last resting place of distinguished men and women.

So, in Boston, the first Sunday I was in Boston at Harvard, I was looking around in the old cemetery called Granary Burying Ground where [Benjamin] Franklin [author, printer, politician, postmaster, and scientist] had erected a monument to his parents. I was meandering around in that old cemetery. After reading the more famous inscriptions, I came across one over in the corner of the graveyard and a little slate slab about six inches above the ground in which this man had written for his wife the following: "She looked well after the hogs, the chickens, and the cows, and always kept my socks darned," and that curious homely epitaph started me looking for funny ones and I found a good many funny ones and the funny ones are the ones that I began repeating here and there and in my classes, so my reputation for grave humor spread much wider than any other reputation that I might have had.

So, I began to give talks here and there on grave humor and then I was persuaded through the years to publish a volume and so I had three or four thousand epitaphs here

so I looked over them carefully and sorted them, like a professor would do, some semblance of order, respectability and finally came up with a little volume I called *Grave Humor* and it has gone through about eight or ten printings now. I am not wealthy because of it. I haven't made any money particularly, but it has been a lot of pleasure.

VZ: Not only for you but for the others. I treasure the volume you gave me for my library, the only trouble is I have two children. How are we going to divide that one?

AH: I'll have to give you two more volumes.

VZ: Did you run into any bizarre experiences in your visits to the graveyards?

AH Well, you do run into some funny experiences. Down in Beaufort, I ran into an epitaph of a man who was buried standing up and I felt a little funny standing there above a man who was standing up below me, in the ground of course. The epitaph said he was buried upright because he had asthma and couldn't sleep lying down. There have been a lot of funny experiences, but they are really just funny epitaphs and that is the main thing.

VZ: Apparently, your reputation went far and wide because you were invited to appear on a popular [radio] show on the air called *Hobby Lobby*. How about telling us about that incident?

AH: Yes, somebody wrote Dave Elman [radio host, comedian, and song writer] who was master of *Hobby Lobby*. And he sent me an invitation to appear on his program *Hobby Lobby* and to give a few of my epitaphs. And I forget the year and the date but I enjoyed the trip to New York. It was one of the free trips I have had, the luxurious hotel, et cetera. I was treated royally. I came off from reciting a few of the epitaphs, I thought they felt at least that this was in pretty good shape. The following day I was amazed at the flood of epitaphs I got from all the U.S.A. I didn't get too many that I could use, but I certainly got a world of them. It was enough to make a book if you publish all those but there so many duplications, you know.

VZ: I recall once when I was on the York River up in Virginia. I came across an early tombstone, actually it was [a] mid-17th century tombstone and I went to I great lengths to get you the epitaph off of it. It was of absolutely no consequence to you but it was a very early one and I insisted on bringing it back to you.

AH: I have had a lot of fun with those at Westminster Abbey. I noticed that when I was over there a long time ago, there was something wrong with the coat that Sam[uel] Johnson [English poet, essayist, moralist, literary critic, biographer, editor, and lexicographer] was wearing and I realized after studying it that the buttons were on the wrong side, that the maker of the monument had put the buttons on the I wrong side. So, I had some fun with my grandson, my two grandsons who were with me summer before last over there and standing before Sam Johnson's monument there they did not recognize it at all so I had the point to do a little teaching, you see.

VZ: Dear sir, you know that one of your greatest achievements in life has been I that you command the respect of both the town and gown elements of the city. Your active participation in your church and civic organizations is an outstanding record. Your civic service to the Greensboro Housing Authority as chairman for many years has recently been rewarded when the city named a large new apartment building, the Alonzo Hall Towers. I was so glad to see this recognition for your efforts over a long period of time for the city.

We are now to the point where we should stop and evaluate the kind of student that is emerging from the campus today, a campus which has grown from institute, to college, to university. It has been suggested that society's problems are not war, race, or ecology, but rather immorality. Has it not ever been thus and I think we have always had ecology around, too, this isn't anything new. Have the ideas promoted by the founding fathers been executed or have they been exploited? Where does freedom of thought end and looseness of thought begin? In our effort to grow, have we just exploded? Have we sacrificed quality for quantity?

AH: I am afraid that sometimes it would seem that quantity has supplanted quality. I don't want to be too hard on what I see here at the college or at other colleges because this college [is] not too different from them but the environment itself at my house here on Tate Street where I have lived since 1916, the environment is so different than what it was when I came here—when I came to the college.

It is a pity really that the neighborhood can't be cleaned up. It is a pity that the corner of Tate Street and Walker Avenue looks very much like a hog pen nearly all the time. But it is not altogether the long hair, long-haired men and long-haired, stringy-haired women, but it is the evident attitude that they are bearing they have and sometimes. they are really insulting to women or men,

I have been insulting myself by some of these long-haired, dirty hippies—quite a difference between long-haired and clean-haired and clean looking and bedraggled and dirty with these vulgar outfits they wear today with vulgar patches on their trousers. It is just a certain vulgarity about them that is not in keeping with what we associate with decency, with any thoughtful living, so that I sometimes wonder just what is happening, if the bottom rail is actually going to get altogether on top and be the top rail.

VZ: That is a long way from the time that we were required to wear hats and gloves when we went uptown. Others have expressed to me from time to time they regretted having a great woman's college turned into a lesser coeducational facility. Do you have any strong feeling about this matter?

AH: I don't like to kick against the spurs, you don't like really to be against progress but you do stop and think and ask what is progress, after all, and I wonder if a great deal of the sort of freedom we have now, a laxity, is responsible freedom or is there any such a thing any more as responsible freedom because this college came along with the idea that freedom to be sure but let it be a responsible freedom. That was the gospel of Harriet Elliott [political science faculty, dean of women, and political activist], for instance, who was a great influence on the college. It was the inspiration of the lives of Dr. McIver, Dr.

Foust, and Dr. Jackson. But something has happened to the identification of freedom, now with immorality, seems to be rather rampant.

VZ: It's a looseness rather than freedom.

AH: Just a looseness is right, I think.

VZ: Whatever our regrets or concerns of the past, I personally have only happy memories of Alonzo C. Hall, professor of English and sculptor of my thoughts. My memories are all elegant and beautiful and it has been the good fortune of my husband and my children to be a part of these happy thoughts for many of these times we have shared a social glass and good conversation which I hope the next generation will remember. My daughter even has her own private, personal poem written by Mr. Hall on the occasion of her christening.

But back to the classroom, the grandly groomed Mr. Hall with the ever-present rosebud would appear just after the bell to tease our mind and encourage us to seek and search for our own truths and always we would hope that he would read to us from poetry or from the prose that his lilting voice would turn into poetry. His strength of character was never more evident than one day during World War II. His tremendous personal loss had overwhelmed and shocked the entire campus. [Editor's note: Mr. Hall's son was killed in action during World War II.] The loss of manhood in flower is almost impossible to understand, but Mr. Hall's faith enabled him to withstand this loss and to appear triumphant over death. And to his next waiting class, Mr. Hall gave a reading of "Lycidas" and manifested his great faith.

Lonnie, the last time I was with Archibald Rutledge, he sat and read poems to me. As a personal favor to me and to posterity, would you end our interview with a flourish by quoting a few lines from Emerson and any others that you would care?

AH: I would be glad to do that, Virginia. That was a terrific blow naturally but one has to go on and if philosophy is worth anything at all it must come to your rescue in times of tragedy. I was thinking of a line just now, two or three lines really from Ralph Waldo Emerson who in my opinion was one of the wisest Americans, if not the wisest, that we have produced. Emerson lost his little boy who was about five or six and it was interesting to me to see just how a philosopher like Emerson, a great thinker, would take such a death, such a catastrophic death really, and I read his poem called "Threnody" and among other things, in the very end of the poem he goes onto say, "Hearts are dust, hearts loves remain; hearts loves will meet thee again." They are just two or three lines there of a very beautiful poem but those lines I have quoted a good many times to friends of mine who have lost a son or daughter in childhood.

VZ: Well, you have so many nice grandchildren by your lovely daughter and her husband. That must give you a great feeling of joy.

AH: Oh, yes. I am glad to see them growing up and I have to grow along with them naturally "Grow old along with me! The best is yet to be, the last of life, for which the first was made. Our times are in his hand who saith, 'A whole I planned, youth shows but half;

Trust God: See all, nor be afraid!’” Now if we were in the classroom, I would ask you who said that.

VZ: [Robert] Browning [English poet and playwright]?

AH: Browning, you are right, Browning.

End of Interview