

Ruth Jameyson

November 21, 2000

Jeff Charnley,  
interviewer

**Charnley:** Today is November 21, the year 2000. We're in Lansing, Michigan. I am Jeff Charnley, interviewing Miss Ruth Jameyson for the Michigan State University Oral History Project for the sesquicentennial of Michigan State to be commemorated in the year 2005.

Miss Jameyson, you can see that we're tape-recording this session. Do you give us permission to record the interview?

**Jameyson:** Yes.

**Charnley:** I'd like to start first with some questions about your general personal background and educational background. Where were you born and where did you go to school?

**Jameyson:** I was born in Hall County, Nebraska, in the country, went to country school through the eighth grade, Wood River High School for two years, and then I went to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and graduated from high school there.

After that I had two and a half years at Coe College. My father was sick and I went home to help care for him and help on the farm. After a year and a half, I went back to Coe and finished and got my degree.

**Charnley:** So that was in the 1920s?

**Jameyson:** I graduated in 1930. I started in fall of '25, but I was out for about a year and a half.

**Charnley:** What type of farm did you grow up on?

**Jameyson:** Just general farming. Corn, alfalfa, wheat, oats.

**Charnley:** The studies that you did at Coe College, how was it that you got interested in that college?

**Jameyson:** I lived in Cedar Rapids for two years in high school, and so many students went to Coe. My mother's sisters lived there, and I could live with them.

**Charnley:** How was it that you got interested in math?

**Jameyson:** I always like math in grade school, elementary school.

**Charnley:** Did you have a teacher that recognized that ability that you had?

**Jameyson:** I'm not sure about that. It was a challenge, and I just enjoyed solving problems.

**Charnley:** After graduation, did you go into teaching?

**Jameyson:** Well, there wasn't much else for a woman to do in those days, and so I did get a teacher's certificate. But I taught one year out in Nebraska, and I felt I wasn't a good teacher, so I didn't really work hard at trying to spend my life teaching school.

**Charnley:** That was at the beginning of the Depression, wasn't it?

**Jameyson:** Yes. It was 1930, '31, '32, '33.

**Charnley:** How would you describe the job prospects at the time?

**Jameyson:** Pretty poor. Tickled to death to get a job that paid fifteen, twenty dollars a month.

**Charnley:** Where was your job that you did get after graduation?

**Jameyson:** Well, I worked at Coe.

**Charnley:** Right at the college?

**Jameyson:** For three years, but it was answering telephone in one of the dormitories. It began like that. Then I worked for the dean of women for a year. Then they started to conserve money, and I was one of the last appointed, so I was one of the first to go.

**Charnley:** Last hired, first fired.

**Jameyson:** Yes.

**Charnley:** What were your duties when you worked for the dean of women?

**Jameyson:** Well, just regular office duties. I never have had any training in office duties. I couldn't type, couldn't take shorthand, so I studied that myself. By the time I got through with my career, I was pretty good at it.

**Charnley:** Were there any self-taught books that you used?

**Jameyson:** There was a young woman working in the office who helped me a lot, especially on shorthand. Then I rented a typewriter and a book to go with it, and I sat at the typewriter at home and worked and worked and worked. I was so proud when I could type thirteen words a minute.

**Charnley:** Thirteen words a minute. You obviously sped up at after that and learned to type faster than that.

**Jameyson:** Had to.

**Charnley:** How was it that you came to Michigan, Michigan State especially?

**Jameyson:** My mother came from a large family, and she was one of thirteen living children and one of nine girls, so she had eight sisters, and they were all much interested in my mother's children, all of us. We were five. They didn't want my life wasted, so they always showed an interest.

After I got out of college and lost my job at Coe, I had an aunt who was here as director of YWCA. She was a member of Zava [phonetic] Club and knew Dean Conrad, Elizabeth Conrad, through that, and she knew that there was a vacancy in her office. So she called me and asked me if I'd like to come and apply for it. So I got on the bus and came. I didn't get that job, but I worked part of the first year I was here as a graduate assistant and did office work. Got paid thirty-five dollars a month.

**Charnley:** You remember that.

**Jameyson:** Thirty-five dollars a month.

**Charnley:** That was in the mid-thirties?

**Jameyson:** That was in the fall of '33.

**Charnley:** What were your impressions of Lansing when you first came?

**Jameyson:** I thought it was cloudy. [Laughter] But I like Michigan very much.

**Charnley:** Your aunt, did she continue to live in the area?

**Jameyson:** She did for a few years, but then she finally moved on, too, and I just stayed here. I had different kinds of jobs for the first few years. Finally, I started work as a graduate assistant. Then I worked at a bank. Then I came back and worked in the economics department as a full-time employee. Then I left to work at the Department of Conservation for two or three years.

**Charnley:** In Lansing?

**Jameyson:** In Lansing, the State Department. Then there was a vacancy in the president's office, I heard about it, came out and applied for it. I worked for President [Robert S.] Shaw for three years.

**Charnley:** That was from 1938.

**Jameyson:** 1938. August 15, 1938, I started.

**Charnley:** Do you remember anything about the interview?

**Jameyson:** Oh, yes.

**Charnley:** Did he interview you personally?

**Jameyson:** Yes. He interviewed me at his home because he wanted his wife to meet me.

**Charnley:** Were they living in Cowles House?

**Jameyson:** No, no. They lived where Williams Hall and Yakeley Hall and those dormitories are. Used to be Faculty Row, and the president's house was one of the big houses on Faculty Row.

**Charnley:** My daughter is in Williams Hall right now.

**Jameyson:** That's nice.

**Charnley:** So I know right where it is.

**Jameyson:** They had some old buildings along the drive there.

**Charnley:** Right along Grand River?

**Jameyson:** And nothing new. I think Yakeley Hall was there when I started to work. I'm pretty sure it was. But it was the only one.

**Charnley:** How would you describe your abilities when you started with him, in terms of what you had to do, or your duties?

**Jameyson:** Well, I was scared to death, but we got along fine. Mr. Shaw was very understanding, nice. He left me alone for a week or so before he made any demands of me. He was very nice to work for.

**Charnley:** What were your main specific duties for him, if you remember?

**Jameyson:** Oh, opening the mail and going through the mail, taking his dictation, arranging his travel.

**Charnley:** You did that with shorthand, the dictation?

**Jameyson:** Yes.

**Charnley:** Besides his travel, was there anything that--

**Jameyson:** Well, not very much, because he was within a few years of retiring. He wasn't traveling too much. He made trips to Chicago mostly.

**Charnley:** When did you first meet John [A.] Hannah?

**Jameyson:** He was secretary of the board when I started to work. I don't know whether you know the old Administration Building, Linton Hall now. Our offices were upstairs.

**Charnley:** The dean of College of Arts and Letters is there now.

**Jameyson:** Are they?

**Charnley:** Yes. They've restored the board room. It's beautiful.

**Jameyson:** That table in the board room was just beautiful when it was new. Fritz Mueller was the one; it came from Mueller Furniture. I remember his explaining how they made it.

**Charnley:** It's in beautiful shape now, again.

**Jameyson:** I imagine it is. It was good furniture to begin with.

**Charnley:** So were you working with John Hannah at the time he was secretary, too.

**Jameyson:** Well, I knew him real well, because he was in every day. He was doing a lot of work and helping to run the university.

**Charnley:** Did it appear as if he was being groomed to become the president?

**Jameyson:** No, no, not really. I was a good friend of his secretary, Marie Mercer, when he was in the secretary's office. She and I were so pleased when we heard that the board was thinking of appointing him as the president. It was a real thrill for us. We thought it was a great thing for the university.

**Charnley:** Did Marie continue on after he became president?



**Jameyson:** Yes, but she stayed in the secretary's office, and I stayed in the president's office.

**Charnley:** Did you have to interview for that job, too, or more or less you just stayed on?

**Jameyson:** Oh, no, just stayed there.

**Charnley:** What were the circumstances when President Shaw left? Was it a normal retirement or did he anticipate it, or were there health issues involved?

**Jameyson:** It was his desire. He was seventy, and he just decided that the end of June of '41 he would be retired.

**Charnley:** Were you involved at all in the process for looking for a new president?

**Jameyson:** No.

**Charnley:** How did you hear about that?

**Jameyson:** They didn't really look for a new president; they already had one. I think the board members were completely sold on the idea of appointing Mr. Hannah as president. I have no recollection of their interviewing or considering anybody else. If they did, I didn't know about it.

**Charnley:** In that first year, obviously, the war came soon after he took over. What do you recall of that first year?

**Jameyson:** I know it was terribly, terribly busy. He was a hard worker and came to work early, very well organized.

**Charnley:** About what time was he usually in the office?

**Jameyson:** I came in at eight o'clock, and he was usually there.

**Charnley:** So he was there early.

**Jameyson:** He was there early. The mail came in right away, and I would open it and sort it, and he would usually dictate then and take care of the mail promptly.

**Charnley:** What were some of your other duties in that early time?

**Jameyson:** Well, I worked alone in the office, so I did everything that needed to be done, answering the telephone, making appointments.

**Charnley:** You controlled his calendar, or kept track of it, anyway?

**Jameyson:** Had to. Of course, there were always several meetings scheduled during the week, and I have to keep track of them and notify people of meetings.

**Charnley:** That first year, with the war coming, how would you describe the mood on campus at that time?

**Jameyson:** Well, I don't know how to answer that.

**Charnley:** Let me rephrase it. How did the students react, let's say, to the news about the war?

**Jameyson:** The students were apprehensive, to say the least, especially the men. Mr. Hannah had, I know, he had a meeting of all the men students at the auditorium. A lot of them used to, in those days, would come in and talk to him, the students who were being drafted and applying for commissions and so forth.

**Charnley:** So he counseled individual students?

**Jameyson:** Oh, yes, a lot of them.

**Charnley:** Was the university involved that you were aware of, or how was he involved in the early years of the war?

**Jameyson:** Well, you know, we had the enlisted reserve on the campus and organized classes, special classes for them. They had classes in foreign languages. They taught them the speaking language instead of the written language. They did a lot of work with the students who came, too, part of their Army training.

I remember Captain Payne [phonetic] of the Air Force, that's where he first came to Michigan State. Then when the war was over, he came and was head of the Department of Farm Crops. I think it was Farm Crops in the College of Agriculture. He was then captain of some unit in the Air Force that was stationed on the campus. There were a lot of men. They were marching through the campus and along the roads.

**Charnley:** Was the process sped up educationally, or did they have to have a special curriculum?

**Jameyson:** Yes, they had a special curriculum.

**Charnley:** How would you describe Dr. Hannah's work during the war, just in general? You mentioned it was busy and he worked hard and that sort of thing.

**Jameyson:** That's so long ago, it's hard to remember things like that.

**Charnley:** That's true. I know it's kind of a general question. Did he travel much during the war, or was he pretty much close to campus?

**Jameyson:** He was pretty close to campus, but he did some traveling.

**Charnley:** Did your job change at all during that time?

**Jameyson:** No, I don't think so. Just continued with regular, routine office work.

**Charnley:** In those years, did you have any contact with students in those early years?

**Jameyson:** Quite a few, yes. I don't remember when he started, but he had a--what did they call it? I think that was after the war, though, that they started having those dinners once a term, I think, with student leaders, called Spartan Roundtable. The presidents of the different student organizations were included in the guest list, and they were supposed to come and feel free to discuss anything they wanted to with no holds. They were always interesting to arrange, and there were a lot of student contacts then.

**Charnley:** So you were involved with sending out the invitations.

**Jameyson:** And arranging for the meetings.

**Charnley:** Where did they usually have those?

**Jameyson:** At the Union. Then they had place cards, seating arrangements and place cards. So it was always a big job to get that ready.

**Charnley:** It was a formal dinner?

**Jameyson:** It was a served dinner.

**Charnley:** Any other contacts that you had with students?

**Jameyson:** Every term, they had a dinner honoring the all-A students. Back in those days, we took care of that, too. It always impressed me that some of those all-A students, the reason they couldn't come to dinner is because they had to study for an exam and didn't have time to come to a dinner.

**Charnley:** How would you describe the campus at that time?

**Jameyson:** Well, it was mostly the north campus, Circle Drive, within the Circle Drive. Always extremely friendly. Then, until the war, there was no smoking on the campus. It used to be that anybody caught smoking would run the risk of being taken to the Red Cedar River by students. [Laughter]

**Charnley:** But the war changed that with the veterans?

**Jameyson:** The war changed that. The veterans came back and a lot of things changed after that.

**Charnley:** I'd heard about the green beanies. That was another tradition that went out with the returning veterans.

**Jameyson:** That went out with the return of the veterans. Another one that went out was that they came back adult men, and the alcohol rules changed on the campus. It used to be that anybody caught drinking alcohol was automatically dismissed. They never put anybody out of school for drinking alcohol without his having a conference with the president, so we used to see those kids. I don't know how many I would see come in, just scared to death because they were caught drinking, knowing that they were going to be suspended. He'd talk to them and was always real nice to them. When they went out, they'd say, "Thank you, Dr. Hannah." [Laughter] I always thought, well, "Thanks for putting me out of school."

**Charnley:** The students were respectful to him.

**Jameyson:** I think it just showed that he cared for the students and it came through, even to the ones in trouble.

**Charnley:** After the war, what changes did you see or you experience with larger numbers of students?

**Jameyson:** Larger numbers, huge numbers of students. They had students living in Jennison Fieldhouse. You probably know that. Then they had these Quonsets set up. I don't know, they had them in the Union Building. They were putting up the barracks apartments. Some of them, of course, weren't ready. But they managed to find a place for the young men to sleep, and they got by until the buildings were ready. I don't know.

**Charnley:** Were the numbers of women increasing after the war, too, or had they stayed relatively stable?

**Jameyson:** Well, I'm not sure about that. I didn't see the figures. I think it was fairly stable.

**Charnley:** Some of the people that President Hannah worked with, the provost--was it called the provost at that time?

**Jameyson:** Not at that time.

**Charnley:** What was the title of the chief academic officer or did the president take a direct role?

**Jameyson:** They had dean of academic affairs or something like that.

**Charnley:** Who were some of those people? Do you remember any of them or some of his advisors that he worked with closely?

**Jameyson:** He worked closely with all of the deans, and I think it was every Tuesday morning at nine o'clock, they called themselves the Administrative Group, would meet over in our office. If anybody was late, they didn't wait for them. The meeting started at nine o'clock, no matter what. But they all worked together in Administrative Group, and I think he got a lot of advice from the various deans and thought a lot of them. Some of them were very good.

**Charnley:** Did you take minutes at those meetings, or were they more or less just give and take?

**Jameyson:** No, I didn't take minutes. I think somebody served as secretary, but I didn't.

**Charnley:** But that was a key group where he sounded out people?

**Jameyson:** Yes. And I think they brought up questions, they brought plans for future, and they felt free to discuss anything they wanted to discuss.

**Charnley:** Who were some of those important deans that stood out?

**Jameyson:** Dean Emmons was Liberal Arts, and Dean Anthony was dean of the College of Agriculture. My goodness.

**Charnley:** Deans that now have buildings named after them.

**Jameyson:** And the deans of veterinary medicine. Dean Bryan [phonetic] was dean for several years, died of cancer while he was still dean.

**Charnley:** What do you remember about some of the expansion that was going on, in terms of the actual building and that sort of thing?

**Jameyson:** They've really worked on that a lot. In the first place, I think Mr. Hannah had a lot of foresight in land purchases around the campus, because when I first started to work, there wasn't too much land south of the campus. By the time he left, why, the farms extended, the property extended to Jolly Road. I think right now it's even a little farther. But he was always buying up what little private property might be left within a section that the university was buying.

They did it in a way not to antagonize people or the present owners. You might be familiar with Mr. Bennett and the Bennett property. I know they finally bought the Bennett farm. Mr. Bennett was a son who needed--his parents were concerned about him. He was an adult, but they made an agreement with the parents that



he could live there in the house on the farm as long as he wanted to. And he did, until he died. They had arrangements like that with other people who could live in their homes until they no longer needed them, but the property, at their death, would belong to Michigan State.

**Charnley:** So many of the farms were in private hands.

**Jameyson:** They all were, I think. That was a lot of foresight. I don't know what we would have done without the land being there. Then they had this huge program of the self-liquidating debts on the dormitories.

**Charnley:** Did you handle that paperwork or the reports?

**Jameyson:** No. I didn't do it, I just did the manual part of it, not the thinking part. See, back in those days, we didn't have copy machines. We didn't have word processors. The only way to make a copy was to make a bunch of carbons.

**Charnley:** Carbon copies, yes. Or retype it.

**Jameyson:** Or retype it. If you sent a copy of something to somebody, you made a copy by the typewriter. You sat there and copied it.

**Charnley:** Were there any things that came up in the performance of your duties that really made things easier for you? Technological innovations?

**Jameyson:** Well, there weren't very many during my career. The machines were just beginning to be used, and we finally had one that we could use. One of my jobs was to prepare the board agenda, which no longer is done by the

president's office, I think. I'm not sure about that. But sometimes it would be fifty pages long, in single type. We did finally have a machine where I could prepare the agenda and save the sheets, and then after the board meeting, the action of the board could be inserted and the same sheets used to run off copies of the minutes, which was quite an improvement, I think.

**Charnley:** Was that like a mimeograph?

**Jameyson:** Something like that.

**Charnley:** How often did the board meet?

**Jameyson:** Once a month, except during the summer, they had one month when they didn't meet. That's when those of us involved would take vacations.

**Charnley:** Was that usually in July or August?

**Jameyson:** Usually August, yes.

**Charnley:** Did you ultimately have any assistants to help that worked with you?

**Jameyson:** Well, yes, finally. We made a little office out in the hallway, and she would come in and do the dictation and type most of the typing. We had the telephone arranged so that either she or I could answer.

**Charnley:** That was in Linton Hall?

**Jameyson:** Yes.

**Charnley:** I don't know if the arrangement is similar to what it was then. I think the office is, obviously, still there.

What was your title over the years, or how did that change?

**Jameyson:** It was secretary to the president until, oh, I don't know when it was. It must have been about 1960 or so when--

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

**Charnley:** When the tape ended, we were talking about the titles that you had. Initially, it was secretary to the president.

**Jameyson:** Then it must have been about 1960 it was administrative assistant.

**Charnley:** Did your duties change at all during that time?

**Jameyson:** Yes, quite a bit, and I was given an office. I wasn't particularly happy about it, really, but I'm sure it was made with good intentions. I still did quite a lot of the same work, especially for the board and the board minutes and the board agenda. Not the minutes.

Mr. Hannah proposed to me one day that he'd make me assistant to the president. He said, "You think about it."

So I told him the next morning, I said, "Well, I'll do whatever you want me to do." I said, "There's one thing. Mr. Dennison is assistant to the president, and he wouldn't like it at all if I had the same title he did." So he made me administrative assistant. I should have kept my mouth shut. [Laughter]

**Charnley:** Were you involved at all in the Constitutional Convention?

**Jameyson:** The girl who worked with me and I did quite a lot of typing for them sometimes if Mr. Hannah was in a hurry for something down there. He'd come in at eight o'clock in the morning and hand me a bunch of papers like that and said, "Do you think you could have copies of this by the time I have to leave at nine?"

I said, "Well, we'll do the best we can." So we'd parcel it out, and we never failed him.

**Charnley:** So just within one hour you had that done?

**Jameyson:** Well, I'd take a few pages and somebody else would take a few pages and we'd get it done. We called on the other offices to help out with things like that. But that didn't happen very often. Just two or three times in my whole career, I think.

**Charnley:** Did you have more contact or less contact with students after you had this change of title?

**Jameyson:** Oh, probably, less.

**Charnley:** What would you say would be your most important thing that you were working on when you were administrative assistant?

**Jameyson:** I can't think of a thing.

**Charnley:** Other than the board.

**Jameyson:** Of course I'd been doing that before. I don't think there was anything.

**Charnley:** Did that part of the job increase, do you think, the board taking more of an active role or was it more work for you at the time?

**Jameyson:** No, no, just about the same, really.

**Charnley:** Did you travel at all with President Hannah?

**Jameyson:** No, no. I don't think I did. The only time was when the board would meet someplace else, and Marie Mercer and I would both go to the board meetings. We met down at Gull Lake a couple times. We met up in the Upper Peninsula once.

**Charnley:** Where was that that you met?

**Jameyson:** We were up at Sault, I know, Sault Ste. Marie.

**Charnley:** They had an official meeting up there?

**Jameyson:** Yes, and then they had one over at the property that the university owned farther west. What was the name?

**Charnley:** Escanaba? Wasn't that far west?

**Jameyson:** It was almost that far west, but north of that. Oh, if I had a map, I could tell you. It's been a long time since I've been to the Upper Peninsula, too. [Tape recorder turned off.]

**Jameyson:** ...before the Oakland University was a separate school.

**Charnley:** What was the situation there? How was it that we got involved in that?

**Jameyson:** That was Mr. Hannah's great friendship with Sarah van Hoosen-Jones [phonetic]. No, no. Sarah van Hoosen-Jones left her property to Michigan State, too. But this was Matilda Wilson. She was the one who made arrangements to leave their property to Michigan State University.

**Charnley:** Did she live at Meadowbrook?

**Jameyson:** She lived at Meadowbrook, yes.

**Charnley:** Several people have talked about Dr. Hannah's personal approach to either fund-raising or bequests and that sort of thing. Were you involved in that?

**Jameyson:** Not in any way except the letters and the telephone calls and things like that. But he served on so many boards and learned to know so many people, and that's where they got the Kresge Foundation interested, because he served on the--Stanley Kresge was a--was it Kresge Foundation or some other board, and learned to know Mr. Hannah.

Our people, I know Dean Milder was involved, and some other folks, they made three proposals to the Kresge Foundation for a grant, and they chose the art museum. And so that's why.

**Charnley:** So that was built.

**Jameyson:** So that was built and started out as on a grant from the Kresge Foundation.

Then he was great friends with the Kellogg Foundation people. Dr.--was his name Morris, at the Kellogg Foundation? Then later on, one of our men who used to be in charge of 4-H on the campus, Russ [Russell G.] Mawby, was president of Kellogg Foundation. They've always been very generous.

**Charnley:** He was on 4-H?

**Jameyson:** He was in charge of 4-H in College of Agriculture.

**Charnley:** Before he became--

**Jameyson:** He was a student graduated from here. I remember when he was a student. He was an outstanding student, and he's an outstanding man now.

**Charnley:** I need to interview him. I had planned to.

Are there any other things that you can think about that were Dr. Hannah's personal style?

**Jameyson:** He really made an impression on a lot of people with his intelligence and sincerity. He made contacts that were very valuable to Michigan State.

**Charnley:** Within state government?

**Jameyson:** And like the Kellogg Foundation, the Kresge Foundation. He served on quite a few boards. I used to keep a card file of his appointments to different groups and how long he served, but I turned all that over to the archives when I left. So that ought to be there.

**Charnley:** So I can look at it there.

**Jameyson:** I had it all on three-by-five cards. That was the way we filed in those days. But I couldn't keep track of it unless I could go quickly to a file like that and see when it was he started to work on a board and how long he had been a member of the board's group. But he made very valuable contacts that way that benefitted Michigan State.

**Charnley:** What were some of the areas that you found that Dr. Hannah had, some of the tough issues that you were aware of that he had to face? You mentioned before having to deal with students and when they had trouble with kicking them out for drinking and that sort of thing. Did he handle disciplinary things personally?

**Jameyson:** No, they came to him last, and he said that he thought that they shouldn't be suspended without his having a chance to talk to them. But I think students felt free to come and see him, and so he did have a lot of students coming in. I remember when Jim Hoffa came in to meet him. He was a very well-behaved young man.

**Charnley:** The younger?

**Jameyson:** The younger, yes. He's the president of his father's organization now, though.



**Charnley:** That's right. He was a student here?

**Jameyson:** He was a student, yes. Nothing demanding about him at all. He was a rather pleasant young man.

Sat down and picked up a magazine and read it until Mr. Hannah was free and could see him.

**Charnley:** Were there any other areas that you know that were tough issues at that time that he had to deal with that you were involved in?

**Jameyson:** He started out interested in athletics, you know. One of the first things he did was to change our football program, the University of Michigan, from always playing at Ann Arbor to a home and home basis. That was hard to do. It really was. He made all sorts of offers, and finally they came through and agreed to home and home bases. They used to have Michigan State the first game of the season because they could fill the stadium with Michigan State there.

**Charnley:** The stadium at Michigan?

**Jameyson:** The stadium at Michigan. Well, they always played at Michigan. The first year I was working, it was always at Michigan.

**Charnley:** Were you involved in athletics? Did you go to any games?

**Jameyson:** I started to go to the games and I got interested in it, too. I started to go to the football games and the basketball games.

**Charnley:** You enjoyed both?

**Jameyson:** Oh, yes, still do. I have a record of having had season tickets for sixty-two years.

**Charnley:** Sixty-two years, that must be a record here.

**Jameyson:** Charlie Bachman [phonetic] was the coach. I always went to the games.

**Charnley:** He was the coach before "Biggie" [Clarence L.] Munn?

**Jameyson:** Yes. I didn't know any of the coaches. Charlie Bachman was the first coach I remember.

**Charnley:** But you met the other coaches after?

**Jameyson:** Oh, yes.

**Charnley:** You were the gatekeeper. What would you say was President Hannah's view on sports and how important it was? Was he competitive?

**Jameyson:** Oh, yes. He wasn't active in sports himself. He traveled with the team a lot, learned to know the players. I think they had a lot of respect for him.

**Charnley:** Both football and basketball, those were important in those years.

**Jameyson:** And hockey, too. He was interested in hockey, but then we didn't have facilities until much later for the hockey games.

**Charnley:** Where did they play?

**Jameyson:** They played in Demonstration Hall. They had an ice rink in there. There were so many columns and things, that it was awfully hard to watch a hockey game.

**Charnley:** Who was the early coach then? Was that Emil Bissoni [phonetic] or was that before Emil?

**Jameyson:** No. Emil Bissoni followed the one who was--who was coach? I remember when we hired Emil Bissoni and thought we were getting a great coach. And we did, too. But who preceded him? I don't remember that.

**Charnley:** I can look that up. Did you travel at all with the team?

**Jameyson:** Oh, no.

**Charnley:** It was home games that you went to.

**Jameyson:** I did go to quite a few of the out-of-town games, but that was because Dorothy Miller was "Biggie" Munn's secretary and a friend of mine, and we'd go to the game and he'd give us tickets to the out-of-town games. That was a lot of fun. No, I didn't have anything to do with the team.

**Charnley:** Did you go to any of when they went to Rose Bowl or any of the post-season?

**Jameyson:** Yes, I went to two Rose Bowls.

**Charnley:** What years were those?

**Jameyson:** '54 and '56.

**Charnley:** Was that your first time to the West Coast?

**Jameyson:** No, but it was my first time to a Rose Bowl game. No, I had been out to California once before, I guess, before the '54 game.

**Charnley:** Would you say that the students changed during the course that you saw the students in the years you were associated with Michigan State?

**Jameyson:** Not that much. I was advisor to Tower Guard for a few years and learned to know some of the girls. Tower Guard now has both men and women in it.

**Charnley:** Later in his career when Dr. Hannah was leaving, was it a surprise to you that he left when he did, or not?

**Jameyson:** Not completely. In a way I was surprised, because I didn't think he'd ever leave. But I wasn't completely surprised either, because he was very much interested in the work they were doing with the USAID.

**Charnley:** How did he get interested in that initially?

**Jameyson:** I don't know whether you'd remember the old Marshall Plan under Harry Truman.

**Charnley:** Well, I don't remember it personally. I was born in 1950.

**Jameyson:** Before your time.

**Charnley:** Right about the time it was going on.

**Jameyson:** Mr. Hannah was president of the Association of Land Grant Colleges and State Universities. As president of that group, he had written a letter to President Truman proposing or suggesting how land-grant colleges could help in instituting the Marshall Plan and how their staffs were well trained for work like that. I remember the letter real well. It was a rather long letter, and he signed it as president of the Association of Land Grant Colleges and State Universities. That USAID program grew out of that. So he was interested in that from the beginning.

**Charnley:** That also stimulated his own personal experience or personal interest in international programs and study on campus.

**Jameyson:** Yes, I think so. Then, of course, he started the overseas programs that we had in Vietnam for one place and Nigeria, Brazil, and those programs were all terribly interesting and, I think, for the most part very well done.

**Charnley:** Did he travel to those countries to look at the programs that were being set up or that were set up?

**Jameyson:** Yes, he did.

**Charnley:** So he was involved in that planning. I was aware more of some of the Vietnam, having spoken with Dean Smuckler. So I knew about that a little bit more.

**Jameyson:** Oh, yes, he would know a lot more about that than I do. But I remember the work there.

**Charnley:** But the Nigeria and Brazil programs, I've got to find out definitely more about them.

**Jameyson:** The Brazil program was very, very successful. The Nigerian program was, too, until Nigeria went to war. Of course, I don't think Michigan State had anything to do with that.

**Charnley:** But they were caught up in the civil war.

**Jameyson:** And the buildings that they were at in Suka [phonetic] were ruined, were bombed and ruined. I think maybe they've rebuilt them now. They had a very colorful man come from Nigeria to begin with. As I remember it, he stopped to see Mr. Hannah one day on a Sunday. Azikiwi was his name. He'd been educated in England, and he was interested. He knew something about the land-grant philosophy and thought that something like that might be useful to the people in Nigeria.

**Charnley:** The retirement when Dr. Hannah left, you'd been here for about thirty-one years?

**Jameyson:** Thirty-one years. I decided that it was too late for me to get used to working for somebody else. It was a good idea just to get out, and so that's what I did. I was able to do it financially. I didn't have much, but I had enough to take care of myself.

**Charnley:** You retired here in Lansing?

**Jameyson:** Yes.

**Charnley:** And you've stayed here. What activities have you been involved in since your retirement?

**Jameyson:** For a couple of years I didn't do much of anything except take other people to the doctor or something like that, wait on some elderly folks. I wasn't that elderly then. Then after a couple of years I started to work as a volunteer at Sparrow [phonetic] Hospital and for the Red Cross. Then our retirees association used to help other retirees a lot with their health claim forms. Two or three of us helped with that. That was real interesting. I learned a lot, too. Then the federal government passed a law that the doctors had to submit the claims directly. So since then, we haven't had anything to do with it.

**Charnley:** With the paperwork of it. So you helped out with the paperwork.

**Jameyson:** But a lot of the paperwork was so bad and so heavy that a lot of retirees just didn't bother with it, just paid their own medical bills. I helped Malcolm Trout and Mrs. Trout. I don't know whether you know them or not.

**Charnley:** Yes. Food science. Yes, I just know of him.

**Jameyson:** Malcolm Trout was the one who developed the homogenizing of milk and was known internationally. She was a piano teacher, college graduate. They came from Maine here, I think. He had diabetes and had one foot amputated, and then I think they finally amputated the second foot. So he had a lot of health claim forms. I went out to help her. It was awfully hard for me to go through the material and see what was there, but she must have had a stack of papers about that high.

**Charnley:** Almost three feet.

**Jameyson:** Oh, goodness. I said to her, “Well, would you mind if I take these home and sort them out and see what I can do with them?” And so I did. I worked here, hard on them. You know, we got so much money back, she couldn’t believe it, claims that she had never submitted. They just don’t know how to do it. So it works much better now because the doctors have to submit it.

**Charnley:** Under Medicare and Medicaid.

**Jameyson:** And Medicare and then the supplementary insurance, which the university provides for us.

**Charnley:** Would you talk a little bit about that in terms of the benefits as a staff member? I haven’t interviewed very many staff members. During your career, was there any change in terms of benefits, pay, that sort of thing?

**Jameyson:** Yes, when I first started to work, they had a retirement plan which was noncontributory. It amounted to, I think, at that time it was 3,000 dollars a year when you retired. Then Mr. [Phillip J.] May was treasurer and controller, and they started the TIA-CREF program. Part of the benefit of that was that a staff member could earn retirement here, and then if he decided to take a job at another college or university, he would take his benefits with him. So we had an option. I had an option of joining the TIA-CREF program or not, or staying with the old. I asked Mr. May, “What should I do?”

He said, “I think you should join. It would be beneficial to you.” And it certainly has been wonderful advice, because when I first retired, I would get, I don’t know, 200 dollars a month from them, which seemed good to me. But now it’s up to 600 dollars a month, a little more than that, I think. The value of it has just increased that much.



**Charnley:** I know Dr. [Clifton R.] Wharton [Jr.] was the chair, so there is an MSU connection with that. He seemed to be very pleased when I interviewed him, because everywhere he'd go, people were very pleased with what he had done or what had happened under his tenure at TIA-CREF.

**Jameyson:** Well, that's right.

**Charnley:** Benefitting a lot of people. Do you remember when that change occurred, approximately, when they made that switch in the retirement?

**Jameyson:** I believe it was 1955. Also, in the early years, people that were paid from federal or state funds were not eligible for Social Security, so I didn't have a large investment in that either.

**Charnley:** How about health care at that time? Health insurance.

**Jameyson:** We didn't have any.

**Charnley:** The university didn't provide any at that time?

**Jameyson:** Luckily, I didn't need any. You go to the doctor, you pay your bill.

**Charnley:** The simplest form.

**Jameyson:** But nowadays, I don't know how many million a year they invest in health care. I know it's terrific.

**Charnley:** It's a major commitment, I know. Did you continue volunteering at Sparrow? Was it at Sparrow?

**Jameyson:** Yes. I was there thirteen years and enjoyed it, too.

**Charnley:** Then you were also involved with the retirees, a formal group of retirees?

**Jameyson:** Yes, we have a retirees association and meet once a month during the school year. I worked in the retirees office for several years, once a week, for a half a day.

**Charnley:** You must have known everyone.

**Jameyson:** I used to know everyone, but not anymore. That's where I got interested in learning something about a computer, was in the retirees office, because we had one and it was a big puzzle to me.

**Charnley:** That must have seemed like quite a change.

**Jameyson:** Oh, from the old typewriter.

**Charnley:** I remember making corrections on a carbon. It was always terrible. The nice thing about the computer is that.

**Jameyson:** Make your corrections before you run the copy off.

**Charnley:** So you have e-mail now?

**Jameyson:** I have e-mail now.

**Charnley:** I suspect you type faster than thirteen words a minute.

**Jameyson:** Yes, I hope I do. But I've slowed down a lot, though, from what I used to be able to do.

**Charnley:** Did you have any other contacts with any of the other presidents like [Walter] Adams or the Whartons or anything like that?

**Jameyson:** Well, I met them. I met [John A.] DiBiaggio, too. They were all very--

**Charnley:** Were you involved with Dr. Hannah any, later on in his retirement?

**Jameyson:** No, not very much, except I always heard from him and the family. I still hear from his children at Christmastime.

**Charnley:** I talked with his grandson, who's interviewing people, Patrick.

**Jameyson:** Oh, did you talk with Patrick?

**Charnley:** I did talk with Patrick.

**Jameyson:** He was going to come and see me last year, but he never did. He plays in the band, doesn't he?

**Charnley:** Yes, yes. I know he is a musician. We talked a little bit about tape recorders and taping. He was interviewing many people that new Dr. Hannah, so when I next see him, I'll tell him to come and see you.

**Jameyson:** You tell him that. He called me, and I think what I should have done was to say, "Come out right now." And I didn't, but I could have, would have liked to have seen him.

**Charnley:** Well, I'll mention. I've got his phone number. I'll give him a call and tell him.

**Jameyson:** You tell him I'd like to see him before he graduates.

**Charnley:** In looking back at your career at Michigan State, did you anticipate when you came--

[Begin Tape 2, Side 1]

**Charnley:** This is tape two. When tape one ended, we were talking about Ms. Jameyson's career at Michigan State. I'll re-ask that same question.

When you first came, did you anticipate that you would be here as a lifelong career at Michigan State?

**Jameyson:** No, but I didn't anticipate that I wouldn't be either. I felt secure. I thought I had a job as long as I wanted it.

**Charnley:** One of the things people talk about when they think about Michigan State in the twentieth century is, of course, John Hannah and how much he represented the university. Could you tell us a little bit about your impressions of Dr. Hannah in maybe a concluding type of way, if you can?

**Jameyson:** I was extremely loyal. He was a very intelligent man. He could handle all sorts of things, one after another, without getting them confused. He was always ahead of his time. He had a great ability to see what might be coming in the future, because we were ready for the soldiers when they came back from war. I remember asking one day, something happened and I said, "How in the world did you know that that was going to happen?" He says, "Well, I wasn't born yesterday." And then he had a great ability to hire competent people to work with him.

**Charnley:** What do you think was the source of his devotion to the university? Any ideas? You worked with him so closely.

**Jameyson:** Well, I just always thought that he just loved the university, and anything he could do for its success he would do.

**Charnley:** In looking back at your entire career, do you remember anything that maybe stands out as something maybe that's most important that you can remember about your work experience at Michigan State College, first? Were you here as Michigan Agricultural College?

**Jameyson:** No. Just MSC.

**Charnley:** MSC and then MSU.

**Jameyson:** MSC and then MSU. Well, I think when we were admitted to the Big Ten was really a big thrill for all of us. He went about that in his organized way, and if something didn't work out, he always had another way that he could approach it. We finally got into the Big Ten. "Biggie" Munn was coach. They had their meeting in Chicago, and got in, a vote of five to four. I don't know why, but we've always known that Purdue University was the deciding vote. Mr. Hannah and the president of Purdue were great friends, which may have helped.

But that was really thrilling, because there's so many advantages besides athletics in belonging to the Big Ten. They had their presidents group that would meet regularly and work on academic programs and things like that and not necessarily athletics.

**Charnley:** How did John Hannah work in that among his peers in the Big Ten?

**Jameyson:** He worked very well. He was always one of the leaders. He was president of that. He was president of the Association of American Universities. He was president of the Association of Land Grant Colleges and State Universities. So wherever he worked, he was always outstanding, I think.

**Charnley:** I want to thank you on behalf of the project, and I appreciate your insights and the time that we spent.

**Jameyson:** You are certainly welcome.

**Charnley:** Thank you.

**Jameyson:** I wish my memory were better.

**Charnley:** It's very good.

[End of interview]

## Index

Adams, Walter 35  
 Alcohol regulations 14  
 Anthony, \_\_\_\_\_ 16  
 Association of American Universities 38  
 Association of Land Grant Colleges and State Universities 29, 39  
  
 Bachman, Charlie 26  
 Bennett, \_\_\_\_\_ 16  
 Big Ten 38  
 Bissoni, Emil 27  
 Bryan, \_\_\_\_\_ 16  
  
 Circle Drive 13  
 Constitutional Convention 20  
  
 Demonstration Hall 27  
 Dennison, \_\_\_\_\_ 20  
 DiBiaggio, John A. 36  
  
 Emmons, \_\_\_\_\_ 16  
  
 Green beanies 14  
  
 Hannah, John A. 7-12, 14-16, 19, 20, 22, 24-26, 28-30, 36-38  
 Hoffa, Jim, Jr. 24  
  
 Jennison Fieldhouse 14  
  
 Kellogg Foundation 23, 24  
 Kresge Foundation 22, 24  
 Kresge, Stanley 22  
  
 Linton Hall 7, 19  
  
 Marshall Plan 29  
 Mawby, Russell G. 23  
 May, Phillip J. 33  
 Mercer, Marie 8, 21  
 Michigan State University  
   Alcohol regulations 14  
   Benefits 33, 34  
   Big Ten 38  
   Board of Trustees 18, 21  
   Campus expansion 16  
   International programs 30  
   Retirement benefits 33  
   Smoking regulations 13

Milder, \_\_\_\_\_ 23  
Miller, Dorothy 27  
Munn, Clarence L. "Biggie" 26, 27, 38

Payne, Captain 11  
Purdue University 38

Shaw, Robert S. 5-7, 9  
Smoking regulations 13  
Spartan Roundtable 12, 13

Tower Guard 28  
Trout, Malcolm 32  
Trout, Mrs. Malcolm 32  
Truman, Harry S. 29

Union 13  
University of Michigan 25  
USAID 29

Van Hoosen-Jones, Sarah 22

Wharton, Clifton R., Jr. 33  
Wilson, Matilda 22  
World War II 10, 11

Yakeley Hall 6