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Lloyd-Ricks-Watson Project

Oral History

Dr. Hunter Andrews

May 14, 2012

Interviewer: Dr. Mike Ballard

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**(Tape Side One, 000)**

Dr. Ballard: Oral history interview; Lloyd-Ricks-Watson Project interview with Hunter Andrews who lives in University Estates, Starkville, Mississippi. The date of the interview is May 14, 2012; approximate time of the interview is 1:30 p.m. in Dr. Hunter Andrews' home. The interviewer is Mike Ballard. Okay, today we're interviewing Dr. Hunter Andrews as part of the Lloyd-Ricks-Watson oral history series. We're at his home, 1188 Cambridge right here in Starkville, and the time is about 1:25 p.m., May 14, 2012. And we just want to thank you for participating, I know Vance will be appreciative, and we've done over 30 of these already...

Dr. Andrews: Have you?

Dr. Ballard: ...And have some more, a few more to go, but we're getting close to getting everybody...of course, he keeps thinking of other people that he wants us to talk to; you know how he is. But anyway, we just have one general question, really; what's your relationship to the building, when did you come to work there, and what kind of time frame were you there? Just go there first and then we'll move on from there...

Dr. Andrews: Well, I told that lady I actually did not work in Lloyd-Ricks. The boss I had was Dr. Bob Eckhardt, the USDA corn breeder, and occasionally I was on, I guess that's the second floor of Lloyd-Ricks, and (I was) in and out briefly, counting

packages of corn for our planting out on the North Farm. As I grew up we hardly ever called that building Lloyd-Ricks, it was the Experiment Station...

Dr. Ballard: Right.

Dr. Andrews: ...Totally...

Dr. Ballard: That's right, yeah.

Dr. Andrews: ...And you go through the corridor and the other end was home ec and I hardly ever went there so I don't know what else was down there.

Dr. Ballard: (*laughs*)

Dr. Andrews: But you know early, early on as this college developed, and then the University, all of the Agronomy sections; the Plant Science, and Plant Breeding, and Soils on the bottom floor; I remember there was the Soils Laboratory; and I think the second floor was where (I can't remember whether it was second or third floor) where Dr. Eckhardt and what floor was he, director of the Experiment Station and the Dean of the College was there, and the second floor was the accounting section.

Dr. Ballard: Mm-hm.

Dr. Andrews: I didn't have any responsibility of work. I worked out on the North Farm with Dr. Eckhardt's program and occasionally when that work would terminate I worked down in the Soils Lab, on the bottom floor with Dr. Coward...

Dr. Ballard: Okay.

Dr. Andrews: ...For, you know, a very brief time, maybe a summertime job. I had a very good friend, Sammy Reynolds, (who) came over from Atlanta, and Sammy would stay with (his grandfather). Sammy worked directly in the station with his granddad, and I think his grandfather tested soil samples if I'm not mistaken. Golly, I wish I could remember his name, but, I don't. So, you know, the pasture management people were in there, the soil testing people, the crops people; who else was

there? I think Dairy Science; I think they were across the street in their facility. But I remember the accounting office, the Director of the Experiment Station when I got there was Mr. Leveck.

Dr. Ballard: Yeah, Henry Leveck.

Dr. Andrews: Yeah, Henry Leveck. And then after he either retired or passed on, there were two or three people that went in; Jim Anderson was one, and I think Bill Fox though was with the University side of the thing, Dean of the College instead of Director of the Experiment Station. So, as you know, all of that changed pretty rapidly once they got moving and the money got a little more freely with the legislature.

Dr. Ballard: Yeah.

Dr. Andrews: It was a *landmark* building. I think most everyone knew Lloyd-Ricks. I searched that book and I cannot find when that building was named Lloyd-Ricks; maybe somebody told you that. I came across both names as...

Dr. Ballard: I don't know if it was named when it was... Now the main part of the building was built in 1936...

Dr. Andrews: Yeah.

Dr. Ballard: ...And I don't know if they named it then, or if they waited a while because then the Extension Building was there and MAFES was put behind it...

Dr. Andrews: Yeah.

Dr. Ballard: ...In a separate building. So I'm not sure what the date is. I always assumed...

Dr. Andrews: His book, and I got this from another friend of mine, and it doesn't zero in. There are a lot of people's names in that, and I came across the name both Lloyd and Ricks, but it identified them in this book as staff members as far as I can remember or read in here, primarily in the Soils Department. Or maybe they were in the administration part, and maybe they didn't stay long. When I went out there

I was a senior in high school and worked that year and then worked for Dr. Eckhardt for a couple of years after I started college, and that was about my experience with Lloyd-Ricks.

Dr. Ballard: Yeah.

Dr. Andrews: In the old Experiment Station that was it. Everybody knew it as the Experiment Station down in the point in that triangle down there.

Dr. Ballard: Yeah, right.

Dr. Andrews: And you know, I could identify with Lloyd-Ricks, but primarily I identified with the Agricultural Experiment Station.

Dr. Ballard: Well, you can talk about that building too since you were... I mean, they are connected up, you know.

Dr. Andrews: Yeah. Well, of course, I'm a Seed Technology...

Dr. Ballard: Right.

Dr. Andrews: ...Specialist, and that came about in the early 50s, I think, I believe it was...

Dr. Ballard: I think that's right.

Dr. Andrews: ...Sometime, I don't know exactly the dates of that, but, I got into that program and stayed there until I retired in 1995.

Dr. Ballard: So you were still in the... you didn't move to Bost?

Dr. Andrews: No, no, no. I didn't have any association with Extension.

Dr. Ballard: At all, okay.

Dr. Andrews: It was the Agronomy until Dorman Hall was build across the street.

Dr. Ballard: Oh, okay.

Dr. Andrews: And I'm not sure what happened to all the responsibilities in Lloyd-Ricks. I suppose it turned into primarily an administrative facility.

Dr. Ballard: I think you're right; I think you're right.

Dr. Andrews: There were a lot of administrative responsibilities in that building when I was there as a youngster.

Dr. Ballard: Yeah. I never saw too many students going in and out like they were going to class when I was around.

Dr. Andrews: There were a couple of places you could get a job, a summer job, or a part-time job while you were in school out there, and that's the route I followed. I was very, very fond of Dr. Bob Eckhardt and Dr. Dean Bunch that came along, those two men. Of course, I knew Dr. Wise pretty well. But all those men were over either in Agronomy Crops or Agronomy Soils, and the Extension people, you know, they were in the east side of that building, were they not?

Dr. Ballard: Yeah.

Dr. Andrews: Yeah. Now you're refreshing my memory.

Dr. Ballard: Yeah.

Dr. Andrews: And I can't tell you who I had contact with in that extension side of that building. Occasionally I went there, but not very much in Extension. The philosophy back then was that the scientist was supposed to do all the legwork and fieldwork and the research work and turn the results over to Extension, and they would take it out and spread it to the farmers in the state. But I think that role has pretty well been defined that all the Extension people I know now get a terminal degree and they do their own research; that's what I understand, but I'm not sure that's correct or not. But I did know quite a number of people in Extension later on.

Dr. Ballard: The Experiment Station side where you were; was that just administrative research, not classrooms?

Dr. Andrews: It didn't have any classes in it to my knowledge; you know, when people came in and were employed, there were people that assumed a desk and a chair out in the hall. They just didn't have any facilities. I mean, they were full. I can't tell you who those people were exactly, but I do recall, on occasion, that people had to assume a petition or whatever out in the hall of the Experiment Station, and that's where they were employed. They ran out of space in that building; it was full of everything.

Dr. Ballard: That's interesting. Well, he gave us a list of names he wanted just to; I'll read them to you and if you want to comment on them you can, but if you don't...

Dr. Andrews: That's alright, I'm fine.

Dr. Ballard: Now you've already said something about Dr. Wise...

Dr. Andrews: Yeah.

Dr. Ballard: ...And Dr. Bunch. We've already interviewed Dr. Bunch.

Dr. Andrews: Did you go out to his home?

Dr. Ballard: He came to the library.

Dr. Andrews: Oh, he did? Oh...

Dr. Ballard: They sent a van out there and got him.

Dr. Andrews: Well, maybe I could do that, but I'm not very mobile.

Dr. Ballard: Well, I think we should have gone to his home because he was out of breath by the time he got there.

Dr. Andrews: He and I spent a lot of time in Brazil together. We had a Brazilian contract and I was on the staff down there with him. He went down two years and then he re-upped for another year, and then Ann and I went down and spent two and a half years.

Dr. Ballard: Mm-hm. What about Dorothea Dickens? Was she before your time?

Dr. Andrews: The name... Was she in Home Ec?

Dr. Ballard: She goes way back, and I haven't run across too many people that knew her.

Dr. Andrews: Dorothy Dickens?

Dr. Ballard: Dorothea Dickens. She did some of the first research in home economics.

Dr. Andrews: I thought that name was familiar, but Lord knows no contact with that lady.

Dr. Ballard: What about Dr. Giles; President Giles?

Dr. Andrews: Well, you know, Dr. Giles was up in the echelon higher than me.

Dr. Ballard: So you didn't run across him too much.

Dr. Andrews: Well, my brief encounter with Dr. Giles was very, very professional and very good. He and his wife, I remember very well, came over here to our house. I had been to Taiwan on a short-term assignment and he was trying to find out if he and his wife should go over there for an extended assignment. So they came over here, and, although my wife had not been to Taiwan, I had been there, and I convinced him to go because my experience in Taiwan was exceptionally pleasant. But anyway, they went and enjoyed a whole year in that place.

Dr. Ballard: Alright. What about Dr. Charles Lee; did you know him?

Dr. Andrews: I didn't know him. I didn't even realize; the way I knew him he was in Forestry...

Dr. Ballard: Mm-hm.

Dr. Andrews: ...And then he went to Texas A&M I understand...

Dr. Ballard: Yeah.

Dr. Andrews: ...And then they got him back as Dean or Director or something, I thought.

Dr. Ballard: He was Vice President of Agriculture for awhile.

Dr. Andrews: Okay. Well, that was above my...

Dr. Ballard: What about the current President, Dr. Keenum? Of course, he was a student back in those days. You don't remember him?

Dr. Andrews: Yeah, but he was over in Ag Economics.

Dr. Ballard: Dr. Rodney Foil I bet you knew.

Dr. Andrews: Well, Rodney and my paths crossed primarily on an international basis. You know, I knew Rodney, you know, (we had) no working relation, or nothing of that nature; no.

Dr. Ballard: What about Baker Andrews? Were you kin to them in any way? (*laughs*)

Dr. Andrews: No, a lot of people have asked me that. He, when I knew him well, he was on his way out to go to Mississippi Chemical...

Dr. Ballard: Mm-hm.

Dr. Andrews: ...To assume a role down there. So after he got into anhydrous ammonia...

Dr. Ballard: Yeah,

Dr. Andrews: ...Was his bailiwick...

Dr. Ballard: That was his biggie.

Dr. Andrews: ...And got that up and running, then I don't think he stayed around very long.

Dr. Ballard: Mm-hm. Verner Hurt.

Dr. Andrews: Well, you know, Verner; wasn't he Director of the Experiment Station? I believe he was.

Dr. Ballard: Yeah, he was.

Dr. Andrews: Yeah. And he came over from Ag... Animal Husbandry; I've forgotten where he came from.

Dr. Ballard: I think that may be right.

Dr. Andrews: I don't think he grew up, so to speak, in the Agronomy section part of that, but he came over in the administrative capacity.

Dr. Ballard: What about Dr. Bost? I know he was Extension, so...

Dr. Andrews: I, of course, knew him but I didn't have any relationship with him.

Dr. Ballard: Well, you mentioned Dorman Hall, did you know Clarence Dorman?

Dr. Andrews: No. I knew his son but I didn't know him. I went to school with Devane.

Dr. Ballard: I think Vance is trying to track down his son to interview him, I don't know if he's found him yet. What about Dale Hoover?

Dr. Andrews: Well, yeah. Dale was our Department Head in Agronomy. I interacted with him in a lot of meetings. You know, I think Dale, I don't believe he did, I don't know whether he taught me soils... A lot of these people that came to Mississippi State, first of all, before they got into administration they were professors in the department...

Dr. Ballard: Right.

Dr. Andrews: ...And I think that's what Dr. Hoover... you know; I believe I took the Soils course under Dr. Hoover. (*laughs*) I can't remember. But anyway, yeah; you know, he was in the department a long time while we were there. Dr. Hoover; yeah.

Dr. Ballard: Yeah, I think his son's still living.

Dr. Andrews: I think he had two sons; one's a medical doctor down on the Coast...

Dr. Ballard: Yeah.

Dr. Andrews: ...And I don't know what the other...

Dr. Ballard: That's the one that Vance has been trying to get in touch with and he hasn't had much luck...

Dr. Andrews: Oh, is that right?

Dr. Ballard: ...with him and I think...

Dr. Andrews: I don't know who might have an address...

Dr. Ballard: ...Dr. Dorman's son, I believe, lives in the Jackson area somewhere.

Dr. Andrews: Oh, I didn't know Devane had left the bank. I don't keep up with him.

Dr. Ballard: I'm telling you what when Vance and I talked a lot of this came up and I didn't write everything down, but...

Dr. Andrews: Well, I don't see Devane any more, and didn't realize he had left Starkville, frankly. Devane and I were in a Statistics class together, and Devane didn't have an ambition to get another degree; and so he left. I don't think he pursued a whole lot of academics after that and went into the commercial end; I think he went into the banking.

Dr. Ballard: Well, that's all the list I have, but now if you got to think of anything else you want to add, you feel free.

Dr. Andrews: No, I tell you, I feel a little bit embarrassed having y'all come over here and I just personally did not have any working duties in Lloyd-Ricks, and when we left when the Seed Technology Program was established over in the Twin Towers...

Dr. Ballard: Okay.

Dr. Andrews: ...In the old Textile Building....

Dr. Ballard: Right, right.

Dr. Andrews: ...Then all of our staff, more or less, and academics and all that left Dorman Hall and transferred all our responsibility over there. And, you know, the first international trip I made was in 1959 with Dean Bunch to South America.

Dr. Ballard: He talked about that.

Dr. Andrews: Yeah. Then he and I were on the staff of the contract in Brazil. And since that point in time I travelled all over the world; but don't go to Africa. (*laughs*).

Dr. Ballard: I have no plans to go to Africa.

Dr. Andrews: I think Vance liked Africa.

Dr. Ballard: He probably did, he likes to go anywhere.

Dr. Andrews: Let me tell you, when I stepped off the airplane in the Country of Guinea-Bissau I thought, 'My God I have made a mistake.' (*laughs*)

Dr. Ballard: (*laughs*) Now when you made those trips, was that like to train people there or...

Dr. Andrews: A lot of training and we were attempting to establish an organization within the government that would pay more attention to seed as a basic agricultural input. And it would work very well while we were there on the ground but, you know sir, when you left those countries then they'd fall right back into the doldrum they were before you got there. It was hard to keep their attention.

Dr. Ballard: I did make a note, you were involved with, I think, the Mississippi Foundation for Seed Stocks.

Dr. Andrews: Yeah, that was while I was over the Seed Technology Laboratory. The Foundation Seed Program was established sometime in the late 1950s, and it was sort of piggyback, it wasn't a real big responsibility early on, but then later on, it did. And the responsibility I had was part time. That shows you how much they were... Yeah, I think they still have a foundation seed program. The concept was the plant breeder would take a plant in his domain that he was interested in; crimson clover, or soybeans, this, that, and the other; and he would massage it and develop it until he got to the point that he says this variety is ready for release to the public. When it was released from the plant breeder, then it went to the Foundation Seed Department. Their responsibility was to take his input, the breeder seed, it was classified, (I was in foundation seed for two years) and we would take that small amount of seed and plant it out and reproduce it into a

larger quantity that would have an impact on Mississippi agriculture. So it existed there, and I think they have two or three varieties in that program. Of course, I grew up with the Soybean Program and it flourished, I mean, it was a big, big thing.

Dr. Ballard: Yeah.

Dr. Andrews: A big thing; soybeans... soybeans when they first hit the market. And then we had a lot of smaller crops. We never did get into the corn business very much. And that's where I got my taste of that with Dr. Eckhardt over at Experiment Station. We had soybeans, and cow peas, and crimson clover, and Lord knows; a few of the crops that the plant breeders were working on. And then we took it in Foundation Seed and improved it; not improved it, but increased the quantity; and when you got enough of it then you could release it out to the public.

Dr. Ballard: So you went from the Experiment Station to Dorman to Twin Towers; is that your track?

Dr. Andrews: That's right. (*laugh*)

Dr. Ballard: Okay. I just want to make sure we have that on tape the right way.

Dr. Andrews: Yeah. And then after the Twin Towers I don't know whether you know the building down there that they built, Seed Technology.

Dr. Ballard: Right; yeah; so Twin Towers there.

Dr. Andrews: Yeah. Well, the Twin Tower(s) (Building) was the first thing, the stop-off, for Seed Technology. But then it moved from the Twin Towers down to that Seed Technology Building down on the other side of Animal Science.

Dr. Ballard: Right, I know where that is, yeah.

Dr. Andrews: And we had that building for many, many years. That's where all of our staff; we wound up with six or seven staff members down there; and we left Dorman Hall,

and it was kind of an independent, make your own go of it, so to speak; and we had a lot of federal government money in that program.

Dr. Ballard: Mm-hm. Well, we can wrap it up; just give me a little bit of your background. Where did you go to school? Where are you from originally?

Dr. Andrews: I was born and bred, and I feel like I've been here too long; a hundred years.

Dr. Ballard: *(laughs)*

Dr. Andrews: My Dad came from Caledonia over here, I don't know how he got here, in 1903; and I just stayed here. Everything was satisfactory. I was in the Seed Program. It was new behind the ears at that time and I felt like I was part of helping it develop. But I got all three of my degrees at Mississippi State. You couldn't find another university that had an advanced degree in Seed Technology. There was an Oregon program and a Kentucky program. I knew the people in Kentucky quite well. But, you know, we got involved in international travel and I came back here and I had beau-coups of graduate students. There's no telling; and it was commonplace, you'd have six or eight or ten graduate students; both master's and PhDs. I don't know how many... I should have counted them but I didn't.

Dr. Ballard: Yeah. Well that's great.

Dr. Andrews: That was very rewarding; I felt like I had contributed a little bit.

Dr. Ballard: Well, we thank you for...

Dr. Andrews: Well, I'm sorry I didn't go...

Dr. Ballard: Now you've got a lot of good information on here. You're going to be surprised when you see it on the internet.

Dr. Andrews: *(laughs)*

Dr. Ballard: *(laughs)*

**(Tape Side One Ends, 345)**