INTERVIEW WITH MILDRED WEHMHOFF
APRIL 2, 1980

Dr. T:  What years were you at the University of Puget Sound, Mildred?

Mrs. W:  1912 to 1918.

Dr. T:  Was it at Sixth and Sprague then?

Mrs. W:  Yes. I went two years to the Academy. My junior and senior high school years were at the Academy.

Dr. T:  Were there many in the Academy at that time?

Mrs. W:  Oh, twelve to fifteen in each class - not too many.

Dr. T:  Now, would those classes be what we think of as tenth, eleventh, twelfth now?

Mrs. W:  That's right.

Dr. T:  These were mainly older people, weren't they?

Mrs. W:  Yes, and mainly men.

Dr. T:  Why would they go there rather than go to high school?

Mrs. W:  Well, most of them were going to be preachers.

Dr. T:  Then you went from two years at the Academy into the school itself. Who was the president then, do you remember?

Mrs. W:  When I started it was Zeller and then President Todd came.

Dr. T:  He left in 1913. Tell us about the buildings. We have in front of us this picture with four buildings. The one on the left hand side has pillars. Now what was that building?

Mrs. W:  That was the Administration Building and all the classes
were in there. The Physics and Chemistry were in the basement. The office was on the right hand side.

Dr. T: In the background there is a low building with a hip roof. Was that the gymnasium?

Mrs. W: Yes. They didn't have it very long. It burned. I don't remember just when it was.

Dr. T: Do you remember when it was built?

Mrs. W: No, it was built by 1912.

Dr. T: When you got there? Now you say they didn't have it very long - it burned. Had the Home Economics been in there?

Mrs. W: No, not as far as I know it hadn't.

Dr. T: This building in the middle - the tall one - what building was that?

Mrs. W: That was the Chapel. The Chapel was on the top floor. The Business Department was on the first floor and down in the basement they had Home Economics.

Dr. T: Did you go to Chapel every day?

Mrs. W: We went to Chapel every day. It was required.

Dr. T: Was it religious?

Mrs. W: It was religious.

Dr. T: Did various faculty lead?

Mrs. W: Yes, mostly faculty but some outside people.

Dr. T: To the right hand side is a building that looks like a house. Is that Dr. Todd's house?

Mrs. W: Yes, that is Dr. Todd's house.

Dr. T: Did they have many special functions in it then?

Mrs. W: They generally had a reception and a dinner for the
senior class and sometimes the Women's League (they called it the Women's College League at that time) met there.

Dr. T: Were you acquainted with the Women's College League work then?

Mrs. W: Yes.

Dr. T: What did they do?

Mrs. W: I think at one time they made dresses for the senior girls for graduation. They just helped the School. I don't know exactly what they did.

Dr. T: I find that they furnished the Home Economic's Department. Then after the fire, they furnished another one because they felt it was very important that the girls got this training. You told me on the phone that you were a member of Philo?

Mrs. W: Yes. The Philomathean Literary Society.

Dr. T: Nowhere can I find a description of a meeting. What kind of meetings did they have?

Mrs. W: I have some of the programs here. They had papers, they had music and they had a critic. After you had performed at the end of the meeting a critic criticized what you did, what you said, how you said it, your composure, and etc. It was a very wonderful thing.

Dr. T: It must have been a very good educational experience for students. Everyone had to take his or her turn?

Mrs. W: Yes.

Dr. T: Was Philo co-educational or just girls?

Mrs. W: No, it was co-educational.

Dr. T: Now the others - the H. C. S. - was a men's fraternity.
Then there was also the Amphictyon. Were they co-educational?

Did they have the same kind of program?

Mrs. W: They were co-educational and had the same kind of program.

Dr. T: Do you remember Dr. Todd's financial campaigns?

Mrs. W: I sure do.

Dr. T: Tell me about them.

Mrs. W: I forget the first. Was it $50,000 we were to raise?

I remember that night that they raised the money, Mr. Hill was going to give an equal amount of money. I remember I drank coffee that night and never slept all night so I didn't drink anymore after that.

Dr. T: Was that when they had the celebration?

Mrs. W: It was about midnight I guess, before it was all over.

Dr. T: Where was this held?

Mrs. W: Well, it must have been on the campus.

Dr. T: You have been a member of the Methodist church all these years haven't you?

Mrs. W: That's right.

Dr. T: Do you remember when Dr. Todd used to come before the Sunday school classes?

Mrs. W: Yes - we used to do a lot of yelling. He was our minister. In fact I joined the church the last day he was our minister.

Dr. T: Before he came to the College?

Mrs. W: Yes.

Dr. T: Do you remember when the churches were asked to give money for the School?

Mrs. W: Well, I don't recall that so much but I am sure that is
what he did.

Dr. T: Well, I know. I have been going through the history and I find that for eighteen years he was in a constant campaign for money - God bless him - he was wonderful - he really was wonderful. You were May Queen once. What year was that?

Mrs. W: That was 1918. I was a senior.

Dr. T: Tell me about how the May celebrations were.

Mrs. W: Well, every year was different. The Music department furnished the music. They had a Maypole dance for the freshmen and sophomores and then they had some other dances. The year I was May Queen, a bunch of the boys put on some crepe paper and after it was all over they danced to a fairy dance and had a lot of fun.

Dr. T: Did they have the Color Post when you were there?

Mrs. W: It was started while I was there.

Dr. T: Tell me about it.

Mrs. W: I think it was about 1917. Anyhow, Dr. Todd thought it would be a nice thing and as the classes entered they would go through the Color Post and then when they graduated they would go through. There was quite a program when we dedicated it.

Dr. T: It was a nice thing. I was sorry when we outgrew it.

Mrs. W: Yes, I wondered what happened to it.

Dr. T: Well, we had some problems because PLU cut it down and debased it almost every year for ten years and then when we got such big classes that they could not fit into Jones Hall both freshmen and seniors, we couldn't use it anymore. I was always sorry because it was a fine tradition and I know Dr. Todd liked it very much.
Mrs. W: They gave the number of freshmen entering and when they
graduated they gave the number that graduated.

Dr. T: Yes, and each one had a side on the post and a color
represented and etc.

What were some of the memories you have about your days at CPS?

Mrs. W: Well, it was during the war days so many of our boys
left for the service - many - so there were not very many the
last year. In 1918 there were not very many boys there. We had
a big program, a patriotic program, in honor of the boys. Elizabeth
Shackleford - later Judge Shackleford - put it on. She never liked
social things but she put on this program and it was very fine.
In the school paper they kept track of who left and what service
they were in.

Dr. T: I notice there is a Student Army Training Corp. Do you
remember them marching and training?

Mrs. W: I wasn't there that year. I was teaching school at
Adna and two of the boys from that Corp came down to try to get
people to go to CPS. We told them that we were having the flu and
our school might close. If they would wait for a half an hour or
so, we would know. We came back with them. The College sent them
out with a Ford but when they had a flat tire they had to stop
another car to get it fixed. We started at 9:00 in the morning
and I think I got home about 8:00 that night. I think we had about
seventeen blowouts. These boys had been out trying to get people
into this SATC.

Dr. T: Were you a part - do you remember when they moved up
onto the new campus?
Mrs. W: I wasn't here at that time.

Dr. T: When did you and your husband go over to Washington State?

Mrs. W: We went over in 1921.

Dr. T: That is when he went over and got his degree?

Mrs. W: Yes.

Dr. T: Now, you went to the University of Puget Sound and all of your children have.

Mrs. W: My daughter didn't. She went into nurses training.

Dr. T: Is George the older?

Mrs. W: Yes, he is older. He graduated in 1949 and his wife Merle did too. They are in Anchorage, Alaska. Their son and his wife both graduated. Stephen and Jackie both graduated in 1977.

Dr. T: Where are Stephen and Jackie?

Mrs. W: They are in Alaska. Right now Stephen is putting on this Alaska pageant. They are both active musically.

Dr. T: I was going to say, didn't he major in Music?

Mrs. W: Yes, they both did. She works in a bank. She majored in two things. Music and Business.

Dr. T: Your other son?

Mrs. W: He is in Connecticut and works for St. Regis in New York City.

Dr. T: I remember on the main street in Chicago, I saw him across the street and I hollered, "Hey, Wehmhoff." He stopped and turned around and finally he said, "Hey, Dr. T." So we met in the middle of Michigan Avenue and had old home week. They are some of our most wonderful youngsters. Out of the 40,000 that we have had they are two of the finest.
What are some of the unusual things you remember about Dr. Todd?

Mrs. W: Of course, I can remember when he was at our church or when he was going out working for UPS - how he would always have us all yell for "Our University."

Dr. T: Tell me, do you remember him leading chapel?

Mrs. W: No I don't. (Laugh) I think he was out on the road a lot.

Dr. T: Who were some of the unusual professors you remember?

Mrs. W: Miss Reneau.

Dr. T: Tell me about her. Not many people know much about her. She must have been a good teacher.

Mrs. W: She was an excellent teacher - English, philosophy, ethics, etc.

Dr. T: There is kind of a rumor that she didn't care how she dressed. Is that true?

Mrs. W: Yes. And her house was full of cats and not many people liked to visit there because of the odor.

Dr. T: I remember I went there one time to talk to her when she owned the property at Ninth Street. Believe me it was one of those places where you took a deep breath and thought, "Oh, Lord, let me hold it until I get out." It really was a very difficult situation. I know the students loved her as a person but there was some question about her personal hygiene. But she was much beloved, wasn't she?

Mrs. W: She was. I felt the Literary Society was one of the main things that helped me not to be afraid to speak in public and all.

Dr. T: Do you remember Senator Davis?

Mrs. W: Oh yes, almost every year I had him for a class. He was wonderful. A wonderful thing I remember about his tests - the
last test he gave, one of the questions was, "Who won the World Series?"

Dr. T: He must have been a very versatile person.

Mrs. W: If he knew anybody, you could see him years later and he knew just who you were and what you were doing. I never knew anyone who remembered so well.

Dr. T: Who were some of the other professors?

Mrs. W: Dr. Hanawalt.

Dr. T: He taught mathematics, didn't he?

Mrs. W: Yes, he taught mathematics.

Dr. T: There is a rumor that he used to put things on the board that said "Save" and he would save it all semester. Is that true?

Mrs. W: Well I don't remember that. There were lots of things on the board, but I don't remember that part of it. I just had one class under him.

Dr. T: Was Paul Hanawalt there when you were there?

Mrs. W: He was there, yes. He was president of our class all four years. Although the last year he left to go into the Navy and so they put me in. I had been vice-president. They really didn't call me that. We called him president for the four years.

Dr. T: Who were some of the other professors? Did you ever have a Professor McProud in Education?

Mrs. W: No.

Dr. T: That must have been before your time. You have had a wonderful time through the years. Is there anything else you would like to say about CPS? Do you remember why they changed
the name?

Mrs. W: Yes, I remember the second time they changed the name, I guess when Dr. Todd came. They called it CPS in 1913. They put it on my class ring. I had been going to UPS but they put CPS on my ring.

Dr. T: There was a Mr. Hanshire on the General Board of Education of the Methodist Church. He was helping them raise money and he thought it would be better to have it a college rather than a university. I was always sorry it was done that way but it came back in 1960 as the University of Puget Sound. A university is made up of colleges and we had six colleges so it was really a university.

I appreciate very much getting a chance to talk with you and put you on tape. This will be transcribed and then it will be a part of the resource of the early history of the University.