Today's date is Friday, June 25, 1993. My name is Lyn Olsson. The following is an interview between myself and Dr. George Sanderlin who is a retired professor of English from San Diego State University. He was here from 1955 until 1983. The interview is being recorded at his home in El Cajon on Singing Trails Drive. The interview is being conducted for the SDSU Emeritus Oral History project which is supported by a John and Jane Adams Humanities Minigrant.

Lyn Olsson (LO): I know that all your educational milestones are outlined for us already on paper, but would you tell me briefly about your educational background before you came to San Diego State University?

George Sanderlin (GS): My high school was Central High School in Washington, D.C. and that was one of the four or five chief high schools. J.Edgar Hoover was one graduate of Central High. Another one was Helen Hayes. My graduating class consisted of about 200 or 300. I graduated in 1931. I had a scholarship to American University, also in Washington. There were about 300 students there then. They've grown quite a bit since then. I don't know what the enrollment is now. That is where I met
Owenita, whom I married, although she'd been living at the top of the hill near our house all the time but I paid no attention to girls at that point.

So, anyhow, American University, '31 to '35, and I had a scholarship throughout there. I worked in the Library of Congress, summers, from age 16 on, and I graduated from A.U. when I was 20. Then I went to Johns Hopkins for graduate work from 1935 to 1938. You could go straight for a Ph.D there (which I did) rather than stopping for an MA. I got my Ph.D when I was 23.

LO: You were very young.

GS: That was in 1938. I guess that's it as far as the educational background.

LO: Let me ask you, then, when did you decide that you had a love of English? Did you know from a very early age or did you pick this up when you were working at the Library of Congress, perhaps?

GS: Well, let's see, I think Owenita learned from my mother that I wrote a short story when I was nine or 10. It was a baseball story. I did a lot of reading. I enjoyed baseball Joe books. I wasn't thinking about writing juvenile books for young people then but I liked to read and I liked literature. And I also enjoyed Latin in high school: I studied a lot of Latin on my own afterwards. I guess I decided I wanted to teach. I would say, in high school and college.

LO: Your study of Latin -- did you get very far in that? Did you find that Latin helped you in your teaching and your study of
English?

GS: I think Latin helps. I think knowing any other language helps, and Latin is especially good because it's very regular in the grammar and the inflections. It's all pretty regular. It's easy to memorize. I won't take your time to recite any of the conjugations or rules of syntax because I go over them every day.

LO: Do you?

GS: Yes. I can do it in a very short time. I do the same for Spanish which I learned later in connection with a writing project. But I didn't have a great deal of Latin. I had three years in high school. Then later I decided that I wanted to be a medievalist so I simply began to read, and read, and read. I taught Latin. I taught many people medieval Latin -- a little special course, Special Studies, at San Diego State for, oh, five or six years. One of the letters in that book [indicating a scrapbook] about these things is by a person who took that course from me. I had a little group of three, four, five, or six people and I met them every week for a couple of hours. There are some very good texts for medieval Latin, so I taught that at that time. I also stood in on Spanish exams by that time -- by the time I had worked on the project of translation from Spanish of the writings of Bartolomé de las Casas. So, they had me sit in on their MA Spanish exams for questions on that field of Spanish, 16th Century History which is what I used in some of my explorer books, and what I did the translations from.

LO: Before this interview, I did a little bit of background
homework by checking the PAC at the library to see which books we have of yours. You are a very prolific writer, I must say.

GS: To me it's all part of teaching. I've heard one other member of the department -- Jerry Bumpus, who came in later for Creative Writing -- say that he wanted to be able to prove that he could do what he taught -- that is, write well. Jerry is a novelist. I haven't read anything of his lately. I'm sure he's churning things out rapidly. To me, the teaching and the writing went together.

LO: Since you mention it, I'll ask you now. How was it that you were able to publish so many books, and to have so many articles published in professional journals and still carry a full teaching load? That you could do all that at the same time just amazes me.

GS: I got up at 4:30 or 4:00 in the morning. I could write for about three hours and, then, I'd have a class maybe at 10:00. If I got to school even at the fairly late hour of 9:30, I could still get a parking place, which you can't now. I didn't get up every morning at 4:00 a.m. When I came home from teaching I'd be pretty exhausted. I would sleep for about an hour then I'd often have tennis after that, it would just depend.

LO: The tennis would revive you for the rest of the afternoon and evening so that you could pick up where you left off?

GS: Yes.

LO: I think that's great. I really admire the way that you could do so much -- that you could produce so much.
GS: Well, I enjoyed everything I was doing.

LO: Did you find, then, that... well, you said that the teaching and the writing go hand in hand -- you used your research material for your writings and your course work.

GS: Yes. That's true. I wrote these explorer books when I was teaching the Renaissance, and exploration and discovery are part of that. Then my editor, Ferd Monjo, wanted me to do some things in American History. Well, that didn't come so much into the teaching but it was all 18th Century ideas and so forth.

LO: What was the editor's name again?

GS: Ferd Monjo. That last name, Monjo, is Spanish for Monk. Ferdinand Monjo. And, when the book Ferdinand the Bull came out, Ferd told us he had to have a fight at school every day. He was kidded about Ferdinand, the bull who didn't want to fight. I have a copy of Ferdinand the Bull in Latin, a translation made by the wife of Moses Hadas, who was a leading classical scholar at Columbia University.

LO: Speaking of getting back into the Latin aspect of it, Gail Burnett was recently interviewed. Did you ever work with her?

GS: No, I didn't. She kept the Latin going here or started it going and nourished it for years before we had the department that we now have. That was all her doing. I don't know if she did that as an extra, the way I did the Medieval Latin. It may have been that part of the time it was an extra, and part of the time they gave her credit for teaching it. I don't know. But without Gail Burnett, I guess, there wouldn't have been Latin for quite a
few years here.

LO: I do know that she said that when she first came to the University (I forget what year it was) they had Latin in the catalog but they didn't have anybody teaching it.

GS: They didn't have anybody teaching it so that she kind of moved in there.

LO: And, then, Ted Warren came in and was very interested in teaching Greek.

GS: Ted really got the teaching of Latin and Greek organized but Gail kept it going before that. Ted came some years later. There was a whole group right after World War II that included Sidney Gulick and others. Then there was another group (1950s) about the time I came.

LO: You were, possibly, the second wave?

GS: I might have been the second wave. I'm not sure. I know that Sidney Gulick and others came earlier -- perhaps Ernie Marchand and some of the others. Then, let's see... (looking at a 1954 yearbook) Let's see... Adams, Theobold, Kramer [Rohlfiesch], Gail Burnett is here, Kennedy, second row. I'm here -- I didn't realize.

LO: Yes, you were there. Everything I've seen in writing says that you officially started working at San Diego State in '55, but there you are in the 1954 year book. Were you, maybe, filling in as a temporary?

GS: I was a visiting lecturer, taking the place of Mabel Traill. That's why I don't see her because she was on leave. I think her
I came (to California) partly because Owenita wanted to get to California. Owenita grew up out here in Pasadena. Her father was a doctor. I was getting a little tired of the Maine winters by that time. Not so much the winter as the spring -- the mud season, mud and snow in April and May. I was getting a little tired of it and I wanted to see what California was like. So, she thought this would be perfect when I had the chance to come out. We did like it.

LO: When did you come out to California?
GS: 'The spring of 1954 as a visiting lecturer. That was my title -- Lecturer. I was paid what Mabel Traill was paid. I was filling in for Mabel Traill, who was a full professor. We did like it and, apparently, they wanted me to come back and they offered me a job. I went back to Maine for the rest of 1954 and the spring of '55 but they offered me the job in '55 and we came out in the fall of '55.

LO: Tell me what the hiring and the interview process was. The reason why I ask that is because I know that in the earlier years it was very simple. It was just a matter of going in and meeting the president and having him say, "Okay. You're hired." Was it still that way?
GS: That's right. I believe Bob McCoy got his job that way. When he was discharged from the Navy (I believe) he heard there was an opening. He walked in and said, "I have an English degree. Can you use me?" And, they said, "Sure. Come on." You'll have to
confirm that with him, I don't know, but in my case I did it with a letter, I guess. Owenita, who is very creative, (she's the creative one -- I'm sort of a creature of routine but I like to, kind of, figure out the routines so that I can get somewhere by working on this language, or that book, or what have you) ... but Owenita thought it would be a great idea to come out, so we sent letters to a number of institutions out here asking about summer work. We wrote the letter together. She had some very good ideas. Anyhow, Jack Adams liked the letter so he said, "We can't give you a summer job but how about coming for the spring semester?" That's the way I got that job -- on the basis of a letter. Jack Adams said, "Can you come out?" I think Sidney Gulick was in on the decision too -- those two.

LQ: Adams and Gulick, huh?

GS: Yes, and Sidney especially. Jack always says, "Oh, you owe it to Sidney" when I talk about coming back. He says, "Sidney said we must have you." So, there wasn't any interview. I came out and I do remember that Jim Tidwell (he was in that first group -- a Navy Veteran -- he died recently, two or three years ago) was a very good administrator. Everybody felt that he should get to be the president of one of the state colleges. He was considered for several posts and never quite chosen. I think people felt that was kind of a disappointment. Maybe it wasn't a disappointment to him but a big loss to the state colleges. He was a good administrator and a scholar. Anyhow, one of the things they asked me to do, during that spring semester when I was here,
was to talk to a group about writing. That's what they brought me out for because they had a man in creative writing who had just been killed in an automobile accident. Owenita and I did a lot of freelance writing. She could give you the figures; she, I guess, sold a total of 1,700 articles, short stories, and so on.

LG: Owenita did?

GS: Yes. And she said my total was 1,100.

LG: Heavens to Betsy!

GS: So, we were doing that all the time. That doubled our salary (which wasn't much of a salary to begin with -- $1,600 a year). We continued to double it, on the basis of our writing. When I came out, they wanted me to take some advanced scholarly courses as well as the creative writing courses.

LG: To teach them?

GS: To teach them, yes. So, anyhow, as far as interviews... oh, one thing they asked me to do was to talk to English majors who were interested in writing. I remember Jim Tidwell came to that session. I kind of felt that I was being checked out there. At that time I wasn't sure that I wanted to come back or if they wanted me or not but, anyhow, I noticed that Jim attended the session. If that was the purpose, that was the only interview that I had.

LG: It might have been a kind of, covert interview. It could have been but they obviously thought very highly of you.

GS: As far as the educational process maybe I should say that at AU I started out as a history major and then I did become
interested in literature. Then, I thought that literature was, sort of, more philosophical, more general, and I just liked it better. So, it's a good thing as it turned out. A lot of my books are about history, really. Anyhow, I became an English major at A.U. and we had some very good teachers in the English Department there, and the Art Department.

LO: This is at American University, yes.

GS: It was later, at Johns Hopkins, that I decided I wanted to be a medievalist. By that time I was interested in Latin. The medievalist at Johns Hopkins was Kemp Malone, who was the top man but kind of hard to approach. On the other hand, R.D. Havens, who was their 18th, 19th Century man, was a bachelor and liked to do things with students. We had him to dinner a couple of times and he went on a couple of walks with me. He had Ph.D topics available. I was kind of scared of Malone. I felt that to be a good medievalist I must know Old Norse, not only Latin but Old Norse, Old French and, of course, Old English -- I had Old English, of course. So, I kind of hesitated. So, I wrote the thesis under Havens but I did my seminar under Malone. That got me over my fear because when I went to the first meeting of the seminar I was the only one there. Kemp Malone said, "Well," (as I say, he had this rather reserved manner) ... "you understand Mr. Sanderlin that in the seminar the routine is that a member of the seminar gives a paper each time." He said, "Now, we only have one member of the seminar, so this is the way we'll do it."

LO: And you did it every time?
GS: At first, yes, but later he began to read his own papers. The first paper I read, he tore apart. I felt pretty bad. The second paper I spent time -- a whole week in Peabody Library -- and I read that, and he said, "Well, I think we might publish this." It was used in Modern Language Notes and, after that, we got along just fine.

LO: So, that was your first publication?

GS: Yes, a seminar paper.

LO: Beowulf.

GS: That was Malone’s field. The SDSU library has, in the rare book section, his edition of the Thorkelin transcripts available (1951 facsimile). I used to take it to my medieval class every semester, just to sign it out for the one hour to show them that it has a long list of sponsors headed by Winston Churchill. This is a very important volume because Thorkelin was the Dane who made his own copy and had a scribe make another copy of the Beowulf manuscript. There is only a single manuscript, which was damaged by a fire. Its edges were charred. These transcripts were made in the 1780’s. They preserve readings that disappeared in the 19th Century because of the charred state of the manuscript.

So, anyhow, those are kind of my interests. Plus, at Johns Hopkins, I played on the graduate English Department basketball team. We had a great upset triumph there because it was thought that English couldn't provide any kind of athletes. The Physics Department had won that little intramural championship every year. We decisively defeated the Physics Department, and one
thing that helped us was that we had the captain of the previous Harvard team. Harvard was not like a Duke or North Carolina, but I guess our Harvard man was a pretty good basketball player. We also had a fellow from North Carolina, who was not on the North Carolina team, but he had played a lot of basketball. Anyhow, as I say, we had a great triumph there.

LO: That must have been a big thing for you to remember those years too. That must have been a lot of fun. You've kept up with physical activities, obviously. You're a big tennis player.

GS: We love tennis and that was inexpensive. It cost practically nothing. We did that in Maine. Of course, you could not do it in the bad time of the year -- which is a good part of the year -- except when we got a chance to play in the gym some Sunday mornings at 6:00 a.m.

LO: Then, when you moved out here, you played year 'round.

GS: Yes, that's right.

LO: Since we're on the subject of sports, I'm going to show you something. I made a photocopy of an item that I found in the University Archives the other day as I was getting ready for this interview. This is a photocopy of something that was typed on state college letterhead. It must have been back in the '50s or '60s. They put a date on there -- 1984 -- possibly as a "looking to the future" as in the novel 1984 by Orwell. It has to do with some professor's attitude toward football, and the coaches, and the extra considerations that the football players receive in classes. Have you ever seen this? [Ed. note: copy attached.]
GS: No, I never saw it.
LO: You have no idea of the history of that?
GS: No. Do you know who wrote this?
LO: No, I haven't the slightest idea. I was hoping you would.
GS: Somebody who likes to do this sort of thing is Nelson Norman, retired from history. He has other things which are in line with it. Did you ask Jack Adams about this?
LO: I haven't asked Dr. Adams; maybe he did it himself, as a matter of fact!

We're going to go back here a little bit. I'm going to ask you about your activities during World War II. What did you do during the war?
GS: I did a lot of things that I never did before or after. I was lucky -- well, I'd consider it lucky. I was turned down twice. Once by the Navy when I could see the draft approaching. I didn't see how my wife and three children could live on $25 a month which was GI pay at that time. I'd had some correspondence with the Navy and they told me to come up to Richmond Market Armory in Baltimore for an interview. I got there and they found that I had this ear/mastoid problem (which I had had since I was five years old; an operation that never completely healed.) They said, "Well, we don't want you" but they said, "Don't worry, if you're breathing the Army will take you." Owenita doubted they would take me, and she turned out to be right. When, one year later the draft did get around to me, they said "No."

Anyway, what was I doing before that? Let's see... we were
in Maine on December 7th. I remember that very well. I was correcting freshman papers. We had a very heavy load there of composition. So, Sunday afternoon I was correcting one paper after another. Owenita had gone out to go to the literary group (the department head, Milton Ellis, an American Lit scholar who did a good anthology and some good scholarship, was interested in writing) when the news came over the radio. I didn't know about it. She came home and she said, "Have you heard the news?" I said, "What news?" That was about five or six o'clock Sunday night. That was the beginning.

I spent one year in the South during the war. Maine students were mainly men, and they were going right out in a stream. Nobody knew what was going to happen. I thought, "I don't know about leaving the family here; we can't afford to keep the house if I do get drafted. What will I do?" Well, a friend of mine taught in a girls' college in the south. He was leaving his place. He said, "Why don't you come down here?" So, I thought, "Well, it would be warmer down there" so I went down there for a year. I wasn't too happy there, but there were some good things. I not only did my teaching but I found a small defense plant where I worked nights, running a turret lathe. At the end of the school year (which ended a little bit earlier) I worked full time for, oh, maybe a month or so. When I was working full time, for a short time, in the defense plant I was put in charge of the inspection department. Those people didn't have too much education. We did precision work. We made aircraft parts for
Glenn Martin and Curtis Wright. We had a terrible reject rate but the ones that got through, I guess, were good parts. The milling was done to within very narrow tolerances. We were one of the few places in that area that did this kind of work.

So, then, they called me back to Maine to teach math. I was glad to go because Owenita's health wasn't too good there. Our third child had been born down there. We had two children when the war broke out and a third on the way. He was born down there. He was born premature -- not premature but early. It was rather a hard time for her. So, I was glad to come back to Maine which we did. That was about the same time that I had looked into the Navy because I could see I didn't know how much longer I'd be teaching or be in some service. Ironically, there did come a draft notice when I had just left and was going back to Maine. I think what happened was that the State of Maine was kind of short of manpower and if somebody wasn't in Maine, he was likely to be taken first. I was talking to the University president. I said, "Well, here I am but I doubt that I'll be here more than a couple of weeks. I'm supposed to..." "Oh, you're all protected," he said. That's when I was teaching but it was in the ASTP program. That was a nationwide Army Specialized Training Program. One thing I was happy about was that I didn't have to worry about the draft until they yanked the soldiers out. Then, of course, they grabbed me right away. But they also said, "Well, we don't want you." In the ASTP program I and another chap from English were teaching
analytic geometry. His class and my class, at the weekly exams, were always at the top, but this had nothing to do with us. I did every problem in the book but it had nothing to do with us. We had people from Yale, Princeton, Pittsburgh. It was chance that he and I got really elite groups.

So that was the war -- running these machines, inspecting aircraft parts, teaching math. Then, when the Army turned me down that summer, I didn't quite know what I would do. I took a job as copy editor for the Bangor Daily News. But, then, in the fall came the first wave of GI students, so all of a sudden, they needed English teachers. I ended up back in the English Department. And that is what I've done the rest of my life, I guess -- teaching English and writing.

LO: You did a variety of things there, during those war years.

GS: As I said, things that I had never done before.

LO: I think that was the case for a lot of people, they were doing things that they never did again when the war finally ended.

GS: Oh, yes.

LO: Now, moving on to San Diego State College. You say that, possibly, you were hired during the second hiring wave after the war, 1954.

GS: I think so... in '55 came Glen Sandstrom, Bill Perkins, Lowell Tozer, and, somewhere in there came, John Monteverde. It might not have been that year, it might have been the next year or so. There were four or five of us right in that time. I said
three of them came in the same year I came. That makes four, right in that one year -- '55. Then came still a third wave and I can't tell you the date of that, sometime in the 1960s. I want to quote Mark Twain to you and ask you to discount everything I say about 20 or 30%. He said, "When I was younger I could remember anything whether it happened or not but now that I am getting older I only remember the latter." I soon will be able to remember only the latter.

Anyhow, there definitely was a third wave. It must have been in the 60's. These were young, eager, they seemed somewhat extreme or radical. It must have been kind of hectic, because there was terrific pressure to advance, to get ahead. I guess a lot of them competed with each other. There was kind of an over-population. One way they all agreed that they could get ahead would be just to pitch out the ancients, the war horses -- get rid of them as fast as possible.

LO: Was there that attitude?
GS: There was a conflict there for a while. They wanted to have promotions based -- well, this is the interpretation that we have -- on publication, because that's what they could do. Up to that point it had been seniority, pretty much. For example, the department chairmanship went by seniority. It was approaching my turn and I was delighted when this other wave came in and they decided they'd have to make the system more democratic and elect the chairman. I could escape that way. I had no desire for it. I think if the chairmanship had still gone by seniority, perhaps I
would have felt I had to serve. There would have been a different kind of pressure. My colleagues would have said, "We hate this also. We suffered through it . . ."

LO: . . . now it's your turn.

GS: I would have felt I had to suffer through it, too. Whereas this way it was fine not to do it.

LO: You never did serve as department chairman?

GS: No.

LO: You were lucky, you got out of that one!

GS: There actually was some demand for me to do it, especially when these conflicts got worse, because I was supposed to be a kind of bridge. The new wave... I was told by those of the old wave, "Well, they accept you, George, because you publish, so go ahead and do this." There were two things about me--"They accept you because you publish. That's good. Your ideas are bad. That's bad. But you publish. That's good." No, I had no interest in that.

LO: You know, what I find is kind of an interesting conflict during the '60s and, certainly it is conflict right now, is that so much emphasis was put on getting ahead, publishing, doing research but at the same time they say that this is supposed to be a teaching school. We're supposed to be a teaching school.

GS: That's one thing that I enjoyed about both Maine (I feel I was fortunate in that way) and San Diego State. When I was at the University of Maine, publishing was sort of an oddity, an eccentricity. If you wanted to do it, okay. It was pretty much
seniority there -- passage of time. And they really meant passage of time... six years for this, six years for that, six years for the other. But, when I left Maine I was Associate Professor. In another four or five years I would have been full Professor... but I didn't feel any pressure there. I liked to write, I wanted to do it, but I didn't want to feel that I had to do it. I didn't feel that way and I didn't feel that way when I came here. It was not that way in the '50s. Again, it was if you wanted to do it, fine, but it didn't make much difference. If it was your turn to be chairman, if it was your turn to be promoted, that was it. It was your turn.

LO: When did this change?

GS: In the '60s, I think. Being on promotion committees, there supposed to be... I forget now how they phrase it, anyhow. the scholarship, the teaching, and the university service, these three things. Emphasis will vary, of course, but nowhere in there is specifically stated what was... or at least the unwritten rule before that was just seniority. The people who did want to continue to make some allowance for that tried to put it in. I forget the phrase now: it amounted to seniority, but that was a bad word. When I was on promotion committees there were those three things and you could, kind of, vary the emphasis according to the way you felt, but seniority was not supposed to be any factor at all from that time on. That was part of the unspoken conflict. People came in and wanted to get everything quickly. As I say, I don't know what they could do about it, they didn't
really start a movement to demote the other people who had not published much but there were some bad feelings that "he hasn't done anything since this thesis" and so forth and so on, and "look, I've done this whole string of articles last year and this year" and so forth. After they won their promotions they began to champion seniority and tenure.

LO: I understand the competition was real tight.

GS: It probably was. Our son, David, was teaching at Cal State Northridge, and was caught by the first State cut-back. He had just secured his tenure, he was publishing. Then they cut the department by one third. He could have gone to some colleges in the mid-west, but he decided he wanted to be down here. Of course, this interview isn't about him especially, but to illustrate this thing... he taught at San Diego State in a department which was kind of an adjunct to the writing department. They offered him a permanent position there. At the same time, all the community colleges were competing for him here because he had a national reputation as a tennis player. They wanted him to coach tennis. They wanted him to teach English and history. (He had a Ph.D.) I said, "Well, whatever you think, Dave, but if you choose San Diego State get them to write things out, get it in writing."

LO: What they expect of you. you mean?

GS: Yes, and what they would offer him in the future, and so forth. He decided on another school and he's very happy there, and has been there ever since.
LO: Where is he?

GS: Miramar. Of course. That's undergoing a big expansion. He
doesn't want to do administration any more than I did but he's
been running two departments there off and on. He's a pillar. If
he wanted to be a dean or a president I suppose he could be, but
he doesn't. He's getting a book out. He's had two or three books
published.

LO: Has he, really?

GS: Yes.

LO: It runs in the family for you.

GS: And Frea (Sladek) has her book on fellowships, you know.

LO: I didn't know she was published as well.

GS: Yes. She has a book on grants. She edited a magazine on
grants, a review, for years. Maybe she's still editing now. I
don't know.

LO: I should ask her about that the next time I see her.

GS: I'm kind of going off the subject again.

LO: Well, actually, it's all related to what we're talking about
-- about the conflict between teaching and research.

GS: Yes, in the 60's. I'm certain this really happened, although
I was not in on the conversations of the newcomers. This
particular conflict, as I say, created rather strong feelings.
One of the newcomers and one of the old guard, after a meeting in
which they debated rather violently, went out on the gallery of
the old Arts and Science Building -- what do they call it now?

LO: Hepner Hall.
GS: The older member punched the new, aggressive member in the nose. And, the new member supposedly threatened a big lawsuit about that. Nothing ever happened. The peculiar thing is, I learned later that the newer member who was one of the most aggressive... had been a combat soldier in World War II. On the other hand, the one who did the punch... I'd better be careful. I don't want to identify him.

LO: Don't give any names.

GS: He was a very dramatic character, also. Anyhow, that was one of the highlights of that particular week.

LO: I've heard of other instances of arguments turning to fisticuffs too.

GS: During that era of conflict, the English Department had to vote on whether to allow a couple of people to get married, Mary Redding and her fiance.

LO: Nepotism?

GS: They would have been violating the rule against nepotism; they had decided to get married. They had met, fallen in love, after they both became members (separately) of the department. They were already established as separate members so it would have been pretty nasty to vote and deny the marriage. They received our blessing. But later, they became a little discouraged with some conflicts in the department, I think. They finally went up to Oregon or Washington to have careers as freelance writers, which is a horrible fate, I think.

LO: Do you think that's a horrible fate? I think it would be
wonderful.

GS: Not horrible but a little too uncertain.

LO: A little too risky?

GS: Yes. I remember my office mate back in Maine, when he learned about our writing, saying, "Oh, that's the only way to live. You have your own office at home." We felt the same way too, and we felt that way for years. But when I came out here I was only part time to begin with. That meant we were dependent on the freelancing. But, as Owenita said, "There's nothing to worry about. we have the college reading anthology" which was doing well at that time. (It was used in 120 colleges and universities.) So, I really didn't have to worry but I didn't like the idea of being dependent for half of my salary on the sale of that one publication. After one semester they said this was just a transition. I could have as much teaching as I wanted. I worked 3/4ths and then said, "I think I'd like full time."

Freelancing didn't go with my temperament. It would go with Owenita's. She's the creative one.

LO: I'll ask you more about her toward the end of the interview.

Since we're on this sort of thing, and we're talking about the old school and the new school, I've got a list of names of people that I'm kind of curious about. Tell me whatever you can think of off the top of your head about these individuals. What do you have to say about John Theobald?

GS: John was a great teacher. I think at one time he was going to be a preacher. He was very eloquent. He came to see us (and it