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Herbert Arnold Oral History Interview, Jun. 8, 2015

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INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR HERBERT ARNOLD FOR THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

June 8, 2015 – Wasch Center with Professor Herbert Arnold

HEATHER ZAVOD Professor Arnold, I would like to ask where were you born, what you studied and also something about your background.

HERBERT ARNOLD: I was born in what is now the Czech Republic in Bohemia. The first ten years of my life were spent in Marienbad, which is one of the big spas in that part of the world. In 1945-46 I was part of the “humane” evacuation of Germans from the Czech Republic, which meant ethnic cleansing. We were expropriated, thrown out of our homes and put into cattle wagons—first into camps, then into cattle wagons and transported out to the American-occupied zone, in our case. My grandmother and that part of the family was moved from the Russian zone that was occupied by the Russians. We were occupied by the Americans, which a lot of people don’t know, and as it turned out later on there were connections with the western side which I can anecdotally fit in if you want.

Zavod: Yes, of course.

Arnold: And so we wound up in the American zone and that meant going to a place called Augsburg; there we were put on American army vehicles in the pouring rain and driven out to the villages because the farmers had room. Cities like Augsburg were totally bombed out; in fact the three or four days we spent there were spent in a bombed-out school without any roof and with the rain coming in. So anyway we wound up in a place called Markt Wald, a tiny village not far from the Alps, what Germany calls the pre-Alpine region of the Allgäu. It had about 900 people, 1200 cows, and a little elementary school. Well, by that time I hadn’t had any school for at least a year and a half because of the war, then the camps, the expulsion and all that. So I had to make up school—I think two and half or three years in one year. The local schoolmistress and the local Catholic priest decided that I should go on to secondary school and they spoke to my parents; to make a long story short I wound up in a small town about 40 km. southeast of Markt Wald called Kaufbeuren and that’s where I went to gymnasium, which is the prerequisite for studying at the university in Germany. I wasn’t there the whole nine years because in 1952-53 I went on an AFS [American Field Service] scholarship to Philadelphia. I had not told my parents anything about applying for that. I had seen the poster and I simply applied, figuring I wasn’t going to get in anyway because it was very competitive with interviews on the local, district and state level. In the end I wound

up being selected so I had to tell my parents because I needed my father's signature to get a passport and permission to go. So I went off to Philly and to Germantown High, where I graduated with a high school diploma from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and as one of the members of the victorious soccer champions of Philadelphia...the only city championship Germantown High ever won in anything [laughter] because it was a very small school. It was also a bit of an experiment for AFS because up to then if they sent you to a big city they sent you to a private school, or a public school then in a small town. This was a trial, a big city public school, let's see. [It] also worked because my school in Kaufbeuren and Germantown High had had ties with kids writing back and forth as pen pals so I had an established pen pal there—Barbara Bateman [laughter], who would wind up in my class later on. I came back to Germany, took the Abitur, then went on to the university. Everybody from my school went to Munich because that's the closest in the Bavarian region, but I was also a soccer player for a local amateur club and German clubs had these tournaments all over Europe annually—around Easter and Whitsun—where clubs get together, have little tournaments and have a lot of fun, and drink beer afterwards and all that. And I wound up with my team in a small town near Freiburg, and the local folks convinced me to come, join their club and to go to university there, which is what I did. I was able to pursue my interests, which were History, English lit and German lit, which was also a combination that you studied for if you wanted to teach later on in the Gymnasium... You had to have fields like that. While that changed while I was there, I always stayed with that grouping and it stood me in good stead because later on that, of course, actually was what I was able to teach in the College of Letters, which is why I not only wound up here, but stayed here. What you normally did, though, in Germany in those days was you didn't stay in one university because you didn't study *at* the university; you studied *in* certain fields, so you went for the best people in that field. That was one consideration. The other one was that if you wanted to teach in secondary school you had to have certification from the particular state that you wanted to teach in ideally, but if you wanted certification somewhere else there was sort of a gradation from the best to the worst. The best was Bavaria and at the bottom were some other states that shall remain unnamed. And since I was officially from Bavaria anyway, I figured okay, so my next university should be in Bavaria but I didn't want to go to Munich—(a) because everybody was there and (b) because it was viciously expensive to live in and difficult to find digs in. German students didn't have dorms in those days, you had to find your own digs. So I went to Würzburg instead and that's where I got my qualification examination for secondary schools (*Staatsexamen*, as it's called) and that's where I got my PhD later on. But there's one important back-up I have to make back to Freiburg—not only were there wonderful teachers there—really big names—I still remember years later that when I came here to Wesleyan Bob Benson was a medievalist in the History Department and he was just finishing his book on the investiture of bishops, and he found out that I had studied in Germany and said where and I said

Freiburg with Tellenbach and he said, “You studied with Tellenbach?” Tellenbach at that time was the head honcho of the Vatican archives in Rome and Bob Benson had gone there to do research and this man was one of the greats. So, these were very good and important people in their fields I had studied with, and then I went to Würzburg and I found very interesting and important people again, like Wolfgang Iser, who later on became sort of the head of a whole branch of literary criticism—based on his *The Implied Reader*—a book he was known for on both sides of the Atlantic. In Germany he later was at the University of Constance and he taught here in the U.S. at [the University of California] Irvine. He was also visiting at Wesleyan several times. The reason he becomes important in this story is that he was my English prof and normally German profs at that time didn’t know students by name or as persons. But Iser was different and I was a little different because I had been to the States and also I was a little fresh, I guess, because on a couple of occasions in Iser’s seminar I would correct his pronunciation. At first he was sort of startled but later he checked it out and said “Well, you were right,” and so he knew me. One morning I walked towards the university and out comes Iser, and he says, “You’ve been to the States, haven’t you?” and I said yes, and he said, “Want to go again?” and I said yes, why not. And he said, just go see the secretary. Well, what had happened was that in ’59-’60, George Creeger of the English Department here and one of the early directors of the College of Letters had been a Fulbright prof in Würzburg from where he came back here to Wesleyan. The College of Letters even then required its students to go abroad for which they needed some language preparation, so they wanted to have an intensive language course for these students here. And George wrote, as one did in those days, to Iser saying, “Can I have somebody from your staff to teach this course?” Iser wrote back that he could not spare anybody from his staff but, “I’ve got some good students if one of those is of interest to you.” Long story short, that’s how I came to Wesleyan in 1962 in the middle of the fall semester (the winter semester) and taught this intensive German course here. The College of Letters in those days was small; the college arrangement then, the buildings of the Butterfield Colleges didn’t exist yet; they were built later, so the College of Letters was still in Clark Hall. The College of Letters was down on the ground floor, my office was on the first floor and WESU radio was somewhere in the bowels of the whole thing. There I taught these kids—class of ’65—German, and German at the time was still the biggest group—it was THE modern language, foreign language, to take here. And at one time when I was teaching them and they were totally somnolent because it was warm inside, cold outside, and nobody really had that much interest and I saw their eyes drooping. I said, okay, everybody I’m going to teach you a little song, you’re gonna sing the song and you do everything I do. It’s a silly little thing and it’s called “Drei Chinesen mit dem Kontrabass,” “Three Chinese with a Counterbass,” and it gives you the ability to vary the vowels. So you just put in the new vowel... and it repeats. It’s one of those rounds. They learned it, they already started to giggle, and I said OK, now follow me, and I got up, I walked over and opened one of the windows, we

were on the ground floor, walked out the window and of course now with great joy they came after me and we walked up Foss Hill and down Foss Hill singing at the top of our lungs and walking all the way around Brownstone Row and then back into Clark.

Zavod: What a great image!

Arnold: So, Wesleyan being what it was at the time, a small college of all men and Vic

Butterfield being everywhere, two days later Vic cornered me and said “What was that all about?” I said, “What?” and he said you played Pied Piper with these kids. So I told him. He said, “wonderful pedagogy,” [laughter] which gives you an indication of what Wesleyan was like back then: (a) pedagogy was big, you had to have pedagogical reasons if you wanted to have programs. There’s no one who asks or even uses that word anymore. Everything now is: can we afford it, how much will it cost, do we have sufficient financial resources for follow-up, which is responsible but it just shows some of the changes. It also shows you something else...that (b) the president knew everything because it was a tiny little campus, everybody knew everybody else, much more of a family. It had a different side to it, too. Vic would go out in the evenings sometimes and sit with the students and discuss education generally, and I was in on one of those discussions and challenged him on some issues...I forget what it was, and was taken aside by one of my senior colleagues who said one doesn’t challenge the president like this. And I said, well he didn’t seem to mind. No only did he not seem to mind but it gives you a sense of how he operated. A day later I get a call asking would I like to join the subcommittee on so-and-so by the educational policy committee. You spoke up, you got co-opted. Okay. That was Vic. If you’re so smart and have something to say, bring it on, make it part of the operation of the college, which is also the way everybody thought and talked at the time. We talked with the college, not the little university, not the big university. And the same thing went for the deans. Dean Barlow, who was the dean at the time, was the same way.

Zavod: Did you like that atmosphere?

Arnold: Yes, very nice, very conducive, although it had its drawbacks, too, okay, one of which I experienced during my early first stay here because I sort of jumped the gun. When I came over in ’62 to do this intensive German, I was only here for a few months until early January after which I went back to Germany intending to do my apprenticeship there for the Gymnasium teaching and then go on and get my PhD and maybe my Habilitation. Well, by about May of ’63 I get this letter asking would I care to join

the faculty of Wesleyan. I talked this over with my wife, as we were married already; she had come with me from Freiburg to Würzburg, we had two children, so you don't just pull up roots and go to some unknown future. But I was interested so I said, how about it, and she said ABSOLUTELY NOT. I said why not. "They don't even speak proper English over there!" Well, we are here, so apparently she's overcome that and not only did she come but she taught at Wesleyan herself for many years and all that. We actually came officially as a family, as a group, in 1963 in the fall, and I came as an instructor since I didn't have my PhD, and as a member of both the College of Letters and the German Department, or Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures as it was called at the time, which is not only the oldest in Connecticut (older than Yale), but one of the oldest in the United States and was unusually strong in terms of its political standing and the number of people teaching in it. When we came back for that, we came as a family and that's why we came out of Germany from Bremerhaven. The negative that I was alluding to earlier was that this nice small college was all male, and had, in fact, a total absence of femininity either on the faculty or among the student body, of course. Well, I experienced it negatively because during my first short stint here I was put up in the dorm, in North College, which was still a dorm then, upstairs, and downstairs was the Dean's office...it used to be Dean's space, Mr. Barlow's, and the secretary...three or four rooms, that was it. The rest were dorms and the dorms were quite nice actually because you had a little reception room, then you had a study and a bedroom, but you didn't have your own bath. There was only one communal toilet and bath down the hall which was all right because it was only the lads there, but on weekends they would import the young ladies from all the various colleges, from Vassar to Conn College and places beyond, and they would roam the dorm and when I was trying to get to the bathroom in the evening I was stopped by a giggling gaggle of females laughing, oh, oh, oh, you can't go in there dit dit dit dit because someone was either throwing up or powdering her nose or whatever and it was expropriated temporarily. So this also gives you a little bit of a sense of what the negative side was because from about Friday on, that's all our students were thinking about and then Monday they were still dreaming about it, and by Tuesday you did sort of get them back on the straight and narrow to academics and so Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, you had them here, and then there was the weekend again and they were dreaming about the ladies again, essentially. This is an exaggeration but it certainly was a factor and so many of us later on in the '70s thought it was a no-brainer to go co-ed and it was one of the better decisions we made. There was brief talk at the time of going co-ed by combining with Vassar but then Vassar didn't want to leave its beautiful campus and, you know, this all came a cropper. There was already also talk back then about acquiring all the land out here on Long Lane that we eventually did get but that was a massive screw up because we could have had it much cheaper then, than we got it later on...but whatever the details, it didn't happen. Anyway, that was the idea, either to relocate Vassar there or somebody else or build new and make this an adjunct. Eventually all this was rejected,

thank goodness, and we came up with the idea instead of accepting women straightforwardly but in a typical Wesleyan twist we didn't start with freshmen...we started with upper class transfers, with senior and junior women from other schools who wanted to transfer and, well, that was a very self-selective group so these were the most high-powered, brilliant, interesting women probably to be found anywhere in the Northeast, and they showed it; for example, one of the young ladies that came into the College of Letters in that group was the first one to get University honors, which is beyond departmental honors, and it went on from there and they were all very good.

Zavod: What was the rationale for bringing them in as juniors and seniors?

Arnold: I don't recall. I think one of the arguments I do remember, and this was a crucial one, and I don't recall what the other reasons were but one of them was that will give us a chance to evaluate very quickly and, for the proponents, have the advantage that we would probably get pretty good self-selection and therefore have a better chance to demonstrate that it definitely, whatever else it did, was not going to affect negatively the quality of students that we had admitted. Here's a cute little pertinent anecdote—the same George Creeger that I mentioned earlier as a part of the College of Letters and English Department was Dean of the College when we introduced this and I was on the EPC [Educational Policy Committee] at the time so we had to go out and convince the alumni that this was a great idea, and it was interesting because there was a distinct generational breakdown. The oldest alumni were all for it, they had no problem with it. Whether it was because they didn't feel threatened by it anymore or whether they recalled that we used to have it once upon a time in the late 1800s, so-called “quail” at the turn of the century...whatever the reasons, I don't know. The youngest alumni had no problems with it, by and large. It was the in-betweens—staunchly opposed and the opposition always, no matter how it was phrased, boiled down to the same thing as it was expressed at a meeting at Russell House with George Creeger, Dean of the College, myself, I think Bonnie Blair might have been there, and we were sitting there and this whole room was packed and at the back of the room somebody gets up and said something like, “Well, George, admitting young ladies, won't that lower significantly our academic standards?” and George, by that time—he was a very patient man and very polite normally—clearly he had had it, so he took off his glasses and leaned forward and said, “Well, John, as I recall your class when it was here, the answer is no.” [laughter] Whether that did it or whatever else did it doesn't make any difference...we got it and it moved very quickly. After these early few people, we got more and then they started admitting from freshman on up, knowing full well that we might face another problem, which we still do—that, by and large, because of a number of factors, but among them is the fact that women develop much more rapidly, socially and intellectually, than men at that age and are better students because of that, you risk

getting many, many, many more highly qualified women than equally qualified men in your admission pool, and then how are you going to keep your balance. This is still a very tricky thing because it's quite clear, even today, I'm sure they officially deny it but de facto they have to keep out more qualified women to reach some semblance of balance...it's more women than men anyway at the moment, but only slightly.

Zavod: I just heard that same thing the other day from somebody at another university.

Arnold: It stands to reason because all our experiences bear that out. So then, you know, that we have that balance. There is another completely different thing and I'm jumping now backwards, having to do with the College of Letters and the College Plans, and that goes back to Vic. Vic had a dream...I mean he had several dreams but this was a big one...he had decided, rightly or wrongly, that the departmental structure of American higher education was not conducive to good education and he would want to break up departments if it were up to him. And one of the ways to do that was the College Plans. There were originally three, in keeping with the tripartite structure we've historically sanctioned at Wesleyan, of Humanities, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences, so there were going to be three interdisciplinary colleges: the College of Letters, the College of Social Studies and the College of Quantitative Studies. For all of that, this complex was built on Lawn Avenue, and it was built with the idea of replicating somewhere the Oxbridge notion of living and studying and having communal meals, etc., all in one place...the [Butterfield] Colleges in other words. That kind of togetherness very quickly failed. All the students, they didn't want it...that was too much. They figured they were together all the time academically and they didn't want to be together all the time socially with the same people. And so the dining hall was the first thing to go, the first dibs on the dorms for the people in the colleges were the second thing, and the only thing that remained was the different academic structure. The colleges were conceived from the beginning as interdisciplinary, which we can see from hindsight now was a bit of a timing problem because we went interdisciplinary at the very moment American higher education went more and more disciplinary and so this was one of the problems, but now everything is interdisciplinary so we were ahead of the time and we knew that. But [laughter] back then that wasn't obvious and that was the general problem with it. Departmental structures and the chairmanship power turned out to be much more ingrained than Vic had hoped and he was never able to replace it although there's the famous anecdote on his little farm that he had. He would always ride around in a little bulldozer and move boulders and things and he said, "Every time I move one of those boulders I see 'em as the chair of the History or some other department." [laughter] But there was a specific other stumbling block at the time and that was in the natural sciences. They had decided that they wanted to have graduate programs so of

course there was no support whatsoever for the College of Quantitative Studies (CQS) from the beginning because all the interests of the science department went towards getting a PhD program and the new science tower, and that's where they went. The spearhead of that movement was Bob Rosenbaum. But he was not the only one, or the one to blame, or whatever, he just happened to be the most visible man carrying the interests of that idea within faculty and administration, which he straddled very successfully for many, many years. Many had wanted Bob, after his interim presidency, to become president. He would have been president by acclamation and that included everybody, even in the Humanities. That was a no-brainer but he didn't want to. I was one of the first opponents of the PhD programs because the problem with it as I saw it and it's still true today is that in undergraduate education Wesleyan is still one of the top institutions, certainly in the Northeast if not in the nation, in terms of quality of students, quality of programs, etc., and faculty. Now, to get the equivalent of that quality as graduate students in the sciences you have to attract people who can also go to MIT or CalTech. Now don't tell me they're going to come to Wesleyan instead of going there if they're accepted, and of course it never happened, so there's a massive qualitative difference between the undergraduate and graduate program. What I have come to appreciate over time is the force of the argument and of the reality of the scientists that they, in order to really prosper professionally, need to do research with labs, but they then don't go on to say, but which is behind it, you can't run the labs without peons—free unpaid labor called graduate students...okay? And so, if we want to have and retain good faculty in the natural sciences doing research and publishing and being known worldwide then we have to have this kind of set-up because that's the way the set-up is in the sciences today, so in other words the rest of Wesleyan has to bow to the way the sciences have set up their system everywhere else. I appreciate that and I guess I see they have some forcible argument. And so over time we have made our peace on both sides with each other. Some of my best friends, like Willie Firshein [laughter], who was one of THE proponents of the thing, and I have simply decided never to talk about that because what's the point and what's done is done. I still think it was a bad idea because Amherst didn't do it, Williams didn't do it, and they're both proud to call themselves colleges and they both rank way ahead of Wesleyan, okay, on virtually all scales. So, enough said in terms of self-criticism on that. We go from a negative to the positive. The positive of course was the College of Letters was tailor-made for me personally and my interests. And even though back in the '60s if you went to a conference, and that actually happened for example at an American Historical Association conference, I was sitting at the bar and this guy comes sidling up to me and he looks at my Wesleyan badge, okay, and he says, "Don't tell me what your rank is, don't tell me what your salary is, I'm offering you one step up in rank and \$10,000 more in salary." I said, "How can you do that?" "Well," he said, "Well, I'm a recruiter for a consortium of small but very good Midwestern colleges and we're looking to upgrade and you come from a respected Eastern institution so let's talk." There were plenty of

opportunities back then...they closed up pretty quickly by around '70, '72, then came a big crunch and the de facto stop for new hires and all that kind of stuff; but that was all wide-open in the '60s. I wasn't interested in leaving; for one thing, you would not find me dead in the Midwest. I've been there [laughter], I've seen it and I wasn't going to go back to that. It's not my environment although I'm quite sure that the universities and towns, you know, like Madison and so on were perfectly fine because they are enclaves in a sea of what I regard as abject ignorance, but I didn't want to go. But beyond that, it was simply because the College of Letters is exactly what I was interested in. I was trained in history, I was trained in literature and I was trained in philosophy, because in Germany in order to do your state exam you have to have a minimum of four years of philosophy as well and those were the things I was interested in and was fond of. I was doing everything I ever wanted to do, okay. As I told somebody once who asked why I do this kind of thing. I said, "Look, I like to read, I like to talk, I like to talk about what I read, and I'm getting paid for it, so what's not to like?" And, I was with a lot of interesting people. In the beginning I had a colleague, Tom Tashiro, who was a Nisei, interned during the war and all that, and his family lost everything, never received any compensation, never received any apology from the government until many years later. A wonderful, wonderful teacher and I learned oodles from him. Peter Boynton, also one of the last to get tenure here without a PhD. M.A. Princeton and said, "I didn't see any point in going on to get that PhD." I said, "What did you do instead?" "I became a pianist on a riverboat on the Danube going from Vienna to the Black Sea," [laughter] and then he served in the Merchant Marines...a wonderful guy. In a way, he was my introduction to Chaucer. Well, he had worked with a top Chaucerian at Princeton when he was an undergraduate and the one thing I'll never forgive my good friend, Jerry Wensinger, in the German Department, for is when Peter died and Jerry disposed of all his books, I told him whatever else you do, that Chaucer volume of Peter's I want because it was filled with his notes from undergraduate years through all his teaching years, and I knew what they meant because this is the other great thing in the College of Letters: we're team teaching—a completely different concept of teaching and a very interesting one. There were people who were brilliant teachers in their own right, like Bob Benson in the history department or Henry Abelow in English—absolutely totally useless in the College of Letters because they could not do the give and take in a classroom with a colleague; they wanted to either dominate or insist on their professional point of view and it just never worked—did not work. Brilliant in their own way as teachers and beloved as teachers, and I think Henry even got one of the teaching prizes, Binswanger or something, and deservedly so, but he couldn't do team teaching. It takes a particular kind of person and you had to sort of go with the flow and dispense with narrow professional points of view, a little suspension of disbelief, you know.

Zavod: So when you came here, about how many years had the College of Letters been in existence?

Arnold: Well, it had just started up. The class of 1962 or 1963, I think, was the first graduating class so it started up in '58, I believe, but don't hold me to that. I'm an historian—I look things up. I know where to look them up and I don't have to keep them in my head. It's roughly true. The class of '65 that I took through with Tom Tashiro was pretty much one of the first two or three classes that graduated from the College of Letters. Duffy White in the Russian Department and now here at the Wasch Center is class of '62; he's from the first graduating class of the College of Letters.

Zavod: So then after Vic Butterfield...

Arnold: Well, after Vic Butterfield we had Ted Etherington. A lot of people are bad-mouthing Ted. I'm not, in part for selfish reasons, and I'll explain the second part. Also generally not because I think his tenure was too short to say anything about him as president. Also, Vic was at that time the longest serving president in Wesleyan history so he had shaped, transformed this institution from almost essentially a non-distinct, small, sectarian place in the Northeast to a significant liberal arts institution. [Laughter] One of the things he would always say, oh yeah, I don't deserve thanks for this; you have to thank Senator McCarthy for that because when he did his un-American activities hearings, a lot of people would get fired so Vic claimed he just followed that committee around. And whenever a good person was fired he would hire them and bring them here. So he assembled quite a few good old Marxists like Norm Rudich whom we had in the College of Letters and in Romance Languages. Now, you know, like all these anecdotes it's an exaggeration but not entirely. What he's talking about is a more general trend. There was a general upgrade in American higher education in the '60s and '70s in terms of the quality of faculty in smaller institutions and then later in State institutions, reflected in the hiring away of good people like Rudy Tokes, who was here in the Government Department and UConn took him. That would have been unheard of before...nobody would go from Wesleyan to UConn, but that happened back then, so that was part of a general shift. With his personal style Vic had impressed himself on this institution and most directly in the faculty. That led to problems, by the way, at the end of his career. In the beginning this was a great successful move...he'd go out, he'd find good people, he'd bring them here and then he'd find a place to put them, okay...that's unheard of now, right, because everybody else has an 18th-century English literature slot, then they'd go and find some 18th-century English literature person to fill it...no, he'd find good people, then he'd find a place and that was fine for a long time because he was building. Towards the end of his career when this was all pretty much built up, departments resented that they had not been consulted beforehand. I'll give you two examples in the History department: Ed Gargan and Stan Idzerda, both very good people in their own fields...I forget where Gargan came from, some Catholic

institution; Idzerda came from Michigan State or some place like that, and both of them came with this weight around their neck... never getting a chance as persons and as teachers and so on by the department because Vic had brought them in over their heads and they were supposed to incorporate them and they weren't going to, come hell or high water, and certainly not the History Department because it was a big department and a powerful department. Ed Gargan eventually left, Stan Idzerda became part of the administration and then rotated out. It's just an example of the responses; not every department reacted in the same way, but some of the bigger departments with traditions and personalities, did.

Zavod: So did that change with Etherington?

HA: Well, a lot changed with Etherington, and Etherington had the difficulty of now trying to live up or to live down this great predecessor, these enormous galoshes that were standing there that he was supposed to fill, number one. Number two, Etherington, you know, came from the American Stock Exchange. He didn't come out of education, okay, and he brought along a young finance officer named Colin Campbell. So, you know, there were these finance people and okay, let them do something for our finances; well our finances were fine at the time because they were still awash with the backwash of the Xerox money and all that, and in fact Ted initially continued the old Vic Butterfield thing... you got money and you have ideas, which is what we grew up with here, only to be sorely disappointed later on when there was neither money nor ideas and we had to make do. And then of course Etherington fell into that political trap that a Republican cabal in Fairfield County set up for him. Ted could have gone—and he wanted to go into politics, it was quite clear—but he could have gone for the Democrats and would have made it. He made the mistake of being convinced by his Wall Street buddies that the Republicans were his ticket where the Republicans were already playing him false because, in my opinion, they were just using him to split the vote so that their candidate that they had in mind made it through, and that eventually happened. He got defeated and he was out of it, when, to everybody's surprise, this unknown money manager threw his hat in the ring, which was already inappropriate. That was not the way it was done, but Colin said yes, I want that job and he got it; and as far as I'm concerned it was one of the better decisions for Wesleyan in its history. Not only did he serve forever [laughter], I co-served with him. We were exactly the same age so when we lined up on Foss Hill for a parade later on, I occasionally stood next to him, I mean once he was retired—not as president, obviously at different functions. And I served with him on an awful lot of things. I was on practically every committee you can think of during his tenure. The faculty was extremely politically active. We had completely different structures politically, we had a university senate for a while, all of which was deeply resented, especially by the scientists because they wanted to spend their time in the lab and not politicking. And Colin, bless his heart, had one

wonderful gift. It's very, very rare in people who get positions of power and I think it was his saving gift, his real strength. He knew what he wasn't good at and he knew he wasn't an academic and he would never be one, so he said I'm going to do everything else and I'm going to find myself somebody who runs the academic side and he did, and most of the time it was Nat Greene, not only, but he was the primary academic VP...we had Rosenbaum and Greene. So Colin had his advisers but they essentially were the ones who made, you know, the academic decisions, educational decisions, and personnel decisions. He would sign off on them, he would be on top of them, but he wouldn't initiate them or pontificate and so on. He'd look, decide, speak to it but he wasn't going to push it. He was very, very different from Vic...Vic had a very clear idea of what he wanted and he was going to push for this. And Colin did do his best work administratively and the other good thing that Colin had, and remember that during this whole time of course we were growing like Topsy as an institution, commenting on this, he said his greatest regret was allowing the unchecked growth of the student body without a thorough debate of the implications, and I agree...Wesleyan has since talked about that because we just kept hoping that in part it was driven by finances...if you get another 50 students that means so many millions and then we could do this and that, boy, we need to close that budget hole and the college kept growing, growing. The natural sciences with the PhD program kept growing and, you know, attracting outside money, etc., etc. So we really never sat down and discussed it. I had a minor clash once with Bob Kirkpatrick on that topic. When it was brought up he said, "What do you mean we didn't discuss that...of course we discussed it in detail." Yeah, in the inner circle of the president...it was not a university-wide discussion and what they called a discussion was a farce. One of the things is that it was a repeated farce...repeated by several presidents. They would come in and say, "Okay, let's have a public debate...present all ideas, I'm open to all ideas," and people got really excited, putting out papers, reams of papers and suggestions, all from their point of view and the idea was that, since we could not fund them all, a committee would look at them, pull out the best ideas and say, okay, this is what remains and this is where we want to go and everybody would have followed because they were part of the process; except when it came to the point where everyone was supposed to follow, all of a sudden everything was replaced, completely replaced and ignored, by a white paper from above that they had had in somebody's lower bottom drawer anyway. People would say that has nothing to do with anything we said and were asking. "Did you suggest it?" No. We talked to each other of course, nobody had suggested it, and now it came down from above and people said, pshaw, they did it the first time and they said, how terrible, second time I'm not going to even turn in anything, you know, fool me once.

Zavod: Did this begin to happen during Colin Campbell's administration?

Arnold: It happened at the tail end of Colin's administration but later it became sort of a repeated exercise with the following administrations, some of which were quite disastrous, you know, I'm sure I'm not the only one you heard that from. Whatever his name was that we sent off to Georgia, Chace, and they were also in contrast with Colin. If you went to Colin to talk to him about something, and we still had access, which now nobody has—starting with Bennet, access to the president by regular faculty members diminished and practically ceased. You always had to go through channels, you had to go through underlings, submit papers and so on and so forth. In the old days when there was something really important or pressing on my mind I would call up the president's office and talk to his secretary, okay, and I would say this is what I have in mind, see if you can find a few minutes where I can sit down and talk to him, and they would say, well now, three weeks from now or whatever and this is the key: you would get an answer. As Colin said, it may not be the answer you're looking for but you will get an answer and, by golly, you got an answer and you got it in a reasonable time. You were told: I'll take it under advisement but I have these 50 other ideas that you're competing with. Of course I know that...I'm not the only person in the universe...I'm no longer 16, and yeah, there are these competing ideas, and for the following reasons I can't do it but it's a good idea and we'll shelve it maybe, or whatever, but this was the procedure. With Chace, "Wonderful idea, oh we gotta sit down and look at this, it's fantastic, why didn't someone propose that before?" and it was the last thing you ever heard of it. I mean, forget about it. If you made the mistake of calling up later on and say you'd like to follow up on that, no, totally pointless. Why gush when you can't deliver? Why not say I'm very interested but we're doing the following things right now, sorry. Fine, any reasonable person would understand but, no, this was the greatest thing since sliced bread.

Zavod: What do you attribute that to?

Arnold: Ah, personality problem, I think. He was too glib with words. The exact opposite in many ways to people like Colin and also Vic...Vic could be quite eloquent if he wanted to but he knew when to be reticent and Colin was careful anyway, and very careful with phrasing everything and so was Doug Bennet. Etherington wasn't around long enough to develop a style all his own in that respect. And by the way, on Etherington, just to come back to that, it also gives you an indication of how different things were. As I said there was a personal reason I'm probably more positive about him than other people. When we first came, we and the children, we came on the J-1 visa, which could only be extended a couple of times and then you had to make a decision; it either had to be through an act of Congress, your visa had to be converted, or you had to go back to country of origin for two years and re-apply for an immigrant visa. Mim Daddario, who was "our man in Washington" at the time, was willing to try for a special act of

Congress, but that had a very uncertain outcome, so the two years sounded like a better deal. So there was question of going back to Germany but what were we going to live on? By that time we were a family of five, our youngest had been born here in Middletown but this is what you could do then, so Chad Dunham and I sat down with Etherington and we talked and Etherington said, "Well, you're doing the program abroad so why don't you formalize that?" It was all very diffuse at the time. Essentially, some of the kids were just sent off and we said come back when you're ready kind of thing or some language instruction somewhere and then you're on your own. So long story short, why don't we simply say you're running the program abroad? You're in our employ and we'll give you whatever we can, which was enough for us to live on since the dollar was worth something at that time. So we went back to Bonn for two years and I came back from there with a permanent residency green card in '67-'69. We were back in Bonn on this deal. You know, that kind of deal that is doing something for an individual while also furthering the institution's interest but on an informal basis, because there's no precedent for it, was possible back then.

Zavod: Creative out-of-the-box thinking.

Arnold: Nowadays, (a) you wouldn't get to the president...you'd have to go through the vice president for something or other, okay? They would say there is no precedent for that and moreover we don't have any money, so sorry, you're on your own, see you again in two years if you want to...you know. I don't think I'm exaggerating.

Zavod: Does the size of the school and the way it grew have anything to do with that?

Arnold: In part.

Zavod: In terms of the institutional structure?

Arnold: Yeah, I think probably the same range of reasons...(1) the personality types that we've gotten as presidents over the years. There's a shift in the type of person that seeks that office. It seems that in the past you didn't seek the office, the office sought you. Now there are people who seek the office and they are quite clearly making it a career and they have a plan and the plan has certain steps...the steps go upward, you know, from California to the East Coast to Princeton or whatever kind of thing and you know in the process you have to throw in a couple of things that make you publicly known, like books that you can promote and so on and so on. So you know this is the whole plan and I'm not knocking anyone, especially not our current president. He was a Wesleyan student, in fact a University major. This

is simply the way things are now and he's playing by the rules of the game, so I'm not going to blame somebody for the rules of the game. He hasn't set them up; all was very different back then. Candidates for president were people who had different and other kinds of backgrounds, they had alternatives so if this panned out...fine, and if it didn't pan out it didn't matter. This was not their only career in which they had to succeed. So I think that's one issue and the other one is simple size. The bigger the institution gets, the harder it gets for the administrators and quite honestly to do justice to everybody and they can't really know the details of the persons, family, and life and so on and so on, the way it used to be...again an anecdote: When we had finally arrived in '63 to join the faculty and Annemarie at that time was not part of the faculty, that came later on in '70 or so, Chad Dunham, chairman of the German Department, took me around in person to the head of every department to introduce me. And that also included the recently retired great men, the Colonel Crusé type of people, who were no longer officially part of the institution but they actually were, and so you were being shown around and the feedback mattered on how you would fit in, as well as how does he handle himself socially. You were invited out to cocktail parties, to dinner parties, and you were looked over and you were engaged in the conversation and so on, all of which played a role and is this person a good fit for Wesleyan or not. Later on this was described as nepotism or ingrown toenails.

Zavod: So that factored into tenure decisions...

Arnold: To some extent it could, because everybody knew about everybody else and a lot of people already made up their minds long before someone came up for tenure so that could affect one both negatively and positively, either way. But, again, back then the cultural center of the campus in Butterfield's days, and still Etherington days and early Campbell was the Downey House, and the downstairs Downey House had this lower pit and then there were dining tables on the upside and then there was the round table and the chimney behind it and over here were the post office boxes for the faculty, so everybody in the morning came to the post office, had a chat with postmaster, had coffee, and then if you were significant enough, you sat at the round table and if you were insignificant you sat in the second row, you know. Ed Williamson of the Romance Languages Department once famously said when asked how do you know whether somebody's a good fit for Wesleyan or not, he reportedly said, "Well, if he can hold his own in a conversation for more than ten minutes at the roundtable." And it was true. The conversation level at the roundtable was a good deal higher than at most professional meetings. And you really had to be on your intellectual twinkle toes to stay up with "them" and it was done deliberately, always testing, testing, testing, testing.

Zavod: How did you feel about that as a junior member?

Arnold: I loved it because I came from a combative, competitive background. That's the way you do it in Europe. I debated my professors, I debated my colleagues, so for me that was natural...that was the air I breathed so that wasn't an issue, which later on I expressed one time at an academic council meeting on tenure, a saying I was much criticized for later on. There was one person, one colleague, whom I liked and spoke for, but several other people got up and one of them got up and said, "Well, I don't think he's appropriate for us, you know, he's always intellectually intimidating me." And I got up and said, "Well, I'm sorry I haven't been intellectually intimidated on this campus by anybody so I don't think this candidate is inappropriate." Well, that was the wrong thing to say! It's true. It's up to you. So this is another thing...it's the personality types that we imported over the years, and I don't want to sound like, you know, one of those old codgers that everything was better in the past...it wasn't...a lot of things were dubious. But, I don't think the quality of the junior faculty now intellectually is what we had back then in the '60s. Not the quality, the background, the knowledge, the ability to go at each other...in part, they're too nice, quite frankly, and too easily intimidated.

Zavod: I'm not sure if some of that comes from our whole educational system, but how much do the current problems with obtaining tenure-track positions factor in because you have adjunct faculty coming from here and there?

Arnold: Yep, that's a very, very bad development and it's of course finance driven. The main reason why we have moved more and more away from real tenure and to more and more adjunct is because you don't have to pay them, either job security or any benefits, so one saves on the benefits. It started by the way, way back when in the '70s. I know because Annemarie was one of the victims, early victims, of that. My wife started out teaching intensive German and doing a little filling in, a course here and there and so on and so on and it grew over time until she practically carried a full load of language teaching, at which point one of the ladies in the (what do you call it...used to be personnel office?) Human Resources, which tells you everything you need to know with that change in nomenclature; they're no longer people, just resources. Well, one of the people in Human Resources, bless her socks, said well, wait a minute, this lady has taught full time for quite a number of years and she doesn't have any benefits. That's illegal...we can't do that so they said well, sorry about that, we can't do anything to backdate you and catch you up, but it will begin immediately, which means of course that her benefits are significantly below what they should be and once more this feeds in now with maltreating women generally and the gender differentiation and payment, which pisses me off no end as the father of three daughters. You know, I've

never understood that and how they can get away with that but they do...still 72 cents to the dollar for women on average in the United States and that brings up another issue which I think is a critical issue of the good old days (there were these bad aspects of the good old days). One of them had to do with faculty hiring and my feminist friends were quite correct in critiquing this because I remember distinctly when I first came, (a) there was one single solitary woman among the faculty...an isolated lady in the English Department, she was sort of kept in the background, very nice and that was it...there were no other women on the faculty. There were also no Jews on the faculty, okay, not in the English Department, for example. Why, because recruiting went as follows: They needed somebody in the English Department, the chairman of the English Department, Yale graduate, would get on the phone, call up his dissertation adviser, and say, "Hi, John here; uh, Joe, could you tell me what do you have in the pipeline?" And Joe said, "Well, not a hell of a lot but there are two or three chaps I could send up...you can have a look at them." They'd come up, have an informal chat, be sent around a little bit. That was the next hire. The rest of the world didn't know there was an opening at Wesleyan and certainly women needn't apply, okay. So opening that process, getting women into the faculty, allowing them to have the nepotism rule lapse, that was thanks to the Ohmanns. Dick and Carol Ohmann essentially broke that rule because the nepotism rule was that you could not have husband and wife teach at Wesleyan originally and certainly not in the same department. Well, the English Department wanted Carol Ohmann and they wanted Dick Ohmann and they weren't going to get them as separate items; they had to take them together, and that killed that rule, without which Annemarie couldn't have taught in the German Department while I was also a member of the German Department, that we never had much overlap, that we didn't necessarily agree on internal political decisions, and so on...but that didn't make any difference to people but then after a while all became moot So that was some of the stuff that was beneficially revised...it was a major, major change. Also in the very, very beginning we had people who were academically a joke, they were independently wealthy, they had gotten their PhD...they didn't really need [to work]. We still had some of that later on...we had a junior faculty meeting once and there was a question of salaries and what to do about them, especially junior faculty salaries because they lagged way behind, and one of my colleagues got up and said, "Well, we all knew when we came to Wesleyan, that we didn't come here for the money." Well, there were several of us who jumped up immediately and said maybe you didn't, but I need it, okay.

Zavod: Is that when the attempt to unionize came up?

Arnold: Yes. And that too was very different. The junior faculty was very, very active.

Zavod: Did junior faculty meet separately?

Arnold: Oh yes, absolutely.

Zavod: And is that still true?

Arnold: No, well I don't know. I don't know what the current status is.

Zavod: Well, when you retired?

Arnold: They would still get together on certain issues, on tenure issues where they of course were always nervous and more suspicious than they need to be actually. Yes, it's an odd process and it's weird and so on. It's not quite as bad as the junior faculty think. It's not nearly as good as some of the people on the Advisory Committee think. Yeah, because the Advisory Committee tends to wind up with some of the more conservative people on the faculty, and so they're not necessarily always the best to be in there to make these decisions. I've seen some horrendous decisions made and then, of course, I'm sure you've heard from elsewhere or seen it. This is one of the big, big, big shifts, and it's a universal shift in American higher education. As the shift to professionalization came and the narrower and narrower definition of professionalization, you know—the 18th-century English novel...that's what he did his dissertation in and that's what he'll be forever. The move away from identifying with your college towards identifying with your discipline became increasingly pronounced and that defined, of course, how tenure was seen and given. A parallel development is that no matter what the lip service, especially and this now becomes specifically Wesleyan—you know Chicago, they don't give a hoot about this, they don't care what you teach, people go there because it's like a German university, that means research oriented towards its graduate students, undergraduates will be tolerated, and they'll have to live off the scraps that fall from the tables of the great people. Wesleyan, however, had always prided itself on teaching, on pedagogy. That has changed. No matter what they say, no matter how many Binswangers we give out, no matter, you know, what the pretense is, you had to be a top-notch teacher in order to make your career at Wesleyan when I first got here. The humanities program, which was universal and required for everybody, was an indication of that. Chad Dunham ran it with an iron fist. It was set up so that the same things were taught in the same week by everybody. Everybody included biologists as well as the classicists doing Machiavelli, for example, with the Germanist giving the Wednesday lecture on Machiavelli to the assembled faculty, that kind of thing... Well, the only people Chad would allow into humanities teaching were the best teachers, but normally beginning faculty didn't show up there. This was senior faculty with a few exceptions here and there. Why? Because teaching is something that's so

important that we can't turn anybody who's not top notch and tested loose on our freshmen, because this is how they get inducted into the Wesleyan spirit of inquiry, etc., etc. Well, at the latest commencement, Annemarie and I were invited by the class of '70 to join them, and I looked at the list of invitees and I said I don't know a single person, who the hell invited us. Well, we got there and Charlie Boss comes up and says, you know, I'm responsible. I am still teaching at Penn State and I am still using your interpretation of the *Oresteia* from my freshman humanities class of '70 and am about to retire. So it was that kind of thing. That emphasis—at Wesleyan it was clear at the beginning: teaching, scholarship, university service. The ranking was quite, quite clear and if teaching and university service were superior, weakness in scholarship could be forgiven. That changed completely and it changed from Campbell on, or from Nat [Nathanael] Greene on. Nat's mission as Vice President of Academic Affairs, and I love Nat dearly and we've become very [chuckle] understanding of each other and all that, but his insistence that the faculty at Wesleyan needed upgrading in the area of scholarship, while correct, was a bit overdone. In other words, I agree with his basic idea. I don't agree with the way it has been applied because it has deprived us over the years of several very, very, very good people. It wasn't that they weren't publishing but that they weren't publishing at the rate it was expected. In one case in particular it ticked me off no end. This guy was working on Homer. It's one thing if you work on, you know, feminist theory, all 15 years of it. On Homer you have two thousand years of scholarship. What do you expect? It's going to turn out something new every other week? You know, I mean, it didn't make any sense. You know, that kind of thing. The gradual de-emphasis, de facto de-emphasis on teaching and the increased emphasis, not only on scholarship but on quantity of scholarship over quality; and in the areas where I know something, I can tell you that in no uncertain terms. Twentieth-century history for example, European history, generally German in particular, 80 percent of everything that's ever been published is crap. Of the other 20 percent, 10 percent is totally wrong, and only 10 percent is worth reading. But, those totally wrong are so interesting and well-documented that you have to deal with them, so that 20 percent is really worth scholarship. The rest, the other 80 percent, are just fillers...noise, white noise, things the people spew out because they have to "meet tenure expectations." In the best of all possible worlds nobody should be allowed as a historian to publish anything before he's 40...they have to have lived, they have to have thought, they have to have read a lot of things, they should have been around, seeing things...then they can begin to talk. As it is now you've got these young punks and they're putting out stuff...every other sentence tells you they haven't thought of this, they haven't thought of that, they've never heard of this. Their world begins yesterday and they're out there talking about things, you know.

Zavod: Shall we continue this later this week?

Arnold: Yes.