

Southern Voices Oral History Project
Florida Southern College



Interviewee: Robert "Bud" Caldwell, Class of 1942

Interviewer: LuAnn Mims, College Archivist

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Transcription: Kenneth David Kellom "Chip" Hafner

[Beginning of recording too noisy to transcribe]

Caldwell: ... and then ah ... my second, my third year I started blowing the bugle as a, as a junior. And did that until I graduated in 1942.

Mims: *So, what brought you here, and I'm really curious so you came that summer to make the blocks? Is that what you were doing? Is that what your task was? To make the concrete or did you actually make the ... pour it into the forms?*

Caldwell: We poured it into the forms and then they set up them out ... to cure.

Mims: *Right.*

Caldwell: Then I left in order to go back home. But I drove back and forth ...

Mims: *Right.*

Caldwell: ... the next two years. I delivered the *Tampa Morning Tribune* ...

Mims: *Oh my goodness ... so you were a newspaper ...*

Caldwell: ... for two years. To about 150 different people every morning. And ah, someone would come up and knock on our door at 3:30 in the morning. And I got up and delivered papers came back and ah, slept for about an hour and a half. Then drove over here to the college and I did that for my first two years here. Then I moved here. Into that house across from ... on McDonald Street. Her [points to wife, Mrs. Caldwell] middle ... her name was um ... Mildred MacDonald. [laughs] Nothing to do with the Street.

Mims: *Uh huh ...*

Caldwell: But ah she has Parkinson's ... and ah, so she gets around and ... can visit with people, but ah, its tiresome for her to travel.

Mims: *Do you remember how much you were paid that summer? Was it by the day? Was it by the hour? Or was it just ...*

Caldwell: It was credit for college. I have no idea. What it, what it amounted to at that time. I know that when I graduated, my father had to bring a check for \$300 to Dr. Spivey for me to get my diploma.

Mims: *Wow.*

Caldwell: So that was part of the last year, I don't know how much of it.

Mims: *Do you remember Dr. Spivey?*

Caldwell: Oh yeah, yeah very much. I have been in his office a number of times. Um ... in fact I even got a letter from him one time; when I was overseas in World War Two. It cost \$10 for that bugle, my dad bought the bugle. 'Course, that was no more strange than the, than the people who wanted to ah, get me registered for the war, because I was already in it, over in Saipan, when I got that letter.

Mims: *Wow, so, before we, I want to talk more about that but let's ... let's go back. So you started working here at 16 and built up your credit so you could attend school here.*

Caldwell: Uh huh ...

Mims: *So, was there an application process? Or was this ...*

Caldwell: Yes.

Mims: *Yes ok ...*

Caldwell: We did have to apply. I was applied as a student the whole four years.

Mims: *Right, well do you remember if there was any exam you had to take before you could come in?*

Caldwell: No ... no ...

Mims: *Okay.*

Caldwell: No exams, I guess they looked at your high school diploma ... but ah, that I had just gotten. I had graduated from high school in May and then in July I was, uh 17 I guess.

Mims: *What year did you graduate from high school? Do you remember ...*

Caldwell: '38, I was 17.

Mims: *Seventeen years old, well what did you think coming to this school and helping to build these buildings? Do you remember what you thought at that time?*

Caldwell: Well, at that time there was between seven and 800 students here. And ah ... you got to where you knew a lot of the students. A lot of the fellas that found their girlfriends ... found them here. I had already found my girlfriend when she was 14 over in Mulberry.

Mims: *Really, so she's from Mulberry?*

Caldwell: Yeah. And ah, so I didn't look for one here. I had some friends here but ah, and some were, were girls actually. But she was the number one when I could get to her. I had to fight through five brothers and a sister to get to her.

Mims: *Oh my Gosh ... well it must have worked out. You guys are still together. How long have you been married?*

Caldwell: We've been married, on May fifth it will be 68 years.

Mims: *Congratulations.*

Caldwell: Thank you, thank you.

Mims: *What was your course of study when you were here?*

Caldwell: I, I majored in industrial arts. But since I had, while I was here, in my senior year I had made up my mind to fly and I got into the civil pilot training programs. Sponsored, I was sponsored by the Navy. And I went out here Roberts flying school at the old airport, where the baseball field is now; and got into flying. And I, the day I graduated from Florida Southern, I rode a bicycle out there and meet the FAA, inspector.

He took me up for my flight check, and I got my private pilot's license the same day I got my, degree from here. So from that point on I was deemed in the Navy. But I have enjoyed the industrial arts all my life. Because I learned to do so many things, I was kind of a handyman at home.

Mims: *Well did it help that you had that experience with the construction? Did that impact your decision at all?*

Caldwell: Yeah, it was, it was kind of an interesting course, Frank Lloyd Wright, was a, strange sort of person. I know one day there was a lot of hangover on one, along the side of the building [Annie Pfeiffer Chapel] coming this way I guess. And one day when he was here, while the engineering officer who was in charge of the construction said to, to Mr. Wright, "You have this information about this hangover in here, you got ah, but there's no definite instruction about how we tie it into the main building." I'm not going to say what he [Frank Lloyd Wright] said back. But in order to get his point across he said, "I draw the pictures, you're the engineer you figure it out." He was a very tough man to talk ...

Mims: *Did he talk to the students at all? Or did he just talk to his engineer, his point person ...*

Caldwell: He would talk to you if he had time. Little short guy, about this high.

Mims: *So did you work on more than, because Pfeiffer is built before you graduated. So did you do the building the whole time that you were a student here? Was that just ...*

Caldwell: When I, when I got the job of, of being bugle boy, I did not work on any more construction. But during those two years the row of buildings that leads away from there, was for classroom buildings ...

Mims: *The seminar buildings? Right over there?*

Caldwell: Yeah, they were under construction those years I was here. Nothing happened until Frank, until Dr. Spivey had the money for it to happen. And it was interesting he, somewhere, got a million dollars to interest Frank Lloyd Wright in building the only college campus oriented construction in the world. And ah, he decided he would do that kind, of like calling it the kingdom of the sun construction.

Mims: *Where's the library, the round library. Was that going up at that time too?*

Caldwell: No I don't think so.

Mims: *How about the walkways, that we call the Esplanades?*

Caldwell: Some of them were, away from the chapel going towards Joseph-Reynolds. I don't know how far, but they were selling those columns. They were getting somebody to donate \$100. And then they could start building the column. And that's how that got started. They'd put your name on it if you gave \$100.

Mims: *There are names everywhere.*

Caldwell: Yeah.

Mims: *Well so when you were a student here did you put all of your effort into, work? Or what was it like to ... go to school here do you remember any of your professors?*

Caldwell: Oh yes, yes we did. Uh huh. In fact, after, during my Navy experience, I was assigned to teach ROTC, at Auburn University ... and the colonel in charge of that unit, second day we were there said, "Over in that red brick building right over there through the window is the headquarters for graduate enrolment. You all," there were three of us, "you'll go over there tomorrow and get signed up." So, I got my master's degree in education administration. At Auburn, that way. And ah, as we were there and my wife's folks and some of mine were down here in the Mulberry-Lakeland area, we would come to Tallahassee from Auburn, and visit the gentlemen who were the director of vocational-technical and adult education at Florida.

He was my drafting and design industrial arts teacher here at Florida Southern. One day, when I was in the Navy 22 years, I had to be in Key West. During that Cuban crisis thing, and he called up and he says "I wonder, I think you told me one time that you'd want a career in the Navy and you can do that in 20 years, and you got 22. Why don't you come up here? I've got a job for you." And that's how I got to Tallahassee, 49 years ago.

My Florida Southern College professor, Roger Williams, was the man who became state director of vocational-technical and adult education. And NASA was after technical people. And he was given the task of putting technical programs in community colleges. And in vocational technical centers, you have

one or two here in the Lakeland-Bartow area. We built 37 of those in the time I was involved with it. And we instituted technical associate in science degree programs in the community college. Now those are not transferable, but could, parts of it could be. If the teachers wanted it or the students wanted it. And I worked with the NASA people going to the various industries in Florida. We took a survey of, 5,000 business and industries in Florida. The first few months I was there, I knew ... I'd met the, computer science director for the department of education and we designed a one-page letter, and a computer card they called them in those days ... punch hole cards ...

Mims: *Yeah ...*

Caldwell: ... and we sent them out. We got 3,000 responses from that. We asked them how many technicians they had on staff. How many they would like in one year, in two years, and three years? And then I would go and visit them and talk to them about how we could develop programs for them, and what their part would be in advising us. And for us to see what equipment we need to put in laboratories, so that training could be done ... and so ah, we had money, ah to do, that part of it was Florida, part of it was federal left over from World War Two.

Mims: *Really.*

Caldwell: See this was in 1963. And, ah, so when they would decide to put a program in Polk Community College in data processing, or in civil engineering or something like that, mechanical engineering, we would go to the businesses that responded to that and tell them, "We would like to put this in for you. Would you help us get it into this college?" Or if it was drafting, was drafting and design, we, some of those programs in technical centers. And so that's what I did. And ...

Mims: *So let's back up for a minute. You said they had drafting here at Florida Southern?*

Caldwell: Yes ... they built it while he was here. They built an industrial arts building here.

Mims: *The Ordway Building?*

Caldwell: Yeah.

Mims: *Yes, so is that where most of your classes were?*

Caldwell: That was finished after I graduated.

Mims: *Okay, so where were your classes held?*

Caldwell: In the basement of, the old building down there, that used to have the library in it [Edge Hall]. The brick building and it was the dining room, and classroom building. And in the basement level of that, on the back side towards the lake was the industrial arts center.

Mims: *Okay ... was this on Ingraham right there?*

Caldwell: No, that building was the only one of three brick buildings. That was here at the time.

Mims: *Okay there was Edge ... Edge Hall.*

Caldwell: ... and that one down, below there ... I don't remember what the name of it is now. But that was classrooms and dining.

Mims: *There's [Joseph-]Reynolds and, Spivey was a dorm? Well, because the industrial arts building is built then after you are here. So what else did you take in Industrial arts? If you did drafting, what else, what other courses did you take?*

Caldwell: We took ah foundry, we took, carpentry, types of things, But mainly, we, I was interested in the drafting and design and, we didn't have computers.

Mims: *No, no, CAD. But I was wondering you know, if, when Frank Lloyd Wright was here why I don't know if we never had any architectural courses or did they have architectural courses? Just straight drafting?*

Caldwell: Ah huh.

Mims: *Well, how did you come by to be the campus bugler?*

Caldwell: Well, actually there was one before me, uh, I was thinking about it this morning, and I knew that he was graduating. And so I went to Dr. Spivey and asked if I could do that. Because I played trumpet in a band, and ah I could do that, and ah, he let me do it.

Mims: *What were your responsibilities?*

Caldwell: I had to blow *Reveille* at 6:30 on either side of, end of these two, Joseph-Reynolds and Allan Spivey Hall. And then I know it went a long ways because, the fella that taught me to play the trumpet lived two blocks up here, and he said, "I never thought, I thought I'd get away from you one of these days but there you are." He, he taught me when I was just ten, but ah, he was um, he was the man in charge of the bell boys at the Florida Children's Home, when we were there, and ah ...

Mims: *So you blew Reveille ...*

Caldwell: Yeah, at 6:30, then to start classes, and then I'd go into class, and then I'd come back out and stop classes. Wait ten minutes and start them again. And so that was my day's activities.

Mims: *Was that like on the hour? Or ...*

Caldwell: Yeah ...

Mims: *And so you blew it for every class?*

Caldwell: Yes.

Mims: *And it was Reveille, or what did you play?*

Caldwell: Oh, I had a bunch of things ...

Mims: *Lots of different things ...*

Caldwell: And, my trumpet, my bugle was new. And one of the slides was easy to use. It worked so well I put some jazz in it too. You could tell the difference.

Mims: *You did that every day?*

Caldwell: Every day. Yeah, I, I'm sure you may not know, but there was a fella named Rodeheaver, who used to be a big writer for Christian music and he would play with Billy Sunday, who was an evangelist, and the early part of Billy Graham's, evangelistic work, but he would come here in the winter. And he'd visit the campus and sit, when I, and between classes, those ten minutes, and we could visit, and Homer Rodeheaver was his name, was on a number of our hymns, in our songbooks, but you could visit with all kinds of people who came here. They were wondering what in the world's going on here with this bugle sounding here. And ah it was interesting, I knew everybody, I've forgotten everybody just about now, that was a long time ago.

Mims: *Did you end the day with Taps?*

Caldwell: Yes I did.

Mims: *At sunset?*

Caldwell: *Reveille* in the morning, and *Taps* 10:30.

Mims: *PM?*

Caldwell: I've been trying to think if *Taps* were at 10, to give them a notice that they had to be in at 10:30. But I cannot remember for sure. But *Taps* came so they could be in the building at 10:30, and that was when the doors were locked. Really!

Mims: *When ah, you were here whenever we experienced the Pearl Harbor. What was the campus like at that time?*

Caldwell: Well, we lost a number of young students, who went to the, Royal Canadian Air Force and, later quickly over into England. I did not do that, I wanted to go to this, Navy; I did not want to go to the Royal Canadian Air Force. But they did that because they were interested in getting into things. And so, I would say maybe ten, could be fifteen of the people in school here at that time went to the Canadian Air Force.

Mims: *You were so close to graduating, that's why I was wondering if it impacted you at all.*

Caldwell: Well the Navy wouldn't take anybody as an aviation cadet who had not graduated. I didn't know about the others. But when I was at Auburn thankfully I had my degree, so I could go to graduate school. But in the Air Force particularly and in the Army you could become an officer without graduating.

Mims: *Like a non-commissioned officer, NCO?*

Caldwell: Well, that would be first lieutenants, the first level. [First level of being an officer in the Army is actually second lieutenant; first lieutenant is the second level] Of course a lot of them went right over as soon as they graduated from flight school; they were ahead of me in some cases.

Mims: *Did you play the bugle in the service at all?*

Caldwell: No I didn't do that, I did play in a, in a band. One time I was on an aircraft carrier for two years and we were in the sixth fleet in the Mediterranean in 19 ...

Mims: *What carrier? ...*

Caldwell: ... '47 and '48. It was the *USS Philippine Sea*, was the name of it. And it was the flag ship of the Sixth Fleet. There were, I guess, a couple of cruisers and 10 or 12 destroyers in that group. And so there was an admiral's band on there from Washington. And I played in that band once in a while, when we would go into a port, they would invite young ladies to come on board, to a dance, in our hanger deck, that was just below the flight deck and ah, they would entertain them and give refreshments, and the guys could get a chance to dance.

Mims: *You had your own USO going there.*

Caldwell: Yeah.

Mims: *Who became the bugler after you? Was there somebody that you knew that took on the responsibilities here?*

Caldwell: Well I'm not sure but there a tower that used to have a bell in it, and, whether it was electronic or not I don't know.

Mims: *I know that the Pfeiffer Chapel had that carillon chimes.*

Caldwell: Isn't there a tower?

Mims: *There is, there's the Centennial Tower that's not put up until 1983 though, I don't know if there was something that predates that.*

Caldwell: It was, it was given by a lady that owned a big ranch down in south central Florida. And I think they used the chimes from that thing, for a while after I left. I don't know for sure because I was gone.

Mims: *I didn't know whether there was someone that took the reins after you left, that it was somebody that you knew? ...*

Caldwell: I don't know.

Mims: *You don't know. Where you paid anything for that? To bugle ...*

Caldwell: No money, just credit ...

Mims: *Just credit ...*

Caldwell: For my, my, what do you call them scholarship money. Or something ...

Mims: *Right, your work study basically, that was your job was ...*

Caldwell: But my father, must have given some each year, because in order to get my diploma, I had to get him to put down three hundred dollars, for me to graduate,

Mims: *Seems like quite a lot.*

Caldwell: Spivey, Spivey was right there with me.

Mims: *What do you remember about your graduation ceremony; where was it?*

Caldwell: It was in Annie Pfeiffer Chapel. Yeah, I got my degree, diploma whatever you, and instead of sitting down I went outside got on my bicycle and went out to the airport for my flight check.

Mims: *Wow, that was back to back, wasn't it.*

Caldwell: Yeah because after that it would have been some time before I could get another flight, FAA man over here. And so I did that.

Mims: *But you did attend the graduation?*

Caldwell: Oh yes, yes, I, I didn't want to miss that.

Mims: *You were here leading up to the war years, so I'm just trying to figure out how different the campus was. It seemed like whenever you came here and you know we're exiting the depression and we're going into the war. Could you tell a difference between your first couple of years and your last couple of years here?*

Caldwell: Well my first couple of years, it was '38 and '39 and some of '40 I guess. And ah, well it was, no, there was no, no supposition that we would be involved in the war at that time. But we did begin to get, when they began to giving ships to Great Britain, why we knew that things were involving us and this country. They gave them 40 World War One destroyers, for instance, to kind of guard the straights over there. And try and find German submarines that were bothering at the time.

And then in, Pearl Harbor [December 7, 1941] why everything kind of shift those. There were guys here that didn't know whether to just quit right then and graduate, or just go. A lot of indecision, there was nothing; well for instance my wife had taken a business course here and went to work for Food Machinery Corporation, which was here in this town, I don't know if it still is or not.

Mims: *It's changed names, but they just recently had their seventy-fifth anniversary.*

Caldwell: Yeah, she was in the procurement office. And ah he, Donald Roebling, Donald, Donald was the name of the young fella that I got the bugle, he blew the bugle. Donald ...

Mims: *The one before you?*

Caldwell: Yeah he had a, either an uncle, or his father was on the staff here. In some room, it's not, I cannot it may come.

Mims: *Well some of this stuff I can look up, too.*

Caldwell: Yeah. Um anyhow, Roebling had invented a device that would flat, that would float, with tracks like a caterpillar. To look up for people who were in the Everglades, during the hurricanes that got swept away off of Matecumbe Key, in the Florida Keys. There were some 400 lost that way, everybody off of that key. And he invented this thing and the war, Marines says that's what we need. And so they started building tanks here, and then they built one, a factory out in Long Beach, Los Angeles and my wife and her close friends from high school went out there, to ah work in the procurement office in Los Angeles.

And ah they built all the tanks that they used in the invasion, the amphibious invasion, and ah they would float and carry a crew on board and go on into the battle. And, ah ... I came back from my first tour overseas in 1944, and I call her sometime early 1945, I hadn't been able to speak to her for a good while. And during the phone conversations we decided to get married. Which we did in Corpus Christi, in 1945. And ah, then I went back overseas again. But, ah, that was how she got through the war. And ah, other women I'm sure, in college and everywhere, got jobs like that, ah, in various agencies that were building ...

Mims: *To help be the support.*

Caldwell: There was no women's, no women's group in the war for a good while you know, before the WAVES [Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service] and the ...

Mims: WACs [Women's Army Corps].

Caldwell: WACs came in.

Mims: *What was the atmosphere on the campus? Though it would have been right after the Thanksgiving holidays and right before you went on Christmas break. Was there any security measures? You know you hear about the blackouts at night.*

Caldwell: You couldn't turn the lights on in the rooms after, after dark.

Mims: *So they did institute those type of protocols?*

Caldwell: Yeah. Yeah.

Mims: *That's why I wondered if you as the bugler were given any additional charges about alerts or anything. Because ...*

Caldwell: Well if there was something I could see. There was a dean of women over in the, Joseph-Reynolds Hall, in the left hand side as you went in. Spivey's office was on the right hand side at that time. I would mention it to him. And the same thing she take, call somebody over to the other building. And they had to put stuff up at the library down there, on the windows, so light couldn't get out at

night. That kids could study. And ah, there were changes like that. So called small changes, but they felt very important changes.

Mims: *Well had you already considered that aviation group, the civil, um, pilot program? Was that what you said it was?*

Caldwell: Yes. Civil Pilot Training Program, CPTA [actual acronym is CPTP].

Mims: *Had you considered that prior to Pearl Harbor? Or was that kind of your ...*

Caldwell: Well I considered that because my flight training out here was sponsored by the Navy.

Mims: *When did you start your flight training? In ah, June of '41 I believe. Okay. I didn't know whether you sought that out after Pearl Harbor, kind of, as something you were interested in ...*

Caldwell: Well, I had a friend here whose name was Marvin Barnet. He's on the honor walk, [not documented]. He was a year ahead of me in college. One of the guys from the orphanage the children's home, and ah I had known him there. He graduated and went to Emory, and on December the seventh he decided to apply for Navy, he did, and ah when he came down here to see some of his friends, he went over to Mulberry and visited with us because my dad and mom had known him very well.

Over there at the children's home, they didn't have a nurse and they used to come over to the house to get their things bandaged and that sort of thing. And ah he applied for the Navy and got it. And he said, "You ought, you ought to get in." And I said, "Well I'm interested in it, I want to get into it." And ah, so that's what started me.

Mims: *Okay, you said that you were in the Navy during your Navy career, during the Cuban Missile Crisis?*

Caldwell: Yes I was stationed at Key West.

Mims: *No way!*

Caldwell: Yeah I was ...

Mims: *You were right there.*

Caldwell: I was the in the base operations office. But also I had a secondary duty, as base security officer. And we had a group of, troops, some thirty marines that I had, as well as security people around the base that we had our trucks and radio communications. And prior to that time that Kennedy made his decision about four months before that, the CO [commanding officer] had told me, I want you to get with the security office, over the other Navy activities here. There were four other Navy activities there, submarine squadron, destroyer squadron, a helicopter squadron, and the training, land plant squadron.

So we got together and he wanted us to figure out how much weaponry we would need. We were also meeting with the Army Reserve officer from Miami. Because we had to set up we had to set up a reserve unit to protect the waterline from Homestead to Key West, that's 120 miles. And that's the only way Key West got water.

Mims: *So it was a little testy there for a while right?*

Caldwell: Then the Army came in, and they set up weaponry all over the place. To shoot rockets over to Cuba. And we set up our requirements for our weapons and our trucks, and our additional people. Then one day he calls me up and says where is that plan? Get it going. And that's when it started and then Kennedy turned those ships around.

Mims: *Well, you were right on the leading edge of that. Well, I don't want to keep you too much longer. But I wanted to find out some additional information about the bugle. Where did you get it from?*

Caldwell: ... must have been. You know that guy that I said lived up the road, here.

Mims: *The teacher?*

Caldwell: He got it for us and it cost 10 dollars.

Mims: *Ten dollars, what was your teacher's name do you remember? Your trumpet teacher?*

Caldwell: Mr. Dan Swift.

Mims: *So you think your dad bought it from him.*

Caldwell: Mm-huh.

Mims: *Was it a special occasion? Was it bought for your job?*

Caldwell: For the job. If had a bugle Dr. Spivey, I could do this job.

Mims: *Well did he say you had to go get a bugle?*

Caldwell: He's the guy that said, "I thought I would never see you again when I left the children's home." He was the man that took care of the major boys in that home. And then all of the sudden he began to hear it down the street when he moved to Lakeland. He was on that first street over to the left down about five houses.

Mims: *Like Johnson or a little bit further down, Success?*

Caldwell: Success I think.

Mims: *Success.*

Caldwell: The one that went down to the lake.

Mims: *Yes ...*

Caldwell: Yeah ...

Mims: *What a coincidence, I'm sure that was kind of, um, strange for him to all of the sudden kind of hear you. So you never lived on campus though right?*

Caldwell: No, right across the street.

Mims: *Just across the street, was that ... ?*

Caldwell: That might have belonged, I don't know if that belonged to the college or not. But they put us working boys in that building. You could wait on tables, we had two of, three of my classmates, worked in the Juke, which is now the religious building [Jackson Religion Building now Fannin Campus Ministries Center].

Mims: *Right ...*

Caldwell: Junior King, Archer McQuig, ah, Rodrick Dugger, he came after the war I think. He didn't, he'd started and then quit and went to the war. So all of us either lived there or there was a fraternity building down on McDonald Street about three or four blocks. A great big house, that Lambda Chi's bought, for a long time, and some of the guys lived in there. There was another independent called Alpha Chi that, I didn't have any money to get into fraternities, and ah, when I came back after the war, my, the Alpha Chi had gotten together with Kappa Theta, was here. There is a Kappa Theta on the campus?

Mims: *I get so confused, I am not sure ...*

Caldwell: Anyhow they became a national fraternity, and I joined the national fraternity, for twenty five dollars, and then I was never close enough to be into anything, in the Navy you know.

Mims: *I'm trying to think if there is anything I've left out. You've certainly covered a lot of ground here. You were here at the college during the time, that I have a lot of curiosity about.*

Caldwell: Sure, you have our phone number.

Mims: *Right, right.*

Caldwell: You can call ...

Mims: *Can you think of anything that I've kind of left or forgotten? That maybe we needed to address, or talk about at this time.*

Caldwell: There isn't any, anything other than I was somebody who attended class after it started and left before it was over.

Mims: [laughs] *You didn't work during the academic year right? The project work was only during the summer?*

Caldwell: Yes

Mims: *Right, because I have understood that at one time that the people who came here to help build our classes, um buildings, were three days in class and three days at work.*

Caldwell: I did not do that. The bugle thing was, was almost twenty four hours a day.

Mims: *Seriously it was. Where would you get your food? Was there a cafe that you ate at?*

Caldwell: In the dining room, after 10:30 at night I would go in with the night watchmen who was one of our, working boys. And, a very brilliant young man who became a doctor, but he was night watchman and he had to check the clock in the kitchen, every night, and I'd go in there, in the kitchen, with him and get a chocolate milk. That helped.

Mims: *So looking back would you have gone anywhere else to go to college? Was there any other thoughts of where of you would ... ?*

Caldwell: I never had any idea of going anywhere else, because we didn't have the money to do it.

Mims: *So this was an opportunity that kind of presented itself to you. I have some ...*

Caldwell: You only needed people to start building bricks, and that, that's how it got I started.

Mims: *You sit, sit still here real quick. I want to bring this over here. [wooden textile block form] This is not one of the original forms, but it is one that they used in some of the restorations. Is this close to what yours would look like?*

Caldwell: You know you've got all these holes in that thing. There was something that ... made the holes.

Mims: *So that when you took the form out it already had the holes then cut.*

Caldwell: Yeah, and then you had to put glass in them. ...

Mims: *Did you put the glass in? Or was that something ...*

Caldwell: ... Some of the girls did that. And not only did they do that, the home economics department made the first cushions for the chairs in the chapel. And we in industrial arts made the first chairs for the chapel. I don't know if there's any one of those left or not. But they were made of wood, and then the industrial, girls built the two cushions that went in them.

Mims: *I never thought about that fabrication. Stay still, I'll be right back. ... This is a, a chair, from the Frank Lloyd Wright library. And so it was probably made here on campus too, out of plywood.*

Caldwell: Yeah they [the chapel chairs] looked like that.

Mims: *And then it would have had the cushion here.*

Caldwell: Well that one's just a little bit different. We didn't have this up here. ... It was a flat back.

Mims: *Well, this was designed specifically for the library.*

Caldwell: That's the round building in those times wasn't it?

Mims: *This went into the old library. Just to give you kind of an idea, that they were fabricated here on campus.*

[end of tape, turned to other side]

Mims: *... skating rink?*

Caldwell: They built a skating rink, for us to skate on, and when the time came for the chapel to get seats. They made the industrial arts people, get in tools and equipment and made it in that skating rink. ... And I don't know if there were any other seats made after that or not. For these classrooms, but I kind of doubt it.

Mims: *So whenever, you took the industrial arts did you have any idea that you'd be making the furniture that went in the buildings?*

Caldwell: No, no. But I just remember, it just came to mind that the building was there and the seats for the chapel were made there.

Mims: *Right, well very interesting. I'm trying to think if there is anything else that we can talk about that you would have information about.*

Caldwell: There is a tape somewhere in your files I don't know. One time some years ago, I came over here, for this homecoming. And a lady from Plant City, who was a student here, interviewed me. I was still in the Navy then I think.

Mims: *So what years were that do you think?*

Caldwell: I cannot say. I really don't. It might have been '90s, early '90s. I retired from the Navy in '96.

Mims: *I'll have to see if I can kind of, she's in my class and she was from Plant City. So she was in the class of '42. But she did a lot of interviewing with people over here, and made tapes. And I thought somewhere in the historical area, here you might find one. Well what's happened is that the archives building has kind of been the collecting pool. And so with the visibility of the building, we're finding out, more and more, where things are being here, there, and everywhere. So talking to people who know what was going on beforehand, is helping me get information, that I need to seek out and see if I can't find this kind of stuff. So, it's been so wonderful talking to you.*

Caldwell: It had more to do with my wartime experience, I think; I think some of this was in there.

Mims: *Okay, well I think we're going to turn the tape off, unless there's something else.*

Caldwell: Well I've enjoyed visiting with you. I've told you more than you needed to know.

Mims: *No, Well I'm going to go ahead and turn the tape off.*

[pause in taping, then tape recorder was turned back on]

Caldwell: There were some people who tried to get rid of Dr. Spivey one time I know. The bandshell had been built, and we had no meeting place for the whole class. So they built kind of an arbor out front, you know kind of like brush arbor. And I know I went to that place one day, when, when one of the deans really went after Dr. Spivey's job, and it was kind of hanging around sort of thing. But it didn't make it, fortunately.

Mims: *No because he stayed around here 'til the '50s. So he stayed here for a few more years.*

Caldwell: And, he [Dr. Spivey] was, he was a money man. I mean, if you owed him a nickel he went after it. And ah, it was interesting but there was a time when all of us wondered if we would be going to school this week.

Mims: *Really?*

Caldwell: Because this person, I think he was one of the deans here, I cannot remember.

Mims: *Are you going to leave the bugle here with us now?*

Caldwell: You can have it.

Mims: *How about the pictures?*

Caldwell: Yes.

[pause in taping, then tape recorder was turned back on]

Caldwell: ... it's in publication I'm sure.

Mims: *Okay so the forms, went bad? Or just the ...* [looking at the sand samples]

Caldwell: The mixture that he gave us to mix these things with was a mixture that absorbed moisture. It was of coquina rock, which comes from the Atlantic Ocean, and then it was from a larger grain than we normally use here in Florida than we normally use in concrete work. They use a really small grain so that water doesn't go into it. And that's when after 40 or so years, some of these things got moisture in them, particularly those Esplanade things. And they began to crumble, because the interior metal began to rust. And they had to do a lot of restoration unfortunately. But it was the mix that he gave us that was not good for a moisturized area.

Mims: *Was this Frank Lloyd Wright's problem, or was it his engineer here on campus?*

Caldwell: No it was his [Frank Lloyd Wright].

Mims: *Let me grab something else. Look at these. This says it was the coquina used in making Frank Lloyd Wright building blocks. And then this is what they used in the restoration which I guess was a similar type coquina. And then this is, they used Davenport sand to make the white ...*

Caldwell: Sand was the difference in the original blocks.

Mims: *So they had sand in them?*

Caldwell: But it was large grain sand.

Mims: *Okay, this, this isn't really fine. It seems kind of chunky.*

Caldwell: Well I'm sure they changed it; Schweizer was his student, at one time.

Mims: *Nils Schweizer?*

Caldwell: And I'm sure in the restoration, they made a change. Because he knew what was wrong.

Mims: *He's the one that ended up designing a couple more buildings here on campus, like the big library next door.*

Caldwell: It's interesting that in Tallahassee, that about two weeks ago, in the Tallahassee *Democrat* I believe there was mention of a Frank Lloyd Wright farm there called the Spring House.

Mims: *Spring House, it's in terrible shape.*

Caldwell: Yeah they're trying to get money to restore it. And ah, I did not know it was there. Because these people that ah, they were the first big bankers in Tallahassee, and they built it. But I don't know what, course they left it.

Mims: *Supposedly it is built on a sinkhole. They didn't know at that time to check on it.*

Caldwell: He [Frank Lloyd Wright] always built where it was near water.

Mims: *So that would make sense.*

Caldwell: 'Course his home, up there in Wisconsin, had a river running through it. ... Not a river but creek, running water all the time.

Mims: *Fallingwater is a signature of Wright's.*

[END]