

Minnesota State University, Mankato,
 Memorial Library, Southern Minnesota Historical Center
 Wortman, Allen L., 1935-. Oral History Interview, 2017.
 SMHC Manuscript Collection 261

Date of interview: 6 June 2017

Narrator: Allen L. Wortman (AW)

Interviewer: Anne Stenzel (AS)

Speaker	Details
AS	"Ok, I'm Anne Stenzel, we're at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Today is Tuesday June 6, 2017. Can you state your name, what you taught, and what years did you teach?"
AW	"Uhh my name is Allen Wortman, and I taught from 1969 through 1995. Uh, what else, what's the other questions?"
AS	"What did you teach?"
AW	"Oh I taught music haha I was in the music department all that time."
AS	"And where did you receive your education?"
AW	"I got my undergraduate degree at Central College in Pella, Iowa, and I got my graduate degrees, um a master of arts, and a Ed.D, at University of Northern Colorado in Greeley Colorado. Ehh."
AS	"Well can you tell me are there any significant world, state, or campus events or issues that occurred while you were at MSU."
AW	"Haha oh my goodness."
AS	"Haha"
AW	"I guess the biggest thing was the uh, disturbances over the Vietnam War."
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"I was present for that, and I was actually on the Faculty Senate at the time, and that was uh, that was quite an adventure."
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"Uh, which Doctor Nickerson has outlined in his book, haha, but uh, that was, that was the most, I guess, national event of significance that I could, uh, think of other than the, you know, when we were first here they used to bring in, real, uh national, internationally famous artists to stay on campus. And uh, they stopped that, but, the reasons being uhh, I don't know-hahahahaha. And uh, anyway we had some really fine artists, uh one of mine of course is the Minnesota Symphony in Minneapolis."
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"And umm, Andre Watts on the piano, I thought that was wonderful, but for some, uh uh, there are a lot of reasons for why they stopped doing that."
AS	"Do you know the reasons?"
AW	"Yeah, haha, the students wanted to keep the money for themselves to get the concerts they liked."
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"And uh, so that's a, that's a decision that they made, so we didn't get any, any more artists haha."
AS	"Can you talk a little bit more about the campus protests?"
AW	"Oh, I can tell you one story about it."

Minnesota State University, Mankato,
 Memorial Library, Southern Minnesota Historical Center
 Wortman, Allen L., 1935-. Oral History Interview, 2017.
 SMHC Manuscript Collection 261

AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"Uh, I had my son with me at school at the time, at one of the, one of the days, and I was babysitting or something, I don't know what, he was only- I can't remember how old he was, maybe five or six, and we lived in West Mankato, and it was time to go home, so we got in the car and I said 'I don't know how we're gonna get home for sure, but..' because they were blocking streets."
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"So we went over to the, I can't think of the name of the street that goes behind West High School, because we lived in west Mankato, it goes down into a ravine."
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"And uh, we got to the top of the hill where it goes down, and it was all completely blocked at the bottom of the, the bottom of the hill. Cars across in front of the logs, branches, everything. And uh, of course there was a whole, uh, group of um mostly students down there, well we sat and watched what they were, you know, some people drove down there and they would talk to them through the windows and send them back up the hill, on either side. Uh, there were of course other places, ways to get where we were going, but I wanted to watch for a while just to see what was going on, and uh, low and behold a car came up behind me and just zipped down the hill and crashed into the barricade. And the guy, the students, uhh the protestors- (Cell phone interruption) sorry I can't answer that. The students got out, uh, branches and sticks and something and broke the windows of the car, 'cause the guy was he, so-and-so, 'get out my way, this is my street!' And uh, so finally, uh, with all, with a lot of his windows broken he was just sitting there in the car, and a boy walked up with bare feet through the glass and talked to him, and he turned around and came back up, and I found out later that was the guys son that-that came up to talk to him."
AS	"Really?"
AW	"Yeah, and I mean those kind of things were just, were just happening, I was in a march that went downtown, so, and I was on campus when uh, students came back from North Mankato on a bridge, and some of them were, sorta knocked, knocked up with, with uh, billy clubs or something."
AS	"Uh huh."
AW	"Injured. And then on the Faculty Senate, we had a vote, as to whether to call in the National Guard, which is what they uh, what they did in Ohio. And uh, we voted and not to call them in, by one vote."
AS	"Really?"
AW	"Yup. So, I don't know if that would have any affect, but it certainly had some effect. They weren't called in."
AS	"Ok."
AW	"Which was very fortunate for us, we could've had another Kent State."
AS	"Yup."
AW	"Ahem. So, anyway, that's what I remember." 6:07

Minnesota State University, Mankato,
 Memorial Library, Southern Minnesota Historical Center
 Wortman, Allen L., 1935-. Oral History Interview, 2017.
 SMHC Manuscript Collection 261

AS	"So do you have any colleagues that stand out in your memory? Any specific memories about them?"
AW	"Oh my goodness, hahaha, I shouldn't tell stories about people that are gonna be broadcast, aha you know I had, I had, a couple of close friends on the faculty, one was Warren Henning, uh, he and I got along real well and we, we uh our families did things together, in fact I saw his daughter at a barbershop concert in Mankato not too long ago, and his son. And uh, any way we had a lot of good times together and we had a lot of, I think a lot of admiration for each other and worked together really well. Uh, I worked really well with Stewart Ross. And, and uh, I know some people are gonna be surprised to hear that, but I did. We worked really well, we were very good colleagues, good friends."
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"I went to his son's Bar Mitzvah and his daughter's Bat Mitzvah, and uh, that was, that was a real highlight for me. And uh we do remain friends but at a distance- he's in Florida now, and, and Warren's in Las Vegas so there you go. My, my two best friends, I guess, on the faculty are, are uh, are gone to uh other places. So I don't really uh, you know, I-I, we were kind of friends with Paul and Diane Moxness. But Diane was there while I was there, but Paul came after me in fact he took my place in music education, so uh (clears throat) not, not on the campus, but umm Diane was a colleague in choral music and, so we had some good times together- conventions, and things like that. (clears throat) So, and, uh Bill Lecklider who was the Chair for quite a while, were, we became close friends. And after we both retired on the same day and uh, we had offices next to each other, and uh, he went to Michigan, and he uh, his wife inherited a cherry orchard, and he and his wife ran this cherry orchard and then his son finally came, and he runs it now but he's greatly expanded it into a fruit orchard. Anyway, we used to go there in cherry season, after we retired."
AS	"Oh."
AW	"And work in the cherry season, it was a 'you pick' and so we laid cherries, and put them in the machine, pit them, and all that kind of stuff. So, we had some really good, good times together at, at their place. We, had a place to stay- we had a motor home for a couple of years, and I don't know how many years we went. Maybe ten years."
AS	"Oh, ok."
AW	"Every summer, around the Fourth of July. Picking cherries- and eating them! Hahaha."
AS	"What's your favorite MSU story?"
AW	"Oh my gosh."
AS	"I'm sure you've got a couple, you don't, I'm not going to limit you to one."
AW	"Well, you know, I, I have so, I have so many stories because, uhh, because I worked with performing groups, you know, choirs, Ellis Street Singers, and, and the theater. And uh, I have some great stories of the theater that were kind of funny. Uh, Maybe not to be broadcast, but, haha-ha I remember when the set fell, some uh, Warren who was in the, my colleague, who was

Minnesota State University, Mankato,
 Memorial Library, Southern Minnesota Historical Center
 Wortman, Allen L., 1935-. Oral History Interview, 2017.
 SMHC Manuscript Collection 261

	in the summer show, slammed the door, up the stairway, slammed the door and the whole set fell over onto the stage. Ahem, and uh, I don't know if it was the same show or not but, uh, I, I guess I can tell as he came out to sing and dance, it was kind of a solo thing. And his fly was open, hahaha, and all of a sudden I heard this, you know I was directing the orchestra, and I heard this titter in the audience, that got louder and louder, and burst in great laughter! You know, and he finally figured it out. So, right in the middle of the song he turned around, zipped it up, turned back around, and everybody applauded. (clap sound) haha."
AS	"Hahaha."
AW	"It was just, it was so funny. And so, so much like the theater you know. Anything can happen."
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"In the theater. And uh, there were lots and lots of things that happened. And uh, made a lot of good friends in the theater department too. Ronald Lawson and I were partners in many many shows. And uh he became a really good friend. And uh, let's see who else, uh, and Ted Fall, and uh, and uh, Paul Hustoles, and Fred Bach and, and uh, um, tsk, can't think of his name the, the uh, uh pai- he painted the sets. Bliese, Tom Bliese. We were all good friends, and we worked really well together I think."
AS	"Mmm."
AW	"All of us, and uh, and, and, and we're still, not real close friends, but friends. You know and, and we get along well. I got along real well with the theater I- I think, almost better than any place, hahaha."
AS	"So now I know you were very involved in directing the Ellis Street Singers, and I know people want to hear about that."
AW	"Well, way back in 1960, I came here in 1966, and then 1967, oh dear- I think it was '67, haha. That's when I started musical theater too. Uh, was in the fall of '67. But, I think it was before we moved to upper campus. Some, some students came to my office, my little tiny office in the- haha- performing arts center, you can hardly get more than one person in there, but there were three or four students, and they wanted to start a show choir and they didn't know how to do it. And I said 'Well, what do you want to do?' And they said 'Well, we want to do like- show choirs, they sing and dance, and put on shows.' And I said 'Well, ok, let's see how we can do that.' So, we had a, kind of a, open audition by, um, um, just writing in, saying what you've done, and who you are. And I think there were about eight students that wanted to get it started. No auditions or anything, we just started. And we found a piano player, one of the students, and we had, starting the next year, I believe it was, we had concerts. And we were on the quarter system then and we had concerts every quarter. And then uh, about, that was, you know I think the first real year that- that I can, the first year was really like, '69, or s- and then there was a little hiatus. We had some funding from the student activities. And they wrote me a note and said they cou- if I directed, uh, they wouldn't give us any money. It has to be a student director. So I backed out, and they went for about a half a

Minnesota State University, Mankato,
 Memorial Library, Southern Minnesota Historical Center
 Wortman, Allen L., 1935-. Oral History Interview, 2017.
 SMHC Manuscript Collection 261

	<p>year, and they broke up. They just couldn't keep the- they needed some direction. So, so uh, the group was actually disbanded for, I think about a year and a half. And then some of them came back again and said 'Well why can't we- let's do this.' And I said 'Well, it's this deal you know, we don't have any money.' And we didn't have any funds from the music department, we didn't have anything. Well I said 'We'll figure it out.' So, we did. And we borrowed equipment. We borrowed equipment for several years. We didn't have, we had no microphones, no sound equipment, no keyboard, no drums. So we borrowed drums from the jazz band, we borrowed some sound equipment from the jazz band. Uh, we were able to get uh, uh, an amplifier I remember, and a couple of microphones. The outfits uh, I can't remember who paid for them, but we had outfits. And, and we got a choreographer- a student. Who did it for nothing as I was doing it for nothing. And uh, we started having concerts every quarter. And every- from there on until, uh, the fall of 1995, which was the fall I retired, uh, we had concerts. Every quarter. We were still on the quarter system when I retired. You almost had to do that, because students move around. You know and they couldn't take doing it one quarter and they couldn't the next quarter and all that kind of stuff so. But it got to be a group where we, where it was highly auditioned. And not only did we have audition, but I had uh, part of the audition, I had a uh, a personal interview with each person that applied. It didn't last long, five minutes maybe or less. But uh, a group that small, has to not only be, be good- but they have to be able to get along with each other. And I won't say I was perfect with that haha, but, but it was pretty good, it was pretty good. And I made a ruling that, if you wanted to be in it the next year you had to audition again. Uh, nobody had an automatic "in" every year so, that's the way we did it. And finally we applied and got some funding from the student activities, we got a little bit of money for equipment from uh, uh, music department. And then people got to know that we were pretty good. And uh, uh somebody over in the administration decided that they could buy us a little bit of stuff. We never did get a trailer but, to haul our stuff around because we performed in schools all over the, the Minnesota. I don't know if I can- if you can look at this map, but these are all the schools that we performed in Minnesota, I kept track. And uh, they are, see how the map's pretty tattered.</p>
AS	"I was gonna say, pretty, pretty.."
AW	"Pretty tattered."
AS	"Pretty sad."
AW	"Yeah, well I want to get it."
AS	"Ooh careful!"
AW	"Yeah there it's tearing again. Oh here it goes, here it goes. I don't know if you can see it at all."
AS	"I can."
AW	"But this is, this is just, this is Northern Minnesota high schools. But here's Southern Minnesota."
AS	"Wow."

Minnesota State University, Mankato,
 Memorial Library, Southern Minnesota Historical Center
 Wortman, Allen L., 1935-. Oral History Interview, 2017.
 SMHC Manuscript Collection 261

AW	"We performed at all of those of high schools, sometimes more than once sometimes three or four times, uh for their assemblies. So uh, there were many many students in uh Minnesota that saw us perform. Uh."
AS	"You've got, you've got two separate pieces now."
AW	"Yeah, well this is, I don't know what this one is haha. It's a part of the map, but this is, I had to make a separate map for the Twin Cities area."
AS	"Oh, ok."
AW	"So this is what we were in the Twin Cities area. But anyway, lots of, we did lots of things. I mean, thanks to the generosity of the music department and their teachers haha. They went out and did concerts. We did three concerts a day when we went out on tour. Two in the morning, one in the afternoon. And we sent out uh, brochures to the, the whole state of Minnesota, to Northern Iowa, Wisconsin. There's some Wisconsin schools on here. And Iowa- Northern Iowa schools. And, and we got more than we could go to. And so uh, we went out and did tours. And we did a concert, did our concerts either in the recital hall, we did several concerts in the Student Union, at a.. What's the name of that little uh."
AS	"Ostrander?"
AW	"Ostrander Auditorium."
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"We did concerts in the ball room. And we always gave more than one. Cause we had lots of people that came."
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"Umm, and we gave many performances around town. Industrials. You know, for parties and, I know that uh, ahem, the big, I can't think of the name now. The soybean plant."
AS	"Pioneer?"
AW	"No, it's it's not- it's not called that anymore."
AS	"Oh, Hubbard."
AW	"It's not Hubbard, No. It's the soybean plant. Hubbard's the- it's anyway, anyway they uh, they had us for their uh, party every year. Every spring. And we'd go down to a motel. A, a hotel- a Holiday Inn, or some place. And then we, we had Christmas shows. We had Christmas shows in-in, on campus usually. A couple of shows, at least. In the ball room or some place. And then we did shows at- at the Edgewood, umm, Edgewood Restaurant. In Cannon Falls. And we did up to twenty shows during a Christmas Vacation. Uh, we'd go there and they had a motel."
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"We stayed in the motel, and we set up in their little performing area. And they had, they had two areas of seating. And they had a, a sm- a, they called it "Old Fashioned Christmas" and they had a, a uh buffet. And we were the entertainment. And they had sleigh rides out in the woods. And, and hot cider outside by the fire and people dressed up in Santa Claus, and ahem, all that kinda thing. Ahem, sorry my voice isn't very good here."
AS	"No you're good."

Minnesota State University, Mankato,
 Memorial Library, Southern Minnesota Historical Center
 Wortman, Allen L., 1935-. Oral History Interview, 2017.
 SMHC Manuscript Collection 261

AW	“But anyway, we did that for uh, twenty years. For twenty years. The other thing that we did, this is a busy group!”
AS	“Mhmm.”
AW	“The other thing we did, we had a uh, uh, we called it the Ellis Street, umm festival, I guess. And we invited high schools to come. And we filled the Student Union- the whole student union with high schools. And we had a competition. Various classes of schools, you know. Umm uh, class one, class two, class three, depending on their size. And they all sang, and we uh, myself and a couple faculty members and then a student at each site, uh, adjudicated, and we picked win- the winners. It was it was a contest. And we picked the winners and the winners performed a big concert for everybody after. The whole ball room filled with kids. After, at the end of the day. And then we also had a contest for solo singers. And we had best female singer, best male singer. And it that was, that was judged by MSU students. Very good experience for them, I think. Especially those who were going to go out and teach music. Of course the people in the group were a very small minor- minority of them were music majors. We had people from all over the campus. And uh, ahem, I go to the recital hall now and see that they have all these cordless mic’s and wonderful sound system. Lighting, we had none of those things. We made due.”
AS	“Mhmm.”
AW	“And uh, we had some adventures. We did a tour, we did uh, national and international tours. We played for at three world fairs. Spokane, New Orleans, and Knoxville. Uh, not all the same year. Ahem.”
AS	“Is that just with Ellis Street?”
AW	“Ellis Street, well when we went to Spokane on our first tour, our first really big tour we went to Spokane. And we went with the, the Children’s Theater, the of the uh.. But once we got there we were separate. You know, they did their thing we did our things. Separate concerts, we had three concerts at the, at the World Fair. And uh, but the other two we were on our own. Of course there were other things going on, it was a World Fair. But, and then, so we every other year we went on a-a concert overseas. Or to another country. So we went to maybe, I think I counted one time seventeen foreign countries that we performed in.”
AS	“Mhmm.”
AW	“Uh, the-the-the highlight I guess for that, one of the highlights was my first year, we were going to Russia. The first year we were going to go on a tour like this, we were going to Russian and Poland. And uh, Dr. Preska, our President, was really excited about that because she’s uh studied in Russia and so she had us all over to her house. Big beautiful house and we were all in her house and she had stuff for us to eat, and she sat down and taught us some Russian aha. Which was really, I-I thought that was really neat.”
AS	“Mhmm.”
AW	“The other real, uh really neat, and memorable trip was when we went to Bulgaria. We went to Bulgaria and Romania one-one Spring, and uh, or maybe it was right after school, I’ve got it in here but I couldn’t tell ya haha.

Minnesota State University, Mankato,
 Memorial Library, Southern Minnesota Historical Center
 Wortman, Allen L., 1935-. Oral History Interview, 2017.
 SMHC Manuscript Collection 261

	<p>Anyway uh, we were, we were a part of a, uh Eastern European Folk Festival. And-and it was all, there were two groups of us from the U.S. It was groups from all over the Eastern-Eastern umm Soviet Union really. Uh, because all of those countries were, and ahem it was big- it was really big. It was on-on the Black Sea. And-and we had kind of dormitory style living. It was a camp that was already there. And then every group was paired with another group. Uh to do things with. And we were paired with a Russian group from the Ural Mountains. They were a folk dancing-singing group. And every group gave a concert at sun- we were there about five days, every group gave a concert at night, a part of a concert, and we did all kind of things with that Russian group. We played soccer, we played soccer with them. We had a team together, and a kind of a round robin soccer thing. They brought us uh, vodka and chocolates for haha for a little party haha, and uh- and uh we just had a, it was a wonderful time and I think all the students that went on that trip just still remember it so much. We played together, we sang together. We just had a wonderful time. And it was right there toge- I don't know how many groups were there. There must have been maybe uh, a doz- at least a dozen, or, or fifteen, I don't know. But, but it was- it was really fun. Really fun. And that was the highlight, I think that's my highlight tour although we did go to Australia in uh 1995, which was our last tour and that was a lot of fun too.</p>
AS	"Now I know you-you conducted the-the Concert Choir as well."
AW	"Yes, for ten years."
AS	"Did you ever conduct the chamber singers?"
AW	"Yes. I had-"
AS	I know you had it
AW	"I had them for one year. We-we you know the director retired or left or something I can't remember. It was before Diana Moxness took over. And I, so there was nobody to do the chamber singers, so, excuse me, so I did it. I did it for one year.
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"And uh, I had to, when I first came I had to, we used to have a big choir. You know, uh, umm that met in the recital hall it was so big. It was too big for the, for the uh choir room. And I directed that for several of years. Sitting in for a few years there, a couple of us were directing. Warren Hetting and I, James Dunn and I, we shared. You know, like I would take all the women and he'd- not all the women but he'd make up a mixed choir. And then I would take all the other women, because there was always a lot more women than men. And we- I did that for several years too. And uh, and then of course the musicals. I did uh, I think like fifty-five musicals at MSU. I've brought the list of them all. If you're interested in any of them, but I got a list of all them."
AS	"Oh, ok."
AW	"I did, and when I did them. And uh, the last one I, the ones I worked in were after I retired. I was the musical director for uh, oh, Wizard of Oz, uh,

Minnesota State University, Mankato,
 Memorial Library, Southern Minnesota Historical Center
 Wortman, Allen L., 1935-. Oral History Interview, 2017.
 SMHC Manuscript Collection 261

	let's see Brigadoon, Fiddler on the Roof- the third- third time we'd done Fiddler on the Roof.
AS	"Haha."
AW	"Uh, let's see, what else, I can't haha- I can't tell you for sure without looking through this whole list. Anyway, I-I-I've counted them and I did fifty-five productions. Plus I worked backstage on five productions doing sound effects in musical background, that kind of thing. And I was in the cast five times and I really enjoyed that. Uh, the last one was Oliver. And I still have people come up to me and say 'Oh I remember you, you were Mister Bumble!' haha so that was, that was a lot of fun. I worked a lot with the theater."
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"And I, I enjoyed it a lot."
AS	"Now I know you keep in touch with a lot of alumni."
AW	"Oh, I do haha. We had-we had probably around 225 total alums of uh Ellis Street singers. And if you named one of their names, I could probably tell you where they live anyway haha. Now if you ask me who sang in what group, that's why I have this book. And if you said 1985-86, you have a picture of the group, So I- and all their names, and their last- the concert, this is the concert that they did in the spring. So I have that. And we have of course a book for every year in the archives here.
AS	"Mhmm. Yes."
AW	"And you can come if you wanted to know what we did in 1992 and '93, you could find a whole book, it was a notebook. It was almost this big for most years. And you can find what we did that year. Pictures from everything. Including parties and tours, and where toured to and, uh, as I said we toured overseas. We went to Russia, Poland one year, Bulgaria, Romania one year. We went to the Bahamas three different years. We went to Mexico twice, we went to Canada once. Uh so, the in between, the in between years we go to in somewhere in the United States, Colorado we went to a couple times, and uh we went to Branson one year, we did a tour of Door County Wisconsin. So, that group was I have to say it was the most active group, at least in my time, my thirty years, the most active group uh musical group on the campus. So uh, and those are my fondest remem-remembrances and I remember the students, like if I open this book, you know I remember every one of these people.
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"Just, just who I opened them. Uh you know, uh, I could probably name them all without looking at the names if I see them, you know if I see them. And uh, you know I look- this fella, by the way, Steve Ordos, I lost track of him for years. And I was on the internet. And I looked, I was just fooling around. And there was this company out from Ohio and I looked through it and there was a name under it, it was a big administrator or something in this company Steve Ordos! And so I wrote to the company and I said, 'Is that the Steve Ordos, you know, please pass this on. Is this the Steve Ordos I know from Ellis Street Singers?' And by golly he called me."

Minnesota State University, Mankato,
 Memorial Library, Southern Minnesota Historical Center
 Wortman, Allen L., 1935-. Oral History Interview, 2017.
 SMHC Manuscript Collection 261

AS	"Hmm."
AW	"It was him. It was him and he's out in Ohio some place. And he was in the group four years I think. A lot of the people were in the group several years, you know they had to audition again every year. You know, and they had a leg up of course if they'd been in before."
AS	"Sure."
AW	"And we started offering scholarships. We got some scholarships from Taylor Corporation. And we made enough money that I could offer you know, when the Taylor scholarships were gone, I could offer scholarships. And we had several years where, where we had anyone that was in for the second year or more got a scholarship. It wasn't a lot, but it was like three, four hundred dollars. That was, you know that was good- at those years. School cost a lot less then. Hahahaha."
AS	"That's true, that's true."
AW	"Anyway, we had scholarships. We had a lot of people on scholarships. This lady here, is Cindy Wilke. She's one of our uh, our uh Outstanding Alums. She was a nurse. She was the head nurse for the Red Cross in Washington D.C. And she was named an Outstanding Alum. We have one more in here that lives in Twin Cities. Her name is Reece- her last name. Uh, and uh this guy right here Paul Kreider, he's the Dean of Arts at the University of West Virginia. And uh--"
AS	"What year is that that you're--"
AW	"75-76."
AS	"Ok."
AW	"75-76. That was the year we went to, we went to Denver that year. The next year we went to the Soviet Union and Poland. So,"
AS	"All those alum that are, that were not here during 75-76 are gonna be sad that you haven't gone through every single year. hahaha"
AW	"Well, you know I- I couldn't go through, I-I'll flip over."
AS	"We'd be here all day!"
AW	"Flip over some pages here, you know! Haha and, and uh whether there- it's harder for me to tell the newer ones. But, if I look down here, and see Rebecca Braun for instance, and I can tell where she is on here, She's- She's (Cell phone rings) Oh come on, I don't want to talk to anybody. Sorry about that, But anyway. I can see her, you know. Umm uhh, Bill Tofte- you know, I don't know where he is. There is about fifty that I can't find. There's about 200 that I found in the alumni association, know where they are. And by the way, I think I should say this; We had a reunion a few years ago, five or six years ago, and we decided we wanted to give a scholarship. And I raised, at that reunion, I raised about 20,000 dollars towards the scholarship, and now we have a scholarship for, uh, choral music scholarship."
AS	"That's awesome."
AW	"So anyway, they were a good group. Umm, you know if I look at the names, Tim Salter I just heard from him. He's over in South Dakota. Kevin Rotty does lots of music up in the Twin Cities with his church. I don't know for sure, but he might be a full time church musician. And he does shows,

Minnesota State University, Mankato,
 Memorial Library, Southern Minnesota Historical Center
 Wortman, Allen L., 1935-. Oral History Interview, 2017.
 SMHC Manuscript Collection 261

	Christmas shows. And Steve Breiter is uhh, I think Steve still lives in Mapleton. He's a big Wig in uhh Cub Foods, haha."
AS	"Mmm."
AW	And uh, Chris Becker lives up in the Twin Cities. Tim Prince, I hear from him every once in a while. I have him on Facebook. A lot of these people are on Facebook. We have an Ellis Street Singers site on Facebook. Umm, Jeff Hawthorne I don't know where he is. Loren Halvorsen's in Mankato I think. He's a part of a folk singing group that uh, he went to Bethany. And he has some people from Bethany that he sings with. And I see his name in the paper every once in a while. Haven't seen him for a while. Gary Erickson was a teacher at MSU and now he's over in uh, in Illinois, at a college in Illinois doing electronic music and other things. Uh Sarah Welp, Sarah's married. Sarah lives in Mapleton. Jean Tostenson lives in Mankato. Jeneal Schei I think lives in California somewhere. Mona Martell she lives I'm not sure but I get Christmas cards from her haha. Uh, umm Kim Wetzal, I can't tell you what her last name is now, but she lives in the Twin Cities and she's uh, she does very well on business. Kathy Johnson was a nurse, she's married, she lives in uh, over by Northfield or some towns over there. So, Diana Gering lives in Wisconsin. Pam Determan lives in Blue Earth. Uh, so I can tell you where you know, where these people are."
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"And uh, well these are all mixed up, these are some of the latest ones. Michelle Lindemann unfortunately passed away, she had cancer, and she had cancer all the time she was in Ellis Street Singers. She's a real- she was a real trooper.
AS	"Hmm."
AW	"And uh, she came to the last reunion and she died the next year. Uh, but uh, there's my son. He was in it one year. I don't know all these as well because Gary Erikson was my grad assistant and he was in the group and he did a lot of the, the work with the group. But Darren Scruggs, he's a pastor right over here on the corner haha."
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"At uh, a Lutheran church. Um Tim Berry is a f-f-facul- he was on the faculty at MSU for a while up in the Twin Cities. Uh, Renee is a teacher. Sarah I know she's around, I can't tell you exactly where somewhere around Minnesota. Nancy Pearson is an Elementary music teacher. Uh, Chris Bigalk is teacher in a community college, and she's a writer."
AS	"Mmm."
AW	"And so, I know a little bit about almost all of these, these people. And I do-oh this is our theme song hahahahaha."
AS	"Oh, ok."
AW	"It was called 'Celebrate'. And you can see it was played a lot. This is the instrumental part and this is the uh.. oh my goodness I must have the vocal part somewhere. Maybe this is just the instrumental part. What is this falling out? This is a cartoon. Carla Barwinick. Who is a theater person, she drew this cartoon that was a lot of our stuff for a while. And uh, these-

Minnesota State University, Mankato,
 Memorial Library, Southern Minnesota Historical Center
 Wortman, Allen L., 1935-. Oral History Interview, 2017.
 SMHC Manuscript Collection 261

	these- three performers. Carla is uh, she was a pretty theater person. She had the lead in the Sound of Music when we did it the first time here. So anyway, what I'm telling you is, like I look at this group they went Florida, Disney World, and The Bahamas. So we performed in Florida at-at-at Disney World. Uh, twice, and then we went to the Bahamas and we performed at Nassau in the square. And we performed on the tour uh boat."
AS	"Ok."
AW	"And we did that three times. Three different years we did that tour."
AS	"Oh, ok."
AW	"And that was really fun. We took a bus that trip. Took a bus down to uh, to uh, let's see that one we went to Orlando and I think, took the bus-well we had a bus to Orlando and he waited for us while we got on the boat. So I just- my experiences at MSU are all tied to the students. The performances, the- we had wonderful times. And parties- we had great parties."
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"Especially Ellis Street Singers because there was only 12, 15. I think the most I've ever had in a group all together with instrumentalists was 20. But it was usually 12 singers and four instrumentalists."
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"That was the average."
AS	"Can you tell me about umm, what sorts of changes did you see on campus over time from the time that you-you arrived in Mankato to the current."
AW	"Ahem, well, you know I think I was in a period where we didn't have any great changes, except for buildings."
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"And-and some-what of a growth spurt and then it went down a little bit then up again but, ahem, I'd say you know, when I came I-I-I'm I was in the building, and the music department is a building that now houses Vine. Down-down on lower campus. We were there for one year and we moved up to performing arts and it was a really nice facility. We were very proud of it. Of course there are always things you wish were different or better. Buildings, buildings, buildings. We were always building buildings."
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"And then, the campus became much more beautiful, I think. I really appreciate the things they are doing with the campus with beautification. I think it's just so much more attractive than, it was very stark when we moved up here first."
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	You know and uh, and so uh that's-that's the biggest change that I found. And one of the big changes I found when I got up here was that I didn't know as many faculty. Because down on lower campus, all the faculty went to eat at uh, not all of them, a lot of them went to eat at Old Main."
AS	"Ok."
AW	"That's where the cafeteria was."
AS	"Mhmm."

Minnesota State University, Mankato,
 Memorial Library, Southern Minnesota Historical Center
 Wortman, Allen L., 1935-. Oral History Interview, 2017.
 SMHC Manuscript Collection 261

AW	"And uh, we got to, I got to know a lot of faculty members- out of my department.
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"When we came up here we were sorta isolated I thought. And I didn't even know some that worked right across the street, so, ahem. And the building of buildings really, really isolated the faculty more I think. Now when they did the addition to the Student Union, I understand, I wasn't here then. Not for that addition, I was here for one of the additions."
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"But, but I think that helped to have areas where the faculty can gather. Anyway uh, ahem, I- that's the biggest change I found. I was on the quarter system. They changed to the semester system as I was leaving. Thank goodness because I didn't want to be involved in that hahaha, and so, so uh there-there was, the change that I found was in the people that I knew. I mean I didn't meet as many people, and I did feel isolated, umm and-and the expansion. General expansion in everything. You know, Curriculum and facilities and, but I would say that the years I was here were not years of huge change. Except, well I gotta name one more, we moved to the upper campus."
AS	"Yeah."
AW	"That was a big change."
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"When we first moved up here in 1967, there were busses. Haha, the busses and the classes down there were on the half hour and we were on the hour."
AS	"Ok."
AW	"And the students had to catch busses back and forth and be careful how they scheduled classes. One of the things I enjoyed most a lot was working with students and advising. That was a nightmare sometimes, uh ahem, but eventually we got all moved up here. And, at the time, 'They're wasting all those buildings'. But now look haha."
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"Vine is just a wonderful place. I belong there, It's-it's just a wonderful place. Of course there were two buildings exactly like that next to each other."
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"And uh, Old Main was a nice facility for seniors. We don't live there, but uh, and then the dormitories are used by low income housing and-and uh, it's-it's uh, the-the old library is a state office. So that was kind of a change. That moving up here, and then the change down here. But I think they made wonderful use of the facilities. Or really, that were vacated. And at the time I thought 'Why are we doing that, we're wasting all this money.' Haha but, uh."
AS	"Was there anything else you wanted to say about your MSU experience?"
AW	"Oh my goodness, well, you know I... After I retired, Bill Lecklider and I, when we were out in the cherry, haha the business, used to talk and say

Minnesota State University, Mankato,
Memorial Library, Southern Minnesota Historical Center
Wortman, Allen L., 1935-. Oral History Interview, 2017.
SMHC Manuscript Collection 261

	"you know, we have lots of complaints. Everybody has a complaint that works. I'm sure you have complaints, I know I have complaints. But when you sit down and think about it, it was a good job."
AS	"Mhmm."
AW	"It was a good job. I, you know, I was treated well. Uh, I had lots of friends, I had a chance do things that I loved to do. I was music department chairman for four years. I gave that up because I enjoyed more working closely with the students. Uh, ahem, but as I'm losing my voice I can say, I can say, yes. I'm glad I was here."
AS	"Good. Well I think we can wrap it up unless you have something else to add."
AW	"That's a long interview. Hahahahaha!"
AS	"That's ok, I really appreciate you coming in! Thank you."