

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY  
JAMES BRANCH CABELL LIBRARY, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS  
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT: TWENTIETH CENTURY RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

NARRATOR: DR. J. MAURICE DUKE

INTERVIEWER: KATHRYN COLWELL HILL

Place:	6136 Rolling Forest Circle	No. of CDs: 1
	Mechanicsville, VA	No. of tracks: 1
		Length of interview: 55 minutes
Date:	June 13, 2005	Interview: 3 of 3

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[CD 1 of 1, Third Interview 6/13/05)

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0:00:10            Introductions

Kathryn Colwell Hill: Today is June 13 and this is the third interview with Dr. Maurice Duke. We are again at his home in Mechanicsville. [I am Kathryn Colwell Hill the interviewer.] The last interview—anyone who is listening or reading the transcripts will note—at that time I indicated that it was the final interview. But, Dr. Duke and I started a lively conversation after the recording had ended, and that is where we are picking up today.

We are going to cover three areas primarily and those, well two, deal with his ancestors and the other will be about his book on Universal Leaf Tobacco. Dr. Duke, I am ready to begin.

Maurice Duke: Okay, anytime.

0:01:00            Paternal ancestors: Bazile, including Judge Leon Maurice Bazile

KCH: Would you like to start with the Bazile ancestors?

MD: That is fine, Baz•ee•l. Bazile. What would you like me to say?

KCH: The last time you mentioned that your great-great-grandfather Jean Maurice Bazile was a Frenchman, who had settled in Hanover County. If you could tell us about his plantation, his contact with Lafayette, the name of his home, those kinds of things.

MD: I don't think he had any personal contact with Lafayette, but he did own the house that Lafayette is purported to have stayed in while he was here, in 1810 or 1815; something like that. My great-great-grandfather was born about 1830. His father, who was Maurice Bazile, was lured into unfortunate financial ventures by his father; whose name was Jean Vanout. My name [Jean Maurice Duke] comes from the Jean Vanout and the Maurice Bazile. Their problems were so severe that—the creditors were so close to Maurice—that he had to get out of France, and he did. He was from a big family. They were educated people; had good professions. I guess you would call them agronomists now. He went, I think, to somewhere in Switzerland and then

made his way eventually to this country and then wrote back for his wife and young son, who was Jean Maurice. When they came over, they spent a short time in New Jersey, and then they came south looking for a better climate. They were great grape growers and had an international business, apparently; well they did when they got here to Virginia. They settled here, and finally my great-great-grandfather Jean Maurice bought the house, historic Hanover [County] house, the name of which was French Hay. It is only about ten to fifteen miles from where we are now. He stayed there until his death; spent the Civil War years there. He had one son, whose name was Leon Maurice and who died when he was in his thirties. He did have a grandson, who was my cousin really; my grandmother's first cousin. He became a prominent attorney here in Richmond. His name was Leon Maurice Bazile, also. I guess the most famous case in which he was involved was the *Loving* case, which was a case of miscegenation; a white woman and a black man who were married. Judge Bazile heard the case and gave them, I think, a year to get out of the state of Virginia, which they did. They took the case to the Supreme Court and his decision was overturned. That is the most prominent thing that he did. He was a fairly well known attorney here in town.

KCH: Do you know a little bit about Judge Bazile? Did the family he grew up in have African American servants? Where did his—I know it was very common to feel that the races should remain separate—

MD: Yes, they did indeed.

KCH: —in the 1950s. Do you know anything about his background that would have led him to feel so strongly?

MD: No, I don't. And he did feel strongly, as you well know if you've read anything about him. He was—. In those days, when I was a kid, the term racist just wasn't used, but if it had been, he would have been an arch-racist. There is no doubt about it. He believed absolutely in the separation of the races and as he said in the *Loving* case—. Did you read the *Loving* case?

KCH: I did bring up some information on it; there actually has been a book written.

MD: Yes, I've been contacted by a woman who is doing a book right now just on the *Loving* case; *Loving* and one other California case. He said in his decision on the *Loving* case that God created the races differently and put them on different continents and had it not been for human beings interfering and traveling from continent to continent; these problems would not exist; pretty staunchly conservative attitude.

KCH: What I found interesting, when I read of his ruling, was that he sentenced the Lovings to a year in prison each, and then he suspended the sentence for twenty-five years as long as they left the state of Virginia. I think that shows some level of compassion, um—

MD: I didn't know the man. My grandmother was his first cousin, and she knew him well. My father knew him, but we were estranged from that side of the family for reasons, many reasons, so I never met him. I've thought about that case a lot, and I don't know what he could do other than legislate from the bench, which he did not believe in doing. It appears to me that he was a strict constructionist as far as the Constitution was concerned, and he was not going to make law as a judge of the Circuit Court. But yes, you are right, there is some degree of compassion there I should think. He was a very kind man; I am made to understand. I have made contact in the last year and a half—. He had a granddaughter, who was about my age, and I had never met her. I made contact when I was working on this genealogy business on the families. I called her up one Sunday morning and got her on the phone—she was living somewhere up in D.C.—and she was flabbergasted. She didn't even know that my side of the family existed. Since that time she and I have become friends, she and I, and she has told me that he was a very kind person, loving grandfather; took her over to his office at the courthouse, things like that. He apparently was a good man.

KCH: It sounds that way when one reads other, when you bring up his files at the Library of Virginia or at the Historical Society. One can tell just by doing a topic read that he was very involved in the community.

MD: He was quite interested in Hanover County history, and he wrote a pretty extensive manuscript on Hanover County history that I tried to read, but his handwriting is so bad that you can't decipher it. I found out from my cousin that even he couldn't read his handwriting, when he went back to it. So I gave up that project. (Laughter)

KCH: That sounds pretty difficult, exactly. The great-grandfather that had the farms, do you have any sense where the financial support came from?

MD: There was some money that was inherited. I don't know from whom, how much, or anything about it, but there was some. He lived, apparently from what I can determine, pretty well. I know the house up at French Hay—I've been there—and it was a pretty nice house; a nice big brick house, eighteenth century structure. He owned the property from Route #1, where the Green Top gun shop is today, all the way across where I 95 comes through and on over to the other side a good bit. Then Judge Bazile, Leon Bazile, had part of that property and he built a very fine house, which he called the Retirement, and it is still standing. It is in Kings Mill subdivision, something like that. That is the main house, the clubhouse, if you will, for that community now. I've been all through that house, too; very nice house, a lot of money in the house. I understand that Judge Bazile was an absolute penny pincher. He wouldn't even spend money for screens in the summertime; you had to fight the bugs. (Laughter)

0:10:00 Paternal ancestors: Duke, including James Duke

KCH: Then on the other side of this family, the Dukes, you had a famous ancestor James Duke.

MD: Yes, easily. (Laughter) My great-great-grandfather James Duke was a farmer in eastern Henrico County. When the Civil War began, during the Civil War, he made contact with a woman, whose name was Elizabeth Van Lew, who was the spy/mistress, as they said, of the Confederacy. Indeed, she was quite effective as a spy. He was working for her. She had a wonderful house over on 23<sup>rd</sup> and Grace Streets. The house is gone now, but it looked almost like the White House of the Confederacy, same kind of house. What James would do, apparently, was

gather information on the movement of Union Troops down the James and then he would give that information to Elizabeth Van Lew who would then pass it on behind the enemy lines. At the end of the Civil War, apparently, she was quite effective in the information that she had passed to the Union forces because President Grant—this was obviously after Lincoln’s assassination—President Grant made her the postmistress of Richmond, in gratitude for the work she had done during the war. James was apprehended by the authorities and was imprisoned, here in Richmond, as a spy. Apparently, Elizabeth Van Lew and her colleagues got him out; he didn’t spend a great deal of time there. She got him out.

KCH: I’ve read just a little bit in *Southern Lady, Yankee Spy*, which you mentioned to me that he was mentioned in, and it sounds as though they were able to get him out just at the time as a number of other people were being arrested.

MD: Yes, that was a volatile time in this city, as you well know.

KCH: It says, “Duke was given a writ of habeas corpus for his release on February 1, 1865 and Timberlake, who as a policeman was in the army’s jurisdiction, was acquitted by a court-martial.” But, then, there was a rash of arrests about that time.

MD: The Confederacy was just about on its last legs at that time. There were great numbers of people in the city who were passing information, in various ways, to the Union forces, because many people realized that it was hopeless, that the southern cause was hopeless, and, I guess, they wanted to do the best they could to make the best future lives for themselves. I suspect that is probably the case.

KCH: Another thing that they mention in the book, that I was not aware of, is it talks about James Duke being a Union sympathizer, and his family was, and he actually sent his sons across the line north.

MD: That is right.

KCH: Do you know where the sons might have resided?

MD: I don't have the slightest idea. I know nothing about those people, and I'm certain that I have relatives up there, probably all over the country, because there are lots of Dukes, but I know nothing of those people.

KCH: Do we know what James Duke did after the war; whether he was able to reestablish his farm and proceed because so many people lost so much?

MD: I don't know for certain, and I can only speculate, and I suspect he was never able to recoup because my family, that side of my family, never really achieved any distinction or any kind of wealth or anything in the community. I know my great-grandfather, Daniel Duke, was a farmer for a while, and he worked for the Richmond Gas Works in Fulton and things; really sort of menial jobs, I would suppose. He had three sons; two of whom I knew because one, of course, was my grandfather. They were not educated people, and they were not what I would call community leaders of any sort.

KCH: One reads about plantation owners both after the American Revolution—that really changed the distribution of land in Virginia—and then, after the Civil War, just by being impoverished and then losing so many of the men to the war. I don't know that there is much written about the Union sympathizers that remained in place and how they progressed because I assume that they didn't want to align themselves with the carpet baggers and that variety.

MD: That is right. I don't know that myself. I couldn't even speculate. (Pause) I did make contact with Elizabeth Varon, the woman who wrote that book, and I was trying to get from her the information about the Dukes, if she had any at all. She is a very pleasant woman to deal with—we e-mailed each other several times—but she said that the only thing that she knew about the Dukes was what she had used in this book. At that point, I don't think that I had—. I'd heard about James Duke being a spy, but I didn't know that there was anything in print about him.

KCH: It appears as though she has done some very thorough research.

MD: Yes, I think so. She is a good scholar.

0:15:35            Thoughts on researching and writing a book



KCH: That opens another subject that I wanted to touch on a bit today; the difficulty of researching the populations that have been ignored in the past and not documented. You are doing your African American architects book and further African American history; would you like to comment?

MD: Well, it is difficult. It has been frustrating for me because, with the case of James Duke, we've been trying to get back—several of us, I have a cousin down in Varina whose—James, as you know, owned a good deal of property down there and my cousins are still down there, in that area. There is one cousin in particular and she and I are working to try get back beyond James Duke. We know that one of the first Dukes who, whose name appears in print, was a man who was Colonel Duke, who was a close friend of William Byrd II of Westover. We all suspect—have heard in the family—that he came with Byrd and so forth, during William Byrd's time, but we can't get back beyond. We can't get any proof before James. We have gone to where he is buried in Oakwood Cemetery. We've been to his grave; there is no marker on it. We've got his marriage certificate, and he was given in marriage by his mother because his father was dead; his name is not mentioned. So, we just do not know. I've not been able to get pre-James.

KCH: When you are researching the African American history, particularly the architects—this is another one of our conversations off-tape—

MD: Right.

KCH: —how are you approaching that, or have you approached it?

MD: One thing is my co-author, who is the primary author on the book—I'm really secondary and also editor—he is the architectural historian, so he has the in on how to do the research. What we have done is gone to the records at Virginia Union University and to family members, talked with them, and we've also gone through census data and such things as that. Also, there has been some work done on African American architects—it was quite recently, within the last two years, I would say—a dictionary of African American architects. That gives

you some leads. There is a specialist, who works for the city as a historian, and he has been helpful. Of course, the gold mine for any kind of research on the City of Richmond is the Valentine Museum, The Valentine Richmond History Center. We have spent a lot of time there.

KCH: And it is just a matter of cross-referencing isn't it; following anything that you can think of.

MD: That is right.

KCH: Who is the primary author on your new book?

MD: Selden Richardson. He did a Master's thesis in Architectural History and his thesis was on the Leigh Street Armory, which was a black armory, right near VCU. He is an excellent writer. I've done a lot of editing of academic people's prose and he is one of the best that I have read; really good. We work pretty well together; of course we haven't had the final fights about what we are going to cut out and what we are going to leave in. (Laughter)

KCH: You have co-authored a number of books in your career. How are those arguments usually framed? How is that resolved?

MD: First off, you have to have somebody you trust, and you have to have a professional writer, because, as you know yourself, I'm sure, there is nothing worse than dealing with an amateur writer who refuses to have one word changed in the copy. You have to have somebody with some flexibility and some trust. I edited a book and co-authored a book with Daniel Jordan, J-o-r-d-a-n, who is the president of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation in Charlottesville. Dan and I worked together, and we worked together perfectly. We never had any kind of difficulty; complete trust. We edited the book on Richmond, *The Richmond Reader*, and we appeared on local TV and radio shows when it came out; for things like that, we were interviewed. He had written about a third, I guess, of the history of the Universal Leaf Tobacco Company, when he got so mired in his job at Charlottesville that he just couldn't work any more because he had so many other commitments. He asked me would I join him as a co-author on the book, and I came in and took over most of, all of the writing, really, after the book was about a

third done. Dan and I just treated each other as if we were students of each other. I corrected his stuff, and he'd correct mine and there was no umbrage taken, anything such as that. We got the book done, and it is an okay book.

0:20:45            Universal Leaf Tobacco: experience writing company history

KCH: That is a wonderful segue into discussing Universal Leaf and the process you had mentioned; that you expanded the narrative of the book to include oral histories.

MD: Well, no. They had done almost all of the oral histories before. We had all of his stuff on tape; every bit of it was made available to me. I brought it home and just started through it. I did very much like I did when I was writing the *Times Dispatch* book page, editing the *Times Dispatch* book page, you just pull stuff out, find what you can use, and use it. We had no trouble at all. Every once in awhile we do something about, Dan and I would, that we disagreed with each other on, but we would work it out. I started one of the chapters out, I don't know, I was talking about Admiral Yamamoto and end of World War II. I was sort of, as they say at the newspaper, I sort of backed into the story, and Dad chopped it out; I thought, I really kind of liked that, (Laugh) but I saw that he was right. I've just done the same thing to a piece of Selden's prose, upstairs, this morning, too.

KCH: So you did not do oral interviews yourself.

MD: I did some. I did, not many, I did two or three in the factories down in North Carolina. I don't think that I did any here in Richmond. No, I did not do any here. Dan had finished the interviewing. He had flown to Canada and interviewed retired people there; talked to people who had been in the China Company in the 1930s and interviewed them. We had all of that stuff. We have secretarial help, full secretarial help, from the Universal people. They would do the same kind of thing that you will be doing with this manuscript; just typing it out and giving it to us.

KCH: Very helpful. At Universal Leaf, was that part of their vision when, I assume, they approached Mr. Jordan about writing a book?

MD: Yes, they approached Dan and offered him a contract to write the history. Dan had, has a very good reputation everywhere, but he had a good reputation in Richmond when he was here. He did a lot of talking, and he was a good teacher. I chaired his tenure committee, when he was up for tenure. As I say, we had done some things together, and so that is how we got together. Dan, they did approach him. Then, when he got to the point that he couldn't continue because of other commitments, he asked them if he could bring me on board, and they agreed. I met them; they took me to lunch down at the Commonwealth Club, things like that. We all got along well together.

KCH: The book is, I am guessing, or you tell me—. The book both presents the management—I mean it gives a history perspective—and then does it include some of the management styles or how they strategized to expand? It is huge.

MD: Yes, it does. It is a worldwide organization. They have a big business in Korea; they had one in China; I think they still have an office in Hong Kong. They had one in the Dutch West Indies, South America, England, Portugal, Somalia, maybe some of the Africa countries, I don't remember now. They are not universal, but at least they are worldwide.

KCH: Right. Were there differences in the perspective at Universal Leaf between the kind of information that the principals, the management, presented and the workers present. I would think that their livelihood and their contact with the company were quite different.

MD: Well they, now I'm not sure I am answering your question, but it is a good company to work for and they are good to their employees. At the highest level, they work hand-in-glove with each other. I just didn't detect any acrimony at all. I don't know of anybody who left the company in disgrace or anything such as that. I know that Congoleum, the floor people, tried to do a hostile take-over of Universal in the 1960s, and they just pulled together; the whole tobacco world pulled together for them, for Universal. They finally, the Congoleum people, gave up. So, they work very well together. They also make, if you go to work for Universal, they might—the first thing they do is everybody has to go to the factories down in North Carolina and

work and then, when they felt that that person was ready to come to Richmond, as they say, they'd "bring him along;" they would bring along so-and-so. You would have mentors; that is what that meant. So young men had a mentor, and when they thought he was ready, they would bring him to Richmond, to the headquarters; that is the world headquarters of Universal. They would pair him with somebody who took care of the China account, or the Portugal account, or whatever the case may be. All of the top-level executives at Universal also took care of individual accounts for customers. Let us say that you worked with Japan—as Henry Harrell, the recently retired CEO was—they would take Henry to Japan; he would meet the people there; they would entertain Henry, and anyone else, in their homes in Japan; and then, when those people came to this country, they would also—they didn't put them up in hotels or anything—they took them to their homes. Most of these people were fairly well off, quite affluent, and they had big houses, guesthouses, and things like that. So they would put them up at the guesthouse; take them around and show them things. They formed friendships, relationships that lasted long after the people had retired. They will still come and visit, that kind of thing.

0:27:17            Universal Leaf Tobacco: business practices

KCH: You are identifying some of the characteristics that you admired in the way that they conducted business at Universal Leaf; you had mentioned that briefly the last time. You mentioned doing things with a gentleman's handshake.

MD: Yes they did, which was stunning to both Dan and me, when we went to work on the book. They don't have contracts. They work purely on the, as I say, a handshake and a gentleman's agreement. It is unbelievable that in today's world that would be the case. Now I haven't had any contact with Universal for about ten years, eight years or so, but at the time that I was with them they had one attorney for a world wide company; just one attorney, which I thought was unbelievable; the kinds of contracts that we have in the business world today so that if you make one move somebody can haul you in some legal precedent and indicate to you that you've have done something wrong. They don't do that. [For example,] they'll call up

somebody in the United States, who is the man for Portugal—. A Portuguese tobacco manufacturer will call up, say, Mr. Towers—he was the former president up here—and he'll say, "I need five hundred thousand dollars worth of whatever." And he'll say, "Okay, I'll get it to you tomorrow" or "I'll send it out to you next week;" and they do; and the check comes back; and that's the way it works. It is like lending your friend a couple of dollars to go to the movies, and they pay you back, still friends. I don't know of any cases—maybe they were hidden from me, but I don't think so—but I don't know of any cases where anybody welshed. Tom Towers, the president, told me that if you did that you were out of the tobacco business forever. You were just black-balled right out of the business.

KCH: I can understand how that type of business practice you could probably accomplish that within your own culture. They are going across to other cultures, which may have very different approaches.

MD: That's right. Well it happened—I think in Portugal; yes, it was in Portugal—when the socialists took over the country thirty years ago, or something like that, they were not going to pay—I think I've got my facts right; I'm a little bit shaky in the memory on this—but they were not going to pay a debt that they owed—I think it was to Universal—and they were persuaded that if they did that, welshed on that debt; they would never get tobacco again. It came through, came through.

KCH: I would think that the leaders are, of Universal Leaf, well schooled in negotiations.

MD: They are, and they are old-fashioned gentlemen of the nineteenth century era. They all have great interests outside of tobacco. Tom Towers, whom I just mentioned, was an ardent student of history. Mr. Christian—I never met him—he was instrumental in the Virginia Historical Society; one of the past presidents, if I'm not mistaken. Jan Laverge—who recently died, in his late eighties—was a collector of Dutch art. He was Dutch, and he had a great collection. These people have all kinds of interests far outside of the business world.

0:31:00 Universal Leaf Tobacco: reflective of Richmond as a unique southern place

KCH: Would you like to comment, because you are entering that area, on what makes Richmond a unique place?

MD: I think I just described it! (Laughter)

KCH: Okay. (Laughter)

MD: —a great deal of it anyway. Pretty much that is giving way to the different attitudes of the twentieth century. But, Richmond was a closed society until, I guess, the end of World War II and to some degree still is; to some degree still is. You have a group of people that are self-contained, I suppose, socially, culturally, religiously, economically, and they were the city leaders for many years. I know there are lots of problems in Richmond, Virginia. Writing a book on black Richmond history at the present time, I know exactly what those problems were, too. But, these other people held together very well. I suppose, it goes back to the origins of this part of the country. Coming from England, they brought a common heritage with them; brought the English architecture, manners, customs, antiques, class, everything else. That gave them a solid base from which to operate. I was appalled, in a way, when I asked—I'm not going to mention the man's name, but I asked one of the top men at Universal—I said, "To what do you owe the success of Universal Leaf Tobacco Company?" And he said, "Well Maurice, in the first place, we don't have any Jews." It made the hair stand up on the back of my neck—this is not the twenty-first century—but that was his attitude. He did go on to talk about the cohesiveness and the perceived opinion about life, which they shared. Some of it was racist, some of it was sexist, some of it was anti-Semitic—as my example just now indicated—but they pulled together with each other. Of course, it was their company. They started it. They were not beholden to anybody else; although it is a publicly traded company.

0:33:14 Universal Leaf Tobacco Company: business practices – promotions

KCH: Have they promoted from within? Have their sons, and maybe daughters, worked into the company.

MD: Their feeling was always that if you need a person in a particular position that person is already within the company. You just have to find out who it is and promote that person into this position. There was no acrimony about lower ranks being upset because somebody went halfway across the country to hire somebody into a position. They always promoted from within. In the early days, there were no women at the highest levels and there were no blacks at the highest levels. They have consciously set about the change that. They were doing that when I was there. I talked to a black man down in North Carolina—he was a nice fellow; he was working in the factory—I asked him what his aspirations for Universal Leaf were; he said he wanted to be a buyer. They would never have had a black buyer one hundred, seventy-five, years ago. They have made those kinds of changes.

KCH: That is encouraging.

MD: It speaks well of their flexibility, I think.

0:34:29 Richmond as a literary center in the early-nineteenth century

KCH: When we are talking about the uniqueness of Richmond and some of the attitudes, you studied James Branch Cabell and Ellen Glasgow extensively, and I understand that part of their niche in literature was spoofing their own community. Am I stating that incorrectly?

MD: No. Well, I think that was the case with Cabell. He certainly spoofed his own community, his own heritage, his own background. With Ellen Glasgow, she was using irony as a basis of a great deal of what she did. “Blood and irony,” I think was the term that she used.

KCH: Say that again.

MD: Blood and irony.

KCH: Blood and irony.

MD: Yes. My dialect is interfering. (Laughter) She wrote about people who were not of the upper echelons necessarily: people of trade, girls from the country, seduced girls, and things like as that; poor white men who struggled for a living; those kinds of things. She was pretty much ostracized in her early years for writing these kinds of things.



KCH: Right. That is what I was thinking, that they really did have to look outside of their home community for acceptance.

MD: That's right. Cabell was—both those people were to some degree—ostracized in the Richmond community. And Cabell, of course, with that big trial about *Jurgen* being a lewd, lascivious, indecent book—and many people believe that that is exactly what it was—he, to some degree, paid the penalty here at home in Richmond, in Virginia; paid the penalty for having written that kind of a book.

KCH: Cabell and Glasgow, well I am not sure they individually—. *The Reviewer*, which was originally a Richmond publication, is credited with bringing a number of literary figures to the Richmond area.

MD: That's right. Not to live, but that's right. Well Richmond was a, in a sense, a literary center in the 1920s: the Modern Language Association held one of its annual meetings here—and that is really a world wide organization—and Cabell and Glasgow were here. Gertrude Stein came down. [Richmond] had such people as Mary Johnston, who was a well-known writer here. DuBose Heyward, who did *Porgy and Bess*, published in *The Reviewer*. H. L. Mencken published a great deal in *The Reviewer*. So yes, it did bring a number of big names to the publication in Richmond.

KCH: It would bring the names to the publication, were there literary events associated with a Mencken visit or with Gertrude Stein being here?

MD: I don't think, so far as I know, I don't recall—there must have been—but I don't recall public lectures. But, there was an active little theater group here in the '20s. Of course, you know what the 20s were like. It was really a liberating decade, in a way, across the whole country and some of that seeped in to Richmond with young people; such as Margaret Cabell, who was the second Mrs. James Branch Cabell; Emily Clark, who was the second editor of *The Reviewer*. She wrote a couple of marvelous books spoofing Richmond society, just very wonderful. *Stuffed Peacocks*—you can see what that name means—and *Innocence Abroad* were

her two major ones. Then there was Mary Dallas Street, who was also on *The Reviewer* staff and Hunter Stagg, who was a book review editor, and a very good one. These people, they had some kind of a literary presence here in the city, no doubt about it. Cabell himself edited one issue of *The Reviewer* and published in it, as well.

KCH: That was approximately the same time—. *The Reviewer*, you say, would have been the '20s. I believe some of the first attempts for a symphony were in the '30s. So Richmond was starting to expand its cultural life.

MD: That is quite true.

KCH: That brings me to the conclusion of my questions. Is there is something that you would like to touch on?

MD: I don't think so. We've done a good bit. I didn't think that we would go through three sessions, but we have. It has been very enjoyable for me. I hope that this will be useful to somebody way down the line.

KCH: I believe so. I was thinking—as you were commenting on the documentation on James Duke, or lack of documentation—when someone starts researching [these topics], follows you, then any time that they can find one piece, it might take them to the next level. That often is what this is all about.

0:39:58      Maternal ancestors: Waldrop, Bourne

MD: Oh, one thing that you had said that you wanted to talk about was my mother's side of the family, where the father and son fought together in the Confederacy. They were the Waldrop family, W-a-l-d-r-o-p; David Waldrop and his son. Their names are on the Confederate monument in the front yard of the Hanover County Courthouse. They were in the same regiment. I think they were in the Hanover Rifles, but I am not sure now. They were both in the war; both survived the war, also. Sort of ironic, in a sense, for my generation, that I had one great-great-grandfather supplying information to the enemy and another great-great-grandfather who was

fighting against that enemy. I guess in a way that is not that unusual in the rank-and-file; so many people caught up in the war, in the Civil War.

KCH: I think it is hard for those of us in our generation, in these times, to imagine what it might have been like.

MD: The families were torn asunder. I was up— The Waldrop's and the Bourne's, B-o-u-r-n-e; their church was the Hopeful Baptist Church up in Hanover County. I go up there every once in awhile. I went up a few months ago and took a camera with me and photographed some tombstones because all of my aunts and uncles are buried there, my grandmother and grandfather. David Waldrop's grave is there and his wife erected it after his death. It mentions something about his being in the—fighting for his country. His country was the Confederacy; it wasn't the United States of America. At the time that I was up there — I guess, he must have died in 1920—somebody had placed a small confederate flag on his grave. So, somebody there in the community—obviously a member of my family, I guess; I have no idea who it might have been—is remembering him for his service. That's what we in the South mean when we talk about "heritage and not hate;" although I don't like that term because it reeks of the Klan.

KCH: David Waldrop and the son that fought in the Civil War; what kind of work did David Waldrop—

MD: They were farmers.

KCH: Is there any family lore about—that has been handed down through the generations—as to how the farming was continued after father and son went—

MD: It was very difficult. It was the women who did it. My mother was a pretty good farmer herself. She was raised—her mother died when she, my mother, was about twelve years old—and she had two sisters and a brother and her father; had to keep that farm running up here in Hanover County, and they did. She did some work in the fields and grew some tobacco; my mother did. That is the way they did it.

KCH: As far as you know, was tobacco the primary crop that the Bournes, the Waldrops, and maybe even the Dukes were—?

MD: I don't know what the Dukes were growing. I know that the Bournes were growing a good bit of tobacco; more than anything else. I know that my Grandfather Arthur Bourne would bring the yearly crop of tobacco to Richmond by horse and wagon. That was about a twenty-five mile, thirty mile, trip, which took a long time. I suspect that what he did was the same thing they did in the eighteenth century. They'd bring it to market—. They would go as far as they could in one day, stop and sleep in the wagon for the night, and get up and come on the next day. I am sure that he did the same thing. They lived up there with no electricity and no running water. I lived that way as a child, when we lived in Powhatan County. That was their life. It was a pretty hardscrabble life; there is no doubt about it.

KCH: The grandmother that you lived with in Powhatan County was she a Bourne or—

MD: Duke. She was my father's mother. Her mother was a Bazile.

KCH: Okay, that helps with the genealogy. So the farming continued through the generations.

MD: It did. My father was not a farmer, although he took a stint at it, and my Grandfather Duke was not a farmer either. They worked here in town. When we lived in Powhatan County, they tried, but they really weren't very good at it, very knowledgeable about it at all.

0:44:59 Tobacco production

You talked about the tobacco—of course, you know what happened here in the Tidewater section of this country—the tobacco wore out the land. They had to start moving west to find more land, which they did in the early eighteenth century. This began to tear the families apart and bring in new people; the German influx up in the Shenandoah Valley—there were great numbers of Germans—then William Byrd, I think it was Byrd, who brought a German contingent here. That began to change things in this society a little bit. But, there was still that old English

aristocracy; the English background, I should say, at the start of it; although some of them were—. That was the group that held together. All the people that I worked with at Universal, they had the same kind of stories to tell that I did. I guess that is the reason that I got along so well with them; our ancestors had been here for a long time.

KCH: [Reflecting on] how tobacco leached the nutrients out of the soil and how that altered the family structure—the family’s ability to make a living—are there examples of diversification [among your ancestors]?

MD: I think that came with crop rotation, the theory of crop rotation. There was a man here, a very prominent one, whose name was John Taylor. He is known as John Taylor of Caroline—that means Caroline County—he was in the legislature. He wrote an important work called *The Arator*, A-r-a-t-o-r, talking about methods of farming and keeping from destroying your land, things such as that. John Taylor was pretty well known.

KCH: At Universal Leaf, is there, or did you get into the subject of conservation; awareness of how to renew the land? Is that part of Universal Leaf’s role? We now know that many of these large companies that deforest the land go back and plant seedlings.

MD: Well, Universal people are not tobacco growers. They purchase leaf tobacco from the farmers and then sell it to manufacturers, who make cigarettes and pipe tobacco and things such as that. So, they would have had no direct input into the growing of the crop. They never did.

KCH: And there was no education arm. I’m just thinking that they’re dependent though on having a crop available to purchase.

0:47:53          Universal Leaf Tobaccos: various topics

MD: Absolutely, absolutely. Now they are diversifying out of tobacco because of the attitudes about tobacco consumption in this country. In the past decades, and centuries really, they did not have any idea about the health problems of tobacco. They did not realize, and I am convinced of this, they did not realize that they had a dangerous product that was addicting

people. Once you get a person to smoke, they are going to keep on smoking; in the past that was the case. I was at one time, for fifteen years, I was a smoker myself. There was one president of Universal that always said that tobacco was just a harmless diversion. He chewed tobacco, had a chauffeur driven car and he kept little Dixie cups in the back to spit in while he was traveling between here and North Carolina and other places. They didn't consider it to be a dangerous crop. Everybody now knows what the situation is. The only people you find now are the kids, who are going to live forever; they are sure of that.

KCH: Young and immortal.

MD: What is it Thomas Wolfe said, "Young and drunk and twenty and knew we'd never die." (Laughter) And that is correct, also. Then there is our lowest social order people, people on the social ladder, are quite often still smokers.

KCH: Which baffles me, but it must be a past time that brings some pleasure. I don't know what to say about that. I don't need to say anything. (Laugh)

MD: That is right. I will tell you one thing that was indicative, to me, of the way that Universal treats its people. I worked on the manuscript and one of the chapters, I've forgotten which one it was now—I think I rewrote it eight or nine times before we got what we wanted—never had any trouble; I just kept plodding away. I'd meet with my committee up there and they'd say—they didn't dictate what I was writing; not by any stretch—but they said, "Maybe you should include this, or maybe, whatever." When this whole thing was finished, at the last meeting Tom Towers told me, "Maurice," he said, "We have enjoyed working with you. We want to give you an extra thousand dollars." You don't find that very often! And I said, "Fine, I'll take it." They wrote me a check for a thousand dollars on top of what they had already paid me for the book.

KCH: A good experience.

MD: It was a good experience working with those people. They are the kinds of people who expect a great deal of you, give you a great deal of leeway; to the point that you feel

that you can not disappoint them. That makes you work harder. It is not like somebody is sitting over you; do this, put that down and do this, and that kind of thing. They wanted you to come back with results, and you would work hard to do that.

KCH: That is really part of what I was trying to get to, when I asked was there any difference in opinion in how Universal Leaf, the management, might have wanted the book to read and some of the stories that you got in your oral histories. There are always, within a company, various opinions. Were they supportive of all kinds of oral histories? Were the oral histories to be inclusive of the worker's [attitudes], or were they more about the actual work that was being done; their duties and that kind of thing?

MD: It was more that and the success of the company, because it has been a very successful company. They never gave me any indication of things that I should or should not include. All of these people—all of these men—had worked at one time or another in their lives on the tobacco markets of North Carolina as buyers; and that is a big thing, tobacco buying. I've got one interview with somebody who talked about the prostitutes that followed the buyers, followed the market, from warehouse to warehouse. I wrote something in there about—I've forgotten exactly what I said—but I said something like, "there were always women who were willing to trade sexual favors for a good meal or a night on the town," something like that. They didn't say a thing. I was writing in a sense—I know I must have been writing—about somebody who was in the room at the time—I didn't know who it might have been—but they didn't say a thing about it. It is in print, and they let that stand.

KCH: It is that type of detail that provides a fuller picture as to what life was like on the road, the temptations

MD: There was another guy, buyer, who—I don't know what happened to him—was a heavy drinker. He got drunk one night and came down to the—this buyer—to the lobby of the hotel nude.

KCH: Oh, my goodness. Not a good idea.

MD: That's right. I included that story and it is in the book.

KCH: They are willing to be portrayed in all of their—

MD: They were willing to take the blemishes, too. There may have been some things that people didn't tell you in the interview, but that is perfectly normal. There are always some things that you are going to hold back in those kinds of situations; when you are talking candidly about these kinds of things. There was a lot of drinking; a lot of partying; a lot of card playing going on—and, I guess, some hanky-panky with the prostitutes—on the markets in those days. There may be still, for all I know. Probably is.

KCH: They reflect other aspects of our society.

MD: That's right.

(Pause)

KCH: I think that I will say, "Thank you."

MD: Thank you, too. I hope that when somebody can come to this in fifty or seventy-five years and find in it some of the kinds of things that I found when I was going through the ephemera in Cabell's library.

0:54:52

*End of Interview #3*