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Interview with
MAURICE MC ADOW
October 17, 1982

Place of Interview: Denton, Texas

Interviewer: Steve Paul

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Approved: Maurice McAdow
(Signature)

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Oral History Collection

Maurice McAdow

Interviewer: Steve Paul

Place of Interview: Denton, Texas

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Mr. Paul: This is Steve Paul, and I am about to interview Mr. Maurice McAdow, former band director of North Texas State University, in Denton, Texas, on October 17, 1982, for the School of Music Oral History Project at North Texas State University.

Okay, Mr. McAdow, if you would like to just fill me in a little bit on your early career, and if you want to just give me a biographical sketch--where you were born and grew up and about how you got into the band business.

Mr. McAdow: Well, I was born in Greenville, Illinois, and my parents moved to Oklahoma when I was just an infant, and two or three years after that, my parents separated; and my father went on the road as a professional musician, and my mother remained in Kansas.

Mr. Paul: Which instrument did your father play?

Mr. McAdow: My father was a trumpet player and had a fine piano and theory background. After traveling for many years on the road, he went to Montana and located there mainly because of malaria that he contracted when he was in the South--boat shows and so on.

My ambition was to be a musician and follow in my father's

footsteps, and this was not looked upon with favor, as far as my relatives on my mother's side. They were strictly business people and looked upon a musician as someone who didn't make very much money, and that made me that much more determined to follow the music profession. So in the summer before I was to be sixteen in the fall, I took off from home and joined a tent show and went down into Oklahoma and toured with this show for several months.

Paul: By a tent show, is that a circus?

McAdow: Well, it was a drama, a melodrama, they called it--the old-time tent show. The orchestra would play at night, like a pit orchestra, and it was kind of like the vaudeville-type thing. Then when they'd move into a new town, they'd always form a band, and members of the orchestra plus some of the other hired help around the show would add to the band membership, and we'd play on the town square and advertise the show. My mother finally located me, found out where I was, and after several months I came back home and finished high school, and took off again (chuckle).

Paul: You finished high school in what town?

McAdow: Anthony, Kansas.

Paul: Anthony, Kansas.

McAdow: I finished high school in Anthony, Kansas. It just happened that this little town of Anthony was quite a haven for retired circus people. I had gotten into their municipal band, town band, and at one time there were only three younger people in that band. I was one of the three, and the remainder of the personnel was made

up of these old retired band men, One of the other three was a man that...he wrote a march that's played quite a bit--this "Queen City" by Bourne--and a lot of people know that, He was in that band, a very close buddy of mine.

Paul: Did you play several instruments in that band?

McAdow: No, I played trumpet in there. I started out on cornet and then trumpet. Then I went back out to Montana and was with my father out there again. I'd go back and forth because that's the only way I could be with both of them, and I got started on some other instruments.

Then, after being with him out in Billings, Montana, for a couple of years, I went on the road again and finally played with some of the large bands around Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago, and Detroit. This led to a permanent job in the Chicago area, where I played in the pit; and we opened up a new theater, and I stayed there for almost three years.

Paul: About what year did you go to Chicago?

McAdow: When I went into that job, it was about 1930, when the theaters were being closed all over the country because of the Depression, and, of course, the "talkies" had come in--that's what we referred to them as in those days.

So then I left there, and came back down to Greenville, Illinois, that same town where I was born years before that. My mother was living there, and I came down to be with her. I had no job--everything had closed, as far as theaters were concerned. I just happened

to be uptown walking around the square, and a man came up to me and asked me if I'd be interested in playing for a dance. He said, "I belong to a lodge, and we have a dance about three times a month. We've got one coming up this week, and we'd like to hire you to play." And I said, "Well, don't you have to arrange that with the leader of the band?" And he said, "Well, the band isn't very good, but we thought that would help it." So I played the job, and after the thing was over, he came up and said, "We'd like to have you everytime." I said, "Well, not if I have to play with that band. I'd just as soon not work." So he said, "Would you like to organize your own?" which I did. I organized a very small band, and that was the beginning of quite a little history of my stage or dance band.

Paul: Did you have a name for the group?

McAdow: Well, it went under my name, just "Maurice McAdow and His Orchestra." In later years I was embarrassed about it, even ashamed of it, and I don't think anyone on the North Texas campus ever knew that I had been involved in anything like that until some of the "exes" helped get out the album when I retired. They came here to the house, and they got hold of some pictures and talked to my son Scott and his mother, and they filled them in on some details. It was quite a shock, I guess, to a lot of people because they didn't know I had done that. But I was glad to get away from it.

Paul: About what age were you when you were doing that band in Illinois?

McAdow: Well, I was in my twenties, late twenties. Then I decided that I

wanted to organize a school band. I had no degree; I hadn't been to college. So I went over to a little town that was just nine miles from where I was living in the county seat town of Greenville, and they informed me that had no money for anything extra like music. So I didn't let that stop me. I just started going around knocking on doors and talking to all the parents and people and was able to get a band started there. That's the little town of Mulberry Grove. And that little band went on and won the district contest and went to the state contest and won it, and they still--in 1982--have the record of being the smallest band to ever to to the state and win a first.

That encouraged me, so then I went out and started two more little bands, and I'd just go a day or two a week to each of those towns. This was paid for by band dues--the parents paid for it--and I'd give private lessons to every youngster in the band.

Then this town of Greenville, which I thought of as a larger town...at that time it had a population of 3,400, and it was the county seat. They came around and talked to me, and they said they could put me on salary, if I could get rid of those other little towns. But, of course, in the meantime, I had to get hold of some kind of certificate, and for a year or so, I worked on an emergency certificate and went into the schools there.

Paul: Where did you work on that?

McAdow: The emergency certificate? Well, I went up to Illinois Wesleyan and started some work there, and then there was a little church

college in Greenville, and I took some academic work there. I got all the English and some education and all that, and to be very frank about it, I never was so bored in my life as I was when I started that. But my friends would keep encouraging me and say, "Well, you got to get your degree because once you get your degree, you'll have opportunities to move on to a better job."

So I continued to work on toward the degree, but at the same time, I was much more interested in expanding my knowledge of instruments. So I went down to St. Louis and started on minor instruments. I took clarinet with Mike Zottarelle, who was principal clarinetist with the St. Louis Symphony. I studied with him weekly for four years on clarinet. I studied oboe, bassoon, percussion, and flute with a man who had been principal flute with the St. Louis Symphony, but had stepped down as he got older and was playing third flute and piccolo. My work with him led me to a position with what was referred to as the Philharmonic, which is...you know what that is. It's more or less their second city orchestra, and I guess one of the biggest thrills I ever had was to be able to play a minor instrument in that orchestra, which I did. I played second flute in there for one year.

Paul: How far was Greenville from St. Louis?

McAdow: About forty miles. I would drive over there every week to take those lessons, and I wouldn't let anything stop me from going in to St. Louis. That's why the degree was dragged out so, and I didn't receive my bachelor's degree until I had had my high school

band at national. I had won two national contests with a high school band before I got my bachelor's,

Paul: Which towns were those national contests in?

McAdow: Elkhart, Indiana.

Paul: Both of those years were?

McAdow: And then I went down to Little Rock, Arkansas. By that time they had divided it into national regionals,

Paul: Right.

McAdow: There were ten states entered down there, and we got first in those contests. So things were rolling along pretty good in the meantime. The summer after I had gotten the second national, I walked across the stage at Illinois Wesleyan and got my bachelor's degree. I joked with the dean as I shook hands with him, and I said, "Now my intonation is going to be a lot better." And, of course, he knew what I meant because actually I didn't feel that I had gotten out of that what I had put into it in effort. The thing that I valued was the work with those artists down in St. Louis, and I still do, to this day, because they were the finest in their field. And the experience of playing my minor instrument with an orchestra like that made me feel pretty good.

Paul: That's great.

McAdow: Then along about that time, the war was on, and I remember being out in my little victory garden--everybody had a victory garden in those days--and my wife came to the door and called and said, "You're wanted. Long distance is calling." So I went in, and it was the

superintendent from Elmhurst, Illinois, which is a large suburb of Chicago, and is where York High School is located. He wanted to know if I would be interested in a job, and I didn't know just exactly what he had in mind. He said, "If you'll come up here, we'll pay all expenses for an interview." So I went up there and came back with a contract. The school, the high school, was larger than the town that I had left down below in Greenville.

Paul: What class was your band at Greenville in the contests?

McAdow: They only had in those days three classes--A, B, C. We were a "B" school. The "C's" were the very, very small villages, and, of course, those schools didn't go on to national.

Paul: Did you compete in any of the contests with Hobart, Indiana?

McAdow: Yes, absolutely. We were in the same class. They were Class B at that time.

Paul: Right. Was that before Revelli left?

McAdow: It was about the time Revelli left. Of course, I got to be very good friends with Revelli through those contests and then the fact that he had lived in a little town called Panama--a little coal mining town, Panama, Illinois--and that was just five miles from where my mother was born. So we used to talk a lot about that, and we got to be very good friends--and still are, to this day.

Anyway, I got the contract at York High School and came back, and no one even knew that I was gone or anything; and it came out in the paper, and, of course, I guess it just shocked everybody.

You can become quite attached to those little towns, and you get so close to your students. In the last concert...there was a tradition there--I guess I had started it--that we would play a seniors' concert after school was out, and it would be outside in the park, where the municipal band would play. I was also conductor of the municipal band there. But the high school band would play this concert after school was out, and we would honor the seniors. Actually, it turned out to be more like a funeral than a concert because of the fact of, you know, the separation and that I was leaving, and I hated to leave all those kids that I had started. I was eight years in that school at Greenville. Then I went to York,

Paul: Before we go on, how full an instrumentation did you have at Greenville?

McAdow: One thing that I learned there, and I still preach it...and I know the boys used to think out here at North Texas and some of the little towns when I go around and find that their instrumentation isn't very good...I tell them that they can have instrumentation if they work for it, if they go after it. And it still makes me furious when I go in and see seven or eight alto saxophones, three tenors, two french horns, and that type of thing--you just don't have to have it that way. I started a plan of staggering my double reeds so that I never lost a first oboe and a first bassoon at the same...you know, I wouldn't lose more than one oboe or one bassoon; I always had that other person coming on the next year.

In those days we were limited. When we went to the national, we couldn't have over eighty pieces in the band. That's, of course, before the days of the cut down of the wind ensemble. The big bands, the Class "A," would go on up to ninety, and I had eighty.

Paul: So you had the maximum?

McAdow: I had the maximum, and I always had two oboes, two bassoons, a full section of horns, and a big flute section.

Paul: A full section of horns would be six or eight?

McAdow: Six, sometimes eight. It depends on how good they were, if I'd cut back on a seventh or eighth in order to bring in someone else who was strong on another instrument. Before we went to contest, I always had playoffs, qualifications, and nobody could go to the district contest until he had passed his qualifications, and I started them early. It was announced at the beginning of school when that date would be. I sometimes would have rehearsals with a ten-or twelve-piece band. It was very comical instrumentation, but I just went ahead as always; and they saw that I meant business, and they'd go after it and work hard. It always produced results. They'd pass their qualifications. If they didn't, they stayed at home. Even as the standards are today, the qualifications were tough. I demanded such things as transposition, knowledge of keys, and major and minor scales. And when I say that, I don't mean two or three; I meant all of them.

Paul: Right. By transposition, you would give them a line, and they would then have to play it in a different key?

McAdow: Play it in different keys, yes.

Paul: How far away from the key would you go with them on that?

McAdow: Well, just to show you...up there basketball is a very strong sport, and when they'd get into the conference games and tournaments and things like that, which they always had one at our school, I'd have a pep band that was a very choice band picked out, you know, something that would really sound, and to keep them from being bored, I'd play those marches in different keys, like a tone down or a tone up. I did that for several years, and these kids got to where they thought nothing of it. It certainly paid off when these youngsters would leave and go off to college.

Paul: I can imagine, Can I ask another question about the contest?

McAdow: Yes.

Paul: When you went to the national contest, was it still under the system of first place, second place...

McAdow: No, it was groups; it was divisions. Yes, they had abandoned that idea, but we had nationally-known judges,

Paul: Right.

McAdow: Of course, that was far enough back that some of the men that I name today went down in history as giants. Some of these judges would be...Harold Bachman was one, and we would have him quite often. Clarence Sawhill had judged in our region several times... Mark Hindsley, Mr. Harding, who is long since deceased--those are some of the people we had...Victor Grabel and some of those men,

Paul: Right.

McAdow: I might throw in something here. I know of two people in particular that I had invited as guest conductors, and they used to come down there down to my city. Mark Hindsley was one, and Clarence Sawhill was another. Sawhill came down to Greenville one time as a guest conductor, and he was riding with Mr. Hindsley--they were good friends and belonged to the same staff. Mr. Hindsley had bought a new car and was making that trip, and in those days you had to drive very slowly, and it took him longer than he had planned on. The place was full--we had advertised this thing--and still no guest conductor. So we went ahead, and I shifted the program around. Finally, I looked back and saw some people walking in, and he came right on down to the front, walked right up on stage, and guest conducted and didn't rehearse or anything. The piece we did was the "Mannin Venn" by Haydn Wood, so you know that the kids were...and that was in this little town of 3,400.

It was a sad day when I left there. Clarence Sawhill said to me one time, "Some of these days, you'll probably have an opportunity to move on to greener pastures, but let me tell you one thing--you'll never step into another situation that you can say it's all yours and that you'll be as thrilled with as you are with these kids." I've thought of that many times, and he was certainly correct. Then I moved on up to York.

Paul: York High School, right.

McAdow: There I got into an entirely different situation.

Paul: Can you tell me what year that was?

McAdow: Yes, I went to York...let's see...I had jotted a couple of dates down here in case I'd forget what they were (refers to paper). Let's see, I went to York in the fall of 1943. That is a large suburb of Chicago, and very close, and the students were used to going down to the Loop to take lessons downtown. I had that caliber of player, but I didn't know until I had been there a few months that one of the main reasons that I was brought in there was to clean up their discipline. And I guess I did that the first week I was there because the superintendent and principal came around to see me, and they said, "We want the band to play for the first assembly when school opens, and we'd like to make the request that they be in uniform," I agreed to it and announced it all along that we would be in uniform, everyday, two or three times a day. In fact, everytime I said, "Don't forget--get your uniform ready, get it adjusted, whatever you need." I walked on the stage that morning, and they were just about ready to present me, the new director, and the band and everything.

I looked over and found one young man sitting there. He was the second chair solo clarinet player, and a good one at that. He was kind of the fair-haired playboy around the school, the campus, and drove the big limousine and everything, and he was sitting there with a bright-colored sweater and out of uniform. I said, "Bob, where's your uniform?" He just shrugged his shoulders and gave me that kind of an answer, and I said, "By the way, can you

see the drum section back there?" He said, "Yes. What's that got to do with this?" I said, "Quite a bit, because right in back of the drum section there's a large door, and I want to see how fast you can get through it." I lost him for good; I told him that was it. The principal heard it and came up and shook hands with me and congratulated me. He said, "Well, that's what we need around here. We haven't had it." So I was only there... I finished two years, and...are you ready to go on to the next?

Paul: Certainly.

McAdow: I had just finished two years, and I got a telephone call one morning, and it was Dr. Wilfred Bain, Dean of Music at North Texas State University. He called and he said, "This is Wilfred C. Bain from Denton, Texas." I said, "Where?" I'm sure that didn't go over too big with him, but he had me kind of startled, I guess. So he said, "We have a band job down here-- Director of Bands." He went on to talk, and I didn't realize that he had checked everything out. He said, "Are you interested?" I said, "Well, I'd like a couple of days to think about it. I found out a long time ago that when you have an important decision, it's best to get at it and not prolong it. Give me two days. You'll need some time to check on me, won't you?" He said, "I've already done that." So in two days, I called him back and said I'd take the job.

Paul: Do you know how you had been recommended to him?

McAdow: Well, yes, I think the man who had more to do with that than anyone

else was Mr. Sawhill, Clarence Sawhill, who was a very, very close friend of mine. He knew my work from those little towns and then at York. After I got down here, I found out from Dr. Bain that he had checked on other campuses, but I give my good friend Sawhill credit for that.

Paul: Very good. Let me back up just a little bit, I have a couple of other things before we get to Texas, Did you attend any of the clinics at the University of Illinois--Saturday clinics or summer clinics?

McAdow: No, the only time I would go to the University of Illinois would be for those contests when I took bands up there, or our state meeting, which correponds to our TMEA here in Texas. We would have reading sessions by the university bands, and I was always around there. Most of my time was taken up with trying to get that bachelor's out of the way, and I was going back and forth between Bloomington, which was a hundred miles, and I would drive that. And sometimes, even after a concert with the town band, I would jump in the car and drive that hundred miles and be in class the next morning.

Paul: So you mentioned Victor Grabel earlier. Did you know him other than as a contest judge?

McAdow: Well, I got to know him because I was very curious in those days to get all the information I could from people that were well-known and had succeeded. I remember he judged the state contest several times at Champaign-Urbana, also at Elkhart, Indiana, where I took

the band once for a national contest, I remember distinctly, when I'd go up for that fall meeting, he would be there for those clinics and so on. He used to stay in the old Quality Hotel, and he would come down for breakfast, and I knew about what time he would be there. So I'd would watch the elevator, and when that elevator cracked open, I'd be right there and greet him and walk in and sit down with him and, of course, considered it a real thrill to get to talk to him. I felt I learned quite a bit from him, just asking him questions about procedures.

I remember one time I was talking to him about...oh, I did a number that had a feature for soli trombone and trumpet, first cornet and first trombone. I said, "Mr. Gravel, I want to ask you a question. Do you know so-and-so tune?" "Yes." I said, "Well, I tried that, and I didn't get a satisfying effect from these two. So finally I got to doubling and ended up with two cornets and two trombones, and they were not my first chair people, but people I liked." He said, "Well, how did that sound to you?" I said, "I tried everything, and that was the best sound I could get." He said, "Just remember, young man, your band will never be any better than what you can hear. And if that sounded good to you, that's the thing to use." And I considered that real good advice. Victor Gravel, of course, was a giant in his own way.

Paul: Back to the University of Illinois, did you ever hear any of Mr. Harding's radio broadcasts with the band?

McAdow: Yes, and I knew of his transcriptions. He was doing so many of those

things.

Paul: Did you play any of those?

McAdow: No, the only time,,when I was at school over there at Wesleyan, I would stay on the campus two or three days and then go back to Greenville to conduct my town band because I was being paid for that, and that was what was buying my groceries. I played clarinet in Mr. Hindsley's summer band there for two summers, and I would go back and forth, and I got to play some of those things at that time.

Paul: Did you ever hear any stories about Mr. Harding and his attitude toward rehearsal, or the way he would work a rehearsal?

McAdow: Well, no. I know that...

Paul: I've heard people say that he didn't like to rehearse much.

McAdow: I was just going to say that he read a tremendous amount of material. I had to be very careful, myself, or I would go in that direction because I had been a firm believer in the fact that more literature--much literature--is the greatest teaching device there is. I think you can develop musicianship that way, rather than spin your wheels and spend all your time on a few numbers. I may be erratic in this respect, that I think it's possible to take all the fun out of playing for a youngster, especially a high school kid. I see it in the contests, and I've probably joked about it more than anyone else, about the people who don't get their bacon crisp burn it. And that's all they do, is play those three numbers, and you can tell it when you hear them play--it's mechanical. And I frown on that.

I think perhaps even at North Texas, I used that system of reading a lot, and I felt that, to me, it was important for those people to know and become acquainted with a vast amount of material rather than just grind away on a few things.

Paul: Would you say you were influenced by Mr. Harding in that, or was that an idea you came up with just from experience?

McAdow: Well, I think I got a lot of that from my father and from being in shows, playing, working professionally, where you didn't have time to rehearse, and you had to do it. You came in and sat down, and you were expected to play.

Paul: What did you do with your Greenville band or your York band to get them to where they could do that?

McAdow: Well, I guess concentration on basics, fundamentals, requirements, the qualifications that I have mentioned earlier this evening where every student was expected to be able to play chromatic scales and all his major and minor scales and then certain excerpts out of books and things that we had there. And then we read a lot, and tuning was important. I still frown on this business of "you're sharp, you're flat, pull out, pull in." I step in the band rooms today--and I'm all over the place--and I go in, and they stand up there and tell the youngster that he's sharp or he's flat. I insist that as long as you tell them, they're going to let you do the tuning. Therefore, we had more time to work on a lot of music.

Just to give you an example, we were on our way to Little Rock,

and I could see a certain complacency that had taken effect, That was the first time I had ever noticed it with these kids, and they were walking around pretty cocky. They had won the state again and were ready to go to this next national. It got back to me that they had popped off at the state contest to some other kids about how good they were and everything, and I didn't like that. So I waited until the week we were to go down there, and on Sunday I went out and changed the folders and put in a new number, and that was the week we were headed for Little Rock. The kids came in, and they said "What's this?" I said, "Well, the title's at the top of the page." What it meant was, every kid got his part, and he went to work, and he just lived with it that week. And it paid off. The freshness was there. The freshness was there.

Paul: Do you remember what piece it was?

McAdow: Oh, my, we played so many things that it would be pretty hard to go back and recall some of those things. "Builders of Youth" was one of the numbers by O'Neil. You've heard of that piece, I guess. That's one. And I can think back to some of the others. Another one that we did, which is probably considered an old chestnut today but it has plenty of pitfalls in it, was "Morning, Noon, and Night." And if I remember correctly that was the number that I slipped into the folders before we went to Little Rock. Of course, in those days there were not as many originals as we have today. I'm a believer in the new music that comes out--

originals. I think it ought to be done. But I think we're short-changing our youngsters if we don't go back and play some of the old things that were available in those days. I think a well-rounded band student should know all of it.

Paul: Well, why don't we move on to Texas. Dr. Bain called you out of the blue.

McAdow: And I ended up down here in Denton.

Paul: What did you think of or know about Texas before you ever moved down here?

McAdow: Well, we joke about it now. So many people in those days had an idea that Texas was out in the plains country--the type of country you find on west of, say, Odessa, on out toward El Paso--and trees were scarce. Of course, making the trip down, we had our furniture trucked down, and then we came on. I remember asking him about a place to live. He said, "Well, don't worry about that. I've got a place for you. The man that's your predecessor, immediate predecessor, is Dr. Chidester." And you probably know Dr. Chidester. He's the one that collaborated with another man who wrote the book Getting Results from High School Bands. Well, I took his place here, and as he moved out of this house...it was owned by North Texas, and the dean held that house for us.

Paul: So he was director of bands...

McAdow: ...before I came, yes. So we moved right into that house, and our furniture didn't come for about a week after we got here. It was real hot--it was in August--and it was rather discouraging

because we had been living in the Great Lakes area. I was discouraged about that, but we made up our minds that we would never turn back.

But the biggest discouragement came--and it was a real low blow--the first time I met the band. You've often heard someone brag about, "Well, I built that program," and how they come in and talk about it. I hear a lot of young fellows today...you know, they go in and take over a band and tell you how they built it.

In this case, I would just like for everybody to know that it was a pitiful situation. I didn't have any horns, and I had enough trombones to go practically all the way around the rehearsal hall. I went to one young man, and I called him in and said, "You don't think I could interest you in playing horn?" He said, "Well, I'll have to talk to my father." He called his father, and his father said, "Well, if that man wants you to do it, now you do it." Well, this man is down at the University of Texas today, Dr. Ben Branch, and is a very well-known educator in the state. He changed over to horn, and within a year or so, he also got into the orchestra on horn, and he was always very grateful that he made the change. Then I went around to the dean, went into his office, and I said, "This instrumentation is terrible. Some of the kids that have come in here can't read, and you can see that they haven't had private lessons, and their embouchures are something else." He said, "Well, what do you suggest?" I said, "Well, I think the band ought to get out and make a tour or two," So we did. He said, "I'm all for it." And so we started making some tours, and then

some better players began coming in.

Paul: Who paid for those first tours?

McAdow: We paid for it,

Paul: We being...

McAdow: ...I say "we," being the band, in this way: I would call up a friend of mine out here in some little town and tell him we were starting a tour. And I'd have it all worked out--if I could get so much guarantee, overnight housing in their homes, the meals, he could have what he made. And that's the way I would book those tours. We made...well, I think it was about twenty-nine tours that we made with the band, annual tours,

Paul: Do you remember which was the first year that you toured?

McAdow: Well, it wasn't the first year I was here, I guess it was the second year.

Paul: That would have been 1946?

McAdow: I believe that was the first one, that spring. My dates may not be too clear in my mind. I was busy trying to get some kind of a band together, and our equipment was pretty bad. But we started some tours around here, and it wasn't long until we had a chance to play for the TMEA. Of course, we played for the TMEA several times while I was out here at North Texas, many times. And that didn't hurt. We made our tours around Texas. But I still thought that I owed something to the youngsters in the band, such as taking them out of state, which would become more of a fun trip for them, and educational. And we also go some talent in that way. Especially

in the summers, we'd get band directors that would come down here to start graduate work. But I think the tours helped a lot.

It wasn't easy. We didn't get any money. And when I say we didn't get any money, I mean not a dime, We paid our way, and it wasn't easy,

Paul: And mostly through ticket sales for the concerts...

McAdow: ...in these towns, They would guarantee us a certain figure, I had it figured down to the dollar what it was going to cost me to make the trip.

Paul: Bus trips?

McAdow: We would go in buses. And then, in order to save money, we would cut that down, and I would hire...have one boy in the band that would take his car and pull a trailer, He would make a little money that way, and it would save us money, And we would crowd them into the buses.

Paul: What type of buses were they usually?

McAdow: Well, we used to go in the Trailways, and then the...I guess it was the old American Company just before the Trailways. We went with them and then also Trailways. But we would use a small bus.

Band directors would call up and tell me that they would go in and see their superintendent saying, "I have a chance to book the North Texas Band." "Well, that's great." "Well, but we have to guarantee some money." He'd say, "Guarantee? Well, I can get Podunk Junior College over here, and they won't charge me a dime!" And he'd go to his band parents and tell them about it, and they

would say, "If you want that band, we'll get them." So that's the way we did it.

In some cases, they made money out of it, but it wasn't often that they made a lot of money out of it. But they said the value to them was for them to hear a college group. Many times we would sight read their contest pieces right on the stage and play them for them. We would do things like that. To me that was somewhat of a practical approach to the whole idea of touring.

But things began to break away, and the band began to build. We got better players, and our standards went up.

Paul: Just what was the equipment situation when you got here? Were there any school-owned instruments?

McAdow: The equipment was as bad as I've ever seen. We had some old beat-up sousaphones. We had as poor equipment as I have ever seen. The percussion was bad. Everything was bad.

But gradually we began to get better. I remember the first time I asked for upright basses. They thought that was..."Wow!" They thought that the sousaphone..."That's the show instrument now: that's what other directors have wanted. Now you come along and ask for the upright bass." And finally we got them. And then we used some old, old horns we had found and dug up, swapped, and did everything we could to try to get better instrumentation. It wasn't easy.

Paul: Was the marching band already in existence when you got here?

McAdow: That hadn't played at football games because of the war. They didn't

have a marching band, and they hadn't had any football. They skipped, you know, two or three years here, a couple of years at least. We didn't have uniforms for that big a band. By that time the band was starting to grow, and I found about forty old moth-eaten uniforms, and we couldn't get into them. So we just threw them away, or they were given...I understand they were given to some underprivileged groups.

And the first fall we went on the field out here at the old, old stadium--that's where the library now stands, the big library--wearing coveralls. And if you want to check that story, you go down to Craven's store down here on the square, and Mr. Craven will tell you all about it. He sold us the coveralls, and he agreed to put a big green eagle on the back. He sewed those on the back. We came on the field, and that just set people on fire, to think that they would have to sit there and watch their university band come on the field in coveralls. But it got the job done.

Paul: What style of marching did you do then?

McAdow: We did pretty much the old, traditional thing. Actually, it was just a sort of a homespun-type of thing. We put together what we could, somewhat of a variety-type thing with a feature and some solos. Of course, I was familiar with the Big Ten pretty much and what they did, and we tried to use some of their ideas, but we just didn't have the instrumentation, or we didn't have the power and the finesse, to follow the Big Ten idea,

Paul: Did your high school bands follow a similar Big Ten style in marching?

McAdow: Yes. When I got up to York High School, we did strictly military there. That was the last high school band I had, of course, before I came down here. We did just the old military-style of marching. The winters are so severe up there, and the season is short, and I saw no reason to go all-out, knock ourselves out, for such a short season. And sometimes it would be so cold, you know, snow storms and things in the latter part of the season, that there were times that we were not even able to do a show.

And I continued to read some. I guess I cheated a little there; I slipped in concert music whenever I could.

Paul: On the field?

McAdow: No, in rehearsals.

Paul: Oh, I see.

McAdow: If we thought we had a little show put together, why, we would also do some reading. And that, to them, was sugar coating. They liked it. Kids liked to read, and they saw the emphasis on good music.

Paul: So did the end of the war really beef up the numbers of music students here?

McAdow: Well, when the war was over, they were beginning to come back, and some of them would come in and major in music. Their attitude was very, very bad because they would say, "Marching band? Listen, I've been doing that for four years, and I don't want any more of it!" And I thought a great deal of the young men that did come on out and march. To me they proved that they were willing to bury

the past, They had unpleasant memories of having to march overseas and around.

But, of course, I didn't allow anybody to be in the Concert Band...you probably have heard that we always called it the Concert Band. You know that, I guess. And not that I'm as old as Sousa or anything, but they used to say, "Why do you call it the Concert Band?" I used to joke by saying, "I knew a man one time..." By the way, I actually met Sousa in person. Maybe I told you that.

Paul: No, you didn't.

McAdow: Yes, my biggest thrill was shaking hands with Sousa. I've often said, "Well, I remember meeting a man one time who had a real good band, and he called it the concert band, and I just thought if it's good enough for him--and he was John Philip Sousa--I'll just call it that." And just out of stubbornness, I kept it that way. I remember, after we started to get out some records, it was always the North Texas Concert Band. One young man came up and said to me...and this was after he had gotten his doctor's degree. He's a graduate of this school and had been a graduate assistant of mine at one time, and that's Dr. Douglas Wiehe--you know who he is--down in Freeport.

Paul: Yes, yes, I do.

McAdow: He came in one day and said, "I hope you never change that. I hope you continue calling it the Concert Band because that's the way it was when I was in there." So I carried it on out that way

until I was through. That's some of the reason for that. There have been a lot of changes in faculty. Some wonderful people, of course, are gone now, and time does that. Time marches on. New ones come.

Paul: I would like to ask you a few questions about some of the people who were here when you first came. Of course, Dean Bain was here.

McAdow: Only a couple of years, and then he left and Dean Hodgson came in.

Paul: Right. Did you know a man named Harry Parshall?

McAdow: Parshall was here through the summer, and he was a brass teacher and a very fine one, I understand. But he left about the time I got here, and--I don't know--I think the first six weeks of that summer, that I got here in 1945, he'd had a band, and he left to go to California. He went on out there and got out of this type of work and went into studio work, I think. He was a wonderful horn player, I understand, a very fine brass man. But he didn't care very much about it; I don't think he really enjoyed the band work. He wanted to get into this other. He had that band there, I think, just for a short time. Dr. Chidester is the one that really had the band there before. And then, of course, I started in the fall of '45.

Paul: Right. And what was Bob Marquis doing when you got here?

McAdow: Well, as far as I know, Bob Marquis, I think, was completely out of that, except to play maybe some with 'Fessor Graham and his stage

bands, But he hadn't anything to do with the band, you know, and hadn't had, I guess, for several years. If he did, he didn't while I was around here. But I know he was interested in another area and went on and got his doctorate and went into education, as you probably know. I actually didn't get to know him for several years because the campus was beginning to grow.

Paul: What contact did you have with 'Fessor Graham?

McAdow: Well, I knew 'Fessor Graham because we used to have our offices together. He had a room and I had a room with joining doors, doors between the two offices, and I'd visit with him there. In those days he, I think, taught some conducting and had the orchestra and the stage band. I knew him in that way. But he had been here several years, and he was a fixture and was well thought of and loved by everybody. He got things that a new man would not be able to get, such as a secretary, and he'd leave and he'd come knock on the door and say, "I've got to go. The young lady here has still got a hour or so to go. Would you like to write a letter or two?" And that's all the help I had for quite a while. So I knew him in that way, but that was about all, I guess.

Paul: Did you ever tell him about your days as a band leader?

McAdow: Oh, no, no! Nobody knew! That was a dark secret because it was shortly after that that Gene Hall came and started the stage band. I was trying to strictly...I didn't want anyone to get the idea that I was interested in that field, and I was behind everything they did. This way there was no conflict, and I was interested

strictly in the "legit." As far as I know, I don't think anyone discovered that I had been into that type of thing until the pictures all came out. However, it's impossible to go on the road with a show band and tour around the country like that without having to play some of that stuff. You had to do it. But I had gotten to the point that I,..I remember the last dance job I played. I said, "As far as I'm concerned, if I never play one, it will be too soon." I had gotten that sick of it. I just wanted to get away from it.

Paul: When they started bringing in wind faculty, did you have an opportunity to contribute to the selection?

McAdow: Well, yes. Now, of course, Dr. Gibson came the same time I did. He was here, and Dr. Morey came two years later. When I first came here, I had to teach brass. I don't know if you knew that or not.

Paul: No, I didn't. And private lessons?

McAdow: Yes, well, brass class, anything. There were brass classes. People joke about it even now. They called Dean Bain the "slave driver" because he could get more out of his faculty,..in other words, they all had,..not a full load, but an overflowing load. I remember one tenor that was here--a vocal man--and he told me he had to go to work at eight o'clock in the morning to start giving lessons in order to take care of his schedule, and you know very well that vocal teachers don't start at eight o'clock in the morning. And he didn't stay. He took it for a year or two and left.

But it was somewhat of an unfair request for me to go in and do brass, even though I had grown up as a trumpet player, and brass had been my instrument, my main thing, through all the years. But then, when I walked out of the theater, I put the horn on the hook and said, "This is it," and I started studying woodwinds. So actually when I came here, the woodwinds were more fresh in my mind. But they had a chance to get a real fine artist like Lee Gibson, and he came in and took over that.

So then I went ahead...I didn't even own a brass instrument. I just about sold everything I had while I was in Elmhurst, at York High, and got rid of all those instruments and was spending everything I could get hold of...I studied with Nicholi Malko--I don't know if I mentioned that to you or not--the conductor, the Russian conductor, and that was costing quite a bit of money, and I valued that more than anything else. Then when I got down here, of course, I was asked to do brass. I went into the Dean one day, and I said, "Well, I'll tell you, if I'm going to be director of bands and take care of that assignment and brass classes, I don't see how they can expect me to do private tutoring and teaching here."

Well, about that time, Leon Brown came, and he came after school started. He didn't get here at the beginning of the year. He came along about November 1st. He came out of the service and came here. That took the low brass away, which was a blessing, and I didn't have to do that. But you can see that the school was growing so. And then they started asking me to do classes, materials classes,

Paul: Music ed?

McAdow: Yes, instrumental methods and things like that, which meant that you'd come to work in the morning, and you would teach till noon, and then at one o'clock until band time and then after. In other words, I never got through.

So, finally, I rebelled again. I went in and said, "This thing is getting too big--too big. I can't spread that thin." So they decided to hire a trumpet teacher. Dr. Hodgson came in one day and said, "Say, a lot of applications have been coming in since we announced that. I've got three of them here, and I want you to look at them and see which one you like." I took a look at them, and for the first one, I said, "Well, that one, I wouldn't hire him if you want to continue having a music school here." So he threw that one out. And the other one, I said, "I don't know enough about him. But this next boy here, he is tops. That's the man I would like to see come here." And that was John Haynie. And he's been here, as you know, many, many years. He came directly from Illinois down here. So that's kind of a story there on the faculty.

Paul: With these people like Dr. Gibson and Mr. Brown, who came from Oklahoma--well, it was Oklahoma A & M at the time, Oklahoma State University now--did you know Boh Makovsky?

McAdow: Yes, I met Boh. He was a character, as everybody knows. He was the old, old foreign-type conductor. Shortly after I got to this campus, why, Oklahoma State,..they asked me to come up there for their summer workshop, and take charge of it. The chairman of the

department told me--by that time, Boh had retired, you know, and he was just around there--he said, "Now if Boh walks in, he's just a fixture here. He's harmless." And sure enough, I walked in there the first morning, and the chairman introduced me, and I go up on the podium; and just when I started to go to work, Boh clapped and said, "Just a minute, boys and girls, I need to tell you something very important. Now when we have guests, when we have guest conductor, you keep your mouths shut and your ears open." I thought that was real kind of cute of the old fellow, and we got to be real good buddies. He was a very fine old gentleman, and a real disciplinarian. I've been told that he'd have those early morning rehearsals, and if anyone would walk in ten seconds late, they didn't sit down that morning. They were always in their chair when the time came. When he stepped up on the podium, they were there. I remember him very well.

Paul: Did you hear much about his reputation or his influence on band in this area?

McAdow: Well, I think he had a tremendous influence on his part of the country up there, especially Oklahoma, and on into Kansas because they're up in the north part there. Of course, by that time there were some people down in this part of the country that were pretty much in that same age bracket, like Colonel Irons and "Prof" Wiley. Of course, "Prof" was a little younger than Boh.

But I made several trips to that campus to do workshops,

Paul: Were these other Texas gentlemen up there, also, in Stillwater?

Like Wiley and Irons?

McAdow: Well, they would come up there to judge. I would go up there for the workshop, and then as you may or may not know, there was a period of about twenty-five years that I judged a tremendous amount. I was out every week, every week someplace. I enjoyed it, and nothing was ever said to me that it would damage the recruiting in any way. But once you get away from it...the only judging I do now has to be away from here, in an entirely different area, because I'm trying to do something worthwhile in public relations, and you just don't judge and do PR...

Paul: ...at the same time.

McAdow: But I've met a lot of those men going around like that, at the contests. But that brought me right up until...I judge a contest the last year I was out here. In fact, I judged several contests. In fact, the year I retired, my "exes" all got together and had a big banquet for me. You've probably heard about it. And it worked out...I know the family and others were a little nervous that I might not get back in time, but it happened that this was a Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, and this was a Saturday night banquet, so I was able to get back. But once I got off the campus and got away from that, I got away from judging.

There has been quite a trend in this part of the country away from--and that's all happened, too, in the last few years--away from college and university judges. You probably know that. They like to pull people out of their own ranks. I very seldom see

anybody out there from college ranks anymore. I really don't enjoy...I judged this spring. I judged in Texas, but it was so far away--way out in El Paso. I enjoy doing what I'm working at now a lot more.

Paul: So, you would pretty safely say you never retired? Never intend to?

McAdow: Well, as long as the Good Lord will give me the health and the strength...I have enjoyed good health, and I don't mind saying this... maybe some young people will hear it, and it might do them some good. I've been a tee-totaler all my life, and I don't think that hurts when you get older. As you may or may not know, I have quite a strenuous exercise program that I do everyday, and I never leave the premises until I've gone through some exercises. I watch my diet and all that. Of course, the thing that's easier about what I'm doing now...on the job, you have to be at a class; you've got to be there; there's a faculty meeting; you've got to be here; there's a timetable. Well, my timetable, I pretty much put together myself. There's a lot of freedom there. I go and come,

Paul: But I know you still cover a lot of territory.

McAdow: Oh, miles, miles, I've had my fourth car since I left the campus. See, I put a lot of miles on my cars,

Paul: That's amazing,

McAdow: Yes, but I enjoy it. A man called me the other day, and he wanted to know if there was a chance I could catch his rehearsal at night. It wasn't very far from here, so I went on out. I told him I'd tried

to get away from the marching after I had done it so many years. And that never was my first love, you know. But I feel that if it's a school--they are poor, and they can't afford anyone to come by--and if I can help there, I'll do it. Of course, that's part of the agreement. I help anybody that asks for help, and many of them are good clients.

Paul: Well, we appreciate your sharing your thoughts with us very much. I know that it's going to be good for the library to have a lot of this information over there. I think that you've told me some things that probably haven't been heard before or in a long time.

McAdow: Well, this wasn't rehearsed in any way, and I didn't prepare any notes because when you start that it's so easy to overlook the things that might come to you that are more important.

Paul: Right.

McAdow: I've tried to tell it just as I feel it. I actually feel it was a blessing when I accepted the offer to come to Texas. I think it was possibly supposed to be that way, and even though I was discouraged when I first got there, because of the condition of the house we moved into, and the climate was awful and hot, and our furniture wasn't here, and there was no instrumentation for the band, I was about ready to quit. I mean, I felt like I could. But I never turned back, and I'm just very happy I stayed.

Paul: Well, thanks again.

McAdow: You're welcome.