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Shimeall, Clark Oral History Interview

Neil Lark

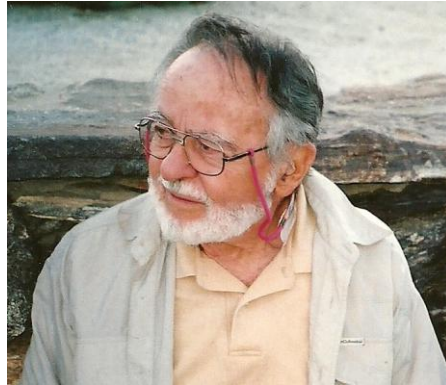
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FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS
UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC ARCHIVES



Clark Shimeall
Covell College, Geology Professor, 1968-1986

Interviewed by Neil Lark
May 18, 2011

Transcription by Robert Siess, University of the Pacific, Department of Special Collections, Library

Subjects: Covell College, teaching geology to Latin American students, becoming Dean of Students for Covell College, Covell administrators and colleagues, personal life since retiring.

UOP ARCHIVES FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS

SHIMEALL (Clark), 1968-1986

May 12, 2011

LARK: This is Neil Lark talking. I'm interviewing Clark Shimeall for the oral history project of the University of the Pacific. Today is Wednesday the 18th of May, 2011. The interview is being done in an unusual way. I'm in Stockton in my kitchen, and Clark is in Borrego Springs, and we're going to be talking through the old fashioned phone line that suits old timers like us. I'm going to go ahead with questions at this point, Clark.

SHIMEALL: Good, good.

LARK: What years were you at Pacific, when did you first come?

SHIMEALL: I came in September of 1968. And we closed out Elbert Covell College in, actually I was at the University until August of 1986, that's when I officially ended time there at UOP.

LARK: And were you in Covell College the whole time?

SHIMEALL: Yes, I was. In fact I came to the University specifically for Covell College. I could give you a little bit of a history on that. I was working on my Masters Degree at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. And I had made the decision to change from working for a corporation to going into education, and as I neared graduation I had to think about what I wanted to do. This was for a Masters Degree, so I was somewhat limited in terms of being able to get into a, you know, four year college, so I was looking at junior colleges, all around the country, but mainly in the southwest. I wanted to go back into the Arizona, Southern California areas, New Mexico possibly. So I sent out letters to a hundred different junior colleges, stating my credentials and inquiring about the possibility of working in a junior college, a science department, particularly geology. And I'll digress here a little bit, but I just happened to see a map one day that showed an isotherm that extended up into the valley, the Stockton area and on up into Sacramento, and lo and behold it said something about Mediterranean climate, and I said well maybe I can extend my area of where I wanted to go into that area. And about that time I saw an ad in GeoTimes magazine advertising for the need of a person who had been schooled in geology academically, the opening was there, it just happened to be over at Covell College at the University of the Pacific. So I immediately forwarded my papers out there to the college. I don't know how much else you might want to know about that, but it was a real, a very real happenstance that proved very beneficial I think to both me and to Elbert Covell College.

LARK: Yes, Clark, but how is it that you happen to know Spanish, what was your background for that?

SHIMEALL: I had only taken one course of Spanish in college, but in terms of my corporate work, we had lived in Guatemala for 4 1/2 years. The oil company was down there exploring, and so about, although we didn't use Spanish on the job on a daily basis, it was very helpful to know Spanish. In fact, when we went down, one of the first things we did was go to a, the US government had a facility down there that they had bilingual educational facility in practically every large area, particularly capitol cities, the areas in Latin America. And they offered courses in Spanish, and I took the two courses that they had at the same time, and was able to improve my language ability at that point. When I actually came out to UOP and applied for the position that was available, Dr. Arthur Cullen at that time indicated that there were two things that I needed to do. One was to complete my masters degree, and within about 5 or 6 weeks of intensive immersion in Spanish in, because my Spanish was quite rusty, put that into going to Mexico, which I eventually did and spent that time in August down there, prior to my arrival at the University of the Pacific at Elbert Covell College. I have, there was one other train, I lost my train of thought there. That's basically where they... Oh I had, one of the other interesting things was that I had taken two years of Latin in high school. And when you get into the technical language of geology or any of the sciences the transference of English to Spanish or vice versa, you're leading with Latin instead of any other particular orientations, so if you know something about the Latin you can take almost any word, put the proper ending on it, male or female ending in Spanish, and you have your own vocabulary. So it worked out very well that way.

LARK: So that anybody listening to this will understand the connection and the reason for these questions, Elbert Covell College did all of its instruction in Spanish, is that right?

SHIMEALL: That's true, with the exception of the English as second language courses, which the Hispanics or Latins were required to work on as they came up here to this country for higher education. Elbert Covell College at that time was, probably there's no other college like it then, where a person from Latin America could enter the University, higher education level, without dominating English. The expectation was they would take their courses in Spanish basically early on, and then gradually work into becoming bilingual by the time they were to graduate from Elbert Covell College. If they could handle English earlier, that would open the entire University to them in terms of their academic ability in various subjects.

LARK: While you were in Covell College, did you ever teach in the geology department for the College of Pacific?

SHIMEALL: No, I worked closely with them, but never did do any teaching at that time. Stan Volbrecht was the head of the Geology department, and they were quite helpful to me in getting started. What I started out in teaching was just the basic physical and historical geology, and we did a lab along with that, and the lab... This is I think where I met Neil Lark and some others. The lab, my laboratory consisted of a lot of rocks and

minerals which were hauled on a cart where I could be very mobile in Wendell Phillips Center on the second floor, and then later actually moved over to the Physics department with my cart and did the classroom instruction and also then the laboratory instruction for the students in the space provided by the Physics department, and I believe that's where you and I met, Neil.

LARK: And was that in one of the old quonset huts?

SHIMEALL: No... But the quonsets were on campus at that time, but I never did anything in the quonset huts. The geology department was in there, I take, probably until the last hut was removed, I don't know whether it's still there or not, I think it's been removed.

LARK: Yes, it's been moved to a building on the south campus, on the part that was originally Delta College. The building was renovated for their use.

SHIMEALL: I mean that, that the buildings and the facilities became available to the University.

LARK: When you first came to Pacific, was that the first time you had been to Stockton or to the University.

SHIMEALL: Yes it was, I... I had my military experience, I was over on Guam for a year after the war was over. And I came back, and was discharged up there in the field near Sacramento, and I made the statement at that time, you're never going to catch me in California again. Don't ever make a statement like that! But of course Sacramento is very close to Stockton, so I had to swallow when I came out to the interview for the position there at Elbert Covell College, so I was back in California, after having said what I had just stated. That was the first time in California, I mean, in the Stockton area, and it was quite reminiscent of where I grew up in Northwest Kansas. Flat, a lot of agriculture, except you had a lot of water with the Sacramento River and San Joaquin supplying water for the ag area.

LARK: Did you end up in a partial administrative position at Covell College? I seem to recall something like that.

SHIMEALL: Yeah, I was not on a terminal track to get a doctorate degree. That was not what I was interested in, and so – and I can't remember whether that was five years or six years after I had been there. But the policy was if you were not terminal, if you were not working toward the doctorate degree, you were automatically terminated. At that time, it so happened that a position opened up – the Dean of Students had decided that, that was in Covell had their own Dean of Students – and he decided to go elsewhere for his own advancement, and I was approached to see if I would be willing to take that job, and I was working closely with the students at the time, so it was a natural, with our small number, it was a natural for me to become an academic counselor, as well as the, with the title of the Dean of Students.

LARK: I would think that business of counseling Latin American students in CA was made easier by the fact that you had lived in Guatemala. You probably knew something about the cultural mores and what was expected of youngsters there.

SHIMEALL: I would guess that you're right about that. The one good thing that I liked, well there were a lot of good things that I liked about Elbert Covell College, but basically, it was not just the language facility that was offered to the North American students, those students came from really strong three or four year Spanish programs in the United States. The other half came directly from the different countries of Latin America. But the, I think that the important thing, one of the most important things was the fact that not only were the students together in the class room, but also, we had our own dining room, and the dormitories were, you had the mixture of, you had a girls dormitory Jessie Ballentine, but you also had in the men's dormitories were really frequently the gringos, the North Americans, and the Latins would be living together, so you had a mixing at all times of the cultures that was taking place automatically. And I think that was one of the strongest points of Elbert Covell College.

LARK: Were there any particular problems because of the different expectations of girls from North America and girls from Latin America? What they expected in the way of behavior and closeness of relationships with boys?

SHIMEALL: They were, yes, they had, in fact, that was one of the reasons that all-female dorm set up for the girls from Latin America. Because there would just be no way you could... at that time, it was popular to have both, at colleges and universities, were starting to have men and women, not men and women- well, yes, men and women in coed dorms was a big deal. In fact, I think they were right there on campus, probably. UOP had them, I don't recall. But you could understand that the Latin father would not allow his daughter to come to the United States and be in that kind of a dormitory situation where it was coed. And therefore, Elbert Covell had the all-female dormitory. And it presented problems from time to time, but the house mother of the dormitory was a very strong person, and she was able to make things work satisfactorily. She was a very caring person, too.

LARK: I think it was during your time at Covell that there was a large influx of students from Venezuela who were sent here by their government to get technical training in geology and engineering and the like. Did that impact you at Covell?

SHIMEALL: Yeah, it was very helpful in terms of increasing the number of students that we had coming from Latin America. It was interesting. I'd forgotten about that. They called it the Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho Program, and the Venezuelan government decided that, supported by their oil money, they needed to have a stronger influx and, you know, or not necessarily influx, but opportunity for their own students to be trained properly in engineering, geology, etc. Now, not all those students who came up here to the United States took those courses. Many of the students who came on that program,

apparently – I don't remember the details of the program – but they were taking English as a second language courses so they could go back and teach, there were quite a few courses and majors, that the people from Venezuela took when they came in on that program, but it was very beneficial to us because, it, part of it, when you looked at the cost to the University, at that time a private university, it was only the people with a considerable amount of money who could afford to send their students here to the United States to go to the University of Pacific, whether it was Covell, or some other college within the University.

LARK: Within Covell, what classes did you end up teaching? Geology, obviously, I knew about, but what else?

SHIMEALL: I, as I said, I taught basic physical and historical geology, and these were taught at a level, I don't think anybody told me this, but I just, I wanted to be sure that the students had the basics of those courses so that they could move on, if they desired, to major in geology, you know, be they north American or Latin, they would be able to major in geology, and so I tried to make sure that they were very rigorous, in terms of the basics. Along with the geology, one of the courses that we first taught was a team-taught course, taught with Dr. Widmer, our chemist, and Professor Bey, a biologist, and then I took the geology part, and we taught that, as a full year course, we were on the, as I recall, semester system at the time. So you had a sort of split in it, but it was a year round course. Later on, I taught an environmental course to sort of round out the science requirement. At that time, I can remember not too many people were talking very much about the environment, but that turned out to be a challenge for me, and I think it was helpful to the students to be exposed to environmental problems that they possibly could be facing down the line.

LARK: Now, one thing related to students I wanted to check on, how you remember approximate fractions or proportions for the students who are coming from Mexico, and those from Central America and those from South America, separately.

SHIMEALL: The proportions of students from those countries compared to the US?

LARK: No, compared with each other.

SHIMEALL: Or each individual country?

LARK: No, I don't mean individual countries, but just the general areas: South America, versus Central America, versus Mexico.

SHIMEALL: Oh, I don't, I can get that information for you, but I do not have it on the tip of my tongue. I did recruiting. One of the things I did later on I did do was, we had an internship programs down in Costa Rica. I was a director of that program, after the first year I went down to see that the students got their internships started, and then also they were able to take classes at the University down there. Because of their... Mostly those were North American students, students from the US who took advantage of that program. But I did recruiting at that time, in the capitol cities. Not in Mexico, but in

Honduras and Nicaragua, Costa Rica, but we didn't do anything in Panama. We did what I would say proportionately, it was pretty broadly even in terms of where the students came from. We didn't need to, except the Venezuelan program, we were picking up students from several different countries down there. I would have to go back and look at the graduates, where they graduated, they are listed in the list of graduates as to where they come from. But, I think it was pretty roughly evenly proportioned.

LARK: Who did you interact with most when you first came, who helped you to get started in understanding Pacific and understanding Covell?

SHIMEALL: It was, I thought about that question and the person who was then the Dean of Students was somebody, that was mostly within Covell, because that's where all the action was as far as I was concerned.

LARK: Was that Ed Betz?

SHIMEALL: Ed Grant[?]. Ed Grant[?] was the Dean of Students at the time that I came there.

LARK: He was the Dean of Students at Covell?

SHIMEALL: I beg your pardon?

LARK: He was Covell's dean of students? Not the Dean for the University of the ..

SHIMEALL: Yes, at that time Ed was the Dean of Students. And he was a very likeable man, and had knowledge of the University, I guess he, you know, as I think about it, in the early stages he was one of the most helpful people. Later on, as I, when I was academic counselor I was on the committee over in the registrars department, and it seemed to be the only university committee that handled student problems, and met once a week and, students could, if they had a problem they could present it to the group and get some counseling or some advice. I can't even remember what we call that committee, but it was one of the places that I became acquainted with other areas within the total university, other colleges. I know Ralph Saroyan was there from pharmacy, and the business school had a representative and, all the schools pretty much were included to make sure that the entire university was represented.

LARK: Did you have any direct official interaction with the University's Dean of students? You weren't directly under him, but you were only under your own Provost in terms of administrative responsibility?

SHIMEALL: I worked with the Dean of Students at the upper level, but my responsibilities were to the provost of Elbert Covell College. And, as I recall, there were a couple of times when what the university was doing was not in, did not seem to be proper for us in our situation with the Latinos. I cannot remember the exact situation. I do remember that it did occur, and at that point I conferred with the provost of our Elbert Covell College, and I think he then talked to the Dean of Students or somebody within the larger university to get an exception to whatever... I can't even remember the

situation in terms of exactly what happened but it didn't occur very often. Pretty much we were all on the same track.

LARK: Did you end up with other committee responsibility for the university as a whole? I remember that in the cluster colleges we had representatives on many different university committees, you must have had some responsibility like that.

SHIMEALL: About that time, Margaret Payne became a strong pillar in the Elbert Covell system, and she represented us I know in several other committees. I cannot think that, I do not remember, officially, another committee that I might have been the official representative from Elbert Covell College. Maybe I can think of something later, but right now I'm not able to.

LARK: Was Arthur Cullen the Dean of Covell College all the time you were there, or did you have other deans?

SHIMEALL: No, Arthur Cullen was the ideal person to help start Elbert Covell College, and one of the reasons I say that was he was a very strong person in his own right. Bob Burns was the president of the University at that time, and it was Bob Burns and a man by the name of Woodward, Robert Woodward, that had come up with this idea. They were on a plane ride supposedly the story is, they were on a plane ride somewhere, and Woodward was an Ambassador, and the idea came up, wouldn't it be something different and advantageous to have a small educational unit, which eventually turned out to be Elbert Covell College, in terms of doing a lot of things, that, you know educating people to other cultures etc etc. When Cullen died, I think this was about 1970, Bob Burns died, and very shortly after that, Cullen died, and so Woodward was called back in to be an interim, a fill in for the Provost of Elbert Covell College until a new Provost could be selected. But I mentioned that because its part of the story of how Covell got started. How the other clusters got started I am not sure, Covell was started in about 1963, so it was 5 years older, it had been in existence that long by the time that I got there.

LARK: And who was the Provost at Covell during the last few years you were there?

SHIMEALL: Here's another interesting point that, the Provost who was selected to take over Covell after Cullen died was Gaylon Caldwell. I had known Dr. Caldwell, he was the, was the head of the bilingual center in Guatemala. So it was interesting to me when the two or three candidates that they had for the job, one of them turned out to be Gaylon and I was, I had to try and ask myself 'is he the man for the job' you know, compared to the other candidates we had. He fulfilled the qualifications that I thought the job should require. And... so as faculty member, he did get my vote. There was one other point I was going to make about Cullen. There was a lot of opposition to Covell on the campus, I came to understand. There were, I didn't know what, the stories about it, but I know that there were people who were, their attitude was, you're starting this college, you're duplicating courses, this is gonna drive students out of our courses. It would be a typical kind of a situation that you could expect to find. So it took a strong person like Arthur Cullen to counteract this, and hold his own position and satisfy what was needed to get the job done. Even though Burns was in favor of it, at that point he still had the faculty

and the professors throughout the rest of the University who might have some sort of a vested interest in whether this thing would, you know, would fly or not. I'm not sure whether I explained that carefully enough. But...

LARK: We felt some of the same problems that you did at Raymond College which was founded in 1962, just a year before Covell College. We had a liberal arts program that included subjects that at least had the same names as subjects that were taught in College of the Pacific.

SHIMEALL: Right

LARK: And there was some jealousy and resentment over it, so we felt antagonism by some people, but... real acceptance by many others. Did...

SHIMEALL: I was trying to remember, Neil, whether you or... I thought you were in Raymond, and the time was really, the clusters were really a departure, when you look at the total university, you know the universities all across the country, it was a total change in how you did things, trying to accommodate to, like in your case, the people who could fast track, the smart people, the people who really were bright people. They could do four years in three years. I know this is not about Raymond College, but at the same time, I think it's well to note that, that cluster system was an exception to what was going on in education throughout the United States. A lot of things were changing in those days.

LARK: Yes, we were very much part of that. The college was a throwback to a system hundreds of years old, and... it was at a time that students were demanding across the country here, demanding a lot of individual flexibility, and the ability to put together their own thing, and they weren't interested in large, efficient classes. And not interested in being told what they needed to take, what their programs should be. That was a source of a lot of difficulty. And that led to one of the difficulties that we faced that probably Covell did too. Enrollment did not remain high enough to make the cluster colleges pay their own way compared with how well the other colleges in the university were paying their way.

SHIMEALL: Yes, in the last years, the, one of the difficulties we had, we did have difficulty recruiting students, and one of the difficulties was that the university said you're not financially viable. And yet, when you looked at the finances from us, from, you know, actual money in money out, we were financially viable. But I can remember that Dr. Caldwell, he retired early and he got Garciella d'Urtiaga, to retire also., And in part it was to, not that they weren't eligible for retirement, they were eligible, but at the same time, it was to help provide less drain on the finances, you know, which were going into Elbert Covell College. It was one of the difficulties that, to me, I had to think long and hard about that whole thing because it seemed to me we were doing the right thing. Our program was a good one, we just needed some more support from the University. We had some over in admissions and some places like that, but at the higher level I had a problem thinking that, well, there are some people here, including maybe the board of regents, that had been persuaded that we weren't viable, and therefore should be done

away with. And that was one of the sour notes that I had, as I think about the, at the end of our, back in 83, 84, 85, 86. Particularly 1984, 85, 1986. We were being terminated.

LARK: When did the college, when did Elbert Covell college officially close its doors?

SHIMEALL: What?

LARK: When was the college basically shut down? Was it the same time you left?

SHIMEALL: It was in the... I would say August, actually, the, it would have been in June, probably, of 1986, that we were no longer in existence. And we had to clean up some of this stuff. I stayed on until the end of August in 86.

LARK: And what happened to the students then? Were there freshman, sophomore level students in the program who didn't have a program to go into?

SHIMEALL: We could not give a diploma from Elbert Covell college, but we provided, we still had some courses that students could take, and, I can't remember, we had a, the name of it. You could take a certain ... x amount of credits in courses, and you, with that you got a sort of certificate; now you didn't get the diploma, the diploma still came from the University, but you could get a certificate of, as having taken these courses in Spanish, which might or might not be helpful in your future. But, ah, it enabled us at the end to still make, have what courses were there being taught in Spanish, being useful to the students that desired those courses.

LARK: Clark, how are you feeling. Do you want to take a break sometime, or do you?

SHIMEALL: Sure, whenever. I'm doing real good. How about you?

LARK: I'm okay.

SHIMEALL: Well, let's go ahead.

LARK: Okeydoke. How have we done covering the things that you thought we ought to be looking at? I'm coming down closer to the end of my list of questions. We haven't hit everything, but I think we've covered many of the topics that we thought to be of interest. I wanted to ask a few more personal things, here at the very end, about what you've done in your retirement. You stayed in Stockton for some years, didn't you?

SHIMEALL: Yeah, we, we left Stockton and moved down here in, actually came down here to Borrego Springs in 1993. Up there in Stockton, I was having trouble with a breathing problem, and it was Spring where we have all that rainfall, normally, you know, you get the mulberry trees coming out, you get the grass growing, you get the, all kinds of pollen, then you also get a certain amount of mold that goes along with that. So I was finding out that I had, every Spring, I was having to dose up on prednisone etc, and we had been exposed to the desert down here in years before. So it was 1993, we said you know, let's just go down there and see if, if we can find a place where we can lease a room for 3 or 4 months to see if it makes any difference, So we came down here, and

interestingly enough, you're involved in this story, we came down here and managed to find a place up here not too far from where we live now that was for rent, and I remember calling Wadsworths in Orinda, they were the owners of the place. And, in the conversation I mentioned that I had been, came here from Stockton and been at the University, and then Wadsworth said, oh! You must know Neil Lark, and I said yes, I do. So right after that, they say, long story short, we ended up leasing that, Wadsworth's little cabin down here, the casita we call it. We ended up leasing that for 3 years, up until the time that we moved in 1996; that's when we decided well, we'll just make it permanent. And, I was feeling much, much better about my own health at that time. And so it's worked out very well for us. We did that, although we had people saying how could you leave Stockton and all your friends, but if you looked at my background, as a geologist and moving around the country, we were, we had moved quite a bit, and we moved, and even though we were, were, you know, moving out of an area, you're still gonna be, there are a lot of people that you can meet down the line that are going to be friends also, it's ah, an interesting conundrum that seems to work

LARK: Now you and your wife got involved in community activities here, before your retirement or only after? I'm thinking that you've been quite active now that you're in Borrego Springs. I know of, I've been told about your involvement in politics, your concern for development and the environment down there. Were you involved in things like that here in Stockton before you left?

SHIMEALL: Eleanor was. I wasn't involved too much. I was getting involved in, um, at that time there was a move to reduce pollution in the air. A man by the name of Jennings I think was spearheading that. He was very confident, but I was trying support any way I could to, you know, reducing the amount of pollution. That was another reason that I thought maybe we ought to get out of there, because at that time there were seven, there were the proposal to put seven new towns up for people who would be getting in their cars and going over the hill to San Francisco, and it seemed unconscionable to me to have workers on the road traveling long times with the pollution problems that the valley already had at that time. I think that's proven out, too, where you think about smog days and whatnot, Merced, and maybe Modesto, I don't know what their situation is now. There was something wrong, and in that Eleanor was heavily involved in water up there for the League of Women Voters. She chaired their section on water at the state level. And went up and testified in Sacramento and that sort of thing. So she had a strong background in water and when we came down here some friends found out about it. They said Eleanor, you've gotta run for the water board, and... when did, when were you? I don't know, she'd been, she'd been on the water board about 10 years now, I think... (Eleanor in the background: 12 years). 12 Years, I'm sorry. I'm trying to... So she'd been heavily involved in that, and both of us, in terms of environment and in terms of this wonderful area, to expose it to other people, we both have been docents out here, and spreading it to other state parks. This is the biggest state park in California, and probably in the United States. There's 100 thousand acres of land down here that's just magnificent in its beauty and the resources to, of, you know, for visitors.

LARK: I think it's very appropriate that we talk about this kind of thing because some people will be interested in reading this part of the oral history will be students of yours

who've known you personally, and they might have known Eleanor as well, so they're interested in what you're doing and how you're doing. You're both in reasonably good health, aren't you?

SHIMEALL: Ah, Eleanor's the one who's in better health, where she's recovering from an ailment here, but she's the one with the energy. My breathing problem has exacerbated, and I think maybe it's just I have a COPD condition. I'm on medications. I'm doing well as long as I don't over extend myself. And my most recent problem is macular degeneration in my right eye. My left eye is already having problems, and I'm doctoring for that, just to see... to make sure I maintain what vision I have. However, life is still good, I'm not ready to exit yet.

LARK: You'll be interested to know that Carl Wulfman, who lived not far from you in north Stockton, made the same decision you did when you retired in the mid-to-late 90's. He moved to Washington on the Olympic peninsula, on the dry side of the peninsula in Port Angeles, and his health has been very much better. His breathing's a lot better now than it was when he left. It's been good to visit with him a few times. He comes back to Stockton, he still has family here. Thinking of family, where's the rest of your family?

SHIMEALL: Our, we have, a number of, well, our daughter – we have five children – and the eldest is our daughter who has just recently moved from Louisville, Kentucky out here to Los Angeles. She is with the Presbyterian Church USA, and is synod executive for Southern California and Hawaii. So it's, we're looking forward to seeing her a lot more than when she was in Louisville. We have a son who lives in Miami, we have another son who's in Ohio, he is an assistant Atty. General for Ohio.. We have a handicapped son who's also there, living in Columbus, and our fifth child, fourth son, is in Corvallis, he and his family – two grandkids – live up there in Corvallis. It's a beautiful place too, but I wouldn't be able to live there. Too much vegetation.

LARK: You're doing one very interesting thing, people who know you might be like to hear about. Tell me what your guest house is like.

SHIMEALL: Ah, part of it, yeah, part of it, our environment when, while we were looking for a place down here to live full time, it was interesting that practically all houses, regardless of size, have only two bedrooms. I don't understand that's an odd number, we had four bedrooms there in Stockton, and we decided, well, that's kinda good, we'll just draw in our horns and start downsizing, and maybe build a guest house. And we got a hold of an architect, and started designing stuff, he said well, what were you thinking? And I said we were thinking adobe. He said uh, that's gonna be really expensive, he had done restorative work for San Diego county with adobe, and he said it will be expensive, it's a nice idea. I was thinking about the heat transference and that sort of thing, and he said what do you think about straw bale. And I said, well, tell me about it, and so eventually we decided let's do the straw bale, and so he designed this semi-circular plan, instead of just a rectangular-square, you know, corner deal, he designed this a straw bale, which ended up being a first permitted straw bale here in the county of San Diego. Environmentally, it has been a showcase for a lot of tours and that sort of thing

when it first came out. Now it's becoming much more common. I think there are 8 straw bales within a radius of about 10 miles here in Borrego Springs area. And people are, they're a little more expensive but savings is down the line, you know, where you're, where you're figuring total life of the building and how much energy it's gonna be taking either to cool it or heat it. That's the story of the straw bale.

LARK: If, do you have any notes down there of things you'd like to talk about that we haven't mentioned yet.

SHIMEALL: Well, wait a minute, let me take a look... Alright, I have one anecdote, that I thought might be interesting. That it was a slip of the tongue. When I got off the plane there, to interview for the position, Cullen, Dr. Cullen met me at the airport there in Stockton. And I said, oh you must be Dr. Covell, and he kinda liked that because he was really Dr. Covell, he was in charge of everything. That might be an interesting thing to include here.

LARK: Yeah, that is an amusing slip.

SHIMEALL: There are some other things I think in terms of courses and programs. Neil you, I don't remember what you did during the 4-1-4 era, when we, you know, had 4 courses in a quarter or a semester, and then we did the month of January on specialized stuff and just, you could design any kind of a course you wanted, and then your last 4 were for 4 courses in the spring. I thought that was a very innovational kind of a situation because it allowed me to grab an idea that had been done there on the campus in Stockton, and that was to take a group of students to Death Valley. It was in the proper time of year, in January, and the first group that we took down there, there were 3 professors, a biologist, a historian, and me as a geologist, and we had, I think we had 25 students go, mostly from Latin America. At that time they had what they call the Latin mafia, and for whatever reason, they all decided to go on this trip. The trip, I think the idea originally, and I can't remember the man's name, but they used to take a lot of people from the University and Stockton, and, you know, a trip terms of as many as 50 or 60 people would go on that trip down there, during the month of January, or at least in Spring or Spring break or whatever it was. Anyhow, we maintained that possibility as long as that 4-1-4 program was in effect. It was a very popular situation. The students formed teams, they did their own cooking, we did, we camped out, they did clean up, and our thought, you know, actually getting out and tramping on the ground was one of, one of the, I mean, geology is done in the field, primarily, I mean, that's where it's at, so it was real good to do that. That's the... Oh, yeah, well, it was, it was really a different time, and reminds me that Latins, normally the male doesn't do much work in the kitchen, but here they didn't have a choice, we had everybody working on different teams regardless of where you came from, so that was sort of a different situation for them, a different exposure.

LARK: Did you have any trouble with Latin American girls going along on field trips? I ask because...

SHIMEALL: We didn't, we did not, it was a, in that case, of course we had tents, and they tented together. By that I mean the girls did, and the boys were on the other side of camp, and to my knowledge there was no problem, it was a sort of an opportunity for them to do this, all along it, working with things that I was pushing was ah, and trying to do it subtly. See, Latin America was different in that the state, the country owned most of the private property down there, not private, but I mean the property outside of, lets say towns and that sort of thing. That was not privately owned for the most part, and they were able to, the government could, if they chose, set that property aside for parks. Now they did that in Costa Rica. I think they were one of the first countries that actually set aside a park, you know, so that, it can only be used for a park, that's what it was designed for, there's Irazu, and there's other volcanoes that have been put in that category in Costa Rica. I cannot speak for other countries down there, I don't know whether they were materialized or not. But knowing full well that some of these kids were going to be in positions of authority within their government, it seemed a good idea to at least instill in them the possibility of doing that kind of thing for their own country. Preservation, if you will, conservation of nature. I don't know how successful it was, but...

LARK: Your Costa Rican program has been very successful. I think they have the biggest fraction of their land in parks of any nation in the world.

SHIMEALL: Is that right?

LARK: We visited there once and were very impressed by it.

SHIMEALL: Yeah, well, I'm glad to hear that, because either the fight we're having now to maintain what we have here in a park status. People want to go in, in the Grand Canyon and mine it, in that area. The "drill, baby drill" grew up and would decimate the parks that we have, so we're fighting this all the time here.

LARK: Coming back to University of the Pacific, how long has it been since you've been on the campus now?

SHIMEALL: I made trips up there when we had Bishop Miller lecture series. I made trips up there frequently, and there was a committee that was dealing with that, and, goodness, I haven't been in, it's been, oh, yeah the last time, I guess was a reunion at Covell, and I think, that's been five years ago, six or seven. I can't even remember.

LARK: Looking back on Pacific and what you've seen of it more recently, do you have any sort of overall impressions you'd like to share, about how it's coming, what directions it's going and what impact it's had over all.

SHIMEALL: I have, I'm not, it sounds like, I haven't talked to anybody, but it sounds like that DeRosa had done some good work, and some progress, started some good, good movers up there, and I'm impressed with the new president. I don't know what, I'm not following it that closely, in all honesty. It's an exceptional university, and I would not

hesitate, I did not hesitate to recommend it to anybody who wants to get a good education. One of the things that I like, when I walked on campus, was the fact that it was, it was a campus that reminded me of Colorado University to some degree when I was an undergraduate, it had 2800 students that CU, we had 4000. I liked the idea of the small classes. The student has individual recognition. I like the idea that the faculty worked with students, I was involved enough to – not just in Covell – but also in watching what went on in engineering, political science, you know, other departments, other university. So, in terms of getting an education, well, even though it would, people would say you need to attend Harvard, etc, or where it's at, I would certainly disavow that very quickly, because of the things that I saw go on while I was there.

LARK: Did any of your children go to University of Pacific?

SHIMEALL: No. Our handicapped son went to Delta. The others, because of our Ohio, we lived there in Ohio for a long time, and it was interesting that the second son, Kent, who's now with the state back there, he moved with us, he and his two brothers moved with us out here, and they, he had his senior year there in Stockton. And he went, back there to Wooster, because they offered him a scholarship. Their registrar at Wooster, their admissions maybe I should say, had a map on the wall, and didn't have a thing in it for anybody from California. So even though Ken was not a real Californian, he was offered a scholarship so they could put a thing in there for California.

LARK: Oh, that's a cute story.

SHIMEALL: Yeah, it, Wooster was a good school. It's a Presbyterian school. Two of our children, ... our daughter, and also one son who started out at Muskingum and then he transferred to Miami University, both graduated from Miami Univ. of Ohio.

LARK: I want to add here at the end that I sometimes here Eleanor prompting you in the background. I want to mention this on the tape so if they hear, they realize what's involved.

SHIMEALL: She's been a lifesaver...

LARK: Yes, she's been... Well, give her all my best, and I'll turn off the tape here, so if you want to have a more personal conversation we can do it, okay?

SHIMEALL: Okay.

LARK: Any last thought before I do?

SHIMEALL: Uhm, no, I'll probably look at my notes and say oh why didn't I say that or this or the other thing. But, no, that was a very, a really strong experience for me. The student factor, that I was making the change from the corporate world to the academic world. And not having had any teaching experience or anything else it was a considerable challenge. But as you know anybody who's a teacher of [?] knows, it's in the teaching that you really start to learn about what you're involved in, so it was really significant, life changing event in terms of the Shimeall family. And I always felt good about what we were doing, especially at Covell. It's too bad that our people in Washington haven't

had similar experience to where they would really appreciate cultures, you know, outside of the United States. Maybe we would be able to take better advantage of some of the opportunities that arise in the worldwide situation. So much for a philosophy.

LARK: Very good. Well, if we had any further things – if you think of more, if I think of more – I'll keep the recorder here for another day or two and we can have another conversation if you like. But I'll stop...

SHIMEALL: Okay, I'll take a little time and look over, I think we've covered most everything. I think we got all the questions answered.

LARK: I think so, but I may have some second thoughts too as I... I'll re-listen to this, and see how clear it is. See if I can make sense of it.

SHIMEALL: Okay. I have a doctor's appointment tomorrow, but we can arrange another time if we need to.

LARK: Okay.

SHIMEALL: Okay, Neil. Thank you very much.