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## TIMECODE

**Arden Granger:** I'm Arden Granger, spouse of a first faculty member at UMM, and I was the first PR person for UMM so I'm retired from that and then later on I was also a university relations person and retired from that, and now I'm retired from everything. A-r-d-e-n Granger, G-r-a-n-g-e-r.

**Christopher Butle:** I like to start these conversations by finding the story of how someone came to Morris so I'd like for you to begin by telling me the story of how you found out you were going to be coming to Morris.

**Arden Granger:** It's quite a story of how we came to Morris. We were living in St. Cloud where Steve was a counseling psychologist at the VA Hospital there and he got a call from Rod Briggs who evidently had contacted his- Steve's adviser at the university's Minneapolis campus to get an idea of who might like to come. Anyway, Steve went out to interview in Morris and stayed overnight, came back and said we were moving to Morris and I said, "Where is Morris?" And I think he started the next week to work full time. It was April 18<sup>th</sup> I believe of 1960 and a couple weeks later in late April I was invited to come out and spend the night and see the town. No spouses ever went along on interviews in those days. I went out to see the town and first I had to endure a chamber of commerce dinner in the basement of the Assumption Church and I was pregnant with second daughter Sarah who was born the first month of UMM, and it was quite painful but everyone was so wonderful 'cause they all wanted- they had worked so hard to get the university here and they so wanted to meet me and the rest of us. And then Briggs took me on a tour of the campus and then the fields and pastures and everything that was going on. I think it had been raining for a week and it was- everything was a sea of mud. He was enthusiastic about what was going to go on in this and that field and all I could see was mud. It was really very depressing, the whole town, the area, but I moved there I think two weeks later, May 15<sup>th</sup>, and been here ever since and it's been wonderful.

**Christopher Butle:** After this spectacular introduction to the town, what did you say to your husband?

**Arden Granger:** Well, he was so enthusiastic- Rod was so enthusiastic, Rod Briggs, that you couldn't be otherwise and the minute you came here you were enthusiastic. The people of the town were fantastic. I was invited to just endless coffee parties as it

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were otherwise and then just many, many townspeople had all of us faculty people to dinner parties in their homes. It was just great. It was-- The enthusiasm of starting the new college was wonderful.

**Christopher Butle:** What were the events or people that enabled you to get over your initial misgivings about the town?

**Arden Granger:** I was quite worried about moving and I really didn't care for the town at first. I was a big city girl born and raised in St. Paul and it was quite something to get used to it, but I think the fact that everybody was in the same boat, everyone was roughly- almost everyone was late twenties to mid thirties or thirties with a couple exceptions only, and people were having babies or they had all these little kids and we did everything together and it was just wonderful. We went to everything together, the basketball games, the football games, the plays, the concerts, the foreign films, and then frequently afterward we would gather at someone's house and have beer and soft drinks and talk about the campus and how wonderful it was and the students. Even wives knew the names of students 'cause that's all what husbands talked about. Now I sound like there were only male faculty but there were of course female faculty too but mostly since they were working I spent my time with wives and children.

**Christopher Butle:** There was also sort of a semiofficial role I understand when regents would come to town that the wives would be involved as well.

**Arden Granger:** Right. Well, actually we had a social-- As far as entertaining, we had a social committee. It was Lucy Imholte and Barb McGinnis and I and when we first came to town there were no dial phones and- but Barb and- McGinnis and I were on a party line and this continued when dial phones came in so one of us could call Lucy at a prearranged time and the other one pick up and we would have our three-people social committee meetings over the phone most of the time like that, but we had formal teas with tea service- a silver tea service and everything for all of the faculty wives and female faculty in the Imholte home. And then the regents I think in those days it was either every three or four years they came to town en masse, huge entourage with them, and their spouses came with them and so we were expected to entertain these spouses for two days so we had to think up things for them to do. I remember once we had them for brunch out at our house in the woods and go see John Ingle's art studio in his home and many things, and then of course they'd have the big dinner for the regents and everyone at night. And even that sometimes there wasn't a place to have, and I remember once we were living out on Lake Crystal and we had the whole-

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regents and all these people for dinner in our basement- walk-out basement, but it was wonderful.

**Christopher Butle:** A very informal atmosphere.

**Arden Granger:** Yeah, it was, very, and enthusiastic.

**Christopher Butle:** It's kind of neat to think about that collective-- It seems like the wives all sort of sense that we're in this together; let's make the best of it. Is that true?

**Arden Granger:** It was just a great atmosphere of you did- you felt you were working together and everything that went on on campus everyone knew about and kind of felt that they were a part of even though they didn't work there, and when the buildings started being built for instance Steve and I and- we'd take our two little girls many nights after work and go out and just prowl around in the new construction. I don't even think you can do that nowadays but climb all over everything and just "ooh" and "aah" progress and it was just wonderful. The feeling you had of being a part of, well, creating a new college and something really special that-- Now I started I think it was December of 1960, I think when Briggs decided that we had to have some publicity and hired me. He knew I was a journalism graduate and he hired me to write the first news stories and I did the first several-page brochure, and actually I can't remember how long I worked but it was until the- UMM got so big they needed a full-time person and I couldn't do that so quit and then later on I came and did it again.

**Christopher Butle:** I also heard the initial faculty had quite an active social life. You mentioned going to athletic events and concerts and things but there was also a lot of getting together informally.

**Arden Granger:** Well, there was both formally or- and informally. The social committee-- I really think we planned three- one party every quarter and frequently it was out at the country club at the golf course before it burned down. Clyde Johnson had a wonderful dance band so these frequently were dinner parties with dances and then in between, like we needed anything else, we had house parties all the time and most of the time dancing to records back then, LPs, just-- Baby-sitters were 25 cents an hour and- although everyone was poor too because salaries weren't very big and for many years everyone brought their own beer or whatever they wanted to drink. I remember of somebody coming with his little six pack of beer and people would bring

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along food because nobody could just afford to buy all the food and drinks for themselves- by themselves. It was great.

Q: Describe one of those house parties in a little more detail.

**Christopher Butle:** Most-- Well, there were-- Oh. The house parties were very-- Sometime-- Many times it was just drinking and dancing and there really was quite a lot of drinking. Charlie Hanna was first I think director of student activities and we would go to his house and he would have the silver pitcher of martinis in his freezer and all of the martini glasses straight up in the freezer and we drank these. It was just-- It was incredible. We were younger. Then-- But many of them also were dinner parties and then you may or may not dance afterward but many people- many-- We just danced. If people had basements we danced in the basement and we thought nothing of getting home at 4 or 5 a.m. and we all had little children, had to get up in the morning. It was incredible.

**Man 1:** After every athletic event.

**Arden Granger:** Uh huh.

**Christopher Butle:** Was there anyone who had a particularly good reputation as being a very good dancer that you recall?

**Arden Granger:** I can't really remember. I think-- Some thought they were. I think Jack Imholte used to think he was okay but he really just liked to dance with Barb McGinnis to--what--Winchester Cathedral.

**Christopher Butle:** What a sight.

**Arden Granger:** Right, and it was kind of back, forth, back, forth, and you'll probably want to cut all that out. Oh. Oh, I tell you who was. The-- As far as especially good dancers it was Rod Briggs and Lucy Imholte. They jitterbugged practically professionally looking. They were wonderful.

**Christopher Butle:** You mentioned Jack Imholte. Let's talk about him. You told me he

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was--

**Arden Granger:** Oh, absolutely. He got up very, very early, first one on campus—

<crew talk>

**Arden Granger:** Jack Imholte was a voracious reader. He would leave home very early, first one on campus. You'd see his light on up there and read, read, read, read, and he loved to read so much that I have heard- no- not I've heard. He told me that driving to the cities on the freeway he would have his book across the steering wheel and read it as he went along. It was kind of scary.

**Christopher Butle:** One of the characteristics about him that comes out is that he was good at letting people's disagreements sort of run their course and he would sort of moderate. You don't seem to agree with that.

**Arden Granger:** I-- No. I think so but no. Of course I'm speaking only-- In talking about Jack Imholte's personality, U- I'm only talking socially, not really professionally, but I think that's true. I-- I'm not sure I ever saw him angry or still is—

Q: In the early years a lot of people talked about the experimentation on campus trying to remove things and in the seventies there were occasional threats of closure and I've heard how that has affected faculty but how did it affect the spouses? Were you aware of this sort of--

**Arden Granger:** Oh, yes, yeah, especially-- I can't remember about the seventies but the sixties when Montevideo was threatening-- There were banners on campus and oh, you had to be aware of it and the student newspaper and people talked about the possibility of closing or not being funded anymore so- but I guess here's an indication that maybe I did worry about closure, well obviously. When we came to town in 1960 we got a one-year subscription to the Morris newspaper because I said, "Who knows how long we'll be here?" The next year I said, "Well, you never know when you're—" To this day we only have a one-year subscription to the Morris newspaper.

Q: You're still not—

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**Arden Granger:** No, no. No. We're going to live here until- the rest of our lives.

Q: I've also found it very interesting. As you came to appreciate Morris more, you really enjoyed it as a place to raise a family. Why is that?

**Arden Granger:** Morris was just a wonderful place to raise a family. Since I had grown up and- born and grown up in St. Paul and I really liked a big city, I- we would go back to the- to Minneapolis to the Guthrie Theater all the time and- but as my little girls got bigger and I knew that I could trust them in grade school to go all by themselves downtown on their bicycles and never have to worry about them and then when they were in high school they could work at Country Kitchen and other places downtown and get home at midnight and stuff and never have to worry about them. They just-- It was wonderful and so many playmates and it was just a very nice place to live. Steve took to the town immediately and never wanted to leave and we would frequently have to go to the- Steve, my husband, and we'd frequently have to go to the cities and to this day he'll drive down until we get to the outskirts and then I have to drive from then on. He doesn't even like it enough to drive in it so- but he just can't believe anybody would want to stay here and live here forever, but part of why we love it so is we're outdoor people and it might be just prairie to some but we love the lakes and the few woods and the rivers and the recreational opportunities and so it's great.

Q: The last thing I want to ask you about is your sense of the relationship between the school and the town. Initially, you said they were wonderful; they ushered you in because the university meant a lot to the school economically, socially. What has been the nature of that relationship as it's moved on? How would you characterize it?

**Arden Granger:** In my opinion, the relationship between the university and the college is- the university and the town—

Q: Start that one more time.

**Arden Granger:** In my opinion, the relationship between UMM and the town, the whole surrounding community, is still- is- has always been good. It was of course very good at first and through the years you've- I've heard isolated incidences of maybe storekeepers who didn't like some of the students or something but in general I think

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they've been wonderful. As part of administration, I think we had more to do and to this day socialize with town people maybe more than some of the faculty do but I think they have always been very welcoming and just in general nice people.

Q: There's probably a bit of truth that we couldn't survive without them and they couldn't survive-- There's sort of a mutual dependence. Would you agree?

**Arden Granger:** I think there's a mutual dependence. I've known townspeople who have just year after year taken classes at UMM, potting and things like that, and conversely of course we have some faculty who have immersed themselves in- like Thorson for instance I remember and many of his- Margaret Kuchenreuther who just like to- want to be a part of the town and on committees and so it definitely is a mutual thing I think.

Q: There was one school coming in and one school going out when you arrived in the sixties. What kind of interaction did you have with the spouses of West Central School of Ag faculty and what was your sense of that?

**Arden Granger:** When we came in 1960 to UMM the West Central School of Agriculture continued for three more years because they let their students graduate and some of their faculty were- became part of UMM's faculty and so we did- we included their spouses in our activities also, and then as new faculty came Steve and I made a point of having every new faculty member and spouse to dinner in our home and I think we did this in to the eighties probably until it just got too big.

Q: You could probably relate to these people coming out to a town and seeming so far removed—

**Arden Granger:** Oh. Well, of course some had horror stories. Some of the faculty who came to interview had some horror stories like coming in a blizzard and we traveled by a train in those days and getting stuck in a train in a blizzard and by Annandale for two days, and many came from small, oh, sometimes religious colleges and so the freedom-- They were so impressed with the freedom that we had in Morris but really there was no censure of anything as some had seen back in their other institutions. The first summer and fall especially were such fun because each new faculty member who came-- It was such a new adventure for them and they had so many different stories to tell of where they'd come from and then there was a big production of helping them

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move in and then sometimes a year or two later they'd move to a new house and a big bunch of us would help them move there and it- that was really part of the cohesiveness I think of the group. It was great.

Q: Mike was saying that for a lot of the original faculty, you and Steve and some other people, there was a sense of kind of being settlers on a prairie. There was a brand new school to define but you might have encountered faculty who came later who were having difficulties. Did you ever have the opportunity to counsel and what would you say—

**Arden Granger:** Some of the faculty, I don't think any of the original, but some of them who came later-- It wasn't the faculty. It was spouses that just really didn't like it and they just weren't around very long. They convinced their husbands to leave and I would tell them, "Give it a chance. It's a wonderful place and especially if you have children it's just a wonderful place to bring them up" but some you couldn't convince and they were gone.

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