An Interview with

Thomas Smith

Conducted by
Calder M. Pickett

Oral History Project
K.U. Retirees' Club
NOTE: Tom Smith died before editing of this interview was completed. Spelling of names and the like may be in error.
Q This is January 22, 1992. Better get that straight. I'm Calder Pickett and this is going to be an interview with Thomas Smith. I think I first met you, Tom, at Burt Marvin's house. It was the first year that I was here and it had something to do with the American Universities Field Staff guys who used to come. I don't remember who it was, one of the persons that was here. His house and I remember that Amby Saricks was there too. In 1951, I think that would be the first time that I met you. Tom Smith was a long time member of the KU faculty, Department of Geography, and he is one of those people I always thought of as the "key people" of the University. He might not think of himself that way, but anyway, I offer my statement to start with. Tom, I'd like you to start by giving some factual stuff about yourself. Your date of birth, your place of birth, who your parents were, kind of work that your father did. Then I want to talk with you a bit about your family, your childhood background, your education and don't leap too rapidly up into the present, because there are a few things from the early years that I would like to get on this record.

A This thing still running?

Q It is still going.

A Are you going to ask me a question?

Q No. You just tell me what your date of birth was, place of birth, your parents and so on.

A I was born in Philadelphia in 1910. My father at that time was a professor at the Wharton School, at the University of
Pennsylvania. We lived in Swarthmore, college town in suburban Philadelphia.

Q Swarthmore, that is the first time I guess, that I knew that it was just outside of the city. That was something I wasn't conscious of. Your father was a professor of what?

A He was a professor of economic geography at the Wharton School, at the University of Pennsylvania.

Q What was his name?

A Jay Russell Smith.

Q What was your mother's name?

A My mother was Henrietta Stewart.

Q Henrietta Stewart.

A Yes. She was from South Jersey, village of Greenwich, in South Jersey with a creek that led out into the Delaware Bay. They met at a Friends school in Philadelphia. I think it was Abingdon Friends. One thing led to another and they got married sometime in the 1890s.

Q Now you were born in a background of education from the sound of it then?

A Yes. I was.

Q Right from the start. Of course many of us who have been on the KU faculty didn't have that kind of background at all. I would guess that there was inspiration on the part of your parents right from the beginning for you to go on and get a good education, go to college and so on?

A Yes. It was that way. My father resigned at Penn and went to Columbia in New York. About 1917 or 1918, and he would leave
home at Swarthmore, early I would say, on Tuesday morning, spend Wednesday and Thursday in New York and come back Thursday evening.

Q So the family stayed there in your home in Pennsylvania?
A The family stayed home in Pennsylvania and my parents have always explained that in terms of, their many Friends in Swarthmore and their connection with the Swarthmore Friends Meeting, which was a very good one. Swarthmore, or course, being a college with Quaker background.

Q I was going to ask you when, you used the word "Friends," you are making reference to Quakers?
A Yes.
Q Was that your own background?
A Oh yes, I was. Also my wife, Eleanor.
Q Did you remain a Quaker?
A Always remained a Quaker.
Q Oh, I didn't know that. I didn't know that about you. I remember seeing you a few times at the Unitarian Fellowship, which I suppose would have been a place very friendly to Friends.

A Yes, well out here, you see I guess I have to qualify. You asked did I remain a Quaker. Well, I was never anything else, let's put it that way. I don't know how good a Quaker I was. Or have been, because I didn't pick up any associations out here in Lawrence. I did go to the Unitarians, somewhat.

Q Did the Quaker philosophy, was that an important thing in terms of pacifism for example?
Well, yes and no. I mean, I took up arms, so to speak, I went into the Army in 1943. Interestingly enough, I spent a year in London, in 1944 or 1945. Then I established contact with the Friends Meeting at Russell Square in London. I remember sitting at that meeting in uniform and listening to the V-bombs go overhead and pleasantries of that kind.

Could a Quaker have made a plea of being a conscientious objector and gotten away with it?

Yes. Some did. In London, it was even easier than it was here I think. In England, it was easier than it was in the States.

Of course our friend Richard Nixon, at least that was the background in which he was brought up. I don't think he was much of a Quaker.

Well, I don't think so either. But he wore it on his sleeve every now and then.

Yes. He was good at that. Did you have brothers and sisters?

Yes. I have two older brothers. My oldest brother, Nolen is still alive, lives in a retirement community over in New Jersey. We had a middle brother, Stewart, named after my maternal-grandfather James Stewart. He died suddenly in 1955 when I was in Europe.

I'm always interested when I do these interviews, and I've done around sixty of them now. In finding out what it was that made people what they are. That is why I am asking you some of these things. But, especially, I keep wondering, how does a guy become a geographer? Was this the influence so much of your dad, that you just kind of fell into that. Lots
of kids, of course, are going to avoid doing the thing that their fathers do.

I think it was the influence of my father. My interest in geography, several things happened in this connection. In 1924 or 1925, I guess it was, or 1925/26, my father took, my mother, my eldest brother and me, with him on a trip around the world. For him this was a calculated activity, to build up background experience, photographs, contacts. That would help him in textbooks that he was going to write. Because he was strongly of the opinion, that it would help world peace and other good things, if people knew more about other people. So, he embarked on a career of textbook writing with the John C. Woodston Company, and also with Arthur Grace. It was a major activity and also quite profitable. Because textbooks were sellable items and in those days, the author received quite a stipend. So that was an influence on me. My father had been trained as a historian and he went to study at the University of Leipzig, when he decided to do a degree in geography. He couldn't get one in this country in 1890s when he did it. So, that was his background. He continued his interest in economic geography at Columbia. He was head of the small department of Economic Geography in the Columbia University School of Business. I did my graduate work there. Took a Ph.D. there. That was part of my training.

Well, you know geography for many of us was one of the most enjoyable and most important classes that we took when we were in grade school. I talked with a lot of people today,
and I wonder whether kids are learning that kind of thing at all any more. We knew all of the capitals and we knew all of the rivers and the mountain ranges, and the principal resources of the countries. This was something in the fifth or sixth grade that was just basic to us. All of us were learning that kind of thing. My daughter, she teaches French over in Olathe, says, the kids in her class can't tell you the name of the country south of Texas. This is of course a terrible commentary on what is happening in the world I guess.

A Well, I agree that is a problem. Of course, referring back to my father for a moment. With the Winston Company, he developed a series of grade school and high school geographies. He went to about the third or fourth grade right straight through to high school. Then with Harcourt, Brace, he published Geography of North America, that was the first really good text, so to speak, at a college level.

Q Those may be the very books that I had in grade school.

A Yes. Human Geography, some guy down in Gravel Switch, Kentucky, of all places. I forgot his name, I have it down. Got very interested in this, and I sent a whole batch of this grade school stuff down to him. I have downstairs a three-foot bookshelf of J. Russell's college work. North America was a standard, I don't like to use the term "text," but it was used as a text for geography. The high school version of that was printed about 1913 I guess. It was published, I guess it was called, Industrial Geography, or Industrial and
Commercial and that became a standard text. I helped him revise that in 1925 for the last time. He wanted me to take over the school geography text, with Winston's, when I was mature and so forth, but I didn't want to do it.

Q What books did you like to read when you were a little boy?
A Did you read all of the standard adventure books? Tom Sawyer?
A Yes. I read those things. I spent a little time with the Saturday Evening Post. I was not much of a reader, as a matter of fact.

Q Probably a lot of books in your home?
A Yes. I've got a lot of books around here. Many of them I have read, some of them, a few of them I read.

Q What were you interested in doing? Sports?
A No. I played around. Worked at my school. Did my school work. I was interested in political books for some reason, but I was never too bookish for some damn reason.

Q Where did you go to grade school? Where in Swarthmore?
A Yes. I went to grade school in Swarthmore and that lasted until we went around the world. Then I came back, and took, I went to George Cole P.A., which is a Quaker school, north of Philadelphia. For background here the Quakers in the 19th century had a split and there was a Hicksite branch of the Quaker community taking its name from a man named Hicks.

Q Was that Edward Hicks the artist?
A No. It was, I don't know his first name. He wasn't an artist. He was an Englishman.

Q The one I mentioned was the one who did all those paintings
of all of the animals and the peaceful kingdom.

Oh yes. Nineteenth century. No this would have been eighteenth century, if not earlier, and it would have been in England. It was carried over in this country and the other branch was the Orthodox branch. My family was Hicksite and my aunt, my father's sister, was Orthodox. So I got a little bit of both. I never knew the difference between them, except that Orthodox did more Bible reading then the Hicksites did.

Did you have any teachers in your grade school years who really turned you on or got you interested in things?

Yes. There was a woman at George school, and I can't remember her name. She was a English and Literature teacher, and I remember her very fondly. Then I can think of others too, but I don't know, I don't see them as models that I sought to follow.

Well, it sounds as though your father was a model, as much as anyone.

This was right.

Well, that is wonderful. Tom, do you remember World War I?

Very vaguely.

You of course were born in 1910. You would have been only 7 years old when we got into the thing.

About the only thing I remember, well I remember a couple of things. My parents had a college student named Michener, no relation to Jim, who went into the Army. He came to our house in uniform. I remember the ROTC in Swarthmore drilling on the athletics field. I remember the Armistice, in November of
1918, riding downtown on my bicycle and meeting somebody that I knew. That is the kind of memory I have of World War I.

Q You were a city boy, did you get out much into the country? Or did you get out to visit the, all of the wonderful historical things around Philadelphia, Valley Forge and all that?

A Oh sure. We did that. Swarthmore was in those days was quite bucolic. A town rather than a part of the city. It took about a good half hour to get into the city, by suburban rail line. Swarthmore and Haverford, I went to Haverford for my freshman year of college over on the Main Line, West Chester are all places I was familiar with. Swarthmore had Crumb Creek that went through the town that even had some old mill sites on it from the water power days, 19th century.

Q You graduated from high school in what town? Swarthmore?

A No. I graduated at George School.

Q Oh yes.

A George School was a coed boarding school, and I became heavily involved with a very attractive young classmate of mine. My parents thought a separation would be good, and they expected she would go to Swarthmore, so they sent me to Haverford. I can still remember my father taking me over and introducing me to the president of Haverford. They made some kind of special accommodation for a late registration for me.

Q What city was that in? Haverford?

A Haverford is a town on the Main Line. Are you familiar with the Main Line?
Well, it was a very good place.

A very exclusive feeling to it, quite unlike Utah State, where I went.

When I went to transfer, well actually at Haverford, I was something of a specimen to be looked at through a magnifying glass, coming from Swarthmore to Haverford. Then when I returned to Swarthmore, it was part of my initiation, so to speak, to learn the songs, "I don't send my boy to Haverford to dine, mother said," and all those nice things.

Did you live at home while you were going to college?

Yes. When I was going to Swarthmore. Haverford, I lived in the dormitory, but at Swarthmore I lived at home. In fact the house, my parents built this house in 1922, 1923, 1924, sometime around there, before we went around the world and it was surrounded by college property. After my mother preceded my father and then he passed away in the '60s'. Actually he remarried and was taken care of by his new wife for a year and a half before he passed away. She would not live in that house, so they lived in another part of town and the property was sold to the college. I don't know who lives there now, but one of the vice presidents used to live there.

Did you get involved in many activities while you were in college?

Not particularly, no. I was a fraternity boy. I was in Delta Upsilon, and it was sort of a family tradition. I don't know whether my father had been that or not, but certainly my two brothers had been. I played at soccer, but I was never an
Did you get good grades?

Reasonable. I graduated with honors.

You did? Well that is good grades.

But, my parents were disappointed that I didn't get high honors or something like that.

What year was it that you graduated? Oh, 1933. Boy, that was right in the Depression. Tom, don't misunderstand my question, but I gather that, it sounds as though you had a fairly substantial family background. I am just wondering whether the Depression hit you folks much?

Not really. See, by that time my father was 10 years into this textbook activity. I never knew the details, but I think there was quite a bit of money in that. So we were relatively unscathed, because those things went along. Then, there is another influence here, in this period, that I featured somewhat in the previous effort. My father was a Virginian, he was born in Loudon County. Now Loudon County, is the northwestern most county of the state of Virginia. The western boundary for, part of it anyway, is the Blue Ridge Mountain, then Loudon Valley, then some hills and then come down onto the coastal plain. It is actually north of Washington, going to Virginia. The Potomac River comes south and it forms the other boundary of Loudon. My father was born in this farming community, near the village of Lincoln, Virginia. Now that requires some explanation perhaps for passing interest. They wanted to put in for a post office
about 1864/65 and they cast about for a name of this nameless village, in fact it was called Goose Creek or something like that. They said, "Well let's name it the 'Lincoln', we won't have so much trouble getting in through the government in Washington." So, they named it Lincoln, Virginia, and it is still a post office, as a matter of fact. He had various relatives there. My wife, Eleanor, was born and raised in the farm adjacent to the farm my father was born on and raised on. She was a Smith before she married me, as you may remember from that other thing. My third cousin, we did that sort of thing in Virginia. My father, one of his major interests, and one of the activities of the around the world trip, were tree crops. My father's interest in tree crops led to the publication of a book called Tree Crops. He was great at it, because of tree agriculture. He bought this land on the Blue Ridge, began to buy it in the 1890s, I guess before he was married. He wanted to have a chestnut orchard on it. He planted a chestnut orchard, about 70 or 80 acres, and the chestnut blight just wiped it out completely. So he shifted to apples and he kept buying woodlands and ended up with about 700 acres on the Blue Ridge. We always spent our summers down there. So that was a break. We had an old single-log cabin that he bought about the 1890s, from a guy named Sammett Palmer, who's somebody else or was somebody else, and added on to it some nice extensions. That's where we used to live.

That is such beautiful country there.
A  Yes.
Q  Shenandoah Valley, Blue Ridge.
A  But of course the Shenandoah was on the other side. Our house was up on the mountain, probably an altitude of 1000 feet above sea level and the valley was maybe six or seven hundred feet and we'd look out over what is called the Loudon Valley. On a clear day we could see the Washington Monument. So that general background of my wife, Eleanor, and my father, and various cousins, Browns, Taylors, and so forth, was another part of the background that I enjoyed very much.
Q  Did you ever have any jobs, have to do any work while you were going to school?
A  I used to do some flag work for my dad, in the Library of Congress. The woman assistant, Margaret Hicks, was her name as I recall she lived in Washington and had a study in the Library of Congress and was employed by him to dig up facts and find out things for him. I worked with her a couple of summers and did some mapping for him. So I sort of got worked into the textbook, a bit early. In the '50s' I did do major work and revisions of this Standard Economic Geography text.
Q  Was geography your major in college?
A  No. My father used to debate with the administration at Swarthmore, criticize them for not having geography. My major was economics and history.
Q  We had no geography department when I went to college.
A  Yes, well.
Q  That is hard for me to believe, when I know what kinds of
things have been done here. But geography wasn't a class. Something we had to get completely from our background that we picked up.

One of the things that happens here, I might explain a bit about the reason I came to Kansas. It was Walter Kollmorgen. You remember Walter. Walter was the first Columbia Ph.D. in geography. He preceded me by three or four years, I guess. He was the first university scholar, perhaps the only one in the geography department and he got the scholarship and came to Columbia and got his degree. Then he went to work for the government, Bureau of Land Economics, or something like that. I remember subsequently my father talked to me one time, this would be in the '50s', and he was reminiscent and he said, "You wouldn't believe how many letters I wrote, trying to get Kollmorgen placed in an academic department." The problem was his physical disability, they wouldn't take him. Finally, of course, Kollmorgen was from Nebraska or somewhere, I forget where, so this part of the country was not strange to him. They decided to have a Geography department. Before Kollmorgen, there had been a professor named Posey, for whom the weather station is named. He taught geography in the Economics department. Kollmorgen came either as an associate or full professor, I forget, with the assurance of a department and at least one other slot for next year. I met him at the meetings in 1946, at the meetings in the east somewhere and we hooked up. So I came out here and joined him and then Will Kuchler came and George Jenks.
Q When did you get married?
A 1937.
Q 1937. I'm kind of curious about something, ten years between your A.B. and your Ph.D., what were you doing in all that time? What did you do after you got through college?
A Well, I went to Columbia.
Q Right off?
A Right off and I've been thinking about that. I suspect that there might have been a little nepotism in that. Nepotism. I don't know, but I went to Columbia, had a hard time writing my Ph. D.. Had a hard time finding a topic, ended up writing what turned out to be sort of an economic history of Fall River, Massachusetts, as a textile center. Boy, it took me quite a while. I stayed at Columbia as a teaching assistant. Eleanor and I went there in 1937 and we were there until, when was it I left, it was after the war started, I left Columbia and took a job in Washington State Department, Office of the Geographer. I was there for about a year and a half, then got drafted.
Q You got drafted in 1942?
A No, 1943.
Q 1943. You were in what, the Army?
A Yes.
Q Now, did you become an officer.
A Eventually.
Q Where were you stationed?
A I was stationed, first I went to basic training down in
Texas. Many of my friends and associates of my age in the
geography field were working in Washington in the State
Department, where I'd been in the Office of Strategic
Services, which was the precursory of the CIA and other
places like that. So I made efforts to get into intelligence
work. I talked to somebody over in the Pentagon, some major,
he was going to get me in and send me to the Pacific
somewhere. But, when that fell through I did get sent for
military intelligence training, at Camp Richey in Maryland,
just below the Pennsylvania line on the Blue Ridge as a
matter of fact. At Camp Richey it was set up as a language
training center. They trained people in French for the ASR
and in German for interrogation and those that didn't have
language they made them into photo-interpreters like me. So I
got sent over to England and a whole batch of unassigned
graduates from military intelligence training center. I was
in a camp in South England and my associates back in
Washington were trying to get me for the OSS office in
London. It so happened I went to London on D-Day out of this
camp in South England. I remember lying in bed that night,
listening to the airplanes, there was a hell of a lot of
airplane traffic going overhead. Of course we were right down
in that area, we seen all sorts of movement. Military convoys
and all stuff coming in. And the MPs in London were being
very tough on people, chasing everybody over the roofs of
houses. I was given orders to go to OSS London and I was in a
replacement unit. Several large camps that on D-Day plus
three, went over. But the OSS group, the MITC group rather, were kept out, they wouldn't have made good fighters anyhow, like I'm a 35-year-old private. But I went to London and spent a year in London, I spent some time, a year and a half, then I spent time in Germany, summer of 1945, picking up maps. Came back to OSS Washington for the next academic year. Then I came out here.

Q Was Eleanor able to follow you much in your military travel? Be with you.

A No. It wasn't too bad, because, Artie was a small kid.

Q I was wondering, when did the kids come along?

A Artie was born in 1942, because he was walking around by the time I left for the Army. I spent the six weeks in Texas and then I was assigned up to Camp Richey. Oh, you see, Eleanor and I were living in Falls Church outside of Washington at that point, when I came down. Bought this happy home in Falls Church and so Camp Richey, was what, an hour, hour and a half from there. I could get two or three day pass, come down and see her. Then I spent time in a port of embarkation in New York. We weren't supposed to go further, we could go to Philadelphia, but we couldn't go any further. So I would get myself a round trip ticket to Washington, on the Pennsylvania C. Then when I got on in New York, I handed the ticket over to the conductor and said, "I'm going to drop off at Philadelphia" So, he would put a Philadelphia seat check on the back of my seat. The MPs would come in and check the train, and this was in limits. When the train got to
Philadelphia I just stayed on it, and the MPs never came through again.

Q Do you have a daughter too?
A Yes. Bertie was born in 1947 and Tim was born in 1950.
Q Three of them?
A Three of them. Bertie's a member of the staff on the New York Times now, as I may have told you. Tim is pursuing a musical career, without too much evidence of success, although he does do some gigs now and then, I don't know what he lives on. I send him money as I do all the kids. You asked whether the Depression had an effect on us. About that time, my father got the idea that Virginia farmland was a better investment then life insurance. So he didn't plow money into life insurance, I don't know whether he canceled any or not. But he bought farms down in Virginia and my brother, Stewart, was a dairyman trained at Cornell. The middle brother that died in the '50s', and he had three kids and he lived and managed the farm that my father had been born and raised on. Then he would also supervise some other things. The thing was that J. Russell, would take out a loan at the bank and buy a farm. Then, he and Stewart would put a manager on it and the manager would manage it and Stewart would supervise it. He had about four farms, in addition to the home place.

Q You came in 1947? or 1946?
A 1947.
Q 1947. Except for the teaching assistant job that you had at Columbia, was this your first teaching job?
It really was, yes.

What rank did they let you have? Did you come as an assistant professor?

No. I came as an associate professor.

You came as an associate professor.

Total salary of $4,400, as I recall.

Well, that wasn't too bad.

No, not in those days.

I came for $4,000 and I thought I was rich.

It was interesting, because I mumbled something about this on the typescript there. Kollmorgen and I met at the meeting in December of 1946/47. I came out here on an interview and there was an opening in Nebraska, and Gus Espon was president. I went up there for an interview, I went from here to Omaha and Lincoln, for an interview on that same trip. Nebraska offered me a hundred bucks more and I squeezed a hundred out of Kollmorgen and Dean Malott, who was chancellor then, and I decided to come here. But the administrative people were more impressive, Gustafson, I think Gustafson was president of Nebraska. He went on to be head of Resources for the Future in Washington. Even more impressive than Malott, God knows the dean, Oldfather, I guess, Oldfather was the dean he was more impressive then Paul B. Lawson. That was an old department with a lot, some deadwood in it. I chose the working level, and Kollmorgen was more impressive then the chairman at Nebraska, so I came here.

How many of you were there in the Department of Geography
when you came?
A  Just Kollmorgen and me.
Q  Just the two of you.
A  Yes.
Q  How many classes did you have to teach?
A  Oh, I don't know, we taught five or six a year.
Q  Three classes a semester?
A  Yes. Something like that.
Q  Nine hours, probably?
A  Yes.
Q  What were the name of the classes you taught at first?
A  I taught Economic Geography, and I taught a regional course on North America. We also taught a regional course on the Far East, which had been one of my major interests. My professor at Columbia, John Orchard, was brought there by my father back in the 1920s. Published a major book on Japan and was deep in research on China, when he died. So that was a background I got in my training at Columbia. Also, my travel with my parents in Japan was more recent than it is now.
Q  Boy, you got some pretty good background on that world trip.
A  Yes, I did.
Q  Not many people have that kind of thing happen to you. Where did you folks live when you came here? Were you among the people who lived down in Sunnyside?
A  Yes.
Q  How long were you in Sunnyside?
A  We were in Sunnyside, 1947, 1948, 1949. Eleanor went to the
hospital to produce Tim, and we just moved into 4 Westwood. Just right up the street.

Q Right over here.

A George Jenks came to babysit with Bertie and Harvey, when I was over there with Eleanor. Bertie insisted on showing George around the house, much to his amusement.

Q George was quite a character.

A Yes, he was quite a character. Interestingly enough, this house was designed by Tom Dearth. He used to be in the department of architecture here, and he designed 4 Westwood. Bob Steele, I think, lived or his family did, in Tonganoxie, down in the faculty bottoms. If he is still alive. He built it. He also built 4 Westwood.

Q Well, you were fortunate to find a place to live, because, of course I didn't come until 1951, but we had no choice. Sunnyside was all that seemed to be available in the whole town.

A Well, that was true when I came. We lived those two years in Sunnyside. I lived in Sunnyside, right below, I forgot the number, just below the road that now goes by the power plant.

Q That's where we lived when we came, we were in building five.

A That road got dusty, remember that. The dust rose up. There is a story I'll tell you about that, or did I tell you this before. About the ruckus one night. We lived in the downstairs apartment on the end, I forgot the name, young couple, recently married, not honeymooners, but bride and groom were above us. One night, did I tell this story?
One night, the bed upstairs collapsed with a bang! I got up with an objective and Eleanor rolled over and said, "Where are you going, where is thee going?" We used Quaker speech to each other. I said, "I'd thought I go put on Josh White's record on the record player, 'Slats on the bed go blam de blam', and turn the volume up." She said, "Thee will not, get the hell back in bed here."

That was an experience, I think it was good to live in a place like that. Of course, what happened to us was we lived in four different areas like that in our early married years. Took us some time before we got into a nice house.

Well, in New York, where we lived for seven or eight years, the practice in those days was to change apartments quite frequently. So we lived in three different apartments that I can think of. That was before the area began to deteriorate as it did later on.

Who were some of the people you got to know? Some of the friendships that you folks made, aside from those in the Geography Department? I'm talking mainly about those early years. A lot of people in the college.

We made some good friends at Columbia, in New York, one couple, I can't remember their names now. I haven't kept in touch with them. Around here, we made friends with people that were somewhat younger than we are. George and Madeline Jenks of course, were our age, and other people in the Geography department. McCleary, Simonetts, Judy Thompson and
Peter, and Walter and Sally Sudlow lived in that house. No. They lived in that house on the entrance of Westwood. Just to the left as you turned into Westwood. Yes. A white house, the Sudlows lived in that. Of course Walter was something of a character. I often wondered, do you know that couple at all? No.

They both had professorships and still do down in Arkansas. Sally is the mainstream. Sudlows, Thompsons that is one of the problems, those people and one or two others, whose name escapes me right now are a good deal younger. When I go over to the Faculty Club for the Wednesday meetings, I don't have any really close friends there, perhaps the Seavers. We ran a bridge club with them.

It was always the same people that were there? I was telling George Foreman that the other day that. If the Retirees Club, doesn't soon start attracting some of the younger people, newer people who are coming in, there won't be anybody there in a few years, because people are getting older and it is the same bunch. The other day, I think the youngest person in the room was Arno Knapper and I think I would have been the next youngest in the room. Interesting group of people there. How did you get along with, you mentioned Paul Lawson, did you ever have any problems with him. He was quite a tyrant for some people. Or didn't that affect you personally?

No. I got along with him all right. Let's see, who was dean when I was chairman?

George Waggoner?
Waggoner was.

Waggoner was quite a figure.

That's right.

Most of the people I talked with had a great deal of admiration for him. I wanted to ask you a little bit about your specialty in geography. Political geography, economic geography, you opted for the latter I assume?

I did in a sense. But, I very was interested in maps, my work in the OSS, was with maps. I was in the cartographic branch actually, if I was in research and analysis. Cartographic Division of Research and Analysis Branch. Actually, we were making target folders for demolition work in the area phase, behind the invasion coast. Where they wanted to knock out either by commando raids or by bombings, communications to reinforce that defense. So we were working on small scale stuff, or rather small side stuff that would give details about just the area of the target. The only trouble was when Patton broke out of the beachhead. We had to change the order on that objective from destroy to defend, he broke out so fast, we were out-of-date. But then in Germany, when I was picking up maps, acquiring them and going into these depots, down in salt mines and other places where they housed the stuff, I got interested in it more broadly in maps and their acquisition. I came back here and I brought some things back, I have some maps downstairs, not that one, that is the vintage of it. That chart or city map of Rotterdam, I guess, is over there. Probably around 1600s sometime, I have
several more of them downstairs that I picked up in some salt mines or other. But, my interest in economic geography, I taught it. I worked on it with Jay Russell and that book revision in 1955. My interest became maps and I arranged them. When I arrived here in 1947 there had been a distribution of maps published by the American Mapping Agencies and this went to a number of Universities. There was a stack of boxes so high, or higher. I forget how many thousand of sheets it was. It was sitting unopened here. We got a few maps cases over in Lindley at that point. The Geology/Geography library got some maps cases and stuck them in there and I catalogued that. Even made up the classification screen for it. In fact, my collection is named for me. I've been interested in it since then and the fact that it is the stepchild as far as space is concerned, and that is too bad, but that is the way things go. It so happened I did two major research jobs involving history of maps. It was what I ended up doing.

Q Now here is another dumb question. Are there classes that students can take that are specifically about mapmaking, cartography?

A Oh yes.

Q Who teaches?

A George McCleary and George Jenks were the people that were teaching mapmaking. It is not the typographic, largescale stuff, it is the history of maps and things of that kind.

Q I used to be a printer and I am fascinated every time I look
at a map. I'm going to have to go into a place that prints maps sometimes. Because I still can't quite get it through my head how they are able to get all that stuff on plate, the different colors and so on. That is what is a hard thing for me to comprehend. Sometime I am going to have to do that, although I don't know whether I ever will. Did you direct many dissertations?

A No. Dissertation people were, well Kollmorgen did quite a bit of it. Because he was a real intellectual, what did you call, primate of the department, in my estimation. Then Kuchler of course directed some people in vegetation mapping. Kollmorgen in more general aspects of geography, sediment and things of that sort. Jenks, McCleary and little cartography and people weren't so much interested in economic geography on that basis. I did a Ph.D. dissertation on, it turned out to be, historical geography actually in the end. When it came to history of cartography, I didn't research any and published a couple of significant articles. One on a bunch of English chart makers in the 17th century, producing charts in London, a certain type. Then, remember Al Parmalee, senior and junior. Al Parmalee, Jr., went to Costa Rica and eventually killed himself in a single car accident, down in Washington, the Virginia suburbs. He found a collection of maps a history professor down there wanted to sell. This is in the days, when Vosper was around, as a librarian. I just waited for Vosper to come up with the $800 or whatever it was to buy this collection. In this collection, unlisted, was
this ancient map of South America, 1775, we have it over here now. You as a printer would just be fascinated by this, such detail you never saw in your life. It is very striking. What was particularly interesting about it when I got into studying it was that the map was produced in Spain, clearly, the information on it showed its origin and named the cartographer and it was done by the order of the king. It showed a boundary in Latin America that went from Guyana through the Brazilian area and down into Uruguay and Paraguay. That favored the Portuguese, not the Spaniards, on the first edition, and then that boundary was scrubbed off on subsequent additions. I think we have both additions here. That was another job. I remember sitting down in Westwood, the light table headlining photographs of this map from this library, they were on top of one another. When you juggled one over the other you got a blur, but when you didn't get a blur, it was on one sheet and not on the other. See what I mean. I found a number in addition, I was able to trace this boundary and I found a bunch of other changes that they had made. So I did a piece of research about the Cruz Canto Map of South America that was published in Lagundo Mundo over there.

Q You became a full professor in 1955?
A Yes.

Q Do you think that would have been a bigger problem for you in those later years, when you had to have a massive list of books and articles and all these other things?
A: Probably would have. Because I don't have a massive list.
Q: Well, you know, I know so many people that don't. Some of the people I think are some of the best teachers at KU. But they weren't producing, Elden Fields didn't do much of that kind of thing, he was one of the greatest teachers there ever was.
A: Did he ever get a professorship?
Q: Oh yes. But, I often thought that I got mine at a fortunate time, too, because I'm not sure I would have made it if I'd had to go up in some of those later years.
A: We had a problem with George McCleary. He hasn't got his yet. He was turned down this year.
Q: Yes. Well, this is a real problem for some people. Did you serve on a lot of University committees? Senate Library Committee?
A: Yes. I served on that and I was on some other committee.
Q: Promotions? Were you ever on Promotions?
A: Yes. I've been on Promotions Committee and I can't give you the dates on this. I got involved with East Asian Studies.
Q: Oh, yes. How did that happen?
A: Well, because I was an East Asian geographer.
Q: Yes. That was something, you knew.
A: I was a good friend of George Beckman. Did you know George?
Q: Oh yes, I took some classes from him.
A: Okay. Well, George was here and he more or less started the East Asia Center, or whatever you want to call it. I was an associate of his and senior to people like, Felix (Vonrichtofen) Moos, the real thing. His uncle was the baron,
I think.

Q I didn't know that!
A Oh yes. Felix served in the Wehrmacht, down in the Crimea among other places.
Q Isn't Felix Jewish?
A I don't think so.
Q I thought he was.
A I don't think so. I could be wrong, but I don't think so.
Q Well, I don't think he could be, based on that.
A No, I don't think so.
Q No, it was just an impression I had.
A The historian, what is his name?
Q Well, I can't remember these names.
A Grant Goodman. Wentworth left, went somewhere else. But Beckman set up a trip for me to go to the Far East and Eleanor and I went to the Far East in 1966. Went to Japan and Korea and Moos was in Korea at that time. Then we didn't go to the mainland of course, of China, and then we went down to Taiwan. So we had another trip and when Beckman left and went to Pomona, I became chairman of East Asian Studies. I was that for four or five years.
Q Now you were chairman of the Geography Department itself, too, weren't you?
A Yes. But that was afterwards. When the East Asian Studies had developed and Kollmorgen was chairman of Geography for about 25 years and he wanted out and I took over essentially. Gave up East Asian Studies and took over Geography. Which was
fitting and proper because I didn't have an East Asian
language or real East Asian research, so that was suitable.

Q What memories do you have of the "good old days" when the
ROTC building was being attacked, the orators were standing
out in front of Strong Hall and the Union burned. What
impressions do you have from that period, Tom?

A I don't know. I seemed to be oblivious of that.

Q You were? Maybe you didn't\_\_many of those people in your
classes?

A It is possible.

Q Were you in the Senate back in those days?

A I can't remember.

Q When all that reorganization of the University was taking
place?

A I don't remember that.

Q I was just wondering how that
A Part of this, maybe faulty memory or memory failure. Because
my memory wasn't what it used to be. Yours probably isn't
either. I just thought I'd remember all that stuff.

Q You didn't react in any negative way?

A No.

Q Bad time, but a very interesting time too, in many ways. Some
of the things that were happening back then. The storms that
were going on the campus. When did you come to this house?

A In 1984/85, Eleanor began to have back problems. We were down
in Texas, at Arlington, Texas. What is down in Arlington,
Texas? University of Texas?
Q: No. Arlington is up by Dallas, isn't it?
A: Yes.
Q: Well, I don't know what it is.
A: Eleanor slipped or stumbled, didn't fall, but she twisted her back. In 1985, I guess, she had to spend about a week or more in bed. She moved into the second bedroom of the house, then in December of that year, 1985, she was diagnosed with bone cancer, which is fatal and for which there is no cure. We quickly went east for a second opinion, also that was back home for Eleanor. It is also part of the Loudoun County tradition, in Loudoun, when you really got sick, you went across the river to Johns Hopkins in Baltimore. At that time, Eleanor's younger sister, Esther, a divorcée with four kids away from home, lived in, where she always lived in, Bel Air, Maryland, on the way toward Philadelphia. It was sort of a bedroom for Baltimore and a bedroom for that big Army base, research base, I can't remember the name of it. So we went home there, and they confirmed the diagnosis. Eleanor wanted to stay. So I bought a house there, I mean I was affluent, because about that time one of the farms my father had bought in the 1930s for $15,000 or thereabouts, I guess it was $5000 down and $12,000 bank loan, had been signed over to me. My brother Nolan had one; of course my brother Stewart, was long dead. We sold that farm, early in the 1980s, for $600,000.
Q: Oh boy!
A: So, I bought a house for Eleanor that was very like 4 Westwood, in Bel Air. She loved that place it was very nice.
She passed away in November of 1988. I decided to come back here, because Bel Air was a bedroom town, and my sister-in-law Esther had many friends, but they weren't my friends.

Q Well, Eleanor was a lovely lady.

A Yes, she was.

Q You retired in 1981? You told me a little bit about your retirement years and what you have just been talking about. What other things have you been able to do? Have you been able to do any traveling? Have you done any by yourself, Tom, since then?

A Not so much by myself. My brother Stewart, had three girls and his wife, both of them are dead. The eldest one is married to a lawyer in Seattle, Washington, and her husband is a lawyer. One of his specialties is immigration law. If you're an immigration lawyer in the West Coast, you have clients that are Chinese. You remember, Stuart Forth? If you recall, he was Chinese. He goes to China quite frequently. So in 1989, maybe 1990, my niece in the West Coast called me up and said, "Hey, do you want to go to China?" I said, "Yes, that's not so bad, tell me more." Her husband, Bob, was on one of his trips, going on one of his trips and I said, "Are you going too?". She said, "If I don't go, he doesn't go." Strong minded lady, I said, "sure I'll go". Went to China with them. They had to drop me somewhere after the trip up the Yangtze River. They had to leave me alone on my own devices and go down to Hong Kong and take care of business for two or three days. So I rummaged around China by myself.
Going to where the buried soldiers are. Then down to Guilin on the South China River and then join them in Hong Kong. I am planning to go to North Italy with Jim Seaver and Charlie Kahn this spring. I go up to Lake Champlain every summer, stay at what I call the Serif Compound, Didi Serif's compound up there.

Q You go up to Phoebe's place?
A Yes. My son, Tim sometimes comes. Harvey and Susan and their two handsome sons come. That makes a kind of nice family rendezvous, these five. So, I have been doing a little traveling, not too much. I don't know how much longer I can keep it up. I went back to Washington, on January 6-12, and I fell down the street.

Q You did?
A Yes. I tripped over on the uneven pavement, not only once but twice. Fortunately I was with people and I survived and was able to walk back to my hotel. Then I went down there to see the 1492 Exhibit in the National Gallery. Circa 1492. Anyhow, I went to New York for a couple of days. Went to a museum there and came on back here.

Q How do you spend your days? What do you do?
A Sleep late. Try to get my income tax done.

Q You feel pretty good, Tom?
A Yes. I feel pretty good. I'm having trouble sleeping, I don't know what is wrong. I can roll around. The frequency of urinary discharge is something of a problem.

Q That is a problem for all of us when we get older.
That is right. I don't know whether to have my prostrate scrubbed a bit or not. Last night for example, I didn't get to bed until about one, but I was doing some things over there. Then I rolled until about four. Got up a couple of times, do my best sleeping from nine or ten.

I can't sleep beyond five any more.

Oh gosh, I don't have that problem.

Just terrible. I get up early every morning, dragging around there.

Are you alone or do you have family?

Yes. My wife is there.

Good.

We have children, but they are not here.

Well, solitary existence isn't all that great. As you can well imagine.

Do you have someone come in and clean up for you?

Nora comes in once every two weeks. She cleans for the Thompsons, for me and I don't know who else. Probably nobody else.

Well, it looks nice here. It looks as though either you cleaned it up or she was just here.

She was here on Monday, but when you're by yourself, you don't mess it up too badly.

Yes. That's right.

I keep the kitchen all scrubbed down.

Is your eyesight good enough for you to do your reading?

Yes. I can do reading and I'm trying to get through a P.D.
Those are fun. They are so big, though. Just a bit bigger for me than they need to be.

I still got it right here. My life goes on, the kids came out here for Christmas last year. I stayed, Tim came out and spent a week, Christmas time, with me here. We both enjoyed this year. Then I went back, as I said, to Washington, and New York.

Do you follow sports?

Vaguely.

If you were a basketball fan, that is about all there is on television. My wife loves basketball and she sits there because she can watch two or three games in a day. I tell her one a week is enough for me. It is fun to have that. Do you have cable?

No.

You ought to have that for C-Span. That is really interesting to watch Congress, some of the stuff there.

I've been meaning to explore cable. Who do you go to, to get cable?

Just call Cablevision downtown, Sunflower Cablevision.

They're the local?

They're right down there, next to the Journal-World. They are in the directory. That and ESPN, which has a lot of sports events. I like old movies, my wife doesn't care for old movies, but I do. Some of the new stuff, I watch a bit of junk. I figure that is my privilege.
Who doesn't, you earned it.

That is right, that's the way I look at it. I have a right to do those things. Just a couple of other things I want to ask you about.

Okay.

One of the things I noticed is that you work "The Friends of the Library". Is that the KU or the local, Lawrence?

KU.

KU. I guess they are about to operate about the same way, don't they? I don't know.

I suppose I've been particularly interested in the maps and geographic stuff. Like I say, the map collection and the documents collection are up in the old science library in the top of Malott. I didn't know if you knew that or not. It is very crowded up there.

Maps do take up a lot of space.

Oh, they do. One of the things we did back in, sometime ago. Bob McKa, lives down the street here and is a Geography professor. He's sort of interested in maps and things like that. He was lecturing up at the Command General Staff College, several years ago and they got a whole bunch of maps in and they were throwing out the old ones.

They have a collection over there. I taught over there too.

We went over there and brought back, we took a van over there and we brought back a whole bunch that we pulled. We'd go through it, take two sheets out of every one and we got a lot of topicgraphic stuff then.
Do people use this collection much over here?

Donna Koepp is the librarian in charge of documents and maps. She says the use is pretty good. Despite its terrible location, work space, and the maps are in these cases in stacks of five. Stacks of five that means you have to have a ladder to reach. Know I have something over at the desk, that I haven't digested yet. That just came in yesterday from Bill Crowe, who wants me to work with him on something, I don't know what it is.

I bet the Library of Congress got, probably a whole building, haven't they, just for maps?

No. They don't go that far. I haven't been in the Library of Congress, for sometime. But I used to know the people that were in charge of that and they moved around a bit. It used to be, as I recall, the latest location was on the ground floor over in the annex in the new library building. Behind the LC, they have a large collection. I know a number, over that.

Well, we have been talking here for a while and I think we can about wind up. I was wondering if you have any famous last words that you would like to utter?

It is a little premature for that isn't?

What was the head of series at KU, the last lecture series? I asked to talk in that, and thought what does that mean, "Last Lecture", at that time I intended to give several more. You had a good life here and you must have found that Lawrence and the University of Kansas was a good place to be?
A Yes. That is right.
Q Or you wouldn't have stayed, you wouldn't have come back.
A That is right. I was different from Eleanor in this. Eleanor was quite happy here too, she was a gregarious as I think
Q You were talking about Eleanor and some of the things that she did?
A I was talking about all her, when Eleanor said home, she meant, Loudoun County, Virginia. Even though she had been living here for 25 or 30 years. At the grave site when I went back in December, I guess it was of 1988, whenever it was. I remembered this, and I said, "Eleanor always thought of this place as home. Loudoun County was home even though she lived out in Lawrence with me for so many years". I used to remonstrate with her on this. I would say to Eleanor, "You have been here 10, 15, 20, 30, whatever year is was, this should be home." She would look at me with disdainful pity, and she would say, "Thee doesn't understand, thee was only summer people, in Virginia."
Q Well, yeah. Summer people, what did they call them in Arizona in the winter, the 'Snowbirds', is what they call the ones that come down there. Well, Tom, I have really enjoyed talking with you. I think and hope we got a little better interview then was done the last time.
FOUR TO BE HONORED AT UNIVERSITY RETIREMENT DINNER

LAWRENCE—Four retiring University of Kansas faculty members will be honored at the annual University retirement dinner, hosted by the Kansas University Endowment Association, at 6 p.m. Thursday, May 7, in the Kansas Union Ballroom.

Carlyle S. Smith, professor emeritus of anthropology, retired Jan. 1. Marguerite K. Baumgartel, associate professor of visual arts education; Thomas R. Smith, professor of geography; and William P. Smith, professor of electrical engineering, all plan to retire at the end of this semester.

Mrs. Baumgartel has taught art education and is a sculptor whose abstract figures have been displayed in several shows. She holds a bachelor’s degree in fine arts and bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees in education from KU. She is on leave in India with her husband, Howard, a KU professor of business, psychology and speech and drama. The Baumgartels have made four trips to India in recent years, including one in 1964 when they were married in Calcutta.

Carlyle S. Smith came to KU in 1947 as assistant curator of the anthropology division of the Museum of Natural History. He became associate curator and associate professor of anthropology in 1954 and curator and professor in 1960. He took leave during 1955-56 to work in the eastern Pacific and on Easter Island with a Norwegian archaeological expedition directed by Thor Heyerdahl. His specialties include archaeology of the Great Plains and Easter Island. He also is an expert on antique firearms.

Thomas R. Smith also joined the KU faculty in 1947, as an associate professor of geography. He chaired the department of geography and meteorology from 1967 to 1976, was acting associate dean of faculties for international programs during 1967-68 and directed the Center for East Asian Studies from 1962 to 1967. Smith is former chairman of the University Senate libraries committee, former president of the Friends of the KU Library and inventor of a mapcataloging system used at KU. An exhibition emphasizing the artistic value of historic maps, "A Delightful View: Pictures as Maps," on display in the Main Gallery of Spencer Research Library through Aug. 31, was organized in his honor.

William P. Smith came to KU in 1950 as an associate professor. He was acting chairman of the electrical engineering department during 1953-54 and chairman from 1955 to 1963. He became dean of the Engineering School in 1965 and served in that position for 13 years. Smith holds a patent on an electrostatic voltage power generator. His recent research has focused on the use of alternative resources, such as wood grown in "energy forests" and trash, for power generation.
Maps have always caught the eye of Kansas University professor of geography T.R. Smith. Smith, who retires this year, studies a map that's part of the Helen Foreseman Spencer Museum of Art's show "Four Artists and the Map," organized by his daughter Roberta. On Monday, KU's Kenneth R. Spencer Research Library opens "A Delightful View: Pictures as Maps." Both exhibits pay tribute to Smith's contributions to KU.

By LYNN BRETZ
J-W Staff Writer

You may be the kind of person who doesn't know what to make of a map. But T. R. Smith does. He's made a life studying them.

And to say thanks to this Kansas University professor, who's winding up 34 years teaching KU students about maps and working to build KU's map collection, two local exhibits are offering a tribute.

At 2 p.m. today an exhibit called "Four Artists and the Map" opens at KU's Helen Foreseman Spencer Museum of Art. The show, which features art by four contemporary artists, was organized by T. R. and wife Eleanor Smith's daughter Roberta, now art critic for New York's Village Voice newspaper.

ON MONDAY, KU's Kenneth R. Spencer Research Library puts on display "A Delightful View: Pictures as Maps," an exhibit of antique maps organized by Spencer Librarian Nora Quinn, a recent student in Smith's history of cartography class. "He's been just tremendous, a staunch friend," Alexandra Mason, head of the Spencer Library's Special Collections, says of the T. R. Smith map on the KU library.

"Thanks to him, the KU map library is one of the largest in the country."

Smith, longtime chairman of the university's Senate Libraries Committee, president of the Friends of the Library and compiler of a descriptive catalog of KU's rare maps, has also been an innovator. He devised a 'map cataloging system that's been adopted by universities throughout the country," Mrs. Mason says.

"I TRAVELED with my father quite a bit when I was 15, oh 19 years old," Smith said during a recent trip to the museum to watch the installation of "Four Artists."

"My father (J. Russell Smith) wrote geography textbooks for the fourth grade through college."

All but one of those books are out of print, Smith says, adding that the shelf life of elementary geography texts is a short one.

"I think I felt I got a heavy dose of geography under those circumstances, with my father. So I laid off it with my children, although it's always been there."

"Then, Berta apparently got this idea...", he said, smiling as his voice trailed off.

Spencer museum officials began talking with Smith about nine months ago, seeking his thoughts about an exhibit that showed the influence of cartography on art.

"THEN THIS curtain dropped and I didn't hear anything more, really," T. R. said.

Little did he know it, but the curtain signaled the arrival of daughter Roberta on the scene. She worked with museum officials on the show, wrote an exhibit catalog essay dedicated to her father and will be here for Sunday's opening to give a gallery talk at 2 p.m.

"Berta was always interested in what Tom was interested in," Mrs. Smith said in explanation of her daughter influence that produced the Spencer museum show.

"I think it was the Fulbright year we spent in Europe, in Holland, when she was about 9, that did it. Tom was studying Dutch maps. Berta was taken from art museum to art museum. You either get interested in it, when that happens, or hate it."

Berta got interested in art and evidently never forgot the maps.

"You know all three children have done something in this art area," Smith said, a tone of disbelief in his voice.

ONE SMITH son plays boogie woogie piano and has even played backup work on an album by singer Tracy Nelson. Another son plays the clarinet and is in New York, interested in a career in avant garde music.

"Classical?" Smith says with a grimace, "that would be too easy. Can you think of something that's less remunerative?"

It's exciting, he says, to leave teaching with this kind of send-off. Featured in the Spencer library exhibit will be many maps the Spencer library acquired thanks to what library officials call Smith's tireless efforts contacting dealers on his behalf.

"A splendid 17th century Cumberford navigation map, hand drawn and colored on vellum. And having his daughter on campus as guest curator for an exhibit that reflects three generations' intrigue with maps is very gratifying."

"You know I'm about to commence a new sort of life here, going into retirement, and this is making it kind of exciting."

(Staff photo by Suzanne Burdick)