

This is a complete transcript of the oral history interview with **Mark Lee (CN 74, T74)** for the Billy Graham Center Archives. No spoken words which were recorded are omitted. In a very few cases, the transcribers could not understand what was said, in which case [unclear] was inserted. Also, grunts and verbal hesitations such as “ah” or “um” are usually omitted. Readers of this transcript should remember that this is a transcript of spoken English, which follows a different rhythm and even rule than written English.

. . . Three dots indicate an interruption or break in the train of thought within the sentence of the speaker.

. . . . Four dots indicate what the transcriber believes to be the end of an incomplete sentence.

( ) Word in parentheses are asides made by the speaker.

[ ] Words in brackets are comments made by the transcriber.

This transcription was created by Bob Shuster and Paul Bartow in August 2013.

**Please note:** This oral history interview expresses the personal memories and opinions of the interviewee and does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Billy Graham Center Archives or Wheaton College.



**SHUSTER:** He was in San Francisco in '58 but he came at later times too.

**LEE:** Yes. And...it went very well when he was there. And everybody was cooperative. The thing was run Well, and so on. But I didn't.... You know they were so busy. I didn't add anything to it except to cooperate with it at Simpson College. And a lot of our people went over to the meetings and supported it. And the students were very prayerful for it.

**SHUSTER:** Well, let me just ask you about a couple other things that we've mentioned...that we've talked about. You mentioned that you knew Ed McCully who was one of the five...

**LEE:** Yes.

**SHUSTER:** ...missionaries that was killed in Ecuador in 1956. Can you talk about your memories of him?

**LEE:** Yes. Well, he came on...he was a freshman in...I think in '46, '47. He was a freshman. And I had been taken on as a TA at Wheaton.

**SHUSTER:** Teaching Assistant.

**LEE:** A teaching assistant while I was studying for my MA at the graduate school. And Dr. Nystrom was asked by McCully would he coach McCully because he wanted to win (he made it very clear) "I want to win the Hearst Oratorical Contest."

**SHUSTER:** This was...?

**LEE:** Which is a national program.

**SHUSTER:** That's Hearst as in William Randolph Hearst?

**LEE:** As in William Randolph Hearst. He wanted to win the William Randolph Hearst Oratorical Contest (called the Hearst Oratorical Contest). And...Nystrom you know he's a freshman. He seemed to be a little bit...a little bit too high expectant. And so Nystrom said to me, "Mark, there's your first obligation outside the classroom." I said "What is it?" He said "you coach McCully. He wants to go to the Hearst Oratorical Contest." So I did. I remember saying to him, I said "Now if I coach you, I'm just...you know I'm not that much older than you. So you may think that because a young guy is coaching you that it may be suggestion. I'm not just making suggestions. I'm giving you analysis. And you've got to tell me you will do what I tell you to do if you want to win. If you just want to take on the attitude of a learner, fine. But you don't tell me that you want to take on the attitude of a learner, you tell me you want to win!" He says "I want to win." I says "Okay, I can tell you what you can do to win. It's not necessarily what I would do if I were teaching. But I can tell you what I would do, therefore I'm not your teacher, I'm your coach. You do what the coach says." He says "I'll do it." You know, all of the sudden he became very humble. He says "I'll do it." So I told him, I gave him the ideas and told him what gestures to use. I told him how to form his paragraphs, etc, etc. And he did them exactly as I told him to do them and he won. He won the

National Hearst Oratorical Contest. But he was that kind of guy. He would win. If you could tell him that he could not reach the Indians of South America, he would reach the Indians of South America. And he did it until he was speared. [in January 1956]

**SHUSTER:** He was a strong competitor. A strong competitor.

**LEE:** A very strong competitor in the right sense of the word. He wouldn't do anything that was wrong. When he played football, he played football all out. Really all out. And the football stadium's named after him.

**SHUSTER:** At Wheaton College.

**LEE:** At Wheaton College.

**SHUSTER:** The field, yeah. Anything else about him that...?

**LEE:** No, after we finished with that...I'm trying to remember if he took my course then. But...I think he may have thought that he got everything from me that he was going to get [Shuster laughs] in that...but we always had friendly exchange. He was so pleased to have done well. And by the way, I used it later. My brother in law (my wife's brother) came to me and he wanted to win a contest that was sponsored by the banks. Which was...the home loan banks. Home Savings and Loan? Savings and Loan?

**SHUSTER:** Uh-huh.

**LEE:** They have a national oratorical contest. And I told him about McCully. And I said to Milt, my brother in law, I said "Now McCully won. I think you can win. But you have to do what I tell you to do." [Shuster laughs]. He says "I'll do it. I'll do it." And he did it, and he won it in Benjamin Franklin Hotel in Philadelphia. He called me and he says...he says "Mark, I won!" And I says "I knew you'd win." [Shuster laughs] It was very interesting. And we'd use an illustration that grew out of my ministry here in Buffalo to start his speech. And someone said "I've never heard an illustration like that before that was real." And he says "That was real, my brother-in-law told me so," [both laugh].

**SHUSTER:** Did you know Jim Elliot as well?

**LEE:** I knew Jim Elliot. Jim Elliot was a student. He was starting when I was finishing.

**SHUSTER:** He was one of your students or...?

**LEE:** Oh.

**SHUSTER:** When you were a student, he was a student.

**LEE:** When I was a student. I was finishing when he was starting.

**SHUSTER:** Uh-huh.

**LEE:** In fact, he was there a little bit before he enrolled as I recall. I'm trying to remember. But he and I were together on the same train the day that the Japanese surrendered.

**SHUSTER:** That would have been August 1945.

**LEE:** Yeah, August 1945. I got on the train. We were still at war. While I was on the train, you could hear outside the train this big whoop of people yelling and screaming. And you knew it was a happy kind. The kind you get at a football game. And then...then Elliot got on. And I said to him "What happened?" And he says "The Japanese have surrendered." And so we rode together. We got off at the same stop, five, six miles away in Lombard, Illinois. And he went to his church group that he was ministering to and I went to the church group that I was ministering to. Different churches, just coincidental that we were both on the train on the same day, going to the same stop the day that the Japanese surrendered. So it's like remembering where you were when John Kennedy was assassinated, you know.

**SHUSTER:** Indeed. Was...were people out in the streets when you got to Lombard?

**LEE:** Oh yes! People were out in the streets. It wasn't like in New York, like they had in New York, but people would go out in the streets and they were yelling. And there was...as I recall...an extra newspaper out relative to it. And in fact, I think I've kept the newspaper from the day in my files. I've got so many that I'd have to search for it. But...it was not...it was more than usual, but it was not...people weren't crowding each other. But people were yelling across the street and that kind of thing.

**SHUSTER:** How would you describe Jim Elliot's personality?

**LEE:** He was a very quiet fellow. Seemed always to be thinking within himself.

**SHUSTER:** Uh-huh.

**LEE:** He didn't seem...to me...he didn't seem to have what I would call outgoing personality.

**SHUSTER:** uh-huh.

**LEE:** Now Elizabeth Howard who he married and she became famous as Elizabeth Elliot, telling first his story and then her own. But Elizabeth Elliot was the kind of person who would be between my kind of...rolling personality and his which was almost an inverted...almost an inverted personality. But she was able to draw him out and draw on his talents which were...spiritually very significant. She...she...she published his diary, you know and didn't change it so that he revealed his manhood in what he said, his approach

**SHUSTER:** We actually have the original diary, she gave to the archives. We have them in the archives. [Collection 277]

**LEE:** Yeah. I've read some of those.

**SHUSTER:** Uh-huh. Anything else that you want to add about Jim or Elizabeth Elliot?

**LEE:** No, Jim was a wrestler. The kind of sport...the kind of sport that his personality would...wrestlers aren't flamboyant...

**SHUSTER:** Well, the ones on TV are, but...

**LEE:** Oh the ones on TV...

**SHUSTER:** But maybe in college they're not.

**LEE:** The college wrestling and TV wrestling [Shuster laughing] have nothing in common. Except slamming bodies, I suppose. But he was a wrestler and quite good at it, quite good at it yes.

**SHUSTER:** Yeah I...

**LEE:** He was all man. But...and all Christian. He was all man and all Christian. But as far as outgoing to other people, there are very few people who would attempt to break through his facade.

**SHUSTER:** I don't know if you know this, but when Billy Graham came to Wheaton, he was on the wrestling team for a semester or so. It's probably one of the very, very few things that he was not successful in...

**LEE:** Yeah.

**SHUSTER:** ...that he turned his hand to.

**LEE:** He'd be...he'd be too slight of body to be a wrestler. He really would.

**SHUSTER:** Long and thin.

**LEE:** Yes.

**SHUSTER:** Did you mention during lunch that you also knew Roger Youserian?

**LEE:** What?

**SHUSTER:** Did you mention...I think you mentioned during lunch that you also knew Roger Youserian?

**LEE:** Roger Youderian.



**SHUSTER:** Yes, I'm sorry.

**LEE:** Roger Youderian. Roger Youderian was a lot like Jim Elliot. Very much like Jim Elliot.

**SHUSTER:** How did you know him?

**LEE:** Well, he was a student when I was a professor at Northwestern.

**SHUSTER:** uh-huh.

**LEE:** And he was the kind of fellow that you felt like he was always going someplace. He knew where he was going, but nobody else did. And Elliot would sometimes give that impression. And Youderian was a committed Christian fellow. He wanted to prepare himself as much as necessary. To be a missionary. And I would remember times that you would see him going from one room to another at the college where he'd very sternly move from one to the other. And you'd think that he might have some of the repartee with the students but he didn't. These men sometimes seem to be...other worldly in a way.

**SHUSTER:** All business...

**LEE:** Yeah. All business and it's personal. In other words, it's not...it's not...community so much. It's personal. And you got that feeling that they were very personal people. I wrote the Youderian...statement that is published by Northwestern. That they're very proud of. And somebody came to me and said "we understand you're writing the...statement about Youderian that the college will communicate and remember." I said yes. And they belong to a certain printing group. And they put that in beautiful, painted material. And the last time I was at Northwestern, I walked by it and there it was on the wall. And I said to somebody, "Boy, you know..." (I was kidding of course) I said "Boy you know that's a beautiful statement." And he says "Yes, we think it's a wonderful statement." And I says "Who wrote it?" And he says "Oh, we don't know who wrote it" [Shuster laughs]. He says "All we know is that it remembers Youderian." And I said "I wrote it." He says "No!" I says "yeah." He says "How do you know?" I says...

**SHUSTER:** How do you know!? [laughs]

**LEE:** I says "I know because they made one little mistake." And then I showed them where they made one little.... It's a B turned like a D turned like a B. And there it is. And no one ever told me. But when I read it, I saw it and I said it. And they said "Well, it's no time...it's not time to do it over again before we need it for the service." And I says "Fine, use it." But no one ever found it until I told them it was there.

**SHUSTER:** So this is a memorial statement after he died...?

**LEE:** A memorial statement, yes.

**SHUSTER:** Did you happen to know Clyde Kilby when you were...?