

Interviewee: Paula Criser

Interviewer: Samuel Proctor

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UF306A

P: ...Paula Criser, Mrs. Marshall Criser, at her home here in Jacksonville
_____. This is January 7, 1997, and this is part of the University of Florida's
Oral History Program. Paula, let me start off by asking you your full name.

C: My given name was **Paula Elizabeth Porche**. My married name, of course, is
Criser.

P: You were born when?

C: June 13, 1936.

P: Where?

C: West Palm Beach, Florida.

P: So you are a native Floridian?

C: A native Floridian.

P: Kind of rare in that part of the world.

C: It apparently is, because it is my understanding when we were growing up that a
lot of people were born there, but they did not stay around very long. They went
other places for jobs, etc.

P: Where is this Porche name coming from? What is the origin?

C: It is french by way of Georgia. My father's family apparently had slaves and the
farms in South Carolina.

P: Were they _____?

C: Yes.

P: They came from France then?

C: Yes, well, several generations ago.

P: I meant that, of course, back in the colonial period. Has anybody done any history of your family?

C: My father's brother, who is now deceased, had started a family history long before he died, and I have also been doing some research and I am gradually getting some pieces together. My father has died also, but he has a brother and three sister who are still living. I communicate to one of them frequently because I am really interested in learning more about my family than I ever knew.

P: As a result of our experience today, you ought to do some oral history taping with the elder members of your families.

C: That is an excellent ideal. So far what I have are written pages rather than just things over the telephone.

P: You sit down with them like you and I are doing. It is amazing how much more information, how many more details you will be able to attain.

C: That is a good idea. I need to do it quickly, because the one with whom I am having this wonderful correspondence relationship with is now ninety-one years old.

P: Yes, do it tomorrow.

C: She is as sharp as a tack.

P: But do it before she is less sharp.

C: You are right.

P: What was your father's name?

C: **Harry**, middle name, **Thrasher**, which is a very unusual name. I have no idea where that came from.

P: That is an old Florida name. One of the oldest alumni that we have from Ocala was Thrasher, a pharmacist there. There probably was a relationship between the families. There are Thrashers that live in that area. I think there are Thrashers in the Gainesville area. Where was your father born?

C: He was born in **Ashburn**, Georgia.

P: Give me your mother's full name.

C: My mother's name was **Grace Elouise Callahan**, her maiden name was Callahan.

P: Was she related to the people for whom Callahan, Florida, was named?

C: No. Her father was a young man who came directly from Ireland at a very young age. He left home -- I think it had to deal with religious differences. He came to this country.

P: When?

C: The year, I could not tell you, but he was about sixteen years old. I will find that out for you.

P: What about your mother and father's birthdates?

C: Daddy was born in 1907 and mother was born in 1910.

P: Where were they married?

- C: They were married in **Melbourne**, Florida.
- P: What brought them to Florida?
- C: My mother's family had come from Missouri. My father's family had been in Florida for quite a while. Both of their families settled in Melbourne. My daddy and mother, I understand, got to know each other through my mother's brother, who was more my father's age. They were in school together and they played baseball together. That is how they got to know each other.
- P: What brought them specifically to the Melbourne area, were they farmers? Citrus growers?
- C: No. My father's father was in the mill business, and he worked for other people most all of his life in the mills, the wood mills. My mother's father did some carpentry work and he built a couple houses. He was not a professional builder, but he built a few houses and he was a carpenter.
- P: You had a sizeable family in Melbourne? I know that you went back to Melbourne at one point.
- C: My father moved us when I was seven years old and my brother and sister, who are twins three years older than I, they were ten. My daddy had been drafted, if you can believe it, at the age of forty.
- P: Before you get to that point of him going into World War II, I want to get the family from Melbourne to West Palm Beach.
- C: My mother and father were married in Melbourne in 1932. My brother and sister were born in 1933.
- P: In Melbourne?

C: In Melbourne. At that time in their life, my father was working with **Gulf Oil**. I am sure he was pumping gas for somebody, that is what he did. He was not a professional person, my daddy was not. He got a job in West Palm Beach, and that is how they moved to West Palm Beach, working with Gulf Oil.

P: So the company moved him, theoretically, from one place to the other?

C: Either that or my daddy just found another job.

P: The point that I want to make is, I want to ask you about the impact the depression had. Florida goes into a depression after the boom bubble burst in 1926, long before the rest of the nation. Times were very, very hard in the state. It was a poor state to start with, and then on top of that you have the depressions coming along. People were hard hit, people like your father. Very hard hit. So, do you remember any impact that the depression had on the family?

C: I was not born until 1936, but I remember living on rations. Your butter was lard -- you got these little pellets and you broke them into the lard and mixed it up. I remember doing that all the time. I thought that was great fun. It was like finger painting, I suppose today. But that is what we ate for butter. Your sugar was rationed, and you got the rationing stamps. Your coffee was rationed.

P: Now wait a minute, you are talking about World War II, and I am going back into the 1930s. Now you are too young to understand...

C: I am only born in 1936.

P: But I was wondering if your father had lost his job in Melbourne, or whatever.

C: I do not think he had. Frankly, talking about my father's family, I would like to learn more about my father and my mother than I actually know. It is amazing how little I know about my own parents, what made them tick.

P: Is your mother still living?

C: No, my mother died in 1985 when we were in Gainesville.

P: So you have lost that generation in terms of your own personal family?

C: Yes. And interestingly enough, my family really never talked about themselves. We did not know enough to ask any questions, to really get their background and about, what did you think about this, and what did you think about that? Children were raised to be seen and not heard in my family.

P: This is why you need to work with the surviving members now.

C: I really do.

P: They can fill in a lot of those gaps for you. Anyway, what is your earliest memory?

C: Of what?

P: Of anything.

C: My earliest memory.

P: You are born in 1936, the family is already living in West Palm Beach, your father goes into service very early in the War, does he not?

C: Yes. I remember things before that. I remember living in a wonderful little house in West Palm Beach on **McClellan Drive**. We had this beautiful lawn in the front that my father took care of and my mother kind of did the back yard. We used to have a maid, a black woman who was a maid. We have a big Mary and a little

Mary in our house from time to time. One of them did the laundry. I remember in the back in the back stirring that over the fire. It is incredible that I can remember something like that. I remember helping them hang up the laundry on the clothesline. We never had a washing machine or a dryer in those early days. My mother did not work outside the home. She just raised my brother and sister and I. My father worked very, very hard. I know that he pumped gas, that is what he did. He was a gasoline attendant. Then, later on, this was much later. I am jumping ahead. I remember that. I remember going to school and having a very, very close relationship in my family with all our neighbors on our street. Everyone knew everyone. If you needed something or wanted something or wanted to talk about anything everyone was always available. They were extremely passionate, thoughtful, caring people. I remember that very fondly.

P: Who were your brothers and sisters?

C: They are still living. My brother's name is **Hal**, he is named after my father, he is **Harry Thrasher** also.

P: You call him Hal?

C: His name is Hal.

P: He is a jr.?

C: He is a jr.

P: Where does he live?

C: He lives in West Palm Beach.

P: All of these are older than you?

C: They are three years older than I am. They are twins. They are three years older.

P: Hal is a twin of...?

C: My sister, whose name is **Grace Elouise**. She was named after my mother. Her married name is **Davis**. She lives in Jupiter, which is just north of West Palm Beach.

P: So two of them live in South Florida and one was named for your father and the girl was named for your mother.

C: Right.

P: And they are twins?

C: They are twins, born in Melbourne.

P: They are three years older than you, so they were born in 1933?

C: Correct. My brother and sister and I, in the early years, got along extremely well together. It was only when we got older that my sister and I had a lot of differences. We were very different. A lot of people thought my brother and I were the twins because we looked more alike. We were more in keeping with the same size. My brother was very short and my sister kept growing. Today my brother is about 6'2". I am 5'8" and my sister is about 5'6".

P: So she turned out to be the shorty of the family?

C: Yes.

P: What kind of family did you grow up in? Was it a close family?

C: It was a very close family. I was probably, in all honesty, closer to my mother. My mother was a very affectionate, giving, person. I have been thinking about my family relationships since you said you were going to do this. I realized that my father probably did not really know how to give affection very well. I do not ever remember being held by my father. I remember that my mother was very caring and was extremely encouraging to me, individually, to do things and to excel. I know my father appreciated things that my brother and sister and I did, but I think he found it very difficult to express his feelings. He was not a cold person, he was extremely affectionate with my mother, and very caring with my mother when we were growing up and of course in later years as well. I do not know whether he was under tremendous pressure from working and all the stresses of supporting a family and how difficult it may have been or it was just his personality, I do not know. But he was probably closer to my sister, of the three children. Maybe they had the same kind of personality or something? He was closer to her, and she was closer to him than she was to my mother. My brother and I were closer to my mother.

P: Growing up in those early years, now you are very young in the 1930s. Before they 1930s are over you are only four years old, and the war is looming up on the horizon. You are too young, really, to understand the consequences of all of these conflicts that were going on in the world. Can you remember the fun things that you and the family did as a child?

C: We went on picnics. I still remember this so clearly, it is one of my greatest memories, is when my father took off from work -- he worked when he had to on Sundays, not very often -- we always went to church on Sunday.

P: As a family?

C: As a family. We lived in the south end of West Palm Beach. In those days, the areas west of us were just woodlands and the areas south of us is and was **Lake Worth**. Houses were few and far between. It was just like being in the country. After church, we went to Methodist Church, we would go out afterwards and get something to eat. Usually at home we would get something to eat. But after lunch we would get in the car. Gasoline was hard to come by, I suppose. We would get in the car and drive down to an ice cream parlor in Lake Worth and I always got cherry gold. I never go anything other than cherry gold, which was probably gross. It was an ice cream cone. We all had our own little favorite ice cream cone and then we kind of ride around. I remember sometimes driving over to the town of Palm Beach. Today it is about two miles. In those days I felt like I was driving all the way down to Fort Lauderdale or Miami. It seemed so far and so foreign to what we were used to.

P: Were there other relatives in the Palm Beach area? You did not grow up with cousins or anything there?

C: No, I did not.

P: Then tell me about your father going into the service.

C: When my daddy was forty years old he was drafted into the service.

P: With three children?

C: With three children. I think it is unbelievable. For the security of raising the children and for his feeling more secure about our family, and I guess my mother and he talked about it, I never did, they decided that the best move would be for us to move back to Melbourne, for him to move the family back to Melbourne where his mother and father and some sisters and brothers lived and my mother's mother and father lived. That is where we went. We went back there.

P: Have you any remembrance of that move?

C: Yes. It was very frightening. It was kind of like a wonderful voyage or experience to begin with, it was very exciting. But suddenly we were left alone and we had to live with my mother's mother and father for a while until we had our own house. We moved in the middle of the school, which was a terrible time, I suppose, to move. I was in the second grade, my brother and sister were in the fifth grade. Shortly after we got there my mother got very sick. I think it was appendicitis that she had, so she had surgery. My father was gone. My mother's sister, after whom I was named, her name was **Pauline** -- and I was very close to her until the day she died -- really kind of looked after us. I am rambling here, but what I am trying to get to is that my brother and sister had made very good grades in school in West Palm Beach. In the second grade I was doing very well as well. Over the weekend they literally had given me the time, it was a period of three days, for me to learn how to go from printing letters, which is what I was trained to do in West Palm Beach, to literally long-hand writing.

P: Cursive.

C: Cursive. Or else I would be put back in the first grade. My brother and sister were immediately put back in the fourth grade, even though they are three years older than I and up until then had been three years ahead of me. They went through school two years ahead of me because they were put back in school. That is how far advanced Melbourne was, this tiny little community and public school system, compared to what West Palm Beach was.

P: That is kind of surprising.

C: It is. All these years it has always had very good public education up there.

P: Did you succeed in learning to write cursive?

C: I succeeded, and in the sixth grade I won this wonderful writing award because I had such beautiful handwriting. So I did succeed. I thank my aunt Pauline for that. I remember we were doing it under light and candle light at night, because you know we had some air raids going on from time to time, and sometimes this was done by the fire light or whatever. But I learned, I sure did.

P: How did you all make a living in Melbourne?

C: My family helped support us, and my mother went to work for first time in her life. My brother, sister and I were in school and in the day time when we were in school she went to work for a woman by the name of **Bancroft**. I cannot remember her first name, but she was a wonderful friend of my mothers. My mother knew her before we had ever left Melbourne. She had a little gift shop. My mother worked for her and got herself a little salary there. The family just pulled together. The family helped.

P: And your father comes home from the service.

- C: He had no job left. There was nothing left for him. There was nothing in Melbourne. His intention was to go back to West Palm Beach. You asked why my father left Melbourne. If I had a guess I would say to get away from family and to raise his family without doing it on his own.
- P: Grandparents telling him what and how to do?
- C: I think so. I do not know. I will ask that question of my **aunt May** someday and find out. He came back from the service, and there was no work anywhere. Certainly there was nothing in West Palm Beach with Gulf Oil. He actually went to work, learned how to _____ and went to work for a plumber. The man's name was **Shnelinberger**, I think it was Shnelinberger.
- P: In Melbourne?
- C: In Melbourne. My father plumbed. You can say anything that you like about anybody, but my father worked hard as the **dickens** all his life. He really did work hard. He would never have taken money as a gift from anybody -- he had to earn it. He was a very prideful person, and he just believed in the work ethic.
- P: How long did this plumbing business last in Melbourne?
- C: It lasted for about a year, year and a half, two years. He made a very piddling salary to begin with, but plumbers, even in those days, made a lot of money. So he made a good living. I think it was about two years. It embarrassed him terribly to be a plumber because he was a very clean person and it was a dirty job. It was physically dirty. It was humiliating to him. One of the saddest things I will ever recall in my life that I experienced with my father was: my brother and

sister and I walked to and from school from this house that he had rented for us. I was so proud of my father, so proud of him. One day I was walking home from school and I was maybe in the fifth grade, fourth grade. He drove this paneled green truck, bright-green truck. I saw this truck coming and I was walking home from school with my friend, and I saw my daddy. I said, hi daddy, hi daddy, and I waived. He saw me and he put his head down and he kept on driving. He never acknowledged me. He was so ashamed to be a plumber.

P: What about the move back to West Palm? What brought that about?

C: He found a job back with Gulf Oil Corporation, and he had an opportunity to buy into a filling station, a Gulf station in the town of Palm Beach, which is what he did. He had another job after the plumbing in Melbourne, which we can cover if you want to. But he had saved some money, enough to buy a house for us in West Palm Beach. He had the job lined up to buy the filling station.

P: How old were you when you moved back to West Palm?

C: I was in the seventh grade, so we were in Melbourne for a total of about five or five-and-a-half years.

P: You left the family behind, and you and your parents and your sister and brother moved back to West Palm Beach?

C: Exactly.

P: You stayed in West Palm Beach then for the remainder of your formative years?

C: I did.

P: You went to school there.

C: I did.

P: What was your junior high school?

C: I went to **Northboro**, which is on the north end of West Palm Beach. When we moved back to West Palm, whether than the south end of town we lived in the north end.

P: Then you went to senior high.

C: I went to **Palm Beach High School**. Marshall had gone there also but a few years before I.

P: What year did you graduate?

C: I graduated in 1954.

P: What kind of career did you have in high school?

C: I was a good student. I got along well with all of my subjects, I made mostly As and Bs. The only thing I had problems with was math. I hated math. I wish I had a calculator in those days. I did not like math. I would as a teacher, why is this so? You know when you get into algebra and whatever. They would say, just because it is so, just memorize it. I needed to know the reasons and why. But I was a good student.

P: What about extracurriculars? Were you involved in athletics in high school?

C: No, I was not. I was involved in music. I was in the choir in the church. I played in the high school band, and I played in the high school orchestra. I was never involved in athletics.

P: What instruments did you play in the band?

C: When I was in junior high school I started out with reed instruments, the clarinet and the oboe. By the time I was in high school, I had had to have braces on my teeth to correct a missing tooth. I had to convert from a reed instrument to a brass instrument. The only brass instrument that was available for my family to rent -- we did not own our instruments -- was a bass trombone, so that is what I played.

P: I heard you became a spectacular trombone player.

C: I was second-chair trombonist for a little bit, but I was not that good. I was good enough. I knew how to march straight. I was a good marcher in the band. But I had a wonderful time. I had a lot of good friends in the band.

P: You were in the Spanish club?

C: I was in the Spanish club.

P: Did you learn Spanish?

C: I did. ¿Como esta usted? Muy bien gracias. We had no Spanish people in school, so that was hard to really learn.

P: The Hispanics had not yet _____ in South Florida?

C: They had not moved in.

P: So you had no real way to practice your Spanish?

C: No, we did not.

P: Did you become an expert?

C: No, I did not.

P: What about the drama club? You starred in that too.

C: That was one of my favorites. We had a lady by the name of **Ms. Wiley**, who was a maiden lady. She was a wiry tough person, but boy was she talented. She was wonderfully talented. She just was a wonderful teacher. She was not a physically attractive person, but she could portray the most beautiful woman in teaching us how to become a particular on stage. You could not believe, she just totally transformed. That is what acting is, of course. She was funny, she was humorous. She was very, very strict. She took her craft very very seriously and intended for us to do so also. One of my favorite things to do in drama, however, I loved the acting and I did do some plays, I loved to do the stage sets. Those were fun to do.

P: You were also a pianist.

C: I started taking piano when I was eight years old in Melbourne. I had played ever since. I took lessons from time to time all through my life.

P: Are you good?

C: Not as good as I could be, not as good as I should be, but better than I ought.

P: That is a beautiful way of getting around that question.

C: Do you have a piano?

P: Not always. When I was young we did not have a piano. I used to go to the church and practice. I would go next door to practice the piano. My parents saw fit to buy me a very small piano, which I may be wrong about this name, but was there a band leader by the name of **Eddie Duchin**?

P: Of course.

C: Did he play the piano?

P: Yes.

C: I believe that I may have had one of his little practice pianos. It was a short keyboard. It was an upright, of course, and that was my first piano. When I got older we had a slightly larger one, regular size.

P: Duchin was a famous society band leader.

C: I do not know how my family could have come across that though. It was in West Palm Beach when I got it, so maybe that is how they got it.

P: Maybe you had _____ and they shipped it across the bridge to the _____ of the city.

C: It was not a pretty thing, so I mean it was really a practice piano.

P: As a young girl growing up in West Palm Beach, was there a relationship with people in Palm Beach? Did you have any friends, anybody over there? Any children that you knew?

C: In high school, not as a young person, you had young kids coming from Palm Beach to go to the high school. When I was in junior high, those were all neighborhood schools, so obviously no one _____, but in senior high there were. I had some good friends from over there. They were not my best friends because they were not in my neighborhood and you generally were friends with people who were close by you, living next to you. I was friends with people in clubs and in the band etc. who lived over there.

P: But you did not visit too often or get involved in the activities over there?

C: Interestingly enough, no.

P: It was two different worlds, in other words.

C: Absolutely two different worlds, it really was.

P: Talk about your modeling activities.

C: Well, I started that when I was in high school, I was a junior in high school. I took my first modeling course.

P: So this is not something that somebody discovered you sitting in the drug store and saying I want that beautiful woman?

C: You know why I took modeling? I took modeling because, in the first place, I earned my own money to take the course. I started working when I was old enough to get a job.

P: Doing what?

C: I was an elevator operator at Burdines. I worked there on Saturdays. When I got older, I would work there sometimes in the afternoon, but usually on Saturdays. I always worked all summer. In those days you actually operated the elevator -- you had to make it go, you did not just push a button. I got in a little trouble with that a couple times. In high school I was on the school board. I worked in the teen department and helped sell clothes and so on and so forth. I got kind of interested in wearing clothes and how you looked. I wanted to be able to handle myself physically better. I wanted to walk better, I wanted to sit more correctly. I will sit now the way I should be sitting. I just became aware of the fact that I could be different. I was very thin and gangly. I suppose I had a figure, maybe a twiggy figure, but I wanted to improve myself. So I did it for self-assurance and

self-confidence. I had no idea of going into modeling to actually model. So I took my course.

P: In West Palm?

C: In West Palm Beach.

P: As part of the school system, or as an extra?

C: No. It was an actual modeling agency that had started there several years before. It had a very good reputation. By then there were a couple down there. The woman from whom I took modeling was **Vera Bruce**. They taught you how to walk and how to sit and how to wear clothes and how to do a little makeup and how to do your hair -- a woman's carriage, if you will. So I started out as a junior in high school. And from there, she had people coming down from New York and Chicago to do photographic modeling with her models. I did some of that. I did a lot of work on **Worth Avenue** as a runway model. The Everglades Club had their fashion shows once a week at the club on Wednesdays, I think it was. I modeled for different shops there. I modeled some in the shops themselves. I did photographic modeling, which was a definite stepping board off of that modeling experience.

P: Now we are talking about the 1950s, are we not?

C: Yes.

P: Was that pay good? I hear models make millions of dollars today.

C: It was not good like that, but it was better than working at Burdines. I think the highest I was ever paid, ever, was about \$200 an hour. That was rare. I started

out getting like \$25 an hour for photographic shootings, but you could spend five hours. So you had a pretty good salary when you went home, you went by the hour rather than the job. The most I ever earned was \$200 an hour, but that was very rare.

P: Now you did some photographic work for big magazines, did you not, with some big agencies like the cigarette agencies?

C: I did. I had a bad experience, financially had a bad experience. I modeled for Winston Cigarettes and **L&M Cigarettes**, and my picture was on Life Magazine and on the back of these tv guide things that they do, but mostly Life Magazines. For all of those shoots my salary was in the thousands of dollars over a period of time. The short of it is none of the models ever got paid. I was no longer with this particular person I mentioned before, Vera Bruce, I was with somebody else. The cigarette company representatives claimed that they paid the agency. The agency claimed they never got the money. Well we never got a cent. We got a lot of pictures in the papers, which was wonderful.

P: But you would not pay the rent.

C: I did not have to. I was not paying the rent. But it was about that time that Marshall and I became engaged. I was just bent on going to New York by gollie and getting my money. He thought I ought to do the same thing until he realized how much it was going to cost to fly to New York and how much it was going to cost to do this, that and the other. He is a very smart person. He said, if the principal of the whole thing that I know that you are after, you do not really need that money. No, I did not need that money, and it was the principal of the thing --

I worked and I needed to get paid. But he said, by the time we go through the courts and all that stuff we are going to spend more money trying to collect it than you will ever realize. So I never had the money, but I had my pictures.

P: And then you become an anti-cigarette person as a result.

C: I did not know how to hold a cigarette much less smoke them when I did those ads. It was so funny. I never had them in my mouth -- always in my right hand between my index and my third finger as if I had just had this wonderful puff.

P: What other kinds of ads did you do besides the cigarette ads?

C: I did Coca-Cola. Again, Marshall and I were married at this time. I was asked to do an ad for Imperial Whiskey. These guys hold _____. But Marshall and I were married. I never questioned whether or not I should do the cigarette advertising. It did not bother me one way or the other. But to advertise for a liquor company kind of raised my doubts. I called him and said, do you mind if I accept this job? He said, that is fine, just make sure you get paid. I was. I was paid very well for that.

P: Marshall is a practical man.

C: I did **Ship and Sure Blouses**. I did a couple of designer gowns on television from when they were doing some shows down there. I did some stuff like that. I modeled, as I said, for some of the different shops. In Palm Beach, [I did] **Lilly Reubins** and **Sax Fifth Avenue**.

P: You were a classy model.

C: I did well. I did well. It was good for my self confidence. It was really good for my self confidence to be able to do that.

P: How did your family accept this? No problems, no objections?

C: I think they were very pleased by it. My mother and father were very excited about it, the fact that I was doing well. As I mentioned before, my father had his filling station, which had grown in size considerably, and it was really close by to Worth Avenue. I saw him frequently. He was very proud. When a parent sees a child's picture in the paper or in a magazine or something, and it is a pleasing picture to look at, they cannot help but be proud or pleased to see it.

P: Your family is prospering now, is it not? You say your father's operation has grown, and so things are no longer as tight as they had been in earlier years.

C: Right.

P: You continue to live in the same neighborhood?

C: We lived in the same neighborhood, but by then my daddy had bought a different house, a larger house, but in the same area of the north end of West Palm Beach.

P: You are an attractive woman. Is this common in your family? Were your parents good looking people? Your brother? Your sister?

C: Very good looking. My father and mother were very good looking people, and my brother and sister are very good looking.

P: So you kind of inherited all the same genes in everybody?

C: We had good genes, there is no doubt about it.

P: What did your brother and sister do? What business was your brother in?

C: My brother was in landscaping, and was until he actually retired from that. Now he works in a shop in West Palm Beach just to keep his fingers in something. He is not a professional person.

P: And your sister?

C: My sister has worked at different things. She has been in sales at shops and stuff like that. She is not a professional.

P: Neither one are professionals?

C: None of us are professionals.

P: As I understand, you were the first one to go to college?

C: No, my brother and sister both had gone to college, but they did not finish either.

That is the one area of my life -- I am not ashamed of it, and I do not sit here and think, oh, I wish I had finished. But I kind of wished that I had persevered and gone on and finished college. I do not lose any sleep over it. I am ashamed to say that, because I am so proud of my own children for having gotten through and gone to college and finished. When my oldest daughter graduated from college I felt like I had. To me it was just a tremendous accomplishment. It is not unique in today's society; it is expected that the women as well as the men go to college and they finish. When I was in high school, if I can go back here a little bit... My mother and father never went to college. When my father graduated from high school he was a very good baseball player -- he had a scholarship to play baseball in college in Georgia somewhere. It could have been Georgia Tech, but I am not going to promise that. His father said to him, you have twelve years of education, which is more than I had, you need to get out and go to work. My

father never went to school. My father was a very smart man. He learned to do things, but he was self-taught. My mother never went to school. It was expected that you go out and you get a job. That was not my mindset, however. My mother and father wanted us three to go to college. They provided the education, they were going to give us the opportunity, financially, to go. We were all good students in high school. I no more wanted to go to college, Dr. Proctor, than fly to the moon. I wanted to find a husband that I loved, a man that I loved, which I did not at the time when I was in high school, and I wanted to raise a family. That was my life's calling. Going to college...

P: Was getting in the way.

C: Kind of getting in the way, if you will. I went to college to please my parents. I did not go with the intention of only going for a couple years. I thought, well, I will go for four years and it will please mother and daddy and it will not be bad for me. I knew that I could learn some things, but I never had any intention. [I] never had any dream, aspiration or anything of ever being a professional person. Now that is a crying shame when you have the opportunity like I did, and had the mental ability to do it.

P: Where did your two siblings go to school?

C: My brother went to junior college, as did my sister, in West Palm Beach. They both went to junior college.

P: Why did you go to the University of Florida?

C: I did not know. I had some girlfriends who were going up there who were very serious about going to school and doing something with their education. That

may have had some impression on me. I do not know. I was ready to leave home quicker than my brother and sister were. My brother and sister never applied anywhere but to junior college. I never applied to junior college. I went _____.

P: When did you enter the University? What date?

C: In 1954 when I graduated from school.

P: Was that your first time in Gainesville?

C: We had gone there to visit one time before, and that is not why I was there either.

I liked Gainesville. It is very strange to be a woman in this century and to say that was not really my big thing. We had been there one time. When I went to college my mother and father literally took me and helped me unpack my clothes.

I was scared to death. Gainesville is much smaller than West Palm Beach, but to me it was a big city. All these students and these big tall buildings and all scared me to death.

P: Where did you live?

C: I lived in the women's dorms. The three dorms.

P: **Mallory?**

C: Mallory, that is where I was. **Yulee and Reid**, right? Back then I was in Mallory.

I always was in the dorm, I never went to an apartment -- that was unheard of in those days.

P: How about a sorority?

C: I rushed sororities and I think this is the thing that is more disappointing to me than even the education. I am not ashamed of it, but I am disappointed in it. When I was in high school, we had very active sororities and fraternities. I rushed in high school and I was in one of the "better" sororities. It irritated me and made me -- I will not say sad -- but it angered me that there were so many young women who wanted to be in the sorority and could get in. They did not get in a sorority or they did not get their choice. I just thought that was really cruel. I saw so many girls -- I did not think about the boys' feelings at all about fraternities -- but the girls, I saw so many people hurt. I had some very good friends who were not in sororities. I just had a lot of different friends. When I went to college, I happily and gladly rushed and I was, if you will, pretty well sought after. I was invited to join and become involved in some of the better sororities. I am not going to mention who they were, I do not think that is appropriate. I had bids, as you will call them and they are still called bids now, from three sororities. I was very very honest. I said, I love being in your house, I love the relationship that you all have with one another, but I want to be very upfront with you, I am not going to pledge anything. I really appreciate what you are doing, etc., but I have so many friends who are not in sororities and I was in one in high school and maybe it ruined me for the whole situation. I think I lost out. It was a totally different situation there than it was in high school, I assume.

P: So you did not go?

C: I did not pledge, I did not pledge. I told the girls who were going after me. I said, you do not really want to waste a bid on me because I am not going to accept

one. I did not wait to see what I got and then say, oh look what I got, I am going to turn it down anyway. I just did not feel that way.

P: So much of the social life of the University at that time, no longer, 1950s, involved the fraternities and sororities.

C: It did.

P: Did you find yourself left out for the next _____?

C: No, because I still had friends. See, there were girls from West Palm Beach that I knew before. There were girls my age and girls who were older who were in Gainesville in some sororities. They were still my friends and I was still included with them. I was just not a part of the sorority life. We had a very good relationship there in Mallory. That was almost like a sorority itself. But I look back on it and that is the one thing I wish I had not turned down.

P: Were you able to meet the boys? What about your social life?

C: Yes. I had a very good way to meet the boys. You are a minority on campus in those days, the girls were still, right? The guys were there.

P: Was Marshall there already?

C: He is there and gone. He is eight years older than I am.

P: _____.

C: When I was in college he was already practicing law. When I was in junior high school he was practicing law.

P: You are attracted to older men, are you not?

C: Yes, I probably am. But from the time I as a sophomore in high school, up to the point when I did date, I did not start dating until I was in the ninth grade. We went to company parties with parents before the ninth grade.

[end side A, tape A]

C: ...by the time I was at the end of the tenth grade, I realized that I have a brother who is two years older than I am in school, and his friends were coming home and I was becoming aware that there was somebody out there other than my same-aged friends and they were interesting to me. I did not think of myself as being more sophisticated than the people of my same age, but I suppose I tried to think I was.

P: Had your reputation, your noteriety as a model, followed you to Gainesville?

C: I do not know that it did. I think probably the sororities knew it when they were rushing because people from your hometown send up stuff that they have seen in the paper and stuff about you.

P: You were a celeberty in a way.

C: I did not go up there and taught it or brag about it.

P: But they knew about it. Did that modeling continue after you arrived on campus?

C: I did some photographic modeling a couple of times for some would-be photographer up there. I did not do much there. I really did most of my modeling back in West Palm Beach and Palm Beach.

P: Talk about your academic life on the campus. You were a good student in high school.

C: I was a good student in high school, and I started out pretty well in Gainesville.

P: You took the C courses.

C: I took the C courses and I did pretty well there. I did not make all my As and all my Bs. I got a lot of Cs. I had a very undistinguished course of study there.

P: Were there any special areas that were attractive to you?

C: The music program. I really loved the music program. I was in the Women's Glee Club, which is not your formal education, but it is part of your life. I was in that, and I really enjoyed that. I loved English, any English courses or reading courses, etc., but those were my favorite.

P: Do not tell me you took **Bob Bryan** way back in those days.

C: No, no. I hate to even have this on this tape, so interested was I in all of my courses, I do not even remember my professors, and I never missed a class. My head was not there. My heart was not there.

P: Were you involved in athletics in any way?

C: You had to be. You had to have some stuff in phys. ed. as a required course. I did basketball and I jammed my index finger. I did volleyball and I broke the vessels in my arm. I did archery and I stripped my whole left arm. But I mean I hit the target. But I was accident prone. It was just terrible. I took golf, and I hit the turf more than I did the golf ball. I played a little bit of tennis. I only did what was required of me. It was not until Marshall and I were about to be married that I decided, you know, I think I might like to play golf. I started taking golf lessons after we were married, and I can play pretty good golf. But I was not an athletic girl.

P: Did you have to work on campus?

C: I accompanied music students in the music department. I was one of the piano music voice students. I did that a little bit, and that is all I did. It gave me a little bit of pen money. My mother and father were not overly generous, but they provided everything that I needed. I did not have to work. I worked all summer long and saved all my money. When I went to school for college each year, and when I went to school, I had purchased -- well actually by the time I was a sophomore in high school -- I bought all of my clothes. I paid for all of my clothes because I knew that it would help my family to do that.

P: Did you have a car?

C: No, I did not. I borrowed my father's old car. He had two cars. I borrowed his old car sometimes. He would let me have it.

P: So when you went back home for the holidays you went by bus or a friend?

C: I went by bus or took a ride with a friend. That is actually the way I did it, with a friend.

P: Why did you leave after two years? You said your heart was not in it.

C: It really was not. By that time my father had experienced some really bad ill health problems. I had gotten sick myself. I had mononucleosis and I was really sick. I came home and I decided I did not want to go back and I was going to get a job, which I did, I got a job at the telephone company. I lived at home.

P: You enjoyed the two years in Gainesville?

C: I enjoyed the two years in Gainesville. I think it was a very good growing up experience, if you will. I made some very good friends. I maintained some friends that I had from high school. I still keep in touch with some of these

people. It was a good experience for me, it really was. I wish I had been more mentally mature to go to school. As "sophisticated" as I might have appeared because of my modeling experiences and training etc., I was not. I was a very naive person.

P: You said you came there and you were very afraid of things, a different environment and so on.

C: Suddenly I was without my family. I had never been apart from my family. I had never been anywhere when I was not with a member of my family. I had never gone to visit a friend out of town or anything. So when you have this close-knit family surrounding you and supporting you, I guess you come to rely on it. You get irritated, maybe, when you are surrounded by your family all the time, but on the other hand I guess I had become reliable.

P: Was this a lonely period then for you?

C: Yes. Talking about did I feel excluded from the sororities because I was not in a sorority. The time that was the lonliest for me was usually on Sundays. I would always go to church. I went to the Methodist Church there on campus, or right off campus. I was involved in that. But Sunday afternoons were the times when a lot of the sororities would be gathering with their memebbers in the houses and the people in the dorms would maybe not be there or maybe they went home and they were not back yet. That would always be a very lonely time for me. In those years, I did not know how to happily be by myself. I have learned how to since then. Some people need to have people around them, and I apparently did.

P: Were you dating seriously in Gainesville?

C: No. I dated a lot of different guys, but no one seriously. Not there. There were some young men that I knew who were not in school there who had gone away to school that I saw when I went back to West Palm Beach that I liked pretty well. I was not in love with anybody, but you know, I enjoyed being with them. I dated frequently.

P: So you moved back to West Palm Beach in 1956?

C: 1956.

P: In June of 1956 the University ends it's spring program and then you moved back home.

C: I got a job.

P: Doing what?

C: I worked for Southern Bell Telephone. I was a service rep in the company. In those days you actually met the public, you were not over a speaker phone.

P: Service rep means what?

C: I represented the service of the company. [laughter]

P: Doing what?

C: You did bookkeeping for a particular client. You had a series of clients who were under your desk. You took care of their billing and when thier bills came in you marked them and so on and so forth. Someone came in to the office and they needed to make an appointment to have a phone installed, to have a phone fixed or to find out what was wrong with their account, we would actually meet with them personally.

P: So you were not on the telephone saying, number please.

C: No.

P: You have the wrong number.

C: You were actually right there.

P: In the front office.

C: There was a training period that I really enjoyed.

P: So you are making a regular living now?

C: A reasonable salary.

P: You were still living at home.

C: I am living at home.

P: You continued working in that operation for how long?

C: I continued working in that until Marshall and I got married.

P: All right. Bring him on the scene now.

C: Let's do. It is getting lonely without him.

P: This old man suddenly appears on the horizon one day.

C: He was not old, he was very very attractive and very...

P: Where did you all meet?

C: You mean the first time?

P: The very first time.

C: I was a sophomore a high school. He was a lawyer in his law firm in Palm Beach. He was dating a friend of my sister's, who was three years older than I am. This girl, her name was **Pat, Patricia Peterson**. Pat's parents and my parents were very close friends and it was over Halloween weekend or

something. We had gone over there. We were close neighbors, about three blocks away. We had gone over there to visit. I had just gotten out of the hospital from having an accident to my right leg. I am back tracking, but you have to know this whole story. We had had a band party out at the country club in West Palm Beach, and the parents were all inside. My mother was home very very sick with the flu, so my mother and father did not go. I had gone with friends. We had had our dinner and we were fooling around on the golf course playing tag. Here we were sophomores in high school, kind of silly, but we were having fun. I was running, running, running and I tripped and fell. This guy who was chasing after me fell right on top of me. Thank goodness he was not heavy, he was a very small clarinetist. He was not a big guy. The fibula on my right leg popped out of my leg. Anyway, I had a terrible accident.

P: It is amazing you have survived this long.

C: I had surgery. I had gotten out of the surgery, but I was still kind of in a cast in my leg, so I was being helped around. I was sitting on this couch with my leg propped up. Pat had dressed up for this Halloween party that Marshall had asked her to go to. She was to kill for. She was just so beautiful figure. She had a gorgeous voice. She was like Marilyn Monroe would be to the women in her area. Girls would think, oh, if I could be like that. She was so perfect. [She was] dressed up in this little cute cigarette girl outfit -- just precious.

P: Marshall goes after the best.

C: He does. Here he comes in the door. I was so anxious to see her date. He must be really something. He comes in the door and his secretaries in his office,

here is this young good looking eligible bachelor, they decided they were going to help him dress for this party. So one of them brought a blonde wig and somebody else had brought something else. He was dressed as this woman. I though, oh! I cannot believe she is going out with this guy who is dressed like this. So that was the first time I saw him. I was not impressed. I was not impressed. Of course I could not tell what he looked like either with all the blonde curls. So that was the first time.

P: So in other words, the first time you saw him [he was dressed as] a cross-dresser.

C: It was not a winner.

P: Do not take that out of the interview.

C: You said that I did not. The second time I saw him I was in late freshman year, I think it was late freshman year of college, now see, he was practicing in Palm Beach, my father's station was in Palm Beach, and that is where he did his service station business, Marshall did. So he knew my dad. He saw me in Gainesville at his fraternity house, Sigma Nu. I was dating some fellow there and he saw me that weekend. He knew who I was and we would kind of say hello or something, but that was the extent of that. So that was the second time I saw him. He looked pretty good then.

P: He had taken off the wig?

C: He had taken off his wig. He looked quite good, but I mean, I was not...

P: He was wearing men's clothes.

C: He was dressed appropriately to the occasion.

P: He was dating someone else.

C: He was up there dating someone else, yes, or had taken a date. I do not even know who he was with, but I remember seeing him. He told my father that he had seen me.

P: Now let us get to number three. You are back in West Palm Beach before you all meet again?

C: Yes.

P: How did that all happen?

C: One of the fellows that I dated when I was college was in medical school in Miami. He was back home in West Palm Beach by this time practicing. He was an ophthalmologist. His name was **Reggie Stanbaugh**, very nice young man. I have known him since I was a little kid. He was Marshall's age. I had known him for so many years. He had grown up in West Palm Beach, as had I. His parents were my parent's friends. Reggie and I dated. We had a really good time together. We went dancing, we went to the movies, we did things like that, picnics and whatever. I really enjoyed being with him, but I was not in love with him, and he was not in love with me, but we had a good time together. And Marshall, well, I will speak for myself, I was not in love with him. Maybe he was in love with me, put that in there. He and Marshall knew each other very well. Marshall was dating this other girl who was a real great looking girl. Her name was **Dee Simmons**, I think. I know her name was Dee. We double dated a lot.

So that is how I really go to know Marshall, in these double dates that we had. One day he called me at work, Marshall did, on a Monday, and said, I have a friend who is coming into town next weekend for the junior Bar party. He is from Tampa. He is a lawyer there, good friend of mine, knew him in college. I really would like you to have a date with him, a blind date. I said to Marshall, I do not do blind dates, I do not like blind dates. I just do not like to do them. He said, well we would be together, the four of us would be together. I said, well, is he is a real good friend and do you really like him and is he a nice guy? He said, yes, he is. He is very nice. I said, well, okay, as long as we are double dating that is okay. That was on Monday. Tuesday Reggie called me and asked me out for this killer date for the very same night. I mean it was going to be a wonderful party and all. I did not drink in those days, so it was not cocktail parites. It was just fun things that young people did. I came so close to cancelling Marshall with his blind date friend. So close. I thought, no, I told him I would do it and I will. So I declined Reggie's invitation. Marshall and I went out Saturday night and my date was **Rex Farrier**, you know Rex. Good looking. We had a wonderful time. Marshall will tell the story that he ended up with two dates. He ended up with two girls because the third guy got sick or something so he ended up with two girls and there was Rex. You know, Marshall always has to do one better. I believe, this is my theory -- I will finish the story. Rex and I did the date Saturday night and he went back to Tampa Sunday. Monday Marshall called me out to go on a date by myself. My theory is, and you can prove this in your little records here. I believe that my husband-to-be at the time was determining if I would go out with

someone else other than Reggie his very good friend. I did so by going out with the blind date. Right? Do you agree? Dr. Proctor, say something.

P: I do agree, but...

C: I think that is exactly what he was doing. He was just making sure. It is not that he could not have taken a no answer, because I am sure he has gotten other no answers before from girls when he invited them out. But he just did not want to interfere with his good friend Reggie, which I thought was very admirable. So Marshall and I started dating, and getting to know each other by ourselves. We did not date with Reggie anymore.

P: Rex Farrier fell by the wayside.

C: Rex was just a blind date. That was, as they call it, a one-night stand, but that is not what that means. It was just one evening. I fell in love with him.

P: You hoped that it was also happening with him.

C: I knew it was. We women know these things. I perhaps knew it before he did. I knew he was falling in love with me before he knew it.

P: I understand you asked him to get married. I would like that story on tape.

C: Did he tell you that?

P: I am not telling you anywhere where I get my information.

C: It is true. We had started dating that summer, in 1956, whatever it was. Had to be 1956. We were married in 1957. It was in September when we had gone to a party. I think we had gone to the movie and to dinner or something, but we had gone home. Somebody who Marshall knew, who was his age was getting married or had gotten married or something and he was talking about it. We were driving

along and I said, well, when? He looked at me and said, when what? I said, well, when are we going to get married? His face just fell open and he said, do you want to? I said, you know I want to, so when are you going to ask me. He said, well, I am going to ask you right now. That was it.

P: You were driving?

C: Well, I think we were driving. It seems like we were driving. Anyway, that is how it happened. I have known to be impulsive, and I certainly was impulsive there.

P: Very forward woman.

C: More impulsive than forward. You know that could have killed the relationship right there, could it not have?

P: I do not know.

C: There for the grace of God.

P: It all happened right.

C: It did happen right. It was meant to be.

P: Now was he meeting all the criteria he had set up in your mind for what you wanted in a husband? He was good looking.

C: That was not a criteria, being good looking was not a criteria. I had thought a long time about, because as I said earlier my main aspiration was to find the right man, be married to him, be his wife and have his children, and that was it. That was my goal in life. My criteria had to do with integrity, even when I was young. I knew integrity was really up at the top of the list. He had to be interesting, if at all possible. I dated some unattractive young guys. I suppose the first thing you look at is not always their looks, sometimes you look at a person's looks.

Marshall was extremely good looking, so that helped. That was not my main criteria. His height was not. I dated a boy one time who was two inches shorter than I was and I adored him. I just thought he was wonderful.

P: Did he have a sense of humor?

C: He was very serious. Marshall was very serious, and I did not see a sense of humor in him much at all. I was probably hilarious and funny and very giggly and very lacking in any seriousness in my life. I think we were a pretty good balance. He was very serious, and he did not crack jokes and he did not play jokes on people and he did not laugh a lot, frankly. He was not somber, but he was very serious, a very serious-minded person, which was very attractive to me.

P: He was already established as far as law was concerned, he was making a good living?

C: Yes. I wanted someone who had tremendously impeccable moral character, which Marshall had and has. He had tremendous integrity in his practice and in his personal life, and that was very important to me. It all boiled down to a very simple question, do I want to spend the rest of my life with this person and do I want him to be the father of my children. His answer was totally yes. I asked that question about a lot of guys that I dated. I had a few other invitations for marriage, you know, before Marshall came along, never after.

P: What was your marriage day?

C: April 27, 1957.

P: You got it right. So you have been married a long time.

C: This year in April will be forty years. Two and two make four.

P: That is almost than you are.

C: Not quite.

P: What about Marshall's family?

C: He is an only child and his mother and father lived in West Palm Beach at the time. They had come down as you know from talking to him, when he was just a youngster from New Jersey. He was raised in West Palm Beach, as was I, from time he was about eleven years old. But they lived on the south end of West Palm Beach. Still he was older, but I would have known him had we been in the same neighborhood probably. But he was in the south end of West Palm Beach, which was a long way from where we were. He went to a different junior high school and went to the same high school as I did, but in a different era.

P: You got along well with his family?

C: I did. His mother and father were very lovely people, very nice people, very caring people, one for another. I loved the relationship they had with their son. I mentioned earlier that in my generation, in my own family, my brother and sister and I were raised to seen and not heard at the table. If we had an opinion, it seems cruel, but it did not seem so at the time, if you had an opinion, you had better keep it to yourself.irst time?

P: The very first time.

C: I was a sophomore a high s