

AL 98

Interviewee: Lorraine Coles Silvia

Interviewer: Connie Llewellyn

Date: March 8, 1988

L: This is Connie Llewellyn. I am interviewing Lorraine Coles Sivia at her home in Gainesville, Florida. The date is March 8, 1988, and the interview is on the subject of the Junior Welfare League of Gainesville. Good afternoon, Lorraine.

S: Good afternoon, Connie.

L: I would like to start today by getting some biographical information from you. Where were you born?

S: I was born in Gainesville, Florida. My mother was also born in Gainesville, Florida.

L: Who was your mother?

S: She was Gladys Beville, and they had a plantation out in the west part of town.

L: And where more specifically was that located?

S: Suburban Heights.

L: She was born in Gainesville, also?

S: She was born in Gainesville, also.

L: And her maiden name was?

S: Gladys Fairfax Beville. She was Gladys Fairfax Beville before she married. My father was Harold Coles.

L: Was he from Gainesville, also?

S: No, he was from Illinois. He had asthma, so the family moved down to Florida. It was probably around 1908 when they moved.

L: But your mother's family was from here?

S: Right.

L: What about your mother's father? Was he born in Gainesville?

- S: Yes, he was from Gainesville. And her mother came from Georgia.
- L: What year were you born, Lorraine?
- S: I was born in 1931.
- L: Tell me, in growing up, what is the earliest thing you can remember?
- S: The earliest thing I can remember--let me think. Probably playing games outside with friends is the earliest thing I can remember. We used to do a lot of outside things after dinner, in the early evening.
- L: About how old would you estimate you were at that time?
- S: I was probably about five or six. I remember playing house, playing doll, playing jacks--all the fun things that little girls play.
- L: You have a good memory. Five or six, that is good. Where did you go to school?
- S: I started out at Gainesville High School. At that time all grades--one through twelve--were there. Then they built J. J. Finley [Elementary School], so I switched to J. J. Finley. That was probably about third grade. I went there for third and fourth grades. Then we moved over to the east side near Kirby Smith, and I attended elementary school there for fifth and sixth grades. Then I went back to Gainesville High School, which was then seventh through twelfth. So I spent six years there.
- L: I see. Now, before you moved over close to Kirby Smith, was your family still living on the plantation?
- S: No, they were not living there. They had sold it by then. We lived near University Avenue, but this had been quite a few years after that.
- L: So the plantation was not a working plantation by your family?
- S: No, not a bit.
- L: I am interested in what some of the things were that were grown on the plantation when it was in your family.
- S: When it was in my mother's family?
- L: Yes.

S: Her parents both died at a very early age. That is why it was sold. From what I can remember her telling me, they did grow sugar cane, corn, and cotton at that time. But they had a lot of farm animals. They raised their own beef and pork and all that. That was primarily what they raised.

L: Interesting. It was a very self-sufficient way of life.

S: It really was.

L: What did you do when you graduated from GHS?

S: I went to Florida State University for one year, and then I transferred back to the University of Florida.

L: What year was it when you transferred back to Florida?

S: I went to Tallahassee for the 1949-1950 academic year, and then in the fall of 1950 I transferred to the University of Florida in Gainesville. I was there from 1950 till 1953. I got a degree in elementary education, and then I taught. Then I got married; I married Fred Sivia. We were here for one year, and I taught second grade at Sidney Lanier. Then he was called in to the air force reserve, so we took a two-year tour with Uncle Sam and went to Illinois for a short time. Then we spent about two years in England before we returned to Gainesville. We had one child, a daughter, that was born in England.

L: I see. I bet that was exciting.

S: Oh, very exciting. It really was. It was so interesting to be a part of a culture like that. At that time, there was no base housing, so we had to live just like the English people did. That meant we had the same type of housing and buying your food at the grocery stores. It was very rewarding.

L: Were you in a cold-water flat?

S: Well, part of the time we were in a squire's home that had been made over into apartments. I use the word loosely, because we had no refrigerator; the refrigerator was kind of like a bird cage outside--if it was too cold, everything froze. But we were only there about two months, and then our whole squadron was moved to an area that was near Canterbury. So we spent most of our time near there, and we did have a fairly nice flat there--three small bedrooms, a living room, dining room, and a kitchen. We thoroughly enjoyed that part, and we loved the people in the area around there. That was a most enjoyable experience.

L: I am sure. I would like to go back just for a minute to the time that you spent in college. I wanted to ask you if you pledged a sorority.

S: Yes, I did. At Tallahassee I pledged Chi Omega.

L: And then when you transferred to Florida, did you affiliate here?

S: Yes, I did.

L: And that, you said, was in 1950?

S: Right.

L: That was soon after Florida had become co-educational.

S: Yes, it was.

L: Do you find it quite a change from Tallahassee? Of course, I guess Florida State was co-educational when you went.

S: Yes, it was, but they were the opposite--they had lots of girls there and very few boys. When I transferred back here, Gainesville had lots of boys and very few girls. A lot of the instructors here, still, I think, somewhat resented women on campus. You did not find that in all cases, but once in a while you would run into that. They were not quite ready to accept the women, even though it had been a few years. But I think most all of the education instructors were familiar with women students, because women had come in the summertime for many years. So that was not much of a change for them.

L: Well, you did encounter resentment. How did you handle that?

S: I did not encounter much resentment, personally. I think some of the sorority sisters of mine that were majoring in, say, business did. Business administration faculty, I think, did not appreciate having women here, and the same is true of faculty of other disciplines. I think the women handled it in their own manner--"Do it in a positive way." They did the best they could in school, and I think soon everybody was very much accepted.

The styles were much different. Now you can go anywhere in a pair of shorts. Then, women were not allowed to go across campus with shorts on. If we had to go to gym and had our shorts on, we had to put on a raincoat.

L: That is interesting. Now, we are back to when you returned from England. Did you come back directly to Gainesville?

- S: We came back directly to Gainesville.
- L: And by this time you were married and had one child.
- S: Right. She was probably about eight months old at the time. She was born in England.
- L: So this was in the 1950s, then.
- S: Right.
- L: What size was Gainesville when you came back?
- S: It was still fairly small. I would say probably around 35,000. I am not sure if that would be right or not. It might be fewer than that.
- L: Was it growing rapidly at that time, or was that a pretty stable population?
- S: It was growing. It was growing rapidly at that time.
- L: In what year were you invited to join the Junior Welfare League?
- S: I was invited to join the Junior Welfare League in September of 1958.
- L: Before you were invited to join, what did you know about the League as an organization?
- S: I had several friends that were already in the League, and I knew that it was a group of women who were dedicated to volunteering their time and effort to making the community a better place.
- L: How would you evaluate the reputation that the group had in the community's eyes?
- S: It was excellent. Everyone thought well of the League, and all the activities that the League was involved in were very well thought of. I cannot think of coming across anyone that would have given a bad name to the League at that time.
- L: Tell me how your invitation to join was handled.
- S: Well, it came in the mail. And you knew nothing about it. Some friend would come over (maybe later) and ask, "Have you gotten your mail yet?" It was a big secret. No one knew when they were to be invited into the League at the time. So when mine came, I had no idea. I was completely surprised.

- L: You really were genuinely surprised?
- S: I really was surprised.
- L: How did you feel about that?
- S: I was very excited. A little bit in awe, I suppose, that I had been chosen to be in this group, very flattered, and also a little scared. I had a month-old baby at the time, and all I could think of was, I wonder if I will be able to handle this.
- L: You said that you already had some friends who were in the League. In general, how did League members get to know people they were thinking about inviting? Was there a committee that was in charge of this?
- S: We had a committee called the admissions committee. If you had a friend that you thought would enjoy being a member of the League or would be interested in joining, you would try to get the committee members to meet your friend. Of course, you would try to do it in a manner that would not be obvious.
- L: And all the time the friend did not even know? Is the admission into the Junior League handled in the same way today?
- S: No, I think today it is all open. The candidates can be sponsored. Now (I think I am right) they are discussing having completely open admissions.
- L: That is under discussion, but it is not the current rule.
- S: So at current rule, then, we are still sponsoring candidates. But the girls do know [they are being considered for membership].
- L: So it is no longer secret?
- S: Right.
- L: What happened after you got your invitation? I assume you accepted.
- S: I accepted, and there was a group of friends that came over and tried to explain everything that would be involved--the time that it would take, the commitment, and what would be expected of me as an individual. At that time, when you went in you stayed in for seven years, so you sort of knew at what point you would go out. Now I understand that you stay in until you are forty, although you have the option to stay in longer than that. But at that time, it was strictly seven years. If you had to resign for any reason, you did not have the option to come back. Now you more or less have an option to retire and then come back in.

But back then, once you resigned, there was no chance to come back as a member in good standing. So you really wanted to put your seven years in. At that time there were a lot of girls who were teachers, and so every other Saturday they were down at the Thrift Shop working.

L: So they had to get their hours in.

S: They had to do their hours on Saturday.

L: Was that the only project that was available with weekend time for people who worked?

S: Connie, that was about the only one. There was the tumor clinic, and, to my recollection, I believe the tumor clinic met twice a month, and that was on Tuesday and Thursday. There was the children's theater that visited different elementary schools and put on plays. Then there was the pediatric clinic, which was open three mornings a week. There was also the Suitcase Museum for people that worked; a few could help with the Suitcase Museum.

L: What is the Suitcase Museum?

S: The Suitcase Museum was a project that was started with articles of interest from foreign countries (or from our own country) that were collected, assembled, or written about and then put into a suitcase and put in a central spot at the school board office. Schools could then check those out. If they were studying Egypt, for instance, and there were a suitcase on Egypt, they could check out that particular suitcase, take it to their classroom, and let the children see the actual artifacts. Perhaps if there were any music or anything that went with that particular country, they could check it out for a period of time.

L: How did they accumulate the articles to put into the museum suitcases?

S: Sometimes they would ask people in the community. In Gainesville there are a lot of people with the University who had traveled a lot, and they were very willing to donate things that they might have collected on their trips. It was a wonderful opportunity to share it with the school children. So that was another project that people that worked were able to participate in.

L: So that was not fixed hours; it could be done more or less on your own.

S: It could be done on their own time at home.

L: Was that done in conjunction with the Florida State Museum [now the Florida Museum of Natural History]?

S: No, I do not believe so, not at that time. It was strictly a Junior League project.

L: The next question I wanted to ask you also had to do with people who work--when your meeting times were. Were there many Junior League members who worked?

S: We had quite a few people that worked, so consequently, when I first went in, most of our meetings were in the evening. We met at the health department; most every meeting was there.

L: Where was the health department located then?

S: It is near Alachua General [Hospital].

L: Is it that little brick building where the Family Resource Center is today?

S: It faces south.

L: One block north of [Dr. Gerald G.] Hazouri's office?

S: Right.

L: I do believe that is where the Family Resource is. But that is where you had your meetings to begin with.

S: After that, I think we had a couple of meetings at the Methodist church. Then we met at what was then the Guaranty Federal Building on Main Street. Upstairs they had a meeting room.

L: And all of these meetings were at night?

S: Right, these were at night. I am trying to think when they went to day meetings. Even though we had some that worked, for some reason we still had all of our meetings at night. Maybe it was easier for people to get out, I do not know. But our meetings were at night.

L: About what proportion, would you say, of the women in the League at that time were in the work force?

S: Not a great deal, Connie. I would say maybe from ten to fifteen out of our entire membership would have been working at that time. Most of them were teachers, and a few were in real estate. I would say not even a fourth of the women worked at that time. It was less than that.

L: And the other people were homemakers?

S: Right.

L: Well, tell me, after you accepted your invitation, what was the next thing that you did?

S: We were provisional [members], and we were invited to a meeting. Mary Ann Cofrin, Mrs. David Cofrin, was our provisional chairman.

L: What does "provisional" mean?

S: Provisional means that it is before you become a member, you go through a period of learning about the League, learning about the community and each other, and how to do volunteer work. They set up various meetings that we would go to and scheduled people to speak to us. I guess this probably took a matter of six months, a period that we were more or less educated or taught to become a League member--what was expected of us and the history of the League. We met together as a group. I guess we met once or twice a month so we could get all of our material in, and Mary Ann met with us. At the end of that time, we became members of the League.

L: You became full-voting members at that time.

S: Right.

L: Do you remember what the cost of the dues was?

S: Not very much, maybe five dollars or something like that. I honestly cannot remember now.

L: I read someplace where it was fifteen dollars, and I thought that was very small compared to what it is today.

S: That may be true. I honestly cannot remember now. But I am sure it was very nominal compared to what it is now.

L: I thought that was interesting. You were still a relatively small group in numbers at this period, is that right?

S: Yes, we were. The year I went in, there were about nine in my provisional group. Very often if there were eight or nine provisional members, there might be almost that many completing their seven-year eligibility and leaving, so the membership remained fairly stable. Most of the members that joined would stay

[their full seven years]. Very few people would drop out unless they moved away from Gainesville, so our membership seemed to stay consistent. I am trying to think about how many we would have had in our membership. Have you read about that anywhere?

L: I have the 1965 membership figures: there were seven provisionals and sixty-four actives. That is not the same year you are talking about, but that general period. That is around seventy members at the end of the year.

Tell me some more about the projects that the League was involved in at this time. I know you were placement chairman part of this time.

S: I was placement chairman, right. We would meet individually with the members to try to find out what projects they would be interested in doing for the coming year. We also had to take into account what projects we felt could be continued as far as manpower was concerned. At that time, I think we continued the Thrift Shop, the tumor clinic, the pediatric clinic, and the children's theater.

L: Now, when did children's theater start? That was a new project then, was it not?

S: It was a fairly new project. It started before I came in the League, so it must have started somewhere in the early 1950s, I would imagine. When I came in 1958, they already had the children's theater.

L: I think they had just started it then.

S: It seems like it was in the early 1950s that it was started.

L: I believe that is the oldest on-going project that the League has currently.

S: Right, besides the Thrift Shop.

L: I was thinking of the Thrift Shop more as a money-maker, but you are right, it is an on-going event that goes farther back than that. Where was the Thrift Shop located at that time?

S: When I came in the League, it was where it is currently. Before that, it was in a rented building. But at the time I entered the League, they were right at the same building where they are now.

L: Right off of University Avenue in the southeast section.

S: Right behind where [J. C.] Penney's used to be.

- L: I read that they had what they called a "bundles tea" in 1958. I do not know if that was before your invitation.
- S: That was before I received my invitation, but I remember it. I think some of us did get to go and take bundles. It was to encourage the community to participate in the Thrift Shop and to see the Thrift Shop.
- L: Because it was new at that time in that location.
- S: Right.
- L: Is that what "bundles" referred to?
- S: Right, you brought a bundle. You filled up a sack with used clothing and took it to the Thrift Shop. You could view the Thrift Shop and see what it was all about.
- L: Do you know what the hours were at that time? Were they open every day?
- S: Originally they were only open a couple of days a week. Then they increased as time went on. By the time I was president, they were open six mornings a week. But I think at one time it was open just three mornings a week.
- L: And that was staffed by League volunteers?
- S: Staffed by League volunteers only.
- L: What were the responsibilities of a person who worked on that committee?
- S: Say it was open from nine till one. You would be there in plenty of time to see that the shop was open, make sure that everything was in place, greet the customers, help them find what they were interested in, add up their purchases, take their money, bag it for them. At the end of the day, clean up everything and make sure everything was tidy, vacuumed, straightened up, and ready for the next day.
- L: How many hours was somebody required to put in on that committee, or how many times did they have to work?
- S: Generally what we worked were two mornings a month.
- L: If you were on that committee?
- S: If you were on that committee.

L: And you said the tumor clinic was in operation then.

S: Right.

L: What were the responsibilities of the people on that committee?

S: I worked on that committee for two years, and I enjoyed it very much. There was usually one doctor there and two nurses that were provided by the health department, and one League member would be there. We checked the patients in and weighed them. If the patient were new, we would get as much case history as we could for the nurses. Then we just stayed with them until the nurses called them in. So really we were more clerical help than anything else.

L: Where was this clinic located?

S: There was a little building to the west of Alachua General, and it was housed in there. The building is gone now.

L: Was it on the grounds where Alachua General is now?

S: It was west of that. It is in that block, but not where the actual hospital is. I think there is a parking area there, or the helicopter pad might be there.

L: Now, there also was a prenatal and a children's clinic. Was the League still operating those clinics?

S: The League still had the pediatric clinic.

L: And where was it located?

S: Let me think now where the pediatric clinic was. At one time they went around to various places in the community. It must have been at Alachua General by then. I think that they had taken over a wing in Alachua General, so that is where it was. I never did work on that particular committee, but I know it was in Alachua General. I think they started out traveling to various parts of the community.

L: I see. Both the pediatric clinic and the tumor clinic were manned by volunteers from the League and also volunteers from the medical association. The doctors donated their time, too.

S: Right. There were doctors as well as public health nurses that would come in and help.

- L: I read something about an investigating committee of League members that worked in coordination with the pediatric indigent clinic. Do you know what they would have been doing?
- S: The investigating committee? No, I am not really sure, Connie. Were they investigating as far as the potential?
- L: As far as eligibility, I gathered, but it really was not very specific in describing it.
- S: To see if the patient is qualified, I guess, for indigent care.
- L: So that would also be a committee of League members?
- S: I guess so. At this point, I am not really sure. I believe, if I remember right, that is probably what it was.
- L: And concerning the children's theater, I read that in 1966 the League did have one performance at Lincoln High School for which federal funds were used to have all the black children in the community bused to the school so they could see the play. I was curious how the League got federal funds for that.
- S: They did get federal funds in 1966?
- L: It did not state who got the federal funds, but federal funds were available to bus the students in for that show.
- S: I do not know, unless maybe the school could have gotten the federal funds. That is interesting, the fact that that did take place. Before, I guess we had not gone to some, because there were several of those outlying schools. At one time, I know they brought the children to Kirby Smith to see the performances.
- L: Before that point, do you mean?
- S: Yes. During that time, they would bus the children to Kirby Smith.
- L: That is interesting. Are you talking about white students?
- S: Well, yes.
- L: Maybe this was significant because it was the first time that blacks had been bused in.
- S: That could be.

- L: I also read about the horse shows. Tell me a little bit about that as a project.
- S: There were quite a few horse shows during that time. I think in the early 1950s they were having the horse shows. I joined the League in 1958, and there was a horse show, I believe, right after that. I know we were helping with the food preparation--cooking hot dogs and fixing the food and things like that. Some of the members were selling programs and going around town trying to get people interested in attending the horse show. We did that probably for two years, and then they switched to the Folly. That was right after I came in, too.
- L: What was the purpose of sponsoring the horse show?
- S: Well, it was a money-making project.
- L: So the League got part of the proceeds?
- S: Right.
- L: Were those funds earmarked for anything in particular?
- S: I do not believe so at that time. They were more or less earmarked for "League projects."
- L: Just things in the community that they were planning.
- S: Right.
- L: Tell me a little bit about the Follies.
- S: The Follies were put on as a fund raiser, but also to get the community involved and get the community enthusiastic about League projects. Also, it was a good way to get to know new members and potential members. If you had friends that you thought would be interested in joining the League, it was a wonderful way to get them involved and have other people get to meet them. I thought it was a great deal of fun. It was also hard work. It took a lot of man hours and time, but it was still a lot of fun. You got to know each other quite well.
- L: This was a musical production?
- S: It was a musical production. Cargill out of New York, if I remember right, came down. There was a director that was sent ahead of time. He would meet with the committee and more or less go over the production that was to be put on. There would be a talent night when various people in the community came in to sign up for different dance numbers or try out. Then the talent committee would get together with the producer, and they would try to line up everybody that was

willing to participate--and those that they had to coerce to participate. When they got through, they would have actual times that you would go to practice. You might practice three mornings a week or three nights a week or something like that, and this was very intense for about two weeks. Then the show would be performed. Cargill would send in all the costumes. There would be committees for the make-up, ads, and to put out a program. It was quite a production.

L: Did it raise a lot of money for the League?

S: Yes, there was always a lot of money raised. Each year it seemed like the profits increased. I think at first it was performed only one night, and then it got to be where it was put on two consecutive nights--Friday and Saturday nights. Yes, it was a good money maker, along with the Thrift Shop, which was our continuing project.

L: I read that the profits from the 1957 Follies were earmarked for the Ella Mae Canova Pediatric Wing at Alachua General, but I never read where any other funds were earmarked. Were they and I just did not know about that, or was that not generally the way it was done?

S: Usually they were more or less just put into the League money that would go back into the community in different projects. At one time some of the money, I believe, was earmarked for library books. But most of the money that came in generally went for different charitable projects that the League had at that time.

L: You have talked about the fact that the money would go back into the community. I understand that the League actually had two bank accounts. One was for community funds, and the other was for administrative costs. Can you tell me anything about those?

S: Well, the theory behind that was that money that came from the community should go directly back into the community, so that was handled in one account. Money from dues, for instance, would go into a separate account to operate the League. If you had to put out a newsletter, for example, stamps, postage, and whatever else was needed would be handled out of that. We wanted the community to know that any money that came from the community would go back into the community to help someone else. So that was the reason for the two bank accounts.

L: So you did not intermingle the funds at all.

S: Right.

- L: Also, I read where there was a television show. In one place it said it was on 8:00 on Thursdays, and then it had been moved to 7:30. I could not tell if that was in the morning or at night, but I was assuming it was in the evening. This same source mentioned that Billie Henry was chairman.
- S: Right. If I remember back to that point, Billie Henry did a community wrap-up. She would tell interesting things that were happening around the community. This was pretty much a placement for Billie Henry. She went out into the community and found people that were of particular interest, and then she would have those people come on the show. I had forgotten about that. I think this was on Channel 5.
- L: I thought that was very interesting when I saw that. How long did that go on? I assume that it was weekly from the way it was set up.
- S: I believe it was weekly that she did this. I was trying to think how many years it may have been on. I know she did it for many years.
- L: But you do not remember how many years it was?
- S: No.
- L: You were also the president of the Junior Welfare League.
- S: I was president in 1965 to 1966.
- L: What were some of the project that were being actively pursued at that time, or have we already talked about all of them?
- S: Well, we have already talked about the ones that were still active. We still continued our bread-and-butter project, the Thrift Shop, which was open six mornings a week from nine to one o'clock, I believe. We also had the children's theater that visited the schools. We had the tumor clinic, the pediatric clinic, and the Suitcase Museum. Those were our main projects at that time. We still staffed them only by League members. We did not have any paid workers at the Thrift Shop at that time, so it took quite a few of our members to maintain that.
- L: I read that during the year that you were president somebody made an anonymous donation of \$3,000 for drugs at the pediatric clinic. You were questioned about it, but you said you could not tell who it was. I wondered if you could tell us now?
- S: No. When they gave it to us, it was really an anonymous gift.

L: Oh, it was anonymous to you, also.

S: Right.

L: It was quite a generous gift.

S: It really was at that time.

L: I also wanted to ask you about the Classroom on Wheels, the speech therapy bus.

S: That was started after I was president. It was a van that was equipped with hearing equipment, and it would visit different classrooms of children that needed help with their hearing.

L: Also, about that same time was there not some work done in equipping a physical classroom for the hard of hearing, in addition to the van?

S: Yes, that was at Sidney Lanier.

L: So the van was for speech and hearing, and the classroom dealt with hearing. At that time was Sidney Lanier an exceptional students school?

S: No, it was not.

L: It was a regular elementary school?

S: Yes.

L: And what about the medical forums?

S: Oh, the medical forums. The League sponsored those about five or six every year, and they were free and open to the public. We would get maybe three doctors to participate, and they were on various topics that they felt would be of interest: heart disease, fatigued mothers, cancer, high blood pressure, and things like that. They usually would have a pretty good turnout.

L: They were popular, then?

S: They were popular.

L: Were they still doing the play therapy project when you came in? I think they were. I do not know how large that ever got to be.

- S: From what I can remember, I think it was part of the pediatric clinic. I think there were a few that would go and help in the pediatric clinic as far as play therapy. But I do not think it ever really got to be a big project. It was on a small scale.
- L: And one final thing I wanted to ask you about in terms of projects was the Boys' Club.
- S: The Boys' Club. I had forgotten about that project. There were several people who would assist in after-school work at the Boys' Club. It might be clerical, it might be chaperoning a party there, it could be just helping with homework or just sitting and listening and talking to some of them. If you had any special skills or anything like that, you could help them that way, but mostly it was just to go there and be available if somebody wanted to talk to you or just be a friend.
- L: Now, this was in the early years of the Boys' Club?
- S: This was in the early years. I think we probably did donate some money to it.
- L: Tell me what blue slips and pink slips meant.
- S: Blue slips and pink slips--that does seem rather trivial now. We learned very early that you should never miss a League appointment or never be late to a League appointment, because someone was counting on you. If you were getting ready to go out of town, if you were having a baby, or [had to miss an appointment for any good reason], you made sure that somebody covered for you. You did not want to be absent. If you were late, you got a blue slip, and then if you got so many blue slips, you got a pink slip. If you were absent, you got a pink slip, and if you got so many of those, you were out of the League. So they were not good to have.
- L: I see. So the project chairman would be the one who issued those, I presume. Then they would be turned over to whom?
- S: From there I believe they went to the secretary who kept tally of those. I believe that is the way it was.
- L: So you did not want to get blue slips.
- S: You especially did not want to get a pink slip. That was very, very, very bad.
- L: Do you know of anybody that was asked to leave the League because of pink slips?

- S: No, I do not think we did.
- L: So it was a good deterrent.
- S: Right. Everybody, I think, was conscientious, now that I stop and think back. We had some people that were very dedicated to helping. I think they were committed, and they knew that the League was a main resource to do these projects. If we were not there, they would not be open. So you made sure you found somebody if you could not go. And I guess it is still that way pretty much now. Have you found that true?
- L: I did when I was active in the League. But I did not know what pink slips and blue slips were.
- S: They did not have them; you just were not there.
- L: They must have some other mechanism for dealing with problems as they come up, but they just are not pink and blue slips. Also, I read that the League, at this time, was considering and did in fact get uniforms. They said they were aqua-and-white striped.
- S: Right. And as with any group of women, that was a big discussion. What would they look like? Would they be solid? Would they be striped, or what? We finally decided that we would get pinafores, and we decided what we would wear it over. We had a little plastic name that went with it that said "Junior Welfare League." So that is what we wore. And back then we were the Junior Welfare League.
- L: Now, where did you wear it?
- S: We wore it when we went to the Thrift Shop, we wore it when we went to the tumor clinic or the pediatric clinic. The uniform was to identify that you were a League member.
- L: Basically on all League projects, then.
- S: Right. Exactly.
- L: Also, during the 1960s you started a newsletter for the first time, I believe, within the organization.
- S: Yes, but I could not even tell you exactly what year it was.
- L: I think it was 1962.

- S: Okay. That was a letter that was sent to the members to inform them of what was going on. It also had your League placement. When I first went into the League, Connie, for whatever project you worked on, they would pass around a piece of paper with the schedule on it, and you would initial it and write down the dates and times that you were to work. It would pass all around the room, and when it would get back to the chairman, she would know who had signed it and who she needed to contact in case they were not there. But if you initialed it, that meant that you were there [at the meeting] and you knew when your appointment was. When the newsletter came out a couple years after that, the appointments were all in that, and any other items of business that we needed to know about.
- L: It was strictly an in-house communication tool.
- S: Right.
- L: What was the name of it? Did it have a name at first?
- S: If it did, I do not even remember. Have you seen any of the old ones?
- L: No, I have not.
- S: Those are the things that I wish I had kept. I do not know if we have any anywhere in our archives or not.
- L: I have not found them with the minutes or with the scrapbooks so far. Every once in a while I will find out that there is another group of things that I did not know about. So it is possible that they are there and we just have not discovered them yet.
- S: Have not come across them yet. I would be interested to know.
- L: It would be interesting. I also wanted to ask you about the scholarship fund that the League contributed toward, Gainesville Scholarship and Loan. In 1964 they contributed \$300 for a scholarship in Aunt Carrie's name. [Carrie McCollum was instrumental in the founding of the Junior Welfare League in Gainesville. Ed.] What was the Gainesville Scholarship and Loan project? Was that a separate company or a way to funnel funds?
- S: I cannot even remember that.
- L: Okay. I believe that the League contributed a scholarship every year for a number of years in Aunt Carrie McCollum [Palmer's] name.

- S: That might be, but I am blank on that one.
- L: When you were in the League, was Aunt Carrie still the League's sponsor?
- S: Yes, she was.
- L: Was she active in that position? What did she do?
- S: During the time that I was in, she was never really active, but everyone knew her as the sponsor for the League. During that time she lived in Cordele, Georgia.
- L: She moved away and came back. I do not remember the dates either, but I believe she was in Gainesville at least a portion of the 1960s.
- S: But as far as being an active sponsor, she was not. It was more or less in name that she was.
- L: Did she attend meetings?
- S: No, not really. She might have once in a while, but she never attended on a regular basis.
- L: I want to talk a little bit about the women in the Junior Welfare League. What would you say was the basic age range?
- S: Probably from mid-twenties to mid-thirties, I would say. Some of them might have been in their latter thirties. When you went in, you stayed in for seven years, so most of them were probably near forty when they retired. But if you went in at an earlier age, say twenty-five. So it really depended at what age you entered the League.
- L: Was a large proportion of the membership made up of Gainesville women, people like yourself who had been born in Gainesville?
- S: Connie, I would say there were both. A lot of the ladies were originally from Gainesville, but there were a few that moved in. You have to live here three years, I believe it was, before you were considered eligible to become a League member. So there was a little bit of a time element there for us to get to know you and for you to get to know the community.
- L: I see. So would you say there was an insider/outsider situation within the League?
- S: Well, there were definitely more Gainesville people, if that is what you mean.

L: Were they from a largely homogenous background?

S: I would say yes, probably so. When you have friends, you more or less intend to pull in new members from the ones that you know, so your circle probably does stay relatively smaller than perhaps now. I think our circle of members has increased greatly from what it was at that time.

L: Did the women in the League largely get along well?

S: To the best of my knowledge. Like any group of women, there were certain things that perhaps we did not get along all together on, but I think from what I can remember, we were pretty much an easy-going group.

L: I expect, though, that there would not be total unanimity on what to do in every situation and how to handle everything.

S: Oh, never. I think in any organization at any time there are always varying opinions.

L: Did you find a lot of this?

S: Not as much maybe as you would think. Everybody definitely had different ideas of a project or how to do something, but our opinions ran pretty much along the same way.

L: You think this might have anything to do with the fact that most of the women were from a similar background?

S: Well, that very well could be. Also, we did not have as many women working then as there are now.

L: That is a good point. [As smaller membership] would increase the similarity of the backgrounds. I read that the Junior Welfare League Sustaining Members organized as a group in 1961.

S: Yes, I remember that. After you were in for seven years, you went into the sustaining group. At that point, there were many women who still wanted to be part of the League, so they organized. This way they could still have an active part; they could have their own meetings and still be able to help out if they wanted to. I think some of the ladies did continue to offer their time in various ways, so it was good for them.

L: But before this time there was no organization for sustaining members?

- S: Not to my knowledge. They just became sustaining when they were organized.
- L: So before that time they did not pay sustainer dues?
- S: No, I am sure they would not have.
- L: I can see that that would be an additional source of revenue to the League, to allow them to have more money to put into the community. Now, the name was still the Junior Welfare League in the 1960s.
- S: Right.
- L: I read that in 1964 there was an application made to the American Association of Junior Leagues, but that the application was turned down.
- S: Well, at that time, Gainesville was still relatively small, and I think it was felt by the national association that before we should try to become a member our community should get a bit larger. So it was put off till a later time. The groundwork was laid at that time, however.
- L: Did you work on that in any capacity?
- S: Not directly. We had a committee that worked on it and got the background material on it.
- L: I was just wondering what all was involved in preparing it.
- S: Well, if I remember right, it was more or less writing up what went on in Gainesville, how our particular League evolved, what our membership was, and a portfolio of the projects that we participated in, what we did. That was the main idea.
- L: Can you tell me anything else about what the League was like during the time that you were in that we have not touched on today?
- S: I am trying to think of some of the other things. Offhand it seems like you have covered it very well. You have done your homework.
- L: I thought that what we talked about might have generated some other ideas in your mind. You were there; you might have thought of something else that you could share.
- S: No. I remember we had our officers meetings. We met together once a month.

L: Is this the board, you mean?

S: The whole board met. And we did not meet just as an executive group, we met as a complete board. We would meet in someone's home once a month.

L: Usually at night or in the morning.

S: Usually we would meet in the daytime for these. We seemed to be able to work that out. But our meetings, for the most part, were at night. Then later they started having the morning meetings. At one point, I remember going to some morning meetings. I believe it was about the time that I was president, too, that we started having morning meetings. Then, a little bit later, towards the latter part of the time that I was in the League, we had two different groups--the morning group and the night group.

L: How did that work?

S: Well, all the ladies who had daytime jobs would meet at night. I believe it was our vice-president that met with the group at the time, because this is after I was president. They would meet after the daytime group met. The daytime group would meet in the morning, and then the nighttime group would meet that night. So that anything that had been discussed in the day meeting would have been carried over to the night group. I wish I could remember what year that was. I was in the League about twelve or thirteen years, so it must have been around 1970 or 1971. I know we had two different groups by then.

L: Well, now, how did that work, for instance, when you had an election?

S: What we did was the morning group would vote, and then the night group would vote.

L: So you would not announce the results.

S: Not until afterwards.

L: And I guess that they had separate programs then, too.

S: Yes. I was teaching my last year then, so I was in the night group. But if I remember right, the morning group met and then the night group met.

L: Was the night group a very large one?

S: No, it really was not very large, because we would meet in someone's home, and there might have been twelve to fifteen, something like that. So it really was not a large group.

L: So even as late as 1970, less than a third of the membership were professionals.

S: Right.

L: Maybe considerably less than a third. Well, that is interesting. You said you were in the League for twelve to thirteen years?

S: Yes.

L: That is longer than the seven-year period. How did you manage that?

S: Well, that was when they gave you the option. I am not sure what year it was that you had an option of staying in longer if you wanted to. I had always enjoyed the League, and I had the time, so I stayed in. I am pretty sure it was just about twelve or thirteen years that I was in the League.

L: Did many people do that? Did many people extend?

S: There were some. I would not say many did, but there were some that stayed in. I thought it was a good idea to have the option if you wanted to, because you were still at the point in your life that you had time and were still at an age that you wanted to participate, so I elected to stay in.

L: Well, the fact that people did choose to stay in must say something about whether it was rewarding to them personally and whether they felt that they were making a positive contribution.

S: Well, that is the whole thing. If you feel like you are doing something of benefit to the community and you are getting a feeling of worth from what you are doing, I think that is true. You do have more of a desire to stay in.

L: You also mentioned that the board meetings were largely in the morning. I take it, then, that you must have been drawing your officers and committee chairman from people who were not professional, if you were having the board meetings in the morning.

S: That is true.

L: Can you think of anything else?

S: I cannot think of anything else.

L: Well, I want to go back to your time on the University of Florida campus again for a few minutes, if you do not mind. We talked about the fact that you felt there

was, in some cases, resentment from the faculty and how that was handled. Did you or people that you knew, who had that problem, take your problems to the dean of women, to Marna [Venable] Brady's office?

S: Not that I know of. I think it was one of those things that as you are sitting around in a sorority house you tend to talk about. Some of the girls felt that some of the instructors just did not want women here. They would say things that they [the women] took as an indication that they [the instructors] wished that the University of Florida had not become a co-ed university. They were used to men and not women. But no, I do not think they ever did [talk to the dean about it]. They never did do that to my knowledge. They may have, but I was not aware of it.

L: I am sure that was a big change. I understand most of the buildings did not even have women's restroom facilities, so when the classes became co-ed, there were a lot of changes that had to take place. You mentioned living in a sorority house. Did you live in a sorority house?

S: I lived at home for two years, and then I lived in the sorority house for one year.

L: But you never lived in on-campus dorm housing?

S: I never lived in the dorms on campus here. I lived in the dorm at Florida State.

L: What did you find to be the case in terms of how welcome the women were on campus and in student organizations on campus like student government and [Florida] Blue Key?

S: I was never really active on campus. I know that there were women honoraries. I think Trianon was one. I know we had quite a few members in Chi Omega that were asked to membership there. I was more active within my sorority than off-campus activity, and also in an education sorority that I was a member of. I was more active in those.

L: That is an all-female organization?

S: Yes, at that time it was.

L: So you did not find in the College of Education or in their organizations any discrimination against women?

S: In Phi Delta Kappa, which is another honorary education [organization], there were men and women, so there was no feeling of hostility there at all. But most of the campus committees and things that I can remember were pretty much

manned by men, more or less by members of the fraternities. Well, maybe they were not all members of fraternities, but they were definitely run by men. And Blue Key was all-men then. Trianon probably would have been the equivalent to that. Now, of course, there are men and women in all different organizations. It has come a long way.

L: Yes. I am wondering if the Junior League is going to become integrated in that way.

S: I do not know. I have wondered about that, too.

L: With the advent of Rotary [International's having to open its membership to women], I do not think it is too far away.

S: I would think so.

L: It is a distinct possibility. Well, thank you very much. I appreciate your information.

S: Well, thank you, Connie. It has been very enjoyable.