

AL 147

Interviewee: June Littler

Interviewer: Stuart Landers

Date: July 30, 1992

June Littler has been an active participant in equal rights issues in the state of Florida. This interview is part of a series of interviews with Stuart Landers on civil rights in Alachua County, specifically Gainesville Women for Equal Rights.

June Littler was born June 7, 1932, in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Her family moved often when she was growing up because her father was in the National Guard. One summer in her high school years she attended Girl's State. She graduated from Hope Valley High School in Durham, North Carolina, in 1950, and went to San Bernardino Valley Junior College in California. There she met Theodore C. Littler, and they were married.

After he served in the air force during the Korean Conflict, the Littlers came to the University of Florida so he could study architecture. Because she was working at UF, June Littler was able to take courses, and she decided to major in social studies. She eventually found herself involved in library work, so she later took master's degrees in educational media from UF and in library science from FSU.

When civil rights became an issue, Littler wanted to be able to tell her children (Stephen, 1952; Robert, 1954; and James, 1957) that she did something about it. Much of her career has been involved with equal rights organizations. Having seen so much of the United States, she did not understand why there was segregation. She had experienced were few blacks up north and numerous Orientals and Hispanics out west. When she was a student at UF June Little became involved with Student Group for Equal Rights. She discusses the organization of the group and her role as phone coordinator. Of special interest was the reverse picket of the College Inn. She also discusses the rally in Ocala, for which she was arrested. She considers that one of the highlights of her life.

June Littler later began working with the Gainesville Women for Equal Rights. She served as president in 1971. Littler also participated in the League of Women Voters, the National Organization for Women, and the Alachua Women's Political Caucus. She also served on the Florida State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights. Politically she considers herself a "flaming middle-of-the-roader" because she is liberal on social issues but conservative on fiscal matters. To her, political parties are after power, not what is good for the community. To her, most people just want to get along, to live and let live.

SL: This is an oral history interview with Mrs. June Littler being conducted in her home in Gainesville, Florida. Today is July 30, 1992, and my name is Stuart Landers.

Can you give me your full name?

JL: Yes. It is June Eloise Davis Littler.

SL: Which one of those is your maiden name?

JL: Davis.

SL: When and where were you born?

JL: I was born June 7, 1932, in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

SL: Did you grow up in Pennsylvania?

JL: Until I was about nine years old I lived in a small town called Clarks Summit, which is right outside of Scranton. My father worked for the telephone company there. Then when World War II started everybody's lives changed a lot. He was in the National Guard, and his unit was activated, so he went into active duty, and my mother and I lived with a friend of the family for three months (for [the first part of] fourth grade) and then with my grandmother for the rest of the year. After Christmas she went to work for Henry J. Kaiser building battleships in New York--she was in the office, however – and I went to a private girls' school in Philadelphia for fifth, [most of] sixth, and [the last part of] seventh grade.

SL: OK. To back up a minute, can you give me your parents' full names?

JL: My mother's name was Marion Eloise Phillips Davis, and my father was William Tuck Davis.

SL: So when the war came everybody started moving around. Your mother was working in New York City?

JL: New York City. Yes.

SL: Did you all move to New York City?

JL: No. I was with my grandmother in Kingston, Pennsylvania, for the second part of fourth grade. For the first part we, my mother and I, were with friends in Norristown, right outside of Philadelphia. Then for the last part of the school year I was with my grandmother back in Kingston. Then that fall, for fifth [grade], I went to Lankenau School for Girls in [Germantown] Philadelphia. It was a Lutheran school run by the Lutheran deaconesses.

SL: And I take it, then, that your family was part of the Lutheran Church?

JL: Yes. I was baptized a Lutheran, and I was a boarding student [at Lankenau.

That was] the best schooling I ever had. That was their first year out in Germantown. They had previous quarters in downtown Philadelphia on Gerard Avenue. It was originally founded by John D. Lankenau. There was a hospital downtown in Philadelphia, the Lankenau Hospital, that is still there. The school moved out [to] Schoolhouse Lane, as a matter of fact, and it was right across the street [and] down a little ways from a school for boys called William Penn Charter School that very early in Pennsylvania history had been established there.

SL: Did you have any brothers and sisters?

JL: No, I am an only child.

SL: What else do you remember about the Second World War?

JL: One thing that was part of what made me what I am is that when I was about five years old I had a very high fever. [I was] very sick, and I ended up deaf in my right ear. Then as time went on and the war came and everybody went this way and that way, on Pearl Harbor day my mother and I were in Norristown, Pennsylvania. Actually, December 7 was her birthday, and we had planned to go to Valley Forge for an outing. Well, we never got there.

That Christmas, which was a couple weeks after that, [we spent with my father]. My father had already been activated in February of 1941, and he was at Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. There was a large army base there, and I remember we spent Christmas there. We had our electric train that my father had gotten me years before, but it was the Christmas train that you put around the tree and everything. There was a big party, and I remember being one of the youngest that was there, and I could not stay up. My eyes just would not stay open, and I finally went to sleep on my father's cot. That is the biggest thing I remember about that party. [laughter]

A year or so later he went overseas; he was part of the D-Day Plus One landing. He was in the Signal Corps. I looked at the paper that the school got every morning, and I was always interested in seeing what the battle lines were. Being a religious school, we went to church every Sunday, and we had prayers at breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and I said my prayers every night. I just prayed to keep my daddy safe. So when the time came and the invasion was on, I looked very carefully at where the battle lines were on the maps in the newspaper every day.

It was a scary time. I feared for him because he was the apple of my eye. We did have some air raid practices, and we had to pull down the shades and turn off all the lights just in case there were airplanes out there that could see lights.

Of course, there was rationing, and I brought my little coupon books for sugar and meat; all these things were rationed. So we turned them in at school, and they used them for what they had to do to buy food for us. Shoes were rationed, too. I remember that in seventh grade I needed a new pair of tennis shoes for gym class and had to [give a stamp for them]. Everybody scrimped, scraped, saved, recycled, and everything, and we managed to make do. Of course, gasoline was rationed, too. I remember that, and the stickers we used to have, depending on how many gallons you could use. It depended on what your work situation was and all that. So those are the things I remember most.

SL: Did your mother work for the Kaiser company throughout [the war]?

JL: Well, let me see. At the end of sixth grade, in April [1944], my mother and I drove our car across country to San Francisco. It was a 1940 Desoto. Some friends were going to buy this car. My father was overseas. I think this must have been 1944. This was kind of unusual. It took us about five or six days – maybe even more – to drive [that far]. On the Pennsylvania Turnpike it was still pretty snowy. At one point my mother had to put on the brakes, and I remember we did a 360-degree turn right there in the middle of the highway. But she persevered, and on we went.

When we got to San Francisco she had some kind of a job. I cannot remember what it was. But we were there on D-Day, and the trolley that went up and down the street – ding, ding, ding – [was full of happy people]. People leaned out the window and yelled and this, that, and the other thing. We were there until the end of [the] school [year].

Then we went up to Lakeport, California, for the summer. That fall I was staying with an elderly couple in Sacramento while my mother went to work for the railroad up in Dunsmuir, California. She was a telegraph operator. She could not have been there more than six months, I do not think, because we ended up in Lakeport again, and I continued seventh grade there.

Then in April, which meant that we had been in California for a year, we went back east, this time on the train. The train was loaded with a lot of servicemen, because by this time the war was almost over. You could feel it coming.

I got back to Lankenau in April. Unfortunately, the year I spent in California was kind of a disaster for me scholastically, because they were only doing fractions when I was ready to do something else. The classmates that I had left were so far ahead of me in math I just about never caught up again math-wise. My father came home about September of that year, and I remember in the talking at the time we were very concerned about what was going to be happening with the Russians. I asked him specifically, "Are we going to go to war with the

Russians?" and he said no. So that relieved my mind [laughter].

SL: How much education had your parents had?

JL: My mother had had high school and one year of college, and her mother had been very anxious for her to continue her education. My mother had a sister that was about two years older than she, and she did get a master's degree later on. But my mother got married unbeknownst to my grandmother. She was married a year before she let her know, because she knew that she, number one, did not want her to get married, that she wanted her to continue her education. While she did spend a year in college, it was very hard because she and my father could not see each other very often. It was not exactly the best way to get started off. Anyway, she finally told her, and she did not go back to school. I think that was a major disappointment for my grandmother.

As a result, my mother always instilled in me the fact that "You are going to college. There is no question about that." So I was taking pre-college courses, which included Latin and all those other things that you are supposed to do.

SL: So your father only went through high school.

JL: Yes. However, he worked for the telephone company. He joined the National Guard. This must have been somewhere in the late 1920s or early 1930s. At that time he was in the cavalry, with a lot of horses. He liked horses. In fact, those guys had a polo team, and he used to play polo in the 1930s. He was just a soldier. But he took all the courses that were offered because he wanted to rise in the ranks.

SL: That were offered by the military?

JL: Yes. It was all military. Whatever he learned from the telephone company [trained him for his Signal Corps work later]. He was a lineman. I remember he used to climb telephone poles with his cleats on. I remember the little telephone company that was in our town and the switchboard that was there. The plugs went in and out, and the operator wore these big things. I was going to be a telephone operator when I grew up.

By the time his outfit was activated the horses were gone, and he was in the field artillery; he was in the 109th Field Artillery from Pennsylvania. But because of his background with the telephone company he ended up in the Signal Corps. He went in as a second lieutenant. He at one point was a colonel, but when he was activated he was upped a rank, [so] he had to drop a rank when the war was over. I do not know what the situation was with the army. Anyway, when he died he was a lieutenant colonel.

SL: So he stayed in the military the rest of [his career].

JL: Yes.

SL: Where did you continue your junior high and high school education?

JL: Well, at the end of eighth grade in Pennsylvania – that was in 1946 – my mother's aunt, who had been married to her Uncle Sam (Uncle Sam was dead by now), Aunt Emmy, was his German war bride. He had married her after World War I. Uncle Sam had been in the army overseas. He had [come home and] gone back over there, when he met her and married her. [Her first husband had died in the war.] Anyway, Aunt Emmy was a widow again by 1946, and she had cancer. My mother had taken a hotel administration course up at Cornell University and had spent some time in Miami working in the hotel system that year I was in eighth grade at Lankenau. So when that was over she took me and Aunt Emmy out to Las Vegas, because Las Vegas was starting to boom, and there were lots of hotels out there. She was going to go out there to get a hotel job.

Well, she got there about two months before we did because we waited until school was over, and then Aunt Emmy and I flew out. She did not have a job at a hotel, but she did have a job in Henderson, which was a town about twelve miles outside of Las Vegas, that had a big basic magnesium plant. That was its full name: Basic Magnesium Plant. They produced a lot of chemicals for the war effort. There were several companies there, one of which was Stauffer Chemical Company. She worked for one of those companies in the office. There was some housing there that had been put up during the war for the workers, and we found a [house there]. Our first place was in a concrete block quadrplex, so to speak, and within a couple of months there was housing available in a single house with two bedrooms and a bath. It was just right. It was a little square thing. We were there for about four years.

SL: So they bused you to Las Vegas for school?

JL: No. Henderson had a school. It was called Basic High School. As a matter of fact, I have a medallion on my key chain, and you will notice here that this cup you are drinking out of has [our high school logo].

SL: I see. "Basic High Wolves."

JL: Yes. It was Basic High School.

SL: And you graduated in 1950, I take it.

JL: Yes. I graduated from high school in 1950.

SL: Towards the end you will have to tell me about the fortieth reunion, which is written on here.

JL: Well, I did not make it [laughter]. I was at the thirty-fifth, but I did not make the fortieth. I hope to make the fiftieth.

SL: I am sure you will.

JL: We are trying to find one of our lost people in Australia.

SL: So you graduated in 1950.

JL: Yes. In amongst all this time my mother and father got divorced after World War II.

SL: Late 1940s?

JL: Yes. It finally got finalized in 1949. My mother met this other dashing military man who was in the air force. His name was Gordon Harby. She and Gordon got married when I was a junior. He was a very unusual person. He had stayed with his father and taken care of him, because he was quite elderly, until he died. He had never married, so he was past forty when he and my mother married. It was his first marriage. About 1952 they went overseas with some air force stuff. In 1950 I went to San Bernardino Valley Union Junior College [now San Bernardino Valley College] in San Bernardino.

SL: California?

JL: Yes.

SL: Were you at all stigmatized because your parents were divorced?

JL: No. I was talking with a friend of mine about that a couple of years ago. I did not talk about my father [then] because at that time he was back overseas with the army of occupation.

SL: In Europe?

JL: In Europe. In Germany. His secretary, who was bilingual, was French. I do not know what happened: Paris and this, that, and the other thing. Anyway, he came back to talk with my mother – I think it was 1949 – to decide what they were going to do. Were they going to get back together, or were they going to

make it permanent? I guess there had been sort of an understanding that they were separated. I did not know that. All I knew was that he was overseas, and I just went about my merry way. I was not a very perceptive person, I guess, at the time. I was very introverted and shy, and it was hard for me to make friends.

In that shuffling around from fourth grade, I was in three different schools: fifth and sixth grade [were in another school], and then sixth and seventh [were in still another, so] I had about three different schools. When you are not in one place very long and are shy to begin with, [shuffling between schools like that makes life very difficult]. Between the time I was nine and perhaps up to fourteen I also stuttered. That was very painful, especially if people made fun of me.

SL: Did they?

JL: Yes. Then I would get furious, and I would stomp off. Well, I just felt miserable.

As a matter of fact, when the troops came back in 1945, my mother and I were visiting her cousin in Arlington, Virginia. There was a big parade in Washington, DC. I guess I was about thirteen by that time. All the troops were marching down the street, and I could not get to the front of the people standing there. [The street] was just cram-jammed. I mean, I was not little enough to wiggle through or make way. I was practically five feet tall, and I had to jump up and jump up to see what was happening. Ike [General Dwight D. Eisenhower] was standing up in a Jeep coming down [the street]. He was the only one I could see real good. Flags were flying, and I could see the helmets of the soldiers, and they were just sort of bobbing along. I could not see them so much as far as this sea of helmets.

SL: But you did see Eisenhower.

JL: Yes. Anyway, it was a very emotional experience, and to this day my heart still goes pitter-patter when there is any kind of patriotic thingamajiggy going on. I could see something on TV or a parade or anything that is of a nature like that [and get all excited]. That was one of the outstanding moments of my life that made me what I am. I had to digress to fill you in on that.

I was very shy. Then my classmates did not know [about my father]. I did not talk about my father. My friend thought he was dead because I just never mentioned him.

It made me so mad. The day he came my mother was out of town on Business and Professional Women's [BPW] business or something like that – she was a member of the BPW club – so I had to meet him at the airport. I was sixteen, but I had my driver's license. I went and got him at the airport, and I had not seen him in about three or four years. I kept saying it was four, but mathematically,

now that I think of it [it was probably three and a half]. Anyway, I kept looking for insignia. I saw this soldier coming, and I thought he was a marine, so I discarded him. It turned out that that was my father. He was about ten or fifteen feet from me when I finally saw him. Of course, he saw me right away, and he had a big smile on his face and was real nice. I did not go to school the next day because I wanted to spend some time with him. But the school gave me an unexcused absence. I was so mad at them!

After he left my mother did go ahead with divorce proceedings. He went back east to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and he brought his bride back – I mean, he brought his secretary over from France, and they married. I guess it was June of 1949. That next year she had a baby boy, in May of 1950. Korea happened in June 1950, and he was activated immediately. Well, he was shipped to Korea, and he called me from Seattle on his way. It was in the middle of the night. I was in Henderson, Nevada, when he called. So we talked on the phone, and that was the last time I talked to him. He went overseas, and a year and four months later he was dead. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

SL: Was he killed in action?

JL: No. He is considered to have died – Apparently he took his own life. My children do not know this yet. I have not told them. One of these days I will get around to it. I did not know myself, either, after it first happened. It was a couple of years later that I was finally told. I spoke with someone about it once, and they said, "Oh. Well, I do not see why he is buried in Arlington, because they do not put suicides in Arlington." That really upset me.

SL: I am sure.

JL: So I wrote to the army to find out what it was, and I got a letter back saying it was considered that he died under combat conditions, or something like that. But the stress and strain of whatever he was under or doing [was severe]. So he died by his own hand with his own gun.

SL: That is terrible.

JL: Meanwhile, later on, my stepmother and half brother were in southern California, in Alhambra, with my grandmother and grandfather and my Aunt Meryle, my father's sister. The last time I saw him [my half brother] he was about two years old. I have tried to find him and reach him, because the family died out there and I was back here. I have written to the military, and they have said that they cannot give me his address, but they would pass on communication. They did not say whether it was my stepmother or my brother that they had communicated with or passed the communication on to, but my cousins and I have never heard

from them. That is kind of a sad situation.

Anyway –

SL: Moving on. After you graduated from high school –

JL: I went to the junior college in San Bernardino, and I met my husband-to-be there. He was a graduate of Boulder City [Nevada] High School from the year before; he is a year older than I. By the end of that school year we got married, so I had one year of college. Guess what I did? I ran away and got married [laughter].

SL: That sounds familiar.

JL: Yes. But I thought, I am going to continue school, this, that, and the other thing.

SL: [What is] his full name?

JL: Theodore Charles Littler.

SL: And he was a landscape architect?

JL: Yes. He got his degree from the University of Florida in landscape architecture later on. But his parents lived in Boulder City. We lived with them that summer and then went back to Pasadena to go to school.

By that time Korea was cranking up a little bit harder. He was in the Naval Reserve. Apparently there was a Naval Reserve unit in Las Vegas for guys who wanted to go to sea. Anyway, he said that he did not want to go into the navy because he got seasick, so he enlisted in the air force in February 1952. He went to Texas for his training, and when that was over I joined him in Rantoul, Illinois, at Chanute Air Force Base. That is where our first son was born. Two years later we went to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base [in Fairborn, Ohio], and that is where our second son was born. I also worked for the Wright Air Development [Center] at the Aerial Reconnaissance Laboratory as a clerk typist.

SL: Your first son was born in 1953?

JL: 1952.

SL: And his name?

JL: Stephen. And Robert, Bob, was born at the air force base hospital in Fairborn, Ohio.

SL: In 1954.

JL: That is right. Ted's enlistment was up in 1956, and by that time he knew he wanted to study architecture.

SL: He was never sent overseas?

JL: No. He ended up doing some programming with some of the early computers. That is when they used to wire boards. [laughter] We have come a long way. I guess they found more use for him there, because he did not qualify for any flight stuff, whatever that is called.

We had met some people who were from Tampa; they were our next-door-neighbors in Dayton. They used to mention how they used to go down to the beach on Christmas day for a picnic, and we thought, Wow. We looked up in the encyclopedia about Florida, and it said that it rained an average of 52" a year. Of course, we were from the desert where you barely got ten, and we thought, It would have to rain bloody murder once a week to get that. Well, we moved here in August of 1956, and it rained bloody murder once a day!

SL: You moved to Gainesville?

JL: Gainesville, yes. We came down to go to the University of Florida.

SL: What did you think of Gainesville and the South in 1956?

JL: Well, I will tell you. We sort of skipped over this. I did graduate in 1950, but I graduated from Hope Valley High School in Durham, North Carolina. I spent the last part of my senior year there. It was a segregated system.

SL: So that is where your diploma is from, not Basic.

JL: Yes, but I am still considered one of those because I was the junior class president, which was a phenomenon in itself. Oh, I had also gone to Girls' State.

SL: Girls' State?

JL: You have heard of Boys' State? Oh. You are going to have to look that up. Bill Clinton went to Boys' State and Boys' Nation.

SL: Now, wait a minute. My parents both have jewelry – little pins or something [related to that]. I will find out about that.

JL: Find about that, because it was a summer program up at the University of

Nevada for students, I guess, going from their sophomore to their junior year or something like that, and it was kind of a civics lesson, so to speak. [Boys' State is an annual program of citizenship training for high school juniors in which the students learn about the election process and the duties of various legislative and judiciary officials. It was piloted in 1934 in Illinois and adopted nationwide in 1935. Girls' State is sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary, and Boys' Nation is sponsored by the national American Legion.]

SL: So [we are now up to] Durham, North Carolina.

JL: Yes. Out in Henderson there were about three black children in the high school.

SL: But it was integrated.

JL: Yes. However, the housing that they had for the workers there [was segregated]. There was a separate section called Carver Park, and that is where the black people lived. Victory Village was where the white people lived. I do not know if any of them lived in the town of Henderson or not. That was mostly the single-family homes. But during the war (I was not there during the war; it was after the war), Carver Park was segregated housing, but the schools were integrated. In North Carolina – "This is real dumb," I said to myself, because there was a black girl who sat next to me in geometry class, and she was smarter than I was. Remember, I told you I had trouble with math.

SL: This was in –

JL: In Henderson. She helped me get through plane geometry, so I was a little bit different. The people I went to school with there . . .

SL: In North Carolina?

JL: Yes – knew I was different.

SL: Because you had a different attitude about things racial?

JL: Yes. So then we were in Dayton when the Civil Rights Act of 1954 [*Brown v. Board*] was passed, and I remember thinking then – I shook my head and thought – It will take a generation for this to get straightened out. Well, it is two generations now, and we still have not quite straightened it out, so my prognostication was off.

SL: The 1954 *Brown* decision?

JL: Yes. Anyway, when we came here I was pregnant with my third child [James].

He was born in January 1957. About six months later we got campus housing. We were living in Eastside Garden Apartments, "Gainesville's Finest," as it says on the sign [laughter]. And they are still there.

SL: [Were you] both enrolled as students?

JL: No. He was the only student. He was getting G.I. Bill and working half time and going to school full time, and I was taking care of the kids. He was considered an out-of-state student, but he was able to get waivers for a couple of years. Then in 1958 the state of Florida was in a budget crunch, and they said, "You cannot have that waiver anymore." We did not have enough to pay the out-of-state tuition, but we had lived here about three years by that time, so that was when we dropped out of school – he dropped out of school – and we went to Sarasota for a year, and he worked for an architect.

Then we came back because by that time we had "established residency," which was too bad because it was a big waste of time. He lost a year, and he was kind of discouraged. Architecture was a five-year program anyway, so he switched to landscape and finished up in two more years.

SL: So he graduated in –

JL: I think it was 1961.

SL: So you had seen Jim Crow America long before you got to Gainesville.

JL: Yes. When we came here and saw the signs that said "white" and "colored" – I used to let my kids drink out of the colored water fountain at Sears when it was downtown on South Main Street, and I remember these little old ladies [saying,] "Look at this!" Their eyebrows went up to their foreheads, and [they said,] "Oh, dear!" But my kids did not know any different. I mean, they could not read. The same kind of water was coming out of one tank as was coming out of the other. So those were my little things. And there were some things like some kind of a game going on at the Citizens Field and they played "Dixie," and I did not stand up. Oh, let me tell you. People looked at me real hard.

One of the other things – this was later on, probably in my Student Group [for Equal Rights] days – was there was this Dixie Cream Donut Shop on North Main Street, and there were two doors that were right next to each other – one was for whites and one for colored. When you went in there was a wall, but the counter was the same counter, and the same guy served both sides. He went back and forth.

SL: So the wall went from the doors to the counter and stopped.

JL: Yes. Or maybe to the other end. Anyway, he served both ends of the counter. One day I went in, and there was a white cop in there talking to the proprietor. I walked in, and he said, "You can buy it over there." I said, "No, this is all right." I bought my donuts and walked out.

SL: On the colored side.

JL: Yes. I said, "I do not mind." Those are my ways of making a statement. Actually, that water fountain thing was way before I was even in with the student group.

SL: Before you got involved with the student group, did you join any clubs, groups, organizations?

JL: No, I was way too busy.

SL: With the kids.

JL: Yes. Now, we did at one point belong to the University Lutheran Church. That was when we lived on campus. But when Ted graduated and we moved out--we moved to Highland Court Manor, north of NE 23rd Avenue near 10th Street--some of the people at the University Lutheran Church [decided to form a new church]. The church was growing, and the town was growing, so they started a new church called Gethsemane Lutheran [now at 4011 NW 34th Street]. They used to meet at Metcalfe Elementary School until they had a place [on NE 23rd Avenue].

So the year that I was with the Student Group, one of the other bits of civil disobedience that I did – and this was after the arrest in Ocala – was on Palm Sunday of 1964. I took a black family to Sunday school and church. It was a man and his wife and two children. That created a stir, because I did not tell the minister. I did not tell anybody I was bringing them.

SL: What sorts of people made up the congregation of this church? Was it faculty folk, a mixture of faculty and local?

JL: It was a mixture. There were some town people [and] there were some University people, I would say middle-class types. One worked for the telephone company. There was an insurance man.

Anyway, I will tell you: the interesting thing was that that afternoon I had a visit from the church elders, so to speak, who were very upset.

SL: They came to your house?

JL: Oh, yes. They said: "This is school property. Blacks are not allowed on school property." I said, "So?" That had been the year that I was the second grade Sunday school teacher, I was a Cub Scout den mother, and I was working half time and going to school full time. And I went to jail. That was a very big year! So I told them that the Sunday school lesson that day was about when the Jews did not have a temple, and they met out in the open. I said: "We can meet out in the open here. I have a big front yard." Anyway, they kept telling me all these things. It could jeopardize their fund raising for the new sanctuary so they could move out of the school and blah blah blah. Anyway, I said, "Well, thank you for coming by and telling me that, but really I do not see any problem," or words to that effect. "But if you do not mind, I am working on a political science paper that is due tomorrow, and I would like to work on it." They disrupted my day [laughter].

SL: Did you continue as the Sunday school teacher after that?

JL: Well, as a matter of fact, I stayed till the end of the year, just to aggravate them. You had better take that part out [laughter]. No, that is OK. We will let it lay.

SL: You can edit it out.

JL: I stayed until the end of the [school] year, and then the church treasurer or somebody came to see me to ask what my donation was going to be for the following year. I said: "Well, the school I went to up in Philadelphia, Lankenau School for Girls, needs a new gym, and they are on a fund-raising quest. I think I will be sending my money to them. I do not think I will be teaching Sunday school next year." So I and my children stopped going.

SL: There is something I forgot to ask you. [Of] the schools you went to before you got to Nevada and while you were there, were any of them integrated? Or the schools in Pennsylvania?

JL: Well, let me see. In Pennsylvania up where I lived there were very few black people. I remember one time that someone said, "Here comes a black cloud," and I looked up in the sky and could not see anything. That was just their way of saying that a black person was coming. As a matter of fact, I heard one time – you know how kids take these things – "Those are kites." They said kikes. I thought, I do not see any kites. Those were Jews. I was an innocent child going around wondering what all this commotion was over or what. [There was one black girl in my fourth grade class in Kingston. Her name was Avis.]

In San Francisco in the school where I was I think there might have been some Orientals, and in Sacramento I am sure there were some Hispanics. But for the most part, outside of [Avis and] the experience at high school with the girl that

sat next to me, [blacks were not part of my school experience].

Then when I went to work for the air force in Wright Patterson Air Force Base I had a black supervisor, and she was a very nice, fair person. I worked with two other blacks. I got into an argument with one [of them] one time over principle, about something concerning work. The supervisor's name was Sara G. Price, and I respected her a lot. So the contacts I did have for the most part were positive.

SL: What about this Cub Scout pack that you were the den mother of?

JL: They were all white boys, because they all came from the same school. This was before the schools were integrated. Then when the time came and the schools were integrated, that was about the time my kids were getting older. I told them that if we ended up being zoned to be bused to Eastside [High School], they were going to Eastside.

SL: Which would be the black [school].

JL: Yes.

SL: They did not end up in a Boy Scout troop, did they?

JL: No.

SL: So when did you become a student at the University of Florida?

JL: I went to work for the school when we got back from Sarasota; I got a job with academic affairs for about three months, and then I went to the physics department. That was in 1959. You could take a free course if you were a full-time employee, so I did that for the next couple of years. I was able to transfer in the year and a half I had from California, which came to forty-seven hours. Then I took one course at a time. I really did not know what I was going to major in. I had always said I would never be a teacher because my mother's sister was a teacher and my father's brother and his wife were teachers, and they were kind of – I did not like them too well [laughter]. They were sourpusses. I guess teaching can do that to you, and I thought, I do not want to be a teacher in public [schools].

Anyway, I decided that I would teach because what it would do was I would have my summers free with my children. I was interested in social studies, so I majored in secondary social studies. Somewhere along the line, though, I never thought to ask and nobody ever told me that it was an overcrowded field. So by the time I graduated [in April 1965 with a B.A.E.] there not any [jobs]. English

was full, social studies was full. It was in the sciences that they needed people. By 1963 I was a full-time student and working half time. Well, I was also doing the Student Group stuff, too; I was doing the coordination thing of the pickets. [We had a telephone tree. I would call several people telling them the schedule and where we needed people, and each of them called a few others. That was how we arranged it.] I mean, boy, it was busy! You never sat still.

I remember it was either that winter or the next winter when it was very cold. Oh, it was so cold! I used to sit all wrapped up in a blanket trying to study at night. I had heat in the house, but it was just a very cold winter.

Anyway, I took one course at a time, and I got through the humanities and all the other prerequisites and everything. I got to the point where I was able to quit my full-time job and go to school full time and work part time.

SL: And raise children.

JL: Well, yes. Somewhere around there – Let me see. What year was that? I guess it was around 1961 my husband and I got divorced, so that made it a little bit harder, too.

SL: And he started teaching at the University at that point?

JL: Yes. But we were divorced by that time. Of course, the big thing [with] the Student Group affair was in the fall of 1963.

SL: What got you involved with the Student Group [for Equal Rights] in the first place?

JL: [The following is from a statement made by June Littler on May 20, 1963.] [On March 15, 1963, I went to hear a lecture by Hungarian-born Hans Kohn, about seventy years of age, who is a world-noted authority on nationalism. The impact of what he had to say, and learning what I was in HY 246 (U.S. history from 1877 to the present), made me realize that my altruistic feelings and ambitions for the poor, misguided, troubled lands to the south, while noble, were a little incongruous in light of the facts that I had chosen to ignore or was not really aware of (like about 90 percent of the people in this country). That is, before we can do anything about democratizing the rest of the world, we had better get busy and see that we practice it here in the U.S. So I decided to forget about changing my major to history (as I had thought I could just as easily study Spanish as education) and intended to see that at least my children get a foreign language and that they grow up with an understanding of the past and the implications that it holds for the future and to be prepared and to work for it, because so far one of our biggest mistakes has been to sit on our "laurels" and

let things coast along taking care of themselves, which as you can see has put us in a big mess, and it is going to take a lot of blood, sweat, and tears--going easy on the blood, I hope – to right the wrongs done to our "second-class citizens," to really make an impression on the rising masses in the world that democracy really does mean something and can work better for each man than totalitarianism, etc.]

There was something in the [*Florida Alligator*] that said they were forming a group. At this time all these things had been happening, and the things had been going on up in Birmingham. I think that was before. Anyway, it got to the point that things were so bad, I mean, it was a powder keg. Everybody had an opinion one way or the other, and it was not good news. I said, "I have to do something, because, number one, I just cannot sit around and do nothing." I had a little bit of a different viewpoint than people who had been born here. I mean, after all, I was in Pennsylvania, [and] I had gone to California. As a matter of fact, the summer of that year we were there I had forgotten that we had gone up to Chelan, Washington, and picked apples, my mother and I. I do not know if it was because she needed the money or what, because we were migrant workers that summer, I guess. But we picked apples. So I had seen a little bit more of the world than a lot of people had who had not been born twenty-five miles from Gainesville or others in the South who had not been very far.

It just was not right, and I just could not sit here and do nothing. On top of that, what if later on in life my kid said to me, "Mother, what did you do?" I would have been very embarrassed and humiliated to say, "Nothing." So it was something that had to be done. I mean, it was a crisis, and there was no more sitting around on my butt twiddling my thumbs doing nothing.

SL: So you saw an announcement in the *Alligator*?

JL: Yes, that there was going to be an organizing thing for students and that we were going to support something or other. Marshall Jones [professor of psychology and psychiatry] was the faculty advisor, and –

SL: Austin Creel [professor of religion].

JL: Yes. So whatever else was happening – [I was not one of] the officers of the group, the main spearhead leadership of the group. I was not part of the upper echelon. I was one of the soldiers.

SL: You were a nontraditional student.

JL: That is right, because I was older, to begin with, except that I think Colin [president of the Student Group for Equal Rights] was a veteran, and he was

older, too, but I do not know how old he was in relation to me.

SL: Do you have any memories of early organizational meetings?

JL: We met in churches, and I think the First Presbyterian Student Center was one, and I think the Episcopal church was another one.

SL: Perhaps the Jewish student center, the Hillel?

JL: Yes. We met several places. See, one of the other things that was different about my involvement with them was that I could not always get out and be someplace when they were because if my ex-husband was not willing to come over or was not able because of his schedule to come over to take care of the children, I did not go anyplace at night. That was one of my functions – I could phone from home. The contribution I could make was phoning from home ahead of time when we were setting up pickets.

SL: So you were phone coordinator.

JL: Yes, I was the phone coordinator. Calling on the phone was not my favorite thing. I had a terrible time at the Wright Air Development Center, because I had to call a colonel's secretary and ask her where the answer to a certain piece of mail was. "Oh! I have to talk to the colonel's secretary!" But I finally got over that and could do it better. Anyway, that is what I did. I was not at a whole lot of those meetings, though I was at some.

SL: Did you do any of the picketing?

JL: Yes, I did some, especially on C.I. Day [College Inn Day].

SL: Tell me about C.I. Day. That is a very interesting happening.

JL: Well, we had these little signs. We did a lot of planning for this thing.

SL: Do you remember who came up with the idea of a reverse picket at the College Inn?

JL: No.

SL: OK. You had small signs?

JL: Yes. We had been picketing at the College Inn because they would not serve students of color, and it had been getting hot and heavy. I was just mortified when one of the chemistry professors that I was only partially acquainted with

crossed the picket line! I could not believe it! This was in the fall of 1963, I guess. We had these little signs in circles that we had handwritten that said, "I do not buy at the C.I."

SL: You were wearing them on your clothes?

JL: Yes. They were paper with a straight pin stuck on there. Then the idea came up: What if we could show them that a lot of people would come who did not mind if they served black students? That would be very good, wouldn't it? Well, yes. OK. So we planned ahead for this, and we advertised. So C.I. Day was going to be when everybody would go over there who supported them opening their services to black students. And lo and behold, people got in line, and the place was crammed. The line went clear around the block and up 17th Street. Oh, it was wonderful! [laughter]

SL: The *Alligator* reported that more than 4,000 crammed themselves in there.

JL: Really? Oh, boy!

SL: So you went in there and ate.

JL: Yes.

SL: What sort of establishment was the College Inn? How would you describe it?

JL: I did not go in there very often. It was a cafeteria; I do not think there was table service. It was convenient and it was fast, and the location was very good for the establishment and for the students, so it was a popular hangout. It was open real late at night, and kids who were studying late often went over there, too.

SL: Did the reverse picket on C.I. Day work? Was that effective?

JL: It did not happen immediately, no. I am sort of a blank as to what the final happenstance of that whole thing was, when it came about, when they opened up, when they relented. I am sure it did not happen right away. I think I would have remembered that.

SL: Well, I am sure you remember when President Kennedy was shot.

JL: Oh, yes. We were still picketing.

SL: I want you to tell me what you remember about the Kennedy assassination, including what it did to the student group's activities.

JL: Well, I think during the fall, during that time period, we had gotten a big ad up from faculty who supported us and our activities.

SL: In *The Gainesville Sun*.

JL: Yes. Was it in the *Alligator*, too, or was it in *The Gainesville Sun*?

SL: Probably. The one I am familiar with was in the *Sun*, a big box ad with a list of faculty members.

JL: Yes. We did that, because I remember soliciting some of the faculty in the chemistry department. It was a dollar a name or something like that to get them in there. Anyway, there was a donation.

SL: So you went and said, "Professor Such-and-such," and talked him into it.

JL: Yes. Do you remember what date that was, the C.I. Day?

SL: November 6 [1963].

JL: Wow. Anyway, on November 22, which was a Friday, I was working in the chemistry department. We were getting out a grant to go to the National Science Foundation, and it had to be postmarked by the end of the day. We were doing some last-minute stuff on it and collating and this, that, and the other thing, and all of a sudden this news came through on the radio that President Kennedy had been shot in Dallas and [that] his condition was unknown. We said, "God!" We could not believe it. But we still had to keep moving to get this stuff going. Then one of the Argentinean graduate students came by who was not even a part of what we were doing, and he said: "Did you hear? This is terrible!" He was so upset. I said to myself, He could not be dead. That would not happen. It was my denial of something like this. Nobody knew for sure anyway. But he was flabbergasted. He was sure this man was dead, and it was just about the worst thing that could have ever happened in the world because it is not supposed to happen here in the United States. "Oh, my God!" It was not until much later in the afternoon when I got home that I found it was really, really true.

Well, we had a meeting, and it was either that weekend or on Monday. We were all flabbergasted.

SL: The student group.

JL: Yes. In fact, I do not think it could have been that weekend. It must have been Monday, because by Sunday [Lee Harvey] Oswald was shot dead in front of everybody. So we decided on Monday that it just was not appropriate [to keep

picketing]. Everybody was shattered, to begin with.

SL: The University was also closed Monday.

JL: Oh, it was? I do not even remember that. We would call off the picketing until further notice, until we decided what to do.

As time went on, I do not know how the word came down to us, but I found out that the blacks in Ocala had asked for us to come in to help them with this picket thing. We did not initiate it.

SL: But you do not know how, specifically, [the arrangements were made].

JL: No. Marshall [Jones] will probably have better information on that. So we decided that we would go in. Now, we did not have a big meeting and say: "Okay, everybody. Sign up to go picket in Ocala." It was more or less a quieter meeting, a smaller group. In fact, we did not let the whole group know about it because there was some concern on some people's parts [that] some of the more radical people would cause trouble. So we took the safe people, [including] good old conservative June [laughter].

SL: Were there factions within the student group?

JL: Not that I knew of, but, you see, I was not really –

SL: You were not in the middle.

JL: Right.

SL: So the safe, conservative people went.

JL: Yes. The ones who were going to keep their cool went. There were going to be two groups: one in the morning, and one in the afternoon. I signed up for the morning one only because I felt I would get it done in the morning and come hoe in the afternoon, because it was Saturday.

SL: The groups were going to travel separately?

JL: Yes, because some people could not go for all day. Most everybody could not go for all day. We were not *willing* to go all day [laughter]. So the group I went with went down early, and I remember there was some concern. I had neglected to do this before I left, but I knew I ought to write my will, so I wrote my will. I was going to mail it when I got to a mail box.

SL: Why did you feel you had to write your will?

JL: Just in case something happened. I really expected tomatoes and bricks when we got there. Luckily, that did not happen, but I was prepared for that. So we went to the church and we got our instructions, and we got our picket signs.

SL: This was a black church?

JL: Yes. We thought we would walk up to the courthouse square; it was maybe ten or twelve blocks, if I recall correctly. It was within a walkable distance, but we decided we had better go in cars because even if we were walking on the sidewalk they would probably arrest us for parading without a license. So we went up in cars. Two students were on each corner with picket signs, and a faculty observer was on each block, so there were twelve of us.

SL: A total of twelve went.

JL: Yes, a total of twelve went in the morning.

SL: Do you recall any whites participating in the picket who were not University of Florida students or faculty?

JL: No. We were the only whites.

SL: So you started the pickets. Now, the *St. Petersburg Times* article that you gave me mentioned that the women were wearing black veils and the men were wearing black hearts. Do you recall that? Did you wear a black veil?

JL: No, I did not wear a black veil. I might have worn a black armband, but I did not wear a veil. I do not know where they got that. Maybe some of the blacks were, but I do not think any of us white ladies did.

SL: So you started picketing.

JL: Oh, yes. The block I was on was on the south side of the square, and there were several black young people with us. We did not block the doors. We walked up and down the sidewalk near the curb; we walked down straight and just sort of turned around in a loop and went back and forth and back and forth. We got there, my guess is, around 10:00 or so. I think we were supposed to be there at 10:00, [but] we probably did not get there that early.

As we were walking this one particular time there was a commotion going on over on the courthouse side facing east. There was a group of people standing there, and they were all arguing about something. You could hear a sort of

mumble of noise, and some of them were waving their arms. It looked like an octopus. These arms were waving like this, and it was a strange sight. The girl that was in front of me sort of stopped, and I almost bumped into her. I said: "Keep moving. Keep moving," so we kept going. We were getting ready to break for lunch. We were going to quit at 12:30, I guess, and then another group was going to come in either at 12:30 or 1:00.

Anyway, all of a sudden, at around 12:15 a cop grabbed me by the arm. At first I thought he said, "You are under arrest for disorderly conduct by means of disturbing the peace." Now, after I thought about it later, maybe he said, "You are under arrest for disturbing the peace by means of disorderly conduct." I never got that straight. Anyway, the three of us who were on that side of the street were plunked into a cop car. There were four of them. They took the three people from each block, and they took us down to the city hall police station.

SL: Which faculty member was with you on your side of the building?

JL: [I think] it was Dave Sheehan, because Ed Richer [instructor of humanities and social sciences] was up on the other side where the coffee shop was, where all the locals were in there palavering early on.

SL: Did a mob form on the side that you were on?

JL: A "mob"?

SL: The newspaper said there was a "white mob" that appeared.

JL: No. I think that must have been the octopus group [laughter].

SL: So they grabbed you and put you in the police car. Then what happened?

JL: Well, actually, the way I got shoved in, the picket sign kind of shoved in up underneath my chin. It was a little uncomfortable, but I finally managed to wiggle myself around. Anyway, we all got deposited at the city hall police department.

SL: Now, who all did they arrest?

JL: They only arrested the white picketers. It was a clear-cut case of discrimination.

SL: And they grabbed the faculty observers, too, who were not –

JL: Who were not picketing.

SL: Why do you think they did that?

JL: We were the outside agitators. I mean, after all! "You, you, and you" [laughter].

SL: Did they call you "outside agitators"?

JL: In the newspaper they did, yes.

SL: What did you think of that?

JL: We smiled.

SL: Did you feel, Yes, we are outside agitators?

JL: Well – [laughter] no, because if we had been outside agitators we would have gone in without being asked. But we had been asked. I did not consider us as outside agitators.

SL: So they charged you with either disturbing the peace or disorderly conduct.

JL: Yes.

SL: How long were you in jail?

JL: About six hours. We went in about 12:15, and they took our fingerprints at city hall. Then they decided that there was not room enough for us there. Meanwhile, at city hall I said, "I need to make a phone call." I called my friend who was babysitting my children back here in Gainesville, and I said: "I have been somewhat delayed, Nancy. I will not be home for a couple hours yet." She said, "Well, do not worry about it." Then they took us over to the new Marion County jail and took our fingerprints twice more – one for the county and one for the FBI was my understanding. Of course, pictures were taken at the city hall. I do not remember if they took pictures at the county, too. Anyway, there were six of us, I guess, six women and six men. But there were eight students and four faculty.

SL: June Littler, Linda Devin, Tom Berkshear, his sister Mary, Robert Canny –

JL: He was one of the faculty members.

SL: Marilyn Sokoloff, Julian Brown, and Nadia Hellinger.

JL: Yes. Nadia and I and Dave Sheehan were on the south side.

SL: And then Marshall Jones, Austin Creel, [David Sheehan], and Ed Richer [were the faculty members].

JL: Yes. I think Marshall was on the east [and] Ed was on the north. That means Bob was on the West.

SL: Had you made any preparations to pay bail? Were you expecting to be arrested before you left Gainesville?

JL: No, because I was expecting to be home in the afternoon. We were quitting to go to lunch. I had not even brown-bagged anything. By the time we got over to the courthouse it must have been past 1:00. We had missed lunch. There was nothing to do. There was a blanket on each [double] bunk, so we kind of rolled up and took a little nap. [laughter] Then [about 5:00 p.m.] they served dinner. There was sort of a solid wall over the barred area. There was a slot where they put in the trays, and Marilyn said later that [when] the guy was passing it in she looked underneath and spoke to him. She said later, "His eyes were big as saucers" [laughter]. He thought, Wow! God!

SL: A cage full of Commies.

JL: Yes, that is right! I mean, what is this? Whew! We had hamburger patties, collard greens, baked beans, bread, and I think it was instant coffee, but it was coffee in a styrofoam cup. It was a large room; there was enough room for eight women in there. There was an open toilet and an open shower and a picnic-type table for you to eat on. There was this bowl of white crystals, and Marilyn thought it was sugar, so she put some in her coffee. I do not take sugar, so I was drinking mine [black]. She took a drink of hers and went, "Wheew!" It was salt – salt in an open bowl. That was kind of interesting.

SL: So who bailed you out?

JL: Well, we never did hear for sure. They had gone to Orlando, the first bail bondsman – this is what we heard. They would not accept him for some reason, so then they had to go to St. Augustine.

SL: Who is "they"?

JL: I do not know [laughter]. You will have to ask Marshall. Maybe the local minister was instrumental in that. We got bailed out around 6:30, and one of the students, Jim Harmeling, as a matter of fact, said: "Hi, June. How are you doing?" I said fine. He said, "You know, when word got out on the radio that the arrest had been made, people from all over the county – blacks – came in to join the picketing for the rest of the afternoon." What they did then was put together

this big mass rally at the church.

SL: That night.

JL: That night. When we finished there and got our belongings back, they took us over to the church. As we got there I said, "I have to make a phone call." I called my friend and said: "Nancy, I am still delayed. I will not be there for a while yet." She asked, "Are you part of that group that got in trouble there today?" and I said yes. She said, "Well, do not worry about it." I said okay.

By the time I got back down to the church basement I was the last one in line. There was this good fried chicken. It was a good supper. Anyway, she started giving me some beans, too, along with the chicken, and I said, "Uh, hold the beans." She said, "You must have been to jail." I laughed and said: "Yes. How could you tell?" She said, "No one who has been to jail wants beans." I thought that was funny.

Then we had that rally upstairs with singing and this, that, and the other thing. We had heard that "they" were waiting for us at the county line out near Ruby's, so we decided that we would go home via Williston, which we did. They also told us that we would be arraigned on Monday, and we were rather aggravated about that because it was an extra inconvenience. We felt that if one of us did not go, they would get us on another technicality, so we decided we all had to go back on Monday, which we did.

SL: And they fined you? They dropped the charges?

JL: No. The guy said: "The judge is not here. There won't be any proceedings at this time. We will let you know." Blah, blah, blah. As we walked down the stairs, Ed Richer said, "That is the strangest arraignment I have ever seen." He said: "I have seen arraignments" – he used to work as a reporter, I guess – "on streets, in jail, and other kinds of places. Why this could not be done I have no idea." This [court]room was on the second floor, and we were going down the stairs. As we were going down the stairs there was another man on the landing, and he said, "Well, if you did not like that arraignment, come on back up and I will do one." Everybody just sort of looked at him. We do not know if he was the judge who just chose not to be in that room. It was obvious they did not have a leg to stand on for us because they only arrested the white picketers; they did not arrest any of the black picketers. Now, if they had – well, I do not know. Anyway, be that as it may, we left.

SL: And they never charged you?

JL: No, and I never heard a thing until years later, actually, when I finally saw

something in something I read within the last six months that the charges were dropped. Oh, I think it was in that FBI Freedom of Information request, as a matter of fact, that I sent for.

SL: So what did you do after that? The Student Group for Equal Rights stopped its picketing activities by the time of the Christmas break, and I do not think anything started back up in 1964. I know you had said that you worked as a tutor.

JL: Yes. That was the following summer.

SL: What about voter registration?

JL: Oh, yes. Was there a big election in 1964? There certainly was, so we did voter registration. We went out in teams. Actually, some of the people I went with were not student group people. They were members of the community. I canvassed with Al Daniels and Delano Filer. We went to Kennedy Homes, and I also was with a group [that went to the A. Quinn Jones area]. We went in groups of two, three, or four.

SL: Knocking on doors?

JL: Yes.

SL: Mainly targeting blacks?

JL: Blacks, to get them registered.

SL: How successful was this registration drive?

JL: Well, I think we got some. I mean, it was not a landslide, but it was a foot in the door. The fact that they saw some white people in their neighborhoods was sort of something different.

SL: Do you have any memories of any black students at the University of Florida? The University of Florida integrated in the very early 1960s, but there was only a handful of black students there. Do you remember anything about that?

JL: Well, I did not have any in any of my classes.

SL: [Were there] any in the student group?

JL: No. The only thing I remember is we were working with some community people, one of whom was Charles Chestnut, but I do not think he was a University student yet.

SL: I know he was in the NAACP Youth Council.

JL: Yes. We worked with them.

SL: Tell me about tutoring in the summer of 1964.

JL: OK. We had a little program [in which] we took seventh-grade girls (the ones I was working with) [and worked with them on their basic English and math skills]. There were about somewhere between five and ten. It varied because they did not all come all the time. We did it on a Saturday, I think it was, in one of the classrooms at the University of Florida. It was just sort of getting used to using a dictionary. We had some exercises that we did on writing and some composition and also math. I have not dug out those papers. I do not know where they are.

SL: You were acting as a member of the student group?

JL: Yes, I think so.

SL: Had you come into contact with the Gainesville Women for Equal Rights [GWER] yet?

JL: Liz Jones, I guess, was my first contact.

SL: Elizabeth [Jones]?

JL: Yes. She was part of that program. My next contact with Liz was when I started working for the public library in 1966. From 1965 to 1966 I worked at Bronson High School, which was really grades one through twelve.

SL: You graduated in 1965, and you were teaching.

JL: Yes. I was the librarian out there. That is how I got into library science. Because I was commuting I did not do anything with anybody that year, even though I had been called by someone from Gainesville Women for Equal Rights to join them. I said, "I would love to, but I just cannot this year."

SL: So even though you knew Marshall Jones, you did not know [his wife] Beverly.

JL: That is right.

SL: So you spent a year as the librarian at Bronson, and then you got a job –

JL: At the Gainesville Public Library.

SL: Downtown.

JL: Yes. It was in a building that is no longer in existence, but it was on the spot where the new one is. When they moved across the street to the interim one it became the traffic court, if you remember that building. I think I had also gone to some kind of a party or something somewhere along the line. [I think it was at Sam Proctor's home.] I do not remember when I first met Jean Chalmers [but I do remember she was at that party].

Anyway, from 1965 to 1966 I was sort of out of everything because I had a scholarship to pay back to the state, so that year that I taught in Bronson took care of that.

SL: So you got the state paid back.

JL: Yes. Then I worked in the public library for a year. Liz Jones was working as a volunteer with the public library, and we were doing something concerning the indexing of *The Gainesville Sun*. That was about the first year of that. I had a good experience working there that year.

SL: Did you do the index?

JL: I was one of the early indexers. Florence Dunlap was the librarian in charge.

SL: So you two were working on indexing the *Sun*.

JL: Yes. Then that following year I went to work for Santa Fe Community College. By that time I felt that I was free enough from some obligations I had been tied up with and [that] I could be active with GWER. So I caught up with them. When did Best Day of the Week Start?

SL: I believe it was 1969 or 1970.

JL: OK. I remember we were also doing some work with voter registration. Grace Knight, as a matter of fact, was an instrument in that respect, about getting people going. That was when I met Sidney Knight, too, because as a member of GWER I was the representative to the Coordinating Council of Concern, CCC.

SL: What exactly was that?

JL: Well, it was just sort of a group of representatives from different organizations that got together to find out what everybody else was doing. If there was something someone was doing that they could coordinate or piggy-back on or help with, they did. But mostly it was in respect to how the racial situation was

going in town.

SL: So was your main GWER activity Best Day of the Week, education, things like that?

JL: Well, I was not all that involved in the Best Day of the Week as some of the others were, but we did other things like, as I said, voter registration. I think I worked on that mostly, because that was also what interested me in the League of Women Voters [LWV]. Voter registration has been my major interest, more or less. As time went on and I became an officer in GWER and we did the HANDS project, I had some other obligations and things that I had to pay more attention to. In the long run, voter registration is my thing.

SL: How long had you been a member of the League of Women Voters?

JL: If you ever find out what year Mary Anne Sherman was president [of LWV], that is when I joined. Do you have League of Women Voters stuff on you?

SL: I can probably find that out. It was the same year? OK.

JL: Yes. So the 1964 election was when we did a whole bunch of stuff as a student group in that summer. Then I interned the fall of 1964 at P. K. Yonge [Lab School].

SL: But you did not want to intern at P. K. Yonge.

JL: No. I had been acquainted with Tom Coward, who was a teacher of social studies at Lincoln High School. Because he was in social studies and I had to intern someplace and felt we ought to do something about integrating the schools, [I thought] this might be a good way to start the ball rolling. He agreed; he was willing to have me for an intern. We talked about this, and I went back and filled out the papers that I needed to and turned them in. The professor who coordinated all this was a little bit aghast at it, but he tried to float it by the school board.

It did not work, and he called me into his office and said, "There will be no school in this county that will take you. You are going to have to change what you said on that [application form]." It was sort of a statement of philosophy that I had. I looked at it and said, "I can't change it." What could I do? It was a matter of principle. So he said, "Oh, God." Lo and behold, they found a place for me at P. K. Yonge.

The interesting thing is that the teacher that I interned with had been the teacher who Barbara Gallant [school board member] had interned with the previous

spring. We both ran for school board: I ran for school board in 1974 and did not get elected, [and] Barbara Gallant ran later and was elected. [laughter]

SL: Tell me how you became president of the Gainesville Women for Equal Rights.

JL: Well, I guess they needed somebody, and it was somebody else's turn, because a couple of other people had already had it. [laughter] It must have been my turn.

SL: In 1971 they elected you. I guess the next thing would be the HANDS project, which was the major [project of GWER].

JL: Yes. It was the outgrowth of Best Day of the Week. A committee had written up a grant and submitted it, and lo and behold it was funded from money that was available through I forget which act. Do you know which act it was?

SL: I have it written down. [It was the Emergency School Assistance Act, September 1970. Ed.]

JL: Well, it was intended to help ease the pain of integration. It was also to help the parents become involved with their children's school and their children and their schooling.

SL: So it was to bring black and white children together.

JL: Yes, and to make the black parents feel – this is my feeling – a little more at ease in interacting with the school. After all, this was sort of a wrenching experience, all of a sudden not having [their own school], instead of having an all-black school going to an integrated school. I mean, this was a new experience. It was to help the community and the people who were intimately involved beyond the front lines, so to speak.

SL: Did you feel that it helped the HANDS project be successful?

JL: Yes. As a matter of fact, some of the people that we hired – That was an experience in itself. We had job descriptions and we had to advertise and we interviewed people, so we were able to identify and hire some black people who, later on, with this experience on their résumé, would go on to do better things. Whatever happened with the children, I think we also did some good in the people that we hired.

SL: I know that the HANDS program went for two years, from 1973-1975. The first year you had five schools included in it, and the next year it was expanded to ten. Then it did not get refunded. Do you remember why it did not get

refunded? What happened with that?

JL: From my remembrance, the funds on the federal level were drying up or were being re-allocated.

SL: And try as you might, you could not get [any more money].

JL: I am trying to remember who the person was that was working on that harder than anybody else. Ginny [Albury] might have some more information on that.

SL: I understand Mitzi Austin was heavily involved in that.

JL: Yes.

SL: There were a couple of other things going on in GWER at this time. One of them, or at least from reading *Focus* I get the impression, was that the plight of migrant workers became a big deal, and you all were boycotting lettuce and things like that. Do you remember [anything about that]?

JL: I am trying to remember how often we met. I know that board meetings were very difficult. They were exhausting. It was generally on a weeknight, and we met somewhere around 7:30 or so, and sometimes everybody did not get together until 8:00 or 8:30. Then we sometimes had a tendency to go off on tangents, and it was real hard to get all the business done and get out. We could not get out by 10:00; it generally lasted longer than that. So those were kind of on the tough side.

Now, the full membership meetings we had in different public places and churches and stuff. As I told my friend in Wyoming, some parts of my life and my past are just a blur. I cannot tell you. I do remember that most of our action and the communication we had in the group was through the newsletter.

SL: What about male membership?

JL: Oh, there were probably a few. Sidney Knight, I think, paid his dues once, and there might have been a couple of other male members. Did the membership list ever end up in the archives, the cards?

SL: The membership cards, which start in 1964, were only updated to about 1968. Then typed lists [exist] until 1972 or 1973. The question of male membership begins to be debated in the *Focus* in mid 1973 and into 1974. The reason I brought that up is I was wondering if that was a battle, if that was a big contentious thing or [not].

JL: [It was] probably the same way it was in the League of Women Voters. The women had been pushed out of so many other things before that by the time they got their act together and were doing real well, [they asked each other,] "Why should we let the men in?" [laughter] But I do think there might have been a fear on the part of some, although I do not think it was a majority, that if men came, they would take over. I do not think that was part of the thing.

I think the thing when GWER started – we did not die a sudden death. We sort of slowly expired. It was probably because by that time a lot of people who had been very active in this thing were women who either had been working at home and already had a degree and went to work or women who had been working at home and went to school and then went to work. So a lot of that energy that had been in there sort of got turned into other things, [including] their own families. I know in some cases families had been neglected. And it took an awful lot of energy, and after a while you get burned out.

SL: Is that what happened to you? You got burned out?

JL: Well, around that time I was trying to finish up [a master's degree]. The Women's Political Caucus/Equal Rights Amendment [ERA] bandwagon started rolling.

SL: Was GWER heavily involved in campaigning for that?

JL: I think that we had kind of shot our wad locally, because our purpose was on local conditions. ERA was a much bigger thing. And NOW [National Organization for Women] came into being, [as well as] the National Women's Political Caucus, and the League of Women Voters took it on as a big thing. So all of a sudden all of that energy that we had been devoting to local stuff here went into something else that was bigger, and it was with groups that were better organized [and] had more clout and visibility, so that is where, I think, a lot of energy went. I remember being at a meeting – it was the Women's Political Caucus – in Leesburg, and we were talking about the Equal Rights Amendment and this, that, and the other thing, and voting rights and civil rights. Someone said, "Who all in here is going to run for office?" I and the person next to me and a whole lot of other people stood up. The woman next to me was Donna Faxon. She looked at me and said, "Are you going to run for office?" I said, "Yes, I guess so." [laughter] She [later] ran for the state senate; I ran for the school board in 1974.

SL: At any point in time during the late 1960s, did you join a feminist consciousness-raising group?

JL: Well, I joined the Alachua Women's Political Caucus.

SL: What about Gainesville NOW?

JL: I did join Gainesville NOW for a while, and I paid my national dues, too, but I was interested in the political end of it. I was not interested in the psychological end of it. But I was a member.

SL: What I am sort of moving toward is did you become a feminist at any point during this period?

JL: Well, I consider myself a feminist. I do not know whether I woke up one day and said, "I am a feminist," or whether it gradually dawned on me. See, part of the thing was my grandmother, my mother's mother, was a single parent, and she worked very hard to put her girls through school. Remember, I told you it was very important to her that her daughters get [an education]. Then when my mother never finished [she was very disappointed]. I will tell you that as years went on my mother read an awful lot, and she was much more educated than a lot of people who had degrees. So she was able to compensate, even though she did not have degrees. She was somewhat bitter about the whole thing, because she said that "it really does not matter how much you know. What matters is how many letters you have after your name." I could not believe it at the time.

Anyway, I knew that it was very important for her, and the fact that I had sort of disappointed her in that respect – And she died young; she was fifty when she died in 1959. That was the year I went back to school. In a way I was not going to school for me: I was going to school for my mother. It was sort of a piece of unfinished business, and I did not know what I was going to do. All I knew was I really ought to get this degree because it was very important to my mother.

Luckily, when the time came I just happened to be in the right place at the right time when something happened. They needed a librarian someplace. Here I had a social studies degree, and they said, ""OK, we will take you, but you have to promise to take a library science course." I thought, No problem. No problem. The first one I took was cataloging, which is the hardest library science course you can take. That was the year I was commuting to Bronson, and I was taking one course one night a week at the University.

So I sort of fell into it. [I thought to myself,] I am in a job I love, and I look forward to going to work every day. I am not planning on retirement at age whatever. I am going as long as I can go.

SL: So you were fairly content with your job and with your position in life in the late 1960s, early 1970s. You said that you did not get into the psychological part of the women's movement.

JL: Right. Even though I was a shy person and introverted, I had this feeling of empathy for others, mainly because I had been "discriminated against" because of my stuttering. I knew how it felt, and I knew it was not right, and the fact that when the time came and I knew I had to do something, I did something. So by that time I guess I had more self-confidence about myself and my place in life. There are times when things have been said either about women or about other people when I have not spoken up when I should have. Someone said something about my mother's sister one time. I could not have been more than seven or eight, and I said something in defense of my aunt. My mother said, "What a diplomat!" I did not even know what a diplomat was.

There are times when you cannot say or do what you would really like to do because in the long run it is not going to do everybody any good. Even though I went through life a lot not seeing much more beyond the tips of my fingers, there are other things I seem to see that other people cannot or have not yet. I do not have the organizational ability or the gift of gab or the other kinds of things that would help make those things come to pass, but I know that some things are possible and should be happening. I am way ahead of my time. [laughter]

SL: OK. Did you get at all involved in the antiwar or peace movement?

JL: No. My sons were getting older, and the war was going on. Males were having to register for the draft and [were] taking lottery numbers. Anyway, my oldest son graduated from high school in 1971, and he registered, but by that time things were winding down. I think that was the last year they drew the lottery. He ended up with a high number, but they did not call anybody that year, I do not think. I do not know what we would have done [if he had been called to serve in Vietnam]; I do not know.

I was thinking about that the other day when they were talking about [presidential candidate Bill] Clinton and all this other mess. I respected the people who went to Canada. Having lived through the Second World War and knowing the atrocities of Hitler and the fact that we really knew what we were fighting for, it was real hard to understand what the Sam Hill was going on over there and why we were not having the success that we did in Europe. Well, of course, the terrain was a lot different. So I was really concerned. I just kept my mouth shut on that one.

SL: This is just a lead to follow up.

JL: Go ahead.

SL: Pretty much after the HANDS project stops, GWER seems to be on the ropes and sort of fades to black.

JL: Yes.

SL: [There is] one thing I wanted to ask you. The most recent issue of *Focus* that I have been able to find is dated May 9, 1977, and it says, "June Littler, editor." Would you happen to recall or can you tell me if this is the last issue or when [the periodical ceased publication]?

JL: May 1977?

SL: Yes.

JL: Does it say anything in there about an election coming up or who the president of GWER is?

SL: I do not think so. Wait a second. New president. It just says, "Amy Sanders was vice-president [and] became president."

JL: OK. Well, Amy Sanders was a real nice black woman. She had been active in her community and in her church. She was elderly, though.

When a meeting does not get called, nobody comes. In a way, I think that is what happened. Cynthia Chestnut was the treasurer, and we had some money in the bank. We did not think to do something better with it, and by the time we got around to saying, "Well, I guess we are not going to do anything anymore," [we did not have any money left]. We had said something in there [in our constitution and by-laws] that we would give our money to blah-de-blah--it could have been a day care center or something like that. I think that is what we had in mind. But whichever bank we had the money in ate it all up in service charges.

SL: How much money are we talking about?

JL: Oh, I do not think it was more than \$180.

SL: So when Amy Sanders was president nobody was interested anymore? She did not call meetings?

JL: Well, I think that if there had been a meeting maybe we did not get enough people out. But something happened, and I think it was really in everybody's mindset that Gee, I have other things to do. I will help with the League [of Women Voters] on the ERA, or NOW, or something like that.

JL: Jean Chalmers told me that by this point she was "mothering the group along," whatever that means, and she also said that the last public thing that GWER did was protest the hiring practices of the school board in 1980. It was not hiring

enough blacks. Does that sound right to you?

JL: Yes, that sounds about right, because by that time, 1980, I was active in a couple of other political campaigns. I think that is probably what took my energy.

SL: You will have to tell me, then, about running for the school board in 1974.

JL: OK. Well, when I went to Bronson and took that library science class, I kept taking classes at the University, and I worked for the public library and took some more classes. By the time Santa Fe Community College opened, one of the bookkeepers at the public library got a job there. About six months later she said, "June, there is a job coming open in the library that you ought to apply for," which I did. Now, I did not have my master's degree yet, but I was more than halfway there. They hired me, and I finished up my master's degree in educational media at the University of Florida. But that is not a master's degree in library science, and it is not quite the equivalent. Within a couple years I saw the handwriting on the wall, so the summers of 1972, 1973, and 1974 I spent in Tallahassee working on my master's degree in library science from Florida State. That was the only place in the state you could get it.

Meanwhile, having gone to that Women's Political Caucus thing [and standing up when they asked who was running for office, I began to ask myself] What am I going to run for? [I thought] the school board is pretty good. After all, we need somebody there, [and I am interested in education]. But I was a registered Republican.

When we first came in 1956 I went down to register. Having been from Ohio where it is socially acceptable to be Republican, I said, "I want to register as Republican." The woman there at the desk said, "You can't register as Republican." I said, "What do you mean, I can't?" I could not believe my ears. She said, "Well, you will be disfranchised in all the local elections." I did not know what she was talking about, so I said, "Put me down as a Republican," and she did. You know, she was right! [laughter] I did not have to vote in any of the local elections. The only thing I got to vote for was city commission because it was nonpartisan. All the activity was in the Democratic primaries. Then it was all over. Republicans were not putting up anybody for the general elections.

Anyway, as time went and we started doing this, that, and the other thing, when Donna Faxon ran for state senate – I think it was in 1976, or whatever year that was. Let me see. George has been in twelve years [so that makes it 1980]. I changed my registration to Democrat so I could vote for her, and then I changed it back to Republican [laughter]. Then when Mary Anne Sherman ran [for the Florida House of Representatives] I changed it to Democrat, and then I changed it back to Republican [laughter].

Now, I have thought about this: Why did I do this? I answered a survey one time when I was in college during the civil rights thing, and one of the questions was: Do you consider yourself a liberal or conservative? I did not like that question because I thought, I am a liberal when it comes to social matters, but I am a conservative when it comes to financial matters. I thought, Now, isn't that interesting! because I had never thought of that before.

As years have gone on I have decided I am a flaming middle-of-the-roader. Someone said, "That makes you an independent," and I said, "Oh."

Anyway, in the course of things there was a Republican representative in Tallahassee who was asked to recommend a Republican to the Florida State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights. I did not know this woman. She just sort of heard about me through the grapevine. So that is how I got on the Florida State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights.

SL: Do you remember about when that was?

JL: It was from 1977-1986 and 1987-present.

SL: You are still involved in that?

JL: Oh, yes. Anyway, that is one of the major reasons I stay registered as a Republican, because I sure would hate a conservative Republican – Well, it is very hard to find a Republican with any credentials in civil rights – let me put it that way. At least around here. So I think, I am proud of what I did, and by George, I think I will just hang on to it.

SL: OK. Are you still a flaming middle-of-the-roader?

JL: Yes. That is because there are people across the wide spectrum, ones that are ready to fall off on the right and ones that are ready to fall off on the left. However, *most of the people are in the middle!* That is where I think the consensus and everything comes [from]. I ought to show you this thing that Cesar [Chavez] spoke about. Remind me to give that to you later. It has to do with political parties and control. The parties are sort of chit, chit, chit, and all they are after is power. They are not after the good of the community! So that is where I think the power is in the middle, because there is more of it. [That is, the middle is bigger than the left and right fringes put together.] This country is run on the bulk, and all the rest of the stuff is trash and moneyed interest – [struggles for control and power]. The great majority of the people are in this other group, and all they want to do is get along, live and let live. You know, the heck with all these other little games. Anyway, that is why I am a flaming middle-

of-the-roader. I do not know if that is good or not, but –

SL: Out of curiosity, did you vote for [Barry] Goldwater in 1964?

JL: No. I am sorry I could not vote for Mr. Goldwater in 1964. I voted for Mr. Johnson.

SL: What about 1968?

JL: Tell me who was running.

SL: Hubert Humphrey and [Richard M.] Nixon.

JL: Oh. I voted for Mr. Nixon.

SL: And the big question: What about this fall? Have you decided?

JL: Yes, I have decided. I have decided I cannot vote for Mr. [George] Bush.

SL: Well, good. [laughter] I am glad to hear that.

JL: Mr. Bush said some good things in 1980, and during the primaries I supported him, but he was not the main candidate that year. So he adjusted some of the things that he had said early on that had to do with the Equal Rights Amendment and abortion, and, at least to the best of my remembrance, that is why I thought he would do good. Anyway, since he has chosen to change his mind on that, I have changed my mind on him.

SL: OK. I guess that leaves Bill Clinton.

JL: Yes. Now, Mr. [Ross] Perot was an interesting phenomenon there. I was waiting to see who he was going to ask to be his vice-presidential candidate. Unfortunately, we will never know. I got to thinking, Gee, he might not ever find anybody. So I figured that if Perot did not pan out, Clinton had my vote.

SL: OK. I know we have been going on for a while. There is one other thing that I wanted to ask you about. Are you still a Lutheran?

JL: Oh. No, I am not. Since that little fracas concerning what happened with the black family that I took [to church with me that Sunday], I did not continue with my activities there. Now, that was 1964. My husband and I had gotten divorced in 1961. When we moved to Florida in 1956, that fall we met someone in our apartment complex who had read *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health* [by L. Ron Hubbard]. My husband became very interested in it. [He had

been in the army and was stationed in Germany, and *Dianetics* had been making the rounds among the troops.] He had grown up as a Catholic and had spent some time with the Christian Missionary Alliance trying to find himself in the universe, I guess. Anyway, I did not think too much of this. I was busy with other things.

As the years went on, we sort of parted. One of the problems was I did not understand what was going in with dianetics. I was not that interested in it. As the years went by after we had divorced, when my oldest son graduated from high school in 1971, he went out to California to be with his father. His two brothers went out that summer, too. They were due to come back, but they did not; they all stayed in California. The youngest one came back four years later.

In the midst of all this I went out at Christmastime in 1971 and took a communications course with the Church of Scientology, and that was very interesting. I was interested in that. As time went on I took a couple of other courses in Miami. At one point I had a religious experience. It was during what was called a ["training] routine." It was part of the communication process, but it is this one particular point where you are sitting facing another person, and in this part of the routine you are not speaking to them; you are just sitting there with your eyes closed. There is another part of the routine where you sit there with your eyes open, but in this part we had our eyes closed. I had been having a problem with somebody who had made me feel less than a whole person, who was in a supervisory position over me who had made me feel rotten. Anyway, as I sat there, a realization came over me that this person was intimidated by me, and that was why she was acting this way toward me. That was a big relief off my shoulders.

This was after another experience I had where I had a very terrible headache one morning, and I could not get rid of it. I was taking a course with the church, and when I went in to do the studies that day I could not hold my head up. It was the worst headache I had ever had in my life. The supervisor sent me to the chaplain, who was also called the ethics officer. I did not realize [why the supervisor sent me to the chaplain]. I thought, Why should I be going to him? What I really need is a doctor or some strong medicine to get rid of this headache. Well, in the course of discussion he said, "I understand you are not feeling well." I said, "That is right." He said: "Here. I want you to read this." I thought that was rather unusual. Why did he not give me an aspirin or something? Anyway, I read this thing, and it had to do with the attributes of a suppressive person. It was kind of interesting; as I read down the list I thought, I know somebody like that. I know somebody like that.

At the end he asked me, "Now, when in the past have you felt like this?" I wondered, What does that have to do with what I just read? I thought, When did

I have this last terrible headache? So I said, "Well, I had a headache in 197_" blah blah, whenever it was. He said, "Were you connected to a suppressive person at the time?" I thought, Wow! Yes! It was that person I kept thinking about. He said, "Are you still connected with that person?" and I said no, because that person is now doing something else. He said, "Well, has anything happened to remind you of that person lately?" I said, "Well, I talked with somebody on the phone about her just yesterday, but that never bothers me." Then all of a sudden I said, "Oh, my God!"

I had been in a little sandwich shop the day before. I had put in my order for my lunch, and I stepped forward to the cash register. All of a sudden, about eight feet behind me, boom! [I heard] this voice that sounded just like this woman, and my stomach just turned over. I thought, What is she doing here? I thought, I cannot stand here all day. I am going to have to turn around sooner or later. I turned very carefully, like this grade B movie. I did not turn my head; I had to turn my whole body. I looked, and it was not that person. But she sounded just like her, and on top of that she had these deep lines in her face, which said to me she is a heavy smoker, just like that other person. You know, A equals A – same person, same sound, same this, same that.

I sat there and started laughing. I said, "You know, a little while ago I did not feel like smiling." (I could not smile when someone had spoken to me earlier.) And I said: "But you know, I sure do now. And you know something else? My headache is gone!" This told me that the psychosomatic illnesses that we inflict upon ourselves are very real and that there is something to what Hubbard calls the "reactive mind," which is this part that you are not conscious of but that is recording all the time. So when this thing came up the day before, I did not have any trouble that day, but the next morning it had sunk into me and was causing me great distress. We really do not need to spend all our money on aspirin and valium and this, that, and the other thing because it is all in yourself, and it is the result of your experiences. Something can trigger something, some other moments of pain and unconsciousness, which I have also done some – an automobile accident I was in once.

Anyway, the point is that I found that there was something else, that life is bigger than I thought it was. Even though Jesus Christ I am sure lived and was an outstanding individual, my concept of God, life, and the universe was not the same anymore.

SL: Does the Church of Scientology have anything to do with Christianity? Is there any carryover?

JL: No, there is no carryover. There is a lot of Buddhist philosophy in it. Hubbard recommends the book of John as being the one that has the best description of

the life of Christ.

SL: Well, is there anything else you would like to add? Do you feel that the Student Group for Equal Rights and the Gainesville Women for Equal Rights made a difference?

JL: Oh, yes. I consider one of the highlights of my life the time I got arrested in Ocala.

SL: You never got arrested again?

JL: No. Only because I was not there. [laughter] I would have liked to have gone to Selma [Alabama], but I could not get a babysitter for several days in a row, so that did not work out.

SL: Were there people around saying: "We are going to Selma. Do you want to go with us?"

JL: Well, yes. Several people in Gainesville I knew wanted to go. I do not really know how many ended up there. I am sorry I was never in the presence of Martin Luther King. His speech on the mall [in Washington, DC] was very moving. I saw that on television live.

SL: In 1963 [August 28].

JL: Yes. I am real proud of GWER because of what it did here. I am sorry that we were not able to document it earlier, because there were some things that were going on in Boston that should not have been happening with the people in the schools.

SL: The busing things?

JL: Yes, in the late 1960s. Is that when it was?

SL: I know there was a big brouhaha in Boston over the busing solution to the integration problem.

JL: Yes. I thought that it was too bad that we could not have sent them a letter or something to say it is possible for the community to get together and to work it out.

SL: Why do you think that things went as smoothly as they did in Gainesville? They seemed to have gone very smoothly compared to a lot of places, like St. Augustine and even Ocala.

JL: Well, my guess is probably because the University has so many people from different parts of the world and the country who have come here. They are not real local . . .

SL: Southerners, southern born and bred.

JL: Yes, and people who have not communicated or been in touch with other people. See, people are the same all over the place. I mean, they laugh, they cry, they bleed, and they have children and love their children. Families are families. Just because they are a different color or a different culture or have ethnic habits that are different from what we have grown up with or that you are comfortable with or familiar with, they are just people. I mean, we are all going to be dead some day, and then we will all be equal. Where did I hear that? Anyway, if we could learn that sooner, that is what I wish would happen. I think that because a lot of people in Gainesville came from different parts [of the country] and because there are students from other countries, even though they do not get out and the people in the end of the county do not get to interact with them, [Gainesville and Alachua County are perhaps more open-minded than other parts of the state]. I think that when you see how the votes show up, the voting maps at the end of a big election, there might be a big green county down south, and then up in Gainesville there is another green one. All the rest are yellow or something like that, depending on the color of the map. But I think Gainesville and Alachua County do have some people who see a little bit farther than the tips of their fingers.

SL: OK. Well, I guess, then, that I would like to thank you for letting me interview you. It is another valuable piece of the story that I can work in.

JL: Well, thank you. I hope it will work out fine.

SL: There is one thing we forgot. Tell me about working for Dr. Proctor.

JL: My kids thought that was just a wonderful phrase, "Dr. Proctor" [spoken slowly and deliberately, like Walter Cronkite]. I was a student assistant to Sam Proctor when he was working on *Florida a Hundred Years Ago*. This was the Florida centennial, and he was transcribing things out of the *Tallahassee Democrat* and other newspapers of the time. I was typing up these little bits of how the feds destroyed the salt works down on the Gulf coast. Boy, it was exciting! I had fun doing it. Sam is a real neat person. I got more perspective of history. He is an all-around fine fellow, and I just love him.

SL: Did you carry a typewriter into the library?

JL: No. What he did was he would read out of the paper into a cassette, and I

transcribed it with a foot pedal on the thing [transcribing machine], and I just typed it up.

SL: That sounds real familiar.

JL: Then he would edit it, and we would get it all set up. We did about a year's worth there, I guess.

SL: Did he pay well?

JL: It was student assistant rate, whatever that was at the time. I started out somewhere around 75¢ an hour, and then chemistry gave me 95¢ an hour. I may have been up to \$1.00 an hour by the time I was working for Sam [laughter].

SL: Well, back then that was not as bad as it sounds now.

JL: That is right.

SL: Tell me about *The Gainesville Sun* nominating a "Club Woman of the Year."

JL: Yes. *The Gainesville Sun* used to give an award called the Club Woman of the Year and also the Club of the Year or the Organization of the Year. I remember one year AAUW, American Association of University Women, got it, and they got this lovely silver bowl. Well, that same year Bobbi Zeman was president of GWER, she was nominated for club woman of the year. It was supposed to be a secret. There was going to be a presentation ceremony and the winner would get it and everybody would be hurray! hurray! hurray! But Ginny Albury and couple of other people decided that Bobbi would never go to that thing put on by *The Gainesville Sun* because we had some differences with *The Gainesville Sun*. They were not coming along in some respects like we thought they should [especially on women's issues]. Anyway, here Bobbi had gotten this award. Now, how in earth were we going to get her there to get it? We had to tell her, so she was told. Anyway, she did not want to come, but then she thought, Well, hmm.

She decided to go, but when she went – you are going to have ask somebody else who has a better remembrance of this than I do – she gave them a lecture. The upshot of it was she really did not think much of it [laughter].

SL: Wait a minute. Did she win?

JL: Yes, and she got a [small] silver bowl, and it was on a pedestal and everything. What we ended up doing with it was we sometimes passed it around at meetings for collections [laughter]. Anyway, because of what she said –

SL: So I guess the rest of you did not think much of *The Gainesville Sun*, either.

JL: Well, it was kind of – Oh, we did not know what to do. Anyway, somebody else who was at that meeting was so incensed at Bobbi's remarks that she made some other incensed remarks, and, oh, it was very embarrassing. I think that was the last year *The Gainesville Sun* ever did that [laughter].

SL: OK. I know that in the early 1970s one of their editors won a Pulitzer Prize.

JL: [Horance G.] "Buddy" Davis.

SL: Buddy Davis won a Pulitzer Prize [in 1971] for his editorials on racial change [specifically, school integration]. So what should I make of that? Does this make *The Gainesville Sun* a progressive paper?

JL: [He might have been, but the paper as a whole was not particularly.] You will have to go back and read his editorials [and compare them with the rest of its coverage].

SL: Some of them seemed to be positive in this regard, and some of them do not.

JL: Well, I will have to ask Jean about that.

[End of the interview]