

AL 155

Interviewee: Carol Giardina

Interviewer: Stuart Landers

Date: November 11, 1992

*Names of individuals in this transcript are approximations.

L: This is an oral history interview with Carol Giardina. We are talking in Carol's home in Gainesville, Florida. Today is November 11, 1992, and my name is Stuart Landers.

To start with, can you give me your full name?

G: Carol Ann Giardina.

L: When and where were you born, Carol?

G: I was born in 1946 in Jamaica, New York, which is just outside the city [of New York]. It is the last subway stop going out into Queens from the city.

L: Can you give me a little bit of background on your parents, [like] their names, where they came from, what they did?

G: Sure. You know, I think it is relevant. We were talking about that book *The Young Radicals*. There was an attempt in the 1960s to paint insurgency as the psychological phenomena of antiauthoritarianism among young people having nothing to do with injustice or oppressive social conditions. [It just had] to do with rebellion with just parental authority. So someone does a study of people in the movement and their families and find that there is this enormous consistency of values. These families participated in the movements of their day, and most of them supported kids piano.

L: So did your parents fit into this?

G: No, but I think it is a question more of good relations. I will have to tell you I am an exception; I am more of an exception compared to the other people in the movement because they do fit that other pattern of consistency. My dad came here from Sicily when he was a young teenager and worked shoveling snow and being a milkman and jobs like that. I do not think he went to much school in the little town that he came from because the childhood stories he told me were about goat herding and ____.

L: His name?

G: His name is August. He is sort of a typical Italian father. My mother, who is now dead as of a couple of years ago, is a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant, blue-eyed, blond-haired, middle-class, very independent kind of woman who went to flying

school. She wanted to fly airplanes during the war. she is quite a different soul. My father and she met at an airplane factory during the war. My mother flunked out of flying school, and my father could not go to the war because he had TB, so they both ended up at this airplane factory making airplanes. When the war ends and they all lose their jobs, my mother marries my father [laughter].

L: What was her name?

G: Eleanor.

L: And her maiden name?

G: Castle. They moved into my grandmother's house. My father faced this solid wall of "You are not good enough to be in our family." I grew up with my great-grandmother, my grandmother, my great-aunt, my uncle, my mother and father, and my little brother in this house.

L: Did your father come over alone? Did he bring any of the rest of his family with him?

G: No, he was a little boy. His father came back and forth several times. [He] then brought his wife and the children, who were my Uncle Sam, my father, my Aunt Carmella . . . Anyway, there were five of them, I believe. I do not want to spend time actually remembering them. It is outrageous I do not, because they are all my aunts and uncles who I actually get along with [laughter].

Then the youngest has to get sent back because he has _____, so he gets put alone on the boat and sent back to Sicily. Within a couple of years my father's mother died in childhood bearing my Aunt Theresa, so my Aunt Theresa and Aunt Carmella go into a Catholic orphanage and get raised by the sisters, and my father and his older brother get raise by my grandfather, sort of on the street. I mean, he is a day laborer, and there are this father and two teenagers. You can imagine what it must have been like. Did you ever see that film *Rocco and His Brothers*?

L: No, I have not.

G: It is by one of those terrific Italian film makers.

L: So you grew up in your grandmother's house in Jamaica, New York.

G: Yes.

L: What was this like? What all do you remember? Is this an Italian neighborhood?

G: No, it is a really mixed neighborhood. It was wonderful. My father and mother kind of balanced each out. She had class privilege, and he had male privilege, which meant getting more equality in the [grand scheme of things]. My ex-husband is black, and I could see the same dynamic operating. It is not as pleasant, but there it is, the different privilege. So my father did not get to be the patriarch who made us go to Catholic school and all. He wanted all of that stuff to happen, but he did not have enough power to pull it off.

My mother was like a Dr. [Benjamin] Spock – very permissive. He tried to make us do chores, and she would say: "Oh, Papa, she is going to be doing housework the rest of her life. Let her alone." So I never had to do much like chore things. Then here were all these grownups that we always had. There was somebody always around. When my poor father would try to punish us my grandmother would come around and give us money and ice cream. It was great for kids, but I am sure it was tough for my father especially [laughter]. I went to the same school that my mother had gone to as a girl.

L: Was this a public school?

G: Yes. It was very pleasant. We just played; we went to school and we played after school. We did not have very many rules to follow.

L: Was this a religious family, a religious upbringing?

G: No. We were made to go to church, but they did not go.

L: Catholic?

G: No. I started out in an Episcopal church, and I finally ended up getting confirmed in a Lutheran church because it was across the street from my school. You could go out of your school on Wednesday afternoon and go just across the street; you did not have to take buses and stuff. But I do not really think my mother or my grandmother [were religious]. I think they were atheists, if you want to know the truth. My mother kind of got roped into going to church as I got older because she became a Girl Scout leader, and that Girl Scout troop operated out of this Lutheran church.

L: How was being a Girl Scout? Was that a positive experience? Would you do it again?

G: Oh, yes, it was a very positive experience. It is very interesting. There is something about Girl Scout camp. When Judy and I were driving to Sandy Spring, Maryland, in 1968 to the first Women's Liberation Conference, to the kind of planning of the bigger one that took place in November, we were on this long drive, and we were talking about our lives and growing and what you talk about

on long drives. We discovered we went to the same Girl Scout camp in upstate New York. I mean, Judy kind of had a theory that Girl Scouts was related to feminism [laughter]. I cannot explain it to you, but I think it is probably true. Girl Scouts was nice. My mother was a great troop leader, because we did things like taking overnight, three-day bicycle camping things. You had to be able to change your tire on your bicycle and pack your stuff and tent and go on your bike. It was good stuff.

L: Were your schools or your Girl Scout troop integrated that you remember?

G: My junior high and high school absolutely were integrated. I do not remember whether Girl Scouts [were or not]. It is so outrageous that I cannot remember. I just am not sure about Girl Scouts and elementary school. I would kind of bet they were, but I am not sure. Junior high, which starts in seventh grade, was integrated, and so was the high school. Not with just a few mixtures of different kinds of people but with all kinds of Latin American people and black people and _____ people. Most everybody was Jewish; I would say probably the majority of the people were Jewish, like 65 or 70 percent, something like that. Then there was the rest of us.

L: What was your father doing for a living, and was your mother working at all?

G: My father is still working. He is seventy-seven, and he is a salesman for a linen company which provides restaurants and stuff with tablecloths and uniforms and stuff like that. Now, was he doing that when I was a kid growing up? I am just not sure. He certainly has been doing it for a good long time. He was doing it, to my earliest memory, which was probably as a teenager. But like when I was seven or eight what work did he do I do not know.

L: I was just wondering if you would call yours a middle-class family upbringing.

G: That is an interesting question. My mother, of course, had worked and then did not work again until I finished high school. She did that so there would be enough money to send me to college. She worked all through the time I was in high school. Neither of my parents had been to college. My father is literate, but how the hell he got to be I do not know [laughter]. I do not know what you would call us. Of course, it depends on what your view of social class it, too. I kind of believe there are two classes – the owners and everybody else [laughter]. The _____ which had no jobs at all because they were homeless and stuff like that.

Now, we certainly were not wealthy. It was not like being in a family of dentists that made \$200,000 a year. Were we middle class? We were working class. I think we were, because my father wanted us to grow up in a certain, nice neighborhood and in this bog old house and was willing to sacrifice some, probably what people would call his management. To do that we did not live in

an apartment. We grew up in a nicer house than what one might think of as poor working class. If they had just had been living on his income we probably would have been in a rented apartment in much more cramped [space].

L: When did you graduate from high school?

C: 1963.

L: You had told me earlier that you had come to the University of Florida in 1963.

C: That is right.

L: How did you end up in Gainesville from Jamaica, New York?

C: Well, it was sort of a compromise. I wanted to go to school in the city.

L: the city of New York.

C: Yes. I thought I was going to City College, which is what I would have liked to have done. I was sort of a beatnik by this time.

L: What do you mean by "beatnik"?

C: What do I mean by "beatnik"? We all cut high school and snuck in to the Village and went downtown and sat in the famous coffee houses in the Village and looked at older beatniks and tried to imitate. We _____. We also cut school and went to the nearest public library where we read things like the *Bhagavad Gita* and Wilhelm Reich and all that Summerhill's schools, and we thought we should all be going to school like that. Then we read *Lady Chatterly's Lover* and existential philosophy. I mean, by the time I was fourteen I had read half of [Sigmund] Freud. We were little budding intellectuals. I had neighbors that were famous jazz musicians, and I used to babysit for them, and they were really beatniks, right? I mean, they were grown-up jazz musician beatniks. So we would sneak off into the city to go listen to them play jazz. That was Lenny Tristano and Lee Konitz and people that if you know jazz you would know. So we did that.

L: I can see why you did not want to leave.

C: Yes, I know. I was happy. But I was not allowed to do any of these things because my parents thought I was going straight to hell [laughter]. They would do sweeps of my room, and they would take all these books out, and I would have to take them back to the library. We would have raging arguments, because I would tell them that I was probably orally fixated at age two because of their child-rearing practices and that they had ruined my life [laughter]. They

would look at me and wonder, What is she talking about?

They thought that I should not stay in the city. Plus my father and I by this time are really at each other's throats. I mean, I had been raised quite freely without much rules and stuff, but when I began to get interested in all these dangerous . . . If I had been my parents I would have been worried about what was going to happen to me. So they wanted to get me out of the city and into a place where it was wonderful. [They thought the University of Florida would be a good place] because there was a curfew here. They thought it would be safe. We had these neighbors that lived in Ocala, and I was going to study psychology, which was supposed to be something the school did well.

L: You graduated from high school at age seventeen?

C: Sixteen.

L: How did you manage to end early?

C: I skipped some grades.

L: So you arrived in Gainesville when? In the fall of 1963?

C: Right.

L: Tell me your impressions of Gainesville then at that early point.

C: I have come to love North Florida over the years. As you can tell, I am still here. But it was like culture shock. It was profound, really profound culture shock. I remember going to my first football game, and they played "Dixie" and everybody stood up except me. I just looked around and thought, Oh, my God. And everybody did things like go out drinking. I had never heard of going out drinking. Some beatniks did some other things, but they never went out drinking. And then you had to wear a dress on campus until after 5:00. It was just . . .

L: Stifling.

C: The Century Tower bell played "Way Down Upon the Swanee River" and things like that. It played those songs, as opposed to what it is playing now, and it played them continuously, all day long. Boy, it was just . . . I do not know. Everything that is in North Florida and southern Georgia was foreign to me. New York did not have cars. The idea that what you did on a date was get a six-pack of beer and went riding in a car was like . . . I could not imagine why anybody would want to do a thing like that. So the whole thing was just a really foreign [experience].

- L: Was there any sort of a beatnik community, so to speak?
- C: Oh, yes, I found it after about six [weeks]. By Christmastime I had found it.
- L: Could you describe that for me?
- C: Sure. There were people in the English department and in the philosophy department and anthropology students. They were just like beatniks in New York--they had beards and wrote poetry and wore blue jeans and were disdainful about other students.
- L: Were there many of them?
- C: Many. There was a good little community. I do not know how many, but there was a real community and a culture. People knew one another. Everybody would sit around, and they would play their guitars and sing folk songs. Bill Wires was part of that. He is a landlord these days in the northeast section and an architect in Gainesville. Paul Newman was part of that. He is the head [of the programming] for the Center for the Performing Arts. As a matter of fact, Paul is my second boyfriend.
- L: Was he a student at the time?
- C: Yes.
- L: Other folks? Other names from this early [group]?
- C: Oh, I would say Bill Werner, Paul Newman – those are two that are still here. Hollis Hall is really a legendary person. Hollis was an older woman who was very beautiful. Doc [Marshall Jones] called her Palace; we all called her Palace. She had been a Tri-Delt. She had a southern accent, and she cussed with great flair. She would be in demonstrations, and she would have on little cut-off shorts and a peasant shirt or a T-shirt, and she would have her Tri-Delt pin hanging out the end of her nipple [laughter]. She would just blow everybody's mind.
- L: Had you met Marshall Jones at this time?
- C: The beatnik community and the [civil rights] movement had a social life together. We would go to demonstrations and stuff, but there was a separation. Well, they were always doing political work, and I would just hang out. So I knew all of those people, but none of us were tight then.
- L: When you said you went to demonstrations, did you do any of the picketing, say of the College Inn?

C: No.

L: So this was some time after you got here.

C: The picketing was going on. It was probably in the first year that I was here, in 1963.

L: The fall of 1963.

C: Yes.

L: So what were you studying? Psychology?

C: Yes, which turned out to be rats.

L: Rats?

C: Yes, rats. It was horrible! I was disgusted. To me, psychology was an art, not a science, and all they did here was experimental.

L: On rats.

C: Well, you can crudely call it that, but there were a lot of rats, more so than people. With the exception of Sid Jourard, who was the kind of the leader. There were a bunch of professors here. See, to me the interesting difference between [faculty then and today] – now, I do not know, because I have just come back to school – is that faculty in those days were much more integrated. Maybe I will find that that is so now, but I sure do not see it. In this beatnik community that I am telling you about there were faculty who were key people in it. Sid Jourard was one. He wrote *The Transparent Self*. He was kind of a famous psychologist and psychology theory person who was on the faculty. Sid and Tom Hanna, who was chairman of the philosophy department [beginning in 1965] – we would all party. We would have parties together. It was not odd for that to happen at all. It was the norm for that to happen.

And there would be wild parties. I mean, Sid had a Halloween party one year (Sid is dead, so I do not think it makes any difference [that I tell this story]) . . . I went into _____, and this was alternative energy and all this stuff. Hollis Hall and somebody else were carried in on a board in some position out of the *Kamasutra*, and they were actually joined [laughter]. They are in great outfits, and they get carried in on this board. Well, this was just normal. I mean, this was Sid Jourard's annual Halloween party. Something like that always happened. During the unknown times one guy came with a green stamp on his penis and a combat hat on. Nobody thought that was [out of the ordinary]. It was normal. And I imagine it was o more wild than what happens in fraternity

houses, either. It was just different.

L: In 1965 and 1966 there was a hippie ghetto, a hippie community, across from the University. What sort of a relationship is there between this beatnik group and ____?

C: Oh, it just grew.

L: One became the other? Is that accurate?

C: Yes, I would say so. It just grew. More and more people came into it. Some of the oldtimers moved on, but it grew. The continuity was the same. Now, I will tell you that if that had been what I had gone on to be and do, and [if] I had become some artsy psychologist or something like that, I might give you a more complicated view of it. But essentially it was the same community.

L: You told me that you had graduated in 1967 with a psychology degree.

C: Yes.

L: Had you become politically active before you graduated?

C: Well, not in a systematic way. I mean, prior to 1967 I went to demonstrations. I ran in Freedom Party ticket. I went to Belle Glade when the migrant organizers were trying to prepare for a strike. They were trying to make a union of agriculture workers, which is actually where I met Jack Dawkins. Later on he became a black power leader in Gainesville. Here is [a picture of] Jack. Judy's aunt made the famous poster of Jack that was around during 1967 and 1968. It was a beautiful poster. I had a hunk of it; it is decaying in that room. A piece of it is messed up. I guess he is talking about the grand jury investigation of sexual abuse in the jails. They decide they are going to set up this thing to study it, and he says, the caption on the poster says, "I told you before by the time they got through lying, fixing, framing, and denying, nothing was going to get done." That is the way Jack talked.

L: Was he a student at all?

C: Oh, no. He was a migrant worker. I met him in Belle Glade being a migrant worker [when I was] organizing this agricultural workers union, and it was a rough place. You know how Belle Glade is now. It was worse. Then it was very poor, [and there was] lots of violence. I mean, you would go into these . . . I do not want to call them plantations, but they were like migrant camps. There would be one spigot sticking up out of the ground and about ten or twelve houses, not houses but just like rooms, like shacks in a row joined together down either side of this spigot. There would be kids with distended bellies out to here and green

patches on their head and no haircut – they had fungus and impetigo all over them. The growers would shoot at the school bus that came onto the property to pick up the kids and take them to school because they wanted them to work in the fields. I mean, there was some very tough stuff.

During that period preparing for that strike agricultural machinery was blown up [and] the AFL-CIO office was bombed. A lot of students went there to help.

L: Who did you go with?

C: I really do not remember. I cannot imagine how I got involved with that. But I went. That must have been 1965 or 1966. That would be easy to find out when that was, because I am sure it was in all the papers. Jack was organizing the thing, and he was leading a whole crew of students behind him, shouting at all these terrible conditions. In those days they wore what I think they called a conch.

L: The straightened hair?

C: Yes, straightened hair, but it went up like that. You would see like a blues singer in the late 1950s with their hair like that if you looked at. Bobby Blue Bland's hair in 1959 or something.

L: Malcolm X talks about this.

C: Yes, right. I mean, he had an Afro in this picture, but he is in Gainesville by now. He has torn-up jeans and big boots, and he has this kind of hair thing, and he has a Karl Marx button on that says "Workers of the World Unite" or something like that. He is just this figure of a person talking. Where he got the Karl Marx button from I cannot imagine. I mean, I do not know what Jack knew to this day and what he did not know. He was brilliant, but he was definitely a man of the people. He was not a [part of the establishment].

L: How did he end up in Gainesville?

C: I do not know that either. After the union failed we sat in front of Publix [grocery store] collecting cans. They tried to strike, but they did not get a union, I do not think. I do not know how Jack got up here. I remember being at a very early meeting with him up here that was probably in 1967.

It is not really until 1968 that I become what I would say into the movement and begin to look at the world at the place that is framed, where change takes place and things happen, because politics and economic systems play a role in it. I just do not view power. I had a typical what you would call beatnik view, and a lot of people still have it today. You change your head instead, [as] the Beatles

called it, where if everybody could just get to be healthy and okay then we would not have war and all that stuff. That is what I thought. I was going to change the world by becoming a psychiatrist. Of course, this was going to be a pretty slow way of doing things, because you can do therapy with only so many people at a time [laughter]. You can see that it was going to take a thousand years. But that was my idea. I thought that was why things were wrong, that people were just neurotic, and that they could change through therapy and so forth. And that would be what I would do.

L: Before we get too far into the late 1960s, though, you were involved in the Freedom Party in the spring of 1965. What do you remember about that? How did you get involved with that?

C: Are you sure it was the spring of 1965?

L: I have a handbill from them.

C: If my name is on it, then that is the year. I do not remember what year it was.

L: I think Jim Harmeling's face is on it.

C: Probably so. Yes.

L: _____ for president.

C: Yes. I do not know what year it was. I do not think I am in Doc's book except for one place. My name is not there. I want to say it is free speech stuff that he is doing by this time, probably 1966 or 1967. Two girls showed up with a fruit stand, and my friend Holly Howard (she is the blonde one) and I came and sold fruit.

L: On the Plaza [of the Americas].

C: Yes, as everybody else was. It was like sort of a beatnik approach. But I do not know what year I ran for the Freedom Party, and I do not know how I ended up running for the Freedom Party, either. I do not know what I ran for, either.

L: I think a senator.

C: I guess you were representatives of arts and sciences. Each college had its own.

L: I take it you did not win, then?

C: No.

- L: We have gotten into the free speech thing. Other than going to set up this fruit stand, do you remember anything else about that series of events? I know Dr. Jones talks about it in his memoir.
- C: I remember how I felt about all those things, and I remember there was a great deal of activity and that the people who were involved in it were very serious and had a kind of a confidence. They had a kind of an air that other students did not have. Now, at the time I was disdainful of that, and I thought, Oh, these people take it so seriously.
- L: Was there anything beatnikish or hippie about them?
- C: See, there was kind of this gray area. During those years not so much, although I would say that probably most of them did not go to church on Sunday. I would say that they did not believe that you had to be married before you could go to bed with someone. I mean, we had values different than probably some of the people. But in terms of their style, they might have worn sandals or something, but they were generally neater, cleaner, they were on time to something if they said they were going to be there. Like I said before, they had this air, a kind of presence that I do not think beatniks had. They were up to something important, and it showed.
- Now, there was one exception which I think is probably in Doc's book, also, and that is Ed Richer, who inspired fairly early on?
- L: Who is Ed Richer?
- C: Ed was really a genius. Ed was more of a beatnik amongst the political people, but Ed was very serious about political change, also. Ed tried to start the Free University of Florida after he got fired, but Ed was much . . . How would you characterize him? I mean, like Ed believed in animal rights. This was like 1965 or whenever it was.
- L: Beverly Jones told me that it was in a conversation with him that she for the first time started thinking about women's liberation.
- C: that is right. That is absolutely right. I think Ed thought in a different way than beatniks did or political people did. He was just way ahead of his time, I guess you would say.
- L: Were you at all involved in the Free University?
- C: No, just except I would bump into Ed someplace, and he would be all excited because he had made his logo for what it was going to be like. I would hear about things, but I was not involved in trying to start it or trying to do anything.

L: It sounds like you are on the periphery of this group and slowly moving closer into the center.

C: Yes, I would say so.

L: So just to get the chronology straight, you graduate in 1967. Do you go straight into a master's program? Do you get a job?

C: I have to give you the short version. I go to work for the welfare department. You have that whole newspaper article, so maybe we should not even put this on the [tape].

L: They fire you over . . .

C: Going to the Miss America demonstration.

L: So that is sort of later.

C: Well, it is only six or eight months later.

L: How did you get involved with radical feminism? When does this start?

C: OK. You really want me to answer it for the tape? because the details of it are in that article, and fairly accurately. I am working for the welfare department. Most of the case workers are older than me. I am living with Paul [Newman].

L: Is this your now-ex-husband?

C: No. Paul and I did not get married. I move in with Paul. Paul is probably a history graduate student. I cannot talk about the fact that I am living with a guy with these older women in the welfare department, once lunchtime comes and breaktime, and they are having kind of a pretty traditional marriages and whatnot. I take all this in, but I am constrained from putting in my own two cents about my life. One day they were talking about desserts; they fix these desserts for their families. I have this understanding of my own relationship with Paul and other relationships that I have had that the normal things that are wrong in a relationship I have no idea [about or] have anything to do with any larger social context in which the relationship exists. Right? I think that what goes on in relationships is a result of what those individuals as individuals are bringing into it, and that is all. I think things to myself like, If I were just smarter, if I were just more beautiful, or things like that, that Paul would treat me more equally. Now, I would not have put it "more equally," but that is what it amounted to because I did all of the cleaning and housework, and Paul thought great thoughts and read books [laughter]. Every once in a while he would discuss them with me, but [not as a rule].

Anyway, here are these women, and they are talking about making these desserts. I think, God, poor Paul! I have never made a real dessert around the house. This has been this same framework of "What am I doing wrong that I am not getting what I want?" So I go home and I make this apricot chiffon pie from scratch.

It is funny. Now, along the same time I am working for the welfare department, and for the first time in my life I am involved with poverty on a daily basis, and I had never seen anything like in my life. The remarkable thing about it was that if you ever wanted to think that people were poor because they were lazy or because of something that was in their head, you could not do this for more than a week and come out still thinking that same thing. I am in Putnam County. People get up before daylight, they work all day long cutting down pine trees or picking up eggs in a chicken hatchery or working for Florida Fryers, which was a big place where they plucked chickens and froze them, or they worked at American Box Company which made cardboard boxes in Gainesville. They did hard, hard work. They had big families and lived in houses with no running water, no electricity. They got up before sunrise. They worked all day. They came back. They boiled their clothes in those big black pots. There was no transportation whatsoever. Kids would get sick and die because the hospital would not admit them because they did not have cash or health insurance. I mean, I would be like racing for Shands, which was the only place with an E.R. that would take you if you did not have any money, with some kid with a 105° fever puking all over the back of my car, wondering if this kid was going to die before I got there.

So I began to realize that there was more to the world than what I had previously thought, that something else was going on here. These people sure beat my parents. I mean, they went to church on Sunday, every morning they worked harder than anybody I ever saw work in my life. The kids would come home from school and immediately start trying to cook on these wood-burning stoves, and the kids would sweep the yard. I mean, those dirt yards were swept so there was not a leaf sitting on the dirt. So these were enormously hard-working, very pious, clean [people], and there they were without electricity.

So these two things are going on at the same time. I am working for this welfare department. Judy [Benninger Brown] and Bev [Jones] are writing their paper now.

L: So you knew them fairly well at this point?

C: No, not fairly well. Of course I knew who they were. We would say hello. But did we ever sit down and have an hour-long talk about [life and issues? No.] I think that I have been wrong about social change, and I wanted to be in the

movement, and I think that those people were right. So I go to Nick Levin and to Doc and to Judy. I am not going to tell you what happened with Judy. Nick says, "Oh, Carol, you have always been in the movement. What is the matter with you?" [laughter] Doc is equally understanding, shall we say, of where I am coming from.

I end up at an ACLU meeting. The welfare department had just instituted this claims and recovery act where you have to sign everything you own over to the state in order to get welfare. All these old people that I worked with have this little piece of land which is all they have in the whole world, and they do not want the welfare department to get that because it is the only thing they have to leave to their children. They do not have anything else except a hunk of sir-share property that they live on. So they are all going on welfare like crazy, and it is just awful. I do not know anything about politics or social change. I am naive. So I go to the ACLU meeting, and I think, The ACLU will fix this. This is an unfair law. Right? So I go there and ask them to fix this unfair law. I tell these stories.

Judy is there organizing a court observer committee because Carol Thomas is in jail. As this same ACLU meeting she is recruiting people to go sit in when Carol's case comes up in court. Now, I always get mixed up which case this is. I want to say Carol is in jail. Oh, I know which one it is. I think this is right. It is either Joe Waller or Jack; I cannot remember which of them. I think it is Joe. They give a speech, a very good speech. There is a law against inciting to riot. There does not have to have been any riot for the person to be in violation of this law. So the police come to arrest . . . I just cannot remember, but I think it is Joe Waller, who is still now in the leadership of the African People's Socialist Party in St. Pete. His name is now Emarri Eshatellia. Anyway, they come to Carol's house to arrest him for inciting to riot, even though there had not been a riot, and there is some kind of scuffle at the front door in which Carol is arrested for assaulting a police officer. And Joe was arrested for inciting to riot. I think they both were an jail at this point.

Judy and I are going out the door after the meeting at the same time. At this point Paul and I are also breaking up. I fixed this pie and did these other things, and Paul, meanwhile, who is draft deferred, decides he wants to go into the military. He is anti-war. Paul was more involved in the civil rights movement than I was! Anyway, he has some reasons. Let us just say they were sort of left-of-center reasons why he is going into the military and going to Vietnam. I said, "Paul, if you go to Vietnam and leave me, do you realize . . .? Well, he has to do this thing. Anyway, I am going to leave him if he is going to leave me, because, hell, . . .

So we are in the middle of this, and Judy and I are standing outside this ACLU meeting and talking. She is talking about feminism, of course. I am saying why I

am going to go into the courtroom but why I am not going to go to the demonstration. I said to her – I will never forget this – "I think Carol probably really hit that cop, so therefore I do not think that I can demonstrate. I do not want her to get a bum deal in court," which she might get, so I would go and try to prevent that. Sure enough, I go to court.

By this time, though, before I get to court, I just do not remember what Judy said, but she probably said something about her and Bev working on this paper, because I find myself going over there to Judy's house. Bev may have left town by this time; Bev and Doc, I think, had already left.

L: Beverly Jones told me that she had written that in Pennsylvania.

C: Yes. They would have just left. I want to understand what this is about, so I go over to Judy's house and sort of begin following Judy around. Judy tells me they are going to this women's liberation meeting in Sandy Spring, Maryland, and if I want to go I have to shut up because I do not understand anything about it, which I do not, believe me, because I was still saying that women are not oppressed. I know there is something, but I do not know [what]. [She also told me that] I have to write a paper, because everybody is bringing a paper, and I should not interfere with her and Bev, who have not seen each other and are writing this paper for this thing.

L: Real quickly before we get too far, the Gainesville Women for Equal Rights [GWER] was involved with this ACLU _____ program.

C: I am sure. Judy may have even been doing it on the rehab when she went.

L: Do you remember anything about the Gainesville Women at this point? Were you aware of them? Did you know any of them other than Carol Thomas?

C: Yes, I was aware of them by this time because by this time . . . The whole thing happens at once for me. I am following Judy around, and Judy is talking about feminism. I have this experience that is like one of these light bulbs that goes off over your head where the contradiction between the fact that I am making these fantastic desserts and Paul has never even perked a pot of coffee or cooled a meal appears in my head, and I am [suddenly aware that] there is a bigger system, and how can that be? It is bigger than me and him. I said to myself, Judy is right. So the oppression of women kind of falls into place on top of that. Something Judy said provoked that.

At the same time I realized that, everything else falls into place it seems like all in two weeks. I understand why I should be in that demonstration whether Carol hit the cop or not. I understand that black people are oppressed the same way women are oppressed, and it is not people's individual thoughts that they do not

have rights or property or things that they should have. And I understand all the rest of this. I mean, I even understand why imperialism is wrong and why the war is wrong and all this other stuff. I understand all of it because I suddenly realize that I myself am an oppressed person, which I had not seen myself as before.

L: So all of a sudden it personally becomes political?

C: Exactly. Now, how does this relate to what I know about the Gainesville Women for Equal Rights? Well, I sort of go from being this person that I described to . . . I already felt bad that I had not participated in the movement because I thought that what they were trying to do was the right way to change things in my old idea about it. Change your head first was not the right idea. So I was very enthusiastic.

My earliest thoughts of GWER were that these were nice liberal people who also wanted to change things but did not understand that you really had to do militant kind of organizing and protest in order to accomplish things. [I thought that] they would help you like raise bail money for somebody and things like that, but they were not people that I [wanted to associate with]. I guess they were not, and I was wrong to think this. I tell you now with this perspective, but I think I thought of them as people that I would not learn anything from because they were not radical, with the exception of some people who were actually radicals.

L: So tell me about the Sand Spring conference. This is your first?

C: Right. I write this embarrassing paper about unwed welfare mothers. How in the world she brings me to this conference I do not know. She was a very patient organizer. She really was [laughter]. I did not shut up. I did not know anything. I was not the person that most of the other people at Sandy Springs were because nearly all of them had been through the civil rights and had years of real organizing experience. Many of them had risked their lives and had been in freedom houses that had been shot into and had been lynch-pin people, key people, in different projects. I had not done those kinds of things. They were all maybe two, three, or four years older than me. So I get there and talk and interrupt Judy and Bev. I do not realize all that I do not know. I have no idea what I do not know.

The two things I guess I should say about Sandy Spring are that, first of all, and this shows you the power of ideology, I know nothing about feminism whatsoever, and I think that at this conference everyone is going to be a lesbian. Now, where in the hell do I get this idea? Judy and Bev are both married; they both have husbands. They are the only two feminists I know, and they are not lesbians. But that is what I think. Now, I do not know why I thought that. I

cannot remember whether I asked anybody about that, but I certainly thought it. I remember thinking to myself, What should I wear? I mean, this was the death of . . . Anyway, I thought, Well, if everybody is a lesbian, I should wear . . . I could not decide whether I should wear makeup and try to look more feminine because I was not one or whether I should try to fit in and try to look like what I thought lesbians looked like, which God knows what I thought that was [laughter]. So that was one interesting perception about them.

I talk about that in talks now when I give talks because people think about feminists [like I did]. At that time I thought that feminists were these little old ladies with tennis shoes who were all in stride and could not take a joke and never got laid and just hollered. You know what I mean? The little old lady in tennis shoes. I had this stereotype of what a feminist was. I do not know where I got that. I really do not. But that is the view I had. I had that view and [the view] that everybody at this conference was going to be a lesbian. That is how I went to Sandy Spring. The only feminist thing I knew was that something was wrong because I had been doing traditional women's work in this untraditional relationship with this nice guy who never made me a cup of coffee when I was making apricot chiffon pies. I mean, that was it.

Sandy Spring was like an amazing experience because here were these women, and I do not believe there were maybe more thirty, maybe less than that, and I am telling you I had just graduated from college and had broken up with Paul, and I had no idea what I was going to do with my life. My plan was that my friend Anna and I were going to go hitchhike around Europe and absorb culture or something. I had gone, as I look back on it, from a kid thinking I was a very smart girl who could be anything I wanted to through these two relationships with these two guys, one of two years duration and the other three, into thinking that I was not smart, that I had this kind of intuitive kind of intelligence, and I did not want to be a great anything anymore. I mean, it was a very different self-concept that I had come out of these four years here with them than what I went into them with. That has something to do with what happens with young women between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one growing up in a male-dominated society. I certainly had a view of myself that was more like the way society viewed women than the one I had when I was sixteen.

What happened at Sandy Spring is that here are these very self-possessed women who have been through all kinds of leadership and risk and experiences that changed their lives, and they are sitting there. These women are like two or three or four years older than me, and they are like Cathy, Sara Chiles, Roxanne Dunbar. I do not know if T. Gray Sackenson was at Sandy Spring. She was certainly there at Lake Villa later on in November. Marilyn Webb, who was a leader in the antiwar [movement].

L: From all over the East Coast?

C: Yes, [from] Boston, New York, Chicago, Washington, DC.

L: Only the three of you from Gainesville?

C: Yes. Anyway, these women are sitting there planning how to overthrow male supremacy, which they think is a big political and economic system that involves the government and businesses. It does not just involve your boyfriend or your dad. It is a whole big national and probably international system of power and money and control that exploits women and oppresses them in many and various ways. This is roughly [the principal topic of the conference]. There were many internal debates, as you well know, about the form the system takes and how to fight it. It is a big thing is my point here.

Well, here is this small number of women, and they are dead serious. They are talking about the organizing they are doing in their town. They brought their papers – their papers are about their theory of male supremacy and their idea for a strategy about [how to eliminate] it – and they are talking about the work they are doing, what group they are organizing and stuff like that. They believe they are going to organize and overthrow the system and improve the conditions of women and make equality for us. Well, it is pretty . . . What word would you used to describe such a thing? Pretty bold, I guess. So I am very impressed, needless to say. I am profoundly impressed.

My friend Brook made a cover for a radical feminist journalism called *Feminism Lives*, and it has a picture of Susan B. Anthony on it and the words "Susan B. Anthony – Live like her" underneath it. Well, that is the way I kind of began to feel coming away from Sandy Spring, that I wanted to be like this. These people were right, they had the right idea, and there was something right-on about them that I was going to do this too, that this was what I should be doing.

L: Were any of these women black?

C: No, I do not think so. If you read the Alice Echols book there is quite a discussion about that in there.

L: I am about a third of the way through that.

C: You will find some papers at the end of the book; I think they are in an appendix. Alice says that these papers show that there was a conscious decision made at Sandy Spring not to invite black women to the Lake Villa conference in November. I do not remember that taking place, but I would not swear it had not taken place either. I wish Judy were around, because she would know. I just do not remember. I do not want to swear to you that no one was black, but I would

certainly say that there were not very many if there were any black people.

Now, you have to remember, too, at the time that the black power movement is in high gear. Black women are not the least bit interested in women's liberation. The left thinks we are crazy, that we are dividing the left. At best we are dividing the left. At worst we are deserting the Vietnamese who were being bombed out of their existence while we are sitting around talking about desserts and sex.

L: Had you joined SDS [Students for a Democratic Society] or SOC before Sandy Spring?

C: That is a good question. I am not sure. Probably so. Yes, I think so, because it was before Sandy Spring that I am already driving Carol's kids to visit her in jail, and all kinds of stuff is going on. I would say for sure yes.

L: OK, because I think Sandy Spring was August of 1968, according to the Echols book.

C: Yes, that is right. That is when it was. I would say definitely that I probably was in SDS. When do I get fired? I get fired in October. Yes, I was in SDS by this time.

L: Do you remember who was running SDS?

C: Yes. Nick Levin.

L: Who was part of Marshall Jones's group going way back.

C: Right. You can see him in that picture. Ed Freeman, a wonderful guy named Steve Ferrell. I am probably leaving out some people, but I think those three [were the main ones]. SDS was splitting in Gainesville during this time about the very issue of self-determination, as a matter of fact.

L: Self-determination for . . .

C: For black people. Also around this same time the Black Student Union and ZONO, which is the precursor of . . .

L: Yes, it is a military organizations.

C: Yes, of militant organizations. And Gainesville Women's Liberation. John _____, Gainesville Women's Liberation, and the Black Student Union jointly demanded of SDS that they stop trying to tell us what to do. We want unconditional support, we say, that they cannot pick apart our policy for who is going to speak or what we are going to have a rally about before they will come or do a flyer or

help in some way. So all of this is going on. There is a lot of left here. There is progressive labor, there is the Socialist Workers Party.

L: Do you remember the Young Socialists League?

C: I doubt that there was one. Oh, and Dave Smith. I forgot him. He used to come to rallies. You know that little picture of ____? He had a little picture like that of Mao Tse Tung, and he had it hanging around his neck [laughter].

Anyway, there were a lot of different small-left groups that were part of big groups. Then, of course, there was SDS. There were probably three more that I do not remember. Then there was JOMO here in the black power movement, and then there was, I guess it was Joe Molay.

L: Is JOMO separate from a black power organization?

C: No, it is a black power organization. It is Joe Waller's organization which evolved into the African Peoples Socialist Party.

L: So the black militants are in one group? There is one group of black militants?

C: Yes, but there is a student group. There is the Black Student Union, which is still here. The Black Student Union is quite a bit more militant, although it certainly did come out quite well last year. There is the NAACP, there is the ____ of the Black Power Group, there is the Black Student Union. I am probably leaving other things out. There is the biracial committee, which is not a black movement group exactly.

L: Is there a lot of interaction between all of these black groups and some of the white groups, or are they very separatist minded?

C: No, there is tons of interaction. They are very separatist minded, but there is tons of interaction. Both things are true. There are not white people except Carol Thomas in the black power movement.

L: What form does the interaction take?

C: Oh, Jack is sitting on Judy's porch saying: "You crazy-ass women! You are going to have a demonstration, and I am going to be out of town this weekend. What the hell is the matter with you? Who is going to protect you? You are going to get your ass beat. Why do you have to do this when I have to be out of town?" I mean, [there was] this kind of interaction. Everybody is friends. That is what it is, I guess. Everybody is friends. They are friends. Somebody stays in your house. Somebody borrows your car, [or] yo borrow their car. You help raise bail. You take their kids to visit them in jail. There is this kind of activity

between white and black.

L: Does everybody make an effort to go to everybody else's demonstrations?

C: Yes.

L: Scott Camil described it the same way.

C: Yes. Absolutely.

L: Before we start talking about Gainesville Women's Liberation, I think it was also Scott who told me about a gay liberation group in Gainesville.

C: Absolutely. Remember I copied that *Eye*?

L: Yes, the underground paper.

C: One of probably more than one underground paper during these years. Do you remember it said there was a gay liberation picnic in that little PR book.

L: There was a little blurb.

C: Now, I do not remember. It is funny, because when there was going to be this gay pride picnic this past year, I was standing there, and people were saying, "This was the first gay pride picnic, and it was something might click." I thought, This is not the first gay pride picnic, but I could not remember. When I was at Connie Canning's in May, and she was pulling out all these old *Eyes*. I was just looking through them, and there was the class that we gave, the Women's Liberation class, and right underneath it is that little blip that said "Gay Liberation Pride Picnic" [laughter]. So I must have known right then that I remember now. That is all I can tell you.

L: Tell me who Connie Canning is again.

C: The African Peoples Socialist Party either had developed out of JOMO. They may be not called that by this time. Joe and them are in Archer.

L: Archer?

C: Yes. The core of the group is in Archer, and Connie is involved in the antiwar movement and in a white support group for that.

L: So she is white.

C: Yes. Her husband is Bob Canning, who goes to jail for quite a while and saying, "Bring the damn war home."

L: Is he a faculty member?

C: He was a teaching assistant finishing a Ph.D.

L: There is a file on him in the P. K. Yonge Library [of Florida History] archives. I will have to look at them.

C: I have a bunch of Bob's papers, too. You should definitely do that. They are quite a couple, and he is quite a guy. He died a couple of years ago.

L: Were they involved in producing the *Eye*?

C: I do not think so.

L: How does Gainesville Women's Liberation come about or form?

C: We come back from Sandy Spring, Judy and I do, and we have heard about consciousness raising from two women from New York that we had never seen before named Carol Hannash and Cathy Sairchild. They are involved in a consciousness-raising group in New York called New York Radical Women. They are also talking about people testifying for the civil rights movement, and they are talking about Reed Sanchen. I want to say even this early, that consciousness raising is a form of what gets used in the Chinese revolution. They proposed this method to the rest at Sandy Spring for building a movement, and the New York Radical Women is doing consciousness raising.

L: I was wondering how a book on the Chinese revolution, or life in a peasant village at the time of 1948 or 1949, becomes a text for [this feminist movement].

C: Oh, because there is so much overlap between the left, the civil rights movement, and feminism. At that point they are [part and parcel of each other].

L: So this was common reading on the left?

C: Oh, probably so. Everybody is reading [this kind of stuff]. The cultural revolution has gone on, and you see these pictures. Everybody is reading Mao Tse Tung, Che Guevara, Karl Marx. Well, not everybody, but a *lot* of people. You can even see that when you read this stuff in the history department and in anthropology. These are my-age contemporary people that I am reading, and Marx is all through them. I mean, they were going through this same period also, getting master's degrees and Ph.D.s in their departments, and they were reading the same stuff. It was not just this little core on the left that was reading this.

Interpreting the war in Vietnam made people begin to understand that there was this system in the war called imperialism. A lot of students understood this then,

and they wanted to understand it better, so they began to read Ho Chi Minh. I watched *Platoon* about two months ago. I had not watched that movie in a long time. Do you know that movie?

L: Yes.

C: Do you remember that scene where the hippie crew is all partying, and they are down in the dugout, and the good guy . . .

L: Pointing the shot gun?

C: No. There is kind of the rough, bad-guy group, and there is the. They had this big picture of Ho Chi Minh up on the wall in there. I thought, My God, how did I miss that on the first time I saw this movie? This is the U.S. military. Now, I would doubt that the director just decided that he would [put that picture there]. I mean, it just would be a pretty big leap if there had not been something like that true sometimes. [laughter] This is [a picture of] the leader of the troops they are fighting! Anyway, it is true that was just a movie, but this was the way people were thinking about things. So for Fen Chen to be circulating [was not that unusual].

As a matter of fact, the other thing that happened when we came back from Sandy Spring was . . . Well, first if all, consciousness seems like a good idea, and we wanted to try it. We decided we were going to organize a group. So we come back to Gainesville and call a meeting of Gainesville Women's Liberation.

The other thing, interestingly enough, that happens is that Judy decides that something she hears makes her think that she should learn more about Marxism. I think that I should learn more about Marxism because women who believe that are wrong. Now, we think these two different things, but we decide we are going to learn about it nevertheless. So we both sign up for one of McGill's courses; Ken McGill is teaching a Marxism course in the philosophy department which lots of people are taking. We did not read Hinton in his class. I do not know what we read, but we read Marx. These things are being read. So we both take that course, and we start to read Marx, both of us, I think, for the first time. We think, God, Marx thinks just like us. That is what we thought.

Lots of people in the movement come from families who, like Cathy's father, fought in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade of the Spanish civil war.

L: Red diaper babies.

C: Red diaper babies.

L: Who are the core original members of Gainesville Women's Liberation?

Yourself, Judith Brown, . . .

C: Me, Judy, Nancy Booth, who is still here, . . .

L: Was she a student?

C: Yes. Martha Davis, Ed Freeman's wife; Amy and Cohen (I cannot remember Amy's last name; her boyfriend was also in SDS); Jeannie Uffelman, who is a nurse at the crisis ____ (she is still here); Amanda Hicks, who died when a tractor flipped over on her; Marilyn Sweig joins later on (she is now Marilyn Holly who teaches in the philosophy department; she is not a beginning member but joined probably within the year). We started in September, I would say. Carol Hanna comes to work with us in January.

L: Of 1969.

C: Yes. She is working for SCEF, Southern Conference Education Fund, and they are paying her to be a feminist organizer, so she is a paid organizer. She has a car, and she is working for SCEF. That lasted less than six months because SCEF fired her because she is doing feminist ____ in their mind.

L: What do they want her doing?

C: Well, their view of feminism is different than ours. They think that consciousness raising is therapy. They think that it is gossip and therapy and tea parties. SCEF is really oriented at that time toward organizing labor, and probably what they think she should be doing is organizing women factory workers to form unions or something. That is probably what their idea of women's liberation is. [laughter] But it was not ours.

L: Tell me about the Miss America protest in September of 1968. I understand you went.

C: Yes. The Miss America protest was, I guess we would probably say, the first really public action, because it is very public. Within a week *Life* magazine has written an article, and all the national papers and TV and press and stuff knows there is a women's liberation and are all carrying on right and left about it. Actually, there is a burial-of-traditional-womanhood demonstration earlier that is public. It is one of those women-against-war kind of groups – probably the Women's International Plea for Peace and Freedom or one of those women's antiwar groups. They are having a women's antiwar thing, and radical feminists women marched with them doing this burial of traditional womanhood with a big coffin and whatnot, saying that women should be fighting for their own rights and so forth.

But the Miss America protest is really the first big public demonstration. New York Radical Women is probably mostly responsible for its taking place.

L: Cathy Sarachild . . .

C: And Carol are key organizers.

L: So they recruit Gainesville people?

C: No. But this time we were so taken with them. See, the other thing I am leaving out here is that Judy and Bev's paper is really like consciousness raising. I mean, they are talking about their own experience, if you read the Florida paper toward the women's liberation movement.

L: Right. Marshall Jones says, "There is a lot of me in there."

C: Yes, there sure is. So they are really speaking out of their own experience. I mean, they certainly present the beginnings of a theory about women's oppression in those papers, but they definitely build it out of experience and not out of a critique of Marx or something else. When their paper, which comes out at Sandy Spring, it was like we obviously going in the same direction as the New York [group], as Cathy and Carol, because the consciousness raising they were doing was like what Judy and Bev had written in that paper. So there was a kind of an instant alliance. [However,] we were to go in very different directions, which we called radical feminism, than most of the other folk who we called the politicians, if you are reading ECHOL'S book, who thought that capitalism was the cause of the oppression of women, and that is what you had to do. It had all kinds of theories that you can read about, and my thesis was about why they thought that. We did not agree. We thought that men had to be confronted, because they were the immediate beneficiaries of the oppression of women. Why? Because they got their dinners fixed and their clothes and all of those everyday things. That was, of course, why they wanted to continue oppressing women, so they could keep getting those things.

OK. So the Miss America protest. I go there. I get there early, and I am standing on the boardwalk.

L: This is Atlantic City?

C: Yes. We have rules about official spokespersons, that we are not going to talk to the press unless you are an official spokesperson. Since I am there early and have this little brown miniskirt on and all these signs, the press descends on me. [laughter] I am trying not to talk to them, and I really am apprehensive because here I am trying not to talk to them, and they are all over the place. I am standing there _____. I do not know how many women were in that

demonstration, but probably easily more than 100; probably quite a few more than that. Maybe 200 or 300. I do not know. But you can hear these feet on the boardwalk because it hollow underneath. So there is this huge clapping. I mean, it is hundreds of feet literally marching on this boardwalk. They are not stomping; they are just walking, but that number of feet on the wood with this hollow space underneath it is just thundering. I looked down the boardwalk, and here they come with their signs and they were chanting. It really was quite a feeling.

It is interesting, too. We spend a lot of time talking to people milling around on the boardwalk. There develops some opposition to this demonstration. Men are yelling funny things at us. The one that stands out in my mind, for some reason, is some man is yelling, "Mothers of Mao!" We sort of were being red-baited, I guess. I guess I should say just for history's sake that no bras were burned. There was a freedom trash can, but you could not light a fire on the boardwalk. We all threw uncomfortable high heels and hair curlers and whatnot into the freedom trash can. A number of women, Cathy and Carol among them, go inside and unfurl that big, beautiful women's liberation banner, which you can see. There are some film clips of that demonstration.

L: That got on TV. Is that correct?

C: You know, I think so, but others think not. I think it did, but I am not positive anymore. It certainly became a famous photograph, if it did not get on TV. They do not get arrested, the women who unfurl the banner. They unfurl the banner and get out before they get caught. Peggy Dobbins goes in and throws Toni hair [stuff all over the place]. You have never gotten a permanent, but if you get a permanent at some point in the process this stuff goes on your hair that smells like ammonia. Oh, it is the worst-smelling stuff you can possible [put on your hair]. Well, she gets a pole of this stuff and sprays it all around the place, and she gets arrested – this is an individual action that she decided to do – so we have to get her.

What else can I say about it? Oh, I get fired. I tell the welfare [department] that I am taking annual leave and that I was going to be in a demonstration. I asked if that was all right. They said, "Well, yes. You are going to be n New Jersey." Little does anybody know that this is going to be like the shot heard around the world. You could see those articles that are in the Gainesville paper. I come back, and I am in deep trouble, but I am not instantly [fired]. I get told out of the blue that I have "broken the confidentiality of the department."

It is a long story, but Nancy Lewis, who is in Gainesville Women's Liberation, has this kid. She was a pregnant homecoming queen in her high school. She has her baby, and she is here going to school, so she is on welfare. She is in the

movement, and she sees these pictures of Jack Dawkins up on the wall. Welfare thinks this is bad, and they are going to do a home visit because they are going to study to see whether she should be raising a kid in this atmosphere. I go to Nancy and say: "They are going to come and do this. You better get that poster off your wall and be cool for a couple weeks." They get there, and Nancy says, "Oh, I knew you were coming because my friend Carol told me" [laughter]. Well, the only rule is that you cannot breach the confidentiality of a client. I have no broken any rule. But they say I have breached the confidentiality of the department, so I think I am getting fired for doing this.

I call Paul Adams, who is then the head of the ACLU. He comes over there. There is a big to-do about it – the ACLU is going to fight them on my firing. They get hold of my personnel file, and here are all these newspaper clippings of me at the protest and all this write-up about how I have to be gotten rid of because of this protest, which turns out to be really interesting.

Well, one thing led to another. Paul says, "You can work in child psychiatry" – he is also the chairman of child psychology [at the University] – "because you do not have a job anymore." So I go down there and try to work, and the University said that I was unemployable, and they would not let Paul hire; they would not put me on the payroll. This is also in my University file, or was, until that nice Dean Cosby got it out for me. (I never made a copy of it.) Anyway, I was unemployable because I had subversive friends – trouble-making friends, like Carol Thomas – and belonged to subversive organizations like the ACLU. This is actually in there. And that I sabotaged the Miss America pageant. Sabotaged! I mean, the closest thing to sabotage is Peggy's spraying this stupid hair stuff all over the place [laughter]. It really did not destroy anything at all; it just made a certain hall and stairwell non-_____ [laughter].

I cannot work for Paul, so we figure that he can take what he is paying me and make it into an assistantship, and I can get a graduate assistantship. I just had to find a department to go to school in. So I apply to the philosophy department to become a graduate student. The Graduate School does not go through the same University personnel apparatus, so that is how I got to graduate school. So there I am, and I decide I might as well go to graduate school in philosophy anyway so I could study Marx, which is what I want to do by this time anyhow. So that is what happened.

L: Had they begun purging the philosophy department at this point?

C: Well, not the way they did [later]. They had fired a Muslim professor named Sabi because he did not believe in God. He had published a treatise that proved God did not exist. They fired Ed, and they fired Doc, so I guess they were on their way.

L: And Ed Richard.

C: Yes.

L: What sort of relationship did the radical feminists in Gainesville have – I guess I am moving toward the 1970s, 1970, 1971 – with other events: the strike of 1970, the student mobilization?

C: We participated in general left demonstrations, antiwar stuff, and SDS stuff as SDS members. We felt and still feel that those issues are like people issues and that men and women should fight those things together against whatever is making the war or whatever and that women's liberation needs to be fought for by women making their own strategy and having their own meetings. So it was not typical that Gainesville Women's Liberation would do antiwar stuff as Gainesville Women's Liberation, although we all would participate as individuals.

I remember saving Steve Fair from the football jocks who were going to beat him up. I probably should not tell you that. Well, I will tell you anyway. It is a funny story. Judy and I and several other people, I guess Connie, bringing up the rear of this big demonstration (I am not sure which one). Steve is a small guy, and we get accosted by these really large, right-wing, jock-type students who were going to beat Steve up. I had forgotten all about this. I was making a speech against the Gulf War, and Connie just was randomly here. She catches up with me and says, "Carol, you have not changed a bit. Do you remember what you did in that other?" [laughter] Apparently I rush into the middle of these guys, and I go, "You guys think you are so big? Whip out your pricks if you are really such big men! And leave him alone!" Anyway, I do this really confrontational thing which apparently they let go of Steve. Then we all get a ____ [laughter]. Connie could tell you that story better than me, because I honestly do not remember it.

L: They had never seen the like.

C: We did protest, I think, as Gainesville Women's Liberation. We came as Gainesville Women's Liberation in support of the Southern Bell strike. There was a big strike of Southern Bell during those years. We did things jointly with the black power groups, like there was the appointment of [G. Harrold] Carswell, who was clearly a male chauvinist pig and a racist.

L: He was appointed to what?

C: [President Richard] Nixon was trying to appointing him to the [U.S.] Supreme Court. He had quite a reputation in Florida, and we opposed his appointment. It was sort of like the [Robert] Bork appointment. I mean, groups all over the place were opposing his appointment. This is actually a decent story is that guy

because this is indicative of several things. Us and the Black Student Union called this demonstration against Carswell, and we say to SDS that they have to play a supporting role because this judge is a male chauvinist pig and a racist. They cannot lead this. Women and black people are going to lead this demonstration, but they should definitely participate in it. So they decide they are going to have a bake sale. Can you imagine? Tom Hanna, who is the chair of the philosophy, and Sid Jourard are both like Mr. Macho. I mean, they arm wrestle at parties, and they both are very handsome. Anyway, they do a bake sale. They actually bake this stuff, and they sell cookies. They had a really good time, too [laughter]. They all turned out to support this demonstration. But generally speaking we would not have done an antiwar protest as a women's liberation group, although we were in them as individuals.

L: Do the radical feminists in Gainesville ever separate yourselves or argue for separation and focus only on women's liberation?

C: What do you mean?

L: Of just spending all of your time doing [women's liberation issues].

C: You can only do so many things at once. We managed to remain quite active in support of the black movement and quite active in the left, but our primary commitment is definitely the women's liberation, and that is what we do.

L: What sorts of things were you doing, other than consciousness raising, for women's liberation?

C: Well, we did these various protests and demonstrations. We taught a class through the community school on women's liberation. We organized a women's self-defense class where we were all trying to learn karate. We participated in national [meetings]. Gainesville had like the second-largest delegation to the Lake Villa conference in November.

L: Tell me about Lake Villa. Is that in Chicago?

C: Yes. We attend national stuff; we attend national protests and national meetings. By 1970 there were eight consciousness-raising groups from organizing and splits. There was a high school consciousness-raising group. I mean, there is not just one consciousness-raising group. There is a big monthly meeting where somewhere close to 100 people frequently show up to do planning and stuff.

L: Would these be the consciousness-raising groups that . . . I do not know if you know Pat Farris.

C: Yes.

L: And Shirley Conroy?

C: Yes. They probably were in one of these groups.

L: This is an organized thing that comes out of _____.

C: The first groups splits. The third split comes out of a class that Ed's wife [taught]. We rotated teaching this women's liberation class. The third group comes out of a class that decides to form its own _____ group.

L: Ed Richard?

C: No, Ed Freeman, who is the SDS leader. Martha [is his wife]. So groups are proliferating off the original out of either activities or splits in the original group until it gets up to eight. Then it interesting because there is like a missing link. The campus NOW chapter is formed in 1972, I want to say, and Donna Brunell, who is one of the people who is a convener of that chapter, is going to a group called Radical Consciousness-Raising Group. This is 1972. Now, I would just bet that somewhere that Radical Consciousness-raising group that Donna is in is also one of the offshoots of one of those groups. I do not know, because by this time Judy and I are working with a group in California.

L: Are you going to California?

C: Well, we have gone back and forth several times to California. That is like our base group. We are living here, but we are working on their newspaper. It is a national newspaper. We are not so much involved in local stuff as we had been.

L: What is the name of that group?

C: If started out being called the Women's Page, and it changed its name to the Second Page. There is a bunch of it there in the archives.

L: You are a founding member of Campus NOW.

C: No.

L: Were you ever a member of it at an early stage?

C: I was a member of national NOW. When does the ERA pass both houses?

L: 1970?

C: I think so. I am a state coordinator for the ERA during that year prior to the ERA

passing. There is a Miami chapter, and I believe it is the only chapter in this state. I am not sure when the Miami chapter is founded. My friend Marion is actually one of the conveners of the Miami chapter. She is here in Gainesville, and she cannot quite remember either. There is not a local chapter until 1972, and we are not involved in forming it.

L: I was curious, because NOW ____ philosophy.

C: I was a NOW member off and on. I have maintained myself as a NOW member.

L: As state coordinator for the ERA, were you working with GWER women?

C: We had all these petitions. I probably brought petitions to other groups. The petitions are in the other room. We had these petitions going on, and we had different PR for the ERA. It certainly was not my primary commitment, and they probably just called me that because they did not have another [title]. I do not know. I did some work for it, but did I go to like statewide NOW meetings? No, because there were none. There was one chapter; there was maybe the Miami chapter by this time, and I was probably the only person NOW could find who would work on this stuff, this Florida ____ [laughter].

L: The Gainesville Women for Equal Rights newsletter reveals that that is on the GWER agenda by, I think, 1970, 1971.

C: Oh, good.

L: It is not a major thing. At this time GWER is sort of trying to find something to do. It is kind of falling apart.

C: Right.

L: Do you by any chance remember any early environmentalist groups in Gainesville?

C: I am sure that Ed Richer thought that that was a big project. It was right up his alley [laughter]. As a matter of fact, you should ask Doc about that, because I had this vague memory. Ed would have been one of those people that would have said that the planet had been raped and that probably would have said that environmental disaster was coming from male supremacy. I do not agree with that view, but that really sounds quite like Ed to me. I am not [sure if there was such a group], but I could not remember that there was a gay liberation front here. There was actually a lesbian liberation groups here, also.

L: ____.

- C: Yes. I have one of its newsletters somewhere in there, also. That is probably in 1969 or 1970. Everything that there is in New York City is here, just about, so it would not surprise me at all if there were an environmental group.
- L: Do you have any contacts with similar types of people or similar groups at any other southern colleges in Alabama or Mississippi or Georgia or elsewhere in Florida?
- C: Yes. The New Left cannot decide what it wants to do with women's liberation. Half the time it wants it to go away, and the other half of the time it wants to capitalize on it because it sees it as a way of getting women into it. So it does a little bit of both. Lynn Wells is a SOC organizing person, Southern Student Organizing Committee, which in Gainesville I think I told you SDS and SOC are the same thing.

But Lynn comes here, and there is a southern women's conference here that SOC nationally puts on. Then there is a big conference in New Orleans that Roxanne Dunbar's group [organized], the Women's Liberation Conference. That is also a specifically sort of southern thing that goes on in New Orleans. I remember going to a regional SDS thing in Atlanta sometime during this period. We go back and forth to New York because we have a strong connection with New York by this time that has developed. But that time there is Red Stocking.

Really New York is like the wellspring of radical feminism, and Gainesville is the second place of it. We worked with New York. Cathy and Carol come back and forth, and we go back and forth up there. There is a whole correspondence in those two red notebooks that Judy put together called "The Consciousness-Raising Correspondence," and you can see how we are writing to each other all during this three- or four-year period cooking stuff up. I mean, we evolve this thing called the Probe and Lion and all this stuff you will read about in Echols. We have what we call life group, which is Judy and I and Cathy and Carol. We are this life group.

- L: What is a life group?
- C: Well, I do not know. I just think we thought we were going to be working together politically for life. That is why we called ourselves the life group. The correspondence among us is in that thing.

Chicago is a big deal, the Lake Villa conference, because there comes a very clear split at that conference between women who want to fight male supremacy as part of the student left and women who want to do it in an independent movement. Now, this is very different than this B.S. separatism where you are not supposed to drink out of the same coffee cup as a man drinks out of that floats around under the name of radical feminism today. That has nothing to do

with it. What we wanted to be able to do was improve our relations with men, not not have any more [laughter]. So it is very different than the Dwork and McKennon, these "nut burgers." That is what I think they are; I really do.

The only way we are going to get women's liberation is in an independent movement. Why? Because you have to spend all of your time just getting the floor, just getting heard at a meeting. You cannot make strategy with all these guys running around. We needed a separate movement to figure out what we needed to change and how we needed to do it and to have our own leaders and whatnot. We believe there needs to be an independent women's liberation movement, independent of the left, and we believe that consciousness raising needs to be its organizing strategy and its program. We openly fight for that at the Lake Villa conference at Chicago, just outside of Chicago. It is Gainesville and New York who want to do that, and we are a very large contingent combined together.

Chicago and Washington, DC, and some of the other big cities want to remain in the left or, if they are going to split off from the left, they still think that they need to fight it. They think that capitalism is the origin of this problem and that we should be making consumer boycotts as women and other kinds of things. They are very dubious about consciousness raising. They think it is therapy; they think it is a way of improving your personal situation. Not at all. It has nothing to do with a support group. It has nothing to do with any of those things. It is a way of developing a theory of male supremacy or planning an action.

That is how the Miss America demonstration was protested. Women sat around in a big group and said how they felt about the Miss America contest made them feel, and they talked about it. From that they decided to protest it, and they decided how they would protest it and what they would do. That is the point of consciousness raising, not bonding with other women or any kind of thing like that.

One of the key things about the Lake Villa conference is that this ideological, this theoretical split, this debate becomes public [and] open. Cathy presents a program for consciousness raising at this meeting. As a result of that it travels all over the country with people who are interested in this method. We do a workshop. By this time we have been doing consciousness raising in Gainesville for about three months, so we do a workshop about consciousness raising. Piles of people come, and a lot of people decide this is what they want to do back in their town. So this is really moment, I would say, where consciousness raising hits the national scene. Now, that does not mean that it was not being done anywhere else on its own. It is being done in New York, and other people may have gotten the same idea. But this is its really [big beginning on the national scene]. Cathy's program goes all over the place. People participate in it and

learn how to do it, and they decide they are going to go back to their town and do it. So that is another real significant thing about Lake Villa.

L: What happens in the 1970s with radical feminism in Gainesville in general? First of all, when do you take the master's degree in philosophy?

C: In 1970.

L: And then do you take a job somewhere?

C: Judy and I go to New York. Judy has a contract with Penguin Books to do a women's liberation anthology. She is probably halfway through putting together this anthology. We think we are moving to New York to work with Red _____. We get to New York, and we spend maybe two or three months in New York. It is too hard to move to New York and write. I mean, we are staying in apartments with friends. You have to pay \$1,000 for a down payment on an apartment. It is too hard to get jobs. We decide we are coming back to Gainesville after all.

By this time our first group has split. We have been thrown out of our second group and maybe one after that. Now, I say "thrown out." It is a funny anti-leadership phenomenon that we were talking about before that I think comes in part just because people have really a different political view. By this time there are a lot of women in the movement who are not coming out of the left or the civil rights movement anymore. They are coming because why? They want to advance in their field of whatever it is they are studying or whatever their job is. They want to be a lawyer or something, and they think that male supremacy is an impediment to that, which it certainly is. But our idea was not to rise within the system as it was, which is NOW's idea. NOW believes in equality, which we believe in, but we believe in something more as well. In other words, we believe the whole thing has to be changed. What radical feminism really meant was radical *and* feminist. It did not mean that you were more militantly feminist. It just meant that you saw that both kinds of change had to occur.

So these women, I believe, do not want to rock the boat quite as much as we do and are not coming of this tradition of having rocked it for years, either.

L: They are not movement people?

C: No. They are just regular women. They want a lot of the same things we want, but they do not have a consciousness about it that you have to change the whole system. (This is partly my theory.) So they have to behave in their minds to rise in their area, but they do not want to come right out and say that. I think a lot of this kind of stuff happens because there is a lot of sincere political divisions that people do not want to speak up and say. So what they say instead is that these leaders are undemocratic, these leaders are nasty people, whatever they say.

[laughter] They say things like that, and they manage to agitate. Then it turns out that you find out that more people feel that way than you thought.

Of course, the other thing that is going on in this period is that [Gloria] Steinem suddenly becomes a national movement figure, having never been in any group that anybody ever heard of. She does not come up through ranks, has not been at either of these conferences or in the Miss America [demonstration]. I mean, nobody knows her! We did not know everybody who was in the movement because by this time there were groups all over the place. But to go from like none of the key people who had been the organizers of this movement that none of those people know you just suddenly being nationally a spokesperson . . .

L: It does not work.

C: No, it is not real. But there she was, anyway, this national spokesperson all of a sudden. I remember her coming to the University, because there was a University women's liberation group by this time made up of faculty, too, and they decide to invite Steinem here because she is this big leader. They are going to have a conference and charge some enormous registration fee for it. We said, "You cannot do that because people cannot pay those prices. Anyway, we are opposed to her." Now, we do not know anything about the CIA, at this point. We just think that something is wrong here.

I remember we went to that conference, which was on campus. There was no child care as part of it, so everybody brought their babies. They brought their kids, so there were nursing babies and four- and five-year-old kids; all these women have brought their kids. We just let the kids run all over the place because we were making a point that there should have been child care. [laughter] We made a big fuss about [the registration fee], and they said, "We will give you courtesy registration." We said, "Well, how are we going to get courtesy registration? What are you going to want? Rent receipts?" Anyway, we attended that but protested it.

L: What happens after the early 1970s, on into the later 1970s?

C: Judy is writing this book. We have been thrown out of these several groups. Ongoing is this phenomenon of the whole movement all over the country. The indigenous leadership or the founders or whatever you want to call the people who had started things are getting pitched. This turns out to be this national phenomenon which, actually, the *Second Page* begins to analyze, which is how we get involved with them, because they are doing a very good job of explaining what they think is going on.

Now, sometime thereafter Red Stockings happens upon this information that

Steinem is a CIA agent. They are not looking for it. They just find it. So that hits the street, and we begin to think this is just about the time this person comes in, and here are all these other people are getting thrown out. Anyway, the whole movement takes a big turn to the right. So that happens.

Now, I am working at Interlachen school in a federal program out in Putnam County. We come back from New York. Penguin does not like the way Judy has introduced some of the articles in this anthology, and they get into a big dispute which they cannot settle. So the anthology does not come out. Judy starts teaching English out there. We are working with the *Second Page*.

L: Are you married at this time?

C: No.

L: Is she still married at this time?

C: No. Well, somewhere along here Judy gets divorced, but I do not remember what year it was. Anyway, NOW has begun by this time, because they begin in 1972. In 1974 I get married and go to Jacksonville and drop completely out of everything.

L: Who did you marry?

C: I married the director of the poverty program in Jacksonville, Moses Freeman.

L: And you move to Jacksonville?

C: I move to Jacksonville, and I do not care if I never see another woman again as long as I live, because I am just disgusted. I cannot figure out what has gone wrong, and I do not know what to do. None of us do. We all just know that we have been thrown out, and we do not understand much of why or what to do about it. The movement seems to be going this direction that none of us exactly knows why it is going there, and there does not seem to be anything we can do about that either. Judy goes back to law school. They must have been getting divorced right around this time because Judy had been in law school, drops out to put Brownie through law school, Brownie is going to law school in Rutgers by this time because the University of Florida tells him that because of his antiwar activities he will never pass the Florida bar, so he has to leave town and finish law school up there. So he graduates, leaves Judy, they get divorced, and Judy starts back to law school herself.

Now I would say they are ghosts. I am in Jacksonville not doing anything except Moses has a son. I am working at a job, and I am trying to forget that I ever was a feminist. So that is what I am doing.

Then a lot of things go on in Gainesville. Judy participates, but I would say unsystematically. She is no longer leading a group.

L: Scott Camil told me that she was part of a contingent of lawyers that volunteered to help defend the Gainesville Eight. Does that sound accurate to you?

C: Yes, it does. Judy continues to participate in the movement, but no longer as a coordinator. If you read about the Gainesville band in Doc's or if you look at the way women's liberation was during that probably four years, during 1968 and 1972, and even the left and the black power. We all worked together. The band concept kind of continues.

L: We cannot accurately ____.

C: But by 1973, 1974, by 1975 for sure there is not any more band, and Judy is participating as an individual and doing all kinds of movement work, but she is not coordinating the movement in Gainesville in the way that she had been. And I am in Jacksonville.

L: Since your friend is here, how did you end back in Gainesville, and when did you come back?

C: I got divorced in 1980. I spent six years [married to Moses], and the last three of those years I began to go to demonstrations. But I am certainly not coordinating anything. My husband does not want to be in the movement [laughter]. He just wants to lead a normal life. He is a nice person, but that is what he wants to do. By this time I am beginning to realize that this is what I am going to do again and that I need to be back here and that Judy and I need to be working together for this to take place.

It would be a whole 'nother question [about what was going on in Gainesville]. I could give you a kind of a thumbnail of what happens, even though I am not here and not participating between 1974 and the time I come back. You could get that from a lot of other people besides me. I mean, what happens in Gainesville is the hotel center if formed in 1973. That is a nonprofit clinic that does _____. It is still here. That happens. Rape. The NOW chapter gets formed, Florida Blue Key gets integrated, the battered woman's shelter is started, there is a feminist newspaper – there is actually a women's center – called *Women Unlimited*, which is a physical place upstairs. Judy rents the upstairs of her loft to Women Unlimited.

L: Oh, she practices law here.

C: Yes, she becomes a lawyer. Something else happens. Oh, a women's bookstore, Amelia's is opened, the Gainesville NOW does a civil disobedience at

the capital trying to get the ERA through the Florida legislature – and I get thrown out of NOW for being too militant [laughter]. Gainesville continues in its tradition of raising hell a little differently. It is so interesting. I told you this phenomenon occurs with the Gainesville ACLU and the g Vets for Peace and with us and with Campus NOW. Still somewhere there is some spirit here and some _____ that is a little different than these national organizations, and it is really a radical spirit that continues still.

So I come back to Gainesville in 1982, and Judy and I slowly begin to start back up. By 1984 and 1985 we are organizing again. Gainesville Liberation resurfaces doing fund raising for a Red Stockings project in 1985.

L: And you have been together ever since, the Gainesville Women's Liberation. I guess that is a good place to end this.