

Samuel Proctor Oral History Program
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Program Director: Dr. Paul Ortiz



241 Pugh Hall
PO Box 115215
Gainesville, FL 32611
(352) 392-7168
<https://oral.history.ufl.edu>

AAHP 044 Jean Chalmers
African American History Project (AAHP)
Interview conducted by Angele Gavalino on June 1, 2009
42 minutes | 23 pages

Abstract: Jean Chalmers is a White woman from Alberta, Canada, who describes some of her life experiences leading to her moving to Gainesville, Florida at the age of twenty-five to attend the University of Florida. She relates the culture shock of being a Northerner who moved into Southern segregated society, and relates memories of Jim Crow segregation in Gainesville. Mrs. Chalmers describes her involvement in the Civil Rights Movement while in Gainesville, including work with Gainesville Women for Equal Rights (GWER) and the Southern Regional Council, and co-founding an integrated nursery school with LaKay Banks. She particularly elaborates on the activities of GWER and how it grew and developed as an organization.

Keywords: [African American History; Alachua County; Civil Rights Movement; Education; Feminism; Student Activism]

ORAL HISTORY

P R O G R A M
University of Florida

AAHP 044

Interviewee: Jean Chalmers

Interviewer: Angele Gavalino

Date: June 1, 2009

G: Hi, this is Angele Gavalino with the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program. Today is June 1st, 2009. And I am here with the lovely Mrs. Jean Chalmers in her office in Gainesville, Florida. And we're going to be talking about kind of her life, and what she's been up to. I was just saying how I'm more interested in what she's done prior to her civil rights activism and whatnot. If we could just start by getting kind of a very early background: where you were born, your full name, whatnot.

C: Yeah, interestingly enough, I was born in a small farm on Northern Alberta, Canada. So, I've seen a lot of poverty. I didn't know that we were poor; I always thought we were rich, because we were the richest people in the farming community. But when I look back upon it now, I realize that I grew up with a lot of poverty around me. So, when I came to the South, I didn't feel uncomfortable. It wasn't a shock to me to see people living on the edge. I left the farm when my father died during the Second World War, and went to live with my grandparents in Victoria, British Columbia, which is a very, very British small city. And my grandfather was very left wing; probably would have been a Communist if there had been any organization. He was always ranting and raving against rich people, and how unfair the world was for poor people. So, that was part of my indoctrination. And then I went over to England, because girls from Victoria went to England to get cultured. So, I saved up my money and went off to London, and there I mixed with the colonial crowd. And in those days, that was the Indians, Pakistanis, Africans, the queen of To[n]ga—you know, all of the lands in the

South Pacific. And then the Australians, the South Africans, and the Canadians were the English-speaking gang.

G: What age was this that you were in England?

C: I turned twenty-one when I was in England, so I was a teenager. Probably eighteen or something like that. When it was time to come home, I came home pretty much on a refugee boat that was filled with Irish and Germans escaping. They were mainly just people without passports, without family left from the Second World War. And I landed in New York with nine dollars. [Laughter] And, took me about a year to earn enough money to get out of New York and go back home for a visit. By then, I was in love with New York, and knew I would stay in the United States.

G: Okay. Now, did you go to college in England?

C: I went to college everywhere. And never really finished anywhere except at the University of Florida.

G: Oh, right on!

C: Yeah. So finally, when I got married—I was twenty-five by the time I got married, and I was still being a bit of a vagabond and came down here. I thought, “Well, if I’m going to marry a professor, I probably should get a college degree.” So I’m a Gator.

G: Right on, that’s what I like to hear! [Laughter] So now, did you meet your husband in class somewhere or—?

C: No, no, in New York City.

G: Oh, you met—okay, so you guys met in New York, and then did you come down here together?

C: No, he was already here. He was teaching here during the winter, and at CCNY during the summer.

G: CCNY?

C: Community College of New York City. When I first met him, I was a barmaid. I worked in an Italian bar down in little Italy, south of Greenwich Village. And then, I was going to school during the day, taking some classes at NYU and living in Greenwich Village with all the hippies.

G: Sounds lovely! [Laughing]

C: So, we dated one summer, and then the next summer, I think he got engaged to someone and I got engaged to someone. And then the following summer, my engagement broke up and his broke up, and we got together again. By then, I was a fashion model. So I had quit school. It was just too hard working all night. I'd work 'til one in the morning, I'd go home and drink a container of espresso coffee and study 'til four in the morning, and then try to get to class at ten. It was just too much. So, I gave up the academic world and went to work in the fashion industry.

G: What had you been studying at NYU?

C: Well actually, most of the time I was supposed to be studying business, because my mother said I should have a degree in business so I could be a helpmate to my husband. [Laughter] But I was really interested in sociology and politics, and so I was taking as many of those kind of courses as possible. I was also fairly

interested—I was eclectic. I was interested in philosophy and literature. I did a lot of theater work on and off, so I was really interested in theater and all the literature surrounding the theater. When I came to the University of Florida, then, I switched to linguistics, because there was a fabulous professor here in linguistics, and I was working on an artificial language with a researcher here. But then, when the professor left, I gave up on that. And so, I have an interdisciplinary degree in health planning. [Laughter] That's where I ended up.

G: So you had quit school to be a fashion model.

C: Right, mmhm.

G: And what did that kind of involve? You were in New York at the time, so—?

C: I was in New York City working in the garment industry, doing mainly runway work and showroom work. I did a little bit of photography, but I was too short to be big-time photography. For a while, I had my own agency; I teamed up with a printer, a man that owned a printing business. And we would hire models for shows at the Coliseum. The Coliseum had just started in New York, where merchants from all over the nation would bring in their goods to show. And I would hire the pretty girls to sit up on top of the cars and sell them. He would do the printing of the brochures and flyers and all of that.

G: Did you enjoy doing that?

C: It was interesting to have a little bit of real business experience, where I had to write the paychecks, and had to write the contracts and such.

G: And so, what age would this have been around?

C: In my early twenties.

G: So then, you came to the University of Florida. Did you come for your husband?

C: Mmhm. Yeah, yeah. So then I came down here, and I had never experienced a segregated community in the garment district. We all worked with Black and White people, all worked together. Then, at the bar, I was close to the factory. And most of the factory workers would come into the bar and invite me to their homes, and so. In London, it was *very* international. So I'd never run across racism until I came to the South. *Wow*, what a shock! And it was so bad that I said to David, "I've either got to do something about it or leave the South; I cannot live in an apartheid society." He said, "Well there is a group that meets on the first Sunday of every month in the Negro library." That's where all the torn and crayoned books from the White library were placed. He said, "We better go off and meet with them." And we did, and that was the Council of Human Relations. And what we did was try to identify the problems in the Black part of the town—well, then said that it was the Negro part of town. And then, we became advocates for the Negroes to get the garbage. There were houses with no sewer and no water. There were spigots in the middle of the street where the people could go and get water.

G: And this was in, what year?

C: 1960s, yeah. In a way when I look back upon it, it was quite patronizing, though. We good White people were going to the city commission and the county commission demanding that they helped our poor Negroes. I guess if the Negroes had gone, they would never have got anywhere. But, eventually that's what had to happen. The Negroes *had* to go and demand rights, themselves. It

couldn't continue with the good White people saying, "Y'all should be nice to our Negroes." And that's what the Black Movement was about. That's when the Negro became Black. The Black Movement said, "Unh-uh, we will go and fight for our own rights, thank you very much."

G: And you were supportive of that.

C: Yes. Yeah, it was the only way it was really going to happen, yeah.

G: So, how long were you a part of the—it was the Human Rights Council, you said?

C: Yeah, the Human Relations Council? I probably said "Human Rights," I meant Human Relations Council. Oh, gosh! I don't know. Probably until the Civil Rights Act was passed. And at that time we became much more active, and most of my energy went over to the Gainesville Women for Equal Rights, which I think was formed in 1963, and I was active in that for ten or fifteen years. It was the second-largest Civil Rights organization in the state of Florida. NAACP had the larger membership—we *think*. NAACP didn't keep written memberships because it was too dangerous. People didn't want to have their names showing up on the NAACP list. We integrated many institutions in Gainesville, and some statewide, like the Florida State Employment Office, which was run for White people. And so, we got in touch with Secretary Wirtz from the Labor Department. "Are they getting federal money?" "Yes they are." "They are segregated." "Oh, they'd better not be!" And so, we changed that. Hill-Burton money was money that, after the War, was giving to local communities to expand hospitals. Snd the local hospital, Alachua General, had Hill-Burton money. And so, the same thing. So we called

Congress, "Can you have a hospital getting Hill-Burton money?" "No, you can't."
So we integrated Alachua General Hospital, and then, all the hospitals in Florida that were getting Hill-Burton money.

G: So, how did you find the information out about who was getting what kind of money and stuff like that? What did that take?

C: We were basically researchers. Florida had a rule that only one person from a family could work for the state. So, there were all these overeducated women with college degrees that couldn't get jobs. So, we spent twenty, thirty hours a week just researching and working on civil rights.

G: Did you have access to—since you were wives of the faculty members, did you have access to the university kind of resources that they had available?

C: The university was no help to us. Yeah. We just went and did raw research. A lot of faculty at the university was supportive to us, but the administration would not get involved.

G: Who was kind of like the president at the time? Do you know?

C: J. Wayne Reitz. Mmhm. Yeah, J. Wayne was it during most of it; Stephen O'Connell was—the Civil Rights Movement kind of merged into the Women's Movement and the Antiwar Movement, but J. Wayne Reitz was during the segregation movement.

G: So, was he supportive at all of what you guys were doing?

C: No. No. Stephen C. O'Connell was the president during the war demonstrations. And no, none of them—even if they were, could never say so. Because they

looked upon the legislature for their money, and the legislature was *not* sympathetic to our positions. Yeah.

G: So now, you were mostly active in integrating and working on that kind of stuff. What would say was your greatest accomplishment as a member of the Gainesville Women for Equal Rights, if you could pick one?

C: You know, I think it was just integrating institutions in Gainesville. We did a lot with education, with tutoring, we set up Best Day of the Week program to bring White and Black children together.

G: Can you explain that a little more

C: Best Day of the Week was Saturday. When we integrated the schools, the Black kids were great at sports, great at music, pretty talented in art, too. The White kids were great at mathematics, great at readin', 'ritin', and 'rithmetic. [Laughter] And so, we wanted to show, we wanted a milieu where the Black kids could succeed. And so, we set up Saturday programs that were given over to music, arts, sports, and those things where Black kids excelled, and had White children involved too. So it was really, we called it the Best Day of the Week, because it was the best day for these creative activities where race didn't have much effect. For four days a week, five days a week, those who had readin', 'ritin', and 'rithmetic were the White kids, and the Black kids were feeling inferior because they'd been to the library with the missing pages and the crayon books. So I think that was important. But I think the hard guts of finding out where the law was broken, and making institutions obey the law of the land is where we were really most forceful.

G: How did that make you feel, to be kind of—I don't want to say a "forerunner"—kind of really pushing the limits of things? Were you ever afraid? Did it ever just make you feel powerful? What were the feelings behind that?

C: No, I think a lot of us were willing to die for it. And it was because of my life.

G: Did you ever feel like it might come down to that?

C: Well, sort of yes and no, because at that time because at that time I had a baby, and a two year old. So, I didn't take terrible risks. A lot of my friends were beaten up, and put in jail, and some of them disappeared. Carol Thomas was the most radical woman in our organization. She spent a lot of time in prison. They shot her dogs. One summer, I took her children when she was in prison. I rented a lake house, and took her children in along with mine.

G: And Carol Thomas was Black or White?

C: White, yeah.

G: Wow! Okay, so it was going both ways.

C: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Mhm. The Black women were really courageous. Because most of them were schoolteachers, some nurses. And their jobs were really on the line. And they were willing to be out front: sign documents, protest. When we'd go down to the school board, the White women would do the talking, but the Black teachers were right there. And the school board knew what was going on, and they were willing to put their careers in jeopardy to do it.

G: So, how many children did you have at the time?

C: Two.

G: So, how were you able to balance the different roles in your life? You were a wife, you were a mother, and you were also this activist. How did that work out?

C: I had a lot of energy, and I involved my kids in it. I couldn't find an integrated nursery school. So I formed one with a Black friend of mine, LaKay Banks; the wife of the Black doctor and I. We had—both of our children were born at the same time, and they played together, as babies they were together. And we had enrolled them in a little private nursery school. We went off to Japan for a year, where David was teaching. When we came back we had found that the little private school had gone to the Heritage Christian Church. And so, I called the Heritage Christian Church, and they said, "Oh, it's fine," sure, they had Henry on the list and they would take him. My friend LaKay called, and they said, "Are you Negro?" And she said, "Yes." And they said, "I'm sorry, we won't take a Negro child." So LaKay and I said, "Right. We'll start our own damn nursery school." And so, we started the Millhopper Cooperative Nursery School, which was the first cooperative nursery school in the state of Florida. And of course, the Department of Education was just thrilled, and everyone in Early Childhood Development was in on it, and helped us, because we didn't know what we were doing! We got someone with a degree in early childhood development to come and teach. And it was a booming success; it lasted for thirty-five years.

G: Wow!

C: Yeah. Just closed.

G: So basically, if you needed something to happen, you just—.

C: We just did it. We just did it, yeah.

G: That's—wow! So, your kids were in nursery school at the time. Now, you went to Japan for a year? And what were you doing over there?

C: David was teaching, mmhm.

G: Okay, and so, how did the movement, how was that? Did you keep in contact with anybody while you were over there?

C: I kept in contact, but I wasn't involved in the Movement at all. In Japan, we were deeply involved in the war. And I was very, very opposed to the Vietnam War, and my husband was not. So, it was a difficult time for us. By and large, the Japanese really didn't think we should be there, so that's where all of our energies went.

G: So now, having had been kind of on the same side as the Civil Rights Movement went in America, was it difficult to be in opposing viewpoints with your husband in Japan?

C: Right, mmhm. It was.

G: Whereas here, I assume you kind of drew strength from him by supporting each other.

C: Yeah that's right, we were in lockstep on the apartheid issues.

G: While he was working at the university, was it ever difficult for him, did you guys ever discuss how difficult it was for him to kind of, I would assume, put up with some of the double standards and things being a state worker?

C: No, he didn't put up with it. In fact, he went to jail.

G: Did you ever go to jail?

C: Yes, mmhm.

G: Did you ever go to jail?

C: No, no. He went just before the Civil Rights Act was signed. And I was slated to be in the next group. I was going to go to jail with Felicity Trueblood. I thought, if I was going to go to jail, I wanted to be with someone called Felicity Trueblood. Then they signed the Civil Rights Act. Because at that time, we had a two year old, so I stayed home with Henry while he was in jail, and he was going to stay home while I went

G: At least you had a system worked out. [Laughter]

C: That's right, yeah. And the university, he got away with everything. He was a very distinguished teacher, he won every teaching award you could, and so, and the University would be hard-pushed to push him out.

G: Now, you were a member of the Southern Regional Council, is that right?

C: That's the same council that started the Human Relations Council at the Negro library. It was amazing that years later, I became president of the Southern Regional Council. In fact, I was president and Julian Bond was vice president. So I rose from being this little Canadian girl at Negro library in Gainesville to being the president of one of the foremost civil rights organizations in America.

G: So, that's actually really interesting that you bring that up. You were born a Canadian, you came to America, and you kind of just went all in for the American way of life.

C: My mother had been born in America. So, in our family we'd gone back and forth across the border for several generations, so I didn't feel alien here at all.

G: So what's it like in Canada? I'm not really familiar what race relations are like up there; you said up in the north, it was kind of a culture shock coming down here. So, I assume in Canada it was also—

C: Yeah, we had very few African Americans in my part of Canada. Those that we did have were just part of society, you know? We had a lot of Native, First Nations people, and we had a lot of Chinese in Victoria. And we had a lot of Sikhs.

G: I'm not, I don't know.

C: They're the Indians from northern India; in fact, the Premier of British Columbia is probably a Sikh. We had a very international grouping, but there was no segregation or anything like that.

G: So when you came here, what were the initial kind of—what did you see first that made you kind of understand “this is what segregation is.” You weren't familiar with it before; what kind of stood out to you the most about that system.

C: I often tell the story about what I think might have been the catalyst for my activity: it was a very rainy day in Gainesville, and I was down on SW 1st Avenue, where Rice's Hardware is. One of those torrential downpours where the water was just flowing down the gutter on the side. There was an elderly Black couple approaching me, and they stepped off into water, ankle-deep, to let this twenty-five-year-old White woman by. And that's when I came home and said, “I just, I can't live like this.” So, that was a dramatic moment; I'm sure there were other moments, but that one sticks out in my mind.

G: Were you at all a part of the integration of Gainesville High?

C: Well, yes and no. I was really opposed to integrating Gainesville High, because what they did was close down the Black high school, and make all the Black kids leave their community, leave their culture. Lincoln High School was a very proud high school. They had a great marching band, a great football team, and it was the center of the Black community. And it just shredded it overnight. So, I marched to protest the closing of Lincoln high School. I knew the kids that integrated Gainesville High School, I was very supportive of them. And we met often with the principal of Gainesville High School, who was not particularly in favor of integration, but he was in favor of law and order. So he told the football team that if there was any problem with the Black kids, the football team had permission to beat up anyone that attacked the Black kids. So, we didn't have any violence. But he also really resisted integration, as much as he could. Particularly, he wanting one to lay off a lot of Black teachers because many of them were not as well-educated—or, not as diploma-ed—as the White teachers. They knew how to teach Black kids. The White teachers did not know how to teach Black kids. But the principal wasn't sophisticated enough to understand that. We kept a pretty strict watch on him, and he looked upon us as terrible troublemakers. But we fought for every Black teacher. And of course, the Black teachers didn't make as much money as the Black teachers, either, so we brought out all that. We were down at the school board causing trouble almost every meeting.

G: You say you were terrible troublemakers, so you were probably well known members in the community. Did you come up against a lot of resistance to what you stood for from your fellow White people, or were you—?

C: Town and gown was very separate; we never met town people at all. Town people thought we were all a bunch of Communists. And of course, the gown people were all intellectual snobs, and they all thought the town people were just a bunch of crackers. So, there wasn't much going on there at all. The people I hung out with were all very approving of what I did. There was just absolutely no way that people in our organization could've been friendly with a segregationist. The feelings were just too strong.

G: So you chose to surround people that supported your cause.

C: Sure, mmhm.

G: Now, can we talk a little bit more about the Gainesville Women for Equal Rights? How did you get hooked up with them, how did that kind of start?

C: There was Students for Equal Rights. Marshall Jones was the faculty adviser to that group, and his wife Beverly Jones realized that that group needed support. And so, she started the Gainesville Women for Equal Rights. And the first thing that that organization did was to invite a group of Black women to come and talk to us about what it was like to be Black in Gainesville. And it was the Presbyterian Student Center, and it was just absolutely *astounding!* That's when we learned segregation was, and how harmful it was to families and people. They invited some of the people from the Human Relations Council to come join them. We all got together in each other's houses, and put together bylaws, and

organizations, and committees, and got to work. For a lot of us, it was pretty much a full time job.

G: So, most of what you did, you started from the ground up, right?

C: Yeah.

G: So, what were some of the greatest obstacles that you had to overcome as part of the Women for Equal Rights Movement?

C: The obstacle we had was poverty. And I think it's still the greatest obstacle. I don't think you can cure racism without curing poverty. I remember once going to a laundromat: Millhopper Nursery School was located next to a very poor Black neighborhood. And we had a lot of kids from the poor Black neighborhood. One of the women had taken in some extra children, she was always out at the pump, pumping water, and washing diapers, and hanging them on tree branches and such. I'd been to her house when they only had sugarcane to eat; I mean, just terrible poverty. No running water, no lights, none of that. No heat, no air conditioning; just a shack in the woods. So I went to the local laundromat and said, "This woman really, really needs to use your laundromat, and I'll give her the"—in those days it was the dimes and the nickels—"to run the machines if you'll let her in, because she's Black." And he said, "I have no problem with letting Black people use my machines. But Jean, they come in with dirty diapers that haven't been rinsed, and their clothes are smelly; I just can't do it, I'll lose all my White customers." And the light bulb went on—duh! He is segregated because of their poverty, not because of their race. And so then, we started working on issues of poverty. And we discovered that the county welfare office

was for White people only. There was no place for Black people to go, to get out of this terrible poverty. We went to the County Commission, and I remember we'd been in India then, and been living in Sri Lanka, and been to Calcutta, which was just unbelievable city. I remember there were two county commissioners and the county manager saying, "We have people living in the woods around Gainesville, living in poverty just as terrible as Calcutta, India." And I think it hit them. And two of the county commissioners—both of them had been raised very poor—said, "We're going to help you in any way we can."

G: Having lived in poverty yourself, you could kind of understand where all this was coming from.

C: Mhm, sure. Yeah, yeah. And the two county commissioners that had been up through poverty were the most helpful; this was Sid Martin—Sid Martin Highway—and G.M. Davis was the other one.

G: Now, this is kind of a broad question: if you had to come up with some kind of solution, what would you say the best approach to dealing with the poverty that still exists, what would you say that would be?

C: Education, education, education.

G: That's it?

C: Absolutely. And we're not doing it right. Yeah.

G: Are you still active in kind of trying to make that, the education and—?

C: No, I'm no longer active.

G: Well you're active doing other things but—.

C: I'm an old woman now. [Laughing] I just have my job. I talk to people, and I'm willing to talk to any organization, and I sometimes talk to school classes and such. But I'm not on any board.

G: How does that feel?

C: I'm not asking anybody for money; and it feels wonderful.

G: So you were mayor of Gainesville, for a time. When was that?

C: The 1980s. In 1982 I went on the city commission, to 1988.

G: As mayor of Gainesville, what were kind of your goals in doing that?

C: The thing I worked on most of the time was the library. That's the thing of which I am the most proud. City government is not involved in health and welfare, that's county government; so, I didn't do very much with poverty or anything. I made sure that the city boards were integrated. I would spend a lot of time in Black churches, trying to get members of the Black community to get involved in the voluntary activities of the city.

G: Do you keep in touch with any of the people that you, I mean the ladies in GWER and stuff? You guys still?

C: Sure.

G: I bet it's fun to get together and talk about all that.

C: There's a lot of love between us, yeah.

G: Was it kind of a bonding space? Did you guys ever have—did any of your opposing viewpoints—did you even *have* opposing viewpoints as members of the—?

C: Oh, *sure!* We would argue about how to do everything. Particularly when the movement went from Negro, to Colored, to Black. Some of the African American members really didn't like being called Black, and they didn't like the Stokely Carmichael thing. Some of them thought it was the only way to go. And we White people were just sort of, we didn't know. But one thing we did know, that the Black movement did not want White people involved, certainly not in leadership. And most of it did not want women involved. So, there was a pretty strong indication then that women were going to have to be on their own, and a lot of our members joined the women's movement. And the whole Redstocking movement, a lot of our movement joined the Redstocking movement.

G: And were you a part of that?

C: No. In fact, I kind of resented that, because I felt we hadn't finished with the apartheid movement, and I hated to see all this energy going into the sexual revolution—although I knew it was necessary, I just thought we should finish one before we started the other.

G: Did you make that kind of known to the people you were around?

C: Right, yeah, yeah. But you know, I am a feminist and I belong to all the appropriate female organizations, and I'm not anti-feminist at all; I was just so pro-fighting apartheid, it just took all my energy.

G: So you just kind of believed in a time and place for each thing, a sequence of events. So when you kind of had different boards going on, and you're chairing different things, they all kind of were for the ending of segregation. Now, being

still a member of the Gainesville community, what would you say the greatest changes are? Do you see a progression, or kind of parallels going on?

C: Yes, both. I see a lot of integration. There's so many of the segregated functions are so deeply cultural. And I don't think we'll ever get away from that, and I don't know if we want to. Certainly the Black church is a cultural institution that is foreign to the White church. And the Black church is central to the Black family life, and Black community life. That will always have a segregating influence. Canada developed very differently than the United States, particularly Pierre Trudeau, or some of the more modern prime ministers. They preserved cultural neighborhoods. So, you'll find in Toronto a neighborhood where everyone's speaking Czech, and the schools are Slavic. And you'll find another one where it's all French, all whatever. There's the Jamaican neighborhood, and there'll be a Jamaican community center, all supported by the government. So, they're really little mini-segregated cultural polyglots, where we have not taken that approach. And instead we've said, "Everyone's got to be together," because separate was never equal. Canada has been able to have separate being equal, because they're a more egalitarian country, and the people are willing to pay the taxes necessary to support that kind of a society. So, I think we'll always have some cultural segregation.

G: Do you think that's okay, or would you rather see a more integrated society?

C: I think it's okay, as long as it's not done out of fear or hatred of the unknown. That's fine, I'd have no problem with—I'm Scottish. I have no problem with going down to Dunedin to the highland games, and participating in the Scottish stuff.

- G: I'm from Dunedin, and I love it down there; they're all crazy. Yeah.
- C: So, that kind of craziness is fine. It's just, if hatred is in it, then we're dealing with evil.
- G: Was that the biggest problem that you ran into when you were trying to bring more integration and dealing with that back in the [19]60s?
- C: Just those who were spouting hate, yeah.
- G: Did you ever get to question anybody as to why—that's always been my biggest question: like, *why* did they feel that way? Was it the way they were raised, or was it what they saw, or what do you think kind of drove people to be like that?
- C: They were just brought up that way. How many times did we hear, "And when the fish, they swim in schools, and one school doesn't integrate with the other school. This is the way God designed it. God didn't mean us to all be mixing up!" They still talk that way. Yeah. They still talk that way. You know, M. Parrish, I worked for years for Mr. Parrish, and he was on the first city-appointed Human Relations Council. And I don't think M believed in integration, but he believed in justice and equality. And so, there were a lot of good people out there that really didn't want the races mixing. But they wanted Black people to have hospitals and schools and everything just as good as the White people, and wanted fair justice in the courts, same as Whites. And so, there were a lot of people that were quite conflicted, and they probably still are. Some folks out there like that.
- G: So would you have ever tolerated separate if you felt that it was truly equal, or were you completely against separation?

C: I didn't think this society could ever be equal, not at all. And I just didn't like the idea of being separate. I loved the melting pot of London. I dated a Zulu guy, must have been six-foot-four; I had platform soles like that so I didn't have a pain in the neck! To me, it was just really fun to live in a society with lots of races, lots of cultural differences. It gets my anthropological juices running.

G: Do you see that a lot in Gainesville, or is it kind of a—?

C: Outside of the university, not much.

G: Would you like to bring more into it, do you think that's possible to bring it in?

C: I don't think you can *do* it, it has to happen itself. I think we're at the stage now, and it's mostly your generation. You've got to decide whether it's really worth working to have a patchwork of different cultures and different groups meeting, having dialogue, finding common bonds, and yet respecting differences.

G: Do you see that in the younger generation, a willingness to do that?

C: Oh, much more so than my generation. Sure.

G: Really?

C: Oh, yes.

G: That's interesting, because everyone sees the [19]60s as, like, the very progressive, like—

C: Oh, yeah, but very separated.

G: Right. So, we have less obstacles, would you say?

C: Yeah. Sure, mmhm.

G: Do you have anything you want to add? I know you're busy, and you have things to do.

C: Yeah, I have to go. No, that's about it.

G: You've lived a very fascinating life—honestly, like, all sorts of stuff.

C: It's been fun.

G: I just really want to thank you again for your time, I appreciate it. Thank you so much, and honestly, I can see the changes that's happened in Gainesville, and I want to thank you very much for your work in that. So.

C: All right! Good.

[End of interview]

Audit-edited by: Ryan Morini, July 24, 2017

Final edit by: Ryan Morini, February 17, 2019