Interview with Nan Schwab Pendergrast

Catherine Oglesby: Okay, it is Tuesday, March 13, 2012 Tuesday afternoon, and I am in the home of Nan and Britt Pendergrast at 1700 West Paces Ferry Rd. in Atlanta, and I've already had a tour of the home/museum of the Pendergrast's, so Nan's going to tell us a few things about her deep roots. She's got a family with roots all the way back to George Washington's presidency, so we'll just get started Nan. I watch this thing just to stop it every hour, so if you see me looking at it, that's what I'm doing. But, the first question is probably not surprising. I'm just interested in what is your first memory? You've got a lot of memories, but what's a first memory for you?

Nan Pendergrast: The first, Mark tells me--- Mark is our son who has written about memory-- and he says that people do not actually remember before the age of three ordinarily. I do remember, my first memory was a dog. And, I think I was not quite three yet and his name was Skippy and he was a white terrier of some sort and I loved Skippy a lot. The next one was when I was four and one of the rooms in our house caught on fire at night, and my parents were out but the nurse had left the iron on and forgotten it and had gone down stairs, and I was lifted out of bed at the age of four and the firemen were there and it was terrifying! So, I remember that well. I misunderstood, it was raining, and I saw the flames as they carried me out to the yard and the nurse was crying. I thought the firemen had started the fire. I was terrified of firemen for quite a while. So, I wasn't awfully smart.

CO: Was the nurse a live-in nurse? Did she live with you?

NP: Yes, and it was in her room where the fire broke out. She had been ironing and evidently had finished and left the iron on and had gone down to the basement where two other servants lived, cause that was sort of like the club house. She was in the basement when the fire broke out.

CO: And did it, did you say it burned the house down?

NP: No, No. It was all contained in one room. It didn't touch anything else. I remember afraid to walk by the door to that blackened room for quite a while.

CO: Yeah, well that would definitely be a vivid memory. Can you describe yourself as a child?

NP: I was little, always, I never made it past 5'2", but I was about the smallest child in the first grade. The only other person other there smaller was a girl named Martha

Aiken, and Martha Aiken and I took turns being the smallest in the class. And we grew up and married brothers. So, she became my sister-in-law.

CO: What about that. So, your children are double first cousins? Did she have children?

NP: No, I guess they are.

NP: I hadn't thought of it.

BP: Hadn't thought of it.

NP: Jessie's first, double first cousins or something. Yeah, we had seven and they had four.

CO: Yep, they're, yeah, they're really cousins.

NP: Yeah.

CO: Yeah. Okay, so small. What kind of child were you? Besides physically being small? What were you like?

NP: I loved to read, and I loved outdoors. Always. And I adored flowers. My fondness for gardens, and in my way is a bit of a rebellion, because mother had no interest in flowers, and Druid Hills, where I grew up, had wonderful gardens but we didn't have so much as a dandelion. So, I always, to this day, I can drive down Springdale Rd. and remember where every plant was in all the people's yards.

CO: So, you were born here, um, you were also born here.

NP/**BP:** Yes.

CO: So, your roots are deep in Atlanta.

NP: Well, my parents were both born here.

CO: Okay, all your children, were all your children born here?

NP: Yeah

CO: So, and their children. Do any of them have children born here?

NP: Oh yes.

BP: Three do, the youngest three stayed in Atlanta and raised their families in Atlanta.

CO: So, that's at least four generations of Atlantans.

NP: Yes

CO: What about your parents. Both of them were born in Atlanta. What about their parents?

NP: Well, there's quite a tale there. And my mother's mother was born in Atlanta, Georgia during the "Battle of Atlanta." Born in the basement because the Yankees were in the rest of the house.

CO: You've *got* to tell that story.

NP: Well, she came in very handy. I never knew her. She died quite young, understandably. She grew up, married, had three consecutive sets of twins. Which, I understand makes her one in four million.

CO: I don't know, but it, oh my goodness. Did they all survive?

NP: No, Uh, my mother and her brother were the oldest pair. Then, there was a pair in the middle who didn't make it long at all. And then there was another pair, an uncle. And then there was single or two. You know how families were in those days.

CO: That's five generations of Atlantans.

NP: I guess it is. I hadn't thought.

CO: And, Atlanta's not that old. So you go back, way back. You go back all the way.

NP: Yeah, well there was almost nothing here then. I've seen a book at the historical society and an 1856 a directory of Atlanta's residents. Of course, no phone book. There was no phones then.

CO: Right, right.

NP: And, one of them was my grandmother's father and his name was Edward Elkin (53:26) He was a printer and that's all I know about him. In fact, you can relax. I don't know much about most of my relatives.

CO: No, I know. These stories. I mean the story of the grandmother giving birth to your mother. Is that what it was? In the basement of their home?

NP: No, my great grandmother gave birth to my grandmother.

CO: Oh okay, yeah.

NP: But she came in very handy cause when later on I became active in the Civil Rights and my particular chore for a group called HOPE- Help Our Public Education- was to talk to the members of the clubs the Kiwanis, the Optimists, the Rotarians, and tell them that they could not legally have segregated schools.

CO: Um hum.

NP: And the question you were always asked was, "where do you come from?" "You don't understand the situation" and I exhumed this grandmother every time I spoke.

CO: Which she gives you every degree of credibility you could possibly need

NP: She did, I never knew her, but I'm very grateful to her. That was mother's mother.

CO: Wow. Well, can you describe your parents? You've already told me a little bit about them. Your mother was 5'6", so not as tall compared to.

NP: Oh, well they were both from Atlanta and my father's family lived on Washington St., which was right near the Capitol. Atlanta was very small, and this was the residential area. There was an orphanage somewhere nearby, and my father used to like to go over there and play at the orphanage. And, I don't know yet what he did, but they threw him out of the orphanage. Told him not to come back.

CO: Now, this was when he was a child?

NP: Oh yes, he was a little boy. Probably six years old.

CO: So he went over to play with the children at the orphanage?

NP: Yes he went over to play with the children at the orphanage because his parents had only two sons and they were seven years apart, so my father until he was seven was an only child. And, uh

CO: And how many siblings were there in all? Did you just say that there was the two?

NP: Well only two, my mother's family were the ones with all the twins, considerably larger. But of all mother's family, mother had three children and she had three brothers who survived and they, only one of them had a child, and it was a daughter. So, I had only one cousin on that side.

CO: Oh, you're kidding!

NP: Yeah, they just wore out.

CO: Where now, well, I don't have the birth order of you and your siblings. You have a brother named Robert and a sister named Frances?

NP: That's right.

CO: And what is the birth order?

NP: Brother was seven years older than I, and sister was five years older.

CO: So he was born in 1913, and she was born in 1915?

NP: I guess that's right. And, I was in 1920.

CO: Okay, alright, and your father was born in 1889? And your mother in 1892?

NP: I don't know where you got that from, maybe from me.

CO: You did.

NP: They married in 1912, I know that.

CO: Okay, I don't have that. Let's see.

NP: Atlanta, of course, was a very small town when they were growing up and I've heard that.

CO: Now, when did you all marry?

NP/**BP:** 1940.

CO: 1940, okay. So, did you describe your mother for me? We said she was um…

NP: I'm trying to be kind about this. Mother was an extremely forthright, determined, positive woman. And, fortunately for our relationship the things that were very important to her, about which she bossed me totally and bossed everyone else too, didn't matter to me. They were clothes. She worried about what I was going wear. It didn't matter to me. Furnishings and households. When we moved into this house mother, well we hadn't moved yet, we just bought the house. And Mother came and looked at the living room there and then she went off on her trip and she wrote to us and said, "I've been thinking I would never had planned a trip had I known you were going to move while I was gone, but this is where your furniture ought to go," and she

had drawn a picture of the room with every piece of furniture and they're there right now. I wouldn't dare move one of them.

CO: You are kidding.

NP: No, I'm not kidding. 56 years later and it's still there.

CO: You're furniture is still the way she put it?

NP: Where she put it, and I don't know if you noticed this but next to her portrait on either side are sconces with candles in them. Which, she said she would bring to put next to her portrait which should go over the couch. And, when her twin brother came and looked at the arrangement he said, "oh, and at what hour do we say prayers at the shrine of St. Helen?"

NP/CO: Laughing

CO: Oh, my gosh I cannot believe that. Okay, when did your parents die?

NP: Well, my mother died in 1992. But, my father was killed years earlier. He died in 1945. He died as the result of a fall from a horse.

CO: Your mother died in 1992? So she was a hundred?

NP: No, no she was 92 when she died. So you can back up

CO: Oh, okay. Alright okay.

NP: Father loved his horse and he had ridden in a horse show a week or so before and he had won the blue ribbon in the local hunter's class. He had jumped his horse and he had beaten all these kids. And then, I guess a month or so later he was out on a trail and riding. He was riding too fast downhill, and there was a tree which had fallen across the path, and the horse jumped the tree and fell, and fell on my father. And he did not die immediately, but he died as a result of that.

CO: Oh, my goodness.

NP: He was 56, I think.

CO: Did your mother ever remarry?

NP: No, she never did.

BP: You might tell Dr. Oglesby about the diversity at the company and here's a little bit of, her father was quite a remarkable businessman. He was a student at Georgia Tech when the company got into some difficulty, and his father made him drop out before graduation to take over the guidance of the company. And when the Great Depression came along, this was a mattress company, making mattresses and box springs, some other type of furniture. The first thing people did was they come to buy all their bedding. You can always put a pad on the bedding, you can turn it over, you can do lots of things. The company was in financial difficulty, and he very shrewdly diversified by going into other lines of merchandise that were selling. He researched the soft drink industry, and the Coca Cola in Atlanta and Royal Crown Cola in Columbus, Georgia. Um, used display racks and empty bottle display racks. So he arranged to go into the manufacturing business of empty bottle racks and display racks. The coils that we used in mattresses could also be used to make springs for furniture. North Carolina had a big furniture industry, so he developed a furniture spring business. The automotive industry was still functioning and making money. That was one of his criteria. He wanted to find people for whom he could provide something who would be able to pay. And, General Motors had a plant here, Ford Motors had a plant here. He arranged to become a regional manufacturer of the cushioning for the seats and backs of the automobiles. He saved the company by diversifying into profitable lines.

CO: Now, this was your father?

NP: Yes

CO: And he was nearing graduation at Georgia Tech?

NP: Yeah, I think he was a junior.

BP: He had had one other distinction. Have you ever heard of John Heisman? After whom the Heisman trophy in football is named?

CO: Well, of course.

BP: He coached at Georgia Tech and Nan's father was a member of his football team.

CO: Oh my goodness.

NP: I have a feeling that he never got into a real game. I think he was on the scrub team, but he was the most insane alumnus Tech ever had.

CO: Oh really? Did he sing the infamous Tech-Georgia, that rambling wreck from Georgia Tech? Did he go around?

BP: Oh yes.

NP: I was hauled to every football game at Tech from the time I was 6 years old on, and I was very excited about it. The big excitement was that Bobby Jones was seated right in front of us.

CO: No.

NP: And next to him was Joel Chandler Harris Jr., and he was as funny as his daddy. We used to listen to Jake Harris. Though I didn't really understand the game very well and was so near sighted I never knew where the ball was, but I loved going to the games.

CO: Oh I'll bet, with all that. How did you wind up with seats right behind him? Where these like season passes that you would?

NP: Oh no, daddy was a very active and very generous alumnus.

CO: Oh, okay.

BP: The only major problem was that during the Great Depression when he had to borrow money to pay the tuition for his oldest son to go to college, and money was scarce. His wife took exception to the fact that he had to buy a football player for Georgia Tech. And that required cash.

CO: I don't understand. What do you mean he had to buy?

NP: Well, he gave Tech enough to buy…. I think. At any rate he must have been a very active alumnus. There was an organization at Tech established long after daddy had graduated or was there. The class of 1909, they went back and awarded a member of each class before that who had been famous for being a leader the [some acronym] ANAK and daddy was the ANAK of the class of 1909. And it was his great pride. He served on the board of trustees there too.

CO: So, he got that award. It was a distinction for academic merit?

NP: I don't know

BP: No, leadership

NP: Britt would know because he…

CO: Was it soon after that that he quit to take over the business, the family business?

NP: Well, no the ANAK award was much later. They went back

CO: Oh okay, I see. So they awarded alumnus.

NP: Yeah, and they would always. Every year they would

BP: Here predating ??????????? (39:37) if it predated started in 1920 and he didn't have any pre 1920 members of the ??? cause it didn't exist. But they went back and made honorary membership to one person in each of the prior classes to the 1920.

CO: I see

BP: So quite an honor to be THE member of a class selected for the leadership award.

CO: Yeah, well it sounds like he had leadership and entrepreneurial

BP: Another cute side story about his diversifying the company. He succeeded almost immediately with General Motors, but was having a hard time getting an audience at Ford Motor Company. The way he cracked it, I thought was quite impressive. He was in Detroit. He picked up the telephone and called and got connected to Henry Ford. And the message he had for Henry Ford was, "I'm here in Detroit on other business with my wife, I'm running a relatively tight schedule, and I would appreciate it if you would work me into yours so I could see you before I have to leave." And Henry Ford gave him an audience and he got the account.

NP: He said Ford was not a very gracious man, his waiting room was small and had only very hard chairs in it, and you had to sit on a hard chair and wait quite a while to talk to him.

CO: Well this is the second story in three days that I've heard about Henry Ford. One woman I interviewed got to square dance with Henry Ford.

NP: Wow, that's something.

CO: At Berry College, where there are Fords all over the place.

NP: That's right. I think Ford had something to do with Rabun Gap Nagoochee School Nannette would have told you that.

CO: Yes, she did. She did. Yeah

NP: I thought for a minute

CO: No, it's not Nannette, no, but another woman who graduated from Berry. Yeah

NP: Incidentally, speaking of our marriage, that's where I lived before we married and we married in that house.

CO: That is huge, it looks like a small castle. Where was it?

NP: On Habersham Road.

CO: Is it still there?

NP: No, it burned down a year ago.

CO: NO, Oh my goodness.

NP: Nobody in the family lived there then, and I hadn't known it happened, but my nephew happened to drive by, and called me up and said our house has burned down.

CO: Oh no.

NP: I think probably it was set fire, because of insurance, cause they immediately built a mega-mansion on top of the lot.

CO: Wow, that's beautiful though.

NP: It was a pretty house. I never liked it much cause it had dormer windows. I liked our house on Spring Dale Road in Druid Hills a lot better.

CO: I'll have to take a closer look at it. Well, can you say something about the influence each of your parents had on you? You've already said that your mother influenced you in some ways by your reaction to her obsession with appearance and clothes.

NP: Well, I admired my mother tremendously. She was really very beautiful and very striking, but we weren't on the same wavelength, and the older I got the clearer it was that my interests were elsewhere.

CO: But, clearly she, you trusted her Feng Shui because your living room 56 years later is still the way she designed it.

NP: As her twin brother implied, very few people crossed mother. I think probably because she was the only daughter, and she had three brothers, and when my mother was sixteen her mother died, and my grandfather called the boys in and said, "from now on do what Helen tells you to do." And from there on the world was supposed to relate to Helen, and it did. I can remember when she was in her 80s, we were in an elevator in the doctor's building, and mother said the elevator was quite crowded, and

between the first and second floor mother said, “This elevator is too crowded, some of you ought to get off.”

CO: And did they?

NP: I don’t know. I don’t think they did. And that was the essence of mother, right there.

CO: Was that embarrassing to you?

NP: She, uh, what?

CO: Was that embarrassing to you?

NP: Yes.

CO: Oh, okay.

NP: It was, I can remember on one other occasion we were at the grocery store, Kamper’s, was a private grocery store, a big one. And I was chatting with the butcher, and as we were leaving mother said, “I heard you talking to the butcher, and asking about his family.” She said, “You must understand it is not really proper to talk to the butcher about things like that. It’s alright to give an order, and you must always say thank you for services. But, just remember who you are.” As we left the grocery store I said, “Mother, who am I?” I never found out what she thought. I don’t know why in the world.

CO: Did she mean just a part of the elite society so you should not.

NP: Yes.

CO: Okay.

NP: I think that was it. She was. Can I tell them what she, your mother said to my Momma?

BP: Sure.

NP: This is awful. My parents invited Britt’s parents, who were neighbors, but whom…the mothers had never met, but my father knew Britt’s father, over to dinner when Britt and I became engaged. Britt’s mother, who was a lovely, wonderful lady, I adored. Her parents had owned plantations before the war. In fact, it was near Jonesboro, quite close to where Tara would have been if there’d been a Tara, but like everybody who was anybody, they lost it all with the war. And she was, had come to

Atlanta as a college graduate. A young woman, and she was teaching and became engaged to Britt's father and she said to my mother at dinner that night, "Do you remember Ms. Singer?" I think that was the name. And mother said, "Oh yes, the seamstress. She was wonderful." And Britt's mother said, "Well I was there one day, I had saved up my salary and I was going to get a dress from Mrs. Singer and while I was there a chauffeur came in, followed by a girl. He was carrying lots of boxes and they were taken right into Mrs. Singer's house, and the woman next to me said, 'that's Helen Kaiser, she's the most beautiful girl in Atlanta and the richest.' And that was the only time I ever saw mother with her mouth just hang open, she didn't know what to say. But I guess that was why mother thought she was pretty special.

CO: Oh, I see.

NP: And we found out…

CO: So she kind of had to live up to that?

NP: I suppose she did. I knew that, later, when they were growing up or high school age I guess, Mother and Robert Woodruff and my father's family all lived together near Inman Park.

CO: Well, that's the elite of Atlanta.

NP: Yeah, that was it. And, the story that I heard was that Robert Woodruff had asked Mother to marry him.

CO: Oh, my goodness

NP: And then she turned him down, and married Daddy. And I always suspected, I just believe that, but when Mark wrote the Coca Cola book, he interviewed Joe Jones, who was Mr. Woodruff's private secretary and amanuensis, I guess, who told him that was true. That Mr. Woodruff…

CO: Had proposed to your mother?

NP: Well, I don't know about that, but he said that. He asked Mark what my name had been, my maiden name. And then he said, and what was her mother's maiden name? And when he told him, he said, "oh, Helen Kaiser. Yes, I heard Robert Woodruff's speak of her often. And the older he got, the more he talked about her." And when Mark started over to the Coca Cola Company for the first time about the book, he had gotten in the car and I said, "Wait a minute Mark, I've got some letters up stairs from Robert Woodruff to your mother, you might be interested in."

BP: Your grandmother.

NP: Grandmother, yeah. And uh they weren't romantic. They were both very old at the time they were written. They had something to do with some charity Mother had asked Robert Woodruff for, and he had contributed. But they were, and, so I didn't know that they'd matter much. My Lord, they acted is if I'd brought them the Holy Grail, because Robert Woodruff didn't write letters. This was incidentally there in that folder of mine.

CO: Wait, so you sent them photo copies of the letters?

NP: No, they made photocopies.

CO: So you've got the photocopies?

NP: No, I think I've got the originals.

CO: Well, they should be preserved, because you know they begin to deteriorate.

NP: Do you remember, Darling, the letter's from Robert Woodruff that I've got in the folder? Are they originals? I think they are.

BP: I don't know. Want me to go find them?

NP: Well, they're just right around the corner. I brought the folder downstairs.

CO: You know that they would want those originals, but if you uh.

NP: Well, actually the letters were typed and the signature was original. But when Mark was doing his book on Coca Cola, we went to the Emory library and archives.

BP: I'll flip through them while you're talking.

NP: Thank you, they're in alphabetical order.

BP: You think you could find it quick.

NP: They're in alphabetical order. I think so. Well, they were, they're way in the back. I think they're there. Yeah. The letter itself is not that important. Thank you.

BP: They're not the originals, they're the copies.

NP: I don't know whether there are two of them or not.

CO: Yeah, this is a photocopy.

NP: Oh, it is?

CO: Well it looks like it has the photocopy marks on it.

NP: Yeah, I guess it is.

CO: Yeah. Your mother would have been 78 at the time of this letter.

NP: As I said they weren't kids. I didn't know how old they were.

CO: But you think they were in love? Or you think he was smitten by her?

NP: I gather he was, because my father said that he that Robert Woodruff had told him that he was going to ask Helen to marry him.

CO: Oh, wow.

NP: And, actually it was sort of funny, my father, if you look at the picture again, didn't look unlike Robert Woodruff. And they were both Robert W's.

CO: Oh my goodness.

NP: Robert Woodruff was Robert Windship Woodruff, and Daddy was Robert Wilfred Schwab. So, they grew up together, but he said he, Daddy said he hid out behind an oak tree and had him show her. And Robert Woodruff came out and said she said no. He said, "I'd advise you that if you want to marry her, I'd ask her quick, because I'm sure she won't be available for long."

CO: So she told Robert Woodruff no, and then did your father ask her soon after that?

NP: I guess he did. But he, I think he was really sort of reluctant. He adored mother and they were very happy together but he liked his gang.

CO: He liked his freedom?

NP: He liked the freedom and liked doing things with his boyfriends, and it was terrible for Mother she said, because on their honeymoon they went on the train to New York. His gang got on the train with them and rode all the way to Lawrenceville and then the gang got off the train and she said my father started to cry.

CO: Oh gosh. He lost his freedom.

NP: He had lost his freedom. Gone.

CO: Well he was 23 and she was 20 at the time they married, so.

NP: I guess there's a post script to this because when I was 17 I started off to college and I rode the train from Atlanta to New York and then took another train up to Poughkeepsie, New York where Vassar was. But I had hardly gotten on the train, or while we were waiting for the train to come, Mother was talking to a friend, a nice lady, who as it turned out got on the train too. And Mother had introduced me to her but I wasn't especially listening. But we got about as far as Lawrenceville when I burst into tears. Decided I'd made a terrible mistake. That I should not have gone, why was I going off to college in New York? And nobody else was doing that. And the nice lady across the aisle came over and said, "what is it dear?" I told her and she was very sweet and understanding. When they served dinner she said, "Lets go in and have dinner," and we did. By that time I had calmed down considerably. By the next day when we got to New York, I said, "Thank you so much. You were so nice to me. I do appreciate it." And she said, "Oh it's nothing dear." And then she said, "You know you might have been my daughter." And she was Mrs. Robert Woodruff. It was Nell Hodgeson Woodruff.

CO: And you didn't know anything about it?

NP: I didn't know anything about that at all.

CO: Isn't it amazing the connections and how paths cross?

NP: Well, as I said, Atlanta was almost a small town then.

CO: Yeah, and that would've been…

NP: 1937, I think.

CO: Okay, alright, alright. So, your mother, um, but now, can you say something about how you think your father influenced you?

NP: Oh, a great deal more I think. My father was an outdoorsman and I can remember if the day was very clear on the weekend we were driving the car out to Johnson's Ferry Road because there was one spot on a very clear day where you could see the mountains. And we would go look at the Blue Ridge Mountains.

CO: Oh, wow.

NP: And he took me to places like Sope Creek, and a lot of outdoor spots.

CO: So your love of outdoors and the natural environment, you attribute to him?

NP: Yes, very much to him.

CO: And so did your mother simply not appreciate it, or?

NP: I guess she didn't. I mean. We used to go up to the mountains in the summer, and there were certain points on the road where my father would stop just to admire the view. And my mother would say, "Oh here comes scream point." We'd stop the car while my father admired the view and I did too. So, yes.

CO: So what did you parents have in common?

NP: I never knew.

CO: Did they seem to be happy?

NP: Very happy, they adored each other. They both played golf.

CO: Oh okay, they had that in common.

NP: And they traveled a lot. A great deal.

CO: Inside the country? Or did they go abroad?

NP: They went abroad a lot. That was a different world I lived in. They'd be gone for a couple of months at a time.

CO: Did they take you and your siblings?

NP: No, they said they had seen too many irritable, bored children.

CO: Oh, okay.

NP: I went with them when I was 18, but I had never gone before. And people would ask, "I know you miss your parents terribly." I would obediently say yes, but I really didn't. It was just part of growing up.

CO: So did you like your nursemaid? Or the people who kept you? Or did you stay with relatives?

NP: No, oh gosh. I'm embarrassed about this. We had six servants. When Mother and Daddy were gone, Mother hired a trained nurse to come in and stay. Her name was Ms. Henchill and she was Swiss. We children had a great deal of fun laughing at her accent.

CO: Now, did you like her though?

NP: No, I liked Ms. Henchill very much. I had a nurse until I was 6 and she was a wonderful, warm black lady, and I adored her. Her name was Anna Hill. And I called her Nippy and I loved her and she spoiled me rotten. Mother thought I was too old to need a nurse so we hired a governess. She was a white girl, 21 years old, and I, she was, she expected more of me than Nippy ever had. I remember, I guess I was in the first grade when I was 6. She came in and I was sitting in bed. It was a school morning. She asked if I planned to go to school and I said, "yes, I'm waiting for you to dress me." She did not dress me. She told me to dress myself. As I said she demanded a great deal of me.

CO: So was she, um, did you go to, so you went off to school? She didn't school you at home?

NP: No, no she didn't. I went to public school from the first through the sixth grade. This was something Mother believed in. All three of her children went to public school for their elementary school and after that we went to private school.

CO: Okay.

NP: I don't know how I got off on this because I…I'm embarrassed about the whole thing.

CO: Oh no, but it was a huge part of your life, especially if your parents … Was this an annual thing that they did?

NP: It seems to me it was annual. I may be wrong. And, yet, for part of the summer we would go to a place in Wisconsin called Green Lake.

CO: The whole family?

NP: The whole family would go to Green Lake, as my brother as he got older would go to a camp nearby. It was…

CO: So, you're the baby?

NP: I'm the baby and it was a nice place. There was a big hotel and then there were cottages around it and we took a cottage and I learned how to swim when I was three years old at Green Lake.

CO: Wow. Is the Schwab…is that any relation to the Schwab Financial?

NP: I don't know, I'd like to think so but I have no idea. There was, when I was in college, another famous Schwab financier whose name was Charles Schwab and he

was second in command at Carnegie at Bethlehem Steel. And I met Charles Schwab's granddaughter, whose name was Ann Schwab and mine was Nan Schwab, and we were at the same house party at Cornell. I liked her and we were about the same size, she was little.

CO: Uh huh, Ann and Nan.

NP: Ann and Nan, but we did not continue now. Now when the current Chuck Schwab, Charles Schwab daughter lived here for a while in Atlanta and we had mutual friends but I never met her.

CO: Hmm, wow.

NP: And now she's back in California being second in command to her father. Her husband, by the way, is I guess still a writer. Gary Pomerantz, and he wrote a wonderful book called *When Peachtree Meets Sweet Auburn.* Did you ever read it?

CO: No.

NP: Oh, you'd love it.

CO: Really? So does he get it right?

NP: Yes, he got it absolutely right. He was wonderful. He wrote about the two families. The Allen family, Ivan Allen, and Maynard Jackson's grandfather.

CO: You know I've heard people who know Atlanta, they do not like Ann Rivers Siddons um…

NP: No, she didn't get it right. In fact, oh my gosh, I know she wrote and she wrote in such a way that you thought you recognized the characters but among other things, she wrote about the mayor…clearly patterned on Ivan Allen, but she named him something else. And then she just gratuitously gave him a case of Alzheimer's, which he never had, and which his wife, Louise, told us she hated. Of course she did.

CO: Right, Right.

BP: Can you all sip tea and keep on talking at the same time? If so I can get some tea.

NP: Bless your heart, would you?

CO: I would be delighted with a cup of tea. Thank you so much.

NP: Thank you a lot.

BP: You want milk and sugar?

CO: Sweetener yes, but no milk.

NP: Thank you, I'd like a dash of milk in mine. Thank you sweetheart. Well he's the most remarkable man who ever lived. You shouldn't be talking to me.

CO: Well, he is welcome to talk.

NP: Well, he's remarkable. He was everything at Tech that my father never got to be because he didn't graduate. He had so many honors…

CO: Your father?

NP: No, Britt.

CO: Did he go to Tech?

NP: Oh, yes. He went to Tech and I went to his graduation and he was Tau Beta Pi, which is the engineering equivalent of Phi Beta Kappa. And he was a Phi Kappa Phi and a Pi Ata Sigma and uh everything, there was.

CO: I'm delighted for him to stay, and remind you….

NP: Very, very smart…always. When he did his oral comprehensive for his master's in organic chemistry…

CO: At Tech?

NP: No, by that time he moved to Emory. He graduated from Tech then went to Emory, and I heard, not from him, that when he finished the oral comprehensive his professors gathered round and congratulated him. He went to work, you'll probably get to ask him this… Our first year of marriage we lived in Philadelphia because he worked for Du Pont and neither of us had ever lived anywhere but Atlanta.

CO: Wow. No, I mean I didn't, there's no indication of that.

NP: It was the depths of the Depression and he was hired by Du Pont as a chemist.

CO: You married in 1940 and…

NP: It was still in 41, it was still going on.

CO: Absolutely, absolutely.

NP: And uh, so he lived there, we lived there, he lived there a year and I was at Vassar and we saw each other every weekend.

CO: So you weren't married?

NP: No, we weren't married by then. But, in the spring of my junior year, I had always planned to marry him in June after my junior year and quit college. I didn't care that much about it, but I thought I'd finish college at a good place. And I knew he was in Philadelphia and I thought I'd transfer to Bryn Mawr and finish. I never did. We married, but because I found out that no really reputable college, and Bryn Mawr as certainly that, would give you a degree after only one year there, no matter how many years you'd had elsewhere. So, I was wasting my junior year at college. Besides, he was 5'11" and he weighed 127 pounds and I was sure he'd starve before I got to marry him.

CO: Oh my goodness, that was thin.

NP: Oh, unbelievable. He'd always been that skinny, and he's not fat now.

CO: No, no.

NP: I think he's gained about 12 pounds. Maybe not that much. Anyway, we married at the end of my junior year and we lived in Philadelphia for a year.

CO: Did you have any babies?

NP: I was pregnant when we left at the end of the year.

CO: Well now back to your, and I've got a whole section on um romance and marriage and family, so. What about your extended family? You said one of your parents didn't have, your mother had three brothers?

NP: Yes.

CO: And your father had one brother?

NP: That's right.

CO: Yeah, so…

NP: I had two cousins, two first cousins. Britt had 33. Most of them he didn't know.

CO: Yeah. So your extended family really wasn't that big?

NP: No, it was very small and both my uncles, the fathers of the two cousins, lived within walking distance. Everybody lived in Druid Hills. And my grandparents lived right at the corner of Ponce de Leon and Highland, which I think is the border of Druid Hills. At any rate, I could and did walk to see my grandparents on both sides a lot.

CO: And what about the cousins? Did you all get together for holidays and that sort of stuff

NP: I was a little older than the two, they were both girl cousins and one of them was an absolute saint, and sweet wonderful girl that I thought would grow up to be a nun but she didn't. But she never married, very devout catholic. And I loved Fran, and I'm afraid I probably bossed her around a lot.

CO: Now they were Catholic. What were your parents?

NP: My mother had been Catholic, she had been brought up and have gone to a convent. But then, Mother was no fool, she gave up being a practicing Catholic during her childbearing years and then later on went roaring back.

CO: Oh really? After the childbearing years were over? So, what was your father?

NP: He was an agnostic or an atheist I guess really.

CO: No!

NP: I'm pretty sure, because when he died, as I said at 56, I don't think he thought he was going. He had written instructions that when he died if they had a preacher at his funeral he'd rise up out of the coffin and ?????? (07:11) and he left poetry by Robert Ingersoll that he wanted read. And I thought, "oh my gosh what's Mother going to do?" and she did it exactly as he said. And the next day she had a Requiem High Mass said for him. And I thought wouldn't it be an interesting trick if she prayed him into heaven when he knew damn well there was no such place.

CO: How cute. So they really were that divided in their deep religious beliefs

NP: Yes.

CO: Wow, was your mother spiritual in her religious….

NP: Mother, she was very strong in her belief, and she tried her best to get me to come back…and I never did.

CO: So, so, well I have a whole section on religion too, but you list your religion as Quaker.

NP: Now it's Quaker.

CO: yeah, and so when did that happen?

NP: That probably happened…1940s

CO: So early marriage

NP: Yes, for both of us.

CO: Okay.

NP: We were married in the Episcopal Church, which is everybody's second choice they say.

CO: So what was Britt?

NP: Britt was Presbyterian, super Presbyterian. His parents…

CO: Yeah, wow

NP: He told you he knew Dr. Ogelsby.

CO: Yes.

NP: And uh, we got together and were married by Dean De Ovies (05:29) at home as I said, he came to the house and married us there.

CO: Now, what did your mother think about that? An Episcopal priest?

NP: She knew when to give up, she didn't try very hard. We're talking religion I guess. I was a good Catholic.

CO: You were?

NP: Oh yes, I liked the music and I liked the incense on special occasions.

CO: You liked the mass?

NP: The mass was lovely, until they translated it. Then, I found out they weren't making any sense at all and I quit. My father's daughter.

CO: So, but you were okay with an Episcopalian performing your marriage?

NP: Yes, and we paid our dues. We never joined the Episcopal Church. Oh, thank you sugar. What an angel, Darling.

CO: Thank you.

NP: What an angel, thank you Darling.

CO: That's my milk and I should put this up. Thank you so much.

NP: Mother, after my father died and she moved out of that house because she was extremely hard of hearing, always, and she didn't like being there alone and not hearing.

CO: Your mother was hard of hearing?

NP: Very hard of hearing. She and her twin both were, although they claimed…he claimed he'd gotten deaf during World War One when he had been in the army and had been stationed near machine guns and that the noise…

CO: So did they think there's something congenital?

NP: noise (30:30) they never did anyway. But Mother was very hard of hearing from the time I can remember. I always knew you had to speak up to Mother. I also knew when you should ask permission in a voice she wouldn't hear and she'd say yes.

CO: Well now, I don't know if I told you this in our conversations by phone, but um, because the project I was working on before I trashed that one and I took on this oral history project, I was looking at mother-daughter relationships in the early twentieth century, so I have an interest in that subject. So, I want to ask how, you've already said a little bit about your relationship with your mother, but do you know anything about what her relationship with her mother was like?

NP: No, I think, well as I said her mother died when mother was 16 years old, and so far as I know she worshipped her mother and I think she did. Her mother's name was Frances and I'm actually named after her mother too because, after she'd named my sister Frances after her mother, my grandfather used to call that grandmother Nanna and I was named Nan for the Nanna.

CO: Oh wow.

NP: So I know she must've really adored her.

CO: So it's Nan?

NP: Yeah.

CO: It isn't Nannette or that's not short for anything?

NP: No no

CO: Okay, sorry.

NP: There's a question about that, might've been Nancy and I didn't like Nancy so I dropped the "cy".

CO: Well so what about your relationship with your mother? You've said it, you um

NP: Well I was aware that she was beautiful. I knew that she was smart. I admired her tremendously and I wanted to be just like her, but I knew that I never would. And I can remember when she would come in to tell us goodnight before she and my father went off to a party and she was all dressed up and I thought she was the most beautiful woman in the world. And her hair was very fair, very blond, and long. She wore it long when other people didn't, and it curled a little bit. Mine was very straight. I was blond, but I was sort of a dirty blond. It never was the way Mother's was. Anyway, I admired her tremendously, but I also, if I fell and scrapped my knee would never have thought to go to Mother to get it fixed, because there was always a servant there or somebody to take care of it. So the only way I know….. Now I don't mind if you talk.

CO: No, it's a relatively new phone, and I don't know where to mash the buttons to turn it off.

NP: But can you tell who it is so you can call them back?

CO: It's okay, it's okay. I should've turned it off before we got started. I apologize. But, so um.

CO: Does that suggest that you didn't perceive her as a nurturing person or you she just wasn't around?

NP: She just wasn't really a nurturing person. It wasn't her personally, all her friends were the same way.

CO: Okay. Do think that was a part of being an elite culture? I mean was that something that..

NP: I think it was. I think. I didn't, my mother's friend's children had the same kind of bringing up I had.

CO: Well, were your nurses and your, were the servants nurturing?

NP: Yes.

CO: You got that from them?

NP: Yes, I adored 'em. In fact, until I was twelve I didn't eat with my parents.

CO: Now, were your servants black or were they white?

NP: Yeah, they were black. Everybody was black until my governess came along.

CO: And you ate with them?

NP: There was a butler's pantry at the house. A little room between the kitchen and the family dining room, and I ate there until I was 12 years old because I preferred it, really. And, I don't, all the trouble was nobody taught me any manners. I barely knew which spoon to use, or fork.

BP: That's what our children say about us. We didn't teach them manners.

CO: Do they say that? Your children?

NP: Yes. No, I was, it was I guess if you're ever going to ask when I was aware of race relations…

CO: Oh definitely I will ask, I have a whole section on that. I'm delighted for you to speak about that now, if you want.

NP: Cause I was probably four years old when I noticed that John and Louise and Erma and the rest of them, did all the work and my parents seemed to have all the privilege.

CO: You recall having some awareness of that at the age of four?

NP: I do.

CO: Okay. I'm really interested in that.

NP: I'm very clear about that, there was never any doubt.

CO: And so how, and how did you explain that to yourself, or did you actually question? Did you actually…

NP: It was funny I, looking back I knew there was something terribly wrong and I felt…I guess I related to what's now known as soul. I used to love to go down to the basement and listen to the servants. And there was a funny situation in Druid Hills, everybody had servants. I don't know if they had that many or not, but they had a lot. And, in the evening, after working hours, I think most of them were live in help too, they would come over to our house in the basement. They would entertain. And, John was the chauffeur and he came to us when I was four, I think about, and he was 16. He wasn't old at all. And, my father was very close to John and very admiring of him because John could fix anything. And, my father was an engineer, but he'd call an electrician if a fuse blew, literally. But, I grew up with John and stayed that way when John died in his 80s I was the only white person at the funeral.

CO: Well I really want to talk specifically about race consciousness and if either of you have any insights I am happy to hear them, because it's amazing to me that… When I first came across that concept I knew exactly what…was it …the questions at issue, but I can talk to some people, I can ask some women that question about do you recall the first time you became conscious of the meaning of skin color, and they don't know what I'm talking about, or they can't maybe they just don't know how to respond. But, they seem to have never, don't have a clue. And, now some people know immediately and they can tell you precisely. I mean I have such a vivid recollection of the first time I became aware and of even, as you say, that inarticulate questioning as a five year old. For me I was five, but I didn't know enough to question openly, but I do recall that. And, now, black people don't have a problem answering that question.

NP: Oh, I bet!

CO: They can respond.

NP: Well I remember some things that puzzled me a little bit, because as I said I knew the unfairness of it. And as I got older, by the time I was in college, I knew something had to be done. But, before that, I don't know. Did you question it any, Darlin', of Viola?

BP: I loved Viola. I did not have awareness of quite how, I accepted the fact that all the negroes downtown, on the street, wherever, they were all shabbily dressed and that's just the way it was. I did not suffer with them. My mother was a very loving person that, and she liked everyone whether they were black or white, there was no problem. But everyone's a product of their upbringing. My father was racist on the one hand, and then he believed in the superiority of the white race.

NP: I don't know where this fits in but I think it's, it's puzzling to me when I look back, my father used to have important customers, occasionally, who would come down to Georgia and when they did they brought their wives and Mother would take care of the wives. And, this was funny because I remember on one occasion, I only heard this I wasn't in the car, but Mother was showing one of the important customer ladies Stone Mountain and they were in the car and John the chauffeur was driving and Mother and the lady were in the back and the woman was from New York and she looked up and she said, "who are those men with the black and white striped clothes on?" and Mother said, "Oh those are our criminals." And as they drove up toward the criminals, several of them said, "Howdy Ms. Helen," and waved to Mother and smiled, and Mother nodded back and waved to them. They were the caddies from the country club and the police knew perfectly well that the caddies shot craps every Saturday night in the caddy house. They'd go in whenever they needed road work done, catch them shooting craps and put 'em in jail. Not for long, I think, just until the road work got done. Mother thought it was quite funny that the Yankee lady was stunned that these just identified criminals and they were waving at Mother. And for years I thought that was funny.

CO: You thought it was not funny?

NP: I did think it was funny, I didn't know any better. I just took it for granted. This is the way it is, they pick up the caddies at the country club.

CO: Well, how do we get our, how do we ever, you know, know our, what we know about the West? We saw it in…I mean….you know…

NP: I hadn't thought about that.

CO: It's all, you know, it's these cultural myths. They're buried very deep I think. It's interesting to me about who actually comes to question it. I'm so curious about that.

NP: Well, I don't know whether this fits in there or not, but as I grew up, later, and did become active in working in Civil Rights, it still took me a while to cross the border. I had never known any black people except servants. And, wow I went the long ways around for this, my brother and his wife used to go to Sun Valley to ski, and they became very friendly with a man who owned a restaurant there. I think he was Swiss. And, he got in touch with them, during the winter, and said, "I have a friend, a South African, she's from South Africa. She's come to Atlanta to teach about anthropology at Spelman or Atlanta University, and he said I've taken the liberty of giving her your telephone number." So the lady, the anthropologist, called my sister-in-law, Burna, and

Burna being a polite lady invited her to tea, and then said to me, “will you come to tea too? God knows I don’t know what to say to a black anthropologist and you don’t know to shut up to anybody. So, I went to tea, well it turned out she wasn’t black at all, she was a white South African of British…

BP: Wasn’t she a member of Parliament.

NP: Yes, no, no, yes I guess she was. Her name was Helman. And, so I, after tea I said, “Burna I’d be happy to drive Dr. Helman back to Atlanta University. First time I’d ever set foot in the campus, I was married by then, and I took her and I went in and met Dean, the Dean of the college, and I’m sorry her name eludes me but it’ll come to me in a while…

CO: It was a woman?

NP: She was a woman.

CO: A black woman?

NP: A black woman.

CO: Whoa. And this was in the forties?

NP: This would’ve been in the late 40s probably.

BP: Well that would’ve identified it as Spelman then, wouldn’t it? They wouldn’t have had female president of Morehouse.

NP: Well maybe she was just living in Atlanta University, while she was teaching at Spelman. They’re right next to each other, but we were there and I was talking to the Dean and I said, “I’m very interested in doing something about race relations; is there anything I can do? Any group I can join?” and she said, “Oh yes, there’s something called the Council on Human Relations, and I’m sure they’d be happy to have you.” And I talked to her, maybe it wasn’t on that occasion when I was talking to her, but I said, “the hardest thing for me is that none of my white friends, the people I’ve grown up with, the people I know well. None of them seem to know about this. They don’t care. Or if we try to talk about it, they get upset and very belligerent almost.” She said, “Well, I know that’s hard, but I had something happen to me that maybe can explain it.” She said, “We had a Chinese exchange student, here, with whom I became quite friendly, and we kept in touch after he moved on to Chicago, I think. And he telephoned me to tell me that he was engaged to be married. And, I said oh that’s lovely. Tell me about her. He said, “Well, I really don’t know anything about her. My parents have

selected her." And I thought to him great heavens, how can you sit still for that? Well, and he said he never questioned it. It was what his parents believed and well, alright for him." Well, I never heard any more about him. I don't know how that came out. But she said, "Perhaps, it would help you to think that when you ask your contemporaries to renounce everything their parents and their grandparents and their great grandparents believe, you're asking an awful lot of them. It's hard for people to turn their backs on slave owning grandparents."

CO: And that, and I think you probably understood that, but my question is why were you so willing? What makes you different? What makes anybody who *does* question and *does* somehow or other have this sense of justice…you know the 90 and 9 kind of thing. Where does that one percent come from?

NP: It just seemed so obvious to me. Well, it was so crazy that white people hired black people to take care of their children. They looked on them as being responsible enough to do that. They're clean enough to cook for us, but don't sit next to one on the bus. It didn't make any sense.

CO: Even hired them as wet nurses to feed their babies.

NP: Oh my gosh.

CO: How much more intimate can you get than that?

NP: I don't know. Well how did you explain it?

CO: I mean, I don't, I look to experts who are doing, like, uh, All that any of us are doing is asking questions. But, the…I do get a lot of paternalism, you know, there are many people who are embarrassed by uh, you know, the more strident forms of racism. You know, they don't want to be identified with the meanness and brutality and…

NP: Words, if I had ever called anybody a nigger I'd have gotten my head ripped off.

CO: That's right. So they want to pretty up the relations, but they don't…it never would occur to those people to do as you're suggesting you did and say, "what can I do?" What can I do to eliminate this barrier that exists between the races. In other words, people are just looking for decency, you know, they want to be decent. They want to be respectable, but they don't want to do anything about the, they're not fighting racism, in other words. You know, they're simply.

NP: I think they might have been a little bit scared.

CO: Sure, and for good reason.

NP: And yet, Britt, I do think you ought to tell Cathy about your, the fellow, the postmaster fella you met, and what he said about your father.

BP: Oh, I've said my father was very racist. He did not see equality in the two races. But, the little black boy who worked around the drug store, mopping up, and cleaning up, and doing menial jobs….

NP: Britt's father was a pharmacist…

CO: Okay.

BP: And later, years later, I worked at my father's drug store too waiting curb and tending tables and stuff like that, and I knew him and by the look I'd of thought that he was using exactly the same text books in school that I was using in school. I ran across him years later as an employee of the U.S. Postal Service. We knew acquaintances, we talked about the old times at the drug store. And, he said, "You know, I owed a lot to your father. I did not have any mentors in my family who knew about hard work or knew about education and I'm thankful for the fact that your father befriended me and set standards for me, I probably would've wound up in jail. That's a relatively conjectural story, but I've attributed to that of my father's being kind and willing to help, but at the same time not recognizing that the races were anywhere near equal.

CO: But yet he could see the humanity of that young man, and so he was just a young man to him, and his heart of compassion reached out to him, it sounds like…

BP: That's the way I interpreted it.

CO: Yeah, yeah. So, I, but aren't there a lot of people like that, like they can't see. I mean excuse me if this is drawing a parallel that insults you, but haven't some of our presidents been like that? I mean, they could see individuals, but they couldn't see the….

NP: Can you imagine Mr. Romney…

CO: I was thinking of Ronald Reagan as someone who could see individuals but couldn't see the race. And I'm not, I'm sorry, I'm not drawing a parallel between your father and Ronald Reagan, I'm just saying it seems to me that that is, um, that that is a common blinder. And, I don't know that we can do anything about our blinders. You know, they have to come off…like I can't remove my family's blinders. It has to come from their own experience. There's nothing I can do. And, I'm equally as blind to some

things. I walk around wondering, “Where am I blind?” You know, because I see that blinders about race are all over the place, still all over the place.

NP: And you do find that out because I had been so outspoken for so many years that, if people don’t agree, they don’t talk about it.

BP: Talking about presidents, I remember the story about Gerald Ford, when he was president, or when he was a congressman before he became president. On his walk to his office, towards the White House, toward the Congress, he would encounter a poor person and would basically give him the shirt off of his back. And then go in and vote against food stamps.

CO: Go figure, it’s yeah.

NP: Well I’m grateful to Vassar for one thing. I had a little introduction and even an instruction, cause I was at college there, and freshman year we had a lot of people come to speak at school, and one of them was Walter White, who was the head of the NAACP. And I went to hear him because I knew that I cared a lot then, and I was stunned when he said that he had been born and brought up in Atlanta, but that he would never come back to Atlanta. He left because of the race riot in 1906 or 7.

CO: Uh huh, 1906.

NP: Well I had never heard of the race riot of ’06. I’d been educated here, gone to school, I’d studied history, but nobody ever mentioned anything about that. I was stunned. But afterward I came up to him and he was a very small man, who looked totally white. He didn’t look black at all. And I said, “Mr. White, I’m from Atlanta and I hope you’ll come back because I think we’re better than that.” And he was very gentle, he said, “Well, you know not a great deal has changed.” This would’ve been about 1938. He said, “When you go back home, why don’t you try to change it,” and that was it.

CO: He was a brilliant man. Walter White. I can’t believe you met him and talked to him.

NP: That was the only time.

CO: What was the speech like?

NP: I don’t really remember the speech that much, it was so knocked out of my head afterward by his telling me to go do something….

CO: Did he say something specific about the race riot?

NP: No, no he didn't. And that was in response to, well maybe he must have. He talked about the race riot because I had never heard of it.

CO: Well, until very recently you, I mean I would have students who'd never heard of the 1906 Atlanta race riot. But now race riots are kind of integrated into our history. Of course they weren't limited to the South by any means, but it, that particular riot was very violent.

NP: Yeah, right above you, do you see that book called *Red Summer.* Have you heard about that one?

CO: 1919?

NP: Yeah, 1919.

CO: Yes, yes.

NP: He's a friend of ours, Cameron McWhirter. He's a good Quaker by the way, and brought up Quaker, he didn't come to it.

CO: Oh, well, definitely we'll come back to this subject again. I'm sure you've got more to say about it. But, could you, can you identify one, sort of, well one thing that people who do life reviews look for, are defining points or turning points in your life, so anytime we come upon something that you would identify as a turning point for you just, you know, say something about it. But, can you identify what would be the most significant or memorable event in your life up to the age of 12?

NP: Yes, it's political.

CO: Okay.

NP: 1928 was a big year, and I guess my parents must've cared a lot about it. I was in the fourth grade and there was no Hatch Act then, and our teacher at school asked us to go home find out what president or what party our fathers were going to vote for. Didn't mention mothers at all, although they could vote by then. It was the election of 1928, and when we came back to school, it was a huge class. There were 38 people in that class at Highland School. Thirty six of 'em's parents were voting Democratic. My parent and Jo Large, whose parent was the Post Master in Atlanta, they were Republicans, and I came home and said to my father, "Why aren't we like anybody else?," and he told me something absolutely incomprehensible about tariffs. I didn't

know what a tariff was. But, that whole year, that started me thinking about things and being aware of public affairs.

CO: Wow.

NP: That was also the year that Georgia Tech won the Rose Bowl.

CO: Oh, well, there you go.

BP: That was also the year that Lindbergh flew the Atlantic Ocean.

CO: I don't know that, but that sounds right. Yes.

NP: It was.

BP: Big year, 1928.

NP: And so that was the year I became aware of the rest of the world.

CO: At eight years old.

NP: At eight.

CO: You know some people don't ever become aware, but it's much older than that before they do.

BP: And the other large one, Herbert Hoover was elected in 1928.

CO: I was going to say, was your father glad?

NP: Well, Herbert Hoover was a Quaker too. Didn't turn out speaking with people who could relate, he'd been feeding all the starving people in Europe and when the depression came along he couldn't imagine feeding any Americans.

CO: That's right. The disconnect was just unbelievable. Well, your father voted for Hoover. Then, did he vote against FDR?

NP: Oh yes. Both our parents were very anti-FDR.

CO: Wow, that's really hard to believe how you all have turned out.

BP: Parties have changed.

CO: Oh sure, sure.

BP: We were Republicans under Eisenhower, and we left the party in 1964 when Goldwater represented the party.

CO: Well, so um, I had something, some response to that, but it's slipped my mind. It'll come back to me. So, that is just, that will be the most different answer to that question in the 30 people I interview, that they came to political consciousness at the age of eight. I just love it. I mean, you can't top that.

NP: We had a set of encyclopedias called *Compton's Encyclopedias* and I think they were for children, they must've been. But, I read them all, all the way through. I read everything constantly.

CO: So, did, were both of your parents, sounds like, um, they were very openly conversant about national and international affairs?

NP: Oh yes, that's right. By that time, my goodness, I still wasn't eating with them so I don't know when that was. They must've talked about it after dinner, in the living room or something, or I may have picked it up reading. I read everything I could get my hands on.

CO: So, your father explained his reason for voting Republican with some discourse of tariffs?

NP: Yes.

CO: Okay, alright.

NP: He didn't, what attracted me to them, of course, was the fact that they were the only integrated organization in the state of Georgia.

CO: The Republicans?

NP: Yes.

CO: Okay.

NP: The Republicans were, and because there were so few of us, I got to be a big shot. I was a member of the state executive committee when I was 22 or 3, I guess. And was a very ardent Republican, because it was integrated.

CO: Wow, okay.

CO: Yes. I did let my windows up, didn't I?

NP: Yes, I saw you.

CO: What were some of your struggles as a child?

BP: Tottie?

NP: Well when Tottie left that was unbelievably terrible. The governess I absolutely adored.

CO: The white one?

NP: Yes, because I know it was, well she was a wonderful lady, but she expected something of me and nobody else had.

CO: So how long was she there?

NP: She was there for about four years I guess. And when she left I was, I guess, and Mother said you know, I knew I was too old to have a governess, but I adored Tottie. And, if I'm being perfectly honest, I felt much closer to her than I did my mother. And, Mother knew that. Frankly, I think Mother began to worry about me. She never said so, but she thought my golly have I got what we'd call a lesbian now. But, that was a heartbreaker, when Tottie left.

BP: It's behind the curtain right now, but I've got my eye on him.

CO: Okay, well that's um, now, how old were you?

NP: It was, I guess I was about nine or ten when she left.

CO: So, actually that could answer that, that could be the answer to the question of the most significant thing that happened to you.

NP: It was. It was absolutely terrible, it was heart breaking and awful.

CO: Yeah.

NP: In the same year, my mother, they gave us, this was still the fourth grade, we were given an intelligence test they called them in those days. And, it was nothing but vocabulary. There was nothing else in there, but a lot of words and you have to say what was an opposite and what was similar and so forth. And, the principal of the school was a wonderful lady, Ms. Corrigan, I was constantly bored out of my mind in school. I hated it. Didn't like to sit still, didn't like to shut up, didn't like having the same thing told to me over and over again. And, I wasn't mean, but I got itchy. I wiggled a lot. I passed notes and I was very often sent to the principal's office. I can't count how

many times. And the principal, bless her heart, welcomed me and knew me well enough to send me on errands all over the school. I ran up and down those stairs all day long delivering notes and messages. And, I liked it. And when the intelligence tests came in, Ms. Corrigan asked my mother to come up to the school and said that according to the tests I was a genius. And it terrified Mother. Her oldest brother, one of them who was not a twin, was supposed to be a genius and I think he was crazy as hell. I don't know. He managed to live for 86 years and never worked a day. And, so, genius to Mother meant Dick. He never was institutionalized, I think he probably should've been. And, that too, I guess I must have been told about this, Ms. Corrigan said, "she ought to be in another school. She shouldn't be here."

CO: Suggesting a private school?

NP: Yeah.

CO: Okay.

NP: And one that would let me work at my own speed. So, I was reading everything in the world by the time I was in the fourth grade.

CO: Wow. Well now, what was it like for you becoming an adolescent, becoming a teenager? Do you remember there being that…you know today we… like your brother [meant son] I'm sure in studying his, in all of his psychological studies is very conversant in what we know today or think we know today about adolescence and that transition into adolescence. But, the women I talked to don't have, they're like we don't know what you're talking about. But, do you recall….

NP: I don't think you're talking to a lot of honest women.

CO: Do you recall any?

NP: Oh gosh, I put on a big act.

CO: Did you?

NP: I fooled everybody but Britt.

BP: I met her when she was fourteen. I don't know what the transition was because I didn't know her before then. But she was the cutest little thing in the whole wide world.

NP: Bless your heart.

BP: And I telephoned her after I had met her at dance, had been introduced to her, because she had made such a great impression on me. I was a sophomore in college.

CO: Now you were, she was fourteen and you were how old?

NP: Seventeen.

BP: I was seventeen. And I asked her if she would honor me by going as my date to the engineering fraternity, which had a once a year affair. And she said she would be happy to, and that was our first meeting. And what she told me many years later….

NP: I didn't tell you, Selma did.

BP: Nan's best friend told the story then, that Nan had telephoned her and said, "Selma, who in the hell is Britt Pendergrast?"

NP: I was happy to go to a dance with them.

BP: I obviously had not made the same impression on her as she had made on me.

CO: She just didn't remember your name.

NP: Yeah, we only dated for five years before we married.

CO: Oh my goodness. So it sounds like neither of you dated anybody else? Or did you date other people?

BP: Oh we dated other people lots, both of us did.

NP: Both of us did, you didn't go steady in those days.

CO: So you would date other people, you would date other people and you did this but dated each other also?

NP: Oh yes, we always dated each other. We liked, I liked him, I just liked being with him. I knew how smart he was, smart meant a lot to me.

BP: I think I knew I needed to marry Nan before she knew she needed to marry me.

NP: I don't know.

CO: Well that was probably more important since you were going to be the one to ask.

BP: Yes, I wrote her a note on the occasion of going on a Naval ROTC summer cruise.

CO: Oh boy.

BP: I put it in her mail box.

NP: No you didn't. You sent it by Bill, and Bill handed me the note.

BP: The thrust of it being, as each day passes you become a more goddamned Sub-Deb but I have innate faith in your innate intelligence and think that someday you will be smart enough to marry me.

CO: Did you really write that?

NP: Yes, he did indeed!

CO: Have you still got that?

NP: No, I burned all the letters he ever wrote me.

CO: No. Why did you do that?

NP: Because they were all maddening.

BP: I was not a good courter.

NP: We wrote each other….

BP: Oh…I can't hit with that damn little fly swatter….

NP: We…

CO: You need a bigger swatter.

BP: I've got a, I need a better aim.

NP: By the time I got to college, we wrote every single day the whole time I was in college.

CO: And you were where by the time she went at Vassar?

NP: He was at Tech. I think weren't you? No..

CO: Well if he was a sophomore….

NP: You were at Emory. You were doing your master's when I was doing the freshman.

BP: I guess that's right. I graduated in '38, got a master's in '39, and Nan was the class of '37 in high school.

NP: No, I was the class of ’37.

BP: You were the class of ’37 in high school, I was the class of ‘34

NP: It would’ve been the class of ’31.

BP: I guess I’m mixed up.

CO: Well you married in ’40 so, and you were a junior.

NP: I was 19, almost 20.

CO: Okay.

NP: And Britt was 23. He had just turned 23, I think.

CO: That’s what your, yeah that’s what it adds up to.

NP: Well I was so funny, but I was dating everybody all the way in college until Britt got up to Philadelphia, within range. Because, I knew a lot of boys who had gone from Atlanta up to Harvard and Yale and Princeton, and they didn’t know anybody else and I didn’t either. So, I went to every college up there while I was there. And it sort of disturbed my Yankee class mates because college… you know they didn’t do that. And they thought I was, I had the feeling the thought I was sleeping with all of them!

CO: Oh really…

NP: They just didn’t know why I had so many dates with so many people.

CO: Well Vassar was, I think in those years, um, I know they loved for southern women to come up, but they were often times didn’t know what to do with them when they got them there.

NP: Well, unfortunately for me, the Dean of the college was from Atlanta.

CO: Oh….

NP: And so when they did occasionally get their grips on a southern girl, they watched them very carefully.

CO: Oh boy.

NP: And, by the time I got there I had skipped a grade in high school. I had just taken extra courses. I was younger, but Dean Thompson called me in. I was absolutely lost. I knew Vassar was a good college, but all I had ever had to do at Washington Seminary

was regurgitate. I had never been asked to really think or been asked a theoretical question. What would you do if? I was just floundering. I didn't know what they wanted. And I had a pretty close to a photographic memory, but I didn't understand what I was reading. So, I know when I got a history exam, I didn't, they asked a question and I answered it by quoting about a couple pages of books. And they thought it was absolutely the most flagrant cheating they'd ever heard of, and called me on the carpet about it. And, I did it again for them and then they quit questioning it. I just, I did not do well in college freshman year. I didn't fail anything but I don't know why I didn't. And the Dean called me in and said, "What is the matter here? Your college boards…Your…" what was it…not..I didn't have to take any college board because they wanted somebody from Georgia so much that if you took the SAT that was all you had to take, and she said my SAT's were, again, pure vocabulary, and she said it was among the six highest they'd ever had. So, why aren't you knocking…

CO: Right, right.

NP: And I didn't know, I just had no idea what I was doing.

CO: Because analytical skills have to be learned.

NP: They did and I'd never learned them. I'd never needed to. And I'm still not, I've got whole blanks…

CO: Well, I find that hard to believe but…

NP: Oh, it's true..

BP: She made Dean's List in the last semester.

CO: I'm sure, that's not surprising at all. Well you had from a very young age, clearly, racial awareness, and awareness of injustice in where race relations.

NP: Oh yes.

CO: Did you have any kind of similar awareness about gender? I mean were you…

NP: No, if anything I tended to, at a party or a gathering, I got bored blue by the women. They were all talking about dress, disease, and domestics.

CO: Um hum, okay.

NP: And occasionally there'd be husbands who'd be talking about something more interesting. I would much rather talk to them.

CO: Did you not experience discrimination for being a woman at any point?

NP: No, I never ever did, I don't think. I wasn't aware of it. Maybe I was so cocksure that I didn't notice anybody was discriminating against me.

CO: So, you didn't, it wasn't an issue in your household? Like your brother didn't have, wasn't privy to any special treatment that you and your sister didn't get?

NP: No, I don't think so. I worshipped my brother. I thought that he had never done anything wrong. It was such a blow to me. Bobby went to Peacock School, cause it was the only boys private school in Atlanta. And, I think he finished it when he was fifteen. He was much too young to go off to college. He stayed off one year, stayed up one year, went back and tutored other people. But, I thought, "Well, where he goes to college is going to be great," and he went to Williams College. And, everybody here would say, "you mean Williams and Mary?" Terrible blow to me. And it was he who sent me to Vassar.

CO: It was he who what?

NP: He who directed me to come to Vassar.

CO: To Vassar, okay.

NP: Cause he said he'd met some Vassar girls as they were real cool, no smooth. That was the adjective.

CO: So, that was an enough endorsement as far as you were concerned?

NP: As far as I was concerned I went because my brother told me to.

CO: Yeah, okay. Well, do you know, um, you've already kind of answered this but I'll ask you specifically. Do you recall disagreeing with or questioning your family's beliefs or values at any point in your childhood or teenage years?

NP: Never my father's, and I didn't really question Mother then cause that was, I was totally social. The school was social, and I did alright in my classes, as I said they just skipped me a year and I graduated with a 96.5 average or something like that. But, outside of school I was the cutest little old southern girl you ever saw. I was an idiot. Britt was the only one who somehow knew I wasn't an idiot, but that was what he meant when he wrote me that charming proposal.

CO: Oh, I wish you still had that letter.

NP: I wish I still, but I remember. It wasn't long, it was just a note and I remember it by heart. Getting to be more of a god damn sub-deb

CO: Did that mean sub-debutant?

NP: Yeah.

CO: That's so cute. Um, when you, did you know when you were growing up what you wanted to do as an adult, or did you have an ambition as a child to do something other than be a wife and mother. You know the traditional role.

NP: Yes, flowers. I wanted to grow flowers. And I…

BP: You wanted to write also didn't you?

NP: Oh yeah, I always wanted to write. I wrote my first mystery story when I was in the fourth grade, too.

CO: Wow.

NP: I explained that the butler was, what did I call him? Something very questionable in the first sentence, but the butler did it.

CO: Do you still have that story?

NP: No.

CO: No. Well, did you share those ambitions with your parents, did your parents have any idea what you wanted to do?

NP: No, I don't remember, it's funny I don't know whether because I was the third one they'd worn themselves out. I don't ever remember having any important discussion. In fact, I worry about what'll happen to this generation because books are out. People don't have books anymore, and yet, when my parents, well my father died later. I got my father's books. Those sets up there, there were all these books. And thank goodness he was an under liner somewhat.

CO: He was what?

NP: An under liner.

CO: Oh yeah, so you know what he though was important.

NP: I knew what he thought important, but I really didn't know until after he died, because we didn't talk about much. We admired nature together, but those books, one of them is a complete set of Mark Twain.

CO: Oh wow.

NP: And one of them is George Bernard Shaw. And one of them is….who's the other one…Shaw and Twain…

BP: Uh….Oscar Wilde?

NP: Oscar Wilde, Dad loved Oscar Wilde. And I read his books and I knew where his head was, and that's where mine was too.

CO: So you admired his literary taste? You admired him for that?

NP: Yeah.

CO: Okay.

NP: And I didn't know it until he died. We just, I don't remember, as I said we talked about nature.

CO: Well we've talked about your family and certainly we'll talk about them some more as you want to, but do you still have friends or did you keep friends throughout your life that you had as either a child or a teenager or college?

NP: Well, Selma, the one I called, thank goodness is still living in her own house. We don't see each other as often as I wish we did, like everybody else I know, except me, poor Selma is a widow.

BP: Well, before they began to die off, you didn't have a whole lot in common with them anyway did you?

NP: No, most of them I…

CO: Yeah, is that because of politics or did they…?

NP: Politics.

CO: Politics? Okay.

NP: And I got accustomed to going to a party and by that time I had children and they had children, and I'd get the "well how are those smart children of your?" and they said it sweetly and I knew they resented the hell out of it.

CO: Because your children were so bright?

NP: Yeah.

CO: Yeah yeah.

NP: And they, every one of them, Westminster, they all seven went to Westminster. And, Westminster gave some sort of test, which was given and you came out being told what percentile you ranked in. Six of ours were in the 99th percentile. And the seventh one wasn't feeling good that day and only made 98.

CO: Oh….

NP: But I never told the others who it was. They weren't told their own grade. I can say that it was a female, and that she has turned out to be the most financially aware of any of them. She's a much smarter business woman. In fact, my mother said of John and Mark, who were each valedictorians over there, John had done something particularly idiotic. I guess it was when he drove a car downtown for the first time, and called up and said, "Somebody has to come and get me, I don't know where I parked the car."

CO: Oh no.

NP: We said, well John, look at the ticket you got at the parking place. "Huh?" He had not gotten a ticket.

CO: Oh no.

NP: At that point, my mother said it would be nice if some of your smart boys had a few brains, no a little sense to go with their brains.

CO: Well that sounds typical though, doesn't it, I mean isn't that…

NP: Yeah, I'm not, John is the one who graduated at 19.

CO: Wow, could we go on for about seven minutes and then stop and take a little break?

NP: Yeah, wait a minute, before we do that, let me turn on the oven.

CO: Oh, okay, alright.

NP: And we'll have something to eat.

BP: I can turn on the oven.

NP: That's alright, I have to…

CO: This is um, about, as I said a few minutes ago, that you'd have an opportunity to talk about the extended family, or your family's background, so you could tell the story about your great, great grandfather and his, who was alive. Basically before you do that though, what did your family do for fun? You said you all went to Wisconsin for vacations. Your parents went to Europe, but you didn't go as a family.

NP: No, um, well I'm afraid one of the things, I don't know whether to call fun or not, but my brother, my sister, my mother and my father were all tournament golfers. If they ever enjoyed [?????], I never heard about it. I heard constant grumbling on what happened. And, I was a, not professional, a competitive diver.

CO: Oh, wow.

NP: That's one, I looked carefully at various forms of sport, and one of the few things where being a shrimp helped, diving was it.

CO: Wow, okay.

NP: So…

CO: Did you enjoy it?

NP: Yes.

CO: Okay, they didn't enjoy golf, they grumbled about it, but you liked the diving.

NP: They groaned about it, but I liked being a diver. But I didn't keep it up for too long, boys got in the way. I was, at sixteen I was the junior southeastern diving champion of eight southern states. But, after that, two things happened: I liked boys, and diving became much more demanding.

CO: Okay..

BP: Hah!

CO: Get him?

BP: Got him!

NP: Got him, good! Thank you darling

CO: Good.

NP: I need you for something in there and that is bread slicing. Do you mind?

BP: I've already sliced it.

NP: You've already? Good for you. Britt bakes our bread.

CO: Oh my goodness. I love home baked break.

NP: Yeah.

CO: Well, um, what, in your family were there any musicians?

NP: No, and I think, actually, my father had played the piano, but you can't imagine how much influence it was that my mother couldn't hear.

CO: Ah, right, sure. Yeah.

NP: So, I think she, I never had music lessons. I loved to sing, I still do although I sound crappy even to me. And, Britt and I sang together all the time. That's what we did on every date, just ride around and sing.

CO: Awww, so what kind of music?

NP: Popular music.

CO: Popular music.

NP: Later I had, and Britt knew classical before I did. And, since we've been married I've learned something, and I've learned to love classical music too. I broke in gently with Tchaikovsky, and I have learned to like thing that are more demanding than that. And, we used to have tickets to the symphony, but we just sort of let them lapse after a while. We do listen to classical music on the television pretty much.

CO: You do? What about books and films, what are, that have influenced you? Either influence you or books or films that you just really like. Is there a genre in either of those that….

NP: Well, I'm not sure. I love anything that's nature still. I'll watch every nature show and I read when I can. There are books there about plants.

CO: Um hum.

NP: And, that I suppose is my favorite book of all times. And, I'm afraid to go back and reread for fear I won't like it as well as I think I do.

CO: What book is that?

NP: It's called *Islandia,* and it was written by a man named Austin Tappan Wright who never thought of publishing it, and wrote it for years. Islandia is an imaginary country, and he did a whole imaginary culture. It was marvelous. One of the children borrowed it and it still hadn't come back. But as a general thing, I like history. And I like English, British English.

CO: What about films? Do you…

NP: Films. We don't see a great many of them now, partly because we're too lazy to drive to them, and partly because they charge the earth for it.

CO: They do, I know.

NP: And I have…

CO: But back in your, when you did go, did you have a particular kind of favorite film?

NP: Yeah well I had favorite actors. I was in love with Cary Grant. I thought he was wonderful, and I think every now and then on the one occasion when I went abroad with my parents, we stayed at the Plaza Athenee, a hotel in Paris, at which Barbara Hutton was, and she married Cary Grant shortly after that. And I kept thinking, "Gosh, I almost knew the person who married Cary Grant."

CO: Okay.

NP: And of course I adored Katherine Hepburn.

CO: yeah.

NP: And I, when I was in college I double dated with Katherine Hepburn's sister, Tracy.

CO: Oh my goodness!

NP: Who was at Bennington then, and I was at Williams, it was right next door. And, I controlled myself. We drove from Williams over to Bennington, and I didn't gawk over the backseat the whole time, but she looked just like her and she sounded just like her, and I couldn't believe it. I've always been fascinated with hearing about actors and

actresses and that's one place where Britt and I split tacks. I start to read, I just love the Turner Classic Movies, almost any of them.

CO: Really?

NP: And then there are some I don't care about. But, most of them are very nostalgic for me.

CO: Oh really? Yeah, so you watch that channel?

NP: Yeah, we watch that a good deal, and channel 8 and channel 30 have what we care about. Can you get all of them down in Valdosta?

CO: I don't know if I get them or not. I don't have much time to watch television. I don't watch hardly any network T.V., and I don't have time for films. I do get Netflix, so sometimes I'll get, I'll get films that my friends suggest. But, I'm not a movie critic by any means. But, I do have friends who just are, they're on top of the you know whatever's the most, um, the going film of the week, and so I learn about them that way but…

NP: Well I know almost, as I said, I'm way back in the last…

CO: Back in the 40s and 50s?

NP: Yeah, 40s and 50s. I might go as far as the 60s and of course I was absolutely hooked on Upstairs Downstairs and Downton Abbey, which is quite fascinating. I hadn't thought I'd care about it.

CO: Do you like the PBS channel? The Masterpiece Theater and those…

NP: Yeah…

CO: You do.

NP: Masterpiece Theater is something we watch a lot. The first thing I look at in the evening to plan any is I look at 8 and I look at 30. And then I look at Turner Classic Movie. And I don't look at anything else, except now and then on Sundays we do watch *60 Minutes*. But, I get really quite exasperated with news. I think it used to be better.

CO: Oh, I know. Well it's so sensationalized. It's just so little reporting and what little reporting there is it seems to be on inane things or things that that they wouldn't have covered…

NP: I am so sick of the Republican primary.

CO: Oh my gosh…

NP: I just wish to vote for none of the above.

CO: Right, right, right. Yeah. Well, I think we can stop.

NP: Okay, I bet we can even eat by now.

CO: You know about your education, but could you, um, could you just go back and tell me all the schools that you went to, and then pick up with…because at supper you were talking about how you were honored at Vassar for your work because you for one thing you helped raise a lot of money.

NP: Yeah.

CO: And then, um, but can you tell that story again? About how that, tell me first of all the schools and the order from the….

NP: Oh, well, I uh first went to a kindergarten, a small one up the street from us, but that one didn't last because I jumped off a chicken coop into a pile of saw dust and broke my arm.

CO: Oh no.

NP: So I didn't finish.

CO: Uh oh

NP: Kindergarten I just, but I went from the first through the sixth grade to Highland School, it was a public elementary school. Then, I went to Washington Seminary, a girls school, where my mother had gone, and I skipped a grade there by taking an extra course each year so that I finished high school a year early.

CO: Well, was that here in Atlanta?

NP: Yeah, all here in Atlanta. Then, I went from there to Vassar, and that was it.

CO: Well, what was it like to be at Vassar? I mean that's a long way from home. I mean, I know a lot of southern girls did it, but how, what, how was your experience? You talked about the being, you know, feeling.

NP: Well, it was a beautiful campus, and I loved that. Trees and buildings, it was very nice. And it was in a pretty place too, right there on the Hudson. I enjoyed that and I enjoyed most of my courses. Botany was strange because Dr. Roberts, who was the head of it and was a brilliant woman, was very proud of herself, I think, for not being about to recognize any plant from the outside. She had to look in the microscope. But, when we went on field trips and someone would ask her what this plant was or that, she didn't know but I did. I had memorized field guides, because I loved flowers and I loved plants. But, I kept being told by the English teacher that I ought to be majoring in English.

CO: Because you could write?

NP: Because I could write. And because I loved English too, I loved writing. So, that was happy enough. Economics was an absolutely closed book. Everything that I thought should be a credit was a debit. Why I passed that one I don't know. It was out of the goodness of their hearts I guess. And, I took German for the first time because it was needed for Botany, and that was interesting because I had taken French through high school and my accent was so atrocious that even I flinched when I heard it. And I had been told that German was very difficult and yet I found it very simple. I liked it. The word order didn't bother me. And after about three weeks the teacher, who was German, asked me to stay a minute after class and I did. And she said, "Ms. Schwab, I know by your name and your face that your family is German. You have always heard German." I said, "no I haven't heard it at all, they came over in 1851." She said, "well I keep trying to teach you high German and you consistently speak low German back to me. What part did they come from?" And I said, "Well, my father's family came from Bavaria." She said that's it. And my mother's, Mother claimed they came from Alsace but I could swear they came from Prussia. Anyway…

CO: How did she account for that?

NP: I don't know, it was a weird feeling. It was like learning something that I had known once and forgotten and it came back again. Uh, I don't know.

CO: Isn't that interesting?

NP: It was. I thought it was, but I…there were two or three words that our family used that were German that I didn't know. One was if we had guests and Mother was worried that the food was running a little low and we children were pigging out she say, "nicht so viel, nicht so viel," and I knew that meant lay off the food. I didn't know that it didn't mean "not so much" in German. There were just a couple of words. And, if I

wiggled around a lot, and I always did, Mother would say stop rutschen around, and I didn't know rutsch was the German word for slip or slide. But otherwise I'd never heard it.

CO: Never heard it. That is bizarre.

NP: And when Britt and I did get to Germany, much later, well actually we were in Austria, and I was talking to the man there running the garden, I found I could speak it alright enough, course I had studied it for a year in college, but that was all.

CO: You wonder what's in the genes…

NP: Yes.

CO: You know what's….

NP: I don't know….

CO: Wow, now can you tell that story again that you told at the table about how Vassar honored you for even though you didn't graduate? You went through your junior year right?

NP: Yes, I, uh, well they called to ask if I would serve on the Board of…Alumni Board or whatever it is. And I wrote back and said, "I think you've made a mistake, I didn't graduate." And they said, "We know what you've done since you left college." And it was all the Civil Rights work. And they had asked me also to come back and speak at college about Civil Rights work in the South. And I always felt a little bit fraudulent because it wasn't dangerous to be an integrationist in Atlanta. Fifty miles down the road it would've been, I think.

CO: Yeah.

NP: So, it, but that was what got it, and then after that I raised a great deal of money, because a very rich alumnus happened to die the year that I was supposed to ???(50:52) and my quota was sixty thousand and she gave fifty thousand.

CO: So, and did you have an easy enough time raising that other ten thousand?

NP: Oh, yes, yes. I raised a lot more than that, but wasn't difficult. But, I always felt that I was given credit for a great deal of bravery when it didn't take that much.

CO: Well, yeah, but it certainly did take a lot of um, well, another kind of courage, I guess, because you do risk reputation. You did risk approval of friends and family and so uh I think it…

NP: I did. There were times when I knew that there was a difference, but on the whole…I kept in mind a man named James McBride Dabbs, who was before my time, but who lived in South Carolina, on a plantation his family had owned for a couple hundred years, and he was a fierce integrationist, and he had invited black people to dinner and broke all the rules. And he was asked once if didn't wasn't awful, he said, "no, I know what they say, 'that James McBride Dabbs, he's a damn fool, but let's have him to dinner.'" If you belonged..

CO: And he would if he'd come from two hundred years of plantation background.

NP: Yeah.

CO: Well know before we leave education, would just say, again, cause you've told me but it's not on record, your seven children. Start with the oldest and come down to the youngest, where they went to school and what they're doing.

NP: Well, Jill is the oldest. She's a girl. She went to Vassar, then she married, married a boy she'd met at a mixer at Vassar. And they lived in Connecticut and she did not finish Vassar, she transferred to Connecticut, and got her Bachelor's degree in Math and then went ahead and got her Master's in Math, and taught Math, and has done so for many years and seemed to enjoy it. Then she, much later on, became a counselor, whatever that is. I'm not certain whether she got a degree in would've been social work or but she's a licensed counselor.

CO: I would think clinical psychology…

NP: She can counsel people in New Hampshire, where she lives.

CO: Is it, does she do that in the schools or she has an office?

NP: She doesn't have an office, but she does have clients and I guess they call her at home. If I sound vague, it's because I've seen her teach math, and she did that very well, but I have not been…

CO: Haven't been in on the therapy sessions?

NP: Haven't been in on the counseling. She has six children, who are all grown up now. And Jill herself, last September, had her seventieth birthday.

CO: Wow.

NP: And told us that she had never felt happier or healthier, she likes it very well.

CO: Wow, that's wonderful.

NP: Then there's John, and John went to elementary grammar school and then to Westminster and he skipped two grades along the way. They simply decided he didn't need the sixth grade and put him in the seventh, and he skipped another one somewhere. Anyway, he was sixteen when he graduated. And he was valedictorian and he went to Williams and at the time he was the first Williams graduate to ever go through it three years. But he finished and he was very eager to join the Peace Corp and go to Africa, and he had spoken out, when he was only sixteen and was a senior in high school, happened to be the same year that the governor had asked that there be sessions, public sessions in each of the then ten congressional districts to tell how they felt about integrating the schools. And, John testified before the group when it came to Atlanta about how eager he was that his younger siblings would have school, because it was…we'd already figured out a group, well I know some legal people had too, that the Georgia law said that if one student integrated the schools the school would close. And, I'm not certain how this worked, but if that school closed a group of parents could file for discrimination and somehow through the legal process, it would end up closing every school in Georgia within three months. And that frightened people, so it didn't happen. But John, looking back it took a lot of courage for a sixteen to testify…

CO: Right right…

NP: But he did. At the time…

CO: Do you remember when that was?

NP: Hmmm?

CO: Do you remember when that was? What year? Roughly?

NP: Well it ought to be easy to do. Let me back up a minute. I think he graduated from college in '63, so probably '60?

CO: Whoa, that was courageous. Yes.

NP: I think that was it.

CO: Okay.

NP: But there was a program, based totally, I think, on college board scores, which first named, they called it “the star student” in each school, and then the Star Student, the one who made the highest grade in the whole city, and then one who made the highest grade in the whole district, and John was the Star Student all the way through. So, they couldn’t very well listen and say this kid’s stupid and doesn’t know what he’s talking about.

CO: Right, right.

NP: But he spoke there, then he went on off to college, then graduating, as I said told you earlier, he was too young for the Peace Corp, so he found a program called Teachers For East Africa, and he joined that. It was administered by Cambridge, and he spent one year in Uganda at Makerere University, where he earned a Master’s degree which was somehow technically from Cambridge. Then, he began to teach at a prep school in Kisii, Kenya, which is 350 miles northwest of Nairobi, and very cool. It was right on the equator but so high that it didn’t get hot. And he enjoyed it very much, but after his three years he came home. In the meanwhile, the State Department had asked him if he would take a degree, a graduate degree in international studies at Georgetown, because they wanted him to join the Foreign Service and go back to Kenya, and he wanted to go back. But they said they didn’t know that many native born white boys who spoke Swahili.

CO: And he did?

NP: Yeah, he had been away teaching there for three years.

CO: Whoa, but did, is that how he picked up the language?

NP: Yeah.

CO: Oh, okay.

NP: I guess, because he didn’t when he left home. He came home and started going to Georgetown for the graduate degree, and we were in the depths of the Vietnam business. It was ’66 I guess, ’67, and he got a little too close to Foggy Bottom and by November he said, “I can’t do this, I cannot possibly represent this country overseas when I feel so strongly about its foreign policy, and then being John, he’s rather quiet, really, he doesn’t ever speak loudly. He left this country and moved to Canada, said he couldn’t accept any of the privileges of citizenship if he were refusing to carry a gun, and he couldn’t buy a loaf of bread because every bit of tax he paid would go to buy the guns he wouldn’t shoot.

CO: How did you feel about him going to Canada?

NP: Well we were not particularly happy about it. We didn't know what would happen. We did know that he would be stateless for five years, if he got Canadian citizenship. But, there's no arguing with John, he was quite, he was determined that's what he need to do. He had never been ordered to report for the draft because there had actually been a letter from the White House saying leave this boy alone, we want him for international studies, or we want him for the Foreign Service. So, when he left…

CO: So, why did he go if it was clear that he wouldn't have to go to Vietnam? Why did he leave and go to Canada.

NP: I don't know, he just felt, as I said he said he couldn't buy a piece of bread because…

CO: Oh I see, okay.

NP: He just could not any longer be a citizen of a country that did that.

CO: So, he wasn't just going because, he wasn't just..

NP: He avoiding the draft because nobody was trying to draft him.

CO: Okay, wow.

NP: But the day he got to Canada he went into the consulate and renounced his citizenship. And we figured well he's…

CO: Did that scare you? Did that scare you?

NP: Well it just disturbed us. We knew he wouldn't be able to come home for five years, nothing. But it turned out we were wrong, because his grandfather, Britt's father, wanted him to come home and see him, and he was, we knew terminally ill, so John went to the consulate and explained and they said, "well go home, it's alright." And, so he went home and then six months later his grandfather died and his grandmother wanted him to be at the funeral. So, again, John went to the consulate and this time they said, "Go already, don't bother us." So, being stateless didn't bother. I never knew why he had such privileges but there was a general welcome in Canada at the time. Someone had said in Parliament, "one nation's draft dodgers are another nation's heroes." And he was older, he was 23 and he had our support, but many of the dodgers didn't. They were young and had fled and we'd heard horror stories. One of the boys who had come home for his grandfather or his father's funeral and had been

snatched as he left the church, and put in jail. A “dodger.” But in the meanwhile, John had married, married a wonderful girl who was at Smith when he was at Williams, that’s where they met, but they were both from Atlanta, they’d both been at Westminster but hadn’t known each other there. But, anyway, they were scheduled and the Canadian government gave John a complete fellowship for his doctorate. So he went to the University of Toronto courtesy of the Canadian government.

CO: Wow.

NP: And he, they served as sort of the other end of the Underground Railroad. They had a small apartment; there was usually several dodgers sleeping on the floor at a time. And, I don’t know how he kept in touch with things.

CO: But he’s there now isn’t he, in Toronto?

NP: Yes, oh he’ll never leave. He comes home whenever he likes. He usually comes home at least once a year and then he meets us in North Carolina when we go. And he married Docie and they have two sons, one a lawyer and one a doctor. And they have dual citizenship because Docie waited until they were born before she left off her American citizenship. So, they could be American if they liked, but they have no interest in it. They’ve never lived anywhere else. John, I mean Jacob, John’s son, went to medical school in Nova Scotia. And, married a classmate, and he has two children, a boy and a girl. And he’s very mellow and very happy there and very busy. He’s been teaching all these years. He’s now retired as a regular teacher but he still does substitute teaching and he does a lot of tutoring, which he enjoys. And, he is a musician who sings and he also plays piano, and taught himself to play guitar when he was in Africa because he couldn’t take his piano with him. And in short I guess he’s lived happily ever after. He gave us some worries, but there’s nothing you can do about John anyway. The next one is Nan. The first one’s named after a Great Dane, the second I got around to naming after me, and she is married, and she went to Vassar also, but then got her degree in education for gifted children. But, her husband was head of Mass Mutual Insurance in Savannah, where he’s from and he wanted somebody to be a pension expert, and he said every time they trained anybody they left them to be a pension expert where they got more money, so she trained to be a pension expert. I don’t know whether it meant going back to college or what, but that’s what she’s done ever since. She also writes regularly for the Savannah newspaper and has been working on a book for so long I don’t know if she’ll ever finish it.

CO: Books take a long time. One of your sons does them fairly timely, but they can take a long time if you've got other stuff going on. Do you mind if I plug this up while we're . . .

NP: Oh no go ahead, well you know you've opened a can of worms asking about all seven of them…

CO: That's the children, no, but I want you to talk about…mainly I'm interested in their educations and what they're doing so…because it shows how you value education in the family.

NP: That we do. I think I counted the other day, they've got nine graduate degrees.

CO: Well, oh I can't plug it in.

NP: It's hard to plug in right there.

CO: Yeah, that doesn't have the three-prong.

NP: Oh, I didn't know it was any different from the other. There's one right over here, but I doubt it'll do any better.

CO: Probably. Let's check. There's one right here. But, is Mark next?

NP: Well, yeah, Mark is…Nan is the one who adopted the, well she just took over for her step son. She has three daughters and one son, one step son and the three daughters are hers. She married a fellow who first met her when she was ten months old.

CO: Oh my goodness.

NP: And he was four years old.

CO: Oh my goodness.

NP: Nankin says when he's had a couple too many drinks, he loves to tell people at parties that he just knew right away when he saw Nan that she was something special, and he tried to pull her diapers off.

CO: So he really did rob the cradle, didn't he?

NP: He did, well he was four years old and she was ten months…. That's a long story we won't go into but he's one of seven children too, and their wedding looked like a zoo.

CO: I bet!

NP: So, that's Nanny. Her daughter, her oldest daughter, had the first twins in the family.

CO: Oh my.

NP: Had expected them for generations and hadn't gotten them. Helen went to Georgetown, but you don't want to get into the education of all the children. That's confusing.

CO: But Mark is next?

NP: Mark is next, after Nan. Mark went to elementary, grammar school, a special grade for the sixth grade where, briefly, they got together the brightest children in the six schools in the area, and put them all in the same class with a wonderful teacher at a different school. So, the sixth grade was very nice. And he finished Westminster and he went to Harvard, and he went through Harvard in three years.

CO: With a degree in?

NP: English.

CO: English.

NP: Uh huh, and after that, well Mark married while he was still in college. That was a disaster, but eventually it ended. And he went back and went to Simmons College. They were living in Vermont at the time, to get a degree in library science because he had decided he wanted to write as well as teach English, and he's been writing ever since.

CO: Yeah.

NP: I think that's his sixth book, or maybe it's his…I don't know, I'll have to count them up.

CO: There are seven.

NP: Seven.

CO: Uh huh.

NP: He's working on the…

CO: Actually, it's eight. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight.

NP: Yeah, oh my golly. Well…

CO: So he's on his ninth book.

NP: Well, he, the Japanese book is the latest one. He writes, thank goodness, very quickly.

CO: Yeah, well.

NP: And very, he researches and every time in the middle of any research he'll say, why did I want to right this stupid book! So last year Britt said to him, " Mark, have you ever thought what you'd like to do if you quit writing or you couldn't think of a subject or you couldn't get a contract." Mark said, "Oh, I couldn't do anything else, I love this!" So that's that.

CO: Yeah, yeah.

NP: Oh, after Mark comes Blair. And Blair went to Junior College in Washington. Blair had never appeared to be as much of a scholar as the others. In fact, Westminster asked at one point if we minded having Blair talk to their sort of…he wasn't official but he was the…I can't think of the word I want. He's not a psychiatrist, what's the other thing..

CO: Well the counselor, the school psychologist?

NP: No, he's a doctor but he's not a psychologist…psychologist is the word I'm look for. Not a psychiatrist. And he gave Blair a group of tests and then he called us in. And he said, "Blair, you must be trying not to study to do what you're doing." She wasn't failing anything, but she was nowhere near an honor roll. And he said, "I've never tested anybody who came out any higher, why don't you study?" And Blair smiled brightly and said, "because it's unpleasant." And we thought we'd never get her through college. So she went to Mount Vernon Junior College in Washington, which is a two year thing for the underachieving children of senators mostly. It's a girl's school. But when she finished, she became the first graduate of Mount Vernon to go to Georgetown. So she went to Georgetown, but then there was a boy who was in premed and he wanted Blair to be a medical technologist. And so she left Georgetown because they didn't teach med-tech and went to American University. Then she decided she didn't like med-tech, she didn't like American University, she didn't like the boy very much, so she tried to get back in Georgetown and they wouldn't have her

after she'd quit them. So, she came here and went to Emory, after all. And finally graduated from Emory with honors. And has worked as a paralegal and then is now, as I told you earlier, director of the…She's the business director of the physical education department at Emory, and has two children; a daughter in medical school and a son at Emory at Oxford. Scott. Haha. Scott's the one who went to Vassar, quit…

CO: Right.

NP: Bounced around, became, well he's a naturalist. He studied the out of doors and he was a raft guide on the Chattooga River, and then the head of the raft guiding business. And, then, at the age of 28 or so went back to college, part time, at Georgia State. Is there a real estate or do they call it business? I don't know the name of it.

CO: It's probably in the Business School.

NP: Well, he graduated with the only Summa in the Business School.

CO: Now, which one of them married Nannette's daughter?

NP: Hum?

CO: Nannette Currin? One of your…

NP: Oh uh, he, she's married to the lawyer. Her daughter Terri is….

CO: Uh huh, is married…

NP: Is married to Craig, we haven't gotten to Craig yet.

CO: The baby.

NP: The baby. And Craig met Terri when they were both in Law School.

CO: Okay. You were talking about….

NP: I don't want this, I do want to tell you something but I don't want it to go on the list..

CO: Okay, sure.

NP: They have a daughter who just started Dartmouth last fall, and a son at George Washington, in Washington. So, for the first time, they have no children at home.

CO: Oh gosh, that's odd.

NP: It does seem odd. They live closer to us. They live about fifteen minutes over that way.

CO: Uh huh…

NP: Can ride their bicycles back and forth and do.

CO: Well, let me tell you what the um, the next category is about mothering, so, and I told you I was interested in that, so…romance and mothering, and if you want to we can wait until in the morning for that. Um…

NP: Well, it depends on how weary you are..

CO: Well, um, let's see how much time…

NP: As I said I thought we'd probably, I figured my brain would turn off at about nine.

CO: Well, okay if you want to we'll do that, we'll just stop at nine. So, you've already told me a little bit about meeting Britt.

NP: Yeah.

CO: You met at fourteen and seventeen.

NP: Yeah.

CO: And then, but you dated other people, he dated other people, you both dated other people.

NP: Oh yes, everybody did.

CO: Was there anybody else that you were serious about? Either one of you?

NP: Not that I know of, I mean, I don't think he was… He dated a girl who was a couple years ahead of me at the Seminary.

CO: Uh huh.

NP: Who was very bright, and very attractive, but she's been dead a long time so he did well to get ahold of me.

CO: Ah, okay, alright.

NP: I know I never ever considered marrying anybody else.

CO: Did you kind of know that you were going to marry him?

NP: I think so, oh well oddly enough, as I said I was dating an awful lot of people up at college, going away every weekend to a different college, and when I came back after my sophomore year, I said, "I'm engaged," to my friend. "You'll never guess who," and I thought they'd been bewildered too. They said no give us three guesses, Britt, Britt, and Britt.

CO: You hadn't hid anything had you?

NP: No, I didn't write to anybody else every day. But I…

CO: Well, so, okay. You know how girls grow up with impressions of what love and marriage and romance is going to be. Did you have those when you were growing up?

NP: I don't remember thinking about much ahead of time. I just…

CO: So, so, but you had seven children. Did you, when you were dating did you think about a family?

NP: I don't think I did, but I keep, well I did for a long time run into people who said, "you always said you were going to have six children."

CO: Oh my.

NP: I don't remember saying anything, I did have three good friends, each of whom were one of five children, and I loved to go and play at their houses. I liked the idea of having a lot of kids.

CO: Oh my.

NP: And well there were three of us, the other two were so much older that I didn't really have any… I always knew I wanted a bunch of them.

CO: So you wanted a big family?

NP: Oh yes.

CO: And you had a big family.

NP: I meant to do it. Britt, bless his heart, had always…I think his mother, whom I loved for every other reason, but I think she was a bit of a hypochondriac…

CO: Oh really?

NP: Passed it on to her children…and they didn't think Britt was at all well. He said he never expected to live beyond fifty.

CO: My goodness.

NP: I don't know why.

CO: Here he is going strong at 96.

NP: Yeah, just 95.

CO: 95, excuse me, excuse me. I'm sorry.

NP: That's alright, we'll settle for 96. I think he worried a little bit about trying to educate all of them, and I don't know why I didn't, except I didn't have any sense. I always thought things would be alright. The truth is that there's always been money. I've never thought about it one way or the other.

CO: Well did you inherit a lot from your family? You both come from comfortable backgrounds…

NP: Yeah, I did inherit something, but I did not want to live the way I had been brought up. And, nobody does. I don't know anybody who has six servants or anything like that. So, we live very frugally really, because that's what I like, and I don't want anything material, and I never did.

CO: Yeah, but what about your children? Do they share that?

NP: They seem to. Every last one of them…very careful and very, I think, very philanthropic.

CO: Uh huh, sounds like it. So, um, so you didn't ever actually ever work for money outside the home?

NP: I did for seven years in a part time job that I loved. I was the counselor at Sears-Roebuck at the Garden Center in Cumberland. I worked from nine until one or two and I didn't work every day on that, they changed my schedule but…

CO: Now, was this after you finished having children?

NP: Yeah, when Craig was in high school.

CO: Oh, okay.

NP: Or junior high, and I loved it. It was like having a party every day, because everybody talked about my favorite subject and I didn't have to serve refreshments or anything. So, I liked that very much, and would've stayed on longer, only they did away with the garden shop. And, they offered me a job in the credit department but I didn't want…

CO: Didn't want that, well I don't blame you…um, so you never considered not having children?

NP: No, Jill was born when we'd been married a year and a half, and from then on we had six children in twelve years, and then five years later the seventh one.

CO: That's door steps…

NP: Yeah kinda.

CO: Yeah.

NP: But I was very conscious of the fact that I loved having all these children, but I didn't want them to feel deprived and…

CO: Was it hard to…

NP: Later on when I, the nicest thing they ever said was, "We all felt like only children."

CO: Wow.

NP: I paid so much attention to all of them, and I resented sending them off to school when they were five or six. I can't image all the preschool now, I wouldn't have done that.

CO: So you, you really enjoyed, did you enjoy every stage of childhood?

NP: I think I did. I can't remember…we've been so terribly fortunate health- wise and never anything desperate. No automobile accidents and I can't believe sometimes how lucky we've been…

CO: Yeah, yeah wow. Do you, um, has your, you said which of your children did you have a hard time with? Oh uh….

NP: Blair went back and forth on colleges but that…

CO: No the one that went, the first one, John, but when he went to Canada.

NP: John, I worried about John because it was pretty clear how brainy he was from the start, and he never had a gang, he never really had many friends. There were, in high school, two or three people who sort of hung on to John as if his brain would rub off on them…and the odd thing is that two of them became Moonies.

CO: Oh my goodness.

NP: And I don't know what that says about John or Moonies, but they did.

CO: Did they come back?

NP: I'm not sure, I know that one of them did not. He has a law degree and he does a lot of the legal work for the Moonies.

CO: Oh…

NP: I think he's wacko, but I always knew John Kirkley was weird.

CO: Um..

NP: That was another John, not our John. But I worried because he didn't seem to relate to anybody else much. In fact, one of his teachers said that John was the only true isolate he'd ever known. And when he was in third or fourth grade, I guess, I tried to get him to have a birthday party and he didn't have any interest in that. And I said, "Well, John who would you ask? Who are your friends at school?" and he said, "Well, I guess my best friend is the guy who sits behind me in class," and I said, "What is his name?" and John said, "I don't know."

CO: Oh my goodness. Is he still a loner like that?

NP: No, Docie, thank goodness, has made him a sociable creature. Now, that was the most heartbreaking part, that I didn't think John had any friends. But, uh…

CO: But that wasn't really trouble, so has your relationship with all of them…it sounds like it's been good?

NP: It's been fine, I like them all. And what's remarkable is that they like all, they all seem to like one another.

CO: Like each other, so there's not a lot of, did you detect any sibling rivalry?

NP: No, I never did. There were too many of them, I think they couldn't decide who to, some, we used to go up to the Yacht Club a lot when we were sailing, and they didn't, we always had all seven of the kids with us. They didn't play much with anybody else,

and I found out that the people called them the Covey, because the seven of them had one another, and didn't seem to have or need anybody else. But John was the only one that just, I used to think, "oh my gosh, he must be so lonely." But he wasn't, I don't think he needed or wanted anybody else..

CO: Do you miss active mothering? I realize you've still got all the grandchildren and now great grandchildren. Is there anything about the experience of mothering that you miss?

NP: No, the lot about driving automobiles I don't miss. I used to drive twenty seven car pools a week.

CO: Oh gosh

NP: I said I'd never be surprised to look up and meet myself coming in the other direction. But I did, and I, when I know how very scheduled children are now, we couldn't have done that. We didn't have that many outdoor things, you know out of school. Teams and stuff…

CO: Right, but did they play sports? The boys, your children?

NP: Yeah, most of them did. Jill was a very good swimmer, and the boys played soccer a lot, and were good. In fact, Craig was the top soccer player of his age which then I think was nine or ten in Atlanta and I came across when I was looking at the scrap books that Craig being given an award by, we had a professional soccer team here now, and one of them was handing Craig a medal or something.

CO: Wow. Now, all your children are incredible achievers…

NP: They have worked very hard, but I don't think they competed…I didn't have the feeling they competed with one another. I think they felt as if they were part of a team and I don't remember ever nagging at anybody about being homework, I don't remember homework being a chore. But, I did think, after Blair, that was the one the psychologist studied, I said, well I was really upset and John was married by then and off teaching, "John, what should I do about Blair?" She was a sophomore in high school. He said, "For God sake, leave her alone! She's the only normal child you've got! Just let her go." And we did, we relaxed and nobody said anything. Of course, Blair had decided she wanted to go to Vassar too, and I'd gone there, and her two sisters had, and she went up to see them and she smiled brightly at them, and they didn't let her in. They said that according to her record, she was a classic underachiever. But, we thought well we've handled it nicely, we've done what we can

do. We've relaxed. But she told us later, when she was about 25, she said, "you know, I thought I was retarded because you didn't expect as much of me as you did of the others." So, you can't win.

CO: You can't win, yeah.

NP: No way you can win, but she has turned out to be extremely reliable. In fact, poor soul, she's our only widow. Her husband died a couple of years ago. Very, very young. But he knew, well he was in his fifties.

CO: From what?

NP: Heart. He'd always known it was there. And he had had a heart valve replaced, and they thought it was all fine and then he dropped dead in front of his computer one night.

CO: Oh no…hmmm. You seem, uh, you seem very, um, proud of your children, understandably, but you don't seem sentimental or nostalgic about it. Do you…

NP: No, I never look back on the day. You just go from…you know…I guess you know I couldn't help feeling it was nice to have a little time on my own. I remember, I was writing a weekly article when Mark was very small, three or four, and he would…he knew that when I was writing, he was to leave me alone, so he'd lie down, he had a blanket he liked and he'd lie outside the door while I was writing. But, I always was aware that there was poor Mark out there lying with his blanket outside the door. It's easier to write without a lot of children hanging all over you.

CO: Well now, do your grandchildren, have you ever wound up with any grandchildren living with you or staying with you a lot?

NP: Yes.

CO: You have?

NP: Nankin's first marriage, she married a German boy who was brilliant I guess, maybe he was the smartest person I've ever known…

CO: That's saying a lot coming from this family.

NP: No, he was amazing. But, he drank like a fish.

CO: Oh gosh.

NP: And I didn't know it, I was so dumb. He never staggered, he never fumbled his words. And after 13 years, Nankin, and four children, his and her own three, she left and came home. And, she and all the children lived with us for about two and a half years.

CO: Now, when was that?

NP: Oh, well gosh a long time ago because the girls are all grown up and married now. Gosh, I couldn't begin…well, I guess I ought to know. Craig was a senior in high school and now he's fifty. So, that's a long time.

CO: Thirty years ago maybe..

NP: Well it didn't, Nankin was teaching at the time, and so she had to get up and go early. She taught out in Marietta, and I had to get the four children to four different schools.

CO: Oh my gosh, that was kind of like being a mother again.

NP: Oh, it took me 15 minutes to get back to being a mother again, as if I'd never quit. It didn't bug me at all, and I loved having them after a while. When they left, I'm not a weeper, but I actually cried at the wedding when she married Gene and was moving to Savannah and taking all her children with her.

CO: Oh my goodness, and that was four at the time?

NP: Yes.

CO: Hmm, well now when she did, did his children…he had children when they married? The husband, the man that she divorced?

NP: He had one.

CO: Oh, okay.

NP: Had Tyllman, and as I told you, his mother knowing he was handicapped had gone off and left. So he was in a foster home in Germany at two and half, I think. So, he's always seemed like ours, that's why I say 20 children, that includes Tyllman.

CO: Right right. Well…

NP: Our Benedictine monk, I'm happy to know you know something about the Benedictines…cause I don't

CO: Oh I just love the Benedictines. Well, one last question about mothering and then, do you think it's harder to be a mother today than it was when your children were coming up or is it easier?

NP: I think it's harder, my gosh, the pressures. Well, so many mothers work now, almost all of them do, and there are all these outside things. They start them doing something outside and lessons. And no, I couldn't cope with that, and I don't know anybody else who's trying to.

CO: Yeah, well, um…I would say, if I've interviewed 18 people at least 16 have answered that they think it's harder today.

NP: Oh yeah.

CO: That all the quote advantages we have are not really advantages when it comes to parenting.

NP: I don't think it is, and I never was aware of feeling neglected when I was a child, of course, but I will have to admit that when I approached motherhood, I didn't want to be the same kind of mother. I wanted to pick them up at school everyday….

CO: Be more, more directly involved in their lives.

NP: Yes, much, much more, and of course we, we have been, thank goodness, very comfortable, but I've never had money running out of my ears trying to decide what to do with it. And, I don't know if we could have handle all the education if they hadn't, most of them, all of them, Craig's law school was completely free. He was a Woodruff Scholar, I think they call them. And, they all, John's doctorate cost us nothing at all.

CO: Oh my goodness that's wonderful. Mine sure cost me.

NP: Oh gosh, yeah I know how. It was..

CO: So he went of full fellowship, is that how he?

NP: Yeah. And then ever since, thank goodness seems to be going in a second thing. Blair's daughter, Erin Lowe, had a complete scholarship at the University of South Carolina for four years, which even included a parking space.

CO: Oh my gosh.

NP: She doesn't have a car so..

CO: I've never even heard of that.

NP: Yeah, it's this thing called a McNair Fellow, and I don't know how many of them they do, but it didn't cost her nickel to go all the way through college.

CO: Wow.

NP: And she seemed to find the time to work at the same time.

CO: Yeah.

NP: She was a, she worked in a restaurant, and she ended up having saved $10,000 out of her salary.

CO: Good heavens.

NP: And now she's in medical school and of course she can't quite do that, although Emory has been extremely generous to her too.

CO: Wow, you've got so many success stories…

NP: Oh it's been, it scares me to death I have to keep knocking on wood.

CO: But it must feel good too though to recall all that.

NP: Oh it does, especially the, the beautiful grandchild with the twins was…same thing, I think she went all the way through Georgetown, she was president of the student body at Georgetown and I don't think she'd ever paid a nickel for anything.

CO: Wow. That's wonderful. Well we can close down for tonight if you want.

NP: Good.

CO: Okay, it is Wednesday, March 14. I'm still in the home of my generous hosts, Nan and Britt um…

NP: Pendergrast.

CO: And Nan has already told me just some incredible stories about the guests she's had in this home from Jane Fonda to, uh, the actor…

NP: Ted Turner's daughter, Laura, lived here for about three months.

CO: Ted Turner's daughter lived here for about three months, she says so. We're not going to return where we left off and I'm going to see if Nan can recall the stories she told over breakfast so that we can record them. They were, and I hope that Britt will

come back and retell the story about Goldwater, because they both new Goldwater. Nan, can we just go back over how your political identity has shifted over time?

NP: Well when I came back, after college, I was married and I had been told by Walter White to do something about the race situation and I wanted to. I told the Republican Party that I wanted to join them and they were delighted because there were about enough Republicans in Georgia to fill a phone booth. We had not, there had never been a Republican elected since Reconstruction had finished. So, they welcomed anybody, and by the time I was 25 I was the press relations girl. I of course was a volunteer, we all were. They were a wonderful group of people, particularly Elbert Tuttle, who became famous later as the judge who made the right decisions about integration. And, there were many people, there were about 24 of us in all who were on the board. And I was very happy being a Republican, the only trouble was that we never elected anybody. It was the only integrated organization in the state of Georgia.

CO: So, so, you're, let me just say for, um, especially the students transcribing this are going to be confused about that, because some of the students working on this project are not history majors, and perhaps don't know that in the south, until at least FDR, Democrats were the conservative party. And your chief issue was race relations and that's…

NP: That's exactly what it was.

CO: That's what governed your political choices and so you, the Democratic Party continued to be the stronghold of racist policies.

NP: We had a poll tax, which was enough to keep blacks from voting, but anyway blacks, I actually think that they were legally forbidden to vote, I don't know. There was a white primary…

CO: Oh, exactly. Yes, yes. Um..

NP: And when they were ready to name delegates to national conventions, the Republicans did by holding county meetings and electing people who finally went up there, whereas the Democratic delegates to the convention were named the by the Governor. There was no election at all, and…

CO: And that's so blatantly un-American.

NP: Oh, it was dreadful, but they got away with it, I guess until the Civil Rights Movement.

CO: Absolutely.

NP: I didn't know that's when it had quit. So when I was there and my job was to take articles down to the newspaper about our point of view and about our need for two parties so there'd be some competition, and so there would be some selectivity and the press was always very kind. They accepted the articles, and almost never printed any of them. It was an interesting period though because during that time I met all the Republican delegates. I can remember the first time I ever met Richard Nixon, was when he was running for Vice President I suppose. It was in a relatively small room, it might have been thirty people there, and he was the least noticeable character there. He just stood quietly over in the corner and I had no idea he would ever become infamous. I didn't know he'd become anything. And, Goldwater was different. Goldwater was very sweet and funny. We met with him at about ten o'clock in the evening in the old airport, because he particularly he had called, asked for some of us to meet with him.

CO: Now, Nan when you say, "some of us," can you say who that "us" was? Because you're still a small minority…

NP: Yeah, it was a tiny, it, well Judge Tuttle was there and a very fine lawyer named Randolph Thrower and John Calhoun I think, a black man, who was active in the black community and who spoke for us there. I don't remember the name, there may not have been as many as twelve. But I had been specifically asked to come, because Goldwater had asked that a letter be written to the newspaper denying the charge that Ralph McGill, the editor, had made that Goldwater was a racist. And Goldwater had his little ways, but he was not a racist.

CO: Can you again some of the ways that uh, that manifests for him, that his racial sort of enlightenment, uh, what at first drew you to him?

NP: Yes, well he had become…he was a member of the NAACP in Arizona, and I'm told, I don't know how he managed this, but I was told that he had actually bought a public school there because it refused to integrate, and he had bought the school and integrated it.

CO: And this was in the 50s, right?

NP: Yeah, it would've been. A long time…it was long before the Civil Rights Bill.

CO: Was it before *Brown vs Board of Education* or after?

NP: I think that would've been '54…

CO: Right, uh huh.

NP: I'm quite sure it was, although I'm not as good on dates…

CO: So it would've been before '54, it would've been in the early fifties.

NP: Yeah.

CO: Wow.

NP: But he was interesting because he was absolutely frank, whereas I always had the feeling later, when I got to know Nixon better, that whenever he was asked a question he would say, "relative to that, I would say," and while he was saying those words he'd think of what is the proper thing to say on this day at this time to these people, and out would come something politically correct. While, Barry had never learned that lesson or wanted to. Well, he was on one occasion, during this same meeting, I don't know how it came up, but he said, "I think we all should understand that someday, inevitably, there is going to be an African nation on the Security Council of the United Nations. And, one of the lawyers in our group spoke up and said, "But Senator, there already is one." And he said, "Oh, well I really don't know anything about foreign relations. Ask me anything you want to about the state of Arizona and I can tell you," and then he went on to the next statement.

CO: Flashbacks of Sarah Palin.

NP: He also said, and I guess I would've agreed with him on the original point, he said, "well you know, I'm the leading seniority member of the Senate Finance Committee, all based on how long I've served in the senate." He said, "That's dumb, because I don't know anything about finance. I'm terrible. If my wife didn't keep the check book we'd be bankrupt." He had married incidentally a very wealthy lady, and the Goldwater family was very prominent in Arizona. They owned a huge department store. He was quite honest about the fact that he didn't know foreign relations and he had no interest in finance…

CO: Is that sort of frank admission of such things what made you begin to question his viability as a candidate.

NP: Yeah, it made all of us question it. The frightening thing was that we all liked him personally, far better than any other candidate we'd met, but we all left the party when he did become the candidate. We were frightened. Kind and funny, but ignorant. I

knew that he had gone through about half of his freshman year in college and dropped out and never gone back.

CO: He didn't have a college degree?

NP: NO.

CO: Oh, my goodness. I missed that somehow. Wow.

NP: And he…a most painful frankness was when I asked him, this was probably about in February and we had an election coming up in November, I asked him who he thought the Republican candidate would be? He said, "I don't know, and it really doesn't matter because whoever it is, Kennedy will win. If the Republicans were able to find and nominate Jesus Christ and he had gone to Harvard, and then we wouldn't have a prayer, Kennedy is going to win." And I said, "Well, sir is it his political principles?" He said, "Oh no, that's not it. My sister thinks that I am much too radical, but she loves the way Jack Kennedy wears his hair."

CO: He just recognized the charisma.

NP: Oh yes, you couldn't miss it. A little aside, Jackie Kennedy had gone to Vassar and I had been just about three or four years too old to be in her class, so I wasn't there when she was. But the college had been very unimpressed with Jack Kennedy, I mean with Jackie, and on one occasion I know, during the Kennedy years, they mentioned that one of our alumnae had written a lead story for Time magazine, but it neglected to say who it was about. It was about Jackie, and they didn't mention that. Jackie had not been at Vassar long and had not been a super scholar and had indeed left to join a fashion magazine in Paris.

CO: So she wasn't academically sound?

NP: Not really, and yet the word had gotten out that she was somehow the top student that Vassar had ever had in history, and the head of the history department had issued a public statement…she was nothing of the sort. So, there was quite a battle on that.

CO: Wow, whoa.

NP: And, uh, incidentally when you ask me who our, this has got nothing to do with politics…

CO: That's okay.

NP: You ask which actresses I enjoyed, or, I should have mentioned Meryl Streep right away, because she is a wonderful actress and she's a Vassar girl. And she came back to speak at Vassar just a couple of years ago, and she said that she was very grateful to Vassar and that it had done wonderful things and taught her to think. She said before that, life had been all about clothes and boys, but she said, "I don't know how to tell you, the students here, but after I'd been to Vassar and I'd learned all these things, you got out in the real world, the rest of life is clothes and boys."

CO: Oh my, how cute.

NP: She was great.

CO: Now, has she been here?

NP: No, no I've never had Meryl Streep here. I'd love to, but I have not had that.

CO: Well Nan can we recount the number of people you've entertained here or hosted here?

NP: Well, we've been, looking back it seems impossible to me that just being old Atlantans and never living anywhere else, there have been so many folks here. But, we met…knew, Ted Turner right away, because he was twenty four years old and he was a magnificent sailor. His father had recently committed suicide and left him with an almost defunct outdoor advertising agency. And he had come to Atlanta from Savannah where he had lived for a long time. I guess he lived all his life in Savannah, and he was a sailor and he joined our little Yacht Club on the recent manmade lake Allatoona and we had a little boat up there too, so we knew him as a sailor. And, I don't think anybody has ever surprised me as much as Ted Turner. There was no way of knowing what he was going to become. For one thing, to be a magnificent environmentalist, he's done so much, and a philanthropist. He told Britt earlier, that the reason the outdoor advertising agency was getting better in a hurry was because he had hired a man who knew all about it, and he paid him one third of the profit and he said he works as hard for my two thirds as his third and we're doing well.

CO: And who was that man?

NP: Yeah, well his daughter, when Laura finished high school she couldn't come home to Ted's because by that time Ted was married to his second wife. I guess I better back up a little here.

CO: Okay.

NP: Uh, his first wife was, we met because of the sailing too. Her name was Judy Nye. She was from Chicago somewhere. And, it seemed clear that Ted had married her because her father was the finest sail maker in the United States.

CO: So now, was he married to her at twenty four when you met him?

NP: Yeah, he was I guess.

CO: Okay.

NP: And, yeah as a matter of fact they had two children, Laura and, uh, Bo we called him. Little children, toddlers. And I got to know Judy very well and like her a lot. We sat on shore minding babies while our husbands floated around the little manmade lake, and she got, Ted was not a…he wasn't a brutal husband, he was just totally neglecting. He had his mind on the sails, and she finally gave up and divorced him. Took the children, and moved to Chicago, back home. She evidently was a poor chooser of husbands, because the second husband *was* a child abuser and actually broke the little boy's arm. So, the children came back home to live with Ted, who had married by then…Jane somebody, who was a stewardess, and later became known as Janey the Airhead. She did not care about Ted's children at all. She managed to put up with them but she was worried that anybody would think she was old enough to have children this age. At least I guess that was her impetus. But, Jane and Bo were not terribly happy at home, and Jane went to a series of boarding schools later. And when she finished up the last of them and felt completely unwelcome at home, she came to live with us for about three months. And I remember that we had a bunch of Great Danes at the time, thirteen as a matter of fact.

CO: Oh my goodness.

NP: We had two females Danes who had both been impregnated by a neighboring Great Dane.

CO: Oh my.

NP: And they had two litters of puppies..

CO: Did they come in the house like…

NP: Oh yeah, in the house and everywhere.

CO: Whoa.

NP: Didn't last terribly long, not thirteen of them. But at the time the backyard was awash in Dane puppies.

CO: And you have your seven and then you had Ted Turner's daughter?

NP: Yeah.

CO: Whoa.

NP: I guess I had all mine at home there then. Jill may have been married by then and gone, but that rest of them were there. Jane was very quiet.

CO: So, Ted had a, his second wife was named Jane…

NP: Yeah.

CO: His fourth wife was also named Jane, wasn't she?

NP: Yeah, but…

CO: And then his daughter by his first marriage was also named Jane?

NP: No, Laura was her name.

CO: Oh, Laura was the daughter.

NP: Yeah, she uh, Laura was certainly not a difficult house guest. She was very quiet and very subdued and…

CO: Now how old was she when she lived here?

NP: Probably 17, 18 maybe. She'd just finished, well she'd gone to Rabun Gap School where Nan…that was the one of the places she had gone.

CO: Where did you put all these people? I mean this is a big house but…

NP: Well there were the other, the bedrooms in the guest house.

CO: Oh that's right. Yeah.

NP: Those were both, so there were six bedrooms in all. Ted came to see her once during those months she was here. He came to take her to a Braves game, and the Danes were there and he made very admiring noises and I said, "Wouldn't you like one?" and he said, "Well, I couldn't afford to feed them."

CO: Oh my, no he didn't say that.

NP: Yes, he did.

CO: Oh my gosh.

NP: But later when he married Jane Fonda, we happened to sit behind them at a filming of a nature show, and discovered that both of them knew us different ways. Jane knew us politically, and Ted knew us as sailors.

CO: So, you, you met Jane Fonda at your, um, your association with her was when she was married to Tom Hayden, is that right?

NP: Yes, yeah this was later. And, uh, well that was Ted Turner, Laura Turner, and those were sticky periods. I guess it must've been the seventies, children were likely to leave home and get involved with drugs and our governor at the time had a daughter who was a classmate of our daughter Blair's. And, she told her parents she just couldn't live with them anymore. And they said, "Well, my goodness, where do you plan to go?" and she said, "well, maybe the Pendergrasts will let me in." So, she lived here for a while too.

CO: Now who was the governor then?

NP: Carl Sanders.

CO: Carl Sanders. I have a young man in my New South course, his granddaddy was Carl Sanders' lieutenant governor.

NP: Oh, well

CO: So Carl Sanders' daughter lived here because she was disaffected from her family. Did she also live in the guest house?

NP: No, she lived up, she and Blair shared a room upstairs.

CO: Oh my goodness.

NP: By that time, Blair's two older sisters one of them was off in college and the other was married.

CO: So these were two high school girls? They were in high school at Westminster?

NP: Yeah, they were in high school.

CO: And that would've been sixties…

NP: Early seventies I think, maybe, I think it was the early seventies. I may be mixed up about that.

CO: That's okay.

NP: Our own, it was a time when children went away, even if they weren't particularly disaffected. And, our son, who was two years younger than Blair, hitchhiked all over the country. I don't know, looking back, why I didn't blow my brains out, but Scott not only hitchhiked, he would tell us where he hoped to get to, and somehow tell us to the day when he thought he'd get back home. But it was a helpless feeling. I certainly didn't approve.

CO: That was Scott?

NP: That was Scott.

CO: Okay, okay. Alright

NP: But I think what cured him finally was he hitched a ride in North Carolina, almost home from a western trip, it was a big Cadillac, a black Cadillac, and a man driving it, he picked up Scott and on the way there was a division between the driver's seat and the second seat. He lifted up the top to the division and there was a gun under it, and uh Scott got out as quickly as possible at the next stop, and I think that was his last hitched ride. He survived them all, but I only mention it because it was typical of the difficulty that even the most conscientious parents had.

CO: Right, then that probably was the early seventies.

NP: Yeah.

CO: When was Scott, actually I didn't get it, we don't have to do it now on record but I would like to get the birthdates of your children, not, if not the days then at least the years. So, Scott was born when? Do you remember that?

NP: Scott was born in 1954.

CO: Okay, alright, we'll get the rest of them before we wrap up.

NP: Yeah, I can do that, those I can do in my head.

CO: Okay, alright.

NP: Jill was born in '41,

CO: Joe?

NP: September. Jill J-i-l-l.

CO: Jill, oh ok.

NP: The oldest one. September ’41. John in August of ’43. Nan in September of ’45. Mark, October 1st,’48. And then we had a gap, and Blair was born in July of ’52. Scott in June of ’54, and we’re finally getting to the end, Craig, December ’59.

CO: Okay, alright, so um, Ted Turner’s daughter or no Carl Sanders’ daughter who lived here when she and Blair…

NP: Were in high school.

CO: High school, okay, so that probably would have been late sixties.

NP: I guess, yeah, I suppose

CO: Yeah, that would’ve been late sixties. Yeah. Okay. Alright, but, and then was Scott gone at the same time on his trek out west?

NP: I don’t remember, no, he didn’t leave during high school. I don’t know, he just left, I guess must’ve been the summer after he finished.

CO: Okay, alright, so we’re, um, and then you talked about entertaining Ralph McGill, the editor of the Atlanta…was it the *Constitution* or the *Journal*?

NP: *Constitution*.

CO: The *Constitution* for years, and then, um, he had been friends with your..

NP: My parents, and I had known him all, well you know, ever since I was a child. And we had, I’ve got a lot of correspondence in that letter file, I brought down, from Ralph. We agreed on racial matters, but when Vietnam came along he was, Ralph had been a marine early on and he never quite outgrew it. Until, he never renounced his, well I think he died quite suddenly of a heart attack, still defending our actions in Vietnam.

CO: But, opened minded, uh, at least for the time on racial issues?

NP: Yes, we had a group, my first official action on racial matters, was a group of 17 of us, nobody in particular, most of us mothers or, oh there were men too, who wanted the schools to be integrated. We concentrated solely on that. Talked about the education issue, and there were, we formed an organization called HOPE: Help Our

Public Education. That was the acronym for that. And we just met in somebody's living room and we talked about it. The closest we came to having anybody official was a lawyer, Hamilton Lokey, who had been a state legislator briefly but was no longer, had gone back to being a lawyer

CO: Hamilton Lokey? Can you spell Lokey?

NP: L O K E Y.

CO: Okay, alright, now, you started this whole thing off this morning with being inspired or at least challenged by Walter White to do something about the racial situation in Atlanta.

NP: Yes.

CO: And that, that had to be in the late thirties when you were at Vassar?

NP: No.

CO: No?

NP: Well, no, yeah that's your right, it would've been. I was the class of '41 and it was.. it would've been '38 or so, I'd of probably been a freshman.

CO: But you see what I'm trying to do is locate sort of in time where your political activism started. I mean your awareness of the racial situation started as a young girl, but the impetus to activism actually started way before, even before the forties court cases that began to challenge, you know, the legal system. So you were, you were really, you were, you were, you weren't just on the forefront, you were before the fore front. So, that's uh, to me that's very, that's worth pointing out and pondering.

NP: Well I do remember as I said, my father had died in '45 and we were working terribly hard then trying, sometime, maybe a little, it was somewhat later, I went to call on a friend of my father's because we wanted some business people to speak out about school integration. This was in the interest of HOPE. And I went to call on Harrison Jones, who was Vice President of Coca Cola, and he been a good friend of my family's, and had been on the board of directors of our company. And I said, "Mr. Jones, I wish I had my father here to ask him if he wouldn't support us, but he's gone, and can't you speak out? You know the schools have got to be integrated, the law has been passed." He said, "Well, I know what your father would say, he's going to say the same thing I am, it's going to come, I know it will, but to those who try to lead the way, they're going to get eggs and tomatoes tossed at them. And I don't think your father

and I know, I don't want you to have tomatoes thrown at you. Now just quiet down, it'll happen someday. It's just not time now."

CO: Do you think your father would've said that?

NP: I don't know, I kind of doubt it, because he let me go my own lousy way.

CO: So, uh, you did talk about your parents a lot yesterday, but we didn't get, we weren't really into specific race issues. Were your parents open to racial progress to, progress in race relations? Even though they themselves might not of…

NP: I don't know. I'm quite sure my mother was not. Mother liked the way things were, very much, she didn't want to see anybody shake them up, and she believed in the "outside agitator" myth. But, I'm not that sure about my father. I know that personally I couldn't imagine his ever being prejudiced toward anybody. I mean… Momma had a little difficulty because Daddy picked up practically anybody and brought them home. Usually white folks, but on one occasion, driving home, he had seen a woman waiting for the bus. She looked familiar and so he asked if he could give her a ride. They chatted on the way home. She knew him. She called him Mr. Robert. Daddy brought her home for a drink. And didn't know who she was. Mother finally did find out she was the dental technician. And he didn't know who is was, but it was a friend. And I can remember, this was before the movie *Harvey* came out, I think they cribbed the line from my father. Phone rang and he picked it up, and I heard him say, "Hello? No, you've got the wrong number, but how are you anyway?"

CO: Do you equate your father with that figure, the um, that uh..

NP: Ellwood P. Dowd, wasn't he lovely?

CO: Oh, I just was in love with him. He just was such a delight.

NP: Oh he was wonderful.

CO: So you think they, did those film makers know your father?

NP: No, no, somebody else had done it. He was, very, you never knew who he'd pick up, and sometimes it was quite interesting. They were in Florida one winter, near wherever the Hialeah Race Tracks are, my father would go over to watch the horse races. He never bet, he didn't believe in that, but he noticed that the same woman was always there. She was rather dowdily dressed, she was probably in her fifties or early sixties, and he decided that she was somebody's cook. And, he began to chat with her, and they met several times. They didn't exchange names or anything, but after the

third time she said, “Oh, my niece and nephew are here visiting and think you, ya’ll would get along well, they’re about the same age, a nice pair, and I wonder if you would bring your wife and come over for lunch.” Well, it turned out that she owned the race track.

CO: Oh no.

NP: She was Mrs. Payson and they were related to the Whitney family.

CO: Oh my goodness, and did your parents go?

NP: Oh, they went and she had a private railroad car nearby, and the niece and nephew were Stuart and Eve Symington, and Eve was the daughter of a Representative Wadsworth from New York, and she was a café society singer. She sang in the serc[???] room of the Waldorf, and her husband, Stuart Symington, later was the senator from Missouri. But, the Symington’s became very good friends of my parents and they visited us in our home.

CO: So your father just, this friendship came about because your father…

NP: Thought she was the cook…

CO: Was, had an interest in striking up a conversation because he thought this might be a lonesome person and he was just gonna, oh my word. She turned out to own the racetrack.

NP: It must’ve amused her greatly.

CO: I bet it did.

NP: But his interest in picking up people, we never knew who would show up.

CO: So, you, you, you interpret that as sort of a benevolent, compassionate attitude towards humanity?

NP: Yeah, I guess so. He evidently was an extremely charming man. You can’t see charm in your own father, but he liked people and it showed.

CO: You think that’s what influenced your openness?

NP: Well I know that I was more my father’s daughter than I was my mother’s daughter. Mother didn’t hurt anybody, and she was extremely generous, all during the Depression her own family’s money was worth nothing. They owned land, and land

was nothing, but when it did come back and she began to have an income, she gave it all away.

CO: Wow.

NP: Gave it to the Catholic Church, and um…

CO: Now, she grew up Catholic?

NP: No, sort of, we never pushed it much, but I didn't go to parochial school. I did go to mass. I remember from probably high school, oddly enough, it was a funny family. Mother's twin brother was violently anti-Catholic, and yet he married a woman and had a daughter who was extremely Catholic. He would take her to mass, she never learned to drive, and sit outside the church and wait. He wouldn't go in. I don't know what had gone on with the church in the family, but when Mother returned to the Church, in her late middle age, my father had died, and she lived in an apartment right next to Christ the King Cathedral.

CO: Oh.

NP: Hey, Baby Darling. Did yall have a nice walk?

CO: She brought you a flower. Darlin'.

NP: Oh, no it fell out of that vase right next to her.

CO: No, she really wanted to bring it to you.

NP: No, that would've been nice, but she wouldn't.

CO: But so, I'm sure you told this yesterday, but your mother's family was Catholic, right?

NP: Yeah.

CO: And your father's family was?

NP: I think they were, all of them were quite agnostic. They didn't go to church at all.

CO: But professing agnosticism was…

NP: Hey Darling, thank ya'll. How were the herons?

BP: Saw two of them.

NP: Oh good, they're there.

BP: I think I counted four nests in the main tree.

NP: Wheew.

BP: I'll show them to you next time.

NP: Okay.

CO: Okay.

NP: Well I, somewhere in here, I want to tell you about the Ritters, who were a couple Daddy picked up in England.

CO: Oh, he was in England and picked them up?

NP: Yeah.

CO: Okay, yeah, please do.

NP: Well, when they traveled, Mother wanted to go to the stores and shop, and she did. And, Daddy wanted to go to museums and he kindly took me on trips. And we went on an excursion trip from London down the Thames to Greenwich, and while we were there my father took a lot of photographs. And, he looked across and he said, "beautiful woman over there with her husband, and she's a typical Russian Beauty. I would love to take her picture." And the man beckoned to me and when I came over he said, "We're not Russian, we're Czechs, and you look more Russian than my wife does!" Well that's all Daddy went, he went over, he took their picture, he brought them back to the hotel, and…

CO: Now, how old were you then?

NP: I was 18 by then..

CO: Because I was going to say, because you said yesterday your parents didn't take you…

NP: Yeah, that was the one trip on which I went. And this was 1938, and Daddy brought them home. Their names were Roger and Maria Ritter, and they were very interested to meet us because they were just getting ready to make their first trip to the United States. Mr. Ritter owned a china factory in Sudeten, and he was going on what would be mostly a business trip to sell his china, but also to hope to talk to some of the government people and hope that they would help the struggle for independence in

Czechoslovakia. And, he said to my father over lunch that day, “We have several names of people we’re supposed to contact when we get to the United States. I wonder if you know them.” And one of them was Rockefeller and one of them was Ford. And he said, at the time he didn’t know Mr. Ford at all, and he said, “No, I don’t think our names would help much, but you can look them up.” So, they did come to the States and they had been here in New York for about ten days when Hitler marched in..

CO: I was going to say was that is this before or after…

NP: Well it was while they were here, and they were of course, they were isolated. Couldn’t get back, didn’t want to. And they sold her jewelry because they didn’t have any money, and they’d told us about it and my father, somehow, got Mr. Ritter a job selling china at Macy’s.

CO: Wow, wow.

NP: So we kept track of them for years. In fact, they took, she must’ve had a lot of jewelry, because they bought, of all things, a chicken farm in the Pennsylvania Dutch country. And if anybody should’ve never been chicken farmers it was the Ritters. She was a beautiful lady, and lovely. And,

CO: So, they actually were from the Sudetenland?

NP: Yes.

CO: Whoa. Well I thought, you were, I misunderstood and thought he owned a china mine, some kind of mine in Sudan, but I was…

NP: No, no, no, they owned a china factory. But, uh, they, the year they had bought the chicken farm, Britt and I were living in Philadelphia. That was the one year, and we went down to see them and spent the day at their chicken farm, and they expressed gratitude for the fact that the Amish neighbors had been very kind to them and taken them in, and tried to show them what they were doing. But, he ended up, somehow, selling or buying china for Macy’s in Tokyo and we heard from them there.

CO: So did they remain here in the United States after the War?

NP: I guess, they never went back to Czechoslovakia. But I think they stayed in Japan once they got there.

CO: Oh, for goodness sake.

NP: I remember we'd get Christmas cards for a long time after my parents had both died, I would get cards from them.

CO: Wow. Your father just connected you all with all kinds of people, didn't he?

NP: Yeah, he connected them because Maria was beautiful and he wanted to take a picture.

CO: He thought she was Russian. A Russian beauty. Wow.

NP: There was always somebody around the house.

CO: Wow. Well, can we go back to the people that have come through this house?

NP: Well, there were various fund raisers and Atlanta was, *is* an interesting place to live. We knew Howard Zinn because he taught at Atlanta U. and was active in liberal politics.

CO: Did he ever visit you here?

NP: Oh I'm sure he came for meals. And I don't know if the name Robert Coles means anything to you..

CO: The author who writes, the Psychiatrist?

NP: Yeah, the one *Children of Crisis*

CO: Yes, yes.

NP: Well, he too taught at…

CO: Yes, he did, a lot of his research was done there on the impoverished, the mind of impoverished children. The psychology of impoverished children.

NP: Yeah, and I liked him very much. When he and his wife were young and they were both here, and they used to come to have meals pretty often. They didn't stay here, but he was, of course, very interesting man. I don't remember her too well. And we have corresponded now and then. And I remember fund raisers with actors. But, oh, by far the best one was Basil Rathbone, who never stayed here with us, but he spent the day and we… Vassar's alumnae association has a fund raiser, was sponsoring an evening of legitimate theater, and Basil Rathbone came down with Helen Gahagan Douglas and they played in a two person play. And, I met them at the airport, and he was, you just, people who had never seen Sherlock Holmes films knew he was something. There was just something about they way he was very handsome and extremely erect

and he walked beautifully, and Helen Gahagan Douglas was an actress who was originally supposed to be in the film with her husband, Melvin Douglas, but Melvin Douglas had finked out on her at the last minute because he was making the film--- dog gone--- I lost the name. But, it was about Lincoln and Douglas.

CO: Oh, the Lincoln and Douglas debate?

NP: Yeah.

CO: Okay.

NP: Anyway, he didn't come and Basil Rathbone, as a friend, had stepped in and taken his part. But, he was really the most delightful charming man I ever knew, except for my husband. He was darling, and so interested in everything. And, he had never seen a garden spider before, and there was a garden spider who had written a message on a web in the middle of a holly bush and he climbed into the holly bush to look at the writing spider, that's what we called them. But, we told him, that while he was Sherlock Holmes to most people, to my children he was the voice on a record they had and played very often about Hansel and Gretel, in which he did the voice for the narrator and also the nice squeaky voice of the witch. And that he, the children loved to [listen to] his record. Blair was then four years old, I remember that. She was still taking a nap now and then. And, we had had lunch and he had chased the spider, and we told him, I said oh I hear Blair's awake I better go get her. He said, "May I come along?" I said of course, so we went upstairs and he stood right outside the bedroom door and when I went in to get Blair, he said in his squeaky voice, "Nibble nibble little mousekin, who's nibbling at my little housekin." It was the witch, and Blair sat up with her eyes wide and was totally amazed when this very handsome distinguished man came in.

CO: What a story.

NP: Well he, really the whole family fell in love with Basil Rathbone, it was wonderful.

CO: Well, a Shakespearean actor, because I didn't know him, I didn't know him, so you'll have to identify him for our transcribers.

NP: He was an actor, who was particularly famous for being the villain, but also for being Sherlock Holmes in a whole series of films about Sherlock Holmes.

CO: Oh okay, well, and I knew the name sounded familiar, but . . .

NP: Yeah, that's who he is, but it was long ago.

CO: Yeah, yeah. Well now you told a wonderful story about, uh, Jane Fonda's daughter staying behind when she…

NP: Well just for the day. She and Tom went over, I mean Jane Fonda and Tom went over to Athens…

CO: This was when she was married to Tom Hayden?

NP: Yeah, and that's when they…and I understand that their son Troy, who I last saw as a baby, is an actor now but I've never seen or heard of him so.

CO: They left their daughter Vanessa? Was it?

NP: Yeah, Vanessa was five and Troy, her little brother, was about five months old.

CO: Yet, he was breast feeding so Jane had to take him with her.

NP: Yes, and so they left Vanessa with me and I was to meet them at the airport and they were to fly back to Chicago for a trial or a hearing with the Chicago Seven. As it turned out they dismissed all the charges when he got there.

CO: And could you tell the students about the Chicago Seven and how that affected Tom Hayden?

NP: I'm not sure, I can't name them all now. Dave Dellinger was one, they were activists who were opposed to Vietnam…

CO: Right.

NP: And they, this must have been in…would it have been in '68?

CO: That sounds right.

NP: And they had all been arrested during the Democratic convention in Chicago.

CO: That would've been in '68. [the trial however was '69-70]

NP: And, I gather, I don't know what they charged them with, but that was when the police were brutal.

CO: Right, right.

NP: That, while Tom Hayden and Troy and Jane were going back to Chicago, Vanessa and I were to meet them at the airport so she could go with them, but their plane came and went and they weren't there, and I really began to panic. I was afraid somebody

had killed them at the University of Georgia, and I was already wondering how to get in touch with Vanessa's father, who was a Frenchman named Vadim. Roger Vadim. When Vanessa said she needed to go to the bathroom, I talked to the person at the information desk, and there was only one in those benighted days, and said this little girl's parents and baby brother are going to come in frantic, looking for them, for us, and we will have just gone to the bathroom for a minute. I said, "Her mother is Jane Fonda," and he was cool, he didn't flip out, but as we walked towards the bathroom, Vanessa said, "Oh, he'll know my mother, because she looks just like me." And I thought, this is wonderful, and it was typical of the fact that, I thought, Jane was doing a marvelous job as a mother and was a very thoughtful house guest, incidentally. And, uh, later, well they did come, after we'd emerged from the bathroom, and I did not see them again, not for years, 'til Jane moved back to Atlanta, but shortly afterwards I read a very vicious article and interview with Jane's father, Henry Fonda, in which he was intensely critical of Jane for her anti-Vietnam activities. And, I wrote to him, to tell him what a wonderful house guest she had been and how much we enjoyed seeing her, and about little Vanessa's comment. Well, I never heard from him. Never expected to, really. But then some years after that, Tom Hayden was in town and I saw him and told him what Vanessa had said. He said, "That's odd, I know that already. I've heard that somewhere." And then he said, "Oh I know, Hank told us." So he had gotten the letter, and he had cared enough to repeat it..

CO: We're talking about Henry Fonda. That's such a sweet story, I love that story.

NP: I like that story too, because it reflects very well on Jane. She has of course taken up the cause now of teenage pregnancy and fighting that.

CO: What did you think about her conversion to sort of evangelical Christianity?

NP: Well I didn't think much I don't think. I don't think Ted did either. I don't know, that was a shocker. Can you cut it off for just a minute?

NP: All of the sudden, what am I doing? I left myself notes. Head Start! I wanted to talk about Head Start.

CO: Okay, go right ahead. Now, listen. There's no rhyme or reason behind, there's no organization behind your interview, so um…

NP: Cause there were two things not related at all. The Head Start which meant a great deal to me. I worked in Head Start with the children and I went to the White

House for the inauguration of Head Start, and met with Sgt. Shriver and was told to get to work on it.

CO: And this was? Can you remember that, that year?

NP: Well…

BP: Johnson was president wasn't he?

NP: Yeah, that'll help.

CO: So, mid-sixties.

NP: Yeah.

CO: Okay.

BP: I think I remember your telling me Lady Bird was present as well as Sgt. Shriver, wasn't she?

NP: Yeah, no I think Lady Bird was… We had been, when Johnson was getting ready to run against Goldwater, on his on…he was already president, but he had succeeded, so when it was…this would've been shortly after Kennedy was killed.

BP: So around the year 1968, wouldn't it? Oh, oh, '64

CO: No, but he got killed in '63 so and Johnson was preparing for election in '64. So…

NP: Yeah, though before that election he talked to either the mayor or the governor, I've forgotten which, and said, "Do you by any chance know of a woman who's a Republican official, or activist, because we don't have any Republican officials in Georgia. But, do you know of one who's not going to support Goldwater, but who will come out openly for me?" and they said, "Well," they said, "that's it. It's Nan."

CO: Is this when you officially became Democrat, again?

NP: No.

CO: No.

NP: Yeah, that is.

CO: Yeah, okay. So, Johnson's…..

NP: Yeah, Johnson asked me to come to Washington to be part of an organization called Republican and Independent Women for Johnson.

CO: Oh my.

NP: And, uh, at that time I didn't know Johnson that well. He's making loud noises, so I went up there, and we first met for luncheon at the Halle's House. She was kind of like the Democratic hostess. Very wealthy woman who owned a department store in Cleveland I think. And, so she had said she would ask the ladies. There were 28 of us who were asked to come and meet with the President, and you could see the fine Italian hand of, because it was categorized. There was one other disgruntled Republican official. She was a committeewoman from Idaho. I don't remember her name. But, beyond that they had invited a couple actresses and they, the woman who was famous, a Dr. Taussig who had invented the Blue Baby Operation, and Katherine Anne Porter the writer. It was…

CO: So these were disaffected Republican women?

NP: Disaffected Republican women.

BP: Wasn't Mrs. Hobby one of those too?

NP: Oh yeah, Oveta Culp Hobby…

CO: Ah, the first, uh, general, uh, woman general?

BP: No, she was in Eisenhower's Cabinet but not in that capacity.

CO: OH, okay okay.

NP: She was the Chairperson of the whole thing. And we met, but I got there a little bit early, and the house was in Georgetown. A very narrow, but high house. And, I asked if I could use the phone and she said yes, and I called a classmate of mine from college. It was just a tiny alcove off the room we were meeting in and I had my back to the room, and while I turned around to talk to Kasha, this amazing aggregate of women came in. I turned my head and I couldn't believe what I was seeing. Actress Ethel Merman.

CO: Oh no, no.

NP: Yeah and a lady named Betty Furness. She was an actress, but mostly I think she was famous for doing commercials for refrigerators. Anyway, she was very recognizable.

CO: So, Ethel Merman was a part of this group?

NP: Yeah.

CO: Wow.

NP: I've got a picture of all of us in there somewhere.

CO: In this?

BP: What about Roosevelt? Wasn't there Roosevelt?

NP: Oh yeah, there was Mrs. Kermit Roosevelt. The old lady who had been…she was Theodore's daughter-in-law.

CO: Oh my goodness.

NP: And she was in her 80s and I don't think she'd ever been south of Oyster Bay before. After we met and we had lunch, and of course somebody, I guess Oveta Culp Hobby, had written a statement that she hopefully would be willing to make, and Katherine Anne Porter, of course, didn't like the way it was worded, and so she…. We were delayed while she rewrote it.

CO: Oh my. Did that turn out to be the final version?

NP: Oh yes. And, uh, then we got on a private bus and went over to the White House. And when we got there, there was one Woman I had, none of us knew who she was, but most of us were dressed to the teeth. Even I had broken down and worn high heels.

CO: Your mother would've been proud.

NP: Mother would, not have been proud, but she might've claimed me.

CO: Oh okay.

NP: But, this woman had on kind of an old tweed skirt and there was a thread hanging off the bottom of it and we were all, you didn't dare, I was afraid if we pulled the thread the skirt would fall off. I didn't know, she looked as if she'd slept in it and indeed I found out later, she had. She had come a little early, a day early, and slept in the bus station.

CO: Oh my goodness.

NP: And when we got to the White House, she got off the bus and started wandering around admiring the shrubbery and that scared the Secret Service. They followed her around. Found out later her name was Mayer. She was a professor who had won the Noble Prize for chemistry or physics or something that year. Then we went in and we met First…Lady Bird in the Cabinet Room and she apologized for the fact that Lyndon was late. She said, "I can't tell you it's the first time he's been late."

CO: What'd you think of her?

NP: She was charming and sweet and nice and not nearly as ugly as I thought she was. I thought she looked like a witch in the pictures. She didn't and very nice. She just wandered around and talked to all of us. And after a while, Lyndon came in and we all sat around the Cabinet table and he told us why we ought to vote for him because Goldwater was a war monger and if we elect him everything would be fine. Well…

CO: Now, how central was race to his reasoning?

NP: He didn't mention it at all.

CO: No.

NP: No, he talked entirely about the fact that, well it was awful. He said, "We're all just little boys up here, ladies, and we need your help." It was just terrible. And, I was the only southerner there, really, I just was dying. It was awful. And I was seated right next to Mrs. Roosevelt, and when it was over, finally, she turned to me and she said, "My dear, don't you think there's something Lincolnesque about him?" I did *not*. That was the only election for president for which, I didn't vote. I just couldn't vote for either one of them. But, It was kind of funny because…

CO: I trust you did vote in the next election.

NP: I did, I voted firmly, but during the meeting, actually, somebody came to the door and said they had a message for me and I, terrified, I was sure one of the children had fallen off the roof and broken his leg or something. It was, and somewhere in there is the tele, it was a message from Ralph McGill saying supposed to be from the Department of Religion at the *Atlanta Constitution*, "Great is the rejoicing when a sinner shall see the error of her ways."

CO: What did he mean by that?

NP: He meant that we'd argued for years because I was a Republican and here I was being a Democrat.

CO: Oh, how cute!

NP: It was very cute, somewhere in there I've got the thing.

CO: It's in the paper?

NP: No, it wasn't in the paper, I just saved the telegram or the message.

CO: Oh I gotcha I gotcha, okay.

NP: But, I left early because, I waited until Lyndon had finished but he was very talkative. Then we were all supposed to go upstairs to the private quarters and have tea, and I would've liked to do so. Oh, I know exactly the date, it was Mark's 16th birthday.

CO: Okay.

NP: October 1, cause I had said I would be home…

CO: So, that would've been '64.

NP: Yeah.

CO: And that would've been, uh, October of '64.

NP: Yeah, just before the election, I guess.

CO: Okay, wow.

NP: Anyway, it was Mark's birthday and I had baked a cake for him and had told him I'd be home. And it looked as if I weren't going to make it home if I waited for the stupid tea upstairs. So, I thought I could find my way out. I went downstairs and I got totally lost. I couldn't find my way out, but finally, somebody finally showed me, and I got to the airport and I made it home for his birthday.

CO: Wow.

NP: But I also came home with an absolute loathing for Lyndon. And you could tell when you got close, he had broken blood vessels all over his cheeks as a really heavy drinker would have had. And I remember, can't remember which one of the national reporters I met somewhere afterwards, and, oh no, it was the guy who did the *Newsweek* article. Who did the *Newsweek* article?

BP: Bill Anderson.

NP: Yeah, Bill Anderson.

CO: About you or about that gathering?

NP: No, it was about us. Somewhere in there, there's that too. I can't connect it for a minute, but I asked Bill Anderson when he came out to do the interview for *Newsweek* we'd known him always, I said, oh he said he had just come back from riding the campaign trail with Lyndon. And I said, "what's it like?" He said, "well, when you're on a campaign trip with Lyndon, you just pray that he's going to be sober enough to get out on the observation car when they stop and make a speech."

NP: I said, "Gee, he's still drinking that much." He said, "Oh yes." Well the newspapers never ever touched it. They never said the guy was a hopeless alcoholic. But that, anyway I don't know how I got off the subject and got on to that.

CO: Well, you were talking about, and I want you to talk about Head Start, that's what you had gone…

NP: Yeah, then later, that was it, I had gone to see Lyndon on that occasion, then a few months later, after he was president, he'd been reelected, I went up because I had been asked to come up there to be on for the occasion of the inauguration of Head Start. And I thought I was going to be, I went to a tea there, and then I went back a third time to Washington because I had gotten a letter from some people. The Women's Strike for Peace they were called. And they were a really strident group, but I didn't know much about them. They wanted seven rep….

CO: Representatives?

NP: And they said they had an appointment with the President. So, I went. It was a cold, icy, winter day. I went back to Washington, all dressed up again. I thought I was invited to have tea with the President again. When I got there, I began to think, "Hey, this is odd," because when I took a taxi from the airport to the White House he said, "Well, what entrance do you want?" and I said, "oh golly, I don't know. Let me off at the first place." And I, there was a man there, in a guardhouse, and I said, "Is there a group of ladies here to meet with the President?" and he said, "Look around the corner." And I went and they were all, hundreds of women, getting ready to protest.

CO: Did they have their baby carriages and their children with them?

NP: No, don't remember any children, but I do remember that the New York delegation had brought black, gas filled, balloons, and on a signal they were supposed to let go of them and they'd float up in the air and look like bombs coming down or something.

CO: Now, was this Johnson's administration still?

NP: Yeah.

CO: Okay.

NP: And I was the only one from Georgia, and they had written a sign for me to carry. Only, they'd misspelled Georgia.

CO: No they didn't. No. Oh my God.

NP: They did. They had the O first.

CO: Oh no, oh no.

NP: It began to strike me really ridiculous. Here I was all dress up, and I didn't want to do that.

CO: Did you carry the sign?

NP: Didn't want to carry the sign misspelled. And the Massachusetts delegation marched there and Mrs. Zinn was one of them.

CO: Howard Zinn's wife?

NP: Yeah.

CO: Whoa.

NP: And she said, "Oh Nan, what are you doing here?" and I told her. She said, "Well, come on and march with us." And I said I think that would be dishonest. I simply sat down on the icy…

CO: No….

NP: curb stone and I couldn't help laughing, the whole thing was… The time came for the great demonstration of the New York… the woman who was in charge of their delegation, I didn't recognize her then, she had on a big hat and she had a loud voice. And, she'd march up and down the aisles saying to the New York delegation, "for Christ's sake. Let go of your balloon!" and that was the point at which I just sat down

and collapsed in laughter. I thought it was so funny that here I thought I was coming to a tea party.

BP: Didn't you identify the lady as Bella Abzug?

NP: Yeah, it was Bella Abzug.

CO: Bella Abzug, my goodness..

NP: But after they broke up, they all went to the legislative buildings and told them, they gathered to harass their representatives, and I was told later that the men's room were never so full as when the Women Strike for Peacers came.

CO: Well, they were pretty successful at one time when they were being, uh, questioned before the House…

NP: Oh, the Foreign Relations Committee. I was there. I got to kiss Mr. Fulbright.

CO: You were there for that? When they were there for being..

NP: Yeah.

CO: For being, what do you call it?

NP: Well they met with the Foreign Relations Committee, I was there for that.

CO: Well at one point, I know they took their children with them and…

NP: Oh, I didn't know that.

CO: And made the legislators look like fools. They were being accused of being communists and so, uh,

NP: My golly, I'd forgotten that.

CO: And it made the, and here they were with their, and most of them were very well educated women, but they came under the guise of being mothers who were protesting against nuclear waste or nuclear…the threat of, you know…

NP: This is a little something from Celestine Sibley I'd forgotten. It was just a nice note. I'm looking for the thing. Well, when everybody went jumping for their congressman to harass him, ours was, at the time, Congressman Weltner. And, I had known Charles, I guess the first time I ever saw Charles he had on a pair of pink rompers. I used to play with his big sister, May.

CO: My goodness.

NP: I told you that I had wanted to have a lot of children, because I used to love the family that had five children.

CO: And that was it?

NP: That was one of them. There were three families. The Weltners were one. Wait a minute.

CO: What are you looking for now?

NP: I'm looking for the letter that Congressman Weltner wrote after I went to see him that day.

CO: As a Women Strike for Peace representative?

NP: Yeah, well I didn't, but they were. I was, I didn't even tell him what I was doing in Washington. I was just frozen.

CO: So you weren't actually a member of the Women's Strike for Peace?

NP: No, I hadn't even, never had heard of them.

CO: Oh okay.

NP: I didn't know what they were. This is, I've got several letters from Charles.

CO: Well, I believe that time that they showed up and made idiots out of the, the uh, I think it was…well it must've been the Foreign Relations Committee. They were being accused of being communists, and they really made their interrogators look like fools.

NP: From there he was downstairs talking to the House UnAmerican Activities Committee.

CO: That's the Committee that brought them up in '62. The House UnAmerican Activities Committee. That's the ones they made look like jokesters.

NP: Oh this is the thing I'm looking for. I wrote him a note later.

CO: Wyche.

NP: Oh, Wyche Fowler. Oh, is that Wyche? I got Wyche and Charles Weltner mixed up.

CO: "I'm sorry that I missed talking to you but it seems you were in good hands, as always your interest in my work"…but this is from Charles Longstreet Weltner.

NP: Yeah, that's what I thought.

CO: But, Wyche Fowler must've been another…

NP: I don't know what, but what he said was, I had written, I had finally got home and wrote him what I'd been doing and told him about the balloons and everything. And he scribbled underneath it, signed Charles, "your letter is the bright spot of the morning."

CO: Oh, how cute.

NP: "Many Thanks"

CO: Those handwritten notes are priceless.

NP: Yeah, well he was cute as could be. But, I got mixed up for a minute about which one. My trip for Head Start was very respectable. I admired the flowers all over the White House, and I met Sgt. Shriver, who was in charge of Head Start.

CO: Well now, there's something about your, um, your statement there about one of the trips being respectable and the other one not being respectable. Based on the behavior of the women? Is that what made you want to distance yourself from the Women Strike for Peace?

NP: I think so, I just had never… it was my fault. Later, I guess. I don't know whether that was the same occasion on which we did go. This is not, all of the sudden, in alphabetical order.

BP: I'm afraid I messed it up.

NP: I'll put them back.

CO: Is it alphabetical or chronological?

NP: Alphabetical.

CO: Oh, okay.

BP: You looking for Weltner?

NP: No, I found Weltner, he was back in the back. But instead of beginning with Ivan Allen, the way it's supposed to, it begins with M's.

BP: I noticed that and I couldn't find anything in the alphabet any lower than M.

NP: I don't know, I'll do this later. There's some.

BP: Could it be another file?

CO: You want to be sure…

NP: Well I just wanted to be sure that…

CO: …and talk about Head Start.

NP: …that Head Start, the fact that I did work for Head Start at length. I went over every week and talked with the children at the Bethune School. And what sweet children they were, and how I loved them. They were four years old. Of course all black.

CO: Yeah.

NP: And I….

CO: Now, what do you think about? What do you think about the legacy of Head Start?

NP: I understand it has been noticeable. Now, they have something that goes on all the time. Public schools I think have a prekindergarten thing. And, uh, they were great. I used to bring flowers every time I came, and we talked about colors. And the children, sweet children….

CO: Yeah, yeah.

NP: And we'd sing a song. Red and yellow and pink and green. Purple and orange and blue. I can sing a rainbow, sing a rainbow, sing a rainbow too.

CO: Aww, so they learned their colors through song.

NP: Yeah.

CO: Yeah.

NP: It was great fun, anyway I just wanted to get a plug for Head Start.

CO: Absolutely, I'm glad you did. Is there anything else on that list?

NP: Yes, something else about an Emmaus House.

CO: Okay.

NP: Well, we delivered surplus foods in those days. There were no food stamps, and so I used to go and that was a wonderful thing.

CO: Now, was Emmaus House part of the Methodist Church?

NP: No it was Episcopal.

CO: Episcopal Church, okay. Cause there is an Emmaus something or other associated with the Methodist church.

NP: Now this is Episcopal, a minister named Austin Ford. If you haven't met Austin, and I think he's still around. But he's a man, you don't want a man right now.

CO: Well, not right now.

NP: He's a very very proper. He took his maid with him when he went to live in Emmaus House, and I thought he'd never be able to relate to the residents, but he could. He did a marvelous job.

CO: So he lived at Emmaus House?

NP: Yes, he lived there with his maid.

CO: Oh my goodness, but so the purpose of Emmaus House was to be a repository for food, for..?

NP: Well, volunteers would come and that's where we'd pick up our stacks of food, sometimes, and we'd be assigned to a particular neighborhood. It frightens me a little bit now to think that I don't think I would dare to just show up in those neighborhoods now, but at the time…

CO: It didn't seem…

NP: On one occasion we were, I always went with one other person, and we were accosted when we started to deliver boxes of food by a fellow who had had too much to drink and he wanted some of the food and he didn't know why we were giving it to those folks and he wanted it.

CO: Oh my, anybody hurt?

NP: No, he just, but it was a little scary. Oh dear, there's so many things. Mr. Carter, Jimmy Carter, was running for president, and a Quaker friend of ours and activist, Dwight Ferguson, said, "I think we ought to try to get," he was still, he had been nominated but he was not president yet, "ask him if when he gets to be president, he

won't take a stand about amnesty for the students, the people who had gone to Canada." So, he said, "of course he's out campaigning, but I think maybe a couple of us ought to go down to Plains and talk to Ms. Lillian about it." And there was a Quaker family who lived nearby, the Singletarys, and he said, "why don't we, let's see if we can't get him to talk to Ms. Lillian to see if she'll listen to us."

CO: So, the Singletarys lived near Ms. Lillian Carter?

NP: Yeah, they lived in Plains and knew the Carter's well. So, he called us back after we told him that, and he said, "She says she's just, she doesn't want to do that because Jimmy's campaigning and he won't listen and he's too busy anyway and don't bother to come." Well then he explained why we wanted to come, and she said, "that I'll talk to him about."

CO: oh wow.

NP: So we did go down and that's when that picture was taken.

CO: Oh, the picture of you and Ms. Lillian?

NP: And then, after we presented a letter, saying Quakers and why they wanted him to let these people out, and of course we never knew whether he talked to her or not. I'm guessing he did. But we were on our way back from his inauguration, it's the only inauguration we've ever been to, and stopped in North Carolina somewhere the next day, and I saw a newspaper and it said his first official act had been to declare amnesty for these people.

CO: What did you do?

NP: I wept I was so happy, and then I called, of course as soon as we got home, I called John and said, "John, did you know?" and he said, "Yes, I knew. I've talked to CBS, NBC, and ABC."

CO: Oh my goodness.

NP: They had all called John because, I didn't know they were in touch with him all the time, but I guess he was the only…

CO: Was he sort of a celebrity in that cause?

NP: I didn't know it, but evidently they knew about John and had talked to him before and asked his reaction of course.

CO: So, did the *Atlanta Constitution* pick this up, this story up? That you had been, that you all had appealed to Ms Lillian?

NP: No.

CO: No?

NP: No, they never… But I found out later, from the Singletarys, how totally horrible Plains was, and probably still is. One of the, I can't remember whether it was the Singletarys or a friend, who had a child who had leukemia, about an eight year old, who had been part of a very small group who had gone to get seeds for the farm at Koinonia, because of course, they couldn't buy any seeds and they'd been shot at. But he, this person's child was dying of leukemia, nothing could be done about it in those days, but he needed to stay in touch with the Sloan-Kettering Hospital in New York, who could at least tell him how to make the child more comfortable, what to do. There was a problem. He didn't have a telephone. He asked a neighbor if he could use his phone to call the hospital. The neighbor said yes, but the charming people in Americus cut his phone line. Can you believe that?

CO: Oh my gosh. Was he black?

NP: No, no.

CO: He was just in Koinonia?

NP: He wasn't even in Koinonia. He was a member of the community that lived around Americus, but he had offered to use his phone to call the hospital and that, somebody told me later, that when the child died nobody had come to see them except Roselyn Carter. And she had come to express sympathy and to bring a ham. And that a little while later the Baptist minister had shown up and said, "I wouldn't be here if Roselyn hadn't told me I had to come. This is probably worth my job." Unbelievable.

CO: And now, but, but, I'm having a hard time understanding why people were so opposed to him, was it because…opposed to him and his family and not willing to help them. Was it because they were…

NP: Because he had gone to get seeds and help out the people in Koinonia.

CO: To help them, the people, okay alright. Did you know Clarence Jordan or any of those?

NP: Did we hear Clarence Jordan once?

BP: We've met him on that one occasion when he made a very strong and humorous appeal.

NP: He was very funny.

BP: For peace in Vietnam. He was very funny and very to the point that we had the wrong priorities in our draft. We should not be drafting our young people with their future ahead of them. They should be drafting those who have had there, probably those who wear funny looking Hawaiian shirts and short pants when they shouldn't. Those were the ones we should be drafting, they're expendable.

NP: He said he thought the Vietnamese would throw us out in a hurry if all these old men with long Bermuda shorts on.

CO: Funny. He's an interesting person.

NP: Oh he must've been.

CO: His background is incredible. His mother's from Talbot county and he was born and grew up in Talbot county. Do you know anything about Talbot County?

NP: No, not much. I know Telfair but I didn't know…

CO: It would make Plains look progressive. It's incredibly insular and hostile to racial justice. It's just hard to believe that, one of my colleagues has written or is writing a biography of him and believes that his mother…

BP: It's all fixed.

NP: Thank you, Darling.

BP: I had messed it up.

CO: That his mother was a chief influence on him and his racial ideas and when I found out she was from Talbot County, I said you have got to investigate that, because it's almost like the biblical question, "what good comes out of…." Not Bethlehem but wherever, and that's pretty much the same thing you could say about Talbot County, so…

NP: I didn't know, but Telfair is where all the Talmadges came from.

CO: Well, yeah. But, he comes from the sort of a hot bed of that kind of racial hostility and to come out of it with those kinds of, and his mother was apparently equally as, I

mean it was her progressive ideas about race that influence him, and to have someone like that it's just really hard to fathom.

NP: Well the same person who told me about the phone line cutting, said that Carter's father had a store there in Plains, and that when people from Koinonia would come in, he'd ask them to come back in his office and have a cup of coffee, and whoever told me said that doesn't sound like much but in Telfair County it was worth his life.

CO: Right, right, right. But there was something about the Carter, I don't know, they had a stolidity about them that they could stand up to that, somehow, when other people couldn't.

NP: Well I knew Ms Lillian, anybody who'd sign up for the Peace Corp and go charging off. But I hadn't known until they told me about his father the he had also been very sympathetic.

CO: Was that the only time yours and Ms Lillian's path crossed?

NP: Um, this, there were a couple of other things. Have I talked about Jeanette Rankin at all?

CO: No, but I drank out of a cup that you, I did not fail to see that.

NP: Well we got to know Jeanette very well.

CO: Oh my goodness.

NP: She stayed her a lot of times.

CO: Jeanette Rankin stayed here?

NP: Oh yes.

CO: Oh, you could've started off with that one.

NP: Made me very nervous because she was in her mid-eighties by then and she always wore high heels. And she slept upstairs because we didn't have any bed down stairs and I thought, "Oh my gosh, she's going to fall and break her neck."

CO: Now when was this?

NP: When or where?

CO: When?

NP: It was Vietnam, early Vietnam.

CO: Okay.

NP: But we had first become aware of her and idolized her during World War II, when she cast that one vote against the war.

CO: Yeah, yeah.

NP: And at the time, a year later, on December 7, 1942, she had read into the Congressional Record a speech explaining why she had cast that vote, and it was wonderful, and we got something like forty copies of that speech and handed them to everybody we knew. But I never, ever, thought we'd get to meet Jeanette. I didn't know she was in Watkinsville, Georgia. She had a home in Watkinsville.

CO: Oh my.

NP: That's where she lived for years.

CO: I didn't know that.

NP: Uh huh.

CO: Now what made her come to Watkinsville, Georgia?

NP: I asked her once and she said cause it was closer to Washington than Montana.

CO: Well, that's true, but so is Virginia.

NP: That's our phone.

BP: I got it.

NP: Thank you, Darling. Paper, I thought I just heard you mention Pascall.

CO: Yes.

NP: Well Walter Pascall was something over the paper. I knew him a little bit, and his wife, Liza, was very interested in the League of Women Voters and was also very active in peace issues, and she was a member…was head of the Georgia Council on Human Relations. That was after Walter had died, and he died very early. Anyway, I knew Liza and she knew me and she was the one who told me that Jeanette Rankin was living in Watkinsville, Georgia, and that she knew her and that she was going over to see her and would I like to come too, and of course I couldn't believe I was meeting

this idol. And, she was wonderful. But the house, it was an old tenant farmer's house and it had a dirt floor.

CO: Oh no.

NP: On which she had priceless oriental carpets.

CO: No!

NP: Yes!

CO: What was she doing in a tenant farmer's almost shack it sounds like?

NP: I don't know, but of course the Rankin's owned more land than anybody in the United States except for the King family in Texas. They owned half of Montana, but I don't know. But that's what she did. And now and then she'd say, "we'll I guess I ought to sell a few cows," and then she'd go to India and commune for a while. She was a wonderful lady, and very thoughtful, and very fond of children. I've got a lot of letters from her in there, and probably got a picture. If we've got it back in alphabetical order I can find it in a minute cause I brought a picture of the cabin. But, whenever she came to Atlanta to speak she would stay with us. And as I said, it made me kind of nervous. But, she never fell. And, this is an article about John, I think, by Paul Hemphill.

CO: John?

NP: Our son.

CO: Oh, your son John. Ok.

NP: But, I'm not sure. I won't stop to read that now. Uh, Rankin, Rankin. This is from Jim Cox, the paper. I'm getting there, I just have to get to Rankin and John Lewis.

CO: Has John Lewis been here?

NP: Oh yeah, lots of times. We had John and Lillian and their son Miles to supper one night, I remember.

CO: Have the Carters ever been here? Is that?

NP: No.

CO: No.

NP: A lot of letters from John.

CO: Did you know John back in the day when he was a Civil Rights worker before he became politically active?

NP: Oh yes.

CO: So he was a young man then. You knew him as a student?

NP: Yeah, and he was. Yeah, I've got a lot of letters from John Lewis in here. But, we had lunch with John last week.

CO: Oh my goodness. Now, Nan, have you seen all of the *Eyes on the Prize*?

NP: I think I have.

CO: Okay, it's priceless. It's really priceless.

NP: It is.

CO: I know that people consider that its perspective is a bit skewed and you know there've been some other documentaries that kind of pick up the slack…

NP: I almost didn't look because I thought, "oh, I know all this," but I didn't. It was marvelous.

CO: Well, the footage is just incredible. I mean, you know that, even without any commentary, uh, the footage would be telling enough, but, um, everybody just misses that you know there's the first six ones made. The first six made, through '65, and then, or maybe they go up to Martin Luther King's assassination. No they don't. It just goes to '65, and then there's a second eight. You know, a second sort of second half made several years later, and um, it's good too. But most people would just dismiss it. Is that something that you want me to see?

NP: Now, this is from Mary Martin. She was… I think I told you that I had a cousin who wrote plays and his discovered Mary Martin.

CO: Oh…wow.

NP: I heard she was coming to Atlanta, and I asked her if we could maybe meet, and I could write an article about her. And, so, that came back and I did meet her and she had all the children back stage. She was still being Peter Pan.

CO: Oh goodness. Is that what that, um, there's a picture in the paper. Is that the newspaper article that you wrote, did you write that piece because there's the…there's the Peter Pan..

NP: Yeah, um hum, yeah I did write it. I'm sorry. These are all from Ralph McGill. Thousands of them.

CO: I really need to look at those. I mean I really need to just look at that whole collection. How far back do those letters go?

NP: No, no.

CO: Okay, alright.

NP: Left over from that one trip, oh.

CO: Well now before we move from your, um, provocative political activities, I want you to talk about the year 1968, if you will, because so much went on and I just want to know where you were in all that. How you reacted to…

NP: That's the other part, that's Jeanette's speech.

CO: Oh okay.

NP: A year later, much too long to…

CO: So you were there for this?

NP: No, I didn't that's the…

CO: Oh, this is '42. This is the peace speech.

NP: Yeah, this is the first I knew about her, but these are all things about her. These are all letters from Jeanette I'm looking at. I'm looking to see if we've got a Christmas card with a picture. There it is. That's the shack she lived in.

CO: Oh my gosh, that's just so hard to believe. She called it Shady Grove Cottage.

NP: I didn't know that, or had forgotten it I guess.

CO: Now why does this call her one of Georgia's daughters? Just simply because she lived there?

NP: I guess so…

CO: So it says that she made almost as many headlines in Georgia as she did in Montana.

NP: Now this, I didn't know she'd gone…

CO: Wow she sued the Macon newspaper for calling her a communist in 1935. Love this woman.

NP: Oh she was amazing. I had forgotten this. This is from Watkinsville from Jeanette. On one occasion…

BP: Not bright red, it wasn't bright red.

NP: Well, she was funny. Her sister, who was very active in working with Margaret Sanger about birth control. I never met her, but the sister called us one day and said that she was in town because Jeanette was in one of the hospitals here, that she had suffered from Tic doloreux, the kind of terribly painful thing and she was in the hospital and she wanted to see us. So of course we rushed over to see Jeanette, and for the first time she was obviously not terribly gracious and glad to see us. I couldn't figure out what was the matter but I knew something was wrong. Her sister explained that she hadn't realized that Britt was coming too, and she always liked men, and she didn't have her wig on.

CO: Oh my gosh.

NP: She was real upset that Britt had seen her without her wig on.

CO: Now was she, did she, was her hair white? Is that what she was trying to cover up?

NP: I guess, I don't remember. It was just sort of gray.

BP: It was just kind of thin I think, wore a wig I think because age had thinned her hair.

CO: What a funny story. So, but she never married, right?

NP: No, she didn't

BP: Was rumored that she and Fiorello La Guardia had uh been very close but…

CO: We don't know *how* close.

NP: No, we don't know how close. She never married.

CO: But, she liked men.

NP: She did like men, and she also was wonderful with children. She loved children. In one of the notes she wrote to thank us for a visit here she said, "I hope Scott's knee is

alright," and I had plum forgotten that Scott had scraped his knee while she was here, but she remembered it.

CO: Wow. I need to read a biography of her. That's inspired me to do that. I will. I hope she's had a recent biographer.

NP: Well, there's a little short one that somebody sent me that had more information in it than anything else. I don't know where it is.

CO: Oh really? So it was a thorough biography, did you think?

NP: I thought it was. There've been some others that I didn't like.

BP: It wasn't long, you could read it very quickly.

NP: But I don't, I think probably, I hope I've got it in here.

BP: I bet I can find it.

CO: Well, that, that's ok.

NP: I keep, after the name Rankin came the name Reston, and that reminds me that Tom Reston, who was the son of Scotty Reston the great newspaper writer, does the name ring a bell?

CO: No.

NP: James Reston, well he wrote for the *New York Times* and he was a very great writer and very well liked, and Tom Reston was part of a group of people who came down after Carter had been elected, but hadn't taken the part yet, I think, and he stayed with us for a month. His son, Tom, nice young man, who wasn't all that fond of his father. He said a visit from my father is like a visit from the mount. Evidently Papa was full of himself. And then, Papa came down to visit him and I made the greatest mistake of my whole life. I invited him, and some of the other kids who were working for Carter, to come…I told them it was tea and that's all it was because we don't drink at all and I don't have any whiskey in the house. But, if you're going to have a newspaper man you better have whiskey or obviously a real pall on the whole house.

CO: But they came?

NP: Oh, they came.

CO: So when you had any, all of your occasions, your events that you held here the entertainment you didn't have anything to drink, no wine or?

NP: No, no alcohol.

CO: No alcohol at all, wow.

NP: I just, it just never had occurred to me. We didn't drink and nobody else needed to. But, having taken care of Reston and Rankin, actually I guess this is the most historically important thing I ever was in on, and I stumbled into that. I told you we used to go to Wisconsin sometimes during the summer.

CO: Right.

NP: Well one of the people in Wisconsin who came up from Milwaukee was a doctor and he had a daughter, Karen… He's Dr. Peterson, and they were friends of my parents, and when the Petersons found out that we were going to England that summer, Dr. Peterson said, "oh please, look up Petey while you're there, she's living in England and she's terribly homesick. She'd love to see you." So, he told us she was living in Ascot, and when we were in London we called her. Father…Daddy called her because Mother's ears were such that she didn't talk much on the phone. And, said, just wanted to tell her hello and that her father had suggested we call, and she said, "Oh, you've got to come for the weekend." And, Daddy said, "well, that's nice, Petey, but we don't have a car and I've got my wife and my daughter with me." She said, "Oh, that's alright. I'll send a car for you and you can stay for the weekend, I think we've got about eighteen other people coming anyway." So, he said oh yes, and when the car came it was a maroon Rolls Royce with a chauffeur and a footman, the footman I learned to know quite well. His name was Newman. We drove out to Ascot, huge house, it was designed by a man named Weigle, who had made lots of money in India somehow, and I don't know, he was obviously no architect. And it was so big that the rooms had name cards on them. It was like a hotel, so you'd know where you were. And a very oddly assorted group of people. Petey had been an actress and she had gone to London in the foreign showing of a play called "Broadway" that I don't remember ever hearing about. And, while there she had met and married a man named Mark Ostrer, and that didn't mean anything to me either. O S T R E R. But when I got there, I found out that he had, he was one of six brothers, incredibly wealthy, who owned newspapers and at the time, they took turns being heads of the various things, he was being head of Gaumont British Films, and two of his nieces, who were aspiring actresses, were there. I was 18, they were in their early twenties. Pamela and, what in the world was Pamela's sister's name, I've forgotten her sister's name, but it was a crazy house. And, among the people who had come over to swim in the swimming pool, there was of course a pool and several tennis courts and a squash

court and among the folks were the folks from next door. The Hurst-Brown's two sons, who were at Oxford in college, and they came over to swim and they met me. And, then they went back home and told their mother and their mother said, "You've got to bring her to tea. I want her to see how most people live in England, those crazy people they're not typical of England at all."

CO: Okay.

NP: So, I did go over and had tea, and they were very pleasant, but their neighbors were there and the two young actresses and a man named Dr….. oh what the hell. I don't remember his name, but he was a physician to the royal family and he was there. He had been invited to make us feel at home because he had once played golf with Bobby Jones.

CO: Oh my gosh.

NP: So we were to meet the doctor. And there was a man there named Stephen Raphael, who was only 28, who Newman, the footman, told me had become three weeks earlier the wealthiest bachelor in England because the Duke of Norfolk had gotten married, and he had been. Stephen Raphael was.

CO: Were they trying to set you up?

NP: I don't know, but they were seated, I was seated next to Stephen Raphael and our places were set for us. Excuse me. Oh you found my book.

BP: No, this is not the one.

CO: Oh, shall I move?

BP: This is one done in 2002 and by a Montana group. There is a very short one that was done locally that I thought was wonderful. Here, 2002 Montana Historical Society Press. Your biography is on which shelf, Nan?

NP: I don't, who's biography?

BP: Just generally biographies.

NP: I don't know where it is. I think it's so little it…did you look on the altar and it's not there?

BP: It's not on the altar, I found this one on the altar.

CO: Is that the place in the back where you keep those books that?

NP: Yes, have you recognized what it is?

CO: No.

NP: It's an old gas radiator that was there and we've covered it up with a curtain and call it the altar. We keep books on it, the ones we're supposed to be reading.

CO: That, yes, okay.

NP: Or the ones that, a lot of them that are autographed.

CO: Now you're telling me about the most historically important…

NP: Yes, very.

BP: Here it is. I found it.

NP: Oh good.

CO: Good.

NP: Well that's great.

CO: I will, Dorothy Sams new one, I'll have to read through this.

NP: If you've never heard of her as a writer, they're very generous to the Rankin Foundation, her husband is. Let me get back to Ascot and you'll know why I'm getting there. Stephen Raphael at 28 was there, a man named Welch, who was the Air Vice Marshall, he was the actual Head of the British Air Force, because the King is the nominal marshal, well he's Stephen uh, well I told you his name a minute ago, well, anyway he was the head of the Air Force. And a man with white mustache and white hair and an accent, quite old, probably in his early seventies and every morning he'd ask me what I thought the market had done that day. I didn't know or care, and, I talked to my father as we were driving back to London. Oh, incidentally, in case you need to know, I was writing to Britt at a desk in the front hall of the house and had written to him, "I think these people have 18 butlers." There were people to stand behind every pair. And a voice over my shoulder said, "no dear, no house has, we have only one butler the rest of them are footmen." And it was Mr. Ostrer, Mark Ostrer.

CO: Ah, had he been watching what you were writing?

NP: He had, I didn't know it.

CO: Oh my gosh.

NP: He was looking over my shoulder.

CO: Oh my goodness.

NP: He was a very nice man, and as I said he was head of Gaumont British Film, and one of the daughters, nieces, their children were seven and nine years old, his and Petey's, but the nieces, one of them married James Mason, the actor. Of course, came to Hollywood and didn't like it, and wrote a book about how awful Hollywood was.

CO: Oh my.

NP: But that was later, she wasn't married to James Mason then, but our host Mark Ostrer, Stephen Raphael, the rich bachelor, the head of the British Air Force, and the man with accent met and talked for a long time in the study everyday they'd be hold up, and as we were going back to London, I said to my father, "Gosh, those men had such a beautiful place and it was for once a very sunny day, and what in the world were they doing all shut up together." My father said, "Well, they jointly own oil fields in Ploesti." Which I think is in Romania, but I'm not sure.

BP: Yugoslavia.

NP: Yugoslavia? P L O E S T I

CO: Um hum.

NP: They owned, this was in summer of 1938, they owned oil wells, and war is coming and they knew it. And they're trying to be sure that nobody bombs their oilfields. So that's what the Air Marshal was doing. Well, the Air Marshal didn't last very long. He lost the top of Africa very early and got replaced by somebody. He was mostly drunk that weekend. I'm glad they turned it away from him. But, nobody ever bombed those oilfields. I kept watching and nobody ever did, until the very end when an American pilot, who evidently hadn't gotten the word, bombed them. But, the white haired man with the mustache who asked about the market was Hitler's patent lawyer.

CO: No, it was not.

NP: Yes it was.

CO: Oh my gosh. What was he doing there?

NP: He was a house guest and they were undoubtedly picking his brain and telling him to save the oilfields….

CO: Oh my goodness.

NP: Which Hitler owned part of too.

CO: Wow, he was Hitler's what now?

NP: Patent Lawyer.

CO: Patent Lawyer, okay.

NP: I don't know why he needed a patent lawyer but that's who he was.

CO: Oh my word.

NP: And, years after the war…

CO: What was his name? Do you remember?

NP: What in the world was his name? I remember it most of the time and it suddenly…

BP: Felix Goetz

NP: Goetz- G O E T Z.

CO: Philip Goetz.

NP: Felix Goetz.

CO: Felix. Felix Goetz. Okay, wow.

NP: And I kept thinking I ought to write this up.

CO: You ought to write that up.

NP: They ought to know that this is what wars are about, people go out and kill and the rich people who own the oil wells make sure they're not gonna be hurt. And I thought about it, and thought about it, and then as I said we always watch Masterpiece Theater and there was a series in Masterpiece Theater called *After the War* written by a man named Raphael.

CO: Oh my…

NP: Not Stephen, must've been Stephen's son or a nephew or something, and it said exactly what I would have. That these rich people were very cozy with the Nazis before the War and it has since been written up quite a bit.

CO: Oh wow.

NP: And Mr. Ostrer was a Jew, the rest of them weren't. But, that didn't seem to matter…

CO: Because he had lots of money and…

NP: Oh yeah he had lots of money and he could sit down and chat with Hitler's lawyer and it didn't bother him at all. And that was in June or July of 1938.

CO: Wow. Auspicious.

NP: And I've never found out who the Rayfield who wrote that was. I don't know.

CO: But most, probably related.

NP: I'm sure it had to be, because he wrote from the point-of-view of these families. The very rich ones.

CO: Was he critical?

NP: Oh yes.

CO: Critical from the inside?

NP: Yeah, critical from the inside. Just talked about how much the very rich Britters…Britons had played with the Nazis. Of course, I understand that's one of the reasons that England didn't much want Edward VIII to be king because he had been very close to the Germans.

CO: Yeah.

NP: But that's as I said as close as I came to…

CO: Well I think your whole life has been historically significant, but that was definitely..

NP: It's crazy.

CO: That's finger on the pulse right there.

NP: We went on that trip and we went through Europe but I didn't meet anybody else like the Ostrers, and Petey, God bless her, didn't live through the war.

CO: No! What happened?

NP: She persuaded her husband to finance another showing of the play *Broadway* and she was traveling playing in *Broadway* and caught pneumonia and died in Brighton I think.

CO: Oh my goodness.

NP: So just a year or so later. But nobody, Stephen Rayfield took off quickly and spent the War in the bistros of New York. And I read about, that was written up in the papers. Somebody had noticed.

CO: Wow, did you realize the gravity of what that, that encounter had been?

NP: Yeah, I did.

CO: You did.

NP: I especially, you know, just a week or so later when the Brits and the Germans went to war.

CO: Yeah, and your father, did you all ever talk about that?

NP: Yeah he was the one who told me, but we never discussed it again. I've got photographs that he took of the estate. It was practically right around the corner from Windsor Castle, and we went over the Windsor and saw it, and they took us to a race event at Ascot of course, that's where the races are. And, uh, that was quite fancy. We, we went along with the chauffeur and several footmen to serve a super fancy dinner they laid out on the automobile. So I saw *My Fair Lady* and of course they showed all the people all dressed up at Ascot watching these races.

CO: Wow. Well is that the last thing on your list of things?

NP: Yeah, that's it I think I've literally talked you and me to death.

NP: Britt was the one who put his life on the line, because he was a conscientious objector, and luckily…

CO: In World War II?

NP: Yeah, but he was also very allergic. So they told him 4F and never pushed on the other thing.

CO: Well, tell me about your, so you didn't have a very favorable opinion of the Women Strike for Peace?

NP: No, but I only, it was purely---for one thing it was an icy terrible day and I should've appreciated what they were doing. I didn't know anything much about them at the time. I don't know why I didn't. But they were, and they had turned out an awful lot people for this and they were… Oh dear, this sounds terrible…

CO: Say it…

NP: They were Yankees! And they talked harshly and loudly and with no manners at all.

CO: You see, that is so, I just, I'm just really pondering that because I have yet to find a woman that I've interviewed who has not been turned off by militant tactics. I mean even the most enlightened women are offended or put off by militants. You know they…

NP: This just, I felt so sorry, when they went into the House of Representatives and they charged up to the poor man who was supposed to tell you where to go and they were shouting, "I want to see Representative So-and-so," and whoever and yelled at him about it. And I just stood back in the back and finally when they all went away, I went up and said, "I beg your pardon, but could you tell me how to reach Wyche Fowler's office?" and he said, "Ma'am, I'll show you," and got up. Is that yours or ours?

NP: We have, I've had trouble trying to forgive Clair, that's this one. She was offered a, I don't know, University of Georgia Fellowship. It would've been completely free, the whole thing, and she went to Dartmouth.

CO: Oh gosh.

NP: And that just happened last fall, so I'm recovering.

CO: So you would have rather she went to the University of Georgia?

NP: Well, I'd been told that it did make a difference if you were in honors programs, which she would've been all the time. I don't know what that is.

CO: This is 1964, that's a picture of you in '64. That's a good picture.

NP: Yeah it's… that was editing the Republican paper.

CO: Ah. One thing I thought to ask you, of all the titles you've worn, I mean of all the hats you've worn so to speak, you have many identities. Oh my, wife, mother, botanist, activist, pacifist…

NP: I think I'd rather be known as a gardener than anything.

CO: A gardener, okay. Alright. I was going to ask you which of them would you… would be your choice. I mean which one would you wear first. What's your…

NP: Well, I think of myself as a botanist or a gardener before anything. Although, cause the others had come and gone for reasons, and the botany has pervaded. Although, I guess the most important thing to me is being a wife, and trying to be good enough for Britt. That runs in their… have you ever read any of Ferrol Sam's books?

CO: Yes, *Run with the Horsemen.*

NP: Yeah, well Ferrol Sams talks about about, very clearly, the Hodnetts H O D N E TTS. And that's Britt's mother, she was one of the Hodnetts. And he said, and on one of them, his Uncle Sam had married a Hodnett, and she was not just a Hodnett, she was a saint. I don't know if you remember this story but he said had, Uncle Sam was bad to drink and that one day he had come in and he was really in bad shape. He'd got hold of some bad whiskey and his wife said, "Just lie down now Sam, and I'll put a cool cloth on your head," and then she knelt by the bed and said, "Dear Lord, look down on your drunken servant." And he shouted, "Oh for heaven sakes don't tell him I'm drunk."

CO: Oh cute.

NP: But they were so good, almost oppressively good sometimes.

CO: Now what does that mean?

NP: Well, a bit self-righteous.

CO: Oh, okay.

NP: A little preachy.

CO: Oh, moralistic where they?

NP: Yeah, sort of. Britt's mother had a way of compressing her mouth with not to say anything but you knew what she was thinking.

CO: Oh, okay. Yeah.

NP: And I, we did all right, but the poor woman. I was her first daughter-in-law. She had four sons, but Britt and I, Britt was the second son and we married before Brody did. And she was the kind of intentionally feminine woman who should have had daughters.

CO: So she enjoyed having you as the daughter she didn't have?

NP: She learned to take care of it, but she, it wasn't what she would have wanted I don't think. She wanted somebody who could sew.

CO: Oh, she wanted a more domestic person?

NP: Yeah, more domestic and somehow more feminine, but we both loved gardening and that helped a lot. But she did, I think, I don't know that they… they were brave about Britt marrying me, but I don't think they were terribly happy about it. For one thing there was all the money and she didn't like the idea that people comment in about Britt marrying for money, and he didn't.

CO: So, the money was in your family?

NP: Yeah.

CO: And, she didn't want people to think that Britt was marrying you because of the money?

NP: For the money.

CO: Yeah, okay.

NP: And, she never expressed it to me but I knew that's what it was, and she. That was all, but we, I loved her very much, and the more I knew… I used to think that anybody who was slow was therefore stupid, and that's wrong. She was just very deliberate. She spoke slowly, she moved slowly.

CO: Wow, wow.

NP: And…

CO: So you came to think that that was more deliberate?

NP: Yeah, I came to think that's okay, it's alright. She just…has nothing to do with how bright she is and how sweet she is.

CO: Yeah, yeah.

NP: You talking about patience. I used to watch her do things and just think dear God. I will mess it up, but I will do it quickly, whatever it is.

CO: Was she patient?

NP: I think she was, and she was a very kind person.

CO: Is that sun bothering you? Do you want to move?

NP: No.

CO: You love it, okay. Alright. Well, can we talk a little bit about the…I know that you've experienced a lot of loss through death. What is the most difficult loss you've experienced?

NP: Well, it was my father dying as early as he did.

CO: Yeah.

NP: And it shocked me. We had not expected it. He had been knocked unconscious when the horse fell on him, and he had recovered from that and they didn't seem to think anything was too wrong. But he, this is crazy, he had one finger that ached, I don't know, he broke it or something, and he couldn't sleep well. The finger hurt. And the doctor said, "Well, Mr. Schwab we can clip that nerve and it'll be quite alright." He said, "but I wouldn't be able to move that finger," and he said, "well no." My father said, "No, I can't be less than a whole man," and he refused. And then, I guess about six months later, he had gone back to work, he was riding the same horse again, but he really wasn't well. He didn't tell us, but he had had ulcers, years before, during World War I, and they'd come back and he'd never told my mother, and they'd gone… he was being treated. Another thing was that the old family doctor, whom we'd had always and who'd delivered Bobby, and Francis, and me, and taken care of everything. When he fell off the horse and was hurt he was riding with two brothers, and they immediately called their doctor, and Mother didn't feel that she ought to leave Dr. Atkins out and go back to Dr. Rosenberg. And, he, I think Mother had, later, more than a touch of anti-Semitism too. She never said anything to us about Dr. Rosenberg, but they had met him while he was still in medical school and my older brother was his first private baby, and he lived right around the corner, and I thought he was a member of the family almost. But Mother told us later that she thought he had turned to drinking too much. I never saw any sign of it. But all…one doctor called in another and there were about six specialists working on Daddy's finger and just general feeling of ailment. But they said he ought to go to Florida for a while, and they never knew about the ulcer at all until it burst in Florida.

CO: Oh my goodness.

NP: And he survived the operation, but, in fact he seemed to be doing better. Mother and Richard were there. Daddy wouldn't let any of us come down. He didn't want anybody to see him with tubes running out of his nose.

CO: Yeah.

NP: And he seemed okay. Mother and Richard had gone out to lunch he was doing so well, and she came back he had died of an embolism.

CO: Your father?

NP: Um hum.

CO: This was after the horse threw him?

NP: After the…after the horse had thrown, yes.

CO: And then you started talking about the doctors who were treating him, but your uncles called their doctor but your mother wanted…

NP: No, it wasn't my uncle, it was two friends who were with him.

CO: Oh, I thought it was his brothers. So, two friends called their doctor…

NP: Their doctor, who was very reputable, who called a bunch of other specialists. Well, Dad didn't…Dad knew the ulcers were back, he'd been bleeding a little bit, but I didn't know that until he was dead. Mother didn't know it either. The maid told us that she had found blood on his sheets.

CO: Oh my goodness, so, but he died of the injury from the fall and that's how ya'll found out about the ulcers? Is that…

NP: Well no, no they knew when the ulcer burst, whoever was in Florida. The doctor found it and they operated. I don't know what they did. But, the operation was a success…seemed to be. He was recovering and while Richard, his brother, and Mother went out to lunch he died of an embolism that they of course didn't know he had.

CO: Oh ok. But he was being hospitalized for the fall?

NP: No, hospitalized for the ulcer that had shown up down there. When the ulcer burst, then they put him in the hospital in Florida for that.

CO: Okay, so your father didn't die from an injury from a fall?

NP: Not really, he always thought, we all thought it was a result of that in those days, and I think they've changed their mind now. They used to think that ulcer was a result of stress, and he had had ulcers during World War I because stress for the company. They'd had trouble. But, they'd been cured and that was…this was 1945, years and years and years later..

CO: Right, right.

NP: and the ulcers recurred. I don't know rather…why it was.

CO: Oh ok. Alright, alright. So your father's death was the most difficult loss. Have there been other losses besides…not losses not associated with death that have been hard?

NP: Well the only one that I mentioned earlier was my absolute heartbreak when I lost Tidy the governess.

CO: Yeah, okay alright.

NP: That was it. I can't remember anything else ever knocking me for a loop.

CO: Well, your son John moving to Canada…was that sort of a loss?

NP: Uh no, not really. That was…I understood it and I couldn't stop him, and I hoped and thought he would be alright, but I really thought when he got up there that people would spit on him on the street, and of course they didn't.

CO: That didn't happen.

NP: He seemed to be a hero from the time he got there.

CO: Wow.

NP: I didn't know he'd been, that NBC and ABC had been in touch with him from time to time about what's happening with the draft dodgers or drifters or whatever you call them.

CO: Wow.

NP: I'm not sure why he was, well John was and is absolutely brilliant, and he had always been known that way. No way to miss, everything he touched he… The Star Student business and the whole works.

CO: Um, okay. Remember I told you I wanted to ask you some things about the subject of aging and that I wanted to ask you how old you feel, not physically but just the way you look at life. You know, your perspective. How do you feel in your heart?

NP: Well what has always mattered to me, almost more than anything, is what's happening in my gardens? Or what we see when we go to walk every morning. And they haven't changed.

CO: They haven't changed.

NP: I can still get terribly excited over a flower I hadn't seen before or hadn't seen for a long time. So, in my head nothing like that has changed any. I get exasperated, now and then, with a frailty. My, I don't know what, well the first night we were in this house, I fell down the stair. Because, the light was out in the upstairs hall and I wasn't familiar with the house and I got up because, at the time, Scott, the baby, was sleeping in here. We had his crib here. And I thought I heard him crying and I got up to see about him, and it was dark and I didn't know where the steps were and I just stepped off the end of the steps and landed on my knees down on the landing. And, tore up my knee.

CO: Oh my goodness.

NP: And it got cured. Britt's brother's a surgeon and when we went to see him he was amazed that I hadn't broken the knee. He sent me to a bone man. And, it wasn't broken, I had just torn it up, and torn all the nerves and the ligaments, and he sewed them back together and it always has been a little shorter than the other leg, I think. I asked him about that once. I said, "feels shorter." He said, "it is, I can't sew through ??? (41:28) material." But, uh, it certainly didn't make a cripple out of me for years, but finally when the years went by I had one.. the…what do you call it? The cartilage wore out and I had one bone rubbing against another. And, so we got a knew knee for it.

CO: Well now, you were still in your 20s then, right? Or..

NP: Hmm?

CO: You were still in your 20s then, weren't you?

NP: Oh, no, no, this was many years later. Just about four years ago now I was in my eighties.

CO: Oh, but I mean when you fell.

NP: Oh, when I fell. Yes, I, no, how old was I?

CO: Well if Craig was a baby…

NP: I was 40-something…

CO: Okay….

NP: ’59 and I’d been born in ’20.

CO: Okay, so you were 39.

NP: Yeah.

CO: Okay, alright. Okay. But, what age do you recall most nostalgically? You don’t sound like you have a whole lot of nostalgia.

NP: I don’t. I’m grateful for every day.

CO: Okay.

NP: I wake up, that sounds like “Pollyanna,” but I’m an absolutely unrealistic optimist. I can’t help it. I always think everything’s okay. This is fine, and we’ve been so incredibly fortunate with the children, and uh…

CO: But when you, can you see political conditions?

NP: Oh, it’s awful.

CO: Yeah, so, but you just, you’re able to keep your optimism in the face of that?

NP: Well, I don’t know how I do that. I don’t always. I mean, I know it’s terrible. I think I know what’s wrong with everything and it’s so simple. How in the world can they keep on having wars? What’s the matter with them? They’re insane.

CO: Yeah.

NP: So, after I’ve written more letters to my congressman, and thank goodness it’s John Lewis, I, or I phone. I phone a lot to the White House, but having done it, well that’s all I can do, and I go out and smell the flowers. Which is very…everyone of…on my 80th birthday, they presented me with a scrap book and it had a letter from each of the children in it, and every one of them talked about a constant optimism and cheer and always knew I’d smile about it. And it’s not an effort. It’s something I can’t help. I feel sort of stupid about it.

CO: Oh my goodness. I would give anything to have that as my default. It sounds like that's your default. You default to the optimism.

NP: Yeah, I guess I do.

CO: That's incredible.

NP: And I am, I think this is hereditary, I have an extremely high threshold of pain, almost wacko. I can't quite put my hands in boiling water but I can take a finger and skim something off of it and barely know it. And the first time I broke my arm they didn't know it at all.

CO: Oh wow.

NP: Until I was five. I was five when I broke it. I've had…all of the children, well, my first child was brought by Dr. Pops, who had brought me, and he didn't want anything to hurt his baby. And, in those days he came to the house and they sent a nurse out and then he went with me. He drove me to the hospital, and I remember singing "it's so peaceful in the country" all the way to the hospital.

CO: You weren't having labor pains?

NP: No, not really. I mean a little bit maybe. But, he said, you know didn't want anything to hurt me, so he wanted to give me something he said just to make me a little bit sleepy. And it knocked me absolutely flat unconscious.

CO: Whoa.

NP: And I don't remember anything about Jill being born, and they brought her with forceps in those days.

CO: Um hum. You slept through that?

NP: Yeah, I didn't know anything about it. And I felt cheated when I waked up, and nothing had ever hurt. The other six children were all natural child birth. I never had anything. And usually, maybe the last two or three contractions I would think, "this is damned uncomfortable. I don't want to do this again," but that was all.

CO: Good heavens.

NP: And I…I used to volunteer over at St. Joseph's hospital. I wanted to be a nurse's aid, and I turned out to be so terribly clumsy that they didn't want me to do that. So, my job really was just to be there and to change people's water and the flowers and be of

good cheer. And I went in one day to say to a lady when my baby was couple days old, and I said, “Oh.” She said, “I know that voice. You have a new baby, don’t you?” and I said yes. She said, “I was in the labor room next door, and I never heard anything as crazy as that. You and the doctor were chatting of this and that, and you said, ‘oh my golly, it’s three in the afternoon, I hope you don’t miss your pheasant dinner tonight.’” Because he had said he was going to dinner, and she said, “about three minutes later he said, ‘oh, here it comes’” and that was that.

CO: That’s not normal.

NP: No, I know it isn’t, and my friend Selma, I told, she had a baby about two years after I did, and I had told her, you know, don’t worry about it, nothing to it, piece of cake. When I went to see her in the hospital she simply turned her face to the wall and said, “I don’t ever want to see you again!”

CO: Wasn’t a piece of cake?

NP: No.

CO: Yeah. Well that has to influence you, because so much of people’s unhappiness in life is related to physical pain.

NP: I guess it must be.

CO: So you, you don’t have, you’ve got such a high threshold for pain that you haven’t had a lot of that experience.

NP: No. After that I got so careless. I am clumsy. I don’t know where I’m going and I broke a couple of arms after I broke the first one.

CO: Oh my.

NP: Cause I fell on them, and I don’t know, doctors don’t recognize this I don’t think. I kept being told what a brave little soldier I was.

CO: But you think it’s really a tolerance of pain that’s…

NP: I don’t know. I just…

CO: Were your parents that way?

NP: Mother was.

CO: Oh, okay.

NP: She never talked about it, but I remember we were in New York once eating in a restaurant and it was raining, and Mother finished before the rest of us and she said, "I want to go out a minute and look at a hat I saw in a window back there." She came back in a few minutes later and didn't say anything, and then a little later when we were ready to leave, anyway, she said, "Maybe I better go. I fell out there and I hit my elbow." She said, "It doesn't bother anything." But she went to the doctor and he said, he thought she was in agony. She had dislocated her elbow. And she wasn't being brave, she really didn't know.

CO: Couldn't feel it. Wow.

NP: And Blair has it, and one of my grandchildren, at least, and I know how to spot it now.

CO: So you can feel it but it just doesn't hurt? Is that what it…

NP: No, yeah, yeah, in some cases I guess I didn't even feel it when I was a child.

CO: But when you gave birth did you feel that?

NP: I, sort of, I mean, as I said the last two or three contractions were sort of not very comfortable. But I remember the nun bring a group in to see me when I was in labor and saying, "she's alright." And it wasn't hurting, I didn't what they, I knew when the contractions were there. I could feel something tightening. And, when… Dr. Pops had an assistant and I was in labor and after a while I said, "Well, I think I'll take a little nap," and I heard the young man say, "My god, with those contractions?" and I did, I dozed off for a little while. But it's, it's very hard to describe to anybody. I don't know.

CO: Well I'm gonna to take your word for it, and you know, I'm envious of it. You don't have headaches? And…

NP: Never had a headache in my life.

CO: Good heavens.

NP: Thank goodness. Or a toothache or…

CO: So you haven't had dental problems?

NP: I went to the dentist to get them cleaned about thirty five years ago.

CO: You are kidding. Oh my goodness.

NP: These are all mine.

CO: Wow.

NP: Not quite as white as the used to be, but they're there. But Blair was saying just the other day that she remembered she had broken her arm at a birthday party. Had jumped off, she was about eight or nine, and the lady having the birthday party called me and said come get her she's broken her arm. And I did and we came home and we called Uncle Bill, and he wasn't available right that minute so we sat and watched television. And, she had broke it up here somewhere and it was bent.

CO: Mmm mmm.

NP: And she said, I don't know how this happen to come up just last week. She said she remembered that it didn't hurt her at all but when she looked at it and saw it looked odd then she decided it must hurt. But it didn't.

CO: That's kind of scary though. A little bit.

NP: It could be. Yeah I know that. And if anything hurts I decide I'm dead.

CO: Yeah.

NP: But it was very clear with Blair. I went to pick her up at school over at Westminster, and I heard her screaming as I drove up. And she had smashed her finger in a car door, and it was definitely smashed, and they were pouring ice water on it and she was yelling bloody murder, and of course I got her in the car right away and she shut up and said, "it doesn't hurt, can I ride this afternoon?" But she knew it was expected of her.

CO: Yeah, yeah. Well, that, okay, that is one, um, because one thing that when I ask people what is the most difficult part of aging, they either say it's forgetfulness or the pains. You know, the aches and pains that go along with aging. So, you don't have that.

NP: Well, now and then, I'm most, now and then if I've been sitting down for a long time and I stand up, I'm a little stiff. Doesn't hurt, but it's stiff.

CO: Yeah, but how would you respond to that, the most difficult part of aging?

NP: Uh, this is terrible. The most difficult part of aging is having people fuss over me. Having people keep… "Can you get up that step?"

CO: Yeah, yeah. Treat you like a child?

NP: Yeah, and that insults me.

CO: Right, right.

NP: I don't like that, and I don't like to accept help.

CO: Well, yeah. I think that's, that is, that attitude towards old people is the equivalent of paternalism toward minority groups.

NP: Oh my god, I guess so. Well I, after I broke the knee, you can hardly see the scar...they. Well, that's not from falling down, that's from where they put a new knee in.

CO: Oh, okay.

NP: And I don't know, we were, I get out of the hospital right away, two days later they throw me out, and I could always walk up and down the steps the minute I got home…

CO: Good heavens.

NP: But I fell down the back steps and split the damned incision open.

CO: Oh gosh, uhh.

NP: And I don't understand that yet, it never did bleed, and certainly never did hurt. But I looked with interest to see what my fake knee looked like.

CO: Good heavens.

NP: And we went and got it sewed back up again.

CO: It didn't bleed?

NP: No, why it didn't bleed I don't know.

CO: How odd. So being condescended to like you're a child is the hardest part of aging?

NP: Yeah, that's the hardest part. Having people with the best intentions on earth insult me.

CO: Right, right. So, um, what are the benefits of aging?

NP: Well, go back to that garden again. The benefits of aging are that I threw a peach seed on my compost heap and if you look out the front window you can see the tree blooming. That's happened over the years. And when the years come by some things

grow and some things multiply. That's almost the only thing, watching things grow and…

CO: Are you sentimental about anything?

NP: Hmmm?

CO: Are you sentimental about anything?

NP: Yeah, I guess. I don't know what sentimental means, but I…

CO: Um…I think you may be sentimental about dogs. You know..

NP: Yeah, I love dogs.

CO: Yeah, are you sentimental about babies? Southerners are supposed to be sentimental about babies.

NP: No, that's one of the things that annoys me. People are always handing me babies.

CO: Oh.

NP: And I've had that bit, I don't want it anymore. And it worried me at first when I first had Jill and I thought, "Gee, I don't feel anything." I mean this is a baby and she's nice and I'll take care of her but love her? My gosh, how do you love fifteen cents worth of dog meet?

CO: Yeah.

NP: And soon as they get older, you know, and are people, even the first smile when they react, that's alright. But, just babies don't do a whole lot for me.

CO: So your grandchildren didn't, you don't have a sentimental attachment to them? I know you love them, clearly, their pictures are everywhere.

NP: Well my first grandchild came when my child, when Craig was two and a half…

CO: Oh goodness, okay.

NP: So I really didn't have time to miss them.

CO: Sure, yeah yeah. Then you've been surrounded with children.

NP: Yeah, always. I had my first grandchild, I was 41. No I guess I was 42. I was 21 when Jill was born and then Jill was 21 when David was born. Now what worries more than anything is that I love some of them, and some of them are just…I mean I don't hate anybody, but I just don't feel as close to some of them.

CO: Yeah yeah.

NP: And there's so many of them, 19. A lot to get all excited about.

CO: Do they ever, are they ever all here at once?

NP: Uh uh.

CO: No?

NP: Not that many. That picture in the library of all of them taken at St. Simons. Last year we had, I think, 32 up there. And they do grow. Several great grandchildren infiltrated last year.

CO: Well, you know what. We did, we talked about marriage and motherhood and all that stuff. We didn't really talk about your relationship, yours and Britt's relationship over time, but I don't know how two people could be closer than ya'll are. Has it always been that way?

NP: Yes, I don't know. I mentioned to him, "I don't know how I can love you more all the time, but I do."

CO: That is so incredible. To me that is more incredible than the knee, than the absence of pain. It's just so…

NP: Well he is so wonderful. He is so thoughtful and so kind always.

CO: Yeah, but you both are. I mean, he has the same feeling for you, and that's…you know from being so observant yourself that that's not the norm. There's so little in your life that's normal.

NP: I'm going to beat this chair down knocking on wood. I'm very scared. What's the word I'm after? All of the sudden it's gone away. Superstitious.

CO: Oh ok.

NP: I got it. One person that I never mentioned and the closest relative, I thought really, was my grandmother, my father's mother. I adored Grandma. You could tell her anything and she was unshockable. And she was a born activist way back when.

CO: Whoa.

NP: Not about race relations. I think that was a little far down the road…

CO: Right right.

NP: But any kind of injustice really bugged her badly.

CO: Oh, I love that. What was her name?

NP: Her name was, well her name before she married was Newelt, Ida Newelt. N E W E L T, but that was Anglicized when they came over from this…from Germany it was…had a U in there. It was N E U W E L T, and it was Neuwelt. Meant 'New World', but they changed it to Newelt by the time of course…

CO: This was your father's mother?

NP: My father's mother.

CO: Now, how long did you know her?

NP: Oh, until she…I had several children.

CO: So, they knew her too?

NP: Yeah, she was 86.

CO: And she was an ardent activist?

NP: Yeah, way back when. She got very upset about the fact that there were some refugee doctors who had come over before World War II or in the middle of it or something, but when they could get out they'd gotten out. But, they came and some settled in Atlanta and they were not allowed to practice because they didn't have a medical degree from an American college.

CO: mmm hmm.

NP: And Grandmother said, "They know more than a lot of other people. This is crazy." But, she never…Grandmother never raised her voice and I don't know how she did it, but she persuaded the medical profession to let them in.

CO: Wow. Wow. Just by being a presence?

NP: Just by care, and we after we were married and moved, one of our neighbors, Mrs. Malone, told me one day, "you know your grandmother saved my husband's life,"

and I said, “huh?” Well Johnny Malone, he’s the brother of Mrs. Bobby Jones, was a drunk, and the family had just written him off, and Grandmother decided he could be saved, and I don’t know how she did it but she talked him into being sober and he married and he was happy ever after.

CO: Oh my goodness, wow. Now what about your father’s father? How, was he..

NP: Oh, he was the sweetest old man you ever saw. He was just a gentle garrulous old fella and I loved him. And even when I was very small and he would say, “oh, have I ever told you about…” and I’d say, “No Papa, you haven’t,” cause I wouldn’t have hurt Papa’s feelings for the world. And he was very sweet and he loved to sing Gilbert and Sullivan completely. He loved Gilbert and Sullivan songs. And this grandmother who was so kind to everybody, she said one day, I went over there, and they lived in a residential hotel on the corner of…well I couldn’t tell you. But it was a nice old place, and a lot of old people lived there. It wasn’t an old people’s home…resident apartments. I came in and said, “Where’s Papa?” she said, “Oh, you know, he’s down on the front stoop, sitting in his rocking chair, talking to all those admiring widows.” She said, “You know your grandfather’s hair turned snow white when he was 30, and he’s made a career of senility ever since.”

CO: Do you have any idea when they were born, roughly? The year? It’s okay if you don’t.

NP: Uh, I’m trying to think.

CO: What was his father’s name?

NP: Well he was the grandson of this old goat over here.

CO: The one in the…yeah

NP: Yeah, the one over there who was born in 18, I mean in 19, 1790, and that was his father.

CO: And what was his name? Your father’s father, your grandfather.

NP: Otto, Otto Schwab.

CO: Okay.

NP: And he told all of us about him. When the family came over from Germany they settled in Hartford, Connecticut very quickly, because Hartford had a great many Germans. And, in fact, there were so many Germans here then, that there had been

some question early on as to whether English or German should be our national language. I didn't understand that, but they said it was so. So, they arrived in 1851. And Otto wasn't born yet. He was born in this country. But he had an older brother, Amil, who was six months old when they came.

CO: Well now before I forget, because I've got it written down here to remind myself, you've told the story twice already, and so I know it's on record, and then you told it again at lunch and you gave me your maternal grandmother's name. Give it to me again.

NP: Ida..

CO: No no, maternal.

NP: Oh maternal, Frances Elkin was her name before she married.

CO: C E S or I S?

NP: E S.

CO: E L K I N

NP: E L K I N, and although that doesn't sound German, they were German too.

CO: And she's the one who gave birth during the Battle of Atlanta and she's the person…

NP: No, she's the one who was born then.

CO: Oh, I'm sorry. Yeah, I'm sorry. Yes, she was born during the battle and she's your sort of claim to be fourth generation Atlantan when people accuse you of not understanding before you're not from around here, you pull her out and use her.

NP: I used her a lot.

CO: Frances Elkin Kaiser.

NP: Yeah, and she married Nathanial Kaiser. K A I S E R.

CO: Ok.

NP: I have always wondered about the Schwabs and never been able to understand it. I've been to the town they came from, Grunstadt, and I know that my great grandmother, this old man's daughter in law, was born in a village called Buhl B U H L.

It's very pretty, and her father was the banker in Buhl. And Joseph, this fella's son, married her. And when they came over to this country the old man was in his sixties, his son Joseph, Joseph's wife, whose name was Johanna, and their one son, Amil, six months old came to this country and settled in Hartford, Connecticut very quickly. And Britt's brother, Bob, is a genealogist and loves to look up people's families. And he's very selective in what he finds. We get the giggles about that. And he wanted to look up the Schwabs, and I didn't want him to.

CO: Why didn't you want him to?

NP: Well I don't know whether I'd want this in the book or not. They landed, I can't [recorder turned off] Mark Twain lived Samuel Colt and Twain didn't speak to Colt because he didn't approve of his guns.

CO: This was your father's family…your…

NP: My father's grandparent, well my father's father was five years old when he lived across the street from Mark Twain.

CO: Now was this in Connecticut?

NP: This was in Hartford.

CO: Yeah.

NP: And, later, he lived on a short street, it was called Charter Oak Place.

CO: Now, if he lived across the street from Twain, then he also lived across the street from Harriet Beecher Stowe.

NP: Well, he didn't mention her, but he did mention…well Twain later, when he really made money, bought another huge….

CO: Oh okay, that's the one that's across from Harriet Beecher Stowe.

NP: Yeah, and I've been to that. That's open to the public and it's florid almost. It's huge.

CO: Yes.

NP: But I never saw this house, but it evidently was pretty nice already and Colt lived there and Lincoln's Secretary of the Treasury lived on the same street.

CO: Wow.

NP: And Joseph and Johanna had six more children after they got to this country, and the way that I know so much about Jacob, there was Jacob, was at the *Hartford Current*, which is the oldest constantly published newspaper in the United States, used to interview all the citizens or most of them when they turned 80. So, they talked to him every day, every eighty, and he lived to be an old man; this old goat, and I've got newspaper articles about them. They're upstairs. What he said on his eightieth birthday and so forth. But, the reason I didn't want them investigated, well Joseph, this fella's son, immediately established his own insurance agency. That's what Hartford was good for. And his was called the Germania Insurance Company. He also, and this puzzles me, became the volunteer superintendent of schools in Hartford, and I don't know how he spoke English, but he had to. But I don't think he would have learned how in Grunstadt. But he had learned. I've seen a picture of the house, it was a big dark red brick house and he had a vineyard in the backyard because the, it reminded him, they came from the Rhineland.

CO: mmmhmm.

NP: And Emil, the oldest son, went to Harvard, and then they sent another son to Yale. In short, what scares me is where did all the money come from?

CO: mmmhmmm.

NP: How did they get here with all that money?

CO: Yeah, yeah.

NP: I don't want to know.

CO: Yeah, okay. I see. I gotcha. I can understand. Alright

NP: Well, I'm glad you can, because I feel silly. I just…

CO: No, I mean I…

NP: I just don't know. I'm afraid I'll find out they embezzled before they left Germany or something. The German records are pretty exact. They mention that Joseph, I mean Emil, Joseph's first son, was conceived out of wedlock. So, I think he probably shacked up with the Banker's daughter and married her.

CO: Oh.

NP: I don't, that's all I can figure out. And Emil, their picture's upstairs, he looked better than the rest of them. He was taller, he was handsomer, and he went to Harvard and

he stayed in Boston and became the travel editor of the *Boston Globe*, and he wrote a lot. And he married a descendent of John Alden's, who must have been a little loopy herself. She kept pigeons in their bedroom. We decided that's why he was a travel agent. So he was the first relative I know of who went to Harvard, but that would've been in the, I guess 1851…probably about 1871. I don't have the exact date.

CO: I was going to say 1870s. Well can you talk a little bit about southern identity?

NP: Well it's there, I know it is.

CO: Yeah.

NP: And I'm pretty stubborn about it. I hadn't thought of it until I got up to New York State in college, and then the more I got teased about, the stronger my accent got. I was not going to give way on it.

CO: Now, do you find it a paradox?

NP: Yes.

CO: Somewhat of a paradox.

NP: It is. It's nutty. Whenever they vote I think, "I'm like those people, they're not my folks." But in the meanwhile, I'm all for them.

CO: But if you had to describe what it was, to somebody not from this, I mean everybody in this country has, you know, some perception of what it is about the South that sets it apart or at least they think they do. But, if you had to describe the difference in the South from the rest of the country to somebody from, let's say Asia, an Asian country, how would you describe it?

NP: I, I think they are friendly. Most of them are very friendly and….well I remember when I….Jill married and married a boy from Rochester, New York and they went to live in Connecticut and I went to visit them and I met the neighbors and they chilled me to the bone. They just were very cold and not understanding, and the grocery store, the little grocery store where she went, very businesslike, and I didn't like it….

CO: Yeah.

NP: And I didn't like them. And Jill said, "Well, there's a difference." Excuse me a minute…

CO: One thing that I'm always pondering is paradox and how you can love and hate the South at the same time. It's the hallmark of our identity.

NP: I don't know, I think about it now and then, but I…

CO: I do all the time, because I, you know I have to study it, and if you say things about it that students find not complementary, you know it's like you're being a traitor to the region. When, in fact, you know you're just pointing out the reality of life.

NP: Oh, well every election I am reminded of this, every national election. I'm very proud of the fact that Atlanta, when Gingrich carried the state of Georgia, Fulton County, where we are, and Dekalb next door, and Savannah never voted for Gingrich. We're not completely wacko.

CO: Yeah, but and you know you've talked about and I mean, whatever else the South, however else you identify the South, you know people want to identify it as a place where there's a deep respect and regard for tradition, and a lot of family values, and uh you know sweet tea, and midnight magnolia myths and all of that, but we also know the South is identified with racial…troubled race relations, always, always. And so I've told you and you've already said you told me the story about being four years old and being aware of…being conscious even at four that something wasn't right with the racial etiquette, what's expected of the two races. Um, do you think, how do you feel about how that has changed over time? How much change do you think there's actually been?

NP: A lot. I mean I really, just within my own life and the people I know, when the couple moved next door to us, the black doctor and his black lawyer wife, I rushed over with a cake I'd baked. What surprised me was that other neighbors had all brought them things of welcome too.

CO: Knowing that they were black? Did they know they were?

NP: And that has been more, that only happened maybe two years ago.

CO: Oh my goodness.

NP: And I was so proud and so happy that that's the way things are.

CO: Oh good, good. So you think that there's…you think there's been a lot of progress made. Where do you think is, what do you think still needs has to be done with regard to racial equality?

NP: Well I think it's an awful lot. I remember that one of the refugees who came over to Atlanta, not a doctor, was a professor and he taught at Tech and he told us that, this was when the race situation…there had not been any Civil Rights Bill yet, he said he asked his students at Tech, where he was teaching, "how would you feel if suddenly you had a black classmate?" and none of them would've objected at all and he said, "Well, but how would your parents feel?" he said almost all of them said their parents would be terribly upset. He said, "Well, what is the difference?" He said they said, "We're educated." And I really…

CO: You think that's it?

NP: I think, really I think that's it. I think it's education.

CO: Okay.

NP: I have…I've done a lot of tutoring in the Atlanta public schools. I'm not a professional teacher, but I used to tutor at least twice a week at a neighborhood school here, and at the worst of times the white children all fled and there were no white children in our neighborhood public school. The children were all bused in from the other side of town. And now things have changed so much that the school has, they've had to enlarge the school and modernize it and it's very integrated. They're mostly white because we're still a mostly white neighborhood, but there are black children and nobody makes any deal of it. And there are black teachers.

CO: You know what I get the most strong feeling about is people being adamantly opposed to busing, and their experience with integration, with desegregation was the reaction to busing. You know having children bused around out of neighborhoods. That's what they seem to be mostly opposed to. How do you respond to that?

NP: I've heard that complaint and I just, I don't know why that is…would be a particular subject of concern. I think that…I'm wondering if they're not just covering up a prejudice against the idea anyway by saying, "oh, it's busing I don't approve of."

CO: Right.

NP: I don't know, but I was so proud when Westminster finally got around to integrating at all. Seven years after the Civil Rights Act. Scott said he would like to…

NP: To play when he was about eighth grade/seventh grade, and he brought home a black child and it had not even occurred to him to mention that the child was black.

CO: Oh wow.

NP: That was just his friend and he wanted to bring him home, and I thought, "Oh boy, we must've done something right."

CO: Something right. Yeah, yeah. Okay.

NP: Because it's okay. And also, this neighbor, as I said I think she was welcomed by all or most of the neighborhood, but a few…last election whenever it was, she phone and said, "May I come over and watch the returns with you? My television has gone on the blink." And said, "Sure, come on." And her husband was still working, but she came over by herself. And, when we watched television she grinned and said, "I called you because I knew you would be voting right." So, she evidently didn't feel that close to the rest of them.

CO: What election was it?

NP: I'm talking, it was something, I think probably local.

CO: Oh okay, right.

NP: It wasn't as far back as a big election, but we were watching it, and I don't remember how much race had to do with it, of course Atlanta's had a black mayor now for quite a while.

CO: Right, right.

NP: What's amazing is the Savannah's got a black mayor and she's a woman!

CO: Yeah, yeah. Right. And your daughter lives there?

NP: Yeah, and I've got the giggles about Nanny. She's…she really, laughing at almost anything, but her husband is very proud of his Scottish ancestry. And there's a St. Andrews Society in Savannah. You probably know more about it then I do. But I know there's St. Andrews and I think there are two groups that have to do with it. Ancestors and especially Scottish ancestors so, Nankin checked it out, having talked to a cousin on Britt's side of the family, and Nankin is now a Colonial Dame.

CO: Oh boy.

NP: She said she got sick of listening to Gene going on about St. Andrews, so now she's a Colonial Dame.

CO: Oh my gosh.

NP: And it didn't take them long, she's a national officer she had to go to Washington for a meeting, but she comes back and giggles about them all something terrible.

CO: I'm sure. Now you call her Nankin, spell that. How do you spell, is that a pet name?

NP: Oh her name is Nan Elkin.

CO: Nan Elkin.

NP: And we call her Nankin because I found out by the time she was ten, I couldn't be big Nankin anymore. She's 5'10".

CO: Oh okay.

NP: So it had to be something, and the only thing wrong with Nankin is that it sounds diminutive and she's not.

CO: Yeah.

NP: And her children are…

CO: Yeah it does sound like a pet name for a little person.

NP: A little girl. But she's a, she has three daughters and they are all as tall as she is.

CO: Oh my goodness.

NP: Because her husband was too.

CO: Do they, are they basketball players?

NP: No, I don't think so. I'd think they would be but so far as I know. I don't know that any of them are particularly athletic, really.

CO: Well now you, okay, we've heard a lot about your work with Civil Rights because it started off all the way back in the 30s when you were at Vassar. But what about the other movements that were spawned by the Civil Rights movement, like the movements that came out of the seventies. The, you know, I mean everybody really. It opened the door for all sorts of "oppressed," and I'm not putting that in quotes because I disagree with it. I'm just saying groups that saw the opportunity. Everybody from the Native Americans to Gay and Lesbian. It was…

NP: Well I had always been concerned about the Indians. Everybody had to be who knew anything about it, especially in Georgia, where the Trail of Tears began. We went up to New Echota, park up there

CO: Yeah.

NP: And it's just heart-breaking because it builds, rebuilds the buildings where the Cherokees tried so hard to assimilate, to do what they could to be accepted. And then, if it wasn't race prejudice, that was greed. They wanted the land.

CO: Yeah.

NP: So, the Indians I was already on board for. The Gay and Lesbians, I had a little trouble with. I didn't object to it, but my heart wasn't there. I didn't think I knew any lesbians really.

CO: So do you, is that still the case? You don't know women who are openly gay?

NP: Now I know some now, but I'm not sure. I don't know anybody who really throws it at me.

CO: So it's not, that's not something you're passionate about?

NP: No, I'm afraid not. I don't object. I certainly would want to see all the laws equal. If I heard about somebody getting fired for being a lesbian, I would be very upset.

CO: Yeah

NP: But since I don't know anybody, and can't doesn't quite relate to it, is the other thing.

CO: Um, do you think you would have been upset if you had learned that one of your children was homosexual?

NP: I hope not.

CO: Okay.

NP: I don't, I don't think so. And we've, Craig's generation, and Craig's the one who was born in '59…

CO: Ummhmm.

NP: They don't seem to have any feeling about it at all. My good friend Selma, who seems to be coming back in the conversation, Selma has a son, one year older than Craig, who is clearly, unabashedly homosexual.

CO: Ummhmm.

NP: And it doesn't, you know, Craig and all his friends…Bobby is part of the group. They had to have, nobody, so far as I know, there is no hesitation at all.

CO: Okay. Alright. And what about the Women's Movement. How did you…did I ask you yesterday if you'd read *The Feminine Mystique*?

NP: No, you didn't. And I don't know whether I have or not. I don't think I have.

CO: Betty Freidan's…you remember the book?

NP: I remember it.

CO: Okay.

NP: I, oh dear, I have trouble with it.

CO: You do?

NP: Mostly, the only time I ever speak is that when I heard from Emily's List asking for money. And saying we want to be sure women are elected. I want to elect the right people. But, I will never elect anybody for gender, one way or the other. I just, doesn't seem to me a rational way to behave.

CO: Right, so you don't personally feel you've experienced discrimination because of being a woman?

NP: No, as I told you, no I haven't. I'm probably so dumb I didn't recognize I was being discriminated against.

CO: I can't imagine you being dumb about anything.

NP: Now the main thing that…I was very active in the League of Women Voters.

CO: Ummhmm.

NP: And I used to go, my job, mostly, was collecting money.

CO: Ummhmm.

NP: And I used my father's friends, many of whom were presidents of their company.

CO: Ummhmm.

NP: Or presidents, I knew all the presidents of the bank and the big companies here, and I would go collect money from them. And they'd always let me in and they'd always give me some money. And I always knew it was because of Daddy, it really didn't have anything to do with me. They knew my father and my father knew them and they worked together. But, I would have objected terribly to being discriminated against or favored just because I was a woman.

CO: Yeah, okay. Alright.

NP: I was kind of a Tomboy as a child, very athletic, and as I think I've told you, I preferred the subjects that interested men.

CO: Yeah.

NP: They interested me more than the so called feminine ones.

CO: What, um, so none of your daughters, to your knowledge, have had any experience of being discriminated against as…in the work force or…

NP: Have not ever heard any of them discuss it. I don't know. They're funny…

CO: Okay, alright. So, what to do think has been the legacy of the Women's Movement? Has it hurt or helped the cause.

NP: Oh I imagine it's helped. It must have. I mean I get terribly upset when I read about a woman and I … the one… the case that went all the way to the Supreme Court who felt that she had been discriminated against because she was a woman. She lost the case because she couldn't prove that was why. But, so far as I know, I don't have any work experience, except my little diddling working at the garden center, but so far as I know Blair, well Terry is a lawyer and I don't think she's discriminated against.

CO: She would see to it that she wasn't.

NP: Nanette would know if Terry was discriminated against.

CO: Yeah.

NP: I don't think you could discriminate against Nanette either, and we've got nurses. Two of my daughters-in-law are nurses.

CO: Ummhmm.

NP: And I don't know if they feel that they are…

CO: Thank god that profession is paid well now.

NP: They're doing alright. One of them, Scott's wife, the second one…I meant to say on our second marriages we've done great.

CO: Done better, okay.

NP: I love it, but Baily is in charge, I think, of the Emory Cardiac Clinic. She doesn't nurse in a hospital. She has her own place, across from the hospital, where she treats cardiac recoverers, and they exercise and they play. She is so absolutely wonderful that they all adore her, and we do too.

CO: Mmhmm.

NP: And Mark's wife is a cancer nurse specialist.

CO: That's got to be hard.

NP: I think it would be terribly hard.

CO: Yeah.

NP: She ought to quit.

CO: Well okay, I'm going to quit about the women, because I'm so unorthodox myself.

NP: I mean if you look at the Apostle's Creed, how on earth anybody in their right mind go for that.

CO: The Apostle's Creed, yeah okay. So it sounds like you don't like creeds at all?

NP: Well I can't think of any. I don't mind pledging allegiance, but I don't pay much attention to it more than any other. I think that's Quaker, isn't it? I don't think the Quakers like being told…

CO: The Creeds, right. I that's um, but before we go specifically to religion, could you identify the core value that has driven you most of your life? Certainly your life of any memory. What is your core value? This question I got of NPR.

NP: Do unto others as one would do…you would have do unto you. It's that simply.

CO: Okay.

NP: Put yourself in the other folk's place and try to behave…you would like them to behave to you. Hi Sweetheart.

CO: Look at that pretty girl. Hey, darling. Are you ready for your interview? Huh? Are you? Looks like you just had something to eat. Okay, you've already told me that religion was not all that important in your family. That you all went to church, but your mother didn't go, is that right?

NP: Oh, no. My father…let me see.

CO: Your father didn't go at all, because he was sort of an unbeliever.

NP: Mother, I don't know whether it was a guilty conscience or what, but once she went back into the Church, she became very generous to them and very concerned about them. And, as I said, she lived right next door to Christ the King, and because I suspect, very cynically, she was generous, I practically stumbled over a priest every time I came to see my mother.

CO: Oh my.

NP: They hung around Momma a lot and they were very fond.

CO: Now, do you think that your…your evolution into the Friends, was that in some way reaction to Catholic?

NP: It was a reaction to really any church that I had anything to do with. Part of my problem with churches, all of them except the Quakers is that I don't like being preached at.

CO: Oh okay.

NP: I just, a lot of times I sit there and think, "Well, why do I listen to this stuff." It's not that I violently disagree with any of it, but it's not important. I don't care. What gives him the right to tell me what to do?

CO: Yeah, okay.

NP: It's not liking being bossed.

CO: Okay, well can you, I mean I think I know a little bit about the Quakers, but can you tell me what are your beliefs, your spiritual, religious, whatever you want to call them?

NP: I don't know what, I believe that Christ was a great fellow and I believe in…I've got a book over there that just says Jesus's own words, and it's a very small book. And I know that even a lot of those are not what he really said. We don't know.

CO: Right.

NP: But from what I know, the things he preached were to help the poor, help the sick, and be kind. That's about it.

CO: So your religion is really to be kind and loving to fellow humans?

NP: That's it.

CO: Okay, alright.

NP: Do whatever you can to make other people happy. And I don't know if I've ever done it or not, this just the motivation. You do what you can, so you take somebody in who needs help. A lot of things just make me feel guilty, like the homeless. I go to bed, I think, "what am I doing with all those empty beds."

CO: Yeah.

NP: But I just can't make myself let anybody in.

CO: Right, right.

NP: And that's awful.

CO: Yeah. Well you've become a, what do you call it, a revolving door.

NP: Yeah, well we've, they've always been people I wanted, and people I agreed with. And sometimes when we took in daughters who were having troubles, that was okay. The funny thing is, it's not funny really, but for many years after Laura Turner left us, and she left because her father said come home we'll be alright, she would barely speak to us when we ran [into her] some[where]…you know if we met on a social occasion or even a do-gooder one. And I think I had it pegged right, that the time she had spent here, in spite of our best efforts, was not a happy time. I think it was lonely and she didn't know where she was going to go to college, and she wasn't a good student…

CO: Now is this Ted Turner's daughter?

NP: Hmm?

CO: Is this Ted Turner's daughter?

NP: Yes.

CO: And so you think she was simply…

NP: She just simply was trying to forget how she knew us or the period in which she knew us. She wasn't mean, she just didn't come up and speak.

CO: Yeah.

NP: But what's amazing is how much it has changed, and I'm not sure why. But now she's all over us when we go to a party she can't wait to rush up and greet us and kiss me…

CO: But you don't think it's just simply growing to the point where she comes to appreciate now what a sacrifice it was for you?

NP: I don't know whether that's it or not, but she is so, it's just almost embarrassing she's so nice. And the last time I saw her was at a South Face occasion, and she was the speaker. She is one of Atlanta's leading environmentalist, and she does very well, but she left her place at the speaker's table, in a huge room, to come down and give me a kiss and say, "you're looking beautiful, as usual." And I thought, "Great gosh, she's round the bend now. They better shut her up somewhere."

CO: Well what would you say is the most, and maybe you don't even believe in this at all, but maybe for you all moments are spiritual, but have you had what you would identify as spiritual moments or spiritual experiences.

NP: I never knew what that meant.

CO: Okay.

NP: And a long time ago I wrote most of what's in this book, a long time ago, and I submitted it to local publishers, Peach Tree Publishers, and they always wrote back very kindly and said, two or three of them, two, I only talked to two, said it was a spiritual or and they did appreciate it, but it didn't fit in to their format, they didn't need it. Of course the dumb thing about it was I submitted it with no pictures. If I'd used Britt's pictures they might have taken it in the first place. 'Cause as it is, Barnes and Noble has…well it, I wouldn't say I'm a best seller but we've sold a couple, several hundred of the books, and that has amazed me. I didn't think anybody would buy them.

CO: Well okay then in that case, they're equating naturalism with spirituality.

NP: That must be it.

CO: Yeah, that's not what I'm talking about though.

NP: I don't know what they mean, and I never have known. What is spiritual?

CO: Well, for me it would be like having an epiphany. You know, suddenly you… Quakers are big into this. She wants her ears rubbed. But you know, that being receptive to the light. This insight into whatever. Just insight.

NP: I don't know. I do know that finding beauty in nature, and I find it everywhere and it doesn't matter how small it is. That's wonderful. It makes me feel great inside, to look at anything beautiful. But I don't know if that's, I don't think that's spirituality. What was that?

CO: Well, it sounded like thunder, but doesn't look like…

NP: No, it isn't thunder. A door slamming or something.

CO: Well, but you see, I mean, that maybe people with a narrow definition of spiritual might say it's not, but in my book that would be very spiritual. I think that some people find God in nature.

NP: Well, that's exactly what I do.

CO: Yeah.

NP: To me, every plant that grows is a miracle. This is wonderful.

CO: Yeah.

NP: And if there's a God, he's the one who did it. And if there isn't, I don't know how they got there, but I'm grateful.

CO: Yeah, yeah. Well that answers that question for me.

NP: Good.

CO: So would you say that that's how if you get, do you ever get down? You have this eternal optimism.

NP: Isn't that awful.

CO: It isn't awful, it's wonderful. I just want to know how you do it.

NP: Well I really, I really never do. I am aware that I have been, the only thing wrong with me is I'm downright scared. I've been so fortunate for so long that I expect something to go wrong, just because it never has.

CO: Yeah, well that's, but that is a gift I think. But the wonderful thing about it is that you've done so much with it. You know…

NP: Well I've, I have been totally self-confident all my life. I've thought this is okay, if I want to try it it'll do. And, uh, sometimes it's really being silly. My sister was five years older, so she was fourteen when I was nine, and I…five years older…yeah she was fourteen, and she used to keep a scrapbook with poetry in it that she would cut out of magazines, women's magazines in particularly would have poetry and they and so I thought that was fun. And when I was nine years old I wrote a love soupy poem. "If you should ever tire of loving me, I'm sure that I'll know your love, Dear, has gone. Although, I'll never tire of loving you," and blah, blah I know it by heart after all these years and said I found this in a magazine and copied it, and Frances put it in her book, and I thought that was wonderful. I never told her I had written it, but when my Mother found out I had written it she thought, "God, is she crazy? What's the matter with this child? Who is she talking about?" I wasn't talking about loving anybody, I was copying the poems I'd read in Frances's book. But I thought now, how did a nine year old have the gall to even write a poem?

CO: But where do you think, was your sister or your brother that self-confident?

NP: I don't know. I think my brother was, but life led him so many dealt…he was…that I think he kind of knocked down.

CO: So, life was not as good to him as it's been to you?

NP: No, his…he was married. Married a girl, who I think really wanted to move to Atlanta more than anything else. They'd been to parties together, but I'm not sure she ever loved Bobby, and I think he loved her. But they were both very good Catholics, and so they stuck together. They only had one child, because Bunna turned out at the age of 26, I think, she had a hysterectomy, cause she had a whole lot of fibroid tumors, I think that's what you call them, and she couldn't have any more children. And she felt awful about it, and she wanted to adopt and Bobby didn't. Bobby said, "I love Robby," that was their son "I'm afraid if we adopted one I'd either overdo it trying not be partial, or I would continue being partial to Robby, so let's don't do that." And she gave way, but they'd been married 21 years, Robby had just graduated from Williams, and she left Bobby and told him he made her sick.

CO: Oh my.

NP: And so he was absolutely crushed and flabbergasted. Happened all at the same time as a whole other tale about business where he got, he had been the grandson of the president of the company and the son of the president of the company and he himself had worked there all his life after college, and he hired a fellow to be sales manager, who was very ambitious, and he wanted to be president of the company, and he fired Bobby and took over his job.

CO: Oh no, oh my gosh.

NP: Just fired him from the only job he'd ever had.

CO: Oh my gosh.

NP: And it was awful, but he became a financial counselor and money was never really was a problem. He always had that. And then he married a wonderful, wonderful girl and lived happily ever after. But it…

CO: Has he died?

NP: Yeah, he died just a couple of years ago. He was the one that died and I was almost grateful because I thought he'd wreck the car.

CO: Yeah.

NP: He was well into his 90s, and he had been very happy with…his second wife died of a lingering illness that I don't ever know what it was. But they loved each other very much and he was very happy, and all came back alright.

CO: How old was he when he met his second wife?

NP: What? What did you ask?

CO: How old was he when he met his second wife?

NP: Probably in his late 40s.

CO: Okay. So they lived a long time together?

NP: Yeah, he particularly did. She died in her early 80sI think, after a lingering illness. I never knew what it was, she just got weaker and weaker and she was bed ridden for quite a while.

CO: Well some people have said, there are a lot of studies now on aging and end of life and that sort of thing, and one…when they ask people what do they think has been the key to a happy life, and always in the top five, wherever the study is, always it's choosing the right partner. You know that that's…

NP: Yeah.

CO: They key to a happy life is having a right partner.

NP: Oh my gosh. Well I, Britt and I had known each other for so long, five years, and yet it was quite a sudden thing. I can remember almost the minute…we were driving along an old dirt road that used to run through his parents property, and I just suddenly thought, "If I don't marry him, life won't be worth living at all." That just, just that quickly. He'd been my best friend for a long time.

CO: So, how long after that…did you tell him that?

NP: I can't remember. I don't think I did. But he'd always made it clear that ever since he wrote the insulting letter when I was fifteen, that he loved me.

CO: That he knew he was going to ask. So when did he ask?

NP: I'm not sure he ever did. It was kind of…I don't know. We just all of the sudden knew we were going to get married. But he wouldn't marry until he had a job.

CO: Yeah, have you in all these years, how many years has it been now? Seven…?

NP: It'll be 72 in a couple of weeks.

CO: Wow, so have you ever had any trouble? Any hard times?

NP: No, the children have told me that that's made it tough, because they've never seen us really disagree about anything, they've never seen us fight. They used to think, some of them, we must've fought behind closed doors. The finally, oh no we didn't. We just always…

CO: To me that's a miracle.

NP: Yeah, it is I guess. But I think it's all the fact that he's so wonderful. Anybody would appreciate it.

CO: Well he just told me that about you when you were out of the room. So it's a mutual…

NP: No, I think he's more trouble than I do. I get very emotional about silly things sometimes, about unfairness. When I watch a basketball game…

CO: Uh huh.

NP: And we watch the Hawks play basketball, and I always think they're being discriminated against. I always want to strangle the referees. So he laughed about that. There's one of them that I especially don't like, players, I don't know why. He gets more fouls than any other and yet they keep on talking about how wonderful he is. I don't see what's wonderful. Britt said the other day, "if you ever forgave him, it would spoil half your fun in watching the game."

CO: Well, do you believe in an afterlife?

NP: I'm not sure, I'm afraid there isn't one, but on the other hand I can't imagine an everlasting paradise. I don't know what it would be like. And I can't believe that when I die I'll meet all the friends I had who've gone before. That's, so no, I don't really believe in one. I think you go to sleep and that's it.

CO: Mmm, okay alright.

NP: And the older you get, the less terrifying that prospect is. I'm not looking forward to it, but I'm not afraid of it either. I don't think I'll wake up in hell.

CO: Oh, well, there's something to be said for that. A lot of people say that they believe that hell is in this life. Well, okay, so you don't believe in an afterlife. Are you certain of anything?

NP: You mean about the afterlife?

CO: No, no about anything. Anything.

NP: Oh, I'm probably certain of everything. I think my mother said of me, "you've often been wrong, but never undecided."

CO: So you're certain, um, well can you just put words to that? You're certain of uh…

NP: I have found out, one thing, and this'll sound stupid too. My reaction to extreme stress, if I'm really worried about something, and so help me it hasn't, hasn't happened seldom, but when Nankin was 12, she had a dermoid carcinoma, a small tumor under her ear…

CO: mmhmm.

NP: And I was absolutely terrified. I knew it would take five years before I could figure she really was cured, they had removed the tumor right away. And Britt's brother was a cancer specialist, but I was so afraid when she was first diagnosed, my reaction was to be terribly sleepy. I almost couldn't stay awake, because in sleep I got away from it.

CO: Oh.

NP: I guess, I didn't know why it was, I just knew that I was very sleepy.

CO: Hmm, some people say that that's a sign of depression, but it sounds to me like you've never been depressed in your life.

NP: No, I haven't been depressed. This was just for that specific thing I thought good heavens.

CO: Have any of your children ever had any depression, or Britt? Has he ever been depressed?

NP: No, Britt has not. But, it does run in his family and we have been told recently that it tends to skip a generation, and I had never heard that before. I'm pretty sure his mother was depressed. They didn't have a word for it, but she was very gloomy.

CO: Right, they called it melancholia.

NP: Yeah, but Britt does not have it. Several of our children have not been depressed to the point, well mostly stress. Craig, and he didn't tell us at the time, but that during his law practice he'd suddenly feel I'm not on top of this. I don't know what to do with this case. And, he has taken medication for it. In fact I think several of the children have done so. Not all of them, but, and I remember poor Mark, when he was at Harvard and he married, oh god, I haven't gone into Maureen. He was riding on a plane, going into Cambridge, having visited brother John, who was married and lived in Toronto, and a very pretty girl sat next to him on the plane and they began to talk and she told him that she was, she had been accepted at Radcliff but had turned it down, and that she was a legal secretary, and she seemed to find him most attractive. He had just turned 19, and she said, uh, she invited him to dinner at her house or apartment, and he went and she asked him to spend the night. He had never done that before. And then two weeks later she told him she was pregnant and he had to marry her.

CO: Oh my goodness.

NP: And he's simple-minded fool, thought he was in love with her too. So, they married and it was…he didn't meet her until October and they married at Christmas. And, they had a daughter, and I finally, years and years later, asked Mark if he really believed that Blake was his daughter. He said, "I don't know. It doesn't matter." And he stuck it out for seven years. They had, but while he was…when he'd just married and she'd just told him she was pregnant and he was scared to death what would happen with…would we throw him out of the family? What he have to quit school? What? And he talked to this psychiatrist at Harvard and told him the situation. The psychiatrist said, "Nothing abnormal about that. If you weren't depressed in this situation you'd be crazy." Oh, he married her at Christmas time, a little bit before Christmas. We didn't go to the wedding. It was up in Massachusetts. They were married by her uncle, who was a priest. He's since quit the priesthood.

CO: A Catholic Priest?

NP: Uh huh, and Mark stuck with it, trying very hard to make a go of it, but she was absolutely mean. Her family was very, talk about screwed up. Her father was a principal of the high school where her brother was a pupil and he set fire to the school.

CO: Oh my goodness.

NP: And her 15 year old pregnant sister came to live with them for a while.

CO: Oh my goodness.

NP: She was one of eight children, and her mother told them that she never should have had all those children anyway.

CO: Is Blake one of the girls that…

NP: Blake's the one who started it all, and Blake has never come back. And nobody is particularly looking for her either.

CO: So she left Mark after seven years?

NP: No, Mark left her.

CO: Oh, okay.

NP: He finally filed suit for divorce after seven years.

CO: Oh ok.

NP: He in the meanwhile, they were living in Vermont. He had been teaching. He started teaching as soon as he finished Harvard, which he did in three years, so he was still very young. But, then he decided he wanted to write, and the meanwhile Maureen had definitely, well I forgot to tell you the most incredible thing, when they came home that Christmas, right after they married, she said, "you know, we don't have to stay together. If you'll just pay me $10,000, I'll go away and you'll never hear from me again."

CO: She told you that?

NP: Mmhmm.

CO: Oh my gosh.

NP: And we… we couldn't tell Mark that because he still thought she loved him and he loved her. That was the real tragedy of my life for a long time. The seven years he stuck it out and she was so loathsome.

CO: Did that make it difficult for you to accept Blake, the child?

NP: No, no it didn't. We didn't see her that much. As I got to know her I didn't have, I had difficulty accepting her, cause she was a nagger. She always wanted something. She always wanted money. When she was quite young.

CO: Hmm, oh my.

NP: And I don't know where she is now. She was smart. She did go to Radcliff, although her mother had lied like a rug about it. She'd never been anywhere near it. Her mother did, how did I know this? She had been living with another fellow. His name was Phillip, and they had just broken up. And when Mark met her on the plane, she was coming back from Ohio. She'd flown to visit a sister, or a friend, and was coming back home. And she must've told Mark about Phillip, because she didn't tell me and yet I knew about it. So I imagine it's Phillip's child. She'd discovered she was pregnant with.

CO: Whoa.

NP: Oh, it was awful.

CO: Would you say, because I have two questions, one about what was the best time of your life and then what was the most difficult time of your life.

NP: That was it.

CO: Would you say that those seven years with Mark being… was the hardest part?

NP: Yeah, definitely. No question at all.

CO: Okay, what about…well what would you consider the best time, the best years of your life?

NP: Oh golly, I don't know, most any of them. I had thought being, you know I figured boy by the time you're 90, it's over, and of course it isn't then. It's silly, having that book signing at Barnes and Noble and having them tell us later the man who had arranged it all with us also explained that he couldn't be there. I had just talked to him on the phone and he worked at Barnes and Noble and he said, "I'm going to be out of town, and I'm so sorry, but so-and-so will meet you." He did and they had set a place up and we filled all the chairs and spilled over. And when he came back home, we both talked a little, they wanted to know discussion. He came back and he said, "well, how are my new rock stars." And we thought that was kind of funny.

CO: Because it had sold so well?

NP: Yeah, I guess, and because we had spoken a lot. His friend had said we said the right things.

CO: Well, could you identify three important turning points in your life. Remember me saying…I think I said this last night, that I was looking for turning points. Could you identify three turning points?

NP: I'm not sure I recognized them too much, but when Britt left his job at Southern Cross and he was president of the company by then, but it was all the regional companies around were going broke.

CO: So you mean when he began to work for the state government?

NP: Well it was before that. It was when he left Southern Cross. He wasn't exactly fired. He submitted his resignation, because he could see the company was going broke after a hundred and one years.

CO: That, this was your father's company right?

NP: Yeah, my grandfather's.

CO: Your grandfather's company.

NP: And he, he lost his job, well I mean he retired, and I think they told him they were going to pay him half salary for a year. And by that time, Mark, I mean Craig, the youngest one, was in college and I remember being concerned. We still had Willie, the same maid we'd had for all those years. I thought oh my gosh will I be able to pay Willie the, I think it was $50 a week I was paying her, but, and I worried but I didn't want Britt to know I worried, and he never seemed to. But, before the year of the half salary was over, he'd gotten a job with the state, and that as he told you was so wonderful.

CO: Right right.

NP: He was so blessed. He had not liked being president anyway. He found it almost impossible to fire workers that he knew were not doing the job, but he didn't want to hurt anybody. And I did remember during his year as vice president, a manager generally, they had a vote. I don't know whether the union did it or not, but of the workers, and there were about 800 people working there, they asked them which of the executives they would most like to be like. And Britt won it going away. They all liked him.

CO: Wow, that's not surprising.

NP: No, I didn't think it was either.

CO: So that was a turning point.

NP: So that was a turning point, and it turned out to be an up, best turning point that ever happened to us, because he loved it.

CO: Yeah.

NP: And when he left, he left because he was by then 72 or something, I think.

CO: Whoa.

NP: He stayed a long time.

CO: You mean when he left the state job?

NP: Yeah.

CO: Oh okay, he was 72.

NP: I think that's right, I'm not sure.

CO: Okay.

NP: So that was a turning point. It was, as always it was real turning point when the first child got married. I just thought, my gosh, and she was going to live up north and I might not ever see her again.

CO: Was that Jill?

NP: That was Jill.

CO: Yeah.

NP: And that was very upsetting. We had, she married before she finished college, just as I had. So I couldn't kick up too much fuss about it. But, she had had a scholarship at Vassar and it was hard to see her turn her back on that. Oh, I, yeah those were…

CO: Well that's okay.

NP: That was about it. Mark and Jill getting married, and it wasn't nearly as bad as Mark getting married.

CO: Right, so how long between that divorce did he meet somebody else to marry?

NP: I can't remember, probably, I don't know. Not right away. Maybe eight or nine years. And Betty is wonderful, and she had had a miserable marriage, which she had gotten out of.

CO: Now, did they have children?

NP: No, they were, I think, she had three children.

CO: Oh ok.

NP: The first one, I didn't know this for years, the first one was by somebody who couldn't marry her because he was already married. And she had one daughter, and her father had a heart attack he was so upset and of course they, and died…

CO: Oh my.

NP: Right after this episode. And then she married somebody else and had two more children. And he's very much in the picture, he's a total bum. He's an English teacher too, but he lives nearby and when they have a party he's the first one there and the last one to leave.

CO: So they're connected because of the children?

NP: Yeah.

CO: Or the child?

NP: Yeah, oh yes. Evidently, I don't know, I guess he knew it wasn't his. I've never asked when the child was born or anything. It's a beautiful girl, and we love her.

CO: Um, if you could live your life over again, would you do anything differently?

NP: This is really smug, No. I think that's awful, but I can't think of anything I'd do.

CO: So, and do you have any regrets?

NP: No, I kind of have a feeling I should of somehow finished college somewhere, but I never did.

CO: But you don't feel a lot of regret around that?

NP: But I don't feel that I've lost a great deal. It would be nice to…I especially don't now that Vassar has been so kind to me and given me all the honors and said it didn't matter. I couldn't believe that.

CO: Yeah, yeah. Is there anybody you would like to make amends to? Anybody who's…you feel like has been hurt by something that you did or…

NP: Well, this is silly. We went on a trip when…and we took the four oldest children with us and left Blair and Scott. Craig hadn't been born yet. We went away for a couple of weeks and I asked Tidy, this much beloved governess of mine, if she should live at the house while we were gone. I'd keep the servants here so she wouldn't have to do that. By that time she was working at a doctor's office where she, when she left us she went to work for the Doctor to take care of his two young daughters, and they were grown up and she'd gone to work for…in his office. So it didn't interfere with her job. She had had a job, she just came and spent evenings here with Blair and Scott, who were very little. Four and two maybe something like that. And I never paid her. It never occurred to me. She didn't ask me to pay her anything, and I didn't. And I think I brought her home a present but she seemed like a member of the family and I don't…I really kind of…if I thought anything I thought it would be insulting if I'd offered her something. But, over the years I've worried about it. I should've paid Tidy. I don't know how much. She didn't seem to resent it at all.

CO: So did she come and do anything else for you after that?

NP: No, I never asked her again after that. We took all the kids if we were going anywhere.

CO: Yeah, okay. Has there been a single individual, or maybe even more than one who's changed your life. I know Britt is obvious.

NP: Walter White.

CO: Walter White. Okay. Alright I hadn't thought about that. That's a good one.

NP: Yeah.

CO: Um, what gives your life unity or purpose now?

NP: That I hope…greatest unity is that I can remain independent. I do not want to, as Britt and I both said, we don't want to be burdens to our children. And we feel so fortunate that we haven't been, so far. We know how miraculous that it.

CO: Right, right.

NP: I don't know how many people are married for 72 years, and able to take care of themselves, and do what needs doing.

CO: And so what inspires you? I think I know what you're going to say, but what is…

NP: Well, I…I hope I'll someday be good enough for Britt.

CO: So that inspires you to keep…

NP: That inspires me to keep trying.

CO: Ohhh.

NP: To try to think every day, now what can I do to make things more comfortable or happier for him? And I do. He's had a few physical problems, thank goodness none of them life threatening, but I really freak out if something's wrong with Britt.

CO: Right.

NP: I think…

CO: And so what are you proudest of in your life?

NP: Oh gosh.

CO: I don't mean that pride in the you know snotty since but…

NP: The family, I guess.

CO: Ok.

NP: I noticed in looking through the letters that there's one from Bill Emerson. There was an article about us a family in *Newsweek*, started out being particularly interested in education.

CO: Is it in there?

NP: Oh I'm sure it's in one of them, I'm not sure if it's in this one or not. But, Bill Emerson wrote us. He moved on from being with *Newsweek* to being the editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*. And he wrote very nice letter, later on. Asking said, "I think about the children and I enjoyed so much my stay with you all, and I wonder what they're all doing? I predicted at the time they'd all be successes. And that made me feel pretty good. So I guess, if I have a pride, it's that they've all been successes.

CO: Right, right.

NP: I wouldn't change anything about what they've done.

CO: Yeah.

NP: Yeah, they care about each other and they're very caring and kind to us, and yet thank god they don't treat us as if we're idiots or young children. And they, Scott in particular, still calls and asks for advice about how to handle his job particularly. He doesn't need to because he wouldn't mess it up anyway, but dealing with all the clients and all the stores that he manages.

CO: How would you like to be remembered or what do you want your legacy to be?

NP: Hmm, my gardens. That's the only thing that worries us. When we aren't here, what to do about the house? Because we can't leave them, any of them enough for one person to buy this house, anyway, they wouldn't have enough money at today's value, and how do we do it? I know that I want Scott to have it, because Scott cares about the grounds and knows every bit of it as we do. But he certainly won't ever be earning enough to buy all his brothers and sisters out. And, a low guess is that the place is worth about a million and a half.

CO: Right.

NP: And that's more than any of them could suddenly fork over, and I don't know what we'll do about that.

CO: Yeah.

NP: We have, in our will have said we would hope that somehow it could remain in the family, but we're not telling them how, and of course if…

CO: Do you make it clear that you would like Scott to have it for the reasons you explained?

NP: No, I haven't talked to anybody about that. I don't know. They might explain [understand?], they might think I'm nuts. But, of course, they very, thank goodness they're all self-supporting. But as you guessed, the lawyer is the richest of them.

CO: Certainly not the one who's writing books.

NP: No, oh no, even he has been terribly lucky. It's not so much the books sales now… He never knows how much they sell. He says he gets a royalty sometimes.

CO: Right.

NP: But the Epidemic Intelligence thing was a grant of $250,000.

CO: Whoa.

NP: He did a lot of traveling. He went to Africa and…but the grants have been nothing that he expected, but they happened.

CO: Yeah.

NP: And that none of them have ever been that high before, probably never will again.

CO: That's huge.

NP: Yeah it seemed huge to us.

CO: But the book has done well?

NP: I think it has. Mostly, well when he went to talk to the Epidemic Intelligence service reunion, which happens once a year, he took along five hundred books and sold them all out and didn't…

CO: Oh my gosh. That's incredible.

NP: It is, seemed to me. I don't know how many people were there.

CO: That is incredible.

NP: And it moves onward and upward. He also, for that book, had a book signing at the Carter Center, nice enough to let him do that. And there's a nice guy there, who really has read the books. And, we were there, of course, to hear him. And I liked him very much. I've never been prouder of him, because he didn't just stand up and talk about his book. He hauled the whole audience into it. He asked how many people work for EIS and where they'd all gone and what they'd done. And it was very comfortable.

CO: Is there anything your children don't know about you? I mean I know they know you well. But is there anything they don't know about you that you wish they did?

NP: I don't think so. I'm afraid I talk so much they know every thought I've had, when I've had it…They were, they're extremely kind and fond and affectionate. I feel very, very lucky.

CO: Well this is a silly question.

NP: When I look at the five children's families, the three of them that made me want to have five children and they're all great people, but they're none of them now that the five children are grown up or they all . . . they've had difficulties, nothing that was their own fault. A lot of illness and in several cases deaths.

CO: Yeah.

NP: And I just again feel so fortunate that I can't think of anything I wouldn't ???1: 08.

CO: Was there any…

NP: It's been fun to see, but I'm sure, good Lord…

CO: I've got one more question.

NP: Oh.

CO: People hate this question, and you don't have to answer it, but what would you title the story of your life?

NP: Hmmm, Big Mouth.

CO: No, no, no.

NP: Oh my gosh I can't imagine.

CO: Well you could certainly play off your love of your gardening.

NP: Yeah.

CO: You don't have to come up with anything.

NP: No, I really cannot think of anything. I'll ask Britt what we ought to call it. I can't really think of my life as separate from his.

CO: Right, that's right.

NP: I just think about our life and he's wonderful with the plants too.

CO: Well you can think about this, and our paths are going to have to cross again, because I really don't have the time to get all the stuff that I want. I will try to make.