

**Transcription of Conversation between Dr. Catherine Oglesby  
And Louise Tennent Smith, taken March 4, 2012**

By: Jake Graffeo

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Catherine Oglesby: ...Keep my eye on this thing because...

Louise Tennent Smith: Um-kay

**CO**...This day, um, conscious of electronics, yeah...

LTS: Electronics absolutely puzzle me to death.

**CO**: Well, this is so simple, it should be idiot proof but I can often mess it up. OK, I am, we are, today in Columbus, I am at 541 Broad Way with Louise Tennent Smith, and she has already told me a good bit but she has...vowed to tell me more, um, so, we'll just get started and have no idea where we'll go, we'll just, um, we'll do the best we can to stay on track but no promises. So, Louise, um, you were about to tell me about your infancy but before you do that, uh, or your childhood, may I ask you what's the first thing you remember, um, as a child?

LTS: (short pause)...Well, I had an abdominal operation at the age of three, and the first thing I remember is being what I thought of as a table with wheels, being wheeled into a great big room and a lot of people sitting up on a balcony looking down and um, I was three, had an intestinal blockage, and I said later I remember all that; Mother said you couldn't, you were three. Well, I described the room where I was in the hospital, I said my bed was here, your bed was there, the window was there, the door was there. She said "My Lord, you do remember." That's the first thing I remember.

**CO**: And that was three?

LTS: Uh-hm.

**CO**: Wow. That's a pretty vivid memory for three.

LTS: Yeah, it's pretty bad, but I don't have a bad feeling for hospitals. My aunt was supervisor of nurses at Emory, and I had an uncle who was a doctor on staff, so, I don't remember it badly; I feel comfortable in hospitals.

CO: Well, that's a good thing, I would say. Um, before I ask you to describe yourself as a child, let me just say again something that is, um...

LTS: I'm having a hard time hearing and you've got your hand in front of you.

CO: ...Yeah, OK, um, something that is important in your identity, which is maybe among the first things you told me when we talked about being a fourth-generation Atlantan, which is something I am very interested in, so, I just want say...

LTS: I have a little story to tell about that if you'd like to hear it?

CO: I'd be delighted, yes.

LTS: My grandfather told me that his father took him into downtown Atlanta one day, and he said, "Son, you see those men in blue over there?" And my grandfather said, "Yes sir." He said, "Those are Yankees, stay away from 'em, they were occupation troops." And until the day he died, "Damn Yankee" was one word, to my grandfather. And his second daughter, my Aunt Frances, married one, ooooh...

CO: Horrors...

LTS: ...and he took her off to New York and subjected her to a life of absolute luxury.

CO: Oh, wow.

LTS: Poor thing.

CO: Yeah. So this was in Reconstruction? Must have been...?

LTS: Yes, my grandfather saw...

CO: Wow, what a story. So, did he tell you that himself?

LTS: Yes, he told me.

**CO:** Wow. So did you tell him...

LTS: He said, "My father told, took me into downtown Atlanta; they were occupation troops."

**CO:** Wow. Did...did, you're a writer, did you write them, have you written these stories out?

LTS: No I haven't, isn't that terrible?

**CO:** It is, yeah.

LTS: I may have somewhere; I think I've got something I wrote (rustling in background), uh, something. I started a, an autobiography and I may have it here somewhere, I'll just check and see. I should of, because the history from the other side of the family.

**CO:** And who was that?

LTS: The Tennents. I'm the product of 200 years of...

**CO:** So you....

LTS: ...Presbyterian preachers.

**CO:** Yes, I know about the Tennents when I was doing Colonial History, I remember the sermons of the ...

LTS: Yes.

**CO:** So that's your family?

LTS: Yes.

**CO:** Wow.

LTS: Yes, William Tennent really founded Presbyterianism in this country. They were driven out of Scotland by the Catholics...and came over here and won the American Revolution.

**CO:** Well, those sermons are the ones I did my Master's Thesis on.

LTS: Really?

**CO:** Yes, it is. I was looking at the influence of the clergy on the, in the South on the Revolution, and remember the Tennents, wow.

LTS: Yeah, those are my people.

**CO:** So you are writing an autobiography or is this something...when did you do this?

LTS: I don't remember. I started writing it and what was I supposed to be looking up?

**CO:** Uh, what were you supposed to be looking up? You were, oh, I asked you if you had written about the story that your grandfather told, uh, told you about his father taking him into Atlanta and seeing the Yankee soldiers, and about "Damn Yankee" being one word.

LTS: I may not have...(pause, rustling of papers)...I'm, I'm remem...ah...(pause, more rustling of papers)...I'm descended from the Kay's of South Carolina, the Byrds of Virginia, and the Tennents. Got some nice background, some good, got some good genes.

**CO:** (laughs). You do. Well, so, is that a full, a completed autobiography that your sitting there holding?

LTS: Mmmmm, not really, I guess. I don't know.

**CO:** And have you, are you, planning...

LTS: It's just memories.

**CO:** Right, but are you planning to try and publish that?

LTS: Oh heavens, I don't think anybody would want to read my...

**CO:** Well, you, you, you, uh, well, let, I would want you to tell me as much as you're willing to tell me about your (ahem), your occupation

as a writer, but before we get to that, just, back to your childhood, could you describe yourself as a child?

LTS: I was adorable.

**CO:** You were adorable?

LTS: Yes.

**CO:** OK.

LTS: No question about it. I had blonde, curly hair. I was the first grandchild on either side of the family...

**CO:** mmm...

LTS: ...and all the relatives lived in Atlanta, and uh, until the day the last, the eldest person died, older than I, and I became the oldest member of either side of the family, they used to say to each other, "Well, 'Weese' [Louise] says, that was me," as if I knew what I was talking about.

**CO:** (laughs) So, you were being quoted.

LTS: I had a charmed childhood, it really was. I was adorable. I almost died when I was three, and uh....

**CO:** That, uh, the surgery you were talking about a few minutes ago?

LTS: Uh-huh. And uh, when we came back from Cuba, as I said, the grandparents were horrified because when I didn't want to do something, I'd say "Mas tarde," and they'd say, "The child doesn't even speak English," you know.

**CO:** So you were, you were the oldest of 3 three children?

LTS: Yes.

**CO:** You have two siblings. How much, when was your brother born?

LTS: Well, when I was five, my brother was born and ruined my life...

**CO:** Yes, of course. So, he was born in '33?

LTS: Yes.

**CO:** And, and then, ah, well, was it relief for your sister, then, to be born to ruin his life?

LTS: No, actually, the two of us worked on it, because she, she would cry and I would pick on him.

**CO:** Ah. Now, when was she born?

LTS: She was born in 1939.

**CO:** OK, so she, you were 11 years older...

LTS: Yes.

**CO:** ...than she. OK, so, you were adorable, how would you, um, what about those two? He ruined your life, um, what was he like?

LTS: He was adorable. He had black curly hair and great big brown eyes. And my grandmother Cooper, mother's mother, who had lost, ahem, two sons, I won't go into that, but anyway...just absolutely adored him. I mean, he was just, you know. She and I fought...all the time. She was an elegant woman...

**CO:** This is your grandmother?

LTS: Yes.

**CO:** You fought with your grandmother?

LTS: I did.

**CO:** OK.

LTS: She would tell me that my father was a selfish man, and I would, I remember being this high and stomping my foot and yelling at her, "He is not."

**CO:** Um-hm. Was she teasing you or was she...

LTS: Oh no, no, she was dead serious.

**CO:** Oh. She didn't like your father?

LTS: No.

**CO:** No.

LTS: He was, he was not good enough for mother...

**CO:** hmmm.

LTS: They sent her on a cruise to Hawaii to get her away from him...

**CO:** uh-huh.

LTS:... but obviously it didn't work.

**CO:** Was this before or after they were married?

LTS: This was before.

**CO:** OK, they didn't want her to marry.

LTS: Yeah.

**CO:** OK.

LTS: I have to show you something. You see right here (rustling of papers)...step with me...

**(RINGING OF CLOCK CHIMES IN BACKGROUND)**

**CO:** You know, I did not, um, I didn't probably didn't say it but I would like photos if you have some...

**(NOISE OF RUSTLING OF RECORDING MACHINE)**

**CO:** ...Of you? At whatever stage you want to share.

LTS: These are my grandmother's opera glasses...

**CO:** Oh my.

LTS: Her, uh, and, honey, her lornettes when she used them. Who are all these dreadful people? Ha ha.

**CO:** Wow.

LTS: Her crystals, you know. May I offer you something to drink? I have not been ...or a glass of wine, or a Coca-Cola?

**CO:** I won't have wine this early, but, actually, uh, water?

LTS: We'll go upstairs and look all around.

**CO:** I will do that before I leave.

**(NOISE FROM MOVEMENT)**

LTS: This is a wonderful house, as I said. When the, uh...

**CO:** Is this you? No, this is your mother.

LTS: That's mother.

**CO:** Yes.

LTS: This is, Mrs. Cooper, the one with the lornnetts Mother's mother. My sister...great grandmother...this is the house they lived in in Macon. Let's see, that would be the...what Coat of Arms is that? Is that the Byrd Coat of Arms? Yeah, and the Thornton Coat of Arms, and the Cooper.

**CO:** Oh my goodness. Now, who is this?

LTS: That's mother and my sister and my brother...

**CO:** And you were where?

LTS: In college.

**CO:** hmmm. It looks like, um, its looks like it, you know, it looks like a '50s sitcom, ha, or a '40s sitcom, perhaps.

LTS: Doesn't it, doesn't it? My brother again...

**CO:** Oh, he's...

LTS: Grandfather, great-grandfather...



**CO:** hmm...(pause), I love this little, um, "Age improves with wine."

LTS: Haha, that's... [GARBBLED BECAUSE OF MICROPHONE BEING MOVED, 54:58]. A wine and whine group sounds great.

**CO:** Yes, it is, it is. (pause)...And here's your office right here. How cool!

LTS: Yep.

**CO:** Are you writing something currently, are you working on something? Do you have a writing project?

LTS: No I haven't, and I've been really bored and one of my friends said, "Well you idiot, write something." And I thought, yeah, that's probably a good idea.

**CO:** Oh, it would be a good idea.

LTS: But, I loved working in a newsroom, and I am so bored that I have offered to work for free for *Columbus in the Valley*.

**CO:** (laughs) Aw.

LTS: Isn't that pitiful?

**CO:** Well, um...

LTS: Mike Venable, you know, has Cancer, I don't know if you knew that.

**CO:** No.

LTS: Well of course you wouldn't know that, would you?

**CO:** I don't stay abreast of Columbus News but maybe I should.

LTS: But he is such a wonderful guy, and...

**CO:** So you, you, does this mean that you have a column, do you have a column in the paper?

LTS: No.

**CO:** No.

LTS: No. I did have, but (pause), I had a couple columns, but...

**CO:** And when was this?

LTS: Well, let's see, I retired from the paper in 1993... and...retirement ain't all it's cracked up to be, let me tell you.

**CO:** Well, I have a whole section on retirement so, you can, it's all going to overlap, I'm sure. But, um, well, OK, back to your childhood. Will you describe your parents, your father and your mother?

LTS: Well, I absolutely was blessed with wonderful parents, and I don't know how to describe them except to say that Daddy in Atlanta was always what they called "visitor's man." I've got a pic..., he was so attractive, he could dance, he could play bridge. And, I've got a picture of him reared up on a horse in the middle of a stream, he played Polo with the Horse Guard.

**CO:** Oh my goodness.

LTS: He, um, he just was dashing.

**CO:** I would love to see those pictures, we'll get them when we stop if you...

LTS: If I can find them, I can't...I've got a picture of Mother with Margaret Mitchell, they were friends.

**CO:** Oh my!

LTS: They worked, were in the Ad Club, they were founders of the Ad Club in Atlanta, and uh...so... there is so much I could tell you that I'm really going to bore you to death...

**CO:** No.

LTS: ...so you better ask me questions.

**CO:** No, oh, well...

LTS: My mother was a writer...

**CO:** What did she write?

LTS: Advertising copy. She wrote for the old, probably you never heard of it, Davison Chamberlain Dubose Johnson, an advertising company. And she wrote for Davis and Paxon, she was also, I think she was probably a, uh, buyer there at one time.

**CO:** Uh-hm.

LTS: An old...I got so mad the other day, somebody called it Paxon Davisons, but anyway. They obviously didn't know Atlanta, and uh, we lived, because we came back from Cuba in the middle of the Depression, there were no jobs, we lived first with one set of grandparents, the Coopers, who lived on Piedmont, caddy-cornered across from the driving club, and then with the other set of grandparents who lived on the Prado, a few blocks away. I remember I got mad one day and I was, had reached from Piedmont Avenue, I had already reached 14<sup>th</sup> Street on the sidewalk when mother flying after me in her negligée right there on Piedmont, please! She said, "Where do you think you are going?" I said, "I'm running away from home!"

**CO:** Uh-oh! How old were you?

LTS: Pretty little, probably about 5.

**CO:** Oh my goodness.

LTS: And, um, I was going to my other grandparents' house on the Prado, you see.

**CO:** This was on Piedmont?

LTS: Uh-huh.

**CO:** Oh gosh.

LTS: Well, that, they, the one set of grandparents lived there and we were living with them and um, the other set lived on the Prado, so I was hell-for-leather for the one on the Prado, and mother, I remember, she, right on Piedmont Avenue in her negligée, she snatched me back in and said, "No

you're not!," you know. But anyway, my father was...most attractive. Um, he was not suitable for my mother according to my grandparents, her parents. So they sent her on a cruise to Hawaii where she almost got a tattoo on her shoulder and learned to love ginger. She was going to get a little butterfly...fortunately she decided against it.

**CO:** I did not know that, um, that, that women, um, in all my reading about women of her generation, I did not know that they were ever tempted by tattoos, but I am delighted to know that they were, and that she was, perhaps, going to get one on her shoulder...

LTS: Uh-huh.

**CO:** ...of a butterfly?

LTS: Uh-huh.

**CO:** I just love that story.

LTS: Isn't that fun?

**CO:** It is, it is.

LTS: Well, mother was never....her mother tried to get her to dress in ruffles and....that sort of thing, and she just never did want to do that. And, uh, I said, "Oh, B-mother," meaning her mother, really knew how to do it. I mean, she used to give bridge parties, and each table was centered with a magnolia, and mother said, "yeah, and who do you think had to shimmy up those dirty trees to get the magnolias?" And when she gave me a, a little brunch after a pool party, while I was in college, I said, "Oh mother, B-mother really knows how to do it. She had, the bacon was curled and the butter was curled, and mother said 'yeah, and who do you think was in the kitchen curling the butter and the bacon?' you know."

**CO:** Your mother was?

LTS: Yeah, yeah.

**CO:** And she didn't enjoy it, obviously?

LTS: No, mother was, was...never fit into the mold that her mother wanted her to be in.

**CO:** So she was not domestic? She didn't, didn't, or she didn't enjoy being domestic?

LTS: Mother and I learned to cook at the same time...

**CO:** Oh.

LTS: ...when I was 13.

**CO:** OK.

LTS: I said, "Oh, isn't this fun, mother? We are learning to cook together." Mother said, "Yeah." Uh, that was during the war, in Jacksonville. We'd always had a cook in the kitchen until WWII.

**CO:** Well, your sister was just 2...if you were 13. So, so your mother was learning to cook because of necessity, she wasn't...

LTS: It was during the Second World War...

**CO:** Yeah.

LTS: ...and it was the first time we hadn't had a cook. They had all gone to work in the shipyards.

**CO:** Yeah.

LTS: Mother was menopausal, giving herself shots, I remember. For the first time having to put meals together...

**CO:** Oh my.

LTS: ... I don't know how she did it. ... And still volunteering, she was president of the PTA at my school and so forth, was a wonderful woman.

**CO:** Now, um, so obviously she was educated? Your mother was educated?

LTS: Oh, yes. She was a graduate of the University of Richmond.

**CO:** Ok, alright. And why University of Richmond, did she say?

LTS: Well, we're descended from the Byrds of Virginia...

**CO:** OK

LTS: ...William Byrd, of Westover on the James River.

**CO:** Good heavens. I need a family tree...

LTS: Oh, that's easy.

**CO:** Is that easy?

LTS: Oh yeah.

**CO:** OK.

LTS: I go all the way back to Scotland.

**CO:** Well...if you have such a thing available I would love to have a copy of it. We'll wait, trust me, I won't forget that. Um, I will...definitely...that will help.

LTS: Um, I'm descended from William Byrd of Virginia, the Tennents of Scotland, who came over here when the Catholics ran us out of Scotland. We came over here and won the American Revolution.

**CO:** Yes, you did.

LTS: Yes.

**CO:** So, um, we're deeply indebted to you, ha ha ha.

LTS: Yes indeed. Well, look at it this way: I always, I say: If you're a man and you wear a skirt, you have to be able to fight. There are the Scots, the Turks, and the Greeks. I rest my case.

**CO:** Ha ha, ok. Um, well, what, ok, your parents were, um, your father, very handsome, became an engineer...

LTS: He was, yes, he was a Chemical Engineer, graduate of Georgia Tech.

**CO:** And your mother, um?

LTS: Graduated from the University of Richmond.

**CO:** ... and was a writer. What, what would you say... is that what influenced ... how did your two parents influence you, what do you think was their biggest influence on you?

LTS: My genes.

**CO:** Ok. But you're a writer, you became a writer, so do you think you were, did you appreciate

LTS: Well, my grandfather was in the printing and engraving business, and his father was a ... during the Civil War he was, a, uh, ran a newspaper. I mean, it just kind of came down, I guess. We're writers.

**CO:** It's in your blood.

LTS: And when I was in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and some..., I mean the 1<sup>st</sup> grade, somebody said, "What are you, when you grow up, what are you gonna be?" I said a writer.

**CO:** ...You knew it then?

LTS: Yeah.

**CO:** Did you, were you...

LTS: I always know things. I have . . . uh . . . (audible gasps)

**CO:** ... I am definitely interested in that. We, I have a section on religion and spiritual values and spiritual experiences, so...

LTS: Well, I have . . . I know things. I know things. I knew when I had cancer, I knew when I was cured, I know things. I knew one time . . . late, driving home in Miami from a place I had been, it was late at night on a lonesome road, 'cause we lived in the country. I knew I was going to be sideswiped... and so I jerked my two right-hand tires off the road just as somebody came up from behind and sideswiped me.

**CO:** Hm.

LTS: It would have been a terrible blow, had not done that, and, uh, I just, I know things.

**CO:** Hm.

LTS: That's . . . weird, but I do know things.

**CO:** Well, I understand how you and Lynn [Willoughby] were good buddies, were attracted to each other as friends. So, your, your parents, uh, did you say specifically how you thought each of them influenced you?

LTS: . . . (Pause, no answer)

**CO:** Your genes, that you, they've given you strong genes.

**--RINGING OF BELLS IN BACKGROUND--**

LTS: ...And loving parents, they loved each other very much, and they loved us, and um . . . I just simply grew up in the middle of puddles of love: grandparents, aunts, uncles, it was wonderful, 'cause everybody was in Atlanta, and, ah . . . I was the first grandchild of either side of the family and obviously spoiled rotten.

**CO:** So, um, about your extended family, then, you didn't have a lot of cousins . . . early? How many siblings did your parents, each of your parents have?

LTS: Well, 5 years later they had my brother and 5 years after that my sister.

**CO:** No, no, I mean, how many did they have?

LTS: Oh, I see. Alright, Daddy had two sisters, and, um . . . mother . . . had two brothers and a sister. Unfortunately . . . her, the wonderful one, Thorton, who was a graduate of VMI, committed suicide in New York over gambling debts.

**CO:** Oh my.



LTS: He was a big gambler, and . . . anyway . . . The second, her second brother was lost also, too, he's, uh, paranoid schizophrenic before he died. And her sister, **Frances**, inherited, unfortunately, Polycystic Kidney Disease, which ran in the family. She died, both of her children, my first cousins, died of the same disease. Fortunately, it did not come down to me, to mother, or to me.

**CO:** So, the sort of solidness that you describe your mother having . . . was not, um, it didn't, it didn't . . . it's not something that her siblings obviously had, the way you described them. So she really was . . .

LTS: She was the first born . . .

**CO:** Ok . . .

LTS: . . . and the two sons, as I told you, one committed suicide and the other's paranoid, was paranoid schizophrenic. The, uh, her sister inherited the family kidney disease, as did both of her children, and they all died of it. Mother . . . never inherited that, and um, so we don't have a large extended family. Now, on Daddy's side, he had two sisters, and um, each of them had a couple of children.

**CO:** . . . and did you know them, your cousins, well? (Ahem)

LTS: I'm sorry, I'm . . .

**CO:** Did you know your cousins well? His, his sister's children?

LTS: No, because we were not living in Atlanta. We were living . . . Daddy was with Ethel Corporation, and was moved around from pillar to post, basically. I mean, we lived in . . . I graduated from high school in Jacksonville, Florida, we lived in Scarsdale, New York, Houston, Texas, you know, it was, it was, uh . . .

**CO:** How long did you live in New York?

LTS: Hmm, I was in college at the time . . . probably just about a year. And Daddy said to them, "Now listen, I'm very happy to be, have a job with the Ethel Corporation, but don't ever move me north of the Mason-Dixon

Line again, I don't like it up there." And I remember, when we were first at Scarsdale, the children around there would make me talk to them all the time because they wanted to hear the accent, and it just irritated the fool out of me, but anyway.

**CO:** So what about Houston, how old were you when you lived in Houston?

LTS: I didn't like Houston, it was, it's not much of a place. It's got all the disadvantages of a coastal region without the advantages of the sea breeze and the . . .

**CO:** Yeah, yeah.

LTS: It's just a great big ol' ugly town.

**CO:** Was it when you were there, was it, like, a hospital "Mecca" that it is today? It seems like all of a sudden . . .

LTS: I don't know. I was in college and not spending a great deal of time in Houston. Um, I was in North Carolina . . . I'm a graduate of Duke University, and um . . . nah, I never really cared for Houston.

**CO:** Yeah, well, well, I can understand why. What is, um, what was your mother's relationship like to her mother? Did they get along well?

LTS: Oh yes. Yeah, B-mother was a mess; she and I fought, as I said, from the time I was that high.

**CO:** What, did she pick on you about something besides your father?

LTS: No.

**CO:** No.

LTS: I was just wonderful other than that.

**CO:** Oh.

LTS: We just, we just fought about that.

**CO:** Oh . . . were you, uh, were you defensive of your father?

LTS: Oh yeah.

**CO:** That's why you fought with her.

LTS: Oh yeah. He, she would say, "He is a selfish man," and I would say, "He is NOT!" And when I needed refuge I would run into the kitchen where Lizzy was in charge, and when I ran into the kitchen to Lizzy I was in total protection.

**CO:** Who was Lizzy?

LTS: Lizzy was the general factotum.

**CO:** Oh.

LTS: And if Lizzy got mad, she would throw pots and pans around the kitchen and shout, not loud enough to be directing her shouts at the white folk, you see, but loud enough to be heard, so I was protected there. And I used to run down the alley in back of the house to Grizzard's Grocery Store and charge lollipops until I was informed that I was not to do that. But, it was, it was a wonderful life. Lizzy was my protector, and uh...

**CO:** Do you think you and your mother had a relationship similar to your mother and her mother? Or was it, ahem, how was it different?

LTS: I don't really know. Um, because we didn't live in Atlanta, you know.

**CO:** Uh-huh.

LTS: After I was a certain age we lived other places, but, um . . .

**CO:** Were you siblings born in Atlanta?

LTS: My brother was. My sister was born in Birmingham when we were living there, and uh . . .

**CO:** Wow, you have, you did live around as a child.

LTS: Oh yeah. I've lived in a *lot* of places.

**CO:** How'd your mother adjust to that, moving?

LTS: She was just incredible.

**CO:** Hmm.

LTS: She always adjusted.

**CO:** Hmm.

LTS: And she . . .

**CO:** Did she work everywhere outside the home? Did she . . .

LTS: Ah, no. Now in Atlanta, she was, um, she had a radio show. She was Enid Day for Davison-Paxon. She was, of course, a writer. She wrote advertising copy. Um, and she did work outside of the home. She had a job also, I think, in Birmingham, when we lived there, at a department store, or maybe that was where she was Enid Day, a radio personality for the store.

**CO:** What store?

LTS: Davison-Paxon, in Atlanta. And um . . .

**CO:** And what was the radio program?

LTS: I don't know, I was pretty young, and she was Enid Day. . .

**CO:** Spell that for me.

LTS: E-N-I-D.

**CO:** Enid. Day.

LTS: Yeah.

**CO:** That was her radio persona? And, so, you don't remember what that was . . .

LTS: Nahh.

**CO:** OK.

LTS: Mother just went to work, and when she came home, you know . . .

**CO:** OK. But she would have been known . . .

LTS: She was also a buyer for Davisons at one time. And, uh . . maybe Enid Day was in Birmingham, you know I just can't remember.

**CO:** That's alright. So that, she was in media, most of her working life, anyway?

LTS: Well, she was in advertising.

**CO:** Ok.

LTS: She was a buyer for Davisons at one time.

**CO:** So she was fashion-conscious?

LTS: Oh, yeah.

**CO:** Ha, ok.

LTS: She, uh . . . she didn't really care for it, but she knew . . .

**CO:** Hmm . . . she didn't care for it?

LTS: Well, she did not buy the latest things . . .

**CO:** Hmm.

LTS: . . . that was . . .

**CO:** For herself?

LTS: No.

**CO:** Hmm.

LTS: She was classic.

**CO:** Hmm, ok.

LTS: I think that's why she taught me it was pretty . . . never . . . basically said it, but I feel, you know, if you buy classic clothes they are good forever.

**CO:** Uh-hm.

LTS: You know, I'm wearing stuff that I wore 20 years ago.

**CO:** Are you really?

LTS: Yeah.

**CO:** And, did, have, size-wise, have you stayed . . .

LTS: Oh I have been up and down. Ovarian cancer was the greatest diet I was ever on. I lost 41 pounds.

**CO:** Wow. And when was that?

LTS: Let's see . . . (clinking of glasses) . . . you know, I don't remember. I kinda put it out of my mind. [Drink spilled] There's a little fierce dog.

**CO:** He is, he is, and very loyal I can see.

LTS: (speaking to dog) Go lick it up, dog. What's the matter with you?

**CO:** Ha ha. Ok . . . I'm not sure what . . . um, well, ok . . . do you, if I ask you what's the most memorable or most significant thing that happened to you as a child up to about the age 12, what would you, what comes to mind?

LTS: . . . Well, of course, the operation . . .

**CO:** At three?

LTS: . . . at the age of three, yeah.

**CO:** Because you remember that?

LTS: I do.

**CO:** Yeah. Do you think you actually remember it, or when did you tell your mother all of those details about when you came out of the . . .

.

LTS: I don't know, I may have been grown up by then, but I do recall, I recall being rolled into that room of, people up there, because, of course, they were seeing a child being operated on who was supposed to die anyway, so we might as well operate. And, um . . . I suppose those memories, and the hospital room, with my bed, mother's bed, the door, the window.

**CO:** Now, you told me about that, the recorder wasn't on to start with. Will you run it back by me, what it was you had surgery for?

LTS: A blocked intestine.

**CO:** Ok. They thought, so, did they, were you not supposed to survive the surgery?

LTS: I wasn't supposed to survive period, so they thought they would go ahead and operate.

**CO:** Ok. Wow.

LTS: And I fooled everybody.

**CO:** Ha. And, ah, with memories to boot.

LTS: I remember I wouldn't eat, and my father sitting by my bed with a little truck full of tiny Coca-Cola bottles, and he would open those bottles one at a time and I would sip them, and I swear that's what saved my life. I would not eat and they didn't have all the wonderful, you know . . .

**CO:** Yeah, yeah.

LTS: . . . stuff then.

**CO:** Now, the Coca-Cola bottles, were those part of that, were they, like, that?

LTS: Little tiny.

**CO:** Yes, yes. I think I remember. That was . . . (ice clinking in glass) . . . a toy, wasn't there a toy?

LTS: I don't know, it was a little truck and it had these little bottles and he would patiently open them one by one and I would sip them.

**CO:** I do remember, I remember . . .

LTS: Yeah.

**CO:** . . . such a thing. Wow. And you're convinced it was the Coca-Cola that . . .

LTS: Yeah.

**CO:** Ok. Well . . .

LTS: So I bought Coca-Cola stock, it was a good idea.

**CO:** Ha ha ha. I can see why. What were some of your struggles as a child? It seems like you had a pretty ideal childhood, with . . .

LTS: I did.

**CO:** But, were, do you recall struggling, except with your grandmother fight about your father, do you recall any struggles?

LTS: . . . no.

**CO:** No.

LTS: My life was just fine until, as I said, I was five and my brother came along and ruined my life.

**CO:** Ok, but now, that's a struggle, ha ha. That's . . . we talk so, uh, casually about sibling rivalry, but it can get pretty . . . fierce.

LTS: Well, it was not fierce until later. I say he ruined my life because I had been the apple of everybody's eye, you see.

**CO:** Right.

LTS: And it was hard to give up the starring role.



**CO:** Especially when he turned out to be so cute and so adorable himself.

LTS: Uh-huh. Oh yeah, yeah.

LTS: But, uh . . . it was a loving family.

**CO:** So you don't really recall any struggles, that's um . . .

LTS: No, I don't recall any struggles. Of course, as I said, my grandmother and I, but uh . . .

**CO:** Now, how long did you all live with them?

LTS: . . . until Daddy finally got a job.

**CO:** Which was in the, this was in the '30s?

LTS: Uh-hmm. We had come back from Cuba, as I think I said, when I was three, when the Sugar Mill burned down. In the middle of the Depression there were no jobs.

**CO:** Yeah.

LTS: And, uh, several things happened. Daddy had to have an operation, the cab taking us home from the boat . . . um . . . had a wreck, I mean, it was just one thing after another. But, we had family. . .

**CO:** Um-hmm.

LTS: . . . and we lived with first one set of grandparents and then the other, and, um, when Daddy finally got a job with Ethel Corporation it was "whoopie"; they thought he was, you know, the family thought he was going to die because he had an appendix removed and got up out of bed after just three days and walked. Well . . . .

**CO:** Yeah, wow. So, um, Ethel Corporation, where was his first job?

LTS: . . . Jackson, Mississippi, I think.

**CO:** Wow. Man, you really did live a lot of places.

LTS: Oh yeah.

**CO:** How frequently were you called to move? Was this an almost annual . . .

LTS: Well, we lived in Jackson for, um, maybe a year or two, and then we moved to Birmingham, Alabama, and lived for a while, and then . . . by that time, and then we moved to Jacksonville, Florida, but that was during the war, and they wanted him to . . . he kept trying to . . . Daddy had enlisted in the Marines in World War I but he was too young to fight and it made him mad. And then in the Second World War, he thought, well, he was going to get in to that one. But they wouldn't let him because he was, um, an engineer, and they had blown up a, we were in Jacksonville then, they had a blown up a ship in the ship yard by some fool dropping a metal chain into a, an unloaded tanker or it was filled with gas fumes and "boom." So they wouldn't let him go because they needed him to be a safety engineer.

**CO:** Hmm.

LTS: That's why we were in Jacksonville. And I graduated from high school in Jacksonville . . . and went to Duke University because, this is funny, I mean, you don't want to put this down, probably, but I uh . . .

**CO:** Let's do it anyway, then you can take it out if you don't want it.

LTS: Ok, anyway, I was standing around in a group of girls in a room one time, and everyone was talking about where they were going to school. And somebody said, "Well, where are you going to college?" Well, I didn't have, I hadn't had a thought about it. And I was Valedictorian, and I was editor of the yearbook. Um, I hadn't thought about it, but I heard somebody mentioned Duke, and I said, "Well, I think I'll go to Duke." And one of the girls said, "Yeah, like you should, like you could get in." And I thought, well, we'll see about that. So I wrote a letter to Duke and said, "I have only applied one place, and if you don't take me this time I'll just wait." Guess what?

**CO:** They took you?

LTS: Yeah!

**CO:** So you went to Duke not really knowing anything about it? Did your, did your mother have a preference for you?

LTS: No...

**CO:** No.

LTS: ...she never said that she had a preference. She was a graduate of the University of Richmond, Daddy of Georgia Tech, and their only, his only thing was, you will NOT go to college where you can get home every weekend, because he felt he had missed a lot of college life living in Atlanta and going to Georgia Tech. So his one cardinal rule was, you *will* go away from home and not come home on weekends. So Duke was fine and he gulped a little bit. I had chosen, of course, one of the most expensive . . .

**CO:** Yes.

LTS: . . . places in the country, but I didn't apply anywhere else. And I guess they thought, "Well, go on and take her."

**CO:** Um . . .

LTS: And when I had been there four weeks, six weeks, somewhere in there, I could get upset at the thought I was gonna have to leave in four years, what a wonderful experience.

**CO:** Oh, wow. So you fell in love with it?

LTS: Absolutely.

**CO:** Wow.

LTS: Head over heels.

**CO:** So, you remained sort of loyal to Duke?

LTS: Always.

**CO:** Hmm. Ok, I could tell that was, like, I think you told me first you were a native Atlantan, and the second thing you said you were a

Duke grad, so that's a huge part of your identity I can see. And I will, I do want to talk specifically about your education, but for, for now, before we leave the, uh, home of, your family of origin, ahem, do you recall, because many people, well, many women in your generation don't seem to, although it's such a big thing today, becoming a teenager? You know, moving from childhood to adolescence. Was that marked for you in any way, for you as a . . . ?

LTS: Well, I graduated from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade in Birmingham, Alabama, and I think there were more parties given to fete that 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduating class than I had for my wedding or anything . . .

**CO:** Oh my goodness.

LTS: . . . I mean, we had teas and, you know, all this stuff, dances, and um, it was great fun, and I went, then, to Jacksonville, and graduated from high school there. Um . . .

**CO:** Now, when you, when you graduated from high school, your sister would have been, um, just a young girl at home, right? So, and then your brother maybe a teenager or getting close? Do you recall, in those years, having any kind of conflict with your mother? It sounds like you had a really good relationship, but was there any, as you become an adolescent, did you have any conflict with her?

LTS: No.

**CO:** About boys or dating or just anything?

LTS: Oh, well, the only thing was, Daddy, Daddy was very fierce, we were living, it was, of course, war-time, 'cause I graduated from college, from high school in 1946, and I said, I remember saying to Daddy, "Well, I don't see why I cannot date sailors, Daddy, because they're just nice boys away from home." And he said, "Yeah, well, when one of those nice boys away from home shows up at the door with a letter from a relative saying he is a nice boy away from home, you may date him." So, hoist on his own petard, who shows up . . .

**CO:** Oh my goodness.

LTS: . . . but Tom Wilkonson, who had spent the second World War as an Ensign on a Destroyer in the Pacific, and he shows up with a letter from my grandmother's best friend. . .

**CO:** Oh no.

LTS: . . . "This is a very nice boy, away from home." Daddy couldn't do anything about it. I guess he was my first love. He adored me, wanted to get married, and I said, "No, I wanna go to college." I just . . . I'm too young for that. (pause) He was, I remember seeing him one time when I was walking through the train with some friends going somewhere, and there he was, and I said, "Tom Wilkonson, my goodness" . . . I said, "Come on back and let's talk." He said, "You led me a merry chase too long, I'm not following you."

**CO:** Oh, this was after you guys broke up? Was it when you were . . .

LTS: Well, we never really had anything to break up. I went off to college, I didn't wanna get married.

**CO:** Ok, you didn't get married, but you said he was kinda your first love. What, were you smitten by him or were you just, was he just a date or two?

LTS: Well, he was smitten by me . . .

**CO:** Ok.

LTS: . . . and tried to get me to marry him. Went to my parents and asked for my hand in marriage while I sat there.

**CO:** Oh my goodness! He hadn't even ask you?

LTS: Oh yeah.

**CO:** Hmm.

LTS: But I just kept, "I'm too young," you know. I want to go to college.

**CO:** Right, right.

LTS: But anyway.

**CO:** But there were many young women that age who didn't necessarily . . .

LTS: . . . who got married.

**CO:** Oh, yeah, yeah, so . . .

LTS: Well, they just kinda, it never occurred to me that I couldn't get married. I certainly had enough opportunities.

**CO:** Ok. Well, I had, I want to hear about those, if you are willing to . . .

LTS: Well, no, you don't wanna hear about it.

**CO:** No, I do, but only if you want to talk about it. But, so, you and your mother didn't have a, a, an adolescent feud or . . .

LTS: No.

**CO:** You shifted into adolescence and your teenage years were . . .

LTS: I don't recall it if I did. I'm sure I was probably a jackass at times.

**CO:** Well, that's what I'm trying to get at, if you remember any of that, uh, any, 'cause you know, so much is written now about the mother-daughter, uh, conflict of . . .

LTS: I loved my mother always, and I remember, as I said, we lived in Jacksonville during the war. She was menopausal . . .

**CO:** Uh-hmm.

LTS: . . . without a cook in the kitchen for the first time, no help, laundries wouldn't take new people, we had moved there for Daddy to do his work . . . she had to wash . . . by an old washing machine with a roller, and I remember one time, when dogs ran through the back yard and knocked the

prop that held the clothes line up, and they all fell in the dirt; she had to do them over. She sat down and cried.

**CO:** Wow.

LTS: She had never cooked, never done laundry, everything had been sent, you know, the flats sent to the laundry, and somebody at home to do, she just . . . was an amazing woman.

**CO:** Did, did you know at the time that she was menopausal and . . .

LTS: I saw her giving herself shots, yeah.

**CO:** So you understood what that meant? I mean, you understood the implications of being . . .

LTS: Oh, I don't think fully.

**CO:** No, but in retrospect you understand it, yeah.

LTS: I always admired my mother.

**CO:** Hmm.

LTS: She was a really remarkable woman.

**CO:** Hmm. Did she know that? Did she know that you admired her?

LTS: Well, she lived with me the last six years of her life, and . . .

**CO:** Was that a good time, a good . . . ?

LTS: It was hard for her.

**CO:** Uh-hm.

LTS: She moved in here and two months after she moved in she had her leg amputated. She was on . . . hospital bed down here, and I said, "Mother, I think we ought to buy this hospital bed" and she said, "Well, I'm not sure I'll live long enough to get my money out of it." So we rented one. But she was amazing. I had a lift put in, because I was working full time . . .

**CO:** Um-hmm.

LTS: . . . and I had people here with her, and I had a lift put in right out there and a . . . cut made in the railing so it could open, and she had her favorite cab driver so with her, artificial limb, she could walk down the hall, call her favorite cab driver, and go to her DAR meetings or whatever she wanted to do.

**CO:** She was a DAR member?

LTS: Uh-huh.

**CO:** Wow. Um, in your household, was there any, did your brother have privileges by virtue of being a boy? Was there any awareness of gender privilege in your household?

LTS: Oh, with my grandmother, yeah, the one I fought with all the time.

**CO:** Well, did she privilege your brother because he was a boy?

LTS: Oh yeah.

**CO:** Ooh.

LTS: But we were not living with her at the time, but she just, you know, he hung the moon.

**CO:** Oh my. What about with your parents? Was there any, did you, no?

LTS: I never felt that there was any . . . that there was any feeling about one over the other. Um...

**CO:** So you didn't feel constricted by being a girl? Being . . .

LTS: Oh lord no.

**CO:** No. Ok. And your sister, either?

LTS: Not at all.

**CO:** Hmm. Ok.



LTS: I never felt that way.

**CO:** Ok.

LTS: But, then, remember, I was the only child in my generation for five long years . . .

**CO:** Right.

LTS: . . . with all the relatives around, until, as I think I've said, the oldest one died and they would say to each other, "Well, 'Weese' [Louise] says, as if I knew what I was talking about. So I thought I must know what I'm talking about, I've always, always, still do think I should have anything I want.

**CO:** So, you didn't, that strong, uh, support, in your family compensated for whatever the culture, whatever messages the culture gave you about what women could and couldn't do, or girls . . .

LTS: Never occurred to me that I couldn't do anything I wanted to.

**CO:** Ok.

LTS: Never.

**CO:** Ok. Even, were you, ummm . . . did you always have a strong political opinion? I mean, did you have, did, was, were you encouraged (sound of bell ringing) to have a public life? As a writer, clearly you were in the public . . .

LTS: Oh, well, I was encouraged . . . I never realized it, but of course I was encouraged. I was, um, I was a volunteer for the CAP in the Second World War. In fact, but they took me up in a little plane and I didn't like it, and I could never learn the Morse Code, so I had to resign from the CAP.

**CO:** Hmm.

LTS: But I did volunteer work, you know, where they push the, you can see, you've seen them in old movies, where they call in, "Single plane, low," and you put that there and push it around on a table. . .

**CO:** I don't know what you're . . .

LTS: . . . and the Radar people are sittin' up here.

**CO:** Ok.

LTS: I volunteered in that.

**CO:** Oh.

LTS: And uh, we were living in Jacksonville during the war, Daddy had to go down and keep them from blowing up ships . . . and . . .

**CO:** How old were you when you married?

LTS: 21. I married a classmate from Duke.

**CO:** So that was, um . . .

LTS: 1950.

**CO:** Ok . . . so you were with your family through the war?

LTS: Excuse me?

**CO:** You were with your family through the war?

LTS: Oh, yes.

**CO:** World War II? Ok. Alright, do you recall disagreeing with your family's values in any way at any time? It sounds like they were pretty . . . uh, certainly open-minded about, uh, well-educated, um . . .

LTS: Yes. Education was important. It never, no, it never occurred to me that my family values could be wrong in any way.

**CO:** Ok, so you . . .

LTS: Because I thought that they were correct.

**CO:** Ok.

LTS: I still do think.

**CO:** Ok. Alright. What about, was your family conscious of the world outside their home?

LTS: Oh my goodness, yes.

**CO:** Ok.

LTS: We listened to the news every night, and I can still remember, every night, at the end of the news . . . the newscaster would say, “. . . and Malta was bombed again.” And I had to see Malta.

**CO:** Hmm.

LTS: I did have to see Malta, because there it was, the only Allied stronghold between Gibraltar and Cairo and it had to be held. I don't know how many hundreds of men died trying to resupply Malta.

**CO:** Uh-hmm.

LTS: It's a wonderful place, I did get there eventually.

**CO:** You did?

LTS: I did.

**CO:** Wow.

LTS: Capers grow wild in the rocks, it's a Mediterranean cuisine. It's beautiful.

**CO:** Hmm.

LTS: The buildings are built a kind of golden stone.

**CO:** When did you go?

LTS: I went when I was on a Mediterranean cruise, I think. And went back, maybe it was on a cruise around the world, I don't remember.

**CO:** Wow. So you've done a lot of traveling?

LTS: Oh yes.

**CO:** Oh, well, I'll want to hear about. So your family, though, was well, well-read and well-versed in . . .

LTS: . . . and always interested in world affairs, always.

**CO:** Ok. And you talked about that.

LTS: Yes.

**CO:** Ok.

LTS: We knew, I can remember at one grandmother's house, hearing this maniac shouting on the phone, it was Hitler, and everybody was sitting around listening to it.

**CO:** How, how was he shouting on the phone, what do you mean?

LTS: I mean, on the radio.

**CO:** Oh, ok. Alright.

LTS: And, uh, but, yes, we always, the family always was interested in world affairs, what was going on in the world. 'Course, we were big Churchill fans, and . . .

**CO:** Ok.

LTS: we had RAF flyers up for the weekend when we lived in Birmingham. They would come up from Maxwell Field where they were sent to train . . .

**CO:** Uh-hmm.

LTS: . . . and I remember I had been to walk with two of them after church one day, we came in the house and Daddy looked up from the radio and said to them, "We are with you now, the Japanese have bombed Pearl Harbor."

**CO:** Oh my goodness.

LTS: Wow.

**CO:** You remember that?

LTS: Oh I do.

**CO:** Hmm.

LTS: I do. I was 12.

**CO:** Hmm.

LTS: 13.

**CO:** So, you'd been for a walk with this young man . . .

LTS: Two young RAF flyers, we always had them, we always had a couple of them up for a home meal . . .

**CO:** Yeah, but as a 13 year-old, were you smitten by them or did you, was that . . . ?

LTS: Not really. I mean, I remember a couple of them, and I'm sure they died because, they went back and . . . fought in the Battle of Britain.

**CO:** Yeah. How did that feel, to have known them and then wondered? Did you wonder for a long time what their outcome was?

LTS: I was pretty sure I knew.

**CO:** Hmm. Because you know these things?

LTS: In fact, I may still have a letter from one of them. I tried, I went to the . . . British man here and asked him if he could find (sound of walking and a drawer being opened) the relative of this young man. (Sound of searching through papers)

**CO:** Are those all old letters?

LTS: (softly) Uh-huh.

**CO:** Oh my goodness. I would love to see them.

(Extended pause)

LTS: (softly) Well, I could have sworn it was here. Let's see what's on this side. (Drawer opens) . . . But I tried to find . . . nope, that's money (drawer closes). I tried to find (drawer opens) . . . the family . . .

CO: . . . to send them the letter? [repeat] To send the letter?

LTS: Yes. I probably gave it to the British officer and, uh . . . (background noise) . . . I guess not. I thought I had the letter. (More background noise) I'm sure the young man died (something slams twice).

CO: But he wrote, was this a letter to you or to your father?

LTS: To mother.

CO: Oh, to your mother.

LTS: Thanking her for her hospitality.

CO: Oh my.

LTS: And, uh, it was such a sweet letter, and I saved it, and I think I gave it to the British officer at Ft. Benning to try to find . . .

CO: The family, yeah.

LTS: Yeah, 'cause I feel quite sure he died.

CO: Yeah.

LTS: In the Battle of Britain.

CO: Hmm. Wow. Well, when you were at home and you had, you said, from the 6<sup>th</sup> grade on, that you were going to be a writer, was that a common thing in your family . . .

LTS: From the 1<sup>st</sup> grade on.

CO: 1<sup>st</sup> grade, excuse me. The 1<sup>st</sup> grade, that you were going to be a writer, so, apparently, your family was aware of this ambition, you shared it with them?

LTS: Well, I don't know, I may have, may not have. But I just, I remember when I was little, I . . . my grandmother took me to the Pershing Point Hotel in Atlanta, to a party given by one of her friends who, I don't know, owned the hotel or something, and um, to my horror, it seemed that the children were to recite things, and one child recited the entire of the "Night before Christmas" . . .

**CO:** Oh my goodness.

LTS: . . . letter perfect. And my grandmother then announced that I would recite . . . that I would recite a poem written by me.

**CO:** Oh no.

LTS: Well, I had written the dreadful little thing, I can still remember it. And I stood up, she was so proud: "Hulda was a little Dutch girl/Holland was her world/she wore a little starched white cap/and her wooden shoes went "tap tap tap."

**CO:** Ha. Awe! And how old were you?

LTS: Maybe six, I don't know.

**CO:** Ha ha.

LTS: And my grandmother was just so, you know, she . . .

**CO:** Of course.

LTS: She pushed me forward and said, "She will recite a poem she wrote herself," you see. So ...

**CO:** Feuding grandmothers, it sounds like.

LTS: Eh?

**CO:** I said, "Feuding grandmothers, it sounds like."

LTS: Oh yeah, this was the one I fought with, yeah.

**CO:** Yeah, ok. Well, you can, at any point, come back to your family of origin if you'd like, but before we leave your childhood, do you have any friends from childhood that you stay in touch with?

LTS: Yes.

**CO:** You do?

LTS: Uh-huh.

**CO:** Hmm.

LTS: My best friend.

**CO:** Is she in Atlanta?

LTS: No, she's in, where the hell is she, somewhere like . . . well, somewhere not far from here, in Georgia.

**CO:** Oh, ok. So you are able to stay in touch with her?

LTS: Oh, yes.

**CO:** And do you do that by email?

LTS: No.

**CO:** No.

LTS: She doesn't email.

**CO:** She doesn't email, yeah.

LTS: Her husband was . . . the most wonderful man. He died this year. He was head of Piedmont Hospital, Dr. William Carter Waters, III. Absolutely the most marvelous man, and we all knew each other as children . . .

**CO:** So you sustained that relationship all these years?

LTS: Oh, yes.

**CO:** Ok.



LTS: I don't like to let go of old friends.

**CO:** Yeah, well, it sounds like friends are important.

LTS: Very important.

**CO:** Do you have lots of, uh, well, new friends? I mean, do you . . .

LTS: Well, I have, this neighborhood is very friendly. We have parties and meet together and know each other, all except the bitch who moved in next door.

**CO:** What makes her a bitch? Is she just not friendly?

LTS: Well, I think it's because she's a Yankee, I don't think it's a black-white thing.

**CO:** Oh, ok.

LTS: Because I tried to welcome her, and she snooted me. And I was going to invite her over for a drink and so forth. I think she's just a Yankee, and I don't think it's because she's black and I'm white, I don't think has anything to do with it.

**CO:** Oh, ok.

LTS: She's married to a white man . . .

**CO:** Yeah . . .?

LTS: . . . he seems very nice, but she's just . . .

**CO:** So what part of the North is she from?

LTS: New England.

**CO:** Oh, well . . . and what about him, where is he from? Her husband?

LTS: I don't know, we have had friendly chats and we took a tree down together, because he wanted it down, but, uh, I don't know.

**CO:** Hmm. Are they, uh, in this beautiful, historic neighborhood, is it, is it integrated with all different ages. . .

LTS: Yes.

**CO:** . . . races, so it's pretty . . .

LTS: Yes, it's black, it's white, it's gay, it's straight. It's writers, it's, uh, yes.

**CO:** Professionals, business people, all sorts of . . .?

LTS: It's all kinds of people and we are all very friendly. We have a thing called the Historic District Preservation Society . . .

**CO:** Uh-hmm.

LTS: . . . and we meet and have parties and do things together.

**CO:** Did you, did you walk the River Walk much, have you ever, has that ever been a part of your. . .

LTS: No.

**CO:** Yeah, I love that. I love it, I've got, the few times I've been here . . .

LTS: Well, when I take the monster out for a walk, we just go around the block and he drags me up. . . do you remember Billy Wynn?

**CO:** Yes.

LTS: Ok, well, he lives, uh, on Front Avenue, and this dog absolutely adores Billy. When we walk around the block he drags me up on the porch, and Billy comes from whatever he's working on, and he and the dog disappear into the kitchen. I know what's going on, you see.

**CO:** He's getting treats?

LTS: He's getting T-R-E-A-T-S, you see. And he absolutely adores Billy, and Billy lets him hop up on the sofa and crawl on his chest and so forth.

**CO:** Well, we've reached the end of childhood and adolescence, so I'm gonna stop it.

LTS: OK.

LTS: ..... (softly) she doesn't know what to do with the old one, and if there's any luck at all she'll sell it to me.

**CO:** Oh. So, are you car-conscious?

LTS: No. I broke the savings for 20 years when I could afford them, but, I can't afford them, so I don't. Let me back out 'cause this hedge is very difficult.

**CO:** Well, I don't mind driving...

LTS: OK.

**CO:** ... if you'd like to ride with me? I'll have to throw stuff in the back seat.

LTS: I do not want to cross that stuff.

**CO:** Ok, what I'll do...

LTS: They grab your foot and trip you up.

**CO:** Well, I will not do it then. What about if I back up right there and you can get in? OK.

(noise of recorder being moved)

LTS: I think my mind is still pretty good but my body is gone, it's just awful. I mean, when strangers stop on the street to help you up a curb ...

**CO:** Oh no. Can you get your seatbelt on, or are we going very far?

LTS: Oh yeah, not far. Just go to the corner and turn left.

**CO:** Ok. So, um, how has ... I have a section on aging, too, so, there will be a time for you to talk about that.

LTS: OK.

**CO:** But since you brought it up, or since I asked a question for you to bring it up, you met the love of your life after 60. Um, I would like to hear more, how did you meet him?

LTS: Well, uh, through the good services of friends. I was going somewhere, to some party or something, and they said, "Now, I want you to speak to this," turn left, um, "I want you to go talk to this fella named Jim Moffett." And I said, "Ok."

**CO:** Moffett? M-O-F-F-A-T?

LTS: E-T-T. So I said, "Ok." So I'm standing there, talking to someone, anyway ... and this fella comes up and says . . . "Are you Louise Smith"? I said, "Yes, I am." And he said, "Well, I'm Jim Moffett." He said, "Now, let me see. You're a widow, right?" And I said, "No, I'm a divorcee. I guess I did something wrong." And he said, "Well, not necessarily." Well, he remembered what I had on and I remembered what he said, and I thought that was really pretty neat, you know.

**CO:** What do you mean, he remembered what you had on? How do you know that?

LTS: 'Cause he told me.

**CO:** Oh.

LTS: Ok, we are going to go to this place on the corner on the right, here.

**CO:** Ok.

LTS: It's called "Minnies," you need to know about it.

**CO:** That's it, right there?

LTS: Yeah.

**CO:** OK. There's nobody behind me, so I'll just back up.

LTS: Yeah, go for it. Anyway, and, uh...

**CO:** Here comes somebody and I don't know if she's coming all ...

LTS: I don't know if that fool is gonna make it or not.

**CO:** Yeah.

LTS: What are you going to do, lady? Why didn't you just...oh well.

**CO:** Let's let her out. (sounds of car noises). We're at Minnies, Minnies is a, uh, is this local cuisine?

LTS: Yeah.

**CO:** I love those kinds of places.

LTS: Well, this is a good place to know about.

**CO:** Here, let me let you out. (sounds of recorder being moved)

LTS: (recorder resumes while dining) ..."Are you Louise Smith?" And I said, "Yes." 'course, we had the couple that told us each we would find each other and talk to each other. And he said, "Now, you're a widow, right?" And I said, "No, I'm a divorcee, I guess I did something wrong." And he said, "Not necessarily." So, I thought, well, ok, and he turned out to be the love of my life.

**CO:** Now how long did it take you to figure that out? And what made him the love of your life?

LTS: What makes anybody the love...

**CO:** You don't know?

LTS: Do you know?

**CO:** I have a good idea, sometimes, but ...

LTS: He just was.

**CO:** So, and then, did you all live together?

LTS: No. Uh-uh.

**CO:** Tell me, was there ...

LTS: Marriage was never considered.

**CO:** But you did have a relationship?

LTS: Yes. Would you like me to tell you ...?

**CO:** No, well, yes, but not one tape. No, I'm just kidding. But, was he local, a local person?

LTS: Uh-uh. He lived outside of Atlanta.

**CO:** So it had to be long-distance?

LTS: Well, he was down here a lot. In fact, he was buying a house here. I said to him one time, your sons are so sweet to me, has two sons, three darling granddaughters. He said, "Oh, they're just so damn glad I didn't show up with a 20 year-old blonde on my shoulder, on my arm." Well, after he died, I told them what he said, and they both laughed and said, "That's the truth."

**CO:** So, was he older than you?

LTS: Uh-uh.

**CO:** No.

LTS: No. But he was round, bald, balding, had a beard, short... love of my life.

**CO:** Aw.

LTS: It was romantic. He could dance like an angel. When we danced, people stopped to watch.

**CO:** Oh my goodness. So, was he divorced or widower?

LTS: Widowed. And ... he had been a tank commander in Korea ... (coughs), so I didn't have to be told he was brave. He was brave, he was romantic, he was fun...and...he had the nerve to go and die.

**CO:** Ohh. How, when did that happen?

LTS: ...when? ...1999.

**CO:** Oh my. Was it an accident or an illness?

LTS: He had a stroke.

**CO:** I'm sorry?

LTS: A stroke.

**CO:** Oh.

LTS: ...But sure was a great seven years. Boy, I mean, that was fun.

**CO:** But you never considered marriage?

LTS: Uh-uh.

**CO:** Now, why is that?

LTS: Why should we?

**CO:** You never discussed that? Or discussed and think you didn't even need it?

LTS: (Nods, probably) why?

**CO:** I think that's a great attitude. It's interesting, the number of women I've interviewed ... who have had relationships with younger men. And in some cases, much younger.

LTS: Really?

**CO:** Uh-huh. Sustained, I'm not talking one-night stands. I love those stories. Well, any romantic story I love, so...

LTS: Well ... I was picking on one of my doctors, which I find, I feel, is my job.

**CO:** Yeah, ok.

LTS: And so, after picking on one...when I had Ovarian Cancer, and I go in and say, "So." I went in one time and I said, "Hey doc," if I've told you this, hold up two fingers.

**CO:** Are you talking to me or were you talking to him?

LTS: You.

**CO:** Oh, me. Um, you did tell me a story about ...

LTS: Yeah.

**CO:** About, something that you had ...

LTS: That I was cured.

**CO:** That you were cured, yeah.

LTS: Yeah.

**CO:** Cured, as opposed to healed?

LTS: Cured.

**CO:** OK.

LTS: Whatever. Why do you find a difference between the two?

**CO:** Because we live in an area where Evangelical discourse is the ...discourse of the majority. So, I don't see a difference at all, but...

LTS: Oh, I see. I get the difference. Anyway...so, I have to keep going back to see them all the time.

**CO:** And I know that I asked you when the Ovarian Cancer was...?

LTS: And I have forgotten.



**CO:** But except for the mobility problems now? What else is troubling, health-wise?

LTS: ...nothing.

**CO:** But you're still walking Forrest every day? So...

LTS: If he's lucky. I have diabetes, which is controlled. And I have high blood pressure, which is controlled, but you know, these are the things you get when you live to be my age.

**CO:** Right.

LTS: So I don't consider that ... worthy of discussion... What did I do with my damn purse?

**CO:** Your purse?

LTS: Uh-huh. What have you done with it? I know I had it.

**CO:** There it is. It's right there.

LTS: A-ha! I knew you hid it from me. That was a terrible thing to do.

**CO:** Do you want me to get it for you?

LTS: I think I can get it.

**CO:** Why don't you let me get it?

LTS: I can get it, I think.

**CO:** We may need to pull the table out. Let me pull it this way.

LTS: Well, I swear...

**CO:** How in the world it slid down there...

LTS: I don't know.

**CO:** Let's put it right here.

LTS: What a good idea.

**CO:** And here's a napkin.

LTS: Let's see, where were we? We were talking about Jim. (pause) He was great, I felt so lucky to have him in my life.

**CO?** Well, now... you married at 21. Is that...picture of a bride on the bedside table, is that you? Upstairs in that back bedroom?

LTS: Probably.

**CO:** Yeah, I could stand that one. So did he, did you know when you married him that he was not the love of your life, or did you think he was? Your husband?

LTS: I don't know. At 21, what do you know? I don't think I would have married him if I hadn't slept with him, 'cause I felt kind of obliged.

**CO:** You did, but he didn't? I mean, was that...

LTS: Well, obviously, he had asked me to marry him.

**CO:** Ok. Ok, you were 21, where did you meet him?

LTS: At Duke. We were classmates.

**CO:** And, how long did you, well, we'll just go ahead and talk about romance. How was, what was, where do you think your romantic images came from, your images of what a...

LTS: Hell, I don't know. Where did yours come from?

**CO:** Probably, from popular culture, you know, from films, fiction, that sort of thing.

LTS: I don't know.

**CO:** Well, did your marriage, your, the man you married, did you date a lot before you met him?

LTS: Oh, yeah.

**CO:** SO, then, did you come close to anything serious then?

LTS: Oh, yeah.

**CO:** You did?

LTS: Uh-huh. He was not the first person who wanted to marry me.  
(coughs)

**CO:** But you, um, married him? Because you felt obliged because you had slept with him?

LTS: Uh-huh. I think that's what it boils down to, in retrospect.

**CO:** Well, now, that's a ...that's a value from your time, you know.

LTS: I don't know whether it is or not, but it was mine.

**CO:** Yeah. Bless you.

LTS: Gracious ... I don't know, it just seemed the thing to do.

**CO:** I hear that a lot too, that that's why women of your generation get married, or got married.

LTS: Well, I never worried about not being invited to be married, because I had had several offers before. But, I don't know. Maybe the time was right, maybe...I don't know.

**CO:** So that was 1950?

LTS: Uh-huh.

**CO:** You were married 38 years? You divorced in '88? No, you divorced in '84. That's what you told me when we were at your house. In '84. You moved to Columbus in '85...no?

LTS: We divorced in '83.

**CO:** So, but you were married over 30 years?

LTS: Uh-huh.

**CO:** Yeah.

LTS: And, if he had been able to keep his zipper up, I would probably still be married to him and vaguely unhappy. We were mismatched.

**CO:** So he was unfaithful, and that was the cause of the break-up?

LTS: Ahhh, yeah.

**CO:** So, would you have stayed, you, you just said, you would have stayed with him ...

LTS: I probably would have still been married to him and vaguely unhappy, 'cause we were not ...and I would never have met Jim, so... My mantra is, "You don't have to be smart, rich, or beautiful, you just have to be lucky." And I am lucky. I am a lucky person.

**CO:** So between, um, let's see, your husband's name was what? What was your husband's first name?

LTS: William.

**CO:** Between William and Jim...

LTS: Yep...

**CO:** How many... how many opportunities did you have for companionship?

LTS: I don't remember. Probably, most of my opportunities came before I married Bill. But...have you been married?

**CO:** (inaudible)

LTS: They think I'm the greatest thing since sliced bread.

**CO:** Now, what about your son, was he ok with it?

LTS: Oh, yeah.

**CO:** Now, does he have any children?

LTS: He's not married. I want him, I said, "I need a grandchild." He said, "You would like for it to be legitimate, wouldn't you?" And I did this...

**CO:** Haha, whatever. So, has he come close to marrying?

LTS: This sounds ridiculous, but I think he's still in love with his high school girl who married somebody else. I, I...

**CO:** That's painful.

LTS: Uh-huh. (pause) But you know, I have learned something that's very important to know.

**CO:** I'm all ears.

LTS: You can't do anything about your children's lives. By the time they're 15, if you haven't done it, it's all over.

**CO:** Yeah, I have the same attitude toward my daughter that you have toward your son. She's turned out just beautifully, and she has a lovely family. Her two children are the joys of my life, they're 12 and eight. And I say that she turned out well in spite of me, you know? She's very stable...

LTS: I got you.

**CO:** Yeah, yeah, I thought you would. So...

LTS: I think we should have some dessert, is there anything that looks good up there?

**CO:** Well, there was lemon cake, lemon cream cake.

LTS: What do you want?

**CO:** Let me do dessert.

... [RECORDER WAS PROBABLY TURNED OFF, RESUMES MID-SENTENCE, 39:04]

LTS: ...and I stooped down, and I looked right at the kid, and I say, "Are they treating you alright?" And the person behind tries to say something, and I say, "I'm speaking to the child." And then I wait, I don't say a word.

And then the kid will tell me, you don't understand what he's sayin', which is [gibberish baby/talk].

**CO:** Right, right.

LTS: But I nod, and say, "I'm glad to hear it." (Extended pause with restaurant noise in background). I tried to buy a couple, and I said, "I'll take him, how much?"

**CO:** Well, my experience of that has been that, it's much, much, much easier to be a grandmother than a mother.

LTS: Hmm. I loved being a mother. But I had waited so long and wanted a child so much ...

**CO:** Now, when you adopted your son, did you have a preference for boy over a girl, or did that matter?

LTS: Oh, well, my husband had to have a boy.

**CO:** Ah, I see. Would it have mattered to you? Do you think you would have been a different mother to a daughter?

LTS: Don't know, never had one.

**CO:** Uh-huh. But, I don't know either if, how it would have been to have had a boy...with only one child, you don't know.

LTS: All I know is, as I told him one time, it was so funny, I heard my mother's words coming out of my mouth. I said to him, "You have always been so perfect. You have never done anything wrong." He said, "Yeah, well, let me tell you...." And I said, "I don't want to hear it."

**CO:** You don't want to know it, yeah.

LTS: I had the same conversation with my own mother.

**CO:** And you tried to tell her when you weren't perfect?

LTS: Yeah. She says the same thing to me. She went, “You’ve always been so wonderful...” Yeah, well..., “Let me tell you.” [she said] “I don’t want to hear it.” I got tickled just thinking about it.

**CO:** How’s your Peanut-Butter Pie?

LTS: It’s wonderful, have a bite.

**CO:** No, I don’t want a bite, it will change the taste of my Red Velvet Cake. But you’re certainly welcome to ...

LTS: Well, life is...most things, you never, you know, if you think of life as ...segments...

**CO:** Uh-huh.

LTS: Looking back on them, you can see ‘em, while you’re going through them you don’t know.

**CO:** Well, so, last section. See, you’re going to wind up ... foreshadowing everything. It addresses that, sort of, panoramic vision of it plus seeing it in the rearview mirror, which, some people manage to start that much earlier in life than, than others do. I mean, I was exercising at my daughter’s house one day, and she’s got a quote on the wall by Lincoln, Abraham Lincoln. And, I was doing Yoga and I looked up and I saw that, and then I saw the dates under his name and I thought, “Oh my God, he died at 56!” I was 56 that year.

LTS: Oh, dear.

**CO:** Yeah, it was...it was sobering because you look at, you look at years differently as you age. I mean, I know that already...

LTS: I never really thought about age, particularly. ...Now that I’m 83, I brag about it.

**CO:** So it’s sort of a badge for you?

LTS: I don't know, but it's really neat because its, you say to somebody, "Well, I'm 83." And they are obligated to say, "Well, you don't look it. You look so good." "Thank you!"

**CO:** Well, I think my new cause....is, I've become so conscious, just reading all the gerontological works to prepare for these interviews...

LTS: And did they prepare you?

**CO:** Um, I don't think I really needed them, actually. But, my new cause is fighting Ageism. It's so awful, it's awful, it's really...the way we think about...but people, I mean, my...I saw a movie not too long ago with, what's his name, British actor? Uh, played Ghandi...? He was in love with, played the part of a college professor in love with this girl in love with his student less than half his age, or more than half his age, how would you say that?

LTS: Doesn't matter.

**CO:** Doesn't matter, you know that I'm talking about. She, uh, and so...he had never made a commitment in his life, he had been, just a chronic womanizer, and...do you need us to move (speaking to dinner staff)?

LTS: No, we're not gonna move.

**CO:** Oh, ok, we're not gonna move.

LTS: He knows how to do this, he's done it before.

**CO:** You come here to be interviewed a lot, often?

LTS: No, but I come here to eat, a lot.

**CO:** Anyway, so, he's thinking about this young, beautiful woman, played by Penelope Cruz, and how he looks in the mirror and he sees, like, I don't know, a 70+ year-old man, but he says, you know, "In my mind, I'm still 30." He's not...so, that is a really, to me, a sobering thought. In your body, in your mind, your body might be breaking down, but in your mind you're still a young person. Some



people, when I ask them how old they feel, they don't know how to respond to that. And then others get it, like right off, it's like, "yeah, I'm 25 in my mind, in my heart."

LTS: Well, I don't think you think about it. Until somebody asks you a question. I know I don't, I just...chug on.

**CO:** But if you go out in public, and you, and people treat you like, like you said, somebody tried to help you up a curb or something...

LTS: Uh-huh.

**CO:** ...and suddenly, you begin to...

LTS: You have to begin to be grateful for it, you know. "Well, thank you so much." But, they mean well. And sometimes I'm glad they helped me.

**CO:** Right.

LTS: But...

**CO:** But you can help people without condescending to them.

LTS: Oh, yeah. (pause) I remember when Mother was living with me, as I think I told you, she lived with me the last six years of her life, and two months after she came to life with me, she, uh, had her leg amputated. And, so of course, I had a wheelchair in the trunk, and in those six years, of all the times I lifted that wheelchair in and out of that trunk, only once did somebody offer to help me. Once.

**CO:** How did she get...how did she deal with aging?

LTS: Just beautifully, as she did everything.

**CO:** Hmm. Wow. And do you think she modeled that for you and for anybody who was watching?

LTS: No, I don't think you think those things. I think you...

**CO:** Well, she might not have consciously done it, but...

LTS: No. But I think your parents are always models for you, whether they mean to be or not.

**CO:** Right, but they can also be models in a negative way. They can model negative behavior...

LTS: Yeah. (pause) I was very fortunate in my parents...were just, have been lucky all my life. Hmm. And you don't have to be, as I think I told you, you don't have to be smart, rich, beautiful, just be lucky.

**CO:** Yeah...that sounds like that is a...core belief on your part.

LTS: Maybe so.

**CO:** And, do you think, is that what you attribute your insight, this ability to know things, like that you're...

LTS: No, I think I have that, and I think I'm also lucky. I think those two things are not inter-connected.

**CO:** Oh, ok. When did you notice that you had this insight, this ability?

LTS: (pause) I suppose the first time I was really aware of it was that night that I was almost sideswiped. And I knew I was gonna to be sideswiped. And after that I listened to myself. Very important to listen to yourself.

**CO:** How old were you?

LTS: (pause) Somewhere in my 30s.

**CO:** And how many times has that happened?

LTS: Oh, I couldn't tell you.

**CO:** Does it happen daily? Does it happen every week? Does it happen..?

LTS: No. Does lightning strike all the time?

**CO:** No, but I'm really very interested in that. It's an intuitive gift, I think.

LTS: Yes...

**CO:** I don't think everybody has that.

LTS: No, you're right. It is an intuitive gift, I do have that. And I also, I mean, I know, I just know things. And so, I know you're gonna find the love of your life.

**CO:** Did you have this sense about, when you met Jim, were you anticipating that in any way?

LTS: No, of course not.

**CO:** So that's not something you knew ahead?

LTS: No, uh-uh.

**CO:** So how long between the time of that and the time you realized, this was the love of my life...

LTS: When he died.

**CO:** No, no. How long between when you met him and you realized he was the love of your life, how long did that take?

LTS: I don't know. Oh, for goodness sakes.

**CO:** Noo! You don't find that important? It wasn't love at first sight?  
No.

LTS: No, the pheromones were not working that night.

**CO:** But how long after that?

LTS: I don't know. (Talking to waitress), "That was really good, you did not lead me astray at all, lucky for you."

**CO:** How long has this place been here?

LTS: Oh, some time. I come here all the time for lunch, as you can gather. It's...just wonderful to have around the corner, and I just come here and eat lunch every day, almost every day, because I don't want to cook for myself.

I can have a sandwich at night, a glass of wine, something, whatever I want to do.

**CO:** Well, I love vegetables too.

LTS: Well, yeah, that's it, that's it.

(Recording probably stopped and restarted, interview resumes at house)

**CO:** He said, "That that's exactly what you would have done."

LTS: Uh-huh, yeah. He's a terrible liar, a just terrible speller. He sleeps with me and is a bed hog.

**CO:** Did he, did you get him as a puppy?

LTS: I got him from PAWS, he picked me out.

**CO:** Oh, you told me that. So he, they were, the local...

LTS: I don't know, I said, "Well, what's his background?" They said, "Well, family member didn't want him", so I'd gather he belonged to an old person who died and, you know... so he just picked me out, he looked at me like, "Come on, lady." And I said, "Oh, all right."

**CO:** Well, he looks like he comes with the house, actually.

LTS: Oh, yeah.

**CO:** Well, I, the next questions I would ask you about, what did your family do for entertainment and recreation? What was that? Did ya'll go camping, did you...

LTS: Well, we played games, and I come from the generation where the Sunday afternoon ride was just wonderful. And if we were very good, we got an ice cream cone. And, uh...

**CO:** Did you all vacation much? Did you travel when you were at home?

LTS: Well, whenever we traveled anywhere, we went to Atlanta, which is where we were all from.

**CO:** Uh-huh.

LTS: I can't remember-- that we did one time go to a beach house. It was fun, down to Grayton Beach, rented the little cottage and...but we didn't take vacations, per se.

**CO:** Well, you were so busy moving, I mean, ya'll moved so much.

LTS: Yes, we did.

**CO:** Wow, ok. What about...there are writers in your family, what about musicians, artists of other types.

LTS: Well, my grandfather was in the printing and engraving business, Foote & Davies, in Atlanta, and his father, I think I told you, was an editor of a newspaper during the Civil War. And...mother was a writer.

**CO:** Did you all like, enjoy a particular genre of film or book? No?

LTS: No. I think we were just voracious readers, all of us.

**CO:** Fiction, mostly?

LTS: Yeah. We had the classics...uh, Sir Walter Scott's stuff. Books, you know, rows of classics. So I read *Ivenhoe* and that sort of thing. And, ah, if you told your mother that you were bored, she'd say, "Read a book."

**CO:** And so you did. Do you think there's a relationship between reading and writing?

LTS: Not necessarily, no. I think if you are a writer, you need to read and read and read and write and write and write, but...well, I suppose there is a relationship.

**CO:** Today's students don't do either, so it's really. I mean, used to, you'd get a lot of students who'd done a lot of reading, they still needed to learn writing skills, but, if they were avid readers it was easier for them to learn to write. But if they don't read it's really difficult, so...

LTS: Today's students don't read?

**CO:** They really don't. And, I mean, you can speculate on why that's so. Maybe the internet has something to do with that. They don't sit with books, it's not...

LTS: Maybe they, um, maybe they read on the computer.

**CO:** They do, but its, well, yes, they do. There's a difference in attention span, there really is.

LTS: You know, for instance, I don't want to read my newspaper on the computer. I want to sit down with my newspaper in the morning with my coffee.

**CO:** Right, right. Well, yeah, and...students who don't read newspapers, the only news they get is...

LTS: From television?

**CO:** ...online, or, yeah, television.

LTS: That is so bad.

**CO:** Yeah, I know, I know it is.

LTS: I can't believe, when I talk to adults, and I said, "Did you see in the paper...." "Well, we don't take the paper." I said, "How can you possibly live and not take your local newspaper?"

**CO:** Some local newspapers are pretty bad.

LTS: I don't care. It's got what's going on locally, the deaths, you know.

**CO:** Right, right. So is that a daily routine for you?

LTS: Absolutely.

**CO:** Ok. Now, I know you went to high school in Jacksonville; you went to Duke for your college degree. Did you go beyond...

LTS: No.

**CO:** ...your four-year degree?

LTS: No.

**CO:** So, and I know that education was valued in your household. Did you ever consider a college degree, I mean, a graduate degree?

LTS: No. Well, I got married right out of college ...so, that kind of “X’d” that out. I never felt the need for a graduate degree. Perhaps it would be fun, but...I don’t think so. I think, well, no.

**CO:** If you had, would it have been in Journalism?

LTS: No, no.

**CO:** In fact, what was your major?

LTS: Duke did not teach Journalism. There is no “J” school at Duke. You don’t take journalism courses, you pick up the nuts and bolts when you are working for a paper. But, to be a writer, you’ve got to have a broad base of the arts, in my opinion. A broad base of history, and...to study journalism, it’s just not necessary. If you’re going to write, you need to, you need to have a broad base, and going to “J” school is just dumb. You can pick up the nuts and bolts in a couple of months working for a newspaper.

**CO:** Yeah, well, when I was, I did one of my degrees at Auburn, and they...every year, someone from this huge bank in North Carolina would come to the History Department at Auburn and recruit History majors, because he said they made better students than, I mean, they made better employees than students with banking or business degrees...

LTS: Absolutely, absolutely.

**CO:** So, I use that to tell students...

LTS: Yeah, you get a ....well, anyway....

**CO:** Yeah, I hear I am talking to the choir here. Um, so what did you major in?

LTS: American Lit and Creative Writing.

**CO:** Ok, did you ever, do you write fiction? Have you ever written fiction?

LTS: Uh-huh.

**CO:** You have?

LTS: I have a lot of, um, rejection slips.

**CO:** Short stories?

LTS: Yes, short stories, much of them.

**CO:** What kinds of stories would you write? Give me an example of a story. No? Ok. Have you got them somewhere? Are you writing now? Are you writing something now?

LTS: I'm not writing something now, no. And when I get bored, I have a friend who says, "So, dammit, write something." Well, I should, I should do that. I should write little...know you, the things that I know that are Oral History, that are going to be gone when I'm gone, I was thinking about one of the Tennents who, well, you know who William Tennent was, and he went south to tell about the Revolution. He believed so strongly of the separation between church and state that he would preach on one side of a creek and then he would say if you want to hear about the Revolution and cross over the creek. Which I think is just marvelous Oral History. And the Oral History of my grandfather, seeing occupation troops in Atlanta. All of these things...

**CO:** No, they really do bear writing down....I have, in my Master's Thesis, I have reflections on some of William Tennent's sermons.

LTS: You have what?

**CO:** Reflections on some of William Tennent's sermons, from the Revolution.

LTS: Really?



**CO:** Yes, yes. I did nothing for six months but read sermons from Southern Revolution...from preachers in the Southern Colonies on the Revolution.

LTS: Well, he was in Tennent, New Jersey.

**CO:** But he was an ardent Patriot?

LTS: Oh, yes.

**CO:** Ok.

LTS: He came south to tell about the Revolution. That's when he did that...oral history thing I told you about, cross over the creek if you want to hear... 'cause he was in the first South Carolina Legislature, and, uh...

**CO:** Those are stories that really, um, and it seems like they would be fun to write about, too. I mean, even if you wrote fiction about that, it could be based on, you know, on that actual...

LTS: I really should write it down for members of the family, because when I'm gone, they're not even gonna know it.

**CO:** Right, right.

LTS: Yes, I will do that.

**CO:** You should become the family historian.

LTS: I'm afraid I already am.

**CO:** Ok, but you've got to write it down. Um, alright, did your, back to romance, did your mother ...did your mother ever talk about her's and your father's courtship?

LTS: No, uh-uh, except that, she had been engaged to several people.

**CO:** Uh-oh.

LTS: I said, "Mother, you had no intention of marrying them, why did you say yes?" She said, "Well, I didn't want to hurt their feelings."

**CO:** How old was she when she and your father married?

LTS: Well, I was born in '28; they married in '27. She was born in '01.

**CO:** Oh, she...so she was...

LTS: She was not a child bride.

**CO:** No!

LTS: As I said, she'd been engaged several times; in fact there was one suitor who sent her flowers until after I was born. When her sister called and said, "Look, she is married and has a child, 'ix-nay'."

**CO:** Your mother's sister did that?

LTS: Uh-huh.

**CO:** Well, now, I have a sort of question here to describe your first love. You've already talked to me about the "love of your life", but what was your "first love" like?

LTS: I guess it was Tom, the sailor who came to the door with a letter from my grandmother's best friend. He was an Ensign and had been through the war in the Pacific on a Destroyer, and I know now the look when I answered the door when he came for the date, he fell in love at first sight. I didn't understand what the look meant, but I know now what it was. And he did want to marry me, and, you know, pursued me, and I wanted to go to college.

**(Bells ringing in background)**

**CO:** So you didn't, I asked you if you had romantic notions about love and courtship as a young girl and you said no, not really, so...

LTS: Whatever happened, happened.

**CO:** But you seem like a romantic person now, and you seem like you've got come...

LTS: Well...your ideas of romance change, of course. When you're very young, I mean, you know, there's the Knight on the White Horse, there's the kiss that wakens you from deep sleep, there's whatever it is....and, uh...I was always smart, and boys don't like smart girls.

**CO:** Right, yeah.

LTS: And, uh, so it wasn't until college that I really came into my own, my lord, I made dates for six weeks in advance. I would have a date for the football game and a date for dinner and a late date, you know, it was just so much fun. And, in high school, if you're smart...

**CO:** Right, right.

LTS: So, it really, I had a wonderful time.

**CO:** You came of age in college, then, really? Wow. And so, did your marriage live up to your expectations of romance? No?

LTS: No, we were mismatched.

**CO:** When did you know that?

LTS: ...I don't know....I don't know. I realized it probably, maybe after we were divorced. Um...I just don't know. But we were, I clearly see we were mismatched.

**CO:** Yeah....did you have different values, different interests... um...?

LTS: Oh, yeah. I remember he said, "Well, now, I'm going to read books with you" and I said "And I will go hunting with you." Well, oh, duh...

**CO:** Yeah, how many times did you go hunting?

LTS: I don't know, several. And it was just ghastly. There were these men in a row, I'm in the middle, and they're all telling me to "Be careful, there are a lot of rattlesnakes out here, watch where you step." Thank you so much! "Now, when you fire, fire straight ahead, do not fire in either direction. Don't load your gun until you see that the covey has..." We had this big...

**CO:** That's bird hunting, some kind of quail?

LTS: Yeah....this big army truck. And I was up in it and I thought, 'Well...I know, I'll go ahead and put the shells in this shotgun, and I'll pull the trigger, so it won't accidentally go off when I push it up.' Well, of course, it shot off, both barrels, "Boom", flew right past the head of my brand new, hardly-used husband.

**CO:** Oh my gosh.

LTS: The men with us were just...none of them would get anywhere except behind me after that. And Bill looked around and said, "Oh, did you see a single?" And I was just, I had almost blown the head off my hardly-used husband. I didn't like it.

**CO:** Yeah. So, how many books did he read to try and ...

LTS: I don't believe he ever did. I mean, he may have, I don't know. But, anyway...he was getting his Master's degree at Florida, and, uh, we were going to the SAE house and having fun and being 'Just Married', you know...

**CO:** Right, yeah. What was his Master's degree in?

LTS: Huh?

**CO:** What was his Master's degree in?

LTS: Oh, business. MBA.

**CO:** And what did he do?

LTS: He was a banker.

**CO:** Ok.

LTS: He taught me a very important thing that you need to know: You don't pay interest, you get interest.

**CO:** Uh-huh. And has that...shaped, has that influenced your...

LTS: NO.

**CO:** Financial....

LTS: I have always been, I think, frugal, and I am frugal. And I'm very careful with what I do. I don't try to buy and sell stocks because I'm not smart enough, smart enough to know I'm not smart enough. I, uh...I'm frugal.

**CO:** Yeah.

LTS: I live very comfortably on my income.

**CO:** And was he frugal? Was that, did he have...

LTS: Well, I guess so. He was, we always had plenty of money...he, uh, his father had plenty of money and lots of orange groves and...

**CO:** In South Carolina? No, I'm sorry, your husband was also from Atlanta?

LTS: He was from Tampa.

**CO:** Oh, ok.

LTS: They had orange groves in the central part of the state....my father was born in South Carolina.

**CO:** Sorry about that confusion.

LTS: Oh, how could you remember my father...?

**CO:** Well, I have your, your data, here. When you were, well, when ya'll first married, how many children did you...did you want, or did you want children? I guess I should ask that.

LTS: I don't think we ever discussed it.

**CO:** Oh, you didn't talk about children?

LTS: Nope.

**CO:** Ok.

LTS: If we did, I don't recall it.

**CO:** So you don't remember planning what kind of family, or imagining what kind of family you would have? No?

LTS: I knew I wanted them, but, I mean, we didn't...he was getting his Master's degree when we married; his father said to us, "You can have your choice, I'll either give you a Honeymoon in Europe or I'll pay for your Master's degree." Well, we chose the Master's degree, and his father laughed later and said, "You could have had both."

**CO:** Oh, yeah, thanks for telling you now. So, did ya'll ever travel? Did you go to Europe?

LTS: Uh-huh. Um, most of my traveling was done after we divorced and after I...but we did, yeah. We had a lovely trip to, um...England, France, Italy...

**CO:** Had you been before, before that...with your husband.

LTS: Nuh-uh.

**CO:** Um, did you work outside the home after your son, after you adopted your son?

LTS: ... (extended pause) Not while I was married.

**CO:** Ok. Did you enjoy that, being at home?

LTS: Oh, yes.

**CO:** Full-time? You did?

LTS: Oh, yeah, because I was active. He was always in private schools and...of course, if anything came up, for instance, he would say, if they needed a room mother, he would say, "My mother will do it," you know. If they needed somebody to run the cake sale, "Mother will do it", you know. He just volunteered me and that was alright.

**CO:** So, you were, you were available?

LTS: Absolutely. It was so funny, I remember one time at, uh.... I went, I was up at St. Thomas, which is the Episcopal School where he went to grammar school...it was not possible in Miami at that time to put a child in public school. It was just dangerous, really. So, anyway...and I was standing there and I heard one teacher say to the other, "Where are the keys to the room with the balls in it?" And the other teacher said, "Find Burford, he's got the keys to everything." And he always did have, he would have the keys to everything. When he was in college at Washington and Lee, he had an office the size of this room overlooking the campus, and nothing came on campus that he didn't approve.

**CO:** Now who, this is your son? Oh.

LTS: He was a student.

**CO:** Oh. But he had an office? And in what capacity?

LTS: He was just the one that approved what came on campus.

**CO:** Oh, for heaven's sake.

LTS: And when he graduated from college...he said, "Now, mother, you're used to my having, getting an award all the time...", and he did, he got every award known to man or beast, and he said, "I'm not going to get an award." And I said, "Well, I don't think you've got room for any more, honey. I can deal with that." And at the end of his graduation speech, the president of the university said, "And now, I would like to give a special accolade to the 'heart' of the class, Burford Smith."

**CO:** Oh!

LTS: And I thought, 'You couldn't, you know ....'

**CO:** Hmm. What was his major, what did your son major in?

LTS: History.

**CO:** He majored in History, what did he do with it?

LTS: Nothing.

**CO:** Oh, ha. And you say that you still don't know what he does, he just gets, he does well at whatever he does.

LTS: Well, he is, um...what you call a "Project Manager," meaning that when he works on the U.S. Open Tennis Tournament, he manages the project. When he works on the Rose Bowl, he manages...he said, I said, "You mean they're flying you to California to put on a party?" He said, "Mother, the Rose Bowl party goes on for seven days, and 10 thousand people a night come, I don't do "hors de 'oeuvres."

**CO:** Ha ha.

LTS: Ok.

**CO:** Well, there's a good plug for a History degree, you can do practically anything.

LTS: Yeah.

**CO:** Well, I think what we argue is that it teaches you to think



Audio file Number 3 of 4

(Sounds of background noise)

**CO:** Um, ok, ok....you were...I'm trying to think how...in '63...you were 35 when you adopted him? Close to it, based on the births of both of you.

LTS: I think I was 33—28, 38, 48, 58...59, 60, 1,2,3...I was 35.

**CO:** Yeah, so, but I mean, uh, you'd spent 35 years as a ....single, I mean, non-mother, and so, suddenly you have this baby. Do you think mothering shaped you into...what role do you think mothering played into shaping you into the person you are now? Have you always been feisty and, uh....do you think mothering had anything to do with the woman you are today?

LTS: I think it gave me joy.

**CO:** Ok....

LTS: I have...I have always, you call it "feisty," I say "just said what I think...do what I think I should." That's "feisty," I suppose.

**CO:** Yeah, well, if I say it, it's a compliment, ha ha, because I couldn't get away with it. I enjoy it when I see other women who...

LTS: Oh I like to tell people, "Now, be careful, I'm a mean little old lady."

**CO:** Oh, ok. Well, um, and are they careful?

LTS: No, they laugh. If I were taller I could get away with it.

**CO:** But it sounds like you've gotten away with it anyway?

LTS: I get away with a lot.

**CO:** Yeah, yeah, that's great. Um, so, now when, you didn't work outside the home when he was at home doing the school thing because you were so involved in his life...did you go back to work

outside of the home while he was...when did you go back to work outside the home?

LTS: (pause)...I worked as a real estate agent for 10 years, which was work outside the home but it did allow you to do what you needed to do, and I made enough money...actually, I got to be one of the 10 top agents in the state of Florida.

**CO:** Wow.

LTS: I made a lot of money, and I bought some rental properties, and that enabled me to go back to the pleasure of going back to writing. So, I've really...there have been 10 years, 10 years, 10 years, you can see, I can see the pattern of it.

**CO:** You mean, since your son's birth?

LTS: No.

**CO:** No.

LTS: I mean, in my life. I worked as a, I was advertising manager of a fashion specialty store in Miami, and then I sold real estate for 10 years when my marriage was failing and I had a hundred dollars and an eight year-old child. And I made a lot of money, and invested in three rental properties. And then, when I had enough money to do it, I went back to writing, here.

**CO:** In Columbus.

LTS: Uh-huh. I harassed myself into the newspaper. Actually, I've never...tried to get a job I didn't get.

**CO:** But your source of security...financial security, came from the real estate...?

LTS: (probably nods)

**CO:** Ok, so that afforded you the opportunity to write, and then you came here and got...

LTS: Well, my source of security was when I divorced my husband...he had to pay me a thousand dollars a month for 10 years, and that, with what I made, made it possible to do what I wanted to do.

**CO:** Ok. Alright, so mothering gave you joy. Um...what do you think it means to be a good mother? I know that sounds like a hokey question...

LTS: (long pause)...Well, of course there has to be love, that's the most important thing. And I had such joy in having my son. And I think you have to lead by good example. I think you have to ...I don't know....

**CO:** What was the hardest part about being a mother, or still is, about being a mother?

LTS: I don't remember anything hard about it. It was just a joy, I had wanted to be one for so long...I'm sure there were hard times.

**CO:** Does he get to visit often?

LTS: Well, he can, anytime he wants to. He doesn't often, but he does get down here...and it's just a joy. The dad-gummed dog, I might as well be dirt on the floor when that man walks in the door. And he pretends he doesn't like the dog, but he's made two doggy doors, one in the mountain house and one down here.

**CO:** Now, where is the mountain house?

LTS: Ah, on Big Ridge, out of Cashers, North Carolina. It's... a mile high, on top of a mountain ridge.

**CO:** Whoa. So how often do you get up there?

LTS: Well, I used to go every summer, for some time, but...when his father died, he left the house to our son, much to the dismay of his second wife, who stayed in it for 2 years. But it belongs to our son...and I cannot, I am just not able to go up there and be alone now. And I can't, it's not good to drive up there, and I don't want a constant house party, so I wish Burford would go on and sell the place because it's not an asset, it's a liability. He

has to pay taxes and neighborhood dues and roads and water and stuff.  
Dad-gummit...

**CO:** Do you want to go fix that?

LTS: No, I'm just messing with it.

**CO:** Ok. Well, do you think mothering is easier today than it was, or harder, than it was, say...

LTS: Have no idea. Hard to say, I don't think you can compare. I think...

**CO:** You don't think drugs and the internet have made it more difficult to...

LTS: There's always been something...

**CO:** Ok. Alright. What do you admire most about your son?

LTS: ...his character, his intelligence.

**(Recorder was stopped and restarted mid-sentence)**

**CO:** ...taste the peach? Do you want to just taste the peach or....

LTS: He wanted us to taste the aged shine. [a discussion of LTS father's efforts to turn moonshine into something good by putting a peach into it, from revisions penciled in to transcript by LTS]

**CO:** Ah. So then, what did he do with the peach? Was the peach used for, um...?

LTS: I don't know, we just told him it was all awful and get out of here.

**CO:** Ah, ok. But can't you imagine that peach making, like um, I don't know, putting it in some kind of cake or something? Being very...

LTS: We didn't want any part of his experiments. "Now I've got it this time, everybody come take a sip", no thanks.

**CO:** Ha ha. Well, I've heard so many moonshine stories...but the next subject to talk about is your work, and I really would like for you to

talk about your writing, if you would. I mean, you wrote for the paper for, how many jobs writing have you had?

LTS: I've had three careers, basically. The first one was advertising manager of a fashion specialty store in Miami. I worked for a couple of stores and eventually became advertising manager of 'Hartleys', in Miami.

**CO:** Now, was this before Burford, or after?

LTS: ...well, let's see. (pause) Before, because I did that...I have to take it backwards. (Pause)...before.

**CO:** Ok.

LTS: And, um, I then...I guess my next, I worked for 'Richards,' a department store in Miami, and then I became advertising manager of Hartley's, which was a fashion specialty store. And I think I retired when we adopted Burford in '63. I don't remember, I have a bad memory for dates.

**CO:** Well, that's ok. But then you stayed home with him until he, what? Graduated from high school or...?

LTS: No...I divorced Bill...

**CO:** He was 11, Burford was 11 when ya'll divorced, I think, according to your dates. If he was born in '63, no, no, if you divorced in 84, then he was 21. Was he grown when you divorced?

LTS: We separated when Burford was 15, I think. It took a while to get the divorce. I don't know, I...picked up something I wrote, maybe I wrote it in here. I don't, I'm so bad about dates, I have to work backwards. Where did I put that damn thing?

**CO:** I just want to know, besides the, the different writing jobs you've had.

LTS: Ok, well, I, uh...I wrote advertising for 'Richards' in Miami which was a department store, and I wrote, I was advertising manager at Hartley's in Miami, and...then I moved to Columbus, I guess. From Miami. And...I

thought, “Geez, I better get some work,” and so...I harassed the *Ledger-Enquirer* until they hired me.

**CO:** But you also sold real estate in Miami, right?

LTS: I did. When I realized I had an 8 year-old child, a 100 dollars, and was getting a divorce, it became evident that I needed to make money, so my attorney said, “Well, you’re smart, why don’t you get a real estate license?” So I did...and I, all my friends told all their friends that I was the only person who knew anything about real estate, I’ve told you this

**CO:** So you had some good...

LTS: ‘Course, they were lying, I didn’t know a thing, but, I worked hard, I learned the market, and I was honest, and so pretty soon I didn’t have to look for customers.

**CO:** Yeah, did you enjoy that?

LTS: ...Not really, it was necessary, it was ok, it was fine. I did well, I became one of the 10 top agents in the state of Florida.

**CO:** Wow, that’s saying something for real estate in Florida.

LTS: Yup, and uh, I made a lot of money, I made enough money to go back to writing. But as I said, I was honest and I worked hard. I learned the market. People who get a real estate license, I still believe, it’s slightly immoral to get a little real estate license, not know the market, and drag your friends around and sell them something when you don’t know what you’re doing, because you need to know the market you need to know. And I knew it, I knew. You have to, on weekends, it’s a terrible job, you have to go to “Open Houses” to learn the stock, you’ve got to know what the stock is. And the only way you can do it is go to “Open Houses” and see what’s on the market.

**CO:** Well, so, when you...do you consider that one of your careers, real estate?

LTS: Oh, certainly. I did it for 10 years.

**CO:** Oh, ok. And then you came here. Well now, go back, because one thing I am looking for is what you consider “turning points” in your life, and I think when we were eating lunch you said something about...your life had somehow unfolded in 10 year segments, did you say that? And, could you tell me a little more about what you mean by that?

LTS: Well, I think career-wise.

**CO:** Oh, ok. Well...

LTS: Because I was...I did advertising copy for 10 years, I did real estate for 10 years, then I worked for the newspaper, so, I just think of it that way. Um, and it all worked out well.

**CO:** Yeah. Of those three different jobs, careers, which was the most gratifying, which was the least?

LTS: The last, and I made the least amount of money. Working for the newspaper, it was just great fun. They're good people in the newsroom, they are good people. They sure aren't working for the money...because they're not well paid, but it was just great fun. And it fun to know all, where all the bodies are buried.

**CO:** Right, I bet you do, too. Ok...if you could go back and train for any other job or profession, what might it be? If not necessarily in place of what you did, but just in addition, as something else you might have liked to do?

LTS: I don't think I'd like to do anything better than writing.

**CO:** Ok.

LTS: It's just, when you're on a roll, it's a wonderful feeling. Writing fiction is just wonderful. It's just...it rolls, if you get on a roll. And writing for a newspaper is great fun.

**CO:** Did you ever publish any of your fiction, or do you just have it sitting around somewhere?

LTS: I have, um, tried, but nobody wanted to publish it.

**CO:** Well, from what I understand about fiction, you just have to keep, you have to keep trying, keep sending. Um...are there any jobs you think that women shouldn't do?

LTS: Any jobs I think.....?

**CO:** ... that women shouldn't do?

LTS: ...(pause) (probably shakes head)

**CO:** No?

LTS: I think women can do any job that a man can do. I don't think that I would like to be a soldier, counting on a fellow soldier to throw a grenade, because I don't think women have the muscle-power to throw it maybe as far as they should. Um...I just think that's sensible.

**CO:** Yeah, you don't sound like you have a lot of ...you experienced, anyway, a lot of gender discrimination in your life.

LTS: Never felt that.

**CO:** Ok, alright.

LTS: I never asked for a job I didn't get. It was really funny, I never tried for one. I remember there was, uh, I was trying for a job in advertising, at a department store in Miami, and there was a room full of people, and the man who was the publicity guy in charge of the advertising department came over to me and he said, "Well, I don't know why, but she wants you," meaning the advertising manager.

**CO:** He said that?

LTS: Yeah. "I don't know why she wants you, but you're the one."

**CO:** Oh my goodness. How did you respond to that?

LTS: "Oh, good," I said. "Thank you." What are you going to say? Well, he was just saying, he didn't know there was a room full of people there, and



she picked me. But I've never, I've never had any trouble getting what I wanted, isn't that terrible to say? But it's true.

**CO:** No...a little bit ago, you said something about "retirement is not all it's cracked up to be," what was retiring like? When did you retire?

LTS: 1993.

**CO:** So you've been retired a while?

LTS: Yeah, it's a bore. I've offered to go to work for people for free...

**CO:** Ha ha, they don't call you to write anything? Well, you said recently you did, didn't you say you had done something recently?

LTS: Well, I have offered to write for *Columbus in the Valley*, I mean I have written, you know, something like that. On a, just a freelance basis. But, um, I offered, because one of the owners of *Columbus of the Valley Magazine* has cancer, and I went down there told his wife, I said, "Look, I'll come, I'm a pretty good editor, so I'll come down there and I'll work for free, I don't need or want the money, but I'll come help you." I haven't heard back, I may go back. She may not want to do it because, I think, because, he might think he's on his last legs with cancer.

**CO:** Oh, yeah. Um...

LTS: But it's strange, people don't want you to work for free.

**CO:** Yeah, right.

LTS: And I'm good. I'm a good editor.

**CO:** So, then, there's no chance of, uh, the Columbus paper, the *Ledger-Enquirer*, needing your services?

LTS: Oh, no, the newsroom is an echoing vault, they've gotten rid of so many people, the bean counters are in charge. It's very sad.

**CO:** Yeah, yeah. They're in charge everywhere. Um, so what's the best part of being retired? You're bored now, but when you're not bored, what...?

LTS: The best part of being retired? ....Beating the dog every day.

**CO:** Oh, ok. (laughs) Ahh....

LTS: (speaking about the dog) You see how terrified he is.

LTS: (Speaking to Interviewer) I don't know the best part of being retired. It's not as great as people think it is. When you've been active, working, and a reason to get up and go do something... Of course, I don't want to have to do that, so I do volunteer things, I'm on several boards, and, you know.... I do stuff like that. But um, I don't feel there's a great meaning....

**CO:** You don't feel there's a great meaning....? Is that what you said?

LTS: No, I don't feel that there's a great meaning to my life, you know. I'm existing, I have plenty of money to live on, I have things I could do with friends, but it's just, I'm just kind of ...drifting around.

**CO:** Hmm. What would change that?

LTS: ...I don't know, what do you think ?

**CO:** Well, I think if you wrote...ha ha, I think if you wrote that family history; it's such an interesting cross-section of people, whose paths have crossed and made, you know, married...

LTS: Yeah.

**CO:** Such interesting connections there. Who's going to write it? Will your sister do it; will your brother do it?

LTS: Oh, no. My brother's a psychologist and he can't write, and my sister cannot put two words together well.

**CO:** Well, there you go.

LTS: I'm it.

**CO:** You're it.

LTS: I'm it. I'm the one that everybody looks to, you know, the eldest member of both sides of the family.

**CO:** How much of that family tree do you know....at what point can you start telling stories about the people in that...tree your mother so carefully...?

LTS: Well, I knew my grandparents, which takes it back into, my grandfather on one side, I know, was born in 1875, and, uh.....(long pause)...I don't...I guess I'm the one that remembers.

**CO:** Right. That, to me, is very...is begging to be done. That's...

LTS: I know. I told one of my friends that I was bored and she was so irritated with me. "Why aren't you writing something?" And I thought, 'you know, yeah, right.'

**CO:** Yeah. But there is a crying need for that. I mean, it's not just an interest, there is a need for that...

LTS: I've, really, I've started to drag it out. I had started an autobiography...

**CO:** You did, you pulled out a few pages...

LTS: Did I?

**CO:** Uh-huh.

LTS: But, um...

**CO:** That looked old, though. That looked like something you started a long time ago, because it looked like it was...

LTS: And I think my memory, memories of the family, go back to people who, as I said, were born in 1875, so that's probably what I should do.

**CO:** You really, yeah. Talk about...meaning.

LTS: And the Oral History that I remember.

**CO:** You're walking history, not just because of what you've lived, but from what you carry, you know?

LTS: Yes.

**CO:** The stories that you carry.

LTS: Yes, that's true.

**CO:** What about loss? What's the most difficult loss you've experienced through death?

LTS: ...(long pause) I suppose, the Love of my Life, when he died. You expect your parents to die, but that was such a gift to receive after you're 60. And that was a terrible loss.

**CO:** How did you get through it?

LTS: The way you get through anything, one foot after the other. You just get through it.

**CO:** Were you, um, had you all been together....

LTS: Seven years.

**CO:** Right, I know that. But at the time he died, that was unexpected, the stroke, right?

LTS: Well, we knew he was dying, and his sons, as I think I've said, were so sweet to my. They allowed me equal time with them to go into his room.

**CO:** Right, but he got...he died from the result of a stroke, right? So the stroke was unexpected? That's right? So was he close by when he had the stroke? Close to you, in proximity, meaning, was he ....

LTS: He was not here, no. I went up to Atlanta, he was in the hospital. He, uh...he died very gracefully. Mother gracefully, of course she had suffered for some time. But to die in your sleep...

**CO:** Yeah. Were you with either one of them when they died?

LTS: Well, my mother was downstairs...

**CO:** She was here?

LTS: Uh-huh, in a hospital bed. When she died, I was upstairs. And when the helpers came in that day, they said, "Mrs. Smith, you better come back here." And she was dead, she died in her sleep, which is a nice way to go.

**CO:** Hmm, hmm. Yeah, yeah. And were you with him, with Jim, when he died?

LTS: Yes, I was there.....A death watch is no fun, let me tell you. If you haven't sat a death watch, it's a bitch. It's not something you enjoy. Daddy was in Intensive Care at Emory Hospital for...Labor Day to Thanksgiving, and every time he could speak, he would say, "Let me die." And we weren't kind enough, you know, at that point, to say, "Stop"....that he was right.

**CO:** The, ah, the medical support, he wanted to be...

LTS: He just wanted to die. "Let me die. Quit all this stuff."

**CO:** So the doctors were keeping him alive?

LTS: Well, of course, that's their job.

**CO:** Right, but you all had to...were you all giving permission to them, to keep him alive?

LTS: Well, it was a long time ago. It was 1978, and things were different then. But every time he could speak, he would say, "Let me die." And finally....we got some doctors in the room, my sister and I, and we looked at them, and we said, "Look, stop. Let the man go." And they said, "You know, it would, it might be called 'murder'." And I remember saying, "Call it 'murder' if you will, but my father wants to die. Let him go." And he died that night, so...(trails off)

**CO:** What did they do differently...?

LTS: They just...stopped...whatever they did, I don't know. I would not like to put a name to it. But, clearly, they were keeping him alive and he didn't want to be kept alive, and I understand that, believe me. I think, sometimes, you know, you think, when you get to be my age, you think, "You know, it'd be so much easier to just go on and die." Just...go.

**CO:** Yeah. (pause) Besides death, what are some other loses that you've had to deal with, like through separation, divorce, you know, declining health, anything you consider a loss?

LTS: Well, yes, all of those things. All of the above, yes.

**CO:** Was it hard, your divorce, was it hard? It sounds like you were separated, or at least alienated, for some time before your divorce. Did that make the divorce, the actual divorce itself, easier or...?

LTS: Yeah. It's been so long ago I forget. Um...every once in a while I think, "Oh, maybe I should have kept ol' Bill, but, no." We were mismatched from the beginning.

**CO:** Is he still living?

LTS: No. He died of Breast Cancer, believe it or not, years ago.

**CO:** Ohh, wow.....so, ok, when you were young....even as far back as childhood or a teenager, do you remember what you thought was an "old person?" Remember thinking 30 as "old" and 40 as "old"? Remember that? I remember it vividly, when I thought 40 was...

LTS: Oh, I remember somebody was getting me a date one time, they wanted me to date somebody, and they said, "Oh, he's 30" and I thought "Ohhh!"

**CO:** Ha ha, that's old.

LTS: Ooooh.

**CO:** Now, what's old?

LTS: Anybody in their 90s.

**CO:** You think that 90s is old?

LTS: Yeah, I think so. I think people are living better in old age. I think the 70s is middle old age. Of course, I'm 83, so...I don't know that I know, but...

**CO:** You don't think of yourself as old, though?

LTS: Oh, yes I do.

**CO:** You do?

LTS: I know I'm old. I like to tell people, "I'm a mean little old lady, so look out."

**CO:** Is there any benefit to say whatever you want to?

LTS: I've always done that.

**CO:** You've always done that?

LTS: Yes.

**CO:** Well, you can't claim that as a benefit, then.

LTS: No, because I think it's....I probably didn't come out with it quite so much at times, but I've always said what I thought.

**CO:** Well, what are the benefits of aging...gotta be some?

LTS: (pause)...Damn if I can think of any.

**CO:** Haha, alright. Um...what age do you recall most nostalgically? Do you recall any age nostalgically?

LTS: If I could recall any age I liked best...?

**CO:** Uh-huh.

LTS: ...(pause)...Oh, probably the ages between, probably the 20s.

**CO:** Your 20s?

LTS: Probably. Probably from 16 to 30, those are great years.

**CO:** So you were dating, you were in college, and you were early married, so those were your....

LTS: It was...college was just great fun....just marvelous. When I had been at Duke six weeks, I think I told you, I could get real upset thinking I was gonna have to leave in four years. It was just a wonderful experience.

**CO:** Well, I can see, I can tell that you look back on that with nostalgia. Do you have any friends from that time that you still keep up with?

LTS: Unfortunately, most of them are dead. They just die, and that's the horrible, I think that's the worst thing about old age, you expect your parents to die...but when your friends begin dropping, it's very difficult. And I, sometimes, I was reading the Duke Alumni Register and I found out that my suite mate had died, I didn't know, you know. But, uh....I was mourning the loss of my old friends and somebody said, "Well, make younger friends." Yeah, right.

**CO:** Where do you get, where are most of your friends? What's your social circle now?

LTS: Well, probably the Historic District.

**CO:** But some people have lived right here?

LTS: Uh-huh, we have a thing called the "Historic District Preservation Society," HDPS. It's the neighbors around here, and we get together for parties and gathering and we know and support each other.

**CO:** Do you write that up, does that get put up in the newspaper or anything? No?

LTS: No.

**CO:** Where do you meet?

LTS: Well, we meet at somebody's house; we go out to dinner together; we have drinks at a bar. You know, we have what's called "First Friday" at some bar downtown, and....

**CO:** Oh, that's good!



LTS: Yeah, it's sort of a casual thing.

**CO:** Is that how you knew Lynn?

LTS: ...**(motioning to repeat question)**

**CO:** Is that how you know Lynn Willoughby from this [neighborhood]?

LTS: I suppose so, 'cause they lived a couple of blocks over.

**CO:** Yeah. Um...

LTS: I'm so sorry they broke up, golly Moses.

**CO:** I know, yeah. Did you get in touch with her after I called you about interviewing?

LTS: I tried to, I...got her, maybe I got her email address from you and I remember sending her something saying, "Hooray, we're back in touch," but I don't think I heard from her.

**CO:** Oh my goodness, she was just so...she spoke so highly of you and was so pleased when I wrote and told her that I gotten in touch with you and was trying to schedule a time to come.

LTS: Well, I better look and see, let's look and see if I have the right email address.

**CO:** Well I can't, I wouldn't know...

LTS: Ok.

**CO:** But before I leave, what I can do is pull my email down and look it up there.

LTS: OK, alright, good.

**CO:** Can I ask you some questions about regional identity? When we first talked it was....I said I was interested in exploring Southern identity with women, and your, then you told me the story about your grandfather, part of it, anyway, so...I ask some people that and it's

amazing to me that they don't know what I'm talking about. I can ask some women about their...

LTS: You know the story of the man who could never be defeated as long as his feet touched his mother earth? I feel that way about Georgia.

**CO:** Hmm.

LTS: My family have been from Georgia from probably 200 years, parts of it. Um...the Martins had a plantation on Whitemarsh Island, um....

**CO:** Now, Martins is what side?

LTS: Mother's side. They were from Ireland. And, uh, the Coopers came down from Virginia, the Byrds. Of course, the Byrds never came down, 'cause they were Tories, they lost they lands after the Revolution. But...the Coopers came down from Virginia, the Martins....the Tennents, of course, you know about that.

**CO:** So, you're heavily identified with the state, are you more identified with Georgia, you think, especially since you've traveled, you know, have you travelled a lot within the country, within the United States?

LTS: I have lived in a number of places in the United States.

**CO:** Outside the South?

LTS: Oh, yeah. I've lived in Cheyenne, Wyoming, um, California, um....Texas, if you count that South.

**CO:** Well, I think, don't they, like Virginians consider themselves apart? They're a different South?

LTS: Yes.

**CO:** Yeah, right.

LTS: ...and Florida.

**CO:** Yeah, that's not, that's a little bit different, too. But, how would you describe, to somebody who didn't know, you know, somebody from a different country, what it meant....how would you explain the difference between the South and everywhere else in this country? How would you explain that to somebody who just didn't know.

LTS: A "cohesiveness," I think. Southerners have a "cohesiveness" and I'm not talking about Florida...or Texas. I'm talking about the band of the south that goes from South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, Alabama....I don't know if I'm gonna put Tennessee in there or not, maybe, but you know what I mean. That part, there's a "cohesiveness" there.

**CO:** What do you think ... is responsible for that?

LTS: Well, I don't know. Part of it goes back to the Civil War, I suppose. Ah, part of it is... shared ... heritage in a way. Um...we are different from New Englanders, we are different from the Upper-Atlantic Coast...even Virginia.

**CO:** Right.

LTS: The Deep South is the Deep South, and it...we have mores and ways of doing things, and cooking, even. It's a very nice, comfortable feeling. When I got a divorce, as I think I told you, I thought, "Now, what's good about a divorce? Oh, I know...I can move back to Georgia."

**CO:** Uh-huh. That's, um, almost "Scarlett O'Hara-ish."

LTS: ...

**CO:** "Scarlett O'Hara."

LTS: "I'll go back to Tara," yeah.

**CO:** Yeah. Well, outside the South, you know...the South is so identified with its troubled race relations, not like there's a place in the country that *doesn't* have trouble....

LTS: I was gonna say, "Let's talk about Detroit."

**CO:** Right, I know, or L.A. or...there is not a state that's not, in some way, touched by it. But the South is uniquely touched by it....

LTS: Well, when people mention it to me, I say, "Yeah, we still bring slaves in from Alabama, it's just wonderful to have them." I'm not going to listen to that crap.

**CO:** Yeah, yeah. But do you remember...as a child, um, do you remember becoming aware of what it meant to be, what skin color meant?

LTS: ....

**CO:** No? You don't remember?

LTS: No, because the people that worked for us were my friends. They were black. Lizzie was my protection from the rest of the family. I mean, if they were treating me bad I ran in to Lizzie. And Paul...

**CO:** Who was Paul?

LTS: Paul was the chauffer of the people who owned part of the property. Anyway, he was my buddy. Um...

**CO:** So do you remember when you were growing up...anything about, do you remember...discovering that there was a different etiquette, a different expectation for white people than there was for black people?

LTS: I don't think I thought about it, no.

**CO:** Ok, alright.

LTS: No.

**CO:** Ok, um....have your opinions of race changed over your lifetime? Do you have any...?

LTS: I don't think so.

**CO:** No.

LTS: I have never... (trails off)

**CO:** Did you have strong feelings about, because, the next thing I'm going to talk about is a few things that happened in those middle decades, the decade of the 40s, and you've already talked about World War II, some. But, do you have, um, did your family have strong reactions to the Civil Rights Movement?

LTS: No.

**CO:** No. They didn't find it, well, if they didn't have strong reactions, there's no, um....

LTS: No, we had a "paternalistic" view of blacks.

**CO:** Hmm.

LTS: We were not...mean, ugly...ah.... It was a hangover, I suppose, from the old plantation. White folks, you know, the big house thing, I suppose that's it. It was patronizing. But...never felt, I never felt that we felt...that we should mistreat blacks. It was, as I said, "paternalistic."

**CO:** So how...I mean...how does that, how do "paternalists" regard the Civil Rights Movement? I mean, there were so many different kinds of reactions to the...

LTS: I don't believe it bothered me at all. I thought, "Ok."

**CO:** Where were you in the 60s? You were in Miami?

LTS: I don't remember when it started? In the 60s?

**CO:** Well, I mean, it started in the Reconstruction, but, really it starts with "Brown versus Board of Education" in '54. But the 60s is when it really began to get in the streets. Ok, Burford you adopted in '63, where did you adopt...?

LTS: Miami, in Miami.

**CO:** Miami. So you were in Florida for a good bit of that, and they probably had a different... . If you had lived in Atlanta, you might have experienced things differently.

LTS: I doubt it. I don't think we ever...my ever were not....well, we were paternalistic, of course. I know that, looking back at it. But we were not averse to the rights that they needed. Ever.

**CO:** Ok. Well, with regard to history, what do you think is the most important historical event that you either participated in or lived through?

LTS: Probably World War II.

**CO:** Yeah.

LTS: I mean, how could you not say that?

**CO:** Ha ha, how can you top that? I think kids in school today, the biggest thing for them was 9-1-1, that's their biggest historical event. But most women of your generation say World War II.

LTS: It would have to be, oh my god.

**CO:** Yeah. How about, did your...Well, the Depression affected your family, your parents, because you said they wound up living with one set of...

LTS: Well, we were living in Cuba, you see.

**CO:** At the beginning...

LTS: ...and when the Sugar Mill burned down, and we came back to the states, it was in the middle of the Depression. It was in, well I would have been three, so that would have been...'31/32. There were no jobs, and so, yes, it was hard.

**CO:** Do you remember your parents or grandparents talking about FDR at all?

LTS: (pause) Vaguely. They didn't like him.

**CO:** They didn't like him. I bet they didn't like Eleanor either.

**LTS:** Uh-uh, oh my! *Eleanor!*

**CO:** Ha, yeah. Do you have any feelings about either one of them?

**LTS:** FDR?

**CO:** Either FDR or Eleanor Roosevelt.

**LTS:** Oh, I think FDR was marvelous...and, uh, lord he had a lot to face, my goodness. And, Eleanor was something else, and she...she was ahead of her time and did some good stuff.

**CO:** Now, let's see, would you have been able to vote for him in either...

**LTS:** No, he died.

**CO:** He died, so you weren't quite old enough yet to vote, so most of what you know about him, you know in retrospect, from reading...

**LTS:** Yes. No, I remember him.

**CO:** You remember?

**LTS:** I do. (pause) I remember the "day which will live in infamy," you know.

**CO:** You remember hearing him say that?

**LTS:** Yes.

**CO:** You do.

**LTS:** I do. I remember, as I think I said, I was walking with two R.A.F. flyers when...

**CO:** ...you came home, yeah. That's...you could write about that...because that's, uh, that is, who has that memory anymore? I mean, who has it? We can read about it, but who can remember it, recall it? It's...

LTS: "The Japs have bombed Pearl Harbor." Whoa. Hmm.

**CO:** Even Eleanor called them "the Japs." Ha ha. Um, so besides the War, do you recall anything else about the '40s? I mean, the War consumed so much of the decade, the War and the immediate post-War was such...

LTS: Well, let's see. In 1940 I was 12, '41 I was 13. We were living in Jacksonville. We had blackouts, sometimes, and sometimes there was tar on the sand, in Jacksonville, from tankers that had been bombed, had been torpedoed by U-boats, German U-boats roamed along there and they would sometimes torpedo a tanker. We had...as I said, blackouts, sometimes. We were taught at school to get under our desks in case there was an air raid....

**CO:** Hmm.

LTS: ...because Jacksonville was a port, of course.

**CO:** So did you have, like, air raid drills?

LTS: Yeah...we'd get under our desks.

**CO:** Did that scare you?

LTS: No.

**CO:** No. Did you ever think it might happen?

LTS: Well, I thought it might...but no, it was not really frightening. You know, when you are a teenager you are not....you're immortal.

**CO:** Right, right. [BELLS CHIMING IN BACKGROUND ARE OBSCURING STATEMENT FROM 8:52-8:46].

LTS: No, I've been through...well, I lived in Miami for a number of years, and really, basically, a hurricane is a bore, because it's so long getting there. Now, a tornado is scary, because you never know...Boom!, there it is. A hurricane you hear about it for so long that by the time it gets there, Ho Hum!



**CO:** Right, right, yeah. Ok, so the air raid drills that you had to do, how often did you have those?

**LTS:** Well, they'd just say, "There is an air raid drill, everybody get under your desk." I don't remember if there was any siren that went off or anything, but...that's what we were taught to do.

**CO:** And so, ok, you recall...part of the '40s as being one of your best times, so the late '40s, you recalled, when did you go to Duke?

**LTS:** '46.

**CO:** '46, ok. So, you were at Duke in the early years of the Cold War. Do you remember anything about that? Obviously it was not...you didn't worry about nuclear...?

**LTS:** No, I was really busy doing what I did.

**CO:** Yeah. And then in the '50s, did you, do you remember having any strong opinions about the Peace Movement and the disarm, the Nuclear Disarmament, do you remember any of that?

**LTS:** Oh, I think I mostly thought, "Oh, shut up."

**CO:** Oh, all right. So you weren't afraid of a nuclear...you weren't afraid of a nuclear war?

**LTS:** Oh, of course we all were. It's damn, scary. All you have to do is think about the Japanese who died.

**CO:** Yeah. Did your family talk about, or have any opinions about, the Atomic Bombs in Japan?

**LTS:** My family always discussed world events, and if they had any feeling about nuclear weapons in Japan and bombing Japan, it was "Whoopie, we got rid of them."

**CO:** So, let's see, '45, you would have been a Senior?

**LTS:** One of the people, as I recall hearing, that one of the generals at the meeting, where they decided to bomb Pearl Harbor, said, "Do you realize

what you're doing? You're awakening a sleeping giant," which is exactly what they did....and suffered the consequences.

**CO:** Ok. Um...you married in '50...what do you recall about the 1950s?

LTS: ...not a lot, just being married, keeping house, you know.

**CO:** Yeah. The '50s was supposed to be a decade of overwhelming consensus opinion in this country.

LTS: Overwhelming what?

**CO:** Consensus opinion, that everything was...

LTS: ...gonna work out fine.

**CO:** Yeah. Do you remember it that way?

LTS: Well, I don't recall being terribly worried about anything, no.

**CO:** And it was a prosperous decade for you?

LTS: Well, if you are just married, and things are going well, yeah, you know, everything's good.

**CO:** Ok. And the '60s, ok. The 60's. Before, I asked you about race relations, if I had just said, "What do you remember about the Civil Rights Movement, as a movement," would you have had anything to say? I mean, did it, what do you recall about it?

LTS: Not much.

**CO:** So you didn't, um... Well, you were in Miami.

LTS: It was time, it was gonna happen. I don't...

**CO:** And what about school, desegregation? Was that...?

LTS: Big deal.

**CO:** Ok, all right.

LTS: I had a maid, we had a maid, and...they lived at a black enclave, a nice neighborhood, and they were just really ticked that their children were being bused so that they could integrate the white schools. They wanted them to go to the neighborhood schools, so, you know.

**CO:** Did they feel like their neighborhood school was a good school, the one that they got bused away from?

LTS: Yeah, they thought they should go to their neighborhood schools.

**CO:** Ok.

LTS: And they were being bused to get this thing going. Ah, there were many different opinions, of course.

**CO:** Right, right. Do you remember 1968, do you remember anything about 1968? Did that year have any special meaning for you? So many things went on... It was a very tumultuous year. Martin Luther King was assassinated in the Spring and then Robert Kennedy assassinated in the Summer, and it was like...

LTS: Well, of course I remember that, both of them.

**CO:** Yeah. It seemed like, though...

LTS: Terrible thing.

**CO:** Yeah. And then, do you remember where you were when JFK was assassinated in '63?

LTS: (pause)...I remember I was walking into the knit shop, when somebody told me about it. Yes, I remember exactly where I was. I remember exactly where I was when Pearl Harbor, when I heard about Pearl Harbor, when JFK was assassinated. What else? There's some things you never forget.

**CO:** Uh-huh, those were two... Do you remember the Cuban Missile Crisis?

LTS: Oh yeah. Well, since we were living...

**CO:** Yeah, pretty close!

LTS: ...about 60 miles.

**CO:** Yeah, yeah!

LTS: Yeah.

**CO:** What was that like? Being so, being in Miami?

LTS: It was no problem.

**CO:** I remember the drills.

LTS: It was not scary. You see, we used to run over to Havana for weekends. You could fly on, oh, there's some little airline that went across from Miami to Havana. And we drank daiquiris all the way down and we landed in Havana and they gave us more daiquiris, "Welcome to Havana."

**CO:** Oh my goodness.

LTS: And the last time we went, I said to my mother, because, you see, my parents had lived in Cuba, and I said, "Mother," Castro was there, and I said, "Mother, if you ever want to see Havana again, I think we've got a little window of opportunity, we can go." And we went over to the "Naci", flew over from Miami to Havana, and, uh, we were the only three people at the Nacionale Hotel, and, uh...we walked past, we went to La Bodeguita???, which was Earnest Hemmingway's favorite restaurant. There was a "barbudo," a "bearded one" with a gun on every corner, and we walked past Castro giving a speech in the square, but I did not feel frightened.

**CO:** Hmm. Wow. This was in the early '60s?

LTS: Yeah, I guess so.

**CO:** Yeah, ok. Alright. Do you remember the Women's Movement? Did you ever read Betty Freidan's *The Feminine Mystique*, do you remember it?

LTS: Yes, I know who Betty Freidan was, and I thought she was a jackass.

**CO:** Oh, you did? Did you read the book at all?

LTS: No.

**CO:** No, no.

LTS: I mean, she was so strident, and, ok, she had stuff to say and so forth, has her place in History.

**CO:** How did you feel about the Women's Movement? It's interesting to me how women of your generation felt about...

**CO:** Did you have, um...well you already said you didn't feel discriminated against, so that...

LTS: Didn't feel what?

**CO:** You didn't feel discriminated against, yourself.

LTS: No.

**CO:** So...did that color your opinion of the Women's Movement?

LTS: Not really. I mean, go ahead, do what you want to do, but, uh, what the hell? Women have run the world for a long time. We just haven't let the men know it.

**CO:** Hmm, ok. So, what do you think has been the legacy of the Women's Movement? Do you think it has helped the cause of equal rights or....the opposite, has hurt the cause?

LTS: I think you could argue either way, but I think it helped.

**CO:** Ok, alright. Um...what about the war in Vietnam? Did your family have strong feelings about that? Did you know anybody that went, or that...?

LTS: I thought we should get the hell out of there. What are we doing there, what are we trying to do, run the world? No! Stop!

**CO:** Yeah. Did you feel that way at the time?

LTS: I think so, probably. I don't believe we need to be everywhere in the world, straightening everything up.

**CO:** Yeah. Did you know anybody who had relatives in Vietnam? Did you know anybody that lost anybody in Vietnam?

LTS: No.

**CO:** No. Ok. What about any of the other movements from the '60s, or actually the '70s, really. The Native American, or the "Red Power" Movement, or the Gay and Lesbian Movement, or any of those movements that was spawned by the Civil Rights Movement?

LTS: Let them do what they want to. I mean, I just, you know, go right ahead and do your little thing. This is the United States, you have your right to do what you want to do, say what you want to say...since my brother is gay, I have no feeling against gays. I don't...many of my friends are gay. Um...I don't understand... "gay-bashing," I think it's done by people who are a little bit scared that they need to show that they aren't gay by bashing gays. But, uh....

**CO:** One thing that seems to be a pattern with many people, not just people of a particular generation...they support the rights of any group or of any, you know, any individual or any group, but they just don't like the... "much ado" about anything. They just don't really support protest.

LTS: Really?

**CO:** And that's how you feel?

LTS: I do. I mean, come on. Do what you have to do, but...

**CO:** How do you think change comes about?

LTS: Well, I do think that it was necessary, you know, some of this was necessary. But it's gone a little bit overboard. This "Occupy" thing is the dumbest thing I've ever heard of.

**CO:** You think so?

LTS: I do. What is the point? Occupy a park? I mean, come on. It's just...I don't know. I'm just old and cranky, I guess.

**CO:** Well, but, no, but that seems to be an opinion of many, many people that I've talked to. They are, they don't have a problem with, um, with anybody's particular...

LTS: ...standing up for, uh-huh.

**CO:** ...But they just don't believe in protest, and so, or militancy of any kind.

LTS: Well, there are, you know, as I understand it, there are times when, on some of the campuses, "Oh, we're going to a protest, you wanna go?" Phht.

**CO:** Yeah, yeah. Well, that's what the '60s was all about. Um...disregarding your own personal political position, do you think that opinions on race have changed since there's been a black man in the White House?

LTS: Opinions have changed about what?

**CO:** I said, do you think that since there's been a black man in the White House, opinions on race have changed?

LTS: No.

**CO:** I could have turned that light on.

LTS: No, I don't.

**CO:** Ok.

**CO:** Do you want me to turn the one across the room on?

LTS: I'll do that. (pause) No, I don't think so. I just hope nobody will shoot the jackass. That would lead to *big* problems...

**CO:** Yep.

LTS: ...and he is a jackass.

**CO:** I take it you don't like him.

LTS: No, I don't.

**CO:** Oh, ok.

LTS: He's all talk, no action. You gotta be a President. He doesn't have any executive abilities...

**CO:** And you don't think that it has anything to do with him being ... black?

LTS: Black? No! It's just, he's incapable.

**CO:** Hmm, ok.

LTS: He could have been white and incapable, you know. We've had plenty of...

**CO:** ...incapable white people?

LTS: Uh-huh.

**CO:** Well, that's enough about history, can we talk about religion? That's a pretty heavy subject for...but I think we can get through if we put...

LTS: I think we can get through it, I am the product of 200 years of Presbyterian preachers.

**CO:** That is a heavy history.

LTS: There you go.

**CO:** And you've Presbyterian all your life?

LTS: Yes.

**CO:** Was your husband?

LTS: No.

**CO:** No. What was he?



LTS: Nothing.

**CO:** Nothing, ok. And...seriously, nothing? Did he claim to be an unbeliever or...?

LTS: No, no, he was, he was, um...a Methodist, but...he didn't attend church and just, you know....

**CO:** Yeah, ok. Well...if I asked, not necessarily religious or spiritual, but what the core value of your life is...would you have, would you know how to respond to that? Does that mean anything to you?

LTS: ... (pause) I think to try to be a good person.

**CO:** Ok.

LTS: And you have to define "good," I suppose.

**CO:** Right, right. Could you... define what it means to be good?

LTS: ...To be honest; true to your values, know what your values are; kind...to other people; try not to hurt people... My father would have put it another way. He said, "Never pick on somebody who can't hurt you." That pretty well says it.

**CO:** I've never heard it put like that, but that's ... that's pretty, um...that says something. So, this is a ridiculous question for you; was religion important in your family? Ha ha.

LTS: Uh-huh.

**CO:** So, um. Were....you have this pretty deep Presbyterian heritage. Was your immediate family, uh, church-goers? I mean, did they go to church all the time?

LTS: Yes.

**CO:** So that was a big part of your life as a child, growing up?

LTS: I can remember sitting in the Presbyterian Church next to my grandfather, and I was so little that he would give me his gold pen and pieces of

paper to scribble on to keep me quiet in church. I was WAY too young to be in church, but I was there. But I remember Sunday School all my life.

**CO:** Hmm. Do you still go here in Columbus?

**LTS:** Yes.

**CO:** Is it the church in town?

**LTS:** 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian.

**CO:** Yeah, right beside the Trinity Episcopal?

**LTS:** Hmm?

**CO:** (louder) RIGHT BESIDE TRINITY EPISCOPAL?

**LTS:** Well, yeah.

**CO:** Which is where I went this morning, ha ha.

**LTS:** Well, we have, we have 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian is on channel 4, so...

**CO:** It's one of the bigger churches, well, the biggest churches, isn't it?

**LTS:** Yes. And Chuck Hasty is just marvelous. If you've never heard him preach, he is simply...

**CO:** He's been there forever, hasn't he?

**LTS:** No.

**CO:** No. Well, then, I'm thinking about somebody else. I came, I visited the Presbyterian church here...it's probably been 25 years ago, but that name sounds so familiar, I'm not sure why.

**LTS:** Well, he's been here for a while, but the man before him was...I'll think of it later, but anyway, wonderful man. He was very good.

**CO:** Well, so do you, have you ever questioned the values of the Presbyterian Church, or have you just, has that always satisfied your religious curiosity?

LTS: No, I've never questioned it.

**CO:** Ok. Um...now, you've already said to me that you "know things."

LTS: Yes.

**CO:** Do you consider that a spiritual gift?

LTS: (pause)... I'm not sure.

**CO:** Ok. Well, besides the couple of things that you've already told me, has...have there been other profound spiritual moments in your life, something that you would identify as...

LTS: (pause)... I can't think of anything.

**CO:** Ok, alright. Have you ever felt the presence of a spiritual guide?

LTS: (pause)... Once or twice.

**CO:** Do you feel more or less...spiritually-connected now than you did at another point in your life?

LTS: (pause)... perhaps more, as I reach the end of my life, and looking back. More.

**CO:** And what do you do to sustain that? Or is it self-sustaining?

LTS: I think it's self-sustaining. (speaking to dog) Alright dog, kill. Kill, Forrest, bite.

**CO:** Darling!

LTS: Oh, you like her? Yeah, well, she was good to you. Get down, get down! Forrest!

**CO:** That's his spot.

LTS: Get down!

**CO:** Really. Ok, so, you've already said twice now that your religious values haven't really changed over time...that's um, that's remarkable. But you feel the assurance that comes from that Presbyterian doctrine...

LTS: I do.

**CO:** ...satisfying.

LTS: Yes.

(dog growling)

LTS: (speaking to dog) What's going on here? Are you going to bite somebody? Oh, he is going to protect us from something terrible.

**CO:** Oh, it's a dog, across the street.

LTS: Ah! Pull tail! What have you got in your tail? Pull tail, pull tail! Ha ha.

**CO:** Ok, do you believe in an afterlife?

LTS: Yes.

**CO:** You do. Do you believe it'll be the same for everybody?

LTS: No.

**CO:** No. So what do you think it'll be like?

LTS: I have no idea, I'm looking forward to it, and I don't know whether I'm going Up or Down, but it certainly will be interesting.

**CO:** You believe there's an Up and a Down?

LTS: Yeah.

**CO:** Ok.

LTS: I think it's possible that Hell is on Earth...but I do believe there is a Heaven.

**CO:** Ok. You've already talked about one thing that has given you great joy, is there, what single experience has given you the greatest joy?

LTS: (pause)... my son.

**CO:** Ok. Do you feel at peace?

LTS: At peace? Sometimes. Other times I think, "Oh, Rats." But I don't think that's different from most people.

**CO:** Right, right.

LTS: I think that's probably a general experience.

**CO:** Yeah. Are you certain of anything?

LTS: (pause) ... Yes. I'm certain of my son's love, and of my love for him.

**CO:** ...ok. And do you believe, have you ever experienced anything you would call a miracle?

LTS: (pause)... I don't know if you could call it, it's not a miracle, but....I knew when I had Ovarian Cancer, I told you that, and I knew when I was cured...I don't call that a miracle, but there is some knowledge that was given me, which was true in both cases. And the fact that I knew on that dark night that I was going to be sideswiped, I knew that. And I'm not sure what all of that means...but... I think it's very important to listen to yourself.

**CO:** Yeah. Do you think that you know how to listen to yourself?

LTS: No, I'm not sure about that. But I think it's important, if you have a feeling. I remember, the best example I can give is one time I was driving from the mountains to Miami and I bypassed Atlanta, and I had the strongest urge to drive into Atlanta, and I thought, "That is ridiculous, I'm bypassing Atlanta," and I got a few miles south of Atlanta, and my car broke, and I had to be towed into Atlanta. And I thought, "Why didn't I do that?" And then I thought, "No, you wouldn't have done it," but it was that strong urge, you know, sometimes. So I think it's important to listen to yourself.

**CO:** Yeah. Where do you think that comes from? You think it's the knowledge that maybe all people have that if they just knew how to access it?

LTS: I'm not sure. If I knew I would write a book and make a fortune.

**CO:** Yes, you would. You sure would. Um, ok. What was the saddest event in your life?

LTS: (pause)... I suppose when Jim died. You expect your parents to die, but it's very very sad when the Love of your Life dies. And since he was late in coming into my life, that's probably the saddest.

**CO:** Yeah. Does sadness bother you now? No?

LTS: No. I've come to grips with it, but...

**CO:** What do you do when you're sad? How do you process sadness?

LTS: Get busy.

**CO:** Ok.

LTS: Try to do something.

**CO:** Ok. Um, well, I asked you about turning points. If you had to name the three most significant turning points in your life, what would they be?

LTS: (pause)... Well, certainly marriage, divorce, maybe moving to Columbus.

**CO:** Ok. You glad you did that?

LTS: Yes, I am. I...was going back to Atlanta to live when my brother, who lives here, uh, said, "Don't go to Atlanta, you're gonna hate it. Come take a look at Columbus." And I think I told you, I said, "Where the hell is that?" And he said, "Just get to Atlanta, I'll get you there." And it has been a good experience for me. I feel comfortable here.

**CO:** So you live here, yeah. Do you visit with him often?

LTS: Oh, yeah.

**CO:** Oh, that's good.

LTS: He *lives* here.

**CO:** Yeah.

LTS: And that's very good, it's very good.

**CO:** Yeah.

LTS: Our sister...lives in Arizona and that's pretty hard, but...I mean, it's so far away, but...

**CO:** Does she come out often?

LTS: No, I just have come back from visiting her...

**CO:** Right.

LTS: ... and, um... she is very comfortably settled there. I do not like Arizona, but she's very comfortable there, she loves her husband, he works there and in Austin. And her son and daughter-in-law live there. And so, that's very comfortable for her.

**CO:** Right. Um, are you, so it sounds like you're satisfied with the choices you've made in life. Are you satisfied with the choices you've made in life?

LTS: Well, I should never have married Bill, but...that was a bad choice. There are a couple of people I should have married and didn't, but that's alright. That's all over and done, and I would never have met my son if I hadn't married him, and adopted.

**CO:** Yeah. Right.

LTS: So...

**CO:** So do you reconcile that with your Presbyterian faith, that sees things as...sort of foreordained? Is that helpful?

LTS: You don't understand predestination, do you?

**CO:** Well, I certainly have read a lot about it. I don't know that I, I...

LTS: Ok, well, let me explain my understanding of it. Predestination means that God has a path for you. It's up to you to find it. God has also given you free will, and it's your choice whether you are going to take the predestined path or not. It's doesn't mean you *have* to take it.

**CO:** Yeah, so...for you, would your marriage to your husband, that was not predestined?

LTS: Maybe not, maybe so. I don't feel everything is predestined. I mean, there is a path, and you need to find what your proper path is. I don't know that I found mine. I'm not sure that...I don't think that predestination means that, it means a path.

**CO:** Ok. Alright.

LTS: Not every little thing.

**CO:** Right, right. I was just wondering if you, if your, if that part of your religious faith...helped you when you think about these decisions and choices that you made, if it's....

LTS: I don't think that my faith.... I think my choices are my own. Now, maybe God intended me to do it, I don't know. But... I blame myself for my choices. I have free will, and that's what I've done.

**CO:** Ok. With as good of intentions as you possibly could have, at the time? I mean, you made the decision to marry your husband. It seemed like the right decision at the time, I'm sure.

LTS: I don't know. It seemed, yeah, otherwise I wouldn't have done it.



**CO:** Right, right. So...the question about regrets, if you had regrets, are you saying that you regret that? You just said that that might have been a wrong decision, but you wouldn't have your son, so...?

**LTS:** Well, of course I think we have regrets about a lot of things. I'm not gonna regret that, it's too long over and gone with. But, surely I have no regret about my son.

**CO:** Right, right.

**LTS:** He is...the light of my life.

**CO:** Yeah. That shows all over your face! Um...is there anybody that you, to whom you would like to make amends for anything?

**LTS:** (pause)... I don't think I've done anything to damage anybody that I need to make amends. If I have...I don't really know it.

**CO:** Ok. (pause) Um...

**LTS:** (Speaking to dog) You're a dreadful dog.

**LTS:** (Speaking to Interviewer) The dog, I suppose. I do beat him, regularly.

**CO:** I can tell, I can tell. Um, if you could do your life over again, what would you do differently?

**LTS:** (pause)... I would marry Tom.

**CO:** The first guy that came calling, the guy that...?

**LTS:** Huh?

**CO:** The guy that came, um...

**LTS:** To the door? Yes.

**CO:** Hmm.

**LTS:** These are so good.

**CO:** Is Tom still alive?

LTS: No, he died. 'Cause when I divorced my husband, I called Emory to see if he was still alive because he came to Miami one time. I was married and he said, "Would you have lunch with me?" And I said, "Tom, I don't think it's a good idea." (pause) But then I wouldn't have gone to Duke, you know. You can't....

**CO:** Right.

LTS: (Talking to dog) What? You do not like chocolate pecans.

**CO:** So do you think, was he was the type of person that, if later in life you had wanted to do something like that, do you think he would have supported it?

LTS: If I met somebody like him later in life?

**CO:** No, if you had married him and then later in life you had wanted to go to school, would he have been the kind of person that would have supported that?

LTS: I have no idea.

**CO:** Oh, ok. Just, can you imagine your life without that experience at Duke? You recall it with such...fondness.

LTS: Oh yes, it was wonderful. It was simply marvelous.

**CO:** Yeah.

LTS: No, I think I made the right choice. I wish I could have had him and that experience, but you can't always do that.

**CO:** Yeah. (pause) Ok....has there been a single individual...or more than one, that's changed your life?

LTS: (long pause)... I have been very fortunate in the people who have helped me along my way. I think of a high school teacher, I think of people who have helped me, so many people have helped me. I can't think of one single person...

**CO:** Ok. (pause)...ok, that's ok.

LTS: ...no.

**CO:** Alright. Um...what is your biggest worry now? Nothing?

LTS: I don't worry about much.

**CO:** That's wonderful, ha. Um...

LTS: I guess being tied to a wheelchair, drooling at the mouth somewhere. I hope I die before that happens, I don't want to live to be 90 and, you know, have somebody put me away.

**CO:** Right, right. Does your son know that?

LTS: Hmm?

**CO:** Does your son know that?

LTS: No, I better speak to him. I threatened to disinherit him every other month.

**CO:** Ha ha, ok. And what is the greatest source of inspiration or motivation to you? What would it take to inspire you to get to writing again?

LTS: (pause, speaking to dog)...what do you think, dog? He's not sure.

**CO:** He'll get back with me on that one. But you've been, obviously, you've had a lot of inspiration in your life; what's the kind of thing that inspires you?

LTS: You know, I really don't know. (pause)...Friendships, love, kindness...

**CO:** You also seem to be inspired by humor...?

LTS: Yes.

**CO:** Have you ever written any humor?

LTS: No. I don't think I could write humor. I don't, I don't write that kind of thing. But, friends are very important to me. Living alone is hell, I want to tell you. I don't like it. I want somebody to say, "Look at that." You know, that is so sad. If it weren't for this dog, I'd probably throw myself in front of a truck somewhere. But he is such a good companion, I think anybody who lives alone ought to have companion dog, even if he is, he has terrible rules, he has rules.

**CO:** Yes, I can tell. He's really a good dog, though, he's a great dog.

LTS: (speaking to dog) Did you hear that? You got her fooled.

**CO:** Ha ha, yeah.

LTS: But he picked me out at PAWS.

**CO:** Well, I bet, I bet. And he was wrong.

LTS: Yeah. And you needed, don't ever go buy a dog at a pet shop, go to PAWS.

**CO:** Oh, I know.

LTS: Do you?

**CO:** I mean, I've heard.

LTS: They have such good dogs out there, and they need a place.

**CO:** I know.

LTS: He picked me out. I'm walking along and he's going..., and I think, "OK."

**CO:** He came home with you?

LTS: Yep.

**CO:** Ok, we've just got two or three more questions. Um...of what are you the proudest in your life?

LTS: (pause)... well, there are things that I do that I have...I mean, the fact that I can write is just something I was given. (pause)...I think I've tried to be a good person, I've tried to be...not to hurt anybody, to be kind. I think I've...now see, there it is, that's...I'm patting myself on the back. That's terrible, but I think I've been a good person.

**CO:** Well, but sometimes it takes an effort to, um...

LTS: It's very hard.

**CO:** To see the glass half-full, which is what it takes, I think sometimes, to be continually, to continue to be kind, you have to, you have to turn things that aren't necessarily positive, and that takes effort sometimes.

LTS: Sometimes it's hard. And I'm not sure I'm always kind, and I think I'm mean sometimes. But I try not to think about it.

**CO:** What makes you mean?

LTS: I don't know. (speaking to dog) Hey dog.

**CO:** Have you always been that way?

LTS: Huh?

**CO:** Is that, has that come with age or have you always been that way?

LTS: I haven't always been mean. I think everybody, sometimes, is mean. A little bit.

**CO:** Yeah, sure. Absolutely.

LTS: You notice how the dog ran and hid?

**CO:** He doesn't like that subject, ha. Um...ok, what's the most important thing in your life today? The most important thing in your life today?

LTS: I heard that. (pause)...I don't know, I feel I'm sort of adrift. Um... the most important thing in my life today is my son. I love him dearly. My parents are gone, I have a brother and sister. I just have the one son. I would have to say that's the most important thing in my life.

**CO:** How do you think he would feel about that? Would he be ok with being the "most important thing in your life?"

LTS: I'm not going to put that burden on him. (pause)...but he is. ...and I try to ...give back to various organizations in the volunteer work and so forth, but it's just so...you know, it's not terribly meaningful. I would like some more, something more meaningful in my life, and I don't know how to go about it.

**CO:** Yeah.

LTS: But, I don't think I have many more years to worry about that.

**CO:** I just interviewed somebody who is a 106. How would you like to be remembered? What do you want your legacy to be?

LTS: Oh, I don't care. I really don't. As the young say, "What is, is."

**CO:** Whatever. "It is what it is."

LTS: Yeah.

**CO:** Um...is there anything that your son, or other people who are close to you, is there anything they don't know about you that you'd like for them to know?

LTS: I don't think so. I think my life's pretty much an open book, and always has been. I've never hesitated to say what I thought.

**CO:** Yeah. Is that liberating?

LTS: Yes. And of course, part of it is being in the newsroom, because working there, you know where all the bones are buried, and what's going on. And, uh...everybody's got a secret.

**CO:** So knowing secrets gives you a little bit of power? You can say whatever you want?

LTS: Not really.

**CO:** What do you think has given you the...I don't know...whatever it takes to be able to say what you want to say, and just say whatever...

LTS: A strong family background.

**CO:** Have all the women in your family, well, women and men, been that way pretty much? Like, did your mother say whatever she wanted to say?

LTS: Pretty much, but she was so adorable and cute, she could say anything and everybody thought she was wonderful. I think pretty much...we have been honest and sometimes that's not terribly good, but that's the way it is.

**CO:** And that's something you value, so...

LTS: I do.

**CO:** Ok. Is there anything we haven't talked about that you'd like to talk about?

LTS: Can't think of anything...sex?

**CO:** I'd love to talk about sex, ha ha. You were supposed to tell me some of the details of your . . . how many, um... "beaus" have you had? You've got four Camellia shrubs on the side of your house here that some beau planted for you.

LTS: Yeah, he wanted me to marry him...and that was too bad. And he also gave me a wonderful ring, which he thought was an engagement ring, but I didn't.

**CO:** Now, you just got through telling me that you... hate living by yourself, and you....

LTS: I do.

**CO:** ...you could have had a partner?

LTS: Oh yeah.

**CO:** But he just wasn't the right one?

LTS: That's right. I'm picky. I've only been married once...I've been terribly in love, well with the Love of my Life, but we never discussed marriage. We were both over 60 and, you know, it just wasn't...wasn't germane. And, uh...marriage is really for children, and, uh...

**CO:** So that man was the love of your life, but how many "loves," people that you genuinely loved, that you've had the...opportunity to actually be with..?

LTS: Oh, let's see, there was Tom....Bill ... Well...I've known a number of men who wanted to marry me. But...the Love of my Life was Jim, and I married Bill, and I should have married Tom, so...

**CO:** But, so, that sounds like you actually loved your husband. I mean, even if he turned out, even if it turned out not to be the best match...?

LTS: I thought I did.

**CO:** But you had all these men who wanted to marry you, you just didn't have a mutual...?

LTS: I just...men have, I've always had...men have wanted to marry me. I guess they thought...I don't know what they thought. Who knows what goes on in a man's mind. But, yes, I have had a number of opportunities, and I just didn't choose to take any of them. I made a mistake not marrying Tom, I think, but it was too soon, I was too young.

**CO:** Right, right.

LTS: I was right about that.

**CO:** Now, do you think...you say that you feel kinda lonely now...

LTS: I am.



**CO:** ...yeah...if you had married someone that you felt better suited to be with, and had lived a long happy marriage with them, do you think you would feel that same sort of loneliness now?

LTS: Sure. The point is not having anyone with you to poke and say, "Look at that." The dog just tries his best but he won't make it.

**CO:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

LTS: It's the sharing.

**CO:** Right.

LTS: It's not the sex, it's the sharing. You can have sex with anybody. But the sharing of a life is what makes things important, I think. And I don't have anybody to share with.

**CO:** There are a lot of people now who don't, I mean, always have been a lot of people who don't have anybody to share with.

LTS: It's very difficult.

**CO:** Yeah.

LTS: And, um...(long pause)...my sister said, "Well, why don't you get some college student to live with you or something?" Uh-uh, no.

**CO:** Right. You might as well have another dog, ha.

LTS: Right, thank you very much!

**CO:** For all the communication there would be!

LTS: Yeah! It's, um...it's hard to live alone, but you come to grips with it.

**CO:** How do you come to grips with it? How do you deal with it, when you're the loneliest or you feel that aching...?

LTS: I get busy. I do stuff. I call somebody up, you know. But, and I sleep with the dog, who is a bed hog, as I have told you. But thank goodness for that, I think everybody who lives alone and is lonely should have an animal,

because that helps. There's somebody who says, "Oh, you came back," when you come home.

**CO:** Well, it's unconditional love, truly. You don't get that from a cat.

LTS: It, really. When I brought this dog home, and when I had been in Arizona for what, 10 days, and I picked him up at the Vet's and I brought him in the house, I had never seen such joy. This dog ran, jumping up and down all over the house, upstairs, downstairs, "Oh, I'm home!" You know, just total joy.

**CO:** I know. Well that, yeah, I think I miss that as much as anything about not having a pet is to be greeted when you get home. It's just...

LTS: Oh, yeah, it's "You came home, you came back!!!" It's a wonderful thing and I would really be in trouble if it weren't for this dog. So, he knows it, he's, his rules.

**CO:** Yeah. So, he knew, probably from the beginning, that ...

LTS: Oh, yeah, he had it all worked out, yeah. They read your mind. As I think I've told you, it's one of my favorite sayings: "Dogs and people have been friends for 10,000 years, and what most people don't understand is the dogs have been in charge."

**CO:** Oh, all of mine certainly have.

LTS: And you have a Jack-Russell now?

**CO:** No, I had, I don't have any dogs now, I had...

LTS: Oh my goodness.

**CO:** I had three or four Jack-Russell's, terriers are my choice.

LTS: They are so darling, and smart. I told you they use them for big game hunts.

**CO:** Yeah, I didn't know that. That's good to know. Well, I've got one more question, and most people hate this question, but you might like it, having been in the newspaper business. I wouldn't like it, but,

anyway. It can be telling, especially if you can come up with something. What would you title your life story?

LTS: (long pause)...hmmph.... I don't know, I would have to think about that.

**CO:** Ok, well you can, but I hope you will, and get back with me on it because titles are telling, you know? I mean, it would be "Louise Tennent Smith: Something." Titles are hard.

LTS: Well, it would have to be something like "A Georgia Woman's Journey Through Life." I mean, you know, something...

**CO:** But you see, just including the word "Georgia" in it is very telling. Nobody has said that. And I mean, this whole thing is about Georgia senior women, so, that's telling, that's very telling. That's also clever, so, ha.

LTS: Well, as I said, I think I told you, when I was getting a divorce, I thought, "What's good about a divorce? Oh, I know, I can go back to Georgia. I don't have to live in Miami." So, here I am. And I feel, well, you know, we've already mentioned the story of the giant who could not be defeated as long as his feet touched his Mother Earth. I have a sense of place...

**CO:** In Georgia?

LTS: Uh-huh.

**CO:** Right, right. Yeah. Well, from having lived in Michigan for six years, I do know that feeling. I had something of a love/hate relationship with the region, which, I mean, the state, and I was in Michigan for six years, and when I, I knew that my daughter would live here because she married, she was marrying a peanut farmer or someone who came from a peanut-farming back ground, and so I started looking for jobs teaching as I was finishing my degree for places in Georgia to come, and I began to have just repeated, recurring, nightmares, "Gone With the Wind," I would wind up in that

mansion, that Tara Mansion; alligators; and there was one other recurring nightmare that I would have about Georgia, so... But at the same time...there was something like, I'd crossed the state line, and just feel at home, you know? It was something that, and the red clay, there's just something in it.

LTS: Grabs ahold of you.

**CO:** It does, yeah. With me, though, it really is a love/hate relationship, I can't say it's un-conflicted, but it still feels like home, and so, there's something about home.

LTS: It makes me feel good to be here.

**CO:** Yeah.

LTS: I absolutely... I was hoping I could live in Atlanta, but as my brother was absolutely right, "You'll hate Atlanta; it's not what you remember."

**CO:** How often do you go up there? You don't?

LTS: I don't go.

**CO:** Yeah.

LTS: There's no need to.

**CO:** Yeah. It is different. It is very different

LT: Not what I remembered.

**END**