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Interviewee: Juadine Henderson  
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Interviewer: Emilye Crosby  
Videographer: John Bishop  
Length: 1 audio file; approximately 2 hours, 30 minutes

START OF AUDIO FILE 1

Female 1: From the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture.

EMILYE CROSBY: Good morning. I'm Emilye Crosby. It's December 10, 2015. We're at the Library of Congress with Juadine Henderson and this is part of the Civil Rights History Project cosponsored by the Library of Congress and the Civil Rights History Project. I'm sorry, the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, and with us is John Bishop. Can you tell--first of all, just thank you for joining us and doing the interview. Can you tell us when and where you were born, and about your family?

JUADINE HENDERSON: Yes. I was born in Batesville, Mississippi, Panola County. My parents were Leora Morris and Hugo Henderson. We were farmers. We had a small farm where we grew cotton, corn, okra, soy beans. Soy bean, major. And that was about it. My dad died when I was about four or five. We're not sure of all the

circumstances. So, I grew up basically with my mother who was married again when I was ten, and that's when we moved to the farm.

EC: That's when you began farming?

JH: Yes.

EC: So before that, did you live in town?

JH: We lived in town, but we could hire ourselves out to local farmers, so I bought my first coat when I was five, from picking cotton.

EC: Really? Did you appreciate that coat, since you bought it yourself?

JH: Oh yes, of course. Oh, I had to count my money every day. Twenty-five cents, now. [Laughter]

EC: How did you feel about picking cotton?

JH: It was natural, normal. It was fine. We also picked pecans. It was good.

EC: When your mother remarried and you moved to the farm, did your family own that land, or were you--.

JH: Yes. It was eighty acres and one group of brothers owned one side of the road. Their first cousins, another group of brothers, owned the other side, and it was called Section Seven, and everybody referred to it as Seven. "You're going to Seven."

EC: At the time, were you aware of the difference it made to own your own land?

JH: No.

EC: Did that mean anything to you?

JH: No, it did not. Before we moved to the farm, my mom worked in a restaurant in town. It was called Brown's Café and I would go in on Saturdays to be with

her, so she allowed me to wash dishes when I went in and I had on an apron and it was all the way to the floor and I was curious about why we had to stay in the kitchen. What happens outside here? And she said, “Well, the next tray of glasses that you wash, do not stop walking until you get out front with them.” That was my first little experience. I think I was about eight years old, so I walked my glasses out front and looked around and went, “They’re just eating.”

EC: Did you think it was something really exciting?

JH: No, oh, that’s different.

EC: Did you have any brothers and sisters?

JH: Yes, I have two older sisters and one younger sister, and a brother, who is no longer here. He died about five years ago.

EC: Sorry about that.

JH: It’s okay.

EC: What were your schools like?

JH: Well, I started school at age three because my grandmother was the teacher and she was also my babysitter, so I had to go to school with her every day, and it was a church-owned, I guess--it was a public school, but it was run by the church somehow, and it was one through eighth grades in that one little building.

EC: Was she the only teacher?

JH: Yes. Yes, it was just for community kids. It was Olive Ray School, next to Olive Ray Church. I went into any class I wanted to. When it was your time to go into, for your class, they would go to the front seat and I would join them. [Laughs] And

I had to do homework at night, so it was kind of fun. I learned to read and write fairly early, like three or four.

EC: Was it hard when you were actually with your own class and you--.

JH: Yes it was, because I was bored. My mother wouldn't allow me to move ahead. She wanted me with my age group, so they were learning alphabets and I wanted to play.

EC: Because you already had that down.

JH: Yes, I had done that, so that was hard. [5:00] I got in trouble a lot. I was ordered to the corner a lot. "Stand in the corner, Maria."

EC: That your grandmother?

JH: No, this was the real public school with other people.

EC: So when did you start going to a different public school?

JH: Oh, when I was six.

EC: Okay, so you went with your grandmother to her school but you went to a different when it was your own time?

JH: At public school, when I turned six, yes.

EC: What was that school like?

JH: Different kids from all over, people to play with. It was good.

EC: You mentioned being at the restaurant and being curious. What are some of your memories of race and how you learned about it?

JH: Well, when I started school at age six, we went to school on a farmworker's truck. A truck came by in the mornings and the man got out and put a ladder down and we climbed up. The white kids went past us on the school bus, and we

yelled at each other and waved. But also in my little neighborhood, the family across the road from us was white. Apparently poor, because they wouldn't have been there otherwise, and we played with the kids. One person had to look out for their father. When we saw their father's car coming, they had to go around through the back and come, go home. He couldn't know that they were over playing with us.

EC: Did you think about that at the time?

JH: We just knew that they had to, we had, somebody had to watch out for their father's car. No, didn't really. Didn't really mean anything to me.

EC: When did it start to mean something?

JH: When I was working with my mother in that restaurant, at age eight, and seeing all the black people who came to the restaurant ate in the kitchen, with her, and then there were these other people and we could not see what they were doing out front, and that was different. Then of course when I was also eight, I think, it was when the Emmet Till murder happened and my mom bought me a copy, I think it was *Look* or *Life Magazine*, I'm not sure, and *Jet Magazine*, and of course I knew then there was something seriously wrong out there. I read the stories, I cried for his parents more than him. Thinking, "What would mother do if somebody did that to me?" Yes. So I was about eight when I really knew something was seriously wrong in the neighborhood.

EC: When your mother gave those to you, did she talk to you about it?

JH: No, not really. No, I just read it, because I tried to read everything I could find. She gave me that, I read it, and was sad for his mom more than anything. We didn't discuss it.

EC: You didn't talk about it with other kids?

JH: No. There were a lot of things that we never talked about, and that was one of them. We never talked--and there was a meeting, I think probably an NAACP meeting in our house. We had two rooms. There was a little store house. It had been a store. The kitchen and the living room was where we slept, you know? There was a meeting there and I was not allowed. I could stay in the back and do whatever I as doing, and I found my mother's NAACP card and said, "What is this? What is NAACP?" I didn't say, "N-double A." I said, "N-A-A-C-P." And she said, "You must never, ever say that again. Ever." Okay. [Laughs] Whatever it is, must be very serious, and we never discussed what they were talking about in the next room.

At church on Sundays, the minister talked about everything. We talked about the kids in Little Rock who had just integrated the schools there. Voter registration things that had not really started. I think there were two people in the county, two black people, registered to vote, and we just sort of heard that on Sundays. There was an older minister, Reverend Middleton Godfrey. That's his name. I hated to see him coming on Sundays because it meant we had to stay at church another half an hour to listen to black history. He travelled around in a little beat-up Jeep and he talked history. You could almost work your mouth. He said the same thing every time. We knew who Crispus Attucks was. [Laughs]

EC: Sort of like the Black History Month posters?

JH: Yes, but he did it every Sunday. No, every other Sunday, because we didn't have church every Sunday. We had Sunday school and other stuff.

EC: So what was your church?

JH: West Camp [10:00] Missionary Baptist Church, initially, until my mom got married.

EC: And was it West Camp Missionary where you had these Sunday school-- talks about black history in church, and about--.

JH: Yes, and it was one of the--.

EC: And what about voting?

JH: Yes, it was one of the most active churches in the county, throughout the Civil Rights Movement.

EC: Do you need to save periodically? When they would talk about voting or NAACP or any of these things in church, and black history, was this part of the service or before or after?

JH: It was after the service, after you finished--can't say that. But I do. Anyway, after they would finish with the traditional service and the guests would stand up and introduce themselves and then they talked about what was going on in other Southern places like Clarksdale, Mississippi, Arkansas, and we didn't talk that much about what was going on in our town.

EC: So it's sort of what's in the news, what's happening with the--

JH: What was going on. What the NAACP mainly was involved with. There were a couple of brothers. C.J. Williams and his brother were active, and Mr. Robert Miles, of course, who stayed active, and Mr. Willie Kirkendall. It came sort of to a head because Mr. Kirkendall's daughter, who's younger than I am, went to town and was accused of stealing. The sheriff brought her to her dad and said, "You have to beat her," and the child said she didn't steal, and her dad said, "I'm not beating my child." And you

didn't say no to the sheriff, and the energy in the neighborhood changed. I don't know how to explain that other than you knew it was really serious, and near nightfall you saw all of the men, or most of the men, walking down the road with their guns on their shoulders to the Kirkendall house. They sent the women and children away, and they climbed into the trees and the trucks to protect the house, the family, so to speak.

The Kirkendall family moved away. We never--I never actually saw them again. They went to Indiana, I found out later. So you knew something was seriously wrong then, but it wasn't--the non-violent movement stuff had not happened. Like, we will protect ourselves.

EC: Do you remember how old you were when this happened?

JH: I had to be eight or nine. Seems to me everything happened when I was eight. I don't know. Eight or nine, because we still lived in our little two-room house in town.

EC: And so this would have been, so, probably around [19]55, [19]56?

JH: Oh, way after that. Way after that. Probably later '50s, maybe early '60s.

Mr. Kirkendall was superintendent of the Sunday school, so everybody knew him.

EC: Did your family talk about that when it happened?

JH: Oh, no.

EC: No? Just it's all--.

JH: Just my mom and me so no, we didn't discuss it.

EC: Do you remember what age you were, or how you came to understand what the NAACP was other than this card that you can't talk about?

JH: I think I was probably thirteen. It was after we had moved to the farm and Frank Smith, the SNCC person, came to town in 1962. Thanksgiving. He didn't come to do movement work, and my cousin, he had met my cousin at Rust College in Holly Springs and I ran up to their house across the road to hear about college, and what you do at college. There was this stranger there, so I said hello, and he told me about the Civil Rights Movement. Now, we knew about the Freedom Rides because it was in the newspaper. We got the *Commercial Appeal* from Memphis. He actually knew people who were involved. He was involved. I found it fascinating and I talked and we talked and I told him that the uncle to one of the men who killed Emmet Till lived in the neighborhood. Got in the car with him and showed him the house.

We came back home and then I was so excited I went home and Mother said, "You got into a stranger's car." "He's not a stranger. He's T's friend." And I told her what he told me about black people voting, and should have the right to vote, and that there are no black people in Batesville who voted and if they did, we could change the whole system. Mother was looking at me like, "Yeah, right." [Laughter]

EC: "What are you talking about, girl?"

JH: Go play, go do something else. [15:00] So that was really the beginning. We stayed in touch with Frank. I told all of my friends about him and the movement. I think we had a meeting at my house but I didn't tell my mom because she would've said no, so people started coming and it was like, "Juadine, what are you doing?" "We're having a meeting." And we had, I was the pianist at church. I played piano every Sunday at our new church. That was Concord Missionary Baptist Church, and I knew that the church wasn't locked. Frank was trying to teach us freedom songs. He could not

sing. He had no clue what they were supposed to sound like, so after the initial meeting at our house, we went to church and had a meeting. We didn't ask anybody; we just went. We took a record player and Frank brought with him a copy of the Albany Movement album, so we got to hear what freedom songs sounded like.

EC: Is that "Freedom in the Air"? Is that the--.

JH: It was called "The Albany Movement," I think. But Bernice Johnson-Reagon was definitely a singer on it, so we could do that, now.

EC: What was it like to hear that record?

JH: It was wonderful. It was like, mainly you put freedom in places where Jesus had been. That was very good, so we knew how to do that, because my girlfriends and me, we were now like thirteen, fourteen, and we could sing freedom songs and we did.

EC: You didn't worry about messing with the church songs?

JH: No. I didn't. They did, I didn't. The elders.

EC: What'd they say?

JH: Well, it didn't come to a head right then. Later, when the preacher finished preaching and I was supposed to play "Amazing Grace," I played "Oh, Freedom." [Laughter]

EC: And you survived?

JH: Some people got very upset and said, "The child has lost her mind." And yes, I had. Yes.

[Recording stops and restarts]

EC: So you said, you were telling us about how you played “Oh, Freedom” instead of “Amazing Grace,” and then you started to say something about your mother.

JH: Yes. Before that, the summer of [19]63, we met Frank at Thanksgiving, 1962. Frank, I thought he was an adult. He was nineteen years old I think. He told us about a voter registration workshop that was going to be held in Greenwood, Mississippi and he wanted us to come. Mother didn't let me have dates, so it was like, “Okay, how am I going to get to this workshop?” I packed my bag and eased it under the bed, the storage place. Because I was going. I was hearing words that I had never heard before, but that happened in Greenwood. Mother, after my dad's death, she didn't do anything-- she didn't make decisions for me alone. She had a brother who she consulted, and I wanted to go to Greenwood so he was a dry cleaner, truck driver. He came to our house, as he did on Mondays, and she said, “Juadine wants to go with those freedom people to Greenwood.” He said, “Jimmy's going.” Jimmy was my older cousin. She's three years older. It was freedom like, “Oh yes, we're going.”

He said, “If anything happens and you need to come home, call somebody.” We didn't have telephones. There was one telephone in the neighborhood and everybody had the number, so if something happened and you needed, your family needed, to contact you, they'd call that number and they would let you know. So we headed to Greenwood, Mississippi, June 1963. It was my cousin Jimmy, my friend Faye, John Hardy, and I think that was it. Three of us. And T, my cousin John Morris, who was a college student. Jimmy was also a college student and we went to Greenwood very excited about being able to get away for home, without your mother and all of that, with these “freedom people.”

We got to the Greenwood SNCC office and looked around and people were talking on the phone very hushed and very serious and we sort of took it in, and sat there and watched. Then we were taken across the street to stay with a woman named Mama Hackman. I don't--that was all we knew. Everybody was very friendly. There were kids our age talking to us and pulling our legs a little bit too, because we were going to go to a mass meeting that evening and I didn't know mass, M-A-S-S, [20:00] from mask, M-A-S-K. What are we supposed to do at this meeting? And one of the girls said, "You have to hold the hand with the person you're with and walk in." "Do we wear anything?" "Nope, you just go in." [Laughter]

We went to the meeting and we heard freedom songs. How they are really supposed to sound in person, at that meeting, that night. It was very nice and younger people, just a little bit older than we were, singing and leading songs, and it was very nice. We went back to Mama Hackman's house. I don't know where we ate. Then the next morning, we went into the SNCC office and it was a very different energy. People weren't as friendly as they had been the day before. It was very strange. It was like, "What is going on?" We sat there and was quiet for a second or two, and then a kid who called himself Freedom--I don't know what Freedom's name was--came in and we said, "What's going on, Freedom? Why is everybody so sad?" And he said, "Medgar Evers was killed last night in Jackson." It was like, "Uh-oh, we've got to go home." Jimmy said, "Do you think we need to call Daddy?" I said, "No, we're here, we're staying."

So we stayed and they told us they were going to canvas the neighborhood. Had we heard of canvassing? Okay, what is that? We're going to walk around from house to house passing out leaflets inviting people to a meeting, a mass meeting. Okay. We went

with the local kids, walked around the neighborhoods passing out leaflets saying there was a meeting at eleven o'clock at some church or the other. We went. There were more people at that church than I had ever seen gathered in one place in Batesville. It was amazing, and people that we had met the day before in the SNCC office were up leading songs and talking. I don't remember what they said; it was just the energy. My cousin and I tried to sing as loud as we could. Like, we know how to sing freedom songs now.

It was talking about what was going on in Jackson. I don't remember specifics, but being very energized by the whole thing. We went back to the SNCC office and had workshops. A workshop? Whatever that is, on filling out voter registration forms. At that gathering I think I met John O'Neal, who was with the Free Southern Theater later, Willie Peacock, who was a major freedom fighter in Mississippi from Charleston, James Peacock, his brother, and they were talking about voter registration, how to fill out the forms, how necessary it was for black people to be able to register to vote in their neighborhoods and how they get to elect people to office. That was amazing to me, and then we would sing every day.

EC: Did you connect voting to things in your life or your community?

JH: No, because we--I told you, there were two people, as far as I knew, in the county who were registered voters. I think Mr. Miles, Robert Miles, and maybe Reverend Middleton. I'm not sure of that.

EC: But when they're telling you about it and you're thinking about it in a different way--.

JH: Yes, of course.

EC: --in that context, do you think about if might affect things in your world, or is it just--.

JH: A little bit. Well, what they were saying--you started thinking about, you haven't paid a lot of attention to elections. We need to be a part of that. It was something you read about in school, not something you did. Not voting. So yes, we connected. We connected the dots a little bit and then interpreting a section of the Constitution, the State Constitution.

EC: That's a little bit like schoolwork.

JH: It was schoolwork, uh-huh, and filling out the forms. They were very long. We practiced filling them out so we could show people how to do it when we went back home. We were only in Greenwood for a week. I think while we were gone, and I'm not sure of this, June Johnson, who was from Greenwood, Ms. Hamer, who was from Ruleville, Euvester Simpson, who was from Itta Bena, I think, came up missing. They sent Lawrence Guyot off to look for them. Now, we're eavesdropping, okay? We weren't a part of the major discussions. We're kids. But it was all interesting information, and we had to go home after a week. A couple of SNCC people took us back to Batesville [25:00] and we were trying to tell them about our town and what happens there. Batesville, at the time, I think, was fifty-four percent black. No black voters, and we weren't all--the 3,000 people who lived in the neighborhood--didn't all live next to each other, we were scattered. We were farmers, and a few people had other kinds of jobs, but very few.

EC: Did a lot of African Americas own their land in that area?

JH: Yeah, actually yes.

EC: So there wasn't nearly as much sharecropping.

JH: No, there was one plantation that we knew about, that I knew about in our part of the county, because there was Northern Panola County and Southern, South Panola County. South Panola County people owned their land, pretty much. There was a plantation. The MacMillan plantation, where sharecroppers lived, and their little houses sat next to each other. We knew their kids because we all went to school together and we didn't think about them any differently except they lived on the plantation, on the Macmillan plantation.

EC: It was one big plantation?

JH: It wasn't that big. Now, in retrospect, it wasn't that big. It's just, they didn't own their own land.

EC: I wanted to, is Panola part of the delta?

JH: Part of it. Half of Panola County is in the delta and the other half is hill country.

EC: So, which half is where African Americans own land, or was it split?

JH: Split.

EC: Okay.

JH: We lived in the delta.

EC: You did?

JH: Yes.

EC: You mentioned that while you were in Greenwood, Ms. Hamer and June Johnson, who was a native of Greenwood, I guess, Euvester Simpson, that they come up missing and Lawrence Guyot goes looking. Do you find out what happened to them?

JH: Later. We didn't find out while we were there.

EC: How did you come to find out?

JH: Somebody told us. I don't know.

EC: Yes.

JH: I stayed in touch with SNCC people after that one week experience.

Another group of kids from my town went to Greenwood to do the voter registration workshop, and I looked at the newspaper differently, looked for stories about people I had met. We didn't find out about Ms. Hamer and June Johnson--I knew June's sister, Dorothy. She was, I think, my age. We found out later, but not from the newspaper, and I don't really remember how. Oh, I know. From the group of kids who went after we did.

EC: Oh, okay. When they came back, they had the news?

JH: Yes.

EC: How did you feel when you found that out?

JH: It didn't really do anything. It wasn't fear. It was, I think Lawrence Guyot, we knew, was beaten after that, or during that time. I didn't really know Ms. Hamer. I didn't know June. I had met her mother and her sister when I was in Greenwood. Euvester, I didn't know either, so these were strangers to me. There wasn't a real connection. Not until later.

EC: Until later, and then you know them and then it means something different?

JH: Yes, of course.

EC: What did you do when you got back from the workshop? Did you start doing movement work?

JH: Trying. We would run and harass--well, I harassed my mother and my stepfather about registering to vote and how important it was that black people elected officials in our town and they sort listened but, okay. Mother said, "I think those people hypnotized you while you were in Greenwood. You didn't come back the same person that you were when you went." It's like, no. So it was trying to show people how to fill out the forms, trying to get my mother and stepfather to register to vote--at least to try--and people had meetings in the neighborhood to talk about it. Not mass meetings, but a few people go together to talk about it, and that went on. This was [19]63. The very next summer was the summer of [19]64, the summer project, and all of these people came to town. Now, I will admit on tape that I was a little resentful that all of these people came out to stare at these new people, and we've been begging you to do this for a year! So, okay.

That was that, and the whole movement in Batesville changed, I think. You had a lot more people coming together. We got to meet kids from other parts of the county who were active. It was on, you know.

EC: Before the summer project, when you're working in [19]63 and you're trying to get people to register, are there any SNCC people [30:00] staying in town full-time, or is this--

JH: No. Frank came back sometime. Willie Blue, who was also a SNCC organizer, came to town for a while. Tillman McKeller came to town for a while.

[Pause] There was no office. They came and lived with a family someplace, mainly Mr. Miles. Yes, but there wasn't a SNCC office until the summer or [19]64.

EC: So were they organizing you all, or were you organizing yourselves?

JH: Both. They were organizing us and talking to us and we were organizing ourselves. We live here, we know what's going on. And that's basically what my mom said in [19]64. You can continue to do what you've been doing, but don't hang out with these white children. They are going to leave and you're going to be here. I said, "Oh, okay."

EC: Did that make sense to you?

JH: No.

EC: Did you listen to her?

JH: No. I got in trouble because there was an office in town. I think was a COFO office by then, Council of Federated Organizations, and we lived 10 miles away in the country. We had gone out to do whatever we were doing and by the time we got back to the office it was late and there was no ride home, so we had to get a ride home with a young white man from Harvard, Geoff Cowan. I thought, "Mother's not going to see." She saw everything. Jeff dropped us off. He had some beat-up car. He dropped me off and Mother had a flyswatter. I'm sixteen, I think, or seventeen, I don't know. But she hit me with the flyswatter, said, "I told you not to ride around here with these white children." "How was I supposed to get home? Ten miles away, mother." And she let it go, she let it go.

EC: Was she worried about you?

JH: Worried is the word. That was mainly it. She was worried that something would happen. Nothing did. Not yet. [Laughter]

EC: Did you ever have any luck getting your mother and your stepfather to register?

JH: Oh, yes. They registered in 1964. My stepfather had to interpret Section 30 of the Mississippi Constitution. He memorized the thing while he's filling out his voter registration form, and he talked it all night long, and they said, "Interpret Section 30 of the Mississippi Constitution. It said"-- of course he had had a little drink too. That helped. But he said the whole section all night long. They were very proud of themselves. They both passed.

EC: So they both passed on their first time out?

JH: Yes.

EC: Did they give you credit?

JH: No. If they did, they didn't tell me.

EC: Can you tell me about some of the older people in Panola who were involved in the movement?

JH: That was Mr. Miles, I told you he was from West Camp. Mr. CJ Williams, who had gone to an all-black boarding school, Piney Woods? You heard of Piney Woods?

EC: Yes, I've heard of Piney Woods.

JH: He had gone to school there and his brother--Jasper, that was his name, Jasper Williams--and there was a Robinson family. They were also West Camp people.

Pearl Robinson and her daughter Claire. Ms. Virgil Robinson, who was also from West Camp. Everybody was from West Camp.

EC: Is that the area where people own their own land?

JH: People own their own land--.

EC: Just everywhere.

JH: --all over the place

EC: So, do you know what it was about West Camp that made people so--.

JH: The minister probably helped a lot, but you had the Tucker brothers and the *Panolian*, the local newspaper did a feature on them a couple of years ago.

EC: Really?

JH: Uh-huh, and they were very active but they had traced their ancestry back to Guinea. He said he was from the Guinea tribe in Africa and I thought, "That's not a tribe" but that's okay. They were very active, so they had a whole sense of self-worth, I think the folks in Panola County, the landowners. People tried to send--because there were no high schools for black kids until the '50s, I think, because my older stepsister went to Rust College High School. My grandmother went away to school. My mother stayed in eighth grade for three years because she couldn't go to high school, so she just kept going to school and going to school, in eighth grade.

EC: I know people who did that.

JH: No kidding! No kidding. I'm glad to hear that.

EC: Yes, [35:00]because they would have them repeat seventh or eighth grade a couple of times since there wasn't high school, so they would--and also, because sometimes they wouldn't get to go the whole year, they had the short session?

JH: Well, we had split sessions until I graduated from high school, so we could get out and work on the farm. We got out to chop cotton and then we got out to pick cotton. All the white kids were going to school and we were out working, you know?

EC: Did you think about that at the time?

JH: No. It was just normal.

EC: Just how things are?

JH: Mm-hmm, yes. And we were on our own farm, so it was different.

EC: So did the young people in Panola County, did you all want to get involved in direct action? I know in some counties the young people got tired of voter registration.

JH: Yes, we did. We got involved--we went, in [19]64, I think it was, we went to the same restaurant where my mom had worked. Mother quit her job at the restaurant saying, "If they come out, anybody put their hands on you, I'm coming out of the kitchen with a knife. So I'm going to quit," and she quit and got a job in the neighborhood at the local restaurant, the black restaurant.

EC: So she knew you were getting ready to go?

JH: She didn't know what to expect. She had to listen to the radio for a while to find out whether I was at school or in jail, but we went to the restaurant where she had worked and I knew the waitress and the owners because my mom had worked there. We walked in; we had practiced falling out of the chairs and non-violent workshops, and covering ourselves. We were told not to talk. Didn't mean that we couldn't talk through

our teeth like this. [Laughter] So we went to the restaurant in town. I don't remember how many of us. Maybe fourteen? Quite a few.

EC: Was it even boys and girls?

JH: Mostly girls, I think. There were a couple of boys. John Hardy, Jr. Robinson who was the youngest, I think. He was thirteen or fourteen. His mom was Mrs. Virgil Robinson. Excuse me. We went into the restaurant and Miss Lil, the waitress who had been there when my mother worked there walked over by us and said, "We're not drinking any cake and eating any milk in here today." She was nervous. I was like, "Okay." We sat there like we were supposed to do, waiting patiently, and then we saw the sheriff come in. "Uh-oh, girl, we're going to get it now." [Laughter] To my girlfriend Faye Gulliver and after the sheriff came in, some farmers came in, putting on their brown cotton glove. Uh-oh.

EC: These are white farmers?

JH: Oh, yes. They're walking in and they're going behind the counter where the waitress normally is, and we're sitting there in our little booths thinking, "I wonder what they're going to do now." They came in and they started grabbing the seats we were on and flinging them across the floor, and we were holding on. Like, "We're not falling. Yet." Then they started picking us up bodily, and throwing us out into the street in front of cars, or whatever. They took a couple of people and banged their heads together. They got us all out. Nobody was arrested yet.

EC: How did you feel when--I mean, how did you cope with this violence?

JH: It was a little scary. Because I didn't know what to expect. It was a little scary. Not being super scared, but a little scared, and so we said, "There's another

restaurant in town, and it's lunch-time, let's go down there." So off we went to the next restaurant. Batesville is a tiny little town. There aren't big--there weren't big restaurants, and so we went and they locked the door. They saw us coming, and the guys in the pool hall across the way came out with their pool cues. It was like, "Oh, they're going to beat us now." They didn't. We stood there and said, "If you go through the front door, we're going in. If you go to the back, we're not coming. So you want to go in, you've got to go through the back door."

EC: So you turned the tables, so whites have to eat out of the back.

JH: We're not, we're not moving. We stood there until lunch hour was over and then we decided to go back to our neighborhood, and we were walking down the road when the sheriff--I think there were maybe three people in the sheriff's department--deputy said, "You're under arrest. You've broke a city ordinance." [Laughs] And we started laughing, of course. We were bad kids. We started singing. He marched us through town to the jail.

EC: What were you singing?

JH: "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn me 'Round."

EC: You call their names?

JH: "Gonna keep on talking, walking." [40:00] No. We didn't call their names because we didn't know their names at that point. We knew Sheriff Hubbard. We didn't know the other people. We went to jail and they booked us and didn't lock the door. He said, "I'm not going to lock you up in here, but you have to stay in the cell." There were other prisoners in there, so it was a good opportunity to say, "You don't need to do crime, we have other work to do out here." So of course we were all over the place.

He made us go back to the cell and it was kind of, okay, go back in there until you leave, and then we're going back out and talking to prisoners. At five o'clock, those of us who were under eighteen were told to go home. Anybody eighteen and over had to stay, so I went home. Walked home.

EC: Were you worried when you got put in jail?

JH: No. I expected it.

EC: Because it's the movement, it's just part of what happens?

JH: Yes, that's what happens. Kids all over the state going to jail. So, I went home. We went--I went back up. I was headed back up to the jail the next day to take some ice water for the kids, a big jar. The sheriff pulled and said, "Get in. I know you're going to do something." And took me back to the jail. Didn't lock up the cell. Again, I'm roaming, having a good time, actually, and that happened a few times, and then when the kids who were over eighteen had to go to trial, the whole community turned out in Batesville, lots of people. Some local people thought they could walk through the crowd and hit the white kids who were there. I think Chris Williams was in the group.

EC: So when you say the white kids, you mean the white volunteers that were part of the movement?

JH: Yes, yes, yes, I do. And Mr. Miles, our local hero, decked him. The guy who was going to go through the crowd to get Chris got hit by Mr. Miles. The older people didn't buy the non-violence, okay? No, you hit me, we're hitting you back. Anyway, so Mr. Miles was arrested and people had to put up land for him. We had a mass meeting that night, I think at Mt. Zion Church, which was closer to town, and I don't remember what happened with the older kids and when they went to court, but the

younger ones, we had to go to juvenile court and the lawyers were all busy, all over the state, with other kids who had, were in jail for everything, and they told us to ask for a continuance. What is a continuance? Okay, we'll ask. [Laughter] And we did that, and the judge said that if we kept doing stuff like we were doing, we were going to have a record, and when freedom comes, you're going to have a criminal record. I'm sitting there grinning as I always do. He said, "Bite that smile off your face," so I wiped it off and threw it on the floor and my mother looked at me like, "You better behave yourself."

EC: She's still worried.

JH: Oh, yes, she's worried. They were both--my stepfather also was worried. That was over. We didn't have to go back to jail for anything, but one Saturday morning a knock came--because we moved from the farm into town, got a little house. A little bigger house.

EC: Were they still farming or did they do different work then?

JH: Yes, the farm was still there.

EC: So they would go back and forth every day?

JH: Mother was working at the local, the sundry. Thomas Sundry, in town. My stepfather was going back to the farm to do farming. I was a senior in high school by now. But a knock came on our door one Saturday morning and my stepfather opened the door, the deputy stepped in just as I was walking out of my room, and he said, "Oh, wrong house," and stepped back down and left, and my stepfather said, "You're moving out of that room today." And the shotguns came out. He loaded the gun and put it in the corner like, "Oh no, they're not getting you. Not in here."

EC: So he assumed that the deputy was there to figure out how to get you?

JH: Yes.

EC: And they would be coming for you at night?

JH: Yes, yes, yes.

EC: Did you think he would--were you worried?

JH: No. I was too young and too silly to worry. [Laughs]

EC: Did you think they might come but you felt like you would be invincible?

JH: I didn't think about it. I didn't think about it. I really didn't. My high school principle, who is also family, [45:00] after I'd gone to the jail one day for something, to visit my old friends who were eighteen, and somebody shot, fired a gun, and I ran back inside and said, "Sheriff Hubbard, somebody just shot." He said, "You had no business up here." Said, "Okay. Guy just rode down the road in a red pick-up truck and there's a guy on the back with a gun." "You had no business up here." Okay. I went home and the principle of my high school said, "If we can do anything to help, let me know."

EC: Really?

JH: Yes. Said, "I'm good." I was.

EC: So you feel you really had support in your community?

JH: Yes, there was support in the community and one of the earlier stories before the [19]64 summer project, I told you, the older people were not non-violent people. We were having a voter registration meeting again at West Camp, and they always let two people outside to guard. One of the men came in and said, "Two men just came down here inquiring about what we're doing, so think we need to go home and get some protection." Almost every woman in the church patted her purse. "Got mine right

here.” And the response was, “Carry on. No need to leave.” It was just the way it was.

The women walked with pistols in their purses, even to church.

EC: Did they do that before the movement?

JH: Yes.

EC: Just all the time.

JH: Yes. It’s in there.

EC: And the men didn’t know it?

JH: They didn’t tell them. If they didn’t tell them, how would they know?

[Laughter] Got to protect our families. We don’t know what’s going to happen, you know?

EC: Did your mom do that?

JH: Yes. My mom was a good shot. They didn’t teach me because they didn’t think I had-- they were afraid to teach me.

EC: they didn’t trust you. [Laughs]

JH: My grandfather, after I turned eighteen and I had gone to the delta to work with the farmworkers down there, said “It’s about time that you learn how to shoot,” and he took me out and put some bottles on the fence and I was supposed to shoot them down. Of course, I didn’t learn. I didn’t learn.

EC: You never learned?

JH: No, no.

EC: You weren’t worried?

JH: No.

EC: You didn’t feel like you had to have your own pistol in your purse?

JH: I did! I put a pistol in my purse in the late, in 1965? But I didn't know how to shoot it. It was just in there.

EC: You were just hoping that by--you could swing the purse and hit somebody with it. [Laughter]

JH: That's right.

EC: Do you remember, were there any differences between the work that men did and women did in the movement, or the way they participated?

JH: I don't think so? Not locally, anyway. Once you got to a different--after high school, let's go back to that a little bit. I decided, I got a scholarship, an academic scholarship to Mississippi Industrial College.

EC: Is that what's Valley now?

JH: No, it was a private school run by some church group or the other.

EC: Where was it located?

JH: It was in Holly Springs, across the road from Rust and I just took the test because I wanted to get away from school that day, so I took the test. But after high school, and I had applied. I wanted to go to Memphis State and then I heard that all these people had walked off plantations in the delta, farm workers.

EC: And Memphis State's a white school, right?

JH: It probably was. I don't remember, but probably. All of these people that walked off plantations in the delta they said 1,000 people and I thought, "Oh, that's where I have to be." I had no clue about anything. I'd just turned eighteen the month before I graduated. I went to a meeting at Mary Holmes Junior College reconnected with some of the people I'd met in [19]63 and decided that I'm going to work in the

movement full-time. Didn't occur to me that you have to have money or a place to live. None of that. I'm going. So I went home from my week's meeting in Mary Holmes Junior College, and told my mother, "I'm not going to college yet. I'm going to work in the movement." And she couldn't believe it. "What do you mean?" "I'm going to work in the movement. A thousand people walked off plantations in the delta and I'm going to work with them." So, [50:00] what could she do? My older sister came to see me and she slipped me \$10, my bankroll. [Laughter]

EC: Go work in the delta with \$10.

JH: Yes, that was what I had, \$10.

EC: You're not the only one!

JH: I went to the freedom office. It wasn't a SNCC office, I don't think, and asked if anybody was driving down to Jackson and Lou Grant, who was head of the project at that time--

EC: Lou Grant?

JH: Yes, his name was Louis Grant. We called him Lou. He was driving down, so I said, "Can I get a ride? I'm going to Jackson." I had made no connections. Look, I had just turned eighteen, which meant you don't get out of jail at five o'clock anymore. You are now eighteen.

EC: It's a little more serious.

JH: It's a little more serious, so we went to Jackson, to Mount Beulah, which was a conference center. They were getting ready for some major demonstration that I don't think I even knew about, and I got a room for free, of course, and got my little blankets and sheets and went to get in my bed and some guy walked into the room.

There were no locks, and got into the bed over there and I thought, “You better get out of here,” left my bed, and saw somebody walking down the hallway and I went into the first room I saw on my left, and there were three old women in there from Batesville, my hometown. I through, “Oh, my goodness.” They said, “Girl, what are you doing here? Are you here for the demonstration?” “Uh-huh, yes, I’m here for the demonstration.” And they said, “Well, where are you staying?” I said, “I have a room up the hall.” They said, “Stay with us.” I said, “Okay, that sounds good to me!” Sounds good.

So I stayed with them overnight, got a ride into Jackson the next day with my little bag and I didn’t have my \$10 anymore. I saw a dress that I wanted for \$7. I bought it. [Laughter] Just completely a child. Went into Jackson to the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party office and had my little bag with me and they were canvassing about the demonstration the next day, and I pretended I knew the area. I knew nothing about Jackson. It was a city. I came from the country, so I helped somebody pass out leaflets in town about the demonstration the next day. Went back into the office. Everybody was gone except one of the women who was from California, and we were both sitting in the office on our bags and the last person to leave the office said, “Do you have someplace to stay?” And we both went, “No.” And he said, “Well, come and stay with me.”

So we picked up our bags and went with him. He was living with a family in Jackson and we slept there and left our bags the next day, went to the demonstration, was arrested about an hour in. Maybe within the hour, we were arrested, and taken to the Jackson fairgrounds, and that’s where all the old women I had seen from Batesville were. Everybody. There were about a thousand women in there. I was in there for two weeks. Met new people. We didn’t have clothes, so somebody had a trench coat and we passed

the trench coat around. You can go take a shower, you can wear the trench coat while you're taking your shower and washing your clothes, with ivory soap. For years I couldn't stand the smell of ivory soap because of that. You washed your clothes, you hung them up to dry with somebody's trench coat on. When they would dry, almost dry, you'd put your clothes on and gave the trench coat to somebody else.

EC: That's amazing. Two weeks.

JH: You never heard that story?

EC: No, two weeks. I knew about people being in the fairgrounds, but what was it like?

JH: Well, they have us mattresses to sleep on the floor and at five o'clock in the morning you got up and stacked your mattress against the wall and went outside to eat your breakfast and there were fifty gallon tanks with fire under them, and you had to wash your tray, dip it in the next one, and the next one, and put it down, and hope it didn't get so hot you couldn't hold onto it because you knew they would make you stick your hand in this boiling water. It was a little bit scary. [55:00] I don't remember what we ate. It was something terrible, maybe syrup and grits or biscuits and grits. They took all of the white women out and put them in the jail. We stayed in the fairgrounds, and I remember there was one woman they weren't sure, and they asked her if she was colored or white and she said she didn't know. So they ended up taking her out and putting her in the jail with the white women.

EC: Was she local?

JH: No, no, no, she was not local. Every day your hands got kind of sore from sitting concrete. You walked around and talked to people about what they were doing in

their communities, met a lot of folks my age. I think I met June in there, June Johnson after a couple of years, yes. Met her in the fairground.

EC: Did she talk about what happened with her?

JH: Not then, I don't think so. I don't remember. Mainly talking about what you're going to do when you get out, and people that you knew and what your experiences were, and your towns where you grew up.

EC: Must have been kind of educational.

JH: It was, it was very good in that sense. One morning, one of the women decided she wasn't giving up her mattress. She stayed on the mattress, and there was a police officer that we called Red. I don't know what his name was, and he yelled for her to get up and she refused, and he was going to hit her with his billy club and she took the billy club--she was a big woman--and I think poor Red got his leg broken. But it was a standoff between all of these women and the police. They had guns and their hands on their billy clubs and we're just standing there. Cursing. I let out some of my best words in there. There was a little, I don't know what you call it, a little line between us and a lady from Batesville, Mrs. Thelma Glover, walked in the middle of the little line and started praying and swinging her arms, and by the time she finished praying they had all backed out. We were saved again.

EC: Were you worried?

JH: I thought it was the funniest thing I'd ever seen in my life. I couldn't wait to tell it. Her daughter was one of my best friends, about how your mom stood out in the middle of everybody. We were cursing at the cops and calling them names and she steps out and starts praying and slinging her arms, and they back out of the room. It was

funny. No, I wasn't worried. I guess I was a little crazy. I didn't think about worrying. Then, two weeks later, they called my name. They were calling names and somebody had bailed me out. I went back to the house where I had stayed before we were arrested. Oh, and by the way, the woman had sent some underwear or something from the suitcase to us, because she found ID in the woman from California's bag. I didn't have any. She sent us a change of clothes because her sister was a cop, which was interesting, yes.

EC: So there were black officers?

JH: There was a black woman officer, her sister. I don't know if there were others.

EC: I didn't know that. Of course, by that time in Jackson, I guess--.

JH: It was [19]65.

EC: Well you know, they had had all the protests in [19]63 over, one of the demands was hiring and--.

JH: I think there was a black--I don't know how many black women where in the police force, but that one came and we were sitting in the woman's house. She was a beautician. She saw us and closed her shop. She was a beautician, took us to her house, and we could take a real bath in warm water, and eat real food. She was just very sweet, and the next day we slept in a bed, not on the concrete floor with a little thin mattress. Next day we're sitting there and the California woman said, "That looks like a SNCC person," and it was my friend Hollis Watkins. One of the lawyers had remembered my name, because it was a little different, and he found us, somehow.

EC: Hollis did?

JH: Yes.

EC: That's interesting. How did you know Hollis?

JH: From 1963.

EC: From meeting him in Greenwood?

JH: Yes, 1963, yes. And we stayed in touch loosely. So I went with Hollis to McComb, Mississippi. McComb was one of those hot places, scary, and I was a little nervous about McComb. Other places I knew. Batesville was mild compare to there,[1:00:00] and I met Curtis Hayes. Curtis is now Curtis Muhammad. Curtis was putting together a group of Mississippi kids to work in the delta, just what I needed. So I went up after a couple of days in McComb. I went with Curtis up to Cleveland, Mississippi, and Cleveland was one of the places where the Mississippi Freedom Labor Union was organized. Shaw was near Cleveland, and had no idea what to do to organize anything or anybody except my experiences in Batesville. I stayed with Owen Brooks, initially, because the National Council of Churches was paying the stipend for Freedom Corps, and I was going to be a part of that group, and when you talked about the difference in men and women, Freedom Corps was mainly guys. And me. Guys and me.

EC: Do you know why?

JH: What?

EC: Do you know why?

JH: No, I have no idea.

EC: Who did you say was paying for it? The National Council--.

JH: Delta Ministry.

EC: Oh, the Delta Ministry.

JH: From the National Council of Churches.

EC: So they were recruiting young people in Mississippi to be the Freedom Corps?

JH: Curtis did.

EC: Curtis did, but they're being paid for by Delta Ministry?

JH: Yes, and we got \$10 a week. Of course, I was feeling my eighteen, I'm now I'm adult person, because I'm eighteen, and I'm staying with Owen Brooks, who is working for the Delta Ministry. Owen was funny. I thought he was an old man. He was about thirty, I guess. [Laughter] I went out one night with a group of movement people to a juke joint, Rexburg, where they were playing live blues. Loved blues. And stayed out all night. Got back the next day. I'm eighteen, remember, I'm an adult person. I can stay out all night if I want to, I said to myself. Owen was like a mother hen. He said, "You stay out all night again and I will call your mother. Where have you been?" I told him the story. Didn't work. Owen found a family for me to stay with. He wasn't going to be responsible for young Juadine leaving Batesville for the first time, trying to hang out, have no clue about anything, so I stayed with the Washington family.

EC: You thought you were on your own.

JH: Nope, not anymore.

EC: You thought you were grown.

JH: Nope, not anymore. So I went to live with the Washington family for a minute or two, and then they sent me off to Rosedale, one of the places where the Freedom Labor Union was really big and a lot of the farm workers had lived in the little town, and I was to organize and work with them. I lived with a family there, Frank Davis, who was the local leader, and it was interesting because he lived right across the

road, or the street, from the courthouse and the jail. I stayed in the room with their daughter who was, I think, a fourteen year old, and they had three other people living in their house. Their house was tiny. Morton Thomas, from Boston, I think, and a student at Harvard, Billy Kochiyama, who was Japanese, grew up in Harlem. Was there another person? Maybe that was it.

EC: So these guys are people who came into Mississippi.

JH: Yeah.

EC: What about the rest of the Freedom Corps? Were they people from outside or local?

JH: They were local. Everybody was in the movement at home. Aurice Webb, from my county. He's still there. Homer Crawford. Willie had been a farmworker. He was a tractor driver I think. Isaac Foster, who had been a tractor driver on somebody's plantation. And Joe Harrison, from Holmes County.

EC; Did you think about the fact that the other Freedom Corps and these other outside folks were mostly men?

JH: No.

EC: Did you notice?

JH: Yes, I noticed.

EC: But you didn't think any--yes.

JH: I had to fight them, sometimes.

EC: Tell me about that.

JH: I could curse as good as they could, so.

EC: Tell me about that.

JH: No, they would--this had nothing to do with the movement. There was a softball game. [1:05:00] I play soft--I played softball, and Benjamin, Ben Brown, I'm sorry, Benjamin Brown.

EC: Is he the one that got killed at Jackson State?

JH: Yes, yes he did. Ben said, "Why don't you act like other girls?" And I said, "Just because you can't play softball is not my problem. I'm playing first base." And I played first base. [Laughs]

EC: You weren't ( ).

JH: Not at all. Then I recruited another young woman, Helen. Helen Williams, from Rosedale, to come and work with us. Then another woman I met in Washington at one of those demonstrations, Tut Tate, came and joined the group. Helen could hang. Tut, not so much. Faye, my home girl, my best friend, came and worked with us for a minute. She also couldn't hang. I said, "The boys are boys. Ignore them."

EC: They didn't find that as easy as you?

JH: No, and when we went out to the plantations to talk to farmworkers, we left one person in the van. We had a van, and when you saw the dust coming, you knew the owner was coming, so you had to beep the horn and everybody ran out from wherever they were and jumped in the car and we took off and the fight was on. They were chasing us and we were chased. We just ran, that's all. And then we would go back and sometimes when we went back, there were, the people were gone. They had left overnight. It was like slavery. They lived there they shopped there, they went to church there. There was one plantation, Delta Pines, had seven churches. I counted. People had no reason to leave.

EC: So this is to keep people closed off on the plantation?

JH: Yes. And so when you went back and knocked on the door that you had knocked on last week or the day before, and nobody was there, you know they had run away.

EC: Run away so they wouldn't be associated with the movement?

JH: No, to get away. To a different life.

EC: When you say you're working and organizing with the Farm Labor Party-

JH: Freedom Labor Union.

EC: Sorry. Farm Labor Party, what is that?

JH: Freedom Labor Union.

EC: Yes, no, I'm trying to think of where I got the--Freedom Labor Union. I think the Farmer Labor Party was in Minnesota. Freedom Labor Union.

JH: At the time, people were making 0.30 cents an hour, 10 hours day, \$3 a day. What we were saying is they needed to make more money, and organize, and that they should walk off if they couldn't get more money, because they couldn't live on three dollars a day. They were on the plantations mainly because they had accumulated bills with the company store, to eat. They couldn't leave because they had a debt they had to pay, couldn't pay the debt. So that was in Bolivar County, Sunflower County, and Washington Counties. And I also tried to organize a little tiny freedom school, because a lot of the kids had dropped out at third grade, to teach people how to write their names. Simple stuff.

Billy Kochiyama, his family had lived in Harlem. His parents had been in internment camps during World War II, and when they were released, they moved to

Harlem. His mom was a big follower of Malcolm X. Billy was the first person who told me I was African American. I think he called us Afro-American, at the time. I was like, "Okay, we can be that." Billy also was not your typical nonviolent movement person. I went out of town for some meeting or the other, got back to town, and they said, "Got to go to court at two o'clock. Billy was arrested over the weekend." I was like, "Okay, I got my \$10, right?" Billy had been standing with one of the kids from the Klan march, marched through town, and one of the Klansmen, we're talking about the KKK now, called him tojo. That was his behind. Billy kicked his behind, right there, and was arrested. [1:10:00] I used my \$10 to get Billy out of jail, or to keep him out of jail. I think that was the fine, \$10, good thing, because we didn't have more than that, and Billy went back to New York at the end of the summer. I didn't ever see Billy again. It was over. I met his mom a few years later. But it was kind of a nice, rag-tag crew in Rosedale.

EC: So were you able to get farmers to organize and walk off?

JH: There were a lot of people who walked off, but they had walked off with no means of support. Labor unions, Freedom Labor Union. I think Isaac Foster, one of the guys who worked with Freedom Corps, was one of the organizers in the Freedom Labor Union, but they didn't really know how unions worked. I wish I could remember details. I know there was a group of them living in tents. Near Greenville.

EC: Near the airbase?

JH: That was later.

EC: That was later?

JH: That was later. The air base--the Delta Ministry sent me to raise money for people. To Minnesota and to Pennsylvania. It was my first plane ride. I was scared to death but I had to put on a brave front.

EC: So you're not worried about anything in Mississippi but you're afraid of an airplane?

JH: Yes, absolutely. And I got to speak at little church groups and stuff in Minnesota and in Pennsylvania, and Illinois. This was also, I guess, it was late [19]65 or early [19]66. I went with Bob, Reverend Robert Beach. We called him Bob Beach. That was kind of fun.

EC: I was going to say, was it exciting once you got there?

JH: It was different. Yeah. In Minnesota, there were a couple of women who had been in Greenville working for Delta Ministry and so I stayed with them, so I knew them. The church groups, you know, I was, I guess they had never seen somebody like me before, and that was kind of interesting.

EC: How so?

JH: They were just sort of staring. At one church, they had me put on a robe and with the preachers? I stood there and did my little talk.

EC: Really? Interesting.

JH: I thought so, too. Okay, I'll put it on, I don't care. Most of the groups were white. When I went to Pennsylvania and I'm just outside of Pittsburgh, I asked the minister that I was living with, "Are there"--I don't know whether we were black or colored then--"other people like me nearby?" Because I hadn't seen any, and so he arranged with the NAACP for me to come and speak in the Hill District.

EC: Oh, really?

JH: Yes, yes.

EC: That's cool.

JH: Uh-huh. And one of the women said, "Where are you staying while you're here?" I said, "Mount Lebanon." She said, "Oh my goodness, girl. It's a wonder we haven't seen you hung up on a tree out there." I'm like, "Are you serious?" She said yes.

EC: Didn't teach you about the North?

JH: Yes! It was a revelation. It was like, black people don't go out there after dark and I don't know that we were black yet, but you know you don't go out there after dark. That's why I leave before sun-up and go back after dark. [Laughter] Okay.

EC: So you didn't feel worried, but they're like teaching you.

JH: Yes, it was like, okay I didn't know that. Then I think the next stop was Illinois, and I spoke at a seminary in Chicago. I don't remember the name--McCormick, maybe? I don't know.

EC: There is a McCormick Center or something.

JH: I think that's where I was speaking, yes. They told me they had a family for me and I said, "I have family here." Up the river. So they had to take me to the south side and I had to yell up in the tenement for my older sister to come and get me downstairs, to let me in, and I was speaking at a church there on Sunday.

EC: Had you been in Chicago before?

JH: No and my sister did not like the way I looked. "You cannot go out of this house looking like that." So she straightened my hair and put me on a suit [1:15:00] with

heels. They will not recognize me. This is not me. I allowed it because you had to respect your elders; that's how I grew up, you know.

EC: I haven't noticed you speaking of respecting your elders a lot. [Laughs]

JH: Well, I had trouble with that.

EC: That's what I was thinking.

JH: I had trouble with it.

EC: So you said your sister wanted to straighten your hair and--

JH: She did. She didn't want to, she did.

EC: ( ) So, were you wearing your hair natural on purpose because of the movement?

JH: Yes.

EC: Did all the women in the movement leave their hair natural?

JH: I don't think so, but I met a young woman named Gwen Gillion, I think, and she had her hair natural, and I thought, "That's not so bad," and then I saw an album cover with Odetta on it with natural hair. I hadn't cut my hair yet, but I said, "I don't need to straighten my hair. Why would I do that?" but my sister wasn't having it, so I went back to Mississippi and something was happening and the politics of the movement, I think, was changing, early 1966.

EC: Can you describe that or talk about that?

JH: I don't really remember. I wish. The Freedom Corps was kind of breaking up. I don't remember why. But--.

EC: Were there racial conflicts?

JH: Well, Freedom Corps was all black. It was Curtis and us.

EC: But you were working with some of the white kids and Tommy.

JH: Of course, yes. I don't remember that. I don't know--I have to try and remember what happened, because I've blocked on it. But I left my place in Bolivar County. I was living with a family there who had absolutely nothing. I mean absolutely nothing. I slept with some of the kids and you could be sitting in the bed and see a mouse running across the pillow. I can't handle this.

EC: The floor is one thing, but the pillow?

JH: Uh-huh, yes. It's time to move. I went to Jackson and I don't remember what went into that decision. Helen decided to go back home to Rosedale. I went to Jackson. The guys also split up. I don't remember what caused the split, and I'll send a note to Curtis and ask him if he remembers. In Jackson I stayed with another group of movement women, in the Patio Apartments, where other SNCC people lived.

EC: Who were some of the people you were staying with then?

JH: The women in that apartment was Gracie [Hawthorne?], from Hattiesburg, Joyce Brown from McComb, Marjorie Hyatt. Marjorie was from Hattiesburg and she also claimed Pittsburgh somehow and most of them worked for the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in the office. I wasn't sure what I was doing yet, but Frank Smith always pulled me out when I did--so I went to work for Frank. He had a neighborhood development group, or something, and they were supposedly going to make bricks to build homes for people in Strike City. That's what the tent city thing was called, Strike City. I was working in his office, and getting a feel for the city. It was--.

EC: Where was Strike City?

JH: It was outside of Greenville, Mississippi.

EC: And it's where people went when they went on strike with the--.

JH: When they got kicked off plantations, yes. There was a tent city and they had a big sign saying, "Strike City." Isaac Foster, the person I mentioned earlier, was one of the people from Strike City.

EC: Did you meet Jean Wheeler at that time?

JH: She and Frank were married. I met her with Frank. I think they were already married, and she was like a big sister to me. We still live in the same neighborhood, what can I tell you.

EC: Does she, was she still organizing, working with the movement at that point?

JH: Yes, but she was working, I think, mainly with Frank and his brick factory idea, trying to figure out how you make bricks to build houses. I'm trying to remember. Jean, I think, [1:20:00] was also writing, which I thought was interesting. I had to think about, now, it's almost time to go to college. You've almost finished your year of movement work, and how are you going to do that? I don't know. And some guy came into the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party office and was looking for people-- recruiting--for Bishop College in Texas, it was a Baptist college, and most of us went. All of us who had finished high school. "Yes, we'll go. What do we need to do?" And we went to Bishop.

EC: So Bishop was actively recruiting movement kids?

JH: No.

EC: I was going to say, that doesn't sound right.

JH: No, it was not. Tom Brown, who had been a SNCC person, was working in the admissions office. He was recruiting movement folks without telling them that. No, not Bishop. Certainly not. No, no. So Marjorie Hyatt, Linda Wilson who was active in Hattiesburg, and I left. Who else? Maybe it was just three of us, went to Bishop.

EC: Did you all organize at Bishop, or did you--.

JH: Oh, it was a nightmare. Bishop was an experience. When we got to Dallas, I think we took a bus there. The person from the school who came to pick us up had a big sign on the side of the car that said, "Repent and be saved."

EC: Did you turn and leave then?

JH: If I could have, I think I would have, I hope. So I went to--we got to the campus and I had an afro by then. I cut my hair. And all of the little women girls were staring like, "Look, she washed her hair." Now I know what black kids feel like when they go to white schools. Had a roommate who was very religious, I guess, young, and thought this is a mistake. But they didn't try to pair us with each other. They wanted us to, I guess, stretch out. Breakfast the next morning, same thing happened. Everyone stopped eating to stare, like, "She washed her hair." [Laughs] So that was interesting. I had to get a job. I was in the work-study program and I got a job. They put me in the laundry room, where nobody would see me. [Laughs]

EC: And so, wouldn't mess with nobody's hair that's already been straightened. Did any of the house mothers or the Dean of Students, did they say anything to you about your hair?

JH: The librarian said something to me about my hair. She said, "You look as bad as that African woman who came here with her hair like that. Jamila Stokes, from

Hattiesburg.” Said to her, “I’ve never seen anybody born with blue hair before,” and that was when black women who had white hair would dye it blue. She sort of looked at me. Because I got fired from my first job. First thing I did, and it wasn’t an act of protest or anything. The sheet, I put it in this roller thing that was supposed to dry it and it never came out and the room got all smoky. It burned so they sent me out of there had sent me to the library to work, in periodicals, so nobody would see me. I could be behind the books and behind the magazines and all of that.

The other interesting part, I think, was the first night--not the first night, the second night, a couple of kids came up the stairs and said, “Can you do my hair like that?” I said, “Yes, all you’ve got to do is wash it and I’ll cut it for you.” I cut hair. Did I know about cutting hair? No, but I could do it.

EC: So you started a movement.

JH: I think everybody was ready, pretty much, and *Ebony Magazine* did a cover in 1966 that said “au naturel,” and they had women on the cover with afros. Oh, was my mother pleased. “See, Juadine’s not the only one. Look.”

EC: That’s cool. So once *Ebony* did it, it was all right, then? People--.

JH: It took a little bit more time, and Howard University--maybe that was later--the queen of Howard had an afro, but people were getting used to the idea of, okay, you can have nappy hair.

EC: So did you stay at Bishop? You graduate? [1:25:00]

JH: I stayed at--no, I stayed at Bishop for two years, and I had a good time at Bishop. I made friends. It was like being in elementary school again in some ways, because it was a very strict campus. You couldn’t wear slacks. It was a religious school.

It was a Baptist college. I got caught--you were supposed to go to chapel every, I think three days a week? I would send my punch card by one of the girls on the dorm and I would sit in my room and tinker on the guitar, and one day I got a knock on the door and I thought it was somebody else who had cut chapel, and it was the Dean of Women and she went back and announced there was a young lady in her room, playing the ukulele. Everybody knew it was me, so okay.

On Sundays when you were supposed to go to church, I went to the federal prison. There was a prison nearby called Seagoville and my English professor had given me something that a prisoner over there had written, and I thought he was a good writer so we connected. They arranged for me to come and visit, so that's where I went on Sundays. I wrote, where you have to sign out the dorm, I said I was going to a Quaker meeting. They didn't know.

EC: So they would let you do a Quaker meeting instead of chapel?

JH: Yes, that was chapel for me.

EC: That was considered acceptable?

JH: There was a woman, I think she was from Louisiana, whose fiancé was in prison there because he refused to go to the war. She would pick me up on Sunday mornings and take me with her and I would go visit Lafayette Lock, the prisoner. I also was able to get books and stuff for them that they wanted and he would tell me where to leave it, like, "In the pasture near the prison," and I don't know how they got it. I would. That's how I spent my Sundays, instead of going to church.

EC: What did you do when you left Bishop?

JH: After Bishop, oh gosh. I left Bishop in [19]68 and Dr. King was coming to Batesville to speak. Before his death. Of course it would be before his death. But my mom said Dr. King is coming to town, you need to go see him, and I said no. I was depressed. I'm not going to see him. So she did what she normally did. She got my uncle and she said, "Go get Juadine and take her to see Dr. King."

EC: Is this her brother, your uncle?

JH: Yes, yes. So I'm sitting in the house and I'm not going outside. My uncle shows up and he says, "Put your clothes on, we're going to see Dr. King." Okay. You don't say no to your uncle, and that might have been a male thing too. He's the man in the house. And he's an elder. You have to listen, kind of. So I went with him to see Dr. King. Doctor King had young people with him, and I was surprised. I was like, I thought this was all old preachers. What is this?

EC: Had you ever heard him before?

JH: Yes, in 1966. The Meredith March. He had been one of the people who came at the end, and he spoke at the rally. I can't say that I listened, but he spoke. I heard his voice. People turned out in Batesville. I mean, there were just massive numbers of people there to hear Dr. King. We thought that was annoying, again. I was like, okay. It's 1968. But what it had done is exposed me, that I was back in town. My friend Tut Tate, who had come from Washington and worked with Freedom Corps a little bit, showed up at our house in like two weeks' time to say, "I heard you were here and we're organizing the Poor People's Campaign." That might have happened after King's Assassination. King was assassinated shortly after that, maybe the next couple of

weeks, and “Come and help us organize for the Poor People’s Campaign.” And I thought, “That’s silly, just going to Washington to march and beg.” But okay.

I went with her to Memphis, stayed at the Lorraine Hotel where King had been assassinated, and met these younger people [1:30:00] who were working with SCLC and agreed that I would go and help them get folks on the buses to get to DC, but I wasn’t coming. I went to Grenada and worked with this young guy named Leon Hall, who was organizing for SCLC. Once they got people all signed up to get on the buses to come to DC, I went to Mt. Beulah and I was supposed to go back to Batesville. I didn’t really have any plans, like, what are you going to do now? I don’t know. Leon said, “Okay, go with us to Selma and then you can go home.” I said okay, I went to Selma. Some little kid in Selma said, “Can you stay with us,” and I said sure, and he went and asked his mom, and I spent the night at their house. The next day, they said, “Come with us to Montgomery and then you can go home.” I stayed with Leon’s family in Montgomery. “Come with us to Birmingham and then you can go home.” And I ended up in Washington.

EC: That’s with the Poor People’s Campaign?

JH: With the Poor People’s Campaign, yes.

EC: So was that the Mule Train?

JH: Yes, that’s the Mule Train. Ended up in Washington, DC.

EC: What was it like to travel with the Mule Train?

JH: One of the interesting things, the Mule Train I wasn’t so much into, but one of the things that I happened I think in Birmingham is I met these reporters from the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. I met Earl Caldwell, Gerald Fraser. ( )

He just died. Tom Johnson, were there from the *New York Times* and Bob Maynard, from the *Washington Post*. They were interesting. So I kind of hung out with them and listened to what they were doing and thought, “Hmm, interesting work. Okay.” I think that was more interesting to me than trying to organize people to come to Washington to sit in a tent city.

EC: You said that you didn’t really see the point in going to Washington to march and beg. What were you--were you just--.

JH: We have to figure a way to do it ourselves now. Washington is not listening. I don’t know when I came to that conclusion, but I had come to that conclusion. I had come here I think in 1965 to help unseat the Mississippi delegation, and we lobbied and sat out in front of the capitol all night and went home and nothing happened. Same thing had happened in [19]64 with the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party going to Atlantic City and I didn’t know for sure what we needed to do but I thought we had to do something different than marching and begging. I think that’s where I was.

So in DC, Washington, I made it to Washington and they had put up tents on the National Mall and SCLC staff uh huh this is terrible, Juadine, had rooms at the Pitts Motor Inn Hotel.

EC So the poor people are staying in tents on the mall and the staff is in a hotel?

JH: Yes. I’m in the hotel, too.

EC: Did you think about that?

JH: Of course I did.

EC: And what did you think?

JH: I thought what a difference. What kind of thing are you doing here? You have people living out here in mud, because it was a muddy place. And we're all sitting up in the Pitts Motor Inn, eating and sleeping, warm, warm showers. It's something unfair about this situation, so I don't know how long I had been here but one day we were driving down 14<sup>th</sup> street, I was with one of the preachers--.

EC: And this would have been after 14<sup>th</sup> street, after the riots?

JH: Yes, this was [19]68, after the riots, and I see Charlie Cobb walking down the street and I said to the preacher, "Pull over!" He pulled over and I jumped out of the car and hugged Charlie and he told me that everybody's in Washington. I said, "You're kidding." And he said no, and I said I'm out at, what was it called? Resurrection City, with the preachers. We need to do something. We need to organize these people or do something. And he said, "Where are you staying?" I said, "The Pitts Motor Inn." It was before cell phones so there was no way to call. Went back to that place, Resurrection City, and did whatever we did. [1:35:00] I think I was supposed to be working with volunteers or something but I have a vague recollection of what we did out there other than looking at people stomping around through mud and getting ready to go to demonstrations to march around the Department of Agriculture or something. Do not have a very good image of that. That evening I went back to the Pitts and Curtis, I think, came. Curtis and his wife Mimi were here and he said, "What are you doing?" I said, "I'm out in the mud with the people at Resurrection City." He said okay. And the next day Frank showed up, Frank Smith, and he said, "Get your stuff, let's go. You're getting out of here. I got my little bags and I left the Pitts Motor Inn and Resurrection City and

the Poor People's Campaign and I had an apartment with a roommate and I became a student at the Institute for Policy Studies. Getting a little stipend, yes. And going over there...

EC: Who else was there, at the time?

JH: At the Institute? Frank Smith, Marvin Holloway, Ivanhoe Donaldson were Fellows at the Institute, and I was a student. I was Frank's student and I would go to seminars and I mainly went to the seminars, I think, to eat. I don't know that that's true but it's probably true, and then shortly after that somebody quit work at Drum and Spear Bookstore, so I got a job at Drum and Spear Bookstore.

EC: What was that like at the time?

JH: Oh, it was wonderful.

EC: I guess not everybody will know, so say what Drum and Spear--.

JH: Drum and Spear Bookstore was started, I guess, by Charlie and a group called Afro-American Resources. It was every book in the world you could find about black people, and I had never seen that many books about black people and I tried to read as many of them as I could, so when people walked in the store and, "I'm looking for a book about such-and-such," I can say, "Look over here. This book is wonderful. It has"- so that was my first real job, I guess outside of the--but it was not really outside of the movement. It was Drum and Spear Bookstore. It was wonderful. It was connected, later with the Center for Black Education. They were an offshoot of Federal City College. A lot of the guys from the movement was teaching over there, black history kind of stuff and I didn't go to the Center a lot. I mainly stayed at the bookstore. Then there was radio program on Sunday nights, *Saya Watoto*. *The Children's Hour*.

EC: Can you spell it?

JH: Oh, please. I wouldn't.

EC: Is that Swahili?

JH: Yes. And we did, Mimi, Curtis' former wife, would do scripts from stories, regular stories, and we would read them on the air on Sunday nights and take on the characters. That was fun. And you got authors coming to the bookstore to sign their books and to talk, and I remember one Saturday I wasn't there. Lerone Bennett, who wrote *Before the Mayflower*, was in the store signing books when the police teargassed the bookstore.

EC: What?

JH: Teargassed it. Shot teargas into the store.

EC: What was their supposed rationale?

JH: I have no idea. I have no idea. It was very strange. It was Lerone Bennett, the historian! After that, I think we were always on the radar because it was all movement people in the bookstore. We moved to a bigger place because people were reordering books from all over the country, coming into the store, and doing their book signings and stuff. So it expanded. Ralph Featherstone, who had been an organizer in Mississippi, came to be the manager of the store.

EC: Featherstone was the manager?

JH: Yes, he was. First Tony Giddings was the first one, then Featherstone. Mm-hmm, so it became a little bit more political, I think. People came into the store to talk and to do, to get books, and to tell us about books that they thought

we should have. It was one of the biggest, I guess, black bookstores in the country at the time.

EC: And did you feel like this was movement work? [1:40:00]

JH: Yes, actually. I did.

EC: Was it part of the answer to that question you had been asking about what to do instead of protesting?

JH: No, not really, but it was something to do at the time. We moved to a bigger place, meeting new people. Then the day, the two days after we moved to this bigger location, Featherstone was blown up in a car with Che Payne. We probably should've had some kind of psychological counselling, but we didn't. That was 1970, March 10.

EC: How did you cope with that?

JH: Well, I didn't do very well with it, but Mimi, Curtis's former wife, had , I guess, money. Did I get a job first? Yes, I left the bookstore. I went to work for the Black Child Development Group in downtown DC, where you had to actually put on clothes to go to work. You didn't wear your jeans and stuff. Met Florence Tate, who was like a big sister. I got a job as a receptionist. I'd never had a job outside of the movement, of movement people, before, and I couldn't type really well. I had taken typing in high school on a royal typewriter and here we've got this new kind of typewriter and I'm over there making noise, pretending I'm typing while people are there answering the phones. When they left to go home, I would do my work. I would type the letters I should've been typing during the day.

EC: Is that because you didn't want people--.

JH: To know that I couldn't type! Yes, that was part of the job, so I had to do my work, so I would stay. I would get home at about ten o'clock every night, and then the head of the organization had some kind of black caucus meeting and she came in at lunchtime and she needed me to type what she was saying and I was typing away and she looked over and saw nothing was on the paper. [Laughs] She sat down to the typewriter and typed her own work, and went back to her meeting. When she came back she said, "How have you been getting out all this work?" I said, "When you go home in the evenings I do my work." She said, "I don't want you staying here late anymore." I was also rewriting people. "I don't want you staying here late. I'm going to get somebody to come in to do the work that you haven't finished and help you with your typing." I said, okay. I wasn't fired. I think I became a program analyst or something, so I could do a little writing, rewriting, at my own pace. That was a three-month project. When that was over, we went off to the West Indies. First to Haiti--no, Puerto Rico first with Judy and Mimi. Puerto Rico first, then to Haiti, then to Trinidad.

EC: That's Judy Richardson?

JH: Yes. Barbados. We were gone for a minute.

EC: Was this just like a, we're going to go and see these places, explore?

JH: I think so, but I think it was also a mental health issue that we didn't ever talk about. It was really good. It was a good trip. Haiti I loved and one of the things that somebody said is when you get off the plane, say what you want to do while you're here. Somebody will hear you. I said, "I want to go to Vodou ceremony," and about three days in--and then another guy, old man, came and said, "I'll take care of you girls," and he came and grabbed our stuff and took us off to the hotel where we were supposed to stay.

He argued with the manager. We left here and went to another hotel, because he didn't like what the guy was charging us, or something. He actually did take care of us. About three days in, some man came and said, "I'm here to take you to the Vodou, because did you want to go to the Vodou?" Yeah! He took us.

EC: Amazing.

JH: Yes, it was amazing. I was so scared; I didn't know what to do with myself. I didn't know what to expect, and all of a sudden you're hearing these drums and these people are singing something, you don't what they're saying, and I'm scared. We left there finally and I prayed. [1:45:00]This was the time--please don't go back with us, I don't know what they were saying, I promise you I won't come back.

EC: You mentioned the drums. You mentioned the drums and earlier, I think, before you started the interview you said there was drumming in Panola County.

JH: Northern Mississippi.

EC: Northern Mississippi

JH: And Panola County, I guess.

EC: Can you tell us about that?

JH: A little bit. I didn't know a lot at the time. Two days every July 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, there were these old men who played drums and the first thing you heard on the 3<sup>rd</sup> was a big boom sound. It was like you knew drums were there. You got new clothes to go to the event. A baseball team came to play baseball with the neighborhood guys, the gangster neighborhood guys, we got our new clothes, and we went to the picnic. That's what it was called, and everybody came. These old men had a fire going to heat the drums, the skins of n the drums, and they played and only the men danced to it.

EC: Only the men?

JH: Yes. The women were making--.

EC: Do you know why?

JH: No. The women were cooking. The kids were dancing to the jukebox when the old men stopped playing and it was like, "Will they hurry up and finish?" I was embarrassed because my stepfather danced. So did his brother. It's like, oh, that's so embarrassing, and they came every July 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, two days, and everybody came. I mean, the whole neighborhood turned out, for the baseball game, first, and then the drumming in the evening. Had no idea it was African, no idea. No idea. Then some years ago, one of my girlfriends who had come to work with us in Freedom Corps for a second said, "Do you remember the drums? Those old men playing drums?" And I said, "Yes." They had a fife, a flute made from cane. I said, "Yes," and I went online and looked for them and found them. The Smithsonian recorded them in the 1940s, traced the rhythms that they were playing back to West Africa, Mali. I said, "Oh my goodness, we were doing that then and I had no clue?" Then I asked one of my cousins. "Did you ever go to the picnics?" And he said, "Yes, I went, everybody went." Uh-huh, so it was like a neighborhood gathering for two days.

EC: Did they play at other places?

JH: Yes, all along the northern Mississippi.

EC: So you all got them for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, though?

JH: And 3<sup>rd</sup>. Though 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup>.

EC: But they would play at other places in the summer?

JH: Yeah. Lomax wrote that the women in other parts of the state saluted the drums. We didn't do that. We didn't know. And that they killed, slaughtered goats, and served goat sandwiches. We didn't do all of that. We had the normal picnic food. You can buy a fish sandwich and sodas.

EC: Have you-- Do they still do it?

JH: The drummers? The twelve-year-old granddaughter of Sid Hemphill was supposed to hold the group together. I haven't seen them since, and I promised one of my cousins that I was going to look for the recordings because the younger people do not know about it. Everybody moved away from the farms and the older people didn't share, didn't tell us what was going on.

EC: So, Otha Turner?

JH: Otha Turner came after Sid Hemphill. They have a statue, a plaque or something, of him in northern Panola County, in Sardis or someplace like that.

EC: Because I believe his granddaughter and her group played at the Smithsonian Folk Life Festival a couple years ago.

JH: I heard that, I heard that. I didn't know it, so I missed them. I would've gone. I would've danced.

EC: The recording might be, you know. There might be a recording.

JH: That's what we're looking for. We're looking for the '40s though.

EC: Yes, but I think they have a recording--I know they have a recording, I don't know if it's online, from the more recent one, too.

John Bishop: Yeah I have a record called Panola and Tate County Fife and Drums.

JH: Are you serious? That's what we're talking about. Oh, please do.

JB: I just got all my LPs out of the basement. I'll see if I can find it for you.

JH: Oh, please. Oh, yes.

EC: I wanted to as--I wanted to go back, if it's okay, and I'm still stuck on the fact of you're in church and you're supposed to play "Amazing Grace" and you come out with "Oh Freedom." And you lived.

JH: I lived, I lived. I only know of one person who protested very strongly, [1:50:00] and I've since seen her and sort of made peace with her. It was like, this girl has lost her mind. But it was also after I was almost eighteen and I stopped playing at the church, after I graduated high school, because I left. And didn't have to do it anymore.

EC: So, by the time you do this, the movement is really kind of big in Panola County, so a lot of people are into it?

JH: They know it, but that's not what you do in church unless it's a mass meeting where you're singing freedom songs.

EC: But you're mixing them.

JH: I'm mixing it.

EC: And what'd your mom say?

JH: Nothing. She didn't tell me I'd better not do it again or any of that.

EC: Did people sing? Did people sing, "Oh, Freedom"?

JH: My friends did. The choir. We knew the songs.

EC: Did you plan it?

JH: Huh?

EC: Did you plan it?

JH: I don't think so. I think I just did it, and the choir was mostly my friends that I had been with since I was ten, so we knew what to do with each other.

EC: Was the minister one of the movement supporters?

JH: No. I don't remember him ever mentioning anything about the movement.

EC: And he didn't say nothing to you?

JH: No, nobody did. The deacon, after that meeting that we had at church with the record, they started locking the church. The deacon went around to the different houses saying, your children are getting involved with this stuff and you better talk to them because I'm not getting them out of jail if they get arrested." He went from house to house. But by the time 1964 rolled around, he actually kept in his house a couple of the volunteers.

EC: So people were moving in the direction of the movement, even if it was-- yes. So you weren't allowed to use the church for meetings after that, you know?

JH: Well, I got up--we had something called what was the thing called? All of the choirs got together to sing, one Sunday a month, from different churches, and I think I did get up and announce that they had locked our church and we could no longer meet there and I did it--it wasn't completely innocent, and somebody from West Camp got up and said, "Our church is always open to you. If you need to meet, you can meet here."

EC: Did you do that, then?

JH: Yes. I think we went to West Camp once, but it was not in the neighborhood and you had to get a ride, although a group of us sixteen-year-olds, Mrs. Glover let us use her car. Her daughter, who was my age, could drive us any place. We would even drive off to Memphis to get a five-cent hot dog.

EC: How far were you all from Memphis?

JH: Fifty-nine miles.

EC: So it was like the big city?

JH: Oh, yes, it was the city.

EC: What was Greenwood like when you went in there in [19]63 for that week? Can you describe the community at all?

JH: It was mostly movement people that I saw. We went to eat at somebody's house who invited us over for dinner, and that was good. It seemed to be much more active than Batesville was at the time. Like I said, after Medgar Evers was killed there was a mass meeting and the church was packed and people were out on the streets. The people who couldn't get in. I had never seen that before. It was a movement city, a town.

EC: Are there people that you met that stand out? Were some of the Tougaloo students there, like Joyce Ladner and--.

JH: No. Freddie Greene was there. Freddie was there. Freddie's family is from Greenwood and she was a student at Dillard. I think she was a freshman, and my cousin was a freshman at Mississippi Valley State, so they got to know each other and I ran into Freddie, over and over again after that.

EC: I know Mr. Miles was one of the really important leaders.

JH: Absolutely.

EC: Can you tell us what he was like?

JH: He lived right down the road from us before my mom got remarried. Very strong man. He had a farm. I knew his sons, the two older sons, Vincent and Robert Jr.

Miles. Everybody knew that he was a movement man. He was a member of West Camp Missionary Baptist Church. He looked after us, like when my mom was at work and we would tear down the two rooms. One night we were playing church and Mr. Miles knocked on the door because he heard all this noise, to check on us. Mother was at work until eight o'clock, you know? And we fell all in the floor and tried to crawl under the beds because it scared us, but he just wanted to know what we were doing. He was like that even before we knew that he was a big movement man.

EC: So he was really a community person?

JH: Yes, he was. Our little road was pretty close-knit.

EC: Who were some of the women in the community that were involved in the movement? What were they like?

JH: They didn't take, Mrs. Glover, Thelma Glover is the person who sticks out immediately. She was a local teacher, and she went to the meetings. She made speeches, and I told you, she was the one who stood in the little thing between the cops and us praying. Her children--two of her children, at least--were involved in the movement. Faye and Louita. Louita ended up going to the University of Illinois, and becoming a lawyer in Chicago. Faye became a teacher in Chicago. Ms. Glover was one of the outspoken women. Mrs. Pearl Robinson was one of the active women. I don't remember her making speeches. Mrs. Virgil Robinson, again, was one of the active women. Don't remember her speaking publicly anyplace.

EC: So when you say they were active but they didn't speak publicly, what were some of the things that they would do?

JH: Make sure people got to the poles to vote. Make sure they tried to register to vote. I think they took in civil rights workers. Claire, Claire, what's her name? Lawson, was Mrs. Pearl's daughter. She was also one of the active women. The Thomas's, the owner of the sundry where everybody hung out in [19]64 had not been active before. You know, the sundry was a place where people hung out, movement people. And I don't remember them ever being really active.

EC: But they were okay with people using it as a hang out?

JH: In [19]64. Not before 1964.

EC: So some people are definitely responding to these outside people? Is it because they're white? Is it because they're outside?

JH: And they're white. We knew white people from a distance. We didn't really know them up close and personal, and I think it was really something to see them walking in our neighborhood and talking to us and embracing us, and people were sort of shocked by it.

EC: So it got people interested, then?

JH: I think so. And--.

EC: Did you become friends with any of the white volunteers? Are there any that stand out to you?

JH: Penny Patch. I remember Penny. I wasn't really friends with her but Claire O'Connor, from Minnesota. We watched them.

EC: You watched them?

JH: Yes, we watched them. What are they going to do now? Let's watch them. [Laughs]

EC: Did you do canvassing with them or anything like that?

JH: That was sort of off the table as far as my mom was concerned.

EC: Because she didn't want you hanging with the--.

JH: Because they were going to leave and you would be here and ( ) so I sort of worked with my friends. When we did sit-in stuff, then we did it all together.

EC: Did other people work with them?

JH: Yes.

EC: Canvassing and stuff? So it was just your mom trying to keep you a little separate?

JH: She was trying to keep me safe. We had had trouble in the family before the '60s.

EC: Like what kind of trouble is that?

JH: Oh, it was serious trouble. Gosh. One of my uncles had been in town--not Batesville, Pope, another little town--and he was jumped by a group of white men because he was going out with a black woman who went out with white men, and that was not--you couldn't do that, so they were going to teach the younger brother--and I don't know which of the brothers they were after. They were going to teach him a lesson, but he was armed and dangerous, so I don't know if more than one person was killed, but I know one person was paralyzed, one person was killed. One of my uncles who had been in World War II, and my dad, went to the aid of their younger brother. The one uncle took responsibility. Actually, it was just recently that we found out that he didn't do it. He left his car in town so they would think it was him, took the weapon and the leftover bullets and got out of town.

They took my grandmother and a [2:00:00] younger cousin to the woods, and said, "We'll kill her if you don't turn yourself in," so he turned himself in, which was the plan in the first place. They brought him back to Batesville. In Oxford, he was in Oxford for a while. Brought him back to Batesville and tried him and found him guilty of murder and electrocuted him, like in 1952. About [19]62 I guess, and then eleven months later my dad died mysteriously. The secret word in the family is he was poisoned. He died exactly eleven months later. The family moved away too, after the trouble. They sold the farm and moved to Kingsport, Tennessee.

EC: That's your dad's family?

JH: Yes.

EC: Do you know, in the family story, how they thought he was poisoned?

JH: Yes. Yes they think--there was a doctor who took care of the black families, Dr. Martin. He would make house calls. He took care of everybody. He would go to black gatherings. My dad was given medicine for blood pressure or something, and that was, we think, what might have taken him out.

EC: So were you aware of this at the time?

JH: Oh no, I had no idea was death was. I was aware that there was trouble, because I listened and eavesdropped on adults all the time, and when my dad died, my mom--my uncle told her, not her brother but her dad's brother came in to tell her he was gone. He also came to tell her when Uncle Lionel was electrocuted, and I heard it. She called me in because they were trying to figure out how to tell me, and I thought, "Okay, so I already know, but I won't let them know I know," and so I went inside and Mother

said, “Your dad’s dead.” I said, “Okay, I guess I’ll figure out how to cry at the funeral somehow.” It was like acting, to me.

EC: Do you know why?

JH: It was a death that meant nothing to me. It was just not real. You go and you do performance at the church and then you go on about your business.

EC: Did you miss him?

JH: Not initially. I told you, it was performance art. When they brought the--I remember it very well, and I don’t know whether I was four or five years old. They brought the casket into the church covered in a flag.

EC: Because he was military?

JH: Yes, he was in World War II. He went overseas. My aunty started to cry and I had to nudge her and say, “It’s not time yet.” We are doing performance here. It’s not time yet. Then I watched my older cousin to see when I was supposed to start crying, because I wasn’t sure, and I would look back--I was sitting on the front row and she was sitting in a row behind me and I’d look back and then when the preacher finished preaching and everybody finished singing and they opened the casket, I looked back and she was squeezing her eyes together to make tears. I thought, “Oh, it’s time.” And so I did my crying.

EC: So because of that, your extended family was more cautious around white folks?

JH: No. I don’t think so. They decided that that was why I was in the movement, but they didn’t say it to me directly.

EC: That’s what they thought? Oh, you heard them talking about it?

JH: Yes, and then when I went in to get my photo with the number there were a group of men sitting around in there and they said, “Girl, where’s your daddy?” And they didn’t know that they had found the wrong one and I said, “I think you know better than I do.”

EC: Did you really?

JH: Yes. But I know they didn’t know which of the Henderson guys was my dad, so I was talking about Uncle Lionel. And I had gone up to see him when he was in jail there, to take him ice cream, and didn’t understand why he didn’t want me there. I thought, “Why? I brought you ice cream.”

EC: Why didn’t he want you up there?

JH: It was the jail. He didn’t want me associated or to be remembered that way, and then I went and moved to California, [2:05:00] late [19]79, and the one person who survived the uncle younger, living in California. He never came back to Mississippi and one of the reasons I want to go to California was to find out from him what actually happened that night.

EC: What did he tell you?

JH: He said, “Only I know and I will never tell.” And he cried. And my Auntie said to me “Look after your uncle, he feels responsible for his brother’s deaths.” Okay. So after he was gone, his wife told me that he had actually done the thing.

EC: Why did they decide that the other brother would take responsibility?

JH: I think that was the brother’s decision, and my uncle at the time was a teenager. He was a young guy and somebody, and I don’t know who, yet--I will find out--sent him away to the army. That’s how he got away.

EC: So somebody slipped him out of town and got him in the--.

JH: But one of the family stories about my uncle is they gave him, he was a trustee in the jail, and they gave him \$500 to take to the bank just about the time the train was coming through, and he took the money to the bank and went back to the jail. So he actually could have escaped if he had wanted to. He didn't want to. I don't know what that was about. And it's interesting because he has a son. And we have never talked about it. His son is maybe a year younger than I am.

EC: So you both lost your fathers.

JH: How do you sneak in the fact that your great-great grandfather was the slave owner, so--and he lived with his family, my folks, and founded a school for them, in Panola County. Until the '50s there was a Henderson school, where all those little offsprings went to school.

EC: So, he lived with his family. Was this before the civil war, he lived with his black family?

JH: Mm-hmm, yes.

EC: And so then, did he leave people land?

JH: I think so. I think the farm that they sold when they moved off to Tennessee was his land. I need to do more research on that.

EC: I was going to say, yes, did your family talk about that history at all?

JH: No, no.

EC: This is your own research?

JH: Yes, because I didn't know about him until one of my cousins. I'm trying to do the family tree and talking about the black people and the native people, and they

said, "What about Duncan?" I said, "Who? Who is Dunc?" "He's your great-great-grandfather." I didn't know that. So I looked up the slave schedule and there he is.

Duncan C. Henderson, and he owned thirteen people. Said, "Dang." There are no names, just ages.

EC: One of them is presumably your great-great grandmother?

JH: Yes, yes. And it took some doing to find her name.

EC: So you did find her name?

JH: Yes. Not in the census or anything, but one of my cousins who was doing a family tree, I saw her online, so I sent her a note saying, "Are you my cousin that I met at my auntie's funeral?" And she said, "Yes, I'm the great-great granddaughter of classy, Ide Lana." I said, "That's my grandmother's name? We found her name!"

EC: That's exciting.

JH: It was. It was very exciting. I had to tell it at the next family reunion.

EC: Have you looked at the land records going back?

JH: No, I have not.

EC: That might be an interesting--I think that you can look at--my dad did some research looking at the transfers, so starting with your dad's, anyway, I don't know if that would track it back or not, but that would be interesting.

JH: I think so, I think so.

EC: Did you participate in Freedom School in summer of [19]64? Did they have freedom schools?

JH: I think they did, but I don't know that I participated. I don't remember being in Freedom School classes. I don't remember our Freedom Schools being as, as organized as they were in other parts of the state. No.

EC: Trying to look at my notes here.

JH: So, what did I do after all of that?

EC: Yes, what did you do after all of that?

JH: [2:10:00] After the West Indies, I came back and Florence Tate, again, was trying to keep me working and doing stuff that I was supposed to do, and of course, I would stray off. I took a couple of classes at George Washington University because I decided I wanted to be a doctor. I got myself a tutor for chemistry and that didn't last very long, and then I quit another job. I got another job at Children's Defense Fund, of all places. I think I worked there a half day or something and thought, "No, this is not me."

EC: What kind of work was it?

JH: Secretarial. Answering phones. Then I worked for IFCO for a minute. They had an office in Washington.

EC: What's IFCO?

JH: Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization. They're the people who've been taking packages, were taking care packages to Cuba. Don't remember the order of that but Florence again called me up at some point and said, "Juadine, what are you doing?" Nothing. "Come to work with me tomorrow." I said, "Okay." I went to work for the National Urban Coalition, and the job there was to be a public relations writer. I thought, "Oh, okay." Go and interview so-and-so. Okay. They

had a little magazine that I helped with, and then I read in the *Washington Afro* that Columbia University had a program for minority journalists. I applied and got accepted, so I went off to New York, in 1974, to the Michelle Clark Fellowship Program at Columbia and became a reporter. It was funny, because I was too shy--and I now you can't see that now--.

EC: No, I can't see that. [Laughter] And I can't see that in the child you're talking about, acting up.

JH: It was a sneaky shy. I walked around with some woman running for governor of New York and didn't ask her a single question. Walked around with her for hours. They were like, "What are we going to do with her? She's not" --.

EC: Where were you working?

JH: I didn't have a job. I was at Columbia; we were putting out a little weekly paper called *Deadline*. So, they sent for Earl Caldwell, the guy I'd met on the Poor People's Campaign? Said, "You better come over here. Juadine is not participating." I was kind of participating but not really, and Earl had me calling people on the phone, taking notes, and then he would put the note--I would have to call them back if I didn't write down everything he thought I should write. It was like, okay, drive me crazy. Then I was assigned to go to the prison to interview a man who had been imprisoned in North Carolina. I think he was sentenced to life or something, and they let the prisoners out to fight a fire and he hit the tracks, ran away.

EC: Go ahead

JH: Yes, he did, he ran away, went to New York, was in a car accident. That's how they got him again. I went to interview him and wrote a story about his life. It was interesting to me. It wasn't--.

EC: That caught your attention?

JH: Yes, yes. They said, "Oh, you can write." Yes, I can.

EC: Well, yes.

JH: And then that was the one story I really liked. Then I went to the Newport Jazz Festival and went to talk to one of the old musicians because I knew nothing about it. He told me about the various people and I wrote about Café Society. Then I went off to my first newspaper job at the end of the summer, in Mt. Vernon, New York, working for *The Daily Argus*. I was a little scared. First story was of a kid who had, the elevator was broken and she stuck her head through the glass to see where it was and was decapitated. Yes. That was my first story. First story was front page. I did the newspaper stuff for twenty-eight years.

EC: So I guess you found what you liked?

JH: I loved it. What can I tell you?

EC: That's great. How do you think your involvement in the movement shaped the person you are? Or did it? [2:15:00] How did it influence you?

JH: I think it was the movement and the family, because my family was pretty strong. My grandmother, teaching in her little school. My grandfather, we never mentioned him too much, but I hung out with him. He was the person who people came to see when they were ill and didn't go to the normal doctor. He made medicine. And a farmer, he was a farmer, and he made medicine. He wanted me to be a lawyer and at

some point I said I was going to do that, but I didn't. I didn't really want to do that, you know? I wish I had learned more about herbs from him. I didn't, so now I study on my own. The movement, I'm still in touch with some of the people like Charlie and Frank. I don't see them every day, that often, but I have to check in on them every now and then. Jean Wheeler Smith is young, is in my neighborhood, so occasionally we will connect again. The movement is, was, and is a part of my life, still.

EC: What do you think is important for people to know about the movement?

JH: That at a time when it was really dangerous in the United States, that young people stood up to power in this country, like they're doing now, pretty much. And that you can do it, and yes, you lose a few on the way, but you can't let it stop you.

EC: Can you think of other things that I haven't asked you about?

JH: No. What didn't you ask me about? Spiritual stuff and how I left church as soon as I turned eighteen?

EC: Did you?

JH: Yes, I did. I didn't play the piano anymore. I have a piano now, but I stopped playing at church. I stopped going to church. I think one of my favorite things was, "I come not to bring peace but a sword." It's time for us to fight, you know?

[Laughter] That was before I went to prison, state prison, Mississippi, Parchman.

Overnight.

EC: You went to Parchman?

JH: Overnight.

EC: How did you land in Parchman?

JH: It was awful. In Rosedale the churches were afraid to open their doors for movement meetings, so we decided we were going to meet on the steps of the church and we had a little rally on the steps of the church. And I don't remember what the issue was at the time, but when people left, as we were leaving, most people had gone already, maybe ten or eleven or us were left behind, talking about what our next moves should be and how we can get the churches to open their doors. These people jumped out of the bushes with their high-powered rifles and marched us off to jail, which was right there a block away, a half block, processed us because they wanted to know who was in their town, and then after about, after they got all our names and addresses and all of that, they took us off to Parchman. Parchman Prison.

EC: Now, did that scare you?

JH: That scared me, but we couldn't let scared show. I remember they took the men off the bus. I don't remember how many men were on there, and left just the women. We got our courage up by cursing. [Laughs]

EC: You cussed them?

JH: Oh yes, and then they brought in a trusty woman. We had to strip. They strip-searched us and gave us only back our top clothes and put us in cells. Four women to a cell with two steel bunk beds, steel. I don't know, maybe we were there for two or three hours before they came around with the big jar of stuff for us to drink. I don't know what it was, but immediately after you drank it, you have to use the toilet. There's one toilet for four women. It was ridiculous. After that, maybe an hour or so later, they put us back on the bus and took us back to Bolivar County, to Cleveland, not Rosedale and then from Cleveland we went back to Rosedale and then I think the Delta Ministry had

bailed us out or something and I ran across the road to the house where I was staying, but sick. They gave us something to drink. I wish I knew what.

EC: Did they do that with everybody?

JH: Yes, yes. Well, all of the people who were arrested in that group, yes. Martin Thomas, [2:20:00] who had been one of the white guys from Boston, didn't get out immediately. He was in Cleveland and they beat him fiercely, the other prisoners. He came out looking really, really bad. I mean, even his ears were bashed. I think his dad sent for him after that and he had to go home.

EC: Did that intimidate you at all, that experience? Did it slow you down?

JH: No. I decided I wasn't going back to jail. You shouldn't tell this, but I had put a little pistol in my purse, although I couldn't shoot it, didn't know how to shoot it. [Laughs]

EC: But you're still packing.

JH: I was packing, yes.

EC: You never had to use it.

JH: No, and if I had I probably would have thrown it at somebody.

EC: Bring out that softball.

JH: That's right.

EC: Might have been better off carrying a softball.

JH: That's true, that's true.

EC: Are there other things?

JH: No, I can't think of anything. I use to give my little sister--my younger sister is twelve years younger than I am, and I would sneak little buttons onto her clothes. "Put this on when we get to town."

EC: So you had your sister be a walking billboard for the movement?

JH: Yes, uh-huh.

EC: Was she excited--.

JH: She was too young to--no, she was too young to know anything. If I was 16, she was four. Had no clue.

EC: Freedom now.

JH: That's right. It had the little hand stuck up, once we started doing that.

EC: What about the Meredith March? Can you tell us anything about that?

JH: I didn't do a lot on the Meredith March. I did go. Oh, that's a terrible story. A doctor came from Detroit to help out the marches and he kept talking about the poor, downtrodden people of Mississippi and we drove him up to the marches but I had to go home first to see my mother. Because the marches were nearby. He was saying the poor, downtrodden negroes, and people burned rags at home to keep the mosquitos away. We're driving down one of the little streets in Batesville and I went and stopped the car. And I went and jumped up and down on somebody's burning rag, jumped back in the car, and went, "Molotov cocktail." [Laughs]

EC: You're messing with that poor man.

JH: Yes. Then we dropped him off at the marches. I don't know where they were. Pope or someplace, and noticed that somebody was following us. So I stopped at my sister's restaurant, older sister and said, "Somebody's following us." She gave me

her .38, put some bullets in it. She said, "Ride facing the back window of the car. If they get too close to the car, shoot out the back window. We can replace that." I said okay and I put the gun in my purse and we went back to Jason. Nothing happened. I guess they figured as much, because the car stopped following us.

EC: Were you in Greenwood when Stokely made his--.

JH: Yes, I was, actually.

EC: --famous speech?

JH: Yes, I was there, but I had just gone up for the day. I didn't march. We went up. I told you I was sick of the marches, and I heard the speech. I heard Rick's first, Willie Rick's, and I had been at the SNCC meeting with Stokely was elected. In Nashville.

EC: Near there, yes.

JH: And I didn't think a lot of it, at the time. I didn't know why it had become such a big deal later. Then I understood, a little later on. It took me a minute, but we left the march. I left with Frank and Jean again and we went into Greenville for something, and then we came back to Jackson and I went to the rally in Jackson.

EC: What did you think when Stokely made his speech, at the time? What did you think about the idea of black power?

JH: I thought it was necessary. I didn't think that was so far-fetched. That was how we started I think. We didn't call it black power, but that black people needed to mobilize and do things for themselves. I thought that was right on the money. I was surprised that it turned off so many people. What do you mean? By then, the Deacons for Defense and Justice had unveiled themselves and I think on that Meredith March--I

wonder if anybody's going to mad at me--I don't care. [2:25:00] People were walking around armed. Making sure that everything was okay. Not flaunting weapons, but being armed anyway.

EC: Did that make you feel safer?

JH: I didn't feel unsafe. I guess I'm just, I didn't feel unsafe.

EC: Can you think of anything else?

JH: No. While I was in school. Ben, the one who wanted me to act more like a girl, was killed, and I saw that on TV, and kind of lost it briefly. Somebody sent me a ticket to come home and I went down for the funeral. Thought, what a waste. How did that happen? Then I went back to college, and didn't get in touch with his family or anything.

EC: How was he killed?

JH: The police officer saw him. He had gone to a restaurant to get a sandwich for his wife or something. They recognized him from the old days and killed him. That was what we were told.

EC: There was a demonstration over at Jackson State, right, about the police going through campus?

JH: And Ben wasn't on campus. He wasn't a college student. He had been married probably less than a year. I think he was staying with his mom and trying to get a job, or working some non-movement job. Yes, that was kind of rough.

EC: You said you lost it.

JH: Yes, I mean, just emotionally.

EC: Very upset?

JH: Uh-huh. Like, how can you do that to me? We were on the plantations trying to organize farm workers and nothing happened. You know? We knew how to run. If you don't know somebody is aiming at you, you don't know how to run. He didn't have a chance.

EC: Do you have any final thoughts?

JH: No. Except it's kind of scary now, and we had better figure out how to mobilize ourselves again. You know?

EC: What do you think of the current protests?

JH: Actually, and this is terrible, but I try not to pay attention. I try not to pay attention. It's too painful. Like, why are we going through this again? You know? At home, and I hopefully will go later this month to see my family, one of my nephews is a deputy sheriff in Batesville, and I thought, "Oh, my goodness. Okay." But he also is a preacher. [Laughs]

EC: So do you feel like you had something to do with it being possible for him to be a deputy?

JH: Probably, and one of the things I used to do--and he talked to me about it--is I used to take books home for them, my nieces and nephews.

EC: When you worked at the bookstore?

JH: Yes, and that was their Christmas present. You've got to know where you came from. He said he would try so hard to read those books. [Laughter]

EC: Would you have any advice for the young people that are leading today's movement?

JH: I wish I did. I do not, because I don't know. It's so weird now. If you listen to Mr. Trump and all of the stuff that comes out of his mouth, it's like, where did you come from? What is this? And it's scary to me. Because at least then, we had a close-knit community. Now we're scattered. You know what I mean? So how do you -- I guess you cannot do it across racial lines. You have to be with people who, like-minded people.

EC: Well, thank you very much for doing the interview for the project.

JH: Okay. I hope I didn't talk your ear off. And if you come up with questions later you can always call me.

EC: I will, I will.

Female 1: This has been a presentation of the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture.

END OF INTERVIEW

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