

*Closeted/Out in the Quadrangles:
A History of LGBTQ Life at the University of Chicago*

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

**INTERVIEW #68
ANONYMOUS WOMAN (1946-) AB 1967**

At U of C: 1963-1967

Interviewed: September 12, 2013 (1 session)

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Length: 01:32:30

Interview September 12, 2013 by phone.

[00:00-05:00: discussion of consent form and interview protocol]

KG: We can start the interview with if you want to recount where you grew up and how that led to you coming to UChicago?

A: OK, well, I grew up in New York City in the borough of Queens. I'm not even completely sure how I decided to apply to Chicago, because I ended up going to Chicago because I did not get accepted by Radcliffe, as it was at the time, and I later found out that—people told me it was the New York quota—but of course I later found out, it was the Jewish quota. So, there were a lot of East Coast Jewish students at the University of Chicago at the time who had not gotten into Ivy League and Seven Sister schools because there was a quota. When I went to Chicago, there was no Jewish quota, there was a female quota of 40%, which was openly discussed, so, anyway, I went to Chicago. I had a choice between Chicago and Barnard and I didn't want to go to Barnard because it was in New York and I wanted to leave home. So I went to Chicago. I thought I might want to major in Linguistics, which is what I did end up majoring in, so I only applied to schools that offered that, which at the time was not very many.

KG: Did you have any ideas about Chicago before you came?

A: Yeah, because I was from New York, I sort of thought it was a small town out in the middle of the prairies [laughs]. I really had a very distorted notion of American geography, so I thought I was heading out to someplace kind of remote. I was quite entertained to discover it was a big city.

KG: Did you know anything about the University aside from that it had a linguistics program?

A: Well, I just knew it was a good school. I was a very good student, I went to public school, the big thing I had been looking forward, because my parents said if I was going to go to a private college, they could not afford to send me to a private school before that. So, I

had gone to a really crappy public high school in New York, where I was very frustrated, and where I was frustrated by being one of the smart kids, which meant that I was not very popular, and so I was looking forward to going to what I considered a good school, where I would have intellectual stimulation and where other people would be like me. That proved to be true. In fact, I'm very glad I didn't go to Radcliffe, because I think Chicago's a much better school.

[00:08:02]

KG: Oh, OK. Was it common for people in your family to go to college or get advanced degrees?

A: Not on my mother's side. My mother did not go to college, or, she didn't finish. She was from a family that had very few resources and she happened to graduate from high school in 1929, which was not very auspicious, so she did not go to college. My father had higher degrees, and he came from a family where basically everybody had an advanced education, although outside the US. So, my grandfather, my father's father, had a PhD in economics, my grandmother was a physician, and my father was an engineer, he had a master's degree, although he never finished his PhD. There was only one other grandchild on that side of the family, we were both only children and he's about two years older than I am and he got a PhD as well. So we just all assumed that that's what you did.

KG: I'm assuming that you'd never been to the city of Chicago before you matriculated to UC?

A: No, I never had.

KG: Where did you live when you first got to the University?

A: I lived in that place called New Dorms, which has since been torn down, which is really funny to think that something we thought was new has been torn down, so I think that was called Woodward Commons, that was the formal name, where the business school is now, they tore it down. I lived there the first year, and then the second year, I lived in Blackstone, which was a women's dorm on Blackstone Avenue, and after that I lived in apartments.

KG: How did you find social life in the dorms while you were there?

A: How did I find socializing?

KG: Yes.

A: Well, first of all, because this is the era where it was all female, we mostly, a lot of us who were from New York tended to congregate together, because I guess we had a similar style and whatnot, so there was a whole group of people I was friends with and they were mostly from New York. After my first quarter, they had assigned me a roommate, who, while I didn't dislike her, we didn't really hit it off in any major way—

though I later figured out that the only reason they put me with her was because we had the same birthday—that was the only thing I could—though she was a year older. But, so, after my first quarter, there was a big shuffling of rooms. I think a lot of people were changing and I moved in with this woman who had become my very close friend, and I don't what happened to her previous roommate, she went elsewhere, but so that was all within the same dorm.

KG: Was social life in the dorms really informal, then, or were they trying to promote community or anything like that?

A: Promote what?

[00:11:27]

KG: Like community or, I guess, now the idea of putting first years in the dorms is so that people can make friends with each other and get acclimated to the University.

A: Yeah, but it wasn't formal, you know, which has happened. I don't remember them doing anything in particular to enhance our social life. I mean, the University was in those days I think pretty clueless about people's social and emotional lives.

KG: Yeah, that's what it sounds like.

A: To be really honest. I know now, because I have a friend that now does work at the University on sexual assault and abuse and all this stuff, you know, we had nothing like that. I think we were pretty much on our own, except that as women, there was control over our coming and going at that time after certain hours.

KG: In what sense?

A: We were not allowed to be out after a certain time. This went away within a couple of years, but at this time, we were still in the era of hours for women, and so there was this little old lady that sat there—you went into your dorm through this tunnel from what they called the central unit—you came into this one building, and then there were these tunnels that led across a lawn, or went under the lawn that went into the building, and there was a woman that sat down there and you punched into a time clock, actually, when you came in, and then they had a system of deducting your time, you had a four-hour amount, four hours you could use after 11 PM, and then I think later it was 12 midnight and they got deducted in quarter-hour increments except you couldn't use more than 2 hours at a time.

KG: Oh, so you could go out until 2 AM and then you'd have to come back and check back in and then go back out until 4:30 or something?

A: No, you couldn't. You couldn't leave again after that.

KG: Oh, OK.

A: And you actually couldn't leave after midnight or 11, and, well, I don't know, maybe you could. You had to sign out if you were leaving after 6, I think, as I recall, and so what a lot of people did is we would simply not sign out at all, but then not come back. If we weren't signed out, then they didn't know we weren't there, presumably. But it also meant that if you did that, then you had to stay out all night, even if you didn't really want to, because you couldn't come back after a certain time if you hadn't signed out without getting in a lot of trouble. So, it was this very byzantine system that supposedly they kept telling us was more progressive than other schools because we had these four hours that we could use in different amounts, so it had some flexibility, although I didn't really see that as being particularly flexible, but anyway, that was claimed, and of course, males had no restrictions at all. They could come and go as they wanted. Male students. And so if we were studying late at night, stuff like that, the only way we could get various things was to send out for deliveries for pizza, and we even had to send out for coffee because we weren't allowed to have coffee pots. I remember these gigantic containers of coffee arriving in the middle of the night.

[00:14:52]

KG: Oh my gosh [laughs]. Where would you go if you were gonna stay out for the entire night?

A: Well, I guess I would go out with some boy and then have to sleep with him, so I did that quite a bit, but mostly I came back, truthfully. But, you know, we went to places, we went to Jimmy's, which I'm happy to see is still there, with fake IDs, and it was very easy for girls to get fake IDs, because we just would go into the bursar's office and say we lost our IDs and get a new ID and the new ID was actually a handwritten thing that was laminated, so you just wrote in a different birth date, so you would be old enough to go to a bar, and you know, I didn't have a driver's license, so that was my picture ID. Boys had a harder time because they were supposed to have draft cards, so it was harder to have a fake ID if you were male, but it was really easy if you were female. I started going, I went to Jimmy's all the time with my friends, and then finally in my senior year I actually turned 21 and had a big birthday celebration. That wasn't a good enough ID to go to other places, there were a lot of places in Chicago I couldn't go to, because I wasn't 21, that weren't Jimmy's. You still call it Jimmy's, right?

KG: Yep.

A: It was a lot grubbier in those days, they've cleaned it up a lot.

KG: I have to wonder what it would look like even grubbier than it is.

A: Well, for instance, I was there a few years ago and I was amazing to see that they had redone the bathrooms. The bathrooms were really kind of squalid and now they were at least basically adequate.

KG: Oh, I've never been in the bathrooms at Jimmy's, I just assumed that they were terrible.

A: They're not that bad.

KG: I will remember that [laughs]. Did your social group remain centered around other women from New York from your dorms, or did you branch out as you spent more time at the University?

A: My women friends were largely those people, although I made some other friends, too, I became really good friends with this woman from Texas, I'm not sure how we met. I mean, she was in the dorm, too, but we just hit it off. We're still friends. Most of them were those folks who were from the New York area. In terms of boys, lots of those were from other backgrounds, the ones I knew and the ones I dated.

KG: Did you meet people in your classes?

A: Yeah, sometimes. There also used to be an institution called Soc Tea, Social Science Tea, this is when the anthropology department was in the Social Science building, before they moved, and sociology was there, too, and there was a lounge there, you know, with all these portraits of ancient men and big, leather sofas and they had a tea every afternoon, and I think you paid 15 cents and you got coffee or tea and there were cookies, and you could have as many cookies as you wanted. People used to go there, both undergraduates, graduate students, professors, and it was very casual, and it was a very cool thing. I met a lot of graduate students there. I met very senior professors. I mean, some of the big shot, important people used to come there and have coffee, and it was very nice, so I met a lot of people at Soc Tea, which became one of my—I went about every day. I think it was from 3 to 4:30, as I recall. And, one year, or one quarter, I even worked as the person who was doing the pouring. There was a person at the end of the table who dished out the coffee and tea and I had a job doing that. I figured I might as well, since I was always there anyway.

[00:19:17]

KG: [laughs] Make some money at it.

A: Yeah, well, of course it wasn't much money, but it was a little part-time job.

KG: Did you start taking linguistics classes right away when you got there, during your first year?

A: No, I took my first linguistics class I think at the beginning of my third year. I was taking language courses, because you had to take two languages to be a linguistics major, and I had placed out of the language requirement, but I started two new languages when I got to Chicago, first one and then the other, yeah, I was taking some of the required courses and some electives.

KG: What attracted you to linguistics and learning all these languages?

A: Well, I'm very, very good at languages. It was probably the thing I was best at as a high school student. I remain very good at it and I love learning other languages, and I didn't really know much about linguistics. I had accidentally come upon a book, now I realize it's a very famous book, by Edward Sapir called 'Language,' and I read that and I thought

it seemed very interesting. The history of languages and the sociological factors in the use of languages and so on. I didn't exactly know what it was in a very full sense, so I think I took my first, there was a sequence of courses, it was three courses you had to take, and I took those in my third year. But before that, I happened to take an anthropology course at the end of my second year, and then, that's when I fell in love with anthropology, and so I continued in linguistics, but when I applied to graduate school, I wanted to do anthropological linguistics, although in the end, that's not what I did. That was my intent. So, not to go on in formal linguistics, but to go into anthropological linguistics or linguistic anthropology, whatever you call it.

KG: Did you have any professors who were mentors to you in anthropology or linguistics? Or in any field, I guess.

A: I don't know if they were really mentors. First of all, I was very intimidated by professors, especially when I first came there. And, like, they would post their office hours on the blackboard, and I remember the first year, I thought, 'I wonder what office hours are?' [laughs] It never occurred to me to go talk to any of them. I was very intimidated in class. I was in a lot of classes with students who were more advanced than I was, because I had placed out of a bunch of stuff, and so like I was taking western civ, which was usually taken by people in their third or fourth year, I was taking it in my first year, so I was incredibly intimidated by everybody, because they all had the style down, the Chicago style down, and I didn't, I hadn't learned it yet.

But later on, there was some professors who I really liked and talked to. I had my, practically my only female professor in the linguistics sequence, Erica Reiner, and I used to go to her office hours every week. I would think up something to ask her, and I think I just wanted to look at her. She had an office in the Oriental Institute, it was very glamorous. That was the first woman professor I ever had. I later had one other, who was a visiting professor, but Chicago at the time had almost no female faculty, which it didn't even occur to me that that was abnormal, but at the time. So she was kind of a mentor. I remember she nominated me for some prize or something which I didn't get.

And Paul Friedrich was very influential. I wouldn't say I was close to these people. And Ray Fogelson, who is an anthropologist. I took a very good course with him, and I liked him a lot. He's still there. He must be a million years old, but I think he's still teaching there. Some years ago, I went to visit him and he had an office that looked like it should be shut down by the fire department, it was such an incredible mess with paper, stuff stacked up, it was just kind of unbelievable, but he still remembered me, that's from 1966, so that's pretty good. Anybody else ... Oh, and then there was James McCawley, who, I don't know if he was exactly a mentor, he was incredibly charismatic, he was a linguistics professor. My last year at Chicago, I took graduate courses in linguistics and I took one with him and he was just totally charismatic. He would get so excited about things, he would fling himself into space. He once fell off the podium he got so excited. And it was strange because he had this terrible stammer, so he managed to be very inspiring despite the fact that he was flinging his body in all directions and had this stammer. I really liked him. Yeah, there were a bunch of professors that I had that were very—oh, Wasiolek, I took two Russian literature courses with. He later went to Harvard, I think. He used to

teach a course on Dostoevsky and a course on Tolstoy, both in translation. He was both in the English department and the Slavic languages department and he was an amazing teacher. I mean, he just had you sitting on the edge of your seat, waiting for the next word. You know, it was just—so, those were courses I absolutely loved.

[00:25:24]

KG: Did you ever have classes that discussed gender or sexuality at the time?

A: Nope. [laughs]

KG: [laughs] I didn't expect so, but I thought I would ask. Did you know when you were at the University of Chicago that, or, did you identify as a lesbian at that point, or were you at a different point in...?

A: No, I did not. You'll probably better wanna ask about the story. I mean, I fell in love with my roommate, the one I moved in with the second quarter. And I understood on some level that I was in love with her. I didn't think of myself as a lesbian. I don't know if I even—well, I must have known what the word lesbian *meant*—you know, I just didn't even think about it in those terms. I tried to go out with men. I was not—I mean, I did go out with men, but I wasn't, like, a massively popular person, so I didn't have tons of dates. And I slept with a lot of men, and I had already, I mean before I came to Chicago, I'd already slept with one or two people when I was in high school. I hated sex with men. I hated it. And I kept thinking as I kept doing it, it would somehow fall into place and I would like it. I was somewhat promiscuous, probably not the most promiscuous person in history. So, I had affairs with several male graduate students, you know, a couple of whom I met at Soc Tea. I did have one pretty nice relationship with a male graduate student, who was about ten years older than I was. We're actually still very good friends, but that's the only one. He's a really lovely person. He got his PhD and went off to Texas. The big thing was this thing with my roommate, although it didn't end well, as I'm sure you'll find out as we go along.

KG: I was just gonna ask how you dealt with that situation.

A: Well she, we were very close, and she had a whole series of serious emotional, psychiatric problems. She was, we discovered, sort of midway through our first year in college, several of us discovered that she had told all these stories about her past and they were totally fabricated, and they were always these tragic stories that had to do with people committing suicide and finding a dead body hanging in the closet. Very melodramatic stories, which at the time, they were so extreme that no one thought that anyone could have made that up, but she had made them up. I actually found out because I ran into somebody that she'd gone to high school with when I was back in New York. This other woman was going to college at City College in New York with a friend of mine. And because she'd gone to Forest Hills High School, I said, "Oh, you went to Forest Hills, do you know B?" And then she revealed this whole thing about the lies. I came back to school and I talked to a couple of our mutual friends about it, and we didn't really know what to do and eventually, we sort of confronted her, not in a really

confrontational way, but and she promptly had a breakdown and went off to the hospital for, I can't remember, for several weeks at least.

And so, I mean, and then the second year, I also, we moved together to Blackstone, but over the summer, she went to Cambridge, Massachusetts, she and her sister, who was in college someplace else, both had jobs in Cambridge for the summer. She met this man who we thought of as older, he was about 25. He was a graduate student in Physics at Harvard. I don't know how she met him, but she started this affair with him, and he was married and had a child. By the time she came back to Chicago, she was involved in this intense, intense, pretty crazy relationship with this guy. I remember she wrote me a letter where she said she was so in love with him, it made her afraid. But, anyway, they would sit on the phone all night, she would be sitting on the sofa, talking on the phone, smoking cigarettes, and having these very strange kind of mystical conversations.

In the midst of all this, I think after about the first quarter of our second year, she became obsessed with the idea that I was her enemy and was doing things to her and she stopped speaking to me completely. So, we were living in this little tiny apartment. The set-up in Blackstone was that it was a former hotel. They were little two-room apartments. So there was a living room with a small kitchen and there was a bedroom that you shared. So there we were in this little apartment, and she pretended I was invisible and wouldn't speak to me. I got incredibly upset. I lost something like 20 pounds in a very short amount of time. I stopped eating. All I did was drink coffee and smoke cigarettes. In those days—I now don't smoke at all—but in those days, we smoked just constantly. I think I smoked three packs a day, you know, and I occasionally ate a can of soup or something. She just pretended I was invisible and I didn't tell anybody about it. I didn't know how to talk about it. I was like completely devastated.

That corresponded with the last quarter of my sophomore year, so my second year, where I took this anthropology course, and I did basically nothing but study for this. I was totally involved in this course, this big lecture course. I was totally absorbed in it and that's when I fell in love with anthropology, but I was in a very fragile emotional state. But I remember reading some of the books—there was one book in particular that I thought was so beautiful it made me cry. And I did very, very well in my course. It was my first A at the University of Chicago. There were 17 A's out of 140 students, I remember. [laughs] You remember these things. I don't know if Chicago has suffered from grade inflation, but back then, we did not have grade inflation, so until then I sort of had B's and C's and that was considered perfectly OK. But I really fell in love with this stuff, but it was a very intense emotional period, so that was the end of our second year, and of course she and I were not going to be roommates anymore.

She had made an arrangement with these other two girls who were in the dorm, who were very nasty to me. She seemed to have convinced them I was a bad person. So they were gonna have an apartment together the following year, and in the meantime I made arrangements. I looked around and I finally found somebody to be roommates with, although it wasn't somebody that I knew that well. She needed a roommate, I needed a roommate, so we got an apartment for the next year. But, over the summer, B and her boyfriend went to Europe. They took the money—she was supposed to go to summer

school to make up some of the courses she'd missed while she was in the hospital. and she took the money that she got from her parents and they flew first to Athens and then to Rome, and in Rome they both committed suicide.

[00:33:33]

KG: Oh my gosh! I'm sorry, I wasn't really expecting that to be the direction of that story.

A: No, that's what happened. So it was a suicide pact and they did it in a hotel room in Rome on July 14th, 1965. That summer, summer of '65, I was going to Columbia in the summer, taking Russian, because I had to do my second language, I did a whole year of intensive Russian over the summer. And I was living not far from Columbia but in my grandparents' apartment. My grandparents were in the country, but they had an apartment in Upper Manhattan, so I was living there, and I went away for the weekend, and I came back and I got this phone call from one of our friends, and he had found out about it, well, I guess it was from another—this was already three people removed, but the original person who found out about it was a friend of ours who went to Chicago, but his mother worked at the University of Chicago and she worked in whatever the Press office was. Someplace where they find out anything that happens to a University of Chicago student anywhere in the world. They get all the news. So she had passed it onto him, and then that passed—so, anyway, I got a phone call from one of our friends about this, that this had happened. I still didn't know I was a lesbian, [laughs] but my parents did at that point. It was interesting.

KG: What?

A: Well, my parents figured it out. So, I was hysterical, I was completely hysterical. Of course being the responsible kid I was, I went to class the next day in the morning, my classes were from 9 to 12, I think, and then I went down, kind of went to my father's office, where I completely collapsed and my father gave me, I remember, a Phenobarbital, which is what you gave people in those days, and I went to sleep on the sofa in his office. My parents were very concerned about my state. Years later, when I came out to my mother, she said, "Oh, we knew that." I said, "Really?" She said, "Well, yes. We understood you were in love with B, and that you were a lesbian," but I never discussed it with them and they didn't tell me that they had figured this out. So, I was pretty devastated, as you can imagine. It was also a very drawn-out business because, you know, it took a while for the body to come back to New York, and Jews typically have—we usually do funerals in less than 24 hours after the person dies. Certainly as quickly as possible, depending on where people have to come from, but in this case, it was a suicide, I don't know they probably had to be all kinds of legal and police things done. The funeral was held up by about three weeks. By the time the funeral finally happened, it was just—just when you thought you were calming down, you went to this funeral, where everybody was hysterical, you know, because this was a 19-year-old girl. Very talented. Very smart. Her parents were utterly [pause] befuddled. They didn't know what had hit them. Everybody was just completely freaking out. ... So, that's what happened! So, after that, I kind of, I sort of put a cork on that [laughs], as it were, falling in love with girls.

[00:37:16]

KG: Did you transition back to being at school OK after that summer?

A: Well, you know, everybody was very stunned and upset. Not everybody from our friendship group was able to go to the funeral, because some people were out of the country. They were these very close friends. One close friend—you know, we didn't have study abroad then, so if you wanted to study abroad, you just took a leave of absence and went abroad for a while, so, two of the friends from our group had decided to go to France for the year and they'd already left, so they didn't come back for a year. Actually, one of them didn't come back at all. She dropped out of Chicago after that, but the other one came back. Another one of our close friends actually dropped out after that, after our second year, she didn't come back. But, I remember I was at the funeral with her and her boyfriend, the one whose mother had gotten the information. So, everybody was very stunned and upset, and I was friendly—actually, I'd had this small affair with her boyfriend, while she was in the hospital—this is an example of really weird behavior. She was away, so I seduced her boyfriend. Talk about something really crazy. So, anyway, we were friendly, and, actually the following year, in '66, we were both in Europe at the same time and I met him in Rome, which was where the suicide had happened, and we were both just really [pause] in a state, as we walked around Rome. We kept thinking we saw her coming from behind, you know, around corners and things like that. I mean, at that point, I wasn't having an affair with him, but I spent time with him in Rome. So, yeah, that's what happened. Almost 50 years ago, it's amazing. 48 years ago.

KG: So, I think you said, you “put a cork in” being in love with girls after that?

A: Yeah, I mean, I was, you know, I think I'd been attracted to some girls before. The girls I was attracted to before, when I was younger, turned out to be more the type I liked, which were slightly butch girls who were very ironic and funny and had great senses of humor. Stuff like that. I just found them appealing, I didn't really understand that it was a sexual attraction. B wasn't really like that. B was, you know, pretty feminine. She was very small. I mean, I'm not very tall, but she was smaller than I am, very tiny. She had a fabulous sense of humor. She was hilarious. It was very clever. She looked a little like Barbara Streisand, as far as the face goes, not—and yeah, so, I just ruled it out, but I didn't have a conscious understanding of what I was ruling out, but I knew it was forbidden. There were rumors about various people being gay, and it was always this tinge of scandal attached to it. There were some girls who looked—I mean, I now I'm assuming that they were lesbians, but no one ever talked about it. We just sort of thought of them in my group as people who didn't dress very well.

[00:41:02]

KG: OK, yeah, I was going to ask you if they were women who were identifiably butch that you met at UChicago.

A: Well, they were, but they didn't—you know, of course, a lot of us, well, we didn't always wear skirts, but so I remember this one girl, who I'm pretty sure must have ended up as a

lesbian. I saw something in an alumni thing. She's, like, an attorney in the military. Maybe she retired as that. And, there were other, one of my best friends at Chicago, who at that time was going out with boys, she became a lesbian, too, she still is, we're still friends. But, neither of us was then. I don't know if she'd thought about it at that time. And there was another girl who I wasn't particularly friends with, but who I know is gay, because the things she's written in the alumni thing. She's been pretty public. She wasn't exactly butch, this sort of short-haired tailored look, which I now think of as a particular lesbian look. There was also a girl in my high school who sat behind me in various classes, because we were always seated alphabetically and my name was [redacted] and her name started with the same initial, and she later became, and I've since had interaction with her, she told me she had a crush on me in high school. She later became a writer of lesbian romances, a prolific writer of lesbian romances. Her name is .C. She is probably still doing it, these somewhat, borderline trashy lesbian romances. So, she was a lesbian in high school, but I didn't know that. She also had that style where she wore sort of oxford cloth shirts with a crew neck sweater. Of course, we had to wear skirts in high school, so, you know, like a pleated skirt and loafers. And she had short hair, so I think that was about as butch as she could be in high school, given the restrictions.

And the only other encounter I had was, once there was a girl in high school who was in my home room, also because of alphabet, I think her name was Levi, but she was never in any of my classes. She was in what they called the commercial course, I think she was not one of the good students. Once, when I was in Greenwich Village, I used to hang out in the Village with all my Bohemian friends, and I was walking past this one corner in Greenwich Village and I saw her and another girl that, so, in those days, picture the early or mid-60's, no early 60's. They had these incredible beehive hairdos, these big teased things. And she and this other girl were standing there and they both had those kind of hairdos and they were smoking cigarettes and they were standing there like they were waiting for somebody or waiting for something. And I suddenly, I understood that they were lesbians. I mean, it just sort of, but I thought, oh boy, I just saw something I don't understand. I remember we had eye contact and we never talked about it after that, but I understood that that was what this was. This sort of working class femmes waiting. So, that was my entire exposure. Then, when I was in Chicago, at one point, one of the men who was in our friendship group, someone accused him of being gay, which actually is completely untrue. I remember sort of taking his side and saying that I thought that it was inappropriate to make these accusations. I actually went out with him a couple of times, but we didn't have a sexual relationships, but we went out on a couple of dates. So, it was a kind of character assassination.

[00:45:15]

KG: So, when did you consciously realize that you were a lesbian?

A: Well, after I left Chicago, I went to Stanford to graduate school. And I still didn't realize it at that time. I got involved with this guy who was going to Berkeley, who actually was somebody I'd gone to high school with. He was a year ahead of me in high school. I got involved with him and was living with him. But I also got involved with the women's movement starting in 1969, so my friend D from Chicago, she was in this collective in

New York that was supposedly organizing the working class or doing something like that, but they started a women's CR group in their collective. She told me I oughta read *The Feminine Mystique* and some other books, so I did and I became a very fervent feminist. I joined a CR group in San Francisco, and I remember the group was having a second meeting, so this would have been I guess the fall of 1969. This whole group of women who I hardly knew at that point were in my living room and the phone rang and it was my boyfriend who was away in New York, he was visiting his parents, and he said, "Oh," we at this point had lived together for about a year, and he said, "Oh, you know, I really miss you, we oughta get married." And I said, "Yeah, we should. Yeah, that's a good idea." And the next thing I did was I went in the bathroom and I threw up.

KG: Oh.

A: [laughs] So, I went into the living room and I told these women that I had had that reaction and one of them said, "Oh, you know, maybe you shouldn't marry him." [laughs] So, in fact, I didn't marry him. But, as I got more involved in the women's movement, I continued to live with him for another couple years, about another two years. I started to meet all these lesbians, and also my friend D in New York came out as a lesbian in the course of all this. And I was very close to her and it sort of felt like I got permission somehow to think about it. So, I would go to these big Women's Liberation meetings, which were these totally insane meetings with people attacking each other and all sorts of horrible stuff going on. I mean, I remember one of them, a whole group of us dropped acid, because we figured it couldn't be any weirder than what we were experiencing. I don't know if you've read about radical feminism in the 60's and early 70's, it was really nuts. So, anyway, I went to one of these meetings and there were always these lesbians who would go off, they'd have a lesbian caucus. They'd go parading off into another room. I found them very compelling and I always wanted to go with them, but of course I wasn't a lesbian formally. Then, in 1970, the fall of 1970, I went to the anthropology meetings for the first time and they were in San Diego. My friends in New York had said, "Oh, there's this woman in our CR group who's an anthropologist." I guess they also told me she was a lesbian. She'd come out as a lesbian in the group. She also went to Chicago, by the way, she was a graduate student. I don't know if you've contacted her, she would probably be in this. Esther Newton.

KG: Oh, yeah! Yes, I actually did the interview with her. [Interview #35]

A: OK. Esther and I are still very good friends after 43 years. But anyway, I went to the anthro meetings, and at that time it was a lot smaller. I walked around looking at people's nametags. Anyway, I met her and I said, "I'm a friend of so-and-so and so-and-so." And we became really good friends at that meeting. She was looking for a job. She'd just lost her first job. She was very stressed out and I was unbelievably attracted to her. [laughs] I really had a huge crush on her. Now, in those days, I had hair down to my waist or past my waist. I was very femme-y. Anyway, she later admitted she was attracted to me, too. We've been really close friends for 43 years. Anyway, I became very close friends with her and the following year, the meetings were in New York and I went to New York and I stayed with her and her lover in their apartment and so that would have been '71, November '71, so at that point it was pretty clear to me that I wanted to be a lesbian. I

still hadn't slept with anybody. But I felt so at ease in their apartment and so comfortable with them. I said, you know, "I'm scared, I'm scared about this." And they said, "Well, it's scary." They were very, very supportive. So, the following January, I told my boyfriend to get out. [pause] I said, "We're done. I'm a lesbian." This is all really intellectual. "I'm a lesbian. I'm keeping the apartment. I'm keeping the car. Because you have more privileges than I do. And I'll drive you to wherever you're going to stay." And that was the end of that. That was January 1972.

KR: Wow.

[00:50:27]

A: I stayed in that apartment for a while. I got another roommate, a woman roommate, and then I moved into this lesbian collective, which later on friends of mine called Seething Tensions Collective. It was a nightmare of political correctness. One of the people—I call this period Stalinist feminism, and this really fits, because one of the women in the collective was the daughter of the editor of the *Daily Worker*. This really was Stalinist feminism. So I moved in. I was still theoretically a lesbian, but I still hadn't slept with anybody. So we'd go out to the bars together and eventually, I did sleep with somebody, but the people in my—it felt a lot like it had when I was in high school, that I had to lose my virginity. I mean, it wasn't really somebody I really wanted to be—it wasn't somebody I was in love with or anything. But, the people in the collective would say, would criticize my way of going about meeting women, or they'd criticize whoever I brought over or whatever. They were into telling me what the correct way to be a lesbian was. One of them, by the way, the *Daily Worker* person later became what we call a "hasbian." She became straight. But they were also criticizing me because I was a graduate student. This was the period when intellectual activity was considered politically incorrect. So, I got really hassled about that, and finally I just told them, they wanted to subject me to criticism and self-criticism, and I said, "You know what? Fuck you, I'm moving out." They said, "Oh, that's your class privilege." My class privilege in those days consisted of \$260 a month, which was my stipend from Stanford. But anyway, I moved out. And then I started meeting a lot more lesbians and being friends with people and having more adventures. It was a difficult process.

KR: I saw on your CV that you do anthropology that has to do with gender and motherhood and things of that nature. Were you already studying those things at Stanford at the time?

A: Oh yes. No, that was my dissertation, but I also moved from that into gay and lesbian anthropology pretty quickly. So my dissertation was about Latina mothers. They were immigrant mothers who lived in San Francisco. I was really supposed to go to the Caribbean, to the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, and then in the end, I decided to stay in San Francisco, mostly because I didn't want to be separated from my cats. Truth. But also I was in the process of coming out. I mean, I started my fieldwork right after I had kicked my boyfriend out. It was just a very tumultuous time in my life. I decided not to go to wherever I was supposed to go, Puerto Rico or something. So I was interested in motherhood as an agentive kind of condition, rather than as just sort of a predicament. I mean, at that time, in feminist theory there was a lot of stuff about, "Oh, women are in

this predicament because they're mothers, and motherhood prevents them from this and the other thing, or marks them culturally as less men or closer to nature or whatever." I just felt that, I didn't see women as totally victims, and I wanted to think about motherhood as something that was chosen and strategized by women who didn't think they had a choice. So I worked with these very low-income Latina immigrants in San Francisco, and that's what I wrote my dissertation on.

And so I've retained an interest in motherhood and reproduction and reproductive health and all that stuff. Then I had a job for two years on a research project, and then I got a post-doc. At that point, I started to think about doing something on lesbian mothers. I figured I didn't have a regular job, so nobody could really stop me. I knew lots of lesbian mothers by that time. There were these big cases going on about, custody cases where women had lost their kids. So these were women who'd had their kids with husbands and had been divorced. So I wrote a big grant and I got all this money from the National Institute of Mental Health, and I did this gigantic four-year study on lesbian mothers. So, that's how I started this part of my career.

[00:55:05]

KG: Did you go to Stanford intending to study gender or sexuality?

A: No, I went to Stanford intending to study linguistics. What happened was, I chose Stanford, because there would be three professors there whose work I was familiar with, and I thought they sounded like good people to study with. So, I got there, one of them, a very senior guy, was an incredibly megalomaniacal kind of person who was not really interested in what students had to say and he seemed like a very difficult person to study with. I didn't like him. The second guy turned out to be, and he was interested in aspects of language, which didn't interest me very much. The second guy, who was the one I thought I would have a lot in common with, turned out to not be able to keep his hands off female graduate students. We didn't call it sexual harassment in those days, but everybody said you wanted to stay at least two arms-lengths away from him. So that was sort of it for him. And then, the third guy was fabulous. He was a guy named Richard Diebold, but he didn't get tenure and he left. So at the same time—I started graduate school in '67, then I took a year off. That was when I decided, I was actually gonna go back to Chicago and I had gotten back in and gotten another fellowship and all this stuff, and then I was with this man, and I said to people, "Oh, I'm gonna really miss him when I go back to Chicago." And they said, "Oh, well, you don't have to leave. You can stay with him." Which was the first time it had even occurred to me that you could make a career choice based on a boyfriend and not on your academic ambitions. [KG laughs]

No, I'm serious. I never thought about it. I ended up taking a leave of absence and moving in with him. I had a terrible year trying to find a job. I was a substitute teacher. It was really shitty. So after that, I went back to Stanford. By that time, I'd applied to Chicago twice and turned them down. I couldn't really do that again. So I went back to Stanford, where I still had a fellowship waiting for me. This was a very good period for funding for students. So, but by the time—when I went back to Stanford—I was on my leave of absence from '68 to '69, and the fall of '69 is when I got involved with women's

liberation. Everyplace I went, people would say, “Oh, you’re an anthropologist. You must know whether women have always been treated this way, and blah blah blah. And has it been like this throughout history and all kinds of cultures?” We didn’t have a clue! We didn’t have any idea. So gradually—well, maybe not even so gradually—I decided that that was what I was going to work on. So I became a cultural anthropologist instead of a linguist. Nobody had ever done this before, though. We didn’t have any women faculty at Stanford. We had an adjunct who was a woman, and I started working on this stuff. I later found out the department had a serious discussion about whether to kick me out of graduate school if I persisted in doing this.

KG: Oh.

[00:58:09]

A: I think they decided not to, because it was by this time 1970 or something. It was a very permissive time. You know, this was during the Vietnam War. We were on strike half of the time. There was one whole quarter where we were on strike because of the Cambodian invasion. I mean, it was very tumultuous. I think they were just kind of permissive. They just said, “Oh well, whatever.” [laughs] But, I don’t think they thought it was going to go anywhere. They thought I was just gonna kind of crash and burn. I don’t think they thought I was their most promising student. [pause] So I went ahead and did it. They didn’t know what to call—ultimately, when I took my comps, they called it women and sex roles. I mean, it was really crazy. It was very hard to find stuff to read, it was very hard to put it together theoretically. If I had a student who wanted to do something on this level now, I would tell them not to do it. But they couldn’t really stop me. I just decided I would leave graduate school if I couldn’t do this, and I did it! I did this work. It then took me 22 years to get a secure job after my PhD, because first I was working on women and then I was working on lesbianism and gay stuff, and also I worked in the US, which in anthropology is sort of the kiss of death. You’re supposed to work somewhere where you can get malaria. So, that was another point against me. So I had very insecure employment for 22 years, until I finally got this job at Iowa. So I’m a very persistent person, and I’m also I guess a risk-taker.

KG: Yeah, it sounds like it.

A: I figure out which risks I wanna take.

KG: You mentioned that you had applied to and turned down Chicago twice. What was your interest in going back?

A: Yeah. Well, it’s obvious, first of all, I didn’t like Stanford. I never liked it. I thought it was the most vapid place on the planet. So, after Chicago, Stanford was a huge disappointment. I went to Stanford because it seemed like there were these linguists there who I could study with, but of course that turned out not to work. I didn’t want to be one of those people who just sat down on the same stool at Jimmy’s for the rest of my life, you know? There were these people who just never left Chicago, and I was really, I didn’t really want to be that.

KG: Right.

A: But, once I got to Stanford, I thought, “Well, that would be better than this.” [laughs] But I’d gotten into and gotten good fellowships from Chicago and Stanford. So I just reapplied to Chicago, and they accepted me again and gave me another fellowship. I even went out and found an apartment for the following academic year before I decided to take a break and stay with my boyfriend. Then, once I did that the second time, I really couldn’t do it again. I still wish I’d gone to Chicago, although, maybe...I probably would have gotten involved in women’s liberation in Chicago. It was a very big thing. A lot of the people I went to undergraduate school with were some of the leaders of the Chicago Women’s Liberation Union. Some people were involved in, what do you call it? Jane. The abortion group. Do you know about that?

[01:01:33]

KG: I don’t, but I think that I’ve heard about it.

A: It was just called Jane, and it was a group of feminists who got together to help women find abortions. It was a referral system that started in the ‘60s, but then it became, they actually started doing the abortions themselves, because they found out that their best provider wasn’t even a doctor. So he trained them to do it. Of course, it’s not rocket science to do an early abortion. So they’re quite famous. Some of them were women I’d gone to school with at Chicago. But that started after I left, you know, in ‘68, ‘69. There was a big student, there was a big strike in 1969 at Chicago. Protests. So I was not part of that, although some of my friends from school were, because they had stayed there.

KG: Oh yeah, did you take part in any sort of organizations or activism while you were at Chicago?

A: Yes. I was involved in anti-war stuff. Teach-ins and sit-ins. We had a sit-in in the spring of ‘66, so that’s the end of my third year, in the registrar’s office, which was in the administration building. I don’t know if that’s still where it is. Because there was a rumor that the University was going to submit class ranks to the selective service. So that male students would be drafted according to their rank in class, so they would start with the bottom. First we thought that we would all just deliberately get bad grades, but then we weren’t part of the ranking, so it didn’t really matter, but we had a sit-in I think lasted, it lasted either for one week or two weeks. I can’t remember now. But I was involved in that very intensely. That was the main thing I was involved in.

I was also involved, my first year I was at the football sit-in. There was a thing in 1963 where students went, Chicago was about to play football with North Central Junior College, and we sat down on the 50 yard line and sat on the ball to prevent them playing football. [Ed.: Football had returned in 1963 after 22 years without a team.] I was part of that. I did some sort of civil rights-y kind of things. Like, I did some tutoring of black students and stuff from Woodlawn, things like that. But I wasn’t, and I went on a March on Washington from Chicago. I mean, it was an anti-war march in Chicago. I can’t remember which year that was. Probably my third year, because I remember we had

buses leaving from Ida Noyes, and we went to Washington and marched. So, I was mostly in anti-war stuff, I guess.

KG: And you said you were tutoring in Woodlawn? Did you spend any time in other parts of Chicago while you were there?

A: Not really. Very little. I went to the Loop once or twice a year. I studied too much. I remember once a friend and I went up to the north side, we went to one of those fancy beaches on the north side. So there were occasional excursions, but not very much.

[01:05:05]

KG: That's similar to what I've heard from other women.

A: Yeah. You know, it's also kind of hard to get in and out of there without a car. The other thing—I should say, I was also politically active in high school. I was very politically active in high school. I was the president of my student SANE chapter, which is Society for A Nuclear—what did SANE stand for? Society for Nuclear ... something. [Ed.: SANE was capitalized, but not an acronym] Anyway, we were against nuclear testing and nuclear war. I was involved in civil rights stuff. I went to the March on Washington between—the summer before I started at Chicago, '63. So I was very involved in that stuff. A lot of my friends—my parents were not really big leftists, but a lot of my friends' parents were. So I was involved in this kind of lefty youth scene in New York.

KG: So it sounds like you sort of have a long history of political involvement.

A: Yes, very long history. I would say now I'm probably at the lowest ebb ever. [laughs] I mean, I go and vote, I put signs up, but I'm not really fully, I'm not doing a lot of work.

KG: I guess I'll ask you, do you think that your experience at UChicago was typical of other women who were there in the '60s?

A: Uh, I think some ways. You know, when I hear about, I was just reading about this with one of my students—oh, we saw a film about the late 50's and early 60's. It's actually about the birth control pill, because I'm actually teaching a course on reproduction. So we saw this film and people were talking about when they went to college, they were supposed to get an MRS degree. And I don't feel like Chicago was like that. I think female students, even though there was a quota, and there was all the sexism and all the stuff with the dorms, I felt like we were taken very seriously, female students. The notion that you would want to go on to graduate school was just sort of very normative. I mean, obviously not everybody did that, but I never felt like I was supposed to get married at the end of college. I mean, a few of my friends did, but that didn't seem like something. I mean, it actually seemed kind of weird. One of my friends got married after our second year, or maybe it was in our second year, I can't remember. I remember we had a shower for her and it all seemed very weird. Of course, she later got divorced from that person. Maybe it was after our third year, because I remember going to a thing at her house with her husband. They had really nice dishes, because of course they'd gotten married, so they got wedding presents. But, it was not typical. We were at the beginning of the

generation that thought that you would get together with somebody and live with them for a period of time. So I don't think we had the same expectations on us as young women at other colleges where there was that really heavy emphasis on that. I thought we were taken very seriously, which was perfect for me, because I took myself very seriously. It never occurred to me that I would take a break between college and graduate school, although I did take that year off a year later. Once I discovered anthropology and linguistics, that's all I wanted to do. I was absolutely passionate. I always wanted to be a college professor. I remember I had these two friends, these two guys. We would go out for coffee sometimes. We used to study. There was a place called Classics Library, which is no longer there, but it was in the Classics building, and a lot of us used to study there. We would go out for coffee or go out to take a break, and we would all imagine ourselves as professors at Chicago. You know, because we were all going to graduate school. One of them went to graduate school in classics. He went to Yale and then he came back and he was a professor at Chicago, although he died very young. He died at the age of about 40. The other one is now very well-known. He's the president of Bard College. Leon Botstein. He was in my class. So he became a college president. We imagined ourselves having this life of the mind, and we were very serious about it. We studied like mad. We did have fun, we had parties and we got drunk and we fooled around and we had the Butterfield Blues Band playing at our parties and stuff and all this great music. But we studied very, very hard. I stayed up all night lots and lots and lots of nights. With the help of drugs [laughs]—which they gave us at Student Health. They handed out speed. Student health gave us Dexedrine.

[01:10:42]

KG: Oh. Yeah, they don't do that anymore.

A: I don't think so. [KG laughs] So we were all, a lot of us were taking Dexedrine and drinking unbelievable amounts of coffee and smoking all these cigarettes and staying up all night. There was something magical about it. I know I shouldn't romanticize it, it's sort of abusive to your body. [laughs] It felt...it was so intense. It wasn't about grades. I studied like mad. I in fact wasn't in Phi Beta Kappa or anything, I didn't have the world's greatest grades, although back then again, that's before grade inflation. I had really good grades in linguistics and anthropology. I think I always got B's in one of my language courses, because I didn't really study for them quite enough. I had terrible grades in the sciences courses. C's and D's. But I didn't care about that. None of us cared about grades, we never talked about grades, it wasn't about that. It was about doing it. It was a very magical place. I don't know if it's still like that, but it was then.

KG: Have your perceptions of the University changed at all since you've been gone?

A: Nope.

KG: Oh.

A: I loved going there. I don't get there very often, but I was there a couple of months ago because somebody I know, her son was doing a recital, and it was actually in this new

hall at Chicago that's over on 60th Street. I can't remember the name of it now. It's a big building that has—

KG: Oh, is it the Logan Center?

A: Yeah, that. I just came for overnight, because I had to come back here for another event. So I drove in on a Friday night for this. I had called ahead to try to get a motel room, which of course you know it's terrible trying to find someplace to stay in Hyde Park, so I called the Quad Club and I ended up staying at the Quad Club, which just felt like heaven. It was so glamorous. I walked over to the Seminary Co-Op Bookstore and hung out there for a while. I love it. I really love going back there. Oddly enough, when I picked anthropology, it was partly because anthropology seemed like the most down to earth, non-elitist thing I could pick. And of course now, the University of Chicago Anthropology Department is just snobbier than hell and full of people who spout this discourse that nobody can understand. So it really changed. But back then it seemed like it was all these people who really hung out with real people. Sat on the ground around campfires and listened to myths and all this stuff. I had this sort of glamorous image of anthropology that it was very down to earth and engaged with real people, which I really liked. I don't think I would feel the same about it there now. I loved going to the University of Chicago. I think it was a great school.

[01:14:00]

KG: What do you think some of the most important changes that have occurred in the University have been, since you were there and your perception of it now?

A: Well, I know they have gay and lesbian groups, openly. I mean, I think it's become a more humane place. I think they have a lot of things that have to do with helping support people from various identities. The fact that, what's the name of the thing you're part of? The Center on Gender and—

KG: Yeah, the Center for Study of Gender and Sexuality.

A: Yeah, I mean, we didn't have that then. Since they have that kind of thing, people are working on these issues. I've been back twice to give lectures at Chicago. I've been invited on two different occasions, and now they're all these people who are interested in these things. So it seems to me intellectually it's become broader. And the fact that there is a gay and lesbian organization, that there are women's organizations, there are things like that that we didn't have seems to me to be better. Seems to me like student life for undergraduates seems better there. It was kind of squalid when I was there. We had very few choices of any place to eat lunch, for instance. Nobody did any sports, or if they did, they were very circumspect about it, because we looked down on sports. Now I know there's this big pool and there's all kinds of new sports facilities, which seems to me to be very healthy. We used to have these intramural softball games that were quite hilarious. We had one every year where women played the men. We would have something like 15 or 20 people on the field and some guy playing the outfield on his motorcycle and people wearing crazy costumes.

KG: [laughs] Oh my.

A: The men's team, which was called the Daffodils, they used to play the Law School and the Business School. They were very annoyed at them, because they didn't take it seriously, and they would applaud for the most humorous error and things like that. But, so we did stuff like—we did some very zany things. There were these very amusing things that went on that were really fun. But I think it's a little more balanced now, that's my impression, in terms of seeing to students' personal lives and their mental health and their physical health and all that. That's my impression. I don't know, just from reading alumni magazines and from things—I have a couple of friends who are still there. One of them took me on this little walking tour a couple years ago and showed me all these new facilities. They were very nice. I thought that was good. I don't know if it's still high pressure.

[01:17:00]

KG: Yeah, there's a lot of pressure still, but they're building a lot of new businesses in Hyde Park, too, so like there's gonna be a actual hotel.

A: I heard a rumor about that.

KG: And then there's some new restaurants and a concert venue slash restaurant. I think they're trying to offer more things to students, I guess, in that vein. Aside from all of the new resources that we have that you would have never.

A: Some of the things we had have become nicer, like Doc Films, which used to have kind of—well, it met in a lecture hall. Now I know they have a much nicer facility. That was something I did a lot when I was at Chicago. I practically went to the movies every single Wednesday. That was a big deal. There also was a neighborhood theater, then called the Hyde Park, I don't know if it's there anymore. It used to sometimes have pretty good movies. I think Hyde Park has become more interesting and more diverse. I mean, the reason I would have to go to the Loop every year was there was no place to buy clothes, for instance, in Hyde Park. You really had to go downtown to buy anything. Even like underwear [laughs]. It's very different from most college campuses that are surrounded by a bazillion clothing stores and stuff like that. It didn't have that.

KG: Yeah. It's still like that unless you wanna buy your underwear from Walgreens.

A: Yes. So you know what I mean. I remember there used to be, there was a sort of army navy store where we used to buy jeans on 53rd street, but it was very, very limited. So if you really needed anything, a pair of shoes or whatever, you had to go downtown. Yeah, so I think it's probably become nicer as a place. I still think it's a very pretty neighborhood. The other thing is I think the racial dynamics have changed, that's my impression. It was very conflictful back then. There were the students and the University people, and there were low-income black people, who of course hated the University of Chicago. Hyde Park was a pretty dangerous neighborhood at that time at night. A lot of people got mugged and there were rapes and all kinds of things. There was all this class conflict. First of all, a lot of the buildings in Hyde Park where students used to live, they

were kind of grungy, have turned into nice condos now. I'd like to think that the racial dynamics are somewhat better. I don't know if that's true or not. There were also almost no black people at Chicago as students when I was there. Practically none. It would be nice if that had improved.

KG: Yeah, I don't know a lot about that. I want to say the Organization for Black Students said this year that we still have fewer black students than other universities of our caliber.

A: Which is crazy, because it's right next to a black ghetto.

[01:20:22]

KG: Yeah. I still think there's some antagonism between the University and the surrounding neighborhood, but since there's a constant police presence in Hyde Park, it's a safe neighborhood to be in, it just depends how conscious you want to be of that racial and class conflict as a student.

A: Yeah, it was pretty stressful then. The safest place I ever lived was my third year, I lived on Greenwood Avenue and it was across the street from Muhammad's Temple No. 2, so they had all these guards, and that meant that block was really safe. I had a friend later here, who was a professor at Iowa who was from Woodlawn, a black woman from Woodlawn, who hated the University of Chicago. I remember they were heavily trying to recruit her son, and she said, "Over my dead body is he going to the University of Chicago." She absolutely hated it. She had grown up next to that. That was stressful. It's unfortunate. It's a bad thing about the neighborhood, that. But in the arts and music, blacks and whites mixed very easily in that period, where I was there. All the people who did rhythm and blues and jazz, those were very mixed groups. There's a new film, apparently, about the rhythm and blues scene in Chicago, called *Born in Chicago*, it's a documentary about rhythm and blues, and the title's taken from this song by Paul Butterfield. It was this very, very mixed group of folks who were—which, I wasn't really a part of. I went to some of the events, but it was pretty fabulous back then. Are you a graduate student?

KG: I just graduated as an undergrad.

A: Oh, OK.

KG: But I would like to check that documentary out, for sure.

A: I just heard it was being shown in New York and I don't know where it's going to be shown, but it's called *Born in Chicago*.

KG: I will look for it.

A: I'm very eager to see it. There was a thing about it in the New York Times, but I haven't gotten to see it.

KG: There's not a lot of blues in Hyde Park anymore, that I saw. There are students who try to

do, there's a student-neighborhood collective called the Woodlawn Collective, and they try to do art projects between the University and the neighborhood, so maybe that's the inheritor of the blues interaction.

A: Yeah, might be. Also the inheritor of the Woodlawn Organization, which was Saul Alinsky, this famous community organizer that Barack Obama was involved with. It was called the Woodlawn Organization.

KG: Yeah, I don't know. It could be.

A: So, yeah.

[01:23:34]

KG: Could I ask you why you decided to be interviewed for the project?

A: Well, I thought I might have something to offer that's not the—I mean, I'm sure people were talking about being gay at Chicago and hiding and doing all of that stuff. But I was in a different situation and I felt like it was probably a situation that affected a certain number of people.

KG: Yeah. I think it's important that we get stories of people who weren't out at Chicago.

A: I feel like I was almost gay at Chicago [laughs], but not quite. It wasn't the right historical moment, it wasn't the right personal moment. It felt like, you know, because I had been this really smart girl when I was in school before I wanted to be attractive, attractive in a conventional way, or attractive to boys, because that would validate me, since I was not validated by being too smart, and not being willing to shut up and pretend to be dumb. I put a lot of store in being acceptable-looking and all of that. And, actually, I still do. I'm pretty femme-y. I dress well and femininely. But I'm definitely a lesbian, that's for sure. [laughs] Never gone back, never even thought twice about it after I decided.

KG: Well, yeah. I'm really glad that you chose to talk with me. Is there anything else you want to say before we wrap up the interview?

A: I don't think so. You've been very thorough. You're going to send me a copy of the interview after it's been transcribed?

[01:24:00-01:32:30 discussion of Kelsey's career/grad school plans, Russian, the exhibition]

[01:32:30]

End of Interview