

**The David and Barbara Pryor Center  
for  
Arkansas Oral and Visual History**

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**Arkansas Memories Project**

Jean Sugg

Interviewed by Scott Lunsford

February 13, 2008

Little Rock, Arkansas

## Objective

Oral history is a collection of an individual's memories and opinions. As such, it is subject to the innate fallibility of memory and is susceptible to inaccuracy. All researchers using these interviews should be aware of this reality and are encouraged to seek corroborating documentation when using any oral history interview.

The Pryor Center's objective is to collect audio and video recordings of interviews along with scanned images of family photographs and documents. These donated materials are carefully preserved, catalogued, and deposited in the Special Collections Department, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville. The transcripts, audio files, video highlight clips, and photographs are made available on the Pryor Center Web site at <http://pryorcenter.uark.edu>. The Pryor Center recommends that researchers utilize the audio recordings and highlight clips, in addition to the transcripts, to enhance their connection with the interviewee.

## Transcript Methodology

The Pryor Center recognizes that we cannot reproduce the spoken word in a written document; however, we strive to produce a transcript that represents the characteristics and unique qualities of the interviewee's speech pattern, style of speech, regional dialect, and personality. For the first twenty minutes of the interview, we attempt to transcribe verbatim all words and utterances that are spoken, such as uhs and ahs, false starts, and repetitions. Some of these elements are omitted after the first twenty minutes to improve readability.

The Pryor Center transcripts are prepared utilizing the *University of Arkansas Style Manual* for proper names, titles, and terms specific to the university. For all other style elements, we refer to the *Pryor Center Style Manual*, which is based primarily on *The Chicago Manual of Style 16th Edition*. We employ the following guidelines for consistency and readability:

- Em dashes separate repeated/false starts and incomplete/redirected sentences.
- Ellipses indicate the interruption of one speaker by another.
- Italics identify foreign words or terms and words emphasized by the speaker.
- Question marks enclose proper nouns for which we cannot verify the spelling and words that we cannot understand with certainty.

- Brackets enclose
  - italicized annotations of nonverbal sounds, such as laughter, and audible sounds, such as a doorbell ringing;
  - annotations for clarification and identification; and
  - standard English spelling of informal words.
- Commas are used in a conventional manner where possible to aid in readability.

### **Citation Information**

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**Scott Lunsford interviewed Jean Sugg on February 13, 2008, in Little Rock, Arkansas.**

[00:00:00]

Scott Lunsford: All right. Well, today, we are at the—uh—  
Alan/Jeannie Sugg residence in Little Rock, Arkansas—the  
University of Arkansas System, and—um—today's date is—uh—  
February 13. The year is 2008. Um—the—uh—person I'm going  
to be interviewing is Jean—Jeannie Sugg.

Jean Sugg: Good.

SL: And my name is Scott Lunsford. And, Jeannie, I have to ask you  
now if it's okay that the—um—uh—Pryor Center for Arkansas  
Oral and Visual History is videotaping this—uh—recording.

JS: It's fine.

SL: Okay, great. Jeannie, this thing is gonna reside in the Special  
Collections Department at the University of Arkansas,  
Fayetteville campus, in Mullins Library. Um—I now need to ask  
you to state and spell your full name.

JS: Jean Sugg. *J-E-A-N S-U-G-G.*

[00:01:00] SL: Okay, Jean. And what was your maiden name?

JS: Bussell. *B-U-S-S-E-L-L.*

[00:01:06] SL: And where and when were you born?

JS: December 18, 1938, in a house on Plaza Street in West Helena,

Arkansas.

[00:01:19] SL: Um—and your parents' names . . .

JS: Were Carl and Virginia Kalb Bussell.

SL: Kalb?

JS: That's my mother's maiden name.

[00:01:29] SL: Okay. And what were their occupations?

JS: Uh—he—my father worked—uh—in the office at a lumber company—uh—in West Helena. My mother was a homemaker. Uh—my father—shortly after I was born in [19]38—uh—was—uh—entered the navy—US Navy, and during that time, he became ill and got a medical discharge and passed away. Uh—he died of leukemia when I was eight years old.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: So I didn't really know my father well. Uh—just as a young, young child.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: And when he came back, he was ill and . . .

[00:02:19] SL: What—uh—level of education did your mom and dad achieve?

JS: Uh—my mother and my father both had high school diplomas.

[00:02:27] SL: Mh-hmm. Um—and—um—your grandparents on your father's side . . .

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: Do you remember—do you remember them at all?

JS: I remember them. Uh—they lived on a little farm just a mile or so out of—uh—West Helena.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: Uh—I—they moved—later—when I was—st—not even a teenager. They moved to—uh—actually, my grandfather passed away, and my grandmother went to live with another son in California. I'd—I never saw her again. I—I heard from her, but I didn't see her.

[00:03:07] SL: And—what were their names?

JS: Uh—[sighs] Joe and Flossie Bussell.

SL: Flossie's a great name.

JS: Can we edit that?

SL: Yeah, sure.

JS: It was . . .

SL: No, there—there are no mistakes here.

JS: There was an Uncle Joe. There was Dave and Flossie Bussell.

SL: Okay.

JS: Mh-hmm.

[00:03:23] SL: And were you—did you know your Uncle Joe?

JS: My Uncle Joe, I knew very well. He and Aunt Nell—uh—lived in

West Helena, and—uh—he was postmaster . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: . . . at the West Helena Post Office. And I had lots of relatives living in West Helena. I had two great-aunts who had no children—my—uh—grandfather's on my mother's side. Um—and they seemed to dote on my sister and me. We were the only two girls in the family, so I used to go from relative to relative and see what they had for me each day. [*Laughs*] And someone would always call and tell my mother, "Jean's over at my house. She's gonna stay here awhile." [*Laughter*] And I just—I did that with all of the relatives.

SL: Now, you mentioned your . . .

Joy Endicott: Give me just a second.

[00:04:13] SL: You mentioned your grandfather on your mother's side.

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: What about your grandmother on your—on your mother's side?

JS: Uh—she, too, was a homemaker. Um—they were just always there, growing up. My grandfather was a phenomenal man. He—um—only received, like, a sixth-grade education, but he was the type of person that if he decided to do something, he just did it. He—uh—decided he was gonna build a garage apartment in

his backyard, so he bought the equipment, the plans, and did it. And he did things that way. He—course, they went through the Depression and tryin' [trying] to raise kids during all of that. Uh—but he was a very smart man. He was—um—an avid fisherman and a hunter. Uh—the whole family—uh—were. He was farsighted enough to help establish the first bank in West Helena and was on the board of directors—uh—just a forward-thinking person like that.

[00:05:19] SL: Mh-hmm. Um—and your—um—uh—your mother's side of the family—what—what was their name? What were their names—their last names?

JS: Uh—my mother's parents were Kalb. Ed and Virgie Kalb.

SL: *C-A-L-B?*

JS: *K-A-L-B.*

SL: *K-A-L . . .*

JS: Very German.

SL: Very German.

JS: Mh-hmm.

[00:05:39] SL: And so there were a lot of your family—uh . . .

JS: In the area.

SL: . . . in West Helena.

JS: Mh-hmm.



[00:05:46] SL: Um—how big a town was West Helena when you were growing up?

JS: It was about maybe six to eight thousand.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: Uh—it—Helena and West Helena were three miles apart, and Helena was by—being the center of the state—the county seat—uh—was by far th—uh—the more metropolitan [*laughs*] as far as—as far as we knew then.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: But—uh—West Helena was not nearly as developed at that time. And since, West Helena has become larger in population than Helena. But, course, now they're one town, so . . .

[00:06:26] SL: Mh-hmm. Uh—so it—it was a pretty rural community then as compared to Helena.

JS: You could walk just about anywhere or ride the bus downtown for a dime. [*Laughs*]

[00:06:37] SL: Yeah. And—uh—its main business was agriculture, I would assume?

JS: Yes. The bank that they established was called Merchants and Farmers Bank . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: . . . which is a clue there. But there was—uh—you know, we had

the wholesale business, the ice company, the monument company, you know, grocery stores, and that sort of thing. Most of the other types of commerce—dress stores, shoe stores, and things like that—were mostly in Helena.

[00:07:12] SL: Um—talk to me about the house you grew up in.

Was that the same house you were born in?

JS: No, we moved the next block down. When my—uh—shortly after I was born, we moved—uh—a block away. Uh—it was a small, two-bedroom, asbestos-shingle house, and I'm still doing fine.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: I [*laughs*] suffered no ill effects from that. But we—uh—it was a house owned by one of my great-aunts, and we rented the house from her. Um—and we lived there—uh—a year or two after my father died. Actually, several years after my father died.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: It is no longer standing. Um—the Roller-Citizens Funeral Home turned it into a parking lot, so [*laughs*] . . .

[00:08:02] SL: Hmm. Um—so did you have any brothers or sisters?

JS: I have a sister three years older, and when I was in the eighth grade, my mother remarried . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: . . . and I have a half brother by that marriage.

[00:08:15] SL: Mh-hmm. Um—and—uh—your—ah—do you—do you still have your mother? Is she still with us?

JS: No.

SL: She passed.

JS: She passed away . . .

SL: And your step . . .

JS: . . . a little over four years ago.

SL: And your stepfather, too?

JS: He passed away quite some time ago.

[00:08:30] SL: Okay. Um—well, so, let's see—you were eight when you lost your father, and how long was it before your mom remarried? Did you . . .

JS: About five years.

SL: Five years.

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: So you—you—you spent some time with your stepfather as well, then.

JS: Yes, he was a wonderful man.

SL: Great guy?

JS: He was a bachelor. Mother was thirty-three at the time, and he

was about forty-five.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: Had never been married.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: He was an only child. [*Laughter*] He also happened to be a friend of our family's, so a hunter and a fisherperson just like the rest. So—and I had known him all my life. He—he—he was—as I say, I have no horror stories. As stepfathers go, I got lucky.

SL: That's good.

JS: Yeah.

SL: Very comfortable.

JS: Mh-hmm.

[00:09:16] SL: That's great news. Okay. So let's talk about your very—oh, I want you to think way back and try to remember your very earliest memory. Can you . . .

JS: I can remember living in the house I was born in. I was old enough at that point. And—uh—I don't remember a lot about it. I think we remember a lot from what we see in pictures, and it may bring something to mind if you keep . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: . . . noticing the pictures of—in front of the house and games and things. But I remember as a child, I had a kidney problem.

I would get infections a lot as a—and I was not allowed to have Cokes—of course, anything with sugar or carbonated water.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: And I remember I wanted a Coke so bad one day. We had this enamel-top table in the kitchen, and somebody spilled their Coke, and I licked it up off the table. [*Laughter*] I was a pretty determined kid.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: Uh—I was accused in later life of going on my crusades to get my way. [*Laughter*]

SL: Yes. Well, that's . . .

JS: Yes, and it was probably true.

SL: That's all right to have some gumption. That's . . .

JS: Yeah, just determination.

[00:10:27] SL: . . .that's a good thing to have. Um—so—um—the house itself—it was a small house?

JS: No, it was a fairly large brick house—uh—but two families lived in it.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: There were—it—it was quite large—it—I mean, in that we each had—it was like a duplex, but it looked like a house, in other words.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: But—uh—and as I say, I don't really have a lot of memories there other than of the pictures. I have more memories, of course, in the house that we moved to next—had lots of memories there.

[00:11:03] SL: Uh—and did both houses have running water and . . .

JS: Oh, yes.

SL: . . . electricity and . . .

JS: Oh, yes. Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . gas and all that?

JS: All—all of—all of those things. Now, my father's parents' house on the farm did not.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: They had running water, but they didn't have indoor plumbing.

SL: So—and they got their water from a well, probably . . .

JS: Mh-hmm. Mh-hmm.

[00:11:25] SL: . . . out in the country. And what about heat?

JS: Uh—you know, they had a fireplace in the living room, and I'm sure it was a coal woodstove in the kitchen, but I—other than that . . .

SL: Oh.

JS: I used to watch them churn butter.

SL: Yeah.

JS: We'd have Sunday lunch there every week.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: And it was always the same. You know, fried chicken, green beans, biscuits—uh—gravy, you know, that kind of thing.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: And they always drank buttermilk, and I hated buttermilk. I have grown up since those days, and I adore buttermilk [laughter] and can drink a whole carton. But it—it—it was a—it was a—underdeveloped, we would call it—a place—uh—their house out in the country. But it was fun because we would go in the woods and pick blackberries. Uh—we would go cut down our Christmas trees, and, you know, I have good memories of things like that.

[00:12:21] SL: Those Sunday—uh—dinners—uh—were—would the whole clan go out there—all the . . .

JS: Well, no, it was just—uh—my grandparents and my father and my sister and my mother and I.

SL: Mh-hmm. So you can—uh—you can remember that time with your—with your dad?

JS: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

[00:12:39] SL: Um—let's see, now. Your father joined the navy . . .

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . um—shortly after you were—you were born?

JS: Uh—it was not long after we moved from the house I was born to the house that I—we moved to next.

[00:12:58] SL: So you were—uh—you probably don't remember your dad before he went to the navy.

JS: I—I remember him, but, again, I—I remember mostly in pictures.

[00:13:07] SL: Uh-huh. And when he got back from the navy, he was already sick?

JS: He was very sick.

SL: Hmm.

JS: In fact, in those days, they knew nothing about leukemia, and—uh—he kept telling them he was sick, and he kept losing weight, and they—they couldn't find out what was wrong with him. So they finally gave him a medical discharge just because it was obvious he was ill, but they didn't know of what. And—uh—then the last time I saw him, he was in the VA hospital in West Memphis.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: And I didn't know at the time that he was about to die.



SL: Yeah.

JS: You know, why we were taken to see him, so . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: But it was just a few days after that. I do remember that very clearly. But—uh—so those, you know, were pretty much my memories.

[00:13:57] SL: Yeah. Um—so I guess that left you with—uh—your older sister and your mom.

JS: Right—for several years.

SL: And . . .

JS: Mother—Mother took a job as city treasurer—uh . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: . . . and, of course, we got government checks—Social Security and government checks.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: And since my father was in the military, they actually paid my way through college—not in any sense paid my way, but I did get a check every month as long as I stayed in college . . .

SL: Mh-hmm. Um . . .

JS: . . . which covered my house and food and that kind of thing.

[00:14:38] SL: Yeah. So West Helena had its own public school system.

JS: Yes.

SL: And what do you remember about it?

JS: I remember all of it. It was very good. I—I thought, and I think Alan would say the same thing of Helena—I thought we had about as good an education as you could get. Uh—we—I remember from first grade on—I started school when I was five because my sister was going, and I was determined to go. [Laughs] So—uh—Mother finally gave in and said, "All right." You could go to school just about any time you wanted to at that—at that particular time.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: Most people didn't. We didn't have kindergarten or anything like that.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: But Mother said I could go ahead and start when I was five. I would turn six in December. And—uh—after about three weeks, I came home and told her I didn't think I wanted to go anymore. [Laughs]

[00:15:37] SL: Did you go—keep going or . . .

JS: I went every day. [Laughter]

SL: The die—the cast was . . .

JS: Every day—that, you know, crusade backfired that time.

[*Laughter*] But—uh—I—I was not a particularly attentive student. I didn't—my sister was always very studious and, you know, came home, did her homework right away.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: Made straight A's and all like this. I—I was not that kind of student. I'm not sure I wasn't a little ADHD in that day.

[*Laughs*]

SL: Right.

JS: And I—I didn't focus well. But I—I didn't do badly, but I would daydream in class and . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: . . . that sort of thing. Uh—as I got older, that changed—uh—and I think I just became more interested in doing the best I could rather than just being a student.

SL: That happens a lot.

JS: We grow up. Mh-hmm.

[00:16:32] SL: Uh—so was it a single schoolhouse?

JS: No.

SL: Two-story building or . . .

JS: It was a s—one-story building that housed first through fourth grades. But by the time I got to the fourth grade, they had grown—uh—so that they had moved us over to the junior high.

So I had fourth and fifth grades in the junior high until—let's see, when I got in—same class all day—one teacher. Uh—when I got into the sixth grade, we rotated. We would go from classroom to classroom for different courses.

SL: Hmm.

JS: We'd have a homeroom, and then the students moved around, in other words.

SL: Kind of like junior high school, in a way.

JS: Yeah, just general . . .

SL: Early.

JS: . . . junior high school. But it was in an old, old building that has since burned, where my mother and father went all twelve grades in that one building.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: The—the steps going into the auditorium were just wood, and they were just worn just almost where they'd go through.

*[Laughs]*

[00:17:37] SL: So your mom and dad grew up in West Helena.

JS: Yes. Mh-hmm.

SL: Wow.

JS: Now, he was I think four years older than she.

[00:17:47] SL: Uh-huh. And I guess they met in . . .

JS: Knew each . . .

SL: . . . school and . . .

JS: I mean, it was a small town, you know.

SL: . . . and married and . . .

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: What is it with Helena and West Helena? How . . .

[00:18:02] JS: Oh, we see a good thing, we know it. [*Laughter*]

Now a—yeah, I'm sure Alan told you . . .

SL: Yeah.

JS: . . . we met in the—in the sixth grade, and we had a little friend—a Jewish friend was having her *bat mitzvah*, and she had a little program dance at the country club. Did he go through all this? I won't repeat.

SL: No, he didn't.

JS: Okay.

SL: That's why we're . . .

JS: And it was a general thing we all attended—or some of us attended a little ballroom dancing class.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JS: Like, every other week—uh—that this lady taught. And [*clears throat*] we—uh—had these little three-person programs, and the boys would come ask if they could be on your program for such-

and-such a dance. And I'd never seen Alan before, and he asked me to be—asked if he could sign my program. And we danced and that was the end of it. [*Laughter*] Another little boy asked me twice.

[00:18:58] SL: And now how old were you? How old were you then?

You were how old?

JS: In the sixth grade.

SL: Sixth grade.

JS: Uh-huh. And—uh—he—Alan, I don't think was really—uh—that interested in girls at that time.

SL: Mh-hmm.



JS: And then when he was in the ninth grade was when he was co-captain of the football team and I was a candidate for football queen. And—um—I got queen. You may have seen the pictures in there. He and the other guy were crowning me. Each kissed me on the cheek. And it came time for the football banquet after the football season was over, and I think his mother suggested that it would be nice if he would ask me to go to the banquet. I don't know what I would've done if no one had asked me [*laughter*], but he asked me anyway. And he really couldn't drive legally at that time, so his parents—the parents went back in those days, too—brought him over to pick me up. I lived right

across the street from the country club on the side—number one fairway. So it was just around the corner, and they picked us up, and we went to the thing. [*SL laughs*] And he asked his parents—I guess they told him he could drive me home by himself. It was just . . .

SL: The block and a half.

JS: . . . a block and a half [*laughter*] around the corner. So he got to take me home by myself. First kiss. [*Laughter*] We may have to edit that out.

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:20:28] SL: No, no, I think we keep that in. So—well, let's talk about your house and growin' up just a little bit.

JS: Okay.

SL: You had the modern amenities. It had the . . .

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . running water and the gas and electrical. Were there any musical instruments in the house?

JS: No, no. My grandparents had a piano which we played on—really "played," not . . .

[00:20:58] SL: Now these are the grandparents out in the country?

JS: No.

SL: No.

JS: The Kalbs in town.

SL: The Kalbs in town.

JS: Mh-hmm. Mh-hmm. But, no other—I did take dancing lessons all my life. I never took piano, but I did take dancing. And I actually—I mean, this is a small town remember. The Rotary Club, the Lions Club—come their Christmas dinner, they wanted entertainment, and often, the dancing students would perform. And Alan's sister played the piano, part of the time, for the dance instructor. This was the same lady who conducted the ballroom classes.

SL: Right.

JS: She taught tap and ballet, and I took tap. And so I have—I didn't pull these out—quite a few pictures of dancing at—from that, you know, early age on—almost through high school. When I got to be a junior in high school, I kinda decided I didn't want to do that anymore. So I quit dancing, and I was into majoretting and all like that.

[00:22:04] SL: But you had a radio in the house.

JS: Oh, yes. Mh-hmm.

SL: Do you remember any of the programming on . . .

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . the radio? Was there . . .



JS: *Bobby Benson and the B-Bar-B Riders* and [laughs] "It's a bird! It's a plane! No, it's Superman!" All the daily serials like that I would listen to before Gabriel Heatter came on, and I left the room.

[00:22:24] SL: Now tell me about Gabriel Heatter.

JS: Well, he was, you know, the doomsday newscaster of the time. [Laughs] Very dry—but all the adults, you know, could hardly wait for the news to come on to see what was happening—especially during the war years, you know, and all of that. The only other thing I remember about that is—the radio—is on Sunday afternoon, they ran our versions of soap operas. And it was the lives of *Helen Trent* and my *Gal Sunday* or, you know, "*The Shadow* knows." [Laughs] All of these, and they were the episodes that would run every Sunday afternoon, and I would listen to those.

[00:23:04] SL: Would your mom and sister listen to 'em with you?

JS: Oh, no, just by myself. [Laughs]

SL: Just by yourself.

JS: No one else is addicted. [Laughs]

[00:23:11] SL: Well, were there any program—was there any program that the three of you would gather around the radio or the rest of your family, other . . .

JS: Not as much.

SL: . . . than the adults with the newscaster?

JS: Not as much as I did—the *Bobby Benson and the B-Bar-B Riders* and the *Superman* and all of those. I just enjoyed listening to them.

[00:23:30] SL: What about *King Biscuit Flower Hour*? Did you ever listen to that?

JS: Yes, I did, but that was more as I got older in high school. And we would hear it—sometimes we had—in high school, we had what we'd call the "Knothole of the Air." Don't ask me where that name came from [*laughs*], but we would go down once a week—those of us in journalism class—and do the week's news from the high school on air. And that was kinda fun.

SL: Is that right?

JS: Yes. Mh-hmm.

SL: So you were a broadcaster.

JS: Mh-hmm. That's a stretch. [*Laughter*] A real stretch. But, yeah, it was kinda fun to do—enjoyed doing that.

[00:24:10] SL: And what about church and religion in the house? I mean . . .

JS: In the house.

SL: Yeah.

JS: We probably were not regular churchgoers, nor were my grandparents on either side of the family. We lived right next door to the Methodist church, in which my sister got married, because she had become a Methodist member by—at the time she got married. And we knew the minister there very well, and we would sometimes go to the Wednesday night potluck dinners there. Mother enjoyed getting out and seeing people and that sort of thing. Being single. And it wasn't easy for her, I know, during that time with two young girls and that sort of thing. I mostly, though, started going to the Baptist church. And probably, I did that because my friends were. Some of my very good friends growing up were pretty steady Baptist members, and one of my best friends—her father was principal of the junior high when I was there in the high school when I was in high school. And I would go, and Sandra and I would go together and do that sort of thing. So we started going to Sunday school and church and BSU, they called it then, on Sunday nights. And it was just down the street, and it was fun. Course, then when I started dating Alan, as we mentioned earlier—his family—they were the pillars of the church in Helena, and his mother—his father was head of the deacons. His mother played the organ or the piano and taught choir. And Alan was in the choir, and all of

the kids were. So—when I would go to church in West Helena on Sunday morning and then Sunday night, in order to have a date, I would go with Alan to church and sit with his father while Alan sang in the choir. [*Laughs*] Then on Wednesday night service, in order to be able to have a date in the middle of the week [*laughs*], I would go to the Wednesday night service. Alan would sit in the choir, and I would sit with Mr. Sugg.

[00:26:27] SL: Now, Helena and West Helena—they had separate school systems, right?

JS: Mh-hmm, up until high school.

SL: And then they combine at high school.

JS: At three years before we got into high school, they consolidated the high school.

SL: I see.

JS: But separate junior highs and elementaries.

SL: So that's how you ended up being . . .

JS: In the same school together at the same time.

SL: And queen of the court and captain of the football team.

JS: Mh-hmm. Mh-hmm.

[00:26:50] SL: Yeah. Okay. What about—you know, you talk about—I mean, your mother had to be a really strong lady . . .

JS: She was.

SL: . . . to raise a couple of kids by herself for the years that she did and. . .

JS: Mh-hmm.

[00:27:06] SL: . . . and having lost a husband. What was it like around the house? I mean, did y'all share the chores?

JS: We did.

SL: I mean, your mom was working, so did she also come home and do all the cooking or . . .

JS: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Well, I mean, it was a job that she could do sort of on her time, but we—I guess we were the—among the first latchkey kids. *[Laughs]* We would come home after school and let ourselves in the house. I mean, it was such a small place, and it was so safe. And, you know, the whole world knew the key was in the mailbox. But it was fairly safe. But the house, as I say, was not large. But, yes, we had our chores. We were expected to help maybe with the dishes. Cleaning up. I hated dusting. *[Laughs]* That was the chore I didn't like to do. Loved to iron. I could stand and iron all day. And that was, you know, back when you got the clothes off the clothesline and had to sprinkle 'em and then starch 'em if you were gonna starch 'em and iron 'em. We didn't have a washing machine, but my grandparents lived about, oh, a short block. It was down the

back alley and take a right down Fifth Street, and you were right there. And they had a wringer washer out in the garage. And we would take our basket of clothes over every week and wash them on washday. And then we would haul them back and hang them up and that was it. After Alan and I got married in germ—and when we then went to Germany for three years, we didn't have a washing machine and really couldn't afford to buy an automatic at that particular time. So we bought—you could—you know, people going back to the States would sell everything they had and not have to haul it back and forth, and I think we bought a wringer washer for about twenty-five dollars. And so, I used that until Katie was born. And when it came to diapers, there was—something had to give [*laughter*]. 'Cause we didn't have disposables back then.

SL: That's right.

JE: [*Coughing*] Just a second.

SL: You okay?

JE: Yeah.

[00:29:29] Trey Marley: I was kinda curious—like, it's gonna be obvious—but, like in the wintertime down there and you're doing all your laundry like that, I've never thought about how you did that in the wintertime—how you got it cleaned and dried.

JS: Quickly. [*Laughs*]

TM: So you just—you put it out and let it dry in the winter, huh?

JS: Well, of course, you're using heated water in the washer, and it gets kinda warm in the small washroom with all of this hot water and rinse and running it through and that kind of thing. But you just would hang it up and hurry back in. I've gotten stuff in many a time stiff frozen [*laughs*] if it was that cold, you know.

SL: Yeah.

JS: If it turned cool after you had hung things up. It was different. We had at one point—it was before my father died, but we had chickens in our backyard—raised chickens for our consumption.

We didn't sell them. And I would gather eggs and hated those hens. [*Laughs*] They would peck you . . .

SL: Yeah.

JS: . . . real quickly. That, and many a time, I've watched someone wring a chicken's neck, you know? It was a choice between the hatchet or wringing it, and then you have to dip 'em in boiling water and pluck 'em. And I got to do all that too.

SL: Uh-huh.

JS: Just all sorts of things.

[00:30:47] SL: Well, you know, that was common.

JS: That was—you're right. It was common back then. You . . .

SL: It was before Tyson.

JS: Long time before Tyson. [*Laughter*] But we did have really good small fryers back then. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah, yeah.

JS: Nice, tender little chickens.

[00:31:03] SL: What about a garden? Did y'all do a garden, too?

JS: We did have vegetable gardens from time to time and flower gardens and that sort of thing that—just normal things. As you say, everyone had fairly good-size yards, and you utilized what you had, so . . .

[00:31:24] SL: What about TV?

JS: Did not have a TV until I was in the ninth—oh, no, I take that back—it was eighth grade. My mother, as I say—I may have told you she got married when I was eighth grade. It was the seventh grade. I'll correct myself if that's the case. In the eighth grade, we were—new stepfather and all—living in a duplex with two bedrooms and that wasn't gonna last very long.

SL: Right.

JS: And the plan was not for it to last very long.

SL: Right.

JS: And we moved to a house just down the street from where they eventually bought a house. But we lived in this rented house for



about a year and that was our first TV. And it was also the first time I had my own bedroom. [*Laughs*]

SL: That's big.

JS: That was real big. [*Laughter*] My sister . . .

SL: Your own closet.

JS: . . . and I both liked each other a lot more after that. [*Laughs*]

[00:32:24] SL: Yeah. Do you remember the TV programs early on?

JS: I do. I remember *Ed Sullivan*. I remember *Dinah Shore*. I remember some talent show—variety show.

SL: *Arthur Godfrey*?

JS: It could've been. I remember the show—the dancing cigarette box—Lucky Strike.

SL: Lucky Strikes.

JS: Was that—that was—was that a musical hits tune sort of thing?

SL: Yeah, I think it was.

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: I remember that dancing . . .

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . Lucky Strike box, too.

JS: Yeah. I remember all of that. During that time, my baby half brother was born also. And so he had—you know, they had two ready-made babysitters right there. Ann and I always took care

of him, and Alan and I—after my sister went to college and we had moved into this next house that I said was across from the fairway, Alan and I would often keep—we'd—Frank is his name, as a baby we called him "Chip"—but we would keep him, and Alan is the one who put all of his Christmas toys together and played Lincoln Logs with him and all like that. As I say, my stepfather was wonderful, but he waited a long time to get married and to have . . .

SL: Have a child.

JS: . . . a child.

SL: Yeah.

JS: So he appreciated [*laughs*] everything Alan did. So—and that was a good memory.

[00:33:51] SL: So your stepfather's business was . . .

JS: He had a grocery—dry goods, they called it at that time store in Helena. And he had some property that he owned. He had been mayor of West Helena, and he, too, was on the bank board with my grandfather—starting the bank.

[00:34:11] SL: Mh-hmm. So there was a little bit more affluence than . . .

JS: Yes. Oh, yes.

[00:34:17] SL: Mh-hmm. Mh-hmm. So let's see—you—I'm just

wondering about—I'm just going to assume as far as cultural events go, it was Helena that . . .

JS: Definitely. We had one rather poor movie theater in West Helena. We would go downtown to the Paramount. The big one—to go. [*Laughs*]

[00:34:51] SL: The big one. Do you remember much about any minstrel shows or anything coming through Helena? Did you attend any of the . . .

JS: No. We didn't have things like that. Since the time we left Helena, it went—it had a developing period where they did have more cultural events and that sort of thing. And are you familiar with Miss Lily Peter?

SL: Yes. She started . . .

JS: She started . . .

SL: . . . Phillips College.

JS: And the free concert series that they had over the years—free. You just had to call and make a reservation. A multitude of really big-name concerts there.

[00:35:45] SL: Is that the same classical series?

JS: Yes, yes.

SL: I mean, orchestras would come in.

JS: The Warfields had some input in all of that, but it—and then I



think the college being there has been a big help too, you know, through the years. But Helena, and therefore, West Helena—when we grew up, it was sort of like *Happy Days*. We had no drugs. No one drank—you know, none of our, you know, friends or high school kids drank. I'm sure they did, but they didn't get in trouble with it. You know, there were some. It was just football games on Friday night, you know. Parades on Friday afternoon before the football game. Football game Friday night. Movies on Saturday. It was kinda calm. The most exciting thing was when Elvis came to town. [*Laughs*]

[00:36:41] SL: Do you remember Elvis coming to town?

JS: Oh, I have his autograph.

SL: You have his autograph.

JS: I have his autograph.

SL: And did you scream whenever he played?

JS: Of course I did. It was my sixteenth birthday, I think. And Mother had let me have some girls over for dinner, and after that, we drove down. It was in the Catholic high school gymnasium that he performed, and we screamed our heads off. All the guys got kinda mad about that. [*Laughs*] But we did it. And afterwards, we went up and got autographs and everything, and I have—it says, "Jean—yours til"—*T-I-L*—without an

apostrophe. I don't know if he knew it needed another L or not [laughs], but I saved it. I'm sure a lot of people have his autograph, but . . .

[00:37:31] SL: Well, I'd say that's probably pretty valuable. So just that one time—you saw him that one time?

JS: Yeah, and in person.

SL: Was it packed?

JS: Oh, yeah, it was. It was packed for the Catholic high school auditorium—wasn't a huge crowd. I don't think there were thousands there—probably in the hundreds. But . . .

[00:37:49] SL: So I guess he had a drummer and a—was the bass player an upright bass player or was it an electric?

JS: Yes.

SL: And did he have a guitar player with him or was it just the three of 'em?

JS: I can't remember. I just looked at him. [Laughs] He played the guitar and he . . .

SL: He was . . .

JS: He swiveled.

SL: It was amazing—the charisma and how magnetic he was.

JS: He was really a phenomenally talented person. I mean, to be able to do all he did. I think he went a little crazy at the end,

and I'm sure it was drug-related, but to think where he came from, you know, and all like that. I recently met—I didn't meet Jim Ed, but I met Bonnie and Maxine Brown. And they often sang on the same stage—not at the same time. Are you familiar with the Browns?

SL: Well—I do know that name. Yes.

JS: And I read the book that Maxine had written, and I think the university published it. The Press did. It was amazing. Elvis really was serious about Bonnie—wanted to be, and she married a doctor. I think she did fine [*laughter*] and lives in Dardanelle. But we really got—we got to know them through one of the senators here who is a music, and especially a country music buff, and Maxine wanted to meet Alan. So they invited us out to dinner and got to know 'em, and it was fun. I love to meet interesting people, and people who are just very good at their own thing and enjoy what they do.

[00:39:26] SL: Any—was there—do you remember anyone else playing before Elvis took the stage that night or . . .

JS: I don't think so.

SL: Okay.

JS: Mh-hmm.

[00:39:33] SL: And—I'm trying to think—so do you remember any

other musical acts that . . .

JS: In the town.

SL: . . . came through town as far as rock—early rock and roll goes  
or . . .

JS: No.

SL: No.

JS: Nope, nope.

[00:39:48] SL: Okay. So now, you did play the saxophone, right?

JS: I did. Alto sax.

SL: So . . .

JS: Not as well as Mr. Clinton. [*Laughter*] The sax, as I say, I—was my only musical—I learned to read music playing the sax. What I can read. I—it's an easy instrument to learn, and I suppose the highlight of my saxophone career was my senior year. There was a—in the concert, there was a piece that called for a solo, and I was first chair by then—lack of competition. But I just told them—I said, "I can't do this." And I said—and he said, "Yes, you can. Yes, you can." And I did it. I don't know how. I don't remember doing it. [*Laughter*] But he said it was okay. There was one other story, which I will jump ahead if I may.

SL: Okay. Sure. Absolutely.

[00:40:47] JS: When I was—of course, I was a majorette in high

school, and when I went to Fayetteville, sororities have a way of finding out what you've done and insisting that you do it in their name this time, you know.

SL: Yes.

JS: And so, they wanted me to try out for majorette my first spring there, and I did, and I got it. And my mother, being as economical as she always was, of necessity, I could not possibly take band without taking it for credit because I was paying for that hour of education, and I was gonna get credit for it. So I signed up for it. Well, it was fine during marching season. But when marching season was over, back in those days, we had to go from the last football game till the middle of January, when we had finals, doing concert band. And I'm—you know, the band is made up of some really fine musicians. Those kids can ad-lib and play anything by ear and read music with this many lines and all like that. And everybody had to try out for a chair, and I was petrified because I could no more play what they were playing. I ju—I really was not very good, and I'm not being modest; I'm being honest. [SL laughs] And I went up and talked to Dr. Worthington. I said, "I need to talk to you." And I said, "I'm a nervous wreck." And he said, "What's the matter?" I said, "If you would just please, please, please, please, please



let me have last chair and not make me try out." I said, "I'll be so grateful." [*Laughs*] And so he let me do that. And the next year, I didn't tell my mother. I just didn't take it for credit, so [*laughs*] when football season was over, I just was out and that was it. And that was my senior year.

[00:42:32] SL: I'm trying to think. Was Lewis Epley around then?

JS: Lewis Epley. That's how I met Lewis. He was the Voice of the Razorback Band. And another little side story, and you stop me if I'm goin' . . .

SL: There's no . . .

JS: . . . too far off track.

SL: There are no wrong things here.

[00:42:46] JS: When we came to interview for the job here and we spent one day flying all around to the different campuses. There weren't as many at that time—eighteen years ago. But when we were here the second night—had dinner down at the Capital Hotel with all of the trustees, and Lynn's father was there. He was going off the board, and Lewis was coming on the board at that time. And we were sitting with them. And Lewis is a—he's one of my favorite people.

SL: Absolutely.

JS: He and Donna are just wonderful and the most humble,

generous man possible—next to Tommy May, maybe, you know? We were sitting there, and Lewis, in his quiet way—he said, "I remember you." And I said, "Oh, I hope so." You know, like that? [*SL laughs*] He said, "You always spoke to me." And I thought, "Oh, my God. I always spoke to everybody."  
[*Laughter*] But I—there are people who didn't speak to Lewis or acknowledge him. Course, he was older and in law school at the time and that sort of thing. The other incident which Alan may—did he mention anything about Lewis or Alan ran for student body president our senior year, and course, we were all campaigning for him. And I can't—I think George Jernigan was his campaign manager.

SL: Okay, that kinda sounds familiar.

JS: He's—George had a stroke several years ago and isn't active anymore, but he was very much into politics—a good friend of David Pryor's.

SL: Yes. Mh-hmm.

JS: And Jack Files was in law school. He's an attorney here in town—was running against Alan. So here was this law student running against Alan, and Lewis was Jack's campaign chairman, and Alan won. [*Laughs*] That was not a good thing. When we were talking about it, and Lewis saying he remembered me, and

he says, "I remember Alan, too." [*Laughs*] But he didn't hold that against him, so that was good.

[00:45:00] SL: You know, I think Lewis tells a story about that campaign. And I forget what the event was, but there was some kind of rally or something. But I—it's ringing some bells.

JS: Yeah.

SL: I—you know, we did an oral history with Lewis years ago and what a great story.

JS: May have been the only one he lost. I'm not sure. [*Laughs*]

[00:45:20] SL: I think that may have been it. Well, so let's talk a little bit about the courtship between you and Alan.

JS: Okay.

SL: It's just—first of all, what a remarkable thing that you guys were childhood sweethearts . . .

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . and you are still together and still beautiful and happy and wonderful and healthy and . . .

JS: He's the only one that would put up with me. That's it.

[*Laughs*]

SL: Oh, come on now.

JS: Nope, nope, nope, that's it.

SL: No.

JS: You know, I think our girls thought that they would grow up and meet someone in high school and—at least, you know, in high school, and it just doesn't work that way anymore. It—it's just not that way. And, in fact, some of them they dated in high school, we were hoping they wouldn't marry, so *[laughs]* . . .

SL: You bet.

JS: . . . it works that way, too. But it—it's just one of those things that hap—I mean, it's amazing the number of people our age that you would find out have—if not as early as we knew each other—have, you know, like my college roommate—one of 'em, my senior year, had met this young man from Little Rock maybe the year before. And they went out on a date, and he went home and told a girl—a friend of his who was a girl—he says, "I think I've met the girl I'm gonna marry." And they did, you know. Just things like that happen. And it's just kinda funny. It's—our right time happened earlier than most. But that's just the way it is sometimes.

[00:47:01] SL: Well, it's interesting that your . . .

JS: It hadn't all been perfect now. *[Laughs]*

SL: Well nothing is and that's okay. But the—what's interesting—culturally for that time for me is that y'all had the church activities as a way to see each other.

JS: Mh-hmm. That was my idea. I don't—I think it was his, too, so [*laughs*] I mean, I could've stayed home and watched TV and eaten popcorn that night, but if I wanted to see Alan—we didn't date much on school nights, you know, as a rule. He had football practice or whatever practice, and Alan worked almost all of his life starting with delivering groceries for the store down the hill to delivering papers and sacking groceries and that sort of thing.

SL: Cotton compress.

JS: Cotton compress. And I didn't. I would babysit and that sort of thing, and I did work at the bank two summers in college. But he did. I mean, he had a scholarship to go to school and had a laundry route, you know—just things like that. He always did.

[00:48:16] SL: Now you went to Memphis State out of high school for a year . . .

JS: Uh-huh.

SL: . . . or a semester.

JS: My sister went to Memphis State her first year and then transferred to Ole Miss where most of eastern Arkansas went, you know, at that time. It was so much closer.

SL: Right.



JS: But—and I—somewhere, my mother—I had an aunt living in

Memphis, and I think my mother thought I should do what my sister did, and so I did. And that was another one of my crusades. It's—before the first semester was over, Alan called and said, "I want you to transfer at semester." [*Laughs*]

SL: Well, you probably had that in mind anyway, didn't . . .

JS: And I—oh, I intended—always the plan was that I would transfer—and they had rush sophomore year—it was deferred rush at the time, so I purposely didn't go through rush at Memphis State. I just lived in the dorm, and a girl from Helena was my roommate. But we—anyway, my mother said, "No, you're in Memphis State, you're gonna stay a year." You know, "Your sister did, so you're gonna"—[*laughs*] and all like this. Well, that's when I went on my number one crusade. I pulled out the big guns, and it was every week, every week—I just—"Mother, I need to transfer. I'm gonna transfer." I even went so far as to enroll myself [*laughs*] without her knowing it.

SL: Yeah.

JS: And, as again, we—semester ended in the middle of January. When we went home for Christmas, she finally said, "Okay. If you can still get in, [*SL laughs*] you can transfer." And by then, I decided I didn't want to. [*Laughs*]

SL: Not really.

JS: I had finally made some friends.

SL: Oh, in Memphis State.

JS: I was so homesick, you know. I had some friends that invited me home for the weekend with them, because it was a city university—a weekend, you know. And they only had one upper-class dorm and one freshman dorm that wasn't even totally full, so they just—if you didn't know people, there wasn't a lot to do. So by the end of the first semester, I had met friends and knew people in the cafeteria when you went in and that kind of thing. And I thought, "Well, maybe I should stay here and just finish."

[00:50:28] SL: Was Memphis State—was it downtown?

JS: It's the same location that it is now. It—I was there the year they gained university status. And the NIT was big business, and the basketball there was big business.

SL: Right.

JS: They had a player called "Win" Wilfong. You don't have any recollection. Well, he was big, and the basketball program was outstanding. NCAA hadn't, I guess, come into existence at that point.

[00:51:01] SL: Do you remember how big the Memphis State population was then? Was it a small . . .

JS: I honestly can't tell you be—and I may have heard the numbers at some time. But as I say, because no one lived on campus, it was hard to ever know.

SL: Right.

JS: They had sororities and fraternities. The fraternities had houses, but the sororities only had rooms in the student center, and you know, I just—I couldn't even begin to tell you. But it's . . .

SL: So . . .

JS: . . . grown since.

[00:51:37] SL: . . . even though the plan was for you to transfer to U of A in Fayetteville, by the time it was time to do that, you had—you really thought that . . .

JS: I had decided that maybe I should stay and finish the year here. I was being more logical than emotional. So I did, and Alan was going into track season, and he was busy, and, you know, if I had transferred up there, I would've still been in a dorm of girls I didn't know.

SL: Right.

JS: I did go to—up—go up there to visit him a couple of times during the year and—or to Little Rock. His sister and her husband lived here at the time, and we would . . .

SL: Met halfway.



JS: Yeah, we'd go there.

[00:52:16] SL: And so had you ever been to Fayetteville before that?

JS: I had never been to—yes, I had. I'll have to take that back. The high school principal, whose daughter was a good friend of mine, was finishing his doctorate in Fayetteville one summer. I'm sure he'd taken lots of correspondence courses, but he had to come up here to do some work, and I came with her family, and we stayed above what was the old UARK Bowl.

SL: Yeah.

JS: And, I mean, we just had fun running all over the campus and around there, but we were in high school and in front of Old Main and all like that, but I didn't see the campus and didn't look at the campus as a place I might be someday.

SL: Right.

JS: I guess at that point, I was thinking I'd probably end up at Ole Miss. Hmm. [*Laughs*]

SL: Okay. So you . . .

JS: Seems to be the trend these days.

SL: Yes. Well, that's so interesting. I don't even wanna get started on that. [*Laughter*]

JS: Oh, let's don't.

[00:53:21] SL: So you transfer to the University of Arkansas, and you get accepted to a sorority.

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: Which sorority was that?

JS: Kappa. Kappa Kappa Gamma.

SL: Mh-hmm. And you became a—not a cheerleader but a pom . . .

JS: Majorette.

SL: Majorette.

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: So did that mean that you went—did majorettes just do the home football games or did they . . .

JS: No, we went to some out-of-state also. I remember going to Dallas-Fort Worth—TCU. And then I'm tryin' to think where else we went. We, course, did the Little Rock games and the Fayetteville games. We didn't go to a lot of out-of-state games. And I don't recall bowl games at that time. But it was practice every afternoon for about two hours—'bout [about] four to. . .

[00:54:27] SL: Let's see now. What year was this—would that have been?

JS: See—we graduated in [19]60, so that would be [19]58–[19]59 and [19]59–[19]60.

[00:54:40] SL: Mh-hmm. So I guess Frank Broyles was there by the time you graduated, and I guess it was Coach Mitchell before.

JS: He was coach. Yes, for—I don't know if he came our junior year or sophomore year. I'm—not—I can't remember that.

SL: I think it was [19]57 or [195]8. I think it may have been . . .

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . [Nineteen fifty-]eight, but . . .

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . I'm not positive about that either.

JS: I wanna say [19]58, but I wouldn't . . .

SL: Yeah.

JS: Close is good.

[00:55:11] SL: What do you remember about life in Fayetteville?

JS: Fun. It—I enjoyed goin' to school. Living in the Kappa house—and, incidentally, we stayed in Carnall Hall before we went—going through rush and that was the upper-class women's dorm that—I would've lived there if I hadn't gotten a bid. I—I'd get nervous. All the girls did. My sister was a Kappa at Ole Miss, and I'd had some friends in the Kappa house, so I thought I might get a bid, but I did. And you moved right into the house to live the rest of the time. No living in apartments or anything like that. Date call we had. My kids say, "What's date call?"

You know, they should reinstate date call, and you wouldn't have any . . .

SL: Well, let's talk about . . .

JS: . . . problems on the campus. [*Laughs*]

[00:56:05] SL: Let's talk about date call.

JS: Okay.

SL: What was date call?

JS: Well, as a pledge, I couldn't go out anyway on the weeknight, 'cause I had to go to study hall. If I really had to do some research in the library, I could sign out and go to the library. I was a good girl. [*Laughs*] I didn't get—I didn't do anything illegal, so I didn't get caught.

SL: Right.

JS: But date call for non-pledges would've been ten o'clock on weeknights, and I think it was something like—I don't know—twelve or twelve thirty or something on Friday and Saturday nights and ten o'clock on Sunday. So Alan, as I say, working his jobs and doing his athletic training, had a pretty full schedule, and I started out as—with the study hall and all like that. So time just went by. I was kind of a night person though, and I liked to visit and play during the day, and after everybody else had gone to bed, I'd stay up and study. And I could do it quietly

and absorb it, and I didn't need much sleep, so I was up the next morning. I went through three years of college up there, going—having a Hershey Bar and a Dr Pepper for breakfast every morning. [*Laughs*] Would get my breakfast—walk straight through the student union—see who was there. I either had a class in the psychology building or Old Main or the business building, and they were just one, two, three. And other than that, that was pretty—I'd take—I loved PE. I'd take PE courses, and sometimes, they were in the women's gym or someplace—bowling—you know, something like that. But life was easy, and life was good, and there you go.

[00:58:02] SL: What do you remember about Dickson Street?

JS: Changed totally now.

SL: Well, it's changed now, but . . .

JS: It wasn't—George's was there, and that was the big place to go and get a pizza, or if you had a, like, a pledge class gathering out one night, you'd go there and have pizza. That and the—Wheeler's . . .

SL: Jug Wheeler's.

JS: That was about all—Collier's Drug Store.

[00:58:33] SL: Yeah, Collier's had a soda fountain then, right?

JS: I don't remember.

SL: Oh, you know what? I don't think they did by then. They did early on, but I don't think they did by then. There was also the Deluxe. Did you ever have breakfast at the Deluxe?

JS: Is that the cafeteria kind of place?

SL: It was right next door to Jug's. Jug owned both of 'em.

JS: I don't remember going there. There—when we came back, when Alan was working on his master's after the military, there—down on that corner right by the Kappa Sig house across the side street there, there was some sort of caf—well, I think it was there—cafeteria place. I—I'm not sure. But that might not have even been there at the time. I really—there was a cleaners on one corner.

[00:59:24] SL: Alan worked at the cleaners, right? He delivered . . .

JS: Yeah, yeah. That's true. That, and then, course, there was more activity maybe on the square with Campbell & Bell and . . .

SL: There was J.C. Penney's, Boston Store.

JS: J.C. Penney's. Yeah, yeah.

SL: There was also the . . .

JS: And . . .

SL: . . . Palace Theatre.

JS: Yeah, the bank wasn't on that one corner. It was a furniture store.

SL: That's right.

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: But there was McIlroy Bank.

JS: Yeah. And, course, the—I don't remem—the hotel wasn't there then—the big one that used to be the . . .

SL: No.

JS: . . . Hilton-slash-Radisson-slash something else. [*Laughs*]

SL: No, no, it wasn't there.

JS: It was just the old circular drive up—the—what was that called? It was a motel of sorts.

TM: Mountain Inn?

JS: Mountain Inn. Yeah.

SL: That's right, the Mountain Inn and the Town Club.

JS: Mh-hmm. Yeah. That was it. And the place to eat would either be AQ Chicken or Heinie's Steakhouse or George's Pizza or Wheeler's.

SL: Mh-hmm. Now there was the Suzie Wong's.

JS: Mary Maestri's. I don't remember Suzie Wong's.

SL: You don't remember Suzie Wong's Rice Bowl? It was the only . . .

JS: Well, how long was that there?

SL: Oh, it was there a long time.

JS: Alan's never been—Oriental food's not one of his favorites. I  
have a hard time getting him to go.

SL: Actually, B&B Barbecue was around then, too . . .

JS: Was it?

SL: . . . on—yeah.

JS: Mh-hmm. Mary Maestri's.

SL: Mary Maestri's, yeah.

JS: Mh-hmm. I have never eaten at the Venesian Inn.

SL: Venesian Inn is pretty famous.

JS: Some people just adore it and always have and always did. And  
I've . . .

SL: We did a lot of that when I was growing up.

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: That was very popular with my parents.

TM: Scott, we need to change tapes.

SL: Okay. Okay.

[01:01:05] JS: Okay.

SL: So where were we? We were—we got to . . .

JS: We were in college.

SL: We were talking about Fayetteville.

JS: Mh-hmm.

[01:01:12] SL: Let's see. When you were—in your classes that you



were taking in Fayetteville—first of all, what were you majoring in?

JS: Business. I was—had a business degree.

SL: So you and Alan were both doing business.

JS: Yes. Mh-hmm.

SL: And did you have any—not just business professors, but did you have any professors that had an influence on you?

JS: Absolutely. First of all, let me go back and tell you—my friends wisely convinced me to pick up my education hours on the side and—to qualify me to teach. Really, the jobs open to women at that time were—you know, if you're not gonna be a nurse—secretary, schoolteacher, unless you had other family options to follow—but back to the professors—I had a lot of business professors I liked a lot, and some—one we even had contact us when we were living in Commerce, Texas. And he was passing through Dallas and knew it was close, so we had him over for dinner one night. And he was another one of those—he was an economics professor—sweet, retiring man, you know. But he—it was so good to see him. And he mentioned another teacher that I had that had asked about us or me, in particular, and I just always appreciated things like that. But my favorite teacher was Leo Van Scyoc. He's been a lot of people's favorite. And I liked

Dr. Richards in psychology too. And I know Nancy, his wife. Well, she was one of our Kappa advisers. But Dr. Van Scyoc even inspired me—when we went back to Fayetteville after the military and Alan was head of the student union and working on his master's, I decided I wanted to go back and get a master's in literature and started taking classes, and I had—I got a non-teaching assistantship, and—but in those days, we did not have child care. You didn't have nurseries where you could drop your kids off, and the school didn't have anything. And I had gotten through, like, the second or third semester of—I didn't take but a course or two each time. I came home one afternoon, and my two- and three-year-olds were crawling around on the floor doing God knows what, and my sitter was asleep. And I woke her up—and I did finish the semester, but Alan and I decided this just wasn't the time I needed to be doing that. So I never went back. But I still thoroughly enjoyed all the courses. I still have my literature books and *Beowulf* and all of that good stuff, so [laughs] . . .

[01:04:04] SL: Well, did you—do you ever . . .

JS: Still fond of it.

SL: . . . think about finishin' up?

JS: I thought about it years later. But I would've lost those hours

that I had a long time ago. And, I—you know, times change. Your interests are in different places, and I was busy making all those clothes for the girls and that sort of—and that—what I wanted to do at the time.

[01:04:26] SL: What did you—what was it about Dr. Van Scyoc that . . .

JS: He just made the material come alive and made you interested in it. He could picture—talk about it—and you could almost visualize all of these things happening and the Greek mythology and all of that. I mean, I would never in my life, without taking his class, have gone and picked up a book of Greek plays and read them. [*Laughs*] I loved it, you know. And to me, that's just a good teacher. I had a Latin teacher in high school that was the same way. I mean, who would think Latin could be interesting? And that's—plus, I had an outstanding English and literature teacher in high school, too. I didn't even get into the teachers in high school that I liked. [*Laughs*] But they were—we had some wonderful, wonderful opportunities and teachers, so . . .

[01:05:34] SL: Well, you—both you and Alan have said y'all had wonderful teachers in high school. Do you want to talk about some of those teachers in high school? I mean, I think this is—

I—you know, again this goes back to getting your foundation built for you to carry on the rest of your life and . . .

JS: Well, Alan just mentioned that one was Maureen Anderson. Her husband, Joe Lee Anderson, was a representative or a senator from Helena for a period of time. Their son, Brady, has been a diplomat to—I can't remember exactly—someplace in Africa. We've seen him since we've been back, and she just—you know, whether it was diagramming a sentence or talking about a poem and the meanings and that kind of thing—just was a good teacher. And then the Latin teacher was Willie Mae Faulkner, a single woman all her life. This was her passion, and it showed. And these were all teachers that—you know, you wouldn't think of goin' to class not having your homework or having read what you were supposed to. It just—you'd let 'em down. That's the way they made you feel. And . . .

[01:06:51] SL: It is interesting how some teachers have the ability to get your respect.

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: And you . . .

JS: You know, they know their stuff, and they know how to make it interesting to you. And I think that's a lot of it.

SL: Jumping back to college—Dr. Richards—I knew these folks that

you're talking about, and I knew Nancy Richards, and they were good friends with my family, and I went to Boy Scouts and all that stuff with her kids and—what was it about Dr. Richards that . . .

JS: I—he was good in a different way. He didn't have the charisma that Dr. Van Scyoc did or the showmanship—that kind of thing. He was just such a nice person—a nice man. And the fact that I knew Nancy didn't hurt, you know.

SL: Right.

JS: But she would say things about—that her husband had mentioned something in class the other day, so you know he took an interest in you. And that sort of thing.

[01:07:56] SL: You know, she later became a house mom.

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: Later on.

JS: I believe, yes.

SL: Yeah.

JS: Yes, after he died.

[01:08:04] SL: So [pause] your—Alan had decided to extend his ROTC commitment, I guess, at the university?

JS: Yes. Well, he took his Regular Army commission, which put him up there with the West Point grads . . .

SL: Right.

JS: . . . as far as supposedly making it a career. By doing that, he may have told you, we could choose our first station, and we chose Europe and got Germany. The reason, basically—we thought we were signing up for three years. Well, we joined, as I say, right after we got married and spent the summer in Killeen, Texas—the first week in a garage apartment with no air-conditioning. [*Laughs*] We finally talked the landlord into putting in one window unit. And we made it the rest of the way. And then, course, basic training at Fort Benning, and then he went to jump school and all of that. And then we got to Germany and found out that it was three years from the time you got to your first post. [*Laughs*] So that was already three and a half years.

SL: Yeah.

JS: Then we came back in December, and he signed up for another six months because he knew he was going back to school and could have the student union job for the fall. And he had nothing—no means of livelihood in the meantime. Plus, I was about five months pregnant [*laughs*], and we'd already had one army brat, so we thought we might as well have another one.

SL: So it was economics that . . .

JS: Economics, mainly. He extended for another six months, and we got out in July, I guess. Jenifer was born on the nineteenth of May, and we got out in July and went to Fayetteville and found a place to live. So . . .


[01:10:04] SL: Talk to me about Germany.

JS: It was a wonderful experience. We—when we moved there, right when Kennedy went—no, excuse me—Eisenhower went out of office, and Kennedy was coming into office—Eisenhower cut off all dependent travel to Europe, and then the army was supposed to send me—if not with Alan—as soon as possible. And because of that, they weren't—a lot of people chose not to go or just to—you know, it backed up the travel for sending families to Europe or any, I guess, foreign place. And after Alan had gotten there, for about two weeks, he got in touch with me and said he thought I should just go ahead and pay my way over. We couldn't live in government housing, so he had gotten an upstairs apartment with a German family. And the car hadn't gotten there yet, so his first sergeant was coming to pick him up every morning and take him to work. And anyway, he said, "I think you oughta come on over." So we did. I bought a ticket to Germany. Unfortunately, I happened to be reading Adolf *Eichmann* at the time—the book. [*Laughs*] I was scared to

death.

SL: Yeah.

JS: I had never traveled anywhere by myself. I had flown some but not alone. And I got to New York and had to change airports in a helicopter, and I nearly drove the little ticket man crazy. It was a small area I was in for the helicopter pad, and one would land and take off. And I said, "That's not mine, is it?" I said, "That's not mine." [*Laughs*] He says, "Honey, I'll tell you when it's yours." I said, "Thank you." [*Laughter*] So I got over, you know, to the other airport and got on the Lufthansa, and I suspected every person I looked at that they must've been a Nazi at some time. [*Laughs*] Anyway, I had nothing to fear. I sat by the window, and this very nice German man was sitting on the aisle. And he asked me, you know, what I was doing and go—where I was going, and I explained everything to him. And he was so nice. He explained the monetary units and a whole bunch of stuff he told me about that helped me tremendously.



And Alan picked me up, and we came home and lived with this German family for about a month. Now that was an experience. We had no hot water. We did have running water. It was better in my house in West Helena. [*Laughs*] But we had a toilet that was on a landing halfway up and halfway down the stairs. The



window never closed. This is January. We had a full bathtub upstairs in a separate room with a wood-burning water heater, which she would build a fire every morning, and about five o'clock, she would light it, so that we would have hot water for a bath when Alan came home. We couldn't take a bath on Saturday because that was their night.

SL: Their night?

JS: Their night to take a bath.

SL: Once a week.

[01:13:24] JS: Then we had—we had to put coins—*pfennigs*—German money—in a gas meter in order to get gas to boil water to wash my face in the morning or to do any—to cook to do anything. I was just constantly putting coins in this meter. It was hilarious. And I got real sick there, you know, just the whole congestive stuff in the chest and fever and all like that. And she—the landlady kept wanting to bring me this hot brew that she had mixed up. Well, I wasn't drinkin' that. [*Laughs*] Not having any part of that. But we came to like them a lot. They were very nice. But as I say, we only lived there about another month, and when Kennedy came into office, he immediately reversed the dependent travel, and we were then immediately available for government housing. So lo and

behold, we got a three-bedroom apartment, and they furnished it, you know, and everything. So that worked out real well. And while we were there, for most of the time, I taught in the Army Education Center. There was my teaching coming in. And I taught GIs who were taking the GED to either—you would think I would have disciplinary problems, but they wanted to be there either because they needed this for a promotion . . .

SL: Right.

JS: . . . to make more money or it was easier than what they would've been doing otherwise, so . . .

SL: Yeah.

JS: They were in—and I had . . .

SL: They were using the system for whatever . . .

JS: Yes, and . . .

SL: . . . gain.

JS: And I loved—had some really good—I had two fifty-two-year-old sergeants in one class. And, bless their hearts, I can't—I think they made it, but I think I was overly generous. [*Laughs*] I mean, they deserved it. And I had kids who were under eighteen that their parents had signed, and they just wanted to finish high school. I had some very bright ones, and I had some really sad cases. But it was interesting, and it was a half a day—

like, four hours every afternoon. And I could do what I needed to do in the mornings and then go to work, and it was great.

[01:15:38] SL: And you got some money for doing that.

JS: Absolutely.


SL: You know, this was during the Cold War.

JS: Yes, and the Berlin Wall.

SL: And so was there any tension going on that . . .

JS: There was. In fact, Alan's unit was called up when the wall started—you know, they were taking it down. The unit at Mannheim, which was about fifteen minutes from us, is the one that actually went in. But they were on alert, and they all had to go out and stay at what they called the casern, which was their big compound, and couldn't come home. And they handed out live ammunition. That was the next thing to war, so—yeah, we escaped that.

SL: It was close.

 JS: Alan said he slept out in the field a lot. They would only let them train with the big tanks in the winter months, so it didn't tear up the ground. So from November till—through February, he would be out almost all the time in the field, camping in a sleeping bag in a pup tent—cold. And he would call me when they'd get back in to the office—to the casern—on the phone,

and he would say, "Get the water running." [*Laughter*] So the tub would be full of hot water when he walked in. But he would come home on weekends mostly.

[01:17:05] SL: And with his leave time, you got to travel a little bit?

JS: We traveled as much as our two hundred and ten dollars a month would take us.

SL: Yeah.

JS: But we could get government gas for ten cents a gallon. And you have to understand that Alan's father was a very economical man too. And when we were getting ready—well, just let me ask you. Who do you know who goes to Europe and—you know, all of our friends went over and bought these sports cars and Jaguars and all of this stuff cheap, cheap. We carried a 1960 pink Rambler station wagon with us. [*Laughs*]

SL: That sounds pretty hot if you ask me. [*Laughs*] What a thing!

JS: We got—the Germans thought it was wonderful.

SL: Well, yeah.

JS: Of course, it's drab—especially at that time—it was just drab over there. It—everything's gray. The weather was gray. The buildings were gray.

SL: And you had that pink station wagon.

JS: Everything. And we got more stares and looks with that pink

station wagon. And but—to, you know, send one over—and we carried it back. I don't—[*laughs*] who knows?

SL: There you go.

JS: Go figure. But Alan's dad decided we needed a new car. And he had a friend who sold Ramblers at the time, so this was what we were gonna have. And this is all they had at that particular time on a moment's notice, so that's what we had.

SL: Wow.

JS: But it [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Now he didn't say anything about that.

JS: No, but it was an experience. But—and everybody, in fact, just—you know, there were Toyotas, there were Jaguars, there were, you know, just all kinds of cars other than that. But our experience in Germany was fun. [01:18:47] We went to Italy twice. We went down—the first time we went down the Adriatic side, because my boss was married to a German, and they know the good places to go. And we stayed in this resort that was new. You didn't often get your own bathroom in Europe in those days. And we stayed in this brand new hotel—three meals a day—more than you could possibly eat—and we had our own bathroom and shower. And it cost us three dollars a day. It was the kind we could afford. [*Laughs*]

SL: You could almost move there and . . .

JS: Yeah.

SL: . . . and just live there permanently.

JS: I'm sure it's not that way today.

SL: Right.

JS: But then we took another trip and went down the Mediterranean side and went all the way down to Pompeii. And we did camp out part of the way, though, to save money. [01:19:40] And here's the thing that I still question. You know how difficult it is with our wonderful child-care situations that we have in places. How you just—you can't even trust your nannies some days.

SL: Right.

JS: Nanny-cams and all like that now just to be sure that your child's being cared for. We had a German maid who came one morning a week. And she babysat sometimes. And we left Katie. She was—how old was she? She wasn't even a year old—and left her with the maid for ten days. No telephone contact. No anything. Now, she kept her in our apartment, and everyone around knew she was there. Our company captain was right across the hall, and they check, you know—it wasn't like—someone would've contacted us had there been a problem. But we went all the way on this trip and never even blinked. Didn't think anything about

it. It wasn't a problem. But we had a great time, you know, visiting all these places. We camped out some and stayed in hotels in the towns.

SL: You couldn't do that today.

JS: No. And we could walk off and leave our tent . . .

SL: Yeah.

JS: . . . and everything would be there when we came back. We didn't have a lot that anybody would want, but still . . .

SL: Yeah.

JS: . . . you know, it was just a different time—never be that way again.

[01:21:07] SL: Well, and also Americans were popular then.

JS: True. True. We were welcome there. We did also go to Berlin, and we had to ride the train to get there overnight. And that was an experience—and went to all the places in Berlin. That was shortly before the wall was coming down. But it was funny—they would take you on a tour, and you would see this beautiful façade on a building, and you'd drive past it and look back, and there was something back there, but it was just junk, you know. Just nothing. It was kind of a sad situation. We also went to—well, we traveled a lot within Germany, and then we went to Switzerland and through the Netherlands and Belgium

and France twice. In fact, a friend of mine who had a friend going to school in Paris—while the guys were out in the field one episode, we took the train and went to Paris to see her friend and got to do a lot of things. And then we went back later with our husbands—did that. It was fun.

SL: Kind of a scouting mission.

JS: Reconnoiter. [*Laughs*]

[01:22:21] SL: Yeah, reconnoiter. So after three years in Germany . . .

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . you come back to Fayetteville?

JS: To . . .

SL: No?

JS: Killeen. Fort Hood.

SL: Fort Hood.

JS: For six months.

SL: And you stayed there six months. Then Fayetteville.

JS: Then Fayetteville.

SL: And he had some kind of job with the union—student union?

JS: He was manager of the student union. He didn't find that enjoyable. And we were gonna leave after a year. He actually interviewed and had a job offer. His degree was banking and



finance—and had an offer from a bank in Memphis. I was gonna have to teach school again and two little kids and all like that, and at the eleventh hour, Jim Pomfret, who was vice president for finance at the time, knew Alan, and he said, "Would you come be my assistant?" So we said yes, and that way he could continue and finish his master's. He did that for two years, and we kind of became more a part of the university family at that point.

SL: Right.

JS: He had a real job. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

JS: So—and then after three years there, he got his master's, and we moved to Commerce—"Whit" Halliday . I'm sure Alan went over all this with you . . .

SL: Yes.

[01:23:41] JS: . . . asked him to be his administrative assistant and went to Oklahoma and dodged tornadoes for about nine months and got his Ph.D. [*Laughs*]

SL: And then back to Commerce.

JS: He had commuted for a couple of years, and then we just had to move up there to establish his residency.

[01:23:58] SL: And then you went back to Commerce before you

went to Corpus Christi?

SL: For about six months, we had—or maybe it was a little longer than that. What it was is we had—we were there about a year, I guess, while he—first semester of that year, he finished his dissertation. And then we had built a house. We had been living in a three-bedroom apartment all this time, which we sublet while we were in Oklahoma. They were hard to come by . . .

SL: Right.

JS: . . . in Commerce, and we had been in our house six months. And within, I think, a month, he got two job offers. One was a—or maybe it was earlier. Roy Shilling, who was at Hendrix, wanted him to come be a development person for Hendrix. And we thought about it but that wasn't what he wanted to do. And then Whit Halliday went to Corpus Christi and asked Alan to go as his vice president, so—academics—for academics. So . . .

[01:25:03] SL: And he was vice president there for seven—six, seven years, and then he became president?

JS: Then he became president. And then—let's see—Whit died after—he moved to sort of the systems person—what Alan does here. And then after he died, they hired someone else, and that didn't really work out well. And they asked Alan—he may have told you this, too, to take over the systems job. But it was in

the works by then that Texas and A&M were grabbing up junior colleges and four-year smaller schools all over the state.

SL: Folding them into their systems.

JS: Yes. Uh-huh. Expansion.

SL: Right.

JS: And that was in the works, and he knew that the systems job wouldn't be forever if that were the case. And he told 'em he would take it if he could stay on the campus also. And they said fine.

SL: Okay.

[01:26:00] JS: So he did that until we came here. And then shortly after we left, they were taken in by the A&M System. So . . .

SL: Good timing.

JS: Good timing. We love our A&M friends. We have a lot of 'em.

SL: Yeah.

JS: But it was interesting—the exposure we had. They—it was just different. We knew a lot of the A&M trustees. We did not get to know, at that time, a lot of the Texas—UT trustees, but . . .

SL: Right.

JS: . . . we know—we still know some of 'em, you know, at A&M.

[01:26:38] SL: Well, did you enjoy living on the Gulf Coast?

JS: I did. When we first moved there, we went to the beach at least

once if not twice every weekend. And couldn't understand why people who'd lived there all their lives didn't go. I mean, it just—I mean, you have this beach, and you don't go to it?

[Laughs]

SL: Right.

JS: And we would just go all the time. But as time went on, you know, we didn't go either. We did end up buying a house over there and sold that one and built a bigger one. And we had a friend who was in the business, and through him, we did that. And enjoyed doing it and being there. But it got to where we would go over to our house, and we knew friends who ran the motel/condo place right across the street, and we'd go—I'm a fan of chlorinated water. [Laughs]

SL: Right.

JS: I like to go to the beach, and then I like to get it off of me.

SL: Right.

JS: So—but it was a wonderful place to live. The weather is not wonderful, but—it's humid and windy all the time. You'd die without the wind. But it—you know, our kids grew up there. It's what they called home. Their friends there—we still have good friends there, and we—you know, Alan had many opportunities there. And the people can be wonderful, so—we met lots of

Mexican American families there on our board and otherwise and other institutional people and just really had a good time.

[01:28:12] SL: Did you pick up a second language while you were there?

JS: *Un poquito.* [*Laughs*]

SL: Just a little.

JS: Si. [*Laughs*]

SL: So—but your daughters started doing the horse thing . . .

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . there. And that became . . .

JS: Alan's bad mistake. [*Laughter*] It's his fault. He got them riding the first horse, and they were taking riding lessons. And that was going along real well till they sold the horse, and Jenifer came home in tears—I mean, the younger daughter—just absolutely her heart was broken, and there was nothing else that she wanted to ride out there. You know, they didn't have any other horses that she liked. And finally, they got in a new horse, and she came—she was funny. She could—the words wouldn't come out of her mouth fast enough when she got excited. She came home from her lesson one day, and she says, "Daddy! Daddy! They have a new horse out there, and his name is Buck, and he's a line back dun, and he's for sale. And you know what

happened to Lady!" [*Laughs*] That was the first horse. So Alan said, "Oh, my God." I think we paid three hundred dollars for this plug. [*Laughter*] But he was a good old horse and probably ended up having the happiest life of any horse you've ever known. When we sold him—some young boy whose grandfather had a farm wanted a horse for him to just come out and ride every now and then.

SL: Yeah.

JS: And Buck died happy in one of those pastures. I just know it. But . . .

[01:29:40] SL: But you all ended up buying a horse trailer and . . .

JS: Horse trailer and . . .

SL: . . . goin' to all the . . .

JS: . . . Jenifer rodeoed for about ten years, and I was the chief hauler. And at one point in my life, I could back a two-horse trailer in a straight line for a long, long way. [*SL laughs*] I learned—like, you're a boat. You do it that way. [*Laughs*] We would go—the rodeos would start sometimes on Wednesdays—weekends in the winter, of course, but on—in the summer. And Jenifer did the barrels and the poles, and then she would run ribbons for a roper. And she would go through all these. She, for some reason, liked to run in what they call slack. That

means after 10:00 at night. It could be 2:00 a.m. or 3:00 a.m., but she just did better. So she would make the finals, and we would either come home after she had qualified. They were never too far. San Antonio might've been the farthest or down in the valley a couple hours away. And then she would—Alan would go back and Katie would come. Katie liked to flirt with the cowboys. [*Laughs*] And then she would run in the finals and do—she always said she did better when her daddy took her. [*SL laughs*] But she said she had more fun with her mother. [*Laughter*] I'd let her get by with more.

SL: Yeah.



JS: But we did that and had some really fun times. There was a time in Freer, Texas, and that's where they have the Rattlesnake Round-Up, and that's big oil country—and we had gotten a motel room in—just for Jenifer and me, 'cause they weren't coming that time. And she made the finals. Well, the motels are regularly rented to the oil guys—the rig guys who come in and out. And they had made a reservation for it, but we were staying over, and we had no place to go. And I was practically in tears. I said, "We can't both sleep in that car out there at the arena." I said, "We just can't make it." And finally, the lady says, "Well," she said, "all we have that you can sleep in is the

back room of a trailer." Like an RV or a hauling trailer. I said, "I don't care what it is. We'll take it." And we took it, and she says, "Now I have to tell you that there's an oil crew staying in the front half." [*Laughter*] And they stayed up till 3:00 a.m. playin' poker or something. And there's nothing but this one little, thin paper door that's locked, but still—I mean, I don't know these men—who they are. First of all, the bedroom—there was about this much room on three sides of the bed, and there was a closet bi-fold door. And there was a hole this big in the bottom of the closet [uses hands to suggest width]. And I'm thinking rattlesnake country. First thing I did was stuff something in there. We went to take a bath, and there were ants all over the bathtub. I mean, it was just the pits. And I told Jenifer—I said, "Don't make a sound, whatever you do. These guys don't even know we're here." You know. And that was the end of that. It was not a restful night, but we did get to the finals the next day and got home safely. So that was just one of our stories. And sometimes, we'd rent an RV and take the German shepherd with us, and then it would rain and then—"Your turn to take him walkin'."

SL: Right.

JS: "I did it last time." You know.



[01:33:14] SL: Well, those kind of became your family vacations, then, didn't they?

JS: They were. They pretty much were. And we had a good time. Jenifer and Katie both did the 4-H horse route—the county—that competition. Katie didn't rodeo. She had a—what you call a show horse and would ride the gaited pleasure classes and that kind—Western, but not the rough stuff. So—and Jenifer had a few hospital trips. She's a tough little girl. She broke her . . .

SL: Fell off the horse?

JS: She—Alan was leading her in from the pasture bareback for her first break. I was home making chocolate chip cookies, and Alan said, "You better come. Jenifer wants you." And I said, "What's the matter?" And he said, "Well, I think she might've broken her arm." Well, I looked at her arm. It was stickin' up like this!

[*Laughs* and point to arm]

SL: Wow. Oh!

JS: Oh, my gosh! And then . . .

SL: Oh!



JS: Let's see, she [*SL laughs*] broke another arm somehow. But I guess her worst one—and it was right before finals—we had borrowed a horse for her to run figure-eight barrels, and she had been sick. And it was not a smart, motherly thing to do, but

the—she wasn't used to the horse, and the horse ran straight at the bucking chute and took an abrupt forty-five—ninety-five-degree angle, and it threw her against the bucking chute and knocked her out. And when I got over the fence and was down there, her eyes were rolled back in her head, and she didn't know where she was. And they wouldn't let me ride in the back of the ambulance, and Alan had to get someone to take the horse home. And he and Katie—I did get to ride in the front of the ambulance, and we got there. And the doctor—our doctor was there waiting on us, and we came in. And, again, this right arm was all buckled up. And they started—she was still out—started cutting her clothes off her. Well, she wasn't out at that time. When we finally got there and Alan came in and she was all covered up—and, you know, she's just under all the blankets and just still not totally with me. And he said, "Are your feet cold?" And she said, "No." And he said, "Can you wiggle 'em?" And she went like this. And we both just—[*SL laughs*]—"Thank God she'll walk." [*Laughter*] You know, I mean, it was scary.

SL: Yeah.

JS: So then the doctor came, and they were x-raying her and having to cut everything off of her 'cause they didn't want to move her. And I kept saying, "You know, Chris—that arm—look at her

arm." And finally, he said, "Jean, go sit down and shut up. I'm not worried about her arm. We can fix that." I said, "Oh."

[*Laughs*] So I spent the night with her that night.

SL: Yeah.

JS: And she was fine, and we got them to put a cast on her that was cut out enough that she could hold the reins and ride in the finals. [*Laughs*] You got to take all your chances. It was her idea. That's what she wanted to do. And, by George, she'd come that far.

[01:36:18] SL: Well, she sounds pretty tough.

JS: She is. She's got those two boys now, and they're all three drag racing.

SL: Drag racing. How old are they?

JS: Jackson will be fifteen, Mitchell just turned thirteen, and Jenifer will be forty-four in May. [*Laughs*]

SL: How is it they can be drag racing at such a young age?

JS: They have junior drag racing. It's pretty—it's safer than riding horses. That's my only—that I keep telling myself.

SL: Now, wait a minute. These are like real cars and . . .

JS: Real cars. They run on alcohol. It's the least flammable.

They—they're only allowed to go so fast by age, and if they go faster, they're out. And it's a one-on-one—you know, dual—and

an elimination, and their dad is the car guy. He is the ultimate car guy and knows all about 'em and can rebuild the motors and all like that. But he started with the older boy because he wasn't into school activities and stuff. And they've always all been interested in cars. When they were two and three, you know, years, we bought 'em the little battery cars that they could . . .

SL: Remote control cars . . .

JS: I mean, they could turn around and back 'em around the curb. I mean, they knew how to drive. They can both drive anything you put in front of 'em right now—a front loader or whatever. [SL laughs] So it's not a matter of being able to drive, and they know that very well. But it—it's—we've gone to watch 'em, and it's pretty safe. They can only—the art of it is in your start. You can red light, and then you're out, or you can get a zero or point-one start, and you have to watch these lights. They go—you know, red—red—red—green—red—red—red—go!

SL: Right.

JS: And then you have to maintain your proper speed, and you don't have a speedometer. You just have to know how fast to go. So they started doing that. And then every now and then, they would have an adult division. And so Jeff decided Jenifer should do it. She didn't really ask to do it or want to, but one day he

brought home a car. [*Laughter*] So it's pink. [*Laughs*] And it's got a nose on it, like, from here to that corner [point to corner]. And, of course, it's bigger.

SL: Right.

JS: And bigger wheels. And they have this big car barn, they call it, out behind the house; they built specifically for all of this stuff. And we were out there looking at Jenifer's car, and I got in it and sat in it, and you are sitting like this, and you're strapped all the way in and your arms are kinda stra—this is all the movement you have. You're—you've got brakes, and this is it [uses arms to suggest movement]. I mean, it's not like I'm driving, and I can haul it around or something like that. And Alan said, "Jenifer, can you start this up? Can you turn it on?" And she said, "Oh, yeah." And that thing started, and it was like the world was coming—and Alan says, "Stop! Cut it off!" [*Laughter*] Inside that barn, too. It is just powerful. It is. I don't know how many hundred horses it has, but it's big. Anyway . . .

SL: I've just never heard of such a thing—that's just an . . .

JS: Well . . .

SL: That's . . .

JS: . . . in Texas, they've had it for a long time.

SL: Yeah.

JS: But it—it's just—you know, I'm not saying that this is what might be her choice to be doing, but the kids are doing it right now and, you know—it's kind of like I never thought I would be hauling a horse trailer around. My friends who knew me in college thought, "Eww!" [*Laughter*] "Why are you doing that?" You know, this kind of thing. But, you know, if it's something that your kids are into and they enjoy it and they're with other good kids and all like that. And they weren't out drinking and . . .

SL: That's true.

JS: . . . doing pot and stuff like that.

SL: Yeah, that's true.

JS: So there you go.

SL: And it's a family thing.

JS: It is. It is.

[01:40:27] SL: Is there anything else about Corpus Christi that . . .

JS: Well, I was employed for ten years.

SL: What did you do?

JS: I was a cotton buyer.

SL: A cotton buyer?

JS: I worked for a cotton buyer. We got into—I got into this—their daughter rodeoed. She was Katie's age and first Katie's friend,

but then Jenifer and Becky did the rodeos together, and we would haul together sometimes. And Irma had had this cotton business for years. And her husband, Tony, worked down there too, and their son and their children in the summer before school started. And one year, she had the girls helping in—my girls helping in the sample room before school started. And, you know, I'd come down sometimes. I'm always the cook, so wherever the kids were or wherever—you know, we did something, I'd take cookies every now and then or cake or something . . .

SL: Right.

JS: . . . whatever and just visit with them. And she was saying, "You know, I have no idea what I'm gonna do. The kids are going back to school." And she says, "I've tried everywhere to get someone to come in the office and help me." She says, "Called the employment agency," and she said, "first thing they want to know is how much vacation do they have and what time do they have to be at work and what time can they go home and all like that." [01:41:46] And she says, "This is a seasonal business." For her, it starts—depending on the crops. Well, 'course, she buys contracts with the farmers all year round. But it really starts in full when—about a month before the cotton

starts being harvested, 'cause she has to be there to buy it. So this is the process they were in—now, she says, "I'm just at a lost—loss—for what I'm gonna do." And I said, "Well, Irma." I said, "I've got a college degree. I graduated with honors." I said, "I'm not doin' a thing." I said, "I'll come help you if I can do it, you know." And I said, "And, you don't even have to pay me." I said, "You've paid my kids for practically nothing this summer." [*Laughs*] Anyway, she said, "Well, I'm not gonna do that. I'll definitely pay you," you know. So I said, "Well, try me, and if you don't want me, I won't be hurt. I'll just bring you some more cookies." [*Laughter*] So that started a ten-year, you know, relationship. And it was back when you had to hand-calculate or put in the weight, the quality, and all of that, the color of each bale and how much that was worth, and figure up what you're gonna pay the farmer. They're all computerized now, but not at the time we started.

[01:43:00] SL: Is that part of the futures business?

JS: Not—she wasn't, other than she would contract with the farmer for x number of acres. In other words, whatever the price of the day was, she would buy his cotton. And, therefore, he was assured a . . .

SL: Sale.



JS: . . . sale, yeah, at a certain price. And, you know, some years the cotton was good quality, and they made a lot of money. Some years it wasn't. One year, we worked about two weeks, and Hurricane Allen came through and blew everything away. And that was the end of the cotton season. [*Laughs*]

SL: We gotta stop.

JE: Yeah.

SL: We just lost a light. [1:43:41] We're still in Corpus Christi. You are a cotton buyer.

JS: A cotton—yeah. And—yeah. Irma was the boss for sure, but we would get the lists of cotton and come in and figure up what we owed, and I was her chief—I wrote all her checks. Did all of that and worked some in the beginning. She had one of the beginning computers that was, you know, geared towards cotton-buying and that sort of thing. Now—I talked to her the other day, and everything is just strictly—you don't even see a sample of cotton anymore. You don't see a IBM-type card that we dealt with so much. Nothing like that. It's all—you call and ask for a certain sheet, and they send it to you, and that—that's all you do. And then it was scary one time, though, when she got sick and was in the hospital, and I was there figuring all of the cotton, paying out her money to these farmers that weren't

gonna give it back [*laughs*] if it wasn't right. So I was really, really cautious on all like that. Made 'em wait a little while, while I double-checked. But it was a fun atmosphere. I could wear jeans to work or, you know, whatever, very casual. She provided lunch for us, you know, whatever we wanted, because the deal with her hiring someone wanting to know the hours and the work, there have been times when I would hurry down there at six o'clock in the morning, and I might not get home until ten at night and that might go on that way for two solid weeks and sometimes on Sunday. And she needed someone that she could depend on. And, course, the more hours I worked, the more I made. So that was—you worked when you're needed and then it trails off. And a lot of times, I would work—I have started as early as the middle of July and then worked as late as into January some years.

SL: Wow.

JS: And, as I say, worked as little as two weeks one time. But it was fun. It was a great part-time job and very nice people to work for. And if I—in the middle of it all, if I had to leave, she'd say, "Go." You know.

[01:46:06] SL: So the cotton was all brought into one location, or did you have to travel around?

JS: It goes to the compress. All the bales are baled and—'course, they have this modular thing now, and they ship—take the modules into the gin. Sometimes I'd go to the gins to pick up the cards on the cotton—the grades and all the specifications. A lot of times, the farmers would come in with them, and they'd want their money right away. But we would get a sample cut out of every bale and that's how we would match stuff up to verify it and that sort of thing. Then it's just totally figured—how many bales at what weight, what grade, and what, you know, staple—they called it—the threading quality of the cotton, which is all done governmentally, you know, now.

[01:47:00] SL: So the grade—was the grade based on color or . . .

JS: Yeah, it could be color. It could be gray or yellow instead of white. It could have a short staple—short thread quality as opposed to the long. The longer the staple, the finer the cotton. And then the weight. And there's a certain weight limit, and I cannot rack my mind about what it is right now, but it's something like lower than two seventy and higher than three thirty-five. And if a bale is too light or too heavy, then it's charged a five-dollar penalty. So it's just like any business. You've just gotta learn the rules and the—what you have to do.

SL: That's fascinating, you know.

JS: It is. It was interesting. It was fun to do. It really was.

SL: And you did that for ten years.

JS: Ten years. Mh-hmm.

SL: Wow.

JS: So . . .

[01:47:57] SL: So Alan ends up getting a call.

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: Somebody's recommended him for coming up to Arkansas.

JS: Out of the blue.

SL: And you guys decide to come.

JS: Did you go over this with Alan or . . .

SL: A little bit.

JS: A little bit. But . . .

SL: But I—you know, we can go over it again.

JS: But he got the call, and, you know, we talked about it. And I mean, you have to be interested in the job, first of all. It's quite a promotion, and—in—coming back to Arkansas was a wonderful thing for us. And he went for an interview before it was really very public. He met—I think it was Sykes Harris and Jim Blair in Dallas—and interviewed with them there. And then came the visit here. And, as I say, we came one day, and the next morning, we started out with Sykes in a little single-engine,

four-person plane [*laughs*], and we bounced from Monticello to Pine Bluff up to Fayetteville and all around that. And, 'course, I don't know how well you knew Dan Ferritor.

SL: I know Dan.

JS: But he—I've always liked Dan. He is a great speaker, and he's fun to listen to, and I'm sure he was a wonderful teacher. But we walked in the office there with board members and some other people around, and he said, "I have a picture of you in the yearbook." [*Laughs*] And all like this. And I said, "Where did you get that?" And he said, "Oh, I did my research." And all like that. But it was kind of a fun thing, and I got to visit with everybody. And—hopefully—evidently, we did okay. And then we came back here that night, and then the next day we did UALR and UAMS, I guess. That was—and that—then that night, we went to dinner, as I said, with the trustees at—where Lewis acknowledged that he remembered me and all like that.

[01:50:07] SL: The campuses were much different then.

JS: Oh. Well, there were only the—what—five?

SL: Yes.

JS: And pretty well contained. We were still football heroes in the [*laughs*] Southwest Conference and great basketball program. So—I mean, my gosh. After Alan had accepted the job, the

basketball team was going to—I'm proclaiming my ignorance now. Let me go back and tell you that watching college athletics and football, in particular—because my last experience was the Big Shootout in the rain. [Laughs] Had wonderful seats, thanks to George Tharel in Fayetteville. But I sat there miserable and swore I'd never go to another football game again. Then when we went to Commerce, Texas, that was the Saturday night entertainment. You didn't just go to a football game, you went for the whole night. And everybody went, and everybody stayed. And I'm—still wasn't exactly a football fan. And well, this job came up. Alan said, "I tell you what. What if I promise you that you will never have to sit outside at another—we'll have to go, but you won't have to sit outside. You will have a box in Fayetteville and indoor seats in Little Rock [laughs], and you don't have to go to the out-of-town games." And I said, "Okay." [Laughs] But, anyway, it was a great opportunity, and Alan really was excited about it and wanted to do it. And our girls were excited too, all up until the time that we told 'em to pick—they were in Houston then—to pick a time when they wanted to come home and gather what stuff they wanted to keep 'cause the rest was going. "You're not keeping the house?" [Laughs] I said, "I don't think so. Not if we can sell it." [Laughs] So, I

mean, they were still happy for their father, but that was a little—that was a rude awakening for them—that life as they had known it would not be the same again. But they love to come here, so that was all good. But, anyway, the process of going through this, you know, went smoothly, and everything was fine, and here we are—eighteen years later.

SL: Eighteen years.

JS: It will be eighteen the last week in May. But who's counting?

[Laughs]

[01:52:32] SL: So did you take on any jobs while—when you moved up here or is it . . .

JS: No, no, I haven't. I haven't taken any official jobs. I was on the symphony board for a while and president of the Junior League Sustainers and did some things like that. Basically, as it was explained to us with getting this house built—and I did get to do that. I—pretty much, Alan turned it over to me and said, "I don't have time to meet with the architects. I don't have time to do all this. You do it, and then you tell 'em." In other words, he didn't want to know if it was wrong because I [laughs] could say so. And had lots of help from lots of friends. Some—a couple of my friends are interior decorators, and they helped—mostly for free, you know. Just things like that. But it—that took my time



for a couple years, because it was about that long from start to finish in doing that. And other than that, as I say, part of the job was to do a lot of entertaining and to have a lot of functions here. And we do have, you know, within reason, any campus who wants to have it here within the system, you know. We have had alumni. We've had functions for UAPB. We're having one coming up in March for UALR. We've had Monticello. We have a lot for Fayetteville. Medical center fund-raisers and that sort of thing. I mean, we've done it a lot. But we do for other—like, LeadAR? Lead Arkansas? Are you familiar with that organization?

SL: No.

[01:54:19] JS: It's—they have people from all over the state that they bring in for meetings in various locations just to acquaint them with what is out there and what else—people from the Delta—what's going on in Mount Magazine or for—you know, things like that, and we've had a lot of dinners for them. We've had—oh, I'm tryin' to think—something I was thinking of a minute ago, and now it's left my mind. What we're having for UALR next month is their fund-raiser for the arts—specifically, the musicians—their jazz festival—and it'll be a brunch, and they'll have some students perform a little bit, and then we'll



have brunch and champagne and wine and . . .

SL: Here in this house?

JS: . . . they'll pay a lot of money, and that's a good thing.

SL: Yeah.

[01:55:17] JS: And the other thing is that I happen to like to cook.

I've cooked a lot, and I do a lot, and I do most of the food for most of the parties.

SL: Now, that doesn't seem fair to me.

JS: Why not? It's what—it—when I have a problem—I remember the day my mother passed away, and I knew the whole family was coming. And I went in the kitchen and started making chili. And Alan said, "Jean, don't do that. We'll hire—we'll buy something. We'll hire someone to come fix it." I said, "Alan, leave me alone. This is what I need to do right now." So it's my therapy. I like to do it. My mother liked to cook, and she taught me a lot, and I have always liked—and I like to do it for big crowds, so—and I can save the university a lot of money.

So [*laughs*] . . .

SL: You know, that's—but you had a . . .

JS: I don't have to do it. And I . . .

SL: You had . . .

JS: What I will do a lot of times is, I have some real good friends at

Catering to You—Billie Rutherford, Skip's wife . . .

SL: Yeah.

JS: . . . works there. And I know Judy Adams real well, and they're so sweet. They will do what I don't wanna do. Like, if you're cooking a tenderloin. Anybody can cook a tenderloin, but you just don't want to cook it too much. So I'll let them do that, and then I'll do everything else, and it works out beautifully. And I can, for instance, make a potato casserole for thirty people for ten dollars. And if I have it catered, it's gonna cost fifty. So why shouldn't I if I enjoy doin' it?


[01:56:57] SL: Yeah. Is that about the size crowd that this place'll hold, is about thirty people?

JS: We've had—as far as, like, cocktail pick-up finger food—we've had up to one hundred and twenty.

SL: Wow.

JS: And then we've had, you know, all down. We've had seated dinners in here that I did probably have all catered, just because the logistics of setting up the tables and silver and china and seating and all like that was about all I could handle for that—for a formal dinner. We've had all sizes and all kinds. We've had out in the yard, hopefully, if the weather's good—you know, that sort of thing. If we can open up the back and let people go

outside and sit out there, and we'll bring tables and chairs up from the patio at the office to have more seating area. I think you could probably have two hundred if you could do that. We—



one day when they de—what do they—inaugurated the *Razorback* submarine across the river. Alan came home and told me he'd invited the pep band for dinner. [*Laughs*] I said, "Okay, that's a Sunday. We can't get any help." And he said, "Oh, oh, okay. Well, I'll help you." That's what he always says. [*Laughter*] I cooked. I can't—I think I made King Ranch casseroles, which you can make ahead of time, and they feed a lot and freeze it and bread and salad and stuff like that.

SL: Hmm.

JS: I must've cooked that morning six fruit cobblers, some of which came from the garden—the blackberries and all like that. And I have never seen a nicer bunch of kids, a more appreciative bunch of kids, and a hungrier [*laughter*] bunch of kids in my life. I must've gotten—course I guess there were, I don't know, forty of 'em here—I got at least twenty thank-you notes written—how much they appreciated. And one kid came, and I had three kinds of cobbler, but six cobblers. And he said, "I haven't tasted that other one. May I have some more?" [*Laughter*] They were so nice, and it was fun to do. But it's great. We've had—the

Clinton School had the students from Indonesia here to study tsunami prevention and that kind of thing. We had all of them here. Now that was hard for me, 'cause I don't cook that kind of food.

SL: Right.

JS: I had—I cooked some of it, but I had Lilly's Dim Sum do part of it and bring it—to serve that. We've just had all kinds of things.

SL: For eighteen years.

JS: For eighteen—well, we've only been in the house . . .

SL: Oh, that's sixteen, I guess.

JS: . . . about thirteen.

SL: Oh, thirteen.

JS: We were five years out in a townhouse on Pleasant Valley Drive. But we did some things there, too, so it was okay.

[01:59:52] SL: I just can't imagine. You had an event in here last night, didn't you?

TM: Scott, we need to change tapes.

SL: Okay.

JS: Not last night, was it?

SL: Or . . .

JS: I had—last week, I had about thirty women for a lunch, but it was a club I'm in, and some others brought some of the food.

SL: Surely over that thirteen years, there's been times when people just wouldn't leave or—I mean, I just can't imagine . . .

JS: Oh, well, that happens, you know.

SL: Like us right now. [*Laughter*]

JS: We've—no. We—we've had some take out some lights what on I call "the runway"—the driveway at night when it's lighted it . . .

SL: Right.

JS: . . . looks like an airplane [*laughs*] runway. And some take out a few lights, and the guys come repair 'em the next day, so [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Right. Right.

JS: . . . it's just part of the job. And sometimes we've had—staying late doesn't bother me, 'cause usually I have kitchen help to clean up. And they're doing that, and I can't go to bed or pay 'em till they leave anyway. But it—it's the ones who come about thirty minutes early that really throw me for—I've had one recurring nightmare in my lifetime, and it has been in regards to entertaining. And it's so funny, because I even had this nightmare when I had very short hair, which you may have noticed in some of those pictures I had for many years. I have this nightmare—I don't like to cook rice, so I always let the girls cook that when they get here if I'm having something with rice.

I either—guests are coming and I haven't started the rice or I'm not dressed and my hair's in rollers. [*Laughter*] And who uses rollers anymore? [*Laughs*] But that—it's always, "I've got to go get dressed. I've got to go get dressed." And then I wake up, and it's okay 'cause I'm not havin' a party.

[02:01:42] SL: That's kind of like my recurring dream I used to have that I had signed up for a course and never went until—and I think, "Oh, my gosh. I remember I" . . .

JS: I have had that one, too. [*Laughter*] I mean, how am I gonna fake that? And I never did that—never thought about doin' that.

SL: Right.

[02:01:59] JS: But it—I—it's kind of "that deadline's coming." And the hair roller thing reminds me. John White was a busboy in the Kappa house for a short time. I don't even—I don't know if it was just one semester my senior year or what. But when he accepted this job, he called here and I answered the phone. And he said, "I've seen you with your hair in curlers." And I said, "I wouldn't tell anybody if I were you. You may not get to come here." [*Laughter*]

SL: Oh, boy.

JS: But we all used to do that, so . . .

[02:02:34] SL: Well, it sounds like—well first of all, it must've been

great to be able to kind of build this house.

JS: Oh, it was. It was fun—not that—everyone has to stay within a budget and that always proves to be a problem because things always go over budget. But, as I say, I had a lotta help and a lotta friends with good taste, so—and a lot of 'em, as I say, didn't charge for their services and/or gave us things at their cost, so I mean, it was kind of a contribution to the university to do that.

[02:03:13] SL: Right. Well, you know, Alan's been doing this for eighteen years now.

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: He's got a couple of hires he wants to take care of and . . .

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . make sure everything's on the right path. What are you guys gonna do when you're not doin' this—when you're done with this?

JS: I'll probably still be cooking. [*Laughter*]

SL: You gonna open up a restaurant?

JS: Let me tell you—as far as our kids coming home for Christmas. I would've loved to have done a restaurant earlier—a tearoom or something like that. You know, the—maybe just breakfast and lunch or something. I really am too old to do that now. I—and

no restaurant's gonna be good if the head person doesn't stay right there.

SL: Right.

JS: Some of the—we love to go to Brave's here in town, but sometimes, I think if Peter's not there, it's maybe—it doesn't quite have the edge that it does when he's there.

SL: Right.

JS: It's still good, but it—but just not quite the same. And it's the—someone else is not gonna do it like you want it done. I mean, how could I do that if I'm not gonna let somebody cater it now? How could I turn it over to somebody? *[Laughs]* So no, I wanna do other things than that. But—and all of our years, the kids have always come home on Christmas, and—except for one Christmas and that's when the younger grandson was born. And he was born on the eighth of December, at which time, I had told 'em I would stay with 'em 'cause they had Jackson, you know, a little over a year and a half at the time, and they needed a little help. And I stayed with them a week, but during that week, I got really, really sick with flu. I think I had walking pneumonia, because when I finally got back here to my doctor, they had to give me two rounds of antibiotics before it would totally clear out of my system. But I was so sick. I went into



town—my older daughter was not married at the time—and I spent the next week on her sofa—she says, "Coughing and sounding really ugly." And I think she was glad to go to work in the morning to get away from me. But then everyone came for Christmas, and so I still wasn't totally well, but they still expected me to make eggs Benedict that morning for everybody. Then we had the whole turkey and dressing and homemade rolls and mashed potatoes and gravy and three kinds of pies and all like that. And to add insult to injury, Alan invited his sister-in-law and brother, who were at Texas A&M, to come join us [*laughs*] in The Woodlands. But we made it through. No one caught my flu or whatever it was. And—it was one of those pictures in there—it's me at the sink doing the last of the dishes, 'cause it was just tradition, so we hold to that. But that's—it's—I don't think I'd have it any other way.

SL: Yeah.

JS: Sound like I'm complaining, but I'm kinda bragging.

[02:06:08] SL: Well, so you don't have—are y'all just gonna—you think you'll—here in a couple years, you'll just travel or . . .

JS: You're trying to get a commitment out of me.

SL: I—well, I . . .

JS: Did Alan tell you something that he hasn't told me yet?

[Laughs]

SL: No, no, no. I did say that . . .

JS: The same question. I know.

SL: . . . I would probably . . .

JS: You're doing an end run. [Laughs]

SL: I can't imagine not being able to come to Alan at some point in time, because he knows where all the [telephone rings] bodies are buried. He knows . . .

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: Let me get rid of this. I'm sorry about this. He—there's so much history that he's not really comfortable . . .

JS: Talking about it.

SL: . . . talking about it just yet.

JS: Well, maybe we'll both write a book. [Laughs] Or maybe not.

[Laughs]

SL: Well, and I know that you probably know a lot of stories too. I mean, you've . . .

JS: Well . . .

SL: . . . you've witnessed—you've—well, just by the entertainment that you've done here, you've had so many endless . . .

JS: I hear things. [Laughs]

SL: Yeah.

JS: I choose not to talk about 'em, so . . .

SL: I know.

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: I know. And, of course, there's a lot of things that don't ever need to be talked about, but . . .

JS: No, I don't think . . .

SL: . . . then there's—there are some things that would . . .

JS: It wouldn't do any good, so . . .

SL: . . . clear things up or . . .

JS: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . explain how things went back [*telephone rings*] . . .

JS: You're in demand.

SL: I don't need to do this. I'm gonna have to kill this phone.  
[Pause] I'd like to be able to come back to you guys at some point. You know, we're gonna keep doing this.

JS: Well, if we're not here, you'll know where to find us.

[02:07:41] SL: Yeah, where—you don't have any idea what y'all are gonna do next, do you?

JS: We don't know. I mean, at some point, I'm sure our children would love us—for us to be a little closer.

SL: And . . .

JS: But we don't wanna live in Houston.

SL: Yeah.

JS: That's not the atmosphere. It—it's Corpus Christi weather without the beach, so—you know.

SL: Right.

JS: It is not—and I have never wanted to live in their back door—backyard—so to speak. I think they should have their lives, and we see each other frequently anyway. They either . . .

SL: Yeah.

JS: . . . come here or we go there or we meet in the middle somewhere for some reason. They all went with us to the bowl game, and you know, we do things together. But I don't know. I'll just have to—stay tuned, as they say. [*Laughs*] We'll figure out something.

[02:08:35] SL: Is there anything else you wanna say or talk about?

JS: I don't think so, other than up to this point, I mean, we've been very fortunate to have this opportunity. I think it's something—the kind of job that I think Alan was born to do. I think he is such a good people person and, as you say, with whoever we were talking about earlier, being able to work out—get a resolution—Mike Beebe, you know. Talk with—go between, trying to get both sides to—at least to find some common ground and that sort of thing. And everything's not perfect, and

some things could always be done better if you could have done them over, but—it—people really welcomed us back, and they've been good to us, so—and who could not like living here?

SL: I know.

JS: As I told Lynn, it's like living in the country, but the grocery store's two blocks down, and you don't have to go far for milk. You don't have to milk the cow, so [laughs] . . .

SL: That's right—wring the neck of the chicken or anything.  
[Laughter]

JS: Yeah, or wring the neck of those chickens again.

[02:09:46] SL: Well, I've got to say—I've never heard anyone say anything but how wonderful and great and how much they love Alan Sugg. I've never heard anything else.

JS: He believes in what he does, and he certainly—if talking on the telephone equates to working 24-7, then he does.

SL: Yeah. Well . . .

JS: But—it took us a long time to convince him to get a cell phone.  
[SL laughs] And now—I won't go there. [Laughs]

SL: He works all the time.

JS: Yeah. So . . .

SL: Well, listen—thank you for all your time.

JE: I've got . . .

JS: Thank you very much.

JE: I've got two things.

SL: All right.

[02:10:19] JE: Can you tell us who the pictures are on the table back there?

JS: That's Alan in the big one in his [points to pictures] . . .

JE: The little round mom-looking pictures.

JS: That would be my mom in one and my engagement picture in the other, which—my daughter Katie will kill me for this—she, in high school, got mad at me one day—really mad at me. It was one of those times when "You will be home." [*Laughs*] And she ripped the picture.

SL: Oh.

JS: Bless her heart, she is so sorry for that. [*Laughs*] But I glued it back together, and I keep it, and there's some more pictures of the girls back there and up there. And I am just—I wouldn't take anything for my girls. I love my grandsons, but my girls come first, so . . .

SL: Yeah.

[02:11:08] JE: And I have one more question.

JS: Sure.

JE: You mentioned that you went to church and basically sat by . . .

JS: Mr. Sugg.

JE: . . . Alan Sugg's father.

JS: Mh-hmm. And I called him Mr. Sugg, too. [*Laughter*]

JE: Did you continue that close relationship with your in-laws?

JS: Well, his mother unfortunately passed away. We had been in Germany about a year and a half, and we were getting ready to go with another couple on a trip to Spain—never got to Spain—and she died. She had been sick. She had a thyroid problem, which back then, they just didn't have the medical knowledge that—you can take a pill now or have something removed and adjust your thyroid with medication. And it took a toll on her whole body. I think she finally had a heart attack. But she was only, like, fifty-two, fifty-three, somewhere in there. And then Alan's father, a few years later, remarried, and she was a really nice woman and really kind of helped raise Alan's younger brother. He had one that was still quite young at that time. But, yes, I always liked Alan's dad, and I think he always liked me. And some Sunday afternoons—he had a farm, and he would go out every week to check on the farm after lunch on Sunday, and sometimes, I'd go. Alan and I'd ride out there with him and back, and he was just a nice person. It was just—nothing to dislike. Now his mother was the personality and the

go-getter. She could teach piano and cook and talk on the phone all at the same time. I can't—unbelievable. Unbelievable. But, yes.

SL: Okay.

JS: Okay.

SL: We're good.

JS: Is that a wrap? [*Laughs*]

[02:12:56] JE: Oh, wait. Yes, I need one more story we got at lunch.

JS: Okay.

JE: Tell me about your dog. Tell Scott about your dog.

JS: J. B.?

JE: Yes.

JS: Oh, J. B.

SL: Oh, yeah, that's right. We haven't told the dog story.

JS: Oh, the love of my life, and in spite of how much I love my girls, the best child I've ever had is my golden retriever that J. B. Hunt bought for me at a Lady Razorback red-tie fund-raiser in—I think this one happened to be at Pinnacle Country Club. And one puppy—I think it was Jim Simms who was with the catering service on the campus at the time, bred his female and had six-month-old puppies at the auction. And, of course, they were



passing all the puppies around, but he was donating one to be auctioned. And I happened to be, when they started the auction, holding this one little very red golden retriever on my shoulder. And he was called a red. I didn't know what they were at the time. And J. B. stood up and said, "I'm gonna buy that for her." And as I told you earlier, Alan was saying, "No, no, no, we can't have a dog. We can't have a dog." [SL laughs] And Johnelle was saying, "Johnnie, you can't do that! You can't do—you can't buy that dog for her!" And he said, "Yes, I can." And he did. [SL laughs] And I—we—as I told you earlier also, we had just put a German shepherd to sleep before we moved here. And with this house and with all the traveling we do, I knew I probably shouldn't get a dog, but I thought that it might be my only and last chance to get one, 'cause Alan probably was not all for it. But I came home. What I didn't tell you earlier—I got on the Internet and found out that they definitely recommend raising any dog—and especially a golden retriever—crate-trained. And I thought, "That settles the problem of the floors in the house. He's not gonna destroy anything or hurt anything." And then I have a friend whose daughter is a veterinarian, but her clinic is way out Cantrell. And I called her, and I said, "I need a good vet close by." And she recommended

one for me, and he has been wonderful. He's practically my best friend now, and any time I call, J. B. has a room. He always has a room in the inn. [*Laughter*] So he's turned out to be a wonderful, wonderful pet and son—my only son.

SL: Okay.

JS: Okay.

SL: That's a good story.

JS: Very good.

SL: That's good.

[02:15:31 End of interview]

[Transcribed and edited by Pryor Center staff]