

Sybil Hampton Tape Summary
First Person Plural Project
3 February 2012

Intro - First Person Plural Project

JB Spoken elsewhere about issues Central High School, race relations in your life
Wondered about gender

SH Brother & I talked about Daisy Bates documentary [2011 Sharon LaCruise film –*Daisy Bates: First Lady of Little Rock*] our mother raised by father as single parent - woman independent
He was contractor, had gone to college
Grandfather had business, mother worked in grocery & restaurant
Mother raised by man, dual lenses
Raised us to be independent
Three adults in house

5 min

Brother & I shared chores, father coached
Went to St Louis for sports
Lived in neighborhood, more boys than girls, mother kept me in house
Grandfather wrote about travels, drove around country
Took brother to Havana, wanted him to see color didn't matter
Girls didn't travel with men like that
Parents went to college
Mother later went to college
Very pivotal event- early '50s we were taking ballet, tap,- busy little beavers
Mother didn't have car, father didn't believe she should have own car
Grandfather supported mother; he signed for her to have car
Father packed clothes and moved out
Brother & I to this day intrigued, knew OK
For a year or so father did not live in the home
Came back & lives went on
Even so very instructive, risks in being assertive – consequences
Very helpful to have balance
Father to Sybil: men don't care for smart women, learn to do things that pleasing

10 min

Father worked in Post Office
Wonderful balance, not sheltered from difficulties, given confidence & independence
Brother & I good grounding in personess, not sheltered

JB Grandmother left? died? What happened?

SH Do not know what happened. Left home. Mother was less than year old. They split up

When teenager, my mother worked for Singer shop, sewed beautifully, met her mother about a year before she died. Think I know the family. Very sad, mystery. Want to see death certificate. Not clear that they married. Not clear that father's mother & father married.

JB Complicated family story. Grew up in military, sponsor system in part because of difficulty of travel for African American families in mid-20th c. Thinking of that as you spoke about your grandfather –

SH They wandered West. Only time went East to Miami. I am certain my grandfather very aware of how to travel.
My brother very happy in California - Bay area

15 min

Oregon, Badlands, South Dakota, parts of country they could travel, Grand Canyon. I dream a world. Made it possible for him
My grandfather got my parents to let me have a paper route

Father born in Willmar

JB Southeast AR?

SH Yes, Warren Monticello, Star City –
One of maybe 7 or 8 children, among youngest Jordans
Great grandfather Cherokee Anglo, African-American, looked Indian & Anglo
Great grandmother Caroline, black as shoe leather

Grandmother Henrietta Carter lived in Monticello. He was a barber
Father's father must have died, farmer, Father finished high school 1930s
Lived in the Heights in Little Rock – servant
Met mother at Dunbar
Grandmother [husband ill] she chopped cotton, cooked, babysat
Mother, strong grandmother learned to read & write, read the Bible
One of my aunts legally blind, grandmother helped out
Entrepreneurial family, independent, risk-taking well-educated, 3rd generation college
Grandfather certificate

JB Unusual for anybody

SH Until after World War II
Worldview mother's breast, womanly things with joy

21 min

JB Parents' education Philander Smith and work

SH After the car – college another moment of warfare in our home over mother's education
Father had narrow view of what women could do – esp. given his mother

Describes difficult interchange with father around 1969-70, while at University of Chicago, married to first husband, worried about relationship. Father says – you have all the qualities man wants in son. Her response- you made me what I am. Incredible conversation – glad father forthright.

JB Unintended consequence postwar WWII childrearing – raise children to be themselves – whoever they are?

SH Think that is true
Going to Central High, lived around country, didn't come back home until 30 years later

26 min

Freed us from place, wanted us to live in larger world, have more choices

Father math major, both parents honor graduates, wanted MBA, no place to go in AR
Among 1st to be able to go to Post Office

Federal pay & benefits
Mother ran grocery & then got degree
Our neighborhood, corner stores – different clientele
Our store city material yard, laborers lunch, big trade

JB Things on way home, too?

SH Yes. Unlike Melba Patillo's *Warriors Don't Cry* reading that book, realized different experiences
Part of block white, part black, social intercourse

JB Kids play together?

SH Some. Family we knew best, kids older. Father into military, didn't get allotment
Came to our store. They got flu, my mother cooked
My sense bifurcated-back of bus, but vendors white

30 min

Saw parents & grandfather as customers of vendors, treated with respect
Helped with duality

JB Complex set messages, how prepare education experience Earlham?

SH Actually, Earlham very easy
Three black women, 20-30 black guys – played soccer, football
President of college, 1962, roommate rules, solo if no partners. My parents uncomfortable with that.
Policy no longer in force
Lots of East Coast students – good skills getting along
Also, how college talked about self – center of Japanese studies
Went sight unseen, describes process of drop-off, separation from parents
Her job in food service, way to get to know people

Describes operations of Ku Klux Klan in Richmond, Indiana in 1960s
Town-gown relationships – Earlham as “pinko,” liberal college

41 min

Segregated and non-segregated sites in community
Border town rural Kentucky
Became copy editor student newspaper, nearby Connorsville [Indiana] “sundown town”
Richmond, Indiana as “Up South”
What were the rules, other black women from Dayton, Ohio, High Point, North Carolina
Describes billboard message against Martin Luther King, Jr.
Cocoon of Earlham
Underground Railroad , some Japanese American at Earlham instead of camps during WWII

45 min

Japanese my language there, describes Japanese culture program in 1960s
Jackson Bailey, head of programs

JB As student involved civil rights?

SH Not actively in sit-ins
One thing took away from Central High – never able crowds, potential violence
Describes Iona College school bus incident, went under table at diner, crying
Abhor physical violence, always in opposite direction
My brother dropped out of Earlham and went to work for SCEF [Southern Conference Education Fund] civil rights out of Kentucky
Julian Bond, Anglo couple, Ann & Tom [Carl] Braden integrated with Louisiana & Mississippi, socialist, Marxist
Was photographer for them
He was in Chicago for Breadbasket, Jesse Jackson, with King in Chicago
My brother & I very different responses
In some ways a gender thing,
We’ve never discussed it, but in some ways a response to Central, to having to be restrained

50 min

I wanted to survive and go on

JB Turn to philanthropic, civic responsibility at home, NAACP, church

SH Certainly parents believed that you serve when asked, be on program at Sunday School
My brother & I got that message
My parents – all meals together, must be present
Rufus King Young, pastor ,black pastors – responsibility to selves & our race
Not enough to do well individually, also the race to be elevated
Old-fashioned, lost my mind?
Girls Scouts, Y-Teens, services elements

55 min

My parents – public face, Central High, somebody has to step up

JB World you operate in now, similar structures?

SH I think not

Story of woman distressed because her child smarter than others in group
Over the years, moved from civic engagement to the individual child

June Freeman – new bridge across Arkansas River
No opportunity for public discussion, engagement

61 min

Example of developing process public feedback

JB Definition of philanthropy common good, you've spoken of "single visions"

SH Conundrum, thinking about writing
Discusses Winthrop Rockefeller a) example of personal philanthropy and b) establishment of independent foundation with goal to encourage community definitions of change

67 min

Foundations have to be outside [power structure]
Importance of racial integration at Rockefeller, significance Mahlon Martin as first president
[Note: Martin an early president, there was an Anglo predecessor.]

Discusses board leadership, connection to founding vision
Working through a governance situation at Rockefeller

70 min

Use of strategic planning to add racial and economic justice to mission

Importance of process, organization structures in foundation work

75 min

People not thinking about common good, People thinking ideologically
Not thinking about black, & Latino children
Southern Policy board conference on circumstances of poor and middle class – getting worse

Every child should be able to achieve personal best

I have lived in a society in which diminished commitment to that

JB Do you think philanthropy that you & others have practiced - ?

SH Yes, the reason , people have to keep hope alive
At Earlham, 'They kindled the fire and kept it burning.'
Diminishing returns, will look for places doing the work

JB Think it will take catastrophe?

SH Look at Little Rock. It took being on the front page of the newspaper. Powerful people always have –

I know in my gut, a message was sent. Economic order will not be destroyed. Powerful people had been working behind the scenes. Does that make sense?

JB Yes Elizabeth Jacoway certainly interprets in similar ways –

One final question
Martin Luther King, Jr. beloved community 1957, content -

SH It is content of message. Even more meaningful for me
Rent civil society at Little Rock

JB Follow up?

SH My journey to being involved philanthropy intentional – change takes place where policy created
Carnegie & Rockefeller created change. Did not work flailing around, systematic need for
research, data enable people fair-minded, make better decisions.
Work on policy for all young people

If have institutions, practices, decisions - fair, don't have to worry about the rest

JB Word resonates equity/fairness
Changes as an objective?

SH I think has changed. Someone here in Little Rock – how many “nigger” children
I was stunned. We went to Dunbar
I remember wonderful women. Many of us were ready for the doors that many thought were
gong to be opening
There was teaching to everybody – total person
Struck that many making distinctions that Anglos would have made in the past
Emphasis on the individual good, success, materialism, competitiveness
No man is an island
Each one, teach one. Social security will depend on strong workforce

90 min

We live in time of scorched earth policy, I avoid scorched earth people
Nothing will grow again
GI bill filled people with such hope
Have forgotten we are brothers' keepers
Those of us have achieved so much, build institutions

JB Probably good place to stop

SH Probably talked head off
This has been good

95 min