

**Nancy Haller Interview Summary**  
**First Person Summary**  
**10 August 2015**

Intro – Jo Blatti interviewing Nancy Haller for First Person Plural project in her home Jasper, Arkansas, 10 August 2015

JB Your background

NH My mother French, war bride World War II, father military  
Father from Texas, died age 38, I was 10  
Have sister, younger brother  
School Fort Smith, college University of Arkansas Fayetteville, then medical [UAMS]  
Husband Harold [Haller], medical school,

JB Unusual – nurses, secretaries

NH I was pretty smart  
Happier a nurse? Enjoyed caretaking  
Doctor – most healing, also relieve fear

JB What about when it is serious?

NH Then again, we are going to take care of it

We went to Dallas for internships  
Lot of debt, Jasper medically underserved  
Came to Jasper 1974 National Health Service Corps  
Established practice – about 3 years, paid through Health Service Corps  
Without that subsidy, couldn't afford  
Lot of people already had doctors in Harrison, it was a rough go

6 min in

We'd go home, phone would start ringing off wall  
We got a little annoyed  
Started doing ER [emergency room] work – Harrison, mostly Mountain  
Home  
70 miles

JB Two times the distance – tough road

NH One & half hours to do it, 24-hour shifts, 2 shifts a week. Hard to come home in the morning.

8 min in

25-27 years, Russellville, Fayetteville VA [Veterans Administration]

JB VA, on staff?

NH I was, three – four years. That’s when I decided to retire. Too much like bureaucracy. Everything on computer - now type into computer. Five minutes with patient, fifteen minutes on paperwork. I would give a patient my full attention if that coming thing not in to it

9 min in

I’ve become interested in human consciousness past five years  
Who we are beyond thinking mind, all kinds of perception

JB Intuitive, emotional?

NH As for solving problems of world, exciting – won’t be any more wars

JB Other people this part of state? Individual study?

NH Probably are- kind of unusual. Buddhist retreat center Newton County

JB Related Buddhist meditation tradition?

NH No problems, we think them up

13 min in

JB Growing up with your mom –

NH Never remarried. Worked for Resistance during the war, just a teenager – run messages, very brave. Fort Smith odor problem: dog food plant. She sued the plant personally – drug on, death threats, won the suit, legal costs & cease and desist. Tornado blew the plant off a month later [laughter]. Quite a lady

JB Messages raising you?

NH No verbal messages. Afraid? So what? Extremely confident, by example. Never doubted herself. Loved to garden, I got that.

JB Chores?

NH Worked hard as kid – dishes, garden  
In high school- laundry, post office  
She never worked, had father’s pension – pretty close to bone toward end of month

18 min in

Lot of good times  
She died about four years ago  
I think a lot about things we did  
Very interested in politics – early Clinton supporter, went door to door in Ft Smith

JB Became citizen?

NH Yes – very proud

Picture of Ronald Reagan on toilet seat  
Very generous – grew strawberries in garden, gave away  
Sat with folks who were dying

JB Religious tradition important?

NH Not at all – thought it hypocritical  
Some of people she sat with, none of church people around

JB You appear to have been very active in community affairs

NH No ambulance, car wrecks, 45 min -1 hour wait from Harrison  
4-wheel vehicle, gathered up all these folks

JB 1970s?

NH Trained all these volunteer EMTs [emergency medical technicians]  
Some really bright, a couple boys went on to medical school  
Ordered gold jackets - “ambulance”  
Couldn’t afford reorder  
Worst bus wreck in U.S. history, put in pull-off, eventually Harrison hospital took over

23 min in

Bill Clinton, Resource Council  
Recycling center, internet service, parks, ball fields, etc  
Husband & I donated land to city of Jasper

JB Affordable housing HUD?

NH The Resource Council would spin off as separate organ:  
Battered woman shelter  
Housing survey & spun off  
Second HUD grant – Harmony House somebody taking funds, didn’t pay federal taxes. We  
were getting clean audits every year  
I think they finally had to call Blanche Lincoln [U.S. Senator, D-AR] and sell the projects  
Sold the children’s shelter, no way to get out from under  
Harmony House [women’s shelter] went under

28 min in

Resource Council hung in together, thanks to Kathy Martin  
Describes Roundtop 110  
Bill Stiritz, used to be CEO of Ralston Purina donated funds for the Bradley House Museum in  
Jasper [in honor of his grandparents with whom he lived as a child]  
Landslide 2010, damage to repair from rains  
Resource Council also does summer camp – 4 weeks every year, 100 kids, students attend and are  
counselors

JB Overnight?

NH Well-received

JB How many people in county?

NH 8,000 – no stoplights  
If get to point of needing stoplight –

JB What do people do – [make living]

NH Live on edge  
What can we do to bring money in - sawmills, Subways

38 min in

Mt Judea [Judy] pig factory

JB What happened to Eco-tourism?

NH Early 2000-2005, went down with IRS problem  
We're trying with idea of bringing back on different basis – less overhead  
Several people really blossomed through that program

JB Anybody prosecuted over missing funds?

NH No

JB I'm trying to understand –

NH Apparently deliberate. I met with state people when I came back to Newton County. Thought we could –  
State people would not tell me

JB Board members have ultimate responsibility –

NH I was trying to get board members to hold auditors responsible

JB Usually a board has insurance

46 min in

NH I moved into children's shelter  
Five little black boys from Earl, Arkansas, not socialized, 2-10 years  
They would stand on the table

48 min in

I didn't know if I would survive  
Harrison, all-white community, need shot records, birth certificates  
DHS [Department of Human Services] said, you don't need anything  
Teachers embraced them, kids thrived  
Unstrapped car seats, shift gears, took them to doctor's office: we need help here

JB French film: *Wild Child*

NH No controls put on them at all  
They wet the bed at night every night  
Would say, 'Dmitri, he's gay'  
'I hate you, ugly old white woman'  
Went on six months, they got placed in Conway, hopefully good things  
Initially in debt [the shelter] \$55,000, system really messed up

54 min in

Kathy Martin saved Resource Council

JB Theater as cultural center 4-5 year, balloon mortgage- hurt  
Success?

NH Idea of Kathy Martin: café, organic café  
Catherine Garner, mover & shaker [Walton], got her involved

JB Old movie house –

58 min in

NH Janet Morgan had friend at Bank of Ozarks appraised at \$125,000, I got involved [along with  
others] - \$67 a month [from each] to make payments  
Then started dropping off  
Then she needed non-profit status  
Janet Morgan died this spring [March 2015]  
We all looked at the mortgage & said this is too much

JB Lots of things happening

63 min in

JB The community itself – folks from city, artists, ordinary people?

NH Folks have had to change, used to have more 'those are 'bad pecker' boys'  
Bunch of local people go to senior center to eat lunch  
There's table at diner for locals  
When there's a benefit for somebody with cancer – raise \$3000  
I just love it

JB Ten years since the shelter gone. What's happened?

NH Harrison – telephone hot line

JB Long way for an immediate

NH Putting women in homes: murder/suicide haven't gotten a handle on that  
Very disturbing

68 min in

Lot of it in any county  
A woman on her own here, pretty tough  
Hard work, you need somebody else  
I've been fortunate to be healthy  
Have to have a lot of skills

JB How you learn them?

NH Trial & error  
Garbage disposal repair, used car repair  
Life tests you

JB Wood/propane?

NH Heat pump – also wood furnace, take futon down  
Also go to California –

73 min in

Story of snow/chains wrapped around axle - couldn't get to airport

Fly out of Fayetteville/Branson  
Buy insurance  
Travel quite a bit  
Mission trips with Methodists – Costa Rica, Rio Brava  
Affinity for Latin America

JB Go over to France?

NH Son & daughter – son to Peace Corps Honduras, water systems

JB Where now?

NH New Orleans  
Daughter Fayetteville - first grandchildren  
Lovely children

JB Grew up here?

NH Milked goats, had a farm about a mile from town  
Son to Harvard, Harvard Law

79 min in

JB Challenging to - ?

NH More family life than most doctors  
I worked one day, he [husband] worked two days  
Saw a lot of our kids

JB Do you think if some of this reversed?

NH Yes, we were government doctors  
Harrison wouldn't give us any privileges  
Same medical school [UAMS] they did  
Other places 'how improve patient care'  
Harrison concerned other issues  
Mountain Home thrilled to have us - makes all the difference in the world

JB From 'off'?

NH Always been from 'off'.

84 min in

JB Was there a particular way decided priorities in the Resource Council?

NH Form a committee & we'll help you raise funds  
That's what I'm thinking about this theater thing – maybe no support

JB Another project in development?

NH 2016 – celebration Buffalo River – stories of the river  
Workshop with storytellers & musicians  
Audience – tourists, \$10,000

JB Found mention of civic recognition award

88 min in

NH First year selected me – not recently  
So many deserving – Wanda Casey  
People very giving

JB Anything you'd like to add?

NH Women left out – done a lot  
I gained from it tremendously  
I recommend community service

90 min in

End