Voices of Feminism Oral History Project

Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College
Northampton, MA

MARGE FRANTZ

Interviewed by

KELLY ANDERSON

NOVEMBER 3-5, 2005
Santa Cruz, CA

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with generous support from the Ford Foundation.

Narrator

Born in Birmingham, Alabama in 1922, Marge Frantz is a lifelong activist. Introduced to radical politics and the Communist Party by her father Joe Gelders, Frantz's activism began early, with the Young Communist League in 1935. Frantz's Party activity ranged from selling the Daily Worker on the New York City subway to organizing the Alabama delegation to the American Youth Congress. Frantz finally left the Party in 1956, though her agitation far from ceased. She was an organizer for the United Electrical Workers, campaigned for Wallace, worked for Planned Parenthood, was a part of the free speech movement in Berkeley, and a stalwart of the peace movement. After she and husband Laurent (also a radical and former CP member) had four children, Frantz returned to college (graduating from Berkeley in 1972) and went on to a PhD from UC Santa Cruz, where she spent three decades as a celebrated and inspirational teacher. Frantz has retired from teaching, but not activism, and lives with her partner Eleanor in Santa Cruz.

Interviewer

Kelly Anderson (b.1969) is an educator, historian, and community activist. She has an M.A. in women's history from Sarah Lawrence College and is a Ph.D. candidate in U.S. history at the CUNY Graduate Center.

Abstract

In this oral history, Frantz describes her family background in Birmingham, highlighting her father's intellectual and political development and subsequent career in radical politics. She discusses her early days in the Popular Front and as an organizer. Frantz recalls the extensive network of friends and comrades that have made the work so engaging and sustaining. She also describes her family life in detail—her marriage to Laurent, their four children, and her partnership with Eleanor. The interview concludes with her life in Santa Cruz, both on the campus and in local organizing efforts, and her passion for teaching.

Restrictions

None

Format

Interview recorded on miniDV using Sony Digital Camcorder DSR-PDX10. Eight 60-minute tapes.

Transcript

Transcribed by Susan Kurka. Audited for accuracy by Cara Sharpes and edited for clarity by Revan Schendler. Transcript has been reviewed and approved by Marge Frantz.

Bibliography and Footnote Citation Forms

Video Recording

Bibliography: Frantz, Marge. Interview by Kelly Anderson. Video recording, November 3-5, 2005. Voices of Feminism Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection. **Footnote:** Marge Frantz, interview by Kelly Anderson, video recording, November 3, 2005, Voices of Feminism Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection, tape 2.

Transcript

Bibliography: Frantz, Marge. Interview by Kelly Anderson. Transcript of video recording, November 3-5, 2005. Voices of Feminism Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection. **Footnote:** Marge Frantz, interview by Kelly Anderson, transcript of video recording, November 3, 2005, Voices of Feminism Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection, pp. 23–24.

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Transcript of interview conducted November 3–5, 2005, with:

MARGE FRANTZ
Santa Cruz, California

by: KELLY ANDERSON

ANDERSON: OK. All right. So we're going to begin. This is Kelly Anderson interviewing Marge Frantz at her home in Santa Cruz, California, on a really stunning day, November 3rd, and this is for the Sophia Smith Collection, Voices of Feminism project. So, as we talked a little bit about when I first got here, we're going to really try to make this as full a life story as we can for a few days. So let's start by talking about your family background, and not even your parents, because that's a big topic, but tell me what you know about your grandparents and how your family, your German Jewish family, got to the South.

FRANTZ: Right. Well, I don't know a great deal. My impression is that on both sides, the family came in through New Orleans, but I'm not positive. I know that's true about my mother's family and one of her uncles stayed in New Orleans, and she has other relatives in New Orleans and one of them became a stomach specialist doctor. That's really about all I know.

ANDERSON: So it would have been her parents that came to New Orleans, do you think? 1:18

FRANTZ: I think they came in through New Orleans, but I think that a lot of them ended up in Maysville**,** Kentucky — certainly her mother. I do know that her father, and in fact my grandfathers on both sides arrived here in the 1870s with a large group of German immigrants, German Jewish immigrants, and they both became itinerant peddlers. They didn't have a cent. One of them, I know, was trying to evade the draft but probably both of them, because there was a 25-year draft in those days in Germany. Both of them became itinerant peddlers and they started off with nothing, and they ended up making enough money to get a car and a horse and so forth.

My father's father settled in Birmingham, Alabama, which, in 1890, became known as the Magic City, because it grew so fast. It had the first steel mills in the South and so that was its nickname, the Magic City, and it was dominated by steel and ended up the Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company, they called it TCI, and it became a subsidiary of U.S. Steel. It was one of the two places in the whole country where

there was a combination of the three things you need for making steel: coal, iron ore, and — what am I missing? A third ingredient I can't think of. (laughs) [limestone]But in any case, the upper peninsula of Michigan is the only [other] one that has all three. So it took off and became the biggest industrial city in the South, not the largest city but the [largest] one doing basic industry.

ANDERSON: So your mother was born — just to go back a little bit, just to make sure we get your family stories. Your mother was born in –

FRANTZ: She was born in 1899, in Montgomery.

ANDERSON: In Montgomery, OK.

FRANTZ: My father's family was in Birmingham and my mother's family in Montgomery. My grandfather on my mother's side ended up selling insurance. There is a substantial collection of German Jews in both of those cities, and, in fact, in every major southern city. And they were discriminated against and they were not allowed, once they made money — they were good at it, apparently, but they weren't allowed into the country clubs. So they all organized Jewish country clubs all over the South. Every single southern city has got a Jewish country club. In fact, one of my uncles, my mother's brother, spent his whole life as the manager of a Jewish country club in Columbus**,** Georgia, of all places.

ANDERSON: So did you know your grandparents?

4:25

FRANTZ: Yes.

ANDERSON: What are your memories of them?

FRANTZ: I never knew them well. They all died — except for my maternal grandfather, they all died when I was quite young. I knew them slightly. My father adored his mother. She died when I was about 11 and I remember her. I know that Walt Whitman was her favorite poet and I know that she was attracted to some offbeat religion, I'm trying to think what it was. It was not exactly a religion. It will occur to me, I'm sorry. She was something of a forward-looking person, although her husband, my father's father was, in his view, a tyrant.

He made money. He was very good at it and he had about six businesses going at once, including department stores and restaurants and this, that, and the other, and he was very good at it, apparently. At one point my father, [my grandfather] had a small restaurant about 30 miles from Birmingham, the sort of place in those days people would drive up to for Sunday dinner. [My dad] had to get up early in the morning — I heard these stories when I was a kid — and kill, wring the necks of nearly a hundred chickens for Sunday dinner that day, or something like that. [My grandfather] always pushed my father to go

into business of one kind and another and he was a hard taskmaster. My father did not like it. My father went off to MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] when he was quite young and he got very little money, really not enough to manage on, and later his younger brother, you know, had fur coats at Yale and my dad was furious about it. (laughs)

One of the most interesting things — my grandmother was supposed to have — my father just adored her — but my aunt [Emma] did not, was not that adoring, and later in life, when I was maybe 30 or 40, I spent a whole evening talking family with my aunt, my father's sister, and found out that she had exactly the opposite feelings about my grandmother and grandfather, which fascinated me because it was a totally new vista. I had no idea from early — I took for granted from early on that my grandfather was, you know, a tyrant and my grandmother totally sympathetic, but she felt just the opposite, [maybe] because my grandmother had lived with her in her last years. She only lived until 56 but I think she probably was a difficult patient, [Emma] never had any run-ins with her father, apparently.

ANDERSON: Right. There wasn't the same pressure to go into the family business or anything like that.

FRANTZ: Right. So my father had mechanical skills from early on and he was born in 1898, and he was at MIT when World War I started, and he wanted to go in the army and my grandmother was very much against it but he finally did but he never served overseas. He was in officers' training school when the war ended. But he ended up hating war and hating the army and hating everything about it. It was an informative experience, I guess. But he never softened in his dislike of his father, really. He felt pushed around and manipulated and didn't approve of his values, et cetera.

ANDERSON: So your father's family comes from quite the business elite.

FRANTZ: In Birmingham.

ANDERSON: In Birmingham. And your mother's family, how would you describe their class status, her extended family?

FRANTZ: Upper middle class, but not — they had one boy and five girls, and all the girls — most of the girls married very well. Two of them married extremely well. One married the guy who became the head of the American Cotton Exchange in Dallas, Texas, and another one was co-owner with his brother of the main stationery store in Montgomery, Alabama, which supplied the state government. So the two of them did extremely well and my aunt, another sister, did not get married. She turned down an offer from somebody who did extremely well but was not a particularly attractive guy and ended up marrying my mother's first cousin, and he became very wealthy. She never married and when

she was 35 or so, she decided to go back to school and get a law degree, which she did, and ended up practicing law and then owning an abstract business in Montgomery, Alabama, for many years. She was known to the whole community there as Ms. Sadie. She did very well for herself. She lived with us while she was going to law school in Tuscaloosa. My mother and dad were teaching at the university at that time.

ANDERSON: So your mother had a college degree?

FRANTZ: Yes. Well, my father did go into business. He went into the automobile business. He had incredible manual skills of all kinds, including auto repair, and he went into the automobile business and he sold cars you may not have heard of, the Franklin motor cars. The Franklin was the first air-cooled engine, like the VW [Volkswagen] engine and it was a very popular car for many years, and he was primarily noted for, at this stage of his life, for supplying the open-air convertible that [Charles] Lindbergh went through the streets in a parade after his successful flight across the Atlantic.

Anyway, my father was not a businessman at heart. He did not like — it was totally contrary to his character. He did not like, you know, being a heavy and getting money out of people. It was totally unlike what he was interested in, although he loved tinkering with cars. But he was doing OK, until the Depression, and when the Depression hit, he lost the business and like everybody else in those situations, he owed a lot of money. One interesting thing was he didn't believe in going into bankruptcy on principle, and he was determined to pay back everything he owed. As a result of that, when we had really hard times when he was an organizer later on in Birmingham, he could always walk in to the First National Bank and borrow money with no collateral at all, because they trusted him. But he knew a lot of people as a result of having owned this business and growing up there.

So many years later, when he was radicalized and then was beaten very badly by thugs who were hired by the local steel company in 1937, there was really a lot of outpouring of support for him in a way that you wouldn't expect in the South. You know, they beat up the wrong man, from their point of view.

ANDERSON: Right, right.

FRANTZ: So that had interesting repercussions.

ANDERSON: I want you to talk more about that story, obviously, when we get to your father's activism.

13:00

FRANTZ: But in any case, he lost his business. He had been at the University of Alabama for two years and then went to MIT for one year and then joined the army, and my grandmother really wanted him to go back and finish college, so she supplied the money. By this time his father had

died and she supplied the money for him, for the family to move to Tuscaloosa, where the state university was, and he went back. And so my mother, who had dropped out of Goucher [College] to get married to him also decided to go back to college. So she studied English literature and he studied physics. There were no such thing as reentry women in those days — I mean, no such thing. Nobody had every heard of this. So she proved a sort of famous woman on campus, and when visiting dignitaries would come, the dean would, you know, bring her out and introduce her. It was really funny.

ANDERSON: How old was she when she was — in her twenties?

FRANTZ: She was in her thirties.

ANDERSON: Oh, thirties.

FRANTZ: Yeah. She was exactly 30 when she went back to college and she, you know, she's an achiever and she got all As and so forth, and they both made Phi Beta Kappa at the same time, and this was a great event, much more so in those days than now, and she called up her father to tell him and he had never heard of Phi Beta Kappa, and he was not at all impressed. But in any case, they were sort of — you know, it was not that large a university. There were four thousand students at the time. Interestingly enough, about half of them came from New York City, partly because Alabama had the best football team in the country then. It went to the Rose Bowl every year, and [Paul William] "Bear" Bryant was the coach and a very famous football coach, and he had had freshman English with my mother and she flunked him. This was before he was the coach, of course, but he greatly admired her. And later on, when he had trouble with his students, his football players, you know, having trouble with English, he would always send them to my mother to be coached. (laughs)

ANDERSON: So your folks had a lot of social standing at that school? 15:28

FRANTZ: Well yeah, they did, because they were unusual.

ANDERSON: Yes, yes.

FRANTZ: And my father finished and got his Master's there, and did some graduate work at Columbia, but he got a job right away as an assistant professor in physics, and he ran the physics lab and he was great at running the lab because he could make all kinds of equipment that was needed for lab experiments and so forth. He was a wonderful teacher for serious students but my mother was a wonderful teacher for unserious students, and she loved it. She was extremely outgoing and personable and warm, and made friends very easily, and she liked people, period.

She also was a great raconteur and a good storyteller. She was a character.

She and I had considerable trouble when I was young, because she knew that her job in life as an Alabama mother was to make me marriageable, and I was about as much of a tomboy as one could be. You know, it was a constant struggle. I greatly admired her in many ways. She's very smart and quick, and a wonderful storyteller, and full of "dumb stories," [pointless jokes] you know — great storyteller. But, you know, I resisted every moment when she was trying to get me to do something about my hair or this or that or clothes and so forth. It just was not who I was. So it was very frustrating for her and frustrating for me.

But my dad was my great comfort in life, and he adored me. What he really adored was parenthood. He loved parenthood. I'm sure he would have been happy to have some boys, but he had two girls. I was the oldest, and he started early on answering every question that I asked, in full and total detail. My mother got very tired of this and at one point she exalted when I said, "Please tell me the short way, Daddy."

ANDERSON: Yeah, I love the first line of your piece "Red Diapers." You say something like, I hit the lottery. 17:50

FRANTZ: Yeah, jackpot.

ANDERSON: I hit the jackpot. Yeah, it was great.

FRANTZ: I truly did. I mean, I –

ANDERSON: And you don't hear that from very many people, how the admiration and adoration, it's really –

FRANTZ: But I couldn't have said that about my mother when I was young.

ANDERSON: Yeah.

FRANTZ: It took old age to make that happen.

ANDERSON: Right, right.

FRANTZ: We [mother and I] became very close in the older years, but I adored him from day one. And he really adored parenthood. I never, ever got the impression he would have rather have had a son. I think he probably would have, but the point is, he treated me just like a son, so. That's what I wanted.

ANDERSON: Do you think his enthusiasm for parenting is unusual for that time and place?

FRANTZ: Yes and no. He was a great devotee of John Dewey. He was very excited about Dewey's ideas about education and I think there were a lot of people who were exited about Dewey and who felt that way, but I don't really know. I've never studied that and I don't have any –

ANDERSON: Well, just in terms of your peers — I mean, the level at which he engaged with you, played with you, was excited about you, didn't mourn for boys.

FRANTZ: Yeah, yeah. Well, I think it's very unusual. First of all, university faculty have more leisure than a lot of people, and also he adored the woods. And the Alabama woods are quite beautiful. You'd never read about them, I've never read any. Well, Faulkner has a little bit about the Mississippi woods, quite a bit in "The Bear," but you don't really read about them much, but they are beautiful. They're beautiful particularly in the spring, because there are lots of flowering plants. There's dogwood in March and azalea, gorgeous azalea in Alabama in April, and then there's mountain laurel, which is the glory of it all for me, but it doesn't grow out here. It takes cold weather to make it happen. Once I was back on the Wellesley campus at the right moment to see mountain laurel all over the place, and that was really nice, at a Berks [Berkshire Conference of Women Historians] meeting.

Anyway, the woods are beautiful there and he loved them, and he knew all the trees and all the shrubs, and I guess this came from his boy-scouting history, going to camp with Dan Beard. And we would study things, like one year we would do flowers and one year we'd do ferns, and one year we'd do mosses, and we'd take books on our walks and so forth. We went to the woods every single weekend, and it was just a glorious way to grow up. I fell in love with my partner Eleanor, on a camping trip, and she was a marvelous teacher of California wildflowers. She knows all the California wildflowers and had been hiking in the mountains for years, and that was how we first met and fell in love.

ANDERSON: So, describe your family home. Describe the place that you grew up, your neighborhood and – 20:53

FRANTZ: Well, first of all there were lots of different homes, there was not one.

ANDERSON: Because?

FRANTZ: When we first moved to Tuscaloosa — well, I remember the house I was born in. I was literally born at home, at my grandfather's house, and my family lived there for a while, not the first six years, all of it, but I remember that house very well. It sat up on the top of a large hill in the foothills. Birmingham is a beautiful city because it's in the foothills of the Appalachians. The [mountains] go all the way down and so it's built on hills, and we lived on one of the hills. And because the landscape is

so lovely, the — it was a very nice place, and my grandmother was a wonderful gardener and she had this whole hillside that she had created and tended. The main thing I remember about her is going for walks in her garden with her. Later on, [my family] had a little house, a house that my grandfather had built on the property and we lived in that house for a while, when I was about — I can't remember now. Maybe it was the summer, but we lived back there at one point for several months. But I don't remember much about my first years in — six years in Birmingham.

I started going to kindergarten when I was four. I don't know, I guess I could read, and then I went to first grade when I was five, and when we got to Tuscaloosa when I was six, I went in the second grade. So I was sort of pushed through school and when I was in Tuscaloosa — it was a small town, there was, I'd say, only four thousand students and we lived just half a block from the girls' gym and I was — my family was busy working. We had someone in the house doing housework but I wandered all over town. I was sort of on my own and I loved it. I ended up spending a great deal of time at the girls' gym because it was right there, and I loved the track and field stuff. I loved to watch the shot puts and the discus throwing, and high jumps and pole vaulting. I just loved watching it all and now —

My mother and father had a young friend. There were some friends in Birmingham, not political, I don't know how they knew them but in some way that was not at all political. And they had a younger daughter who was coming at 16 — very bright — to the University of Alabama and they asked my family to sort of look out for her and, you know, take her under their wing. And [her family] later moved [to Tuscaloosa] themselves to do that but in any case, she came down and her first cousin came down. They started at the same time.

And I had a picture of them that I ran across some years later. I took one look at it and it was so obvious that her friend, her cousin, was a lesbian. I mean, it just jumped out at me and never had occurred to me before, and then I realized that that whole scene at the girls' gym was a whole bunch of young lesbians, particularly the woman that sort of was the chief coach for this, that, and the other, and that fascinated me. You know, I mean, I have no evidence except for this picture, but it just (snaps fingers) you know, it was like that. It was quite amazing.

ANDERSON: And you described yourself as a tomboy as a kid, right?

FRANTZ: Oh total, total tomboy. I wanted to be a boy. There was a folk wisdom at that point that if you could kiss your elbow, you could change your gender.

ANDERSON: I never heard that. (laughter) Could you do it? 25:15

FRANTZ: I tried very hard. You try, try. You can't do it. (laughter)

ANDERSON: That's hard, yeah.

FRANTZ: You cannot do it. Anyway –

ANDERSON: OK, so we were talking about whether —

FRANTZ: I wanted to be a boy. 25:30

ANDERSON: Your family homes and so, Tuscaloosa.

FRANTZ: OK, we lived right next to the university, in a university house. They had faculty housing in those days and they bought houses around the town. So I hung out there. I hung out at the tennis courts. There was a wonderful male tennis player who I just loved to watch play. He was one of the local champions. Beautiful, graceful game. And also I hung out at the regular main stadium watching the football team which, as I say, was nationally famous. I just hung around everywhere I wanted to. I never had to study. I didn't have any problems, you know, with that, so I had time on my hands and it was a wonderful way to grow up. I mean, I just loved it. It was — my family had lots of friends. My mother just made friends very quickly, and furthermore, it was wonderful because my mother was studying English literature, so I got introduced to English literature, you know, around the house, poetry and stuff, all the time. Books were fed to me in rapid succession and I read a lot. In those days, libraries used to have sort of lists for what you're supposed to read when you're six years old and seven and eight, nine, ten, and we went through all those lists. And I loved libraries.

So, I mean, I just had an idyllic childhood in many ways. We always — we had friends over. Mother — we had a full-time housekeeper, because she had two kids. My younger sister was four years younger than I and so — but I was allowed to roam and — I think Mother, probably my family didn't realize how much of a roamer I was, but I never ran into any problems about it. It was great. I think back on that as just a wonderful time and I had good teachers and bad teachers but I did pretty well, all things considered. I don't know, I skipped various grades along the way.

ANDERSON: That must have been hard though, socially. Did you ever find that? I did that too and I always felt it was a little awkward trying to fit in.

FRANTZ: I didn't really, because I always had two or three good friends.

ANDERSON: Yeah.

FRANTZ: And you didn't need more than that. We lived in Tuscaloosa for quite a while and then we moved to a suburb, and that was great because we had some woods right next to our house. And the schools I went to — not city schools, city schools were supposed to be terrible. The county

school system was perceived to be a much better system, and I started the sixth grade at a school at a very small town outside of Birmingham called Holt and just a few weeks [into the term] — the school system developed a testing program for the first time in the state of Alabama in 1932 and I think it was probably late for that but they got around to it. So I was in the sixth grade and I tested in the tenth grade. So I had already skipped a grade or two. I started off kindergarten at [four] and I skipped a grade so the family didn't want me to skip [another] grade. So they worked it out that I would — the elementary school was here and the high school was here; (gestures off screen) they were on the same basic lot a half a block away — that I would go and take an algebra course in the high school instead of skipping a grade. So that's what I started doing.

And at that point, about two weeks later, the whole school system shut down. They ran out of money and they just closed their doors and there were no schools in Alabama, no [county] public schools in Alabama that were functioning. I don't know how long that lasted, but the family decided to put me in a Catholic school. That was the only thing that was open and running. The city schools were going, not the county.

ANDERSON: The county, yeah.

FRANTZ: But the city schools had a reputation of being just terrible schools, so they decided to put me in Catholic school. It was a rather weird choice, in my opinion, but the thing that saved it was that they taught Latin. They wanted me to learn Latin and so they [asked the nuns], Are you sure you don't indoctrinate students? Oh no. And actually, half the kids were non-Catholic. No, no indoctrination, but what happened was they taught catechism every single day, but they put the Catholic kids in the front of the room and the non-Catholics at the back of the room. We had nothing else to do except sit and listen to catechism lessons. So I was momentarily converted (laughter) at age ten.

ANDERSON: Were you all practicing Judaism at home?

FRANTZ: No.

31:11

ANDERSON: I mean, were you observant in any way?

FRANTZ: No, not really. My mother's family was, and occasionally one of her aunts would take me to — one of my aunts, her sisters, would take me to a seder dinner or something, but no. But the family's best friend — the closest friend to my grandmother's family was the rabbi's family. She was extremely close to the rabbi's wife, and when I was six years old I was a flower girl in the wedding of the rabbi's daughter. But my dad was an atheist from day one, and in those days most scientists were atheists. It's very different now, but it was pretty widespread, even in

Alabama, and he was an atheist by conviction. He was not a casual atheist. This is difficult for Eleanor, who is a serious Quaker, but. She thinks I'm very closed minded on the question, but in any case. (laughter) She's not a — she just thinks I miss out on one aspect of life, although she's by no means a dogmatic Christian or anything like that, but she just thinks that there's a spiritual dimension, which I am unacquainted with. But in any case, (laughter) it's not a serious issue between us. It's almost funny.

ANDERSON: So did you get in trouble with the nuns? How did you do with them?

FRANTZ: I got along with the nuns.

ANDERSON: Yeah.

FRANTZ: I got along with the nuns. I didn't like what they were saying about the Soviet Union, but that's jumping ahead of our story. You know, they liked good students and I was a good student, and my family was dying for me to learn Latin, although it turns out that the — not that it really matters how you pronounce Latin, since it's not a living language, nevertheless, the pronunciations were completely different from standard — there's a Roman Catholic Latin and there's a non Roman Catholic Latin. It's funny. But that turned out to be useful later, as we will see. When I went to Radcliffe — in the '30s they were very big on either Latin or Greek, and you had to have at least two years of either Latin or Greek to get in.

ANDERSON: Oh, wow.

FRANTZ: And once you got in, if you only had two years, you had to take a third year. You had to take a couple of Latin courses once you got there or Greek, whichever you — that's all changed.

ANDERSON: Yeah.

FRANTZ: (laughs) In a big way.

ANDERSON: So you did all of your high schooling in Catholic school then?

FRANTZ: No. I actually was only there for about a year and a half.

ANDERSON: Oh, OK.

FRANTZ: Until the schools opened again.

ANDERSON: OK.

FRANTZ: But meanwhile, my father had — who originally began as an exceedingly, excited New Deal supporter because of the Depression, had become disillusioned with the New Deal because Roosevelt's agricultural policy was one which thought that the solution to that — the bottom had dropped out totally of agricultural prices. Nobody could sell anything because nobody had any money, so even — it didn't make it worthwhile even for farmers to bring their produce into town to try and sell on the streets, because there was so little — it didn't pay for the gas money to come into town. So it was, you know, it was really — people who didn't live through the Depression and aren't students of history don't have the slightest notion of how desperate things were, and there are very few movies that make that clear. It's really a shame, there should be more, but that's one reason I liked the films Union Maids so much, because I do think they have some very good footage on the Depression.

ANDERSON: And it's usually so urban focused, too.

FRANTZ: Yeah.

ANDERSON: I think people don't realize how bad and how much earlier the South was hit. 35:09

FRANTZ: Right, and how much harder the South was hit since it was so poor to start with. So, anyway, the bottom had fallen out of agricultural prices and Roosevelt's solution to this — it wasn't his personal solution, it was the advice he got from the economists — was to plow under cotton and kill pigs in order to create artificial scarcities, which would then raise prices. In California when people were starving they were putting kerosene on oranges and throwing them in the river. And it was so counterintuitive, you know. It was so irrational. And what [my dad] worshipped was rationality, and he had been so exited about Roosevelt. I was with him when we heard Roosevelt's inaugural address, and I just remember his real excitement about that. So he thought this capitalism didn't work. I mean, he was disillusioned with capitalism and he'd never been — he was not a political theorist. He had never thought a great deal about politics.

I remember, one of my earliest memories was when I was six, listening to the radio full of static, as it always was, listening to the Al Smith/ Hoover election in '28. I would have been six. So he'd always been a Democrat, being a southerner, and he was tremendously excited about driving the money changers out of the temple, and the Roosevelt inaugural speech, but [agricultural policy] really did him in. And so he decided to go to the library and look for some books on socialism and communism, and that was not that far out in 1932. A lot of people were doing the same kind of thing. And so he came home with [the only] book [on the shelf], Stalin's *Leninism*. It was a collection of sort of pamphlets that Stalin had written. I'm not sure Stalin had written them

but in any case, they had his name on them. He read it all night long and woke up my mother and said, "Darling, this book has changed my life. This really makes sense." I forget the phrase he used, but the idea was that he was a rationalist and this was reason applied to society, you know, for the first time.

And then he went in to the head of the physics department, where he was the fair-haired boy. Dr. Wooten, who was head of the physics department, who was an Alabama land owner, sort of a plantation owner in southern Alabama, really loved him. And he said, "Dr. Wooten, this is the best book I ever read. This is science applied to society." So, he didn't know what to do with this, you know. That was the only book in the library on Marxism, apparently or virtually, and he didn't know what to do with all these ideas. It wasn't that — he didn't know who to talk to you or, you know, (claps hands) there he was.

ANDERSON: But it sounds like he also — he talked to you guys about it.

FRANTZ: Yeah, well he talked to me about it, for sure.

ANDERSON: And your mother, you think?

FRANTZ: Yeah. My mother was horrified, as you can imagine. I mean, she was very smart and so forth, but she was completely conventional in her upbringing and I guess you couldn't call her conventional if she went back to college like nobody else was doing and studying English literature but — and they had always gotten along really, really well. They really were a great pair. So he conceived the idea of going to New York for a year to try and sort of bring her around, you know. He could introduce her to other [radicals] interested in English lit, and there were a lot of literary people on the left in those days.

ANDERSON: Right.

FRANTZ: There's a wonderful book about that, by the way: Malcolm Cowley's *Dream of the Golden Mountains*. Cowley worked on the *New Republic* and he was a very good writer. He talks about this whole ferment in the '30s and what it did to intellectuals, literati.

ANDERSON: So he thought he would take a leave at the university for a year? 39:58

FRANTZ: Yeah. He was already doing some work at Columbia anyway, on a doctorate. He had several quarters accumulated there. I don't know quite when that happened, but he did. He worked with a well-known [physicist] named Arthur Compton. So the idea was that he and I would go to New York for the summer to sort of sound out the situation and see what we could find in the way of a job or whatnot for a year or so, and I would stay with his sister, who was in Westchester County and whose husband was a big corporation lawyer, and he would go to New

York and sort of see what he could — scout the situation, find a place to live and so forth. So that's what happened. He and I hitchhiked to New York and I was a great hitchhiker.

ANDERSON: Did you literally hitchhike to New York?

FRANTZ: Yeah. I was a great hitchhiker. I thought hitchhiking was the greatest thing on earth, because we lived, at this point, six miles from town and there wasn't any good bus transportation, and I would hitch my way home. I found that people would tell you their whole life histories if you were hitching, and I just found that absolutely engrossing. I loved it and I never had any problem and only once did I have any problem at all, and I got out of it. They didn't approve of that, of course, but I did it anyway.

ANDERSON: Right. I was going to say, I can't believe your mother sent you hitchhiking to New York, knowingly.

FRANTZ: (laughs) Oh, she had a fit, but you know, (Anderson laughs) I didn't pay attention to her. I mean, my dad was my lodestar. I mean, I shrugged it off. It got to the point — she was always pushing me in one direction or another that I didn't approve of, and I just let it roll off of my back. We got along really well, considering how different we were, because she was — [I'll] go back a bit and tell you a couple of things about her.

She was a beauty and she was exceedingly popular in high school. Most of the Jewish guys in the Jewish community and most of the guys in Montgomery in her high school class or one year ahead of her, went to Tuscaloosa to go the University of Alabama, and they all joined the Jewish fraternity there, ZBT [Zeta Beta Tau]. She was corresponding with 18 guys at the ZBT, and that's how my dad heard about her. He was in ZBT and he [thought], Who is this woman? She was on the basketball team and they had a game in Tuscaloosa, so he was determined to meet her and there was a dance that night. So that's when they met and he started courting her, and then he went into the army and as soon as he got out of the army, they got married. She dropped out of Gaucher [College] at that point to get married.

But anyway, she was a beauty but mostly she was vivacious and lively, and that's why she made such a good teacher. My success in teaching, I think, totally or a great part of it, is that I inherited a lot of that, and I really love students. She had office hours every afternoon from two to six and she would bring students home for dinner, and she would just call up, you know, if somebody was home cooking, and she'd say, "Two more people for dinner tonight." So I loved it, that atmosphere, because she'd bring these college students home and I was allowed to sit in the background and listen to all the conversation, and it was a wonderful way to grow up.

ANDERSON: Yeah.

FRANTZ: But she really loved teaching and she was extremely good at it, and this is typical of her. She always was a great storyteller. When she was teaching the — is it the heroic couplet, the two-line iambic pentameter? — her sample of this was, "Her eyes were jade, her neck was like a swan,/ And that's the neck I do my necking on." (laughter) Well, she was constantly doing things like that, and students loved her. Whatever success I had in teaching I think came directly from her, her personality.

ANDERSON: So we were talking about you hitchhiking, and how you – 44:48

FRANTZ: Yeah, so anyway, we hitchhiked to New York and she didn't like the idea, but on the other hand, there wasn't any money.

ANDERSON: Yeah, yeah.

FRANTZ: So she put up with it. We got to New York. My aunt lived in Westchester County, in Pelham.

ANDERSON: Is this the one that went to Smith?

FRANTZ: Yeah. She took one look at me and she said, "Well, tomorrow we'll go to New Rochelle and get you a hat and gloves." And I said to my dad, "I'm not going to stay here." (laughter) So he said, "OK, you can come to New York City with me." So that's what happened. We rented a room on 14th Street and Second Avenue, and I was free all day to wander around New York — at 13.

ANDERSON: Unbelievable.

FRANTZ: I had the best summer. You just can't imagine how great it was. We had some friends who had gone to New York and gotten involved with the left. So we went to visit them and I can't even remember who they were at this point. I don't have the slightest recollection but they said, Why don't you join the Young Communist League [YCL]? I should backtrack to say that after my dad discovered Marxism, after reading this one book, shortly after that he had stomach surgery — he had always had stomach ulcers — and he sent my mother to the library to get some more books on Marxism because there weren't any others in Tuscaloosa. She came to the hospital with books and was reading to him as he recuperated.

And one day, one of the nurses came in, shut the door and said, "I've been noticing what you're reading and I think I know somebody you'd like to meet." And she brought the local Communist organizer up to meet him. So this guy recommended that he go to New York and bring back some books and make some connections there. So that's what he did — and that would have been in '32, I guess, or maybe '33. And he brought back a great big box of books, 30 dollars worth of books — in

those days, 30 dollars would get you a box full of books — and one of them was for me, called *The Teachings of Karl Marx for Boys and Girls*. I'm told now that it's girls and boys, but anyway, I've never seen it since. I really should go on Amazon and see if I can dig up a copy of it, because I'm very curious. But mostly what it was, as I remember, it was an atheist tract. In any case, it didn't take much persuading. I mean, obviously I would have followed him anywhere, but it released me from my interest in Catholicism, in any case. (laughter) So –

ANDERSON: So you were finding the ideas exciting to you before you –

FRANTZ: Yeah, but I would –

ANDERSON: But you were a child, also.

FRANTZ: Yeah, but he was very good at explaining all of this in language that was comprehensible. So anyway, I joined the Young Communist League and I went on my first demonstration, which was an interesting one. There had been a lot of stuff in the paper about [Fulgencio] Batista's Cuba, which was a pretty fascist-like rule and there was an American delegation of artists and writers that went down to Cuba to sort of investigate, and it was led by Clifford Odets, who at that time was the most famous playwright in New York City. He had two plays going on Broadway which were very famous, *Waiting for Lefty* and *Awake and Sing*. So this delegation went to Cuba and they were not allowed to [dis]embark. They stayed on the boat the whole time. They weren't allowed to come in. So they came back to New York and there was a delegation and a demonstration to meet them at the pier. 48:15

So I was on this delegation, I was on this public march, and that was the first time I began to learn any leftwing songs, and I became a devotee of leftwing songs and started accumulating them. I loved to sing them. I just love them. And so that was the beginning of that part of my life, and I started going to Young Communist League meetings and meeting people more or less my age. I was younger than anybody but nevertheless, that was an interesting experience about which I remember very little, until I got to high school. And so, what my dad did was to find a place for us to live, and the whole family moved up to New York.

ANDERSON: So the two of you stayed.

FRANTZ: We probably — we might have gone back.

ANDERSON: Right, and Blanche and your mom came up that fall.

FRANTZ: Right. OK.

ANDERSON: Do you remember anything about the Young Communist League meetings, like what you all talked about, what it felt like to be there?

FRANTZ: I don't remember that then, but once I got into high school I do remember.

ANDERSON: Oh, OK.

FRANTZ: I'm not sure there was even much happening then, except for one thing I do remember, and that is the Communist newspaper was called the *Daily Worker* and for the first time that summer, in '35, they started putting out a Sunday edition called the *Sunday Worker*. They decided to sell it, have YCL kids selling it on the subway. So I started off selling down in the subway, and if you know the New York subway system, we were on the West Side system. We got on the train at 14th Street and [sold papers] up and down the train all the way to 96th Street and then we got off and got one coming down and [sold papers] in on the way down back and forth for the evening. And I turned out to be a star salesperson because of my southern accent, which was extreme, (Anderson laughs) and people would just buy it and tear it up in front of me just to hear me talk. (laughs) I really had a very thick — Alabama accents are probably worse than some, and I had a very thick one, in the beginning. When I came home after a year and a half, as it turned out, everybody told me in Alabama that I talked like a damned Yankee. (laughter) Couldn't win. So in any case, that's all I remember about the YCL, is selling the paper.

ANDERSON: Right, yeah.

FRANTZ: But, at the same time, the *Daily Worker* had a list every day of where there were meetings all over New York City, and I would look at that list and if there was anything easy to get to. I didn't get on the subway for an hour but if there was anything around Manhattan, I frequently went to meetings. And also, there were lots of meetings in public, big public meetings in those days of all kinds, and so I went to a lot of those, and I had my favorite speakers and so forth.

ANDERSON: You must have been the youngest audience member.

FRANTZ: Yeah, I could have been. You know, my dad usually took me with him as he wandered around — I mean, often did as he wandered around doing things, and he was supposed to — theoretically, the idea was that he was going to New York to continue at Columbia, but he didn't. He went to the Workers' School instead and took classes, and one of his teachers at the Workers' School lived on the Lower East Side, probably many of them. But anyway, the guy he was studying with was not a particularly attractive character, but he invited us to his home and we went, and I met his wife, who was, you know, a Jewish house frau on the Lower East Side, but she was very warm. They didn't have any kids and she sort of adopted me. I hung out there a lot, and in the process I

sort of explored the whole Lower East Side, which was absolutely intriguing and fascinating to me. If you've seen that movie *Hester Street*, I think, I'm not sure it's even still around in stores but it had a good picture of it. It really looked like an Eastern European city. It was full of little, you know, individual stores in the street, and it had characteristic smells. You could just walk up and down and watch life happening out in the open. I was just utterly intrigued by it and fascinated with it. It was so different from anything that I'd ever been acquainted with in Alabama, you know. There was no connection.

ANDERSON: Yeah. 54:19

FRANTZ: It was just a different world, totally, including terrible smells from fish shops and whatnot, but I loved it, and I would just wander up and down and watch and listen to the conversations. It was just gorgeous. And I didn't even know the Jewish patois, I didn't know anything, and so I got a wonderful education that summer and it was just great. So the family moved up. My dad found a four-flight walk-up, you know, apartment, cheap, on 15th between 3rd Avenue and 2nd Avenue, and it was a four-story walk-up. So the family arrived and moved in, and I went to Washington Irving High School, which was right around the corner.

That was an incredible experience, because I'd never been in a large school. This had six thousand students and it had an elevator practically the size of this room, not really, but it seemed like it, and was six floors high. Some of the teachers were just wonderful and I had always had crushes on teachers but I accumulated a couple more, including a wonderful history teacher, who really influenced my life, named Elizabeth Eisenberg. I kept in touch with her for many years, until she died. She taught modern European history.

Another major influence was that if you got an A or a B in your English lit class, you had the option of not taking more English but of taking a journalism class, which I did. I got a hundred on my first journalism quiz, so that made me decide I should probably be a journalist. (laughter) So that was interesting. When I went off to college, that was what I thought I wanted to do.

I stayed in New York essentially for a year and a half. The family stayed for a year. I joined the Young Communist League but I also joined the quote "mass organization," which is what you do when you join the Communist movement, is to join some large organization that you can use your influence as a Communist in. And so I joined what was originally the National Student League, but that Christmas there was a big convention of the National Student League, in which it coalesced and joined with the Young People's Socialist League to form a student organization called the American Student Union [ASU]. There's a newish book — it's three or four years old now — about the history of the American Student Union which is quite good. It has a wonderful title called *When the Old Left was Young*. It's a pretty good

book. I'm not totally sympathetic with the politics of it, but it does a good job and it was fun to read.

There was a brilliant young kid named Bert Witt**,** who was head of the sort of Communist faction in the group — impressed me greatly. I went to one of their national conventions when I was [16], in Madison**,** Wisconsin. I take it all back. I was mixing that up with the American Youth Congress meeting I went to in 1939.

ANDERSON: OK.

FRANTZ: This was 1936 and I went to a meeting, a national meeting. It probably wasn't that far away. I can't remember now. Anyway, the American Student Union was really mostly college students but they had a high school division. Their national office was just a few blocks down the street from Washington Irving High School. It was on Irving Place. And I went down there not long afterwards and sort of volunteered, and was given a broom to sweep the floor with. I met — the woman who was the head of the high school division at that time was a marvelous person named Celeste Strack, just a fantastic woman. I was very impressed with her and later got to know her. Anyway, I had four meetings a week. I had a meeting at the Young Communist League, a meeting of the American Student Union and a meeting of the executive committee of each of them.

ANDERSON: Oh my goodness. (laughter)

FRANTZ: So I was totally engrossed in student politics.

ANDERSON: Right.

FRANTZ: We just did whatever was happening, including peace demonstrations and things of that sort. I made my first soapbox speech about the Scottsboro Case, which was a major cause célèbre of that period, starting in 1931. Nine young black men had been arrested for raping a white woman, who later recanted her testimony, but it became — I don't know what to compare it with today. I guess –

ANDERSON: There isn't really –

FRANTZ: Yeah.

ANDERSON: – [anything of] the magnitude.

FRANTZ: Yeah. Anyway, I got very involved in that.

ANDERSON: I think we're going to have to pause there, unless there is a thought you want to just wrap up real quick.

FRANTZ: No. OK.

ANDERSON: OK.

END TAPE 1

1:00:37

TAPE 2

ANDERSON: [We were] talking about Washington Irving High School.

FRANTZ: Right.

ANDERSON: Do you want to say anything more about your political involvement that year?

FRANTZ: I had a wonderful teacher who taught modern European history, and she sponsored something called a League of Nations contest. The League of Nations Association was — well, there's the United Nations Association now, which tries to drum up support for the United Nations. Anyway, this group had an annual high school contest about the history of the League of Nations and the reasons it came into being and so forth. She organized a League of Nations club for those of us who wanted to take this [national] exam, and the first prize was a trip to Europe, so it was an attractive prize. The second prize, unfortunately, was only 25 dollars, (Anderson laughs) which is what I ended up winning (laughter) in Alabama, because when I left New York and came back to Alabama, I organized a League of Nations club at my school and found a teacher to sponsor it.

But anyway, she got me interested in world history, which I would have gravitated to anyway, probably, but she was really an extraordinary teacher. I was very fond of her and I had some other very good teachers. The New York school system in those days was just superb.

ANDERSON: What was the demographic of Washington Irving? Was it in any way integrated or was it all white?

FRANTZ: Hardly, hardly [integrated] at all, but it was very much integrated with the Lower East Side.

ANDERSON: Yeah, Italian and Jewish.

FRANTZ: Yeah. But I really don't remember any black students. But I did get to know some because the American Student Union had chapters all over New York and we got together for local meetings and regional meetings and so forth. But it was an unusually good school. My journalism teacher was terrific too, and I had a Spanish teacher that I liked. She didn't really approve of my politics but she said, "That's OK, because, you know, young people always do this but they outgrow it. (laughter) That was a challenge. Anyway, while I was there, in fact fairly soon after I went to school that fall, my dad went back to Alabama.

Well, my dad found a job in New York City as the executive director of something called the National Committee for Defense of Political Prisoners. It later changed its name to the National Committee for

People's Rights, and it was a committee of leftwing or left-leaning writers and artists who could move into some of these really difficult trade union or anti-discrimination things around the country with a committee of well-known people to sort of shed light on what was happening. And they had had a very famous — very famous within the bounds of left-wing history — delegation to go to Harlan County, Kentucky, where there was a lot of labor violence. [The organization] was headed first by Lincoln Steffens and then later by Rockwell Kent, but it was a sort of a list of writers and artists and intellectuals who were willing to put their names on a letterhead, and you know, they didn't have a lot of meetings and so forth, but they ran this office.

And they put out a weekly publication called *News You Don't Get*, about situations around the country. Because this was 1936 and '37, and the labor movement was beginning to organize, there was a lot of anti-labor violence around the county. Senator [Robert] LaFolette, one of the best senators, had set up a committee called the Committee to Investigate Labor Violence, or something like that. It was always called the LaFollette Committee — I don't remember precisely what its title was — and they were having investigations around the country of things that were happening.

The idea was that my dad would stay in this job for a year and then he'd go back South and open a southern office of this organization, and so he went back South to organize a — I should say that there was another leftwing outfit working on these kinds of issues in national labor defense, which was much more of a Communist, openly Communist-led thing [The ILD or International Labor Defense]. The National Committee of People's Rights had a lot of people that were not Communist or [who were] even anti-Communist. But these were the years of the so called Popular Front, when the basic marching orders for people on the left was to try and organize as broadly as possible, anti-fascist support in this country to fight Hitlerism and Mussolini. And that was the whole push of the Communist movement, to try and broaden out and organize, to work with socialists and not fight against socialists.

Hitler really came to power in part because the socialists and communists were fighting with each other. There had been a huge Socialist Party and a huge Communist Party in Germany, but they did not unite to fight Hitler, and the lesson from that that the communists at least learned was that should never happen again, we should unite with the socialists as far as we can and work together against fascism. So that's the idea of the Popular Front and by the way, there is finally a good book on the Popular Front, which there has never been before, called *The Cultural Front* [by Michael Demming}.

ANDERSON: Oh, I read that one. That is a good book.

FRANTZ: Yeah, it's the first book that has given any academic significance to the Popular Front. So he went south to organize a committee to support the Scottsboro Boys, which he did successfully in Birmingham, and got a

whole bunch of ministers and so forth and other people to work on that. And then there was a case of a Communist organizer in Bessemer, Alabama, which was a suburb of Birmingham, which was a major industrial suburb, and this guy was in jail. There was an ordinance on the books in Birmingham which said it was OK to have one copy — this was their obeisance to the First Amendment — it's OK to have one copy of a Communist pamphlet, but not two or more, because then that proved you were trying to organize. This was called the Downs Ordinance, and this guy [Jack Barton] was arrested. I guess he was a Communist organizer. I can't remember now exactly, but anyway, he was arrested.

And dad went down to try and organize some kind of resistance to this, and while he was there, he was kidnapped and beaten very badly by thugs that were hired by the local steel company, it turned out. Really, I think they thought he was dead, that he would die. They left him out in the middle of nowhere on an old country road, halfway between Birmingham and Montgomery, and they really beat him very, very badly. I have a picture of him, showing his beating. I don't know if you'd be interested in taking a look.

ANDERSON: Oh sure, yeah. Sure. And you didn't know about it at the time, is that right?

FRANTZ: I didn't know about –

ANDERSON: Your parents didn't tell you about this when it happened?

FRANTZ: Yeah, they told me. Well, I don't know when my mother heard about it, but it was in the *New York Times* the next morning and one of my teachers knew about it.

ANDERSON: That's right.

FRANTZ: But I did know about it. She just hugged me in the elevator on the way up. But I couldn't think about it.

ANDERSON: Sure. 9:40

FRANTZ: It was too painful for me to think about. This was a picture taken at the time of him. He was taken to the hospital. There had been lots of beatings like this. This was not the first such beating, but this was the first beating of a local boy [from a well-known family], so that it hit the papers and stayed there. And as it happened, through a complete fluke they found out who did it. Somebody was seen throwing out a baseball bat and tearing up a lot of papers on the edge of town where nobody would presumably be watching, but there was somebody who saw something weird [took down the license plate number] and called the police. They went out and found this bat that they had used to beat him

over the head and so forth. As I say, there had had been a lot of people beaten but there hadn't been a local boy that everybody knew, that had been through the school. You know, everybody knew him. So it caused a lot of furor at the pages, the front pages, and stayed there. And there was a national protest, of course organized by the National Committee for People's Rights, plus other groups. This organization changed its name at some point along the way to the National Committee for People's Rights, from the National Committee for Defense of Political Prisoners.

Anyway, there was a national Senate committee headed by LaFollette, and it was popularly called the LaFollette Committee, and it was supposed to investigate labor violence and so forth, and they held hearings — I don't know if they were in Birmingham or Washington, I can't remember, I didn't go — about the case. They did a lot of legwork about it, and they were able to literally and very successfully pin it on — it was organized by Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company, popularly known as TCI in Birmingham, and it was generally considered that TCI owned Birmingham. You know, they did whatever they wanted. But it got a lot of publicity and as I say, there had been other people beaten, but nobody that was a hometown boy that people knew about. There had been a lot of these New York lefties that came down to try and organize. And so it really rocked the state to some extent and the governor was forced to appoint a special investigator to try and get to the bottom of it. And he was honest and decent, as it turned out, which was very lucky. His name was McClung.
(pause to adjust microphone)

ANDERSON: So, the investigation.

FRANTZ: The investigation pinned it on TCI. Literally, they found stuff in the wastebasket that they'd put together that was torn up and so forth. It was clear exactly who did it, who organized it, et cetera. That broke open the whole civil liberties situation down there and really made a significant change, although it didn't affect the fact that — the name just went out of my head, the guy who became very famous — head of the police down there. It will come to me in a minute.

ANDERSON: Connor, is that who you are talking about?

FRANTZ: Yeah**,** Bull Connor, thank you. He became quite famous during the civil rights days. Anyway, this was all very devastating to me, obviously, but it was too devastating for me to think about or imagine or experience emotionally. I just walled it off in a way, and it was not until several years later, when I was reading a book by Albert Maltz [*The Underground Stream*] about a labor beating in Detroit that I read the details of this beating and this sort of all came home to me. It was very difficult to deal with. Anyway.

ANDERSON: How did that impact your family? What do you remember about your family life in the aftermath of that?

FRANTZ: Well, my mother was obviously [upset, worried, and] sympathetic but she didn't drop everything and go to the hospital, and my father really resented that. I mean, he didn't talk about it but I heard that he did. I don't know where I picked that up, but I got it from somewhere.

ANDERSON: Was she still not in full support of his agitation at that point?

FRANTZ: Well, she just was simply an apolitical person. She wasn't interested in politics. I mean, she later did some things that were useful and helpful on the Wallace campaign [Henry Wallace, Progressive Party candidate for president, 1948], after they moved to California and stuff, and she ended up, as it turned out — I'll get to this — supporting the family, you know, and she wanted to keep the family together but she just wished that it all had never happened. You know, she became a — I guess you could say that she became a fellow traveler of sorts, but not an enthusiastic one. But her heart was in the right place and she could obviously see what was wrong with the social situation of the South and the horrors of southern Jim Crow and so forth, but she just wanted it to happen to somebody else and not to her.

ANDERSON: Yeah.

FRANTZ: And also, the sort of unspoken but overwhelming shape of her life was to get along with people, everybody, and that made it a little difficult. Although she was a great ambassador, you know, but it certainly didn't enhance that. On the other hand, after my father died, the next guy she married was a Communist, and so, you know, she wasn't exactly running away from it, but on the other hand it was not what she would have chosen.

ANDERSON: And what about the — what did it do to your family, in terms of the fear? I mean, did you have a different sense of fear or vulnerability after this? 17:06

FRANTZ: Well, she really was an amazing trooper, all things considered, because later we had a cross burned in the front yard and we had shots fired in the house and so forth, and she was pretty cool about the whole thing.

ANDERSON: Did it make you afraid? Do you remember anything like that?

FRANTZ: No. I don't remember ever being afraid. I was just very proud of him and considering myself a complete ally and so forth and so on. I don't remember fear as being part of it. And I missed a lot of this. I was off at college when the cross was burned in the front yard, but not when the shots were fired in the house — I was there then.

ANDERSON: Do you know who did that?

FRANTZ: Well, we just know it was some Klan types, you know. We don't know if they were actually part of the Klan.

ANDERSON: Or TCI, or –

FRANTZ: Yeah, I don't think it was TCI. I think they learned their lesson at this point. I think it was just locals, but who knows.

ANDERSON: Yeah.

FRANTZ: But it could have been serious and it turned out not to be. It just meant repairing a lot of glasswork in the living room. We lived in a small, three-bedroom house but we often had people spending the night out there and sleeping on the floor in the living room, and that happened a lot because people would come out and it was 15 miles from town at this point we were living from Birmingham. You know, some people could have been hurt. Anyway, they weren't. No, I don't remember.

I just felt numb, but I also had a complete life of my own. You know, I really was moving away, as teenagers do from their families. I was so busy with all this stuff going on at school and all these new friends, and they were all interesting and full of life and all kinds of people. I mean, it was just a whole new world, you know.

ANDERSON: Yeah.

FRANTZ: Plus, there was incredible cultural stuff going on in New York and you could get tickets to the second balcony of old playhouses for 55 cents, you know, and so you could go to theater and concerts, and I went to lots of meetings. Their meetings were advertised in the *Daily Worker* every day and I would see what was happening and often go to large meetings, hear really interesting speakers and dull speakers, but it was just so different from, you know, Tuscaloosa that it can hardly be imagined. So, it was a wonderfully exciting youth.

ANDERSON: Were you resentful or sad to be going back to Alabama then? It sounds like –

FRANTZ: Yeah, I was.

ANDERSON: – you could have stayed in New York.

FRANTZ: I should tell you the story of what happened. I didn't go back with them when they went back, because I really did not want to leave. I didn't want to leave high school in the middle and so forth. So one of our friends, named Beth McHenry, who was working on the *Daily Worker*

then but had a lot of friends, her husband had been the southern organizer for the International Labor Defense, so that's how we knew her, and she was a delightful person. She stayed a friend for many, many years, until she died. She visited us and I got along with her and stuff. But she knew us well enough to know that I really didn't want to go back South and so she found a family for me to live with. It was a wonderful — it is the best thing on earth. It is my way I've learned of dealing with difficult teenagers is to find another family for them to live with. (Anderson laughs) No really, it's perfect, because once — you know, they can be ordinary, decent people once they get away from their parents.

So anyway, I was going on 14, I guess, when I moved in with this couple, and he really didn't have a regular, steady job. She had a job. She had a fascinating job. She was the chief proofreader and really the chief editor — I don't mean edit in terms of deciding on articles but on editing the articles — for *Fortune Magazine*. She disappeared five days every month to go put *Fortune* to bed. It was run by a very interesting guy at that point, Russell Davenport. You know, it couldn't have been more of a change of climate but she was just superb at what she did, and she was a delightful person. I loved her. I ended up loving her, really just adoring her. But the one I really loved in the beginning was her husband.

Bob was just a delightful guy. And he didn't have a regular job, he sort of was — I guess he didn't need to make money and he worked on various sort of odds and ends of leftwing periodicals and this, that, and the other. But he came from this Russian revolutionary family — his mother and father were both born in Russia, and they named all their kids after one revolutionary or another, like one of them was named Friedrich Engels Menaker, and he was Robert Owen Menaker, and so forth. I started off adoring him but then I really came to love Mary even more.

They ran around with this, you know, literati type group and so there were always interesting people over there. *Life Magazine* was born at that point as a sort of offshoot of *Fortune*. It was owned by the Luce people, you know, the whole thing, and so a lot of the *Life Magazine* people were hanging out all the time. It was just a fascinating household, and they were wonderful to me. And the thing is, that that's just exactly what 14-year-olds need, is to get out from under their own parents and have another life with some other people sort of taking care of them, I've decided. I did that when my daughter was so difficult at one point in my life. I felt she was impossibly difficult to deal with, so I farmed her out, basically, to my sister. (Anderson laughs)

Anyway, it was an idyllic life for me for four or five months, but it ended because of a weird scene. Bob was a member of the Communist Party [CP] but his wife wasn't. They didn't have any children at that point. They did have children later, one of whom [Daniel Menaker] is now head of Random House. But the CP gave Bob [an assignment], a sort of undercover job, trying to infiltrate a Trotskyite magazine, and so

I had to leave. I would be, you know, a tip-off, and that was not a good idea. So they both felt very bad about it and I felt bad about it. So I was only there about five months.

ANDERSON: Yeah.

25:12

FRANTZ: But it was a wonderful five months and it really is something that teenagers' parents should listen to, because if they just get out from under your control, they can turn out to be perfectly nice people. I was not that difficult. I wasn't difficult for my father at all. I was difficult for my mother because she, you know, desperately felt that she needed to make me care about clothes and hair and all this and everything, and she would enlist my father — this was later on, after New York — to do something and he would come and say, "Now, don't you realize you can be more effectively politically if you got your hair done once a week or something?" (laughter) But my mother and I ended up being very, very close for many years, so that's a passé issue. But it was funny, it was always an issue in a way because she really cared about clothes, and I really don't give a damn about clothes (laughter) and appearance and et cetera, et cetera.

ANDERSON: Did those pressures translate into your behavior or was it really only your appearance that she was worried about? What about acting female?

FRANTZ: Yeah, I'm sure she would have preferred it if I acted female. But you know, I took the heat out of that by getting married ten days before I was 19, so it didn't last forever, just, you know, four or five years.

ANDERSON: Right.

FRANTZ: Thirteen to 19, I guess.

ANDERSON: Right. So tell me about transitioning back to Alabama.

FRANTZ: OK. Well, at first I thought it was going to be pretty hard but it turned out that the big high school — there were two. The big, big high school — when my father was growing up, there was only one. It was all white, of course, Philipp's High. It was the second largest high school in the state and some of the people that had taught him and my aunt were still teaching there. So I had a little core of people that were fond of him and my aunt and they were vaguely, not actively, but vaguely sympathetic with what he was trying to do and so it turned out not to be that difficult. I organized a League of Nations club at Philip's and ended up as co-editor of the high school paper. You know, they really were extremely supportive because my dad's name was in the paper all the time. And that's not the easiest thing for a teenager, even though I'm totally sympathetic with him. Still, it wasn't the easiest thing on earth, but it was really a superb school — I mean, in many ways and obviously not

on other ways. My history teacher would brag about how her parents owned slaves and so forth, so it was really difficult. And of course it was all white. But I had a wonderful lit course and we read every single line of *Macbeth* and parsed it, you know. They don't teach that [these days, usually]. It was much better than anything that happens these days in high school. And I couldn't — I had an awful time figuring out why my kids didn't like high school because I just adored it, and they were bright, but I don't know. I still don't fully understand that. I really liked it. I enjoyed school and I missed stuff that was going on, but I had a lively correspondence going with the kids from Washington Irving High School, and there was a Communist movement in Birmingham, as small as it was, particularly in the white community it was very small. But nevertheless, there it was and I –

ANDERSON: How much were you involved with that?

FRANTZ: I was very involved with that. The head of the Communist Party when I got back was a guy named Rob Hall, who was a very smart and interesting guy. He had been at Columbia and had been one of Rex Tugwell's students and had been part of the original group that went to Harlan County, Kentucky, [to investigate labor violence there in the 30s] and that's where he met his wife, who was also there and became a very close friend. So we were extremely close to that family, but we were also close to some of the black people there, particularly — there was a group called the Southern Negro Youth Congress and I knew all the people that worked there. And there was a succession of three different guys who were head of it: Ed Strong and then James Jackson, and I forget who came first, and then a guy named Lou Burnham, who became one of my very closest friends, and his wife Dottie I'm still in touch with. One of their kids became one of Angela Davis's lawyers. Angela Davis grew up there, too. I didn't know her but I've since met her mother and we had a lot of friends in common but I hadn't known her at the time.

ANDERSON: Now is this the first time in your life in the South that you've had relationships with African Americans? I mean, when you were growing up, I'm assuming your school in your neighborhood was all white.

FRANTZ: Well, you know, every white middle-class family had a black servant.

ANDERSON: So the employees in your household were black?

FRANTZ: Yeah. And we tried to get them to eat at the table with us and they literally wouldn't do it. They were scared, I think, that somebody might see them or something. But I was partly brought up by the woman that worked for our family, you know, and when I was a teenager — Mabel Collier was her name. She later went to Chicago with the great, enormous emigration to Chicago.

ANDERSON: So in terms of a peer level, this was the first time that you're sort of socializing with kids your own age?

FRANTZ: With the Southern Negro Youth Congress, yeah. I'm trying to think. I don't think there was anything before that. But what happened was, I went back south and I did various miscellaneous — you know, what can one person [do], it's a small group, but I did various things. And one of the things I did — but this was a little bit later, from college — I recruited one person into the Party who became a very useful person for a long time, until her death — from high school, and I made other friends who were apolitical, who were non-political there. I was totally uninvolved in the social life at the high school but I had my own social life, including a guy who later went off and fought in Spain. There weren't that many white families in the CP there. There were a handful, not many at all, but one of them was an interesting family that — her name was Jane Speed, and her mother was also there.

32:40

ANDERSON: Oh, I know who she is, yeah. I did an interview with Rosaria Morales.

FRANTZ: Oh yeah.

ANDERSON: So I know about Jane's story in Puerto Rico.

FRANTZ: Good. Well, Jane was a good friend. She was older but nevertheless a good friend. And in fact she had had an affair with the guy that I later married. So I knew her very well and I know her mother well. Also there was a guy named Sid Rittenberg**,** who is an extremely interesting person, but I probably shouldn't get off into Sid. There were a handful of whites. It was small, you know, probably not more than ten fingers, maybe a few more but not significantly more, and then there were lots of African Americans. I knew a handful but I didn't know a great many because it just wasn't even that safe to be seen with black people on any kind of equal level. But I did walk over into the black neighborhoods, which were very segregated, the business neighborhoods as well as the residential neighborhoods. I was over there frequently at the Southern Negro Youth Congress's office, but this was really a couple of years later, after I graduated and was at Radcliffe for two years and came back. Anyway, I was there for a year and a half before I graduated and then I applied to three different colleges and got into all of them but got a scholarship at Radcliffe, based partly on my League of Nations exam stuff.

ANDERSON: Let me ask a couple questions before we start with Radcliffe. Your father seemed to have embraced civil rights so quickly and readily, and that was a huge part of his work during that time. Is that a continuation of the ideas that he already had about race and race relations or did that

somehow evolve? In other words, what did you learn in your household from your father about race and how did that change as he became more active in the CP? Did he pick up more of that anti-racist ideology later?

FRANTZ: Well, there was never any hostility before he got to be a Communist but there was very little contact, except through servants –

ANDERSON: Right.

FRANTZ: – that I can think of.

ANDERSON: Was it something though that you all talked about or were concerned about, or did that come later because of –

FRANTZ: It wasn't the issue that got him involved in the left. It was really more economic and intellectual. It was clearly the most egregious thing that was happening on all sides.

ANDERSON: Right.

FRANTZ: And I certainly was taught that — but the only black friends that I had or that there was any opportunity to have, really, were through the Southern Negro Youth Congress.

ANDERSON: Right.

FRANTZ: I mean, you can't believe how segregated life was. It was totally segregated in all ways. It was not easy, and even the libraries were seg[regated] — you know, it was not easy to have, [with the exception of the] servant relationship, to have those relations, you know, to have those connections. And even before he was in the Party, it was clear that [my family] didn't approve of Jim Crow and everything that went with it, And I think for most young white adolescents, there was absolutely — in those days there was no conceivable way to cross those barriers. It just wasn't out there. I mean, everything was segregated, everything — libraries, everything was segregated, and the downtowns. My dad once was — this was a couple of years later, it was after his own beating and everything. He was walking to the headquarters of the Southern Negro Youth Congress and also the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People]**,** and you know, whatever, was in one black office building. I think it used to be something like one of these civic organization–type things that white businessmen belong to but I can't think of it.

ANDERSON: Oh, like Kiwanis or something like that?

FRANTZ: Yes, yes. It used to be something like that and it ended up being sort of engulfed by a black neighborhood and so it became a black office

building, I think. I'm not positive about that, but anyway, there was just one black office building and you made yourself obvious by going to it. Ordinarily that wouldn't create any problems but one day my dad was on his way over there — this was a couple of years later — to see somebody and on the way he passed a cop, a white cop, beating a black man in a car with a blackjack and he stopped and said, "What's going on here?" Of course [the cop] didn't like being interfered with. And [Dad] was arrested for refusing to assist an officer. So the lines were really, you know, carefully drawn.

ANDERSON: Right.

FRANTZ: And you weren't supposed to — whites weren't really supposed to be over there and so forth and so on. I mean, they weren't supposed to see people beating up on people and so on. Anyway, my dad was arrested and we couldn't lick it. We just had to pay a fine. When I saw a lot of the film footage coming out of the civil rights movement, I recognized all of those buildings and places and everything during the Birmingham struggle. What I remember before he got involved in the CP was a very distinct difference from the way most people treated blacks, just in terms of respect and affection — well, respect, I guess, but it was not the dominant thing in our life. There weren't simple ways to fix it. I missed one episode that happened chronologically that I want to go back to –

40:35

ANDERSON: OK.

FRANTZ: – which is that when my dad went to New York to meet these people, you know, after the New Orleans thing, to meet somebody in the Communist movement, they gave him this big box of books, which included the book for me, but they also said — he overhead in the elevator at one point with these people, somebody said, "Shall we give him Nat Ross's name?

ANDERSON: You write about this a little bit.

FRANTZ: He wasn't supposed to hear this and he kept going down to Birmingham [from Tuscaloosa] and trying to dig up some way to find Nat Ross, unsuccessfully, and nobody did anything about it for years. Because, as I think I mentioned, the Party was much more interested in getting working-class people than they were interested in college professors particularly at that point, which was stupid but nevertheless the case. So nothing happened and so in the meantime, he organized study groups.

And one interesting thing about the University of Alabama was that about half of its students were northerners, they were New Yorkers, because A, it was cheap and B, to get into the free City College system, you had to get an 87 average on your Board of Regents exams. A lot of kids didn't. Even if they missed it for a point or two, they couldn't get

into the colleges free. So they came to Alabama, which was very cheap, and it was famous because of its football team. So literally, there were a couple of thousand people there from New York and we met a few radicals, not many but a few that way. And so there was also a lot of Jewish population because these Jewish kids were bright but they didn't have the money.

ANDERSON: Right.

FRANTZ: So there was a small circle. We organized a sort of reading circle but that's all. The book at that period was a book by John Strachey, of England, called *The Coming Struggle for Power*, and it was the sort of leading book used to trying to make Reds out of intellectuals. It was basically an interpretation of Marx — that's what it was. So [Dad] organized some kind of study group but nobody [from the Party] came to look him up for about a year or so, or maybe a year and a half. It was really stupid. Anyway, suddenly he got a call from somebody and it was the guy who was head of the Communist Party in Tennessee, or maybe he became that later, but anyway, he came and then — my mother was a wonderful cook — they came to visit and stayed for the weekend and she fed them all well, and they weren't used to good meals. And so our house became a sort of R&R center for these young people.

And there had been this really interesting thing which nobody's written about — at least I haven't read it anywhere. Now you know about Mississippi Summer, all of these students coming south, but there were a whole bunch of people coming south, young people, in these days, not in the same numbers but a substantial trickle, including some of the people that were organizing the sharecroppers' union, and there were some real struggles going on with the sharecroppers. There was a shootout and, you know, there was a lot of stuff going on.

ANDERSON: Robin Kelley writes –

FRANTZ: Yeah, right.

ANDERSON: – about all that.

FRANTZ: I put Robin Kelley originally into contact with the person that he interviewed at length in *Hammer and Hoe*.

ANDERSON: You show up in there, too.

FRANTZ: Yeah.

ANDERSON: You and your dad.

FRANTZ: Anyway, eventually some people showed up who had been working with the Alabama Sharecroppers' Union and other people, other whites

from New York actually who came down to help. And as it turned out, one of them turns out to be the uncle of somebody who lives in this building — really funny (laughs) what happens. So we finally met some Communists, live Communists, (unclear) in here. This was actually before we went to New York. Some of them stayed friends for life, you know, literally. The people that had to do with the — it's terrible not being able to remember the names of books that you know practically by heart, but anyway. There was an as-told-to story by one of the leaders in the sharecroppers' union, but I can't remember the name of it at the moment, but it's incredible, it won a big national book award thing. [Theodore Rosengarten, *All God's Dangers: The Life of Nate Shaw*.]

FRANTZ: Anyhow, he did this really long oral history and it was in the early days of oral history. There weren't many oral histories done at that point. I mean, Studs Terkel was writing, but there was nobody doing a full-scale [history] of this black sharecropper. It was really a very impressive book [and the guy is now in South Carolina. I'm sort of in email touch with him and his wife but I can't think of his name.] Anyhow, there were some very serious struggles, you know, and shootouts and so forth going on in Alabama, and that's when we met some of these people. My dad came to Marxism strictly through books and so forth. He didn't know all this stuff was going on.

ANDERSON: Right.

FRANTZ: Nobody knew. I mean, very few people knew. So we got educated and our house became a sort of R&R center for these strung-out revolutionaries, because my mother was a great cook. And at this point we lived out from town and we had a place right on the edge of the woods. It was a very simple but very pleasant atmosphere and so they cooled out there, and we kept in touch with many of them for many years. And one of them turned out to live next door to us and became [one of] our closest friends and friends of my kids. So anyway, these relationships really do last forever, some of them, although all my friends are dying off at a rapid rate, because I was younger than anybody.

ANDERSON: Did you want to bring it around to — you were talking about Nat, I think, right. 47:56

FRANTZ: Well, we met Nat later, but we met these other folks first, and then my dad had this idea. He was trying to figure out — he was still teaching physics but he was trying to figure out a way to be useful and he had heard about all these cases of political prisoners who were suffering in jail and so forth, and he had the idea — he was a great lover of John Dewey. He just loved Dewey's educational theories. He was a serious educator. He loved the process of educating and so he had the idea of

starting a school for the children of these political prisoners. He drew up some plans and nobody — he couldn't get Nat Ross very interested but Nat said, "Well, go to New York and talk to some people," and so forth. So his first trip to New York, or maybe the one that he went with me, was taking this idea and trying to sell it. He was pulled into other things and it sort of fell by the wayside, but that was his impulse.

So anyway, I came back and went to high school, and one of the jobs that I was given — I guess I went to college for a year and when I came home in the summer, after my first year in college, I was given the job of organizing a — finding some local Alabama people, black and white, to go to a meeting of the American Youth Congress in Geneva**,** Wisconsin, in the summer of '39 it would be, I guess. So I did. I got some from Tuscaloosa and some from Birmingham, and we got — I had more than enough for a sedan but not enough for two cars, and so my dad built a trailer, just an ordinary sort of luggage trailer for us to go in and put the extra people swapping off in the back of the trailer. And I went there. I tell the story in *Red Diapers* of how I met Pete Seeger singing a song that my family had written, and he didn't know anybody else knew the song and I didn't know anybody else knew the song, and that was fun.

ANDERSON: Yeah, that's a great story.

FRANTZ: So he desperately wanted to come south and pick up songs. He couldn't come right then and there, but a year later, in 1940, we were in another national meeting of the Emergency Peace Mobilization, and he came back with us in the same trailer and lived with us for a few months while he went out bumming all over the state picking up songs, and that was great, you know. That's when I learned to sing so many of these leftwing songs and I just loved them. I started when I was in high school and I just loved all the leftwing songs, and I ended up using them in my teaching. I don't know if you were ever in a class where I sang any songs, but when I was doing big lecture classes, I would frequently think of a song that seemed very appropriate for what I was teaching, particularly in McCarthyism or recent U.S. history, and I would sing it, and the kids just loved it, you know. I don't have any kind of voice but they just love these songs. So that was fun.

ANDERSON: (laughs) We've got about five minutes left on this tape, so do you want to wrap up by talking about that youth congress?

51:45

FRANTZ: Well, it was very interesting. This was a difficult period politically because there were terrific fights about — the Soviet Union had signed the non-aggression pact with Hitler, and what made them do it was — every effort we had tried to do to organize some sort of an anti-fascist alliance against Hitler had come to nothing — you know, Soviet Union and America and Britain and so on. So I think out of total desperation Stalin signed this thing, presumably to get more time to build up the

army, but I have since read that he didn't use that time for that purpose, and I assume that's correct. At least it seemed to be a reputable source. Anyway, what that did was ruin us for trying to build what we had been struggling to build all these years, an anti-fascist front, because nobody trusted us further than they could throw us.

I was really upset about it all, but as it happened, between my freshman and sophomore years at college, I was asked to go to a national youth training school, Communist training school, and I went. While we were there, the pact was signed and they sent some of their heavies from New York to come up and try and explain it to us and make sense of it but, you know, there was no way to make sense of it. And the result was that we ended up being — I mean, there was a way to make sense of it in a way that — it was simply a question of buying time.

ANDERSON: Did you question your politics, your loyalty to the Party at that point?

FRANTZ: Not seriously, no.

ANDERSON: But it was upsetting to you.

FRANTZ: I was 18, you know. I didn't consider myself in a position to do that, exactly. But anyway, it was upsetting. It was upsetting because it made what had recently, in the recent past, been successful political work, it undid everything. I'm convinced that that's why I lost my scholarship at Radcliffe really, because when I went in to see about renewing it after my sophomore year, the dean was practically in tears. It was the day that France had fallen and she was very hostile, hostile. Anyway –

ANDERSON: So, the summer conference you went to, the American Youth Congress – 54:45

FRANTZ: Yeah. But I think the Lake Geneva conference was before the pact was signed. So I think it was still a pretty successful group. I don't have the slightest recollection of anything that happened at that conference, except for the Pete Seeger story.

ANDERSON: Do you remember how it felt though?

FRANTZ: Yeah. I loved being there and I remember — and I felt good, because I had succeeded on a task of getting a good Alabama delegation together.

ANDERSON: And you had an interracial delegation, too.

FRANTZ: Yeah. But I don't remember what happened there. Big blank.

ANDERSON: OK, that's OK.

FRANTZ: I enjoy these great big get-togethers. You know, you meet a lot of interesting people and so on, and I probably ran across some of my old comrades from high school there. I wouldn't be surprised but I don't remember it. But what I do remember is I dropped out of college when I lost my scholarship. Well, I should –

ANDERSON: We haven't even talked about going to Radcliffe yet, so we have –

FRANTZ: OK.

ANDERSON: Well, I think we should just pause, because that starts a whole other chapter, it seems like, and start with going off to Cambridge next time. I want to go back and just talk a little bit about sexuality. We haven't talked about that at all, and you've said in your intro to *Lesbian Life, Wedded Wife* [*From Wedded Wife to Lesbian Life*], that book, that you sort of had inklings all along.

FRANTZ: Well yeah, because I really wanted to be a boy. I really truly was a tomboy. I was a tomboy in every conceivable way in everything.

ANDERSON: So I think we should just save that topic and then obviously you get married quite young, too. So we'll pick up with –

FRANTZ: But you know, at the time I got married, I had absolutely no — well, I was going to say I had never met a lesbian, which is not true. One of my high school teachers in Alabama was a lesbian and she invited me to her house at one point and read me some lesbian poetry, but she didn't make any passes at me or anything.

ANDERSON: Yeah.

FRANTZ: But she wanted to — she thought she saw a useful conflict of interest but she didn't pursue it any. She was a very nice person. She was completely out of place in that high school.

ANDERSON: I bet.

FRANTZ: Yeah. I don't even know to what extent she was out, but she was certainly out to me. You know, she pulled out these books of poetry. Anyway, but I didn't have any con[text] — I didn't know anything about lesbianism at all at that point but then when I married, my husband had a first cousin who was the lesbian in the family, whom he was very, very fond of. So that's a whole other story.

ANDERSON: All right. Well we'll talk about that tomorrow.

FRANTZ: But I'm good for as long as you want to go. I mean, I'm not tired. If you want to do any more, it's fine with me.

ANDERSON: OK. I'm going to turn this off. 57:59

END TAPE 2

TAPE 3

ANDERSON: OK, we're back on. Second day of taping with Marge Frantz for the Voices of Feminism project. So yesterday when we ended, you were going off to Radcliffe. We talked a little bit about why you left Radcliffe, that you were only there a year and a half.

FRANTZ: Two years.

ANDERSON: Two years, and that you lost your scholarship. But let's spend a little time just talking about what it was like there, what you found and your activity, your political activity, as a college student there.

FRANTZ: For one thing I was younger than everybody, than most people. I was just barely 17 and most people were older, at least a year older. And I sort of was a hick compared to most of the kids that were there, and particularly — I was not a typical Radcliffe girl. (laughter)

ANDERSON: Which was? How would you describe her?

FRANTZ: I don't know, but much more sophisticated, and many of them from prep schools and most of them from wealthier families, you know. I was there on scholarship. I had very little money. My family had no money at that point. I mean my dad was still working for the National Committee for People's Rights and he was getting — well the Southern Conference for Human Welfare was about to happen that December of that year, so I missed it but, you know, he didn't have any regular income except money he could raise with mailings and whatnot, so that meant a trip to New York, which meant that it was not all sheer profit with what you got. (laughs) He had a couple of angels that he could sort of call on but not very many, and later that problem was solved but not while I was at college because he arranged to get my mother a job with the National Youth Administration. He was a friend of Aubrey Williams and she became very, very, very useful in that office. They loved her, they adored her. She did all their PR stuff, putting out all their [publications] — you know, she was extremely competent.

But when I went to Radcliffe that income was not there. So one of my mother's sisters sent me five dollars a month and my father's sister sent me ten dollars a month, and that was the money I had just for daily — for anything I needed. So in a way I felt, you know, like a second-class citizen. I mean, it wasn't oppressive but it was a problem. And also I wasn't in the dorms, so it was not as easy to get to know people because I was working at the room-and-board job, which was just, you know, a ten-minute walk from the campus but it was still a problem. But I made an instant friend because there was somebody in a room-and-board job right next to my house, the house that I was working in, who was an old leftie. So we became very good friends and that got me off to

a good start. She was a senior, but we stayed friends for many years, until she died.

One of the things that happened that was interesting was that on my way to college, I was in New York with friends right before I was ready to leave and get there early to take an — there was an exam at the beginning of the semester to see if you could — it was a writing exam basically to see if you could skip freshman English and I missed it because of the — there was a huge storm. It was the famous storm on the east coast and everything was — railroads weren't running, busses weren't running and so forth. Trees were down everywhere and so forth. It was the fall of '38 and it was centered right in the main road and ocean between Cambridge and New York. So I got there late and missed that exam. They had a makeup exam because lots of people couldn't get there and I passed it. So that was a good beginning for me because it gave me a little edge. I didn't have to take freshman English. I had more time to take other things that were interesting to me. Radcliffe had this tradition of all the organizations on campus having a tea, fairly sort of semi-formal tea to introduce people, the students, the freshmen to new organizations and that was an interesting scene. Anyway, I hooked up very quickly with the Young Communist League and it was — we had some meetings with Harvard students and some meetings just with Radcliffe people.

ANDERSON: How big would you say the organization was on campus?

FRANTZ: At Radcliffe there were probably about ten or 12 people and with the Harvard people, you know, there would be about 25 or something like that, but I made some lifelong friends there. And then of course there was an American Student Union chapter which was much broader than the YCL chapter. This was all before the pact, before the Soviet/Nazi pact. There was a lot of so-called united front activity going on on campus of all kinds and varieties. I volunteered to work on the *Radcliffe News*, which was the weekly newspaper, and I got involved with that. Otherwise, you know, I was also getting used to studying at that level but I did well. I didn't do brilliantly. Talk about, you know, there's much talk about grade inflation now at Harvard but in those days, there were virtually no As anywhere. I mean anywhere. They were very hard to come by. I got one A the whole time I was there and many people never got near it. I was just lucky. I took a course on trade unionism and public policy, (laughter) my second year. I did become — through the ASU I became friends with someone who became my college roommate the following year and who I was friends with, and still am for all these years. She was a junior Phi Beta Kappa and she got A's, but she didn't do anything except study, really. I mean, she used to study all the time, although we did — she was a sort of a sympathizer. She joined the Party some years later as a result of my efforts, but not then. However, we became roommates the following year.

And my second year there I lived in a co-op house, which was great. There were 17 people there but we cooked our own meals and it was a great deal cheaper than the dorms, but it was an officially sort of recognized. And the administration had a nurse that lived there and sort of kept track of all of us. And one of the reasons I felt that I lost my scholarship partly for political reasons was that when I went in to talk to the dean of women, who was a major force on the campus, she told me that the house mother had told her that I didn't make my bed every day, and I thought that was sort of a tip off to — you know, it's hardly an appropriate complaint, (laughs) when you're talking about scholarships, but anyway. You have no idea how powerful deans of women were in those days. It was also true at the University of Alabama campus, where my mother was. The dean of women was her one great backer because she liked to have an older woman there, but they really had a lot to do with the tone, and a lot of academics definitely had no business dealing with –

ANDERSON: What about being Jewish at that campus? Were you comfortable?

FRANTZ: It never –

ANDERSON: It never came up, or – 9:08

FRANTZ: It never bothered me. There wasn't — I think there were probably a lot of Jewish kids at Radcliffe, because I think scholarship was what they went by so they would naturally get a lot of Jewish students, and I remember several, but I was so much of a non-Jew, [non-]practicing Jew, you know.

ANDERSON: Right. So it was more of the southern –

FRANTZ: Yeah.

ANDERSON: – piece of it that made you feel out of place in class status.

FRANTZ: Except I didn't feel that out of place. I was reasonably comfortable. I felt out of place because I didn't have any money –

ANDERSON: Yeah.

FRANTZ: – slightly, and because I did have a big southern accent when I got there and, you know, that sticks out.

ANDERSON: And what about that inkling –

FRANTZ: So, I mean, I didn't give a damn about clothes.

ANDERSON: Right, the gender stuff, yeah, yeah.

FRANTZ: And I was definitely a minority in that scene. And also, well, the first year, because of my room-and-board job I didn't have any other jobs off campus, but the next year, when I was living in the co-op house, I took all the — we had something called the bureau of occupations and I took lots and lots of babysitting and cooking jobs and during the spring vacation I didn't vacate. I took a job taking care of kids and, you know, things like that. There were a number of people who did that but we were definitely a minority and a fairly visible minority. I mean, people were aware of it. It was a very class-based institution, obviously. On the other hand, I was very glad to be going there and the first year I was there, there were a lot of lefties that taught at Harvard. Very few of them taught at Radcliffe, but there were people there that we felt were — Granville Hicks was teaching there that year. He was well known as a Communist. He later left the Party but he — he was at Rensselaer year. I'm almost certain. Another guy who was there, but he didn't teach classes at Radcliffe, unfortunately — oh god, here I go again.

ANDERSON: Don't worry, you can fill it in later.

FRANTZ: A guy who later committed suicide and May Sarton wrote a book called *Faithful are the Wounds* about him. I took a course from George Sarton on the history of science. He was a wonderful guy and May Sarton's father. Well, it doesn't really matter.

ANDERSON: Yeah, we'll fill it in later, yeah.

FRANTZ: I enjoyed myself. I got along well, very well, with the family with whom I was working. She probably went to Smith because she was a friend of my aunt's that went to Smith, Amelia Fisk, but that wasn't her maiden name, and I don't remember what her maiden name was — Worthington. Amelia Worthington. And she, along with my aunt, Emma Stern, or Emma Gelders when she was at Smith, led a fight in Alabama against convict labor. I may have mentioned that.

ANDERSON: You mentioned that yesterday, yeah.

FRANTZ: Well Amelia was her friend and her husband was a lawyer in Boston, and I really got along extremely well with him and they had two teenage kids, and I got along OK with them. So it was a fairly decent situation. When my mother died and I was going through all of her correspondence, I found a letter from Amelia to my mother saying, "Margaret is doing very well" — basically the idea was, Her room is a mess, but (laughs) aside from that.

ANDERSON: Do you remember anything about lesbian relationships on campus, or –

FRANTZ: I think I was completely unaware of them and I did very little dating, and I think maybe my sophomore year I dated — well actually I went to the freshman prom with a guy, but I was not really part of the big dating scene there at all.

ANDERSON: Yeah. Were you having –

FRANTZ: What was the question you asked me?

ANDERSON: Just an awareness of any lesbian relationships or –

FRANTZ: You know, if so, it's a complete blank. I can't remember and I think I would have. I think I would have. There were some people in my YCL (Young Communist League) group that I met and stayed in touch with for a long, long time. But they've sort of faded, except for Muriel**,** my roommate. So anyway, I made friends with her my freshman year and she asked me to room with her my sophomore year. That was great for me, because it sort of got me into a new circle and I had many more friends and, you know, there were 17 women there. I don't remember any lesbian stuff going on there. I think there were probably some rumors that X or Y may have been gay, but I really can't bring up anything. But I'll think about it. I might come up with something.

ANDERSON: So it sounds like you would have liked to stay for your four years if you could have.

FRANTZ: Yeah, except that I was not that great a student. You know, I made a B average but — almost. I'd say a B- average. I'd never gotten a C in my life until I got there. But it really was the average grade across.

ANDERSON: Yeah.

FRANTZ: It was very hard to get even Bs and almost impossible to get As unless you just were total[ly] — you didn't do anything but study. But I liked it. I enjoyed the whole scene, and I was glad to be going to Radcliffe. I applied to Barnard and Chicago and I got in — besides Radcliffe, I got in to both places but I didn't get a scholarship. I think I probably would have enjoyed either living in New York or Chicago better, but anyway. I was happy to be there. But the dean of women really was a jerk, Mildred Sherman. She was, you know, her aim was to have everybody be prim and proper and I obviously didn't fit that mold and so it was, you know, sort of two strikes against me.

ANDERSON: And did she have –

FRANTZ: She was into everything. She was into every single — you know, she didn't miss a trick.

ANDERSON: And she's the one with the authority to yank your scholarship.

FRANTZ: Yeah.

ANDERSON: So what were your choices when you were told that you weren't going to get any funds?

FRANTZ: I wasn't sorry because I had had a couple years of college, and I was ready to go back and join the fray, you know. And I had missed out on going to the Southern Conference, which I felt very bad about. So, you know, I enjoyed my family. It was not a world-shaking, world-destroying decision.

16:45

ANDERSON: Yeah.

FRANTZ: I had a sort of "romance" in quotes going with a guy who proposed — wonderful person, a wonderful human being. He was working full-time for the ASU, the American Student Union, and the Party wanted him to go to work full-time for them as their organizer in Vermont. He didn't know a soul there and he wanted to take somebody with him and I think it was less — you know, we were going out and we enjoyed each other and he had proposed but I thought it was way too premature both in terms of him and in marriage in general. I had no real desire at that point to get married. But we stayed in touch for years and he married somebody else, and whenever I went to Cambridge, I always saw him. And he's still alive, as far as I know. He wrote a good book on the Philippine independence movement.

ANDERSON: So you went back to Alabama.

FRANTZ: So I went back to Alabama, yeah, and when I went back, I got totally involved in — that's when I organized the youth delegation of the American Youth Congress. But then I also got, you know, just involved in Party activities in general. I got arrested, I think that first — I'm not positive whether it was '39 or '40, but it was during the summer. I got my first arrest from Bull Connor, who had just become, you know –

ANDERSON: You were leafleting, right?

FRANTZ: Yeah.

ANDERSON: So what did you do for work? What was your paid work at the time?

FRANTZ: I didn't actually get paid. I went to work full time for the League of Young Southerners because it had — as a result of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, they set up a youth organization called the League of Young Southerners.

ANDERSON: Yeah.

FRANTZ: And its office was in Birmingham.

ANDERSON: And what was the mission of that organization?

FRANTZ: Well, it was essentially to organize youth around a New Deal-type program and build support for the new deal in the South and the whole range of issues that the New Deal was working on, and worked very closely with Southern Negro Youth Congress [SNYC] on racial issues, and we were very close to them. Whoever was working for the SNYC at that point, you know, I was very close to and there were three different executive directors over the time that I was there. The first, I think was James Jackson or maybe Ed Strong, I can't remember who came first, and then Louis Burnham. And after I left Radcliffe, particularly I was very close to Lou Burnham. He was a wonderful, wonderful human being who died prematurely but, his wife [Dorothy] is still a good — a close friend.

ANDERSON: So what was your position with the youth movement?

FRANTZ: I don't think I had a title. There was just one person that had a title, whoever was the executive, which was Sidney Rittenberg most of the time. I guess when I got back from Radcliffe, Sid was the head of it. Have you ever heard of him? Do you know who he is?

ANDERSON: No, I don't.

FRANTZ: He was a young kid from University of North Carolina who, in 1940 or so, maybe '39, there was a guy from India named Roshni Patel. We were still fighting for Indian independence and this guy Roshni Patel appeared on the Chapel Hill campus where Sid was in school to give a talk about Indian independence. Sid was so taken with the whole thing that he dropped out of college and started going with Roshni on his trips around the country to talk about Indian independence, and I don't think he ever got back to college and I'm not sure exactly where he was. But anyway, he ended up in Birmingham heading up the League of Young Southerners.

I'll only spend one minute on his trajectory from there on but it was totally fascinating. He ended up in China. During the war he volunteered — for the army in the Second World War. He was very smart. The army sent him to India to learn to speak Chinese and he became very fluent in Chinese, and he became a translator for General Marshall's truth teams when they went over to try and interfere/settle some of the stuff that was going on in the early days of the Chinese Revolution. And he stayed in China for the next 17 years, I think, and he was in jail for a long time. He was very, very smart. He had perfect Chinese, apparently, and he ended up in the early days of the revolution

as head of Peking Radio, which was probably a great mistake on his part, for a foreigner to take that job, who knows. Originally, because of being a translator for the truth teams, he went to Yunnan and he met Mao and he jet Zhou Enlai, and he and Zhou Enlai became close and he was a charming and interesting guy. Anyway, he ended up on the wrong side of a couple of battles and ended up in jail and then got out of jail, ended up in jail again, and has written a very interesting book called *The Man They Left Behind*.

Now, I regret to say, he is making an extremely good living by taking American businessmen over to meet people in China to get them started. I've seen him just a couple of times. He lives on Fox Island outside of Seattle**.** And he wrote a book, which is basically — he married a Chinese woman, they had five kids and they all are flourishing. It's a very interesting story that we don't have time for. (laughter) Anyway, we were very, very close. We were you know, hand and glove together. We were very close friends. And we had a common bond with another person who is very important in my life, Junius Scales, who was a Party leader in North Carolina, a student at UNC Chapel Hill. I had met him earlier.

I had been, in 1940, I guess probably while I was at Radcliffe, I had gone to — or maybe it was in the summer of 1940, I'd gone to a national Party convention in New York and I'd met Junius there, and we became friends for life, and he just died a couple of years ago. He was sort of the Party guy in Chapel Hill, the student contact. So later when I was working in Alabama for the League of Young Southerners, he was my contact there, and he was also a good friend of Sid's. He was later prosecuted under the Smith Act. He was the only person who was prosecuted under the membership clause of the Smith Act, and he spent some time in jail, and he wrote a wonderful book. It was a marvelous book, I just love it. I of course can't think of the name of it at the moment. I have to go look. [*Cause at Heart*]

But anyway, it's about among other things, his jail experiences. He came from an interesting family. Either his uncle or grandfather or something was governor of North Carolina. He came from a ruling-class family, sort of. And when I went back to North Carolina, which I will get to — I went to college there briefly for a while in 1940, so I spent quite a bit of time with him there but I knew him from day one, from first having met him at this Party convention.

He was one of the loveliest human beings that ever lived, just a marvelous person. It was just a joy to work with him. He was also a musicologist and he really had no business being a Party organizer because his passion in life was classical music. And that's how I first met him, when I first went to Chapel Hill many years ago. I went into the bookstore because I had heard about the fact that there was a leftwing bookstore there. So I went in and there he was in the music listening room and that's when I met him.

ANDERSON: So how long were you with the League?

FRANTZ: I was there until the war started, which — I got married in June and the war — the Soviet Union was invaded while we were on our honeymoon. And then, like most of the people — that was in June and in December Pearl Harbor happened and almost all the young Communist males that I knew of, you know, went into the army. My husband was anything but a soldier. He joined the navy thinking that would be a little less disagreeable — I mean he was a wonderful person.

27:20

ANDERSON: How did you meet Laurent? Start there.

FRANTZ: I met him through the Party. He actually was Sid Rittenberg's roommate. They shared a room in Birmingham when I came back from college, but I'd known him earlier. He had been there earlier. I can't remember when we first met, but there weren't a lot of — I mean, first of all, I wasn't prepared to marry anybody who wasn't in the Party in those days, clearly, and there were very few such people available. And it wasn't that I was in any great rush to get married, I really wasn't. But we were thrown together a lot. He was a very wonderful, special person. He's one of the smartest people I've ever known. He was absolutely brilliant.

But as happens with brilliant kids a lot, he was socially maladapted. (Anderson laughs) He graduated from high school. He was pushed like hell from his family. His mother was a complete mess, in my opinion, and that was not a happy relationship. It's one of the few failed relationships of my life, difficult relationships of my life, really very few — but she pushed him much. Anyway, he graduated from high school at 14 and then he went to college right there. His father was teaching at the University of Tennessee. He graduated from college at 18 and then went to law school, you know, and graduated at 21, and passed the bar. But he had no interpersonal skills of any description. I mean, he was attractive and he was pleasant, but he lived in his head and just had no social skills. He needed somebody like me, you know, to sort of give him ideas and direction. I mean, he was much smarter than I, but it was not in a social realm. He spoke very slowly and deliberately and he thought about everything he said before he said it, and that's a very substantial barrier to conversation. (laughs)

30:00

ANDERSON: Not a good dinner date.

FRANTZ: But he wrote just beautifully. He wanted to be a writer. He grew up, you know, and he was interested in British writing in the '20s and he was extremely well read, and really wrote like a dream. I was very useful to him, because I could give him ideas about –

ANDERSON: Yeah, help investigate.

FRANTZ: – the rest of the world. Yeah, exactly.

ANDERSON: So he went into the service.

FRANTZ: So he went into the navy and spent four years in the navy, and he was at various jobs but his ship was sunk off of — in the North African invasion, he was on a transport ship. He stayed for four months and the navy didn't know what to do with him because they had a record of his politics, and he wanted to go to radio school. He wanted to get some skills and they wouldn't let him do it and so he ended up being a yeoman, the lowest, non-commissioned [officer]. They weren't commissioned, he was just working in an office. He just sat for four months waiting for some sort of an assignment where everybody else was being shipped out quickly, but the FBI was on top of him, you know, and so forth. This happened to a lot of guys, leftwingers in the service.

So anyway he ended up — his ship was torpedoed. He survived, jumping overboard sort of thing into lifeboats, in a harbor. The Nazi submarines came in and sunk five transport ships in this harbor off in Morocco near a place called Fedala. He got on a lifeboat, went to shore. He turned out to be one of the few people that could speak French, so he was used as an interpreter during that whole scene and then came home for a month's leave and then went back and served in the Pacific as well, and he just barely escaped a Kamikaze**.** He was in a harbor in Okinawa when the ship right next to him was hit by a Kamikaze and went down, but he got out, he survived, and spent four years in the navy and ended up a yeoman second class. He worked in the office of the chaplain for a while and so forth. They didn't know what to do with him. That's too bad because he had a lot of talent. They could have used him in one form or another.

But in any case, he got out and came home in '45. My father also joined the army during the war and he ended up in a job teaching physics, in the signal corps, essentially, first in Missouri and then in Davis**,** California. The signal corps took over the whole Davis campus during the war, the UC campus in Davis. So as soon as Laurent got out of the navy, we came to California. It was interesting because everybody was in motion at that point, every base was being demobilized. They were using every single train that had ever been built, and we were in a train that was lit by gas lights, coming out of Chicago to California. They really came around with tapers, you know, to light the lights at night — the whole country was madly in motion with demobilized soldiers and sailors. Anyways, we visited my family, which was the last time I got to see my dad, for Christmas of '45, I guess it was. And then we went back.

ANDERSON: How long were you in California?

FRANTZ: A couple of weeks.

ANDERSON: Oh, OK.

FRANTZ: They took us on the usual tour of Yosemite and the works, and then we went back to Tennessee. So, I skipped a period here. When he joined the navy, I went to Washington, D.C., to get a job with the government. There were no jobs in Birmingham and the country was screaming for trained office people in Washington. So I went and I got a job with the Board of Economic Warfare, it was called. It was originally called the Economic Defense Board, and it was an organization that tracked all of the companies in South America, every single firm that was incorporated in South America, just to have that information on file of how we could [keep track of] all these corporations. And I got a job at almost the lowest level. I guess people with no college at all had a slightly lower level, but I got a bottom job in the office bureaucracy and I was put to work alphabetizing cards for every company in South America.

ANDERSON: Oh, gees.

FRANTZ: I spent every day alphabetizing cards. 36:04

ANDERSON: That's a tedious — oh, wow.

FRANTZ: Although it was a slight challenge because of all these weird names, you know, because I really didn't know Spanish in the beginning at all. Anyway, so it was hard to know how to alphabetize these weird company's names, but anyway. That's what I did for several months, five months, until the FBI got ahold of me and fired me. I had actually found myself a better job one step up at the Office of Price Administration, where there were a bunch of lefties in good jobs, but I never got there because the FBI got to me first. So that was my first firing. So then I got a job, with no difficulty, working for the United Electrical Radio and Machine Workers of the U.S., because a guy who'd taught a course at Harvard when he was a graduate student was heading up that office in Washington, so I knew him.

And it was a very interesting office because during the war, there was a no-strike pledge, as you know, and what workers were offered in lieu of the strike was an outfit called the National War Labor Board, which set up tripartite committees to try and settle all labor disputes, with one labor, one company and one person in the middle. Later on they established regional offices but at that time, early in the war, everything came to Washington. So if you had a grievance in Nebraska or California or Texas, you had the hearing in Washington, which is slightly insane, and later they divided up into nine areas. However, I was working as the secretary to the guy who was in charge of all the War Labor Board stuff for the United Electrical Workers, which at that time was a major union. As a result of McCarthyism it was pretty much

largely destroyed — not totally. But at that time, it was the third largest union. And that was a very interesting job.

The guy who was doing it actually was an architect by training and profession. His name was Niel Bryant. He was very bright. So I got to meet the leadership of locals all over the country as they came to town. And mostly I was just doing shorthand and typing but it was a very interesting office to be in. Russ Nixon, who was head of it, had been the guy at Harvard that I knew, you know, wanted to make it the best office in the whole CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations] and he put a lot of energy into it. And there were some interesting people there. Burton K. Wheeler, the senator, his daughter worked there, Frances Saylor, working on some of these cases and so forth. She was a lovely person. And it was just a fun place to be. I had the skills of shorthand and typing but I'd never really had a big office job before when I used them eight hours a day. So that kept me busy while Laurent was in the navy for [four years], and got an apartment in Washington and my college roommate came down and she got a government job. I can't remember what — she ended up working for the Committee to Abolish the Poll Tax through connections that I had, but I don't think that was true in the beginning but I can't remember. Anyway, we had an apartment nearby and I had various relatives who were living in Washington.

Every single week — I belonged to the union, of course, Federal Workers' Union, and every meeting of the Federal Workers' Union there would be new people coming in that I knew from all over the country coming in to work — you know, people I knew through the ASU and the National Student League and so forth, coming in to work to Washington because there was a huge need for office workers.

ANDERSON: Right.

FRANTZ: So that was a very lively scene, and I was there for — I was only there for maybe a few months. I forgot to mention a job I took in between losing my government job and the UE [United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America], and this was interesting.

ANDERSON: OK. We might need to pause. Is it going to take more than a minute, because then we'll put in a new tape. OK. So let's –

40:43

END TAPE 3

TAPE 4

FRANTZ: So when I first lost my government job, it turned out that there were lots of people being hired by the Soviet Purchasing Commission. They had set up a big outfit. They bought a building in Washington and they sent a big contingent of young officers over, and technocrats, to order machinery and stuff they needed. And they were hiring people right and left, and I ended up [in the war effort.] Well, first of all, I had to leave the Party because they didn't want anybody that was in the Party. They wanted to keep the lines clear. So anyway, I got hired. They were hiring anybody they could get their hands on and it was not easy because so was the government, but the CP didn't want any connections between the Party and the Soviet government. So I left [the Party], took a long leave of absence or whatever. I went to work for the machine tools division and basically they were just getting requisitions from Moscow to figure out what they needed and buying stuff.

And there were three Soviet engineers I worked for, one woman and two men. They didn't have very good English so we wrote their letters and stuff like that. One guy was really nice and it was during the Stalingrad operation, and one of them was from Stalingrad. I felt so sorry for the guy because it was impossible to get any kind of information, you know. They couldn't find out what was happening really and he was a very nice guy. And then there was this young woman. The most remarkable thing about her was that she wore heels like this (shows height with fingers) (laughs) and very nice, and a well-trained engineer, apparently. Siganyova was her name, and Zinuk was the guy from Stalingrad, and Kosolov was the head of the office.

That was interesting, just to watch the manners and mores of their — the only remarkable thing about it, for me personally, was somehow there developed a — we weren't really supposed to fraternize particularly but there developed a weekly bicycle ride, which included both the Soviet engineers and the Americans, and you know, about 20 of us or 25 in Rock Creek Park. It's a very long, thin park, you know, and it has great bicycle trails, and we would just rent bicycles and ride together, and that was really fun because the one thing we did share — we didn't share much of a language but we shared leftwing songs. They knew a lot of the same songs that we did and so we rode along on our bikes and sang songs, and that was really fun.

But otherwise it was a fairly undistinguished period and it only lasted about five or six months, because I heard about this UE job and so I went to that. But it was interesting and it followed me around, of course, and all these lurid stories about my life, that I worked for the Soviet government. (laughter) Anyway, I learned a little Russian but not much. We had some Russian lessons that I went to but it didn't go very far.

ANDERSON: So maybe we should pick up with what happens when the war is over and Laurent comes home.

FRANTZ: Yeah. So anyway, there's a segue between the UE job and what happened next because what happened was that in Bessemer, Alabama, there was a large, leftwing union local district, the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers' Union. The guy who was handling all of their War Labor Board work, which of course was central to every union at that point, because they couldn't strike — it was the only method they had for dealing with grievances — he joined the army or was drafted, one or the other, and so they needed somebody to do War Labor Board work.

So I got called to come to Bessemer to work in Bessemer, so I left the UE. I spent about six months each on each of these jobs and then went back to Alabama and worked for the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Bessemer, and that was a mixed job. I was a secretary, basically, but I was writing the War Labor Board briefs. The head of the office was a guy named Homer Wilson, who was, sort of a — you know, he'd come out of the mines but he was just a two-bit bureaucrat, and he didn't have a lot to offer. I think he probably earlier in his life had been a militant union leader but he had become a sort of petty bureaucrat. So the office was not a particularly lovely place to be, but there were several rank-and-file organizers that I became very, very fond of: two brothers named Mooney, J.P. Mooney and Howard Mooney, and Howard and I became very close friends. And then there was a guy named Alton Lawrence, who had been active in the Southern Conference. I had known him earlier. I don't know why he didn't do the War Labor Board job, he could have easily enough, because he had a sort of literate history, but the other guys really had just been to high school. He later became a stool pigeon, during the McCarthy period.

But anyway, Alton was there and then these guys, and we all went to lunch together every day, but otherwise it was not particularly satisfying. I mean, I really loved getting to know Howard Mooney, who later became an organizer for Mine, Mill, and then the steel workers later on absorbed the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers' Union and became part of the Steel Workers' Union. Reid Robinson was the head of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers' Union, and he was a wonderful guy and he came by periodically. You know, it was a militant union but there was not a lot unions could do within the strike pledge.

So, I wrote war labor briefs and we won some and lost some but, what I mostly — but this was half way during the war. I went down in '43, I guess, late in '43, and this was a period when women were beginning to get decent jobs because the men were all off at war, in the army. So I thought I needed to jump on that bandwagon if I was ever going to get out of office work. I am very much of the generation that if you were not a trained nurse or a teacher, you were somebody's secretary.

ANDERSON: Sure, yeah.

FRANTZ: I mean, if you wanted to work, those really were the only options and I really didn't enjoy being a secretary and taking dictation and whatnot. I was good at it but it was a bore and I wanted to do something worthwhile. So they were organizing — you know, Rosie the Riveter — they were hiring women union organizers and the UE was hiring women. So the Party –

ANDERSON: Did you rejoin the Party then after the –

FRANTZ: Yeah, oh yeah. I rejoined as soon as I left the Soviet position, and I was very active with Rob and also Lou Burnham. He was still in Birmingham then and we became really, really close, and his wife. They, plus Howard Mooney, were my closest friends then. Bessemer is 15 miles from Birmingham and I was living in Bessemer. So then it was a half-hour streetcar ride to town. It was slightly isolating, but I still had friends in Birmingham. It was sort of a strange era — everything during the war period felt temporary.

ANDERSON: Yeah.

FRANTZ: You didn't settle down. 9:49

ANDERSON: Yeah.

FRANTZ: In any case, Rob helped me get a job with the UE as an organizer. He had two friends who were organizers and he wrote to both of them. The one I ended up with was in Evansville**,** Indiana. So after six months with the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, I moved to Evansville, Indiana. When I worked for the UE, I had known some of their best people, because they came in to Washington to argue these cases, and all the people I had known were really bright and able and so forth. But, I got to the Evansville office and that was not the case. I was so gung ho: my first real, non-secretarial job, but they didn't know what to do with me exactly, so they put me to work at first just reading the files to sort of catch up, and then I was supposed to be trying to organize a local with a couple of guys at Servel, which was an outfit that made gas refrigerators. It was the only one that was — GE and stuff made electric refrigerators, not operated with gas.

Anyway, there were five thousand women working there. It was not a union town by any means. It was at the very tip, the southern end of Indiana and it was very close to Kentucky, and it was right on the river actually between Kentucky and Indiana. It was very southern, which was good in a way because I had some natural affinities with southerners. But it was hard, and I was the only woman, and the guy who was in charge of the office seemed to me to be a pretty uninspiring guy. I was startled because the other people I had known had been so great.

But then a guy named Bill Sentner came to town and he was in charge of the district as a — Evansville was part of it. He was working out of St. Louis, and he turned out to be absolutely brilliant and magnificent. I mean, I really learned a great deal from him. He was an extremely good organizer. He was the only open Communist in the UE. There were plenty of Communists there, but he was the only one who was open about it, and he was absolutely a brilliant organizer and an interesting person.

ANDERSON: Were you open about your Party membership when you were out there?

FRANTZ: Well, to the extent that it ever came up, but it was sort of assumed, I think. And so, I really learned something every time Bill came to town and he came to town fairly often. So that was a great relief and a boon because I had been pretty miserable there for a while. I got a room in somebody's house and Laurent was in the navy in North Carolina at that point, and it was a long way away. It didn't seem much chance of visiting and when I told her that he might be coming home on leave she said, "Oh well, nothing like that ever happened in my house." And also a couple of nights I didn't come home. There was another woman on the staff whom I liked a lot, who was a very good organizer and I learned things from her, named Mary Sweet**,** and when I didn't come home for a night, this woman whose house I had a room in was very upset about it. (laughter)

Anyway, it was sort of funny, looking back on it. I was lonely and missing Laurent, and didn't feel like I could really get my teeth into that yet. It was hard to figure out a way to grasp on to five thousand women. There were no other organized places in town. It was difficult and I began to wonder whether I was really cut out for union organizing or not. Well, this all didn't last very long, because — but I did want to stay because I was learning a lot from Bill and I found him very, very interesting. He was really a remarkable guy. This didn't last very long because of a series of external events that had nothing directly to do with me.

John L. Lewis, who was head of the CIO, decided that after the war, they were going to do a big organizing job in the South. The Mine Workers' Union, which was Lewis's union, already had locals all over the South but the rest of the CIO was very weak there. And now he was head of the whole CIO and he was determined to change that. One thing he did was to contribute a big chunk of money to the Southern Conference for Human Welfare. It was as an advanced token of help he wanted to get later and establishing a base, and it was more money than the Southern Conference had ever seen. So they had money to increase their operations. So there was a vacancy for a job, essentially as a secretary to Jim Dombrowski, who was the executive secretary of the Southern Conference in Nashville**,** Tennessee. And the Party decided they wanted me there so that they would know what was happening and have somebody on the spot.

So a guy whom I hugely respected in the Party, a wonderful person named Al Blumburg, who used to teach at Johns Hopkins before he went to work for the Party and was called Doc as a result — he was, at this moment, in charge of the CP in the South, and he asked me to come down to Nashville to meet with him, which I did. He wanted to persuade me to leave this job and take a job with the Southern Conference, and I was very loathe to do it because I'd only been there a few months and I thought I had a lot to learn from Bill Sentner. So he was a good persuader but he worked and worked and he didn't get anywhere, because I really was determined. But he finally broke me down and mostly said, This is what your father would want you to do, blah, blah, blah, your father started this organization, and so forth. Anyway, I finally agreed to do it. I really didn't want to leave and also — well anyway, I didn't want to leave.

He finally persuaded me, so I left that job after just five months and moved to Nashville. It turned out to be a very good thing and I'm very glad I did it, but it was hard at the time. So Jim Dombrowski was never in the Party but he was not at all hostile to the Party and he knew where I stood, and he knew my father. He was a friend of my dad's. He was an interesting guy. I guess he went to Columbia, had a Ph.D. He did his dissertation on the history of Christian socialism in America but he also, I think, must have gone to Union Theological [Seminary] at some point along the way. He had been one of the founders, with Myles Horton, of Highlander Folk School. There were three people who started it: Myles and Jim and a guy named John Thompson, who ended up at the University of Chicago, head of the Rockefeller Chapel. But he later became chairman of the Southern Conference. He moved from the University of Chicago to the University of Oklahoma at one point, so he became a southerner again. Anyway, I finally left. He broke me down and I moved to Nashville. So that was a whole new chapter. This was '43 and I'd only been there four or five months, sort of being Jim's secretary and helping on the — they had a monthly magazine called the *Southern Patriot*.

ANDERSON: Right. You edited that, didn't you? 19:22

FRANTZ: Yeah. I ended up editing that because the Committee to Reelect Roosevelt, early in 1944, maybe in late '43, was building up its staff in Washington and they wanted Jim to come and work on that. So he just left the office and left me in charge of it. So I had to be the editor of the *Patriot*. In the first month or two, he wanted me to send [him] everything before it published, and then he stopped. My name was never on the masthead, however, and it really was not because I was a woman, it was because of my leftwing connections, because I hadn't been there very long when the *Nashville Banner* — there were two newspapers in Nashville, there was the *Nashville Tennessean* and the *NashvilleBanner*, and they were owned by the same company, but the *Tennessean* was the

liberal paper and the *Banner* was the reactionary paper, owned by the same outfit — really weird and manipulative.

Anyway, the *Tennessean* was really good but the *Banner* decided to do a big story about me and they got hold of all my FBI records and everything, and Jim had already gone. They had this big, front-page story. I had only been there a few months. "*Daily Worker* Comes to Local Office," and then they started talking about Jim, and the entire second page of the paper was about me and with an interracial picture of me taken out at Fisk College with a circle around my head, and it had my entire political history on it. Well, that was not helpful.

ANDERSON: What was the fallout from that?

21:20

FRANTZ: However, people rallied around and I had made enough — it was just a few months after I had been there but I had made enough friends to have a support system. I was living with a woman. I had gotten a room, a really nice room and kitchen in somebody's house. She was the widow of the Vanderbilt football coach and it was wonderful. It was on the edge of town with this beautiful view of the foothills. I just loved it. It had ten windows and it really looked down on this really lovely view. I'm sure it's completely built up for the next ten miles now, but it was just on the edge of town and it was just a wonderful spot, and she turned out to have been a teacher of my mother's sister when she was young, so she welcomed me sort of into the family. She was living there alone. She had two daughters in town and she wrote lessons for the Baptist Sunday School and I typed her lessons for her as she wrote them. So we developed a very warm relationship. When this article came out, it upset her badly and I didn't even want to go home for a couple of days because I knew she was going to be upset, but she weathered the storm.

ANDERSON: She didn't kick you out?

FRANTZ: No, she didn't kick me out. Anyway, I lived in Nashville for the next two years, I guess. I worked for the Conference for a couple of years and I really loved it. I got to know people like Mary McCleod Bethune, who was on our board, and lots of other really interesting people who were on the board. And I got some really — you know, I had edited my high school paper and college paper. That was my total editing experience and I loved it. I loved that kind of stuff and I was able — at one point, we had enough money that I could hire an assistant. We'd spend one night sort of writing hopefully clever headlines on our articles of miscellaneous news, you know. I don't even have a copy of the *Patriot* to my name at this point because somebody I knew later on, Palmer Webber, was interested in having his wife [get the job] possibly and asked me for my file of *Patriots* and I made the mistake of sending it to him and I never got it back, and he's dead now. Anyway –

ANDERSON: Was your father still living when you had that job?

FRANTZ: Yeah.

ANDERSON: But he was no longer involved with the organization?

FRANTZ: That's right. He was out here [in California]. He was in the army and then when the war was over he — the war was still going on when I took that job.

ANDERSON: Yeah.

FRANTZ: When the war was over, he was at the Davis campus, which had been taken over by the signal corps and he got a job on the Davis campus so he was out here and I was back east. In those days, people didn't jump on a plane.

ANDERSON: Yeah, sure.

FRANTZ: So –

ANDERSON: So you had that job.

FRANTZ: But he was pleased, I'm sure, that I was working for them.

ANDERSON: Sure, yeah.

FRANTZ: Anyway, so I stayed there until Laurent got out of the navy in '45. We came out to California to visit my family as soon as he got out of the navy and then we went back to Nashville and he got — we both went to the founding meeting in Detroit, Michigan, of the Civil Rights Congress, which combined two groups: the old International Labor Defense, which was pretty much a CP support group but which had done the lion's share of all the work on the Scottsboro case; and the group called the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties, which was an outgrowth of the group my dad worked for, the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners. Those two groups came together and formed the Civil Rights Congress in Detroit in '46, or very early in '47.

Shortly before that there had been a riot in Columbia**,** Tennessee, and now I cannot remember what triggered the riot but it was a riot basically of whites against blacks. [The Southern Conference] had a few connections there. Anyway, Laurent went down to investigate it and wrote a really good pamphlet about it, and we took some of those people from Columbia to the conference with us. We had an interesting experience. [Southern] airports were not segregated. They didn't have separate waiting rooms for blacks because there were so few blacks who flew on airplanes, but there was a sign in a white waiting room that made it clear that it was the white waiting room and I don't remember

precisely what it said but basically it said No Blacks Allowed. We had a joint delegation from Columbia, black and white, going out to this conference in Detroit. We had bought the tickets and everything, so we just sat in the white waiting room, and they didn't want to kick us out because we had tickets. So they just came in and took down the sign that said No Blacks Allowed. I thought that was interesting.

So anyway, we came to Detroit and started the Civil Rights Congress, and Laurent went to work as the southern director of the Civil Rights Congress, but he worked out of Nashville. So we were there for another year or so and then there were some internal struggles in the Southern Conference, in the course of which I got kicked out.

ANDERSON: What were those struggles about?

FRANTZ: Well, it was really about Clark Foreman, who was the National chairman. It was really a struggle between him and Jim Dombrowski, who was the executive secretary. I don't think it was an ideological struggle or a political struggle, I think it was a personal coup more than anything else.

ANDERSON: So how did it impact you, then? 28:48

FRANTZ: It impacted me because the Southern Conference moved to New Orleans and I didn't want to go to New Orleans. In any case, I was replaced. I mean, Clark won the battle. He got somebody he wanted in as editor of the *Patriot*. There was no complaint about my work but my name was never seen on the masthead. So basically I just got fired because of an inner, [unpublicized] struggle in the Southern Conference. But when I left the UE I was on leave, personal leave, so I could go back to work for the UE, which was what I did. The CIO was planning to do a major organizing job after the war in the South called Operation Dixie, and UE was part of that, and they wanted me to go to Mattoon**,** Illinois. One of the things that they were going to do was to organize GE plants all over the South because they had a national GE contract but they didn't have a lot of plants [organized]— and it covered every plant in terms of benefits but they didn't have organizations in the South. So they wanted me to train in GE and go up and get a job in a GE plant in Mattoon and work from within to sort of learn about GE.

So that's what I did. We moved to Mattoon and I went to work for GE. I'd never worked in a plant before and all I was doing eight hours a day was taking fluorescent light bulbs off the assembly line, putting them in a sleeve and putting 24 lights in a box and taking the box off the assembly line over here.

ANDERSON: Wow.

FRANTZ: Going back to putting sleeves back on again. That was a brand new experience, both working in a plant and being on my feet, you know, eight hours a day.

ANDERSON: Were there a lot of women working in the plant?

FRANTZ: Yeah. But I had a terrible time connecting with the women, and I was incredibly abashed because I'd never had trouble connecting with people in my life. And you know, my job was to connect with people and I couldn't seem to do it and I didn't know why. Really, it was very strange. I later found out as soon as I was hired, the FBI came to GE and told them about me, but they told them not to fire me just leave me there and just watch me. But GE called in all the people around me and told them not to have anything to do with me, but I didn't know that. It was really hell.

ANDERSON: Yeah, I bet.

FRANTZ: It was really one of the worst experiences I ever had, because I felt a total failure. Well, several things happened. One is, one of the women finally told me what had happened, so that was a great relief. Another was that I got fired on the grounds that I had lied on my application. I said I'd never been arrested. Well, actually I'd been arrested but I hadn't been charged with anything so I thought I could get away with that. I didn't even think there was a record of it, but the FBI of course had a record of it, and they had come to GE right away. They just followed us up there. And the newspaper, the local Mattoon newspaper, had an article very soon after we arrived. We rented a room, a little tiny apartment, and they had an article saying something like Unpleasant Guests in the Midst, or something like that. (Anderson laughs) They didn't mentioned our names, but –

ANDERSON: Do you have a copy of that clipping?

FRANTZ: I don't know where it is. So Laurent was getting a hundred a month under the GI Bill. He was working on a book, which he never finished, but he did write some very good articles as a result of it in the *Lawyer's Guild Review*. One of the things I did when I was [still working at GE] every morning when I checked in, was to try and get people's addresses off of their things so I could go visit them in the afternoon. I had to learn how to manage working on my feet all day and still working at night, and I discovered that if I just lay down for half an hour or 45 minutes after I got home, I was OK, ready for an evening's work. That really wasn't bad at all. I mean, I was young and healthy. But the business of being isolated that way was — I mean, not having a single friend in town, it was difficult. After a while, I don't know how long, I can't remember now, the UE sent somebody down to help from Chicago, and that was a great boon, and she was wonderful. She was just a terrific

organizer and I learned a great deal from her. She was a go-getter. She was a very — out-there person. I can't think of the word I want, but her name was Irene Berman. I lost touch with her and I felt very bad about it, because I really loved her, and I just felt she was a lifesaver, in terms of my mood and feelings about the world, because it really was hell being there, with this cloud over our heads and trying to organize and not really being able to do it effectively.

ANDERSON: Yeah. So did you think about leaving sooner than you did?

FRANTZ: Yeah. It seemed to me — well, here was the problem. It was terribly difficult to sign people up but we finally did and when Irene came down [and we were] working together, we signed up a majority of the people and we got some people in the plant that were really excited about it. This was the summer, however, of 1947. This was the summer that Taft-Hartley was being driven through Congress. The anti-labor stuff in the paper was unbelievable. There were two other unions in town: there was a steel workers' local and a rubber workers' local, as I remember. There were two other unions, but they didn't have particularly good contracts. We had a hell of a time organizing it because we operated under the UE national contract. So they didn't have any very serious grievances. And so it was just a very difficult organizing scene. But the other thing was that the entire publicity network in the country — [newspaper], radio, everything — was aimed against labor at this point because Truman was trying to get the Taft –

ANDERSON: Right.

FRANTZ: – you know, because labor had won a lot of gains during World War II and the National Association of Manufacturers was anxious to roll them back, and Truman was very much on the fence. He knew he partly owed his election to — I mean, he hadn't been elected. This was before the '48 elections but he knew he owed, to a certain extent, his presidency to the labor movement. And he vetoed Taft-Hartley but it was passed over his veto. But the unions had really gained a lot of strength during the war and the ruling class was on the offensive against them so that everything that was in the papers added to the effort to keep us from organizing effectively. Plus the fact that there weren't any other [plants] in Mattoon that were organized. There were some other places that were, but they didn't have particularly good contracts.

So it was a hellish job and I don't in any way blame myself for our non-success, but it did absolutely turn me off to organizing. I mean, I never wanted to go back and be a trade union organizer again. So, we managed to get a majority of people signed up, but we couldn't have an election under the NLRB [National Labor Relations Board] because the UE wouldn't sign non-Communist affidavits. And so, we had all this stuff but it didn't do us any good. So it was an exercise in futility and it felt that way. I don't think it was, but it certainly felt that way. So I

decided to go back to college. The only bright spot that I can remember at that period — it really was a low moment in my life — was that my college roommate his sent me the records for "Finnian's Rainbow." Do you know the show "Finnian's Rainbow"? Well, it's a wonderful, wonderful musical comedy. I'm nuts about musical comedy, anyway — but it was a pro-labor, pro-left musical comedy that has marvelous music, just wonderful [lyrics], written by Yip Harburg. This was the days of 78 [rpm] records and it was a mood lifter like none I've ever had. Anyway, what I decided to do was go back to college, which my family had been pushing the hell out of me to do for years.

39:10

ANDERSON: Yeah.

FRANTZ: So we packed up everything in our '36 Ford with a huge, cavernous trunk, including all of our 78 bulky records. I spent much of the wartime collecting all the Beethoven quartets on 78 records, which was all there was, but LPs were just about to come in. Anyway, we packed everything up in our Ford — we had this huge trunk — and moved to Chapel Hill, and that was a whole new era in my life, and the contrast between Mattoon and Chapel Hill could not be more marked. I mean, I adored Chapel Hill. It was really — looking back on my whole life, second to the pleasure I got from teaching was the pleasure I got from living in Chapel Hill with this marvelous bunch of people: veterans who had just come back from the war, mostly, going to school under the GI Bill, just marvelous people. Just a whole — a wonderful scene. Junius Scales was the center of it all, my old friend from way back, and –

ANDERSON: Was there much Party activity in Chapel Hill?

FRANTZ: Yeah. Well, we really made it happen.

ANDERSON: Yeah.

FRANTZ: We did a lot of anti–Jim Crow stuff, at all levels, teaching classes in black neighborhoods, doing a lot of really interesting stuff. But mostly I was working on the campus and I was going to school, the first quarter. Well, I thought I was going to school. In a way I was going to school, in a way I wasn't. I got there and discovered that the out-of-state quota was full for students registering. But they said, That's OK, don't worry about it. Take three courses, do all the work, take the exams and we'll give you credit the next quarter. You know, we'll let you in next quarter because of the quota and so forth, so that's fine.

So I did that, and I loved being back in school. I adored being back in school and I had a marvelous teacher, Howard K. Beale. He was one of Blanche Cook's teachers. We had this bond about Howard Beale. I think he was at Wisconsin later, where she must have gone. I don't know exactly where, but anyway, he went to Wisconsin later. I was studying the history of the South and my basic plan, what I for years

thought I would do in one way or another, was to work in the South doing trade union education work. That's what I wanted to do, that was my goal. Anyways, so I took a lot of courses on the history of the South, and Chapel Hill was the best place in the country for that, and I just loved it. I took all the exams and got my As. But just at that moment, Henry Wallace announced for President. He was running and so I just dropped all of that and I never went back. (laughter) I didn't go back to school until 1950. After that, long after that.

ANDERSON: Seventies, right?

FRANTZ: Seventy, right, 1970.

ANDERSON: Yeah.

FRANTZ: But anyway, I did have a wonderful quarter there. But the other thing besides the classes, which I loved, was that the intellectual community and the surroundings and the atmosphere and so forth was so refreshing. After Mattoon, which I felt was a total defeat for me personally — which is, you know, wrong, I mean there were plenty of reasons for it, but I nevertheless felt that way. So, I just began to discover things that I hadn't — I had never read George Bernard Shaw before and they had a wonderful drama group at Chapel Hill, the Black Friars, and I went to see their — I don't remember which play it was [St. Joan], but anyway, I just fell in love with Shaw and started reading everything he'd written. That was a great morale lifter. I love Shaw, and it was so funny and so wonderful and so clever.

But the really big thing intellectually that happened to me was that I discovered the writings of E.M. Forster, who became my absolute hero. And to this day I just love his writing. I think he understands the human heart better than anybody I've ever read, and I love him. So I read everything. Somebody gave me *Passage to India* to read and I recently picked it up again and I suddenly realized why I had fallen so in love with it. Among other things, aside from the writing, which is just unbelievably beautiful, in my view, in the very first few pages of the book there is an encounter between Mrs. Moore, the white Brit who comes out to visit her son who is an English bureaucrat, and the Indian hero in the book, in which she treats him with respect and equality and deference, almost. I think that reading that, it was such a contrast to what I was living through and had always lived through. I think it probably just flipped me out. I don't remember that passage, until I went back to reread it, but I just have a feeling that that was the thing that got me started, and I just love the book. I don't really like the last third of it. It goes off into sort of a spiritual — is a little strong — into stuff that I'm not crazy about. But I loved his writing. I just felt a sort of kinship with his writing, more than anything I'd ever read. And so then I read everything he'd ever written, and I adored his collection of essays called *Two Cheers for Democracy*. It's just my practically favorite book in the

world. So I became a real Forster fan and many years later, when I went to England for the first time, I had a friend that taught at Cambridge and invited me up to the senior common room where Forster used to hang out, and it was a real thrill.

Anyway, when I think of Chapel Hill, I think about Shaw and Forster, but I also think about the incredible bunch of people we had there then, and we developed a social scene. Junius Scales lived there and was married by now and had a nice, big house that I guess was part of his family property at some point along the way. And we had a get-together every Friday night, I think. It could have been a Saturday night, I'm not sure — of all of our friends and quote **"**contacts." There was a wonderful pianist among our group and there was a good piano there. There was this young gay couple, the first gay couple, male couple, I'd ever known. Well no, I did know one earlier. And one of them played the piano beautifully and the other one was the son of I guess a Methodist minister, I'm not sure, and so he knew all these hymns. And Earl would get down and start playing these hymns and we'd all stand around and sing these hymns, and we had a ball. We just had a ball. It was so much fun. I mean, you know, the music is great and we just loved it.

In general, we had these weekly events and we just had — Chapel Hill was just full of all these young guys getting out of the army and the navy, and some women. It was always the most interesting spot in the South intellectually, you know, it was the best college in the South and everybody knew it, and there were just some extraordinary people there. One couple ran the bookstore, Minna and Ab Abernathy, and Minna was one of the greatest people ever. She's in her nineties and she's still alive at this point, but not well at all, in Chapel Hill. But I stayed in touch with her for years. She had a daughter who lived in California and when Women's International League for Peace and Freedom put on that party for me — they did that book and had a party — Minna came up for that and that was great. Anyway, I can't tell you the incredible bunch of people and spirit and everything.

So in 1998, skipping forward 50 years, several of my friends were talking about going to some of their fiftieth reunions and I decided to organize a fiftieth reunion of the Chapel Hill gang, which we did in New York, and we had 25 people that showed up –

ANDERSON: Wow.

FRANTZ: – that came from all over the country. And I took Eleanor, of course, and she got to meet all my old friends there. We all sat on the floor and talked about what we'd done for the last 50 years, all of us. We just went around the room and she was so impressed, as she should have been, at the quality of all these people. They just were wonderful and they've been doing incredible useful work all those years, in many different occupations. One of them had been a doctor for the United Mine Workers medical outfit in West Virginia for a long time. You

know, just all kinds of things people were doing and it was just a very, very heartwarming event. I really felt incredibly pleased about it.

Anyway, so I have extremely deep and warm feelings about Chapel Hill and I regret — we're still in very close touch with one couple, and the reason is that one of their kids lives out here so they come out every year. So we see them all the time and we stay with them if we go to New York. And then one guy comes to the OAH [Organization of American Historians] every year and I see him. In general people are dying and it's not what it used to be. But just a few years ago, pretty much everybody was alive. So it was a very heartwarming scene and it sort of speaks to me about the quality of the kind of people I knew on the left — really wonderful human beings. Obviously there were some exceptions but it just underlined for me how much real love and solidarity can exist over the years. Even when you don't see people you know that they're there, and I'm still in correspondence with quite a few, a lot of the people in that booklet that WILPF put out. They stole my address book and wrote to everybody.

ANDERSON: All right. I think – 51:14

FRANTZ: So anyway, it was a great event and Chapel Hill still — you know, when I think about it my heart lights up. I can't help it. It just is great. And incidentally, another connection with Chapel Hill is that one of my very closest friends in the world, who has since died, came from there and much after I did, a guy named Henry Mayer, who figures largely into stuff yet to come in the '60s in Berkeley. It's produced a lot of really fabulous people, just fabulous people. It's just a great place and it's also beautiful, and I'm still in touch with a lot of those people, mostly around Christmas cards and so forth. But they're dying and Junius, who was in some ways the absolute center of it, died a couple of years ago, and he wrote a wonderful book called *Cause at Heart*. It's not a great book but it has two absolutely remarkable stories in it. I don't know if it's digressing too much to –

ANDERSON: It might be.

FRANTZ: – talk about him.

ANDERSON: Well we've got just about a minute left on this tape.

FRANTZ: He went to jail under the Smith Act. He was the only person who went to jail under the membership clause.

ANDERSON: Yeah. You mentioned that already.

FRANTZ: When he was in jail — he looks rather effeminate. He's not gay, but if you were looking for gay people in a group, you would pick him out. So when he got to jail I was worried about him because, you know, he was

in a federal pen. But the word got out. Most of the people there were mafia people and the word got out that he was there because he wouldn't squeal on people. So they just took him under their wing and protected him totally from any kind of assaults. So that was one thing that was really fascinating to me. And the other was that he was — I mentioned once before — a musicologist, really. He ended up working in the office of the prison and helping to do educational things and so forth, and he organized concerts which he interpreted for the guys. These guys were Italian so they loved Italian opera. So he would play stuff for them and talk about it and there were various stories about that, but I just thought that was wonderful. He was just a marvelous human being. So OK, we're through with that tape.

END TAPE 4

53:46

TAPE 5

ANDERSON: So let's start by talking about the Progressive Party and the Wallace campaign, and take us in to California.

FRANTZ: Good. In the late fall of '47 Henry Wallace announced he was going to run for president, and that was at the height of the red scare, at the height of the cold war, or the early cold war. We were all extremely excited about it. I dropped my plan of going back to college and began to work full-time on the Wallace campaign in North Carolina. We put together, first of all, a bunch of the students that I've been talking about, plus as many more as we could get, called Tar Heels for Wallace. There are 53 colleges in the state of North Carolina, and we organized five carloads of students that would try and visit as many of these colleges as possible. We worked out the routes, et cetera, to try and make connections with college students all over the state and to organize a big Tar Heels for Wallace thing for students, college students in Chapel Hill, in the ensuing month or two. I can't remember exactly what the timing on it was. That really was exciting.

And one of the places we visited, by the way, was the black college in Greensboro, North Carolina, North Carolina State, and organized a chapter there, a Progressive Party chapter there, out of which some of the people who were crucial in the whole struggle against Jim Crow in the years to come got started, particularly a guy named Randolph Blackwell, who was the head of that group. We put together a state convention of the Progressive Party. We put together 17 statewide candidates — some statewide candidates and then candidates in different congressional districts. I think there were 17 people on the ballot altogether. There are a couple of good books on it. Pat Sullivan wrote one. She wrote her master's thesis on it and then it is part of her book called *Days of Hope*.

ANDERSON: Oh yeah, that's a good book.

FRANTZ: It was an incredibly exciting campaign. It was the first interracial slate since Reconstruction and there were a number of blacks on the slate, both congressional candidates and statewide candidates, like lieutenant governor and so forth. And it was a very totally integrated party, and it was — I can talk about it for hours. Well, I will skip it. (laughter) You can read Pat Sullivan on this chapter. I really have really enjoyed my life as much as again, continuing my Chapel Hill excitement, as working in North Carolina because it really is different from other southern states. I mean, it's definitely a southern state but it has more possibilities and more leeway for action. There's a huge black business community in the state for one thing, black insurance companies and stuff like that. And so you know, there's a considerable cadre of black lawyers and people that were very much a part of our campaign. We ran a wonderful guy named Conrad Pearson for attorney general of the state

and so forth, a black lawyer from Durham. So the whole thing was a really great enterprise and very exciting to be part of.

I got pregnant shortly thereafter with my first child. And my husband, meanwhile, was going back to school to get sort of a refresher course in law at Chapel Hill, and then he went to Duke and got a master's in law and did some really important research on the Reconstruction period, and the history of the Fourteenth Amendment. But of course — well, first of all, we had to get 30,000 signatures to get on the ballot. We had to get 10,000 officially. According to the Constitution, we had to get 10,000 signatures on the ballot, but they had to be people who had voted in the previous election and I can't remember the exact qualifications but it was a very tricky bunch of 10,000 names we had to get. So I basically spent my time organizing that campaign to get signatures. And we moved to Greensboro, which was sort of the center of the state and also the center of our campaign in North Carolina. We worked, you know, practically around the clock. I mean, we barely (laughs) — didn't have much sleep, but it was a very exciting campaign, and it was complicated by the fact that our candidate for governor, Mary Price, was — this all coincided with the beginnings of really serious McCarthyism and so she was attacked in the press by somebody who was testifying before one of the McCarthy committees and that didn't make life simple.

And then Henry Wallace came to visit and traveled through North Carolina. I was driving one of the — we had a caravan of cars that sort of took him across the state, and Pete Seeger was along to entertain the crowds and warm up the crowds and so forth. The Klan had found out what our route was going to be and they had gotten there ahead of time, before we did, and were giving people lots of rotten tomatoes and that kind of stuff to throw at people. That made life a little more exciting.

But my favorite story from that whole thing was that in the middle — we had a pretty interesting bunch of people that were not leftists at all but who really supported Wallace and who were running on our state ticket, like somebody running for Congress from Hickory, North Carolina, who had no connection with the left at all but he knew everybody in Hickory. I think he owned a small plant there of some kind. I can't remember now. I can't remember his name but he knew everybody in town. And the Klan drove through the state right ahead of us, you know, 25 or 30 miles ahead of us and was distributing rotten tomatoes and eggs to throw at people, to break up these meetings. When we got to Hickory, it turned out that this guy — his name has just escaped me — knew everybody in town and he knew the people had these rotten eggs and tomatoes and stuff, and he would just walk up to everybody he knew, "Hi Bill, how are you doing?" (laughter) And stuff would be dripping out of their pockets. It was really a great scene. Anyway, it was a wonderful experience, that whole campaign.

I moved with another friend to Greensboro, Mary Price, the candidate for governor, and my friend Preston Saunders, who just died a couple of days ago — the three of us lived together. We had one double

bed we slept in, to carry on this campaign and we really did work practically around the clock, but it was very exciting. Anyway, it was, you know, a considerable downer considering the vote we got. But nevertheless, it was very much worth doing, I think. And it really was a sort of pioneer, civil rights activity that led into the activities of the ’50s.

My husband, meanwhile, had been going to Duke to do a refresher course in law — to Chapel Hill, I guess, and then to Duke to get a master’s in law, and he and another friend were going to — he planned to stay in North Carolina and practice there but the state Board of Bar Examiners would not allow him to take the bar exam. He was already a member of the bar in Alabama and Tennessee, but they just refused this. You know, McCarthyism was beginning to really go strong. So there was no point in staying there under those circumstances and we decided to move to California, where my father had recently died and my mother was alone here. And we had our first child and we packed up the car and with a trailer and all our possessions, mostly a bunch of very heavy, 78 LP records (laughs) — I mean non-LP, before the days of LP — and came across the country.

When I got to California, I intended to just stay home and be a stay-at-home parent for a while, but that didn’t last very long. One funny thing was that where we moved to in Berkeley, my mother and father had been in a large housing project that was built during the war to handle all the people that came out to work in the shipyards and so forth. There were 10,000 people in this federal housing project and my mother and dad had lived there. My dad had died and my mother turned over the apartment to us and she moved in with my sister for a while. I have a sister also in California who was married. So we lived in this housing project with 10,000 people, which was a marvelous place to do political work. They were all concentrated in a few blocks.

After the Wallace campaign was over, I got a job at Duke University doing editorial work on a couple of scholarly magazines. I was working for a great guy [a psychologist] named Fritz Kuder. We lived on this little street and Laurent’s name was in the paper fairly often, as well as mine, and there were cars of thugs. We lived on this dead-end street and it was just a one-block street, with these cars of thugs with guns showing would drive around. It was a very bad time. The Stockholm Peace Petition was being circulated and the lines were really getting drawn. You know, McCarthyism was going full blast and it was scary. So we went from this — and our names were in the paper and they always listed your phone number and stuff. So you got phone calls in the middle of the night and so forth.

13:16

So we came from this really dismal scene and sort of scary scene in North Carolina to this housing project, and the first night we went to bed and woke up in the morning to sound trucks blaring stuff from the Independent Progressive Party and the Civil Rights Congress in our neighborhood (laughs), and the contrast was just unimaginable. I mean, you know, there was just no way to encompass it in your head for a while. Anyway, I intended to stay home and take care of my kid and

recover from my wounds, particularly from Mattoon, which was still very much on my mind. But that didn't last forever.

[Doris Brin Walker, nicknamed Dobby] was in charge of the Independent Progressive Party, which was what the Progressive Party was called in California, IPP, was a lawyer and she wanted very much to get back in to law practice. The party told her she had to find somebody to take her place before she could do that, so she chose me to work on — and she had a lot of work to do — because I really did not want to take an organizing job at that moment. She introduced me to California. She took me on long drives all through the Marin Hills and to wineries. She was a great winery taster and so forth, and she finally broke me down and I agreed to take this job. Well, it turned out to be great fun because the Independent Progressive Party shared an office with the Civil Rights Congress and then there was a room in the middle. There were two offices and the room in the middle, which was our sort of room for meetings. It had a big table, you know, and so forth. Both of us used this suite.

And the person who was running the Civil Rights Congress was Decca Treubaft, [aka] Jessica Mitford, and I had known her originally in Washington, D.C. just slightly. I just met her once at Virginia Durr's house. But we hit it off immediately and became bosom friends until she died. She was a total, total delight to work with. She was nothing but fun and the most incredible sense of humor, as you will know if you've read any of her books and you should definitely read — if you want to know anything about the leftwing movement in these days, you should read her book, *The Fine Old Conflict.* Her sister had heard people singing the Internationale in England and thought — and the words to the chorus were "'Tis the final conflict." And her sister thought it was "fine old conflict" so that's where that [name] came from. It's a wonderful book. She wrote various other books [a memoir, *Daughters and Rebels*, and an expose on the funeral industry, *The American Way of Death*] before she wrote that and I kept pushing her to write a book on the Party. I kept pushing her and she finally did it, and it's just a delightful book.

ANDERSON: How did you balance motherhood with working then?

FRANTZ: Well, that was difficult but I had a very good friend that I made since I got here who had a young child the same age and who lived in Cordonices Village, where we were, so she took care of Joe for me. I really wanted to stay home with him and I never went to the Independent Progressive Party meetings because I was taking a class in photography because I wanted to take a lot of pictures of him. So I hadn't actually met the IPP people and Doris Walker, who was trying to get herself replaced — her nickname is Dobby — she had barely met me because I had never come to their meetings because I was at this photography class. But anyway, she heard about me. Our chapter in Cordonices Village was doing great things. So anyway, that's how that

17:13

started. I didn't really want to do it but we didn't have any money. We really were broke. So anyway, we were living on the GI Bill and didn't have much money, and this job paid 30 dollars a week and that seemed like a lot of money in those days. So I decided to do it and it's good I did, because it was my natural habitat and I should have been doing it but I had been so burned that I really felt dubious about it.

ANDERSON: So this was about a year or two, right?

FRANTZ: Yeah.

ANDERSON: In California?

FRANTZ: Yeah. Well, it didn't last very long, because the repression was really getting heavy. There were 15 people arrested under the Smith Act just in California and Laurent got very involved. He went to L.A. to work on the California Smith Act case. For a year and a half I had the kid alone, maybe about a year, something like that.

ANDERSON: You and your husband haven't lived together very long in your marriage so far, it seems like.

FRANTZ: That's right. In the navy and –

ANDERSON: Between the war and your job, yeah.

FRANTZ: It didn't affect our love or closeness with each other, actually.

ANDERSON: Well, I always thought the Roosevelts had a good model. (Frantz laughs) But no, it's just interesting. It's very unconventional.

FRANTZ: Yeah, it's interesting. I hadn't actually ever thought about it in those terms, exactly. He played an extremely useful part in that. In fact, he played a crucial part. (pause in recording)

Just a second, let me get back in rhythm here. He played a crucial part in the Smith Act case because he was working on the legal team. There were five of them working on it. He came up with the idea that — it was a technical point. We knew we weren't going to win on the basic politics of it, but we figured there were some technical questions that could be raised that could get it thrown out and he came up with one, and that was the one that the Supreme Court used to throw it out. It's complicated and I can't remember what it had to do with — the date the Party was organizing, you know, stuff like that. But anyway, it was crucial and the ruling was that the law was unconstitutional as it was being applied. Anyway, he was a brilliant legal scholar, really was, and if he hadn't had — it really helped to have me pushing him in this direction because he wouldn't have done a lot of these things without

[pushing] — but he never really was able to use it to the max, unfortunately.

Anyway, he was down there and I was sort of running the Progressive Party office from here. We ran a candidate in 1952, Vince Hallanan, but it was pretty lackluster. I mean, it was not the same as the Wallace campaign but we did do a lot of very useful things. California had been a very lily-white state before the war and there had been a huge migration of blacks to California during the war, because there were shipyard jobs and there was a lot of shipbuilding out here, lots and lots and lots of shipbuilding up and down the coast, but particularly around the Bay Area, and so a large influx of black workers and then black middle-class people followed. So there were black teachers and so forth, and this is the group that eventually elected Dellums to Congress, but in the meantime, you know, there were a lot of civil rights activity and a great deal of discrimination.

So the Civil Rights Congress got a very good foothold here and Decca was organizing that, and she was a superb organizer. We had a lot of black ministers involved. It was the only place in the country where [the CRC] really had a mass base. But one thing that escaped notice was that were also a lot of white workers that came out to work in the shipyards, and they all ended — not all, but a hell of a lot of them ended up in the Oakland police department, which did not make race relations very happy in Oakland, and it's still true. Some of them are still there, you know, or they left a legacy. So that's what the Civil Rights Congress was really working on, and we worked together with them, obviously, a lot of the time.

After the Smith Act case was over, Laurent's idea of moving to California was — partly because my father had died and we wanted to be with my mother — but he decided to go back to school and get a library degree. He probably couldn't, because of McCarthyism, get a law teaching degree but he could probably get a law library job. So he went to library school here and that was interesting for him, because you learn a lot of very useful techniques when you're studying to be a librarian, in terms of being a researcher in general. You know, he rather enjoyed it, but he hoped to work in the library. But then the California loyalty oath was happening and he wouldn't sign the loyalty oath so he didn't have a job there. So we were sort of broke. As I said, we were totally broke and just this 30 bucks a week really helped, particularly since I had very few babysitting expenses because my very good buddy had a baby at the same time.

So that worked out pretty well but then Laurent started applying for law librarian jobs that came open and he got one at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. So we had a detour to Des Moines, Iowa, for a year and a half in '53. It turned out to be interesting. It turned out we were able to be socially useful there. It was during the period of the [Julius and Ethel] Rosenberg fight and we tried to create some goings on there about that, including letters to the paper and so forth, which was not the most popular thing one might have done in Des Moines, Iowa.

There was a very lively Farmers' Union there that I got very involved with and did a lot of volunteer work for a wonderful, wonderful guy named Fred Stover. It was a sort of dissident part of the National Farmers' Union and I got a job with the Iowa AFL-CIO working for a lawyer there that supported them — the FBI followed me around wherever I went and that didn't help much, and eventually I left there. They didn't fire me but they were very dubious about me. So anyway we stayed there a year and a half. And we left on our own accord to come back to California, because I missed it something awful. I had just fallen in love with California so we returned here but I didn't have a job.

I went down to the Western Employers**,** just to get temporary jobs, and I got a job in a place called Hall Scott, which was a manufacturing outfit that had a big plant downtown and an office in Berkeley. I worked in the office. I'm a competent office worker so I did OK there. But the plant was hiring and they paid much better than office work. So I decided to quit that job and go apply for a job at the factory, which I got, and I was there exactly two days before the FBI followed me down there. I was doing such sensitive work! I was working on the copier machine or something, (Anderson laughs) but it was a war plant. I mean, we weren't in — well, I guess we were in the Korean War.

Anyway, one of the things I did at that time in my life was join the Unitarian Church, just because I was looking for ways to be effective in fighting McCarthyism and also in fighting against the Korean War and so forth. The minister of the Unitarian Church in Berkeley was an extremely interesting person and I ended up on the board of trustees. I was vice president of the board pretty soon and I really liked him. We got along very, very well and he was crazy about Laurent, because by this time, Laurent was writing articles for *The Nation* and he felt that there was a feather in his cap to have Laurent in his congregation. Anyway, we became very close to him.

ANDERSON: Were you actually a believer? 27:18

FRANTZ: No. [He really wasn't either.]

ANDERSON: You were just looking for community –

FRANTZ: I was looking for a place to do political work. You've probably heard who the Unitarians pray to, namely, to whom it may concern. (laughs)

ANDERSON: True, right.

FRANTZ: So it was just a bunch of like-minded people and university people and so forth. But the university at that point — we had a lot right on the edge of the university, right on Bancroft Way, and it was a beautiful old church. It was just a gorgeous church. The university wanted that property so they went into court to get it by eminent domain. Laurent

did all the [legal] work and got three times as much money as they wanted to pay us, you know, for the church property. But we built two elaborate, fancy churches — it was really beautiful — up on top of the hill. Somebody gave us the land on top of the Berkeley Hills. So anyway, that was a long adventure. I stayed with that for quite a while as long as Dr. Cope was there, because I really liked working with him. And that's how I met Eleanor, so I had a lot of pleasant feelings about the church.

ANDERSON: Eleanor was a member of the congregation?

FRANTZ: Yeah, she actually was.

ANDERSON: So how did you get involved with Planned Parenthood?

FRANTZ: I just answered an ad in the paper. After we came back from Iowa, I was starting all over again looking for a job and there was an ad, and I called up. I had worked for Planned Parenthood when I was at Radcliffe. I had an [NYA] job working for Planned Parenthood, just doing their mailings for them or something, but I knew all about Planned Parenthood. So I called up and there was a very interesting woman from South Africa who was running the office, a very bright, young, able gal. And she said, well, she had already had somebody. She'd run this ad for several days and I got there late, but I could come up. And so I talked myself into that job. It was a secretarial job but I made it in to much more than that, because I had a lot of experience raising money. So I was sort of helping to run the campaign to stay alive. The Catholics were really after us. They tried to keep us from getting any money from the combined charity funds. Anyway, it was a very interesting job.

ANDERSON: Would you describe it as a feminist organization? What was the climate?

FRANTZ: Well, it was a very small organization. It had a board that was mostly for purposes of fundraising — women from Piedmont, you know, the fancy part of Oakland. But the gal who ran it was originally from South Africa, sort of a refugee from South Africa, and she was very, very bright and able and fun. And then we hired somebody else that I got to know really well, as a PR person, part time, and the three of us just had a really good time. I discovered an old box of books that went way back to the early days of Planned Parenthood in the closet that nobody had looked at for years and there was a biography of Margaret Sanger which I had not read before, and it was really interesting. I had no idea she had been a socialist and, you know, one of these "new women."

ANDERSON: Right, yeah. 31:03

FRANTZ: I didn't know much about the history of Planned Parenthood. That was just fascinating to me, which became useful later on. It was a good job for me because it, you know, paid the rent and it was, you know, I was very useful in the fundraising campaigns and so forth. And I made some very good friends, and I started having babies right and left. (laughter)

ANDERSON: But would you say that that's a place where you became introduced to feminism? I mean, you've said that it really was much later, but then you also worked at what we now think of as a feminist organization during the 1950s, so what about the politics?

FRANTZ: It didn't have that much gender consciousness [aside from birth control.]

ANDERSON: No, OK.

FRANTZ: I mean, the board was almost entirely rich women from Piedmont, because we couldn't get money from the community chest, you know, united crusade**.** We had a big fight. We got it one year and then the people wound up against us and so forth. No, it was just a stop gap for me, in which I polished my fundraising skills and made some good friends.

ANDERSON: And what did you do –

FRANTZ: Actually, it was a very important thing in one respect and that was that the person we hired part time for PR stuff, a woman named Mary Eubanks, and her husband, Sam Eubanks, had been head of the American Newspaper Guild in a slate against the reds in the newspaper guild. And so I had considered him a class enemy, you know, from way back, many years back. Mary was a Social Democrat. We became extremely close friends and that was very useful to me, very useful, in terms of being able to get a distant look at the Party from somebody else's point of view. I was still very active in the Party but I really respected Mary. At first I was horrified, you know, when I realized Sam Eubanks — he was a no-no, her husband. Anyway, we became really close friends and we shared a great many interests. She was doing a lot of publicity for Kaiser Hospital at that point and she hired me to do a newsletter for Kaiser. And then we became — our families became friends. Anyway, I was in the process of moving away from the Party, and so she was an important ingredient for me to get another look at the Party, through her eyes.

ANDERSON: Do you want to talk about that now, about leaving the Party, in '56? 33:60

FRANTZ: Yeah. We aren't quite up to '56, but that's fine. I was still there until '55, I guess, and by this time, Laurent had a regular job. We weren't under as much financial pressure. He got a job as an editor at a law book

publishing house writing law book articles, articles for legal reference books. This was before the Khrushchev revelations. But I felt the Party was completely ineffective. I mean, we were so isolated — because of all the red baiting in the McCarthy period I didn't think we were doing anything very useful. This was a real contrast to my years in the South, where I felt that we were extremely useful. One day I was sitting — this is before Khrushchev — I was sitting in my office, having to go to a meeting that night. My job at that moment in the Party was a section organizer for Oakland and I didn't enjoy that job. I didn't particularly think that much of the people I was working with, and I usually just found the Party people great. But this was not a particularly happy combination. We were being, it seemed to me, utterly and totally ineffective and I was sitting in my office thinking, I just hate to go to this Party [meeting] tonight, I don't want to go, I don't want to go. And suddenly a voice in my head said, Well, it's your decision. You do have something to say about this if you don't want to go. So I did go, but I went and raised a lot of questions about all my issues with the Party and then I came home and talked to Laurent and he said he didn't disagree with me about any of these issues but that he just didn't want to give up the Party. It's part of your guts, you know.

But I did go to this meeting and raise all these questions and it was a pivotal point. I'd also been doing a lot of reading that I wouldn't normally read, that was hostile to the Party — fiction and other things. So I was very much on the fence, as of what to do. And then the Khrushchev revelations came out and I didn't have any further hesitations. But I can't say that it was not painful. It was painful. The Party's view of this was, you didn't associate with people who'd left the Party, and I'd been part of that. When some of my friends had left, I [had] not pursued them. It was not simple. It was a 20-year, a 21-year romance of sorts, and Laurent felt also very torn and divided about it, but we both decided to leave.

Shortly after that he was subpoenaed by HUAC [House Un-American Activities Committee]. I guess it was in 1960. He was subpoenaed three different times but a couple of times he was subpoenaed and he wasn't called. I don't remember all the chronology very well. But meeting Mary was one of the factors that influenced me at that point. Anyway, I left Planned Parenthood when I was pregnant with my fourth child.

ANDERSON: And you still had just a babysitter for the three, or – 38:23

FRANTZ: No. I had hired a full-time housekeeper.

ANDERSON: Oh, you had, OK.

FRANTZ: You know, for the first one I did patchwork stuff. The first one I had somebody who took care of him with her kid, and then I forget what happened to that. Anyway, there were people living at home then with

kids that were looking for income and so forth. I had good arrangements for all of them, I think. I didn't feel uncomfortable about it.

ANDERSON: Did you like being a new mom, a young mother? What kind of a parent were you?

FRANTZ: I'm not sure what my kids would have to say about it. I was totally into being a parent when Joe was born. I found parenthood very interesting, but I didn't want to do it full time, I think. So I had this housekeeper who, when Alex was born, the youngest, in '57, shortly after Planned Parenthood. She adored him. I mean, she was just crazy about this kid. She didn't have kids of her own and she wanted them and she didn't have any. She really was like a parent to him. She was an African American from Mobile**,** Alabama. She was very comfortable with us. She felt — probably not for good reasons, but — it was a lot like her youth and growing up. Somehow there were always white people she got along with really well and she really was very fond of us. The only problem I had with — and we were very good friends and we were good people to work for, from her point of view — but she was very religious and she was intent on teaching Alex to believe in God, is really what it amounted to over the years. We had a few problems with that, but aside from that, she was great and we stayed very close friends until she died. She was a lovely person and she was extremely warm and extremely outgoing, and the kids were fond of her, except for Joe, my oldest kid, did not want anybody telling him what to do about anything. He beseeched me to get rid of her, but I didn't go along with that.

But in general, I spent a lot of time with the kids on weekends and so forth, and we developed a habit of hiking in the mountains, early on, with the whole family. After Joe, my oldest, got married, he wanted to spend his vacation coming out here to hike in the mountains with us and his wife couldn't believe it, you know, that somebody would want to spend their summer vacation with their parents. (laughter) This was in the '60s, or maybe the '70s. Anyway, it was really funny.

ANDERSON: Was Laurent an active parent, too?

FRANTZ: No. He was for Joe, the oldest. He really was crazy about Joe and he was very fond of the kids. He just was not an outgoing person, but he taught Joe how to play bridge, and Joe got in to bridge and he really wanted to be the first young life master in bridge, and so he went to bridge tournaments all the time. So he was very close to Laurent on that score — Laurent was a good bridge player. He never got involved himself but he taught Joe, and in general they were very close. But he really wasn't close to Larry until very much later in his life. They became friends close to the end of his life, really good friends. A whole other story. He was always crazy about Virginia and she was very close to him. So he was very good for two of my kids. Alex and he were just

alike and they never connected at all, and Alex didn't even appreciate the good qualities of Laurent, so that was really sad.

ANDERSON: This is towards the end of your marriage, too, by the time you have your fourth child, right?

FRANTZ: Yeah. Well, now our marriage — I know this doesn't make any sense to anybody else, but our marriage really lasted until he died. I mean, we were very close for years. Even when he was living with Marian, we all had holidays together, and he stayed very close. You know, on what would have been our fiftieth wedding anniversary if we were still together, he called me up and we went out to dinner. I mean, we really stayed close, and he was at all the children's birthday parties and we always had Christmas and so forth. We really stayed a family and he was a wonderful guy. Joe totally appreciates him and Virginia totally appreciates him, but he wasn't easy to appreciate because he was too much tied up in himself.

ANDERSON: So what happened?

FRANTZ: I don't mean to be self-serving in any way. I just meant that he didn't have a lot of social skills at all. He had very few social skills [and I filled in for him.]

ANDERSON: So what happened when you left Planned Parenthood?

FRANTZ: I went home to have the baby and I was intending not to work for a while, and I got a phone call when he was just a few weeks old (laughter) from a friend at the university who wanted to know if I wanted a job working on an interesting project. This was a friend I knew in the left. I forget how I originally met him but we were friends and I knew his family. He was a grad student at Berkeley and had a graduate research assistantship with this guy named Earl Cheit and they were doing a big survey on workmen's compensation. He had a big Ford grant to study workmen's comp, and they were hiring people to do interviews with workers who had been injured in the course of employment and with widows of men who had been killed in the course of employment. So [he asked] did I want a job, and I said yes, because I really needed the money and a certain amount of being home with babies is fine but it gives out. So I think [by] early May I was already working on this. Anyway, I can't remember. In any case, I went to get the job and it was interesting.

Part of the job was an hour[-long] interview. It was a very elaborate interview with figures about your income after somebody was hurt and so forth — trying to get some data, some serious data, economic data. And they had hired nine grad students to work on this thing, and then there was a page at the end for your general comments about your reaction to the interview and anything you wanted to say about it. So I

was very good at that. I was very good at getting things out of people and also at figuring out the amount of money. We had a chart to try and figure out just how much people were economically affected. But a lot of the grad students were pretty sloppy and after I worked a week and the guy who was running the project, a guy named Earl Cheit**,** looked at my production and looked at the others, asked me to come to the office and edit other people's interviews. So I did, and that led to seven- or eight-year job in which I stayed on to edit all these things and I stayed on to analyze the results, and I stayed on to help write the book. It was *the* book on workmen's comp for quite a while — I don't know if it is any more or not — *Injury and Recovery in the Course of Employment*.

And then he got other grants to do other work and I worked as a research assistant, essentially, but he got me a very good — I came on as a casual worker with very little money — he got me an excellent job as a senior editor. He saw that I got promoted and we had an extremely happy working relationship for many years. He turned out to be the dean of the business school over time, after I left. He was assistant vice chancellor for a while, and that's a whole other story. He took me into his office as an assistant to him. He didn't want to lose me. And there was a big press story about my history, of course, so he let me go back to my old job, but I didn't lose my — I was protected by academic freedom as long as I worked at the Institute of Industrial Relations, but not in the chancellor's office. And so I lost that job, which is just as well, because I thought there was going to be a real — this was after the FSM [free speech movement] and I thought there was going to be a real reform in the chancellor's office but there wasn't. I mean, he hired a couple of good people but it didn't last, and so I'm very glad I wasn't there trying to defend the chancellor's office in the ensuing years.

ANDERSON: True. Right. 48:10

FRANTZ: But I missed him. I really enjoyed working with him. He's a very bright and able guy but we are not in touch any more. He hasn't particularly wanted to look me up although he's got a place here in Santa Cruz. So I wasn't going to initiate it. But anyway, I had seven years, I think it was, working there and I really loved it. I ended up editing the [Institute's] journal, [*Industrial Relation*.] I was the assistant editor, I guess. I did all the editorial work on it. I went over all the articles, edited all the articles for the magazine, but I didn't make the editorial decisions about what was going to be printed. But I got some very good editing experience and I enjoyed it, and I worked with a whole bunch of grad students over the years and became very, very, very close to a lot of them and am still in touch with a lot of them. It was a great place for me and I loved being on the campus, and I was close to Eleanor. There were many side effects.

ANDERSON: So there's two things I want to ask, and it's going to take our last ten minutes about that period. One is meeting Eleanor. So let's add some of your personal life into that story. And also, what replaced all the time

that you were giving to the Party? Did something else take up that time, or was it really family and work and Eleanor? Was there some other political component to your life that took the place of the Party?

FRANTZ: Well partly it was the Unitarian Church, because I really got very involved in the Unitarian Church and organized various stuff up there that I thought was socially useful. And that wasn't hard because the people in church were basically good people. For a while I was working [closely wth] the NAACP. I worked very hard on some of the political campaigns, like Bob Sheer's. I was very involved in raising money and working for Bob Sheer when he ran for Congress. He didn't make it but it laid the basis for the Dellums election the following year, or two years later. So I was very involved with Berkeley politics in general and with — yeah, I never stopped doing political work. I left the Party in '56, officially, but my old contacts in the Party stayed friends, even though they weren't supposed to, but they did. And also I spent a lot of time with Decca working in the Civil Rights Congress, too. And her husband ran for DA at one point and I got very involved in that campaign. There was always something.

But I never stopped, you know. I'm a good organizer, so any time somebody needed — well, I'll tell you one of the major things that I did was a case called the Powell case, and that's a whole other story. But they were a couple who were in China and were apolitical when they went there, and they got very supportive of the Chinese revolution and they finally came home in 1950 and the government went after them in a big way, and they charged them with sedition under a World War I statute and they had never been part of the left in this country. They got interested in China. They didn't have any kind of support group or anything, so I organized it. I was very involved in organizing a Powell support group and Laurent did a huge amount of the legal work for nothing and we all became very, very close friends, and still are. But I did a whole bunch of fundraising for them because they didn't have any money. So I put on a couple of great big parties and raised a lot of money and so forth. I was always involved in 15 million [things] — and every time you organize something, you meet a new bunch of people who then bring you into more things.

ANDERSON: And what about meeting Eleanor and bringing her into your family?

FRANTZ: Well, it's sort of a long story but to make it short.

ANDERSON: Or we can just leave it for the next tape if you'd rather. It's up to you. Do you want to do that?

FRANTZ: Well, we can start it now. I don't care.

ANDERSON: OK.

FRANTZ: I met her through the Unitarian Church and through the women's auxiliary group of the Unitarian Church. She was, as she told you yesterday, impressed with the presentation that I gave to them. And those things were fun because we did our own programs. Unlike the Women's Alliance [who met at noon] who had brought in speakers, we [in the Evening Alliance] did our own programs. And that was the only opportunity I had in my life to do any kind of research and reporting. It was a different niche and it was fun. So I did that over years, I did something every year and it was really fun. So that's how we met and we enjoyed each other, and we worked very close to each other, so we started having lunch together. And I met a couple of her friends and she met some of my friends and she really became part of the family before we fell in love.

And then she loved the mountains and we had fallen in love with the Sierras. It took a while though, because the eastern woods [in Alabama] are so much less severe and more homey, you know. When I first came out here, I didn't like the Sierras, what I saw of them but I fell in love with the high mountain meadows. The 10,000 feet meadows just went close my heart. So she was an expert at backpacking and I wasn't, I was learning as I went. But I thought I was pretty good. So then we had this big thing [I invited her to go on a trip with us]— after this backpacking trip together, that's when we fell in love, basically. She's just was a real pro. She is so good at it. She's been doing it for years. There are a lot of skills involved and she was just terrific. But all the years I knew her before we fell in love, I just simply hadn't ever thought of her as a sexual person. I just hadn't. I mean, it just never occurred to me. And also, I was in a period of having had crushes on people and deciding I wasn't going to have any more crushes on women because it was pointless and took up too much emotional energy. So there were some barriers to that but they got broken.

And then once we fell in love it was hell, because her son was living at her house and I had a house full of people. I thought it was tawdry to go to a motel and so forth so the only way we were together was I made it a habit to offer to water people's plants when they were on vacation so we had a chance to be together. It was very difficult, and so that didn't last, you know. Eventually we worked it all out. But it wasn't simple in the beginning, and I had virtually no experience in lesbian relationships and I didn't know much about the whole thing. I mean, I was not an expert on that subject at all. I learned as I went.

But one of the points is that my husband was extremely — he didn't have an ounce of homophobia of any description because he had been very close to one of his friends in college. They hadn't been lovers but he had a couple of homosexual experiences in the navy. He just had no homophobia, period. But, at the same time that I was falling in love with Eleanor, he was getting fascinated by the Sexual Freedom League. I told you he was a sort of social isolate, in a way, and he'd started going to encounter groups, which were busting out all over. He went to Esalen and stuff, had a massage, and he went back and went to masseuse

school, so he could teach massage. You know, he was having one of these Berkeley revolutions. And that was fine but it didn't interest me and I never got involved in that scene. But anyway, it worked out just unbelievably easily and well. And as I say, we stayed extremely close for years.

ANDERSON: But did it prompt a separation between you and your husband? I mean, how did the living and family arrangements work out? 57:07

FRANTZ: Well, Eleanor moved in with us. We had a separate apartment downstairs, and she stayed down there and I stayed upstairs for a long time. Eventually I moved downstairs.

ANDERSON: Laurent and the kids stayed upstairs?

FRANTZ: Yeah, but — I mean, I was upstairs.

ANDERSON: Right.

FRANTZ: I mean, I slept downstairs, like you said. I didn't move downstairs.

ANDERSON: And how did you explain it to your children at the time?

FRANTZ: Well, they were in the process of taking off. Well, I guess Virginia wasn't. Joe and Larry were pretty much in their own worlds. Joe had already left home, I think, when this happened. He had joined the — God, I've repressed the name of the outfit he (laughs). This is really funny. I can't remember the name of it. How funny. That is really funny. Anyway, it was a Trotskyist group. They put out a paper called *Workers' Power*, but I can't remember the name of their organization. He had split. He had gone back to work in industry. He was working in an auto plant and he was a coal miner for a while and did all kinds of things to be a real, true proletarian. So, he was away and out. Larry was into his own stuff. It was not a big deal for them. They didn't have any crises about it at all. Eleanor was part of the family and that's what happened. She was very important for Virginia. She really was a great partisan of Virginia's interest and taught me a lot about being a parent, actually. It certainly made an enormous difference in my life. I have just unlimited admiration for many, many qualities of hers. She's a wonderful person. So anyway, we worked it out. And Laurent, meanwhile, was having a few affairs on the side.

ANDERSON: Got it.

FRANTZ: So there was never any friction or hostility. There was zero friction and hostility, there really was. We were just incredibly lucky it worked out.

ANDERSON: All right. I'm going to turn the tape off.

FRANTZ: OK. 59:44

END TAPE 5

TAPE 6

ANDERSON: Alrighty. So, it's day three of taping with Marge Frantz on November fifth. So you said you wanted to go back and say something –

FRANTZ: About Nashville.

ANDERSON: – about Nashville from yesterday.

FRANTZ: Nashville was a very interesting place. In addition to being an unusually large city for the South, it was the home of the Grand Ole Opry, as you remember. And actually our Southern Conference for Human Welfare office was just opposite the Grand Ole Opry building. It was also the headquarters of a lot of religious groups in the South, like the Methodist Church headquarters, and the Baptists as well. But also, it was known as the Athens of the South because it had so many colleges there. In addition to Vanderbilt, there was Fisk, and I had a lot of doings out of Fisk. There was a marvelous woman who was in charge of the YWCA at Fisk, Edmonia Grant, who became one of my close friends. I spent a lot of time at Fisk. And when the *National Banner* did that big story about me, it had an interracial picture taken at Fisk with the circle [around my head] — they always circle these things, you know. (Anderson laughs)

And then the other thing is that it was close to Highlander Folk School. It wasn't really close but it was a two- or three-hour drive. We were in mid Tennessee. Tennessee is a very wide state and it was in the eastern corner. I went to Highlander a lot and taught a lot of their weekend seminars on the political situation in the South and the Southern Conference. Highlander was, in those days, really a wonderful, wonderful place. It was really interesting because it brought blacks and whites together under in the same roof, eating at the same tables, et cetera. It was the only totally non-segregated place that you could experience in the South. And it brought these white mill workers from North Carolina and Tennessee who were sent by their local unions to Highlander and they had never sat down with a black person before. A couple of them just left. They couldn't deal with it. But in general most people stayed and they learned to live with it, and it was unbelievably educational. And the main thing was, it changed them. They were there for two weeks and at the end of that time they went back home and they were different, and they really lived differently and acted differently. It really was truly the only place I know of in the South that changed people's lives in a very direct and profound way in the 1940s.

This is something that never gets talked about. All this stuff about Rosa Parks in the last few days. But my friend, Virginia Durr — Rosa Parks was her seamstress when she first came to Montgomery. She raised the money — Virginia didn't have any money. They were just trying to live on the proceeds from Cliff's law firm and he didn't have that many cases that made money, but she raised the money to send

Rosa Parks to Highlander for a session. Rosa Parks later said that what she learned there essentially was that there were white allies that she did not know existed before and she later said specifically, after her arrest, that she wouldn't have had the guts to do it if she hadn't known about these white allies. So Virginia really should get a lot of credit for the whole development. I mean, [Parks] was a wonderful person and she had worked for the NAACP. But that's different. A lot of people [worked for] the NAACP that didn't challenge segregation laws. 4:00

ANDERSON: Right.

FRANTZ: So Highlander really made a difference, and particularly while Myles Horton was there. He and Jim Dombrowski started it and Jim was the guy that I worked with in the Southern Conference. So anyway, I used to go down there weekends, and that's another thing that made Nashville great and one reason I didn't want to leave. Another thing that happened while we were at Highlander, and this was important, was that there was a riot in Columbia**,** Tennessee, which you'd probably never heard of but it was very big news at the time. This was right after the war and a lot of black soldiers came back very much determined not to put up with what they had put up with before they went into the war. I forget the spark that lit this fire, but there was what became known as the Columbia, Tennessee, Riots. Columbia is 50 miles south of Nashville and my husband, who was by then working — well, he was working with the Southern Conference briefly and he went down there and spent quite a while investigating the whole thing and wrote a pamphlet about it called "The Truth About Columbia." Shortly after that the International Labor Defense and the National Committee for Constitutional Liberties in New York decided to merge, and that's how the Civil Rights Congress began. It had its first meeting in Detroit, Michigan. Maybe I mentioned this.

ANDERSON: You told this, yeah. You told that story.

FRANTZ: Yeah, OK. Took a bunch of people from Columbia up there.

ANDERSON: Yeah.

FRANTZ: So anyway, Nashville was a really — lots of things happened there and I could go on about it forever, but I won't. (laughter)

ANDERSON: So, do you want to jump up to Berkeley?

FRANTZ: Now we come to Berkeley.

ANDERSON: Just to refresh your memory, yesterday we talked about you meeting Eleanor. We talked about some significant aspects of your life, in terms

of what you were doing politically and with the church, but we didn't talk about your education and going back to school. So let's talk about that.

FRANTZ: Well, I got this job on the campus.

ANDERSON: We talked about that.

FRANTZ: And I met all these young grad students. Many of them were very deeply involved in the free speech movement. So I was on the edge of this free speech movement. But there was a faculty senate committee that was involved and then there were these students, but there was a whole huge bunch of people like myself who were staff people and had responsible jobs on the staff but we didn't have an organization. So one guy and I organized one called the Academic Research and Professional Association, or ARAPA. So we jumped into the fray and made public statements. But the best thing we did, the moment of victory was when the academic senate came out very strongly in favor of the students. Meanwhile there had been a lot of newspaper publicity but very little of [the real story reached] the other eight campuses, or seven maybe, then, of the university — people didn't know what the hell was happening and they didn't have a clue. So we got together with — Chuck Muscatine**,** and I sat down and wrote a sort of history of the thing. It went on four pages, you know, two pages back and forth, a very attractive thing, just explaining what had happened. We spent all night at the printer getting this thing out, 60,000 copies.

ANDERSON: Wow.

FRANTZ: And we had organized the faculty group. There was a group which eventually became a committee of 200. I mean, it was the most active faculty but there was a smaller group of about 20 that had planned the whole thing and we had put it to them the night before. And they had organized a bunch of people that were going to go out to all the other campuses first thing in the morning when we got this thing done. And so we distributed it, and they got in the cars and took off for Riverside and L.A. and Davis and so on, and distributed this piece that we had put together. One of them was a piece by Charlie Sellers which had come out in *The Chronicle*. You know, we just gathered some stuff together and put it all together and got that in everybody's hands the next day.

So I really felt very pleased to get involved with that, with this whole group of students who had been radicalized by the free speech movement. There was all this political energy and nobody knew quite what to do with it and so there were various things that happened on the campus that I was involved in. I hadn't been directly involved with the free speech movement. I didn't go to jail with them but one of my closest friends was there, a lawyer, et cetera, et cetera. And then there

was this little group of econ grad students that I was very close to and they were all quite engaged.

So one of the things that came out of it was to try and organize the clerical workers on campus, and I got very involved in that campaign. That was very lively, and we succeeded in getting a union started. I don't know if you've ever seen the movie *Berkeley in the Sixties*, but there's a very dramatic moment [at the] very end of the movie when somebody gets up and says, "Don't everybody go home now, we have a war we have to stop." And that's what I really got involved in was the faculty peace committee, and as it turned out, the following year, the fall of '64, I guess, '65, Noam Chomsky was on campus for a year. And partly working with him and partly with a wonderful guy named Leon Wofsy**,** who was a former Communist who was teaching in the sciences, immunology — Leon and I and Noam Chomsky helped to get this faculty peace committee together and we put on lots of activities, and I did all the secretarial work out of my office and stuff like that.

ANDERSON: Was there also an awareness of the civil rights movement, or was it really just the antiwar stuff that was – 10:57

FRANTZ: Well no, the whole thing morphed into a big fight to get an Afro American Studies on campus. That was one of the things that came out of it all. And we succeeded in having a department. But also Latino Studies — I don't remember the precise form of it and I don't really know how it's changed because I haven't been on the Berkeley campus much. The other thing, in addition to the antiwar movement, which became a very militant movement in Berkeley, the People's Park –

ANDERSON: Oh, yeah, say more about that.

FRANTZ: There was a piece of property that belonged to the university that was not being used for anything. I can't remember the precise beginnings of it, but the students decided to take it over and make a People's Park out of it. It was just sitting there and it developed into a real struggle about this piece of land, which was very close to the campus, and the university didn't like what was happening and so they put up a big fence around it. By this time, the students really had taken over what had been for years a very inactive student government. Actually that began to happen really before the FSM but they still had some real oomph with the student government. The head of the student government at that point, a guy named Dan Seigel**,** there was a rally and he said, "Let's go down and tear down the fence." So they headed for this People's Park. I haven't read this stuff in years so I can't remember if I'm getting the details right.

ANDERSON: That's OK.

FRANTZ: But, in any case, they headed down there and there was some gunfire exchanged on the way down there. Somebody got blinded. But anyway, they tried to take down the fence and a whole slew of people got arrested. And [Ronald] Reagan called out the national guard and we spent one night out and I spent a night, along with several hundred other people, staring the guard in the face all night long. We circled the park and we were this far away from the National Guard (laughs; gestures shoulder-length distance), who was also around the park. That struggle continued for some time and there was a huge march through Berkeley. So that livened the place up quite a bit for some months.

Eleanor was working in the library, as you know, and they had a friend that used to work in the library that came back for a visit and the decision on where to go to have lunch off the campus was debated at some length as to where they would be less likely to run into teargas, and that was really a fact of life on the campus. It was militarized for some time and you never knew what was going to break out. At one point the rumor got out that the students were going to come and tear up the card catalogue or mess up the card catalogue, and all the librarians came out to defend the card catalogue. (laughs) There was also a librarian strike that lasted for, oh I don't know, ten weeks. Eleanor was on the picket line with everybody. They had a lot of grievances against the head of the library and the way the library was being run, so they got a newsletter and sent it out to university libraries all over the country. And that really brought them to their knees because they didn't want that kind of publicity. So she got a little lesson in militancy along the way. (laughter)

The reason I mention it is that it was typical of what was going on all over the campus. It had an incredibly big effect. Well, that brings me to the next story, which is the House Un-American Activities coming to town. This actually is non-chronological because they came in 1960, before the free speech movement. But it was after the changes began on campus because they really began about '59, when a progressive slate was elected to the Associated Students, University of California, ASUC. ASUC was a major player, in an institutional sort of way. They had a whole building, and this group was radicalized essentially because a lot of people went to Mississippi.

ANDERSON: But that would have been –

FRANTZ: In the summer of '60.

ANDERSON: Oh, OK.

FRANTZ: And so they came back and began to organize. Really, you could argue very cogently and I think successfully that a lot of the whole free speech movement had its roots in the struggles of the black students in the South in the '50s. Mario had been there and a number of the other people. So when House Un-American Activities came to town in 1960

— they had come about three times during the ’50s or maybe more, and I had been working with the Independent Progressive Party to try and organize opposition to HUAC. We would call on more or less the same people we had that were non-Communist but they were in the community — you know, a favorable minister here and some official there — and put together a mass meeting against HUAC. We had several over the years but we got the same tired three hundred people left over from the old Progressive Party campaign to come out. We had never confronted the committee directly with picket lines but we had these protest meetings of one kind or another.

This time, in 1960, because the students had been energized by People’s Park earlier — I don’t remember the date of People’s Park, I guess it was later — well, they had been energized as a result of electing some good people to the student ASUC, Associated Students, University of California, and also there was an ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union] chapter on campus. So they called for people to come and protest these hearings in San Francisco. My husband was one of the people subpoenaed in that period. So instead of the usual, you know, sort of tired hundred people or two hundred people that would come out for a meeting, there was a very substantial response, and they were picketing, and they were trying to get in to the hearing room. HUAC had decided to have these hearings in a room that held about a hundred people max — one of the courtrooms in the city hall building. They had sent out invitations to paper the crowd — you know, Kiwanis Club wives and people who were free during the day. They had sent out quite a few invitations and so there wasn’t any room. You could get in if you had some connection with one of the witnesses and my husband had been subpoenaed so I could get it but there was a hall full of people outside the city hall, outside the doors of the courtroom chamber trying to get in, and they were chanting, Let us in. Open the doors. Open the doors. Open the doors. You could hear it inside.

And that happened all day on that first day of the hearing, which I think was a Monday but I’m not positive, and nothing happened. The next day there were even more people out doing the same thing, and these were kids who had been to the South and were used to sit-in procedures and so forth. So the cops came and told them to leave and threatened them and they just sat down, and they filled the halls sitting down. At lunch that day, apparently they decided they’d had enough of it and they called the cops to come and get these kids out of there. So the cops came and started dragging people, literally. They all sat down and they started dragging them. There are these marble steps that are maybe 30 — whatever, however many it takes. They were very big, wide steps. They just started dragging these kids down the steps and banging their heads on. You know, the reporters were there and there were television pictures of all this stuff that immediately went on the air.

The next morning there were, I don’t know, maybe a thousand people out protesting in front. I mean, it really broke it open for the first time and there was this huge crowd. That was the day that my husband

testified and he was great. He really had a wonderful statement he'd written. You don't get to read very much of your statements before they shut you up, but when he came out, he got all kinds of applause, because people had screens outside watching television and knew what was going on inside. So it was very dramatic. It was the first really major, large protest against HUAC that really broke into the papers. It made a big difference in the whole civil rights/civil liberties movement.

ANDERSON: Were you called to testify? 22:28

FRANTZ: No, I was never called. And it's really interesting. I decided to write and get my FBI record when it became possible to do that. It was 560 pages or something like that, ten cents a page, which was absolutely wasted money, because [of] two things. First of all, they black out everything and you can't see it. I don't know if you've ever seen one of these things, but it's just — but the other thing is there was almost nothing about me in it. It was all about my father and my husband. There was the FBI interview with me when I was working for the government — that was in there, but it was blacked out.

ANDERSON: That's interesting.

FRANTZ: There was very little stuff about me. And it was funny, because Decca had written this book that I gave you yesterday talking about getting her FBI files, and she has a wonderful section in there about what a delight it was to read it because it reminded her of all these wonderful things she had done in her life.

ANDERSON: A scrapbook of sorts. (laughter)

FRANTZ: So I was looking forward to this high but I didn't have it. (laughter) Anyway, that was a real turning point and it really grew directly out of the civil rights movement and that was very inspiring. So out of that grew something called the Education Liberation Front, which was the language of the period, which I helped organize and got very involved in and am still in touch with some of those people. When the first successful slate of progressive kids got elected to the Associated Students, University of California, they decided to do a survey of many of the classes on campus, and report on the faculty. That had never been done before anywhere, as far as I know. They put out this big thing called *Slate*, which had all these reports on faculty, and that's how I got started. That really was crucially important to me, because that's how I heard about [Jack] Schaar**,** and that's how I got started studying political theory and going back to school.

But *Slate*, in the course of all this other stuff it sort of petered out. And then three university faculty members were not given tenure that students liked and that we thought were good. And they weren't all political — one of them taught drama — but they were all people who

had gotten good write-ups in the past in *Slate*. So we put a group together called the Education Liberation Front to try and save the jobs of these three people. One of them was definitely a political guy, named Lichman**.** He taught courses on Marxism, as I remember, but I'm not positive. He was in philosophy, as I remember. One was in drama and I forget who the other one was. Anyway, we started a campaign to try and save these guys' jobs. I got very involved in that and made a friend that is still a very close friend, who was in the drama department. That's why I remember the drama thing. She was a sort of natural-born dramatist and she figured out that she — it's very hard to get attention for any protest to Berkeley at this point because there was so much happening, and after we won the fight to have tables on campus, which was what the original free speech movement was about, there were 30 tables lined up. And I thought, you know, as an old political, that that was so stupid, that there should have been some organizational sense to it, you know, five tables at once and not 30. (Anderson laughs)

But anyway, everything became quite fragmented for quite a while and there was no real leadership. But we decided, among other things, to fight for getting these guys' jobs back and we went and put on a big thing at the Associated Students executive committee meeting to try and organize students around this issue, and we had various demonstrations on campus about it, and we didn't win. We went to the student ASUC. They had a lot of money and we arranged for them to hire these three guys themselves to teach classes at the ASUC.

And then we also decided to keep this organization, Education Liberation Front, together to reinstitute the *Slate* handout. So I ended up being in charge of getting out the new *Slate*, and that was a huge job. We had all the old files from before but we wanted to freshen them up, of course, and so we put out questionnaires and we distributed then to every department on campus to try and find students in every class to get them filled out and bring them back. It was a huge organizing job, a great big campus, and then writing up all the stuff and *then* going to the printer to print. I can't remember exactly how I did it but I remember endless, endless, endless hours and then taking it all out to the printer, which was way the hell out, 25 miles from town, et cetera. (Anderson laughs) But anyway, it was great. It was a lot of fun and it was interesting as heck. You know, students' reaction to faculty is always interesting stuff. So that was one of the major things I got involved in there.

Well, in the process of all this, and I don't remember the exact chronology and how it worked, but I do remember that I quit in the middle of People's Park and I didn't know what I was going to do with myself. I had no plans whatsoever. I just called up and said, "I'm through working here." And trying to figure out what I was going to do, because I had always worked, I decided I would go back to college. I wasn't planning to enroll or anything, I just decided I would go and audit these courses again, but this time doing the reading, because I had never had time to do the reading before. And so I went to Schaar's and

Sheldon Wolin's classes, and I went not just to one section but to several sections, because that was my full-time occupation, and I read.

By this time also I had left the CP, so I was looking for answers. I just had this wonderful year and I got totally absorbed in the whole thing and at that point, the end of that year, Schaar announced that he and Wolin, they both announced they were coming to Santa Cruz and I just felt like the rug had been pulled out from under me and I didn't know what to do. So this friend, Gerta –

30:53

ANDERSON: That was when the school was starting, right? I mean, they were some of the original faculty.

FRANTZ: Yeah, they were early on. I don't think they were original but they were very early. Maybe it was right in the beginning, I'm not sure. Anyway, so I decided to go back to school. Eleanor had been pushing me to go back to school for years and I said, "Well, why do I need to go back to school? I have a really good job. I don't need a BA at this point since I managed to overcome that." But she was convinced that it was a good idea, and so I did. By this time, incidentally, I had also become friends with Alex Meikleljohn, and I should say a couple of words about him. He was quite a well-known figure in Berkeley.

He originally had taught philosophy at Brown and then become quite well known for his teaching and then also administrating, as an administrator at Brown. He was hired in 1912, I believe — I may be wrong about that — as president of Amherst College. And Amherst had been a very well-known college in the late 19th century but it was not at its best at this point and they were looking for somebody to reinvigorate Amherst, so he was hired. He really reinvigorated it, to the great discomfort of the people of Amherst. He didn't pay a lot of attention to the townspeople but it became widely understood as the most exciting college in the country for quite a while. He hired Robert Frost, and Frost was a very difficult character to get along with and did not stay very long. But that's a whole story in itself. But in any case, it became a very lively place, and then he was fired in 1923, I think. There was somebody on the board of trustees, a big Wall Street guy. I don't remember the people at this point. It's been a long time. But anyway, he was quite well known and became one of the major cause celebres of that period and it was all over the papers.

And then he started — a little bit later, he was asked to start an experimental college at the University of Wisconsin, which became extremely well known and interesting and newsworthy, very different, but this is not really all that relevant, so I won't go into it. But anyway, he ended up at Berkeley, retired, and I got to know him originally when he was 87 years old. I was 37. He was one of the two people that started the American Civil Liberties Union in San Francisco and I went to a big event in 1957 celebrating his 85th birthday, that's what it was. And I had known his wife because she was on the board of the Planned Parenthood. So we drove them over to this event in his honor in Marin

County, and that was my first opportunity to get to know him and we just hit it off big time. I think he was originally interested in me because I was on campus and all this stuff was beginning to happen on campus and he had a sort of inside ear to it. So he asked his wife, who also became a good friend, to invite me up for lunch a lot and they were close to the campus, so I started spending a lot of time with him. He was an utterly, utterly, utterly delightful guy, just a total charmer. At 85, in fact, until he died at 92, he took long walks in the Berkeley Hills every day. He was in very good shape. His wife later told me that whenever he got discouraged — he was trying to do some writing and he was having a hard time — whenever he got discouraged he'd say, "Call Marge up and have her for lunch." She'll get me pepped up again, you know, was the idea. So we became very close. I named my fourth kid after him and I ended up writing my dissertation about him.

But that was a bright spot in my life, because he was so much fun. He had a wonderful, twinkly sense of humor and he was so smart and interesting. I started finding out more and more about him and reading his books, which I loved and so forth. He was really a major player in the fight against McCarthyism. He was absolutely stalwart, and there was a whole set of hearings at one point of some congressional committee where he testified about McCarthyism and so forth. He was really the leading non-Communist who defended the rights of Communists during the whole '50s, and did it brilliantly. He developed a whole theory of the First Amendment, which would have given it much more power than it has now, which four out of nine members of the court went along with, but not five, unfortunately. One of the five who did not go along was Felix Frankfurter, who was an old, old friend of his. So it's sort of an interesting and dramatic story and it definitely brightened up my life considerably in the late '50s and early '60s. He died, I think, in '62, but I'm not positive. No, he died right after the free speech movement. He died in '64. How did I get started on Meikleljohn?

ANDERSON: Well, we were talking about the intellectual inspiration from people like Schaar and you going back to school.

FRANTZ: So when Schaar said he was coming down here I was really disappointed so I just decided I would go back to school and finish my BA, and come down here and work with them, which is what I did.

ANDERSON: So that was what, three years of Berkeley?

FRANTZ: Two years.

ANDERSON: Two years at Berkeley.

FRANTZ: And I was very lucky to be able to study with Hannah Pitkin, who was in the political science department at Berkeley and really took over their

classes to some extent, and later married Schaar and became my next door neighbor and a very close friend. So, I loved going back to school.

ANDERSON: Was there anybody else in your classes that was your age? I mean, there was no such thing as reentry education.

FRANTZ: No. There were a handful of reentry women, but very little. Eleanor's sister at one point decided to take a course at — she's about my age — to take a course at Berkeley, and she went in and was met with just no cooperation whatsoever from the registrar's office. I mean, zero. She didn't go. She was just dumped on. There was no encouragement of any kind.

ANDERSON: And what did you find?

FRANTZ: Well, I knew my way around the place, you know.

ANDERSON: What about your teachers or your fellow classmates? Was there any –

FRANTZ: No, it was great.

ANDERSON: No, just embracing you and –

FRANTZ: No, I'd get along with pretty much anybody, even the class enemy. (laughter) No, I loved it, because see, I was already sort of a fixture around there.

ANDERSON: Right. 39:13

FRANTZ: Because I had been auditing these courses and going to section meetings, and I knew all the grad students. No, there was no problem at all. I was driven to work my butt off. The only problem with me was family and time to read as much as I wanted to read.

ANDERSON: Right.

FRANTZ: But that worked out OK.

ANDERSON: So what year did you graduate from Berkeley, '68? No.

FRANTZ: Seventy-two.

ANDERSON: Oh, '72.

FRANTZ: Seventy-one, I think. No, I guess I graduated in June of '72 and came down here in September of '72.

ANDERSON: Would you describe any sort of feminist consciousness or women's movement activity on the campus before you left?

FRANTZ: Yeah, there was definitely some going on. There were a number of people doing things. I thought that they were out of their minds. I mean, I thought that their — (laughs) I was not particularly — I didn't have a strong identification with them at all.

ANDERSON: Because?

FRANTZ: Because it seemed to me the kinds of issues that they chose were anything but central and I think the main reason that I had trouble with them was that I had never personally experienced, in the Communist movement, any kind of discrimination against women. As I mentioned earlier perhaps, I know that there's some people that did feel that way, and it came out in this movie, [*Union Maids,*] the first movie that Julia Reichhart and Jim Kline made. Some of the women were quoted as saying that they were ignored and not invited out to lunch with the other full-time people and so forth. They had a series of grievances. I never experienced any of that at all. And furthermore, it seemed to me that — I mean, I think this is very short sighted. I'm not defending this position at all.

ANDERSON: No.

FRANTZ: It's just that –

ANDERSON: It's interesting to know where you were 40 years ago.

FRANTZ: It seemed to me that the specific grievances that they were talking about in Berkeley, and in the *Village Voice*, which was what I was reading in those days from New York, were narrow kinds of issues and not fundamental kinds of issues. I didn't have an immediate reaction, you know, I didn't join in full. It took me a while, and when I came to Santa Cruz as a grad student my friends down here began to really work on me.

For example, one of the issues that they were constantly screaming about was the use of "man" as a generic word to include men and women, and since I had always assumed that men and the use of that word included men and women, it seemed to me a peripheral issue and not a central issue, that there were so many issues of exploitation and so forth and class issues that they weren't talking about, and racial issues they weren't talking about. It just seemed to me that — and then one woman — before I came to Santa Cruz, I was introduced to somebody who was already a graduate student here and she had changed her name from Stevenson to Stevensdaughter, and that was a great major rallying call. It just seemed peripheral.

And then the other thing was that people were screaming that they couldn't get the floor at meetings. Women would say that they couldn't get the floor at meetings. Well, I had never in my life been denied the floor at a meeting. I hadn't had that experience and I didn't believe it, you know. I just thought if you were determined enough you could get the floor at a meeting. And this was blindness on my part because I hadn't been particularly active in the new left, per se. I mean, I had been an ally of the new left all along but I hadn't been part of that movement. And then the other thing was that I had never, ever had to face that myself and people come to political issues because of their experience and I simply hadn't had that experience.

I had very much had the experience, which I was very sensitive about, [of] the difficulty of women getting into any kind of occupational categories other than secretary. That was a very real thing, so it wasn't that I didn't approve of fighting about issues like that. It just seemed to me that the kinds of things that the early women's movement were doing were doing were sort of counterproductive. So I got educated by my friends and my fellow grad students when I got here and I pretty soon got involved.

But the thing that really made the difference for me, the total difference, was reading Adrienne Rich's book *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence*, and that was a brilliant book. I had absolutely no problem identifying totally with everything she said. So that really turned the tide, but it took a while. I'm not proud of my initial reaction to the movement but it came directly out of my experiences. (pause in recording) It's funny, Eleanor had a different reaction.

ANDERSON: What was her reaction?

FRANTZ: Which was, she felt that the women's movement denigrated things that she really loved. She loves gardening and she loves housekeeping and she loves house decorating, you know, things like that. And she even loves ironing! (laughs) She can meditate while she irons. (laughter) And she had grown up doing women's work as well as being a librarian, and she really cares about — she has had great trouble with me because I'm unaware of my surroundings, but she isn't. She's tried to educate me. (Anderson laughs) But she feels that the women's movement denigrated much of what she grew up believing to be perfectly legitimate things that women did. You know, she's a complete sympathizer with the obvious good goals of the women's movement, and I think the women's movement moved in the direction that I've moved a lot.

ANDERSON: Right.

FRANTZ: But it really did take Adrienne Rich to convince me intellectually that it was a good thing.

ANDERSON: So that was the early '70s probably, right?

FRANTZ: Yeah.

ANDERSON: Adrienne's book.

FRANTZ: I came down here in '71. I started UC. I finished my BA and came down here in '71. When I came down here, I drove down on Monday morning and found a place to sleep Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, and went back on Thursday.

ANDERSON: So you came alone?

FRANTZ: Thursday night — yeah.

ANDERSON: You didn't move the whole family down here.

FRANTZ: She was still working for a year.

ANDERSON: Eleanor?

FRANTZ: She was still in the library and we were living together then.

ANDERSON: And where are Laurent and the kids living by this point?

FRANTZ: Well, we were all living together.

ANDERSON: OK. So the kids are still at home.

FRANTZ: No. Joe has left long since. Well, he left not too long before that to go to Detroit and work in industry and take over the world. Larry had moved out with, and was living, I think, at that point with my girlfriend that I went back to school with, Gerta, that I mentioned. And the other two kids were at home. And Eleanor was sort of running the household. So after one year she retired, in '72, and came down here in '73, or retired in '73 and came in '73. Anyway, I was here one year without her and then we both moved in to this house right across the street from Jack Schaar, not the street, the road.

ANDERSON: Up in Ben Lomond?

FRANTZ: In Ben Lomond. And she took over that house, which was a sort of a graduate student shack that graduate students had lived in and made into just an absolutely lovely, wonderful place to live. It was just great, in the woods, very beautiful.

ANDERSON: You guys were there almost 30 years, right, in that house?

FRANTZ: Twenty-five, I think, something like that. And it really was a joy, it was really a lovely place and the setting, the house was a banged-up old house but Jack added a bedroom. It became a very comfortable place, although it was pretty ramshackle to start with. It was an old, beat-up house but she has a talent for that sort of thing, and it was great and it was beautiful and there were beautiful walks, and it was just a half-an-hour drive to campus. I had a VW Bug which enjoyed climbing the hill and I came in to campus — I drove exactly the same amount of time driving the official route but I had a back route climbing a mountain and coming in that way, over Empire Grade. So it was a beautiful drive every morning and I got hooked on NPR [National Public Radio], which I never listened to radio at home. (laughs)

ANDERSON: So what was the campus like in the ’70s?

FRANTZ: Well, the campus was just wonderful. The campus was glorious. It was –

ANDERSON: You were in the HisCon [History of Consciousness] program, right?

FRANTZ: Yeah.

ANDERSON: Which was the only graduate program, I think, at the time, wasn’t it?

FRANTZ: That’s right. There were graduate programs in the sciences, because the scientists wouldn’t come here unless they had lab assistants, but there were none in the humanities. So HisCon, in the beginning, was just a miscellaneous collection of people who wanted grad students, period. They wanted TAs [teaching assistants] and they wanted to work with grad students. There was Jack and Peter Euben and Norman O. “Nobby” Brown. We put together a kind of colloquium that met every couple of weeks — not strictly political theory but humanities and political theory. Wolin left after one year. In fact, he left the year I came. He wasn’t here. I came down to visit the year before and take a look at the place and he was teaching one of his classes, just once, but he got a job at Princeton and left, which was too bad in a way, because he and Jack had been writing these wonderful articles. I don’t know if you know that little book but it’s really a wonderful book. It’s a collection of their *New York Review* articles about the revolt at Berkeley. It’s called *The Berkeley Student Revolt and Beyond.* It’s really worth reading. I’m sure it’s out of print but it’s around. They had a wonderful partnership in their writing but it didn’t continue. They actually tried. Sheldon got some money to put out a journal on political theory [that] he and Jack were going to co-edit. I guess it was called democracy, with a small D. I’m not sure; I can’t remember.

ANDERSON: What was it like politically on campus in those early days?

FRANTZ: Everything was wide open. The thing is there wasn't anybody to stop you from doing anything, you know. There was no Politburo, you know. We had various protest meetings, I guess, somewhat later, when the first Gulf War started. I was very involved in the speaking. John Brown Childs and I spoke at about ten different rallies together.

52:00

ANDERSON: Did you find it as politically charged as Berkeley, or was it — I guess the reputation is that it was just more sort of countercultural and back-to-the-land hippie dropout — more of a cultural –

FRANTZ: Well, the crowd that I was with — obviously there was a great deal of that — but the crowd that I was with was the political theory crowd, primarily, and this kind of crowd –

ANDERSON: Right, right.

FRANTZ: – there were a lot of young radicals there. One of the people there, for example, was Lorraine Kahn, who had done all the research work on Rosie the Riveter. I just went to her sixtieth birthday party a couple of weeks ago. Candace Falk, who later did the Emma Goldman papers**,** was a colleague of mine, started at the same time. The year that I came down here, in '72, HisCon had gotten a chunk of money from somebody and they gave a lot of fellowships. So there were people that ordinarily might not have been in grad school because they couldn't afford it. There were three guys that were working for Ph.D.s with Jack and Sheldon, and I became very close to all of them, of course. Some of them finished and some of them didn't. One of them went on to be a college president, "Bro" Adams. He's at Colby now, was at Bucknell for a while as president. We had a group of 20-odd people that came to this colloquium. Norman O. Brown came and Jack came and Peter Euben came, and a few other people — I can't remember who all. I don't think there was much of the faculty there.

Norman O. Brown and I arrived at the same moment and went up the steps together to this colloquium one night, and he asked me what I was working on and I said, "Alex Meiklejohn," and he said, "Why don't you leave him happily moldering in the grave?" Later, quite by accident, he read my qualifying essay. I put it in the wrong box — his box was right next to John Dizikes', who was on my committee, his mailbox, and he ended up with my qualifying essay. I didn't know this. As soon as I finished the thing, I went out on a brief vacation. This is the sort of statement which you've got to do your dissertation about and so on. It was a 20-page paper. I mentioned Nobby on the first page in a glancing way, just to say this is not what I'm going to do because he was not down my alley. But anyway, when I got back home from this three- or four-day vacation, there was a message on my answering machine from Nobby saying, "I have one of your papers here." It turned out I had put it in his box instead of John Dizikes**'** box, which is right next to his, and I said, "Oh my God, I'll come and get it quick," because I was going to

be having my orals, you know, and he had to read it first. He said, "Well, don't you want to know what I thought about it?" So I said yes. He said, "I think it's wonderful, I think it's terrific, I think it's great. You should publish it," blah, blah, blah. I had mentioned his name, as it happened, on the first page but really to dismiss it and say this is not what I'm going to do. But anyway, that was heartening. So he changed his mind about Meiklejohn. (laughter)

It also was funny because he had a very good friend named Carl Schorske, who taught at Princeton, who used to teach at Berkeley and whom I knew from Harvard days, and who was a good friend of mine. He had this paper sitting there and Carl came out to visit him and he saw my name and he said, "Oh, you know Marge Frantz," blah, blah, blah. So that didn't hurt me any with Nobby**,** actually, so then we became really good friends. I used to go for walks with him occasionally. He was very nice. He invited us out to dinner a lot, and he was going through a period of being absolutely nuts about China. He thought China was the greatest thing in the world, the Chinese revolution was the greatest thing in the world at one point. I mean, he was a strange mixture, just a very strange mixture, and he was the big icon at Santa Cruz, you know, the big catch.

ANDERSON: We've got about a minute left, so wrap up your thought about that.

FRANTZ: Well anyway, he became very friendly to us and invited us over, and we met a lot of interesting people there. When we came back from China he wanted to hear all about it. He couldn't have been nicer to me. He became a very good friend and a very good supporter, but it was really funny how it started.

ANDERSON: So should we pause there?

FRANTZ: Yeah, we can. Yeah, let me sort of collect my thoughts again.

ANDERSON: OK. 57:25

END TAPE 6

TAPE 7

FRANTZ: The first thing that happened when I came to Santa Cruz as a grad student was I heard about, during the summer — I forget how I heard about it, but I did hear about a special class that Schaar and two other people were going to be giving in the fall. I didn't even know the other two people, but I wanted — it was a small class and it was going to be a 15-unit class. It was all you did and I wanted to get in it. So I wrote and said could I get in it and they said yes. Well, it turned out — it never happened before or since, but it was an absolutely wonderful experience. There were 20 people in it, and this was typical of Santa Cruz [in those days], that you could do things like this. It was 15 units for the thing and we met every morning, all morning, from 9 to 12 on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and we read a book every day in the afternoon and talked about it the next day, and wrote one paper a week. And it was a group, as I say, of about 20 people. It was about contemporary issues essentially but with background and everything. The prerequisite was that you had to read *War and Peace* during the summer and *Fanshen*, a book about the Chinese revolution.

The two other people with Jack were Wally Goldfrank, who taught sociology, and Michael Cowan, who taught American studies. So I wrote and said can I get in and they said yes, and so that's how I spent my first quarter here. The idea of being able to spend four mornings a week with Jack was just my idea of total heaven, and it really was. It was a sort of self-selected group who wanted to work intensely and was serious, pretty much. So it was just a wonderful way to get started.

This all happened at Merrill, and Merrill was, at that point, the most politically lively place on campus and also sort of a third world college, in terms of its intellectual focus was supposed to be international politics, essentially, and also to some extent, third world politics. It was before College Eight got started, before Oaks got started. It was just a wonderful way to begin doing graduate work, and I had a ball. It was a mixed bag of students. There were some very good students and some that weren't but I'm still in touch with some of them and it was really an unusually interesting way to begin.

Santa Cruz was like that. You could sort of do anything you wanted to do. I mean, you could, as far as academic work was concerned, there was pretty much — there was [virtually] no bureaucracy. The humanities division had a total of three people working there. It now has about 50. There just wasn't all this BS, you know, and people were focused on the intellectual enterprise in a way that was remarkable. I've never seen anything like it before or since. And the slogan was, as you may remember, something about making the "ideal real." That has just completely vanished and the whole notion of experimentation — it's all compartmentalized. And the notion of trying to develop a non-departmentally organized campus, which was the big thing then, is just gone forever. However, it was nice to be here in the beginning. It wasn't

quite the beginning. It started in ’64 and so it had been going for six years.

ANDERSON: You even began to teach before you had finished your degree, right?

FRANTZ: Yeah.

ANDERSON: Just a couple years later.

FRANTZ: So I had no intention of teaching. In fact, early on, since my mother and dad were teachers, I said, “I’m going to do something different. I’m not going to do that.” The next quarter — I’m not sure it was the next quarter, but very shortly I began to TA for Jack. After the very first time I TA’d for him, he came over and said, “You know, you’ve established quite a reputation as a teacher.” I had a couple of kids in that class that are still friends of mine who went in and told him, talked about our section. Of course there was no way I could have been a better teacher than I was in Schaar’s section because it was so full of material and I was working very hard on it, and trying to get my head around it, because I didn’t know anything about political theory except, you know, auditing at Berkeley. I hadn’t done any of the significant — I had done very little of the reading. His course was a complete — nobody ever taught a course like that. I mean, it was totally individually designed and it had its own way, but by that time I had heard it enough at Berkeley that I really was pretty familiar with it. So I didn’t want to teach political theory because I did not consider myself a theoretician in any shape, form, or fashion. I mean, my impulse is not theory, it’s practice. So I said, “Well, thank you, but I don’t know what I want to do.”

Well, at the same time there was a very interesting guy named Frank Bardacke — did you ever run into him? — who was teaching a class at Merrill, I guess it was on the history of California agriculture, and Eleanor was auditing it because she was very interested in agriculture, for her own reasons. She grew up on a farm and during the New Deal she had worked for the Farm Security Administration, one of the camps that you read about in *Grapes of Wrath.* Her husband had been manager of a camp and she had been there. And she grew up on a farm so she knew a lot about agriculture. So she was very interested in Bardacke’s course and so it suddenly occurred to me that I didn’t want to teach theory but I could teach something I was interested in, like Bardacke was doing, because it was then possible to do that for grad students. You didn’t even have to be advanced to candidacy.

So this happened over time and I think it was ’76 when I started teaching, but I’m not positive. I decided I would teach a course on the 1930s because I thought that the new left had totally misunderstood the ’30s. Their whole take on the ’30s was that Roosevelt “had saved capitalism,” [quote] unquote. I thought the ’30s was much more than that. I mean, they didn’t know about the popular movements of the ’30s and they hadn’t read anything much about it. I don’t even think they’d

read *Grapes of Wrath*. You know, I don't think they had a clue. At least they didn't talk like they did. And so I wanted to bring the labor movement alive and the mass struggles alive, you know, of the '30s.

In those days, a grad student could sell a class to a college and if the college decided to support it, that was fine. So I went to Merrill and said, "I want to teach this course," and they said OK. I mean, there was a procedure you went through. You had to make the argument, and I guess there was some committee broader than Merrill. But in any case, I taught this course and it was a huge success. They took very seriously, in those days, student reports on classes, and I got rave reports because my heart was in it, you know, I was really fascinated with it. I used a lot of films. I still think the best films for student education are *Grapes of Wrath* and films like that. The first film that the Rickards did about the three women [*Union Maids*] where they interviewed three women at length. It came out of a book called, [*Staughton Lynds*.]

9:30

ANDERSON: You can fill it in later, it's OK.

FRANTZ: In any case, that course was a great success. I sent people out to interview people who had lived through the '30s to start with and get their hands dirty. I had some great reading and my first big lecture, the first lecture in the class after the introductory lecture, was a very detailed narrative about the people that came to Washington to protest for veterans' benefits and got driven out of town. I can't remember the name. [The Bonus March] Anyway, it's a very dramatic story and fascinating story, and I told it in great detail. And I usually do that in the beginning of a course is to tell some story that would get people interested and fascinated and excited. Anyway, it got great reviews and from then on, I could teach anything I wanted to teach. I mean, that's what Santa Cruz was, you know: if you got good reviews on your classes, you could teach a course. So grad students could teach courses. A lot of people didn't do it. I mean, it was not widely done, but there were no barriers.

ANDERSON: It makes so much sense translating the organizing skills and all of that into teaching. No wonder you were excellent at it.

FRANTZ: The one thing that I started doing in that class, quite without any plan at all, was occasionally break into song, because there were so many wonderful songs from the '30s, leftwing songs, and they're fun and some of them are funny and so forth. And they just loved it. It was completely unpremeditated, you know, it just happened. So that became a pattern, in a way.

ANDERSON: Did you feel like in your early teaching, did you teach about women as much as you did about men? How would you describe that contact?

FRANTZ: I taught a lot about women because there were a lot of interesting women in the ’30s.

ANDERSON: But was it less?

FRANTZ: It wasn’t focused on women, but it was not very long — well, a lot of this happened just absolutely accidentally. It was completely and totally unplanned. For example, when Jack went away for a year to Wellesley for some thing that was set up to give faculty a break to come study or — I forget exactly what it was, but it was a year off. And I felt bereft because what I really liked to do was to TA his class, because I kept learning. Every time I TA’d his class I learned a lot more. I kept doing reading. If you asked me to describe what it was about Jack’s teaching that was so exciting, I couldn’t do it. I couldn’t even tell you the essence of his classes, because they don’t fit any category and there is no vocabulary that I have developed to talk about it. But they were endlessly stimulating to me. It was partly because he was extremely knowledgeable and it was partly because he had a wonderful delivery, but it just stimulated my intellect and fascinated me. And it was also, he had a marvelous sense of humor — maybe I said that. And he was very ironic and I feel a lot of the irony went over most students’ heads, because since then — when we moved here, I missed him so much that Eleanor and I together audited his class, his lecture class, and that was so much fun. I couldn’t tell you the guts of what he was — except that his approach was essentially action oriented. He wanted to get people involved in the political process, thoughtfully involved, and I was good at that.

ANDERSON: So we were talking about content of women in your classes and something – 14:25

FRANTZ: He was terrible. He had really no content on women at all, but he started getting better when the movement got hotter and he got pressure put on him. The pressure, a lot of it was stupid. When he was teaching in HisCon, they didn’t want him to teach Rousseau because Rousseau was bad on women and everything. I mean, I think that is stupid, in my opinion. I thought there was a lot of that kind of thoughtlessness in the women’s movement and it really offended me. But I became a very ardent advocate of women.

But anyway, he left for a year, so that left me to find somebody else to teach with, I mean to teach for as a TA, and I TA’d for Barbara Epstein. She’s a good lecturer. She doesn’t have skill working with students but she’s an excellent lecturer. She appreciated my ability as a TA in that class, because I really did bring the material home to them in a way that she couldn’t quite. I learned a lot, but the thing is she’s very, very kind to TAs. At least she always offered me, Would you like to do a lecture in this class, you know, because I’m sure when she was a grad student she was given that opportunity, and that is a very nice thing to

do for a grad student. So I said, “Sure, what do you want me to talk about?” And she said, "Anything you want.”

So I decided I would talk about McCarthyism. And I hadn’t ever prepared anything about McCarthyism, I just lived through it, you know. So I started hitting the books and I read everything that was available at that point, which was not a great deal, and I did a lecture on McCarthyism for her class which was really good. So that gave me the idea of teaching a class on McCarthyism, so I did, and that was a big success. People loved it. I mean, it was all new to them. The first thing I did was send people out to interview somebody who had been affected by McCarthyism, and so we started off with just tons of interesting stories. It wouldn’t be possible now: they’re all dead, practically. For example, there are very few people around here that are still alive that went through all that. There are a few, but not many.

But people came in with wonderful stories, which I wish I could talk about for a half an hour, but I can’t. But I will say one. One person said that the person she interviewed said that when McCarthyism really got hot, her family, they went out and dug a huge hole in the backyard and lined it with some kind of metal, and put all their leftwing books in it and covered it up. And when Kennedy got elected, they went out, opened up the hole and got their books back again. I mean, we got stories like that from all over, fascinating stories, just tons of them. One woman said — this was in L.A. — said, “I’ll talk to you, but first let’s go in here and I’ll turn on the shower so the FBI, if they’re here, they can’t pick it up.” I mean, just all kinds of interesting stories. So I did that class and I had never read about McCarthyism so I hit the books quickly and, you know, really put a very, very interesting course together, and that was really fun.

And then Jack was gone for three quarters and so I needed to find somebody to TA for, because I was living on my TA wages, pretty much. So I TA’d for her in a course on women and U.S. history, about which I knew absolutely zilch, you know. I didn’t know anything. I’m a fast reader and I read a lot in a hurry. So she did the same thing, you know, said, “Would you like to do a lecture?” and I said, “What about?” and she said, “Anything you want.” And so I said, “Well, let me do women in the progressive period.” I had no idea about anything, you know, I’m just interested in the progressive period. Partly I’m interested in the progressive period because I was really startled by all these books by people like Kolko and others that basically dumped on the progressive period as being just a way to strengthen capitalism, which I thought was nuts because there was a huge popular movement that made a difference. I’m not a great lover of a lot of the new left historiography.

So anyway, I started reading and I didn’t even know exactly what to read but I did run across Crystal Eastman. I read a little piece by Jane Sochen and not a good writer at all. And then I ran across Blanche [Cook] ’s essay and I really got excited. I knew quite a bit about Margaret Sanger, because when I worked at Planned Parenthood. I

found an old box of books that had a book of hers, and I found out she was a socialist, which was totally new to me.

But there were a couple stories in the *Village Voice* at this point about Lawrence**,** Massachusetts, that absolutely fired my zeal and imagination, by a guy named Paul Cowan, who died very young, and very sadly, because he was a brilliant writer. And he had gone to Lawrence, Massachusetts, and interviewed a bunch of people, and he was trying to get some remembrances of the Lawrence Strike in 1912 before people died. He read everything he could about Lawrence before he went and he read some testimony in the — there was a Senate Committee investigating what happened at Lawrence because of various things that had gotten in the paper. It was a big thing. There had been a riot in the train station about — there was an old socialist tradition in Europe, when there was a big strike and nobody would have any money, to send the children to friends in another city so they could take care of the kids while you were penniless. So they did that in Lawrence because there were lots and lots of foreign-born people in Lawrence, in the mills, during the Lawrence Strike in 1912. And so they found a lot of socialist homes in New York and they were putting the kids on the train and the cops came in and busted up this whole scene, and hit women over the head and children and God knows what all. The second time. They did it the first time and the second time, they got a lot of publicity about it and they didn't want that so they came in and broke it up, which of course they got more publicity.

So he had read all the stories about Lawrence before he went there and he figured that some of these children would have testimony because they would still be alive, and there was a woman named Carmella Teoli, who was somebody who had testified in the [Senate hearings]. There were national hearings about the strike later on and he had read all this and he wanted to find this woman. He got on the phone and tried to find her and wrote a long, long piece in the *Village Voice* all about this, and it was riveting. It was really fascinating. It was all new to me and he was a wonderful writer who died prematurely, very sad, because he was a terrific writer.

I told this lengthy story, and I don't have time to tell it now, but it's got so many lessons in it about Carmella Teoli, but the fascinating thing was that her children knew absolutely nothing about her role. She played a really important role, because they had hearings and she came and testified. The wife of the president was there and it broke the whole story wide open and led to a settlement. It turned out to be a pivotal thing.

ANDERSON: So what was the impact on you in terms of reading that piece? 23:32

FRANTZ: It had a big impact on me, but it had an even bigger impact on my students, because I really told it well. I wish I could tell it to you. But anyway, it was a great story. I looked for these emblematic stories, and that was a great one.

ANDERSON: We were talking about you integrating women in your classroom and teaching for Barbara.

FRANTZ: So this was a very woman focused story. It was not only about Carmella Teoli but it was about Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, who was working on the ground there, and it was about Margaret Sanger, who came up. And these were all women who were involved in this movement. So anyway, this course on new women was really something. I was so excited about it, you know, discovering all these people and all these things that were happening that I knew nothing about. You know, there had never been any such thing as women's history when I was in college.

ANDERSON: Sure.

FRANTZ: And there was nothing in Berkeley in women's history either at that point. It was just like opening this wonderful book. I mean, it was really exciting, and I was loving it. Crystal Eastman just became an absolute role model for me. I was so fascinated with Crystal Eastman. She was brilliant and bold and also beautiful, apparently, and captivated everybody that came into her circle. She was really something and it was also interesting because she was the sister of Max Eastman, who as a Trotskyist was a great class enemy of mine. So that was all fascinating.

Anyway, those years, when I look back on them, were just super. They were so full of — I had a lot of energy then and I really could get through to students. I just wanted to make them more knowledgeable and more attuned to participating in the public life. And that whole thing came as much from Jack as it came from my left history.

ANDERSON: Sure.

FRANTZ: It was terrific.

ANDERSON: So with your new intellectual interest in women, did it change your feelings about the women's movement?

FRANTZ: Yeah. I learned in a hurry, you know. I'm a fast learner. I realized that some of these wild people that I had known in Berkeley were on a fringe and not the center of the women's movement, and I got very, very interested and supportive. And so when the students got together and organized the first Take Back the Night meeting, I was the person they asked to speak. And so then I took off a week and just read nothing except issues — books having to do with that period. And then at some point somebody asked me to introduce a woman at a meeting and I did a lot of reading. You know, I just responded to the –

ANDERSON: Right, right, to the needs.

FRANTZ: – particular things. Oh, this is terrible. I used to be [so] fast on the trigger, in terms of names and things. But I found teaching women's history to be thrilling, and I was able to do it in a way that really fired people up.

Here's another thing. Because I was a lecturer, I couldn't get support for TAs. I couldn't get money for TAs, but I had to have TAs, I had to have discussion sections, and so I got grad students and undergraduates that were really good. If I had a really super good student, I would ask them to TA for me the next time I did that class. So I developed this whole cadre of undergraduates who became my TAs. They didn't get any money but they enjoyed the prestige and so forth. And I taught them how to — I spent endless time with them and I always visited their sections, and I always got them together as a group. We met once a week with all the TAs. So they got a great deal out of it. They got extra credit, but they also got prestige. They also learned a lot.

ANDERSON: Right, sure.

FRANTZ: Nobody else was doing this much at that point and that became one of my strengths, because I had these wonderful teaching assistants. And I'm very close to some of them still, who are around the university doing administrative jobs, and some of them went on to teach. Some of them are teaching all over the country. And then I had office hours every afternoon and that was more or less what I did. I had endless office hours, and I loved it, and I loved to get to know them and I just got to be very close to them. And every June I would take a bunch of them up to the ranch, usually.

ANDERSON: Well, we haven't even started talking about the ranch, so you have to tell the origin story of that, if this is the right time.

FRANTZ: OK. In 1979, I think it was, my friend Henry Mayer, whom I had gotten to know — oh God, I missed one whole enormous thing from Berkeley. I'll have to go back and do this and you can switch it around.

ANDERSON: OK.

FRANTZ: One of the results of the free speech movement was a great deal of fierce repression on the part of the university against some of the people who participated in it. The university rules for dealing with student protests were just horrendous. After the free speech movement, the next year there was another whole outbreak of students protests, which the academic senate resolved by setting up a commission to study the relationship of students and the university. It was called the Study Commission on University Governance. As it turned out, there were six faculty members and six students, including two graduate students, who were selected to be on this committee, and they were supposed to spend

a year working on a report on what to do about campus rules dealing with student activity — what were the basic grievances of the students and how to deal with it. There was a second strike and so this was the way of dealing with the strike.

And so, of the people who were appointed on this committee, one of the faculty members and one of the students happened to be good friends of mine and they needed a staff person to work for the commission and they proposed me. I didn't tell you this whole story either but I got smeared in the press as a result of things that grew out of the free speech movement. I got big stories about my leftwing activities. What happened was that Cheit, the guy that I was working for, was made executive vice chancellor of the campus. He emerged as this faculty leader and after we got rid of the administration, he went in as the executive vice chancellor, and there was a new chancellor. He had been on the search committee for the new chancellor, and this is the chancellor who picked him as his executive vice chancellor. He asked me to go with him into the chancellor's office, and I had great doubts about it, because, you know, the chancellor's office had been so bad. But he was bringing over some very good faculty and I thought it was going to be different. And so I said yes. As soon as I went to work, the red hunter for the San Francisco afternoon paper –

32:25

ANDERSON: The *Examiner*?

FRANTZ: Yeah. [The Hearst] paper got hold of the story and he was their sort of red reporter, you know, screaming headlines about reds, and so he picked up the story and had a story about my going to the chancellor's office. So [the reporter] started coming on Cheit and he decided not to defend me, and that was OK with me, because I didn't particularly want to be in the chancellor's office because I didn't think I could have any real influence there but I liked working with him and so forth. Well, I'm very glad I got out because I thought it was going to be a different administration. I thought it was going to be really different, because there were several other people who came into the office at the time that were very good. They didn't last.

And another crisis arose very soon around the Vietnam Day Committee demonstrations, and I was very glad I wasn't there. But anyway, I got fired. I mean, I didn't get fired from the university but I got sent back to the Institute –

ANDERSON: Right.

FRANTZ: – and took over another job there. So as a result of that whole scene I got to know a lot of people. I ended up with a job as the sort of editor and researcher for the Study Commission of University Governance, which was set up to settle the issues in the second strike on the campus, and I did that for a year. The commission was headed by a guy in the law school named Caleb Foote and a graduate student who was then

part of the Associated Students, University of California board, or something. And we worked for a year to put out a report on the state of the university, with recommendations on what to do about student government, about the governance of the university and the involvement of students, and what to do about student rules and all those things which had come up as a result of all the student protests. It was a great job. I adored both these guys that I was working with. There were 12 people, six students and six faculty. As it turned out, I knew one of the faculty well and one of the students well, which is how I got the job. And we worked practically around the clock, we just worked all the time. And the three of us were an extremely congenial working group and we ended up with a book called, I think — oh well, hang on a minute, I'll show you.

ANDERSON: OK. (pause in recording)

FRANTZ: But we really did work. I just was barely at home that year and I got very, very close to both Caleb Foote and Henry Mayer. It was the three of us. It was a tripartite enterprise. One of the things I did was to do a long research memo on student protests all over the country to try and put it in a bigger context. And I got hold of all the student papers, the *Daily Cal*, exchanged with and so forth from all over the country and did a long paper about student protests all over the country, which was really astonishing. I mean, nobody ever published anything like that. It was happening everywhere. There was not a single campus practically that didn't get totally swept up in the early '60s. That was fascinating, but mostly I got to be very close to Caleb and Henry.

So this was also the time of communes breaking out all over. Eleanor had always wanted to own some little piece of land somewhere in Sonoma County, because she had grown up on a farm and she just loved that life and loved that countryside. She and I were on a trip for a weekend at another friend's house further up on the Mendocino coast and we came back by back roads, and as we passed on this beautiful back road, we saw this sign For Sale — and she used to spend her Sunday mornings drinking coffee over breakfast reading the country property ads in the *Chronicle*, because she just really wanted to have some place in the country. But she didn't really have any money, it was just sort of a wistful something or other. So when I saw this For Sale ad, I [said], "Do you want to look at that?" And she said sure. So we drove in — this was 1969 — and people came out. I just said right away, "How much is it?" and they said, "Sixty-five thousand dollars," and I said, "Thank you very much," and we left. None of us had anything like that kind of money. It was not all that pretentious a house at all, and that was a lot of money in those days, believe it or not, but I didn't even ask how big the land was. I didn't ask anything.

But as it happened, the very next weekend — Eleanor had a little tiny house, the whole thing is not much bigger than this room. It was just a very small little house, but a wonderful house in Jenner, which is

15 miles south of there, right where the Russian River goes into the ocean. We were up in Jenner with a couple of friends. We had been very impressed with the beauty of the road, this little back road this house was on, and so I said, "Let's drive up on that road again," and we did, and we went to the house again. Eleanor had given me hell for not finding out anything about it and so we stopped in again. We found out that it was 60 acres and it had not just this one house but it had a huge barn and three other little houses on it and a whole bunch of incredibly gorgeous redwoods up on top of this property and in the back. So, you know, we were interested. I mean, she was interested and I'd had a friend who had been visiting recently from Mexico, somebody who had a leftwing history, somebody I was in high school with at Washington Irving who had ended up in Mexico and wanted to have some sort of a place in the Bay Area, some place to come back to, and had been staying with us when she came up here.

So I was thinking about that and we were thinking, you know, maybe we could divide up the land, but how would you divide it up? It's so hard to figure out a way to divide it up. So we came home and we didn't think too much about it. A couple of days later that week, two people appeared at my house simultaneously that didn't know each other. One of them wanted to borrow a mailing list for some political purpose and I forget why the other one was there. And I told her about this property just casually and I said, "How would you divide it up?" and Frances said, "You wouldn't divide it up, silly. You'd have a commune. You know, you'd own it together." And Henry, the other person who was there, was one of the co-authors of this report which was what brought it to mind, was just getting ready to leave on his very first job. He was going back to Pennsylvania and he wanted a sort of toehold in California. And Frances was getting ready to retire. She was the person who said, "You would have a commune." She had some friends that owned land together and she was about to retire and she loved the idea of having a place in the country.

So we decided to go up again and look at it, and we organized this little group to go up and look at it. I had two friends who were very good at fixing up property and evaluating houses, and so I asked them to come along. So we went up — there were about six or seven of us — to look at it the next weekend and take a tour of the place. It turned out, as I say, to have a barn and three houses in addition to the one we looked at, plus a sort of pond that had possibilities, plus the 60 acres of gorgeous redwood country. We took a tour of the whole place and sort of fell in love with it. We belonged to a reading group in those days and it was meeting that night. We went to the reading group and told people about it and several people there were very interested.

So we decided to put together this commune and buy it. We got ten people together and bought it. And it's really beautiful and it turned out to be quite an enterprise. It needed work. We met several times before we did it and then my husband drew up some very good articles of partnership that provided that none of us could ever make any money on

it at all. If we pulled out, we could just get the money we put in. The only thing we could do would be to just — depending on inflation or something — but just get out of it what we put into it. And if our kids didn't want it, it would go eventually to a nature conservancy or something like that. So there was no money making involved in it. So we bought it and we developed, over time, a whole set of patterns.

ANDERSON: You were probably rarely all there at the same time, right? 44:05

FRANTZ: We decided to go up together four times a year. This developed over time and we had a meeting once a month or at least once a quarter, I'm not sure. In the beginning we probably met every month and then — the ethos was that we were going to do all the work on it ourselves and we were going to learn as we went and so forth. Henry had two very close friends who were grad students in history. They became partners in it.

ANDERSON: Was Henry the only man in the group of you that owned it?

FRANTZ: No, there were others. It's changed a lot over time and at this point there are just as many men as women. But various people pulled out. It really wasn't for them and they weren't as congenial and so forth and so on, but we always had no problem replacing them. One of the couples that was part of this, that I also took up on this first trip — the couple that I took up who knew something about houses and buying them and stuff, was Bill and Sylvia Powell, and they were part of a reading group that we were a part of, and we went back to the reading group that night and told people about it and we picked up another couple. So we decided ten people was the simplest number so we could divide everything equally with no problem, and that's what we ended up with and it's changed a lot over time. There were a majority of historians in the beginning and there were at least five of us that were primarily historians so that made it very comfortable. And we really had a wonderful time and it was great for the kids, and it was very good. Well, people have changed over the years. A number of people have died, some really wonderful people who were part of the ranch have died, two marvelous women, and now we have, unfortunately, a majority of lawyers and not historians. (laughs)

ANDERSON: Were you the only lesbian couple in the group? 46:20

FRANTZ: No. There was another lesbian couple in the group, although one person was not that comfortable with lesbians in the beginning. She got over that. What happened was I brought one of my people from UCSC, from HisCon, who was a flaming lesbian, I guess you'd say, (Anderson laughs) or whatever, and that really antagonized Sylvia, but she got over it. But anyway, and she got called down by somebody else in the group who was not a lesbian and gave her a bad time about that. Anyway, it had developed. It really became a great place for my kids. One of my

kids was the caretaker for a while and lived up there, and just grew up there and learned a great deal about life and taking care of the place, just a great many skills. You have to learn a lot of skills, you're far away from any immediate help, and he became an excellent gardener. Anyway, it's been a joy in our life and Eleanor particularly adores it. But we are much less — when we lived in Berkeley it was only two hours to get there, so it was no big deal, but now it's four hours and it's a long drive and we go up much less frequently, and we don't get to all the work weekends. We developed a pattern finally of having a work weekend every three months, where we all end up working on the place together and those were great, but at our age, we're not that great workers. She did gorgeous gardening up there and a lot of other things.

ANDERSON: Was there a political philosophy behind it?

FRANTZ: Not really, except we didn't want it to be — I mean, all the people were somewhere on the left scale.

ANDERSON: So it was more like summer camp for like-minded folks than sort of an intentional community that you think of as communes.

FRANTZ: Yeah, yeah. We didn't plan to change the world or anything like that.

ANDERSON: Right, or live by certain rules. 48:35

FRANTZ: Well, the rules were basically we do things for ourselves: that has/hasn't changed. Anyway, the whole place has changed enormously since not only the lawyers but Henry's death was very hard on me. Henry was the co-editor of this thing and he was just a brilliant and able and wonderful person and very close to me. He died suddenly of a heart attach at 59 and the ranch just never was quite the same to me after that. His family is still involved but that was very, very hard. And then the other two historians went off and did other things in the East and are not part of it any more. One of the lawyers is also a historian and has a Ph.D. in history and stuff, but they're all nice people. They're just cut of a different cloth.

ANDERSON: So do you think you might get out of it soon?

FRANTZ: No, I'm not going to get out of it because Larry, one of my kids, really loves it, but it just isn't the same. We don't get up there as much for the work weekends. Meetings are usually in the Bay Area and we usually get to the meetings, which are also once a quarter. But for many years it was great and it was a wonderful — and it's still a beautiful place. It was a major adventure and something that really added a lot to our lives. We used to write musicals and put them on for major anniversaries. We'd just pick a musical and write new words to all the songs (Anderson laughs) and we had several people who were very good at

that. There are a few academics in it still. One of them teaches back East and we don't get to see her very often. She's at Brown and teaches Shakespeare at Brown, and we had a wonderful Shakespearian scholar from Berkeley who became disabled and one of his kids is in it. But she's not what Norman was, so you know, that's the way it is.

ANDERSON: Yeah.

FRANTZ: However, it was a great adventure and we got a great deal of pleasure out of it and it is a great place. So that was a lot of fun. Anyway, that was a complete detour.

ANDERSON: So this might be a good time to take a break then before we change the tape.

50:53

END TAPE 7

TAPE 8

ANDERSON: So this is just to say it for the tape: this is our last hour of taping, so we're going to try to — I guess we've got a couple decades or so to go so (Frantz laughs) we're going to pick and choose from the highlights. You and I talked about making sure that we cover civil disobedience in the '80s, peace movement stuff and more about teaching, and I'm going to get you to talk about feminism a little bit more. Do you want to start talking about the Lawrence Livermore stuff in the '80s?

FRANTZ: Sure. One of the people in our ranch was a woman named Sarah Crone**,** and she was an old Bolshevik League type and a wonderful person — since deceased — I got a phone call from her. Well, in 1982 I was part of a group that went up to Livermore to protest the Lawrence Livermore labs. There had been a lot of protest around Berkeley and I'd been part of that earlier, because we didn't want the Berkeley physics department so involved with nuclear weapons and didn't think that there should be the connection between UC and the Livermore Labs. At one point we tried to get a thousand people to surround the entire campus of the University at Berkeley, which is a very large area, and we pretty much succeeded in protesting against the university's connection with Livermore.

ANDERSON: I guess you should back up for people who wouldn't know. What was the connection between the Livermore Labs and UC?

FRANTZ: Livermore was the major research center along with Las Vegas, with the labs down there, for developing nuclear weaponry and it was very closely connected with the physics department at Berkeley, and many of us didn't think that was an appropriate thing for the physics department to be doing. In 1982 we began trying to — American policy was to set up nuclear sites in Sicily and in England, nuclear bases, from which to attack the Soviet Union, if and when. So a group called Livermore Action Group was organized, first to protest against the university's connection with Livermore and then to protest against Livermore in general. At one point we had this demonstration in which we tried to encompass the entire university campus at Berkeley with protestors, and we virtually succeeded. It took a lot of people; it's a very big place. But in 1982 there was a major demonstration at Livermore, and about a thousand of us were arrested. The women were held in a huge gym, an old gym that had been part of an army base there, but we had a very favorable judge and basically we were only there for three days. We were charged with what amounted to the same as a traffic ticket.

It made a lot of press and we liked that, we were trying to spread the word about what was happening at Livermore. They were developing all sorts of new stuff there. This was the big experiment place where experiments were happening to try and improve our nuclear arsenal. The following year I got a phone call from one of our ranch members who

was active in the peace movement named Sarah Crone saying that they were going to have a — she had organized something called Elders for Survival and she wanted me to get together some older women in Santa Cruz to participate in this group who would go up and demonstrate in 1983. Because what had happened since ’82 was that we had decided to set up new nuclear, any nuclear bases aimed toward the Soviet Union in Sicily and Turkey and other places much closer to the Soviet Union, as well as England, at Greenham Common. So she was trying to organize a group of elders.

The Livermore Action Group was still in existence and they were going to have a big demonstration there in the beginning of July, or maybe it was in June — end of June, I guess. She wanted me to organize a group of elders in Santa Cruz to be part of this Elders for Survival group. So I got some people together and they weren’t all elders by any means, but we had a group of about 20 people. We began to meet and then when the time came for the demonstration, we had a couple of carloads that went up. I think there were ten of us from here, and they were elders, to participate in this demonstration. And what happened before was we got what amounted to a traffic ticket. It didn’t really amount to any sort of serious penalty at all. I got involved the first time because of one of my sections. In the new woman class several people were going and I decided to go along with them.

This time, though, these were people that I had put together — and it was a wonderful bunch of people, including our best woman’s poet from here, Maude Meehan; Julie Edwards**,** Tillie Olsen’s daughter; a marvelous gal who was a colleague of mine. She was the psychologist for Kresge College and so forth. There were ten of us, as I say, and so we went up there and participated in this picket line and at a certain point we all marched forward to sort of indicate we were intending to march into the Livermore plant and we all got arrested. There were ten of us from here, [a thousand in all,] and this time the judge was less sympathetic and he said that he would let us out in a couple of days but we were all going to be on probation, and if we were out on probation and we demonstrated again and got arrested we would get long jail terms.

So we weren’t going to accept the probation and we decided the only way to deal with that was just to stay right there and wait and see what they did. We refused to go to court and we refused to go to the arraignment. We just sat when they came to get us with trucks and so forth. We just sat and wouldn’t go. Well, in the first place, they didn’t have any room to put us all, because there were a thousand of us, and they put the men in the men’s jail that they had but they didn’t have any place for the women and so they erected a couple of huge circus tents and put us there. There was an old warehouse, some people slept there and the other people slept in cots in this circus tent, and when they came to get us, we were all meeting in this circus tent and they had to — some people had kids at home and they couldn’t stay for two weeks, or however long it would take. We didn’t know how long it was going to

be. We were just going to stay there until they dropped this probation charge.

So some people had to leave and we were all sitting down in the circus tent and we got up and made a sort of tunnel of love that they could walk through, and we sang to them, We will not forget you, We will not forsake you, as they walked out. It was quite moving. This happened every day when they came to get us and we wouldn't go, just a handful of people would leave, that just couldn't manage to stay for personal reasons. Meanwhile, the conditions were pretty awful. They had all these miserable army cots crowded together and the guards would sit at the back of the tent and stay up playing cards all night, and it was hard to sleep, and the food was God awful. It was National Guard, you know, it was bologna sandwiches and that sort of thing.

But we decided to sort of take charge of the scene and make it a culturally enriching scene. So we started organizing classes and personal sharing groups, because some people were pretty upset at being away from their kids and stuff. And events — we had a big Emma Goldman birthday party. I talked about Emma Goldman's life at some length and also a friend of mine was a public health nurse in Berkeley and they asked [if] anybody would volunteer to be the nurse for this place, and she did. So I got her to go home and round up books so we could have a library and she got — I gave her a long list of people to call. You know, they have to give you two phone calls if you get arrested. The first time, they took us all in, they put us all in a big gym and they drove us on busses to make these phone calls. They didn't want to do that so they installed ten phone booths. So we took charge of the phone booths. We kept two of the phones that were strictly for calling press. Anybody who had any kind of press connections, we'd call the press to get them, tell them what we were doing and what was happening. We stood in lines to call home.

So we had our mass meetings and we had all kinds of events like an Emma Goldman birthday party. We gathered and sang. We had what we called a rock band. We got rocks, we picked up rocks and made noise. (laughter) There was a lot of imagination there and we all put it to work to entertain ourselves. One day on the way to our dinner we had a Gandhi look-alike contest. We draped ourselves in sheets, and had a prize (Anderson laughs) for the person who looked the most like him. We tried to really keep people happy.

ANDERSON: How many of you were there, do you think, for the duration? 13:33

FRANTZ: There were about five hundred women. And I taught a lot of classes, and we also had personal sharing groups. We just kept busy and it was a wonderful experience. We had some terrific people there. Starhawk was there and she led some groups, and I went and I took part in a group leading a nonviolence training, that sort of thing. We tried to get as many people to call home to their newspaper connections and so forth. But we also could call home with these phones at hand and I made the

mistake, as I think other people did, too — I would call up Eleanor and say, "I'm having the time of my life." Not what she wanted to hear. (laughter)

ANDERSON: But somebody has to do it.

FRANTZ: And we were all scheduled to make our very, very first trip abroad, you know, just a few weeks from then and I wasn't home to help make any preparations or do anything.

ANDERSON: How long were you there?

FRANTZ: We were there ten days before they relented. We were there ten days before they decided that we didn't have to do probation, but we had a choice of either being part of a group that would appeal this whole thing, which I couldn't do because I was going to be away. And part of the other of us could spend two days in jail, in the regular jail. So there were two hundred of us that (claps hands) spent a couple of days in jail, including Starhawk, and that was really fun. Meanwhile, we sang songs endlessly and we made up words to songs. When we were in jail, our jailers — women, you know, matrons, so-called, I think — loved our songs, and one of them said, "Please sing this song." So she got her daughter on the wire, and we sang a song for her (claps hands). You know, we really made the most of the situation and there was a lot of imagination there and a lot of wonderful people, and we had a good time. I did a non-violence training thing with Starhawk that was fun, when we were in jail, in the small jail.

But Eleanor, I really couldn't help calling her up and saying I'm having the time of my life, you know, I'm feeling very useful. And that's not what she wanted to hear. (laughs) She was getting antsy about our trip and everything so.

ANDERSON: And the trip was for WILPF [Women's International League for Peace and Freedom]**,** or no?

FRANTZ: Yeah, we were going to a WILPF convention in Sweden but then it was our first big trip abroad.

ANDERSON: Got it.

FRANTZ: We'd never been to Europe together, neither of us had ever been to Europe. So it all worked out great and I have a tape. We did an hour presentation. We came back on the local NPR station and –

ANDERSON: You have a tape of that?

FRANTZ: Yeah.

ANDERSON: That's great.

FRANTZ: And it's real good. I listened to it about a year ago and I was really pleased by how good it was. There were three of us participating, talking about what we did and why. Oh, I was going to say, one of my friends was a public health nurse and she volunteered to be the nurse out here.

ANDERSON: Right.

FRANTZ: I called her up and said, "Get us books," and I called a whole bunch of friends, since we had these phones, and said, "Take some books over to her house," so we could have a library. So we organized a library and I guess I said we had an Emma Goldman birthday party.

ANDERSON: Yeah.

FRANTZ: We just did a whole bunch of imaginative things. We had a big rally the first night and I felt that I was really putting my whole history to good use. I felt I was valuable and worthwhile because I did a lot of talking about history to them.

ANDERSON: Sure.

FRANTZ: They loved it and I actually did some classes and when we finally went through the business of getting out, we were, a whole bunch, about a hundred of us were outside sitting on the grass waiting to be called in to the judges chambers and we were bored, and I did a long women's history lesson. (laughter) I didn't even have a pencil and paper to make any notes but it was great. I don't know, that whole thing was an incredible upper for those of us who were there. And for a long time, the six or seven of us that were part of our little affinity group continued to get together for social events for a long time. We all became very close. It was great. It was a wonderful adventure.

ANDERSON: Do you remember any conflict there among all of you, in terms of how to organize things or any of that discussion?

FRANTZ: No, there really weren't. It was amazingly smooth. You know, there could have been but I don't remember anything significant. The first time, when we were only there for three days — well, one thing that happened that was very interesting for me was, when we were arrested in '82, they put is in a great, big, huge gym that was big enough for two basketball courts. So we were all there together and slept on the floor with sleeping bags. At one point the guards changed — they were on eight-hour shifts — and so the new guards came in, and somebody said, "Let's look and see how many of these guards are dykes." I was shocked at the idea that there would be dykes that would spend their

lives as prison guards, which of course is very naïve of me. I mean, it's something that a lot of lesbians do because they have a certain sense of power over — but I remember my utter shock at this. I learned a lot (laughter).

Well, we made some very good, close friendships that are still extant, and then when we went to Europe shortly thereafter — after our meeting in Sweden we went to England and went to Greenham Common and met a lot of women at Greenham Common. And also we went to the WILPF meeting and I did a lot of workshops on civil disobedience, and talked about it and so on. So it was a good experience.

But Eleanor did not want me to call up and say, "I'm having a wonderful time. I've never felt more useful in my life." (laughter) She wanted me to say, "I miss you." And other people had to face some of the same complaints from their partners. But we really did work very hard to make it a positive experience for the people that were there so they would do it again. We had a little subgroup — I was asked to be part of the group of planners and leaders and there were a lot of really able people there. It was great. There were a lot of really good organizers. They were from all over northern California and that was impressive.

Well, the same year, by the way, '83, *Seeing Red* came out and that occasioned a lot of interest around here. We had a big opening in San Francisco at the big theater in the gay di[strict] — in the Castro. I really enjoyed working with the people that put that movie together. I liked the movie quite well. I thought they did a very good job, Julia Reichhart and Jim Kline. We had a big meeting — the first showing in the Bay Area was at the Castro Theater, and we had a panel of speakers. That was good, and Alice Walker came and introduced us all. That was interesting, and there was a lot of publicity here about it.

ANDERSON: Only increasing your popularity around here, no doubt. 23:26

FRANTZ: Well, actually it did.

ANDERSON: I'm sure.

FRANTZ: Santa Cruz being what it was.

ANDERSON: Yeah, I'm sure, more student interest and all of that, in your courses.

FRANTZ: There's a very interesting guy who was one of my TAs a long time ago, many years ago, and when the guy who normally teaches recent U.S. history left, he asked me to take his course for a year. He was on sabbatical so I taught this great, big recent U.S. history course. And one of my TAs in that course was this guy named Jeff Dunn, who has made a couple of movies himself and who became head of public television here when it was set up. He was, as a I say, a TA and he was a

wonderful TA, and we became very close. He made several movies himself which I was part of. He made the movie about the Miss America contest and I helped him get a grant for that. He's now teaching film. He's not well but I hope he'll recover. He's now teaching film in the community studies program at UCSC and he's very good at that — very nice guy.

ANDERSON: All right. I'm going to just try and keep us on track, Marge. We've got half an hour.

FRANTZ: OK. Anyway, *Seeing Red* was a lot of fun and there was a lot of publicity about it. I'm sure there were some people turned off by the idea but on the other hand, the reds are not much of a threat to anybody at the moment, so it's not quite as virile as it would have been a few years earlier.

ANDERSON: Right.

FRANTZ: One of the things that happened that was really important, as far as my relationship with the women's movement went, was going to one of the women's music festivals. I took Eleanor and she didn't like it. I mean, she was not comfortable, and she more or less sulked in her tent most of the time. (Anderson laughs) She just wasn't comfortable in this scene. But I was, totally. And two things that stood out for me was, number one, Charlotte Bunch. Do you remember her?

ANDERSON: Sure.

FRANTZ: She has disappeared, as far as I can tell. I don't ever read anything about her, but I brought her here. I was very impressed with her.

ANDERSON: She's still at Rutgers, doing her work there.

FRANTZ: Really? OK, good. Well, she was a very powerful speaker here and I really liked her. Anyway, I don't remember when I met her but I raised the money to bring her back here for a few days to talk. I guess I met her at the women's music festival, I think she was there. And I just followed her around from one workshop to the next because she really had a really serious, well put together, well-rounded, fundamental — you know, she knew what she was talking about. You know, there were so many young women in the women's movement that didn't know from nothing about anything and went off on wild goose chases, and that drove me nuts.

ANDERSON: And Charlotte had a global perspective, which I'm sure you appreciated.

FRANTZ: Absolutely, yeah. She was terrific. And Holly Near was terrific. There were various conflicts and it was quite a scene, but I had to go home a

little bit early because Alex had a birthday and as I drove home — but it was an absolute turning point for me, because I just realized that those were my people and that's where I belong. I was in tears as I had to leave and go home early. Anyway, it was a turning point in my visceral connection with the women's movement. It didn't help to bring Eleanor along, however. But I mean, she obviously believes in women's equality and stuff, it's just that the accoutrements of the movement, were –

ANDERSON: The cultural piece of it sounds really alienating to her.

FRANTZ: Yeah, right. But I also got to know Holly Near there and I arranged to bring her to Santa Cruz and got the money for her, and then we became good friends. And that's been a pleasure. We've kept that up over the years. Every time she comes we get together. I like her politics very much. Both of her family were in the old left, so we come from similar stock and we really connect with each other.

ANDERSON: Did your new connection to feminism translate into different kinds of political activity here in Santa Cruz for you, or different kinds of organizations that you belonged to?

FRANTZ: Very early on here, I got involved in a little sort of lesbian social group, which was a new experience for me because I really had never had anything like that before. I was only halfway comfortable there.

ANDERSON: Because?

FRANTZ: Well, because some of them were so far out about some things. I mean, what I really believe about that subject is that everybody is potentially a lesbian. I just think that — I mean, all women are. You discover that part of yourself, or not. You know, we're all bisexual by nature, in my opinion. I've never wanted to put my energy into the lesbian movement particularly. I went up to San Francisco once to be part of the lesbian/gay parades for fun. And I was part of the Jesse Jackson for President contingent, and that was a lot of fun. But I just have a broader political perspective that includes a lot more things. And I love working with lesbians if they have some sort of broader perspective, but I'm not interested in working just on a single-issue, lesbian stuff, particularly. I mean, I will do it on occasion and I'll certainly stick my neck out whenever I can, but that's not my main position in life. But I do enjoy some of the cultural stuff.

There's a big gay and lesbian — I fought to get a lesbian center here on campus but I haven't been very involved in it, partly because I just have too many other things going. The gal who's in charge of it is the person I worked with on that book about lesbian stories.

30:14

ANDERSON: Oh yeah, *From Wedded Wife to Lesbian Life*?

FRANTZ: Yeah, that's right, and that was fun. And one of the people who worked on that I love to work with, Ellen Farmer. She was an editor on campus for quite a while. She's not now and Deb Abbott is the person who's running the center here. But it's not where I want to put my political efforts, although I certainly am available, you know. I've done a lot of things for the lesbian community, speaking and this, that, and the other, but it's just not the center of my political life. There was a lesbian bookstore here for a long time. It had such possibilities but it never quite realized them.

ANDERSON: Did you always feel comfortable bringing Eleanor to your meetings or communities here?

FRANTZ: Well, that's no problem. She doesn't like social stuff because she's not really comfortable. So she doesn't go to a lot of things with me because she just doesn't feel comfortable. She doesn't even feel comfortable socially in the Quaker meeting where she is a mover and shaker. She's basically shy, is really what it amounts to. She basically doesn't feel comfortable in social situations. And when we were first together, I organized a big surprise birthday party for her, which she hated. (laughter) I mean, it was not big, it was eight people for lunch, including some people in her family, but she just didn't like being the center of attention. She just doesn't like it.

ANDERSON: Isn't that curious then that she hooked up with you?

FRANTZ: Yeah. Well, it's turned out to be the most magnificent thing that ever happened to me in my entire life and we are exceedingly happy together, particularly since I stopped teaching, because it was very hard for her. I had all these social relations with students and stuff which, you know, she felt lonely, and particularly when we lived out in the country. But since I retired, it's just been absolutely wonderful. I mean, it was always wonderful but it's been more wonderful.

ANDERSON: Yeah, now you have more time together.

FRANTZ: She's just a magnificent person and I adore her. So it's just been the greatest thing I ever did in my life. However –

ANDERSON: You've said that one of the things you're most proud of is your teaching.

FRANTZ: Yeah.

ANDERSON: So maybe we should sort of wrap up by continuing to talk about that a little bit.

FRANTZ: When I was young my mother and dad were teaching, I thought, Well, that's fine, that's great, I think what they're doing is great but I want to do something else in my life, you know, I don't want to just follow their example. I don't know why, that was really dumb, but nevertheless, I felt that way. (Anderson laughs) So it was the last thing I ever planned to do. And as I say, when Jack came over and said, "You've got quite a reputation as a teacher," I thought, I'm not going to teach political theory, that's the last thing. But then I had this brilliant idea of teaching something else and I loved it. Once I started, I loved it, and I realized that my mother was my main role model here, because she's very outgoing and she's the one who had office hours every afternoon, and that's how I felt about it. I loved talking to students and I felt I was really being useful and encouraging them and so forth. And by the way, you have to do it by talking to them, because I discovered, to my horror, that they don't pay any attention to — they don't even read the comments you put on their paper. No, they really, truly don't. It is absolutely awful.

ANDERSON: Such a waste of time, then.

FRANTZ: In the beginning I just busted my ass trying to write things that were critical but useful and not demeaning, you know, that they could read and understand and that would be helpful, and then I discovered they just don't even pick up their papers. That was a drag, that was really a drag. However, I just developed personal relations with all of them. I had really made an effort to develop personal relations with all the people I thought needed to be encouraged, and I absolutely loved it, and I felt truly useful and worthwhile.

ANDERSON: Did you feel like teaching was activism for you?

FRANTZ: Oh absolutely, absolutely. Let me tell you about one class I had. When I started teaching this course called The New Woman from 1890 to 1920, I co-taught it with a very dear friend who was in literature. She and I together went through tons of short stories that were written in this period and they were just wonderful. There are just tons of wonderful short stories about women's lives, and we put this wonderful reader together and I kept looking for stories like that, and there are so many good ones. There's really no good anthology of them. There's one good little anthology — I was looking for it but I couldn't find it — that had a few, that gave me some leads, but Ellen Fischman and I together did this and we taught the course together the first time. It's a very powerful course, and it's very exciting to look at women's lives in that period right around the turn of the century, and there's some marvelous role models and so forth.

If I had another life in front of me, I would spend it working on that period and writing about it, which I had never done, but I never took the time to write because I so much enjoyed the teaching. So I just figured

that's what I would do. I was too old to start all over again. I felt like I want these people to be role models and I want people to understand that you really can change the world and your life can make a difference. I started Women's International Freedom chapters on the campus twice but it's hard to keep them going because people graduate, and I just gave up on that.

I tried to get some over to the WILPF thing but the average age of WILPF people here is over 50 and it's hard to get young students involved in that, but actually, one of the main mover and shakers in WILPF now is someone that I trained, Bettina [Aptheker] and I together, obviously. In all these cases, they start with Bettina and end up with me. So I had a feeling I'd been useful to WILPF and I have been active in it in the past and Eleanor has been quite active in it. She organized a Middle Eastern study group for them which was extremely good and useful for a long time. And the gal who was the national president of WILPF last year, Sandy Silver, is a wonderful person. She's somebody that I helped — she was my TA at one point. She's an older person who — I didn't start her political education, her husband did, but she was very active. She lived down in San Luis Obispo when the nuclear plant was being put in there and she was active there. So I didn't start her off, but she had never been to college and when she came to college, I helped get her through. She's a wonderful person and she's also part of a small women's group that I'm a part of now. Eleanor started a small women's group 25 years ago. Was she telling you about it? She was telling somebody about it recently, and it's still going, and I'm part of it now.

ANDERSON: Wow. 38:00

FRANTZ: That's an interesting group.

ANDERSON: So we were talking about activism, teaching as activism, and –

FRANTZ: I really wanted to be a model — I talked about my activist experience, so I hoped to be a model for them. But I also talked about the value of social movements, and so I ended up going from the new woman class into a class called Women in Radical Social Movements, in which I traced the history of activism, starting with the abolitionist period all the way up, and it's just a wonderful class. I mean, it's wonderful stuff, and the reading is terrific and people love it. So I was going to tell you about one class. It was a great, big class. It was over in Thiman II. Do you know that great big room and you know out where you go in to Thiman II is a great big platform, a big concrete entrance area, and nobody wanted the class to be over. They all brought me bread and roses. Every section brought some roses and some bread that they had baked but nobody wanted the class to be over, they couldn't stand it. So we all went out on this big, open concrete thing and made a circle and sang songs together, and nobody wanted to leave. It really was a great class.

I just had a wonderful bunch of teaching assistants and that makes all the difference, and I was very good at picking teaching assistants and taking people who had never taught at all and really training them, and I met with them regularly. And one of the things I discovered as a teacher was that I didn't do well unless I taught a section, that my lectures were much less effective. If I had taught a section, I knew where their heads were and I could respond to that.

ANDERSON: That's interesting.

FRANTZ: So I always taught a section. And then [the] teaching assistants all met once a week as well as the class so when I'm with the school, I was busy all the time and I spent every afternoon pretty much with an open house.

ANDERSON: Was it a hard decision to retire, since you liked it so much?

FRANTZ: Yeah, it was, but here's the thing. What happened was because I was a lecturer, in order to get my medical, I had to teach half time or more. And because I was a lecturer, I had to teach at least three courses to be half time. So at this point we wanted to travel and I had a hard time persuading Eleanor to travel. Once I took her on this trip — in '83 she wanted to travel. So what I did was I figured if I retired with the understanding I could get my medical as a retiree — I was already over 65, I was 68 — and then I could teach two courses so that I would have a quarter free. By this age, I wanted to teach just one course at a time, because really, one course, when I taught it, turned in to about three. So that's what I did. I just taught one. What I did was retire and get my medical with the understanding that I could come back and teach as much or as little as I wanted to for the ongoing time. So that's what I did and I started teaching one or two courses at a time. That worked just perfectly.

So I do feel, looking back on it, that my major social contribution was teaching, although I wouldn't have been as good a teacher if I hadn't had all the political activity first. So I thought it all worked out magnificently. And so, you know, I just found my voice and found my métier and it was great. I ended up being extremely influenced by the women's movement and trying to make it broader and more socially critical, not just on women's issues, but to make connections between the women's movement and all the other issues in the world — and to try and make people realize that in a way, working for women's rights is one thing and working for feminism is another thing, and they're both worthwhile. But it seems to me it's important that one of them is trying to get incremental gains within the deeply patriarchal system that we live in and the other is challenging the whole system.

ANDERSON: Right.

FRANTZ: You know, what I try to do is to make that clear to people and try and make people into much more serious radicals. And you don't win them all but you win enough to make it really work. So as I see feminism, it just requires a profound transformation of all of world society and all of human relationships. I mean, you're talking about absolutely fundamental things in which women are self-defining, self-determining and so on. And it's got to be tied up with economic justice. If it isn't, it's not worth anything much. So anyway, I just figure that coming back to school was the best thing I ever did and meeting Eleanor and starting to teach. It's just been a wonderful life and I have no complaints. My complaint is that I'm losing my memory and losing my energy but aside from that, (laughs) I still love teaching and I do gigs in other people's classes a lot, and that's really fun. I like that. It's very limited utility but it's fun and I've had wonderful colleagues.

ANDERSON: We have just a few minutes left. Do you want to say anything more about your family, your children or grandchildren or anything like that?

FRANTZ: Well, my daughter is a good feminist. I have three sons and one daughter, and she's very active and lively. She's a trained nurse and she actually at this point is working with kids. She's working as a psych nurse with kids from seven to 17 who are in a locked facility, a state facility. But she's very, very skilled at arts and crafts and she's really a very good artist — silkscreen, stuff like that. So she's able to use those talents with the kids. It's a very fulfilling job and she loves it, and I'm very pleased.

My oldest son is working in an all-black school system in the middle of Oakland. It's a separate school system in a town called Emeryville and he's struggling like hell to lift the standards there. He's very good at what he does. He's an assistant superintendent in charge of instruction and this, that, and the other, and being very socially useful, I think — extremely able, very bright.

One of my sons has gotten completely involved in the self-improvement world. He's a very interesting guy. I adore him. He got totally fascinated with EST, which turned into Landmark, and he became a teacher for Landmark. He's very good at it. Before he got involved with Landmark, he was up at the ranch for five or six years living on the ranch and then he came here and he's a beautiful folk dancer. He's a very quick and smart and interesting guy. He flunked out of college originally and then he came back after living at the ranch and growing up, and ended up with highest honors in physics and did some graduate work for a while in physics, and worked over at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, and he really loved it but he didn't really have the discipline to stay and do a Ph.D. and so he dropped out and he got into this whole Landmark stuff and he loves it. He now, I hate to tell you, has a very good job training real estate agents to sell real estate in L.A., because he's such a good trainer. I don't know how long that's going to last. I think he may lose interest in that at some point along the

way. But anyway, he's married and he's happy. He's very happy, so that's good.

My youngest son is very much like my husband. He is extremely bright. He finished school here in computer technology. Santa Cruz had this deal that they weren't going to have exams but the university bureaucracy in Berkeley made them have some sort of requirement, either a senior thesis or something. What they have to do is to take the GRE in computer technology, which he did, and was in the ninety-eighth percentile or something. But he has no social skills, so he's had some IT jobs but he hasn't been able to keep them. So at the moment he's in much better shape because there's a woman in his life, an old girlfriend. So he's sort of got his life together. He was living alone for a long time and was not all that great. But he doesn't have a job at the moment. I mean, he's doing some tutoring and stuff, but he can't keep a job because he's just not skilled at getting along with people, although he's bright as hell. That's a really weird situation, but anyway.

48:06

ANDERSON: Yeah, it sounds like they both got a lot from the two of you and also are very much their own people.

FRANTZ: Yeah. They're all good people and their instincts are all good. Alex did quite — actually, Alex is the youngest — he did quite a bit of work during the last political campaign in Nevada. He joined teams that went over to work for the Democrats. He's not as radical as the rest of us, but he's a good Democrat.

ANDERSON: Well, sometimes they turn on you all together and become staunch conservatives, so at least that didn't happen in your family.

FRANTZ: They're good kids, and I wish Virginia lived closer. I'd be much happier if I could get to know my grandchildren. She has two sons. But St. Louis is a long way away. Her husband would love to teach out here. He got his Ph.D. at Davis but he did his undergraduate work in Santa Cruz and loved it, and so –

ANDERSON: So, we've got just a couple minutes, Marge. I guess I'm interested in hearing what your feelings about the future are. I mean, as somebody who's seen decades and decades of radicalism come and go, do you feel hopeful?

FRANTZ: Well, I'm an eternal optimist. I'm an eternal optimist.

ANDERSON: OK. Well, that's good to hear.

FRANTZ: I have an optimism folder in there and whenever anything good happens I put it in. The thing is, protest makes a difference. Organization makes a difference and it's all worth it, and it brings results eventually and I think it's totally — I love history because we have these examples that

we can learn from. You know, all the radical historians are basically optimists. I mean they're all optimists because we've seen these things happen. And I told that story about the five thousand people — if I ever got there, I'm not sure — coming out to protest after these people were dragged down the steps at City Hall.

ANDERSON: Yeah, you did.

FRANTZ: Five thousand people were there the next day. We tried for years to get you know, three hundred, and suddenly it happened. I just think that it's quantity builds into quality. The work you do is not lost. It's all worthwhile and eventually it takes root and something happens. So I'm an eternal optimist and, you know, just living through the civil rights movement is enough to make an optimist out of anybody. I think the crucial determining thing was the Greensboro student sit-ins, and I feel I had a little, you know, this much of an effect on that. It makes me feel very good about my life. I feel that I was very lucky to be born in the South and raised in that situation, and be able to be useful. During the Montgomery bus boycotts, the FBI types put out a rumor that I was down there working in Montgomery, and my family went nuts down there because they didn't want that to — you know, I heard that from them. Anyway, I feel very good about my life.

The experience in the Communist Party was difficult. It was very difficult to leave the Party and leave all my comrades. But I'm very happy I had that experience with some of the best people I've ever known in my life, just magnificent human beings and all really caring about the right things, caring about a better life for people. So I just feel I was very lucky to have had that experience, to have learned from it, to have moved on and then to find teaching. I just feel it was the luckiest thing that ever happened to me, that I discovered that I was a teacher.

And then the other magnificent thing that happened to me was Eleanor. So I just feel that I have been a totally lucky person, and I don't think it had anything to do with me. I think it just had to do with luck of the draw. But I feel it was just a great life and I wish to hell I had a better memory and more energy at this point.

ANDERSON: All right. I guess we'll call that a wrap. Thank you.

FRANTZ: OK.

END TAPE 8

53:02

Transcribed by Susan Kurka. Audited for accuracy by Cara Sharpes. Edited for clarity by Revan Schendler, July 2006.