

J: He was the godfather of ????? and um,
S: Three of the people who taught at our school were ah, Bralooof(?) graduates.
J: Oh that was the most wonderful summer.
S: Now what year was that?
J: That was the year I finished, 41.
S: I remember Matt Ketty was the ah, oldest and that might have been a few years after that. I think he was there right after the war if I remember correctly.
J: Yeh, well this of course was just on the verge of, 'cause I went on to Columbia that fall to do some gradute work and Pearl Harbor happened that December while I was in New York and ah, we went to um, Carnegie Hall for a New York Philharmonic Concert and they came out and announced that Pearl Harbor had been attacked. So our dayes had to hustle off to Fall River Mass., all service personnel had to immediately return to, you know, their bases. So it was a very tramatic memory I have of that.
S: I bet.....I can't remember that day.
J: Well obviously you cannot (laughs).
S: I remember air raids. I was old enough, air raids and margerine that's the thing that started with me. You had to use these little coupons and get margerine.
J: Right, color it yourself.
S: Yeh right
J: Break those little um, things, littel plastic
L: My father was a civil defense and he had a little CB and I remember he used to patrol the neighborhood telling people to turn their lights off.
J: Right and we had black outs, yeh, black out curtains everywhere, I think they're called. We were going to be invaded any minute. But then we had to wait until the 60s to be invaded in Selma (laughs)
L: Did you hear that Bill?
S: I got it....
J: But Jonathan Daniels to me was one of the nicer, outside of agitators as they call them.
L: I imagine some of them could have been obnoxious.
S: Now I get.....so longnecker, is that ah, still at Jonathan's?
J: As far as I know. I've forgotten how long ago I got the book from him. But I wrote him a critique which was favorable as you can kind of tell from that and ah, everybody I had talked with thought it was a very fair treatment of events, you know, building up to the civil rights legislation.
L: You wouldn't believe the amount of equipment we fit in our car.
J: Yes I would too. Turner Broadcasting um, did, you may have seen some of the ah, they did all the states. They did um, called Potrait of America.
S: Yeh
J: And ah, they came to my house and did several interviews and it was incredible to me what that crew brought in.
L: Well we're a crew of three and we can barely manage.
S: We've got the bad backs to prove it.
L: The arm for this um,
J: What's Elizabeth Elliot doing throwing my name around and

she's not here herself?

S: She didn't feel well.

J: She has been, you know

S: Sayd she wasn't even going to get dressed today.

J: She has been in the hospital in the last couple of weeks and she had had some heart problems and she walks very slowly with help.

S: Really, I think they returned from a vacation spot or something.

J: Maybe they had been down to the beach, to the Gulf coast to their daughter down there.

S: and ah, she felt real badly.

J: well she's ah.....really pretty much an invalid I think.

S: Is that right?

J: Umhm,

S: Yeh she said she couldn't come out and I said, "Well we better come out"

J: Not today anyway.

S: I said we'd be in town.....in fact we got a um, bibliography from the um, ah Alabama State Historical Archives and this was listed on it so.

J: Umhm, he's done a very thorough job.

S: What do people think of that ah, Selma 1965, do you know that?

J: I don't think I've, who wrote that?

S: Ah, Larry what's the author's name of Selma 1965?

L: I can't remember

S: I always forget. We'll have to look it up. It was written at just the, 68, 69 ah,

J: I'm surprised I haven't.....but if you don't know the author,

S: Well I could find it.

J: It may be at the library.

S: Yeh, it's in the car. I can get it for you.

J: Selma 1965, well you know everybody's had a hay day with Selma and now in this mornings Montgomery paper, there's an article on the new biography by Julia Kass of J.L. Chestnut, which is out and he's going to be doing a, a publicity tour promoting his book. He's going to go and talk on, you know, some of these morning talk shows, whatever they are, a 3 wekk swing around the country. Heaven knows what he'll say. Heaven only knows, I mean it was bad in the 60s. I mean the tension was high here but I don't remember it being as bad as it is now.

S: That's what we hear.

J: For one thing that had a central focus. This time they've made up a focus. But that really, they had a legitimate cause I felt and ah, ah, legitimate leadership in Martin Luther King and his, you know, entorage. Well this time ah, it is, I think, I think I've assessed it properly, it is a group of local leaders, a handful, who want control of all of the towns and school systems in the black belt and Selma is the one that they do not yet have and so they've kind of made up a cause about Rousell. They didn't even care for him, they said so in the paper, they had no use for him and they could dump him any time they wanted to.

S: Is this the superintendent?

J: Uhuh, he was the cause to live but ah, that's all, I mean he was a figure for another push. But what bothers me most is, I think this is, we're going to be slower to heal as a community after this than we were in the 60s because in the 60s once the civil rights act was passed, once they, you know, attained the right to vote it was a clean wound and it healed, if we were going to abide by the law. This time the public school system has been desimated and the white flight has excellerated and um, that kind of wound in a community is very, very slow to heal, you know, because people who are going to be transferred in to the south central part of the state, any, if they have a young family, anywhere but Selma because that's one thing everbody looks at.

S: The school system yeh.

J: And it's just been ah, devistating for me. I cannot tell you the tears I have shed.

L: You've lived here all your life.

J: Yes....virtually, well you know, we lived away for a good while. I married a man from Wisconsin so, we tried it up there for awhile.

S: (laughs) Too cold?

J: Well for him not for me. I liked it but ah.....

S: Who was at Middlebury when you went, was it John Keargee(?)

J: Pardon?

S: Was John Keargee at Middlebury when you were there?

J: No he's here now.....I don't know when, he's younger than I am, I don't know when he was there. I didn't know he had been there. I went out and took some courses from under him at the community college. No I went to school in Virginia and ah, then when john took, my husband took early retirement um, I thought I can't hack it here. I don't want him around all the time. So I went back and took the courses I had carefully skipped when I was in college so I could qualify to be a teacher and, in the public schools because I wanted to do that too, stand up for the public schools.

L: We're all set

J: And that's when I took some courses down at the community college.

S: You all set Larry?

L: Oh yeh, I'm just going to sit down, the heat, I'm not used to it.

S: Yeh

J: Well it's not hot in here.

S: No

J: This is great

L: I asked um, asked Pastor Morrison if we could use this room instead, it's going to get very hot in there. In fact he used a good mataphor, what was it?

J: Hot as hell (laughs) That's a good one.

L: I can't remember what he said. This is the book we didn't even order.

S: Yeh right, yeh

J: I didn't know if you were familiar with it so I brought it because ah, to me it's a good treatment of the events that lead up to the crunch here in Selma.

L: Is there um, a bookstore in town where we could pick that

up?

J: I doubt it. Montgomery might, possibly. Aren't you kind of back and forth too?

S: Yes we are.

?: There's a bookstore in Montgomery.

L: There's a bookstore in Montgomery and we, and the title which was intriguing to us called Roots and Wings. We gather it ah, what would one might call it, left of center or progressive bookstore dealing largely with black issues. I don't know, Roots and Wings.

J: I don't know that one. I was over there Saturday because we went to see Measure For Measure at the Shakespeare Festival, which, by the way, you must go to see.

L: I wonder if it would be playing tonight. I love that play.

J: Go to see some tonight, that is the most sophisticated theater. New York has nothing comparable, but anyway, ah, we stopped, we went early enough to stop at a bookstore in the Eastdale Mall and um, it is quite up to date and has wonderful selections. So if you strike out at that Roots and Wings, I don't know where that is.

S: Well there was another one downtown, what was that?

?: Books of all publishers, Capital Books I think it;s called.

J: Well you could get on the phone maybe and eliminate a lot of cruising around, you know. Find out if they have that then.

S: Let's see now, now you could give a little background about yourself in terms of ah, your life in Selma, when it began. You can start there.

J: Ooh, it began 70 years ago and um, when I was in junior high school um, let's see, in 19....34, my dad um, became a representative in the congress and um,

S: Federal law, state what?

J: We don't have a state congress. We have a legislature. This is in Washington and uh, in the pre-war years was not full-time of course so he had a law practice here and he was back and forth and mother had a complicated family. She had 3 teenage children and my dad's mother had moved in to live with us when she became too old to keep house for herself. So it was hard to turn loose and make a move as, in fact we just barked and said no we're not going to move up there and um. So we finished high school here but toward the end of high school, he went up in the middle of Roosevelt's first term in 1934 and um.....once or twice mother was able to go up and spend a winter with. Her mother would come down, she was a much younger grandmother. My paternal grandmother was 45 when my dad was born and she was the one who was living with us and she was quite feeble and dependent. So it was hard to leave her but my other grandmother would come down and take care of the household for mother so mother could be with dad some of the time. But it was not until the war years actually hit and ah, his time up there was almost continuous that she was able to move up and they took an apartment and then henceforth, until he retire, lived up there. But then um, both my brothers went to school at University of North Carolina on

Chapel Hill and I went to school at Randolph Makon in Lynchburg, Virginia and I didn't think about it at the time, but looking back on it, I talked with a couple, one of my brothers is a federal judge in Montgomery. The other one has been chairman of the um, board of trustees of the university system of the state and he's just been called back to be the interim chancellor during the search ah, to replace the chancellor who had left for the west coast. And I was talking with Sam Earl, this is the Selma brother, about why our thinking is maybe different from the thinking of a lot of people in this area and I think a lot of it had to do with our being sent away from the state to school. Seeing a bigger vision of how things are elsewhere. I;m not sure he thoroughly agrees with me but um, looking back on it, I give my dad a lot of credit. being in politics in this state for, being willing to send us out of this state because, you know, they use everything in the industry involved in the political arena and ah, I think that took courage. But I;m glad he did it. Although we have kind of been out of step ever since. Mother didn't want us to come back to Alabama to live. She kind of foresaw what was building up and ah, I think she thought it was going to be ah, terrible up hill struggle for anybody with liberal tendencies, to live in this environment and she wanted, I think both my brothers to stay in North Carolina. But they both came back and ah, here we are for what it's worth.

S: Now when you here when the ah, just moving up a little bit, when ah, the thought of education the Brown(?) decision came down?

J: that was in what, 54

S: 54

J: I'm trying to think when we came back um, see we lived around, all during the war years we lived all over um, west coast, Florida and um, then after the war we went back to Madison, Wisconsin, John finished up his engineering degree which had been interrupted by the war. He was a navy pilot, fighter pilot. So we went back and ah, lived up there while he finished that and then, what did we do? Then we lived, when he finished, we came back and lived in Birmingham and we had.....well our forth child was born in Birmingham. I'm trying to think when we moved to Selma um,....shoot. How old is Jack? Oh he was 2 years old when we moved back and I think he was born in 52. So we must have moved back in 54 and we've been here ever since and had another child after we moved back here. So we have a total of 5 that came up through Selma schools. And then I tried to teach in Selma High School, briefly. I told you when John took early retirement, he was the chief engineer at Quakfield which was the ah, ah, airforce thing out across the river.

S: The high school was segregated at that point.

J: Well not for my last 3. It was for the first 2. But for the last 3 it was integrated and ah,

S: How did that go at Selma High School?

J: I think the original integration went all right. Um, by the time I got out there to try to teach, I would ask when I would be reviewing them for an exam as I'd say, "DO you have

any further questions?" How old are you. They knew that I was a new teacher and had never taught out there before and obviously I wasn't one of the ones just out of college. But um, I couldn't take it, it was a terrible year. It was the year um, I was replacing somebody who was on maternity leave and it was the year they had put the principal in by court order, Mr. Yelder a very decent, nice man who had been principal at one of the ah, maybe a junior high or something like that and ah, Mr Yelder was a casualty and so was I. It was also the year Mr. Yelder had got ulcers and I just had a quiet little nervous breakdown (laughs). But, it was funny. It was the year that Jimmy Carter was ah, became president and the black people felt that they were the instrumentality that had made that possible. They had put him in office and I have never known such arrogant ignorance in my life as I encountered it at that high school. It was just awful. You know, they were really on top of the world and nobodies word mattered and they couldn't believe I had voted for Jimmy Carter. they thought only black people had voted for Jimmy Carter and ah, it was a hideous year. Just awfulness, Yelder as I said ended up with ulcers and I just ended up.....But um, the people who had had some experience in teaching in years past ah, said it was a unusually awful year, that immediately, you know, after that, things were better. They had a stronger administration in the office. Mr. Yelder as nice as he was was no administrator and so the teachers got, the classroom teachers got no back up, you know, when there were disciplinary problems and ah, so they said the years before and after that I just happened to roam in out there (laughs) in the worst possible year under the worse possible circumstances.

S: You were saying that um, by the time Jonathan got here, things had been pinking for quite a while.

J: Umhm, that's why I thought you ought to have that book as background for what had been going on um, Ralph Smeltzer, who is the subject of the book here, ah, was around at the house a lot and uh, looking back, you know, you always have whys of 20/20 looking back um, he really ah, was in a position to do a lot of good and so many of us were trying to help him but it was like butting the head against the stone wall. Nobody would listen, nobody in authority would listen. But I think, I can't remember if I'm right about this, but I think in here he describes some of the tension between the different groups in the community and the fact that um, there was a movement to try and get rid of people like Jim Clark. I can remember going to see the mayor with a friend of mine and ah, another woman, and he was old school, you know, ah, never sayer and ah, white citizens council and we went to try to say, you know you've got to give a little. You cannot be intransigent, you have to, you know, this is just the wrong way. And he wouldn't hear anything, "You young women, you go home, let, we men know how to take care of this" That was his, you know. So we got absolutely nowhere and I think what made us go to talk with him was..., I think I remember this right, I think what it, we were outraged when we heard that well qualified black people were not being permitted to vote. That we had

a vote of registrars here that were depriving qualified black people of the vote. It's no um, that's no excuse but we did not know this until it was made public knowledge, until we began to hear chapter and verse about people we knew were qualified who had been turned away. Then to our amazement, we heard that some of them who had been seen in the line up at the courthouse, you know, this was an everyday pressure, they would be lined up to be turned away and ah, we found that they were loosing their jobs. They were being fired because of the effort to vote. Well I was just almost sick in my stomach to hear that there were people in this town, employers, who would do that. So we began a little campaign of going around trying to button hole people and say, "What are you doing here? How can this be?" And we got the most amazing answers from the most astounding people. I mean people that we thought we could reason with. It just, it was a horrible thing to peel back the layers and find what was underneath here, you know? Well let's see, he was here during this time and we were trying to be helpful.

S: What were the answers you might get?

J: Well I recall Dick Grason, he's an episcopalian and he wasm he had a ahh, he was I think a dentist or something like that, maybe.....well I'd have to look what his specialty, maybe nose and throat or something like that, and he had fired his receptionist, or long time office nurse. And I called and I said, "Dick I can't believe" I said, "I've heard a rumor about you that I just find very hard to believe" And he said, "What is that?" And I said, "Well I just can't, it blows my mind to think that you have fired a long time employee because she wanted to vote" "Well you just don't understand the pressure we're under here." A lot of the men were running scared of economic pressure from the citizens council group and, you know, other organized ah, never sayers and I don't, that just could have been a very lame alibi. The people I admired the most just said no to joining that citizens council which was trying to get a, you know, show a lot of muscle. I don't know. It's painful even to think back on how it was and we really had, I think, grown up a lot, matured a lot in race relations here until this flap this year and god knows if we'll ever be able to move together.

S: What was the reaction when King came down and started to push the movement a bit forward in January of 65?

J: Oh, it was like um, Nixon and, you know, circle of wagons. It was that whole, you know.....that was the movement at the time.

S: And when, when I guess Dainels, when white or black outsiders came in, was the reception or attitutde of relationships, what was Daniels likely to experience in terms of peopl from Selma ????????????????

J: Well I'll tell you, some of the whites who came in, whites who came in from Boston and elsewhere ah, made a big display of....arm around, you know, black women. I mean they seemed deliberately to exassibate the feelings here ah, the culture here, the deepest seated fear here which I'm not sure has been overcome anywhere in this country. You know,

interracial sex. It seemed to be a deliberately inflammatory tactic. They wanted to make the citizens angry. They wanted to taunt us by our way of life which wasn't their way of life either back home, I think. Ah, but things like this made me angry. Ah, other things that made me angry, well they would come in for interviews like this ah, I kept saying to everybody "talk with these people, talk with these people. If you don't, if you close your door and close your mouth, the only resource they got is the black community and they'll get one side of everything." Well I didn't have much luck with that sermon but ah, I did open my mouth and they came in and ah, some ah, television people came in and did an interview and um, with the understanding that I would get a chance to edit and make sure that they hadn't cropped and distorted what I had said. Never saw it, never heard of it, John's mother saw it in Chicago, or had a friend call her and say "was that your daughter-in-law we saw on television out of Minneapolis or some place." But people were running fearful of being sold out because they were, being misquoted, their remarks were being edited out and one reporter told my brother, he said ah, "We can't publish what we find we have to publish what will sell back home. If we send back what we find, it'll be killed." I mean he frankly told him that as an explanation for why the stories didn't come out the way they'd been given. So naturally people kind of clammed up. Wouldn't you?

L: Oh yeh, well in our case, we just ah.....Selma plays a large role in Jon's life but we're not going to try and do a number on Selma at all. I mean, I think we have a lot of respect for the community. We're mainly interested in how Jonathan, I understand what you mean about being misquoted, but ah, I don't think we've ever been accused of that.

J: No, historians have a job to do but journalists don't. I mean it's different. It is different. I mean historians loose credibility if they're not as fair and accurate and balanced as they can be and of course everybody has a point of view when you begin something and that's bound to come out and I don't object to that.

S: So I take it that it, was it somewhat unusual that Jonathan was able to at least make some contact with people.

J: Well as I told you on the phone, I don't know what his initial contacts were um, among white people. I think they were probably in this church, which I'm not a part of um,

L: Want me to turn on these lights and, we'll see if these are aproblem. Mrs. Joyce right?

J: Yes

L: Okay, now we can aim these up if they're unplugged.

J: It doesn't bother me.....

L: ???????? Well we'll just leave these on then. Excuse me I didn't mean to interupt you.

S: I think he did and, tried to get some blacks into the church and his approach was rather interesting from what we can read from his own materials that he wanted to see himself as a bridge between 2 communities.

J: Right, but with the mood of the community as it was, um, I don't think anybody wanted a bridge at that point. I mean they had learned to be quite suspicious and quite ah,

S: ???

J: Well nervous about people from away who were trying to change things and bring about change overnight, you know um, I don't think he was that radical but some had been. I may be wrong about him, I didn't have, as I told you, I had very limited contact with him. Um, one thing I remember that he said, and I told you Carol Summers name, ah, I think she's the one who introduced me to him and she was a member of this church and she and I were together on the board of planned parenthoos at that time, it was a volunteer ah, group, and ah (BEEP).....we were under some fire from the black community because they thought it was another white person's ah, effort to, you know, play the numbers game and keep them stable as to population and we were talking with Jonathan about that and he had a lot of contacts in the black community which we didn't have and he said, "What you women are doing in this community....if you can make this go, it will last far longer than anything that I'm trying to do or anybody else here is trying to do. If you can persuade people that this is the way up and out of poverty, you will have done a service beyond anything that any of us are working toward here."

S: Isn't that the philosophy that it was up to the community to kind of ah, make it spark rather than he kind of coming down,

J: That was, from that remark, that was the impression I got ah, was, you know, he was the bird of passage but those of us who lived here ah, need to think of a long term answer to things and of course we were not trying to limit the size of the black population ah, we were trying to preach the gospel that if you limit your family size, you're able to do more for their health, for their education, you know, for their um, all of their needs. Which you cannot do if you have a dozen children and I'm a fine one to talk. I went around making talks for planned parenthood and I remember talking at one um, civic club, men's civic club, one day and a friend of ours from the back of the room when I got through and asked for questions said, "Mrs. Joyce, how many children do you acknowledge?" (laughs) and I had to say 5 and I said, "That's why I'm adamant on the subject. You need to limit family size" But that was, that's my most outstanding memory of Jonathan and my, oh that awful gone feeling when I heard about his death.

S: Where were you when ah,

J: I was in Selma, but I just um, Mrs. Liuzzo had been killed in transporting (BEEP) and under very questionable circumstances, I don't think they still know for sure if that FBI informer was the one who killed her. But this will give you a little insight into the feeling I was trying to describe in the community. I belonged to a little ah, rich club and the morning after Mrs. Liuzzo's death, we were at a neighbors house and ah....the conversation in that room was, it was probably one of those outside agitators that killed her just to give another black eye to this community. I cried. I said, "Until southerners can acknowledge that they're capable of this kind of violence, we are never, ever going to climb out of this and grow up." But they couldn't,

they couldn't acknowledge the fact that there are people like that down here, you know. They wanted to believe the myth that all southerners are gentle, kindly, you know, sweet. But that is part of what was going on and of course the Rev. Reeb had been killed by some thugs. He was in an area of town where, I would not have gone.

S: It was a mistake

J: It was, I think, but ah, and they talk about Bloody Sunday and that was the one day up in Selma, was his, and Mrs. Liuzzo was between here and Montgomery and of course Jonathan was down in Hayneville. Who killed Jonathan?

S: Tom Coleman

J: And he was never indicted was he?

S: Well he was indicted for manslaughter and tried and acquitted.

J: I guess that's what I meant, he was never

L: On the charge ?????? he claimed Jonathan had a knife and a gun. He was let out of jail about 3 minutes before.

S: It was an all white male jury.

J: See we have come some distance haven't we?

S: Yeh. I want to ask you again, where were you when you heard about Jonathan?

J: I think I was at home. I think I read it in the paper or heard it on the television. I don't remember the exact circumstances, I just remember the feeling of "Oh god" you know....and the I talked with Carol on the telephone and we got his mother's address and wrote to her and ah,as I said, never heard from her but I can sort of understand that. It would be like....somebody from Nazi Germany writing to, you know, you don't know what

S: No, she's not like that. It's probably, if I were to interpret it, I don't know, but I would interpret it that she wouldn't want to rekindle certain memories and things because she's a very kind person and not a bitter person.

L: Who's that Bill?

S: Connie, Connie Daniels.

J: I said Carol and I wrote to her after Jonathan's death and ah, we never heard and I just thought maybe she was redigent because she didn't know what kind of people were here and, you know, it would be like writing to somebody in Nazi Germany or something.

L: I don't think she felt that way. From what we've heard, Bill knew her, I didn't but I think she was probably just destroyed and couldn't respond.

J: Couldn't handle it.

L: She became kind of accepted of his death and filled her house with memorabilia and these moving vans had to come and dump all the junk off.

J: Oh wow

L: Yeh we found some things in a local auction barns that ah, his father's diaries, his father had been a medical officer in WW2 in Germany and had kept a diary and we turned that up and we've had it transcribed. It's a wonderful document. He was wounded and died in 1959 actually as a result of the wound.

J: Oh is that right

L: But you can see where Jonathan got some of his concepts

of service after reading some of his father's material. But we're not trying to turn him into a saint.

S: We're just wondering how he ended up here.

L: Yeh, how he ended up doing what he did.

J: Well what was he doing before he came here?

S: Well he went to VMI, he was a graduate of VMI and then he won a Woodrow Wilson,

J: That's a funny breeding ground for a preacher.

L: Especially a rebellious one.

J: I used to date at VMI when I was a Randolph Macon and I didn't meet any preacher types there I tell you (laughs)

S: Then he went to graduate school at Harvard for a year on a Woodrow Wilson scholarship, in English, dropped out of there, came back to Keene, he didn't really know what he wanted to do with his life and then had a religious conversion um, and decided to go to the seminary in 63. But then what came, he had been working in Providence for a while where he met some blacks and worked with blacks and then came um, made that call after Bloody Sunday and it was one of the ???? contingent. We think what we came down on the same way to Atlanta that Reeb came down. But what's unusual about him in many respects is he stayed, without really separating from a lot of people and he felt a commitment ah, you know, to continue working down here. It wasn't ah, he said a lot of the people who came down it was a wham bam experience, that's his expression for it. Come down for a day or two and then leave and he just, you know, wasn't going to do that and so,

J: Most of them did, they came ah, just for the publicity of the march, you know, and ah, I remember the Saltinstahls came down, well Mrs. Saltinstahl came down from Massachusetts ah,

L: I wouldn't blame southerners for being real indignant, that kind of a norm of hypocrisy and ah, spirit or attitude of ah, "We can come down and straighten you rednecks out because we have the truth about the racial problems" when the reverse is true. Do you know what I mean? I wouldn't, it's no wonder people are saying hello to us at all.

S: The proportion against yankee ah,??????

J: Well see I'm quite enlightened because I married a Yankee. Most of the time I'm glad (laughs)

S: We won't go into why.....Well maybe we can end by asking you what,

L: Want me to run it?

S: You talked a little bit about the ah, ????? presently and you don't need to go into that again, but what about your vision of what you'd like Selma to be. How might that fit in with Jon's vision if at all?.....I mean is there a link at all between Jon's concept of, saying he was a kind of bridge or trying to be a bridge or trying to,

J: Well as I said, I thought (BEEP BEEP BEEP) Selma was well on its way to being a united community. I really did until this um,I don't even know what to call it. I think it was a pretext ah, for a power play, this Rousell issue. You know, that blacks, because they called it racism when his contract was not renewed and um, the same board that hired him was the board that reviewed his ah, achievements

here and his, the moral of the teachers here and it's the same board who will probably hire another, it's not racism. They can call it whatever they like, but it is a pretext. It is not a legitimate issue, it is not like ah, being denied the right to vote. You know, it's nothing cosmic here and I think if um, well I read in connection with um, you probably did too Sheldon, in connection with um, Chestnut's book that's just been published um, he's going to be doing this talk tour and he said he may not come back to Selma, he's ready to hang it up and get out of the law practice and maybe teach, maybe get on the talk circuit, something like that. Um, I think if a few of the more vocal leaders like Chestnut and Rose Sanders who is brilliant, no question about it. I think she's um, very, very bitter. I think she's ah, never met a white person that she trusts and ah, this kind of intransigence, there's no room for compromise, there's no room for seeing the other side. So there's no hope as long as that is the kind of black leadership that we have locally, I think. I don't know but um, a lot of the following they have had, I think, is um.....out of fear, um, I think many, many, I can't even imagine the pressure that black people in the, people in the black community are under. If they seem to be ah, in the least susceptible to compromise or to ah, saying yes that's reasonable, whatever it is um, the Uncle Tom's, you know, Chestnuts column every Sunday is to that effect that ah, city council picks those that'll go along with the white man, we see through them, you know, and.....I don't know. It's just hard for people who see things or want to see things as a united community to come together to even know who we are. You know, we tried doing that but the black, in our church we had ah, what they call a service of reconciliation, repenance and ah, it was interracial and ah, very few black people came. I just think they are under a perfectly hideous burden of pressure and ah, because these leaders are bright and they are angry and they are bitter and they did want to take over this town and this school system and so far they've been ported and so, I don't know. If my vision of what I would like it to be would be a town the way it was, you know, between the wars. Between the sixties and now. Because you would see black and white people having lunch together ah, people work in banks together, you know blacks and whites would go out and get their sandwiches together and eat at a fast food place together. The worship has never been totally integrated. Now this church has a black family as members. Our church does not but we had,

S: And that church is?

J: Presbyterian. We had um, contact with some of the um Bohemian students who were here at Selma University and they came one night, the night of the reconciliation and repentance service I was on the door handing out bulletins as people came in and the black young woman who was posted with me um,the next Sunday showed in the school class I teach, an adult church group class, discussion type class and she and a friend were standing out in the hall outside

our room and I went out and I said "Well for pete's sake come on in" So they came, she came regularly. Every Sunday she stayed for church, I would take them back, she would bring friends ah, and as far as I know, there was not a ripple about this. They didn't join our church but I think motivation for worship had a lot to do with animosity when they tried to integrate this church. They did it for the TV cameras and they were jeering and ah, making faces and pushing and chatting, you know, loudly and obviously ah, wanted to get the publicity and that aroused. If people really come to worship, there's no problem and I don't think anybody can know anybody's motivation but you can know their behavior whether it's reverent or whether it's, you know, the exact opposite of reverent when they come. Well these young women who came from Selma University, these Bohemian women, were seeking a place where they would be welcome. They said in Nassau, all worship is integrated and they had not been in a community before where the worship services were segregated and they were uncomfortable with that and it was perfectly obvious they came to be fed spiritual food and nobody raised an eyebrow. You know, I mean this is what the church is for

END SIDE ONE

J: I think it's their preference to stay because the black churches are really pretty much where politics is discussed too. You know, this is kind of the genesis of a lot of the movements and things. I know the Baptist church is and of course during Martin Luther King's time it was the, ah, Methodist.

S: Well I think

L: I think we're done. That was an interesting story about Jon, the meeting you had with Jonathan.

J: I was impressed by him. There's a movie actor that has the same kind of intensity that I saw,

S: Yeh, we have an impression of that.

J: Yeh, well he killed himself, I'm trying

S: Clift

J: Yes Montgomery Clift

L: That's mine

J: Exactly, the same, the same, well even some resemblance physically in his features but also an intensity that was there that I felt in Montgomery Clift, you know. I don't see much in the way of movies but I saw him in um, I think You Can't Go Home Again, maybe he was, was he Thomas Wolf.

L: that was the Dreiser novel too

S: Well he was

L: A Voice in the Sun with Elizabeth Taylor, rememebr that

J: Yes

S: It was based on the American, was it Freud.

J: Yeh, but I had the same feeling and I've been trying, I'm glad you thought of his name.

L: I don't want to be rude here, the microphone (laughing) We're supposed to be in church here.

J: I forgot I was being taped.

L: Well um, would you mind um, I think the only quotation we would use would be the one you felt about

S: Jonathan

L: But we, and the rest would just be for our background

information.

J: Right, and that's what I thought you'd want this book for is for background because to me it's excellent. Have you read this?

?: Which one is it?.....No I haven't

J: Ah, the hero of it is Ralph Smeltzer, he was the brother of reconciliation in Philadelphia. He spent a lot of time in Selma trying to tent things down but

L: This would allow us to allow, we wouldn't be able to do, they'll want proof.

S: Would you put your name on that too so we get it right.

J: Huh

S: Could you print your name on the bottom so we

L: We'll only use that little section that we um,

J: Well it's been nice to talk with you guys. We need some outside educators (laughing)

S: Well we have to do that much

?: It's nice to be outside

J: What's today?

L: Today is the 12th, isn't the 12th. Well Bill had an interesting experience this morning in the motel we stayed at. He went to check out and the guy behind the um, counter, was obviously I'll reconstruct it, "You all here to see the bridge?" and Bill didn't say anything and he said, "As long as you're in the south, why don't you go down and look at the dam where those guys in Mississippi were killed" So I guess he had us figured out.

J: At the Holiday Inn?

S: We got a room to stay in it was some sort of,

L: The last place on the left as you go down the same road.

?: Oh the old ???? inn,

L: Well we didn't know any better, we're just outsiders.

S: There weren't any rooms because there's a Baptist women's convention.

J: Well some of those were spinning out at the Holiday Inn when we lived down, we have been interviewing a perspective replacement for ?????? and you better stay.

?: Don't tell me that

J: He's leaving

S: I heard that yeh

J: Yeh, so I hate to loose you people, I really do.

?: Well that's what associates do I guess.

J: But you'll have your own church in Mississippi right?

?: Sumner

L: Longnecker's book

S: I took a note

L: Oh you did okay, yeh we should have worked that months ago when we first got the notice on it.

J: Not all of it will feed into what you're doing but ah, some of it will. If you get into the temper of the community building up to what happened.

L: Terry do you have the keys and I'll get this out

J: Now that I've found my way in, that was the hard part

L: And there's something I want to get in the car as well.

I guess we can leave these lights on, they're not bothering anybody.

J: thank you Bill, nice to have seen you

S: Thank you, nice chatting with you

J: i'll see you on the ?????? You want to read this? You got any time for that?

?: No, no not right now, I'm just sort of like that but I'll keep it in mind. Longnecker's the guys name.

J: Hollar if you want it.

L: Bill why don't you turn off the tape recorder because i think I left it on.

S: Oh, okay (END OF INTERVIEW)