

Oral History Interview conducted with Anne Braden  
Louisville, KY  
August 20 1999  
Interviewers: Dr. John Ernst and Dr. Yvonne Baldwin

Anne Braden: I'm going to have to slip away from people I might bother, to smoke a cigarette... I can't go too long without one. Smoke doesn't bother you?

John Ernst: You go into whatever direction you want to go into, I'm fine with it.

Braden: Does smoke bother you?

Ernst: No, I'll be fine.

Braden: Are you sure?

Ernst: I'm sure. Every once in a while...every once in a while, I'll smoke a cigar.

Braden: Well, hon, if I can smoke, I'll go get my ashtray.

Yvonne Baldwin: Yes, feel free.

Ernst: Start with a real broad one. How early on did you and your husband come out against the war and why did you come out against the war in Vietnam?

Braden: Well, I just always been against war period. I think we were always...you see, I worked against the Korean War. You know, I think the issues were pretty much the same. But I think the Vietnam War, by that time, um, we were working for the Southern Conference Educational Fund. Do you know what that is?

Ernst: What is it? SCEF? Yeah.

Braden: Which was the...doesn't exist anymore. It was destroyed eventually. But...

Ernst: Can I ask you to move up just a little bit? You have such a soft voice.

Braden: Oh, okay. Well, I'm trying to stay back there to keep the smoke out of your face.

Ernst: Well, I don't care about the smoke.

Braden: Okay. Um, it was an interracial south-wide organization that was interracial but its outreach was to whites. We were trying to get whites active in the civil rights movement, basically not just sitting around talking and communicating but actually being on the picket line and so forth...and we did to a certain extent. Not as much as obviously but I think it made a difference...

Carlton and I, when we started working for SCEF was 57', right after we got passed the sedition case here, which I guess you know something about, you know...and we lived in Louisville . We told not to leave Louisville but we were traveling all through the South and there was a wonderful, um, experience. I edited their publication, The Southern Patriot which very similarly, there is a file at UK, I am sure.

Um, but it was published by SCEF. It had been more of a house organ and I turned it into kinda a newspaper. It was eventually an all-page tabloid. It started out small but really, it was the movement paper we covered. It didn't cover the house organ for SCEF.

So, I was doing that... it still, I think, one of the best records of that period because it was written right then. It was immense. I wrote a lot of it but I want to say I had another woman doing more of the work than I was...but also people who were involved would write stories. So, it was very first-hand...and we were doing all that.

We were just deep into that you see and um, we were living here in Louisville. Eventually, we would later move the SCEF office here to Louisville when the manager directed it for years. New Orleans is where the head quarters were and in the late 50's, well, before we went to work for them. And, um, he retired in 66' and the board wanted us to be directors and we didn't want to leave Louisville because people had been trying to run us out of Louisville so long, we weren't about to leave. So, we moved the headquarters here and bought the house next door to move in case we would be evicted.

Eventually, because of the Kenton County Removement Center, people coming in, we got this building as an educational center and its been here, I do believe, depending on the history of the building. But we were very much deep into the civil rights stuff. You know, the South was on fire everywhere. I think that I hadn't been noticing Vietnam all that much. You get so, like I don't know, into the international things like I should now. I mean, when this thing happened recently, you know, all the stuff with Yugoslavia, I didn't know what was going on. I told somebody, you see we have some international organizations here, like FOR, and "somebody put out something analyzing this. I don't know what's happening!" ...and because I'm so providential and you get so burned out in what you are doing. It was almost like that then. I mean I knew, well oh, I remembered a little bit about what was happening in Vietnam in the early 50's when the French got ran out. I remembered that.

I didn't know that much about it. I remembered that first time I really got to thinking about more... me, I couldn't speak for Carl was ...when would that been...probably, along about 64'. I went down to Hollander. Do you know about Hollander is... Hollander center in Tennessee? Do you? I won't take too much...anyway; it was a center in Mount Eaglin, Tennessee, near Chattanooga, which was a gathering place for social justice movements. It had started in the thirties, modeled after the folk schools in Denmark. It was a labor school...people... labor organizing the center. During the civil rights period, it became the civil rights center. It was terribly under attack in Mount Eaglin and eventually the state went through also and closed it up. Finally, one night,

someone came out and burnt it to the ground. It was tragic. In the meantime...the... I don't know how the state got the property...they decided not to keep fighting about that but to rebuild Hollander, which they have done. It is quite the center down near Marquisville. I don't get there much anymore but they have all kinds of workshops and people coming in there to generate movements today...out in the mountains near Knoxville.

At this point, they were in between. They had an old house in Knoxville where they had meetings and it was pretty...you know, everyone was there in one building. You could go there and have workshops. They were having some kind of workshop and I can't think...I don't think SNCC sponsored it. You do know who SNCC was? There were a lot of SNCC people there. Do you know who SNCC was? I don't now who sponsored it but was a lot of SNCC people there. I remember Bob Moses. Do you know who Bob Moses, who he was at all? She knows more of civil rights history than you do, I take it. He was the spark plug of voting rights movement in Mississippi and wonderful guy. He's still around doing other things now.

I remember he was there because he became very involved in the Vietnam things afterward but there was a number of SNCC people there. I forgot what even the topic of the workshop was but there some young people there...and I do not remember their names, whom had been to Vietnam. They took an afternoon there to tell us all what was happening about Vietnam. It was all news to frankly everybody there. I don't even remember what were happening but the history of Vietnam and what this was out and the whole French period and what had happened since and all that. It certainly enlightened me. I didn't know and neither did these other people. A lot of these people began to get involved in the anti-war movement after that.

I think it was about 64' and within SCEF there was a...a big debate about whether we should come against the war originally. As there was in all the civil rights group because there was this whole thing, don't mix civil rights and peace, which is pretty ridiculous. We always thought it is was ridiculous. To me, it was the same issue long before this because when I got active in things, which is here in Louisville, basically after I moved here from Alabama. In the later 40s was right when the new military build-up was starting after World War II and we though we were heading toward World War III, and I think we were. I really think that was in the cards and I think enough people stuck the finger in the dike to stop it at that point. I still think that.

Then the Korean War thing broke out in 50' and we were involved in that. The thing was I got involved in civil rights kind of activities and the whole thing against segregation stuff in that period. At the same time, I got involved in anti-war stuff. I thought it was all the same thing. You know it was the same people and that was true everywhere in the South. It was real interesting because it took courage to come out against the foreign policy of your country and the people whom had that much courage were the people who had enough courage to buck segregation.

So, it was the same people and a lot that were African-American. In fact, I wrote an article about this. Do you know Southern Exposure magazine?

Ernst: I've seen it once ago, yes.

Braden: It is a beautiful magazine. I don't know if we have some around here. I don't know but they put out a special issue in the early 80's called "Waging Peace". It was when we were trying to build a new peace movement with Reagan doing all he was doing. I went into some this history in that article. They had me write sort-of an introduction article to it. I might sent that for you because that kind of background, to me, it was all the same thing. By that time, or actually during the 60's, the visible anti-war movement seemed so white. But you know, that was all. I'm sure you have heard all those discussions to why it was white and that kind of thing.

It wasn't traditionally in the South. It was the African-American that really, in the leadership movement against the Korean War and all that, build-up of war...the drive toward war in the late 40's. Interestingly enough, there was a group called CMVA, Committee for Nonviolent Action and that kind of direct action people. A woman named Barbara Denning. She since died but she was one of them. They would do these peace walks to traumatize this campaign against nuclear weapons. So, they decided to have a peace walk in the South and before they came South, I think I mentioned in this article, they met and they decided they should stay away from civil rights movement. They were controversial with civil rights movement and they would just hurt that effort. I guess they thought they'd hurt there own. You know, don't mix the issues. They whole thing just fell on its own weight. The minute they got South because the only people that welcomed them were the black churches everywhere. Took them in and all that kind of stuff. They got in jail in Georgia and the blacks helped them get out. So, it had always been the same thing as far as my perception of it. Peace and civil rights just went together.

My first political activity was the Progressive Party with Henry Wallace in 48'. That's when I got into things. That's the funny thing trying to get people organize mailing parties. We always have signs saying bring people to a mailing party...I got into the movement because I went to a mailing party of the Progressive Party and you heard people talking. That's when Henry Wallace was running on a platform of peace in the world and civil rights at home. He was touring the South speaking to, refusing, this war in 48, refusing to speak to segregated audiences and this was revolutionary. The sky didn't fall in. It made a difference. He ended up not getting a lot of votes because of Red-baiting attacks.

Carl and I had, pretty much, the same perspective because he came from different Southern history background. In 64', there wasn't that much visible movement. Yet, I don't think, against the Vietnam War. We had the view, of course, we ought to be against it. Then, I think the first of civil rights group that came out against this was SNCC. They did that because they were totally localized and they began to get a more international perspective through this period. I think in 1965, probably in 65', that they adopted a resolution against the Vietnam War. That's was before Martin Luther King came out against the war at the Riverside church speech, April 4, 1966. Well, he came out long before that. But that's what got him so attacked was that speech.

Before SCEF, although we always thought we were the cutting edge, I know we had a board meeting of SCEF. It was down in Georgia, Coninnica, which is, as you know, an Indian outlet in the fall of 65'. It came up and that's the first time it came up at a meeting. There was a huge discussion about what to do. What they finally decided to do, as the guy was then still director before he retired, he said later, of course he was very much against the war, said, "We could have passed a resolution against the war. We had the votes to do it but it would have split the organization down the middle." So, what we did was said that the role of SCEF would be, because we would always encourage discussion and breaking through all the cotton-cut curtain silence of the South.

Did you ever hear of Ella Baker? You probably have. She was this wonderful black woman who was sorta the mentor of SNCC and she had worked for the NAACP. Then, SCLC and SNCC. She was just a wise woman but she said one time, "the problem in the South is not the radical thought or conservative thought, it is the lack of thought! People don't think." It's like that guy who wrote that book about Mississippi, The Closed Society. It imposed segregation, the way they did...they shut the doors for everybody and stifled dissent.

I remember this woman from Texas, white woman, who got active in SNCC. Actually, Casey Hayden who married Tom Hayden, whom later married Jane Fonda, said one time when I interviewed her for The Patriot, said, "I was nineteen years and in college before I ever encountered a full-fledge idea."

So, we saw our role that we could stimulate discussion of the war. We set up this thing call "Operation Debate". That's what we called it and we raised little bit of money, we never have much money and never paid anything, including us but starvation wages. We got two people. They were both white, young white woman from Nashville. I'm trying to think where the guy was from. I think he was from Kentucky. Anyway, they were sorta staff and their job was to work for "Operation Debate" and go around and sorta of get together discussion groups and stimulate debate on the war. That was in the fall of 65' but the interesting thing is, you look back, by the spring, we met twice a year, the board did. By the time our spring meeting in 1966 came around, things had changed so. It had become so clear how bad it was that there wasn't any question about it. The SCEF board adopted a resolution totally against the war. Really did a lot to try to link the civil rights and peace forces.

Meantime, there was a lot of activity that a lot of people that don't realize I think because they see that white demonstration in Washington and all that. An awful lot and fairly organized opposition to the war in the black community. In fact, the first demonstration at, what do you call it, an induction center, a draft induction was in Atlanta, led by these black SNCC people, who all got arrested and framed. Some of these people went to prison. Some years, we fought about it but they went to prison. I was there and Bob Moses really became terribly involved. In fact, he was going through a lot of things himself. He had decided not to stay in Mississippi. He had become such a hero and he didn't want to be a hero and he was going to move to Alabama. He changed his name to

Bob Parris and walk the dirt roads of Alabama anonymously and organize in Alabama. Well, he never did that because he got very much involved in the war against Vietnam, well, movement against the war, and helped organized a thing. We all went to Washington in something called the Assembly of Underrepresented People. I forget, it was in the summer. I forget what summer that was. It must have been about 67', maybe. That's was where the white peace SNCCs and some of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party people from Alabama or from Mississippi came.

So, that was, you know, we were involved with all that stuff with SCEF and its activities against the war. Here, by that time, in 66', we had moved the office of SCEF here. The first things, I remember and you talk to George and Jean, right? George would remember all this better than me. But, the first things, I think George organized it. I didn't know Jean that much then. Jean didn't seem as visible as she did then as she sure is now. But we had met George briefly back during our sedition case in 1954. He had a church in the 50's. He had a church in Pee Wee Valley. He was and I guess you found this out, he was a real passivist. He was a passivist during World War II, which not many people were. I wasn't. So, he always had that commitment. He had this church out there and he was vary courageous. People were so scared of us, you know, we wouldn't find anybody with the courage to speak out in favor of us. But he did and he spoke very publicly. I can't remember how we got in touch with him. Somebody said go see him and we did.

So, we had met him and knew him a little bit but hadn't worked closely with him. I think, now he would remember this, the first time to impress upon me was he was, we were all told, we need to get down to downtown every Wednesday to have a vigil against the war on Guthrey Green. You know Louisville well enough...it's that one little block street between 4th and 3rd, south of Muhammad Ali, Guthrey Green. So, I don't know why they Guthrey Green but it was near 4th street. Of course, 4th street was more of an artery of everything then, more so than later. That's where the stories were and that kind of thing.

We would go down every Wednesday, try to go every Wednesday. I can't remember, my recollection is that George organized it. It may have bee...there were Quakers there. Quakers were involved in it. It was mostly white. Sometimes, some African-Americans around SCEF would go but it was mostly white. Quakers were passivist. I remember George and I can't remember what other groups were involved. We would go down and I think sometimes there would be 4 to 5 people. Sometimes, there might be 10. There weren't that many but we kept going. I don't remember the steps of it but you know, that must have been...I don't remember when the vigils started, but I don't think it was earlier than 66'. Might have been earlier but I don't think so. We already had the office here when we started going. Then, within three to four years, it just grew here like it did everywhere. I guess the biggest thing was a march of about 3000 people, which I have a picture here that you might want to see.

Ernst: Oh, yeah.

Braden: It's in here. That probably was in maybe 71', along in there. This little book will tell but I thought it was a few years. In the meantime, there had been a lot going on and people from here took part in, in which I think makes a difference, in the marches in Washington. We organized people to go on the buses. I don't I had, I'm trying to think if I had every went on the bus to Washington on one of those trips against the war. But we got other people to go and that's really, for many people, was the first thing they did, was to get on a bus and go to Washington. It changed many of their lives. They would come back and get active here, you know.

Then, of course, we had the whole GI movement here which became huge, really at Fort Knox. None of us here had really that much association with Fort Knox. I mean Fort Knox was just there with all its gold, you know. I can't even remember how we first got in touch with people at Fort Knox. I think there was a Catholic priest that here, I get Christmas cards from him because he lives up in Boston now. I can't think of his name. He later left the priesthood but he still quite active in Catholic stuff around Boston. He was still a priest and we somehow set up some kind an organization and he was sorta the leader of it. I remember, a bunch of them, I didn't go, were going out one day trying to talk to people at Fort Knox. So, there was beginning to be some communication between them but I don't remember how they developed into these anti-war people at Fort Knox began to come around SCEF. How we connected, I'm not sure but it became kinda their second home. We had a printing press in the basement and they came and printed their paper there. It was called FTA and which supposedly stood for "Fund, Travel and Adventure". What it really stood for was "Fuck the Army". They were very and they set up a coffeehouse which cause all kinds of consultation and melodrama. It was closed up and bunch of them got arrested. Susie will tell you about it. Her husband at the time, who they separated later and he's dead, represented them in that coffeehouse case, I think.

There was... Somebody said at that time that Nixon was not only going to be the first President who lost a war but he was going to be the first President that lost an army. They were leaving in droves, you know. So, we had a lot of people coming through the SCEF house who were leaving. Some of them got caught, some of them didn't. I didn't tell this story for many years because I was afraid they would do something to him but they had a tribute to George down at the University Unit. So, I'm going to tell this now George was so funny. I don't know why he didn't get put in jail. It's against the law to help people desert the army and George was doing it all over the place. George was treasurer of SCEF. He was halfway respectable, not very respectable. I don't know how he kept his job at he Presbyterian Seminary. He was always being outspoken. He 's the most militant passivist you ever saw. George would get so mad. He ain't going to kill you but he would kill you with his words and smart as the dickens. He could really, and I was in his classes sometimes at the Presbyterian Seminary and he really, you know, kinda opened up people's minds and stuff.

But he was more respectable than we were because we were, pretty much, still purged at that point in the community. So, we needed a respectable treasurer. He was our treasurer and we had another person who fell in that category before him. This was after Carl and I left being directors of SCEF because we had gone back to doing other things. There

was a young woman who was director. So, she went out to get him to sign checks. She was so funny because she said, "Lord, I got to get George off the phone." She called him to see about meeting him usually at the bank of Louisville down on Broadway. Meeting him down to sign some checks. He said, "Well, alright." You know how George talks, "I can meet you down there," he said. "Now, first I got to go to the Greyhound station and meet this guy because he's coming from Fort Knox and I have to get him on the bus so he can get to Cincinnati and get to Canada." We knew our phone were tapped. We were careful about what we said on them. She said, "Okay George, I'll see you in a few minutes." He was doing that and it was like an underground railroad, you know.

Then some of them would come in. I remember this one guy. I remember his name Steve Gilbert and he had been around a lot with the paper and he was over there at the house next door. Well, I looked out and there were some strange cars out front. I said, "Steven I think somebody's looking for you." He was just as calm as he said, "Oh, shit.", and he went out the backdoor. He went somewhere through people's yard and got away. They didn't get him. He finally, either surrendered or they caught him. I forget which but not until a long time afterwards. He wasn't even upset. He just said, "oh, shit". He finally did go to prison for a while I think, but that was going on.

Ernst: He was a soldier from Fort Knox?

Braden: That's what they all were. Not everybody deserted but they put out this paper and had the coffeehouse, the ones that were there. Of course, a lot of them did go and went to Canada. We had a whole movement, somewhat afterward, trying to get amnesty and that kind of stuff. I'm trying to think of some of the other things going on here. There was the Fort Knox people. I don't know...it still wasn't...one main thing...you see, the other thing that was happening in that period was the civil rights movement or guess the African American movement was so under attack. People don't realize, a lot of the historians don't realize, the oppression of the late 60's was to men, worse than the 50's. I live through the 50's. You don't get it in a lot of the histories because so many are written by white people and they don't realize because it was really the blacks who were...us, white radicals were doing pretty well. Most of us were out of jail and everything but they were just framing African American organizers all over the South. It happened here. We had cases of same sorta of thing but it was more serious in other places. So, we were so involved in that. This is just one of the things we were doing. I'll probably might remember but these are some of the things I remember of the movement here.

Now, Susie, when Susie...I didn't know Susie well at all until, I guess, the late 60's, Susie had grown up here and had lived in California. She and Eddie, her husband, came back here in the late 50's or very early 60's. I think late 50's, I don't know. But she got active in the ACLU which I didn't have much to do with because they were scared to death of us. The ACLU here had been formed as an outreach of our sedition case but they didn't want us to come around. Carl and I used to go the annual dinner every year just to worry them.



Then, Susie became director of it. I don't think she was paid, I think she was volunteer, in the late 60's, and really changed the ACLU a lot. She wanted to turn it into an activist organization and link up with the activist community. She got in touch with me and with me. I remember she called me one day, wanted me to come to a committee, be on a committee or come to a committee meeting or something. I almost dropped the phone because, the ACLU before that, didn't touch us with a 10 foot pole. So, I thought that was kind of interesting. I thought I'd go. So, I went. The next day, I'll never forget, Susie called me and told me what a wonderful contribution I made to the meeting. She hoped I'd come back. It was so important to have me there and I'd made this great contribution. It was at least two years later before I found out that after every meeting, Susie called everybody and told them that. I told young organizers that's how you organize. She was the best organizer around at that point. She really was.

So, we got to know her and she was sorta linking the... Susie, always been sorta a bridge-builder. She comes from very middle class or maybe, upper middle class Jewish community. A very entrenched community had provided a link between the Liberals, what you would call them, not just Jewish but from that world, with the more activist world and black and white. She doesn't do as much as that anymore. It's a little different now but she did then. She was a real bridge then.

So, she was trying, she'll tell you more and I don't even remember the details but I think she was the sparkplug of it. She brought Dr. Spock here and it was one of the big meetings. She got a lot of people that who hadn't been involved in things before. I think here, like everywhere, the anti-war movement during the Vietnam brought into activity a lot of people who hadn't been active in anything. Not all of them but a lot of them, that is the starting point and they began to do these things and some of them stayed in social justice movements. Now, to me or the movements, I've been in, the starting point was race which that was the "open-sesame". You saw that first and then you saw other things but for some people, I think that was the starting point.

Then, of course, I forget... we had our own draft-resistance cases in SCEF, too. We had two people that worked for SCEF that was refusing the draft. One of them was white and one of them was black. The black guy was from New Orleans, Walter Collings. He did live for a while later after SCEF, sorta, later on. But he was in New Orleans but he just refused the draft. He was a very militant guy down there and he went to prison. We built a whole campaign around him and his mother worked on it a lot. She and Carl made a tour of the country because black war resisters were being kinda ignored. People thought this was a white thing. It wasn't, there were a number of them and trying to focus on that. African-Americans who were active in civil rights and on the front lines who had been targeted for the draft, probably as reprisal. Then, the white draft resisters that was connected with SCEF was Joel Mulloy, who had grown up here in Louisville in a white, stable Catholic family in the West end, which a lot of people could relate to. Like a lot of people, I think, his family had a real hard time with this because this was something that didn't happen. He was convicted and a guy from Lexington that maybe you talked to, Don Perritt, if he still over there. Well, Don and Joel were indicted at the same time. Don eventually went to prison, I'm sure he's told you. Joel, we fought his case. Bob Setter,

who was at law school at UK and began taking a lot of cases for us, took it to the Supreme Court and we won. I forget what technicality we won on but he never went to prison though he went to jail for a while. So, we were building a whole kind of movement around him. Then, he had been...it was interesting...where he's connected with SCEF was...he was working down in Appalachia and he had gone down...

[end of Tape 1, Side 1]

[Tape 1, Side 2]

Braden: You know a little bit about the Appalachian volunteers. It was kinda started, a part of the poverty program I think. They had some federal money but it was young, idealistic young people. They went down. They painted old schoolhouses. That was their stereotype but they did other things too. It was mainly kinda a service operation. But that was also when there was huge battles going on against strip mining in the mountains. Really, terrible unemployment which of course, there still is because the mines were closing then, you know. There were some real issues. You know, kinda everyone know what the perennial issues the mountains are, poverty and all the wealth being taken out of the mountains and all that.

So, a lot of those people who went down there, not all of them, but some of them, just to kinda be a service operation, got radicalized. Joel was one of them, I think and they began working with the people who were sitting in front of bulldozers trying to stop the land from being strip-mined. That was when we all got indicted for sedition again in Pike County. They were in Pike County, Joel Mulloy and his wife Karen, who came the same way. She had come from New York, upstate New York, and not New York City. Very talented young woman and she said one time, "the mountains made me radical." They joined Alan and Margaret McSurely, who were and Margaret had been with SNCC. SCEF had set up what we called the Southern Mountain project which the purpose, what we always, SCEF back through the years, as I said, were trying to get white people involved in the movement but we knew we weren't really reaching masses of people. We were reaching some of the people who were passed for the intelligent of the South. You know, the college professors, white ministers and staff, not working class people because you know, you look back and why not?

Maybe we could have done more but the thing was they were so, the headquarters of the Ku Klux Klan in Birmingham were in the Steel Workers Hall. They had the union movement sewed up at that time. You know, Walter Ruther would come down from Detroit and marched but not the Southern unionists. That began to change because what happened was a lot of those white workers around the South saw the blacks were accomplishing something. So, it came in the late 60s and earlier 70s, I remember these white steelworkers from South Carolina called up the SCLC in Atlanta and asked them to come down for them and they did. So, they were beginning to get some coalition. Then, what we saw, when the civil rights movement or the black movement turned towards economic justice, cause the very early 60's, the fight was really about symbols. You know, the lunch counters, which no one really cared that much about the hamburger, but it was the whole symbol. And the right to vote, which was more than a symbol. Even that, had a certain...but by 64' or even 63', I remember the SNCC conference in 63', they were really talking about the battle for public accommodations had basically been won. Even though the civil rights law wasn't passed till 64', like it was won here, it was won in the streets. I mean, everything here opened up two years before they got around to passing an ordinance. That happened everywhere. The right to vote, we really didn't get that vote till 65'. So, people were beginning to talk more about economic justice and you began to hear people in Texas saying the same thing to people in North Carolina were

saying in effect, something's happening. They are going, "what good is it if I can sit at the lunch counter if I don't have money to buy the hamburger."

The whole question of jobs, I remember Byrd Runstein speaking at that SNCC conference that this was the real battle. He said, "you know when we asked for a seat on the bus with a certain amount of nonviolent direct action. Its called social dislocation. We could get it because there were seats on the bus. When we asked for jobs, the jobs aren't there and that's different." So, we figured with that, I remembered people in SCEF talked about it, with that there were openings to create some coalition with working class white people who had a lot of same problems. So, we very conversely tried to do something about it. We weren't hugely successful at that time. But I still think it was an important vision and it still is. I mean that's still like I work now. That's what I don here in Louisville, the regional organization, the descendant from SCEF really, called SOC, Southern Organization Committee for Economic and Social Justice. SOC has headquarters for a long time in Biringmham, now they are in Atlanta. We are constantly trying to bring people together and it's harder ever today. There are openings and one of the avenues that SOC works on now is the pollution that is killing everybody, which is killing white and black and should be a common issue but still a lot to overcome. We do it in some places. That's what we were trying to do back in the 60s. We were a little ahead of our time because in the first place, we set up the Southern Mountain Project. That was the idea, trying to link movements of people there with the African-American movement in the deep South. Of course, there were blacks in Appalachia too, but that kinda of thing...then, we set up a grass roots organization work in the deep South in Mississippi and Alabama that brought black and white woodcutters together that were organizing. We and that former Klansman that began to come around. Mountains were hard. In the first place, we were outsiders and mountain people are rightly suspicious of outsiders. With that, also the Red-baiting because we were suppose to be Communists. That's when they indicted for sedition. Well, what happened was Joel Mulloy and them were down there. Instead of painting old schoolhouses, they were working with these people that were trying to stop strip-mining which upset the prosecutor in Pike County, Radcliff. He was trying to run for Governor that year so he needed a good issue but he was a coal operator. That's when they indicted them for sedition. Carl and I were just thrown in as window-dressing on that go-around because we were notorious by then. I never been in Pike County in my life until I went down there to go to jail that day. Then we won that case in three weeks. I said, "That shows you the difference between what had happened." Because in the 1950s, it took us three years to win that sedition case. In 1967, it took three weeks because we convened federal court in Lexington and go the law declared unconstitutional. What had happened...I think that's important about the war too because I know I'm getting off what you wanted to talk about. I guess I had trouble...

I'm so convinced that everything that happened in terms of the uprising of the 60s. I think the 60s were, I guess there is a lot of disagreement about that. We got people who thing what's wrong with the country is the moral breakdown during the 60s and all that kind of stuff. The 60 were a shining period in the history of this country, in my opinion. And the most important decade in the history of the country except for the 1860 because

it was dealing with the same issue. This was the second reconstruction, you know. I think...you see, the 50s were never completely silent because that was of the great privilege we have because we had to get out and fight back and travel the country to get support. Everybody in Kentucky was scared to talk to us. So, we met what I call the resistance movement in the 50s. People who never shut up and who were always resisting the oppression and stuff of the 50s, the Red Scare, and all that kind of stuff. A lot of people were shut up and you have...I think we are still living with the fruits of that because what happens is...what happened in the 50's with the whole fear of Communism and all that kind of stuff is that made...if you have any idea that was critical of the society, you were subversive. People who had maybe done something but couldn't stand being labeled a traitor. So, social problems festered basically. Some of them are plaguing us today.

Like anybody with any sense could have seen after World War II and did see that, our cities would become unlivable unless something was done then. The people who were trying to do it and I can cite a chapter and verge of, like the people in Los Angeles who had a plan to rid Los Angeles of slums within ten years, were all charged with being Communists. The money went back to Washington. They never built the housing and that kind of thing. That was everywhere. So, that was a very sad period.

Then what happened was what broke the pall of the 50's was the civil rights movement. The beginning of the end of the 50's was when Rosa Parks sat down on the bus, Montgomery, December 1 1955. All of sudden, people realized that they could speak out about their society. Not just on this issue but everything. That's where the student movement of the 60's came from. That was so clear to me and a lot of people are never convinced of that. Like Berkley, nobody had ever heard of Berkley in the sense we thought of Berkley later as the "hot bed of student radicalism". Until, I guess, it was the 1960's when a whole bunch of them went and demonstrated against the House of un-American Activities and got washed down the streets, steps of city hall out there. A lot of people got radicalized that day. I was out there just a few months after that on a fundraising trip for SCEF and talked to some of those students and they said they looked at what was happening. What these Southern student movements and they figured they better do something too.

So, it spread and see, I think that because of the war. To me, I think the issue in the Vietnam War and the Korean War was practically identical. During the Korean War, we had a protest movement. I was a part of it. One of the early things I did. We went out and circulated peace petitions and we got a few eggs thrown at us and that kind of thing. We found a lot of support too but it was never a mass movement, you know. You had a mass movement against the Vietnam War and the only thing different and what happened in between was the civil rights movement, basically and the upsurge of the new women's movement. We had new labor organizing going on. Eventually, the disability movement, the disabled people, and the gay and lesbian too. It was the idea of freedom is everywhere. This just spread through the whole society.

So, I'm not quite sure why I got off on the at this point except but I think it is important about the Vietnam movement against the war. It is true that a lot of the whites, who came into the Vietnam War, it was the first they did. Some of them didn't know that but a lot of them had come out of the civil rights movement basically.

Ernst: Do you think, this is probably a loaded question, but it's one I have been pondering, do you think that Johnson's 'Great Society' was headed in the right direction and Vietnam destroyed a possible moment for this country?

Braden: I think the thing was when I said it was such an important decade, it was a great time to be alive in a lot of ways. Are you old enough to remember the 60's? Everybody kinda caught, I mean, it wasn't everybody, but people who weren't involved in the movement directly with civil rights or anti-war or anything else. There was a spirit in the country of dealing with problems and people were doing it. We never though it was enough, people who were active but a lot of humane legislation was passed. Medicare, Medicaid, all those things that came in then. The whole concept, don't get me started on this. One of the things that bothers me most is this whole mythology that has been promoted and it really stated in the early 60's and late 70's is what black people gain, took something away from the white people. That's the whole basis in a lot of the new racism and that kinda of thing and the revival of the Ku Klux Klan and the more respectable forms of racism. Where that's not so. Everything the blacks gained, whites benefited from. We never thought it was enough. Like jobs, I betta you, practically everybody that goes to your school gets a Pell grant. There were never any grants like that until blacks demanded education. So, government set up these things and whites benefited too. A lot of white working class people got to go to school but never would have before and I tell them this when I talk to them. I say, "How many of you have a Pell grant?" That's where they come from and there were jobs programs set up CEDA, which people trashed CEDA. I know a lot of young whites who, I forgot what it stood for but its been criticized a lot, who got a start getting a job as a CEDA job first.

So, it was humane, humane legislation and did you ever hear of C.T. Vivian? He's still around. He's still active. He is in Atlanta. He was one of Martin King's top aides. He was in all the campaigns in the South. We worked together through the years. He and I have to around the exact same age. He helped to organize the anti-Klan network or did organize. That was some of the Democratic revival in Atlanta but I was doing a long interview, oral history interview with him for a book Highlander was doing. Of course, they never...anyway, he's very talkative like me and went on and on. A very long interview but something he said there stuck with me. He said, "You know, " and he is a minister. He's a very serious, scholarly theologian. So, his social activism is kinda based in his theology. Not all of which I might agree with but I'm not sure. Some apparently do. But he said, "You know, what really happened in the 60's. It's really true what it says in the Bible, that you got to, a person has to repent of their sins before they can be saved." He said, "That's true of an individual but that's true of a society." And he said, "What really happened in this country in the 60's was that this country took the first step to admitting that it had been wrong on race and creativity burst out all over the place." And it really did. People had something to do with their lives. Like doctors formed the

Medical Committee for Human Rights and a bunch of them went to Mississippi. Some of them stayed in New York and other places and did good things. Lawyers formed committees to help. You know there was something creative to do. So, it was real, not only in terms of the whole racial changes, which we just, you know, unfinished...that economic justices are the unfinished part of the civil rights evolution. Till this day because the movement got crushed, in my opinion, at a very critical point but it was a beginning. On that issue but also on everything else too. It was a humane sorta agenda that was being promoted.

I think Johnson's 'Great Society', he was responding to that. Whatever he was, I never knew him personally. I knew people who knew him actually, when he was a Congressman and that kind of stuff. I'm sure he had some sincere feelings on this like others. I mean he was white Southerner that just like me that if you had to deal with this. That I think, Southerners of my generation, of course, he was a generation before me, had to go through all this is what the country still needs to go through. That's why I think our experience, I just put this in the epilogue of my book that's being republished, because we had to turn ourselves inside out really. Turn our values upside down. It's a very painful process but it's not destructive. I think that's what the country never quite done. It's picked around the edges of the problem. So, I think he had some sincere feelings about this but basically, he responded to the pressure and so did Kennedy.

Kennedy wasn't that good. When he was a Senator, he wasn't much good at all on this issue but he responded to the movement. That's where change comes from, in my opinion. It never comes from the top down. Its people organizing underneath and when you get a response. So, he developed those plans and our people, like me, who were active, thought they were pretty picky issues. That it wasn't enough. Looking back, it's pretty good because what we have been chipping away at it. I think a lot of the whole things happened later, when I think that movement was crippled. Thus, you begin to have what I call "the attack on white people's minds", telling them this movement took something away from them. Then you get this whole concept of reverse discrimination which I think is the most dangerous idea ever let loose on the country. You had this retreat in the 70's. A lot of people blame Reagan for the backward move on civil rights but I think it worked the other way. I think you begin to have a national retreat from this issue and a movement that really created the atmosphere that put Reagan into office. Sorta wrote into law some of the backward movement but it already began to happen. Not only in terms of just civil rights, but a withdrawal of people from social commitments generally. It was sorta, "I'll take care of my own self and my own backyard and get ahead for myself and that's it." Which it is still pretty prevalent still. It was just like a brief shining time when I think and I don't romanticize the 60's. I know its warts too, but it was very real in terms of the kind of thing that could happen in this country, I think. Real spirit of community that existed.

Baldwin: Earlier you said that when your opposition to the war, you saw this as kinda peace. That war was a part of civil rights. Basically, the history that has been written about that comes at King's opposition to the war. Most of the black leader's opposition to

the war grew out of the fact that more, a disproportionate number of blacks were not only serving the war but were dying in the war.

Braden: Which was true.

Baldwin: Yeah, which was true. What was the heart of your ideological opposition to the war and how did it tie into your civil rights vision?

Braden: Well, like I said, it's the same thing. I think that's a very narrow interpretation of what their motivation was too. It was true that there was disproportionate dying but so were the poor whites by the way. Appalachia, oh, I meant to tell you about Joel, let me rest a minute because I was telling you about Joel Mulloy and Appalachia. He had formed some rhetoric for being an outsider. I don't blame people in the mountains for not wanting people in because being preyed upon. But he had formed a lot good, close relationships with people down there and there was a woman you may have heard of her. I don't know whether she's died or not. If she did, it was real recently. Edith Easternly. She was quite a community leader in Pike County and she loved Joel and he loved her.

When he resisted the draft, she was personally hurt. She said, "Joel, how could you do this to us" because she knew they were...it was going to hurt them on getting money from, not for themselves but things they were doing. He left the mountains to come up here. Well, he had to go to jail for a while and he lived up here for a while. It was interesting because when he went back down there a few months later, she said, "You know Joel." She said, "You were right on this and we were wrong. You shook us up and that's what we needed was to be shaken up." I think that was real interesting because there had been a whole controversy. Your friend that studied the Appalachian volunteers know.

Ernst: Now, how close is the connection with Appalachian volunteers and SCEF?

Braden: Well, they were scared to death of us. Some of them, now, Joel was an Appalachian volunteer.

Ernst: Right.

Braden: He was still an Appalachian volunteer. He joined. I think they fired him or something because he resisted the draft, basically.

Ernst: Right.

**Braden:** Then he joined the SCEF staff but he was already working for Alan McSurely who he went down there as a part of SCEF. So, there were people in the Appalachian Volunteers who were much closer to SCEF and its radical politics. "Radical" in the sense that we wanted some real change. You know, that's what radical means. The Appalachian Volunteers who identified with us. I think the leadership of the Appalachian Volunteers, I don't remember who it was, but was very frightened of SCEF. Not that we



were doing things that dangerous, well, we were supporting the strip-mining fight but we had a radical label. We were and even though this was the 60's, the "Red" label still made a difference. Radically, I was talking about when they put in jail that they had a report that the Russians were getting ready to move into Pike County with tanks. Really, you know, people took it seriously. I mean, people were just crazy.

So, the people that I think who were handling the money for the Appalachian Volunteers, which was federal money, were very upset and didn't want to associate with SCEF. We would be a kiss of death in terms of them getting their money. Also, when Joel comes out and is an Appalachian Volunteer and he's not going to fight for his country in Vietnam and all that kind of stuff. So, they had a big controversy about it and I don't remember the details but it's an interesting story and he may have looked into it.

There is a guy named Tom Bethel. Did you ever hear of him? Well, ask your friend whose study Appalachian volunteers if he's been in touch with Tom Bethel. I think Tom is still around, not in Kentucky. He's in Washington last I heard. He left soon after that. He wasn't native to the area. A lot of them wasn't.

**Ernst:** Let me ask you this.

**Braden:** He wrote this fable about the Bavarian volunteers. Did you ever see that?

**Ernst:** No.

**Braden:** Well, he is a good writer and it circulated all around. I hope somebody still got a copy of it. It may be in our file in Wisconsin. I don't know but it tells about these Bavarian volunteers in Germany in the 1930's. How they go and to help people in the mountains in Bavaria. I can't remember all the details but there is controversy arises because these things soon happen in Berlin to the Jews especially. Really can't get involved with that because that would hurt the work they were doing there in the mountains in helping the people. So, they just have to stay remote from that. He goes one thing after another, obvious. Then it ends up with World War II a coming and nobody ever hears of the Bavarian volunteers again. So, Tom Bethel writes this because that was what they were arguing. You see, we got to do the work here; we can't be bothered by those other things because it will hurt this important work we are doing right here in Appalachia. All the while, the world is going to hell. It's a real clever piece of writing. You see, if the guy who's writing about it has a copy of it.

**Ernst:** I'll ask. My friend indicated that some of the letters he read from the Appalachian Volunteers, that a number of them went in, to get the CO Status and that kept them out of the war. I didn't know if you had any insight on that or not.

**Braden:** I don't know. They may have. I don't think Joel did. I'm trying to think, he didn't have...he had applied for CO status and didn't get it. His draft board was here in the West End. He had the same draft board that Muhammad Ali did which bragged that they never had a CO and they never expected to have one. So, he, as I recalled, decided

just not to register or he refused to induction is what he did. I think, there seems to me, there was an element in his case. Some of these details, they're important but they get mixed with so many cases and so many battles. I'm pretty sure this is right. It was right after the sedition thing and after he was so identified with that anti-strip mining struggle that he gets his induction notice. You know, just like some of the blacks did too when they have been real active and he just refused to go. It maybe what you said, it maybe true. I don't know.

**Ernst:** Did you ever have any contact with Ali?

**Braden:** Muhammad Ali? I never really knew him. He went to the same school my kids went to when he was ahead of them. He was a little bit older. So, I really didn't know him. Most of the people I know around him knew him at some point but I never did. I guess I met him at something but not really.

Before I forget it, the piece that Clever was suppose to give you, well you see, you had this...well, I never really finished you question of what brought these issues together for me. Well, my initial, when I began to get active in things when I moved here from Alabama in the late 40's to work on the paper here. Running away from the South really. I had become so oppressed by the situation. I didn't know what to do about it and all kinds of things. I've written a whole book about it so I won't go into that. I came up here and met people here that were doing something. I began to get involved so.

For me, coming to terms was the fact that this society was based on oppressing black people. I may have not used that terminology at that time. I had grown up pretty privilege and realizing that when you benefit because other people suffer. That it is very corrupting that's all. That like I said was kinda of the open-sesame for me. I think for most white Southerners who ever got involved in anything then and may years later, certainly in the 60's. That once you begin to see that's wrong the rest of, you begin to question the whole society. I think that's one thing that happened in the 60's to a lot of people. The fact that the black movement was raising such basic questions. Not really deliberately, just asking for their rights and it just raised questions. It just opened everything up to question because society is built on racism. This economy was built on slavery and slave trade. It's so woven-in. It's not somewhat on a body of politics. So, once you question that, everything is opened up to question. It did for me. I think it's done it for a lot of people. That the society is not organized in such a way as to meet the needs of people. To few people live off the suffering of too many people. That's generally, that goes beyond race. But it was race that opened up that which also leads you to the thing, or least it did for me in the late 40's, I still think we were right and I still think it's still going on. It's just different now. The white people running this country also think they are suppose to run this world. That's caused all kinds of problems. I just figured that out all at once, because I said, the thing we sorta saw during the war too, the Vietnam War, that it is very hard to come to terms with the fact. It is like I said you sorta have to turn your values upside-down. But to come to terms with the fact that your own government is wrong and a lot of people went through that during the war. You project

your own ego when somebody tells, and then they are attacking you. So, you identify with it and to recognize its wrong is a painful sorta thing.

Well, I went through that but I had to come to terms with the fact that the people I'd grown up, the people I'd loved, the people, my family, my friends, the people running Alabama were just plain wrong. But once I figured out those people in Alabama were wrong, it wasn't any jump at all to realize the people in Washington were wrong. It just all went together, you know.

Well, I thought about it a lot during the Vietnam War because I saw people like Joel Mulloy's parents. It was harder as you got older. I was pretty young when I went through this but a lot of people whose sons, their sons were refusing to go fight for their country. It was very painful. To come to terms with that and begin to see why there's something wrong with your government was doing wrong in Vietnam; it was hard for some of the young people too. Not just the fact they might go to jail but just that thing of coming to terms that my government is wrong. It was interesting to me because at that time in the mid-60's, there was a significant number of white people, young white people who were active in the South in the war. Really, not enough. I never encountered one white Southerner who was active in the civil rights movement who had any problem with that at all. Of dealing with the fact that they were wrong in Washington because we had been through it all before in terms of our own home government. That you don't have to do it once, you know.

So, I think that's why it was just all linked together in my mind. Our foreign policy of a few people trying to dominate the lives of other people which is exactly what I saw in Anniston, Alabama where I grew up, only on a smaller scale. Oh, there's a C.T. Vivan I quoted a while ago; he was speaking here at the Presbyterian seminary. I think George brought him but he was quoting this thing. I don't know whether if he thought of it or he got it from somebody else. You know the hymn or it's a Christmas card I guess, "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" or something, "let nothing you dismay" or something like that. "That cannot vote in Al-a-bam because they are not white. They cannot vote in Vietnam because they won't vote right. Oh, tidings of something joy. Oh, tidings of peace and joy." The two things go together, the control of many people by a few people. It's just wrong wherever it is and there are all kinds that goes together.

**Ernst:** We are about to run out of tape.

[End of Side B, Tape 1.]

[Tape 2: Side 1]

**Braden:** As the anti-war movement here began to grow, in an organized sort of way, and I even forget what the organizations were called but there were organizations in the white community. There was a separation, just like there is a separation now in Louisville, so divided. All communities are, most of them cities, racially. The East is out where you grew up. The West now at that time, we were still trying to keep the West End

integrated. Then, of course, a number of white people still live here besides me. I'm not the only one. But then we made a real effort but there were too many odds against us. There were only one place whites could live at that time. We had an organization that worked with that called the West End Community Council. Well, then you had the blacks saying they are not going to move and that kind of stuff. Didn't work anywhere in the country I think because the pressure and we knew everytime we persuaded a white family to stay, there was something for blacks they needed. There were a lot of contradictions.

Louisville is terribly divided and the people in the East End. Now, you think the West End is entirely black and some of them scared to come down to this place is a bridge-builder but further east you go into Louisville, the whiter it gets and the richer it gets. Beyond St. Matthews, the richer than there.

**Ernst:** I was not a rich child.

**Braden:** You know the further east you go and that division exists in social justice movements too. Here like everywhere, you have certain number of white peace organizations and black civil rights group. Then, in the late 60's, you got kinda a lot of new organizations developed in the black community. There was a period, people got disillusioned. A lot of young blacks that had been through a lot of the struggles, other places more than here, where they were even more bigger movements with bigger black populations, hadn't changed their lives that much. So, people, we had a chapter of the Panthers here and there was some BULK, Black Unity Leaders of Kentucky, and whole bunch of charges against people. We always called them uprisings but very small to what was happening in other places. At 28<sup>th</sup> and Greenwood, pretty bad because some of the people got killed. There was a week of that.

In the wake of that, you had people charged with, six people called the "Black Six", charged with conspiring to blow up the oil refineries down here, which was crazy. No one is going to blow the oil refineries. They are gone now. They finally took them down. They were monstrous and struggled to get them down because it ruined the West End. A lot of people, it was huge support for the Black 6 because they all been active in the community. People in the black community saw this as they were being made scapegoats for problems that the white power struggle didn't want to face. That's the general feeling. So, it was a real movement around them and a lot of us who were white were a part of that. SCEF was organizing people to be a part so it wasn't all black. I guess it started in 68', about two months after Martin King was killed. Went on for about three years and when they finally acquitted, the judge dismissed it for a lack of evidence. Never had been any evidence.

In the meantime, there had been and they had pretty good lawyers, there had been a lot of activity. I think I can find in here, this little book, what it year it was of one of those marches. I was going to show you a picture. It may have been 69', a year after Martin was killed, on Martin Luther King's birthday. The death day April 4, the various groups on the West End planned a march to support the Black 6. Then a lot, some of the white

peace people planned a march because King was seen by them as an anti-war person, which he was, to observe King's life on his anniversary of his assassination. They were, I think, the white march was entirely white. The black one, they started here in the West End. See where 32<sup>nd</sup> street goes on down to 46<sup>th</sup>. After that, you get to the river and downtown is 4<sup>th</sup> street. So, that's how far it is. They started way down at the West End and marched. You know, there were several hundred people marched and picked up people along the way.

Meantime, I'm not quite sure where the white peace march had assembled but they were coming down Broadway the other way. It was pure coincidence, nobody had, and I guess, enough sense on either side to call up and make some contacts. I think we all going to be demonstrating on the same day, maybe we had better talk. Nobody had done that. By pure coincidence, those two marches got to fourth and Broadway at the same time. Neither one of them had a permit. By that time, you had to have a permit to march in the streets, you used to. If you had to by them, but none of them had permit. They were supposed to be on the sidewalk but nobody could keep those people on the sidewalk. So, they overflowed and took over 4<sup>th</sup> street. When they first started, the blacks were shouting, "Freedom, Freedom!" as they were marching and the whites were shouting, "Peace, Peace!" They got on down 4<sup>th</sup> street and went on from there to the courthouse which was at Jefferson street, several blocks, you know, on over to 6<sup>th</sup> street. By that time, they got about to what was now Muhammad Ali, it was then Walnut, they were all shouting, "Freedom, Peace. Freedom, Peace." It was like they came together. It didn't last but you saw that power if you'd come together. They went down there and raised a black flag on Thomas Jefferson statue, climbed up his statue. It was just that power of coming together that was so dramatic and you could because a lot of us would say if these movements would come together what we could do. Well, there you did it. You took over 4<sup>th</sup> street, nobody could have stopped them, and nobody tried.

I remember George Edwards that day, he was with peace march and I was coming from the West End. George and I had a lot of arguments because George was definitely against the black power movement because that separation. George gets on a high horse; you can't get him off of it. We supported the black power movement because it was a real thrust forward for the country. It was a declaration of independence and that kind of thing. It was very important in terms of and raised important issues. So, he and I had a lot of arguments about that and so, here these white peace who never be able to march anyplace but the sidewalk were taking over the streets. I found myself walking along George and I said, "George, what do you think about that black power now." He laughed.

It was interesting because by that time, there was so much attack on the black community and the black activists, maybe more than the community. It wasn't like the early 60's when people got in jail and stuff but there was a certain level of support too. People were getting framed and sent to jail. The civil rights movement or the black movement wasn't that respectable anymore where as the peace movement had become somewhat accepted by then. It had gotten a lunatic fringe maybe in the beginning but it was speaking by that time for the majority of the people in the country. They may have not all come out but it was. It was much more respected.

So, you had, I remember black leaders here that would talk about if the peace people were having something, if they could get a speaker there, people might listen. Where as, six years before it would have been the other way. That the peace people needed some legitimacy. That sorta what had happened. By that time, a lot of whites were running for cover that had supported it. It was seen as more dangerous because of the attacks on it.

**Baldwin:** A lot of, this isn't a Vietnam question but I love to teach the civil rights part, a lot of women who were involved in the civil rights movement, Casey Hayden, Kathleen Karlmicheal, others have talked about the fact that they often felt they were second-class citizens in the civil rights movement. As a woman, did you ever feel any of those feelings?

**Braden:** Not really. I know I've heard a lot of that discussion and I disagree with that. I think there's been a lot of questions...the new woman's movement definitely grew out of the civil rights movement. People who formed the, I say new one because there had been one back in the Twenties, white woman's movement. I think that's one thing we always forget to experience because white women and black women are so different in this society. My generation, not my generation, my age group I think when I was in college exactly during World War II and my age group, closed down soon after that, caught the spillover of that earlier movement. I think that's what shaped my ideas because I was in a woman's college and stuff. Everybody, we all opposed segregation. We thought we were the New South. We weren't doing anything like the students' twenty years later but we also rejected the traditional role of women. None of us planned to get married or anything like that. We wanted careers and we were catching that spillover which changed pretty soon after that because you had the whole "Back to the Kitchen" movement of the 50's which was part of the reactionary period. It took me a longtime to realize the difference when I began to work with some the young.

These white woman, when they came into civil rights stuff in the 60's, they were around here all the time and a lot of them lived in my house and stuff. We ran a Freedom House with people moving from North to South. They'd come and stay. Some might stay a week, some stay a year. One woman came and said that was a fit place to have her baby. So, she stayed had her baby there.

When they begin to organize these women groups, they were conciseness-raising groups. They were started in New York and I knew those women who organized those first conscience raising groups had been from Mississippi. That's where they came from. So, there was always the question of whether did they do this because they had to go to organize for their liberation. Or, did the civil rights movement open the vista of how to organize. I think it was the latter because some of them would disagree with me, although more recently we've sorta converged in our thinking. I think I knew some of those women who would've live out their lives in quite desperation somewhere and not know anything until they went to Mississippi and all this stuff opened up. They naturally moved onto their own liberation.

I know Casey Hayden's paper and stuff and SDS and Mary King, I think and all that started a lot of controversy. I think that there certainly was sexism in the movement and still is everywhere. There wasn't anymore than there was in society generally and probably less because it was very prevalent. I couldn't understand what they were talking about at first because and I realized that our experience has been so different. I had that when I was exposed to ideas in college of women who had done things. These kids had grown up in the 50's. Just in a totally different environment. Of course, my childhood was like that and when they went to Mississippi or no, it was Alabama, Georgia, or any of those places, but it was like a new world. The relationships brought a lot of baggage with them and all though I think they were captives of the traditional role of women when they didn't have to be. When they thought they weren't because the way they had grown up. Being their identity depending on a man and stuff like that.

They had a lot of baggage and so did the men. They had all this baggage. I used to, women's work was woman's work. That was just general in the society. I had all these people in the house and I never meant to spend my life keeping house and cooking and cleaning for my own family. We always tried to do it cooperatively and handled it well. I sure wasn't going to do it for another generation and I would put a list up of who was suppose to fix dinner that night and who was going to wash the dishes. The men were terrible. They were these young men, thinking they were nice, radical men. I remember this one guy. He didn't even lived there. He actually lived in Louisville. He was a Socialist with a capital "S". He was a member of the Socialist party and he was somewhere supposedly organizing in the neighborhood and lived not too far from us. He would come over and eat. So, I said, "David, its your night to wash dishes." He said, "I've gotta real, important meeting to go to." I said, "You may but you better wash the dishes before you go because it's your job." He said, "That's terrible" and I said, "I don't care. Now look, just don't come back here and eat anymore if you're not going to take you turn at the dishes." He didn't come back but you know what he'd do. He'd come over late at night and raid the refrigerator. He never got over it.

That was in the society generally and I don't think it was any worse in the movement. Somebody and the whole idea that the role of women was to clean up the Freedom Houses and sleep with the men in Mississippi. Some of the black women were really the backbones of the movement. There was a little different. Now, they weren't the big spokesperson either. The ministers got up and did the speaking but they were highly respected like Mrs. Haymer. Everybody knows about her and Annie Divine. Every community had some black women who were the backbone of their churches. Churches couldn't keep going without them.

I think that's been exaggerated. I know some of the things Casey and them say but I think it has. Somebody said the real thing was nobody cleaned up the Freedom Houses. That's the answer to that one. I don't know...we had some fights in SCEF about that actually because one of the woman who formed some of those first groups really wanted SCEF to become totally a woman's liberation thing. Women were real leaders in SCEF. So, there was kinda a fight about it which passed. It's an interesting question. There are different

viewpoints. I think the experience of different people was different. You know, you can't generalize too much. I think one of the unfortunate things in terms of women's movement is that so many women. White women who come into women's things later, really had no idea where this came from and don't really know their own connection to the black movement. I remind them when I come across when I can. Really, when you think about how things have changed for women, not everything, there's been some real changes. In a way, it sometimes more than for blacks. You hear a lot black people say that black people opened the door and white women walked in, in terms of jobs and things. There is a certain amount of truth to that which is unfortunate.

Like I said, the disability movement, not that isn't directly related like the women movement. Where you can traced who did it, where they got their inspiration and where they started these thing but was just the atmosphere that you got rights. Everybody got rights. That was in the atmosphere and where that struck me because I hadn't thought about it too much because I hadn't been too involved in the disability movement. Although, there were some people around SCEF who were a little bit.

In 1983, yeah, 1983, they had a twentieth anniversary march in Washington of the 1963 famous march where King made his "I have a Dream" speech. Which is the one that always gets quoted ins  
ople, who all got arrested and framed. Some of these people went to prison. Some years, we fought about it but they went to pr  
active of different organizations came together first and Dr. Joseph Larry was the head of SCLC, called a meeting of the black leadership forum, saying we need to have something big. Not to just to commemorate 63', but because all the problems going on in 83'. It was a march for peace and justice. Actually, 1963 was billed as "Jobs and Freedom". Jobs kinda got lost. Anyway, they invited white organizations to support or otherwise it would have been white dominated but starting this way, it always makes a difference.

We had a committee here like that, that built and brought a lot of people together. You see, you are trying to build a black & white coalition. We've spent a lot of time this afternoon talking with a woman here and doing some research talking about this. It's very hard to build real interracial organizations or activities in a racist society because of the tendency of white people to dominate. That's sorta what we do and the tendency of some blacks to let us do it. Some people call it "internalized racism". I was invited to some of the earliest nationalist meetings after we started working on the 83' march. When I came back here and I remember talking to Jean Edwards about it, I think, because they were real excited. This was a chance for people to get together. They wanted to call a meeting. I said not to call a meeting. If you call a meeting, it's going to be a white thing. Let's get somebody in the black community to do that and we did. We went and John Jackson, who was then State President of NAACP. I didn't know him too well but real good guy. He wasn't any great radical but he was a bridge-builder. He called a meeting, got blacks involved, and whites came in. So, we had a real black and white unity kind of thing. We didn't have the labor people. We got more connections now. Labor was staying away from everybody in those days. They organized their own buses because nationally, they were doing that. So, a lot of buses went up there.



I was going to the national planning meetings too. It was revealing to me. We were at these meetings in Washington, not too long before the march, where they were explaining the logistics in what was going to happen that day. Walter Faultmore, who helped in Congress and who then helped organize the 63' march. He said they were going to try to replicate pretty much what had happened in 63'. They did this and marched to the Lincoln memorial and had the program. This would be here and it would be like 63'. The only difference was that