

“Green Mountain Chronicles”
Oral History Transcriptions, 1981-1989 (bulk: 1987-1988)
MSA 199 & 200

Introduction

This transcription is one of approximately 42 transcriptions of interviews with individuals conducted primarily in 1987 and 1988 in preparation for a radio program sponsored by the Vermont Historical Society entitled “Green Mountain Chronicles.”

Scope and Content

The transcriptions in this collection represent interviews of approximately 42 individuals conducted primarily in 1987 and 1988 by Mark Greenberg, Mary Kasamatsu, Eleanor Ott, and Tom Davis in preparation for a radio series entitled “Green Mountain Chronicles.” The series of 52 five-minute programs was broadcast by commercial and public radio stations throughout the state in late 1988 and early 1989. The earliest interview in the collection was conducted in 1981; the latest was in 1989.

The interviewers spoke with well known Vermonters such as Governors Philip Hoff, Deane Davis, and Madeleine Kunin; lesser known personalities such as Catherine Robbins Clifford, one of the first women to hike the entire length of the Long Trail; and historians such as Weston Cate. The following inventory of the collection highlights the major theme(s) of each interview. The following list of program tapes gives the title of each radio program.

The goal of the radio series was to tell the history of Vermont in the twentieth century using archival sound recordings and recent interviews. The project was undertaken by the VHS in celebration of its 150th anniversary in 1988 and was funded by a \$14,000 grant from the Vermont Council on the Humanities and Public Issues with additional support from New England Telephone Company.

MSA 199, Folder 0 contains background information on the project. The VHS website at www.vermonthistory.org/gmchronicles contains a list of the Green Mountain Chronicles radio broadcasts and audio files of those broadcasts.

Lillian Baker Carlisle
March 28, 1988

Mary Kasamatsu
Interviewer

MK First I'll say that I'm with Lillian Baker Carlisle. It is the 28th of March. This is an interview for the Green Mountain Chronicles. Okay, lets start with a little bit of background about you first of all. Are you native of Vermont?

LC No, I was born in Mississippi. (LAUGH)

MK Oh.

LC And we came to Vermont after the war. My husband was a third command pilot in Montreal for six years and during World War II. And we decided we liked this world better than the world of the Philadelphia main line so we moved up here after the war. We wanted the skiing and the sailing and we wanted a small town and a university town. And you looked on a map and there it was. So we came here in '46.

MK Let's see, what were you doing at that point?

LC Well I had been, um, legal secretary and had volunteered for a lot of things where I could take shorthand. So a lot of places always made me secretary the minute I appeared anywhere. So when I came here I was just trying to get some furniture and some things for our house because it was just after the war and everything was rationed. There was just nothing, there were no stoves, there was no refrigerator, there was nothing. So the first year with trying to find a refrigerator, some furniture, beds, even mattresses. We slept on the floor on mattresses for awhile. And we had two burners when we first started because there just was no, no stove of any kind. We had an ice refrigerator which was second hand which had in this brand new house that we moved in on Mayfair Park, there was a cockroach living in it or maybe a family but we only saw one and here I thought, here I am in a brand new house and it has got cock roaches and then somebody said oh no, they live in the mechanisms of refrigerators from the heat and they live on the glue from the directions and things like that. So, fortunately we could find them wherever they were we found them and then eventually we could get a stove and then eventually a refrigerator and furniture.

MK I didn't realize that furniture was rationed.

LC Everything was second hand and you used well orange boxes, orange crates. If you turn them upside down which kids still in college still do use as bookcases. No there was

Lillian Baker Carlisle

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just, and no cars of course. No cars. So you used the bus which was very nice. We had good bus transportation from South Burlington.

MK My father told stories about waiting and waiting and waiting and waiting to buy a new car.

LC Oh yes.

MK And that's how I did know about the cars, but...

LC Oh it was very difficult even for if you started out fresh with nothing in your larder to get any kind of fat was impossible because you didn't, they didn't know you in the stores and they saved. When butter did come in or something did come in, they would save it for their regular customers. So it was very hard to break down and get to be one of their regular customers and of course I had to go on the bike to go to the store. My girls bicycles to go to the store. Every bit of food that came into the house. (LAUGH)

MK How long did the food rationing last?

LC It wasn't so much rationing as just wasn't available.

MK Uh huh.

LC I was never, I was rationed very much in Montreal of course because everything for instance all the canned fruits, and sugar and anything that had sugar in it was in a certain ration coupon and tea, coffee and all things like that were in another coupon. So it was much harder in Montreal. And I don't know what happened down here of course it was over by the time we came.

MK Oh. How did you get involved in political, politics, political...

LC Well first thing I ever got involved in when Consuelo Bailey was the representative from South Burlington and she came around to the house and to ask for support. She was one of the first people I ever knew went door to door but she did and she came to our house and asked for support. And I said how do you feel about margarine. At that point it used to come looking like white lard and there was a little capsule of yellow color and you had to break the capsule and put this dye and then squish it through your hands in order to make it yellow. And then um, put it back together and put it in the refrigerator. Well you can imagine how gruesome it must have been, but

that was what it was and in Vermont they would not pass the law for colored margarine. And the law was coming up so I asked her how she felt about it and she said, "Well, ah, you know, South Burlington is a rural community." And I said, "Well, how many farms are there now still in South Burlington?" So she said, "Well, not too many." Three or seven I forget how many farms there were at that time. So I don't know how she voted. But, anyway that was the first political thing I had ever had. Well then how I myself got into it was when we moved here to Lakeview Terrace. We used to have a municipal generating plant down there. And it used to spew literally tons of fly ash into the air. And I'd done everything through every organization that I'd been in and letters to the editor and sending bits of fly ash to each and every one of the aldermen who were on the committee and putting it in an envelope and say do you really know what fly ash is. This is fly ash. There was so much around here you could sweep it up, literally sweep it up. So I swept up some and sent it to them in the letter. And I remember one of the aldermen was absolutely furious with me. He said you know I opened your letter and my wife nearly killed me, it got all over our white carpet. How do you think we feel on Lakeview Terrace. It's everywhere. I said that's what fly ash is. So that was the thing that really, I tried every way I could and there was just no way I could get any attention to everything and it all boiled down to it was, well I just let it matter so I said so, I'll run for legislature. And that's really why I ran for the legislature.

MK When was that?

LC About '65, something like that. And I got defeated the first time and then I guess I made it the second time by a fluke. The democrats decided, I had really never had any affiliation either democrat or republican, I'd always voted for the issue. So when I registered, oh, the republicans came to me and asked if I would run on the republican ticket because they had never found anybody that would run, this is a democratic area right here. And they said we will sponsor you, so I said okay. So I was sponsored as a republican the first time and then as I said it didn't really matter to me. All I cared about was that fly ash and I didn't care how I wanted to be elected, I was going to be elected and I was going to try to get there and do something about it. Pass the Clean Air Act or something like that, which was the key to the whole thing. Was to get the Clean Air Act passed and then after the Clean Air Act was passed to get an engineer. You see they weren't in violation of anything because there was

absolutely nothing to be in violation of. So then you had a choice of what committee you wanted. You were supposed to put down three choices and I put down one choice only and that was Natural Resources. And I was I guess one of the first women, I suppose they had, had other women in there too, but they were just wonderful, Royal Cutts (?) was the chairman and it was a wonderful committee. Really wonderful.

MK So now would you have been there...

LC '69, '70, when they had three very, very controversial things. They had Act 250, they had abortion, and that was why I didn't go back. (LAUGH) They were only voting on whether it was incest or rape or I guess genetic in which case there could be an abortion. That was the only thing we were voting on and I voted for it. I mean to enable them to have an abortion under those three circumstances. And the next year when I tried to take my petition around, the former mayor's office who had been very, wife who had been very wonderful about my petition before said "You've been a great legislator, but I am Catholic and I cannot support you now as my legislator." And one other lady I went to, poor soul, I felt sorry for her she did sign it and that night, she was about 83 and that night she called me up and said would I please take her name off of there. She was Catholic also and I guess she had been tormented with the fact that she was doing something against her own religious feelings.

MK Let's go back now a little bit to the Order of Women Legislators and tell me about it. What is the Order of Women Legislators, why, what was it and why was it?

LC Yea, well when I was there, we um, well I can tell you a little about the history of it in a minute. But when I was there, we used to have a weekly meeting and the purpose of this meeting was for actually social, informative and instructive. And what we did, we would bring our lunch, we would get it at the cafeteria and bring out lunch into one of the rooms and then we would sit and we would discuss and somebody on a committee if there was a let's say a controversial bill coming up or one that was hard to understand, she would talk about that and tell us what was happening in the committee and the testimony that they had been taking and what the feelings were in the committee and whether it was going to come out with a recommendation or without their support and so forth. And one of the things that they decided they would never vote as a block, there would never be a block or anything like that, it was really for their own

instruction and their own help to help them better understand. Because you know you have hundreds of bills and you have certain of them in your own committee and you know what's going on there, but you almost have to at least, what I eventually found I had to do was to take the ideas or rather take the support of the people if they, in the committee if they sent it out with their recommendation. I would usually, oh I guess always vote for it. If they did not recommend it, I would vote against it because I would feel I just didn't have enough real background and would have to trust them as they, hope, were trusting us with our background because we had that Act 250 and that was a hard one to get across because that was, well it was going against all of our things that we'd ever thought of, we stood for in Vermont. It was controlled from above and um, but if it hadn't passed, goodness knows what would have happened. I remember, um Governor Davis had been kept, everybody from the southern part of the State kept telling him how awful this situation was down at the southern part of the State. We weren't too disturbed at this time up here, down, up in this part of the State. But down there, they were selling one acre. And they would just take up a map and just make one acre squares in it. And it could be on a mountain side. It could be above somebody. It could be a way to pollute the person's water. There was no roads. I mean they were selling all these lands, acre of land and they kept telling us about all these terrible things, so finally one of the representatives from the southern part of the State said, "I want to take you down this Sunday and show you," so they drove down with Governor Deane Davis and there was a clown out in the middle, a guy in a clown suit out in the middle of the street pushing his hand up toward the mountainside, "Come Buy a Piece of Vermont, Come Buy a Piece of Vermont" and so Governor Davis came back to the next, when legislature opened on Tuesday and he said we are going to do something. So that was our day in and day out, word by word taking that Act 250 apart and of course it encroached on everybody. Everyone of those people owned little, a little camp by a stream or a ski lodge or a hunting camp up in the mountain somewhere, so they knew that, we knew that everything that we had thought of we could do with these things was suddenly being taken away from us. So it was very difficult and we had to work through it ourselves, everyone of us and then work through it as this is the best thing for the State. And of course it was. But there were eight criteria and we had to take each one of them and then every word was looked at from every possible source and we took testimony from anybody who wanted to come and tell us what it, or how it was going to affect

him or her. And Jim Jeffords was the Attorney General at that time and he was practically a member of the Committee. He would come in with us and we would say, "What do you think would happen if this were tried in court, if this went to court?" And he said, "Well, I don't think that will go. I think they'll say that's against this or against that, I don't think that'll go. Well, maybe that'll fly, I don't know. We could try it anyway, maybe it'll fly." And so, we just did it word by word and then they finally put together the higher elevations which was a separate bill to keep people from building on the higher elevations. So they put it all together and couldn't believe it finally passed. And so the next morning, we all, all the people on the Committee in the Senate and in the House had a little note in their box to come up for cocktail or tea at Governor Davis' house. He was so happy to see that, that thing had finally passed.

MK What were those hearings like? Were people incredibly upset at the thought that the State was going to get into something that had always been personal, individual control before?

LC Well they would tell you and it really hurt some people. There would be people that had a farm. They had no insurance. I mean they had no pension. They had no savings. The farm was their savings and they had figured when they were going to die they would put it up, sell off a lot here or during the last years of their life after they retired a lot there. They would tell us this and that it was just taking their whole estate away from them, which it really was. That was all the estate they had. At that time, you know, for awhile their social security, until the '60's, social security did not even cover farmers. So that was their life and their pension and their savings and everything else. So that was a real terror and they would tell us how this was going to hurt them. So then we would change it a little bit by saying that they could do so many like, two or the family or something like that, trying to fix it so that at least they could still live because you can't take away their livelihood when they got too old to milk. What were they going to do? And then people who had worked all their lives and bought some lake shore or riverside property and all of a sudden you couldn't build. It was in a flood plain. So the property was worth practically nothing and they were still paying these taxes on them. And they presented all these things to us and we kept trying and then somebody said the size of the lot was another point. That if they could sell it in ten, less than ten, I mean

ten acres or more, that they could, well we weren't trying to hurt anybody. We were trying to make it more safe and the water resources and people told us yes in a ten acre plot you could find sewage in all probability and water in all probability that would not pollute others and especially with percolation tests which were all made part of it. So that it really did provide for it. But you know, progress always hurt somebody if it's taking your house for a road or ~~eminent~~ domain, so you can have a bike path or whatever. It's going to hurt. That was a terrible thing to realize. Everything hurt somebody. And that's hard, because you could hear the people, they would tell you how it was going to hurt them. And you knew when you were making this law, what it was going to do to them. Hard.

MK Do you, do you recall a film by John Carroll, was it called "So Goes Vermont?" I think that was the name of it.

LC That's, I don't remember it. No, all of a sudden I, it kind of background it now.

MK I had wondered, I had occasion to see it just a few years ago and I thought it was very powerful and it was clearly made to ? and it was very visual. It showed the incredible development that was just mushrooming in parts of the State and really looking awful, you know, and saying it with very sharp cuts between that and then what we like to think of as Vermont, back and forth and back and forth and hearing people on all sides of the issues, and I wondered whether, you know, whether that had been a powerful tool at the time?

LC I don't remember it at the time. I don't know what your date is. What the date of the film is. But, it was not, it was not one of the propaganda things in our time.

MK Uh huh, okay.

LC I never, if I saw it, it was something afterwards. One of the most important things was we had the man from the Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania, McHarg(?), who had written the definitive book on the environment. He came up and spoke to the whole. It was, they have a great protocol and you are not allowed to have people speak in the House to you and all that sort of thing. But this was after hours and so people came and listened to him speak and he told us, really so goes Vermont if you don't do something, this is what's going to happen and that was very powerful. I remember that. But

about, so this was one of the things that being on that Committee was responsible for trying to get this across to all the women in our meetings. Three very controversial things and then we had the sales tax that year. That's, the sales tax, abortion and Act 250. Was one big two-year period.

MK Had there been no sales tax or...

LC No, no sales tax, none, none, none, none, none. And the republicans were pushing it and the democrats were not. But I finally, I finally, our minority leader was Tom Salmon and the presentation that the democrats had put instead of the sales tax really, you could see it wasn't going to be enough money for the State and there was nothing except you had to do a sales tax in order to have enough money for the State. So I, of course, the democratic block was voting against it usually. I think about five of us voted for it eventually, or at least the second reading which is the important one and then on the third reading we voted with the party, but the second reading was the one that usually tells how you feel.

MK Uh, okay well to go back to the Order of Women Legislators now. This is all very interesting to me because another one of our programs will also deal with Act 250.

LC Uh huh.

MK So I'm very glad to have all this information too.

LC Well all of my, speaking of that. You know, I kept every scrap, I was clerk of that also, of the Committee. And I kept every scrap of paper that came across us and of course when they would get through, usually they would throw it in the waste basket. It would be no more good. Well I put it all together and it's all at the University and there is a complete file of everything on Act 250 that transpired in the Committee. And of course then the records are written up every day. Most of the Committees, not most of them, but some of the Committees would have one of the legislative council come in and take the minutes or they would tape them or something like that. But Royal Cutts did not want that. He wanted it our own Committee so. All the minutes on Act 250 are my minutes that are in the State House there.

MK When the OWL's, well of course you weren't, you were not in the legislature when the OWL's started but uh...

LC Well, I did look up some of the things from the history on the thing and found that in 1921, when suffrage was given to the women, that our first representative was a woman, was Edna Beard . Of course she was 51 years old. She was a principal of the school and also had been on the school board for quite awhile and apparently according to what was said, she was an unassuming and plain person, but with force in whatever she said. And she was the first one. By 1923, there were four women in the House and by '53, there were fifty-two and two in the Senate. Fifty-seven and it jumped up to sixty in the House and two in the Senate and then fifty-nine. There were five senators and that was the largest number that they ever had. Well in '65, was reapportionment and of course that changed everything. Most women at that time were republican and as I guess most of the legislature was. But afterwards there was a mix and the House was dropped from two hundred thirty-eight members to one hundred fifty. And that year, they had twenty-one in the House and two in the Senate. That proportionately dropped a little bit, not too much. Twenty-eight would have maintained it, but twenty-one. Then it went down, kept around seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, right in there. But the Senate, we had three in the Senate, three women in the Senate from about '69 until '73, which is about all the time I've kept the records for. But, the OWL's started in 1936 and it was a two day affair at the Fletcher Farms in Proctorsville. It was June the 30th. And they met, with some women from Connecticut and decided that they would start this OWL's organization, Order of Women Legislators and join the national, can't quite make out from the material that I have whether, how long National OWL's had been going on. So I don't know just how that fits in there, but anyway Connecticut and Vermont worked together on the thing. And they decided that they would have two meetings a year. One on Lady's Week, which is in February and the other one in the summer, usually in the part of June. And to that meeting, all past legislators would be invited. In 1949, the legislature provided a ladies' lounge and the General Assembly was called to order by the first woman, who was Helen Burbank, she was Secretary of State at that time. In October, they had the annual meeting, I mean the regional meeting of the OWL's here in town and their subject was alcoholism. So you see, we haven't solved anything yet. (LAUGH) Consuelo Bailey was the MC at that meeting. And then she was elected in '53, the Speaker of the House and beat out five men. And that was the year, on April the 6th of 1953, the picture of the women, the OWL's on the steps of the legislature appeared on the cover I understand of TIME, of LIFE and then I understand that there was a double page spread on it. So I don't

know, I would love to find the copy and now that I know the date on the thing, I think I'd like to find a copy of it and see what it was. But every year we did get our picture taken and from what I understand they were all in the ladies lounge and I just wonder what, is there a ladies lounge anymore?

MK I'll ask Julie tomorrow.

LC Is there a ladies' lounge and if so, what's in there and what has happened to these pictures? Certainly, they wouldn't throw them away. They would have given them to somebody. And what with women's history year and all the rest of it, I think we should certainly do something about this because it hasn't been easy and it should, the ones who were the ~~fore~~ foremothers should be honored and we should be aware of what they went through in the very beginning there to become what they did and to make it so much easier for us today. We don't realize today what a, what it was to go out and compete against five men as Consuelo did and get to be elected Speaker of the House. Think how smart she had to be to make that. Anyway, then she was elected Lieutenant Governor and that was the first in the United States of America in '55. There's another thing that I would love to know about that you could find out in the Secretary of State. They edited a book on Vermont in 1951 and they published 3,000 copies. I would like to see a copy of that book.

MK Who edited it?

LC Women, the OWL's.

MK The OWL's did.

LC Yea, and I'll tell you, it was Daisy Williams who was the chairman of that committee that did that and they did it for the State and published 3,000 copies. Margaret Hammond was elected in 1944. She was really called the Dean of the Women because she had served for, in the House from '44 to '65 and then in the Senate from '65 to '72 and that was the longest of all the service I think. 1953, they got together and decided what they were going to have as the flower, because at that point, Vermont had just made its own flower. The pages every year come up with something. Either it's the flower or the mineral or the insect, the bee or the, I remember the year we were there, it was schist and think what they could do with that schist in the legislature and they did it. (LAUGH) But the pages usually come up with something for the State of Vermont. We had the bird and we had the flower of course,

but they would come up with, well the bee was the last one I guess that, the maple tree, well I don't know. They always have something, they find something that they are going to come up with. Anyway, so the ladies in '53 made their own, the OWL's made their own flower and it was the Lady Slipper, (LAUGH) which was very sweet. Um, the governor's wife was always an honorary, the first lady was an honorary and so was the lieutenant governor's wife as part of the honors to the women that they gave. Mildred Hayden who had served twenty years was elected to the National Treasury and she went to the National, to the national convention. We invited them in 1973 here and we almost got the national convention but Puerto Rico offered all sorts of things. We offered them a piece of granite or something. We went around and found what we could give them and so forth. But Puerto Rico was, anyway they got it. Puerto Rico, the women in Puerto Rico got it.

MK It was warmer, (LAUGHING)

LC The OWL, the new legislators as they came in were called Owlets. And then after they had their February meeting and they paid their \$1.00, that's all the dues were. This was not a money making thing, they then became full-fledged OWL's, no pun intended. Their purpose was redefined as their meetings would be devoted, these luncheon daily, weekly meetings would be devoted to explaining, studying, and discussing the bills and again reiterated that it was not to be a block vote. That was not the purpose of it. There's another thing I want to know where it is. The owner of the, I should say the manager over at the Tavern presented to the OWL's in 1964 - '65, an antique owl. It was brass. It was solid brass. And the OWL's sent it away and had it cleaned and mounted and a permanent finish put on it. It cost them \$18.00, plus \$5.42 for the postage on the thing. And it also hung in the ladies' lounge. I would like to know where that is. I think there's a lot of things that have kind of gotten disappeared and I think it's time we bring them all out and look at them again. The last, let's see, they had a Burlington president, I should say a local president and a state president. And the Lucille Molinarelli was, I was the, I guess I was the State President and she was the City, not City but our own Vermont President. She had a brain tumor and so they didn't have a meeting that year. She did get better. And then, in 1972, the National asked for State histories and that was when we drudged up the old one by Mrs. Drown, Representative Drown and then got Mildred Hayden and Margaret Hammond to do the new one which they did to bring us up-to-date. So it's up-to-date to 1973 and I don't know what happened after 1973. I

don't know whether it just disappeared in the wood work or what happened to it. But as far as I know, it no longer exists.

MK I had wondered about that change in, change in name and whether that reflected a change in focus, a change in purpose, whether it was...

LC The last president I know of was Lorraine Graham and she was president in 1973 and I think somewhere along in there, four years later, Kunin was president of the State one.

MK Was it still the OWL's at that point?

LC Uh huh. It was still the OWL's and I remember at that meeting, she said it was too bad that we didn't have any history of the OWL's, and so it was quite disturbing to me to realize that here we had, had the wonderful history up to '69 and then we had it carried on after that. But so, I don't know, we did offer to send those histories to anybody who would just pay us for xeroxing on them and of course the State Department and all the Historical Society and so forth got copies of them.

MK I was interested in how, whether the organization, where you say it was, there was no block voting, um, did party affiliation matter in any way within the organization?

LC No, you know it's funny. Except for something that where religion is involved in one way or another, I don't think that you could tell who was a republican, who was a democrat. When they get to Montpelier, you know you take a vow. I mean you hold up your right hand and you pledge that you will vote your conscience and I think they really and truly vote their conscience and if a proper job is made of some law by the Committee that shows that it's really good for it, there will be a vote for it. If, probably if the presentation isn't good, it will be voted down, but it can come up again and be represented in a different manner and in a better manner and still pass which is what happens in many cases. You figure you have to bring up a thing two to three times before it gets made into a law. But no, I think they really are, they really do vote their conscience and vote the issues once they get there. And that goes for everybody, men and women. It's wonderful to realize that you know that it isn't closeted and smoke filled rooms and that sort of thing. Well of course it depends a great deal you know on your leadership and your leadership is your Speaker of the House. And that Jack Burgess was, who was later the Lieutenant

Governor, was Speaker of the House when I was there and he was absolutely wonderful. You know, you can call upon whomever you want to when you're Speaker of the House. You can put them on whatever Committee you want to when you're Speaker of the House. You can punish them if you want to when you're Speaker of the House by putting them on a Committee that isn't going to do a darn thing that year. And if you are a very active person, you can silence them that way. I don't know what happens now, I've not been there and I don't even go over to Montpelier. For the first year or so I used to go over because I was lonesome for it. After you're once there you know, oh it's, you know you spend more time with your Committee than you do with your husband or your children or anything else. You're constantly with them for four hours a day, five hours a day, whatever it amounts to. And there's nothing in your life that takes that much of your time.

MK That intensely too.

LC Right. And every day, every day.

MK Did you bring a lot of work home too?

LC Well you live there. I lived in, I had a room up on College Street I think it was. It was a very lovely room, antique house, that had stained glass windows by Tiffany and my, where I lived was a separate entrance and a separate room and a separate big walk-in closet and toilet, bathroom of my own. And inside the closet, it had been the old kitchen and there was the bake oven still there with its metal door that was in the wall of the chimney. That was fun. But yes, you did and you had hearings and that was another way that you could become aware of what you were going to have to vote on was to be able to go to some of these hearings and find what the people were saying at the, in the testimony. Because that's the nice thing about Vermont you can speak on whatever you want to if you put in your name and do it in a proper, proper manner. You can't break into a conversation or anything like that and unless you are giving testimony, you don't speak in a Committee, but any person can speak in a Committee if he feels strongly about a bill, either for or against. All he needs to do is write to the Committee Chairman and ask for some time for some testimony which is another nice thing.

MK It still is a very relatively informal...

LC Yes.

MK State Government.

LC And you do take things home. Usually if it's something that you didn't understand what happened during the day and you read the newspapers. That's about all you know what's happening. The rest of the community, I mean all the other committees, you don't know what's happening in them and so you read the paper and then you're always astounded when you heard what went on in your Committee according to what they say in the paper. What! (LAUGH) Maybe they have their own way of presenting it.

MK Oh. As far as you are able to, as far as you understand given the change from the Order of Women Legislators now to the Women's Legislative Caucus, how would you say that the structure of the organization has changed...

LC I don't know, I didn't even know there was a women's caucus that they call themselves a caucus. There was a caucus here in Burlington that first started before Kunin was elected. I went to their meetings. That was called the women's caucus. So whenever anybody says women's caucus, I think of that. It was about the time that, uh, who was running, I forget whose name was running for, oh, I'll think of it in a minute, for President. But um, so I don't really have any idea of what it is, whether they actually ever meet or whether they, as far as I know, there's no summer meetings or anything that any former legislators are invited to or that they try to make known what they are doing, if they are doing. So I would have no idea. I don't even know if there is a structure.

MK Uh, I was curious as to why the name changed and what it reflected. Whether they were more, whether, I have the impression that there was some social aspect to it and a supportive aspect to it in the OWL's at least and whether perhaps that sort of feeling of, the need for a women's network to educate....because there may have become something that they no longer feel they need as there are more women.

LC Well it was kind of nice to be able to ask some questions you know of your woman who's on that Committee that you would be shy about asking a man because he would think you were idiotic whereas if you're in the same boat and asking each other questions like that, then you don't seem stupid and that way it certainly was a great help because you could ask any, and it was, there was no reporter or anything like that. And of course reporters can be in all of your Committee meetings and but the caucus was, I mean

the OWL's was very informal and then they had these very lovely meetings in the summertime which were really fun because you could see people that you hadn't seen for a year. It was like an alumni association in one way.

MK I could imagine that, that if you had not, especially if you had not been in public service in any way before, that it would be very valuable just to be able to as you say to ask those questions on safe ground.

LC Well almost everybody of course had been very active in community things or she would never be elected.

MK Sure.

LC So she had to have a background of public life. Um, and she could bring that to the organization too. They didn't last, the meetings didn't last very long because we had to get back to the, our Committee meetings but, and as I said we would just take our lunch into any room that happened to be available and just eat lunch and talk. It was very informal. We did have a secretary. Then for awhile at the meetings, at least while I was president, again maybe because I just am so historically minded, but I tried to have everybody send me clippings from their paper that, of any person who died, who women, women who had died or anything about a woman who had done something outstanding that was, had been an legislator and we mounted these on colored bristol board and they were all available for the people to look at. You could see that different people had died in the meantime and those things I unfortunately I guess did them with rubber cement which is, don't ever do anything with rubber cement, never, never, never. You can't get it off. You tear it. Much better to use some of these, well white glue, elmers glue and do it on the four corners because at least you can rip it through with a knife. But anyway, so I did take all those off and they are turned over with all the other things to the Julie Cox in the State House, State Records. A few of them I've kept since then that I just haven't turned anything in. This is 1946 picture of the women and here the longest Margaret Hammond was the longest serving one of all. She died in '86. This was the sort of thing that people would send me and I would save and then we would post them for everybody to see the next year at the next summer meeting. Summer meeting was a social meeting really. You didn't discuss anything. It was just a social meeting and sort of find your old friends and...

MK Nice pictures. One thing now, this is not, I realize just, just the women that were involved in this, but the

mock session, I've read that the OWL's did some very interesting things for the mock session.

LC It was, it was either after or before because I don't, I never did anything along those lines. There is one thing apparently reading back in the materials, I've found that in there it mentions that the OWL's bought that painting, "Vermonters in Gettysburg" and presented it. And I would certainly like to see that followed through and find out whether that really was true. You know it was the one that they just recently had restored at a great price. And I'd just like to know more about that and if it is a gift of the OWL's, there should be a plaque on there saying that it was a gift of the OWL's.

MK Uh, that was quite something.

LC Yes, I don't know. I don't think they could have paid too much for it at the time, but then how many people could have a painting 9 X 12, or whatever that painting is, (LAUGH) not very many people have room in the living room for it so, so I don't imagine that it cost a lot. But they certainly at a dollar, dollar does they certainly couldn't have had a lot of money and they had spent all that \$18.00 for that brass owl that they had to get that restored.

MK How well, you talked already about Consuelo Northrup Bailey and I interviewed her, her sister...

LC Fredrica?

MK ...this summer and I wanted to get, again wanted to have just another voice in the piece, but how would you describe her? What kind of a person was she?

LC Oh it's kind of hard. If you would listen to her tell you... She was very witty and I remember we asked her to speak at the Chittenden County Historical Society because she had been the Chittenden County States Attorney during prohibition. And some of the tales that she told us about prohibition and how she had prosecuted these. Of course, and we had it in the old and we had this meeting at the old courthouse. This was before it burned and she very graphically described how they came in and then very graphically described some of these setups that she had to go and find the people who were doing the bootlegging and one particular one she had been at a ball somewhere and she had on this long black velvet dress and her pearls and they came and told her that they had this guy and they had to go immediately, so she left with her high heels and her

black velvet and went and picked up the guy. She was um, persistent and just would work very, very hard for whatever she wanted. She was innovative as I say going around door to door before anyone ever, I ever heard of anybody going door to door. And there wasn't much reason for her going to door to door because nobody in South Burlington was running against her. That was when everybody had one representative. And as far as I know, nobody was running against her. She was an attorney. She was a great prosecutor apparently. Won a lot of cases and put a lot of people behind bars, bootleggers. Then she was a member of ZONTA. And so was I a member of ZONTA. And we have, ZONTA used to meet in people, you know they used to have those houses and I remember when she had her, had us up to her place, her program was "Bird Songs" recorded bird songs and it was a lovely meeting. She would tell us what the birds were and then she would play these recorded bird songs and of course she was a great antique collector. She had all those, especially Bennington pottery, wonderful cases of that. And she had been the wife of the first mayor of Winooski. And she had, I've got to go up and see it, Fredrica has asked me to come up. I've seen the bed and I've seen some of the pieces of furniture that was carved by [Whittaker?] who was the carver who has done so much of the architectural carving around here including the um, University of Vermont buildings. All the carving inside buildings and also outside of houses and things like that. And he had carved this bedroom suite for her when she was married to the Mayor of Winooski. She would, she loved blue. She wore blue all the time, blue hats, blue scarves, blue dresses.

MK Did she have a temper?

LC Well I never saw it. She could, she could easily have a temper. I imagine, I think she felt very deeply everything and people like that usually do feel deeply if they don't like something and so they usually do. No, I don't whether she had a temper. I never saw her lose her cool.

MK I was just impressed at reading about her. I mean...

LC Did you read her book?

MK I have not yet, no.

LC Well, I remember her writing to me about when it was first being, when she was writing it and asking about how she should go about publishing it. I was President of Legue

Vermont Writers at that time and um, she hadn't finished it. I think when she finally did finish it, I think maybe Nick Muller was instrumental in helping her find a publisher of it which wasn't easy because you know people seem to think that biographies have limited appeal and maybe they do, I don't know. And of course the laws now you have to sell them one year or else they can't make it because it's so expensive to publish anymore and they figure if they can't get their actual publishing cost back in one year, that they really can't afford to publish. And that's hard. Hers is a sort of book that will be good ten years now, a hundred years from now, but publishers have to sell enough in one year.

MK Interesting.

LC But she was very active in everything that she did and she was a good, I think she helped start ZONTA. I think she was one of the founding members of ZONTA, which of course was for executive women in executive positions. It was, and they go in categories. You know you can be a, well if you are self-employed like an author or something like that, well that's different but, if you're say working for the Free Press, you must be head of the features or head of something. It must be an executive position. In a bank, I would expect you would have to be an officer of the bank. And it was sort of patterned on Rotary I think so far as the categories were concerned.

MK Is it a National or a...

LC International.

MK International.

LC International and as a matter of fact, they published a book with the presidents and you could go anywhere in the world almost, Japan, all the European countries and so forth and just call up the President of that town there and they will come in and or just do the most wonderful things for you. I mean they will take you and show you the town, take you to meetings and entertain you and all the rest of it. It's international. I remember, Mrs. Trapp was a member and she actually asked to be a member. She said she had never been a woman, a member of womens organization. So Mrs. Rob had been a friend of hers in, over in Austria and she presented her name to us. So, she was voted in because she was an lecturer. I think she came in as a lecturer. And she had us up to her place for the meetings as I said and I remember when we went up to the lodge, she said that she had a question that she

wanted us to decide for her. She said her son wanted her to stop wearing her Austrian clothes and she was going to put on American clothes and she wanted us to say how we felt about it, what sort of an appearance she made. So she went and she changed and she put on these American clothes and she came out and paraded around for us. All the glamour was gone. She had very slim, very thin legs and it doesn't, you know, it doesn't, wasn't right, so we said no, go back to your Austrian clothes. But she used to especially, she was one who took advantage of this business of going to other countries and getting in touch with the president there. Of course she did a lot of travel you know. It gave her a built-in friendship as she got in there and she wasn't dependent upon just the people for whom she was doing this lecture or whatever it was or appearance. And she was telling us that all they wanted to know is what sort of meetings that we had and what we did at our meetings and she said I didn't want to tell them that I didn't go to very many of the meetings so I really didn't know very much what you did do at your meetings and I wasn't about to tell them about my fashion show. (LAUGHING) So but, she used to get in touch with them all the time and then one of the others called up the lady, Japan it was. She took her to the right place so that she'd get the proper kinds of pearls from Japan. So it's very nice. But anyway, Consuelo I think was the one that started that organization here in this State. So she was very innovative. She saw something that should be done and she did it.

MK One thing I wondered about since she could claim so many firsts you know as a woman, whether she had seen any particular almost responsibility to a broad constituency of women particularly. To be particularly concerned about women's issues in quotes "women's issues" or do you know, do you have sense of whether she felt anything like that?

LC I think she wanted to compete, not as a woman, but to compete and the fact that she was the first in all these things was gratifying, but she wanted to be the Speaker of the House, not the first woman Speaker of the House. She wanted to be Lieutenant Governor or Governor, Lieutenant Governor and not the first, but then when they happened, well States Attorney, you see she always picked masculine issues, sort of things which made it twice as hard to compete. She had to compete first intellectually and then get over the fact that she was a woman and so it made it doubly hard for her to do the competition. But I don't think she did it to prove that women unite. I don't think that was the thing. It was fun. She loved social affairs. She loved to entertain which were very womanly

- characteristics. She was, wanted her forebear who was the president there, wanted some homage paid to him and she as I say was very persistent when she got something in her mind that she wanted, she really saw it all the way through until it was just accompli.
- MK On another whole topic, did you ever run across or are you, I was interviewing Walter Hard, Jr., some time ago and he was talking about his father's time in the legislature. And said that of the two issues particularly interested him, one being education and the other being getting for women the right to serve on juries.
- LC Well I have that date you know, one of the judges came to the meeting of the OWL's and said this was a nasty thing and it was not the thing that women should do and there was no reason why any truly feminine woman would want to do a thing like this because it was a nasty thing. But the legislature voted for it that year and passed it. And I have the year on that, when that is, and his name.
(LAUGHING)
- MK That was the first that I heard. I did not realize that women were not able to serve on juries.
- LC You know, that's it. There is so much ground breaking and it's so recent.
- MK That's why I was so amazed. I thought, I just assumed that was all taken care of along with...
- LC No and you know I think more and more that we've got to realize that these ground breakers, these pioneers, the wonderful things that they did. They were greatly supportive of the Austines School for the Deaf too by the way. I think it was. At one of the early meetings, Judge Barton of Windsor spoke on the subject of jury duty for women. He stated that it was disagreeable job and nothing a woman should be interested in. Vermont however, voted for women to serve on jury and to date they have served satisfactorily. I don't have the date. It was just one of the early meetings. But there's his name. Judge Barton of Windsor.
- MK As you say, they are so recent, so many things that are...
- LC Yes, and my grandchildren, you know if a thing is, time telescopes and you just can't conceive of anything being new if it's only 50 years old because it's just as ancient for a person your age as the races in the Roman forum. You know it all telescopes together. But centuries divide

them really, but if it's in the past, it's one past. It doesn't have a year past to it. Very difficult. This idea of telescoping the past into one era.

MK It's interesting. I was so tickled when his, Walter Hard, Jr., then was saying that his father was quite sort of startled and almost shocked to find that his women constituents were not particularly pleased that now that they had the option to serve on the jury, *really ... the* responsibility.

LC That's another thing. You know in abortion, the women did not support, it was more the men that supported that and it was a swing vote all the way in the House. I was one of the swing votes on the thing and I remember oh, the girl who was the, the outstanding reporter called me and said I, you see they would let it hang on Friday and if you had voted against it and wanted to vote for it or voted for it and wanted to vote, I guess if you had voted against it and were thinking of voting for it, you could recall it and have them do another vote. And *Mavis* Doyle, and this was over the weekend, it was left right there at the second reading there. And she called me up and said I here you're going to ask for a recall so you can change your vote. I had no intention of doing it and she had not heard it at all. It was just for me to say and that's how she got the information. It was very interesting how they would get information from the legislators and you would say no, I have no intention of it. I voted against it and I have every intention of voting against it again or for it I mean, for abortion, I was for abortion. So I said I have every intention of voting for it again. So she said, "Well, I just wanted to check on it. You know, you understand that you can have a recall and have another vote on it," and I said, "No, I didn't know that." Because you know when you are new there, you don't know anything. So anyway, but that was how and I remember one of the other ones, was in line one day and she was in the cafeteria lines and she said, "What do you think of so and so?" He says, "I think it is disgusting." The next day it was in the paper. So and so, the honorable so and so, says he thinks it's disgusting. (LAUGHING) So, this is how they found their information which is perfectly legitimate.

MK It can put you off balance *a bit though*.

LC It does, especially if you don't know what it's all about, which you don't when you are new. So many things to learn.

MK That must have been really a value for the women, the OWL's. I mean it's your own sort of private orientation group in a way. I would think...

LC Well you wouldn't like to admit, this is it, you wouldn't like to admit you are ignorant sometimes and it wasn't against you if you admitted it to your "friends" which women were your, supposedly your friends all in the same boat.

MK In terms of the National organization, what was an advantage to being linked up with a National organization?

LC Same way it was, same way it was, the advantage to be linked up in our own. It kept you in touch with what other states were passing for legislation. And much, much of it was women orientated legislation. And if you saw that Montana was doing this, maybe it would be something that you might like to put a bill in on. If you thought it was really helpful to the women of your state. So in that way it was very helpful. Mostly they would tell what would or would not work in their own state and you know you wouldn't beat your brains against something that just wasn't going to fly. So you would rather put your time on something that there was a good chance of it passing or maybe if not this year, then the next legislative session. So that was the real advantage of belonging to the National. And they had the convention every year. Mildred Haydon went twice and as I say she was National Treasurer at one time.

MK Do you, let's see, are there any women that served with you in the legislature who are still there?

LC Who, in the legislature?

MK Uh huh.

LC No, none that I know of. I don't know of a single one. Um, I guess Sadie White was probably the next to the last or the last that I knew that was still there. But I looked at this picture and I don't know a single person there.

MK Uh. I'd be really interested in talking with someone who might be able to compare the OWL's with whatever organization there is now, if it is...

LC What, how active is this thing? Is it anything?

MK That's what I'm not really clear on and that's why I'd like, it would be nice if I could find someone who had been there for the OWL's and could say well now it's different and this is how it's different.

LC Who is in charge of caucuses? Are there officers? What is it?

MK You know, I'm

LC Maybe there isn't really you know a caucus.

MK All I have is at this point...

LC It would be very interesting to pursue that because um, this they just call these as they postmarked the fiftieth anniversary of the State OWL's.

MK Right. Huh. I have my other thing in the car, that's...

LC It's one of these things that somebody makes the word, says the word. Now there was a women's caucus here as I told you. In town we used to meet. The first meetings were at Trinity and that may be it.

MK When I was talking with Julie, she said as far as she...

[reading now]

LC 'The caucus has formed in its place ^{caucus} which has met infrequently, is a support network for female legislators and a place where womens issues can be discussed. Well where do they meet or do they meet or what is the whole story on it? The group has been encouraged by straight archivists to keep track of its precedings. Julie Cox, Assistant State Archivist at Vermont has the best records in the country with participation in the legislature. This is because the OWL members kept meticulous notes.' You're damn right we did. (LAUGH) I he , 'by looking at past its interesting to see ^{where we} are today.' What was the big thing last. Last year Vermont elected, you know that's all, that's all they say. Was the first woman to ever serve on the House as tax writings ways and means. I don't think that's right. I don't think that's right at all.

[reading from clippings in scrapbook]

MK Which is that?

LC It says that Gardner was one of the first - well that's not right. Julie Patterson, Peterson served her second as one of the three members of the appropriations. Well, that's been a long time they've had those. When she entered the legislature in '83, she said the womens legislative caucus

helped initiate her into the ways of the General Assembly. You know, how, when, where, what, where do they meet?

MK — ? I have nothing to go on at this point. Yea.

LC Well, that's Jane Gardner from Bennington, she talks, no, it's Julie Peterson, from Brattleboro.

MK Okay.

LC '83

MK Just looking to see whether I saw or would recognize her with Reynolds Smith in that photograph. I'm not sure whether I would recognize her there. I've only seen her a couple of times.

LC Now I know that the caucus, the local caucus here was very instrumental in helping Kunin to her election. Sister, the one who was...

MK Candon?

LC ...Candon was very active and offered the facilities there all the time. And it was a very, very, active, a very active group in the, let's see McGovern, when McGovern was running. That was the year that it was at its biggest activity and then so far as I know, it still maybe, it is still going on, I think but, I don't know where, or how or anything about it. I don't know whether it is a real organization either, but it was very active at that time. It was well supported, a lot of people were there and not only feminists, but other people too that were older or...

MK So that would have been '72. Good, well thank you very much for taking the time to tell me this.

LC Now, when you get this together, I would like to hear it.

MK Okay.

LC Because I do want, sometimes I say 1942 and it should be 1842. (LAUGHING) I say Brattleboro and it should be Bennington and I like to go over everything that I, I won't change your...

MK Well what would be...