Spring 4-25-2015

Interview with James A. "Jim" Aull

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TRANCSIPTION

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Jeremiah Morales Alright. I'm officially recording, now. I have to start by a few things I have to read off this list. This is kind of – is the label –

James A. "Jim" Aull Right.

JM – of the audio file. So, my name is Jeremiah Morales. It is April 25, 2015, 9:00 a.m. And could I ask you to introduce yourself? Your name?

JA Okay, my names is James Aull, "Jim."

JM Alright, so, we are in 624 South Michigan Avenue, the Columbia Library, Chicago, Illinois. This interview is part of the Columbia College Chicago Archives, an Honors oral history project, "Chicago '68!" that is part of a collaboration with the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago. So, we will officially begin the interview. So, what I'm going to do is I'm going to try and walk you up through your life all the way from the beginning, all the way to '68, and then all the way to now. So, I'm going to go ahead and ask you questions about your very early youth. So, I wanted to ask you where it was you were born.

JA Okay. I was born in Pennsylvania, outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I grew up in a suburb of Philadelphia, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

JM And who did you live with?

JA I lived with my family: my mother, my father, my sister, and my father's mother – my grandmother.

JM How was your relationship with your family?

JA Well, it was good. I mean, we – where I grew up was a – had a – at one time in the family, had three hundred acres of farm land. The house had been in the family for many, many, many years; it was a big, old farmhouse. And lots of room (laughs) in the house, and, when I was growing up, there was about fifty acres left of fields and woods. My father did not farm, but much of the land was farmed; he rented the land out to pe – different people to farm it. So I grew up in a kind of rural setting, and was able to, you know, roam the woods. And the house was big. There was a problem; my grandmother had lived in that house for many, many years, and so, when my father married and brought his bride, my mother, to the house, there were two women in the house, my grandmother and my mother, and that created some tension –

and that, that was difficult. It was difficult for my mother to share the house with my grandmother, who, as I say, had been there, all her life.

JM What is one of your most fond memories of living in that house?

JA Well, I think – probably – you know – I loved the woods. Both my sister and I loved the woods, and so it wasn't so much the house that was important to me; it was the surroundings, the fact that I could camp and I used to hunt, which I wouldn't do today, but, then, it was okay. And growing up like that was very positive.

JM So I wanted to ask a little bit about the religious aspect of growing up. What was religion like, in your household?

JA Well – well, that's interesting. My father was an Episcopalian. He did not go to church. The family did not go to church, but my sister and I were sent to Sunday school and, as I got older, I sang in the choir and was involved in the church in that way, but it was rather peculiar because it was not as if I grew up in a religious family, but I got involved at a certain level. And I enjoyed the church; I enjoyed the aspects of the rituals of the church, and so I had a positive feeling about churches. I don't know whether I thought so much about, quote, "religion" as I thought about, you know, the trappings of

the church. I liked – I became an acolyte. You know, I served in the church. So I had that positive experience, in that way.

JM Where did you attend elementary school?

JA A public school – a local public school. First – I attended first through sixth grade at the local public school.

JM And, after sixth grade, did you transfer to another school?

JA Yeah, I went to private school. I didn't have a very good experience, in the public school. I was frankly bullied. I had bad experiences for whatever reasons. So, you know, I wasn't very happy, particularly in the latter, you know, fourth, fifth, sixth grade were kind of rough for me. So my father decided it would be a good idea for me to go to private school, which I did, so for seventh, eighth, and ninth grades, I went to a private school near Philadelphia. (Wipes hands across table.) And I would take the train to the school and back, in the morning and the evening, and then after that I went to boarding school. My father had a dear friend of his who established a scholarship for me to be able to go to boarding school, so I went to boarding school for tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades.

JM What sort of – beyond school, what sort of extracurricular activities

were you involved in?

JA Well, when I was in private school, like – in seventh, eighth, and ninth grade, I guess I was involved in debate. I was – you had to be involved in sports; you had to be part of a team, whether that be football or baseball or whatever. I wasn't particularly athletic, but, I mean, you know, I did those things. When I went to boarding school, I became more involved in – some social service kinds of activities. One of the most important ones – really, I would call it a kind of life defining experience. There was an organization that brought students from school to Philadelphia to participate in work camps. It was the American Friends Service Committee, Quakers, who sponsored these work camps, where we go into the city and we would team up with local residents in poor neighborhoods do to rehabs of buildings or paintings or construction or whatever needed to be done, and I think the most – what was most critical about that experience was that it taught me to be it – taught me a way to relate to people that you're trying to help, not in a condescending kind of "I'm here to help you" kind of way, but in a very, you know, we're equals, and we're here to be – you know, work with you side by side. That was very important to me. It taught me something that I think I kept for the rest of my life – a certain attitude about people that was not condescending, that was not paternalistic, and with my kind of background, coming from, you know, a private school, a boarding school. That was a very

important lesson for me. That stuck with me, kind of guided my attitude towards things for the rest of my life.

JM So, throughout boarding school – throughtout private school and boarding school. I know you said prior, that you were – that it was more church than religion. Did your relationship with religion evolve or change, over the course of those years.

JA Well, when I went to boarding school, you went to chapel every day (laughs), and at night. (Wipes hands across table.) It was not that it was a – it was not a religious school in the sense that – it was not a Catholic boarding school; it was actually – I think the foundation of that school was Episcopalian too, although, it was really nondenominational – it was not any one religious, or the other but I – that, you know, the religious as – the organized church related aspect of religion never particularly appealed to me. I mean, I didn't get involved in various programs or social service activities with an idea that I was going to become some kind of a minister or something like that. I think if I thought about anything I'd thought about anything I'd thought I would become a teacher, but we got plenty of religion (laughs), because we were required to go to church, to go to chapel. I mean, the boarding school had its own fancy chapel that, you know, we all attended.

JM So, how did you personally feel about doing that every day and every

night?

JA It was just part of – It was just part of the routine. You know? You know – I didn't think anything about it. One way or the other, it was just what you did. It was just like, you wore a coat and tie – to class. I mean, that was just how it was organized. And so I never resented it nor was particularly drawn to it. It just was, you know?

JM What aspirations or goals did you have, in the high school years?

JA Well, like I said, I think I – if I were to articulate anything, it's probably that I wanted – I thought about being a teacher. I had a couple of teachers at boarding school who I really admired, and who – I also, by the way, besides – one of the things I got involved in when I was at boarding school was the newspaper, so I became – when I was a senior, became one of the managing editors of the newspaper. So that was an important experience, and that brought me in contact with teachers, a couple in particular who I really liked and admired, and who, in a boarding school situation, where you can – where you have opportunities, sometimes, in the evening, to attend a, what they would call a "hall feed," where people all came together and the teacher – the head – the master would provide snacks and stuff like that. Anyhow, you could – I admired those guys, and so, if I thought about it, what I wanted to do, it was to be a teacher. But you understand, in those days, and this – we're

talking about the '50's, at high school and even at college, you really weren't deciding what you wanted to do, like a vocation, and you certainly didn't go to boarding school for the idea that you were going to beco – I mean, engineers, chemists, physicists, biologists, and the sciences, they kind of were clearly on a track to that kind of a field, but the rest of us, it was liberal arts, and we were liberal arts kind of people, so you didn't – if I aspired to anything, it was related to maybe to teaching.

JM So, after, boarding school, then – what were your – what was your collegiate level experience?

JA Well, I went to college. I went to Princeton. I, the first two years, there, you don't declare a major, and, as I said, it was very – a liberal arts education. You were expected to get as well rounded an education as you could. I ended up majoring in history. I could've maybe majored in english, but I chose to major in history. And – but – well, anyhow, that was – and I didn't know what I wanted to do. Again, teaching was something that I thought about, but I then became involved in some extracurricular activities that became really very, very important to me and really determined the course of my life from then on.

JM What were those extracurricular activities?

JA (Laughs.) Well, I, you know, I said, in boarding school, I got involved in the American Friends Service Committee work camps in the city, so I had this – experience that I was interested in following up, and so I got involved with – well, it was called the Student Christian Association (Wipes hands across table.), and they did, for example, they did trips into the city, into Trenton, to lead different boys' clubs, and I got involved with the YMCA, and, once a week, a group of four or five of us would drive into the city, into Trenton, and work with a group – provide leadership, provide adult leadership to a small group of boys. So, because I was involved with people from the YMCA, I was introduced to some people who were involved with a college and university YMCA. Now, the college and university YMCA was very different from the YMCA that had boys' clubs and gyms and pools, and stuff like that. The college and university YMCA was – it was like an organization – excuse me, let me just go back. On any college campus, there's a lot of religious organizations. There's the Episcopalians, there's the Jewish community, there's Catholics, there's Protestants, Presbyterians, whatever. They all had religious groups on campus, and I actually joined the Episcopal group, or attended activities with them, but the YMCA on the college campus was kind of the place where people who didn't really know what they wanted, who might be doubters or questioners, that sort of thing, and, so, on my campus, at Princeton, there really wasn't anything comparable to a student YMCA, but I was contacted and got involved with a student YMCA, and, actually, in those days, the YMCA and the YWCA were very close to each other. They worked

together a lot, and, in fact, the YWCA nationally had a very strong involvement in the Civil Rights movement, particularly, in the south. Women were able to lead in the South, in the Civil Rights movement, easier than men – men had to worry about their jobs and their fraternal relationships and other colleagues, but women were freer to stand up and really – and the student YMCA, and the student YWCA, were involved in issues like the Civil Rights – the civil rights issues. (Wipes hands across table. Does repeatedly, from here on.) Now, again, we're talking about the early – we're talking about the '50s, so, we're talking about way before there was anything like Selma. You know, we're talking about, practically, ten years before that, but anyhow, they kind of put their finger on me as a potential leader, and I began to get involved in organiza – in activities beyond the Princeton campus. I was still involved with the Student Christian Association, but mostly through the social service work I was doing with kids. (Taps table.) That was one part of my life, but, increasingly, I got involved with this other aspect of the YMCA and the YWCA, and so I became involved in regional conferences. I would have co – and there were regional officers who were elected chairman of the Middle Atlantic region, or whatever, and, again, I met some very powerful people – three or four of them, at that time, who were really important to me: a man who was the YMCA secretary for college and university; a woman who was the secretary for the YWCA, who was part of – who was a Quaker; and they became very influential in my life, and they kind of mentored me and got me increasingly involved in leadership experiences outside of my college

campus experience. So, to make a long story short, and you can ask me to elaborate, if there's something I'm missing, but I ended up – in my senior year, I was elected chairman of the Student Christian Association. That was my rise to glory, locally, (Laughs.) and I became, through a series of conferences and stepping up through different levels of the organization, I became chairman of the National Student Council of YMCAs and YWCAs, and those were definitive experiences for me – I mean, they determined the rest of my life in lots of ways. I also had the opportunity to travel in my – between my junior and senior year, I went to the Soviet Union and traveled, and Soviet Union is part of a student exchange program, traveled to Czechoslovakia, and Poland, and spent six weeks in the Soviet Union, three weeks in a Soviet sports camp, which was a unique experience because, all of a sudden, you weren't just traveling as a tourist – there's a lot of that, where you sat down at a table and talked to other students, and there was a translator and all that, but the sports camp was on the Dnieper River, outside of Kiev. I think that it's – today, I think it's part of the condemned area, you know, where the Chernobyl disaster occurred, but any case, for three weeks, I just lived with college students – other students, in the sports camp, and they were very – you know, I joined a judo class, which I wasn't that great at, but they took care of me, and, you know, we had a really powerful – it was a very powerful experience, and when I came back from that experience, traveling, I spent the next year, my senior year, doing a lot of speaking about my experience in the Soviet Union, and trying to give the message that, at best, they had a very

idealistic view of what their communist society was trying to do. They would tell the story – I would tell the story, when I would speak to groups – I spoke to so many groups, I almost flunked out of college (Laughs.), but my roommates would tell you, even to this day, that, you know, I was usually not around very much, but they would tell this story about how, in their society, they would produce the kind of person who – if two people were standing outside of a cave, and a bomb was about to explode among them, their people would be – they would stand back and let the other person find refuge in the cave before they would, in other words, a kind of self-sacrificing kind of ideal, so that was, you know, that was a way of humanizing the whole Russian experience that the – and many of the students that we spoke to – many of them had no time for the communist party, they were not interested in it and didn't like it, and others were very, you know, involved in it and participated in it, and, just like I was involved in the YMCA, they were involved in the young communists organizations, and, at the sports camp, I met a couple of people who really were dissatisfied – they were real dissenters from the whole Soviet system, so there was a certain intrigue – we would often meet late at night, somewhere, and just talk, and just talk about what they like, and what they didn't like, and they wanted to know about our country, and all that kind of stuff, and I spent that year – oh, and I made enough money (Laughs.) speaking about my Russian experience, that, the next summer, I was able to travel with the YMCA to a series of meetings the World Student Christian Association and the – I guess, the world alliance of YMCAs in

Strasberg, Ger – in Strasberg, and we visited one of our work camps in Turkey, so I had two summers of international experience which were very important to me, so if I say any more I'll be jumping ahead, so I'll stop and you can follow up. (Laughs.)

JM Alright, so, how did your experiences of the other cultures – how did those change or influence your perspective on American culture?

JA Well, I think it made you more aware of the differences. I was young, I don't think – it didn't cause me to reject my own culture, but, again, at this point, now – and we're getting out in, like, 1960 – 1960's when I graduated from college, so I was in the Soviet Union in 1959, and I was travelling in Europe in 1960, and the Civil Rights issues were becoming more and more important. Also, the – there was a thaw; the reason I was able to go to the Soviet Union is because there had been an agreement, an exchange agreement, about student-to-student exchanges. It was also – you won't remember this, I mean, you weren't anywhere near born (Laughs.), but, you know, but Krushchev, the Russian prime minister debated Richard Nixon in Moscow, that summer. There was a real thaw. Now, the next summer, 1960, all that thaw, better relations between the two countries, kind of went to pot, because the Russians shot down a spy plane, the U2 spy plane – Gary Powers, the U2 spy plane, and that kind of killed a lot of the good will, and I have a dear friend – he was in my wedding and I was in his, we were great buddies –

he was traveling – he was in the Soviet exchange, that summer, the same one I had been, the summer before, and he was kicked out of the Soviet Union for distributing Bibles (Laughs.) to students; somebody caught him, you know, exchanging a Bible, and he was kicked out. So it was a time of flux, of change of, internationally, a lot going on, and it made me interested in – well, it made my interested in the – but, religiously, what was going on in my mind was a much more – was a broader understanding of many religions, and it made me much more catholic – not in the sense of Roman catholic, I mean catholic in the sense of more broad-minded – you appreciated – the whole YMCA experience, period, was one of bringing you into contact, not just with Episcopalians, if you had just been involved with them, or Presbyterians if you had just been involved with them, but the YMCA and the YWCA kind of brought together people who were not particularly affiliated with any religious group, or were questioning. There was one fellow in our group who was a catholic, a Roman catholic, and a good one; he was not anxious to leave the church, but he liked the YMCA for what it did, and he liked the interaction, but it caused him a great deal of angst, because he felt conflicted that he, as a Roman catholic, shouldn't be involved in this organization, but it taught me to be much more aware of different organizations, of different religions, different people's views, but – a commitment to providing a place where people could express their doubts, could question, could find a place to have social action, and, as I say, now the Civil Rights stuff was really beginning to heat up, and, so, there was a lot of seminars and conferences

and work groups around racial issues, that sort of thing. Not sure if I answered that question, but –

JM Yeah!

JA - I'll say it again.

JM No, you got it! I want to ask a little bit about your personal perspective on the civil rights issues that were going on at the time, in terms of your interest in social services and your personal religious beliefs. How did those things interact?

JA Well, you know, I don't – my personal religious beliefs became determined by the activities I was involved in, so it didn't bring me any closer to the Episcopal faith that I – I mean, I was an Episcopalian. At Princeton, you went to the – you know, that Rockefeller Chapel, here, at the University of Chicago – well, at Princeton, there was a chapel that was as big and as grand as that was, and the first couple years that I was at Princeton, you were required to go – not every day, but there was a required chapel attendance, but I, you know – my interest in organized religion was never very strong. I, in many ways, and even after college, could tell you later how I was involved with the church, but it was not – in these days, while I was at Princeton, and involved with the Why, my "church" was my experience with the YMCA, and,

getting a lot of good strokes from leadership positions that I held, finally, at the national level – so to preside over an annual meeting of all the national student YMCAs across the country was my "worship" experience. (Laughs.) I mean, that's not quite the right way to say it, but I found, in my involvement with that organization, my sort of spiritual roots, and, you know, for somebody who had been bullied as a child, who – when I went to private school and boarding school, that all kind of went away – I mean, I wasn't bullied at private school or boarding school, but, on the other hand, I wasn't an outstanding leader at boarding school – yes, I was involved with the paper, I was involved with the Christian Association, but I never felt that I was a real standout leader, but when I got involved with the Y, and with the student Y, I came into my own. I mean, I was respected, I was sought after, my speaking about my Soviet Union experience was an incredible ego trip, because I would go to Rotary Club meetings and YMCA meetings all over the East Coast. I had this great speech that I had that, you know, brought people to their feet, the way I was able to present myself, so – a commitment to seeking, to questing, to creating an environment which the YMCA was committed to doing – to creating an environment where people could look for answers to spiritual questions. It certainly increased my knowledge – or commitment to the whole civil rights thing, because – of course, at Hill, at boarding school, there was – there may have been – I don't know whether there was a black student in that school, at the time. I don't think there was. At Princeton, there was maybe two, so I had no experience with race

relations, and, of course, I grew up on a isolated sort of rural – so, I had very little experience. The YMCA kind of changed all of that; my experience was all of the conferences that I was involved with, traveling, you know, with a mixed group. I became much, much more aware, and, as I said, the YWCA was really hot into race relations, moreso - the YMCA was more tied to the business community. I mean, lots of their boards and committees were pretty white, but the YWCA was very integrated and very aggressive, and they were involved in sit-ins and all the rest in the South at this time, so that changed my perspective, and I became much, much more aware of the civil rights movement and all of that kind of stuff. It was a corrective to my background, which didn't have much to do with anything racial.

JM When was the first time that you really – in being involved with all of these organizations and all of these activities, when was the first time that you considered yourself an activist for something?

JA (Taps table.) That's funny. The word – yeah. The word "activist" wasn't around in those days. I mean, I don't – I mean, that's a funny way to say it, the way you ask it, because there were certainly activists, what I'm talking about with the YWCA; they were certainly activists, but (Adjusts self; wipes table.) – hang on, it's an interesting question, because I don't think that – I didn't consider myself an activist. I mean, there were people around me who were activists. The National Student Council of YMCAs and YWCAs, of

course, had its roots in college campuses, so there were a lot of people coming to these meetings that I was involved in, who were active in their schools, in their colleges, but I wasn't. If I was active in anything in college, it was doing some social service work with kids through the YMCA – you know, going to Boy, so I didn't – I never considered myself, nor to this day do I particularly consider myself an activist. I mean, it would be really, really jumping ahead, but we'll end up getting that, but, in those days, in the early '60's, during college, my activism, if you want to call it that, was involving - was creating – strengthening the opportunity in college campuses for people who were questing, looking, searching – a place for them to be, not so much a place to become an activist. What the YW is doing in the South, and in the North, too, but a lot of it the South – that was real activist work. They had that – they did that a lot, and when they came to national conferences, which I would, you know, my last year there, co-chair, they would lead workshops on Civil Rights issues and stuff like that, but, to me, those were one thing among many things that you might get involved in, and so creating an atmosphere of seeking and questioning and beginning to develop your own faith, or your own style, or whatever, however you want to put it, that's what I saw in the work that I was doing – that's what was important to me.

JM So, after college, now, what were your plans or goals, or what was it that you wanted to do after graduating?

JA Yeah. Well, I hadn't made up my mind, and I'd thought about a number of different things – I actually applied for a Rockefeller fellowship to go to seminary. I didn't get it. I wasn't sure what I wanted to. So – I'm trying to think of the sequence of events. The people that I knew and respected through the YMCA wanted me to have a career in the YMCA. Now, my father who was kind of pretty conservative, kind of rolled his eyes when I would say I wanted to be a teacher, because I was – you know, he would've liked to have seen me be a international diplomat and go into the foreign service. All my traveling in Russia, in Europe – you know, that would've been great, but I wanted to be a teacher; if that's what I had said to him, you know, he would kind of roll his eyes. You could imagine how he felt when I said I wanted to be a YMCA director, because, immediately, in his mind, the only thing the YMCA meant to him was gym and swim, and, you know, buildings that provided, you know, jocks a place to – so I had to, you know, explain to him, and he under – you know, in the end, he understood, but the YMCA folks wanted me to pursue a career in this college and university YMCA. So, one of the roots to doing that was to go to seminary, because the whole student YMCA was about bringing people together to quest and question. Then – so it made sense that the YMCA directors on the college campuses have a seminary degree, have a bachelor of divinity degree. Not all of them did, but many of them did, and it was considered the root to becoming a professional student YMCA director, where you would eventually probably end up on a college campus working with, you know, the same sorts of things that I was – had

been doing in Princeton. (Wipes hands across table.) And, so, they were really hot for me to go to seminary. I'm trying to think (Laughs.), because there was a gap of a year between graduating from college and going to seminary – yeah, I worked for a year after I graduated from college, locally, at the regional office. I traveled to different college campuses in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, helping student YMCAs and YWCAs to get stronger, you know. (Laughs.) I don't remember exactly what I did, but that was the job they created for me, and in the pro – in the meantime, the people at the national level of the YMCA thought it would be a great idea if there could be a place where students could come who wanted to go into the YMCA, student YMCA, where they could train, and it needed to be a seminary, but it needed to be a kind of open-ended seminary that was – that could understand this whole business about seekers and questioners and a student – kind of student YMCA. So, they cooked up a deal with Chicago Theological Seminary. Chicago Theological Seminary is on the South side of Chicago; it's right next to the University of Illinois. I don't know whether you know the South side at all, but it's right across from Robie House, the Frank Lloyd Wright building, and Chicago Theological Seminary was a United Church of Christ – very left wing seminary, very liberal seminary, had its ties to the University of Chicago – wasn't part of the University of Chicago, but it was – and they worked out a deal with Chicago Theological Seminary that they would take some of us, and there was actually three of us, and they would put us through a process of getting our bachelors' of divinity degree, but, at the

same time, work for the Chicago YMCA, which, at the time, was the largest YMCA in the world, and the Chicago YMCA agreed to cooperate with the seminary and provide us with work experience and pay us to do work with college students in an urban environment, and that was very new, that was very cutting-edge, because most YMCAs on the college campus were campuses like Princeton that, you know, were in communities, but not urban; nobody was really reaching students, so the idea was that we would experiment with different ideas to try to reach college students in an urban commuter environment, where there was no real "campus" like we were used to. So, three of us – we, each of the chairmen – I was one of the chairman; the next year, Jim Schultz was the chairman; and the year after him was Farley Maxwell, chairman, and the three of us decided we would go to Chicago, enroll at CTS, work for the YMCA, and begin our careers (Laughs.) in the YMCA. So, that's kind of how I got to Chicago.

JM So, I wanted to ask about your involvement in the Oak Park Area Lesbian and Gay Association.

JA Uh – well – we're skipping a lot of history, here. Trying to think. I mean, do you want to – how much do you want to know about my coming out experience? Because – that sort of, like, leads up to the Oak Park Lesbian and Gay association. I mean, I was – when I was in college, I was not out. Nobody was out, those days, and even at seminary – at seminary, I was out, but I was

out in the sense that I had written a paper for a professor saying that I had a "homosexual problem," and I wanted a family, and I wanted a normal life, so how could I get over this "homosexual problem?" And being a very liberal seminary that it was, it still wasn't ready, as it certainly today – I think the president is gay. They worked very diligently not to kick me out, which is what would've been traditional, most places, because I said I was a homosexual, but because they involve me in all sorts of various therapeutic opportunities to try to quote "deal" with my homosexuality. Well, none of that particularly worked (Laughs.), and, eventually, I came to peace with my homosexuality, and, finally, I had been, in the meantime, married for fifteen years. I began therapy with a Jungian therapist, ended up getting divorced a year later, met somebody, and he and I lived together. I had been teaching school – again, there's a whole history about my vocational life that I'm skipping over right now – and we decided that we, after a year in a small town where I had been teaching, we would move to Oak Park, because he had friends there, so he and I moved to Oak Park. This was in – I'm getting a little fuzzy about dates (Wipes hands across table.) – but we were – we lived – we lived in Chicago for a couple of years, then we moved to Oak Park, and we were lived in Oak park for a couple of years, had been together for maybe six years. He died of AIDS. I, then – and at that time (Taps on and wipes hands across table several times, from here forward.), the Oak park – there was movement in Oak Park on the part of some people to try to create a – trying to think what came first – and Oak Park was a very liberal community, so

there were groups of people who were beginning to make movements to get the village to pass non-discrimination ordinances. There was a whole series of ordinances about civil unions and stuff like that, so, twenty-five years ago– twenty six years ago, a group of us got together to form the Oak Park Lesbian and Gay association. I was a founding member; I was on the board; they met at my house, and, over the years, continued to press for various, you know, liberties for gay and lesbian people, and it was not that hard to do in Oak Park. There was plenty of opposition from the very conservative churches, but, for the most part, Oak Park was pretty open to what was going on.

JM How did your sexuality interact with your religious beliefs and your participation in social services?

JA You know, I was – by the time – it never, you know, once I was out, once I was really comfortable with who I was – this was mostly because of the psychotherapy; I had a really great Jungian therapist, and, boy – I mean, as I say, it got me out of a marriage, which was not a bad marriage, but I knew I had to have – I mean, I wanted the physical satisfaction of a homosexual relationship, so I was so out by that time that I – I mean, it was not an issue for me. I ended up working for a social service agency for twenty-five years, and I – it was never an issue. I mean, when Dennis died, I got involved with AIDS counseling – I actually volunteered for the AIDS hotline. That was my, sort of like, my involvement, at the time, and then my work with the Oak Park

Lesbian and Gay association, but it was all so above board that there was nothing sneaky about it or – I mean, it was just natural, and I just moved in circles and worked with people where that wasn't important, and my work for twenty-five years with a social service agency had nothing to do with the fact that I was gay.

JM I wanted to ask you about the Why, the coffee shop that you mentioned before. Could you tell us a little bit about what that was and what it meant to you?

JA Well, I told you that we came to Chicago to experiment with ways of reaching urban college students, so one of the things that we did was start a coffee house on the Northwest side of Chicago, next to Wright Junior College – Addison and something, and the YMCA was very much behind it. I mean, they put out the money, rented the facility, and – I didn't – I wasn't involved with it, at the very beginning. My partner, Jim Schultz – I mean, my colleague, Jim Schultz (Laughs.), was the one who really started it, but I got involved with it later, in 1968 – maybe late '67, '68 – and it was basically a place where college students could come and, you know, sit around a table – it's just like a regular coffee house, and it had – and, again, it kind of had some of the same spirit that I had had always about the YMCA, a place where people could come and sit around and talk. It was a safe zone, so to speak, and it was, you know, the students kind of controlled it; they set up how it was going to be,

decorated. They painted the walls black, you know (Laughs.), and then used chalk to write on the walls. It was a very typical coffee house type of deal, and so the – at the time, I had been in – again, I was employed by the Chicago YMCA, again, as part of this outreach program to college students, and one of the things we would do was we would sponsor work camps where college students would come in and work in inner city community organizations – not social service organizations, so much, but community organizations, real organizations that were working to organize communities – poor communities – which meant we were really bringing in a lot of white kids to work in, basically, black communities. Well, because of 1968 and the death of Martin Luther King, the riots in Chicago, it was our decision to, instead of bringing all these white college students into the city to work with black organizations, our job really was to do something out in the white communities, the white, racist communities. That was where our mission really should be, and if you see, there is a certain kind of tieback to my experiences early on about work camps in the inner city, where you learn a kind of equality of work. The idea sort of was we really had no business, you know, bringing white kids into the city to work in black neighborhoods; we needed to be working in white neighborhoods, because that's where part of the problem was. So, I happened to have on my staff at the coffee house a kid – wasn't a kid, was a graduate student – from George Williams College, and he was a real radical. He was intimately involved in the rioting that occurred around the Democratic Convention – actually had his arm broken by the

police – and he took over the – I mean, and I gave him the responsibility to set up a series of seminars on what we called "white racism" (Continues to wipe hands across desk.), and we had posters printed – "White Racism" (Laughs.), and then, you know, a series of seminars, and we got somebody from Northwestern, I think, and somebody – I forget the people who were scheduled to be – lead the seminars – and the idea was to invite the community, and to try to create a dialogue with people in the Northwest side of Chicago. Well, there was an organization in the community called "Operation Eight Ball." I think it was called "Eight Ball" because they saw themselves as being behind the eight ball, but it was a white organization, proudly racist, hated what we were doing, hated this white racism tag that we were putting on them, and on everything else; so, when we would hold these seminars, they came and picketed the coffee house and engaged in a whole series of activities, including planting dope inside the coffee house and then calling the police, who came and found the pot, and they would picket using whistles filled with spit that they would blow their whistles into our faces. I mean, it was a very, very tense time, but it's what should've been happening; I mean, it was a good thing in that it was doing what we should've been doing. The YMCA (Laughs.), our parents, so to speak, the people who employed us, who supported this coffee house and had their whole system of YMCA directors in different areas, who did in fact run gym and swim programs and did in fact have boards, white boards for the most part, (Laughs.) so the YMCA was kind of in a pickle because here we were, causing

uproar in a community that poor Mr. Litney, who was a director of the YMCA for that area – his whole board was mortified that this was going on, so he put on a lot of pressure on the YMCA downtown that was employing us to stop this business of "white racism" and everything, so there was that tension, and, you know, there was a mixed up affair. I, at one point, agreed to stop, and then had a second thought and decided, no, we can't stop. I mean, the pressure to stop was intense, and then I had to call my boss at two in the morning to say "Look, I'm sorry; I said we would stop, but we can't. You know, this is too important. We've got to do it," and they stood behind us; we did it. So, that's the story of the Why coffee house. It didn't have much of a life after that; it didn't have the financial stability to keep going, and times were changing, and I ended up working for a year (Laughs.) for this Dale Litney, who hated me so much. The idea was that I was going to become a more traditional YMCA director.

JM How did the incident with Operation Eight Ball and such – how did that interact with both your religion and your beliefs regarding social services and civil rights?

JA Well, you know, I think that that was my civil rights activity. At seminary, I attended – I mean, my Sunday mornings, I went to an Episcopal church (Laughs.) and served in that church, so I – maybe because I liked the ritual and the incense and the stuff that went around, it was important to me,

so I – and I had came out of that background, so it was kind of natural, but – and here was I was at a congregation, or United Church of Christ Seminary, studying to be a YMCA director, going to an Episcopal church for my quote "worship experience" (Taps table and wipes hands across it several times.) I think, in the evolution of things, it led me, between my social activism, that's what the Why coffee house stuff was, my YMCA experience with people questing and searching – you know, I came away with not a very high opinion of organized religion. There were certain people that I admired, but – and I guess, intellectually, I became an "a-theist," not an – "athetist" implies you don't believe in anything. "A-theism" means you don't necessarily believe in some personality, like an old man sitting up there, creating judgment or deciding your fate. To me, my religion – sense of religion is of mystery and of wonder, rather than some god who kind of ran things. That had never had much of an appeal. So, I guess, today, I would consider myself an "a-theist." I believe I – I believe in the mystery of the universe. I believe there's probably something more to life than just this life, but what that life is or what is beyond, or – and I also had some experiences along the way with some psychic phenomenon – people who had experiences that pointed you towards a sense of wonder and awe that there was something going on beyond this level of reality, let's put it that way, and so that I admired and believe goes on, but I don't find the church as an organization, as an institution – to the extent that it does good for the poor, that's great; to the extent that it harbors riches, accumulates wealth, and is exclusive or, at its

worst, the kind of right-wing religious fanaticism that we see today – that is so horrible and so unacceptable that I don't even – I mean, it's just evil people, but even the mainstream churches, the Lutherans, the Episcopalians, the Methodists, the Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and the Roman Catholics, to me – to the extent that they're doing some kind of social good, that's good, but, to believe that that's a route or a gateway to some kind of other life when you die, or is somehow mysteriously governing your life, I don't – I think I grew out of – I mean, all that I've told you about how I evolved with the things that I did kind of leads me to that position.

JM Now, the incident with the Why, that was late '67 or early '68 –

JA No, that was '68.

JM – '68, that was '68; now, we're in '68. So, this is sort of the point – the really high point at which all the civil rights movements had a lot of tension, a lot of rioting, and a lot of tumult. What – I know you'd said a colleague of yours had personal experience at the Democratic National Convention. What experiences did you have with rioting, with protests?

JA Well, 1968 (Clears throat very loudly.), although I had the coffee house, I also – the Why led me to Hugh O'Brian, who was an actor, played Wyatt Earp – great guy, ladies' man, and Hugh had a foundation, and he brought colle –

high school students together, to have various experiences, and he, in 1968, because of the conventions, he built his foundation seminars around the conventions, so he had twenty-five high school students who went to Miami for the Republican Convention, and he had twenty-five other students who who later came to Chicago for the Democratic Convention, and the YMCA led me to him to shepherd these kids around – I was their counselor, and – Hugh was the one who opened doors, he knew everybody, he got us the tickets into the conventions, and, you know, called upon his friends – Senator Dirksen, for example, was a friend of his, so we miraculously got a meeting with Senator Dirksen – so I attended both those conventions – not every day, because I couldn't get tickets every day, and unfortunately, I – what – we were not in attendance the day, at the Democratic Convention, when there was this huge uproar between Senator Ribicoff and Mayor Daily about what was going on outside the convention hall, which is where all the rioting was taking place, and where my intern from the coffee house was part of all the confrontation, but my job had – was – at that day, on the day when all the rioting was to go on – was to get the kids, who were staying at the Why Hotel on Wabash – it's no longer there, but – I mean, not the Why Hotel – yeah, the Why Hotel – it's not there anymore, but it was just down the street from the Hilton, where all of this was going on, and I had to get the kids from there to my house, which – I lived in Lincoln Park – I had just been married, the year before – because we didn't have tickets to get into the convention, but we wanted to see what was going on, but it was a real trick and a half because of

all the uproar that was going on in the city, but we finally got everybody to my house, and we watched the convention from there. You know, it was – I mean, they were incredibly important conventions – at the Miami convention, where they nominated Richard Nixon, he stood up and talked grandly about – he was going to appoint an attorney general who would, you know, put right to order and get rid of the problems in the streets, and on and on and on (Taps table.), and, of course, that attorney general ended up in jail – trying to remember his name – trying to think of it, coming down here (Taps table multiple times, here on.), but he was caught up in the Watergate scandal, and ended up in jail. I always thought that was kind of funny and ironic. The – so my experience with the convention in Chicago was one of a facilitator, like I had been, as you can tell, all my life – a facilitator of people coming together – so my job was to keep the kids "A," happy, "B," not running off and getting killed. They were a naïve group; they were not a radical group of protestors. They came from Kansas and Colorado, every state of the union – he picked his groups from different states, so they were pretty pliable, malleable. They did what I wanted them to do; they weren't trying to be difficult, but they were – I mean, I would like to know – I don't know – I don't know, to this day, how that experience ultimately affected them, but, certainly, in retrospect, it was a very important turning point. I mean, it was one of the things that continued to propel the quest for justice that goes on today against the kinds of corruptions, and – I mean, the mayor was pissed as

hell that anybody would stand up there and say that the police, his police, were beating kids, but they were. (Laughs.)

JM You'd watched the convention on T.V., as you'd mentioned –

JA Well, I went – I was there for some of it, and watched it on T.V. otherwise.

JM – that day.

JA Yeah.

JM What was the coverage like?

JA Well, I think it was probably pretty – you couldn't – you couldn't obscure what was going on. You couldn't obscure what was – how the police were responding to the protestors, so without necessarily making any comment about it or making it one way or the other, it was just sort of there to see, and the stuff inside the convention that'd gone – that was going on, was really shocking. I don't forget, also – who was the liberal senator who – I can't remember his name – but there was all sorts of commentary from various more left-wing, more progressive candidates and observers about how – the problem was that, at one level, what the kids were doing, what the protesters were doing, was clearly sort of like beyond the bounds of what was

appropriate. You know, they were trespassing on property, they were, you know, goating the police – they were trying the best to aggravate everybody; that was their purpose – but the way the police responded, and the way the city responded, was what got the city a bad name – was what was really highlighted when you watched it on television – that your sympathies – my sympathies would've been with the protestors, anyhow, but for people who might be on the edge to see the way the police, you know, would use their stantions to beat on people's heads – meant your sympathies shifted to – I mean, part of the problem is that, if you believe a certain way, the people that you surround yourself with will be of like mind, so my world, in my Lincoln Park community and all of the things that I was involved in there, which was more than just politics – a lot of what I was doing in 1968 was – my house became a meeting place of radical students, and there was a large group of us who were involved in helping kids who were running away – became a kind of underground railroad for kids who had left home and were running away, but that was kind of – I mean, those were side issues, at the time – the – but – so the people that I talked to and watched television with and fraternized with all had the same take on things. This was also at a time when the whole National Student Association organization blew up and was shown to be a front organization for the C.I.A., and that was big, and many of my close friends were much involved in that. That happened more in '67 than '68, but there was an anti – there was an anti organization bent to the world that I lived in.

JM How did what had happened outside the convention – how did this confrontation – how did Mayor Daily's handling of the situation – how did that influence your views of Mayor Daily, of the police, of the administration?

JA It just confirmed what we believed, those of us who believed in like-mindedness – what we believed that the city was a corrupt, patronage-driven city. That has since proven to be true, and is still, to a certain extent, true. (Laughs.) The mayor was ugly – he was ugly the day that he confronted Ribicoff at the convention. I think – I'm trying to remember, I don't to misquote or – I think he was caught mouthing "fuck you," but I can't remember whether that's true or not, I think it was true, but he was mad, so it confirmed, my group, so to speak, my colleagues, my contemporaries, that, you know, he didn't like being called to the carpet. It was a great embarrassment to the city, in the end; it was very embarrassing, because, in the end, the police came off as being really brutal, and that's why – I mean, and that's how – that's why the city's reputation, at that point, was damaged. To us, it was, well, now you see it – I mean, now, you can see what we've been saying all along.

JM Could you articulate for me what "your group" was – who you were, what you believed in?

JA At that time? In 1968? Well, in 1967, and in ’65 – ’66, ’67 – I lived – I had graduated from seminary in ’65. I moved to the North side in, I think, ’66, or so – yeah, ’66, and I was introduced to a woman in the Lincoln Park area who, every Wednesday, she would watch Bill Cosby and Robert Culp in the sitcom “I Spy.” Was Cosby’s big – first big deal for him – so people got accustomed to coming by on Wednesday nights to her house to watch “I Spy,” and it became kind of a social thing, and “I Spy” became – didn’t become so important anymore, but she had an open house every Wednesday night, and lots and lots of different people – in fact, one of the people who came there was Roger Ebert before he became – before he even started doing movies, he was just a reporter for the – I think, for the Daily News – and he came, periodically, so this was a long-standing thing that she did, and I, when I moved to Oak Park, somebody told me I should go to this open house and meet people, so I met the people at this open house, and they tended to be an eclectic group of different kinds of people, some political, some not, some just going to school, or whatever, and, to make a long story short, the woman who did this was Gayle, and that was – and I married her, in 1967. And we kept the hou – we bought a house in Lincoln Park on Bissel, and she had a son who was four at the time, and I adopted him, and she continued – we continued to have the open houses, even after we were married. So, in 1967, and I – we were married in ’67 – in 1967 and 1968, our open houses became a kind of gathering place for all sorts of people, including civil rights people. Jim Bevel came many times. Other lesser-known came – I knew Jesse Jackson, he had

been at seminary when I was at seminary, so I knew him – not very well, he never came to an open house, but I knew him enough to go up and shake hands with him, but the – and these open houses began to – I mean, these were big meetings – they weren't meetings, they were social affairs, but lots and lots of people, so there as a whole community of people – this is where a lot of the connections were made. I had a seminary classmate who was working for the local church in Lincoln Park that was dealing with Hispanic gang members who were becoming civil-rights oriented and pressing for civil rights for Hispanics – just so many other things that were going on – working with runaways was a big deal for some people, had did that – a lot of times, spent with individual kids who connected with mental health facilities in the city, or whatever – whatever, I mean, just a lot of that going on. So that was the context in which my involvement with the coffee – being from the coffee house, and the conventions, and all of that stuff – I had a weekly group of people that were my sort of spiritual support group for all that was going on, and during the coffee house days, in late summer, it was important to have that kind of support, because I was being pressed from all sides to do what I was doing. I don't know whether that answered your question, but press on

JM What responsibilities – you said that you were pressed from all sides, that it was important, that it was important for you to have these seminars and these meetings, it was important – to what extent was it important? What greater purpose did you feel you were serving, if you were to articulate that?

JA The coffee house stuff? Well, as I said, it was an effort to really – for white people to put their money where their mouth was. You know, it was fine to go support the civil rights activities that were going on in the inner city, but it was ballsy to go out into the enemy territory. I mean, those people on the Northwest side were not nice people. I mean, they were hateful, so when I talk about being picketed and having whistles filled with spit that they would blow in your face, dope plants – that was tough stuff, but to me, that's what we should be doing. In a cer – if you want to put it in religious terms, testifying where, you know, where it counted, where we should be, taking on the white racism that was creating the problems of poor people being ghettoed and victimized by an unequal society. Now, the white folks in Operation Eight Ball, as hateful as they were, they too felt oppressed. I mean, they felt society turning against them, accusing them, and that black people were – I mean, they worried that black people were going to quote "get 'em." Now, that was real – I mean, that was – that was – they – they were really worried about that. Their – their concern was genuine – misplaced, maybe, and there were more constructive ways they could've behaved, but, when they reacted to our presumption of coming in and accusing them of white racism, that just infuriated them, and I appreciate – could appreciate their – I mean, one of the funny things – we developed a set of sort of like manifestos at the coffee house: we would not discriminate, we would only hire companies – I don't know how – I don't know what it all said, but I think, at

one point, there was a point where we said – where we made the – where we made the argument that we were not necessarily in favor of integration. That was, in a way, a kind of ultra-radical position to take. Some people took that position – for us, it was kind of a posture, I think, (Laughs.) but the idea of separation we were saying – we were not trying to say you have to be integrated; we're just saying, you know, that you can't – you don't have to hate each other. Nobody pushes, or pushed, that position very much in those days, but we did it, sort of, to try to reach out to talk to these people who clearly did not want to talk.

JM What was your political stance, in this year?

JA I was a democrat, I mean I was a left-wing – I was a progressive.

JM And were the majority of the people that met at your house also the same?

JA Yeah, they would – I would say probably the majority were. I mean, many, many were not – wouldn't even con – wouldn't even want to consider themselves democrats – one of them would consider themselves left – I mean, there were a lot of people in that group who were affiliated with very left-wing organizations. Some would be – some could be considered communist, so it wasn't like there was a bunch of mainstream democrats particularly, but, when it came to voting – I mean, it's tricky, because in

Chicago, democra – I mean, the democratic machine, if you supported that, you were supporting the corruption and the dysfunction of the whole system.

JM What was your – what were your opinions on the Linden-Johnson administration, and of the war in particular?

JA Yeah. Well, of course, it was a very anti-war group, so that was part of the package, I mean, of the people that I was with, that – it was clearly – we were clearly against the war and against Johnson's perpetuation of the war. Now, that was a mixed bag because Johnson did some very, very, very good things, domestically, in terms of war on poverty and things like that, so it was – it created a kind of schizophrenia, I think, among many of us. You know, I should say that I continued to play the role, which I think you can see the roots of, as all that I've told you today – of a kind of person who brought people together, the closest activist kind of thing that I ever came to was the coffee house experience, and I didn't really organize that mys – my intern Tim did. Now, I had to stand up there and deal with it and support him and help to make it happen, but I was never very comfortable with kind of role. I was much more – and the open houses that Gayle had started and which became a kind of institution in the community was more to my nature, bringing many, many people together, so I had the ability to see both sides to many issues, including Linden-Johnson, because you couldn't deny what he was doing domestically, but the horror of the war and the inappropriateness

of the war – the wrongness of the war was unfortunately what he's most remembered for.

JM What did you think – and the people in your group think – of the development of the bomb?

JA Of the what? Of the bomb?

JM Of the bomb, of the atomic bomb.

JA I think that – I think that the majority would say it was, you know a horrible – I mean it was a horri – the use of the bomb, and the, kind of, the cold war that it produced for both sides, you know, trying to keep up with the arms race was very destructive and sucked off a lot of resources and diverted a lot of attention away from domestic issues, which, even today, had not been resolved. There're still ghettos and still poor people in horrible situations. The fact that the killing is now confined within these ghetto areas where people are killing each other doesn't make it any less horrible, so you could say the whole bomb, the whole war, all that stuff, were man's inhumanity to man, which you see around the world today – I mean, groups love to keep killing each other.

JM What was the most shocking or memorable thing that you remember from that day at the convention?

JA Well, it was certainly the police's reaction to the protestors. Now, the protestors had a good thing going; they had masses of people (Laughs.) you know, and, in a certain sense, the police played right into their hands by overreacting, so – but that's – but that's what you remember. I mean, you remember that day, you remember the mayor's anger at anybody dared to criticize his city or their handling of what was going on, and you remember, you know that confrontation, and I had plenty of people who were involved in that confrontation. Some of them got badly hurt; Tim got his arm broken by a gun stock, so all that's pretty vivid and pretty shocking.

JM In terms of the future of the city and of the nation, what did you anticipate that the events of that night would be?

JA Well –

JM What sort of change do you think would occur?

JA Yeah. It's so hard to separate that question from, you know – when I was done with the coffee house, at the end of the summer, that was all behind me, and I moved into a more traditional role and ended up being a director of a

YMCA in the western suburbs – so my life flowed on, and my youngest son was born that – the next January – he was – Gayle was pregnant all during all this 1968 business, and you know, there were lots of things that had happened. We had taken a trip to Mexico in the spring with – and when – and then King had been assassinated, then Robert "Bobby" Kennedy had been assassinated, then the coffee house, and then the conventions, and all of that – in a certain sense, I think I was exhausted wanted my life to even out, and then my son was born. That was a responsibility, a new kind of responsibility, and life sort of went back to a more normal, and I don't know that – I mean, I continued to be in touch and be involved with the people around our open houses and continued to be involved with issues – with local issues, like the Hispanic gang members who were trying to become more civil-rights oriented, or runaways that were coming through our system. I don't think anybody had any hope that there was some big turnaround, you know, because, in the end, Nixon won the election – I'm trying to separate what I might have thought, if I stopped to think about it, and separate what I might have thought then with what was going on with my life, which was establishing a different kind of stability, and after such an exhausting year, where so much had in my life – you know, from being in Mexico for a vacation, for assassinations, for coffee houses, for conventions – I was ready to move on, and so it's hard for me to – and because I'm not a particularly politically oriented kind of person – again, my role has always been to bring people together or to create circumstances where people could

meet. I didn't have a lot – I guess I didn't have a lot invested in whether this meant real social change or not. I mean, the war still went on. There was still – the inner cities were still a mess. Mayor Daily still rained supreme. He might've been embarrassed, but it didn't dethrone him, or anything. And so my mi – I was back to my roots, so to speak, and I – and I began work in a community in the near West side – or, near West suburbs, which involved a lot of mental health outreach to kids, and stuff like that. That was more my thing. I was never very political, so I guess I never had any – now, I have friends today who are still very political and see a lot of that as turning points in their lives, at least, as far as creating a greater commitment to social change, but the civil rights movement was well on its way – I mean, that was old news in lots of ways. I think a lot of the protests around the convention was more middle class folk, hippies, all the political types – you know, trying to throw off the oppression of a society which is pretty organized from the top down – not a lot of democracy, so to speak – and then people felt frustrated at not being able to have their voices heard; certainly, that was what black leaders were concerned about. Whether 1968 changed a lot of that, I don't know, but it certainly changed, I suppose, people, who became more committed to social change and to social justice. I think the churches became more radical, more concerned with social justice, who felt left behind, if they hadn't been involved, got themselves involved in what was going on at the time. I mean, churches took a lot of big leadership – I don't mean just in 1968, but up until that time, had been involved in major ways in

efforts with social change. I don't think it changed much politically. I think it did probably change a lot socially – that there was a greater sense – that there was a need for major social change, and certainly the civil rights legislation, the war on poverty produced some significant, significant changes, and while I – I mean, and I think, for a lot of black folks, it created opportunities that are reflected even today, where there are certainly far more black people in positions – in social service agency positions, particularly, throughout the systems, who – you know, who could get an education, who could find leadership positions, find organizations that were progressive enough to understand how efforts should be made, what kind of efforts needed to be made to help people get out of poverty, that sort of thing.

JM What changes or accomplishments do you personally feel, in that year, responsible for?

JA Well, bringing people together, through those open houses – you know, I mean, I exposed fifty high school kids to a whole variety of experiences, to sit down with politicians and leaders and to have their seminars, and then to see these conventions firsthand, and then the coffee house, I'm very proud of.

JM How did all these events, in 1968 – how did they communicate with you on a personal level? How did they influence who you were?

JA Well, I think – it's interesting. I think it – it's, you know, it's hard to say how this worked, because I spent the next few years working in a very traditional – it wasn't a traditional YMCA setting, actually. It was a YMCA setting that had no building; it was outreach to kids, but not so much political, or anything, and I was also involved in some city-wide organizing of different community groups that were working with kids, but, after a couple of years, I decided I wanted to teach. I had that in the back of my mind, and I actually went back to school and got a degree at Northwestern and taught for seven years – so, in some ways, 1968 was the top of my activist life, but what I did was continued on with my eclectic bringing people together, kind of working, not politically or confrontationally, but trying to do the best job possible, and teaching was an interesting experience for me. I got tired of it, after a while, after seven years, because it was – you know, you didn't have much adult contact when you taught high school. You were just in a classroom, and you saw teachers occasionally in a smoke-filled room, but – and so then I went into social service, but I – I mean, and, you know, I think my life has been – you know, 1968 was sort of the peak of my quote "active involvement" in the world of politics or social action, and after that time – not because I was disappointed, but because I think that my nature was different than some of my colleagues, who went on to become involved in community organizations or political organizations, and things like that. I'm not sure I'm exactly answering your question, but it's a hard question to answer. You're asking me what it personally did for me. Is that what you're asking? I think it

confirmed that I needed to do things that I felt most comfortable with. Running that coffee house was not the most comfortable thing I ever did – I was pushed by my interns, who were structuring the seminars, and stuff like that – you know, I supported them, but, left to my own devices alone, I probably wouldn't have done it, because it was not so much in my nature. I'm glad I did it; I'm proud of it, but that's how I feel about it.

JM How did 1968 influence the way religion connected to your life?

JA Well, by that time, I – I did not attend church. I graduated from seminary in '65. I guess I may continue to go to the Episcopal church in Hyde Park, after that first year, because I lived in Hyde Park for that year, first year, but by the time I moved to the north side, I had no church affiliation, and whatever church affiliation I had was or – churches that had active social service programs, like a church that served runaways – there was one in Lincoln Park – so I was involved with a program, but not – when we got married, we were married in the basement of Wellington Avenue Church – not up in the sanctuary, but in the basement, and I was married by one of my classmates from seminary, and it was a quote "religious ceremony," I guess; we wrote our own ceremony, and it probably had some of the traditional language in it, but it was more of a celebration – so, my formal religious connections had pretty well dried up (Laughs.) by the time I got to the North side and got

married, and all that stuff, so my children were not raised with any particular church – we didn't go to church, send them to church, or anything like that.

JM What were the most positive and negative consequences of the Democratic National Convention and that year, as a whole?

JA Well, I think, positive, it created an awareness – kind of showed the ugliness of the mayor's face. I mean, that was good for people to see, who he was, and it energized a lot of people to become active, opposing the machine that was running, you know, the city. Negatively – you know, I don't know that there was anything negative that came out of it particularly, unless it was that it didn't – I don't think that it, in the end, changed a whole lot. I mean, I think – I think a lot of – I think a lot of community organizations got strengthened by the activities that were going on around that time, not just 1968, but there was a great, you know, Saul Alinsky organi – you know, techniques of organizing – you know, Obama comes out of that community organization mold that still exists today – grass roots organizing, helping people to organize their own lives, speak up for themselves, that sort of thing. That's what was going on, you know, below the surface, and I think a lot of – I mean, the rioting, we haven't talked a lot about it, but the rioting that occurred when Doctor King was assassinated was an expression, a frustration, that here was somebody who really was beloved and a leader, struck down by society, and it was, in a sense, saying "fuck you," you know, and people got

pretty, you know (Laughs.) irate about it – a lot of destruction, a lot of businesses got destroyed in those riots, but, as I say, it propelled some of us to go out into the white community and hold a mirror up to what was going, and that was a good thing, that was a positive. How much lasting effect it had, I don't know.

JM What parallels do you see between society then, in terms of all the social issues, and society now?

JA And for be – between 1968 and now? Well (Laughs.) I mean, you could argue that not a lot has changed. I mean, in the South side of Chicago and the West side of Chicago, where schools are inferior, where the funding system for public education is undermined by charter schools and other underfunded efforts – this whole pention crisis is horrible, because teachers fought for those pentions – struck for them, in some cases – and, for them to be denied or changed is really a tragedy – so, in lots of ways nothing has – nothing has changed. I mean, poor people are still poor and being killed; children are still undernourished and undereducated; the jails are full of people who shouldn't be there. I mean, you could just make a good case for not a whole hell of a lot has changed. Think there's been a growing middle class – black middle class – and that's significant; that is a – a result of those days, in the '60s. That may be the most powerful legacy that exists today – but we still live in kind of a segregated society. I mean, Oak Park, which we pride ourselves on our

integration and in the schools, where there's black and white students – black students still kind of tend to hang out with black students, and white students tend to hang out with white students. That may be inevitable and not necessarily bad, but race relations haven't taken huge leaps and bounds – at a certain level, they have. In social service work, which is – I was in, for twenty five years – you know, there is much greater equality of managerial positions among black and white. I think the politics of the city is just as bad as it was, and we're seeing that, and maybe we're getting to a point where people are going to say "enough of this." I think progressive politicians, progressive thinkers, see the current mayor as just another cutout of the same mold, kind of wheeler-dealer. You know, my generation – the radicals from my generation, like the – like the Thom Ayers and the Bernardine Dhorns, are now respected professors are universities; when Obama is tied to any one of them, they haul out all the rhetoric that they were, you know, bomb-throwers and stuff like that, or advocated violence and violent overthrow – but there's probably a stronger – I don't know, I was going to say progressive voice, today, than there was in – not a radical voice, but I'm talking about Bernie Sanders or Elizabeth Warren, or – well, Chuy Garcia would be one – you know, voices who see the need for fundamental change, whether anything – and, you know, the question then becomes "did anything fundamentally change in 1968, between 1968 and now," and I think there were some things that fundamentally changed. You tend – I tend to sort of reflect on the things that didn't change, but, like I say, the middle class – black

middle class, I think is significant. I think – I don't know how your generation, for example – you know, my son's generation, he's forty-five, so, I mean – and he – he's not very political at all, but he has very progressive ideas – climate change, for example, is something he's very concerned about – pretty well convinced it's too late – there's not much that can be done; it's just plain too late, so he's a little fatalistic about some of that stuff – there's really just not a whole lot that you can do – but, on the other hand, there still is, you know, people who are battling for issues related to climate change. There's still so much evil in efforts to suppress voter rights, keep people from voting, because it hurts your party as opposed to the other party – those are bad things that have never been eradicated. There's still an awful lot of racism that runs through the society. You see it now in these examples of police brutality – Ferguson, other places. Maybe there'll be a tipping point, but I don't think it's come – I don't think 1968 was – I think it would be to glorify it a little too much to think that it substantially changed a lot. I think other things – again, the civil rights legislation is probably more – ending of the war – Reagan was – in and was a disaster for – you know, from a progressive's point of view – just talking about my own political biases – was – is a complete disaster to the way business is given – you know, now, today – the ability to buy elections by putting millions and millions of dollars into political campaigns – a supreme court that is rewriting history in a very, very bad way – so, you know, in a certain sense, nothing has changed – and Reagan whipped out a lot of gain, and his legacy lives on, unfortunately.

JM As the final question for the interview, I'd like to ask why it was that you agreed to participate in the project.

JA Well, Stan Davis is a good friend of mine. He actually helped with the coffee house picketing, and everything. He was running an outreach program to white youth in that same area, at the time, and he and I were good friends that worked with the Why for a long time – so I ran into him, the other day – he lives in Oak Park – and his daughter, Heidi, who I knew as a tiny three-year-old – were having dinner – and so we got to talking. We were finding out what Heidi Marshall was doing, and so that's how I found out about – and Stan was telling me about the project.

[Recording interrupted.]

JM [Thank you for your time.]