

PRESERVING OUR HISTORY: ROTARY CLUB OF GREENSBORO
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: JOE MULLIN

INTERVIEWER: KATHELENE MCCARTY SMITH

DATE: May 19, 2008

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

KS: It's May 19, 2008, and my name is Kathelene Smith, and I'm here with Joe Mullin to interview him for the Preserving Our History: Rotary Club of Greensboro oral history project. Good morning Mr. Mullin, how are you?

JM: I'm doing fine Kathelene.

KS: Well thank you for having me to your home today. Please tell me when and where you were born.

JM: I grew up in Excelsior Springs, Missouri, in a little town about twenty-five miles from Kansas City. But I was born on March 29, 1924, fifteen miles from there in Knoxville, Missouri. My mother's sister had married a country doctor, and so, of course, she went to Knoxville, and then brought me home, and I lived in Excelsior Springs for the next twenty-one years. My father was, when I was born, sixty-years-old and my mother thirty-eight – there was twenty-two years difference in their ages. He had had a wife and three children who all died. His wife died with tuberculosis, one child died with tuberculosis, a daughter died of scarlet fever, and the other child died with spinal meningitis. And so then – my mother had never been married. She was in her early thirties; he was in his mid-fifties when they married.

And he had always farmed through the years, and why he came to Excelsior Springs, I don't know. But he had a farm nearby, and bought a home on 210 Dunbar and it didn't have inside facilities, it didn't have a basement – and he paid cash for it and then he, himself, would contract to bring people in to do certain things – but he put in a full basement there and installed a furnace himself and had a tinsmith who he worked with and he began incidentally to do this furnacing thing around Excelsior Springs; he was good at that. But he had this steady job of a caretaker of a Disciples of Christ Church at Woods Memorial Christian Church and he – my mother and dad both did not go past the eighth grade. They were both eighth grade graduates, but they were good readers and encouraging to me. I had had a sister who was four years older than I, so when I

was in high school she had already just graduated. We were never really close. She married then and lived in New Orleans and died at fifty-three.

My mother died on May 1, in 1941. I was seventeen, and dad and I were eating breakfast, and I said, “Where’s mom?” And he said, “Well, I don’t know why she hasn’t gotten up. She was very quiet when I left the room.” And I went in, and she had died in the night with a massive heart attack. And she had always thought that, obviously, my dad was sixty when I was born, that he would die first. I remember that she would always use the word “breadwinner.” “You’re going to be the breadwinner.” But then she died and my dad died when I was twenty. So my high school – I loved high school. I was president of my senior class. There were only eighty students, so it wasn’t too hard to beat seventy-nine others.

KS: So where did you go to high school?

JM: I went to Excelsior Springs High School, and it brought in students from around the county. The town was small. You’re going to be kind of impressed or stunned when I tell you how I ended up where I am, but the high school – I think the principal was a woman. The principal kind of felt sorry for me because my mother had died and she sort of took me in. English was my favorite subject, English Lit [Literature] and English Composition, Grammar, and Creative Writing. And she taught the senior year on that, but she let me take it my junior year and my senior year. I took it twice. And not having an educated family, I think it really helped me with all the rest of it that I really – incidentally, I took typing. I was the only boy in the class, but I was absolutely in love with the typing teacher. She had just finished college; her name was Vera Mae Goodloe. [Laughs] I’ll tell this quickly. She said to me, “You have to have a forty word pen. I can’t pass you if you don’t have a forty word pen.” So she kept me in after school and here she was standing over me. So I tried it once, I didn’t do it. I said, “I think Miss Goodloe, if you’d set the clock and go out in the hall, I think I could do it.” So she set the clock, went out in the hall, and I typed forty-two words a minute. So, but I type every day, you know, so it’s such an asset.

And then, you see, I didn’t think I would ever get to go to – how would I ever get to go to college – it’s the Depression, my dad made fifty dollars a month, I mean, I’m not going anywhere. So my senior year, I ended up taking Home Ec. [Economics]. There were two – me and another boy were in the classroom. Yes. I learned I never say, “for John and I,” I always get the object – anyway, Bob Sharp and I. Well I learned – we served meals to the faculty, and I learned that the salad fork goes on the outside and the dessert fork on the inside and the main fork in the middle, and I learned manners. I had them coming out of my ears by the end of the year. And all that was really helping me for the future, although, of course, I didn’t realize it. So, when I finished high school, I went to work.

We had two little banks in the town, and I went to work as a bookkeeper in the local bank. I spoke at my senior graduation, and I remember – see this was just six months after December 7, 1941, and so the War was coming on – and I remember talking about this, that we had no idea what the future held for us as graduates. Well, I was called up for service – and I had developed a hernia in junior high – and when I went out to Fort Leavenworth, I was rejected. I was made 4-F. And down the street from me, this is the thing that has to be providence, but down the street from me, Raymond Dale, he and I knew we both had hernias. He was called up, they took him, gave him surgery, and he went overseas. Now maybe they had quotas or something, I don't understand why they wouldn't take me, but they took him. But anyway, I was in the bank and parents would come in and look at me and think, "Why is he not in the war?" So I ultimately gave into it and went with North American Aviation in North Kansas City, and I could commute from my hometown. And I built B-25s until June of 1945 when the war ended. Ten thousand of us were laid off that week the three – and we didn't wear nametags, we wore numbers. Everybody had a number, and I had gotten to know a man in the men's room, it seemed like we were in there at the same time almost every day. I had no idea who he was, I didn't know his name, but we would chat about things, and he had been the comptroller of Chevrolet Motor Company in the Kansas City zone. And he called my boss and said that there was a job open at Chevrolet in the business management department. And so I had thought that I would go back to Excelsior Springs and find a job. I didn't want to work on the pumps but, you know, I'd find something. And so I ended up taking the job – but this enters into it – I also had a high school sweetheart who I thought we would marry. She did too, and we dated for years. Her dad was a psychiatrist. We had a veterans' hospital, and during the war, he was stationed in Excelsior Springs, and he ended up in Chillicothe, Ohio. We corresponded for months, and one day I called her from a drugstore in Kansas City, and her mother answered the phone and said she had married the Saturday before.

KS: Was it a surprise to you?

JM: Well, yeah! [Both laugh]

KS: Was that the first you heard of it?

JM: The first I heard of it. So I got a letter – a "Dear John" from her – so the point is, I didn't want to go back to Excelsior Springs and face everybody. So I went with Chevrolet, and, in fact, I was already with Chevrolet when that happened because that happened in February of '46. Now here I was turning – '46, I'd been turning twenty-two – I had never been in a Presbyterian church in my life. I woke up one Sunday morning, of course I realized with a rather heavy head, I realized I was really getting into trouble. I had been ordained a deacon in my Christian Church back home and took my dad's place when he died on the board of deacons, and so I had always gone to church, but I didn't go to church anymore. I didn't even

know where a church was in Kansas City. And I decided that morning, "I'm going to church." So we didn't eat at the boarding house on Sunday, so I went up to Sydney's Restaurant, I came out on the street on the corner of Linwood and Troost and I had four directions I could walk. I chose to walk toward Armour, three blocks away, and when I got there it was ten of eleven [a.m.] and I looked down the street. I thought, "Well, I've got to find a church by eleven o'clock or I'll just go on back home," you know, that's when the service is going to be. I could see in the second block, a church of some kind, so I hustled down there and went in, and that church paid my way through college to become a minister.

Now all of the "what ifs" enter into this. No one spoke to me the first Sunday. But I thought this fellow – I had never heard a good sermon before. Where I had grown up they weren't there to preach. And so I went back the second Sunday, and when I was going out the door, a fellow stepped up to me and said, "I'm Tommy Thomas, and I sponsor our young adult group. Have you ever been to it?" I said, "No, I didn't know you had one." He said, "Well, I'd like for you to come. Are you available?" [I said] "Boy am I available! I am available!" [Both laugh] So what they were doing if you were single, you were in the Congress Class. If you got married you were in the Senate Class. If you turned thirty-five and hadn't married, you were an Ambassador. So it was very cleverly done. Well, what if the teacher in the summer of '46 had not taken the summer off? But he decided he would be gone. He was with Faultless Starch. He would be gone June, July, and August. So he said, "We can talk. Joe, why don't you take the class the first Sunday?" So I had never spoken. I had spoken at graduation, of course, but that's about it. But I studied and, boy, I thought, "This Bible really lives." I got so excited. Well, they said, "Why don't you do it again next Sunday?" Well, I ended up teaching it for about six weeks.

Well, Thelma Moss – this was a church of 1,200 members and the minister wouldn't have known me if I fell on him – well, Thelma Moss, his secretary, administrative assistant we call them now, but his secretary was sitting there listening to me and she thought, "This fellow could make a preacher." So she mentioned it to Layton Mauze and he said, "Oh, you think everybody should be a minister." He said, "Just go ahead and date him." She said, "No, I want you to talk to him." So we had – the church owned a thing called Centreat, a home out on a lake, and we were there for the weekend. And Layton was there on Saturday morning, and he invited me to drive out in the boat on the lake. And he said, "When are you going to – have you been to college?" Well, I had three semesters of night school. What my goal was was to stay in the bank ten years. You could get in law school after sixty hours at the University of Kansas City. It was twenty-five miles away. And so for three semesters, I went three nights a week, and I got home at a quarter of one and then I had to be at the bank by nine o'clock. So anyway, I had twenty-one hours, and I needed sixty to get in law school. It would take ten years to pull it off, but at least – I was never going to get to go to college, so I would just do it the hard way.

Well, anyway, he said – I’m sitting in the boat and he said, “When are you going to quit work and go to college and become a minister?” And I said, “No one has ever said anything like that to me before.” He said, “Well, what about it?” And I said – He said, “What’s your goal in life?” And I said, “I guess no one has ever asked me that, but my goal in life, I think, is – the only time I am really happy is when I’m doing something for somebody else. I’d like to do something like that.” And he said, “Well, what about the ministry?” And I said, “Well, you expect a minister to be good.” I said, “I think it would be more effective if you weren’t a minister.” And he said, “Well, tell me what there is out there that you could do that would be more beneficial, reach more people, than the ministry.” Well, of course, so far I haven’t thought of it to this day. And so I said, “Well, let me think about it and pray about it.” And so, he brought a book by my boarding house, and I read it and then I began to think, “Well, maybe if I decide to be a minister, it’s kind of like becoming a priest. The girl eloped on me, and maybe I’m getting back at her, and then I thought, ‘Well that doesn’t exactly make sense.’” But one night when I was praying, it dawned on me, “Do I care if Virginia Ashmore knows that I’m a minister? No, I don’t really care. This is it.”

So I was going to work my way through the University of Missouri, so he – Layton called me one day and said, “Could you come by the office on your way home from work?” So I went by and he said, “The session,” that would be the elders, “the session met last night Joe, and we voted that if you would go to Westminster College,” now this is a Presbyterian school in Fulton, Missouri, where Winston Churchill gave his “Iron Curtain” address there and we were well known for fifteen minutes. Anyway, it had six hundred students. So he said, “If you’ll go to Westminster, we will cover your tuition, we’ll cover your board and room and tuition.” So I went. Because I took some courses that I already had, but I wanted to make sure I had them – always in English courses – so eleven hours would transfer. So I went through there in two years and nine months by going to summer school, and it was a superb experience.

I was in – you say, “What did I do in college?” here in these questions. Well, I was in Jabberwocky which was the acting group, I sang in the Glee Club, I was in the current events thing, I forget just what that was called, I wrote for our school paper, *The Columns*, and was business manager of the yearbook. And so, we had on campuses all over the country, it’s called Omicron Delta Kappa, ODK, it’s a national leadership fraternity. You can only have, it has girls in it now, I don’t know if they still call it a fraternity or not, but only two percent of your student body can be members of it – that would be twelve at Westminster, and I made it my senior year.

KS: Wow, that’s impressive.

JM: I was a Delt; I was a Delta Tau Delta. The last day of school on the day of baccalaureate, when I got up I had a terrific pain in my side, the housemother called a doctor. She couldn’t find a doctor but she finally found Henry Durst, who

happened to be a Presbyterian, and he came and he said, "It looks like appendicitis and you need to go to the hospital right now." So I got in the car. I knew it was going to be emotional. I got in the car, and he said, "I'll need to get in touch with your parents." "I don't have any parents." He said, "Is there anybody I should get in touch with?" "I can't think of anybody." And so he operated on me, and he said, "Were you in the service?" And I said, "No, I have a hernia." So that was on Sunday morning, and the president and the dean of students came and presented me with my degree, but on Friday – he kept asking me every day, "Why don't you stay over and let me fix that hernia." And I said – I had two churches out in the country, I had to write two sermons a month. I'd been doing that for the two years that I was in college – I said, "I've got these two churches waiting for me, Dr. Durst, and I really can't do it." So on Friday he asked me the same thing, and I gave me the same speech, and he said, "I've reserved surgery for Monday morning at seven o'clock and for your information, there is not charge for my services." So the anesthetist gave his services free, too, for my two major operations, and I didn't know what the hospital cost. I had been there for two weeks. I got a hundred and twenty dollars for people who didn't know I was in the hospital – from people who knew me and knew I didn't have any money. I had three dollars and seventy-five cents. I had closed my bank account and I walked to the desk. I had one hundred and twenty-three dollars and seventy five cents. The bill for two weeks in the hospital was one hundred and twenty-two dollars.

I was going to go to Princeton Seminary. Everyone has heard of Princeton, you know, so I thought, "I'll go to Princeton Seminary." And I sent for an application and before I ever got one, Louisville Seminary visited the campus and they were – they offered me a job in a church and a scholarship for my tuition, so I felt that I didn't even need to pray about it, it was so obvious. Princeton didn't offer that, Union Richmond, I wrote them and filled out an application and they didn't offer it, so I went to Louisville Seminary.

Now, I had never been inside a Presbyterian church until I was twenty-two years old. Now I have five earned degrees: I have a Bachelor's, three Master's, and a Doctorate, and I have three honorary doctor's degrees. Westminster – see they brought back Winston Churchill II, the grandson, back in 1972, he did the commencement, I did the baccalaureate. I have been on the board – what I did, I was invited back for Religious Emphasis Week at Westminster. We used to do that in colleges. I don't think they do it anymore. Anyway, you speak every day in chapel, and, of course, chapel is required. But they – I knew two years in advance I was going, so I saved the money of what it would have been, my tuition, if I had paid it during the years I was there, and I made an appointment with the president of the college and gave him the check for it. And when I saved the money for Central Church in Kansas City, another Joe Mullin might walk in off the street so I felt like I owed that to them too.

So I'll tell you how I got here. One summer, between my second year and third year in seminary, by this church where I would be pastor for the summers while I was in college – in seminary now, Western Kentucky – went down to Tennessee to a summer camp and conference grounds that was called NaCoMe. And the director of the conference camp came by Russell Dale. I can still remember where I was standing in front of Carl Page's Chevrolet Motor, Rufus Hicky, he said, "We need – we're short one counselor in the junior highs, the pioneers, would you be willing to come?" I said, "When is it?" He said, "Next week." You know, I am an agenda person – you don't call me and say you're going to be out of town for a week next week, and, also, I was scared because I had never done it, and I didn't know what it would be like, so I told him no. That night I was praying about things, and I couldn't get that off my mind, so I called him the next morning and told him I would do it.

Two counselors there in the senior highs were my wife's mother and father. Her two brothers and sister were there, and she was in Chicago with an Assemblies Youth Council. Her church was both Southern and Northern – we were split, the Presbyterians were split then. So she was there at the Assemblies Youth Council for the United Presbyterian Church and she was also on the council of the Southern Church. So there were two days between the two, and there was no one at home, so she decided to come to NaCoMe. She is eight years younger than me. She had finished her first year of college at Vanderbilt. We knew. It was kind of like we knew, as I've described it, like a bird on a limb. You know if you walk over to it, it's going to fly away. I was too afraid to think about it. It was very obvious that she and I could have a great life together. We will have been married fifty-five years in August. But here was this young girl with bangs – she was darling, she was beautiful – and of course, I'm not handsome, but we loved each other. And so I knew she had to finish college, so she went to summer school like I did, and it ended up that she still had one semester left, and it was going to be practice teaching at Peabody College linked with Vanderbilt. Maybe it's Peabody University, I don't know.

But anyway, we married in August of 1953. We met in July of 1951. She still had – and her dad made me pay that last semester of books. [Laughs] And that's what he should have done, but they gave us a car as a wedding gift – a beautiful 1953 hardtop. That means that there are no posts in between, you roll down the windows – and it was a beige top and Carolina blue. But anyway, I was a minister in Nashville, Tennessee, for just a couple of years – two years and a half. I started while I was still in seminary organizing a new church. They shouldn't let a student organize, they need somebody with experience. But anyway, I got it off the ground, and then in 1954, in August of '54 I went to – and Presbyterians style ministers, there isn't a bishop or someone to appoint them. They just come around with a committee and try to wear a fake beard and glasses and a nose. [Both laugh] And so Paducah, Kentucky, came and so I was there – that was a church of 450 members, a downtown church. Paducah sounds like Podunk, but it was 50,000 people, and we had three, four Presbyterian churches

there, and I was there for six years. I was really involved in the community with the Salvation Army. I ended up chair of the board of trustees of the hospital, the local hospital, and when I left in April of 1960, the newspaper printed my final sermon on the Op-ed page and wrote an editorial about me. I thought that was the dearest thing.

KS: That's wonderful.

JM: Isn't that something? I really don't deserve anything like that, but they knew I loved Paducah. I've always said, "They loved me in Paducah." [Both laugh] So there's a church in Louisville that was the largest Presbyterian Church in the state. It grew to 2,300, really, when I was there, and I'd like to take credit for it, of course, but the community was growing, and we built us a new sanctuary, and so forth. And I was there between nine and ten years.

The night that Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated is one of the turning points in my life. Of course, I had never done anything for him – I was hiding out there in suburbia, in the suburbs of Louisville. I knew everybody loved me. I wanted everybody to love me. I didn't want to upset anybody, but I knew we had to do something. Incidentally, when I was listening to the radio when I was coming home from a Presbyterian council meeting, and heard that he was assassinated, it swept over me. Back in January, Central High School in downtown Louisville, an all black school, had invited me for Friday, April 5 – the next morning – to speak when they were going to tap their honor society. Barry Bingham, the publisher of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, was going to call the names and make the presentations, but I was going to speak, and I had written – have you ever heard of *Get Smart*, Maxwell Smart?

KS: Oh sure, that's one of my favorites.

JM: Okay. I had taken – I called my sermon *Get Smart* – I was going to take expressions like, "Sorry about that, Chief," that we always fail, it is how we handle our fears. So I had an excellent little talk for young people, I thought. How could I get up and speak – a white face? Barry and I were the only white faces in the room. And 1,600 blacks walked into the room, silently, silently. And you know kids don't come in anywhere silently. They were not saying a word. And so, I had gotten up at 4:30 [a.m.] and I took Martin Luther King's – I had his, I had never read it – a letter from the Birmingham jail. He was responding to the white ministers in the city as to why he felt he was right and they were wrong. And he was right.

I decided I would say something about that. I came down to the end, and I looked out there at these kids, and I said, "Is there a possibility that there's a Martin Luther King, Jr., sitting in this room right now? Is there a possibility there is just one of you who would be willing to die for what you believe? I would be willing to die for what I believe." And I sat down and there was silence for a

moment, and clapping began, and then they all stood up clapping. I was absolutely wiped out. I thought, "I can't believe this." Well, the principal wrote me a letter the next week. You see, we were burning the west end of town. The blacks were burning their own buildings. The police were beating up blacks. I normally don't wear a clerical collar away from the pulpit, but I had a clerical collar on along with some other ministers, and we just stood at the police station when they were bringing them in, and we rode with the police in their cars to try to get them to stop beating on the blacks.

Well, anyway, that Sunday I did a sermon called "We Have a Dream," a take-off on King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech. I took the four points, and after each point I said, "I've never done anything for Martin Luther King's cause, but I'm going to." So I came down to the end, and I said, "I'm going out there, and I hope the officers of this church will go with me. If you don't, I'm going anyway. I've got to do it." Well, the editor of the evening paper, *The Louisville Times*, was sitting there in my congregation, so he sent a reporter out to interview me. And on the next Saturday, there was a profile of me in *The Louisville Times* saying – and he was a great writer, I mean he made me sound wonderful, he really did – and he said, "When he laughs, his laughter bounces off the wall." He was just really carried away. Well, the next Sunday – that would be two weeks after Palm Sunday – I came out of the second service, and I got down the aisle and down the steps and looked out. There were maybe twenty-five or thirty black young men. They were marching in a circle so we could not get out the door, singing "We Shall Overcome." And a white man stepped up to me and said, "I'm the facilitator for these boys," he said, "Dr. Mullin, they read what you said in the paper, that you wanted to do something." He said, "We tried to get cars and come out in time for the service, but we couldn't work it out. But they wanted to come out and tell you, they wanted to help you any way they could."

So, I had a decision to make. There were 1,200 people coming behind me. I took off my robe and handed it to one of the elders of the church, and I got in the circle and sang, "We shall overcome." I – a rumor went through the church that I had planned it, for them to come. One morning, I came over to the church and was going through the front door and someone had a – one of those Molotov bombs with a coke bottle – that they had tried – I never told a soul. I never even told Betty about it because I didn't want – that would be on the front page of the paper, you know, you're just asking for it. So, I thought, that's what they wanted, they wanted the publicity for it, and they're not going to get it from me.

So I lasted a year after that. And I won't go into the details about that, but we began to have blacks and whites out at the church and talking about, "What are we going to do?" I wanted to meet with these guys. What would be the worst night of the week for me to be away from home – Saturday night. You see, I memorized sermons. I never use notes.

KS: Oh really.

JM: Yes. I use strictly – I had a – Dave Stanley in Paducah said, “Whenever you quote poetry, my palms perspire.” [Both laugh] So, anyway, I made a decision – Betty and I talked about it – that I felt called from that church. But we did things, I won’t go into detail, but we began – I invited a couple of blacks in our community to join our church. That was in the article, the newspaper, so people knew that I was trying to do something. They didn’t join but they knew they were welcome. I didn’t want to go anywhere at all, and Betty was president of the woman’s organization that year and she had never done that before, but she knew we were leaving, and so she thought she should do something. Well, there were calls about that day and night, and I kept telling her I wanted out. So on July 31, 1969, I resigned, and we found a home. We leased a home in the suburbs outside of Princeton in Lawrence Township, and I enrolled in Princeton Theological Seminary. I already had a – I was trying to think what my degrees are called – a Master of Divinity. I had a Bachelor of Arts, a Master of Divinity, from seminary, then I had earned a Master of Theology in ’57 from the seminary studying the Resurrection of Jesus, and then I got another Master’s at Princeton. That’s how I ended up with all these. I jokingly said, “I got my education by degrees.”

When a man in his forties wasn’t working back then, he was either sick or in school, or desperately looking for a job. So I thought I would go back to school, that would be the obvious thing to do, and it would give me concentration on something. So anyway, we were there a year and a half, I guess. Well, I’ll tell you this. I’m getting too long.

KS: No, no, not at all.

JM: When springtime came, no one called me doctor. I did not talk to anybody. I was really silent. I went to all my classes and wrote the papers and so forth, but in March of 1970 – this would be seven – from July to March Trinity Church in Arlington, Virginia, had been in touch with me to come down and do Holy Week services, so I thought that would be good for me so I went down there. Betty and my three children – we’ll talk about those in a minute – came down on the Metroliner, and then we went over to the Park Arlington Hotel where I was staying. The children were asleep next door, and Betty was sound asleep, but I began to panic. I had done a sermon on how to handle the hoo-hahs of middle age, and I had a case of it – I really did, I could tell. I was really physically shaking. I thought, “You know, you negotiate from strength, not from weakness, and I resigned from a great church back in July, I’m going to graduate in two months. What am I going to do? No church has ever been in touch with me. I’m not preaching anywhere. You can’t come hear me anywhere. I was here this week but that’s the first time.”

While I sat there quivering, a scripture popped into my mind, “Why art thou cast down, oh my soul and why art thou disquieted within me. Hope thou in God.” Well, my first reaction was, “That’s the King James Version. I don’t normally use the King James Version. The RSV [Revised Standard Version] came

out when I was in college, and I have used it my whole ministry. I'm quoting the King James version." Then the second is, "Where is it from in the Bible? Well, it sounds like a Psalm." Well, I hadn't brought along a house coat or a robe or house slippers, but I ultimately bounded out in my pajamas barefooted in the dark and got this concordance, this Bible concordance, out of the trunk and went in the bathroom and closed the door. It's Psalm forty-two. But when sitting there having quoted that Psalm, "Hope thou in God," I suddenly realized that the hoo-hahs were gone, and I knew – I knew I was sitting there in the presence of the Lord. So I really began to live on tiptoe in the days ahead, and a church did get in touch with me. And it offered me – the committee – a proposed call. I carried it around in my pocket for two weeks and prayed about it every day. Betty did too. And it was in the area of Washington, and I thought I wanted a – I didn't need a – I had this experience with a large church and multiple staff and it would be nice to have some kind of staff, but if there were decision making people in the congregation who might do something about – something significantly about what they're learning in church school and what they're learning in the preaching of the Word. And of course, this was a church that could do that. But when I prayed, I didn't feel anything.

Well, I'd gone over there – it was May 1 – and I had gone to New York City to the Statler Hilton to a national minister's conference, and when we broke for supper, I had been eating with the ministers the night before, and [I thought], "I'm going to eat alone because I've got to call these people tomorrow, the two weeks are up." And so I – incidentally, Madison Square Garden was built on top of Penn Station, which was across the street, and they never stopped a train. I never understood that. Barnum and Bailey Circus was in town, so I was sitting there trying to eat, and mothers came in with balloons and children yelling and so forth, and I took out my notebook and I wrote a prayer – I've still got it. I wrote, "Lord, I don't often ask you for a sign, but I've got to ask you for a sign tonight. You know I don't feel that's where I'm supposed to go. But, would you give me a sign tonight so that I would know that I'm not supposed to accept this call tomorrow."

Well I went across the street – it was ten 'til seven. I'm a Type A, I'm always on time. Betty says I've never missed an elevator. I'm always on time. Well, anyway, I raced across the street and went to call her because she would be asleep when this thing was over, and she needed to know when to meet me at Princeton Station. I dialed and we did, "Hello, Hello. I love you. I love you." I told her when to meet me. She said, "Wait a minute." I said, "I've got to make a run for it." She said, "Before you hang up, I want to tell you something. Don Davis called you last night and said that First Church Greensboro has been in touch with him." Now Don, I'd used him as a reference. He was an elder in my church in Louisville. Well, when I hung up the phone it wasn't, "Well, that's it. I'm going to go to First Church Greensboro." But it was, "Don't worry about it. There will be other calls and don't accept that one tomorrow." And there were. I won't tell you how many, but there were a number of them.

It came down to – this is what we’re getting at – it came down to June, 25, 1970, about 6:30 a.m. in the morning, Betty and the children were asleep upstairs. I had a yellow pad like that in my lap, and I began to write down one at a time, the name of the church, then I would just pray about that. “Lord is this where you want me. What would it be like here, am I on the right track here?” I took each one of them. I came down to the end. Of course, Greensboro wasn’t on the list. They had never been in touch with me. And out loud I said to the Lord, “Lord, why don’t I ever pray about First Church Greensboro?” Now I don’t know whether the voice was in the whole room or in my head. All I know is, I know I heard a voice, and the voice said, “Shut up, Joe, that is where you are going.” So my mind went into a spin. I thought, it was kind of like an engine in neutral and I thought, “Lord, I don’t know – Jack Redhead has been there twenty-five years. They love him. He’s on National Radio Pulpit and Protestant Radio Hour every week. Everybody in the nation who is a Presbyterian knows about him. I can’t follow him.” And finally, when I pulled myself together, the voice spoke again. It has never spoken before and never spoken since, but the voice said again, “Shut up, Joe, that is where you are going.” Well, I knew I couldn’t tell – I wouldn’t tell Betty. If you are forty-five years old, and you’ve got that case of the hoo-hahs, and you’re highly emotional, and you are also now hearing voices from God, that ain’t going to fly. So I didn’t tell a soul. I knew I was coming to Greensboro, North Carolina.

They did get in touch with me, and I preached a trial sermon down at Covenant Church in Charlotte – I flew down from Princeton. Then, in a couple of weeks they invited Betty and me here, and I saw the church and had an interview with Dr. Redhead, and then I heard no more from them except that they hadn’t called somebody else. Every now and then they would notify me of that. But, he was not retiring until December 31. What was I supposed to do between July and January 1? He retired on his birthday, December 31, he was sixty-five. Anyway, to make a long story longer, I had been invited to go the Democratic Republic of Congo for four weeks to do reconciliation retreats with the Congolese and missionaries. I won’t give you the story on that, but there was a reason why I was supposed to hold these seminars with them. So I came back, and I thought, “Well, I’ve got all these months.” And so I enrolled at Virginia Episcopal Seminary.

[End of Side A, Start of Side B]

KS: Please continue.

JM: Thank you. The – let’s see, where was I? [Both laugh] We are – oh yes, it was November 6, and Web Durham called me and said, “Joe, the committee is going to meet on Monday at 4:00 [p.m.] and I’ll let you know the outcome of how they vote.” Well, I got on the Metroliner to ride back up to Princeton, and it began to dawn on me something I had never thought of before – “If I wait until they call me and say I’m coming, then say, ‘Guess what happened to me on June 25’, that doesn’t fly either.” For it to be authentic you’ve got to tell what is going to

happen before it happens. Who was I going to tell? Obviously, Betty. I tried to tell her Friday night I was hearing voices. I couldn't do it. I went all day Saturday and could not bring myself to tell her that. Finally, Sunday afternoon, I said, "Let's go for a ride." She said, "Joe, it's raining." I said, "I know it's raining, I just want to tell you something." So we got in the car and drove out to Lawrenceville Presbyterian Church parking lot, and I took my yellow pad. I didn't want to embellish it, just tell it exactly like it happened. So I told her, and when I finished I said, "Do you think I heard a voice from God?" She said, "If anyone else in the world told me that they heard a voice from God I wouldn't believe it, but if you say you heard a voice from God, you heard a voice from God." And I said, "Well, what if they call me tomorrow and they don't want me?" Well, being the kind she's always been she said, "Well, let's wait until tomorrow." So he called, and here I am.

Now when you – the thing I've learned from that, is that no one wanted to follow Jack Redhead, no minister wanted to 'cause you last three years and then you go and then the next one comes and does great. There is a grieving period. But I knew, I knew I was supposed to be here. Why would I worry about that? So I didn't and I never have. And the church grew. It grew up to 4300 members before I retired, and I've had a great time with these people. Now, let me tell you about my involvement with the community.

KS: Oh, okay. And also I want to hear about your children.

JM: Okay, let me give you that. We have three children. Molly is Mary Hamilton, she teaches out at the Day School [Greensboro Day School]. She had – her marriage didn't make it, but we have a great relationship with Gary Kenton. Malcolm, you can read him in the paper periodically, he is one of those ten out of eighty-eight they chose who are community correspondents and he finished at Guilford this year and was in the high percentile. He was way up there in one of the handful that was recognized wearing those gold cord ropes that they do, and Molly teaches at the Day School. She's been out there with the Social Studies since '91. And my second daughter, Beth, is an attorney in Washington, D. C. Her husband is also an attorney – we talked about his getting to be with Horace Kornegay. But Beth is an environmental attorney, and she was accepted at Duke Law School, but she went to NYU because it had some programs that would involve the environment. She's not a tree hugger, but she really knows what she's talking about – she works on that.

Then my son Bart, Joseph Bartholomew Mullen, Jr., is an antique appraiser in Charleston, South Carolina, and he had not married and at forty-five he had finished at Chapel Hill [University of North Carolina Chapel Hill], and he met a girl from Duke who's forty-one and they married and they had a child. And they didn't name him Joseph B. – but that's alright, that Joseph Bartholomew business is enough anyway – but they call him Harry, Harold Lawson Mullin. And they are – he – we don't send him money, but I guess maybe we shouldn't

record that. [Laughs] He's doing okay as an antique appraiser, he loves – and you can look around, we don't have any antiques in our home [Both laugh]. But he learned it. I won't go into the details of that.

I have been involved in Greensboro. I really love Greensboro. I know that's why I got to write the introduction to *Once upon a City*. I have been involved – I have been on the Chamber of Commerce board of directors, I've been on the United Way board of directors and American Heart and American Lung, but my real love and involvement has been in Habitat for Humanity and in the Greensboro Urban Ministry. Betty and I have both served on those – on the board of the Urban Ministry and stay involved. We right now have underwritten a house, another house, along with three other families, which is under construction, and it's so exciting to get to know the parents – the family that moves in. They are always so conscientious and dear people. And I have been involved with Jim Melvin. You know his dad was murdered at his filling station on Asheboro Street, which is now Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive, back in 1972. Jim was not a member of my church, but I was so stunned by it that I called him and we talked then.

Let me tell you this, one Sunday morning sometime in the '70s, I was doing a sermon upon the importance of sharing your faith in small groups. That there are – all over the country at that time, there were small groups or sharing groups or Bible study groups. In fact, we knew that were two Supreme Court Justices – we don't know who they were – who were in small groups. Well Jim, one of the children was ill and Susan had gone to mass and he was lying across the bed listening to me and he was with NCNB then, the bank – he was the head of the Greensboro area of that – and he was also mayor. He called me the next day and asked me if he could come by my office and he and I together, he decided this and I did it with him, we decided to invite some of the key leaders in the community – the president of the Chamber, the chairman of the school board, the city manager. We never told anybody that we were meeting because it sounded like political overtones, but we gathered in the mayor's office every Wednesday at five o'clock. I knew most of those guys, most of them had never prayed out loud before in a situation like that, but we all knew we were going to do it. And we didn't talk about our personal lives and anything like that, but what is going on in the community and how we can do something about it. And so we did that for a number of years, and Jim and I grew very close, and I am so proud of him and I'm glad to read these things that they've written about him.

Now, let me just read a paragraph here that I wrote about what's going to happen to Greensboro in the future. This is from the foreword of this book *Once upon a City*:

As Greensboro celebrates its 200th anniversary it has much to be proud of, especially as it's been busy rebuilding itself in recent decades. When I arrived in Greensboro in the early 1970s, the downtown was quickly

becoming deserted. I saw so many empty storefronts. Two hotels were imploded; it all looked so discouraging. Now the downtown is becoming a vibrant thriving area. The depot looked so pathetic back then, now it is refurbished to the architectural gem it was meant to be. As rail and bus passengers move in and out during the day, throughout the day, we now see the economic results of extending Wendover Avenue out to I-40. We now have a boulevard to the airport and surrounding suburbs. Over these decades the public parks have become showplaces and our environmental concerns heightened. We have lost the industries that made us economically strong forty years ago but they are being replaced by job training for new technologies that were unimaginable when I arrived. I have seen the leadership of the city change too. No longer do we depend on the chieftains of industry to be our leaders. There is broad and diverse participation of residents throughout the city who love to be part of the decision making. Sometimes this has created tension and disagreement. This is a byproduct of a democratic society. If we can keep our civility and respect the opinions of others, we will win the day.

KS: That's wonderful.

JM: So that's kind of where I am regarding the city, and we have marvelous philanthropic people here, and the Jewish community, you know, we are really together in what we do here. We always have been, all through the years. My church downtown in the balcony, it has a Star of David that points directly at Temple Emmanuel across the street. And one other thing, we built this cathedral down there – in 1929 we dedicated it – and then the [Great] Depression came and we struggled all those years to get the payments made, and it came down to 1945 and we were going to make our last payment, and Temple Emmanuel heard about it and at their Friday evening service, they took a special offering for First Presbyterian and delivered it Monday morning to us so that they could be included in our final payment.

KS: That is wonderful.

JM: Isn't that great? The Cones were the original key to it. They cared about the welfare. They are into the arts and culture, and we identified with that. And they, of course, were the economy for a number of decades here, depending on textiles. So ask me anything else. [Both laugh]

KS: You're a great interview.

JM: Isn't this fun?

KS: This is great. Well, I did want to ask you – so you moved to Greensboro in the early '70s. Now, I know you said that you were involved with race relations in your previous church. Greensboro had a lot of issues going on. I know you were

not here for the sit-ins but you would have been here for the Nazi/Klan rally and perhaps even for – when Jesse Jackson was here at A & T [North Carolina A&T]. What were your impressions of those days in Greensboro?

JM: They were rugged and we tried our best to – the National Conference of Christians and Jews gave me an award one year, they do that once a year, because of the concerns that we had. Mainly, the best thing we did was in the representation of the whole – you see, just the northwest quadrant of Greensboro was running the city. Now, they are elected by the whole city, but they are the ones on the ticket, and so we now have in all of the districts, all of the areas, everyone is represented. I think that's done more, the racial end of it. We have a black mayor for heaven's sake. We are really coming along. We've still got problems, but at that time, the only thing you could do was – we have a black Presbyterian church here – well, we brought their minister, their congregation, to our congregation, and he preached from our pulpit, I preached from his pulpit. We began to do things together. We went up to Washington together to see what was being done in a poverty area and brought it back here, and that kind of thing. I just had to do the practical things.

The important thing is in your relationships – it's true with women, it's true with blacks, it's true with gays. Not to get off on that, but the whole thing with gays, the next generation is going to look back on us like we do on the 1920s when women couldn't vote or that blacks couldn't vote. They'll think, "How could they have ever done that?" The first minister of my church had slaves, owned slaves. In the Civil War, this great minister we had, Jacob Henry Smith, he was here thirty-eight years and he was loved – there's this monument for him in the cemetery, in Green Hill Cemetery, paid for by children who gave pennies and nickels for it to be paid for – but he was broken hearted over the Civil War that the Confederacy didn't win. So we've come a long way, and I have not been as brave here as I was in Louisville, but I feel like – I know when I first arrived someone said to me, "The session has," how did he say that, "If a black person presents himself for membership, they will not accept it." And I said, "Well, let's have this understood, that the day the session does that, I offer my resignation as the pastor of this church." Now the session never said that, but this person had his own problems, you know. But you have to stand for what you believe, and it costs you sometimes doesn't it? Meanwhile on page – [Both laugh].

Now let me tell you what I did in Rotary. This is kind of cruel. But they've done the right thing. I was in Rotary from the week I arrived. I had been in Rotary before so I knew them and felt comfortable belonging. In '79, I had chest pains and had to have open heart surgery. We weren't doing it much here – I went to Birmingham. And when I came back, I was out of the pulpit for nine months. I was taking the medication where I didn't have chest pains, but I also couldn't function. I talked slowly. It was a nightmare. We thought that I was going to die, to be honest about it. But anyway, I dropped out of everything except what I was being paid to do, so I dropped out of Rotary. I came back in '91 and got involved.

Paul Harris is the one who started Rotary, and there is an award called the Paul Harris Fellowship, and it costs a thousand dollars. The club will pay five hundred of it, and you pay five hundred. It used to be that back in Paducah when we had the Paul Harris we were honoring somebody for some reason, but now it is pretty common, everybody should be. So I was chairing that committee for Rotary in the early '90s, and they announced – they didn't announce, I heard that there was a club where everybody was becoming a Paul Harris Fellow. That the five hundred would be paid by the club, but they would pay the other five hundred and they would do it with their quarterly dues. There would be twenty-five dollars added so you paid a hundred dollars a year, in five years you would get your Paul Harris and if you wanted to pay it all along the way if you were getting close or so forth. So I convinced the board of the Rotary to do this to this to this large club. So everybody is either a Paul Harris Fellow or a sustaining Paul Harris Fellow – they're on their way to being.

KS: What a good idea.

JM: And then the Benefactor is a thousand dollars. Incidentally, the club gave Betty a Paul Harris Fellow Award. [Both laugh] After all I had done to them. The Benefactor also helps a great deal, and you can leave that in your wills. I became a – I never thought about being a notary public, but I went downtown, they told me where to go and I took the course – and I became a notary public so if you wanted to change your will and you got me, we can sit right down and do it and I can notarize it and sign it with you. So I couldn't get many to do that, but at least it was an idea.

KS: Right.

JM: So I've had fun. Now, today, I don't know if there are any others or not, but I am an honorary member, and it means that I only pay for meals when I go. Oh, our bluebird is going in the box, see her there? There she goes, or maybe that's he checking on her.

KS: It went right in. There's a nest in there?

JM: Yes. We – the Lipfords were telling us, theirs now has five eggs. I said, "How do you know that?" They have a box like ours and of course I can't get up to that thing. I wouldn't dream of trying to. Anyway, I don't know how many eggs, but I'm sure they're at it. Now, make sure that's written down. [Laughs]

KS: I surely will. [Laughs] We transcribe this verbatim.

JM: That's great. But, I love Rotary but I am an honorary member and so I only pay when I eat there, but I try to go most of the time.

KS: Well I do want to ask you how Greensboro has changed since you've lived here. Has it changed for the better or for the worse?

JM: Definitely for the better. As I said in the book, the downtown has been transformed. It has been transformed. We were down there to see that General Green statue. The city center – did you see the program last night on PBS?

KS: No.

JM: I got Molly to record it because we were at a gathering – but from 6:30 to 7:00 last night, they featured New York's Central Park, Chicago's Millennium Park, and Center City Park, Greensboro, North Carolina.

KS: I hope they reshow that.

JM: I hope they will too. So I plan to get it on tape so I can share it around. If you're nice to me I might lend it to you. [Both laugh]

KS: Okay, I'll take you up on that.

JM: So, Greensboro is a little bit out of control like most cities right now in development. We're not using very good judgment, and we've got realtors on the city council, and it's hard for them to be objective. And my grandson Malcolm writes articles on the Op-ed page regarding this – he is really concerned about what we're up to that we're not studying it as we should or protecting some areas as we should. But I think the spirit of – Jim Melvin was telling me that Simkins, the dentist who was a strong black, who is really the one who got the hospitals integrated years ago, before I came here that took place. Jim was telling me that he was at some gathering. He and Jim didn't agree on anything. That he saw George and said, Jim leaned over to him and said, "I love you, you rascal," and he said, "I love you too Jim." And he died in two weeks. He was the communicator. I remember I was with him going over here with Henry Frye who's a lawyer. We were going over to talk to the governor about something, and I was so proud of myself. I had opened – there was a black bank opened down on Murrow Boulevard, and so I thought, "I'm going to try to cooperate." So I moved our account from Wachovia to the black bank. So, I couldn't wait to tell Dr. Simkins this. I was sitting in the back seat and he was up in the front seat and when I told him what we had done, I turned around and said, "When First Presbyterian church has its bank account at our bank, I'll really be impressed." [Both laugh] Touché! I've got a ways to go on that one.

But I think that the race relationships are coming along. Now, in my small group with Jim Melvin, Walter Johnson, Yvonne's husband, was president of the school board at that time, and we had integration represented there. It's not worthy in the publication, but one time in that group we decided in that group that this division between the haves and the have-nots in Greensboro was very real, so

Jim agreed that he would go to the downtown Rotary, and at that time we had the four heads of the universities there – the chancellors and the presidents. It's a great group of people, influential people. Well, Jim was going to speak on that subject. Then I would write a sermon on it and Bill Snider, who was editor of the *News & Record*, was in that small group also. I got a newspaper person – newspaper people and politicians do not get along very well, so I thought it would be good in this small prayer group to have Bill Snider. So Bill participated. So, the agreement was Melvin would make the speech, I would write a sermon on it and we'd print it on the Op-ed page – Snider would arrange for that. When it came out on Sunday, I opened it and there was my sermon and a picture of Jim Melvin. I've never let him forget it. [Both laugh] It should have been a picture of me. So I got even with him. This book [*Once upon a City*] is partially about him, and my picture is on the back cover!

KS: Your picture's on it, where it should be, that's right! [Both laugh] How do you think Greensboro could improve the quality of life for its citizens?

JM: I've read that question, and we need to solve the water problem for one thing. And it's too bad – it's solved – the water problem is solved when Randleman Dam is used to bring the water here. That's it, that's all we need. And why for heaven's sake, there's an article in the paper this morning about it, something about High Point and the pump somewhere. For heaven sake, get the pump and get it done! That would improve the quality of life, I believe.

We both drive – our two cars are hybrids, and I think that the quality of life for the whole nation, including Greensboro – we're going to have to get off the SUV business and get cars that are practical. Now my Prius, Betty made me trade it in, it had 20,000 miles on it, but I'm eighty-four years old, and I don't turn very well or see very well and the back of the hatchback on a Prius is a third purple and she maintained that – and I was having difficulty, so I got a hybrid Camry which I notice I've got forty-one miles to the gallon on. I was getting fifty on the Prius. But she's had a Prius since 2002 – they think we plug them in at night. It's just another car except when you put your foot on the brake, it's recharging that battery and it shifts to electric so you think that your engine is dead when you first start up, but it's just that it's switched. You look when you start to see if you're still on. We're going to have to do something about that as a nation, and it's going to affect the quality of life. We've decided – well I'm not going to tell you that.

KS: Oh, go ahead. [Both laugh]

JM: Well, I just thought of this the night before last. We are going to take a week of our lives where we only drive one car instead of two and see how the week would go – how many times we are in conflict where I need to be somewhere and she needs to be somewhere, and how we could have worked that out. Well Spring runs buses and vans and all kinds of things. We don't need to drive to the

symphony. We can ride to the symphony – it's parked at the door, you get in it, you're home before the others have found their automobiles out in the parking lot.

KS: Now you were saying before the interview how Well Spring started.

JM: Yes.

KS: I would love to have that on tape.

JM: Good. All right. There are six Episcopal churches in Greensboro and they decided that they should build a retirement community of some kind. So they went over to Raleigh to meet for the certificate of need. If you are going to have skilled nursing you will need so many beds and so forth. The man behind the desk said, "What is the constituency of Episcopalians in Greensboro?" I said, "There are 3,000." He said, "Well, this begins at 5,000." So they thought, "First Presbyterian!" So they came to me – we got to talking about it and we said, "Let's ask First Baptist." So we agreed to do it. Well, here I was out thinking, many of the people I am trying to solicit money for, for the startup money – you need money for the architect and to buy the land and so forth, because the church isn't going to run it but they need to get it started. So I got an idea that what – we could form a benevolence committee and when we issued the bonds, the money that we had raised for the initial – it turned out to be 2.7 million or 2.8 – was placed in a benevolence fund so that everyone who is approved, your finances are studied. We know the finances of everyone here. When you come in, if you don't just give it away and become poverty stricken, if anything goes wrong, our goal is that no one will ever be turned away from Well Spring. Also, we are able to bring people who can't afford assisted living. We can help them with our benevolence fund. They can pay for part of it, we can pay for the rest of it. And our church participates in this too with a marvelous fund that we could do that also. So – and it's worked out. We have a good segment of the Jewish community living here – the Cones are here. Well, I won't name them all but there are a lot of them. It's a great relationship.

We have 375 people. Now what we did – I rode over this in a Jeep. And incidentally, the man we bought this from, we paid him a million dollars for the eighty-eight acres. He lives here. He and his wife moved in.

KS: Oh, great. It's beautiful. It really is a beautiful property.

JM: The thing about it is, you know, I just wish that everybody, everybody could have this kind of thing in their later years. See, we're the only ones, according to our ads, in Guilford County that is a life care – in other words this means for life. You move to assisted living, it doesn't change your cost here, you move to skilled nursing which is an expensive thing, it doesn't change – whatever you are paying is what you pay the rest of the way. And we have a doctor on the staff who comes, we've got all the skilled nursing so we really – there are chains everywhere that you pull.

Our interior decorator, she was here with her three children in an empty house and “What’s this?” The little kids grabbed the cord and she said that within three minutes there were four people in the house.

KS: That’s good to know.

JM: They’re ready. Security is very good. Maintenance told me that they are clued into that also that when they hear the signal, they know what the address is, and if they’re nearby, they come running also. So, they’re really trying. It’s a marvelous set-up. They meet you for your plane, you know, when you’re going they come pick you up and take you to the airport, they’re there when you get home.

KS: You can’t beat that.

JM: It’s actually luxurious, you know.

KS: Now do the home – we have Salem Town in Winston and we have a friend who lives there and the homes revert, if you ever want to sell or anything like that, the house would revert to the property?

JM: Yes, we don’t own this property. Now we paid for it, but we don’t own it, it goes back to them. Now, I told our children, “Now, we’re reducing your inheritance, but you don’t have to worry about us the rest of your life.” And children do worry, and they still will worry, but at least they know that we are really being taken care of.

KS: And what a wonderful house.

JM: Isn’t this something? It’s three bedrooms.

KS: It’s beautiful, and a perfect size yard.

JM: We were kind of surprised that our patio was so small. Incidentally, I throw seed out there because of mockingbirds. You hear them sing and you think, “Doesn’t that sound wonderful,” but what they are really saying is, “Get out of the area!” [Both laugh] I’ve even been attacked by a mockingbird.

KS: Really?

JM: In Paducah. That rascal, boy, it really hurt. Maybe I was near the nest or something, I don’t know, but I was trying to cut the lawn with competition.

KS: We have mockingbirds around our house too. I tell you what; they really do try to run everything else out.

JM: Yes, we can't put up with it. Now that sack is for goldfinch. They can – their beaks – purple finch can't fit in, for some reason, only goldfinch beaks can get in there.

KS: Can they just hold on to the side of the bag?

JM: Oh, yes, they can even hang upside down. They're real cute.

KS: Well, we have goldfinch feeders too. My son loves birds, now we all kind of do but we just have the ones that they can sit on, but we had to buy the metal perches because the squirrels would hang from them and eat a hole.

JM: Aren't they something?

KS: They're a mess. So finally, we bought a corn feeder to appease the squirrels.

JM: Yes, I saw a bird fly in and the mockingbird sail down and ran him off. They just bug me to death, and the irony is that Tennessee chose the mockingbird as their state bird.

KS: I'm a Texan and Texas does too.

JM: Texas does too. Sue McCoy of Dallas was here last week, and she told me that. I was telling her the trouble we were having. Now the bluebirds ignore them.

KS: They're pretty tough too. They are tough customers too.

JM: We had – I gave them, what do you call them wormy meals or mealy worms? Cost me fourteen dollars, they said that there were 1000 of them. Then you keep them in the refrigerator and take them out in little cups. There's a little deal on the box that you fill. But the mockingbirds were right there and chased off the bluebirds. And so I did it twice, I spent twenty-eight dollars, you know, I'm feeding – I'm an idiot! [Both laugh] So this year they came anyway, without the mealy worms. It's real fascinating to try to control them.

KS: Now is there anything that we haven't covered that you'd like to?

JM: I think – I had no idea I was going to tell you the things I told you.

KS: No, I'm glad!

JM: Well, I'm so proud of my children. We have Beth and Jim in Washington, D. C., have two grandchildren. One is graduating from a private school, the Waldorf School, and we're going up. Right now his senior trip is in Hawaii.

KS: Oh goodness, now that hardly seems fair! [Laughs]

JM: Well, let me tell you what mine was: My senior trip – now I realize it was hard times – was to Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary. Now why in the world the school chose that, but there were eighty of us. There were two busloads and we drove around Kansas City and out to Leavenworth, Kansas, toured the penitentiary and then – it was the first time I ever spent the night at a hotel, the Muhlebach Hotel, which is still there, in Kansas City. The kids, where we got those paper bags I don't know, but we could fill a paper bag with water, of course it wasn't air conditioned. You could stick your head out the window and drop it. I remember that it splattered. I don't think we ever went to bed. Of course there was no drinking, that would be unheard of with high schoolers at that time. But we just had a ball. And when President Truman, you know he ran, and they thought Dewey had won. The *Chicago Tribune* came out; everywhere there was that picture of him holding the *Chicago Tribune*. It said, "Dewey Wins!" But he was in – my hometown was strictly no industries, just mineral water, but we had three nice hotels – but he was at the Elms Hotel. Harry Truman didn't think he'd win. This was '48. He was sound asleep, he had gone to bed and two service men were sitting out – two secret service men were sitting outside the door listening on the radio and so they ran in the room and woke him up. They drove to the Muhlebach Hotel where I once spent the night six years before. [Both laugh]

KS: A brush with fame!

JM: If Harry had only known that, he would have been so impressed! [Both laugh]

KS: Well thank you very much for this interview. This has been a great morning. I really appreciate it!

JM: Well, you're delightful.

KS: Thank you so much.

[End of interview]

[End Tape 1, Side B]