**THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO**

**INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY COLLECTION**

INTERVIEWEE: Cynthia Farrell Inman

INTERVIEWER: Hermann Trojanowski

DATE: June 7, 2013

HT: Today is Friday, June 7, 2013, and my name is Hermann Trojanowski. I'm in Jackson Library with Cynthia Inman, Class of 1969, and we're here to conduct an oral history interview for the UNCG Institutional Memory Collection, the African American Institutional Memory Project. Cindy, thank you so much for coming all the way from the Philadelphia area to do this interview. If you will tell us briefly something about your background, such as when and where you were born, and that sort of thing.

CI: Okay. My name is Cynthia Farrell Inman. I was born in Raleigh, North Carolina to Walter and Lucinda Farrell. I am the second child of five, and my father worked in various jobs, mostly in maintenance, to support his family. I'd like to say that the first three of their children were born into segregation and the last two in integration. [Therefore,] I got the opportunity to see things from a different perspective than a lot of people. My mom was a "stay-at-home mom" until we, the first three of us, were in school. She worked as the secretary of our church for a number of years (thirty-eight years). One thing about my mother was that she would tell us almost daily, "You are just as good as anybody else." I often, as a child, wondered, "Why does she keep telling us this." But years later, I understood what she was trying to tell me. My father instilled in us the love of education because he had very little formal education. [As a result,] he promised each of us that he would send us to college, four years of college, without any type of financial burden on us. He would pay for everything and we accepted. We knew that he meant it because he worked very hard, five to six days a week. That is the gist of my family background.

HT: What was it like growing up in segregated North Carolina in the 1950s?

CI: Well, I know more about the sixties than the fifties. I was born in '47. All I knew was that my world was black, various shades of black, but it was black. I did not know much about the words racism or segregation [because] my parents didn't speak in those terms. [However,] I knew I went to school with all black kids, various shades, but all black kids. And so, this was [my] normal. My parents had a way of sheltering us from the outside world. In retrospect, we really weren't exposed to a lot of segregation or to what was actually going on. We didn't go downtown often, and when we did, we would see the colored water fountains and the white only and colored restrooms. I would ask my mom, "What is going on? Why do we have a colored fountain and a white fountain?" But she

would never answer me. She would just pull me away and say, "Let's go." [However, I felt and] knew something wasn't quite right. I never rode the city bus, so I knew nothing about sitting in the back of the bus. My parents didn't allow us to ride the bus. My father had a car, and we went everywhere in the car. They (my parents) didn't talk in terms of black and white and segregation. I guess a lot of [white] people think that they would teach that. But most black parents didn't teach the hate of color. And therefore, I didn't know much about racism. The only thing I knew is when I reached junior high and high school [I didn't have a selection of schools to attend]. I went to the John W. Ligon Junior-Senior High School from seventh through twelfth grades. It was the only black [combined] junior and senior high school in Raleigh. [There] I became more aware because the teachers would always talk about education— "You need education." [But they never talked to us about black and white [education] nor what would happen if you didn't get an education. However, they would say,] "If you do get it, you will have a better life, but they never described that better life. So we were still kind of perplexed as to "What is a better life? We don't know any other life.

I got exposed to white kids about ninth grade. I was a representative for my school at the Red Cross meetings. Most of the time I was the only black kid there, and that was a little strange. Sometimes I would be the only kid, and the only black. [So I started to think about things, such as,] "My mom always said we're just as good as everybody else." I guess she was trying to train me for something [this]." And [also,] quite frankly, one of my teachers when I was in the eleventh grade said after a [standardized] test on which we had done very poorly that we were three to four years behind white kids. And I'm thinking [as she criticized us], "Well, if we are three or four years behind them, how many years is she behind [white teachers]." And that got me thinking, "Well, apparently black teachers aren't given the same information as white teachers." I actually believed that. The more I thought about it. I said [to myself], "Well, the tests are made by white people; therefore, other white people will know about it—not black people." And I didn't think our teachers had it [the test] because they would have no reason not to teach us the concepts if they had them. That's when, I guess, the seed was planted [for me] to attend an integrated college. By the time I reached twelfth grade, I decided to apply to UNCG [The University of North Carolina at Greensboro].

HT: Did you apply to any other schools at all?

CI: I'm thinking I must have applied to NCC [North Carolina College at Durham] only because my brother was there. I don't think I ever applied to A&T [North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, Greensboro, North Carolina] because if I was going to come to Greensboro, I wanted it to be UNCG.

HT: So you never had any thoughts of going to someplace like Shaw [University] in Raleigh, [North Carolina] or—

CI: No, because I was on a mission to prove my theory that white kids were exposed to different things than we were exposed to, and especially, when it came to testing. [And of course], this, also, means that the black teachers were not exposed to all that the white teachers were [provided]. So that's why I wanted to come [to UNGC].

HT: And when you were in high school, what were your favorite subjects?

CI: English and math.

HT: So you were going to major in that when you got to college?

CI: No, I was going to major in accounting or business administration.

HT: And how did that come about?

CI: My dad cleaned offices at night and he would tell me, "Cynthia, I think you ought to [study]," he called it counting, because he didn't know the word "accounting." He would say, "When I'm dusting off the desks, I see a lot of papers with numbers on them. I think if you majored in that, you would be able to get a job—a good job." My dad was a very enterprising man, and I knew he was smart. He just was uneducated, but he was very smart about a lot of things. He was just smart. He could make us a sled for the snow with his own hands, and things like that. He was very creative; he could draw beautifully. He was just a smart man; he could do a lot of things. And I always listened to him, so I decided, "Okay, well, I'll go and major in accounting." But when I got to UNCG, I found that even though they told me at orientation that I could major in accounting, they [omitted] that I had to transfer to [the University of North Carolina at] Chapel Hill my junior year. I didn't find that out until, probably, my sophomore year, and I decided, "Oh, no. I've gotten used to one group of these people. I'm not transferring anywhere."

HT: So there was no accounting major at that time?

CI: No accounting major at that time; therefore, I had to major in what was called Economics and Business Administration.

HT: What do you recall about your first days on campus, that would have been, what, in 19—fall of '64?

CI: Sixty-five.

HT: Sixty-five.

CI: My first day on campus, I clearly understood what was really going on as far as integration. My parents left after getting me all set up in my room. My roommate had not yet arrived so I decided to walk around the Quad. I don't remember which of the dorms, [but] I happened to see a friend I'd met at orientation so I went to her room. And, oh boy! There was just chaos going on in there. We had to send pictures in with our applications, and somehow, in her picture, she looked white. She was fair, but she wasn't as fair as her picture looked. And so, she had been assigned two white roommates. There was someone from administration saying, "Oh, there's been a big computer error and we have to correct this and make some changes." [I recall] one girl was from Virginia and the [other] from New York. The parents of the girl from Virginia, at least, the mother said, "I don't

have a problem with it." But the parents from New York did. [So it was determined that because there had been a "computer error," a correction was needed.] They were not going to have a black girl and two white girls in the same room. They did not say that, but that's the way it was. So then, I said, "Well, so much for integration."

HT: Now you said there were three to that room. What about your room situation? Did you just have one roommate?

CI: Yes. But there were people who had as many as three roommates but [there] were only two of us in my room.

HT: Do you recall who your roommate was?

CI: I don't want to give her name because she did not graduate [from UNCG].

HT: Oh, okay.

CI: But [in] my sophomore year, [my] roommate was Suezette [Brown] Roney [Class of 1967], who has already participated in this [University Libraries' oral history] project. Dorothy Moore-Duncan [Class of 1969, to whom] you will talk later, was my roommate my junior and senior years.

HT: And do you recall which dorm?

CI: Moore [-Strong Residence Hall]. I actually lived in the same room for three years. I lived there with Suezette, and with Dorothy Moore-Duncan in the very same room.

HT: I think that's the one that's across from the Gove Center—Is that right?—the Gove [Student] Health Center.

CI: I have no idea what's on this campus now. [laughter]

HT: It's been so long,

CI: But I heard that Moore [-Strong Hall] is still here.

HT: Yes, it is. It's still here. Well, was it a difficult transition for you from high school in an all-black situation to UNCG in the mid-sixties?

CI: Only to the extent that I would go to some classes and the students, [when] I sat down, would get up and move away. And I have had a couple of [unusual]) situations. I had a situation where my health teacher [freshman year] gave me a D [for the semester]. I knew I didn't deserve a D so I decided to go talk with her. I asked to see my final exam because I could not believe I did that poorly. She just looked me straight in the eye, and said, "I don't have to show it to you." And I [responded], "Oh, okay. Thank you." I knew what the deal was and there was no recourse for us. UNCG, as far as I'm concerned, didn't do

anything to support integration for us. There was no one assigned to just check with you and say, "Hey, how are things going?" There were only fifty of us out of 1900 freshmen students—only fifty blacks. I always felt that they could have at least had someone for us to go [to vent].

HT: A mentor, or something like that.

CI: Anything, even if not individual mentors but just two or three people that we could at least go and say, "Well, this is happening to us, blah-blah." But there was no one. I never went to administration on anything. I didn't go to them in my junior year. The course was called History of Economic Thought (an evening class of less than ten students). The first class the professor walked in and he didn't say, "Good afternoon nor evening." He just said, "We all know that blacks are mentally inferior to whites." And I'm [thinking,] "What does that have to do with History of Economic Thought?" I assumed he was trying to get me to drop the class. Of course, everyone turned around and looked at me (the lone black). I had no emotion whatsoever; I just sat there, looked at him and I didn't say anything. One thing, I had as a child walked in civil rights freedom marches, so I knew how to stare straight ahead and not listen to what I considered noise. I was determined I was not going to drop the course and I went to every class.

HT: And I'm sure you probably needed the course for graduation, didn't you?

CI: Well, it was an elective, but it may have been an elective that I needed out of the economics. I got a B in the course. I thought I deserved a higher grade. But at least, it was better than what [the grade] Mrs. White had given me.

HT: But that was the health teacher, right.

CI: [laughs] Yes, health teacher [Mrs. White].

I did my papers, and he would give me like B+'s. But I was satisfied, because he could have been more discriminatory than he was. [However,] I think I would have taken him to task on that. I felt like he gained a little more respect for me because I never ever indicated that I was upset by what he had said.

HT: And he never said anything like that again, I guess.

CI: He never did. When he saw that I was going to come to class each session, he went on with teaching.

HT: Well, tell me about some of the other courses that you took and some of your favorite teachers on campus.

CI: I really cannot tell you about any favorite teachers [because] I didn't interact with them and they didn't interact with me. My [first semester] math teacher, I liked her. I knew she was fair. She was much younger than my [other] teachers and I really liked her. As a matter of fact, that was the class that answered my question about exposure for whites

versus blacks. She had an [unusually] huge [math] class, and about our second meeting, she said, "Listen, this class is too large, and we need to create a second one. [Therefore,] I want everyone who made over 700 on the math section of the SATs to raise your hand." [So many] people raised their hands that [I thought,] "Oh, my goodness. I am really in the wrong place if all these students made over 700 on just the SAT math section." [She did create another class.] And a couple of days later, after class, I got a knock on my dorm door, and there was this young white girl who said, "Cindy, could you help me with my math?" And I said, "Didn't I see your hand go up for making over 700 on the SAT?" She answered, "Yes, they taught us how to take the test, but by your participation in class, I see you know more math than I do."

And [I said to myself,] "Well, I'll be darned. Now I know that what I was thinking all along as a child was true." Therefore, I was ready to go home because this was what I had come to find out. Were they [whites] all smarter than us or had they been exposed to more than us? [Yes]. They had been taught how to take the test and they knew the concepts on the test. They had probably been given the test [as practice], and our teachers didn't even know the concepts to teach. I knew I couldn't go home because my daddy said, "You've got to go four full years."

HT: And this was during your freshman year.

CI: Yes, this was less than a month, and I had already gotten my answer. [laughter]

HT: Well, you've already mentioned that you lived on campus and where you lived. What was dorm life like in those days?

CI: Well, there wasn't a lot of integration of blacks and whites. I think we were both suspect of each other because we didn't know anything about the other. There were a few that were very friendly, and there were some who were not. We actually only gathered during the few dorm meetings we would have. And most times the whites outnumbered the blacks five or ten to one. There may have been five blacks there; I think there were about five blacks in my dorms (Gray Hall and Moore-Strong).

HT: At one time, all the blacks were housed in Shaw [Residence Hall] at the very beginning, and then later on in Coit [Residence Hall], but it sounds like by the time you got here, they were in various dorms. Is that correct?

CI: Yes, we were separated.

HT: Separated, but everybody in various dorms.

CI: [Yes], we were separated into various dorms.

HT: But you were still separated?

CI: Yes, when you were saying they (blacks) were all housed together, I am saying, "Yes, we (black students of the Class of 1969) were separated into various dorms. But you're right. I think somebody did tell me later that they (blacks) used to ALL live in one dorm.

HT: They did the first couple of years. It was Shaw [that] you saw this afternoon when you first came in, and then later on, it was Coit, which is on the Quad, and I think you're the first person I've talked to that said they actually lived in Moore-Strong [Residence Hall], so I guess—But with fifty [students], and I think they must have housed the freshman in one dorm, and the sophomores in another, and that sort of thing.

CI: Well, the freshmen were housed (in dorms) in the Quad. My sophomore year and after, we had more of a selection of dorms. I went to Moore [-Strong] because I was paired with Suezette [she had lived there the prior year. I remained there the following two] years because it was a nice dorm [and room].

HT: It was probably fairly new at that time.

CI: Yes, it was.

HT: And what about the rules and regulations of the dorm. I've heard other people talk about those. What were your thoughts? Do you recall what the rules and regulations were in the mid-1960s?

CI: Well, I know that we had curfew (freshman year), I think, 10:30 P.M. perhaps during the week, and maybe one o'clock (A.M.) on Saturday night. And I thought that was very liberal. [It] was better than my curfew at home. [laughter]

HT: Oh, my goodness. And what about the dining hall food: do you have any remembrances of what the dining hall was like?

CI: The dining hall was very impressive. Number one, I think there were five dining rooms in the building and you could go to any one of them you wanted. I thought the food was good; [especially], compared to when my brother would come home from NCC [North Carolina College at Durham] and trash their food.

HT: And did you gain much weight those first few years?

CI: No, I didn't, but I didn't go to all meals—I hate to say this. Well, my parents won't hear this. I was very weight conscious so I did not go to every meal. I very rarely went to breakfast; I went to lunch; I occasionally went to dinner or ate out. Most of the times, I would tell my roommate or whomever to bring me a sandwich back from the [dining] hall. I was determined not to gain weight.

HT: Because I talked to one—She was a couple of years ahead of you, but she gained twenty-five pounds because of eating so many brownies.

CI: Yes, that's why I would do what I did. They [my friends] would tease me because I was always exercising in my room. [laughter] But I had been a chubby child, and so I was just determined I was not going to gain that weight. I was determined. But my parents really lost a lot of money because I rarely had a decent meal there. The food was very good when I did go and I enjoyed it.

HT: And I assume you could have as much as you wanted to.

CI: You really could. You could go back for seconds, and occasionally, they would have an ice cream bar. You could make your own sundae, and I said, "Oh, no, these people are going to kill us." [laughter] I had no complaints about the dining hall—no complaints whatsoever.

HT: And what about your social life on campus; what do you recall about that?

CI: Not too much interaction with the opposite sex on campus because we [had so few males]. I know we had Charles Cole [Class of 1969]; [Larry] McAdoo. I don't know if Larry stayed on campus or he stayed off-campus by that time.

HT: He was Class of '68.

CI: Okay, so he was a year ahead of me.

HT: And Charles Cole, I think, was maybe the class of '69, your class.

CI: Yes, he was in my class, and I think there was a Jon—I can't remember Jon's last name but I'm not sure [when] he graduated. [Editor's note: Jon McKinley Brawner, Class of 1970]

HT: [unclear] Was he Reginald? Something like that, Anthony Reginald? Anthony Reginald [Thompson]. I think that was his name.

CI: Oh, we just called him Jon, and I can't remember his last name.

HT: There weren't that many black men on campus.

CI: Yes, that was so.

HT: There weren't that many white guys on campus in the '60s.

CI: Right, exactly. For social life, we went off-campus: football games at A&T, and [such events, along with mostly] dating young men from A&T.

HT: Now I have had other alumni say that there was a little bit of jealousy from the women who attended Bennett. Do you recall anything about that?

CI: Yes, Bennett.

HT: Bennett College.

CI: Yes, yes.

HT: The Bennett Belles.

CI: Yes, we went over there one time early in our freshman year, and they were very hostile, so we just decided we had better stay away from there. So yes, there was a little rivalry there. So no, we didn't bother them.

HT: Now, there were women at A&T, is that true?

CI: Oh yes, very much so.

HT: It was co-educational at that time [unclear, both talking]

CI: It's always been co-ed, I think. [At least, as long as I can remember.]

HT: Did you have any negative thoughts from the women who attended A&T.

CI: No, because, quite frankly, a lot of my friends from high school [attended] A&T and I would go over to visit them. I didn't have any problem with them whatsoever. Also, we dated guys who were not A&T [students, as I recall. I don't remember] where they were from. [laughter]

HT: So did you attend the dances on this campus?

CI: No. No, I never attended the dances on this campus. The only thing I participated in was Jacket Day, and I still have my jacket. It's hanging in my closet at home. I don't know [if] there was Ring Day but I still wear my ring.

HT: Well, I think—I know that at one time they would actually have a ring made out of cardboard or plywood, and you could walk through that, and I don't—

CI: For some reason, I don't remember anything special happening like that.

HT: I've seen photographs of that and I assume you got your ring in your junior year. It seems like you got your jacket in your sophomore year—

CI: Sophomore year, right.

HT: And then after that you were considered upper classmen and that kind of thing.

CI: Jacket Day, I remember. Ring Day, it's a little fuzzy, but it's been forty-four years.

HT: Just a little time.

CI: Yes, half a century, just about.

HT: As a matter of fact, my next question was about various campus traditions, such as Jacket Day, which you have already mentioned. Do you have any recollection of Rat Day? That was sort of a hazing that the sophomores participated in against the freshman.

CI: I don't remember. No, I'm sure I would have remembered if there had been some hazing. But maybe they were a selected group of people, and maybe they did not do it to the African Americans.

HT: Maybe, because I know the freshmen had to wear rat ears, and they had to bow down to the sophomores, and any kind of command that the sophomore would give—like bark or meow—the poor freshman would have to do it. It was a mild form of hazing; that's what I've read anyway.

CI: I truly do not recall anything like that [nor] participating in anything like that. I don't think they did that to us. [laughs]

HT: And you know, after Woman's College became UNCG, so many of these traditions started sort of fading into the background so maybe by the time you got here, maybe they didn't have it anymore. I just don't know the year.

CI: I have no idea. I have no recollection of Rat Day.

HT: What about the Junior Show. Do you have any recollection—Did you participate in [the] Junior Show?

CI: No, I did not. I didn't participate in any activities other than the Neo-Black Society when it was formed. I attended the meetings and I recall they had a tutoring project in which I participated.

HT: It was called GUTS [Greensboro United Tutorial Service].

CI: Okay. We were taken in a van to what, I'm sure, were the projects. We tutored kids in their homes. I participated in that and I really enjoyed it.

HT: Let's see, the Neo-Black Society was founded in'68.

CI: In '68. That was just a year before I graduated.

HT: Right, so you were—I guess you were a founding member almost.

CI: Yes.

HT: Do you remember Yvonne Cheek [Class of 1967] and Betty Cheek [Class of 1968]?

CI: When they formed the group, we [my friends and I] went to the initial meeting and subsequent ones. [Several of us participated in GUTS].

HT: I interviewed both of them in Minneapolis last year.

CI: Oh, great!

HT: Lovely ladies. They were so gracious, and anyway there's going to be a forty-fifth anniversary celebration this fall—I think in October—of the Neo-Black Society, kind of gearing up to the fiftieth anniversary, which is coming up in just a few years.

CI: Do they still have that?

HT: Yes.

CI: The Neo-Black—Oh really. I did not know that it still existed.

HT: Oh, yes. It's never gone away. It's always been very strong on campus.

CI: Oh, good.

HT: And so I think there's a Neo-Black Society Legacy Room next door in Elliott University Center. If you have a chance, either I can show you where it is or maybe Linda Burr [University Libraries development officer] can show you where it is.

CI: If you have a canoe, we'll go.

HT: Well, you don't have to go outside. Just go through the Connector [building], which is great. [laughter]

CI: Because it has been raining very hard [here] today.

HT: Oh, gosh. Well, I think we've already covered the men on campus, and how few there were, and I think even of the men that were on campus, a lot of them were day students or town students, and they weren't even on campus except to take classes.

CI: Exactly.

HT: So you probably have very few remembrances of who they were.

CI: Right.

HT: Well, did you ever feel discriminated against while you were on campus, other than those incidents you've already mentioned with Mrs. White and that economics professor?

CI: They are the only ones that stick out in my mind. People not sitting beside me didn't make that much of an impact. Maybe the first few times it happened, but after that, it did not bother me.

HT: What about studying and study groups?

CI: I never tried to join a study group, quite frankly. So I don't know how that would have been handled. I had very little conversation with any of my classmates in class. I was friendly, and I would speak to everyone but we would have very little conversations. One thing, you would get out of one class and would have to rush to another one.

HT: Did you work at any kind of jobs on campus?

CI: No.

HT: Nothing like that.

CI: My father didn't allow us to work during the school year. [As] I said, he had no education, and he didn't want anything to keep us from focusing on the reason we were there. We worked during the summers and during vacation time, [such as,] Christmas holidays. I worked in department stores as a sales person, and [jobs] like that once they were opened up to us [blacks]. I had marched for these opportunities as a youngster.

HT: Well, my next question was about the political atmosphere on campus in the sixties. I think before you came here, you actually participated in some Civil Rights Movement [events].

CI: As a child; thirteen, fourteen years old.

HT: Tell me about that. That was in Raleigh I guess.

CI: Yes. We marched quite frequently on Fayetteville Street, the main street downtown, to some of the department stores, [such as] Woolworth's and some of the hotels [like] Sir Walter Raleigh. Marching for the right at Woolworth's to eat at the counter.

HT: I guess this was probably 1960 when we had the Sit-ins here in Greensboro.

CI: After the [Greensboro] Sit-ins, we [in Raleigh] started duplicating them [by] marching at [local] hotels so that we could sleep there, and maybe, work at the reservation counter. I knew I was marching not just for me, but for the future generations.

HT: And you were only thirteen at the time.

CI: I was thirteen or fourteen years old when I started.

HT: Did your parents approve of this at such a young age?

CI: My parents didn't say anything which to me meant that they had no problems or even were encouraging it. But they did not speak on the subject. I guess, because they were [unsure] what would happen [to us. However,] they knew that my sister and I were [marching. The marchers] were mostly children, college students, clergy and the president [and leaders] of the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People].

HT: Wow, that took a lot of courage at thirteen to do something like that.

CI: Well, if you want to change something; and as I told you, my mom always said we were just as good as anybody else. She did not want us bowing down to anybody, regardless—period. So I did [march because] I thought this will be good for some changes for the future, and even, my own future. I'm sure those marches enabled me to get a job at the Mobil Oil Corporation as their first black female controller-trainee. So, like I said, there was a purpose for it [the marches].

HT: Were you arrested?

CI: No, they very rarely arrested children. The most that ever happened to me was that I was doused with water from a hotel window or something like that. It wasn't like what was going on in Mississippi and Alabama. It wasn't quite that frightening. [However,] it could be frightening, in that, we would have people [mostly white adults] lining the streets as we marched. They would be cursing and screaming at us, but, thank God, nobody ever had a gun, to my knowledge.

HT: Because this was a peaceful march.

CI: [Yes], it was peaceful. Like I said, the people who were onlookers were trying to keep us from marching [by] shouting terrible things. [However,] half the time I didn't even listen [to that noise]. I just stared straight ahead and it never dawned on me that anybody would [actually] hurt us. [My youthful ignorance, I guess.]

HT: Did you have any kind of training [about] how to behave in marches and things like that?

CI: Well, they would talk to us before we would go [to the streets] to let us know, basically, don't listen if you can, and don't react to what's going on. The purpose is just to march and [to sing] our songs, the Freedom songs, as they were called. The [main] point they wanted to get across was: "Look, this is non-violent. If you don't think you can handle someone cursing at you and shouting out obscenities, please, don't join us. We are following Martin Luther King's plan." We [really] didn't have any [serious] problems

[to my knowledge].

HT: Was this the only time that you were able to participate in a Civil Rights Movement [protest]?

CI: The only time was in Raleigh.

HT: After you got here, you didn't.

CI: Well, I don't think there was a lot of marching taking place here [UNCG nor Greensboro] that I was aware of [between 1965 and 1969].

HT: I think, yes.

CI: There were other things taking place at A&T [that I would attend, such as,] various black speakers. I can't recall the names now but I would go and listen to [them].

HT: Because you got here—

CI: In '65.

HT: In '65, and there were some protests in '63 to integrate Tate Street, so that was already past.

CI: Exactly.

HT: And then there was another protest, well, in '69 over at A&T, but that may have been after you left; I can't remember.

CI: No, that happened while I was here, and the only thing I remember about that is going over there [A&T] and seeing [United States] Army equipment [tanks and such].

HT: Yes, I think that's when Scott Hall over there—Something happened at Scott Hall, and I think the National Guard was brought in, and that sort of thing.

CI: Exactly. Yes, it really did look like a war zone.

HT: Now, did the Army come to this campus as well at that time?

CI: I don't ever recall anyone coming to this campus—no protests, no marching. I don't recall any [UNCG] meetings to even talk about what was going on at A&T, as a general thing.

HT: And there was a strike on campus that dealt with the ARA [Slater] food service strike, and I can't remember if that was in the spring of '69 or it might have been the fall of '69. Do you have any recollection of that?

CI: Vaguely, I do remember something like that but I don't remember specifics.

HT: Most of the workers in the cafeteria were A&T students, and I think they were striking for better pay, and there were marches held on this campus in conjunction to help support the strike.

CI: It seems as if I vaguely recall that now. I haven't thought about that in over forty years, but that sounds familiar. I don't remember any specifics about it. I don't think it lasted very long.

HT: Probably not, I don't know the details. I can't remember the details. It was resolved so— Well, what do you recall about the assassinations that took place in the 1960s: starting with the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in '63; and then, of course, Martin Luther King [Jr.] in '68; Bobby Kennedy in '68; the Vietnam War? The sixties was such a turbulent time. What are your recollections about all the 1960s?

CI: Well, in 1963, I was in the tenth grade. As a matter of fact, I was in math class when John F. Kennedy was assassinated. [When we got the news, every student] started crying [because] we kind of felt a little hopeless. For some reason John F. Kennedy, young and vibrant, [made us feel that] he was going to make some changes and that our lives could be a little different. We were sad, number one, that he got killed. He had a young family and it was very sad. [But we were, also, concerned as to how] this was going to affect our lives. And when Martin Luther King was killed, I was here in college. It was '68, and again, the tears, sadness and wondering: "What is going on in this country that every time somebody wants to make some improvements for the lives of others, they kill them." And I felt that things were just getting out of control because we really never resolved the Kennedy assassination to anybody's satisfaction. So when he [Martin] was killed, none of us felt that that was done by one person. It just did not make sense. [After] the second Kennedy was killed, it became apparent and, just seemed obvious, that anybody who wanted to make improvements toward a more just society, was going to be eliminated. And that was so heartbreaking. And, again, it was one person who did it, supposedly. But you had to ponder, "How can this [keep happening]?" So it was very discouraging [to me as I had thoughts of,] "What's going to happen to our lives and our children's lives."

HT: And what about some of the other African American leaders who were killed during that time: Medgar Evers[civil rights activist assassinated in 1963].

CI: Medgar Evers was early in my life [also].

HT: You know, I want to say '62, but I'm not 100% sure.

CI: I remember it. I knew that he was for voting rights, and all he wanted to do was to help his people be able to vote. Why in the world would people kill him because [of that]? So, it was very sad. Those years were very scary for me as a young person, but also, exciting, in that, I felt something's got to change, if nothing but as a result [of all this]. I felt that there has got to be a group of white people who realize this is not right. Because I always

wondered, “How in the world could you look at a group of people and say, ‘I want their lives to be so much worse than my kids’ lives.”’ I used to wonder when I was marching and looking at all the [white] mothers and fathers, “What did I ever do to you that you want my life to be so much less than your lives and those of your children?” It [just] made no sense to me, but as you know, **“it was what it was.”**

HT: Do you have any heroes or heroines who were African American, such as Rosa Parks [African American civil rights activist who refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger in 1955, which started the Montgomery Alabama Bus Boycott], maybe, or someone like that?

CI: Yes, Harriet Tubman [African American abolitionist, humanitarian, Union spy during the American Civil War, and was involved with the Underground Railroad], Sojourner Truth [self-given name, from 1843 onward, of Isabella Baumfree, an African American abolitionist and women's rights activist], Rosa Parks. I actively read about Rosa Parks and the Montgomery boycott and how courageous she had to be to sit on that bus and have policemen drag her off as if she had stolen something or killed somebody, when all she wanted to do was sit down.

HT: Because she was tired.

CI: Exactly, and didn’t want to give her seat to a strong white man. So it has always been confusing to me how your birth can determine your color and your life is supposed to go a certain way because you happen to be born a certain color. That’s crazy! [But], **“it is what it is.”**

HT: [If we can go] back to UNCG, do you have any recollections of any of the chancellors from your period of time, or vice chancellors?

CI: Only their names. And when we had to make an appearance at one of their speeches, we [attended]. They never said anything relevant to us. There were so few of us and I never got a feeling [that we were wanted there]. They never welcomed me. Because there were so few of us, it seemed as if nobody planned for [“real”] integration. It was forced upon them [by law], so they said [probably], “Let them come, and let them survive the best way they can.” That was what I felt the attitude was.

HT: Well, I know that many of the students who came, only stayed a year or two and didn’t graduate. There was a huge number of students who just kind of fell by the wayside. I suppose they went elsewhere to school.

CI: They did. They went to traditionally black schools. They said, “They had enough.”

HT: I think some of your roommates did that.

CI: Yes, had enough.

HT: But you stuck it out.

CI: Yes, I did. I stuck it out because, for one thing, I believed what my mom had said: "I'm just as good as anybody else," And I knew that I was going to have to deal with everyone [in business]. If I could march in the Civil Rights Movement, I could take this. Nobody was heckling me; they may not want to sit beside me, but nobody ever bothered me physically.

HT: Did you ever do an internship while you were—or did they even have any internships?

CI: They didn't have [them or] if they did, they were not made available to us. I never heard of an internship [while] I was at UNCG. I got my own jobs in Raleigh. I worked in a laundry one summer (it felt like 125 degrees in there). And then I was fortunate enough to get jobs at the Belk store in Raleigh. I was a pretty good sales lady, and so my supervisor told me, "Call whenever you're home, you can work here."

HT: So I guess these jobs helped pay for your education.

CI: They helped pay for my books. No, my dad paid for my education. My dad was determined [and would say,] "You can work and pay for books, and things like that, but I will pay for your education (tuition)."

HT: Now, did he have more than one child in college at the same time?

CI: Yes, for four years he had two of us because there were only two school years between my sister and me (she was two years younger), and my brother was two years older than me. But somehow they did it; they promised it to us, and they said, "Only four years. If you want more than that, you will pay for it."

HT: So did you ever consider going to graduate school?

CI: I did, but I was tired of school, and I guess because of some of the things that happened here, I didn't want school anymore. I just didn't. [Plus], I had had my question answered, right?

HT: That's true.

CI: So I didn't need it. [More answers for my theory].

HT: So after you graduated, what did you do next?

CI: I got a job with the Mobil Oil Corporation, and I was their first black female controller-trainee.

HT: And where was that?

CI: Philadelphia [Pennsylvania].

HT: And how did you find out about the job?

CI: At A&T. I happened to be walking across campus one day, and I assume they had had a career fair earlier that day. [At any rate, as] I was walking by after visiting one of my high school classmates, some men were knocking on the window of the building [as] I passed and said, "Come in, come in." And I said, "What do you want?" And they said, "Come talk to us." And I replied, "Well, I don't attend here," and they replied, "We don't care." So I said, "Okay." I went in and interviewed with three people [there].

HT: Three different companies.

CI:; Three different companies: Ford, Mobil, and, at that time, RCA. I don't think they [RCA] exist anymore, not under that name. I was offered jobs by all of them, but I selected Mobil.

HT: And did UNCG not have career fairs or—

CI: If they did, I may have already had [my] interviews set up before they started interviews here [UNCG]. For some reason, it seems that people had told me that mostly only government agencies came to UNCG because of the years of being Woman's College. I don't think they were looking for accountants and business people, so I never went to any type of career fair here [UNCG]. [I wanted to work in corporate America.]

HT: And so, right after graduation, you went up to Philadelphia, all by yourself.

CI: Well, I had an aunt and uncle who lived there, and I lived with them until I got an apartment. Also, Dorothy Moore-Duncan, [with whom] you are going to talk [later], came to [Pennsylvania] to attend Temple's Law School. I asked my aunt and uncle could she stay with us until we [Dot & I] could find an apartment. They said, "Yes," and so we stayed with them about six or seven months until they approved an apartment for us. [laughter]

HT: You and Dorothy Moore-Duncan were roommates afterwards.

CI: Two years. We were two years here (UNCG), and then roommates for about a year [in Pennsylvania] until I decided I needed to marry. I was too young and stupid, but what the heck.

HT: So how long were you with Mobil?

CI: Twenty-seven years.

HT: Wow.

CI: In various positions.

HT: All in Philadelphia?

CI: In the Philadelphia area. I worked in South Jersey at one of their accounting locations, Service Station Accounting. That was my first supervisory job where we did the accounting work for the Mobil owned service stations. And when they moved to Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, I [relocated] to Valley Forge [where I held] several various supervisory and management positions.

HT: And was Mobil a good company to work for?

CI: They probably were better than some and worse than some, because at that time, there were not a lot of blacks—I was the only black supervisor/manager there for several years which I thought was very interesting. And they did some discriminatory things, too, because companies are run by people [who have their own individual prejudices].

HT: Now do you think—Was there more discrimination against you as a woman, or as an African American?

CI: It's very difficult to tell, to be honest, because for a number of years, I was the only black and the only woman in that circle, so it's very difficult to tell. It really **is** very difficult to tell. But I stayed, just like I stayed at UNCG.

HT: That's right, because you were determined. [laughter] Now you said you stayed with Mobil for twenty-seven years; what about—Did you retire after twenty-seven years?

CI: Yes.

HT: How many people did you supervise at the—?

CI: It varied. I have supervised probably as many as one hundred, plus, at one time. I was tired of supervising. Supervising adults is very interesting. Managing adults is very interesting. And I vowed [after retirement,] that I would not go into any business that required employees. [Therefore,] the network marketing [industry] concept intrigued me because it didn't require employees; only business associates. Any rate, things all worked out.

HT: Well, since you graduated, have you been involved with the school, the university at all?

CI: No, not until you came along.

HT: Right.

CI: [Except] when I first graduated, they [UNCG students] would call me, and I would contribute. And some of my [UNCG] friends would respond, "Are you kidding? Money

to UNCG, they hated us." I thought about it and I had to say, "You're right. I'm paying [them] for their abuse. I paid them to abuse me." [laughter] And I stopped [giving].

HT: Now did they have any UNCG clubs or gatherings up in the Philadelphia area?

CI: There was one in King of Prussia, [Pennsylvania], I believe, but then I was taken off the list, maybe because I stopped contributing.

HT: Oh, my goodness. Well, what do you want people to know about your time at UNCG. You know, we've recorded this because—as an historical document, so what are your thoughts about—

CI: Well, I'm very proud of my time at UNCG. I have no regrets. I still would have come here even after everything I've been through. I met some wonderful people and I got a good education [here]. A good education in how to handle myself under stress and pressure. [Also, I learned] to believe in myself and to not worry about having to be a part of a group. Most of the times, I would be the only black in the class. I just didn't let anything bother me. We had a way of blocking it out, all of us did. To be honest, until this forum—this library project, we didn't even talk about it. For instance, I never told anybody what that teacher said to me in that class that night. I didn't even tell my parents. I didn't tell, not a soul, and I think all of us did the same. We considered them secrets, I guess. Remember I told you I wrote a poem about it. We just endured it.

HT: Well, speaking of the poem, do you want to read that now. I think it would be great, because it's such a powerful document.

CI: **Secrets**

You never took us aside to tell us we were called an inferior race.
You never took us aside to explain the system called our place.
You never took us aside to convey what the "white only" signs were for.
You never took us aside to say life for us would be no open door.
You never took us aside to show all the schools not open to us.
You never took us aside to note why we sat to the rear of the bus.
You never took us aside to tell us to set limits to our dreams.
You never took us aside to explain all that racism really means.
You never took us aside to list the jobs for which we could not apply.
You never took us aside to show houses, vacations, our money could not buy.
You never took us aside to fully explain the Jim Crow laws.
You never took us aside to say you supported the Civil Rights cause.
You never took us aside to announce life's racial wicked surprise.
You never took us aside - for this, should we love or you despise?
You never took us aside, and the strain was clearly mirrored in your eyes.

HT: Thank you. What impact do you think attending UNCG had on your life?

CI: Like I said [previously], it showed me, number one, I was just as good as anybody else and it also made me more confident in who I am. I don't wait for other people to say who I am. I know who I am, and no one can take that away from me. [Plus,] I will not **allow** anyone to take that away from me. And it showed that I could be in a hostile environment and still survive. [Therefore,] when I left here [UNCG], I felt that I could do anything.

HT: Do you think it was kind of a proving ground for Mobil, because I'm assuming—You mentioned earlier that you were the only African American many time at Mobil, and you've been sort of a minority here as well, so it was kind of a—You got your feet wet here.

CI: [Yes, I do]. It was the best thing I could have done for myself—for the career that I was going to lead. I had no problems eating lunch alone. I had no problems going to a meeting [alone]. I remember going to a sales meeting where there must have been 300 hundred men. I was the only woman, plus, there were only a few black men (two or three). It didn't bother me because I knew who I was. [UNCG] prepared me for a lot of things: to go to management meetings and be the only woman; to go to personnel meetings and be the only black. I was always the only something. So UNCG was a good place for me to have been so that I would be prepared for my future.

HT: So, no regrets**.**

CI: No regrets whatsoever—none.

HT: Well, Cindy, I don't have any more formal questions. Do you have anything you'd like to add that we haven't covered this afternoon?

CI: No, I think we've covered just about everything.

HT: Well, thank you so much.

CI: And thank you.

HT: You're so welcome. Okay.

[End of Interview]