

MSS Jean Moule Papers Oral History Interview Part 1

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Interviewee: Jean Moule

Interviewer: Natalia Fernández

Transcriber: Daniel Pearson

Note: *[italicized words in brackets were added in by the interviewee for clarification]*

[JM] = Jean Moule

[NF] = Natalia Fernández

[00:00:00]

[JM] Today is Monday October 17th, 2011. My name is Jean Golson Moule. I am going to begin by talking about my childhood background which begins with my grandparents. I never knew any of my grandparents as three of them had died by the time I was born, and I never met the one who lived into the 1960's. My father tells a story of when he was a small child and lived with his grandmother. His grandfather, as far as I can discern from hushed stories, was lynched: he managed to own rich bottom land and some wanted to rid the area of this person of the "wrong color" to own land. Yet, my father remembers traveling over this property *[with his grandmother]* gathering rents from those who lived there. And, in his understanding of the world of his childhood, he thought all of the people in power and those with money were Black! His parents were Thomas Golson, born 1880 in Orangeburg, SC and lived in North, SC. Isn't that a name for a town? And Bessy McCrary, born in 1890 in Springfield, SC; she died in 1921, he died in 1969. I do not know how his parents died; I do know that he lived first with a family member he did not like, then a few peaceful years with his grandmother and cousin. When his grandmother died he ended up with Uncle Loman and Aunt Martha, his father's sister, who had no children of her own. He began plowing with a mule by age 8 or 9 with a smaller plow made just for him by his blacksmith uncle. An activity he would continue in some manner including using that skill to support his few years in a private boarding high school/college: Voorhees. My father, Matthew Arnold Golson, born in 1919 or 1920 in Great Branch, South Carolina. He was an exceptional individual in his youth, going to and winning at the national level in the judging of livestock. He was well-known and appreciated in his home in Great Branch making his way through World War II as a staff sergeant, fathering 5 children in three households by age 29, yet providing for all of us, by 1953, \$5000 in the bank for each of their educations.

On May 8th, 2010 at Voorhees College my daughter [Mary Ellen Moule] introduced or spoke to the graduates at Voorhees College on the behalf of my father. She says, "Like many of you he was the first person in his family to attend college. When he arrived at Voorhees Normal and Industrial school in 1936 it offered both the highschool diploma because many of the segregated rural schools ended in the 9th grade. Dr. Golson earned his tuition by working on the school farm," as I said, plowing behind a mule. In fact, his uncle Loman watched him trying to work with a plow, a large one, at about age 8 and made him a small sized plow, so that he could work with it. The work study program at Voorhees focused on getting a degree, also developing character and skills for life. The college is still like that. "Dr. Golson" (because he does have an honorary degree), graduated 1940, served in the army during World War II, and migrated to New York City. He worked hard and established a successful career in real state in New York and South Carolina. But if you asked him about his greatest accomplishment he will tell you that he sent all five of his children and all six of his grandchildren to college. "We have used our educations," this is what my daughter says, "to become teachers, college professors, lawyers, engineers, and community organizers. I would venture to say that he's very proud of us and we are proud of him too."

[00:05:08]

If you think about it, \$5000 in the year 1953 was an extraordinary amount of money and he had that in the bank for each of us five children; who were in three homes before he had his second suit. And I think that that tells you how much he valued education and how through my whole life and my siblings' lives, getting an education going on as far as possible was just something...you were going to go to college. You were going to take advantage of all the education that you could. And I mean, this tells you a little about why there was that push from the very beginning.

My mother, Mary Ann Moseley, was born in Charleston on January 29, 1925, she was also an orphan and, like my father raised by "the village." You know you have heard that it takes a whole village to raise a child. Well I think that part of the history in the African American communities, especially in places like Fort Motte where I was born was that people were communally held and communally responsible to a very large extent. There's Swahili, I believe I've got this right, that in Swahili the word "Aunt" and "Mother" are exactly the same word. And if you understand that, then you understand why, in a village, children are jointly held; and for all the years of slavery and all the things that went on in this small Southern community, not that long out of slavery, that was still what was going on strongly. And of course I think that's true in many rural communities, including white communities, historically in the United States. So it's not just a racial thing but I think there is some definite connections there.

Her birth mother was Clara Gilliard, who was born in 1892 in Charleston, South Carolina; she died in 1926. The father she remembers was Jerry Moseley, born in Fort Motte in 1890, who died in 1934, yet, I doubt that this dark-skinned man could have been my very fair mother's biological father. There is a good chance that he was not her actual father. I was born on October 27, 1945 to this 20 year old woman in Fort Motte, South Carolina. Today Fort Motte has about the same number of residents as at the time of my birth. A drowsy quiet town was warm in people and air. My grandmother's house sat across the road from the railroad line and unlimited fields and streams beyond. Visiting from the flat, dull, smoggy L.A. valley was a delight. We'll talk about that migration later. I remember though, in Fort Motte, walking down the dusty dirt road to the old store that smelled of years and had little more than penny candy and orange soda pop in a case on the front porch. I remember the bench near the front door that held some of the town's older gentlemen. They sat to talk and scared me silly with their very presence.

I realized at some point that I had to be 3rd cousins with everyone in town...and one of those, Aunt Fannie, the town's midwife helped bring me into this world weighing me in at 10 lbs. I often thought that this was a guess and that my slight slim mother could not have produced this huge first baby. Yet the picture of me at one year, at 30 pounds testifies to this probable birth weight.

[00:09:30]

In my mind I sense the slow gait of those who walked the roads, the quiet of the dense southern vegetation and the heaviness of the humid air. I remember chasing the hen and chicks, finally exhausting to death the last chick that I was usually able to catch. I remember catching catfish with my Aunt Corrine, my mother's adoptee mother, chosen by her, my mother was chosen by Aunt Corrine when her own mother died in childbirth with twins, an event my mother remembers; she was 18 months old at the time. At my Aunt Corrine's place, after we caught catfish, I'd check in the bucket after we carried them home. And then one time they were missing. I discovered that Aunt Corrine had fed them to the cats. As I said before, so in Swahili the same word is "mother" and "aunt" and I understand now that my birth town echoed that "it takes a whole village to raise a child" - an African proverb. When my grandmother died in childbirth, it was simply a matter of who would take in which of the children. And Aunt Corrine chose my mother. I won't go into great detail but I know from my mother's story that Aunt Corrine raised her to basically help around the house and she had a very unhappy childhood.

I visited this town beginning at age 3 and every few years until I was 13. At age 50 I took two of my own grown children back. We drove slowly down the dusty roads, me trying to see and guess if one of the dilapidated houses was the one I remembered fondly...the smell of the water when it came through the pump, the search for chicken eggs, the chamber pot until I was old enough to make my own trek to the outhouse. Fortunately I had yet to have the glasses of socio-economic status and my father's disdain for that which was not top notch and assimilated to the mainstream white culture. The country smells that surrounded me for my first 6 months lived in me, and from those first early months and my visits as a small child, spoke of a time and place that eventually I returned to, in my mid twenties, when I headed to Oregon. Before that I took a quite standard African American migration route: the south, a northern city: New York City in my case, and then West to Los Angeles.

I was brought to New York when I was six months old, specifically the Bronx, that was my home for my first 6 years. According to my parents, their first items in their New York City apartment was me and a radio so my father could listen to the baseball games. To this day, at age 92, he knows the batting averages of some top players. I have [no] memories of these years, yet enjoy the ones my mother tells me. We moved into an apartment and in this case it was a two story townhouse. We were in the upstairs and another family was in the downstairs and this must have been our second place. I was about five years old and my sister was three. There as a stoop out front which both families could sit on and the first time that we went to sit on the stoop the children in the downstairs apartment told us that we didn't belong there, that we couldn't sit there. So, my mother tells a story that I went upstairs and I found the hoses from the vacuum cleaner, gave one to my sister, and I took one and we went down and hit the little boy on his shoulders so that we could sit were we were supposed to be able to sit. When we first moved Bronx it was 98 percent Jewish. The same areas are now 98 percent black. My father was a part of this process. He would buy a house through his Jewish friends. Then he would move my mother, my sister and me into the house. The neighbors, not liking the color of the new neighbors, would sell their homes at lower prices. My father and his Jewish buddies would then buy the house and sell it at a profit to a black family.

[00:14:45]

I wrote this for part of a chapter of my book *Cultural Competence: A Primer for Educators* Chapter 7:

Jean was six years old. Her family had quietly moved into an all-White, mostly Jewish neighborhood. Despite an act of overt racism – one morning her father had seen 'N – – – go back where you came from' scrawled on the outside of the house and, without telling anyone, washed it off – my parents had hoped that the school personnel would treat me like any other child. Perhaps pretending there was no difference would help me to 'fit in.' I experienced being different

even as my parents worked to help me assimilate. During a Jewish holiday, for example there were only two children in the entire school, and I was the only student in my class. And I wondered, 'Why isn't the teacher teaching me today? I am here!' So both in school and often socially, I was alone and something was not okay.

My mother tells a story, I actually don't have a good memory and never did, it's not just because I am 65 [laughs]. My mother came to pick me up from the second grade because the teacher had said that I would wait outside the door of the classroom and as the students came out, one by one, I'd stomp on their toes as they left the school.

I have one other story from my very young childhood that I think says a lot about my own journey ever since then. We had a..., I think I was about three years old at the time, and we had a latch on the door of the apartment. And I pushed a chair up and opened the latch and I got out. My mother hadn't noticed that I was gone; she was standing by the front door [window] and as she was looking through the front door [window], she looks across the street and she sees this little girl just spinning around and just having a great time and she's thinking "Oh what a cute little girl. Ah! that's Jeanie." So she just yells "Don't move, don't move!" and runs out and gets me. But I have often thought that as far as I can tell I really do have all my life pushed the envelope from a very young age. And that's the first story that I know of, well I guess the vacuum cleaner says something too, where I just went beyond the bounds of the walls that were put in front of me to find out something else.

[NF] Did you, can I ask though.

[JM] Sure.

[NF] Did you ever, when you were little, do you remember, it sounds like you had feelings of frustration. Did you ever associate that with it being your family and knowing and you were so young, did you make that connection or do you think you were making it when you were little?

[JM] Well, I think that obviously there was a certain frustration if I'm stomping on the toes of the kids outside my classroom door. That's a pretty aggressive thing to do. I have a picture of myself at Halloween and you can just see that I am the only brown face there. I know I had a couple of close Jewish friends but I don't ever remember being in their houses. I remember walking down the street with them; I had a godmother Aunt Lila that would come and visit. She was a live-in maid and she, I remember her in and out of my life, she never married. We visited her once in Greens...Greensville? Greensborough? and this was when we had children. And here I am visiting my godmother; she made dinner for us and she wouldn't sit at the table, at

her own apartment because she was so used to the servant role. She could make dinner for us but she couldn't sit at the table with us. Isn't that amazing? So I had little pieces of seeing the remnants of the very, very low expectations for African Americans in our society. My father wanted so much to give us a different viewpoint and a different life style that he literally cut off all connections to our extended family, and so I lived a very isolated childhood. It was just my mother and my sister and I and as I've said before I have in one calendar year my father had three children. And so at the same time I was born he was also trying to do some financial support for my half-brother and half-sister. And so, you know, looking back on it I see that he did as best he could at the age he was; to have done what he did starting at age 39 [29] is, I think, really amazing, but we isolated. Now I think my parents really hid from me as best as possible the acts of discrimination that happened at that time. I have talked a little bit about my childhood in New York City and I left New York City, I believe I was six I left, so I was very young. I don't think I had conversations about race then because even up until the time I was a teenager there wasn't, even among the black community, there was little open talk about race, particularly not in my family. You see that picture right there? There is a picture of my mother. She's very fair in the top shelf there and this is the next little story from my childhood.

[00:21:34]

In 1953 we drove across the country to Los Angeles. I have been in all 50 states and this was the first of 13 trips I have taken, by car from one coast to the other. I remember my mother would go into the lobby of the motel to get us a room: she could pass for white and she would be able to get a room while my brown-skinned father could not. And then after she got the room she'd come back in and we'd all drive around and then go into the room after she got the key. And, but often, he would simply drive for 18 hours straight and pull over to the side of the road and we would sleep in the car before continuing the journey the next day. So those are some of the memories that I had. And my father, because of his wanting to have his children make a strong break as possible from what he saw as a black oppressive positioning, tried to give us experiences that in some way while very wonderful were also very "white." I went to a ballet school in New York City around those ages and I have seen the picture of those 40 children. Now this is not in the Jewish school but it is still in the community and there were only two brown faces and I was one of them.

I remember we went to a resort for a summer vacation, supposedly. But it's in the Catskills, it's expensive, everybody there was white. The only thing I remember from this place that should have been a summer camp and fun thing was you know, in the room getting dressed up as prettily as possible so that we would put on a good front for, supposedly, breaking the barrier and being there. It wasn't fun, it was like putting on a front. My father always was and still is very much about appearances. My father is 92 years old - I have never seen him in a tee-shirt. I have only seen him in a button

down shirt, with or without a tie, or his pajamas. He would eat breakfast in his pajamas. But, I have never even seen him in that kind of informal dress because he just didn't do that. He is very well-dressed very well manicured, quite a bit, always has been. So that's that background and that side of the family. So my parents about this age, age six, my parents separated. And at this point we left and I have a couple of little stories about the time in L.A.

The year after I was stomping the... I don't know I keep coming back to that. It's just I can't imagine doing it because I am a very, at this point in time, I don't...I stay away from conflict. I will stand firmly on the truth and we'll talk about the times that I have done that and it's caused me trouble. But, it's really hard for me to imagine physically doing that. 'Course I was six, so, okay seven.

[00:25:05]

Alright, the next year I move with my family from their East Coast urban area, as part of this migration, to a West Coast suburb, from a two-parent to a one-parent family. My new school, Virginia Road Elementary School, was as culturally diverse as any that Los Angeles could offer. Miss Thomas's room was a secure and healthy place for both my own emotions and my classmates' toes. I was learning about my own culture and in ways, becoming immersed in that culture. I just want to say a little bit about the teacher, Miss Thomas. I remember her so strongly because she was one of those teachers where you could hear a pin drop in her room, for 3rd grade that was pretty extraordinary. And, she was the first person that validated or let me see how bright I was. She used to put a ten by ten addition problem on the board. Ten figures by ten figures. And she would put two of them up and call people up to do them and I was always the last one. I could always do it well. For some reason that really stands out to me because I think that's the first time that I had been in a situation where before other people, and see I don't think teachers should do things like that right now, I don't think that's a good philosophy [laughs]. But at the time I remember needing the validation that I did, partly because of the isolation I felt in New York City; that was probably a very good balance for me. And I remember that I met her years later on a train going from the West coast to the East coast. She just happened to be there, this was after she had retired and I remember talking to her briefly. But one other thing about her class and this I think is extraordinary because we are talking about 1954 by now maybe. Each day she wrote a Spanish phrase in the corner of the blackboard. She read it to the class then had the children repeat it. In less than a minute of classroom time she acknowledged her Mexican American students and opened the door to another language for all of us. Her classroom was safe from disrespect towards her and among her students. And I strongly think of her influence. She is one of the very few teachers that I remember by name. There is hardly any others I remember. There was Mr. Merrill and Mr. Sparrow. In that same school... oh and Mr. Uyeno here [laughs].

There's this particular elementary school in the 5th grade this is 1956. I think there are 30 some students, 33 students in the class. Less than half are African American there's no one majority in the class. You see Asian students, you see Latino/a students. My best friend was Anne who was a Jewish individual, which makes sense because I had just come from a Jewish community. And my other best friend was Penny, African American, "Skinny Penny" [laughs]. So those were the two I hung around most with. But at some point they, I forget exactly what grade it was, I think they didn't skip me but had me take the higher level twice. It was really weird, there was something that was happening, of course I was testing pretty high by then.

[NF] So let me ask you: was this school, based on the school district, the people living in the area were ethnically diverse or you mentioned the suburbs, so were these the children that you would play with not just in school but outside of the classroom? So now you had a more diverse playgroup?

[JM] That's right. And now I was going to read this one other part. When we arrived in L.A. we quickly found a room in the home of Aunt Vel. Now her family continues to be friends with my mother and to some extent myself nearly 60 years later. Aunt Vel passed away at about age 50, her sister Aunt Lottie is a healthy like 103, 104, and I knew her back then. And this extended family became our family during our first years in Los Angeles. But the interesting thing about that is that we weren't related. It was just that it was a room in a home that she had. My mother rented it from her when we first went to L.A. before we established ourselves in a home. But it became our family because that is what you did, so that the Auntie thing was still continuing there. You know I have pictures of me setting up a lemonade stand in front of her house and her daughter Urria is still friends with my mother. And Aunt Vel's granddaughter, Adrienne, is someone I have been skiing with. So the family has continued those connections.

[00:30:40]

When I was at Virginia Road, I was in a Girl Scout troop; I went to summer camps; I would go on trips travelling back cross county, some of those trips to South Carolina, Fort Motte, happened at this time. So we did a lot of traveling. At that time my father took us on a car trip North, first time I went through Oregon and Washington. Went to Glacier National Park and it was those times that we'd be out on a trail and I just so loved it, I loved the country. I would just take off and almost get lost because I wanted to see more of that. Los Angeles area we did, Griffith Park was a large park that my mother would take us to sometime. And it wasn't just a neighborhood park it was mountains and I would get out in them if I possibly could. But yeah, the elementary school was quite diverse and all the schools I went to in L.A. were. We had in just a few years ago a 40th high school reunion and at that 40th high school reunion were a couple of people who were in this picture, who I had been to elementary school with even though we ended up in junior highs and high schools that were not in exactly the same

district somehow we had managed to be in the same ones. At our high school we had a cheer it was “Gray boys, Spooks, Buddha heads, Jews, with this combination how can L.A. lose?” [laughs] “Two, four, six, eight, we don’t want to segregate” [laughs]. And I think that that’s extraordinary that in the late 50’s and early 60’s, to have been part of such a well integrated community. ‘Cause that is very, it’s unusual now even, it was extremely unusual then. That these communities were, the neighborhoods were interracial, the schools were interracial. There was not strong barriers and the neighborhood that the school was in, I have been back, it looks almost exactly the same as it did when I lived there which is something else extraordinary. The houses are just the same, little stucco houses and the lawns and the little playgrounds they haven’t changed very much. Which is amazing.

[NF] Can I ask you so it sounds like the students were very diverse, so two questions, what about the teachers themselves and also the curriculum? I am really interested to know if the curriculum was very white history based or if you remember it being more diverse. Your teacher encouraged Spanish language and she acknowledged students’ racial identities. Was that also in the curriculum, do you remember that?

[JM] Okay, I don’t think she acknowledged racial differences at all, the teacher didn’t. I think that there was in this school a variety of teachers. I remember having, while I was at Virginia Road Elementary School, I had two white teachers, female; two black teachers, male; and Mr. Uyeno, Asian. So the teachers here were diverse but I’m sure that the curriculum was mainstream centered with no racial diversity at all, I’m almost positive of that. One of the stories from my high school years again when we talk about things that impacted me greatly - I think I actually wrote about this in my chapter on biases. But no, it was a profound thing for me and it took me a long, long time to really understand the context. But, I did not do well in history and I recognize now that I did not do well in history because of the way the curriculum was based. That is was just white history, mentions of slavery was hidden and certainly nothing you talked about. No understanding of the beginning racial civil rights. Nothing like that was taught it was just pretty much put under the rug you just did what you did and taught what you taught. Because of that and also because I have a poor memory for dates right, but you have to remember that in high school in math and science I was in all the AP classes. I was often the only African American, even though it was a very well integrated school, I would be the only African American, maybe one other, in the room. And very often one of three girls.

[00:36:06]

[NF] In the high level classes?

[JM] In the high level classes. In Calculus and Physics...[laughs] and all those other things and I was good at it, I loved it. I didn’t do as well in English classes. I was in mid-

level English classes. I am surprised sometimes when I see that I am a writer now, but that is a whole another story. But, history, oh my gosh, did not do well in history at all. Just the memory and I realize now it's just this dead white guys; [laughs] this is what we were studying for the most part. It didn't go back; when you went back in the ancient history you certainly had nothing about Africa - it's just this whole continent and little mention of the Chinese, it was all about European American history. The Cro-Magnon men in European continent which is funny, I had something I was just reading something, this book. You know Europe is not really a continent, [laughs] if you think about it's a peninsula as huge as a continent. But, we see it as, even seeing that as a continent is just a biased perspective. But, of course I was raised to... I am not sure if you get over it completely. When you've heard it once in elementary, once through junior high, and once through high school so I still have to battle those things in my mind myself. But, so I didn't like history, ended up having to retake the history class in the summer and this time I sort of went for it. And started to research, I loved the Western movement. Remember I like to journey I like to travel; so you can imagine the whole idea of getting on a wagon train and going into the unknown and being part of that pioneer spirit and climbing mountains. I mean that so appealed to me. Oh, by the way, I also wanted to be the first woman in space. No one else has done that yet but, when I was 11/12 I was reading space books, science fiction books, had pictures of jet planes new jet planes [laughs] on the wall. I was so focused on that and I say now that being both black and female probably did more to curtail that than my own inward desire to do it. But I didn't get that at the time so I think part of it is a feeling of failure on my own part, when let's face it, the one time that they were going to take some of us in one the advanced placement classes to something... I can't remember the name of it but it was some big fieldtrip. They were going to just take a few people and you wrote an essay and when we came up to do the interview for who exactly was going to get to go they started the interview by saying "we're not going to take any women because we don't want to have to take a female chaperone." So that was it and yet no one questioned it, I didn't know to question it. And so, I had those kinds of barriers in front of me. I remember I wanted to take a drafting class because I like that precision and stuff. I walked into the drafting class and the teacher looks at me, like, it's clear he doesn't want a girl in there; he doesn't want a woman in that class. He wants nothing but guys. I would have taken auto mechanics if it had been open to women. Because I liked that kind of stuff. To this day I wish I had taken an auto mechanics class.

[00:39:44]

So back to the history, I sort of went on a... [laughs] So, I had done the research; you know you go through and make the little index cards and I done a good job on the research. And I started writing the draft of the introduction to my paper. And I started it by pretending that I was a wagon master. And I'm saying "Wagons Ho!" It just started with a few quotes like that just to get things going. My teacher sent me back the

paper and said...she gave me an "F" on it and said "You've plagiarized this." She wouldn't accept it as mine because from her perspective it was too good to come from an African American, I guess. I don't know but what can I do? I didn't finish the paper [laughs], got another low grade and she just didn't believe I did it myself. That's sort of a key part to me because I think that's part of what drives me to help teachers understand the impact they can have on students, with something that simple. So you know what that did to me? It turned me off to...history for sure, writing to a certain extent, creative writing to a certain extent. In retrospect I met and married my husband who was a history major with a little bit of "Am I really going to do this, marry someone who is a historian, excuse me?" Because of the way I felt about history.

[NF] When that happened to you did you talk to other professors? Where there other professors you could talk to?

[JM] Well this was highschool.

[NF] Right in highschool, were there teachers that you talked to or your parents?

[JM] There is no one to talk to.

[NF] What about your classmates, did you vent to your classmates? There was no one that you felt that you could turn to?

[JM] No. I think that because of my earlier upbringing in New York City with my mother, who did not go past high school, and my father graduated with basically a high school diploma from Voorhees which was a combination high school and college. So, they were really interested in us getting an education, but they probably weren't all that comfortable themselves confronting the teachers. Let's just put it...my friends were "thin" [laughs] I didn't have very many - I was very much isolated because of my parents and then also because of their...I think my mother, as a single mother, was probably very protective of where I would go, when I would go: things probably as simple as overnights and going off with people and having fun. I think she felt she had to be, which I understand, keeping us really close; as I would if I was a single mother with two young girls. And so that was somewhat limiting.

I remember my classmates very fondly. A few of them: David Dolberg is an old friend, an old Jewish friend. I remember spending time at his house working on a science fair project. The science fair could only have a single person's name on it and I remember that we were working hard at this project when only his name was on it. But I remember his house and you know matzah balls and pancakes and bacon. I mean how can you have matzah balls and bacon for breakfast, ok? [laughs] It's just really a little bit of how cultural things were. But, most of my friends in high school were Jewish because most of my classmates in those AP classes were Jewish. I had an African American boyfriend; but, David was my run around with, let's do things together friend. And I

may actually see him in a couple of weeks: we're going down to California and I may look him up. I was also, as you have probably seen already, very much, I guess you would call me a tomboy at the time. Always climbing trees and can see from the pictures that in that day and age, you don't see girls in pants, you see them in dresses. Well I couldn't wait to get home and take off that dress and put on a pair of pants and a checkered shirt and go climb around and doing things or go across to the playground and do things.

[00:45:08]

One other interesting thread and I'm not sure I can think of why that thread started or where or how. Starting in elementary school I was a graduation speaker. I spoke at my elementary graduation. I spoke at my junior high graduation and I spoke at my high school graduation.

[NF] You were selected?

[JM] I was selected in each sense to do a speech mostly written by myself.

[NF] Was it based on your GPA? Was it based on teachers that put your name forward?

[JM] I don't know. In high school I was not the valedictorian. We had a class of 500 and I think I was number 50 in it, so the top ten percent because of those history grades were not quite up there [laughs] and neither were the P.E. [laughs]. I really don't know why I was selected on some of those, but I was. And so I thought it was really interesting when end up giving the graduate commencement address at OSU in 2003 [laughs]. It's like I sort of skipped my own college graduation; but, then I ended up giving a college graduation speech anyway [laughs] as a faculty member. That's an interesting one because I don't remember being particularly outgoing then. Although, I find myself, I think I'm fairly outgoing now. I think that looking back on my childhood, one other thing that does come through it is that because of the variety I had through there. It may have helped me to see people more as individuals because there was such variety there, that I didn't connect. Even though it was a struggle in New York City when I got to Los Angeles and there's some of this variety there might have been a something that happened and I just had a variety of friends. And I do remember having friends of all different colors all through my time in Los Angeles. It is extraordinary. Okay.

[NF] So when you were in highschool it would have been late 50's early 60's?

[JM] Correct.

[NF] And being in L.A. and a big city do you remember having a sense of the bigger picture of what was going on in the United States? Did you have a television in your home? Were you watching television or did you listen to the radio or did you talk about

it in school? It sounds like it was pretty mainstream but do you remember the bigger of context of civil rights?

[JM] That's a good question let me think about it a little bit. First of all we had a television very early. I think like 1950, which was very early to have a TV, little tiny screen. But, I don't remember watching news on it. I remember watching endless cartoons. I remember my mother, you know we had all the shows that we watched. I don't remember, probably had a newspaper in the house, but I don't remember. *Life* magazine, we had that. Probably *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *Jet*, maybe for a little while. I don't think my mother talked about what was happening in the larger picture and I don't think I did either through high school. I cannot remember. It seems to me we must have. But, I don't remember feeling engaged with the larger issues of what was going on until college. I think part of it was those AP classes and those of us who were in it just focused on getting the grades and going on to college. We were high schoolers, we were having fun. I remember going to the Rose Parade and I remember going to a few lectures at some of the universities. I remember an academic focus in highschool. I think it's true now that people of different racial backgrounds, when they're together, race becomes a taboo topic. I think that some of us probably weren't talking about it in our classes very much and teachers were probably just afraid of it too. And that many people were talking about it at home but not in my home. So, I think it was pretty much over my head, or out of my thoughts, which is why I think that going to Berkley in 1963 was huge.

[00:50:47]

Oh, one thing that did happen in my high school which was something that broadened my horizons quite a bit is that some alumni of Los Angeles High School gave the school a quarter million dollars. And starting with our class they took a group, they used the interest to take a group of seniors on a trip around California. At my reunion I was talking to someone that had been there and they remember one of the songs was "We're traveling, we're traveling, we're traveling, round California. Traveling, we're traveling, we're traveling around California by the seas and over the rugged mountains, Romans from L.A. High." Then we had a verse about the math teacher, we had a verse about the Hearst Castle, we had a verse about San Francisco, we had a verse about everything else. And on that trip we visited the University of California at Berkeley. And I remember those of us sneaking out at midnight to go to the movie theatre and that you had your choice of who happened to be on the bus to be your temporary one week girlfriend, boyfriend [laughs] you know how kids are. That was pretty interesting. Honestly that opened so much of the world for me because I saw so much of California from that bus. And also, I had a chance I think to have some of these deeper conversations. But, I still don't remember us doing anything that was of social justice, political or awareness nature.

So I did apply to the University of California Berkeley and I believe 13 students from my high school entered Berkeley at the same time I did. And a few of those had been my classmates so I had a little bit of connections then. But, I think one of the things that surprised me right away is that I realized that my friendships with those in high school had been partly connected because of having classrooms together and once we were in a larger world and they just dissipated almost immediately. I can remember my first roommate who was also named Jeanie. And my mother tells a story, she actually wrote it to *Readers Digest*, that when someone would call the dorm and ask for Jeanie the operator would say, "Do you want Jeanie chocolate or Jeanie vanilla?" [laughs] But I remember that she was being rushed for sororities and it was never any question; I know that there are sororities, probably even then and certainly now, that were integrated. But, at that time there was no chance of my being invited to it [laughs]. There is a good chance that I just wasn't the type of sorority person anyway. It may not have made any difference what color I was because I was not a conformer even then. One time I did meet with some members of a black sorority that was not *[living]* on campus but was there. But, at that time all the black women were wearing straight hair, had their hair straight. The only women who, black women, who did not wear their hair straight were those who were from Africa. And you know Odetta, the singer, she was one who we would listen to music wise and she wore her hair natural and some of the African women did. And as far as I know I was the very first African American woman to wear her hair natural at the University of California at Berkeley. There was no one else I just decided to do it on my own, cut my hair, that was it.

[00:55:20]

[NF] So in high school you had been wearing it straight?

[JM] Straight oh yeah.

[NF] But when you got to college you decided to...

[JM] Yeah I did! [laughs] My mother hated it so much that when she came to visit me she insisted that I wear one of my dorm-mates blonde wig over it [laughs]. That was crazy wasn't it? So, I am trying to think of what kinds of influences and what kinds of things happened during those first few years at Berkeley.

[NF] Well can we go back just?

[JM] Sure lets go back, anything you want.

[NF] So when you were applying to Berkeley what was it that you wanted to study since you were so good at math and science is that what you had in mind when you went to college?

[JM] Oh yeah. I'll tell you that journey. That's an easy journey to tell because I have told it before. But, the other thing I think to remember; I tell people that I was at Berkeley and they go "Wow, you were at Berkeley, that's a great university." No, no you don't understand. When I went to Berkeley if you had a "B" average you were in. That's all you had to have. It was a state school and like some schools still are, they let everyone in knowing that what, 20 percent, 30 percent are going to flunk out very quickly. And that's just how it was done, so it wasn't highly selective then. It's just that's the school that I chose to go to and it was within a day's drive from my home. So, you have to realize that I am going from this sort of very closed, protected home life, to Berkeley [laughs]. Which, Berkeley I would say had about the same ratio of students of color as OSU does now or less. Yes...or less - it was very white. Now it's pretty integrated but then it was pretty darn white. And, I told you that I had trouble writing, I wasn't a great writer and when I took the exam for specifics of where they placed you, my writing skills were not good enough get into English 1A. I had to take "Subject A" which is the pre-class before you get your skills up there and you get into English 1A. So that was sort of like a real bummer. And then I had taken the AP calculus classes and I was a math /science person. And I remember I took the AP test and I didn't have enough, it wasn't high enough to skip the whole year. And I don't think the way it was set up I could start in the second level, I think I had to start at the beginning level. So when I went to my advisor I said, "I've taken AP calculus got an "A" in it. Why should I just start in calculus 1A that's just going to be lower level?" And I said, "Well why don't I take the honors calculus? That makes sense, I will be starting at everyone else." Well recently I read about someone who did a study about African Americans, at Berkeley, at the time I was there. Now, I wasn't a part of the study; but, what they found out was that African Americans that went to Berkeley for some reason, I haven't read the study but it was done, thought that they were supposed to succeed on their own with no help. So, here I am in this honors calculus section, lecture, 300 people. I don't remember seeing one other female. I don't remember seeing one other brown face. There were some Asian males, I remember that. I am sure there might have been someone else, but that's what I saw. And I didn't know that in all likelihood I should get a study group going [laughs]. And so I didn't make it. I was in honors calculus and at the end of my first quarter [semester] I had a "C" in it. It was a "C" maybe a "D" I don't know.

[01:00:03]

Now at the end of the year, I was still helping my dorm-mates with their regular calculus. Because I knew calculus well it was a different level and I had always managed on my own so I saw no reason to. And this is the quarter [semester] that I met my husband, so I had a lot going and studying was not one of them and I didn't even know that I needed it. My first quarter [semester] I got three "C's" and a "D". Now to stay in the University of California at Berkeley you have to have a "C" average. So I had to get three "C's" and a "B" by the end of the next quarter [semester]. But, by now I had

met Robbie; I have a really interesting story that I can read about our early days together which maybe we will get to if you want it. But, in that quarter [*semester*] when I had to bring it up, we had a motorcycle accident and we were in the hospital at the end of the quarter [*semester*] and so I had all Incompletes. So, I got a letter saying that basically you're out of Berkeley. I wrote a letter and I said "Well I was in a motorcycle accident" and they said "Okay, we will give you to the end of the fall semester to bring your grades up. To finish your Incompletes; see that they're up high enough to give you a "C" average and you can stay in. So, I tell that story because I was so close to the edge of not making it at all. And, I also think that as I reflect on that time and what it was like, I think I understand how important it was to have some academic buddies to help. In my classrooms I have students facing each other and making connections because that was not, it still isn't the normal thing to do for starters at a university; but, I make sure that it happens in my classes. I think that's part of why I did it because of what I saw happening when I was in college.

One little part about the sororities which might be a detail that some people don't know: although by the time I was looking at the black sororities it was no longer true. When black sororities were first set up, part of getting into a black sorority was whether you passed the paper bag test. If your skin was lighter than a standard paper bag you could get into the sorority, if it was darker you could not.

[NF] Into a black sorority?

[JM] Correct.

[NF] I would think that it would be the opposite?

[JM] Well, you know black is beautiful and that certainly happened during the time when I was in college. When I think of the things that happened when I was in college it's just absolutely amazing. We were both caught up in the beginning stirrings of the Civil Rights Movement very, very quickly. We were on the front lines of the Free Speech Movement. We saw, we began to see what was happening across the United States and in the South in the Civil Rights Movement there. We were still being supported by my mother and father, you know I was a freshman and sophomore. There is no way I had the means or the way to get on a plane and get there. So, I think it was very natural to want to get involved in the Free Speech Movement.

[NF] So when you say "we" was it the classmates themselves, the students, was it the teachers, was it the whole culture? How did you start getting involved and how did that come about?

[JM] I think this is probably a good time to look specifically at my closeness with my husband Robbie because when I say "we" at this point, I am pretty much talking about my time with him.

[NF] Well and you said that he was a historian so he was very interested in that. Did he ever talk to you about that and that's when you got more interested?

[JM] He was a history major at that time and I think that might have been part of it. But, I think that it was more...there was a rumbling of anti-establishment, anti-money, anti-capitalism which for us was very closely connected to the Civil Rights Movement. We didn't like the world and the government as it was. That to a large extent was connected to what you could see happening in the South. But, of course I had seen pieces of that discrimination all through my life so it wasn't as if that was as sudden as it was sort of this ground swell of other things that came up.

[01:05:55]

I think this might be a good time to talk a little bit about my time with Robbie. This is from an article called "Homeless, Clueless, in Jail, but Their Love Never Failed." This is a poem that Robbie wrote me in February 1964, which is the era we are talking about right now. "If I could live on grassy slopes and see the world through pines. I'd culminate my fondest hopes and build a home, yours and mine." Now, he would write me poetry sometimes almost daily and put them under my door or mail them to me and that was how he courted me. There was one poem where he said, "If my poetry could grow like the love in my soul, then the whole world would know Mrs. Robert D. Moule." It took me awhile to realize that would be true of anyone that he married, it didn't need to be me [laughs]. Ok. "Most couples remember their first days with misty eyes and pleasant thoughts. We first set our tear filled eyes on each other the day John F. Kennedy was shot. We met two weeks later on Pearl Harbor Day, some might say it's been a war ever since. Any relationship begun on those few days has nowhere to go but up. Through the years we have been homeless, clueless and in jail and at those times when we've had little but each other our marriage has been strengthened. According to surveys these and other types of causes many marriages to split. It goes back to the old adage, 'the difference between an obstacle and a stepping stone is how high you lift your feet.' So we took some high steps beginning with the decision to cross racial barriers to marry. That probably set the tone for the willingness to give our best efforts to the problems of marriage. We were both attending the University of California at Berkeley. As the news of Kennedy's assassination swept the campus many students found their way to the student union. The chairs and sofas were quickly taken and as the news was broadcast over the intercom the floor filled up with students as well. In the midst of floor-to-floor solemn people one man rested his head on a women's torso. An art student at the time, I thought them an interesting picture and began to draw to pass the time away and take my mind off the tragedy. Some people may say of their beloved, I loved you before I knew you. I can say to Rob, 'I drew you before I knew you.' Within days, through a dorm-mate, the woman in the drawing I met Rob. Fresh from home only two months before, I was smitten by his poetry which came almost daily. His poetic muse was short-lived, dying shortly after our wedding although about

every five years he puts his pen to paper. At the time it was enough to turn the head of a romantically inclined 18 year old. So was the motorcycle. Adventure was-ever just one varoom! away. By June, we had taken trips to the mountains and the coast and circled the San Francisco Bay one romantic evening. We had a head-on with a car, killing the motorcycle and almost ourselves. My mother said that after the scars on my leg that he had to marry me. When Rob had graduated from traction to crutches to a cane we both hobbled over to a bench by the campus stream and became engaged setting a date for the following June, 1965.

[01:09:25]

Meanwhile the campus atmosphere was heating up. By fall we were both involved in the Free Speech Movement on campus. As skeptical young people we felt strongly that people should be able to speak their minds, empty though they may be. We marched into the campus administration building and stayed to be arrested. We found our pictures on the front page of the San Francisco Chronicle and lost all faith in the news media. Eventually we lost faith in "the cause." In the next first years we picked up our marriage license, a couple of degrees and a few experiences of being your not-so-typical married-couple. When we think of our early romantic days one scene stands out. We were newlyweds traveling to Salt Lake City to meet my father and his wife to continue by car to the East Coast and the rest of our honeymoon. On the bus trip, although we had eyes only for each other, we did notice a women walking the aisles and talking to other passengers. As she came even with us I heard her say " 'And they even have the nerve to be wearing rings.' " We found out later that there was still a law on the books in Utah, and 26 other states, against miscegenation or mixed marriages. We decided it was safest to wait in a dark movie theatre for my parents who were to meet us. When we went to the hotel we were told there was no record of a room reserved for us by my father. We then asked for my parents who should have arrived, the clerk could not find their name on the registry either. We slowly walked out of the hotel with little money and no idea of how to contact my father with the knowledge that we were in an hostile environment. On our way out we glanced into the hotel dining room, there sat my parents, eating and waiting for us to arrive. My father went to the desk and insisted that we be given a room. My father and his wife had had no problem registering because they were both black. This time on our honeymoon was the most blatant discrimination we faced before or since. Basically we feel that prejudice keeps away from us people that we probably wouldn't like anyway. Later our wanderings brought us up through the West Coast and through several spiritual searches. In 1969 we found ourselves near Silverton, long-haired, long-skirted hippies expecting our first child."

[NF] So can I go back to a couple of things?

[JM] Sure.

[NF] I wanted to go back to the fact that you got an art degree. So how did that come about and what inspired you to art?

[JM] Well, the math and science wasn't working. Then I took a philosophy class and I loved philosophy. I wrote a paper called "Unity in Multiplicity" for my Philosophy 6A class. And that Professor Firerobin was the first professor that I ever really sat down and talked to. Even though I remember his conversation "Why do you want to study philosophy, why don't you just have kids and settle down" but he still gave me an "A" which was my first "A" in college, [laughs] so I wanted to know about this man. First, I wanted to do my strength and then I wanted to figure out all of life and the universe through philosophy. And the next thing I went into was psychology because I think I wanted to figure out myself. And then I got into art which was basically I was just going to express myself [laughs]. So, it was just a journey and I am sure that a lot of it was connected to my growing identity. I mean I went from, I entered college at 17 years old, that's young, with very little to see. And then I meet the love of my life almost immediately so there is so much to be done there and there was so much happening, not just the Free Speech movement. I remember when I was in Berkeley there were several times when we went to meetings where the Black Panthers were there. Huey Newton, I mean I met some of them. And one time when I was out going over to the bay area someone asked me if I was Angela Davis because I had the natural. She had a natural, a very big natural by then. I remember marching to a park with Joan Baez and dancing in the Fillmore with her sister and her husband. One of the other earlier things, we used to go out to the small, small place in the country with this band that would play. We would go out there and there might be 30 people and they'd play and we would dance. It was the Grateful Dead when they were only playing to a handful of people and we knew; Robbie knew them. There was a lot happening then. We were really into Bob Dylan.

[01:14:50]

And so, I sort of went from doing my art, doing my strength. Where was that going to lead? The philosophy I am sure was highly connected to the whole New Age, bigger-picture movement that was happening then. But, the thought of how our brains work and what makes us tick and all that stuff in psychology, then that became very, very interesting to me. But, then I took one or two art classes and I really liked expressing myself. I remember just having a sort of epiphany once with an art teacher, Robert Hartman that really touched me. And then, I think there's this sort of non-judgmental whatever you create and put up there could be seen. And then I also realized, I think at that time, I'm getting back into it now then into, I guess I'm in retirement [laughs] that I had some talent in it. So, that was beginning to come through and I just ended up with an art major and a psychology minor. But, first freshman was math and science, then philosophy right away. I think I went into psychology as a sophomore and I didn't get into an art major until I was a junior or a senior. So it definitely changed and I was

married between my sophomore and junior year, so that was key then in hanging out with a lot of different people and totally immersed in a Berkeley lifestyle.

One of my political things, about that time, we were a part of Students for a Democratic Society, or SNIC [*it was the Peace and Freedom Party*]. I don't remember [laughs] it was some radical left wing movement. We were politically so far left that the Democratic and Republicans were both to the right. I mean really they were out there, we were obviously, tear down the walls [laughs]. But, I was doing some campaigning for a local legislator in Oakland because we lived on the other side of line of Berkeley-Oakland over a gay bar. We lived over the Berkeley-Oakland boundary. And I was campaigning in Oakland and I was walking down the street knocking and leaving campaign literature and I went door to door. And I noticed this guy in this old, sort of dirty, white station wagon. I'd see him and he would sort of be looking at me and then I be around and I would see him again, wondering what this guy was doing. Finally, he stopped his car in the street and sort of waved me over; so I go over and we start talking and he said, we saw that we were about the same political stripe and he said "Do you think you could pass out my literature I'm running for mayor?" And it was Jerry Rubin. And it's interesting to me, of course I don't tell that story to my students anymore because they don't know who Jerry Rubin is [laughs].

But, as someone that was active in that political pushing against things that we didn't like, and honestly I think at that time for me the specifics on the Civil Rights Movement and the discrimination against African Americans was part of a larger picture that I was seeing and I just didn't like the way the world was being run. And I didn't like the capitalism. You might have called me... I'm not going to say communistic because I don't think I knew enough about it politically, but the idea of living on a commune where you're working together and you're sharing things and you're giving freely of your gifts to other people and everybody eats, everybody works. There is something there, I found that very enticing and I think that that equalitarian idea and commonality and sharing of our gifts, more than any specific political leaning. It still permeates how I teach; of course it is certainly there in cultural competence that I do.

[01:20:07]

[NF] So can you tell me a little bit more about the Free Speech Movement and then the excerpt from the article that you read I heard the word "disillusioned." Can you talk a little bit about how you came about with that movement and then what became of that?

[JM] Well, I think that we were ground troops. We weren't, I remember one time we ended up in a car for some reason with Mario Salvia, but, we were not in the leadership of that at all, we were simple followers. But, we believed in it and we did we went in to sit-ins. There's a picture of us on the front page of the San Francisco Chronicle sitting underneath one of the registration tables. And we're doing our homework while people

are standing up on the tables looking around, but we didn't leave. We were arrested, and I think the disillusioning part was feeling that we hadn't really made a difference. And that it had disrupted our personal lives quite a bit because of it. And for me personally I remember when we got out of jail someone had a copy of the *New York Times* on that day and remember that we are just sort of no bodies in the background. But, some people were more in front as leaders. And they're reading this article and one of them says to another, "Who Jean Golson?" And I go, "What?" And I look over their shoulder and on the news article in the *New York Times* for some reason out of 800 people arrested and they had chosen my name. And the story in there wasn't my story, it wasn't my arrest. And I think that's the first time that I, and it's pretty early, to have something that specific where you knew the media wasn't telling you the truth. 'Cause I knew that wasn't my story. In the *New York Times* article the person arrested...when they came to arrest me it was trespassing and what was it?...there were three different things that we were accused of...disturbing the peace and trespassing, or something. Anyway, and then if you didn't get up and walk away you got arrested for resisting arrest. Well I didn't get up, I was carried. The story in the *New York Times* had the person getting up and walking out, so I knew it wasn't mine they had just picked a name for some reason.

And it was just the bureaucracy of it all. I remember just recently I was reading someone who left Berkeley for some of the same reasons that we protested then. And it's just that the bureaucracy is so massive and you wonder if you can make any difference by knocking hard on the door or being arrested. And I think I came to believe at that point that what we did, while it sort of moved things along and it maybe did "x." In the big scheme of things, I think that those who stay in the system and work to change it may have a better chance of making a difference as far as influence is concerned. And I would say that's probably why I eventually went on to finish my degrees and do what I do now, in the sense that I can work in it. One body on the line for an extra arrestee is not as influential as writing a book and having students that I can talk to and individually help them come to some more connections about what's happening. So I think that it was just that that happened in the Free Speech Movement for me. It's all said and done I have an arrest record which I still have to answer to occasionally. But, did my extra body on the line, my sister in law she was in the thing when it came to you being arrested she went home, you know [laughs]. Not too many years ago my son noticed that the Free Speech Movement was trying to find the arrestees and he saw that our name wasn't on there so he made sure that we would get on it. Every month or so I get email from the Free Speech, FSMer's we're called and just last year for the first time I went back on campus and now there's an FSM café on campus. But, this young woman who left the university recently said, "Here are these people that stood against the bureaucracy trying to make a change and now what's happening? There's a café there." When I was on campus there was this really huge rally, I couldn't believe it. Thousands and thousands of students marching five and six

abreast across campus and they had all these signs up and it was about the tuition raise [laughs]. You're fighting because the tuition was raised? Okay, I get that. But we were fighting because we believe that our fundamental rights to speak in public were being curtailed, that people couldn't say what they wanted to say on campus. And so, did that make a difference? You know, it's hard to judge. I've never really thought back to it and to judge it any more.

[01:26:20]

[NF] But it had an impact obviously and then now especially you were saying that the way that you approach education and how working in the system from within.

[JM] I think it has. But, then was it Mario Salvia that said "Never trust anyone over 30?" And so, we were. I think it might be good to finish this part about my husband and I, that I started about our love, and it's personal but I think it's a good place to be. And maybe close to where we should end, we should see. Because I started talking about our love and I started with the poem. "In Silverton we received a surprising welcome from some rural folks who were not afraid to offer us unconditional love in the name of God. Eventually we ended out spiritual journey," (which by the way included transcendental meditation while we were in Berkeley), "by returning to our Christian roots. At this point our marriage became stronger because of Jesus Christ. Would there have been the time of near separation, the temptation of drugs, the drop out years if we had found the Lord earlier? If we had to do it all over again we'd take Jesus every day of our lives. On the lighter side, if Rob has a garden, a library and a crossword puzzle he had everything he needs. I like people and challenges in general. Together we travel, ski, and enjoy fellowship. Two of our three children who became the focus of our close marriage blessed us with a card on a recent anniversary. One son said, 'If I try to draw a picture of how much the two of you love each it would take a lot more hearts than what's shown on this card. When I talk to my friends and they tell me the stories of their divorced parents I am grateful to you for being together and a solid family. Twenty-seven years is quite a feat by today's standards.' The other son added, 'What is most important to me now is knowing wherever I am, I can always come home or call home and find two loving and supportive parents. That number "two" is so important to me. People have told me they almost can't believe what a relationship the two of you have and I realize now how fortunate I really am.' This is another poem written in February 14, 1994 right about when I wrote this article. "The love we've shared since '63 has grown beyond just you and me. Our three beige babes have left the nest and the years ahead may be the best."

[end 01:29:20]