[Audio: Sue Ellen Jacobs Phone Interview.mp3]

[0:01:54.8]

BHATT: I know that you're familiar with the project and I know that Angela and Shirley have been in touch with you. Just to give you a sense of my own background, I graduated from the PhD program at UW in 2011 and I worked with Priti Ramamurthy for almost the whole time that I was there. And so I think I joined right after you had left, unfortunately we never had the chance to meet in person, which I have regretted a great deal, because I came in 2004. I am currently an Assistant Professor at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County in the Gender and Women's Studies Department there. And I was helping with the department's oral history project over the Winter Quarter, to start soliciting stories of folks who have been instrumental in shaping the department.

We did about six interviews in the Winter Quarter and the idea is to continue to build the archive. And of course, your story is instrumental in making sure that we have as thorough and deep of a repository and of course to make sure that we archive your history in shaping the department as well. What I thought we'd do is I would basically go through a conventional oral history, starting by asking you to talk a little bit about your own history: Where you were born, what kind of household you grew up in, and then moving into your university education and your early activism, and then moving into your experience at the University of Washington, your research, and life beyond that as well.

JACOBS: Did you read what I told you to read?

BHATT: I did, I got quite a bit of information from that. I might ask some questions asking you to elaborate a bit more, for instance on the Northwest Center for Research on Women and the controversies around that, your early involvement with the Sacramento Women's Groups and then later on in the Seattle area as well.

JACOBS: I'll do my best.

BHATT: OK, we'll take what we can.

JACOBS: Just to let you know, the fifteen boxes that I have of my years at UW are going to be picked up and brought to the University for further use. They will be in the archive in about a month. I was afraid I would forget to tell you that. So let me go back to your first question: where was I born, and when.

BHATT: Yes please.

[0:06:16.0]

JACOBS: 1936, I was born in Chicago. My mother comes from a long, proud Irish family and my father was a proud Scots Irish. But just for the [inaudible: 0:06:38.8] here, the siblings—some of the siblings are determined that they are only Scots— so we are having fun with that. And there's a new article in – well, last year – in the—what's the name of that journal? The National Museum of American Indian magazine, it's called *American Indian Journal* or something like that. Anyway, they had a big event there in 2013 called *Scots in the American West*. And so they are willing to talk about the Scots Irish as part of that Scots English, and it's from the point of view of "what did the Scots do for or to the Native Americans?."

BHATT: Very interesting.

JACOBS: So that's where I wind up in my life as a focus and determination to help set things right, especially in the celebration of Civil Rights laws that Johnson brought into existence. I am working here with people who are constantly on edge about rights for [cross-talk 0:08:00.6]. I wanted to be sure that the rest of the family got a chance to see what the National Museum was saying about Scots in the American West.

Now, you want to know about the family. That was my dad and my mother, and he was nine years older than mother. They met in Chicago and married. My mother graduated from a—what did they that back then?—a secretarial school. You know, you would go for two years to learn shorthand and all kinds of ways of taking notes and so on. Anyway, when she told her father where she was going to go after she graduated and so on. For her adventure he gave her a pistol. A [cross-talk 0:08:57.7] handed pistol, the kind that can slip in a purse or in a pocket. Now, I never understood the significance of that until I saw the movie *Chicago*. Have you seen it?

BHATT: I see. I have, yeah.

JACOBS: Well, that was the time my mother was arriving in Chicago – somewhere around then and that's why she got to carry that gun with her all over the country. And when we got to Seattle – they actually moved up there to be with me during the last years of their lives – she brought that pistol and gave it to me. Now, Seattle had a program, about a year after that had happened, to if you have a gun in your house you don't want, bring it in and we'll make a manhole cover with it. So we did that with her pistol. Somewhere in the city there is a manhole cover that came from my mother (laughs).

BHATT: That's a really interesting way of keeping the history localized, that's really neat.

JACOBS: And bringing things together because when my dad was in the Navy he was stationed at Bremerton, but that was years before. So he and Mother used to go over to Bremerton to have visits. Now, I was very anti-war and so within the family— and a brother-in-law who went to Vietnam and came back with Agent Orange and that seems to have been passed on to the children but anyway, that's another story about the framing of, determination of my politics.

So I'm number one, and then three come after me and Dad comes back from the war and we start moving around the country. And that was because he had a couple of issues. One was he had malaria when he was in the—I've forgotten where they were—El Salvador I guess, somewhere around there. But then he was shell-shocked from a plane that crashed into the ship he was on, and so forth. So anyway, he could never find a happy settlement until my brother got out of the Army and wound up in Colorado with the best friend of the President of the College there, Adam State. And John convinced Dad and Mother to move there and he said, "Oh what the heck, why don't all the family come over there?" And so they all wound up in Alamosa, Colorado. I was a wonderful time for me. I got to know all kinds of wonderful ranch people a whole other view of the world than I had had living east of the Mississippi and much of that time in the South.

One of the things I did as a registered nurse with my speciality pediatrics, I forced the City Hospital of Charlotte, North Carolina – my best friend and I – forced the Hospital to integrate. How did we do that? The heart surgeon told us to go downstairs and look at this child he was going to be doing heart surgery on. We went down and looked at him and met the family and so forth. He was African American, they had what they call a "Colored Ward" back then. So Jo [? 0:12:34.3] and I decided we weren't going to this. We got somebody with a gangrene leg over here on this side and we got somebody with something else on this side and we are not going to let him do this surgery here, bring this child back here. So we went back upstairs to the pediatric ward and told the doctor, "No, we would not be taking care of this patient." That was a pretty gutsy thing to do back in those days. You don't tell a heart surgeon that you're not going to take care of his patient – his surgeries were already known world-wide. He said, "Why? Why are you doing this to me? Why would you do that to that child?" "Real simple, there's no crash cart for a child down there. There's none of the support that we would need for caring for that child." He just stopped in his tracks and he said, "I

will be right back." He went through the doors, came back in about thirty minutes and he said, "We are bringing the kid up."

Now that started something else because there were a lot of white families that immediately wanted to take their children out of there. Well, I had already started feeling that there were too many wrong things in this country that I was willing to fight against, and that was my first big step in the direction of Civil Rights.

[0:13:52.5]

BHATT: What year did you end up in North Carolina? Was this after you had finished your high school?

JACOBS: No, after high school I went into nurses training, I was a full-time regular nurse at that point. You're trying to get a date for that, aren't you?

BHATT: I was thinking about it.

JACOBS: Let's see, the family had moved to North Carolina. It had to be before '63 because I had started graduate school at the University of Denver and was there when Kennedy got shot in '63, so I would guess it was probably '61. And then very quickly thereafter we began to see African American nurses on the units around. So it didn't take long, but it did happen before the passage of the Civil Rights Act.

Now let me see, from there I went to Virginia Beach and wherever else, it doesn't matter – I wind up in Colorado with the rest of the family and decide to go ahead and try to get all of the requirements taken care of that I needed in order to go on to become a MD. So that was my [inaudible: 0:15:30.7] from the time I was little. And so I took a lot of courses but I took some anthropology and it was there that I began to learn a different way of looking at different peoples of the world. I had a very excellent anthro teacher and a sociology professor whose name was…well,

Don Green [? 0:15:54.2] was the anthropologist. I can't believe I've suddenly forgotten the name of the Japanese American. His family was put in the camps, of course we heard about that every course I took from him, but it was a wonderful way— Dr. Oba, his last name was Oba—to bring us all into another kind of real dimension of life, or the multiple dimensions of life. So complementing the anthropology theory and basic courses that I was taking, came Dr. Oba.

So I graduate and I go to Denver and I work in the juvenile hall there for a while just because I wanted another kind of experience before I went on with my graduate work. What I learned working in the juvenile hall in Denver was that the color of your skin made a difference about whether you were picked up as a kid doing little things kids do. And that made me angry. So again, I'm signing out things that I couldn't believe because, see, being born and starting school in Chicago meant that you were in a multi-ethnic, multi-racial environment, and then I'm dragged all over the country to places where people don't appreciate that. So I go through that but my conscience is really high. This is a good time, too, after Kennedy was killed that people began marching to different drums, in different ways. And so I was able to get to the University of Colorado as a graduate student and had a couple of radical anthropologists for faculty members and suddenly out of the blue I got a call from one of those faculty members asking me if I would like to go to California because there was a job there that they felt I would be good for.

BHATT: Wow. And this is before you finished the PhD?

JACOBS: I didn't have my dissertation written but I already spent some time in Denver with Corky Gonzáles' Chicano Movement and his people. We were doing, we meaning I, was doing a study with a faculty member who was not my mentor but she was interested in seeing if I could get into that community and bring back some news about health care in that barrio. See, I'm remembering things now that I had

forgotten about for years. That's what these things do to you.

[0:18:52.4]

BHATT: Exactly, that's the point.

JACOBS: So that was going along just fine, and then I got the call for— that anyway I'd have to come back and give a report on what I was seeing over there: "Healthcare situation horrible; food banks no, none; clothing drives, none." I mean, all kinds of things that were needed. And Corky Gonzáles and his people were really trying to stir the flames on all of it. Yes, I got frightened a couple of times but it was basically OK in the long run.

The faculty member who wanted to get hold of me and have me as his student did tell me about the job. I guess the call had come to the head of the department and they were talking among themselves at faculty meetings, now we know how that goes, and I just thought they had thrown a dart at the list of graduate students and it happened to land on me or something like that. So I packed up and went out there.

I had already done my fieldwork in a hospital and I was very influenced by Ray Birdwhistell's work and some other language/communication-type folks and I thought that part of the problem for discrimination had to do with communication style and that a lot of white people were causing trouble because they didn't know how to listen. My previous director – I guess she wound up being my final director – Dorothea Kaschube, the linguist who had this theory that the troubles in the world were because of people doing rapid listening, nobody knows how to listen. And so then I took it the next step, and that is that ethno-communications are variable by region and so on. I had a chance to take my—well, I was testing some of the basic theory that I was developing in the hospital.

And then when I got to California it turned that they wanted me for a particular type of mission and my time with the Chicanos in Denver seemed to fit the bill. They had just started a program called the Mexican-American Experienced Teachers Fellowship Program, and I was to direct them in a course on culture and poverty. And my point was – I had really learned this firmly from the [Audio cuts out: 0:21:46.9]: they couldn't know if they didn't get out there and live with the people that they were [Audio cuts out: 0:21:57.4] whose children they were supposed to help.

[Audio disruption 0:21:59.5 to 0:22:06.9]

So with the permission of the chair of the department, the head of that project, I, and some of the community leaders— I assigned a fieldwork component to this culture and poverty course. They had to read a little bit of Oscar Lewis and then they had to go out there and find a family that would put up with them. Put them up. So there was good stuff going on down there with Dolores Huerta and César Chávez, and some of the guys wanted to go do that, so I wasn't going to say no to anything that anybody picked up for themselves.

Now, meanwhile, half of the people on this program are Anglos and the other half are very sophisticated, upper-class Chicanos – who were not Chicanos at the time, they were dyed in the wool, middle-class, upper-class Spanish fellas of the California type. So they were tough, and didn't want to have to – they were politely tough – didn't want to have to go out and do this kind of thing. By the time they came back, there was a whole different tone in the classroom. And I have to say that I'm very proud of what happened. They found out that by living with families who were way beneath them in terms of the hierarchy within the Chicano community, Hispanic community, they learned that they were racist.

BHATT: Interesting.

JACOBS: It happens in African American communities, too, and we've seen a lot of that lately, in the last twenty years. So anyway, they came back and I see these guys with beards and mustaches, jeans, and lounging in their chairs acting so [cross-talk: 0:24:05.9] – they just can't wait to get hold of me in that day and I just applauded them.

The other things is, we had to set up with the college – that was Tech State – we had to set up a rescue system so they all had my phone number at home as well as the head of the program. And if they needed to call the police, they should just do it and we would get them. You may have seen where I mentioned the President of Tech State that time was Julian Bond [sic 0:24:43.4].

BHATT: Yes I did.

JACOBS: African American. So he thought this was kind of cool, and anyway, they all went out there – half women, half men, or maybe more men than women but it doesn't matter – they all came back unscathed, didn't get any emergency phone calls or anything. Once they got out there and got in the situation they acted like anthropologists. I was so proud of them.

And then time came for someone else to take over this position and one of the young men was so courageous, he had been the principal in one the schools in Los Angeles and he said, "You know, the only thing wrong with this is that you are a white woman, you're an Anglo, and we want somebody here who understands and can speak to us in Spanish." And somebody on the other side said, "Yeah, well you don't speak Spanish!" (laughs)

BHATT: Interesting.

JACOBS: Well, you know at that time, how did you—? It's just like in the Native American communities, how do you survive in this society that's been taken over by all these English speaking people? You learn to speak English, and you use it from morning 'til night. So they finally got past the language issue and Steve Arvizu became a really good friend. He said to me at the last day of class, I think it was – somewhere around there – he said, "The only thing wrong, Sue-Ellen, is that I'm going to have to take your job." I said, "You come for it, come on, get it! I'll be happy. Next year, you're going to be ready next year because I will talk with the department. Absolutely, we all know you." In the long run, Steve actually got a PhD in Anthropology, he went to New Guinea for his fieldwork and he came back and he was put into that position. He is just an amazing guy. Anyway, as that was flowing and happening, I was going to the Sacramento Women's Liberation Foundation—what did call it?

BHATT: I believe it's the Sacramento Women's Liberation…I just had it written down here as well…

JACOBS: Oh good. I've forgotten the last part of the title.

BHATT: So that organization had really sort of started as a community…Sacramento Women's Liberation Front.

JACOBS: Front. That was it. I was looking for the rest of the F there. It was serious resistance, serious Angela Davis-type stuff, and everything that we could throw together to make us half as high but at the same time stand out as truly against the system. So I went because I needed that kind of nurturing, for one thing. I needed to belong in a community of women that were working on the behalf of women. Gloria Steinem used to come to town with Flo Kennedy—do you know who Flo Kennedy is?

BHATT: No, I don't actually.

JACOBS: Well see? That's what happened, everybody always talked about Gloria Steinem and they didn't pay any attention to the African American woman who was with her. She did all the legwork and she brought in the African American women to the meetings, by her mere presence. But come on, don't forget her! Put her back in the history!

And so on we go, on I go. I don't know when I first started being resistant. Probably when I was a little kid, when I ran away from my parents as we were passing an alley in Chicago, and I saw this thing about to happen, I just jerked loose and ran down, waving my arms up in the air and this guy on this semi-truck finally put his brakes on – there was a baby crawling in the alley there!—And how did I happen to see that? How do I happen to remember that? I don't know—But he just drove back down [? 0:29:14.3], scolded my parents for letting me do that. I don't what went on from there, but periodically there was something. There was always something that I was getting in trouble over. It formed kind of a steel band around my heart, around my soul so that they couldn't get to me. And I kept fighting on and on.

I tell you, when you were a nurse back in those days, those doctors, they were gods, and you didn't dare fight with them or disagree with them. So I learned that if you step out sometimes you're not—well, Bernice Johnson Reagon says that "You don't always get killed." So first of all you show up. And sometimes just showing up is all you need to do. And secondly, if you stand out and step forward, you don't always get killed. You might, but on the other hand, if you don't who's going to do it? So that was my life. And I have done that here with the Pueblo, I've done it with American Indian stuff, and in many different places. And I just have a sense of—oh, and at the university, how many times did I sit before a dean and do that?

[0:30:33.9]

BHATT: Sure. And in fact, you mentioned in your article that you went to James Bond and really called for a sea change at that time in terms of curriculum.

JACOBS: Yeah there we are. I, along with some other collaborate [? 0:30:50.6] faculty, we didn't want to be part of the system when we were there at the Sacramento Liberation Front meetings. We just wanted to be quiet and learn and do what we could do and volunteer for little things, stuffing envelopes and stuff like that. But that night that this person who had recognized us, pointed us out, you know, "Are you here to be spies or what are you here for? Why don't you do something there at college that will help us?"

So it didn't take long for me to be determined to do that. I had already started doing my research on women cross-culturally and it was really easy for me just to slide on that same trail that I had been on all this time – didn't even know it – and went to see the head of the department. And he agreed to it right away. He didn't have a hesitation but we had to have— that was for my course. But we wanted to do more than just a course here and a course there, just as it was at UW. We would want a program. We decided we wanted to have a Women's Studies program and so we went for it. And that's what we were doing in President Bond's office. Ask permission from him and just to get it put in place right away. It's kind of like the President of the United States deciding to make an executive order, not going through any committees or anything, "Yeah, I like that one, we're going to sign it right here." And that's the way he was. He did the same thing for Chicano Studies there, but we got there first (laughs).

[0:32:30.3]

BHATT: That's pretty remarkable though, to have that at least that initial experience be supported at the highest level.

JACOBS: Exactly. I enjoyed teaching my classes there, enjoyed the work, continued to work with the group in the city. Then an opportunity came for me to do some post-doctoral work at the University of Illinois. And I went there thinking that's what I was going to do, but when I got there the person I was to study with had died, I can't think of his name right now. But Oscar Lewis' wife was still alive and she wanted to work with me, anyway. So what happened next is that I got an appointment in the Urban and Regional Planning Department. So I was teaching and they had heard about me being there, the anthropologist who had been there was leaving to take a better job someplace else. So what happened was that within the first day of sitting in this office and wondering, "What the heck I'm I doing here?" A black man came in the office and said, "You must be the one replacing—" whatever the other guy's name was— and he sat down in the chair at my desk and he put his feet up on my desk.

BHATT: Oh my.

JACOBS: So I [inaudible: 0:34:09.3] sat back the way I did [inaudible: 0:34:10.9], so we started talking. He said, "So what are you going to do for us?" "What do you need? What do you want?" Bill Smith was his name. He went on to get a PhD in something, I don't know, and he wound up being a faculty member in Nashville or someplace, Tennessee, I don't know, a traditional African American university. So that's basically I said, "What do you want, what do you need?" And he introduced himself, then, as a board member of the Frances Nelson Free Neighborhood Health Center, and that with the man leaving – the anthropologist leaving – that they were left without somebody who would be an advocate on campus. As he began to explain to me things, and I was leaning back over the desk, and he took his feet of and then now we were almost elbow to elbow talking but across the way here about "What can be done? What can we do? Can you pick up where he worked? Can we do more things?" I wasn't shy about making suggestions about

how to change the situation that existed in Champaign-Urbana, where a graduate student's dissertation had hit the airways locally and nationally, that the death rate of mothers and babies in the Black community was 40% greater than in the White community. There was no maternal infant care at that time. So it didn't take long, I was busy. I was digging in everything I could get my hands on.

At that time, as a result of Johnson's— it wasn't just the Civil Rights Act, it was something else too, that there were a whole bunch of initiatives that came out of D.C. that made it possible for me to apply for money for maternal infant care programs in the black community. Now, that's alright if you're an anthropologist or you're in the department or whatever and you're not monkeying around with something that's going on at the high level of the institution as you know best part of any university is its medical school, right? Those were the people who were supposed to take care of problems like this, not some little… (laughs) I don't know, radical feminist person here, who wants to take care of mothers and babies? For god's sake, No! What can she know? It didn't take long and we were getting the money that was supposed to be going through the medical school. And then we had a lot of public community meetings where we made the case for—I've forgotten what it's called— you had to apply for it but every community that did at that time got it… right into community facility, rather than it going to the community government. So we did that and it was great.

[0:37:29.8]

I went to an anthropology meeting—I will get back to a date on that in a little bit, but I went to anthropology meetings and I had already had my first experience of San Juan Pueblo. And that was the result of the breakdown of my car, and a couple of people here suggested I stay overnight and we'd figure it out in the morning and I did and they fixed it and in the morning I went on back to California. But that night Harry and John had called a bunch of the women and told them, "A feminist from California is here." (laughs)

It was really important because when they came over and we talked until two or three in the morning about feminism and radical this and that, and Harry was a long time known red communist, not just a socialist but a true died in the wool enrolled communist. And I learned a lot from that over the years, but more importantly that event that night led to a phone call that I got back in California about two months later. Harry called and said, "Would you be willing to come here and work with the women to find out the answer to their question which is: 'When did we women lose our rights in this pueblo?'".

[0:39:30.0]

BHATT: Interesting. Could you tell me a little bit about that community?

JACOBS: Could I tell you a little about this community?

BHATT: Yes in terms of the history of it? Who was it you were meeting with while you were there?

JACOBS: Well, Harry Hay and his partner John, they had set up their kaleidoscope factory in a shop that they made in the main building area, in the high of the Pueblo. And Harry was the founder of the Mattachine Society, a leader in gay rights movements. What else? But anyway, he was good friends with a lot of the pueblo women and so the folks he invited to their house that night were women who had already expressed to him – or to them – ideas such as, "I don't know why they don't pay us the same as they're the guys for making the Adobe bricks out there in the sun all day, for heaven sake's?". The follow-up question is, "Well, if they would, would you work with them?" "Not unless some other women went with me."

So there is that kind of issue: gender defined roles. Everything that was just

basically theory for me in my determination to equalize women with men or vice-versa, I even wrote a paper about equal women, equal men, what's the vantage to the women's movement for women, for men, and so on. That was my first public statement. I did that in Sacramento, it later got published somewhere.

Anyway, I had already had that introduction of the idea of working in the pueblo, and I needed to figure out what to do about what was going on in Champaign-Urbana. I've sort of lost my sequence here, but anyway…Because here, once again, I'm a White woman and there ought to be somebody who is African American doing this job. And there are wonderful, smart women here, what's the difference between them and me? "They don't have the degrees you have." They don't need degrees for this one, this is community activism! And oh my goodness wouldn't Obama have loved this one? Now that I think about it, you don't to have the degree, you just have to know how to work with people for heaven's sake. That's what the students were supposed to be learning, and I was very lucky that among the students that I had were several African American young people who you knew were going to be leaders in their community if you just looked at them and listened to them. Uh-huh, yes. The poise, the determination and the excellent grades of their exams, and all of that stuff, and their love for their community. I decided the only way it was going to happen was if I got out of there.

So I started applying for positions elsewhere. Threw my hat in the ring for a position at UW. It was just for Anthropology. Here comes another one of those amazing serendipitous things: I'm on the elevator and two women standing behind me, one of them leans over, she said, "I see your name tag, are you Sue-Ellen Jacobs?" "Yes." "Have you applied for a position at the University of Washington?" I said, "Well, maybe." She said, "Get off with us right here." And she said, "I'm Carol Eastman and this Laura Newell. Get off with us right here." I got off with them. "We're going to a meeting of the hiring committee that's here at

the meetings. We want you to come in about fifteen minutes. We want you to be a candidate for the Director of Women Studies at the university with a shared appointment in Anthropology." and I say, "OK, well, what the heck." They're doing a conference and you're already woozy and tired, and what the heck, what else can go wrong?

So I did go to the meeting and Carol and Laura were very instrumental in getting my name on the list. And I think I mentioned this in the article, that I was number two when they finally decided, but the first person didn't take it.

BHATT: Right.

JACOBS: And lucky me. So forty years later I can sit here and talk to you about all that that went before.

[0:44:57.7]

BHATT: Absolutely. So at this point Women Studies had been in existence, you mentioned, for about six years before you came in, is that time right?

JACOBS: Absolutely not. No, no, for six years these people had been meeting and determined to have it but there was no Women Studies, there was a course called Women 200, literally that was the title of the course when I got there. And the other one was in existence was the one Nancy Kenney wound up being hired for, Physiological Psychology, or something like that. So those two courses counted towards some kind of specialty but they were under the General Education or whatever it's called.

BHATT: I see.

JACOBS: No, there was no department or anything. There were graduate students who were

doing the best they can to hold it all together. But there were people, including the President, who didn't think this was such an important thing to do. On the other hand, there were all these senior women who had fought to get to the top of their positions in their departments, and they were willing to come on board and help out. They were the ones who became the standing committee that I mentioned. And that's made of full professors and a couple of associate professors. But nobody wanted to step forward if they didn't have rank.

Oh my gosh, it was so hard. And I wasn't supposed to mention the names of any of these people who were helping and all that kind of stuff. Well, I came in as an Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Women Studies. As I told you [inaudible: 0:46:49.0] "We don't do that anymore." I said, "No, no, no. I didn't come here for this." Oh those guys were awful. Ugh. That makes me want to throw up sometimes when I think about how awful they were to me and to other women who came and went from that department. I mentioned the graduate students who were part of the search committee – they were two women and two men. They were told, basically, by the department head that if they didn't go someplace else, they were just going to die there because they were never going to get out of that college.

BHATT: Wow.

JACOBS: I mean it was—Kathy [? 0:47:34.3] what was her name? But they waited until I was securely in my position and then they left between Fall and Winter Quarter and they went to Cornell and someplace else, Now, I was a candidate for the position of Director at Cornell. In fact, I almost said yes to them. And Donna Gerstenberger, I talked to her and she told me, "Just take the one at Washington. You'll see. It will be OK." And she was an Associate Dean at the time. Now Clare Bright, do you know Clare Bright?

BHATT: I do, yes.

JACOBS: She's been there since day one. She was part of the original group that put it together. Have you interviewed her?

BHATT: We have, yes. One of our students was working with her at the end of the semester.

JACOBS: Fantastic, because without Clare, I don't know what I would have done. And when she finished her PhD she went to the Midwest for school there – I don't think it was Minnesota, but anyway, then she got a degree in clinical psychology I guess because she came back as practitioner, a counselor. She's still one of my best friends in the world.

[0:49:12.7]

BHATT: That's wonderful. And so at the time you mentioned that in Anthropology—would you say there was pretty open hostility towards you and other folks trying to do this organizing around Women Studies?

JACOBS: Yes. Open hostility towards me. Uh huh. But I had friends there, too. So we'll go back to Carol and Laura. Laura didn't want to have anything to do with it, once we got the appointment made, she was through. She's a physical anthropologist, she didn't want to mess with this. And she's a physical anthropologist because she didn't want to deal with these social issues. But Carol, on the other hand, was just awesome. And then there were a couple of archeologist women who didn't think we ought to be doing this either, but anyway, it doesn't matter. Once I was through, mainly the guys were awful, just awful. And Donna used to tell me when would say, "I'm going to this meeting now and this and this and this is going to happen." She would always say. "And don't you cry." The last words before I would leave the meeting with her would be, "And don't you cry." So I learned not

to cry.

[0:50:32.5]

BHATT: Oh my. You also mentioned in your article the importance of Florence Howe in your time, I wonder if you could talk a little bit about your relationship with her.

JACOBS: Well Florence and I, we also had these continued feminist organizational meetings that had nothing to do with the college or the university. You see, I had my book published by the University of Illinois Press – that was the *Women in Perspective: A Guide for Cross Cultural Studies* and that got a lot of attention. And Florence asked me to do this, that, or other thing, and I would agree to that, go to this meeting or that meeting. It was the formation of the National Women's Studies Association, I guess, that would be where we came together most often.

And now we're going to talk about some of the sad and disappointing things from people who were doing Women's Studies around the country. So we had done this thing in Sacramento and we often met with people from Berkley and UCLA, but these were quiet meetings, parties we were going to get together with folks and talk about this and that. But it was the building of types of coalitions that were not based on feminist principles. People were very concerned – and there are still people running the show that are like this – very concerned with how they are going to fit in the academy and make changes that would accommodate them, be good for them.

One of the things I insisted on when I first got completely into Women Studies, was that I was not going to go ask for money that was designated for Ethnic Studies in Women Studies. I wasn't going to go ask for anything on behalf of our program because, once again, it was setting up women against the minorities. So the directors of the various programs, I would ask them to come to a meeting. And they would come and they would want to hear what I had to say, but they

didn't trust me, and I didn't blame them. All along it was about, “Here's what we want to go for, I know there's that much money there and we are all probably going to ask for the same thing about the same time. So should we do this together or separately?” That was the kind of thing that I did want not to have happen to us what had happened in other places. And already we saw signs of betrayals in the melding of Women Studies and Ethnic Studies around the country. Did you know about that?

[0:53:46.2]

BHATT: Absolutely so that you now have this tension that’s building.

JACOBS: Yeah, so I didn't want to have that. In fact, it was kind of funny to see people’s names as being in either Ethnic and Women Studies or Women and Ethnic Studies. Does this mean there are no ethnic women?

BHATT: Precisely.

JACOBS: Exactly. So I got everything I asked for, now I’m challenging that.

BHATT: Absolutely. And thinking about the implications of lumping those large categories together, sure.

JACOBS: And then we get into the period of feminist theory coming on strong from the departments that didn't want to have anything to do with Women Studies in the beginning. These people are developing the so-called “true feminist theory” and I still don't know don't know what that is. I mean, how come there can't be multiple feminist theories? And so, I can sit here and say that now but if I was still there on the faculty I would fighting for one or the other. You got to take care of what you're doing.

[0:55:20.6]

BHATT: Sure. In this period of time you mentioned that there was also an advisory committee that was made up of people of various constituencies. What was your relationship like with the advisory committee?

JACOBS: (laughs) You don't mean the standing committee?

BHATT: I mean the standing committee that had initially been working to coordinate. Either one, actually.

JACOBS: Well you see, the ones who were doing all the grunt work were the ones that Clare was part of and many people, and Radical Women. Do you know anything about Radical Women?

BHATT: I do, yes. In fact, I lived quite close to their hall that they would use in Colombia City when I was in Seattle.

JACOBS: They used to be down by the waterfront.

BHATT: They moved over to Colombia City which is really nice space, actually.

JACOBS: Do you know any of those women?

BHATT: I did while I was there. I don't anymore, unfortunately.

JACOBS: Did you got to talk to them about things?

BHATT: Yes, because they actually hosted a couple of community forums early in my time when I was first starting at UW. In fact, Sirena Moore [? 0:56:47.7] had done a

presentation with them and they hosted an event around her research as well.

JACOBS: But you didn't stay with them?

BHATT: I was also part of other sorts of organizations. I actually became really involved with the immigrant population in Seattle and worked with South-Asian women's groups, which is where most of my dissertation research shifted.

JACOBS: That's good. I have a graduate student I worked with who was a Hmong [? 0:57:19.5] woman, [0:57:23.2 sounds Long Minh]. So you had enough to keep you busy so you didn't want get into a radical group that meant you had to do a lot of activism?

BHATT: Actually, the group I was working with did a lot of activism. It was in the post-9/11 period, there was a lot of anti-immigrant, anti-south-Asian, anti-Muslim sentiment coming up. And so the work that I was interested in was actually thinking about those communities. My own ethnic background is South-Asian – my parents are from India – and so that was the community that I had actually got very involved in in terms of thinking about extending rights of women, particularly Islamic women, that were coming to the United States.

JACOBS: OK. And so I can understand you wouldn't necessarily be attracted to the style of activism that Radical Women used.

[0:58:21.5]

BHATT: It sounded like it wasn’t a different approach. And in fact, it seemed like early on they were way more involved with the department and thinking about the department.

JACOBS: That's true, they were fierce. They were absolutely fierce. But they didn't scare

me. They didn't have anything compared to what those Chicanos could lay on me, or what the African American community could lay on me. They were just plain white women who wanted to get their way, that's the way I saw them and I already been around Marxists and communists and others who didn't mind using bombs taped to their body, and that was small stuff the way they presented. In fact, one of the leaders of Radical Women was the first secretary to me, and it was awful the way she tried to undermine everything that we were doing. But that's alright because I had Karen Rudolph, do you know who Karen Rudolph is?

BHATT: No, I don't think so.

JACOBS: OK, well. She was as loud or as brash as anybody from Radical Women, only she was coming at it from a different direction. And Karen and I are still wonderful friends. One of the things she wanted to do in part of her emerging consciousness about Native Americans was to help—well, doing this helped her get that. And I don't remember what program it was at the UW that allowed students an opportunity to work with people at Manuel [? 1:00:12.8] Federal Prison. She became very fond of one of the prisoners there, who was in for killing somebody and Karen could not believe that he actually could have done that. So she was able to – she came from a well-to-do family – she was able to gather resources and get enough help to get Jimi's charges dropped, they were minutes away from going to the death chamber and stuff like that. They did a movie about that and everything. And they moved to California together and everything was fine until he started having cancer because of the kinds of the treatments that he received.

But anyway, she was there to egg me on sometimes. It's great to have somebody who appreciates you challenging you in ways that just make you wake up. "Come on, come on, we got to get on with this," and something like that. I was having such a hard time with personal life and other things that come along. We talk about the university and the programs and everything, as though they are separate

from what was going in my life, but they weren't because you take from each of those places to the other.

Karen Rudolph lives in California now, she's a lawyer and she's done other things that have been fantastic. She and Clare were good friends too. Where am I in this? We are still talking about that period and the committee that was community-based. And Karen Rudolph comes up because we had a day when we were to swap roles, just to try to do something to break some of the barriers that were between us, the students, and the community and those who were staff and faculty. So Karen was going to be me. She played the role of me and I played the role of Karen. And we put on quite a show and people were laughing so hard that we didn't get to make our points very well. I wore coveralls and I got wig and I had long hair and what else did I do? But anyway, she came in a very nice suit. Oh boy! And then I thought I was saying things that she had said and she thought she was saying things that I had said. It broke the ice and for many days, and many months after that, there was a different of feel in the advisory committee meetings.

Meanwhile, I still don't have the credentials to go up against the whole system all the time and this advisory committee was not going to be accepted by the administration for the promotion and tenure, even approving the curriculum. So it was at that point that Donna Gerstenberger, and Timmy (Thelma) [? 1:04:54.3] Kennedy, who was in the School of Medicine, and then Naomi Gottlieb, who was the Dean of Social Work, they decided that the best thing to do was to convince the President to make a committee of fully senior, long-term senior faculty. And then we had Mark McDermott, he’s a famous physicist.

So we had these people who formed the committee, there may have been a couple of others that I'm just not remembering. They helped [inaudible: 1:04:36.4] climb up the ladder. And I was doing all my publishing and all that other stuff which

was necessary to get the point, I don't know what else to say. And you know, the sad thing is that I really loved everybody, the standing committee as well as the advisory committee and I really wanted the advisory committee to have more power but I couldn't do anything about that, I was pretty burned out by then so I stepped down.

BHATT: I see. And that's when Sydney Kaplan came into the position?

JACOBS: I think that's when Sydney came in, yeah.

[1:05:29.8]

BHATT: OK. Now, at this point you've also begun to hire lines [? 1:05:32.0] in Women Studies, specifically. Did you feel that there was more visibility for the program across campus – people were feeling more invested, or was there still resistance?

JACOBS: Sydney needs to be the one to answer that question because I felt that there was work to be done yet but I was already now deeply involved in my studies of Native Americans and spending time with my courses in Anthropology and American Indian Studies. I knew what the deal was with Native women down here, as well as up there. [inaudible: 1:06:23.6, sounds like Belinda Jones] at Tulalip, a number of other tribes, I won't mention any other names. But it became so clear to me that even though we were sitting right there in their homeland, we're not doing anything about that.

Just about a year ago— no, more than that now – about three years ago the university signed treaties with the tribes of the Northwest, having to do with research and development and everything else. It came in a timely way because I was having trouble with a couple of people in the Computing department about my Mellon Foundation grant. I called on the President and the Provost to stop those people from trying steal the work that I had done for this tribe down here. It

took a few days, it took some heavy duty lawyers from California and Washington D.C. talking to people at UW for them to cease and desist. So I'm out of sight, out of mind, so you know that's their stuff we worked with it, we're going stake it and do what we want to do with it.

BHATT: You're still working on that project now?

JACOBS: No, it came to an end.

[1:07:58.7]

BHATT: I see. OK. Could you tell me a little bit about what you had done as part of that Mellon funded project?

JACOBS: The Mellon Foundation Project was to finish off the years of work that I had done with several people here on the language preservation. We completed the project. I'm not allowed, by tribal rules, to talk about it anymore than that. So that's the one thing that will not be coming to the archives there, the tribe has created an archive just for my stuff and Dick Ford's stuff and other people who have worked so closely, intimately with the pueblo. There won't be any of that raw material.

[1:08:55.8]

BHATT: Sure. Going back to the department, what year did you retire?

JACOBS: 2004.

BHATT: 2004, OK. We must have crossed ships in the night. That's the year that I had started.

At the time that you retired, what did you think about the development? At that point the PhD program had been going on for a few years, there was a different

kind of cohort of new faculty. How did you feel about the ways in which the department had shifted in the time that you had in there?

JACOBS: Do you want one word or a couple of paragraphs?

BHATT: Paragraphs would be great.

JACOBS: Alright. Well, first of all the first betrayal came when they brought a man in to direct the Women Studies program. That was disgusting. And all over the country people were in shock, but I found one other department back in Kentucky or some place that had put a man in because the women couldn't get along. Well, we hadn't been able to get along for quite a few years and…I was pushed to—pushed? No, I was just on the periphery because I wanted to do my work.

One of the things that is really hard to appreciate when you are in the middle on those kinds of difficulties is how important it is to just shut up, close your door and get your work done because it actually is a sanctuary. A university that follows the old fashioned rules, it remains a sanctuary for those who think differently than the outside world, or even think differently than traditional departments. And I had that kind of a position at that point. I could do my work and I was getting recognized nationally and internationally from some of that work, and it wasn't because I was doing anything spectacular about women, but I was doing it with women in the pueblo, and we were working on all kinds of things.

So I was disappointed. The loss of the core courses in Women Studies, and melding that all into non-descript, hard to find women in the catalogue anymore, gender and so forth. That was—that's a decision you all made and that's the way you wanted to live…When I finally asked Shirley and Angela, "What the heck happened here? Where was I, how come nobody told me?" And Angela just said

at point blank, "They are the ones that are going to carry the department to the future and that's what they want, let's give it to them." So how do I feel about it now? Well I don't know. Just whatever you all want, that's it. I don't have anything else to say about that.

[1:12:08.2]

BHATT: So what would you say then has been your legacy in this field, in this department?

JACOBS: I don't have any idea. I thought I knew when I left but…I really don't know. I think that's for other people to say.

BHATT: If I might reframe that, then: What do you feel most proud of?

JACOBS: Well, I applied for a position that wasn't even a real department, it wasn't a real position with the idea that someday we would have a PhD in Women Studies. That was way back then and I dreamed it and dreamed it and I was fighting people all along the road, but Susan Jeffords said, "No, we can do this. We can do this. And I agree with you, I think we should have a PhD in Women Studies." And so Susan made it happen.

BHATT: And now we've got a wonderful faculty all around the world coming out of that program, which is pretty remarkable.

JACOBS: I think it's pretty darn good. And even if everybody else was fighting me on it, I still won.

BHATT: Yes. And I will thank you personally for that as somebody who benefitted from that.

JACOBS: I'm so glad you could say that to me. Susan made it happen. She trusted my

instincts on things and I appreciated that so much.

[1:13:53.2]

BHATT: What's next for you? What's the next project or plan that you have for yourself as you move forward?

JACOBS: When I retired here, six months later I was introduced to one of the assistant provosts at the local college, who, along with a Native American woman here, asked me and her to come help with the American Indian Center. What she and I did was to develop courses for Pueblo Indian Studies and we even were able to get a degree in Pueblo Indian Studies. We went all the way up to the Higher Education Board and we had very good luck with Steven [inaudible: 1:14:43.6 sounds like Stakinger] but then my health has not been very good and I'm 77 and then I think, "Well, gosh, when my mother was this age she was still working as a secretary in the College of Engineering. What's the matter with me?" (laughs) "Why can't I hold like she did? Her mother lived to be 104, but come on," but the things I've done have taken it out of me. I'm just trying to get my archives to the university and a couple of other things. All the stuff that I've ever done with the Pueblo is in their archives. I have a couple of things that I need to Smithsonian that are from my years as president of the Society for Applied Anthropology. So when all this things get wrapped up, I might go to Disneyland to celebrate.

[1:15:41.6]

BHATT: I see that's quite fair. Is there anything else you would like to add as part of our interview?

JACOBS: I can't think of anything. I've been thinking about this ever since Angela mentioned that it was going to happen but I'm glad it's done now. If you have any questions about anything you said you'll be asking me some questions about— do you still have any questions for me?

BHATT: I think we covered the most of them but if I do would it be OK if I e-mailed you or followed-up with another call?

JACOBS: Yes that would be fine.

BHATT: OK thank you. Well, I really appreciate your time today. This such a gift for you to spend this time giving this story and I know that the department appreciates it and I can say personally as somebody who came through the program and is moving into the ranks of the professoriate myself, I appreciate your work. Thank you again.

JACOBS: I wish you the best of luck and I hope you've gotten good advice from you mentors about how to move up those ranks.

BHATT: I just did my contract renewal and had my first book come out. I'm trying.

JACOBS: OK, good for you. Congratulations.

BHATT: Wonderful, so then we will in touch as the project continues to move forward and thank again for your time.

JACOBS: Let me ask you this one question about the thing I signed. If anybody wants to use my interview for publication—Oh yes it says here. I give permission to record and use in publications or presentations. So I would be quoted?

BHATT: You would be quoted if you— At this stage I'm not sure if the department is planning of transcribing all of the interviews at once or how they're going to be doing it because I'm actually not part of the department anymore. But at that stage I think what they are hoping to do is to use parts of the interviews in preparing for

the 45th aniversary celebrations and eventually the 50th aniversary celebrations of the department.

JACOBS: OK. I mentioned some names and I just wonder if we ought to put a five year closure on this one.

BHATT: Which would absolutely be fine, and I'm happy to make a note and then maybe we can just get that in writing as well so that way we have the record.

JACOBS: OK. If we could wait five years. One of the best people to talk to just died this past year. So many of us are approaching that graveside for friends. I'm trying to think who is left who could be hurt by anything I might have said inadvertently. The only people who are still alive are Clare and…Anyway, I think I won't repeat the names again and if we just close the access for five years that would be good. Because they've got this public thing, too, and that's for anybody to use, of course.

BHATT: Sure that's absolutely fine and I'm happy to let the department know and I'm sure that either Priti or the student that's now taking over the project can also follow up with you to make we just have all of that paperwork done as well.

JACOBS: Well thank you've been a very tender interviewer, I appreciate it.

BHATT: Oh no, it was my pleasure and thank you again, I apologize for the time mix-up and I'm glad we are able to connect.

JACOBS: Me too.

BHATT: OK, take care have a lovely day.

JACOBS: You too. Bye-bye.

BHATT: Bye-bye.

[End: Sue Ellen Jacobs Phone Interview.mp3]