

**Oral History Interview**  
**with**  
**Gary & Marilyn Jones**

Interview Conducted by  
Juliana Nykolaiszyn  
August 27, 2012

O-STATE Stories  
Oral History Project

**Special Collections & University Archives**  
**Edmon Low Library • Oklahoma State University**

# O-State Stories

An Oral History Project of the OSU Library

---

## Interview History

Interviewer: Juliana Nykolaiszyn

Transcriber: Miranda Mackey

Editors: Miranda Mackey, Juliana Nykolaiszyn, Tanya Finchum

The recording and transcript of this interview were processed at the Oklahoma State University Library in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

## Project Detail

The purpose of O-STATE Stories Oral History Project is to gather and preserve memories revolving around Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College (OAMC) and Oklahoma State University (OSU).

This project was approved by the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board on October 5, 2006.

## Legal Status

Scholarly use of the recordings and transcripts of the interview with Gary and Marilyn Jones is unrestricted. The interview agreement was signed on August 27, 2012.

# O-State Stories

An Oral History Project of the OSU Library

---

## About Gary & Marilyn Jones...

Gary and Marilyn Jones met at Dexter High School in Kansas and developed a friendship that would last a lifetime. After graduating from Dexter, Gary and Marilyn married and decided to attend Oklahoma A&M College in 1951. Together, they lived in Vet Village, worked various jobs and attended classes. In 1955, Gary earned a degree in agricultural education while Marilyn graduated with a degree in home economics.

Upon graduation, Gary served in the military before embarking on a thirty-three year career in agricultural and horticulture education in Peabody, Kansas at the high school level. Marilyn focused her efforts on running the family farm and teaching hand spinning/natural dyeing. Avid supporters of the Peabody community, Gary and Marilyn have been active in various civic projects over the years.

Together they have two children, Mike and Lynn.

# O-State Stories

An Oral History Project of the OSU Library

---

## Gary & Marilyn Jones

Oral History Interview

Interviewed by Juliana Nykolaiszyn  
August 27, 2012  
Peabody, Kansas



**Nykolaiszyn** *My name is Juliana Nykolaiszyn with the Oklahoma State University Library. Today is Monday, August 27<sup>th</sup>, and I am in Peabody, Kansas, interviewing Gary and Marilyn Jones as part of the O-STATE Stories Oral History Project. Thank you so much for joining me today.*

**G. Jones** You're welcome.

**Nykolaiszyn** *Well, we'd like to learn a little bit more about you. Gary, if you could start first, please, and tell us the year you were born and where you were born.*

**G. Jones** Well, actually, we were both born the same year in 1933, back in another eon, you know. We graduated from Dexter, Kansas, which is right down on the border—it's in Cowley County on the border of Oklahoma. We were the only two to go to college out of this class. And then also, at that time, to be married and go to school, that was a no-no. We got married on the second and moved to Stillwater on the seventh of September to start school. I was in agriculture, and she was in home economics.

**Nykolaiszyn** *What did your parents do for a living?*

**G. Jones** Well, my dad was a farmer and also ran a locker plant in a grocery store. Her dad was a full-time farmer, south of Dexter.

**M. Jones** At that point, but when I was little, he worked for the Kanotex Refinery out of Kansas City, which was closed down, and then he went out to Colorado after they closed that. I had one sister, and we lived with my grandparents, just around the corner. (Laughs) But we did live there when I was in first grade, at least, up until—I'm not sure when we moved out, about the third or fourth grade because I always went to country school. He always lived in town. But I went to country school and there were three years when there was just two of us, me and one

other one. (Laughs) That's where, I think, I learned to speed read. I'm not bragging, but I really read really fast! (Laughter) That's my library stack for the week above your head up there. (Gestures)

*Wow! (Laughter) For the week!*

**Nykolaiszyn**

Yes.

**G. Jones**

They're not very heavy reading, though.

**M. Jones**

**G. Jones**

I guess maybe the reason we went to Oklahoma A&M at that time was we had a young basketball coach that just graduated from down there. He got to taking the basketball team down there to Stillwater my junior and senior year, to the basketball games. So we kind of got acquainted with the campus, and nobody ever took us to K-State so we went to Oklahoma State instead. I attribute it to him taking us down there and getting us acquainted with it. He would take the whole basketball team down there, to take them to basketball games with Hank Iba and all that.

*Was education something that was important in your family, to encourage you?*

**Nykolaiszyn**

**M. Jones**

It was in mine. My mom graduated in the very first class for Arkansas City Juco [junior college]. My dad went one year to Phillips University, which in that era, most people didn't go to college.

**G. Jones**

Neither one of my parents, they just graduated from high school and that's it. Neither one of our sets of parents thought it would work, but I guess it did. (Laughs)

*Well, how did you two meet?*

**Nykolaiszyn**

In high school.

**G. Jones**

*In high school?*

**Nykolaiszyn**

**M. Jones**

Well, I knew him before that because his dad used to drive a Standard Oil truck and deliver oil out in the country.

That's when I was a little guy.

**G. Jones**

**M. Jones**

He was a pest. (Laughs) One time, in high school, I was up changing the clocks so we would get out of school early. And then he hollered, "She's at the clocks!" and got me in all kinds of trouble. (Laughs)

We weren't perfect students in high school.

**G. Jones**

**M. Jones**

I went one year to Winfield High School, because my parents thought that was a better education in Winfield. I hated it but I read every book in the Winfield library, I think, almost. But then I went to Dexter. It was a much smaller, to me, friendlier place. But it was just probably because of the number of people.

**G. Jones**

There was a whole sum of eighteen in our graduating class.

**M. Jones**

Not too many more than that in the whole school! (Laughs)

**G. Jones**

We had chances to go to a private school in Winfield. They offered us a scholarship. They didn't have any agriculture, and I thought I wanted to go into agriculture so we didn't partake to that one. We went down to Oklahoma State instead and had to work all the time because our parents, they wouldn't help us any.

**M. Jones**

Well, they couldn't.

**G. Jones**

Well, they'd help us a little bit, you know. So, we worked in various jobs at Oklahoma State. In fact, when we flew into Vet Village on the seventh, somehow. I can't remember how we got there, all the details, but we landed up out there. Of course, at that time, the only thing they had for married students was out there because married students just didn't go to school at that time, in 1951. But I went up to the post office to get a box, because we all had to have boxes there. The post office was in the Quonset building, like you showed, there.

I noticed up on the bulletin board that they wanted a butcher at the commissary. Now, they had a commissary, a pretty good-sized one, there in Vet Village for the veterans. But anyway, they had a sign up where they wanted a butcher. Well, my junior and senior year of high school, I worked as a butcher in my dad's locker plant. So, I thought, "Well..." I was looking for a job anyway so I ventured over there. They jumped on me, and at that time, I got an extra fifteen cents an hour for being a trained butcher. I got sixty-five cents an hour.

**M. Jones**

I got fifty cents an hour.

**G. Jones**

I thought that was big money, though. We worked out a deal where I would fill the meat case of a morning, and I wouldn't have any classes until ten o'clock. So, I would go over there early, fill the meat case, the meat in the meat case and go to class at ten o'clock. She worked for a lady in home-ec, doing experimental different things. They worked on sweet potato stuff and apple stuff, but they would make recipes and make new recipes.

**M. Jones** Mostly, I just typed. (Laughs) We did a lot of food stuff, but then type up the recipes and so forth.

**G. Jones** At that time, sixty-five cents an hour was...

**Nykolaiszyn** *That was good money.*

**G. Jones** Oh, yes.

**M. Jones** If she hadn't hired me—and she didn't hire me out of the Oklahoma State budget. She hired me out of her own...

**G. Jones** She only got fifty cents.

**M. Jones** She was an old maid lady. She had an investment, and when she died, she even left me eight thousand dollars. She came here, at the nursing home, and had planned to work as a dietician at the nursing home. She never did marry, she never had a family. At the last few years, she didn't know up from down or anything. But how she made it, I have never known because wages at that time for a single [person], even a college instructor, were not good. They were terrible.

**Nykolaiszyn** *What was her name?*

**M. Jones** Eula Morris. If it hadn't been for her, we probably wouldn't have got through.

**G. Jones** Junior and senior year they closed the commissary down, because at the Vet Village the population was dwindling and Safeway, and that was bigger downtown. They closed it down so I was without a job. I went to work in the audio-visual department under a guy named Guy Prichard. Of course, their audio-visual department consisted mostly of sixteen-millimeter movie machines. I would take them around to different classrooms and show these movies. They'd have different educational movies. At night, the sororities and fraternities would rent out a machine, and I would go show a movie there. They found out I was married and they said, "Well, good. You can show the child birth movie and some of the ones that..."

**M. Jones** X-rated stuff. (Laughs)

**G. Jones** X-rated, you know? (Laughter) So, I got this job. I got a little extra money for hauling all their equipment in my pickup to the sorority and fraternity houses at night. But then we also, during weekends, I would work for Ms. Morris, too, because she always had things that needed to

be repaired or fixed or whatever around her house.

Or out in the yard...

**M. Jones**

She helped us quite a bit, then. But that kept us alive, I guess. (Laughs)

**G. Jones**

**Nykolaiszyn**

*Well, tell me a little bit more about Vet Village and what your living accommodations were like.*

Okay.

**G. Jones**

I drew a sketch, here. (Gestures) Sixteen by sixteen. It's just like this picture.

**M. Jones**

**G. Jones**

I don't know whether this will pick it up or not. But this was the house and it was sixteen by sixteen. And as you can see, it was very plain. They moved them in. They weren't pre-fab, but they were all made out of plywood. The walls were three-quarter-inch thick.

Well, I'd call them pre-fab. They just slapped them up there. (Laughs)

**M. Jones**

**G. Jones**

But it was real compact in there. It worked out pretty good. The bathroom was so small you walked in and backed out. (Laughter) But it was completely furnished. It had a stove. I think maybe the stove was in it. I don't know.

It was. It was. But we had to buy our refrigerator.

**M. Jones**

**G. Jones**

At least it had natural gas so we had a gas cook stove. We had to buy our own refrigerator, and so we bought a small refrigerator. She had an old treadle sewing machine. We brought it and one of us would study off—that was one of the desks that I always studied off the kitchen table, which was just a small portion of the table.

Actually, we still have that. (Laughs)

**M. Jones**

In fact, we've still got it over in barn. (Laughs)

**G. Jones**

**M. Jones**

We never use it in here, but we still have it. And we had a radio, one of the few.

It was an FM radio.

**G. Jones**

**M. Jones**

At that point, they had so many students and the field house was very small so only half of the students got to go. If you were the half that didn't get to go, you could usually swap somebody for a ticket. But a lot



of people would come to our house, and we'd all gather around the radio to listen. Lynn [Gary and Marilyn's daughter] said to be sure and tell you this. I was brought up on radio. My dad always listened to the St. Louis Cardinals and the Brooklyn Dodgers, in that era. She found, when we were hunting for this stuff, my eighth grade graduation speech, which I gave and said one of the things I was busy doing was listening to ballgames. (Laughs) I thought that was funny, because then we listened to ballgames. Well, on Saturday morning, I would clean the house and we had *Jack Armstrong: the All-American Boy*, *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon*, *The Green Hornet*, and the villain was the Praying Mantis. I remember him. It seemed like there was one other one, but that was our Saturday—my Saturday morning.

**G. Jones**

And the nice part about it was everybody out there was in the same boat. They were poor, I mean. They were in school, yes, but they didn't have much money to spend, other than going to school. So, they would come over for ballgames because we had the only FM. I think we got it for maybe our wedding gift or something, I don't know. Then also, we could only go to half the basketball games. We could go to all the football—no, it was—yes, it was all the football games. But at that time, the Oklahoma State football team was so bad, everybody beat them. (Laughs) But the basketball team was the opposite. Under Hank Iba it was so good. And then also, somebody got us going to the wrestling matches. At that time, they had a national winning team. They'd let all the students that wanted to, to go to the wrestling matches because they didn't have that many at the game. So, we got to be quite the wrestling fans, too, because they had an excellent, good team.

Let's see, what else? We had a pickup that my dad loaned us to go to school. We couldn't go home very often, because we couldn't afford to buy the gas to come back up to Dexter. So, we'd come home on Thanksgiving and Christmas and Easter, and that was about it. At that time, my folks was still in the locker plant. When we'd come home they'd give us a box of meat to help us along. We got so tired of just eating beef that we would trade the steaks sometimes for bologna. (Laughter) Some of the neighbors had bologna. We'd trade them steaks for that bologna, because we just got tired of beef all the time, and they'd give you a variety of things.

We had a garden back behind the house.

**M. Jones**

**G. Jones**

Yes, we had a garden right behind the house because we had a swamp cooler in this back window, back here.

*What's a swamp cooler?*

**Nykolaiszyn**

**M. Jones** An evaporative cooler. You ran water over a [coil].

**G. Jones** Run water through it.

**M. Jones** ...like a—let's see. What's comparable? Well, it's actually like the filtering present-day air conditioners, but you ran water over it. And we didn't have any recycling mechanism, obviously, so all the water just...

**G. Jones** We ran the water out on the garden.

**Nykolaiszyn** *Oh, okay.*

**M. Jones** We had a lovely mint patch, and my home-ec teachers were always so impressed that I could bring mint to garnish things with. (Laughter)

**G. Jones** I worked there at the commissary for two years under E.M. Osteen, we called him Emo. That was his initials, you know. He was a nice old guy, and he was jolly to work with. His wife was a little bit nuts, but that's all right. We got along.

**M. Jones** We had a clothesline up there by the garden. One year we had such a good cantaloupe crop that I was taking around and giving them to neighbors. Some people thought I was selling them. (Laughs) They didn't want any, but I was just giving them away. We had so many of them. (Laughter)

**Nykolaiszyn** *Would other people have gardens around?*

**M. Jones** I don't think so.

**G. Jones** Not too many.

**M. Jones** I tried to remember if anybody did. I couldn't think of anybody, but we always gardened. We always had one.

**G. Jones** One year I took Horticulture I under Frank LeCrone, and one of the requirements there was you had to develop a vegetable garden. So, we had a vegetable garden there. It was down there right behind—probably the old infirmary is not there anymore. But anyway, there was some patches right behind it where we were allowed to develop a garden, and we got graded on the garden. I didn't get graded too high because a few weeds got in it.

**M. Jones** That's a problem today, too. (Laughter) That was, I guess, our only social life, is we did belong to the Horticulture Club. We learned to make cider. We blew some up in the closet one time. (Laughter)

**G. Jones** They probably still make cider for money-making things, don't they? Or did they?

**Nykolaiszyn** *I'm not sure.*

**M. Jones** But that's something we do to this day. If we have apples, we still make apple cider.

**G. Jones** Yes, we have our own cider press and things. But the Horticulture Club, they got the apples from the school farm...

**M. Jones** It was a money-making thing for them.

**G. Jones** ...and made cider. And then they sold it at Homecoming football games.

**M. Jones** One of the things that we did in the foods lab was develop things to do with apples. One of them was making cider floats, which is nothing but cider with vanilla ice cream in it and a dash of nutmeg on the top. But it's really good, and I don't know of anybody else that makes them. But it is good.

**Nykolaiszyn** *You mentioned the commissary in Vet Village. What were some of the other things that Vet Village had that the rest of the campus did not.*

**M. Jones** Laundry.

**G. Jones** And we had our own post office. All these were in Quonset villages. And then also, just to the east of our house was the Vet Village gymnasium. It was just a big old building that had a basketball court in there, and you could go down and play basketball. I never had time to play basketball. But anyway, they did. I think that's about all the...

**M. Jones** I don't think they had any other...

**G. Jones** That's about all they had.

**M. Jones** If you wanted to shop, and could shop, you had to go to downtown Stillwater. One summer, Gary had to go to officer's training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and so...

**G. Jones** ROTC.

**M. Jones** ...so he took the vehicle. If I needed something, I walked to town, just like five miles. So, you didn't walk very often. (Laughs) But the campus

wasn't that far away, basically.

**G. Jones** But you had to get across campus to get clear on downtown in Stillwater.

**Nykolaiszyn** *Were you able to make friends in Vet Village even though you weren't veterans?*

Oh, yes. Well, let's see. There was...

**G. Jones** ...two couples that we visited a lot with, one right next to us.

**M. Jones** And they were non-veterans, too.

**G. Jones** Well, both of them were. And then the other one...

**M. Jones** ...across the street, he was...

**G. Jones** He was across the street.

**M. Jones** He was a poultry major, which there weren't that many poultry majors, then. He was originally from Massachusetts. In fact, both of them were from Massachusetts. Let's see. She worked.

**G. Jones** She was an artist. She did paintings and stuff.

**M. Jones** And he went to school.

**G. Jones** She supported them.

**M. Jones** Yes. Well, there was a few other people. I remember Pete and Marilee. They were older. They were from back east, too. They were weekend friends or something like that.

**G. Jones** We really didn't have time to visit very much.

**M. Jones** No, you didn't have time to do too much visiting.

**G. Jones** You had to work to stay alive. (Laughs)

**M. Jones** Work and go to school.

**G. Jones** Just to the ballgame and that was about it.

**M. Jones** We both carried about fifteen to seventeen hours a semester, plus working full-time. So, it kept you pretty busy, and so you didn't have a lot of social time. (Laughs)

**G. Jones**

*Did you live in Vet Village your whole time on campus?*

**Nykolaiszyn**

**G. Jones**

All four years. They would let us keep the place. I don't remember whether we had to pay rent or not. The rent was thirty dollars a month. I was in ROTC all four years—well, the first two years, you were required to be in ROTC. I don't think they are now. But then the draft was hot on my heels because I was in the Air Force the first two years of ROTC. Well, we got up to go to Advanced ROTC, and you had to have 20/20 vision without glasses. Well, I didn't. They said you had to have that to fly. Well, I didn't want to fly, anyway.

Well, the draft board sent me notice that, "You will be drafted." So, I went across the street to the Army ROTC. They were glad to have me so I got into it, the Advanced ROTC. This helped a great deal because I got twenty-nine dollars a month, then, from ROTC. Well, that lacked a dollar paying the rent, and it helped us survive pretty well. Once we started to get our extra twenty-nine a month, we thought we were in heaven, you know. (Laughs)

Let's see. The last year, maybe junior year, I worked in Simex Locker Plant. It's not there anymore. In fact, we went by there. They tore the whole thing down. But Simex had a locker plant and also, they made ice. I had a job there of an evening. Evening and Saturday, I went in to clean up the saws and all the equipment. And then Saturday I worked as a meat cutter then at that...

**M. Jones**

We were there in the days of segregation. I worked at the hotel and the Boston Pops orchestra came through, and Paul Robeson sang with them, and he could stay there on campus, but he couldn't stay downtown in a hotel, because he was black. [He] couldn't use the fountain and all that sort of thing.

*You worked at the Atherton?*

**Nykolaiszyn**

It's what it is, now, I think.

**M. Jones**

*Okay.*

**Nykolaiszyn**

But it was just, at that point...

**M. Jones**

*The Student Union Hotel?*

**Nykolaiszyn**

...it was with the Student Union Hotel, yes.

**M. Jones**

And it was relatively new, then.

**G. Jones** Yes, it was.

**M. Jones** In fact, we went back and stayed in it just a year or so ago.

**G. Jones** Yes, our grandson graduated from high school. (Laughs)

**M. Jones** He graduated from Perkins High School. And it was fifty years ago to the year that she was a clerk in hotel. It wasn't called the Atherton, then.

**G. Jones** No, it was an Atherton, somebody left money, I think. It was just the hotel at the Student Union at that point. But I finished at mid-term, and he still had time to go. And then he had summer school that one year.

**M. Jones** On account I took ROTC, that kind of took a lot of my hours.

**G. Jones** Took his time out of there.

**M. Jones** *Well, the Student Union back then was the Waldorf Astoria of student unions.*

**Nykolaiszyn** Oh, it was. Right.

**M. Jones** Yes.

**G. Jones** *Tell me about the hotel. What was it like?*

**Nykolaiszyn** She didn't get in, hardly. She worked the desk.

**G. Jones** As far as I was concerned, it was a really good job. But other than working there, I don't...

**M. Jones** It was just a job.

**G. Jones** I guess the things I think about nowadays, they wouldn't happen today, because a lot of it had to do with whether you were black or white.

**M. Jones** (Laughs) And you didn't have black students on campus, either. The only time I did—in graduate school they could be black. One summer, I went to summer school and he was gone. I had this wonderful lady who she said, "Oh, Lord, Honey, you don't think I let my husband see me, do ya?!" (Laughs) And she'd get in the closet to get dressed. She was a home-ec teacher from I don't remember where, from somewhere. But I had some really wonderful experiences with people that otherwise you couldn't talk to.

At that time, they all went to Langston.

**G. Jones**                      *Right.*

**Nykolaiszyn**                Now, even the whites go to Langston.

**G. Jones**                      Langston, supposedly, has a really good goat department that I'd like to go visit.

**M. Jones**                      The best goat program.

**G. Jones**                      *Really?*

**Nykolaiszyn**                We'll have to take you out and show you our goats out here.

**M. Jones**                      *That'd be awesome. (Laughter) Did you find it challenging being married students?*

**Nykolaiszyn**                We didn't know any different.

**G. Jones**                      We didn't know any difference. (Laughs)

**M. Jones**                      We were both eighteen.

**G. Jones**                      I think I should say I was out in the country, and we didn't have electricity or water or even good roads that you could go on if it rained.

**M. Jones**                      We had a car but you didn't go on that kind of road. And we didn't have a telephone. His folks had the first TV in the country, but I don't know whether that was good or bad. It's so different than anybody today. He always had conveniences, at least. (Laughs) But I think that sort of shaped the way we grew up. We weren't expecting a lot so it wasn't so bad not to have it, because you didn't know any different.

   You look back, and we were quite frugal, I guess.

**G. Jones**                      My sister was sick a lot. Before penicillin came along, she had a lot of earaches. The Missouri Pacific railroad track went really close—about as far from here out to the road. If they would take her over to the Arkansas City doctor, Mom would go out and flag the train down and get on the train. You could go in in the morning at ten o'clock and come back in the afternoon at two. But the roads were so bad you didn't drive it if it turned out that way.

   Lots of change since 1951, you know. (Laughs)

**G. Jones**                      *Yes.*

**Nykolaiszyn** It doesn't seem like that long ago, but...

**M. Jones** *Well, do you have any teachers that really stand out in your mind?*

**Nykolaiszyn** Yes, I do. The lady I worked for, although she was never my teacher, but I saw her teaching. And then had another lady—well, Dean O'Toole was the dean of home economics. Oh, I can't think of the lady's name—Ms. McAlister, she was an old battle axe. We had to live in the home management house for six weeks. She told me, "You can't eat cold wieners, you had to warm them!" (Laughter)

**M. Jones** Yes, cooked weenies.

**G. Jones** I remember that so plainly. (Laughter) But there was another lady, whose name I cannot remember, and she was the one that encouraged me. She kept saying, "You're hiding your light under a bushel basket. You could go out and be..." I was so timid I couldn't talk. Obviously, now, I won't shut up. But she said, "You could give speeches and that sort of thing, if you would just do it." But I had to take a speech class, and I remember this was a man. He said, "Are you physically deformed that you can't open your mouth?" (Laughter) I was so scared I couldn't do it. But the lady really encouraged me a lot. Wright. Her name was Wright. I can't think of what her first name was.

**M. Jones** I don't remember. There are some of them I remember, but their names have slipped me. I do remember J.C. Hilliard. He was the swine instructor. They always called him Hog Hilliard. Let's see. Who was the meats man?

**G. Jones** I don't know, but I remember taking a psychology class in Old Central, and somebody went to sleep and the professor threw an eraser at him and hit him right square in the face. (Laughter)

**M. Jones** *Yes, we can't get away with that, today. (Laughter)*

**Nykolaiszyn** They'd throw you in jail!

**G. Jones** It was very effective! (Laughter)

**M. Jones** They had a shop class. I got into agriculture education about my junior and senior year, and I had to take a—well, altogether different classes.

**G. Jones** One of them was a shop class, and I still remember the instructor, but I can't recall his name. He kind of felt sorry for me. He'd give me Saturday jobs to come in and clean up the shop. At the time, he lived in Vet Village, too, even though he was an instructor. He'd give me jobs so I could make a few bucks.



Dr. Norton was a dairy professor.

**M. Jones** Yes, he was very good.

**G. Jones** We just talked about him yesterday, and he went to K-State. Well, at least after he was there, we knew him at K-State. He was just a really nice guy that taught a lot about cheese and that sort of thing.

**M. Jones**

**G. Jones** Fred LeCrone was the horticulture instructor, and he moved up to, I think, the assistant dean or something like that, later on. When I took my first classes, I got kind of interested in horticulture along with my agriculture education classes. For some reason I didn't care too much for the shop part, but I was interested in horticulture. I remember I took commercial vegetables and gee, I don't know what else. But Fred LeCrone still sticks in my mind.

**M. Jones** I liked to take horticulture, because it was an easy way to get an A. (Laughs) My grandma always gardened, and I guess we always gardened.

**G. Jones** In fact, it even carried over when I went to teach it in Peabody. I started the first horticulture department in the state—I mean, the first horticulture classes. Now, they've got a full-time teacher up there with a greenhouse and the whole bit. Just because I was interested in horticulture and not interested in fixing engines and stuff.

*Well, Marilyn, you mentioned the practice house.*

**Nykolaiszyn** Home management house.

**M. Jones** *The home management house, can you tell me where it was located on campus?*

**Nykolaiszyn** No, I can't.

**M. Jones** *Okay.*

**Nykolaiszyn** It was out at the edge, and it was a regular house. You're supposed to learn to dust with two hands, I learned that. (Laughter) I could look at dust and not even see it today, but...

**M. Jones**

**Nykolaiszyn** *What were some of the other things you had to do in the house? How did it work?*

I've forgotten. There were like six of us, maybe, that had to live out

**M. Jones**

there. We had to have regular meals and learn to make the bed just so-so and have the meals and serve in courses. That type of thing, which was totally different than what I was brought up doing in my relatively poor environment there. It was all different to me. But I did learn to make the bed so you turn the tops, you know. We have a bed and breakfast down there. To this day, I make a bed, turn the top sheet over like that, which that was one thing you had to do. (Laughs) Dusting with two hands and be sure to cook the wieners, I remember that. (Laughter) The lady was an old maid lady, and she was very... (Laughs)

She was strict. We used to laugh about it at home.

**G. Jones**

...very particular. But the foods lady that I said made such an impression, there were certain things—well, Ms. McAlister, the home management lady, she wanted you to—you know, you should be able to make biscuits and muffins and a simple cake without a recipe. You ought to be able to...certain things that you just should know. That's all there was to it. (Laughs)

**M. Jones**

**G. Jones**

I had to go out student teaching, what, senior year? At that time, we only spent six weeks out student teaching, and they always sent two out. I mean, you went out in pairs, and there was a reason for that because one was teaching and one would critique the other one, and [that] worked out real well. I happened to draw my partner that went with me. He was from way down in southeast Oklahoma. He was a coon hunter. That was his pastime. All he could talk about was running coons with his coon dogs. He was really quite a character. But we kind of thought alike in student teaching so we worked out very well.

Also, we would try to protect each other when Dr. Orr come out to check us. We'd get the wind that he was coming out so we'd work together. We covered each other's back when he come out. But the practice teacher that was there, he was kind of a show bum. He was gone all the time, looking for steers and pigs and everything else. We were expected to do that, too. Also, he was busy with show animals or just different shows. It was in the spring when they had spring shows. We were gone all the time so we didn't get to teach very much. We found out that, I think, Dr. White was coming out. He was a great big ole guy, but he was jolly. We kind of cooked up the lesson that we was going to teach, because we'd been out scrubbing calves and pigs and everything else during school time. We weren't teaching any, but we had to teach when they come out. They didn't want to see us scrubbing pigs. So, we dreamed up some class to satisfy him. He was pretty upset that we hadn't been teaching in class all the time. He said, "I'm thinking about transferring you guys to another location." "Oh, no. We really like it here." (Laughter) And we convinced him to leave us alone.

**M. Jones** Home economics didn't work that way. I was able to practice teaching right there in Stillwater, and we had to teach for a whole semester. Although, I remember going over to Pawhuska and observing, at one point. That was Osage Indian country over there, and again, there was the segregation thing. The Indians, if you were an Osage, you had a lot of money, probably. But if you were a Ponca, and we went right by Ponca on our way up when we came back to Kansas, they had absolutely nothing. The Ponca Indians over there, they were [poor]. It was good to be an Osage over there.

They had oil money.

**G. Jones** They had money, and they were on campus quite a bit, driving big cars and so forth.

**M. Jones** Yes, I remember in agriculture, we had an Indian girl in class. Her mother would bring her to school every morning in a big, long Buick.

**G. Jones** We used to kind of chuckle about it.

Fannie Beartrack, wasn't it? (Laughs)

**M. Jones** Fannie Beartrack.

**G. Jones** I hadn't thought about her for a long time.

**M. Jones** She was a good student, but her mom brought her to school every morning, to class anyway, in a big ole long Buick. (Laughs)

**G. Jones** Of course, today, I think your car tag says, "Native American," or something on it. [Native America]

**M. Jones** *Right, yes. Yes.*

**Nykolaiszyn** At that time, if you were an Indian, you weren't very high on the social scale.

**G. Jones** No. We had to learn the Five Civilized Tribes, because we had to have Oklahoma history to get a teaching certificate. I used to know them. I don't know that I do anymore.

**M. Jones** One of the questions was, "In what county is the highest elevation?" They had some dumb questions on there, really. (Laughs) It was a standard test. You had to have it for Oklahoma history.

**G. Jones** I had to have an hour of swimming. I made it around the pool without

drowning so I passed. (Laughs)

**M. Jones** *Was it in the old Armory building?*

**Nykolaiszyn** I can't remember where it was.

**M. Jones** *It had kind of a track on the top, maybe?*

**Nykolaiszyn** Yes, that's where the swimming pool was. Yes, she had to swim across the swimming pool.

**G. Jones** No, I had to go clear around it.

**M. Jones** I didn't have to take all those classes because I was in ROTC. That took care of it.

**G. Jones** I didn't have to take math or I probably never would've graduated. I had to take art and that was kind of fun. But those were just requirements that you had to have for a teaching certificate. I can't say they contributed to your education, particularly, but you had to have them.

**M. Jones** (Laughs)

*So were you thinking that you both wanted to become teachers?*

**Nykolaiszyn** No, never heard of it.

**G. Jones** I just wanted, if I had a family, to be able to support them. I didn't particularly want to teach, but I wanted something to fall back on if I had to.

**M. Jones**

**G. Jones** The first two years I was in general agriculture, just took ag classes. But then I got to looking around, "Where am I going to go? How am I going to make a living?" There was no farm to go back to at home. And at that time, you could get a farmland job, but that was nothing. So, I got to thinking, "Well, I've got to do something." Somehow, somebody convinced me to go into ag education. They said, "Go in ag education and also, you can run the FFA program." Well, I didn't know what the FFA program was. We didn't have FFA in the little school I came from. I got kind of interested in it and went into ag education. That's where I stayed the rest of my life, I guess.

I remember Dr. Orr was there. We called him Pappy Orr—not to his face. He was a little short-statured man, gray hair. I still remember him. You'd go in to see him and he'd kind of look, "What do you want?!" (Laughs) You felt like he was just going to eat you alive. I remember I went in and talked to him one time. "What do you want?!" I said, "Have

you got time to visit a little bit?” “Sure, I’ve got time!” (Laughs) That’s just kind of the way he was. But then Dr. White, he was a real big, jolly man. He was nice to visit with. But Dr. Orr was the head of the department so he’s the one you had to talk to. At that time, it was upstairs in Whitehair. Whitehair?

*Whitehurst.*

**Nykolaiszyn** Yes, that’s where it was, the ag-ed department.

**G. Jones** *Okay.*

**Nykolaiszyn** I graduated—here again, the ROTC threw me behind. I had to go to summer school, my last summer school, to get out. So I thought, “Well, I’ll just go right into the Army once I graduate. No problem.” Well, your orders come out in the middle of August, which, boom. They didn’t want me until the first of December. Well, I had to go from August until the first of December. I had to eat, and so Dr. Orr said, “Oh, go ahead and get you a job. They’ll defer you. No problem.” Well, where do you go to find a teaching job on the last of August?

So, he looked at his file and says, “Well, I’ve got three here available,” which that was a lot of openings. One of them was in Kansas, Leon, Kansas. I thought, “That’s too close to home. I don’t want to start teaching very close to home.” He said, “I’ve got two in Illinois.” Well, I said, “I used to have an uncle that lived in Illinois and always liked the country. I’d like to go up there and investigate.” So, he stuck my transcript in an envelope and that was it. (Laughter) And I was on the road looking for a job in Illinois.

We went to the first one and the old superintendent had been the wrestling coach in Tech High School in Indianapolis for years, but he finally got his administrator certificate. He had taken this job as superintendent in this little town of Allendale, Illinois, with a population of 300 at the most. But anyway, we cycle in there and lo and behold he was from Mulvane, Kansas, originally. He found out we was originally from Kansas, and he took to us like a father. He hired me, too. Started out at forty-two hundred for eleven months. I stayed there a year because I knew I had to go take care of my ROTC duty.

Sure enough, it come up the first of December, and I was supposed to go. I was still in school, see. He said, “What am I going to do for an ag teacher?” I said, “I don’t know. Well, they kind of promised me they would defer me going in until the end of school.” He said, “Well, who’s that guy on there?” It was some captain that wrote out these orders. He picked up the telephone, called him. He chewed on him unmercifully

and when he got done chewing him, this captain said, “Well, when would he like to go to duty?” (Laughter) So, yes, he got me deferred, then, until the end of the year. Well, it was in November, and I still had the same problem. There was a gap in there but I found a job then in de-tasseling corn.

That’s the only place I was ever homesick for. The people were so friendly and so nice to us. Actually, Mike was born in Illinois.

**M. Jones**

We found a little place at the edge of town that you weren’t in town. The guy that owned the place had a bunch of goats out there.

**G. Jones**

And we took care of his goats. (Laughs)

**M. Jones**

He hired me to feed his goats. It was kind of like this place. It was out at the edge of town. And then I got a job de-tasseling corn. And once we got done de-tasseling corn, I went into where we took the corn and I was in charge of the corn drier, then, for the Sea Corn Company. I worked for them until December when I went to Fort Benning, Georgia.

**G. Jones**

Illinois was so different than Kansas. I mean, there were trees, it was green everywhere. Here, it’s not true anymore so much, but if there’s trees, you think there’s a creek there, there’s some water there. Well, in Illinois, of course, there was stuff everywhere.

**M. Jones**

And it rained every week.

**G. Jones**

We had this wonderful lady that lived next to us. She was a grandmother-type, and she would say, “Now, don’t worry. When you get tired of blackberries there’ll be something else coming on.” She taught us how to find wild mushrooms, and she was just a dear, dear lady.

**M. Jones**

We were just way out there in Illinois on our own.

But they made us so welcome. It was a wonderful place to live.

**G. Jones**

We lived on the—they called it “the square.” It was a mile square. There were people that lived around. They said, “Oh, yes...” They didn’t take to strangers too well. They said, “Yes, there’s some newcomers right down the road, there.” “How long they been there?” “Oh, they’ve been there twenty-five years.” (Laughter) They were still newcomers. (Laughs)

**M. Jones**

**G. Jones**

I thought it was forty years.

But they took care of us just like we had always been there.

**M. Jones**

And until just, say, the past ten years, we kept in touch with quite a few of them.

**G. Jones**

**M. Jones**

Yes, even the old superintendant. I used to call him all the time.

He came by and stayed with us one time.

**G. Jones**

*So, you ended up in Fort Benning...*

**M. Jones**

Yes. They had to go through officer training.

**Nykolaiszyn**

Briefly.

**G. Jones**

Had to go through officer's training at Fort Benning. They used to call it Fort Benning School for Boys. And then the Korean War was winding down, but they were still sending a lot of green second lieutenants to Korea. Well, they come around and said, "Who wants to volunteer for ranger and also jump school?" Not this guy! But some of the guys said, "Oh, you sign up for those, you won't have to go to Korea." Well, I said, "I'm not signing up for anything." There was a bunch of us that didn't sign up for anything. Well, once we got done with school, all the ones that signed up for ranger airborne went straight to Korea.

**M. Jones**

**G. Jones**

*Wow.*

**Nykolaiszyn**

The rest of us, they sent us to Fort Jackson at South Carolina and also Fort Bliss in North Carolina, to take recruits through basic training. I went through basic training eight times. (Laughs)

**G. Jones**

*During all this, what are you doing, Marilyn?*

She was tagging along.

**Nykolaiszyn**

**G. Jones**

Mike was born the first year we taught school. We have two kids. I was so far out in the country, I'd never taken care of a baby in my whole life. Babysitting wasn't anything I'd ever done and that was a big chore as far as I was concerned. (Laughs) [phone rings]

**M. Jones**

But as I said, I had never been around any babies so taking care of Mike was just a major, major thing. But again, the very same thing that I guess has always bugged me was the south was really segregated. Gary's commanding officer was black. We had really nice neighbors on both sides. We lived out in the community. They said, "Don't you ever bring anybody out here like that." I mean, we could've been real good friends, but that wasn't the way the world...

We just had to be good friends on post.

The only place I ever saw the Ku Klux Klan march.

**G. Jones**

**M. Jones**

Mike, our son, was just a baby down there in South Carolina. Also, we had an English bulldog. She was a pretty good size, and she just liked sitting in the front door, I mean behind the screen and just sit there.

**G. Jones**

That's where she liked to sit. The neighbors across the street thought we had a really deformed baby because that bulldog would just sit there in the sun. (Laughter)

But it was pretty country. Again, it was so different because they had things that don't grow here, like flowers that grow there and azaleas and camellias and that sort of thing.

**M. Jones**

It rained fourteen days straight one time.

**G. Jones**

So, we got to see different country, visit some plantations as far as that. Of course, the money was good from our standpoint. It was the most we'd ever had in our whole lives. But we hated it, whew! Couldn't hardly count the days until we got out of it.

**M. Jones**

**G. Jones**

Oh, we hated it every day. Most of the ones that I worked for out on post, they were real nice. And at this time, Mike could just kind of walk a little bit. I'd take him out there to get a haircut, because we had a barber in our company. He'd cut his hair for a quarter so I'd take him out there all the time. We got pretty close to the cadres there, because the troops would come and go every eight weeks. That's how long we'd have.

But the pay was good, and we shopped at the commissary on base and...

**M. Jones**

I was paid \$222 dollars a month. We thought, "Man, that's a lot of money!" (Laughs)

**G. Jones**

Some hurricane came along. I can't remember which one it was, but Gary had a sergeant—where was he from, Puerto Rico?

**M. Jones**

Yes.

**G. Jones**

Anyhow, I'd taken Mike out to the base. I don't remember why I had. But right in front of me, the pine trees were just snapping along like this. (Gestures) This man knew what it was, a hurricane. I didn't know.

**M. Jones**

Sergeant Martinez...



**G. Jones** The rest of the world didn't know, and he was trying to warn them, but he couldn't remember any English. So, all he was telling them was in Spanish. (Laughs)

**M. Jones** Yes, he couldn't talk English too well. When he'd get excited, he couldn't talk English at all.

**G. Jones** Nothing actually happened.

**M. Jones** And he was just running around there just going nuts. All you could get out of him was "hurricane."

**G. Jones** We were sure not where we were supposed to be.

**M. Jones** Those trees were just going right down. Yes, I often wonder what ever happened to—that ole sergeant was a real good ole boy.

**G. Jones** *When you're in the service, are you thinking about what's going to happen after you leave?*

**Nykolaiszyn** Oh, yes.

**G. Jones** We couldn't hardly wait to get out of there.

**M. Jones** *What were you thinking? What was going to be next?*

**Nykolaiszyn** Finding a teaching job to make a living.

**M. Jones** I was on guard duty one night, and on guard duty you're required to stay awake, but you having nothing to do. So, I would read regulations in the Army.

**G. Jones** *Just for fun? (Laughs)*

**Nykolaiszyn** Yes, just to stay awake. (Laughter) And one of them in there, it said something about you could get early release for teaching or going to school because you had to get out at a certain time to teach and go to school. I got to figuring up if when my time was up, my two years was up, at that time, you had to serve two years as an officer. Today, you have to serve six years. But anyway, that really struck a—I thought, "Man, I can get out." I believe it was thirty days or six weeks early. I thought, "Anything to get out of here."

**G. Jones** I start making contacts back here about teaching jobs, and teaching jobs weren't too plentiful. I threw out hooks in Missouri, Kansas, and

Oklahoma to try to land a job. Well, we found a couple here in Kansas. Well, we found one in Missouri, but as soon as they found out that I didn't graduate from University of Missouri they weren't interested in me. They said, "Oh, we don't have much." So, I come on back, interviewed at one or two here, and then we still had some time so I was down in Oklahoma. So, I went into the vocational office to see about a teaching job in Oklahoma. Well, they found out we were just recently from Kansas, but went to school at Oklahoma so they weren't interested either.

So, we come back to Kansas, and we spent a whole day messing around in Fort Scott. Fort Scott was open, which is over in eastern Kansas. Liked the looks of it, liked the looks of the town and everything. But there was a guy that they was waiting on him to make up his mind. He had some experience, plus he had his master's degree, and I was second in line. Well, this guy finally made up his mind, and so, "So long." But there was a job in western Kansas open, out by Dodge City, little town of Ford.

Before that, we went out to Johnson and interviewed.

**M. Jones** Well, we was at Ford and I interviewed, and they offered me a contract. Here I was in August, and school was going to start in September. So, they were hungry for anybody. They offered me the job, but then also,  
**G. Jones** Johnson was opened up. That is in the far west, right next to Colorado so we went out there. We had the contract in my pocket, and we was hoping somebody would offer me a little more money, but they didn't.

First question they asked was if you were Catholic. If you were, that was the end of the interview.

**M. Jones** Yes.

**G. Jones** But we weren't, so... (Laughs)

They wouldn't hire a Catholic.

**M. Jones** *Wow.*

**G. Jones** That was just the difference of time.

**Nykolaiszyn**

**M. Jones** They didn't have an agriculture department at Johnson, but they wanted to start one. They said, "We'll just give you a check that you can buy anything you want to start out." Then also, they said, "You'll be assistant football coach." I said, "Wait a minute. The first football game I ever went to in my life I was a freshman in college. I don't know

anything about football.” “Oh, that’s all right. You’ll make it okay.” Well, in the meantime, the home ec teacher found out we were in the building, and she happened to be a classmate of Marilyn’s in home ec at Oklahoma A&M. So, she come back and caught me, said, “Is Marilyn here?” “Yes, she’s out there in the car.” So, she shot out to the car, visited with her, and she said, “Are you applying for a job here?” “Yes.” There I was, she says, “You tell him to get in the car and get out of town as quick as he can!” (Laughs)

I don’t remember that.

**M. Jones** Well, yes, she said that. The superintendant was—he was almost nuts. (Laughter) They didn’t offer me a job. Well, I wanted to have something written, and so I went back and took the job at Ford. Then we went on back to South Carolina to finish getting out. We went up to the door, our door of our house, the phone was ringing. I got to the phone and it was Johnson to offer me a contract. No one knew that we took the job at Ford but that was fine, because it only lasted three or four years, and then it died out there.

But we liked Ford. It turned out to be...

**M. Jones** We were at Ford for three years, but it was small and declining. They was consolidating and we thought we better look for something, of course, that’s nicer.

**G. Jones**

**M. Jones** People in western Kansas, at least at that point, were more progressive probably, than like in this part of the world. But you thought nothing of hopping in the car and going into Dodge City to get a loaf of bread. Distance didn’t really mean anything in that era.

*Well, how did you get to Peabody, Kansas? (Laughter)*

**Nykolaiszyn** Well, that’s...

**G. Jones** Actually, the place out at Ford that we were, they were going to close just any day.

**M. Jones** We ended up looking for a job out there. We were out there three years, and you could see consolidation coming. So, I looked for a job every year for three years.

**G. Jones**

But it didn’t come, actually, for another ten. (Laughs)

**M. Jones** Yes, but I was at an ag teachers conference in Manhattan in the summertime. They have it in Oklahoma, too. All the ag teachers were in

**G. Jones**

Manhattan for their summer conference. I was eating supper at this little ole restaurant down there close to the hotel, and here come all the supervisors, including the director, over to me. I was sitting there having supper. I thought, “What is going on?” They knew that I was looking for a job. They said, “Would you be interested in going to Peabody?” I said, “Peabody? Where in the world is that?” I had to come home and look it up on the map to find out where it was at. They said they have an opening. See, this was in June, and about all the teaching contracts are over by June.

But anyway, this instructor had gotten a state job at Lee, and said, “It’s opening up. They’ve got a relatively new building,” and said, “If you want the job, we’ll kind of hold out the ones that we send down there and see if you like it.” So, the Ford music teacher had driven up there. He had his car there. I didn’t have a car, because I had ridden with the Dodge City ag teacher. So, I went over and talked to this music teacher. I said, “Could I borrow your car to go down to Peabody?” “Sure.”

So, I flew down here, and they had set up an interview. I interviewed and they were ready to grab me, because there wasn’t anybody else out there. They said, “You’ve got to be here on the first of July when your contract starts.” Well, I called Marilyn to see if she was interested. We hadn’t disposed of what we’d had out there. I’d had a tractor and some stuff that I’d accumulated and stuff that we couldn’t move. I had to come early, had to leave her and come here early to be here by the first of July, because I had to be on the job. So, I brought an Army cot and I slept in the office in the ag building up there for a week, waiting to get things lined up.

And this was the only house available, the only one. There was one north of town, but it had no water. And here we had a new baby by that time.

**M. Jones**

This place had just come on the market and the guy’s dad had this farm right over here. (Gestures) Had he known it’d been on the market, he’d of grabbed it in a minute because he wanted to get out there closer to—because he went by every day, going to work at his dad’s. We ended up buying this place.

**G. Jones**

It had nine acres with it. It cost nine thousand dollars. We wondered how we’d ever get it paid off. (Laughs)

**M. Jones**

Yes, that was like Fort Knox, nine thousand dollars.

*Oh, yes.*

**G. Jones**

**Nykolaiszyn** We sold everything. I sold my tractor and everything out there, because I had to come up with two thousand dollars for the down payment. We finally got the two thousand dollars put together and bought this place.  
**G. Jones** The rest is history, I guess. (Laughs)

*So, you spent thirty-three years working for the school, here?*

**Nykolaiszyn** Yes, yes. That's almost unheard of anymore, because teachers come and go. Two or three years and they're gone down the road. In fact, I retired in 1993, and they've had two, three, four—they're on the fifth ag teacher since '93.  
**G. Jones**

*Wow.*

**Nykolaiszyn** They go through them. Well, last year, we got an Okie in here, and he was real good. I thought, "Well..." Well, I retired in '93 and some of my teachers got me by the ear and said, "Why don't you run for the school board now that you're not teaching and see what it's like?" because there was an opening. I stalled them off for a year or two. Come up for election, I run for election on the school board and got on it. I found out you have to die, then, to get off it. (Laughter) So I was on the school board. But we've gone through like five ag teachers since I've retired. We've got a new one this year. (Laughs) But it seems like teachers don't stay like they used to, regardless of who they are.  
**G. Jones**

At least in agriculture. Grade school teachers tend to stay a long time.

**M. Jones** Well, they stay forever. But high school teachers, they're more volatile.

**G. Jones** *Well, with your finger on the pulse of agriculture, are you doing anything interesting here? Are you raising anything interesting?*

**Nykolaiszyn** Well, we've raised sheep almost all the time we've been here.

**G. Jones** We used to have as many as 250 until he retired and found out how much work it was, because I have always farmed. And then we cut them down, the flock, a lot. This year, we cut it due to the weather and old age, I guess. But cut it way back. We don't have any feed. We don't have any pasture. Gary was sick last winter, all winter, and so we just cut down our share in numbers. Then we added goats over the years, actually to start in to provide milk for the orphan lambs. And then we kind of like goats really well. That works out pretty well for us. And we've always gardened, and we had a greenhouse out in western Kansas.  
**M. Jones**

It was just a small...

**G. Jones** We moved the greenhouse back here, and so I've always had a greenhouse business.

**M. Jones** That was her occupation, because she never did teach. Well, we had a daughter born when we was at Ford. So, then we had two youngsters.

**G. Jones** I've always liked that if I had to go back, but I'd frankly rather mow yards than be shut in a house and have to teach. (Laughs)

**M. Jones** She would raise bedding plants and this kind of stuff. Peabody had no greenhouse.

**G. Jones** Made corsages for the high school things.

**M. Jones** The business picked up pretty well, I mean, kept growing every year. In fact, there for a while, she done floral corsage work, too, making corsages for prom and that kind of stuff.

**G. Jones** And somewhere along the line I learned to spin because we had a lady here—not here, but in Hillsborough. Hillsborough had a lot of German people that came and settled in this area because of the railroad and that was something they did at home. We had all this wool and she showed me how to spin. So, then for like twenty-five years, I taught spinning and dying at the farm. That was a lot of fun. People would come and stay here for a week. Then we developed a bed and breakfast across the field over there. (Gestures) That was about the time...

*And that's not a lot of work.*

**Nykolaiszyn** It keeps you off the streets. (Laughter) We needed water down there for the sheep, and so it paid for the water bill to have that old house down there. So, that worked out pretty well.

**M. Jones** Way back when, when she was teaching spinning she would like the different fibers. So, we started collecting breeds of sheep as a hobby. One time, we had twenty, thirty different breeds of sheep here just because she liked this breed and this... And then we started developing black sheep because black sheep is recessive to white sheep and it's a challenge to get them to turn black, to get them to turn coal black. You can get some black ones and they have white spots on them. Well, that didn't count.

**G. Jones** So, we got them where we could get them coal black, and we ran an ad or two in *National Magazine*, "Long wool, black sheep." Well, see, nobody was pushing black sheep. That was a no-no. But we went ahead and done that and got them where we could—we produced them about

95 percent of the time. The other 5 percent, they'd come up with a white spot on top of their head and the tip of their tail would be white. Well, the tail would be no problem because you could cut their tails off, but they still had the white spot on top of their head.

Anyway, we would take a pickup load of two ewe lambs and one ram lamb, that was the package, we'd load up—well, we'd have, during the winter, we'd correspond and sell them to people back east. We would deliver these black sheep back east. We done that for five or six years, until I got tired of going down I-70. We'd deliver them as far as Bangor, Maine. We sent some to Aruba one year. We'll never do that again. Also, we've had buyers here from Bakersfield, California that bought black sheep. But we sold black sheep, then, for all the time that the spinning craze was going on. But then it sort of took its course.

In the Main Street program, I don't know if you're familiar with that, but to revitalize little towns in America, and it came to town in '87, and so we got busy helping with that, and that was the last year we taught spinning.

**M. Jones**

We got very involved in that.

But we met a lot of wonderful people that were interested. They would come and sometimes they would camp, pitch a tent around here. But usually, they stayed someplace else.

**G. Jones**

**M. Jones**

We've had people from all over the world take spinning, including one doctor from Dodge City that came here every year for twenty-something...

**G. Jones**

Twenty-five years.

He'd come every year. Wouldn't learn anything, he'd just come to get away from his practice.

**M. Jones**

Then about—how long have we been traveling, fifteen years, twenty years? I watched my folks, they were always going to go take a trip and they never did and they died.

**G. Jones**

**M. Jones**

My folks are about the same way.

So, we said, "That's not going to happen." So, and we started going on a trip. And because we have livestock, you can't go off and just leave them. We had different people early on. And then for the past ten or twelve years, we've had a good friend that worked for Gary when we had a store downtown, and she just moves out here and takes care of

**G. Jones**

**M. Jones**

things. But we try and get it down to where it's the least amount of work possible, which is September and October for us.

*You go everywhere? Do you go out of the country?*

Oh, yes.

**Nykolaiszyn**

Out of the country we've traveled quite a bit.

**G. Jones**

I've been in all fifty states.

**M. Jones**

And some people think we're absolutely crazy, but that's the way we spend...

**G. Jones**

**M. Jones**

That's our hobby.

Last year we went to Ireland, but we've gone to Switzerland and Italy and Iceland.

**G. Jones**

**M. Jones**

Guernsey Island, you ever been to Guernsey Island?

*I have not.*

**G. Jones**

Quite a few places.

**Nykolaiszyn**

Well, I always wanted to go to Guernsey Island because that's the home of the Guernsey cattle, and also, next to Guernsey Island is Jersey Island where the Jerseys come from.

**M. Jones**

**G. Jones**

Then it just happened that these people came to town from Wichita and he was from the Guernsey Island. They turned out to be good friends now, and they helped us go and visit his folks and change currency. Oh, they're wonderful. But it was just a happen-so.

**M. Jones**

Well, about the time I'm getting ready to retire from here, I bought this old derelict building downtown. There's a lot of them down there. But I bought it for what, fifteen thousand dollars?

**G. Jones**

Not very much.

And we rebuilt it and started an antique store. So, had an antique store in there for twenty years just because I like old stuff.

**M. Jones**

**G. Jones**

But we knew nothing about running a business.

No. But anyway, this is where this couple come in and I thought he had



**M. Jones** an English accent. I said, “You must be from English.” “No, I’m from Guernsey.” I said, “Oh, we’re getting ready to go to Guernsey!”

**G. Jones** Not at that point we hadn’t. We wanted to go there, but we didn’t know anything about it.

**M. Jones** So, they said, “We’re going”—this particular year that I talked about. I said, “We’re going to go at such and such time.” He said, “We’re going to be there at that time vacationing, too.” And they met us at the airport, showed us around Guernsey. Now, Guernsey Island, you think you can’t get lost on an island, but I got news for you. When the Germans—the Germans occupied that during World War II, and the native people didn’t like them. They took down all the street signs, and they never have got around to put them back up. Well, you can get lost. One time, we spent four hours trying to find a place and come to find out, we was just three blocks from where we stood. You just kind of go round and round. The streets, there’s no rhyme or reason. The streets were real narrow, too. We got out there one time to show people, going to take a picture of how narrow the streets were. We held our hands out, like this. (Gestures) She was over there and I was over here, and we touched both sides of the road. And on the sides of the road was rock wall. With a rental car, you’ll be real careful. (Laughs)

*Oh, yes.*

**Nykolaiszyn** You hit that rock wall and you pay dearly.

**G. Jones** Then about, I don’t know, twelve years ago, maybe—let’s see. Okay, about that time—Gary has a cousin who’s never married. She’s a lab technician...

**M. Jones** I call her my “ole maid.”

**G. Jones** ...at a VA hospital in Muskogee, Oklahoma, but she spent a lot of years back in New York. Anyhow, we got the idea—she was actually born the same year we were married, so she’s sixty-one. But asked her if she’d like to travel with us, that’s when we were going to Switzerland.

**M. Jones** She didn’t have any...

**G. Jones** She has a sister, but as far as I know, she had never traveled much before. She wasn’t really close to somebody else, you know. So, anyhow, now she’s kind of like our daughter. She takes care—she drives anymore, that sort of thing. But anyhow, we went to Switzerland. Well, that time she showed up with five suitcases. (Laughter) To her credit, she’s never done it again, but it was pretty dreadful.

**M. Jones**

Because she had to handle them all. I didn't handle them.

But she still takes more than I think she needs.

**G. Jones**

She's down to one suitcase now.

**M. Jones**

**G. Jones**

**M. Jones**

But anyhow, and then about the time—when she turned fifty, I guess, you can go to elder hostile stuff, so we found some things that sounded interesting and the elder hostile classes—I don't know if you know anything about them, but it's a national organization. You can go and they have everything arranged. It's usually through some local college. We're going to go to one, actually, next week. The end of Wisconsin, the Apostle Isles...

Clear up there on Lake Superior, as far up as you can get.

Somehow, Alda likes lighthouses so there's some lighthouses.

**G. Jones**

I wanted to see a cranberry bog because I've never seen one before.

**M. Jones**

What else?

**G. Jones**

Plus, take in the cheese factories, too. (Laughs)

**M. Jones**

*Right, exactly.*

**G. Jones**

**Nykolaiszyn**

So, that's our biggy for this year. That's not overseas, but we went to Ireland last year and actually, we got so tired of sitting for so long. It was miserable.

**M. Jones**

On the airplane.

It was like seven hours of...

**G. Jones**

They shove you in there like a bunch of hogs.

**M. Jones**

**G. Jones**

**M. Jones**

If you could ever afford to go first class, that might be better. I don't know. (Laughs) We've traveled quite a lot in the recent years and met the nicest people. The people always say, "Aren't you scared or worried?" But dogs, I really love animals, dogs, and I've met the nicest dogs all around the world. That's always a conversational piece no matter where you are. (Laughs)

Some people spend all their time and money bowling or golf...

*Right.*

**G. Jones** Ours is traveling. Generally, we go in September or the first of October for several reasons. One of them is...

**Nykolaiszyn**

**G. Jones** We told her about that.

**M. Jones** Oh, the little kids are in school and it's cooler. So, we always go about then, and it's worked out pretty well for us. We've gone all over.

**G. Jones** We don't ever go any place that's hot. (Laughs)

*That's a smart thing to do.*

**M. Jones** Oh, these past two years have been horrible! (Laughs)

**Nykolaiszyn** We did take off and go to Chile once.

**M. Jones** But that was in the winter. That was early.

**G. Jones** That was in the first of December.

**M. Jones** That was a mistake on our part, which we never thought of because the same gal came out and took care of things. But we didn't think about things freezing here, like the hoses freezing up. We never thought to tell her to drain the hoses. Of course, then she had to do a lot more work outside because things froze. We'll never do that again, but that was our own stupidity. But it was nice for us to travel before the changes reversed and everything.

**G. Jones** And Chile, we're going to see a lot more of Chile producing our fruits and vegetables for us, because Californians are big into condos and fruit farms. (Laughs)

*Well, you mentioned you bought an old building downtown. I noticed that your daughter put on the directions that y'all were pretty active in getting some of the buildings downtown on the register, national register.*

**Nykolaiszyn**

**G. Jones** Yes, she done that.

**M. Jones** Yes, the historical society—actually, I don't know how I got particularly started in it, except they asked me to plant the planters uptown in front of the museum. When the kids were little, I really didn't do that much in it in the first few years. But since then, I've done a lot with it and put up stuff for people, that sort of thing.

**G. Jones**

Some of these old buildings had gotten in pretty bad shape, and I was teaching at the time. The band teacher had become the real estate person in town as his part-time job. He got a hold of this old building, one of many old building down there. He said, "How about selling you this old building, Jones? It's a bargain." I thought, "Uh, not for me." So, they'd bought it to keep—there was a junk dealer wanting to buy it to just put junk in. Anyway, in one of my weaker moments, I went down with him to look at it, and I visualized what you could do with it. We had no idea what we was going to do with it at the time. But for fifteen hundred dollars, that's what I gave to buy the business. The stone building, nice building, two-story building, so I bought the thing.

I went down to survey what I'd bought, went in there right after a rain storm and there was fifty-two five-gallon buckets under drips. The ceiling just leaked like a sieve. There was this much water on the floor. (Gestures) I thought, "Oh, boy." So, the first thing we done was hire a roofer for six thousand dollars to put a roof on the thing. (Laughs) He told us to clean it clear off, but I knew we had to get it stabilized before we could do anything. And we did. Then we started painting. It hadn't been painted for years. It was an old grocery store, and they used to slaughter in the back room for this meat market.

It was a beer joint, too.

*Oh.*

**M. Jones**

**Nykolaiszyn**

**G. Jones**

So, anyway, we started donning it out, painting it, got to where I was painting the walls one time and putting it on just pretty heavy. I'd work down there of an evening after—I was still teaching school at that time. I'd come home and it wasn't how much you got painted, it was how much paint did you use up. If you didn't use up a gallon of paint, you just didn't do much. (Laughs) But anyway, we got that done and we decided to go into an antique business, because I always liked to go to farm auctions and this kind of stuff. I sort of specialized in old agriculture stuff and furniture went with it. We run that antique store down there for twenty years.

But in '87, that was when the Main Street program came, and we did do a lot and Main Street looked really good then for a while.

**M. Jones**

Every building was full.

**G. Jones**

Now, it's going back down here. But we had Baker Furniture here in town, and they had like eleven buildings downtown. Well, about three years ago now, they decided—the big problem was Highway 51 decided

**M. Jones** to go around—the State Department of Highway Transportation sent Highway 50 around instead of going through the north side of town. It's much more convenient for traffic, but it was a killer as far as the town was concerned. So, there went all the traffic we had worked hard to get downtown. It literally, killed the town. Well, then Baker decided to move out and move to Newton. Now, we've got empty buildings again and lots of them, and he didn't take very good care of the buildings. So, now, we still have the Main Street program or we wouldn't be here at all. They have purchased buildings, and they're trying to get roofs back on and attract some businesses to come in. But who really wants to come in?

The economy is not great.

*Right.*

**G. Jones**

**Nykolaiszyn**

What are you going to bring in that can survive here? It's easy to run to Newton. My pet peeve is people run to Dillons or wherever it takes to get their groceries and don't support their local businesses. (Laughs)

**M. Jones**

I need to back up. I was teaching. They always encourage you to get your master's. Also, you looked to salary schedule and that's the only way you could get a decent raise was to get your master's. So, I started going to K-State in the summertime to get my master's, and I spent six summers taking classes up there. Of course, they used to rag me all the time, being an Oklahoma graduate. They kept saying, "Why don't you wear a K-State hat?" I said, "I don't wear those things," because a lot of the teachers were K-State graduates. I said, "Well, yes, I graduated from K-State and Oklahoma State, too, so I got dual allegiance."

**G. Jones**

One year, he went to Illinois to work on his master's one summer, and the music teacher and I built that barn out there that summer. We'll take you out there pretty soon.

**M. Jones**

*We notice graduates from Oklahoma State, Oklahoma A&M, have this intense loyalty to their school. It's like nothing I've ever seen.*

**Nykolaiszyn**

*(Laughter) Why do you think that Oklahoma State graduates have this loyalty towards the school?*

I don't know.

**G. Jones**

I don't know, but I've noticed the same thing. It's much more intense than most places I've been.

**M. Jones**

Well, now, in Kansas, the same thing is with K-State. They're really loyal. I know we've got a principal up here, I always used to goose him

**G. Jones** having purple shorts because he was so loyal to K-State.

**G. Jones** I think K-State and KU are, but you don't hear it about the other, Wichita State or...

**M. Jones** *Emporia, yes.*

**Nykolaiszyn** Well, I suppose they're smaller, too, so that probably makes a difference. The kids all have degrees from K-State. Our daughter-in-law and our son-in-law graduated from there, too. In fact, Lynn has her master's from K-State.

**M. Jones**

**G. Jones** Our son, he graduated from vet school, which took him nine years to get through that. But he's practicing veterinary medicine in northern Kansas. And then Lynn, her husband, both work now for Oklahoma State. They're not teachers...

Have you met Lynn, actually?

*I have not.*

**M. Jones**

**Nykolaiszyn** Oh, okay. Well, I thought she said she really didn't know you.

She works over in the...

**M. Jones**

*Fire protection.*

**G. Jones**

Yes.

**Nykolaiszyn**

**M. Jones** Yes. And then our son-in-law does nothing but lay carpet all over the campus. He's a carpet layer.

**G. Jones** But he actually has a degree in hotel and restaurant administration. (Laughs)

**M. Jones** Yes, from Kansas State. He's an avid K-State fan.

**G. Jones** I don't know if this is of any interest to you in the slightest, but I did dig out...

**M. Jones** *Oh, your old Redskin.*

Under the bed, yes. (Laughter)

**Nykolaiszyn**

**M. Jones** It's been there forever.

**G. Jones** It was bad, it probably still is, but anyhow I dug that out and Lynn found our picture. I think she said they don't even put these out anymore.

**M. Jones** *They do not.*

**Nykolaiszyn** Okay. Well, when we were there, if you didn't pay to get in it, you didn't get in it. So, the lady I worked for paid...

**M. Jones** If you didn't buy a book...

**G. Jones** ...paid to get us in there so that's the only reason we're in there.

**M. Jones** *Do you have any, as we wind down, any memories about your time in college that are just real special to you?*

**Nykolaiszyn** Not particularly.

**G. Jones** We got through it.

**M. Jones** *Got through it. It's a good thing.*

**Nykolaiszyn** At that point, I don't know that anybody from Dexter High School ever went to college. They did afterward, but...

**M. Jones** Yes, there was a few of them after, later, but nobody green out of high school went.

**G. Jones** Everybody tells me we were absolutely crazy.

**M. Jones** Of course, I look back at Dexter, it's kind of an economically deprived area.

**G. Jones** It probably was at the time, but we didn't know it.

**M. Jones** We didn't know it.

**G. Jones** *It's typical of the time. "We were all poor, we didn't know it."*

**Nykolaiszyn** That's right. (Laughs)

**G. Jones** Everybody was the same way.

**M. Jones** Yes.

**Nykolaiszyn** And as far as the Vet Village part, I think now, if it'd been bigger, more to take care of, you wouldn't have managed it. We couldn't have

afforded it.

**M. Jones** Now, our son got married when he went into vet school, and they lived in the married apartments up there. They are plush.

**G. Jones** *Yes, times have changed.*

**Nykolaiszyn** Well, they're plush now, but they were much better than the house we were in. (Laughs)

**M. Jones** Much better than this. (Gestures) But this is all they had.

**G. Jones** For a long time there was one of these left over at Newton. It's not there anymore, but...

**M. Jones** I tried to buy one, one time, just for keepsake. But they wanted a fortune for the thing.

**G. Jones** Lynn and I were just talking, particularly me, the older you get, the smaller I like the house to be. (Laughs) I can't remember the man's name, but he does a series on tiny houses. They're really tiny, too, and we don't really need all this stuff around here. That's for sure. And we certainly didn't have here, but...

**M. Jones** I don't know whether you can see the—that's the layout of the house. (Gestures)

**G. Jones** Well, it's simply one door at the front, which you can see on here. (Gestures) It had these windows, and they cranked out from the bottom and cranked out sideways.

**M. Jones** Today, you'd have to have two doors on account of fire.

**G. Jones** *I wonder how they named the streets.*

**Nykolaiszyn** Le De Sud was French, but don't ask—what does that mean, if you speak French?

**M. Jones** *No idea, but it's something to look into.*

**Nykolaiszyn** I think maybe, see, being in Vet's Village—and I suspect at one time the vets had a hand in naming the streets.

**G. Jones** Excuse me a second. I'll call our local veterinarian who has a degree in French. (Laughs)



**M. Jones** I got a feeling maybe they had a hand in naming the streets because they were in from all over. We got in on the tail end of the veterans coming in there, and they were taking any married students that would come in.

**G. Jones** *Were they starting to dismantle the housing units while you were still there?*

**Nykolaiszyn** Yes, there were some areas that were just vacant. There were some there, all that was there was the foundations. Well, these houses didn't have a foundation. They had four poles set in the ground. That was the foundation. Then they had the concrete floor in the house, and later on, they black-topped the streets. The streets were black-topped when we went there. But in reading history, they were mud streets for years, but they black-topped and then they made a concrete walk up there with a stick. Now, we had a small picket fence, about this tall, around here, especially when we had our bulldog because you can let them out. Bulldogs couldn't jump over that little fence. So, in fact, somebody stole one of our bulldog pups one time.

**G. Jones** *Really?*

**Nykolaiszyn** Yes. That's when I was in ROTC camp in Benning in the summertime. Our ole bulldog had two pups. One of them was a nice pup, the other one, he wasn't much good. But they stole the good one.

**G. Jones** She didn't know. She said it means, "The street of..." whatever S-U-D... (Laughter) I don't know the answer to that.

**M. Jones** *I'll just have to ask our campus historian...*

**Nykolaiszyn** It's D-U S-U-D.

**G. Jones** It's two separate words.

**M. Jones** *Well, is there anything else you'd like to add before we close her on out, today? Anything else you'd like to share?*

**Nykolaiszyn** I think we've about run through the gamut. (Laughter)

**G. Jones** *I think I've covered it from A to Z. (Laughter) Well, thank you so much.*

**Nykolaiszyn** ----- *End of interview* -----