

Jacqueline Byer
Interviewed by Alan Burube
World War Two Project
December 1984

Transcribed: Loren Basham

Alan Burube: This is Alan Burube. I am talking to Jacqueline Byer on December 2, 1984, in San Francisco.

Jacqueline Byer: This is a picture, I think, of the company before ours. You see, ours began in '52. This is another orange company. I think they were just playing around with the idea of commissioning for the civilian life. And I don't know why I have that one, but it's the company just before ours.

AB: Request for--.

JB: Right. All this is 1952 and this is class 50--?. And there are a couple of interesting things about it. She's the only black and (I think) one in our company and that was my first experience with even that degree of integration. During the war, there just simply wasn't anything like that. I think we had one in this company. No, we had an Asian. And I don't think we had a black. If we did, she was very light.

AB: And this class 5 picture was for Virginia?

JB: This picture was for Virginia.

AB: And this is?

JB: Fort Billings.

AB: Billings?

JB: And this is the same woman, who was, as I said, my *bete noir*, good old Captain Secwell.

AB: Why do you call her *bete noir*?

JB: Because she was the one who conducted the harassment campaign. I would be told to do things. I would be ordered to do things that were physically, literally, physically impossible to carry out. And then I would be hauled in for insubordination.

AB: Like what would she do?

JB: Well, I would be in charge of a company and there is only one time when you "dress right dress" and that's when the middle company makes a formation and then the one on

your left dresses on that company. Otherwise, it's "dress left dress." And so I am in charge of this middle company and the other two companies, platoons, were supposed to dress on my platoon. And I was ordered to move my platoon to the right, right up against the other one. There wasn't room. I couldn't do it. And I got totally frustrated and, of course, despite my anger and was snapping out the commands, back and forth, because I would do it and bump up against the other platoon and then they would read me out in front of everybody. It was quite a campaign. I was a pretty good soldier in terms of knowing--I mean I knew the drill book. I knew what to do....

AB: I can tell from the way you are talking.

JB: And they--I talked to a friend of mine later who had been an officer formerly and she said she saw the syndrome of what they were doing.

AB: Why do you think that was going on?

JB: As I say, I really don't know. I can't explain it, I think, overtly in terms of sexual orientation. Oh, the other interesting thing about these pictures is that we were told that we would wear makeup. And I never wore makeup in my life. It was the only time I wore lipstick. And we were told that was a necessity so we wouldn't be thought queer.

AB: Really? And some of them wore--

JB: Right. So they were apparently sensitive to that.

AB: This was dictated to--did you have anything like that in the war?

JB: No.

AB: When did you enlist?

JB: I went to basic training in September of 1944.

AB: '44. That was at Des Moines?

JB: Right, Fort Des Moines. And I got out in June of 1948. After having served in Washington, D.C. and Germany with a couple of months at Camp Stoneman. I have some pictures in here somewhere of Fort Des Moines. I don't know. These are the papers. I think I have four honorable discharge papers. I was in the Reserves. I joined the Reserve when I went back to college because I thought I could get some extra money by going to meetings. When I went to the first meeting, it was so horrible that I never went back. And then in 1950 I went to Europe with a student tour and I left just a little bit before Korea started and during that summer they gave people a chance to get out if they wanted to so when I came back I kept getting active duty calls. So finally with a lot of other things going on in my life, I just decided to go back in. And this is the first enlisted discharge. No, that's the application. This is the discharge. This is the--

AB: A photographic laboratory two.

JB: Right. I went into the Women's Army Corp. I was recruited at the University of Colorado where I was an undergraduate student and I got a lot of messages about cryptographic work. Was I good with languages? Did I want to do some real detective cryptography work? They made it sound very glamorous. And then they give you a battery of tests and I went off to basic training with a little piece of paper that had a classification number on it. I remember that when I went to classification at basic training they said, "Oh no, we do anything. You're already classified." And I didn't really know what they were doing to me until I got to Arlington Hall and they had put me in this [IBM school]. And I went through key punch and sorters and this stuff. And I realized after a month of this, they really intended to put me in charge of doing this sort of thing. I found out I was going to run a sorting machine on swing shift for 8 hours a night. I said, "I didn't join the army to be a handmaiden to a mechanical brain. That's not what I do," the kind of thing. And they said, "What do you want to do?" And I said, "What have you got?" And they said, "We can't tell you. It's secret." "Well, give me anything." And they looked at my record and I had news photography on my journalism curriculum. And so they put me [there.] They just happened to have an opening in the photo lab. And I found out some time later that is they hadn't had that. They were going to put me on the maintenance crew, assigned to sort of firing the boilers in the barracks and changing light bulbs and stuff like that.

AB: Lucky.

JB: I thought so because I did enjoy it. I did learn a lot about photography. As a matter of fact, I did free lance photography for a year when I got out. Before I went back to college.

AB: So you did some photojournalism in college and that was all?

JB: My journalism major included some news photography.

AB: In what?

JB: I've had my own Speed Graphic and done work like that. So I had a little bit of a break. Certainly, better than IBM, that's for sure. So I learned a skill, I suppose. This is the 1951. OK. This is the appointment to a reserve commission. And this is the honorably discharged. OK, that's the fancy document rather than the form.

AB: So you can frame it.

JB: And then this is the discharge as a reserve enlisted. And I got a reserve commission.

AB: So you were a sergeant?

JB: I was a Tech Sergeant.

AB: And also during the war too?

JB: That's model rank. It was three up and one down. They call it a T-3, technician third class, but it was the same as a staff sergeant in terms of the insignia. And then I was Second Lieutenant the second time around--which meant nothing really. I had the opportunity to apply for a direct commission in Germany and I did and I was turned down on that. And the only desperate thing about that was that it separated me from some of my friends who did make it. Because the fraternization between officer and enlisted, as I remember it, was a lot more difficult than anything about being gay. I remember they had--right after World War II--they had the commission that was directed by Eisenhower to study the democratization of the Army. It was a big thing in 1946-47. Americans were not going to settle for those kinds of hierarchical, authoritarian military structure. So we wanted to democratize it. And they had long agonizing conversations about the degree of fraternization. And when I went back in 1952 I had a military courtesy class. And this officer stood up in front of the room and she said, "Whatever you heard about the Eisenhower commission, forget it. The Army will never allow fraternization." So the public image was that this was changing, but reality [was] not like that at all. And then this was what I did. That has the civilian and then the military occupation.

AB: Photographic laboratory technician. That was the Army Security Agency?

JB: Right.

AB: Would I be able to get Xerox's of these?

JB: Sure.

AB: Or I can read this.

JB: I can make a note of what you would like to have because one of the things--I took some of these to the Lesbian Herstory Archives in New York City and they were very excited over it and I temporarily lost sight of some of things and just gave them the originals of a whole bunch of letters. I have a copy of the letters. I think I really need to [get the] originals back and let them have a copy. But Diz Schwartz says she wanted a whole stack of pictures and I said, "Well I have to go home and sort out my negatives." So I thought if you saw the same sort of thing I would just make a set.

AB: OK. Great.

JB: For you too. Because I've got stacks of pictures that aren't even here. This has been-- I've got a wonderful copy of the *Stars and Stripes*. I couldn't figure out why I saved it. I still don't know why I saved it, the only copy of the *Stars and Stripes* I have in my collection. But the interesting thing is it was January 1, 1947. I had it in Europe and

I went through it and on the back there's these little notices about, little blurbs of information, interesting information. One is about a New Year's party. It starts out: "Gay Ball to be held. There is a paratrooper's unit that's going to have a "gay gala" for New Year's." I thought, boy, "There's a perfect expression of the change in language."

AB: You could never get away with that now.

JB: Not now. That's dated. That's stuff I picked up. Those are clippings. Now that's just a bunch of--. That's when I was a civilian. Oh, that's other stuff. Insignia that was signal corps. I don't think I have ___ (?), isn't that a shame. I must have it somewhere. And these are things I picked up in Germany. See, I have been--one of the reasons I am a geographer is that I have always been a travel freak. The lengths I sat in the fifth grade and read my atlas rather than that book I was supposed to read. So I think I have that sense of place and a love of maps. I was really excited about being in Europe. The Army was good [for] that. I enjoyed it.

AB: Was being a photographer part of that? Were you--?

JB: Yeah, I think so. I didn't do a lot of that kind of thing except personally. Mostly, it was the photo lab. Just photostats and copying and stuff like that. But in Germany we did some historical work. I traveled around with a captain from the cryptography section. She was doing a history of the ASA in Europe. And I traveled around in the American occupied zone and took out door historical pictures of units and whatnot. Took some pictures of parades, General Marshall, and some people like that came along. This is the kind of thing I tended to do a lot of. This is a set of pictures and I'd send these reports back home with information about where it was and all. In terms of some things you want to ask about--you know, [the] life of gays and lesbians--it's pretty dull. I am addicted to book kind of stuff. I am always going to class--my letters back home are about working with German high school girls, teaching English, traveling to see castles and recording very carefully all this stuff. And always taking courses wherever I was. And my social life was probably wilder then than it's ever been, but it wasn't anything especially to write home about. We had a club in Frankfort, the WAC Club. And I do remember going there fairly often. I drank more in Europe than I ever had before or since. Particularly in association with sports teams. I played sports and we always had these grand gala balls at the end of our tournaments where everybody got horribly drunk.

AB: This was softball?

JB: Softball, volleyball and basketball. We went places. That was the main incentive for me. We had four softball teams in Frankfort and only one could go to the theater tournaments. And that, in 1947, was held in Vienna. Vienna was a closed city. You couldn't go on tours, on leave there. The four allies, Russians, French, English and US were in command. And it was a divided city so I wanted to go to Vienna. And we got a chance to go.

AB: Did your team win?

JB: Yeah. Our team won. We had three teams in the WAC company and they were divided alphabetically. Nancy Carter was our first sergeant. She played first base. And she was a person of great integrity, but she managed by very careful watch. She was first sergeant. She kept very careful watch over the leaves and the people in the hospital to cut the first group of people right below the name of Kit Filter. I was the best catcher. Kit was the best pitcher. So they named the battery for the team that ended up winning. Thank you very much.

AB: __(?)__

JB: Yeah. Oh, yeah. So I used to write these kinds of reports back about all these--.

AB: And this would [go] to your--?

JB: To my home.

AB: And these would correspond with the pictures?

JB: Right.

AB: I see the number.

JB: And those were my best friends. I'm certain that she spent the life of a lesbian. I haven't talked to her or seen her since. This woman--who I was very much in love with--that she professes to be, and I'm assuming is and has been straight. I know that she lived with me for a year after she got a baby, an illegitimate baby that she couldn't take care of. We're still in touch from time to time.

AB: Were you aware of yourself as being a lesbian?

JB: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean--.

AB: I mean at that time.

JB: That meant that I went through the usual '40s thing. I can remember when it happened. I was very much in love with a woman when I was in college. I'd had feelings when I was in high school, but I didn't think too much about it or know too much about it. But it hit me when I was 17. I started college when I was 17. I was walking down 13th Street in Boulder and a voice said, "You're homosexual." I just nodded, looked around and said, "What does that mean?" Well, being me I went to the library. They've got a book about everything. And sure enough there were books, but they were all kept on the shelves in the librarian's office and I'd get special permission to take them out. And they were Krafft-Ebing (sp?) and Henry and all the pathology. And I remember reading it and being puzzled by it because it came to me that these were people who came because they had some problems. They came for psychiatric treatments and

that, therefore, they had problems so it wasn't a fair sample. I didn't know anything about sampling or anything, but it just--it puzzled me. But I also had that sense that something was very, very wrong. And meanwhile I was having these passionate feelings about this woman who was clearly involved with another woman. I was just thinking about that today coming over here. I have kept in touch with Jan all these years. And I just had a conversation with her this Summer. Because I wanted to get it settled. I wanted to get it straight what had really happened. And she agreed that yes, indeed, she had had a sexual relationship with Mary a year after she graduated and left town. They went to Bartlesville (?) where Mary became the first field geologist that Phillips ever had and about a year and a half after they moved to Bartlesville, Janice got married and had five children--and is still married to the same man. And I am sure I was totally confused by all that. She was one of my consistent correspondents. I think that example of somebody who did something just temporarily--and then got into the right group--made me feel even more as though I had to be wrong. In other words, there was another process of internalizing the oppression. And so I think I wanted to be very much in control of what I did and who I was. So I never made any overt moves toward anybody. I was always falling in love. I tell people now I was falling in love with straight women or boundary type people. There must have been something in this.

AB: Pretty safe.

JB: Yeah. So--I had 20 years with my mother until I went into the Army. Then I had 18 years by myself, essentially, with one encounter. And then I met the woman I lived with for 21 years and kicked out. And that has been my life. So while I knew there were homosexuals in the army, I knew they were on the teams I played with, I knew the couples. Some of them confided in me about their problems. And I empathized and sympathized with them and discussed things. I had one friend--her picture is in here somewhere--who was in this commission-split thing. Her lover got a commission. And there was a lot of tension and their continuing relationship was very cautious. And she confided to me about how stressful this was. So I knew what was going on--.

AB: She got a commission?

JB: No. Her lover got a commission.

AB: And she was becoming an officer.

JB: Yeah.

AB: And she remained enlisted?

JB: Yeah.

AB: So that really does ___(?)___? That's a conflict that I hadn't thought about. That's real hard.

JB: I have pictures of them in here somewhere. And none of this is in any order or even complete, but I thought what you'd like to see it. I took these partly because I stayed with a friend of mine that teaches at Rutgers. And this is Camp Kilmer in New Brunswick, New Jersey. And this is where we were stationed for five weeks while we were waiting for this grand and glorious agglomeration of women to go to Germany in 1946. They wanted to have the biggest shipment of WACS ever sent overseas.

AB: How many was that?

JB: Seven hundred plus. And they had a lot of dependants and Red Cross and other people too on the ship. It was the *George Washington*. *George Washington* was a ship that had been a German passenger liner before World War I. The allies took it over in World War I. It was commissioned as cargo boat in the Caribbean in between the wars and then the US took it over again and so it had some remnant glory from its passenger days, but it was a troop ship. It was a real experience as you see from some of the pictures.

AB: This is wonderful.

JB: And so we just waited around Camp Kilmer for these five weeks. And those were the barracks. We didn't even have anything to do. We had to go to a lecture to explain what to do if our wives got pregnant. And get our shots.

AB: Did they ever talk to you, give you a lecture about homosexuality?

JB: No.

AB: Social hygiene?

JB: Social hygiene all the time. We got lots of stuff about VD.

AB: There wasn't any mention about homosexuality?

JB: Not to my recollection. I just never remember that as being --there was sort of an under current of caution and in Germany at one time. I can't remember. It must have been towards the end of my stay there, sometime in late '47-'48--or '48. I was asked by some of the people I knew whether the rumor was true that I was taking pictures for the Captain. Secret. Bursting into people's rooms and taking pictures. [That] is the rumor [which] got started. And I remember I was horrified and denied it. Somehow my association with photography got connected to this rumor. And they said, "You're not doing that, are you?" And I said, "Of course [not]. I wouldn't do anything like that. That's an invasion of privacy. It would be a dreadful thing to do." So they accepted it. But apparently there was enough of a rumor that that sort of witch-hunt was going on. But I never felt that it affected me. I never knew anybody. I never knew anybody who had been suddenly, suddenly disappeared or was dismissed. There (as you see from some of the sports pictures) it's quite clear who some of these people were and some of them

were officers in reasonable positions of authority. So I suspect that there was a network of information and protection. But I never remember it being oppressive and leading to the sorts of things that we hear about in Tokyo. But again this may be the World War II experience. I know that I have been reading D'Emilio's book and I identify with what he says about World War II--that they were less inclined to want to get rid of people as long as we did their job.

AB: I have some things to give you before you go too. Some articles.

JB: So that's our service at Camp Kilmer.

AB: So these are the barracks?

JB: Right. Some of them still standing. But mostly this is the site of Livingston campus of Rutgers University now. They started taking over about 20 years ago.

AB: I might describe this.

JB: This is when we were packed up to leave.

AB: You are all lined up?

JB: We are all lined up and tagged. I remember we had to fall out about three o'clock in the morning and have breakfast and we marched off to the railhead and it was about 30 miles to the Navy shipyard in New York City where we sailed from and it took all day. That train went back and forth over the New Jersey wilds and it was just an incredible example of military bureaucracy. I remember it because this was a friend of mine. This is Lynn.

AB: Blowing bubbles?

JB: Yeah. She was blowing bubbles there, but we got on board the ship and we hadn't had anything to eat since our early breakfast and I was making some joke or some crack about something and I found out at that point that she tended to become very testy if she didn't eat meals regularly because my head rolled across the deck. I didn't talk to her again until we had mess. It rained a lot and was pretty dreary.

AB: Is that the Brooklyn Navy Yard?

JB: Yeah. And this is the group of us from Arlington Hall.

AB: This is a good picture.

JB: We were the only set of people who had assignments in Europe we were transferred from almost a free agency in Arlington Hall in Washington which is still a National Security Agency post and transferred to their outfit in Germany. The rest were all

replacement troops. They had to wait until they got to Europe to be assigned. We knew where we were going and so we were excessively impatient about the delay. So that's gang at eleven.

AB: It's a wonderful picture. Now which one is you?

JB: The profile.

AB: This is you here?

JB: She, I know, was gay.

AB: __(?)__

JB: That's Gwen. She took her guitar and coconut. She was the one I told you that had the affair with the officer, the woman that became an officer. So she obviously was. To the rest of them, I wouldn't make any--. As I say, Lynn, I think, probably was; but [we] did nothing other than have a firm friendship with this other woman. There were five of us: Lynn and Lee, the woman you saw in the other picture, and then there was a couple from Cortez, Colorado, that had to have been a lesbian couple. And I know I write home about the kinds of things we did together. Any they were always just there. It was Corky and her friend. And so this was from the docks. And, of course, this was my first experience on a ship going overseas. And then this is what we called our favorite deck chairs. Our favorite garbage cans where we sat on the deck and whiled away the hours.

AB: These are good pictures.

JB: Oh, yeah.

AB: This was while you were sailing?

JB: Right. It took us a week and a half.

AB: The old garbage can. These are great.

JB: It was when I learned not to like MP's. I felt the MP's, I write to my mother about how the MP's were quite annoying to all of us: didactic, authoritarian stance. So I write about how I would try to tease them.

AB: How would you tease them?

JB: Go up and stand at attention giving sharp salutes, overdo the military stuff. I have a history of that kind of thing. In high school I used to cause trouble because I would sit in the side halls and stare at people. And you do that for several minutes and pretty soon they're a bit edgy and start throwing spitballs. And I wasn't doing anything.

AB: Good at it?

JB: I got bored easily.

AB: These are wonderful pictures. Now are you in this picture?

JB: Yeah. This one is me. Forty years ago. Have I changed that much? I guess I have. And that's the general scene that we saw.

AB: All that time.

JB: EW's.

AB: EW's. Yeah, right

JB: I have very detailed descriptions in the letters of what our accommodations were like. These are all pictures of the bunks and stuff.

AB: Geographer?

JB: Yeah, yeah. No academician. I never really intended to be a college professor when I went on and did graduate work, but I guess that was my destiny.

AB: These are very--I mean I have seen a lot of pictures from the war and these are very unusual. Because there are very few pictures of women in the WACS or any of the services that are of women in informal situations.

JB: Informal yeah.

AB: They are always formal.

JB: Well, like I say, that's what I did. I bought a camera at Camp Kilmer. I bought the camera. I still have it. A little German Metina. (?) I bought it for \$20.00 from some GI. And that's me writing the constant session of a letter to send home. That's Gwen Bell. As I say, I know she was gay.

AB: This is a great __(?)__ here.

JB: I don't know if that's a pencil or what. Maybe it's a cigarette holder. That's our first ship.

AB: A paperback book?

JB: Oh, yeah. Always the reader.

AB: Where did you--?

JB: We took it with us. I went on a student tour in 1950 to Europe and went on a ship. And the first thing I did was--we were down in a dormitory style boat and they had these steel girders up there--the first thing I did was set up my library of paperbacks. I have my library in the car right now.

AB: Did you ever get the GI paperbacks that were--?

JB: I don't know.

AB: All the old classics.

JB: I don't think so.

AB: They're called Armed Forces Editions.

JB: No. And then we got to Brenmerhoven and that was my first touch of Germany. And I write about how much better we were treated than the rest of them. I met somebody in New Brunswick who was fascinated with this picture because he was interested in the kinds of propulsion for cars during the war and that's a charcoal burner that the Germans had converted when they ran out of petroleum fuels and converted their cars to these charcoal burners. Of course, I thought that was interesting. The rest are mostly just pictures I took traveling around. I have to go back, I have all my negatives identified. I have never identified them in here. Someday I have to go through and do it. I did note the negatives though. But I was just fascinated with being in a foreign country and faraway places. I remember when I went on leave to Paris I was walking down the Champs Elysee (sp?) and I just stopped at Stots (?). Here I am from humble Nebraska and Colorado and I never dreamed that I would be here. And I went over a lot of my letters this spring for other reasons and realized that I had really enjoyed being in the Army. It got me away from home. I was making my own money, making my own way, doing work that I was good at and going places I enjoyed being. It was a good experience. It wasn't bad at all.

I think a lot of people these days, of course, having gone through all of the Vietnam business and all, forget what that syndrome was like. I could not wait to get into the military. In 1942, Spring of '42, I was seventeen. I took a course in Red Cross in motor mechanics because I was going to go to North Africa and drive an ambulance. The big thing [was] to help. And then they started the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps and I started getting really interested in that. Initially, the age limit was 21 and then about a year later they lowered it to 20. I started getting ideas and my mother said, "I won't sign [an] under 21 age permission unless you get your degree because we have worked too hard to get you here." So that's when I revved up and did summer school and extra credits to finish in three years.

AB: Wow. That's motivation.

JB: I got my degree when I was 20 and went off to basic training.

AB: So you were born in Nebraska?

JB: Born in South Dakota. Lived in Kansas City and Nebraska, Tulsa, and then moved out to Colorado when I was about 10. My mother was divorced when I was a year old so I had that sort of experience growing up without a father and two older siblings. Much older. So I was raised to be sort of independent. Make my own decisions. I am the only one in my family to have gone to college. Well, my mother went to college in the 1890s.

AB: Wow.

JB: She went to a place called Liberty Ladies College. This is the Rhine and castles in Germany. We went to, this friend of mine, Lee (the one I did a lot of traveling with) is a Catholic and she was fascinated with cathedrals and old historic things. That's Lee. I am very fond of her.

[End of tape 1, side 1]

[Tape 1, side 2: Jacqueline Byer]

JB: This was a cold November day when we went to a White Russian church near Wiesbaden and went to the ceremony/church service. I remember incense swinging, Orthodox ceremony.

AB: This is a cable car?

JB: That's a cable car. This is my friends. Yeah. As I say, they are the ones I did most of the traveling around with.

AB: These are really different shoes. Look at those dress shoes.

JB: Yeah. And that's Lee taking a picture of me taking a picture of her and the other picture is around somewhere. And then we saw some good bombed areas. This is another gang. They were friends of mine, a different set of friends I had in Washington. And she was one of them. She popped up in the signal corps in Frankfurt. And I was just in touch with her not so long ago. I had a friend who is not in the pictures yet [who] is in Michigan. I have seen her several times and have talked to her on the phone. But she is out here in the back someplace, doing health healing. (?) And I thought the German Salvation Army was interesting.

AB: Mmm-hmm. Beautiful.

JB: There's more. There's more WAC pictures in here. We worked with youth groups. These were orphans that lived - [that] were brought to the barracks for parties. This is a friend of mine.

AB: Were these war orphans? Or?

JB: These are German war orphans, yeah. I had some very pompous things in my letters about how we were going to save the world about how we would make friends with the Germans and making sure the new generation grew up to be like a good German. Lynn went off.

AB: She's skinny.

JB: She participated in an ice skating ski tournaments. Individual sports. I played team sports. This is Nell McNeil. Lee played tennis and she skied and ice-skated and I played team sports. And these are again travels. This is Lee. She depended upon me for a lot of help with photography. I did a lot of processing of her pictures which of course was [a] midnight requisitioning sort of thing in the lab. I had the lab, I had the paper, and we just used all the materials. This is the couple from Cortez.

AB: They were always together?

JB: Yeah, I know. Looking back [on it], they had to be gay. A lesbian couple.

AB: Did you get a picture of them together?

JB: Yeah.

AB: What is this, here?

JB: That's the Seine. This couple and then that's my friend Lee. That's Lee.

AB: Now Lee she was a lesbian?

JB: I don't think so.

AB: Because you were buddies?

JB: She was a very good friend. She's the one who after the, she stayed in the military. And had an illegitimate child and lived with me for a year.

AB: OK.

JB: She professes I don't know. I think she's pretty straight. She had a very close friend who was clearly gay. And I think she was trying to convert her. I don't know. We never talked about it.

AB: It sounds like there was a lot of--even though things may not have been said--there was awareness of other human beings and a kind of tolerance.

JB: Yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah--because she was very good friends with this couple. These two. See these two? And Lee was very close with them. The five of us did things together all the time. So I don't really know. I know she disapproved of my relationship with Gloria. And I think our relationship faded when I came back from South Africa with Gloria. I don't know if she disapproved of her particularly or the relationship. I think she tends to be a little bit. I don't know. That's a fashion show we had.

AB: What was the fashion was different uniforms?

JB: They were trying to change. this is when they changed the uniforms from the Khaki sort of Topo and they were showing these off and trying to convince people it was a good idea. They had some men's changes too. I don't know. I just went along. That's just part of my--I don't think it's part of my job. I had a Speed Graphic so I did it.

AB: These men are all black here. Oh, because it's the band.

JB: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I didn't pick that up. Yeah. And this is when I first went to Frankfort, I worked in a photo lab that was in a German concern, (?) barracks area outside of town. Before it moved to the I. G. Farbin building. So this is just sort of hanging out at that spot with some of the guy in--.

AB: Sitting on the boxes.

JB: Yeah. In some short span of sunshine one day. We were kidding around taking pictures.

AB: These are great pictures. These are wonderful. I notice that helmet. Were you issued helmets? Did you have your own?

JB: No. Never did any of the combat, field. We couldn't go on field exercises. When I went back in '52, we went on bivouac and--I can't remember--there was some sort of obscene joke about "bivoWAC". I can't remember.

AB: BivoWACS. BivoWAC.

JB: Yeah. This was the officer who was in charge then and I can't remember too much about him except he was probably some kind of a fink. He didn't have too much respect for our officers. As a matter of fact, when we went to the I. G. Farbin building, we had an officer who was never around. He was busy out whoring around and doing black market stuff so I was the non-com in charge. And I remember at one point there was this young ambitious PFC and I finally just told him, I said, "Bailey, you're gonna have to wait until I go home. Cause as long as I am here, I'm in charge. I know how to run the thing and I am doing it. So don't push." So I guess I had that element of what you call "feminism" right from the beginning and I wasn't going to be pushed aside. I could do it. But mostly I got along with him OK.

AB: These are great pictures.

JB: These are some basketball pictures. I was pretty good for five foot three. We played half court basketball, mind you. But I did play team sports in college. I had no sports in high school. When I went to high school outside of Denver, they didn't have girl's athletics. So I was pleased when I got to college and could get some instruction. That's kind of the gang. That's in--where did we have the basketball? Darmstadt. That would be Darmstadt where we had the basketball. We had volleyball in Heidelberg when we went to Vienna for softball. I think I went to two basketball tournaments. That's just the audience. That's the gang coming to see you. I know she was gay. And she was gay. That was the I. G. Farbin building. That was the I. G. Farbin Company headquarters and the rumor was that they (the allied forces: the Americans and British) deliberately didn't bomb it because they were planning on using it. But it was one of the undamaged buildings.

AB: In Frankfort?

JB: Yeah. I was in Frankfort. On line. And we had to drill every week. They had a drill parade every week. So we dressed up in our fancy uniforms and marched. And learned about show and tell. And this was another party.

AB: These were during your drill?

JB: Yeah. They gave an air show then too. No, I am not sure. That wasn't a weekly thing. That was some special thing. I think that was maybe when Marshall was there or something.

AB: These air--

JB: This was kid--

AB: The rabbits, yeah.

JB: A party for the kids again.

AB: This was you?

JB: I was--these were the women. Yeah.

AB: Dressed up as rabbits?

JB: Yeah.

AB: For the orphans?

JB: Right. And then I got the photographer's kinds of pictures. And then this is the-- those are friends. This was--these are all straight women, but fun. This was my buddy from Washington, Margell. She came in as a single parent. She'd been divorced and had a son when she joined the Army and she's been married two or three times since then and ended up with two sons.

AB: They would allow women to enlist?

JB: Yeah. Well, as long as her mother was taking care of ___(?)___. As long as they had that backup, that was OK. And then this is the WAC Club.

AB: The newspaper.

JB: This is the volleyball tournament, sitting in the hotel when we were in Heidelberg, partying. I know she was an officer. She was gay. That would be Golworth. (?)

AB: These were all officers?

JB: No. This is. The rest look enlisted. These were all enlisted. You can tell by the insignia.

AB: What is the way you can tell?

JB: She's got bars on.

AB: Oh, I see.

JB: I don't see that the others do. That's the volleyball pictures.

AB: I remember one woman told me she was in the Marines. And she wore her hair like this woman here.

JB: Short, yeah.

AB: And she was ordered to get a permanent.

JB: That could have happened later. Yeah, that could have happened by '52. All I remember is getting to Fort Des Moines and I had my hair cut before I went to Fort Des Moines. I wore it long when I was in college. I braided it down below my waist. So I had it cut and I thought it was really short. And, boy, we had a sergeant that really reamed us out. "Now either get your hair cut short--when I say short, it can't touch your collar. And that means it's above the collar and there's space--," Oh, sure. Meanwhile they didn't have anything that fit me. I was standing there in these fatigues down below my--. That was quite an experience. That was a different set of people. I went to Arlington Hall. Everybody recruited for Arlington Hall had, I think, if not a college degree, college experience. So I was in with a group of women who, you know, were

articulate and a lot of them had been school teachers or older women. Basic training was a whole different world. I remember writing home about this horrible experience of being on the train coming through Nebraska and Iowa with this woman from Idaho who was shacking up all the men on the next car. And wouldn't take a bath. We had to haul her out and put her in a shower and scrub her down with a brush because she was so filthy. I was just amazed that there were people like that. And that's basic training and when I got to Washington it was reasonably comfortable, in terms of just people to talk to. I remember in basic training I used to have to sneak in the day room and put the one classical record on. It was Revel's *Bolero*. Because when they came, they played their junk music and I am playing *Bolero* over and over and over and over again.

AB: I bet you got to know that by heart. Basic training was six weeks?

JB: No, it was from September to November. About three months.

AB: Did you meet any other women who were lesbians at that point during basic?

JB: No, the three friends that I had, the three friends I had were from the University of Utah. And I remember them because they were sent back to Salt Lake City as recruiters. Because it was important for them to have a group like that in Mormon country. And I went back on leave and visited them. As far as I remember, they had nothing but signs of being straight.

AB: Did you have any--were there--did the WACS have a reputation of being kind of--?

JB: I think--.

AB: Were you aware of that?

JB: I think that there was. That would be really looking back from today's perspective. I remember when we went into Des Moines. We were going to do something, some kind of gymnastic show, a physical training show and we went into Des Moines. I write about it in a letter. And it was my first experience in uniform in the civilian world and I know I felt different. I know, obviously, people in Des Moines were used to it. There were women in uniform around. But I know I felt really, really different. And I think that was probably my first overt expression of that difference. I don't think--I think it was just women in the military. Women soldiers were so different and so strange. If I heard anything about lesbians, I don't think I paid any attention to it because, as I say, I was putting that kind of thing aside. I was not accepting who I was--in control of myself. And if I was going to be dirty and different and deviant, I didn't want to be that. And so I fought off those feelings. I had the feelings, as I say, I was passionately in love with all these people, but I never did anything about it.

AB: Interesting.

JB: In going over all who I am and what I have done about my life, I think it is quite clear too that I am a loner. I was raised to be a loner. I never had play things when I was a kid. I never did socialized things in high school. So I don't think there's too much to be said, except that I was very much in control. But I did enjoy being with people. So it's kind of this ambivalent thing. But I did good things. I think I would have done them anyway. I just, you know--.

AB: That's very interesting. In the dorm--or?

JB: It's in one of the sports things and that happened to be one of the little games we were playing about spitting accidents. "Ssay. Ssal, you want to take a sshower?" She was out on top. She was gay. I know that. This was the first sergeant, Nancy Carter, the one I was telling you about, that got us rigged up for the team. They were a pair. That was well known.

AB: This is a different couple?

JB: This was this officer here. And there. And this is another officer. She must have been gay too. I know she was. And she was. Pretty good part of the team was.

AB: Well, it seemed to me that once you get, you get women who were volunteering for the WACS and select out a few women who were gay, and then among that group you select out who were really on the teams and that might even be--.

JB: I think that. I think that--.

AB: That might even be--.

JB: I do. I don't think it's unfair for me to look back when I read D'Emilio about World War II being the catalyst. But that was the case for me. That a lot of the things I wrote home about, feeling good about the work I did and the rest of it, was coming to terms with the fact that I wasn't deviant and I wasn't different and I was competent and the people I knew were. I just didn't articulate it that overtly. But I think it was, looking back, because I know when I went back to college and I was in the theater group, which was a wild crew, did some really wild things. I was always falling in love with people. I was very distressed about myself. And I confided to my sister-in-law. It was the first time I ever talked to anybody in my family. Well, my mother had said something when I was an undergraduate, she said something about being uncomfortable with the strong feelings that I had for this woman. That's all she ever said. We never talked about it. We never talked about sex or relationships at all. I just never had any pressure to do anything as I say. I grew up not having the expectation that I was going to get married. So I didn't have that sort of thing. My mother didn't care about my getting married because she hadn't had a very happy marriage. So maybe she was gay. I don't know. Who knows? But, anyway, I don't know where I was headed on that. I just feel that he was right that that was a turning point. Oh, when I confided in my sister-in-law, her reaction was to make to make an appointment for me to see a doctor. And I remember

that I said, "Well, to hell with this. That's crazy." I went to see him and I thought it was the most idiotic conversation I had ever had with anybody. I think that was the time I felt "my life was my life." I could make it whatever I want to. But yet, I was still, I was still very much into the.... Where I have gotten my success all my life is [in] academic things. I was good in school. I liked school. I got good grades. I was smart. The first in my family to go to college level graduate school and that's where my life energy has been spent, making a career for myself. A lot's been left behind to go for that. I told somebody yesterday, "I don't know if I was born too soon or too late." I think I was born right in between.

AB: Always the right time.

JB: I don't know. I don't know.

AB: These are great pictures of the teams here. What is this, basketball?

JB: Volleyball. And someone playing softball out in the field. I have a couple of pictures of me playing softball. And marching which we did a considerable amount of and then just touring around.

AB: This is a neat picture. Is this an Asian woman?

JB: Yeah. __(?).___. Yeah, that was a bicycle trip we went on.

AB: Now this group appears to be all WAC too?

JB: Yeah.

AB: Is that true?

JB: Oh, yeah. As I say, not until '52 did I have interaction with blacks. I don't remember a single black member in the Women's Army Corps. It was very much, very much white Anglo-Saxon. This is the couple I was telling you about. She got her commission. Robinson. Film-addict Robbie. She's the one who talked to me about how difficult it was.

AB: And the argyle socks, are they?

JB: Mmm-hmmm.

AB: That's the style?

JB: Well, no. I don't know. I don't know. All I know is that when we were in Arlington Hall. I had a friend who was an Army brat and she came stomping in from the supply room one day and she said, "If they are not going to supply me with khaki socks,

I'm going to buy my own." And so we all went out and bought white, red and any kind of socks we wanted. I wore saddle shoes. See my saddle shoes.

AB: Yeah, those were common.

JB: That was a photo tour trip to castles and all. Also in the barracks. We had a dog. She was the one that played first base on the team. She was from __(?), Arizona. That was me taking a picture of Lee taking a picture of the other family. That was my Speed Graphic.

AB: Now what is a Speed Graphic?

JB: Oh, it's a press camera. I had a 2-14 x 3-14 and we used 4x5. Usually you put film plates in it. That's why a lot of these pictures are contact pictures. I kind of like that. We were at some concert or something.

AB: Now what kind of dresses are these?

JB: Those are the fatigue dresses. They were seersucker, brown and white striped. Sometimes they green and white striped. And they took the place of fatigue pants, if you wanted to wear dresses instead of pants. I had a job. My job in the photo lab entitled me to wear slacks. I wore slacks and field boots most of the time. And I was just sitting around one day, you see we had double daylight savings time, and Frankfurt's far enough north so you get very, very dreary winter days. So when springtime came around you sat around--you sat around the back stoop of the--we lived in apartments that had been built for the I. G. Farben workers. They were two bedroom apartments and there would usually be five people in the apartment. One in the living room and then double in the two bedrooms. And they had a little kitchenette and a backyard. It was pretty good.

AB: You're wearing lederhosen?

JB: Yeah, yeah. Well, we were in Germany.

AB: These are fascinating.

JB: I've got a bunch of junk heap here that's just my pictures. Oh, these aren't really interesting. I did some commercial photo work. And weddings were the best kind of jobs you could get. It sort of led into my freelance work after the war. But that's just a standard.

AB: This was in Germany?

JB: Yep. I know that I write about that somewhere.

AB: I would like to, if it's OK with you, to see copies of your letters during the War.

JB: Sure.

AB: Because we are writing about that. Looking in the book, I really want to be able to capture as accurately as possible what it is like--like if you were sitting when you when you were going across in the troop ship. Just the actual thing. You know, being--letters are really good.

JB: For as long as, well, until my mother died--because those are the letters I have. I think I wrote to another friend who gave me the letters back, but it's the letters to my mother that I have a collection of.

AB: What's this, a pageant?

JB: Ahhh, God, I can't remember who that is. It looks like some sort of spring celebration, doesn't it?

AB: Yeah, they have these in Europe.

JB: God, I'd have to look that up. I don't remember seeing that.

AB: A passion pageant?

JB: Yeah, a passion-play on Easter. These are--I haven't put that album out in a while. There's some travel pictures. Oh, I know. OK. Some softball. Mine are--I'll have to dig mine out. They're in here somewhere.

AB: Was this--were you in the South? Was this the team you were on there?

JB: Yeah. I wonder if Kit--is that Kit? Yeah, that's Kit. That was the pitcher. She's the first baseman. She's second baseman. I'll take a look. Around here somewhere I've got pictures of me as a catcher. I was a good catcher. This was a buddy of mine from journalism school who went in the Marine Corps, and was taken down at Quantico.

AB: Oh, yeah. Was she a truck driver?

JB: Yeah, she drove a truck. A good job for a graduate of a college of journalism.

AB: Now when was she in?

JB: She went in--we both graduated in '44 from college--and she went in. I think she went in a little earlier than I did. She went in in June, maybe.

AB: Was she a lesbian?

JB: I don't think so. But she could have been. I don't think she ever got married. Actually, I haven't done anything to keep in touch with her.

AB: So there was a woman I interviewed in the Marines at Quantico and they had a big purge of the truck drivers in 1944 or '45.

JB: I lost track of her when I went to Germany, I think. Oh, I know. Yeah. She got out because when my mother got sick, she had gone back to Central City. She came from Central City and she'd worked on a newspaper there. And she was sort of at loose ends and she had agreed to stay with mother until I was due to get out. My mother was going to leave the hospital and go back up to Evergreen. Then she died before she did that. So Mike--I called her Mike--her name was really Morgan. She could have been. We never talked about it. She went to California with me when I went to Camp Stoneman.

AB: I bet she might have been aware of that purge.

JB: She might.

AB: The woman that I interviewed said everybody on the base knew about it.

JB: I could track her down.

AB: Whether she was there or not at this point.

JB: Through the J-school alumni. Oh, nasty junk. I have just thrown it together. What I did for a lot of these, I couldn't tell you too much about them because, we had as I say I was in a lab and we had a file of photographs of Arlington Hall. And these are the kinds of things they put out. This was a girl's school that the Army took over and these are just file photos that I don't know anything about when they were taken. This is workers coming into the base kind of thing. This is the woman who was an Army brat--[in] the khaki socks. Phyllis. Ellen was her name. Ellen and OB were buddies. I am looking for those softball pictures.

AB: Well, don't ever throw any of these away.

JB: No I won't. I've got the negatives, I think.

AB: They're really good. As I say, there's not all that pictures--.

JB: It's a good record, yeah. But I'd have to piece it together in terms of better information. That was Arlington Hall. It was a girl's school.

AB: Now where was that--was that in Arlington?

JB: It's right outside Washington D.C. It's at __(?)__ Road. In what's it called? Anyway, it's right outside Washington. And it's still there. It's never gotten back to being a girl's school again. That's what the barracks looked like.

AB: That's neat.

JB: That's Arlington Hall and that's Arlington Hall. This is Mike in her dress uniform and that's her being a Marine.

AB: This is all Mike here.

JB: This is me at work in Frankfurt.

AB: On here it says "clueless." What does that mean?

JB: Oh, that was for I guess secret stuff. We had supposedly secret stuff. I don't know. Maybe we did, maybe we didn't. Yes, we did. I remember. I remember one job I had was to go out when they experimented with some kind of phosphorescent bomb that they wanted to put in between the safes so they could destroy the safes. And they were seeing what it would do to them. It was a disappointment when this huge flaring hot, hot fire on these steel safes and they opened the doors and they were just singed around the edges. You know all this paper and they couldn't burn the paper. Because that's hard. She was a nice woman. She was a school teacher from South Bend who insisted she could teach me how to sing.

AB: Did she?

JB: I never let her try. This was Robbie. A gay officer.

AB: That's the mailroom? No.

JB: What a devil this crap is. This is me. Rosie's car--a friend from Detroit and her sister's car.

AB: Nice car.

JB: Do you know, I do a course on the life and death of the American automobile and I collect a whole lot of different kinds of information. And I found out I think from the World Watch people put out a book. And in 1950 the total car ownership in the whole world was 53 million. So having a car--I inherited my mother's car--so having a car when I went back to school is not that usual. And that was in 1950. It's hard to believe. There is a lot of stuff in here that's interesting. What I am looking for--maybe it's in here. I'll put those pictures back in the album where they belong. Whoops, shouldn't do that.

AB: Wow, some of these pictures are great.

JB: See all of these have June's stamp on the back. She wants them all. This is just my general life history. These are not--these are post-Army. This is when I went on the

student tour in Europe. And other stuff. Hitchhike and bicycling. This ___(?)__ at I. G. Farbin.

AB: Oh, wow. Now what exactly is I. G. Farbin, what's that?

JB: That was the *Farbinberka*, (sp?) I. G. Farbin, the big chemical outfit. It's one of the German war industries. That was their building.

AB: A big industrial headquarters?

JB: Right. (mumbling) I keep saying I am going to sort this out. This is my friend Lee and her son.

AB: Oh, yes.

[End of tape 1, side 2]

[Tape 2, side 1, Jacqueline Byer]

JB: Rats, this is everything. Damn.

AB: Did you find it? Oh, yeah. Was this you catching?

JB: Mmm-hmm.

AB: That's great.

JB: Catch and left me batting. The friend in the East Bay that I just showed this to said, "That's a pretty straight swing for a dyke." I just got it.

AB: I can see that June wants these. I wonder why.

JB: Yeah, a pretty good catcher. This is in the day room at Arlington Hall. We took up knitting.

AB: Look at the pajamas.

JB: We worked alternate days and swing shifts. So there was always one part of the barracks on day shift while the other was on swing. So I guess I was at work that day or something. Or else I'd been--friends of mine and I went downtown to work rather than do a lot of gossiping the day we would go to clubs. So we went downtown in Washington and got part time jobs. I worked as a copy girl in the Washington Star for several months before I went overseas.

AB: Really?

JB: Yeah. This is me at work in the lab.

AB: Oh, this is great. This is a wonderful picture. The calendar too. What a contrast there.

JB: What did I know? That's me, I think. What a bodacious sweater. And I'm not too displeased with these two pictures.

AB: Oh, wow. There you were on the list.

JB: Ah-huh. Not a bad start. I'm not that good a bowler my (?). And then this is [the] Camp Stoneman softball team. Oh, here's a good--here's the news clips.

AB: The time was when?

JB: That was '48. Two months.

AB: When you came back?

JB: When I came back from Germany and had a month's leave when my mother died. And then I was transferred out here for two months before I got discharged.

AB: So your mother died in '48?

JB: Right.

AB: Did you go to San Francisco at all when you were at Stoneman?

JB: Oh, yeah. I used to come in for weekends.

AB: Did you go to any of the gay places like Mona's, Black Cat or Finocchios, or anything?

JB: I went to my first gay bar a year ago.

AB: Oh, yeah?

JB: In Boston, Cambridge.

AB: Which one was that?

JB: The Marquee in Cambridge. I say I just never did that. Partly because I'm not interested in socializing. Here's my basic training pictures. __(?). Company at Fort Des Moines.

AB: Company 13, 3rd Regiment.

JB: With and without hat.

AB: These are not identical, are they?

JB: I write home about Lieutenant Bourne. I have one phrase in one of the letters. "Everybody adores Lieutenant Bourne." Quite true.

AB: Why did everybody adore her?

JB: I know I did. She was a cutie. All I knew was I liked her. She was sympathetic to us for one thing. But I just thought she was wonderful. This was the place where I had to come to terms with a whole lot of different kind of people.

AB: What was that like?

JB: It was a shock and a surprise, and a challenge and comforting and lots of things. According to what I wrote home, I learned a lot. It wasn't like college. Although college was interesting in a way because--talk about a women identified world.--all the men left in '42. They had a Navy training station at Boulder. They had a Japanese language school and then they had what they call V-5 Navel Enlisted Man Training. So there were a lot of men around. But in the military, you know. You'd just see them marching by. But in the class I was in in the journalism school, there were eight graduates in '44 and there was one man. He had lost an arm in an agricultural accident. All the rest of us were women. So that was the atmosphere at my schooling. Here is the Spartans Guide. *Gay Watch*.

AB: Oh, yeah. Gay watch parties planned in Munich. This is '47.

JB: Welcome to our gay watch parties and religious services. Well, that's quite a combination.

AB: Let me read this into the tapes, OK?

"*The Stars and Stripes*, Wednesday, January 1, 1947. Page 12. The headline is: Gay Watch Parties Planned in Munich. *Stars and Stripes Bureau*. Munich, December 31. Army personnel in Munich and the surrounding area prepared to welcome in the New Year with gay watch parties and religious services. Munich _ (?) _ Army Air Base boasted it was holding the 'highest New Years party in Munich' on the sixth floor of the base terminal building. A masquerade ball is the featured attraction at the Red Cross' *hof brau* club. The theater commander and General Joseph T. McNanie (sp?) and his family are guests."

That's all of it, I guess. That's neat.

JB: And I just took pictures for the sake of doing photography. I don't think they are too bad.

AB: No.

JB: ___(?)___

AB: These are ___(?)___

JB: Not bad composition. This is Heidelberg. That's the Frankfort Zoo.

AB: With zebra.

JB: That's a blowup of the picture you saw earlier in the small. This is a civilian. This is the softball team I played on in Denver. Summer of '48. The year I got out I played softball. We won the state championship.

AB: This is a civilian team, right?

JB: Yeah, a civilian team. The manager's wife played catcher so I had to play third base.

AB: I'm glad that you agree to copy some of these.

JB: This is much more recent. That's three or four years ago when I had my own plane.

AB: So this is you're quarter of a million, huh?

JB: Yeah.

AB: Just coming out.

JB: This is a friend of mine I fetched from Boulder to come to down to Colorado Springs to give a talk. So I flew up to get her which I thought was added incentive to this. This is after I got out in '48. Living up in the mountains doing freelance photography. This is in the lab in Frankfort.

AB: Now what is this you are doing here?

JB: Oh, we were just horsing around. We had to take ID pictures. So we would horse around. I've got a whole bunch of the little pictures where we were kidding around. Putting "Heir Hitler" on the cards and stuff like that. But those were the guys that worked--I worked with in the lab.

AB: And you supervised these people?

JB: Yeah.

AB: What was your job there? What was your--?

JB: I was the non-commissioned officer in charge of the photo lab. I was a photo lab technician and Photostat operator. Those were my official designations.

AB: How was it supervising three men?

JB: As I say, I did pretty well with it.

AB: And how did they feel about it?

JB: They got along alright. He was the one that got a little ambitious, but we got along alright. Yeah. They were alright. They didn't want--they wanted to go home. Everybody wanted to go home finally. It wasn't that challenging work. I just enjoyed being where I could travel. I didn't do a bad job. This is the lab. That is more recent. Then the rest of it is just a hodge-podge.

AB: Are there more pictures of you here? What I would like to do is tag some of them that are pictures of you.

JB: Well, this is--this is in...

AB: I have a little pile here.

JB: I'm sorry that this got messed up, but I have a set that I took one of our recreation weekends at Fort Lee. As I say, that was a miserable time. That was where I finally got discharged. And we didn't agree but the one weekend we went down the James River and camped out. Some nice ones--and I don't remember too much about them. Because as I say, I spent as much time away from the post as possible during that experience. That's when I was taking flying lessons and it's a very traumatic experience. But that's another--these are all Fort Lee in '52. This is the kind of uniforms we had then.

AB: This was in '52?

JB: Yeah, '52.

AB: Was this part of the party?

JB: Yeah.

AB: Now, talk to me about the traumatic experience at Fort Lee. Because I think we talked about that before the tape was on.

JB: Oh, OK. Not to be boring about it, but my description--.

AB: You can't be boring.

JB: The Army and I mutually agreed that that was not a good choice of career. I had joined the reserve while I went back to college in 1949 and I didn't--wasn't in the country to take advantage of the opportunity to get out of the reserve in 1950. And so when I went back to school in the fall of 1950 after having been in the Army, I began to get active duty. I think I went down to Fittsimmons about three times to take the active duty physicals. And that kind of upset--plus the resistance I had from the Geography Department about what I was doing there--plus my own personal distress at my life--finally convinced me that the thing to do was go back in the service. Korea was still dragging on and I had gotten a reserve commission by that time. So I thought, well, at least it'll be more interesting and challenging and maybe I'll get a real career opportunity. I was frankly thinking about language school at Monterey because I had taken two and a half years of Russian in college and I thought that would be advantageous.

So I went back and I found first of all it was a totally different training experience because it was a combination of officer training and basic--because most of the people in the company didn't have any military experience. They had been commissioned directly from civilian life. It was kind of an experiment. I guess--I don't know--I could well have started off on the wrong foot. But it was four months of just sheer hell. The final culmination was that I was told that I was not going to be allowed to finish the course. I had an honorable discharge, but I never really did know what my problem with them was. People have asked me whether I thought it was being a lesbian and I said I don't see how that could have been because I didn't do anything that would give them any indication. I didn't make any moves on anyone and I faithfully put on the lipstick that we were all required to wear. So no one would think we were queer.

I didn't interact too much. I met some people that I liked and interacted well with. But basically I was by myself. As I say, whenever I could I went to take flying lessons--didn't go to the officers club. I think they just saw me as a nonconformist. And that I was not going to be easily subject to discipline and there wasn't a place for me to fit in. That's my explanation. That's what a friend of mine said: that I was just, they couldn't hook me on performance. My academic and military performance was by the book and so they put me under stress to the point where they could argue--what they officially said--was that I had threatened to commit suicide. Which is a lie--but that's how they sent me to the hospital.

And I was in the hospital and then I went to see a shrink and the shrink said, "Well, what are you going to do now?" I said, "Go back to the company and finish." And he says, "Oh, no, you won't be allowed to graduate." I said, "Well, maybe you'd better tell me because I obviously don't have the right answers." He said, well, "You can sign a for the good of the service discharge." And I said, "Oh, that's the right answer. That's what I must say. I want to sign." And that's the way it worked out. And it was just a matter of putting me under stress. It isn't enough to think that I hadn't done anything wrong. Therefore, they couldn't, you know. What I'd said was that the way

they did it was that no one by the end of that training period had any love for Fort Lee at all. And yet we knew that there was a likelihood that some people would be assigned to Fort Lee. And, typically, you would be assigned either the training officer or mess hall officer. And it wasn't very challenging. And besides we were sort of under that aura, this awful woman who was in charge of the company.

So then the list came out a week before the end of the course. The list came out of the people who were going to be assigned to Fort Lee and there was one other women. I remember her because she had a Master's degree from the University of Chicago and I was quite impressed with that, not having finished my own Master's degree. And she had started late and she was a civilian and had a hard time with drill. She wasn't that well-coordinated. She was under some harassment. I heard a long time later that she had stayed in and had taken to alcohol from the stress. But, anyway, this list came out of the people who were going to be assigned and her name and my name were not on the list so we thought, well, at least we don't have to face that. The last training day, we were marching around through this horrible, horrible November smog/fog. There was a chemical factory down at Hope Valley. They burned coal smoke and the weather at Fort Lee. It was a horrible day.

We came into the day room for the final instructions about what was going to happen to us and the Captain read the list of assignments and our names weren't on it. And I raised my hand and I said, "Lieutenant Averly and I were not named." She looked me straight in the eye and says, "Oh you're going to be at Fort Lee. I thought that was understood." And it was like being hit in the stomach with the end of a pole. I went back to the barracks and people were commiserating with me because they understood what that meant in terms of my feelings about the place. And what I said was, that's all right, I can do anything as long as I have my flying. Because I can still go out and fly. They came in--marching in--the Executive Officer came marching in with a covert of guards and hauled me off to the hospital and told the people at the hospital that I threatened to commit suicide.

AB: Wow.

JB: And when I tried to find out what that meant, that's how they interpreted my flying. That I was going to go out and crash the plane rather than do what they told me to do and that really did sting. My reaction to that was, "How did they think that would destroy somebody else's property from the way that I was raised?" I was so proper and correct. It's unbelievable. Anyway, I called a friend of mine in Washington D.C.--or who was at Ohio State--and she said, 'Oh, they're stupid. How can they do that sort of thing? Come on back.' And that was comforting to feel that someone would tell me that was OK. So I worked my way back into graduate school. That's when I sat in my bed in the hospital and said, I'm going to go back and finish my Master's degree and get a Ph.D. And I don't know where that came from. I didn't know what that meant. And that's what I did.

AB: A good story. So the kind of independence that you had during the war was seen as a plus then in a way. But afterwards it was not the kind of non-conformist--.

JB: I think that they were probably right--irrespective of the sexual thing. I think that they sensed something that was going to get me into trouble--that I didn't belong in uniform in a hierarchical organization and I had not seen myself in a hierarchical position in the academic world. I should have worn my T-shirt that I got for my 60th birthday this Summer. We have a tradition now at the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs for tenured women to get this T-shirt. And I have been tenured a long time but they just gave it to me for my birthday. It's got a lovely, lovely rose on the front. It says "Tenured Bitch." And I think I am the only one that has worn it on campus. Reclaiming the title, you know. Women who make it and get in positions of reasonable authority are seen to be bitches--happily proclaim that that's who we are. So I think I have that tendency to give off auras of questioning authority. And that's not what you do in the Army. So I like to think that's what it was and that they were right.

And [they] did me a service in getting me redirected and sort of being a catalyst for my saying, "Well, I know now what I want to do." And because of the resistance at the University I remember. I'd be sitting taking a test and the instructor would sort of sidle over to me and say, "Hey, Jackie, why don't you give all this up and go get married?"

I went in to talk to somebody about somehow or other I had learned about the Society of Women Geographers and I applied for a fellowship. They at that time were giving alternate year fellowships to Columbia and Chicago. And I applied and I found out from my advisor that I was second in line. Now that could have been just two people, you know, who applied. But I was startled. I hadn't done anything on a Master's thesis. And I thought, "Gee, someone out there thinks I'm worthwhile." So when I went in to talk to him about actually going on to do Ph.D. work. The advice I got was, "Don't do it. You'll never get a job. You'll never get promoted." And, of course, he thought he was helping me out--and [that] I would go away from professions like that thinking they've got to be right. They must know. And yet, see, that's what I really wanted to do. So I feel like I was really swimming against the current. And all of that kind of came against, "Well, I don't care anymore. That's what I want to do." And then when I got the tuition scholarship to Chicago and went there, it was a totally different atmosphere. I really feel that that was a real turning point. First of all, I was successful. I finished the Ph.D. in three years and got directly into college teaching and found out I do well at it. So that was good. So the Army did me a service. You don't need me to protect the security of the country.

AB: Protect it in different ways?

JB: Yeah. So the rest of it is just. What I'll do, rather than worry about your looking at all of these, make a choice of what I have in terms for negatives.

AB: OK.

JB: And make sure that both you and Judy get sets that are satisfactory for your perusal. And I'll try to annotate them as clearly as I can regarding dates and people. Some of

them I forget. I know that this woman's name is Garrison because she was the only other person. She had a master's degree in geography from Syracuse so I remembered her as a geographer at Fort Lee.

AB: Yeah, that sounds--.

JB: Dorothea Garrison.

AB: The ones that I am most interested in, to make sure, would be the ones of you and like this pile here.

JB: Like I said, I became a photographer so I could be taking the pictures and not in them. I am not particularly happy with having my picture taken. But I guess it's good to have them. This is a barracks picture.

AB: This is great.

JB: We were orphans in this barracks. When we first got to Arlington Hall. I think we kind of spilled over. They hadn't really expected us to show up. And they put us in a dinky little barracks down at the bottom of the--that had been constructed by the Army rather than one of the old girl's school places, women's school places. And we had pot-bellied stoves and it was getting on toward Christmas and they left us out of the Christmas preparations. So we went off and did our own thing. This is the woman who went up and took the fire ax down off the wall and marched across Lee Road and chopped down a tree so we had our own Christmas tree and we put sheets over the foot lockers and had our tables and then we collected all the food we got from home and had our own Christmas celebration.

AB: Good pictures.

JB: Washington D.C., springtime.

AB: Could I take slides of some of these of you while you're here. Because I have a slide show and--.

JB: That was before the war. That's college.

AB: This is--.

JB: These are satirical pictures we took at Fort Lee when we got a little bit silly.

AB: These are great.

JB: Staff training, right? Strategy.

AB: This is great.

JB: She was one of the ones who went to the beach party with me. I can't remember her name. A nice woman. That you can have. This was in Europe on the student tour. This is with Peter. This is Lee and Peter. And this is the most recent one. That's UCCS women going cross-country skiing last January. And I am the short dumpy one who fell down a lot.

AB: I can hardly see you. So much.

JB: I keep straggling up after falling down a lot. That's post-War. That's post-War. Post-War. That's college just before I went into basic training. That was one of the journalism--as matter of fact, he's the one that taught me news photography. He died and the wife of one of the other journalism professors died and so she is married to the other journalism professor and they still live in Boulder. And this is the family I babysat for when I in Chicago. They're my second family.

AB: And is this?

JB: That's me.

AB: __(?)__

JB: That's right. I was as dyke as you can get. I was just talking to a __(?)__ in Pittsburgh with a friend of mine from those days. He is having a relationship with my ex-office mate from Chicago, a cross-country relationship. I said I want to tell you about the project and what my life was all about. And he said when you were in Chicago then, he said, "Were you like that?" I said, well, "Yes, Bill. I was like that all my life." He said, "I remember you as being so together and having it all straightened out and everything, you know, what you wanted to do and everything." And I said, "Well, maybe I gave that impression but I had a lot of confusions in my life then." But that was the only other relationship that I had before I met Roy in Capetown--a year before I went to Chicago. This friend of mine at Ohio State sent me back to Boulder to take care of her lover there. A woman she'd met in '51. She was still an undergraduate. I fell in love with her and she cared a lot for me, but [at] the end of the year she decided to fulfill her commitment to woman at Ohio State. And so I went off to Chicago after having said, "I will. "Come be with me and be my love" and that kind of thing. She says, "Oh, no. I'm going to go stay with Nan." So I was in a kind of state of shock when I was in Chicago, a kind of rejection sort of thing. I didn't really think it was real anyway. But I didn't get involved in anything in Chicago. God knows, I didn't do anything except go to Guggenheim Hall and work. It was a great place, but it was a pressure place too.

AB: When I was there it was really high pressure.

JB: But it was a comfortable pressure. They were civilized people, the faculty there. We never had the sense of being torn apart by internecine warfare among the faculty or [of] trying to show off. Of course, I had the advantage of having one of the greatest

people in the world come back and head the department. Gilbert White. My relationship--I mean he was just incredibly important in my professional life. I am still friends with Gilbert and his wife. I used to wonder if I was ever going to get anywhere in my life. I was past thirty and nothing really had happened. I figured the timing was right--that I could finish my dissertation with him. It made all the difference in the world. I think I disappointed him in terms of not being a research scholar but I talked to him last Spring about this project and he said, "Tell me the women's gate. Tell me about women's gate. I said, "I will after I go out and find them."

AB: What do you mean when you say "this project?"

JB: Oh, well. I am touring around the country now because I've got a year's leave at full pay and some travel support from our campus research, the creative works committee, to do a study of the geography of women's communities with the purpose of lesbian communities.

AB: That's wonderful.

JB: And nobody has ever done that geographically, spatial viewpoint of it. That's what it's doing. And I call it an exploratory expedition. It's not data collection. I'm just checking things out and having, well, exploring. So it's being a wonderful year.

AB: Wow. That's exciting.

JB: Let's see if I can give you some idea. OK, how about August 25, 1946?

Aboard the USAT, *United States Army Transport, George Washington*.
"Dear Mother: I am writing this along the way, day by day, so you will know everything that happens. Camp Kilmer is the logical place to start inasmuch as that's where we started. Saturday morning at four o'clock no less. Friday night after I called you, I finished what packing I had left and tried to go to bed. There were at least three farewell parties at which the rules forbidding liquor at Camp Kilmer were strictly ignored. The noise resulting from the reveling was not exactly conducive to sleep. But could be ignored with the will power. With will power. But when they called out all the replacement troops to go through a dry run at ten forty-five p. m., that was too much. They have them falling in and out, sounding off, name and embarkation number and marching up and down the road below our window until twelve. Then at three a. m. they started marching platoon by platoon to breakfast.

We had eaten breakfast by four forty-five so by four practically everybody was up. We had until five forty to dress, eat, clean up our rooms, turn in our bedding, put our suitcases out, get all our gear on and fall out. "All our gear" meant for me one musset (sp?) bag, which is sort of a knapsack Army style. I carried it on my back but they didn't give us the right kind of straps so the buckles met right at the front of my shoulders and I could feel them through my blouse.

Then I had my coat plus camera plus four rolled up blankets. We were each issued two blankets for the boat and Lynn and I combined ours because I had a strap to carry them with and we took turns carrying the roll. So by six o'clock we were lined up and ready to march. The replacement troops got transportation to the train but the odds and ends-- a few officers, the eleven of us with special assignments, some who are returning after furloughs home--'red cross girls'--and about three hundred re-enlistees--have to march a mile to the rail head. It wasn't bad although the sight of the sun rising in all its glory wasn't quite enough to make up for the fact that I had been up for three hours after three hours sleep. The train pulled out somewhere after seven o'clock. After much shifting and retracing of routes we got on a direct line to Jersey City. At Jersey City we disembarked after three conflicting orders from as many Captains, none of whom would yield to the others.

Our group had no one directly in charge although there are two signal corps lieutenants from the hall who are going with us. And any one with higher rank feels compelled to insert their authority into the situation. From Jersey City, we boarded a ferry right by the station so we didn't have much walking to do. By that time we had all seven hundred eighty women in tow and, as we were first, wherever we went we had to wait. The ferry was one like the San Diego automobile ferry, but we stood up. After much sniffing, Angie decided the last cargo had been horses. My cold served me well then. We were ferried across the harbor, past the Statue of Liberty and Staten Island to pier eleven where the *George Washington* was docked. Again we marched off. This time one by one onto the pier. Then we filed up the gangplank, were given mess cards and led up to our quarters. We came on the ship on 'D' deck, the first deck with portholes. In other words, the one right above the water line. We were taken two decks below that and the only reason we stopped at 'F' was because the steps gave out. We couldn't go any further. Troop ship is no understatement. We expected it to be crowded and have to barely [enough room to] live during the trip, but none of us expected anything like this. The compartments are equipped with tiers of bunks, four in a tier and a higher level, three in ours. We are bunked two to a tier so we have one for storage. Which really was a benefit that a lot of the guys going overseas never had. They were one on one on the bunks. I don't know how they did it. The bunks themselves are very simple. Canvas strips to wooden frame and tied with ropes and suspended.

[End of tape 2, side 1]

[Tape 2, side 2: Jacqueline Byer]

JB: "The bunks themselves are very simple canvas strips to wooden frame and tied with ropes and suspended to a center support with chains. One set looks like this from the end."

AB: And you've got a picture.

JB: I have a picture.

The ceiling complete equipped with pipes, horizontal ladders, etc. Floor. Relation to bed before someone gets in and sags the canvas. There is room for one person in the aisle between tiers and when all four opposing tiers went in at once it causes no end of confusion. Then we have clothes and suitcases and mess kits and toilet articles to contend with and no place to put them. I forgot to tell you that our embarkation gear also consisted of a pistol belt with full canteen. Those have to be kept around too. So you can see that the Army doesn't send it's help the best way. Lynn figured, at capacity, our compartment would hold a hundred people. With two in a tier now there are about seventy-five in a space no bigger than a good sized living room. There are ventilating ducts bringing fresh air from outside but it is still pretty stuffy. If anyone gets sick, it will be hell. Of course, the ropes creak and squeak every time you move and the way I turn over I'll probably wake everyone. Lynn and I have one tier. And she has the bottom bunk and I have the top. We start things in the middle while we aren't there and raise it when we are so we can sit on the bottom one. The latrines are two decks above us - a long way in case of dire need. The johns have no doors and usually no paper. The flushing system is quite erratic, running water continuously but when you are halfway through the one you were using stops and the one next door runs over. The washbasins are long troughs with faucets here and there. There are shower stalls open to the world, salt water runs hot and cold 24 hours, but fresh water only twice daily for half hour periods. I don't know if you have washed in salt water but I would almost rather be dirty. I found a small john with about ten toilets and no one else seems to have discovered yet so I have some privacy, not for long though. Seven hundred women are quite a few. After we..."

(All the women some of the time.)

After we were aboard, we watched the others come," (what a lost life, I don't know.) "the others come aboard to the tune of flashing guns from photographer's cameras. They were taking 'cheesecake' reel pictures and pictures in the compartment. By the time Colonel Boyce came around with an inspection party, we found that this is the largest shipment of WACS in peace or war. Personally, it gives me a big pain. We've had our assignments since June and had to be held waiting for a whole slew of others just so some brass hats can get a big splash of publicity. I don't think it was necessary to pile up so many that we have to travel like this. Our officers have been down several times. They can't believe it is all true. After eating breakfast at four-thirty we were getting pretty hungry. They finally called one compartment to eat, but waited an hour before discovering that everyone had just joined the line instead of waiting to be called. So after standing in line for forty minutes we ate at four o'clock. Spaghetti and cheese sandwiches have never tasted so good. The mess hall has two serving lines starting out with a tub of hot water to dip our mess gear in. We

eat standing up at tables which hit me above the waist. Standing to eat makes me feel rushed and that, combined with the fact that I have been very hungry, has resulted in my absolutely wolfing my food down--five minutes for a whole meal. We ate again at six thirty but found a way to chisel our way in before the rest so I had no line to wait in. We had stew, beans, ice cream and cookies and it tasted wonderful. In fact, I can eat anything they give me. It must be the salt air. Before eating the second time we sat around," (boy, I haven't read this in a long time) "before eating the second time we sat around the rail waiting for the boat to be pulled out. We were supposed to leave at six but at six thirty it hadn't left but as we were eating we could see things moving by.

After chow, we sat by the rail on 'C' deck watching Brooklyn and Coney Island move by. The sunset was beautiful. There had been wonderful clouds over the harbor all day and the colors were beautiful. There was a huge red ball that sunk bit by bit as we watched. But then the shore lights began to blink on. Coney Island, Shore Drive on Long Island, but about nine o'clock we were at the edge of the harbor where we were to drop the pilot but [there was] no boat for him to go back in. Angie thought she might know the pilot and she and Lynn were dashing back and forth stalking around corners trying to see which side he was to be dropped over. But we finally had to come and go to bed. Everyone was knocked out. We had our canvas mattresses, two itchy wool blankets and life preservers for pillows. I went right to sleep after dabbing my hands and washing my teeth in salt water. But at midnight I woke up to find everybody sound asleep and every light blazing away. I couldn't see that. Maybe lights should be on by the stairs, but that's enough. I got down from my perch and unscrewed some of the lights in our corner. I guess everybody was so tired they didn't care.

Then I woke up about six o'clock and got up to go to the latrine. That's the first deck with the portholes. After I stuck my head out and saw what a wonderful morning it was, I had to go back and get dressed and go back up on the deck. Hardly anyone was there so I sat by myself and watched the wake of the ship. I missed the sunrise by about six inches. I went back to bed about seven and got up with everyone else at eight thirty. Besides WACS, the ship has enlisted men, officers and civilians. The civilians and officers, of course, had the best quarters. Certain parts of the deck are restricted to everyone, but I think we are jammed into a smaller part of the deck in proportion to our numbers. We have the aft side of 'D' and 'C' decks. That's the stern. Plus our compartments. It would probably be too cold for many people to be out very much, I hope. We have been sitting out most of the day reading and writing and knitting, etc. They have a loud speaker system for announcements but when they don't announce, they play very loud music which I could do without. We were supposed to have a meeting this afternoon, but I think they must have forgotten about it because no one has come down here. The water has been very smooth so far. No white caps even. No one has been sick and I hope it stays that way. My wrist is alright. Justin has some salve which draws out poisons and makes new skin so the scar won't be so bad. My cold is almost gone. Otherwise everything is OK. There

isn't much more I can tell you now. We haven't done much and we don't know much so I can only wait. I'll write as soon as I know something. Thanks again for the money."

AB: That's great. You write very dramatically. You can tell. You write very nice letters. You've got really good detail. It's an historian's dream come true.

JB: OK, well, what I'll do is they are all in order. And I will get you copies of these or else get Judith to send me back the originals. I am not sure that I've got everything on this. I guess it doesn't really matter.

AB: Well, copies of these would be fine. They would be easier to copy too.

JB: "Thanksgiving here was quite something. Maybe you have heard that it quite a bit of emphasis on German youth activities program right now. It's part of that our mess hall entertain thirty German children between six and ten and I signed up as hostess to one of them." So some of this correlates to the pictures. I talk about my leaves, going to various places on leave. My impressions of-- That's the apartments we lived in.

AB: What a record? OK, well, let's see.

JB: What I need to do is [to] go home and get all this straightened out. I can, if necessary, I can supplement the tape. The description--I'll write out a description.

AB: Talking into a tape would be just fine with me or whatever you feel comfortable with.

JB: I've got a computer now so I'll word process it out.

AB: Is it OK if I take some pictures of some of these?

JB: Sure.

AB: I do a slide show called "Marching to a Different Drummer" which is about lesbian and gay Americans in World War Two.

JB: I feel a little be fraudulent because I have so little experience in terms of really interacting as a lesbian. Being forward out front.

AB: But you're story is real similar to most of the women I have interviewed so far. It's not fraudulent at all.

JB: It was quite a time.

AB: There's very few. Well, there were some. There's some pictures that I have of women that I have interviewed who just looked like real butch dykes and were WACS.

And they weren't out and they say they weren't out and they weren't as far as I can tell in relationships.

JB: Well, the closest explicit recognition I had was--I think it was a volleyball tournament. And, see, we used to have these wild parties and I had been drinking a lot and busted into somebody's room and they were hot and heavy in bed. [whispered]. I thought, "That's what they do!" I was really amazed. My personal story is--I could have been dead. We went to Vienna and we had this party out at the Vienna Woods. We had a big wine banquet and all and we came back and were told--we were staying in a sort of private house and it had a real steep roof, the Vienna style, Austrian style--and we were told to be careful. I mean out on the streets because the Russians were in charge and they didn't know how to treat people that were just wandering around. So we were told to stick close to where we were billeted. So we came back with liquor and wine and I remember crawling over the transom of the kitchen room to get some food. I got a ham out so we could slice up ham and have some more snacks. And then I wanted to go for a walk. And I was aware about the restrictions of the request that we not fly in it by going up on the roof. And they found me perched upon the roof with my heels in this gutter.

Why I'm talking about the moon and romance? They hauled me back in and saved my life, I guess. I could have been walking around that damned roof, I don't know. Mainly the next day, our train didn't move until evening. So I woke up pretty hung over. We got on the train late in the afternoon and somebody broke out a couple of bottles; they had hard liquor, it wasn't just wine. And I got drunk again. And I was running around doing my act. And very voluble and verbal and I wanted to go up and tell the engineer to stop sending smoke out because it was coming in the windows. You know, they were holding me back and that and they finally got me convinced it was time to go to bed. We had a compartment, you know, the European trains with the compartments at right angles to the direction of the train. And there were two women in the lower berth, and I am sure that they were having at it when I went in. And I crawled up in the top berth because they were awake. And I crawled in the top berth and I got sick. And I didn't want to embarrass myself or anybody and the only thing I could think of in my stupor was to stick my head out the window. And they literally pulled me in by my feet. And I start out with this story about this wolf (?) because the train windows were open. And they were open for ventilation. So that window was open and I'm going to vomit, I got to stick my head out the window. I was just straight out the window and these two women hauled me in. So I am grateful for their activity and alertness. I remember the next day when I had quite sobered up, I'm thinking, my God, you know if my mother saw the headlines: "Drunken WAC Splattered Over Austria." She would not have approved of that at all. As a matter of fact, the drinking was something I never wrote home about--or, if I did, it's in very amusing terms because that was one thing I think she was convinced my father was an alcoholic. And that was one thing sort of hovering in the background: "Don't drink." Although we had wine--she was not a temperance person--we had wine at Christmas and all. But drinking was something she would have been bothered by. The first time I got drunk in college she found out about it. Didn't let me know until a week later. It was __(?).__ I never drink that much any

more. Theater days, once in a while. I get all ___(?), whoever it was was playing Cleopatra. Never embarrass me. And now I am too old.

AB: Too old for what?

JB: Well I find the lesbian community is--there is some ageism in there. That there is a definite age classification. ___(?), so to speak. There is certainly at Colorado Springs. There is nobody of my age. Very few. Being out here is wonderful just to talk to people.

AB: How do you know Peg?

JB: Peg--I met at the--of course, I knew her book. The *Lesbian Studies* book was one I looked at last winter. So I went to the National Women's Studies Association meeting with the deliberate intent of making connections with people with this plan of mine. She was there. I was very interested. It has been very helpful in making connections out here for me. So I did that pretty much everywhere except there was sort of a blank in Southern California. I am just going to pick up whatever I can and go through the ___(?). Then after Christmas I will go to the South East. I have been in the East, Midwest and East. And then I will go to the South East after Christmas. And eventually I will be producing things like a map of contra-lines of hemophilia.

AB: This is wonderful. This is social geography

JB: Yeah. Urban social geography. And it's different for me because I am really a research management conservation geographer. That's what got me in. I have a long time interest in land and water problems in the West. That's what got me into geography as well as this sort of accidental thing. I think, basically, I've been a geographer all my life. As I say, I have always had a love of places and maps and I maintain--.

AB: And from your letters too.

JB: I maintain that a geographer--there is a very thin line between a geographer and a hobo. That's a line with a certain minimal kind of social responsibility. Otherwise we would all be out there with our backpacks. Hustling around seeing places. I taught in South Africa for four years.

AB: That was in Capetown?

JB: Yeah.

AB: And that is where you met Gloria?

JB: Yeah. We split last year. After 21 years.

AB: Wow.

JB: She is a veterinarian now. So that personal change in my life last year was one of the things that led me to coming up to 60 and losing what I thought was a lifelong partner. It made me ask questions about what I wanted to do with my life. I decided I didn't want to sit and be a recluse and be bitter. I wanted to do some more interesting things.

AB: You certainly are.

JB: And I'm probably--it's probably unprecedented that a University of Colorado professor to have a full year at full pay. I had a sabbatical for a semester and then I have a "post-tenured development off-load." I've done pretty well. I haven't had a cold or anything since September. All this traveling around.

AB: Have you seen these maps of Valencia Street?

JB: Yeah. Montequela (?) sent me one of those and I have pictures that I took of all the places.

AB: __(?)__ and Monica's

JB: I haven't been on this trip, but I did fill out one of the forms __(?)__. These are-- this is one of my friends from Michigan. "Flossy" we called her. I just saw her in September. She's in Michigan. She is married with two children.

AB: That's my mother's name.

JB: Her name is really Luanne. But she is a good buddy. She worked in the photo lab with me. This is an historical, real historical--.

AB: Oh, yeah. Are these, there should be a prints of these at the Lesbian Herstorical--.

JB: She'll want all of these. This is the eighth grade graduation. The other thing that is different about me is that I started school when I was four and I was always two years behind everybody. I was the youngest all my life.

AB: And you even went to college in three years?

JB: Yes. Then I made up for that. By fiddling and diddling around with my Masters. I didn't finish my Ph.D. until I was thirty-three.

AB: So can I take pictures of these?

JB: By all means.

AB: And is it OK if I put one of--a couple of these in the slide show?

JB: Sure.

AB: At the end I have I talk about people who were in the war and just show pictures and snapshots.

JB: I have no problem at all. I'm as out as anybody can be. I've decided I'm tired of dealing with people who don't want to know that they know.

AB: Right.

JB: My dean said that he was going to play around with this business of post-tenure development off load with people who have been in the trenches a long time and worked at building up our campus. I started the Department of Geography there in 1970. And he wanted to give some support (?)___. You know, we may have a few directions they take in their life. You know, development. I said, "Well, as a matter of fact, I think that's something I want to do that's different." And he says, "What is it?" And I said, well "Like Gay Geology." And he said, "All right."

AB: Well, I think a weird form of that in my work is that I have been looking at lesbian and gay bars--and this whole thing about the bathhouse controversy--and I have done a history of the bathhouses. In light just in terms of territories, I have been thinking of them as ways that people have created safety zones.

JB: Well, I call the subtitle, I am going to call it "We Are Everywhere: the Geography of Haven."

AB: Ahhh-huh.

JB: And I know Madelyn Davis has done that with the bars in Buffalo, about how lesbians in the '50s literally carved out their own spaces.

AB: I think it's real important and it really hasn't--it's not acknowledged like that a whole lot. And there is so much shame about those places too that we miss the fact that they are havens. They're safety zones. And they're in a way erotic territory. It's not--it doesn't deal with erotic stuff very well. It's very hard for the culture to tolerate those areas. But it takes people. It takes a lot of bravery, I think, our history of creating the bars in the back. Any places where lesbians or gay men can congregate in public is a--.

JB: Yeah, that's why I was just at the Women's Building and this quartet sang a song. The last song they sang was "I am proud being a dyke, I love being a dyke." And it's just, you know--.

AB: Ah-huh.

JB: (?)___ what I was used to. ... You can do that without copy lights?

AB: I have 400 ASA in here so.

JB: OK.

AB: It should work OK near the window here. I've had--when I travel around interviewing people--it's not always the best conditions and this usually works pretty well. If you have any questions, I'll turn this off.

[End of tape 2, side 2]

[End of recording]