JEAN STICKNEY INTERVIEW  7/13/99

Madeleine Winter (MW): I’m here with Jean Stickney and it’s July 13, 1999. [Jean has discussion with her cat] Well, Jean could you tell me just a little bit about your background and anything you might find people might be interested in hearing?

Jean Stickney (JS): Ah, why, I moved up here from Connecticut in seventy-three. Do you mean background as of type of work I’m in, things like that?

MW: Whatever you think might be pertinent. You know, yeah it can be about your work, your family, whatever you want to include.

JS: Okay. Um, my coming out was in Connecticut, sixty-nine. I was a late, late bloomer. And ah, it was a, a case where I met these people who were lesbian and gay and I was always questioning my sexuality. Because um, going to bed with a man just didn’t do it, I mean, you know (chuckles). So at any rate, so I’m, questioned my own sexuality and my feelings, so I would have different feelings when I was around a woman than I did when I was around a man so I didn’t understand it. Ah, this one woman I met, I asked her if she’d help me. And she told me that she would never introduce anybody into the lifestyle. A person would already have to, decided that they were a lesbian before anything. So much for recruitment (laughs).

MW: I guess they didn’t have toaster ovens then, huh? (laughs)

JS: No (laughter). ____ toasters. Anyhow ah, so I was in between work and I decided I wanted to see what California was about. So I took myself and my dog and we went out to California. And I thought that this would be safe because I would be away from my family and this way I wouldn’t embarrass them if it came out that I was a lesbian. And while I was in California I figured I could perhaps go to the bars and find out.

MW: Where in California?

JS: I, I settled in San Diego. But the bars I heard about were you know, up the coast in Long Beach and so forth. But not really being a bar person I didn’t know the right time to go (laughs). Or the right days or anything (laughs). So I’d go off, I’d travel up there and I couldn’t find anything. And I was afraid to ask people at work where such and such was because I thought well, that might be a section where lesbians and gay men were then they’d know right away I was a lesbian. I hadn’t even known myself if I was. So there was like a complete blowout. Um, I spent a year in California and I came back home. And I was in the car with this lady I had talked to before I left. And she says, “well what’d you find out?” So my thought was, “well this was now or never” (laughs). So I said “yeah, I’m a lesbian.” “Oh, okay. So what do you think?” I said “well, I’m glad I finally found out.” And I was driving my car and while I was driving she grabbed me, and she kissed me. And I almost raked the car up (laughter). But the feelings came over me that I never had before with anyone. And it was wonderful. So
we decided that we would get together a certain night that week. And not knowing what
to do and I didn’t want to blow it, I got out all the dirty books I could find you know. I
mean, of course, straight love making, figured this should give me some hints as to
what I should do. And ah, we got together and I forgot the books and whatever it is
you’re supposed to do, you do.

MW: That’s right (laughter).

JS: It’s just natural. And it was the most wonderful feeling I ever had. In, in a sense
to borrow a phrase from the, the religious people I was born again. You know it was
just, it was wonderful. I found, one night and I found out where I belonged is what it
seemed like.

MW: That’s incredible.

JS: And I didn’t tell her that I lied until about six months later (laughter). I didn’t want
to screw anything up (laughter). But—

MW: Oh, it’s interesting.

JS: And we went together for about three years. And then she and her family moved
up to Maine after their house burned. And, I felt that was a pretty long distance
travelling. So I moved up to be closer. But, just things haven’t, the relationship ended.
But I was, I was here, I was stuck here. I was stuck here where ah, I, I really didn’t
know anybody but that family.

MW: And that was in the Belfast area?

JS: In Northport. She was married and had two children.

MW: Oh really.

JS: And ah, so we (chuckles) we got a hold of a, a book that talked about, you know,
where you could find your gay bars guide. We went into Bangor and at that point they
said the Bangor House, which is now a retirement home, and ah, the Bus Stop are the
two places. So we went to the Bangor House and it didn’t look like it to us, we didn’t
see anything, anybody. Then we went to the Bus Stop, I think it was called Peter’s.
And I asked the waitress if there were any gay bars around. I mean you feel very brave
when you’re from away. And she said, “oh yes.” Oh, where are they you know, and I
said “do you know what the word gay means?” “Oh yes.” And she told us about all the
bottle places and dance halls. So to her gay was happy.

MW: Oh, oh I see.

JS: (laughter) But at any rate. It was a while later, this, this was back in seventy-
three, in October of seventy-three. But in a few months period there was an article in
the newspaper, Reverend Bubar, being very upset with the University of Maine because they allowed a gay/lesbian group on campus, the Wilde-Stein Club.

MW: Right.

JS: So that hit the paper like crazy. And I thought, oh great, we are here. And I ah, thought I'll go the university, it shouldn't be hard. I'll just look for people you know. With the radar, would tell who's who. And I went there and I didn't realize how big the campus was. And I just didn't have a clue who was what or where. So I went to the security office and I asked them where the Wilde-Stein Club met. And it happened to be the right night (laughter). And the guy directed me to the right building. And I met the folks there. So that was my, my introduction to gay people in Maine. And then they said that they also had another club that met off campus for the people who didn't go to the university. And that was like, 7 men and 3 women belonged to that.

MW: Do you remember what that was called?

JS: I don't know if we had a name, really. But ah—

MW: Did you meet in people's homes?

JS: No, we had a, it was a, an office down on, oh the street that used to have the bars, is it Hammond, not Hammond Street. But it was downtown Bangor, there was a little place there we used to meet. It didn't last for a real long time because they, really didn't support. But it lasted long enough that ah, in seventy-four the Wilde-Stein wanted to put on Symposium, the first Symposium. And it was supposed to be, I think it was held in February or March or something. It was supposed to be like a cabin reliever thing. Time of the year when there's nothing going on. And our group and, and the Wilde-Stein group got together to get the first one going. And I think by that time we were meeting at, because we had to move out of one place, I think we ended up meeting at the Unitarian Church in the parish house. That's where we were having our meetings. Which is now the playhouse ah, the ... playhouse.

MW: Then was it Bangor Support and Action?

JS: I honestly don't remember if we had a name even.

MW: Okay.

JS: And ah, so we put on the dinner and the dance at the parish house. And then all the other activities were on the campus. And with the first ah, Symposium we also opened up our homes to the people so they could stay. Because there was still a lot of unrest and we were, we were a little scared that something might happen at Symposium. Somebody might do something dangerous but, it went off okay. That was that part.
MW: Then how did you get involved with Maine Lesbian Feminist?

JS: Well, then I, I ended up working for Pine Point School, I was the house parent. And that brought me out of the mainstream because I had to work weekends and my hours were pretty near all the time. And I guess it was the second or third Symposium when the women got together and formed that group. And then they ah, had members right here in town, Joann and her partner, they put an ad in the Republican Journal stating that they had a, a group, Maine Lesbian Feminist, and if anyone was interested to join this is the telephone number to call. So I did call that number and ah, I guess (chuckles) when I finally lost my job working at Pine Point School that's when I started going to ______, I probably didn’t get into MLF until seventy-four or seventy-five, something like that. It might even have been a year later than that. But ah,--

MW: Am I correct in that you did the newsletter? The MLF newsletter?

JS: Yeah. It already had started up, but I guess it’s maybe the fourth meeting I went to they needed a new treasurer because the treasurer wasn’t showing up at meetings and so forth and the treasurer was also the one that put out the newsletter. So that, that’s how that happened. So I started doing that. We had a little mimeograph machine back then and we pulled that off. We also had a team of people that used to help write it (laughs).

MW: What was the content of it?

JS: Um, I guess the main purpose was to tell them when the next meeting was, number one. And, we used to have some poems in there I believe, and different writings that people would do. I don’t think there was anything deep or political and maybe announcing that there was a concert coming up or something like that. It was pretty small. Maybe six pages. Just to have that connection to everybody,

MW: What kind of activities did MLF provide you with?

JS: I, it was really cool ah, what we would do is meet at different people’s houses once a month. It may be up in Belfast or down Portland way, out in Farmington, all over the state. And ah, we would have workshops so that if you were a mother with children what do you do. Then there was a group who were in AA and they would have an AA meeting group. And ah, we would discuss whatever it was that was something on someone’s mind. You know, and how to do something. How to live. Ah, we had fun things too like ah, Betty would put on a massage workshop. That was always nice (laughter). And then we’d bring different things like you know, if you had sports equipment or music or whatever. It was just a variety of stuff that went on for all day. And ah, one really nice one I remember was up in Farmington, that was a weekend one. And ah, I think it was in Farmington but it was up north. And there was a blizzard so we were really stuck at the farmhouse. So there was all kinds of things. They had a sauna going, they went cross-country skiing. You know you didn’t have to go to these workshops and do these things. You could also just sit around and gossip.
MW: That's sometimes the best thing. (laughs)

JS: Yeah. But you, you had that connection. And ah, there was one bar in Augusta that was open at that time. I think it was called Flo's. The other name was Eastside, the same place. And we used, we went there to go dancing but it would always be you know, sort of coddling to the men or so. We wanted to have at that time some women's music on the jukebox. Could we have one night a week that's just for women and they're, no, no, not enough money, can't have that. So it was New Year's Eve, we all wanted to get together for New Year's Eve, so we thought well we'll meet at Slate's and have dinner and celebrate New Year's. And there was too many of us descended on Slate's that we couldn't go in, you know there just wasn't enough room. So well, I guess we'll go to a bar. So we drove up to the bar and ah, we started going in there and the guy that was collecting the money and his mouth is open he's seeing all these women going in. And it was then that they came up to us and said, what night would you like to have (laughter). But by that time we had organized enough where some of the women had ah, developed Susan B. Anthony Club which was here in Belfast where we held dances once or twice a month during the summer.

MW: And where were those held?

JS: Ah, it was the ah, let's see, it used to be the Grasshopper Shop used to be there, it was up on the third floor.

MW: Okay, downtown.

JS: ... yeah. In fact I had that, that probably should go with you I've got a picture of a, of the room. That would be a very good thing to it's part of history. Ah, so we, that was a nice space because we had a, a big room people came into where they could sit and talk or smoke. We already did this, we separated smokers from regular people (laughter). So they could sit and smoke and gab and we had chairs there. Then we went into another room and we had this pool table, it cost $25.00. It was a very bad pool table (laughs) but we played. And then we had the huge room where the ah, Masons or whoever they were, Knights of Columbus or Oddfellows, where they would meet. So that was a huge room, huge ceiling. And we would make up tapes, music tapes and just play the tapes and people would dance. So you had all of those steps. If you wanted to talk you went out to the other room and talked. So it was really cool, but it didn't have heat so we couldn't do it during the wintertime. When it got cold.

MW: So these women were from MLF that started this club or were they just...?

JS: I think they were, there were some new gals who had moved to town to help form that. And ah, then there was also the MLF, so it all kind of went together. But, of course the newsletter helped to keep the dances going too. It was kind of nice telling the guy in the bar, "no, we don't need you" (laughs).
MW: Yeah really they just want the money.

JS: Yeah.

MW: So what about some of the more memorable MLF weekends? Anything stick out in your mind?

JS: Well I remember the ah, the first one I went to. Um, I really didn't know the, the lesbian scene, shall we say, because I hadn't really been in it. I mean I was in a relationship for three years but back then you only met at the bar, you didn't have groups. And ah, so I, I really didn't know very much history or whatever. So they're having this meeting and they were deciding whether or not to change our name from Maine Lesbian Feminist to something else that maybe we really weren't feminists. So, and they asked people's opinions and I told them I was for everybody's equal rights. I mean I'm making brownie points here, you know. I see a lot of men who don't have rights on, on the things that women automatically get it, get it too. Everybody should be, so that went over real well. And then they were talking about a concert that was coming up. And talking about a Willie, not Willie Tyson, Willie Tyson, yeah maybe it was Willie Tyson, yeah. And I asked who he was (laughter). They just looked at me like where is she from (laughter) you know. So that was my introduction to Willie's music.

MW: That's funny. (laughter) So I understand MLF lasted what 3-4 years, something like that?

JS: When the ah, fuel shortage started up. When we were having trouble getting gasoline. That's when meetings were starting to fade a little because people couldn't afford to come out to wherever we were having it. So then a lot of the gals had moved down Portland way, because their life went on. And ah, so the group was kind of breaking up in that regard. ...

MW: How long have you lived in Belfast? When did you move here?

JS: I've been in Waldo County, _____ so that's over five years.

MW: So after that kind of ended where did you find support and you know, social _____?

JS: Well we still had our little network, you know, here. And Symposium was still happening, which I was, thought was very important. And ah, the MLF - we still had the dances, even though we didn't have the, the other group. And then when that finally gave out ah, one way of socializing over the years, I, I started dating somebody and ah, I worked at the bar that her mother owned and we were dating and trying to figure out how we could be together more, because again it was a married woman (laughs). How we could be together more without raising suspicion. So I said well gee why doesn't your mother sponsor a softball team? Okay. So we had our first softball team, Bill's Café. And she said, yeah I'll get the sponsor, you get the players. So I did and the only
people I knew were lesbians (laughs). So we, we had our, our first team. And ah, it wasn't known we all were lesbians because some were still in the closet so. But ah, that, that was a good way to reconnect after all the others broke off. And ah, we were only Bill's Café one year. And we had broken apart (laughs). So, but from then on went, we became ah, Oak House, Oak Hill team. And then JKS Copy Printers which was my business, sponsored the team for a few years. Then we didn't have a team. Then a few years later we started up with the Minor Miracles. We lost every game (laughs). So we got the good sportsmen award for four years (laughter). And ah, what they, our teams did was, once it was found out, we were the Minor Miracles that it was like official, yeah we're gay. But we always had a two, two ah, a couple people that were straight. It was kind of funny because it wasn't planned you know. And ah, you got a whole lot?

MW: No. making sure it's picking up.

JS: So it, it, it was good because these people in the area found out that lesbians weren't so bad. Now we're educating the general public. And in softball it's usually a family thing, the wife's on a team, the husband's on a team, redneck country here we come. You know?

MW: Yeah.

JS: And ah, over the years it's gotten so that we were really well accepted. And then we ended up being the team that we were last which was New Attitudes. And by that time we had two other lesbian teams in the league as well. And ah, it was really, it was really good. I mean I think ah, our presence was a good education for a lot of people who would be angry people. To not be understanding about people. But when I, when started my business, it was like 15 years ago, my copy printing business ah, I decided we needed some connection again because the newsletter was defunct and we weren't finding out information as to what was going on around the state. I had gone to a, I think it was a Cris Williamson concert and nobody knew about it. It was like hardly anybody at the concert. So I thought well it's time we did something. So I made up this ah, newsletter called Fruits of Our Labor.

MW: I remember that.

JS: Yeah, and I just meant it to be a calendar thing. You now just to tell people what's going on, support it if you want it to keep going on. And ah, that ah, that worked out pretty good. It got the people out into stuff. Because maybe one person would get the letter but they'd tell a few others about it.

MW: We used to get it for APEX and we would put it in our calendar.

JS: Yeah right.

MW: So yeah it was a good thing to have.
JS: Well like everything else people don’t support it. Everybody wants it but nobody wants to support it. So that died out, yup. And ah, fortunately yeah I was able to let it go and give up on it (laughs).

MW: Yeah, sometimes you’ve got to, I know.

JS: Yeah.

MW: It’s hard to do.

JS: Yeah, it was hard to let it go but when you’re starting to dip in your own pocket all the time, it gets costly. And if I wasn’t printing it myself it would have died a lot longer, you know, a lot sooner than it did.

MW: So what kind of things are you doing these days, politically or whatever?

JS: Politically?

MW: Or whatever.

JS: Politically I’m, I think I did a lot of stuff before. I was the ah, top ah, codependent in the area (laughter). So, and I, I’ve learned to let go of a lot of stuff. So now I’m there if people need help but I’m not going to be the head honcho anymore. I’m the grunt now. I guess that’s what my title would be. I’m out there to assist but that’s it.

MW: [garbled]

JS: Kind of burnt out but I know I shouldn’t be because we’ve still got a long ways to go yet. I was on the, in Augusta with everybody trying to get that first one passed when the governor said he wouldn’t sign it.

MW: Oh right.

JS: McKernan. We went there every night of the week … So it, it’s really hard for me to remember stuff like that. I was lucky enough to get that lesbian alliance award.

MW: Oh yeah. That’s great. Is that for a particular project you did?

JS: I believe that was because of the newsletter that I was behind. The MLF, the Fruits.

MW: So you’ve closed your business right?

JS: Yeah.
MW: When did that happen?

JS: Ah, it’s almost two years now. That, that was rather nice, though. Ah, when I decided to close it that was when we were doing the ah, vote no again. And I had this friend, she said that she’d really like to go out sometime, go to the bar or something, go dancing. You know would I be in for it? Sure, well let’s plan ahead when I can get a night off. And she planned it like two months ahead and I thought, wow, she really likes to plan things (laughs) you know. So we put it on our calendar, okay that’s when we’ll do this. And the night came upon us and she said do you mind if so and so goes with us? No I don’t mind. And ah, then there was supposed to be the political rally for the vote no, in Belfast. And if that’s entertainment there, why don’t we go to that first. I said okay. And then if it really stinks you know, and it’s boring (chuckles) then we’ll go out to the bar you know. If it doesn’t turn out to be good. Okay. So the day came and she, well before that day even came she had asked me, because she was going to be moving away, if she could have a list of my telephone numbers of some friends. Because she’d like to have their names and so forth. I said sure call them. But during this time I’d been in AA for like 12 years and in AA you can tell you not to question a whole lot of stuff. Just let it go you know so. I could have questioned her on it and I thought no, whatever her reason is let her use it you know. And, then something else would pop up and I’d wonder why the heck they’re talking about such and such. But I’d let it go, didn’t investigate anymore. So that night she, she came to the apartment and she said, oh you should see all the cars down at the library, there are so many. And I’m thinking to myself, she’s not political why is she so excited (laughs) you know. I let it go (laughter). So we got into the library, I’m looking around and there’s a couple signs saying you know, Vote No. And I’m looking what is Portland doing in Belfast you know. Why would they be at our political rally? I let it go (laughs). And I’m seeing all these different familiar faces and I look up on the stage and there’s this huge softball hanging from the ceiling. What the heck is that there for you know (laughter). Let it go (laughter). And someone called me over to their table and I’m sitting there talking and Nan’s up on stage she’s talking about something, I wasn’t listening. And ah (laughs), great to have me in the crowd (laughter). I’m busy talking to this person and Nan’s saying somebody come up on the stage and be our first one. Finally they said, Jean go up on stage. Huh, let it go, up I went. And all of a sudden it’s a party for me, a retirement party.

MW: Oh isn’t that wonderful.

JS: Yeah. And what they did was they took my phone books and my telephone lists and called up everybody on the lists and invited them to come.

MW: How wonderful.

JS: Yeah. And ah, the big ball up on the stage was a piñata and I figured you know, they said you know what you’re got to do that. And I says well yeah, you know, smack it. So they give me a baseball bat (laughter), exactly, and I hit that, I figured I’ve got to
really hit this because I've got a reputation here (laughs). And, and I figured you know candy everything would go flying. And it was stuffed with money.

MW: Oh my God.

JS: I know (laughter), that's exactly what I said (laughter).

MW: That was a gift to you?

JS: Yeah.

MW: Oh, that is so nice.

JS: Yeah it was over $1700. And I thought about it later how great this was that you know and the—you have your friends and they end up dying and you have a memorial service for them. Well I've already had mine (laughter) you know. And I was able to enjoy it, it was, it was a nice feeling to see so many people there you know. And I guess I made an impact on people in their lives.

MW: I would say.

JS: It's hard when you're on this end to realize what you've done. But, I guess I can't come up with a lot of funny interesting things to say because I, I don't know what the impact really was you know.

MW: You can only do what you do.

JS: Yeah, right. I remember having meetings at, I used to live in a trailer, a ten foot wide trailer and having the meetings in there and having you know, wall-to-wall women. I mean that was nice (laughter).

MW: Yeah, I'll bet. It sounds like it.

JS: And then we were having a dance one day after the meeting and I was gonna go up to the Susan B. Anthony Club and have a dance that night. And there was three women they had to take a shower after the meeting and I said, well be my guest I said but (chuckles) you're all going to have to take your shower at the same time because this is a trailer you know (chuckles) a twenty tank, gallon tank and that's it. They had a blast (laughter) three women in there showering (laughter). Trouble was the windows were open and they were (laughter) they got all these comments from the ladies right across the way (laughter).

MW: So how old were you when you came out?

JS: When I came out? I was ah, 29 I believe. Didn't have a clue you know. When I look back at it now I know there was a lot of clues you know. There was this ah, friend
of the family, his name was Uncle Joe who I loved dearly you know. This was World War II, he was a sailor and I had a sailor doll of Uncle Joe. I mean this was a really, attachment that a kid had. And ah, after the war Uncle Joe came by and he had this woman with him, it was like, see you later (chuckles). I was enthralled by this woman you know and I'm what, maybe six years old at this time. I mean I just, I had no time for him at all, it was her. There was just something there that did something at a young age. She was gorgeous as far as I was concerned you know. And ah, now when I, at girl scout camp you know, you have your different little heroes that you have. I just remember the feelings that my body was having at that time and now putting it all together like, oh okay (chuckles). Now I know why I felt that way.

MW: And it's like such a big secret you know. It wouldn't be so hard if you really had the inclination.

JS: Yeah. And that's the way it was up until the time I finally at 29 (chuckles) found out why I felt like I did when certain females were around. I had a roommate that ah, when I was 17 I went out on my own. And ah, I would have certain feelings that I didn't understand then. I remember being very jealous because she had a boyfriend. And I wasn't jealous because she had a boyfriend and I just didn't want him with her (laughs), you know. That was the jealousy I felt. But it took all that time to finally realize. And that's why I feel that it's nothing that we make ourselves be. That we are, in my way of thinking, we are another form of human being. Whatever makes up a human with genes or protozoa or whatever, that ours are just a little different somewhere and that's who we are. My older bother like, my whole family knows that I am who I am. And ah, I don't know if this is important or not. Ah, my, I had told my, my mother before she died. And she knew and she told me not to say anything to anybody so I didn't. And then when I was having trouble with a male roommate who was threatening to tell everybody about me and my girlfriend and all this, back in the sixties, it's something you don't do, right. And ah, so I called my, my mom was dead by this time, and I called my dad up and I asked him if he would come over because I was afraid of this guy, I was kicking him out of the house and I was afraid that he'd take his anger out on my animals or my apartment or something and could he stay here until he moved out because I had to go to work the next day. And when my dad came over I told him, I said that you know, I have something to tell you. And he said what that you're a lesbian (laughs). I said yeah. I said when did mom tell you? Oh, that same night (laughter). Don't tell your father. So, I kind of thought she'd tell you, she tells you everything you know. And ah, so my father, you know, knew about me. He thought it was a phase I was going through. And then after mom died he also, he moved in with my older brother and his family. Um, I told my sister-in-law who I am. I didn't tell my brother because he was very homophobic and I think he was homophobic because he was a very good looking man and I think he had been ah—

MW: Approached.

JS: Approached, yeah, by other men. So he had that experience. And, when I moved up here I was writing home to my sister-in-law and one day she wrote me back a
letter and said that one of her children had asked if I was the kind of woman that liked other women. And it just struck me like how did this child figure this out? I never brought any women with me to their house you know. If anything I brought a man. How did they figure it out? So I wrote back and I, she said that she had told him, yes I was and didn’t make it sound nasty or anything. And I wrote back and said, well if they ever have any questions I’d rather they’d ask then to ask someone who doesn’t know you know. And that was the letter my brother read (laughs).

MW: Oh.

JS: So he wrote back and said he’ll have none of that talk in his house. It wasn’t that he was a religious man, just very homophobic, he wasn’t religious at all. And he didn’t want that in his home and blah, blah, blah. I wrote back and I apologized to him for keeping it a secret. He’s the only one that didn’t know. The whole thing was so - of course he’d be mad, you know. And that I had in myself planned on telling him the next time I went down because I felt he should know. If I’m going in his home he should know what’s coming into his home. And ah, we got to a point where it was a good understanding. Finally I, you know, it was acceptable. And I felt it was completely acceptable until the last big march on Washington. And ah, another friend and I went down, we stopped off in Connecticut. We stayed at her mother’s and then we were going to go down to Washington the next day. And I thought well I’ll go see my brother and his wife. So I went over, oh what are you doing? Oh I’m going to Washington for our rights. Oh you folks have all the rights you need in the privacy of your own bedroom (laughs). Okay (laughs) big shot. I didn’t think he was like that you know. So and wanted to talk about it and I said no. I said I won’t talk about religion or, or politics. You’ve got your thinking, I’ve got mine and we won’t get anywhere. We would just fight. So okay we won’t talk about it. A little while later he brings the subject up again. And then ah, his two daughters came over to the house and he brings the subject up then. And they just look at each other like oh (laughs) you know. So then, he calls his daughter up in New York state and ah, guess where your aunt’s going. And he starts telling it again. And it’s like, dad cut it out. You know you could see the girls just looking that way and his wife is (chuckles) making a face. And ah, the three of us go out to dinner and as we’re leaving he digs in again. And I thought jeez, this man really wants me to get into a discussion and I won’t do it you know. And I was so happy I was on my way to Washington because I needed--

MW: You should have invited him.

JS: (laughter) But anyway. I came back and I told my other brother who lives here in Belfast about what happened. He said well maybe you should call him up and talk to him. I said no. He’s the one that did it, I think if anybody should call he should call me this time. So, it was a few months later he called up and ah, he said I want to apologize for being a jerk. I said oh, about what (chuckles) you didn’t know you know. He said about, you know, keep questioning you. He says, he said I just don’t understand you know, what it is, why you’re a lesbian. And I told him, I said I don’t understand it either. I said I just know I am. I am what I am I said, when I figure out why I am what I am I’ll
let you know, you know. So, ah, that was really cool and I talked to his girls later and I asked you know, what did you guys do to him (laughter). Oh, we didn’t do anything, mom did it. You know, she read him the riot act. But since then he and I have had a very good ah, rapport. He’s, at least he’s honest. He’s saying he doesn’t understand the gay/lesbian life. A lot of us don’t understand it either, we just know that it seems right, it feels right. That’s more my history than Maine history.

MW: That’s good too (laughter). So is there anything else you can think of that you would like to add on the tape?

JS: I ah, I used to manage ah, Diana Hansen and Pixie Lawlor singing group. Did a lot of that. Used to help the, the gals with the, what do you call pine cone productions?

MW: I don’t know that one.

JS: They used to put on music, women’s music. They’d have the big people.

MW: Oh was it Wild Iris?

JS: Yeah then it, it changed to another name.

MW: Yeah I know it as Wild Iris.

JS: Yeah, because ah, I talked them into letting Diana and Pixie open for ah, Kate Clinton. And that was neat. Because she made them go out and do an encore (laughter).

MW: Oh really?

JS: Yeah.

MW: Where was this concert?

JS: It was at the church there in Portland.

MW: Oh the First Parish?

JS: Yeah I think so. And then when they had Springfest up here in Lincolnville and they opened for ah, Cris Williamson. So kind of, and, oh I know what happened. Judith Sloan the comic, she opened for them once (laughter). That was exciting being in that part of it. But the problem was, where I used to organize different dances or music stuff and things like that. It took a long while for people to realize I wasn't doing it anymore. ‘Cause I, I’d go to a dance down in Portland once, a group was putting it on, and the music was really loud. So I was in the back of the room dancing and some gal came up to me she said, “why don’t you tell them to turn the music down it’s too loud.” I said “well, I’m up here dancing where the music isn’t so loud.” “Yeah,
but get them to turn it down.” I said, “this isn’t my dance.” I said “it’s too loud, you do it.” But that’s what I was finding for a long time people were still—

MW: You get identified with something.

JS: Yeah, and that’s why you know like when I said I cut back on doing stuff it’s been a long time. They were so used to me being in the middle of different things that were going on that they figured I still was.

MW: Yeah, yeah. Oh great that was kind of exciting. Well thank’s a lot Jean. This was wonderful.

JS: You’re welcome.