

ORAL HISTORY OF JULIA PENNY CLARK
First Session
November 30, 2015

Ms. Upadhyaya: Okay, it is November 30th, approximately 6pm. I'm at the offices of Bredhoff & Kaiser. This is Moxila Upadhyaya taping session one of the oral history of Julia Penny Clark and the only individuals in the room are myself and Ms. Clark. So Ms. Clark where were you born?

Ms. Clark: I was born in a very small town called Oak Grove, Louisiana which is in the far northeastern corner of the state.

Ms. Upadhyaya: When you say very small town?

Ms. Clark: Oh, maybe a 1,000 people. Probably fewer than that at the time.

Ms. Upadhyaya: When were you born?

Ms. Clark: 1948.

Ms. Upadhyaya: Do you know the hospital you were born at?

Ms. Clark: The Biggs Clinic.

Ms. Upadhyaya: And were both of your parents from Louisiana?

Ms. Clark: No, my father was and that's why the family was there at the time. My mother was from Texas, from Waco, Texas but my father had been in the armed forces during World War II and the Army Air Corps and was given a period of leave because his father was ill or had died, probably had already died and he was needed to farm the land that his family had. So he went back to Oak Grove to keep the farm running for some period of time, I'm not sure quite how long and I was born while the family was there.

Ms. Upadhyaya: And your paternal side of your family were, your grandfather was a farmer. Was his father a farmer, if you know?

Ms. Clark: I assume so but I don't know that for sure. They, it was a Louisiana farm so they grew cotton and vegetables and nothing really exotic.

Ms. Upadhyava: How large was the farm?

Ms. Clark: I think it was quite small. I don't know for sure but my father plowed the fields with a horse, so it was not, you know it wasn't like your modern factory farms with great big tractors and things like that.

Ms. Upadhyava: Do you know whether, was your father married when he was in the service or so when he came back from the service or took a leave?

Ms. Clark: My parents married in 1943. My father, they met in San Antonio, Texas where he was in training in the Air Force. The Air Force had maybe five large training bases around San Antonio at the time and he was there. My mother was there working for a local newspaper as a bookkeeper in the classified ads department.

Ms. Upadhyava: Your father's name, full name was?

Ms. Clark: Elton Willis Clark.

Ms. Upadhyava: And your mother's name?

Ms. Clark: Pauline Ruth Smith Clark. So they married in '43 and my sister was born in '45 at a time when my father was on Guam waiting for what would have been the invasion of the Japanese home islands. But the atomic bomb ended that and he came home as soon as he was given transport back.

Ms. Upadhyava: What was your sister's name?

Ms. Clark: Anna Beth Clark.

Ms. Upadhyava: So he, you said he came back home?

Ms. Clark: He must have got back home in the spring of '46. It took a while for them to

transport everybody back. And the people who had been over there in combat got first priority as you might expect and he had not been in combat. He had just been shipped over there to be ready for the invasion.

Ms. Upadhyava: When your father left for, was Guam his first deployment as far as you know?

Ms. Clark: His first overseas assignment, yes.

Ms. Upadhyava: So he joined the Air Force, went from Louisiana to San, straight to San Antonio for training?

Ms. Clark: I'm pretty sure that's right.

Ms. Upadhyava: And your mother I presumed had moved from Waco to San Antonio for work or for?

Ms. Clark: Yeah, she actually spent most of her childhood and her young adulthood in Gatesville, Texas which is even smaller than Waco. But when she graduated from high school, it was the Depression. There was, she wanted to go to nursing school but the family didn't have enough money to send her so she decided to seek her fortune in San Antonio.

Ms. Upadhyava: What was the line of work that your maternal grandparents were in?

Ms. Clark: My maternal grandfather ran a credit bureau in Gatesville, so doing credit checks on people. In those days not quite as easy as it is now. And my maternal grandmother taught children with intellectual disabilities in her home so she had students with Down Syndrome and she taught them to read and rudimentary skills like that.

Ms. Upadhyava: Wow.

Ms. Clark: She did that for years.

Ms. Upadhyava: Did she have professional training? Had she gone to school somewhere in the

area for?

Ms. Clark: She went to Baylor University but I don't think she graduated. And my grandfather also went to Baylor University. I would guess that he did graduate but I'm not sure.

Ms. Upadhyava: So your maternal grandmother and grandfather met at Baylor?

Ms. Clark: Yes.

Ms. Upadhyava: You presume?

Ms. Clark: Yes.

Ms. Upadhyava: Ok. How many sisters or bro, did your mother have any siblings?

Ms. Clark: She had one sister and two brothers.

Ms. Upadhyava: Ok. Do you know what...how old she was when she moved to San Antonio?

Ms. Clark: I would say she was probably about 17 or 18. But I might, yeah..., I mean, I don't know how long she stayed in Gatesville before she decided to head for San Antonio. I don't know that for sure.

Ms. Upadhyava: Do you know how old she was – how old she was - when she met your father.

Ms. Clark: Well, 1943 she was twenty three.

Ms. Upadhyava: Do you know how they met?

Ms. Clark: In church.

Ms. Upadhyava: Ok. And, how long did they date before they got married.

Ms. Clark: Not very long at all...

Ms. Upadhyava: Chuckles.

Ms. Clark: They met on Mother's Day and married on Labor Day.

Ms. Upadhyava: Chuckle...Ok. Great!

Ms. Clark: 1943

Ms. Upadhyava: Did umm... so then he was de... so... after how...how long after they were married did was he deployed? You said 19...

Ms. Clark: Yeah, It was '45. It would have been the ummm...

Ms. Upadhyava: ...a year and a half or two years.

Ms. Clark: Right. And when she got pregnant with my sister, uh... she was fired from her job. The instant that her employer knew she was pregnant, was not gonna have any pregnant women – she was working as a bookkeeper in a classified ad department of the newspaper. I mean, it was not exactly a strenuous job, but the [sighing] culture in those times, those days was 'we will not have any pregnant women working' ... and she was fired from her job, and she went to live with her sister in Kansas, which is where my sister was born.

Ms. Upadhyava: Where in Kansas was your sister born?

Ms. Clark: Horton.

Ms. Upadhyava: Where is that? I'm from Miss...

Ms. Clark: No idea.

Ms. Upadhyava: I'm from Missouri, so that's why that's why I ask.

Ms. Clark: Yeah I know [Laughs].... I just know the name of the town. Horton, Kansas.

Ms. Upadhyava: Because your father was deployed, she was...

Ms. Clark: He was overseas...right.

Ms. Upadhyava: She went to live with her sister?

Ms. Clark: Yes.

Ms. Upadhyava: Um...how old w...so when your...so your father came back in the spring of '46,

so I suppose Anna was, Anna Beth was about one?

Ms. Clark: Yeah.

Ms. Upadhyava: When he met her there?

Ms. Clark: Yes, she was born in November so she was...

Ms. Upadhyava: About 6 – 8 months when he met her?

Ms. Clark: Probably, yeah, maybe...maybe a little older. It could have taken longer for him to get a slot on the transport back from Guam.

Ms. Upadhyava: Umm...Do you know what his duties were when he was deployed?

Ms. Clark: He was um...throughout his career in the Air Force an Aircraft Maintenance Technician.

Ms. Upadhyava: Mhm....

Ms. Clark: So he maintained the airplanes. He did engine work and whatever else needed to be done.

Ms. Upadhyava: Was that his only deployment overseas?

Ms. Clark: No. He also was um...deployed for the Berlin Airlift. He was stationed at one of the outer ring of bases where they were servicing the airplanes, loading them up, turning them around and sending them back to Berlin. Just around the clock. Seven days a week. Um...for as long as that lasted, which I think was about a year and a half, and I don't know how long he was there specifically. Cause I was a baby. [laughs]

Ms. Upadhyava: So you were born at this time?

Ms. Clark: I was born before he left for the Ber...he was in, he was in Oak Grove when I was born.

Ms. Upadhyava: Ok.

Ms. Clark: My mother stayed there when he was sent overseas for the airlift, and she stayed there until he came back. He did a later deployment for the Korean War, he was stationed in Tokyo...

Ms. Upadhyava: mhm...

Ms. Clark: ...and maintained aircraft there. That was a year and a half he was there. And then his next overseas service was the Vietnam War, when he was stationed in Hanoi...

Ms. Upadhyava: mmm...

Ms. Clark: No, I'm sorry...no, no, no, Hanoi was the enemy

Ms. Upadhyava: mhm

Ms. Clark: umm...Saigon,

Ms. Upadhyava: Mhh...

Ms. Clark: ...right, ya Saigon, Tan Son Nhut Air Force Base, it was called in Saigon. And that was his last overseas deployment.

Ms. Upadhyava: Chronologically, um...let me make sure I get this right, so um...Anna Beth was born during the time that your father was in Guam.

Ms. Clark: Right.

Ms. Upadhyava: He comes back in the spring of '46, do they move – do your parents move to Oak Grove um...at that time?

Ms. Clark: I, I...

Ms. Upadhyava: She must have from Kansas.

Ms. Clark: I don't know exactly whether they were directly from Kansas to Oak Grove, they may have...

Ms. Upadhyava: mhm...

Ms. Clark: ...it would make sense. And I don't know of, you know I mean I've got picture albums and everything and I don't think there are any pictures between Horton and Oak Grove, I think it's all [inaudible] so they must have gone directly to Oak Grove.

Ms. Upadhyava: And are you the second born? Ms. Clark:I am,

Ms. Upadhyava: Ok

Ms. Clark: and the last.

Ms. Upadhyava: Ok.

Ms. Clark: So there were just the two of us.

Ms. Upadhyava: Ok. So you are born and then your father was deployed to Germany.

Ms. Clark: Mhm.

Ms. Upadhyava: Do you know how old you were, when that happened?

Ms. Clark: No. I don't have that timeline that clear in my head, exactly when the Berlin Airlift started or when he was sent over.

Ms. Upadhyava: Do you recall him being gone for long periods of time?

Ms. Clark: Yeah, I remember him being gone for Japan,

Ms. Upadhyava: Mhm.

Ms. Clark: and for Vietnam.

Ms. Upadhyava: Ok.

Ms. Clark: umm...Japan was a year and a half, and I was in first grade.

Ms. Upadhyava: Mhm.

Ms. Clark: Vietnam, I was in high school, and it was a year.

Ms. Upadhyava: I'd like to go back for a moment...let me finish the chronology. Between

deployments were your parents maintaining the farm.

Ms. Clark: No...no...once... after he came back from Germany, um...he stayed in the Air Force on active duty,

Ms. Upadhyava: Mhm.

Ms. Clark: ...and so we lived at various places in the south where there were Air Force bases.

Ms. Upadhyava: Mhm.

Ms. Clark: Umm...I mean my earliest memory is of a place where we lived in Panama City, Florida.

Ms. Upadhyava: That's where my parents currently live.

Ms. Clark: Is that right?! How wonderful.

Ms. Upadhyava: Panama City Beach.

Ms. Clark: Yeah. Well, we weren't on the beach we were we were more inland but uh..

Ms. Upadhyava: Ok.

Ms. Clark: ...at a place they called a Tourist Court, which was just a cluster of little houses that people would come and go for about a week or two weeks or whatever. But we were long term tenants there.

Ms. Upadhyava: Ok.

Ms. Clark: Um...and then we went to Valdosta, Georgia, for a temporary assignment. I think it must have been a training assignment that he had.

Ms. Upadhyava: Mhm.

Ms. Clark: And...

Ms. Upadhyava: You can get that if you need to.

Ms. Clark: Alright. [Speaks on phone]. Um, and then we moved back to Panama City for my year in first grade and I guess the whole time he was in in Tokyo we were in Panama City.

Ms. Upadhyava: Mhm.

Ms. Clark: And then we moved to Charleston South Carolina right after I finished first grade and right after he came back from Tokyo.

Ms. Clark: So he stayed then in Charleston, except for one brief training assignment in Texas. He stayed in Charleston for an unthinkable long time for a military family, especially an Air Force family. We were there from the time I finished first grade - we moved during that summer - until I was partly into the ninth grade.

Ms. Upadhyava: Hmmm.

Ms. Clark: So I guess that's eight full years, which is....which was really quite nice. I mean, the same community, although we didn't live in the same house. Different houses at different times.

Ms. Upadhyava: Nice in the sense that you were staying put.

Ms. Clark: Yeah, we weren't being transferred every year or two. And I went from third grade through eighth in the same school system. So I had stable friends in school and we were in the same church throughout that period of time and it was just...it was much more stable than most military families enjoy.

Ms. Upadhyava: When you reached ninth grade...so your father was in Vietnam in high school. So where were you living when he was deployed to Vietnam?

Ms. Upadhyava: In Waco, Texas.

Ms. Clark: Okay, so you went to Waco after Charleston.

Ms. Clark: Yeah, he asked for a transfer because my mother's parents were still in Gatesville, which is fairly close to Waco and there was then an Air Force base in Waco. The transfer was granted and then so we moved to Waco.

Ms. Upadhyava: Did he ask for the transfer because he knew he was going to be deployed and he wanted the family to be near your mother's family?

Ms. Clark: No. No, in fact that uh....So that was...I'm counting back...60...1960 or 1961. And there really wasn't much going on in Vietnam. So no, he didn't know he was going to be deployed. It was...we went on a vacation to visit the grandparents and everybody had a good time and he thought "Gee, you know this would be a nice place to live." So he asked for the transfer and quite surprisingly got it.

Ms. Upadhyava: How did you feel about moving at that time? Because I've moved and I had a similar upbringing and I resented having to move in the eighth grade, which I had to do.

Ms. Clark: You know, I guess, it was sort of, it was a good time for me to move. Uhm, but they had moved me out of the high school. I started high school in the eighth grade, at least the North Charleston schools had 8th through 12th in high school, didn't have any middle school. So I started eight grade in one high school, and they redrew the attendance lines and moved me to a completely different high school for ninth grade. A few of my friends were there but not many. And so those ties had kind of been broken already. And I, as I recall it, I was happy for the thought of moving to Texas. So it worked out fine for me. If it had happened the year before when I was still in school with all the friends, I had gone to elementary school with I might have thought about it differently.

Ms. Upadhyava: What was the culture like in, cultural difference between Charleston and Waco? Did you...I mean, how different was it?

Ms. Clark: Charlestown is deep South and I was keenly aware by then, certainly is the kind of thing you become aware of gradually, but I was keenly aware of outright segregation. Signs on water fountains, white and colored, restrooms white and colored, school buses going past our school loaded with young African American children taking them to their school, which was farther away. All of those things were really obvious, and not so much in Waco. The school, the high school I went to in Waco was segregated and there was no African American student there, until I think it was my senior year. And they started a very gradual, tentative integration of bringing in students of a school that had been entirely African American, but you know it was not as blatant by any means as it was in Charleston. In Charleston, the segregation was very blatant when we left there.

Ms. Upadhyava: You went to segregated schools the whole time you were in Charleston, yes?

Ms. Clark: Yeah, oh yeah, yes, absolutely.

Ms. Upadhyava: Did you know any African American families, or did you have any African American friends?

Ms. Clark: No. Nobody in our neighborhood; there was just no one I would have any contact with. Church was segregated, everything was segregated. It just absolutely everything was segregated in those days.

Ms. Upadhyava: What church did your family belong to?

Ms. Clark: A Baptist church.

Ms. Upadhyava: And was segregation at that time in Charleston now, I guess let's stick with

Charlestown for the time being, something that was discussed?

Ms. Clark: Well this was during the time that *Brown v. Board of Education* was decided and then the first few court rulings after that addressed the question of how quickly the Supreme Court was going to require that segregation be ended. So there was a lot of news about it. And I remember hearing it even as early as second or third grade. There was some point while we were in Charleston that would have been somewhere between my third grade and my eighth grade that a decision was announced that sounded like it was going to require some more rapid changes, of course it never did, at least not while we were there. And my father announced that he wasn't going to allow us to go to integrated schools, if they integrated the schools, he was going to take us out of school. Well, I thought that was the most horrifying thing I could think of because I was really good at school. That was what I did well. And I knew the family didn't have money to send me to a private school, and the thought that he would take me out of school was the worst thing I could think of, and I couldn't imagine why it would matter to him so much that there would be African American students in my school. I mean, how can that hurt me?

Ms. Upadhyava: Umhum.

Ms. Clark: But that was his mindset and he didn't, very late in his life, and I'll say this now. Very late in his life he came to have some very close friends who were black, and his attitude changed dramatically. But at the time that we were in Charleston in the late fifties, ah it was, segregation was the way he saw the world and he was going to defend with whatever he could defend it with.

Ms. Upadhyava: No, we're good. I have to come back to your mother's firing.

Ms. Clark: Umhum.

Ms. Upadhyava: Okay. You did not think you were going to go away without talking about that.

Ms. Clark: No, no, right.

Ms. Upadhyava: Because I know that must have had an impression. But I don't want you to lose, I want to come back to that this session. But more on this point, did you have, as you were growing up and your father is saying that if the schools are integrated, he was going to pull you out of school. Was the notion was that you were going to be homeschooled if that happened, or was it?

Ms. Clark: He didn't go that far.

Ms. Upadhyava: He didn't go that far, right.

Ms. Clark: He wasn't taking the progression, and we will do X, it was just I'm going to take you out of school.

Ms. Upadhyava: Right, did your mother have any particular view if you can remember?

Ms. Clark: She was not going to disagree with my father; that was just the nature of their marriage. She was probably as horrified as I was at the thought that he would pull us out of school. And maybe was just thinking it would never come to this, for whatever reason, I'm guessing that was her approach. But I knew I couldn't go to her and say: "You got to disagree with Daddy" that just didn't happen in our household.

Ms. Upadhyava: What about Anna Beth? What was her take on it?

Ms. Clark: I, much the same as mine, which was no you can't do that.

Ms. Upadhyava: Did you, at this point you were in second, third, fourth grade?

Ms. Clark: Yeah third or fourth.

Ms. Upadhyava: Did have a view on a grander scale, or on a more substantive scale about

integration and civil rights, or were you really thinking more at that point in time that you just don't understand why it would make any difference and you wanted to stay in school, were you at that time developing any views on segregation, or integration, or the Civil Rights Movement to the extent that it was really truly taking shape at Charleston at that time, I mean you're in fourth grade I'm not, I'm assuming you're not marching at that time, or anything...

Ms. Clark: No.

Ms. Upadhyava: But how were you looking at the world? I mean was it really, I want to stay in school, what's the big deal, or were you starting to form any views?

Ms. Clark: I mean certainly the thing I remember most is just the thought is how absolutely unfair it would be that I wouldn't be able to go to school if the courts required integration of my school. And I remember just being generally puzzled by why there was this rigid segregation, why you know: "mommy why does it say colored water here?" You know what I mean, it made no sense to me as a child. And my mother never manifested any prejudice, so I think I kind of channeled her views to the extent that it left me just kind of puzzled. Why would anybody think that this would be a reason? And I would watch the school buses go by with all the black children in them and wonder, you know, why they would have to pass my school and go somewhere further away? And I was generally aware that the schools for black children were not as good as ours were, um, and I can't remember how I knew that, I certainly have never been inside one. But somehow, I knew that.

Ms. Upadhyava: I'm sorry go ahead.

Ms. Clark: Yeah, no, it may just be that there was sufficient news coverage during that

period of time of the background of the *Brown versus Board of Education* and the cases that followed it, but I was aware that people were saying, no no, these children didn't have good schools. Not that ours were great, ours were rather pathetic too, but theirs were much worse.

Ms. Upadhyava: Do you remember *Brown versus Board* coming down or do you remember?

Ms. Clark: I think I was too young for that decision itself, because I think it was '54' wasn't it?

Ms. Upadhyava: Yes.

Ms. Clark: Because I was only six then.

Ms. Upadhyava: Right. I think it was '54 or '56. I think it was '54.

Ms. Clark: Yeah, it was really the cases that came after that I remember hearing.

Ms. Upadhyava: All the implementation cases. Was there...did your teachers ever talk about integration?

Ms. Clark: I don't think so. I don't remember any of them talking about it. I remember a lot of news about Little Rock. I remember news about sit-ins at lunch counters. Lunch counter was something that I was very familiar with because our Walgreens that we would visit from time to time had a lunch counter and my mother would sometimes take us in there if we were downtown buying school clothes and have a milkshake or a coke float. I remember those, so I knew about the lunch counters and so I, I mean that was something that definitely resonated with me, at least the idea of it. People were being turned away and being told they couldn't sit there and they couldn't order food just like we would.

Ms. Upadhyava: Would you, where would you place your family in the social-economic scale?

Ms. Clark: Lower middle class.

Ms. Upadhyava: Okay, for the duration of your upbringing?

Ms. Clark: Yeah, there was rarely any discretionary income, you know it was my father made enough that there was always food on the table, we always had clean clothes. You know, my mother could keep house very well, but nothing fancy and but my father supplemented our diet by fishing and hunting. I mean, he brought dead animals, you know he would go out and shoot things and bring them home and that probably made up a third of the meat that we ate. So it was always a matter of, you know budget was always a matter of real concern to my mother and my father. Can they afford this? Can they afford that?

Ms. Upadhyava: Did your mother work again after she was fired?

Ms. Clark: Not until my father went to Vietnam and she worked briefly while he was overseas then.

Ms. Upadhyava: What did she do?

Ms. Clark: She took an office job. I don't know if it was bookkeeping or reception or something. She didn't type, so it couldn't have been typing. And that didn't last very long because the owner of the business, it was a very small business, decided and I didn't know the word sexual harassment at the time but I guess he thought that with her husband overseas, she was probably fair game and he would and I mean literally chased her around the desk. Literally chased her around the desk and she tried to get away from him and she just said enough of this I quit. So that didn't last very long at all and then she mostly filled up her

time with babysitting, taking care of other people's children on short term basis until he came back, but he never wanted her to work when he was at home.

Ms. Upadhyava: Whoa.

Ms. Clark: And that was a part of the arrangement.

Ms. Upadhyava: What a deal. So you left Charleston in the ninth, partly into the ninth grade?

Ms. Clark: Right.

Ms. Upadhyava: And the schools never were integrated?

Ms. Clark: Never, never. Now, I'm sure they were after we left but they weren't before that. So that was 1960 or 61.

Ms. Upadhyava: Wow, you know when you think about *Brown vs. Board* in those years that followed, it's unbelievable how long it took to implement.

Ms. Clark: In those areas where there was such strong resistance, it took an enormously long time.

Ms. Upadhyava: Do you recall any discussions about segregation in church?

Ms. Clark: No, the churches were just as segregated as everything else. There were black Baptist churches and there were white Baptist churches.

Ms. Upadhyava: Let's take it to a different line of I guess of discussions of church. Did your church leaders, ministers ever discuss integration or segregation or share views on those topics during their sermons?

Ms. Clark: I don't remember it. You know, the one thing that I remember of that sort was during the 1960 presidential campaign when our minister, who in every other respect seemed to be a generally enlightened person, preached multiple times about what a terrible thing it would be to have a Catholic as a president. And I

thought that was just bizarre. I could not imagine how it could make a real difference in our government if our president were Catholic. I didn't believe for a minute that he was going to be on the phone to the Pope asking instructions which was sort of the way people put it in those times.

Ms. Upadhyava: Right, right.

Ms. Clark: So that's the only thing I remember of that kind of prejudicial thinking showing up in the church, but it was just as racially segregated as the schools. Even events that as a teenager I would attend where there were people from lots of different churches in the area attending were always white only. I cannot recall ever encountering someone of African-American descent involved in those programs in any capacity.

Ms. Upadhyava: Were there any Latino families in the area at the time that you can remember?

Ms. Clark: No, not in Charleston. When we moved to Texas, I encountered people from Mexico for the first time.

Ms. Upadhyava: Anecdotally, any discussions among family friends in church or your friends in church talk about segregation or integration? And what I'm trying to get at here is were people vocal about keeping the schools, the churches, public accommodation segregated or was it simply the way things were? That's what I'm trying to understand.

Ms. Clark: I'm sure that my father wasn't the only one voicing his views –

Ms. Upadhyava: I'm sure he wasn't.

Ms. Clark: – in favor of preserving “our Southern way of life.” I don't remember any other specifics. I certainly, I don't remember anybody else saying they were going to take their children out of school if the schools were integrated, but no it was, but

it was definitely the way that people in that community at that time thought this is the way things should be, it's the way they always have been and it's the way it should continue to be and. Did Strom Thurman start running for office in those, he must have already been in office.

Ms. Upadhyava: That would have been 1954 at the earliest, I would think so.

Ms. Clark: Yeah, I think so. My family was not political. My mother always voted. My father sometimes voted but political issues were not a huge topic of discussion in the house.

Ms. Upadhyava: Do you know how they voted? Were they a member of any particular party?

Ms. Clark: They weren't really but I think my mother generally voted Democrat. Certainly in her later years she did and of course in those days there really weren't any Republicans in the South so it was more like the race was decided in the Democratic primary and then whoever won the Democratic primary would be elected. That certainly was the way it was in Texas when we moved there and when I started becoming aware of Texas politics.

Ms. Upadhyava: So let's go back to your mother's first job. How do you know about that? I'm fascinated by your detailed knowledge of some of the events –

Ms. Clark: She told me.

Ms. Upadhyava: – of your parents. So tell me about that event and how did you, when did you learn about it?

Ms. Clark: You know I think it was just kind of part of the family narrative that she would say that when she got married it was hard enough to keep her job then but I'm sure that she was protected to some degree because so many of the men were in the service, so the newspaper had to keep women on the payroll. Who else was

going to be doing their bookkeeping, right? But it was just, when she would talk about how she came to move to Horton when my, when she was pregnant with my sister and why she was there, because Kansas was just totally out of the whole family history right? I mean you got all of these Southern places where everything else of importance happened and my sister was born in Horton, Kansas. Well, why were you there, mom? That's kind of the narrative included that she was fired as soon as she got pregnant so she didn't have any income, she couldn't support herself and her sister invited her to come and live there and that's what she did.

Ms. Upadhyava: Where did, how did her sister get from Waco to Horton?

Ms. Clark: She was married to a preacher and I assumed he had a congregation in Kansas at that time. They also lived at various times in Colorado and in Washington State.

Ms. Upadhyava: And your two uncles? On your maternal side.

Ms. Clark: One of them was in the navy and spent most of his life up in the Seattle area. I never met him. The other one was a missionary for years in Indonesia and moved back to the States when he and his wife retired and he now lives in Tennessee.

Ms. Upadhyava: Whereabouts in Tennessee?

Ms. Clark: You know he moved recently and I'm not sure of the name of the town. I have been trying to get the address.

Ms. Upadhyava: I grew up in west Tennessee for a part of my childhood.

Ms. Clark: I think it's northern Tennessee, so for some period of time I think it was Jackson, Tennessee.

Ms. Upadhyava: Jackson, Tennessee was about ten miles from where I grew up.

Ms. Clark: Oh really?

Ms. Upadhyava: I grew up in for a small period of time in Trenton which was very small and then the next biggest town over was Humboldt and then Jackson was the city.

Ms. Clark: Oh wow. That's funny.

Ms. Upadhyava: Yeah Jackson was kind of more, yeah that's, I'm curious. It helps me to understand kind of the areas because I do think that places really do influence individuals as my personally held belief but your mother's job, do you know the newspaper's name?

Ms. Clark: The *San Antonio Light*.

Ms. Upadhyava: And how did she tell, how does she tell the story? If she were sitting here and telling me the story, how would she relate it?

Ms. Clark: You know, I think years ago she would have related it more or less matter of factly. When they found out I was pregnant, they fired me. They weren't going to have any pregnant women working there. And she would describe it, she thought it was unfair. She could certainly continue doing the work for quite a while longer but she didn't tell it with any tone of outrage. "How could they possibly do this?" But as she got older, and of course the values of our society moved in the direction of that's wrong. Then, she did once or twice describe this and say, and describe it then with a tone of outrage how could they do this. How could they think that that was right thing to do and how much better the world would have been if they hadn't done things like that? And she was certainly outraged when, in the sixties when the boss was chasing her around the desk and she just said I'm not going to put up with that. I hate to give up the job, it's a

nice job but I'm just not going to do that. So that was years before there was any sense in the law that this is wrong and should not be tolerated.

Ms. Upadhyava: So the years that she's in San Antonio working for the *San Antonio Light*, roughly '43 '42. If they met, if your parents married in '43, it would have been probably sometime in '41 '42.

Ms. Clark: Might have been, yeah.

Ms. Upadhyava: And I take it, she accepted the termination and moved on, I mean there's no.

Ms. Clark: There was nothing she could do. There was no equal employment law.

Ms. Upadhyava: Do, I'm sorry.

Ms. Clark: But yeah, she accepted it. She said okay, so what do I do now. Here I am, pregnant. I've lost my job and my husband is overseas. She may well have had some allowance from his salary. That was common for families on the home-front but she did not have enough to live on her own in San Antonio and I guess that was when her sister stepped in.

Ms. Upadhyava: Do you know how they found out she was pregnant?

Ms. Clark: No.

Ms. Upadhyava: Does she ever talk about that?

Ms. Clark: I don't remember her ever telling anything about that.

Ms. Upadhyava: When was the earliest that you can remember her telling you about this event?

Ms. Clark: A long time ago.

Ms. Upadhyava: Before you went to college or law school?

Ms. Clark: Oh yes absolutely. It was just as I say just a part of the family lore. Why was she in Horton, Kansas when my sister was born?

Ms. Upadhyava: People often ask why is anyone in Kansas. I get to say that as a person from

Missouri. What was your father's reaction? Did he, do you know, do you recall him ever having a reaction to this event?

Ms. Clark: I don't remember him ever speaking about it. No, I don't.

Ms. Upadhyava: Did you. How do I put this? Did that part of your family narrative have any impression on you and did that change as you grew older?

Ms. Clark: Well, I certainly internalized my mother's sense that it was unfair and I could, even as a child, I could see that there's no reason why a woman in early pregnancy couldn't do a desk job. It just didn't make sense to me that they wouldn't allow her to continue to work. But you know there were a lot of things that were unfair about the way women were treated in those days. It wasn't as bad as the way the African Americans were treated in Charleston, but it was, you know I grew up thinking the only career choices are teaching, being a nurse or being a secretary. And my mother's attitude was well of course you should have some career because you might need to support yourself if something happens to your husband. I mean, that was what she would say to me when I was a young, you know 9, 10, young teenager or whatever, that was her view really even when I went off for college.

Ms. Upadhyava: Was that a divergent for you?

Ms. Clark: No, I don't think it was. I think it was really not common that there were women that we knew who worked outside their homes. One or two of my friends' mothers worked outside the home. Not many. Most were at home when I would go over to play with my friends but there were one or two that worked and there was a housekeeper at home minding the children and doing all the housework. But it was definitely the exception not the rule and they just,

the norm was very definitely for women who were married to be the stay at home mother and keep house. So, you know I saw my teachers of course, I saw them all the time and most of them were married. Many of them had children, but of course they were in this bucket called teachers and the nurses that we would see when we would go see the doctor were in a bucket called nurses. And of course they were all women. I don't know that I ever encountered a man who was a nurse until I was possibly in high school.

Ms. Upadhyava: What was Anna Beth like or what is Anna Beth like? Is she?

Ms. Clark: She is deceased now.

Ms. Upadhyava: Okay.

Ms. Clark: She was not as much of a scholar as I was. She didn't love school. She would do what she had to do to keep a passing grade.

Ms. Upadhyava: Did she go by Anna or Anna Beth?

Ms. Clark: She went by Pepper.

Ms. Upadhyava: Okay.

Ms. Clark: She preferred Beth to all of those other names, but she was Pepper which was the nickname my father gave her when he came back from Guam and didn't like Anna Beth as a name.

Ms. Upadhyava: And where did the nickname Pepper come from?

Ms. Clark: The story is that she had, if you ever looked at a Dr. Pepper cap, it has 10, 2 and 4 on a kind of clock face which is said to be the hours when you should be having a break to have a Dr. Pepper. And according to my mother, her feeding schedule was something close to that and so my father nicknamed her Pepper. Dr. Pepper first and then went to Pepper. That's how I got Penny

as a name, it was very similar. When I was born, according to the family story, my father had nothing in his pocket but pennies and his view was that all children needed a nickname so he nicknamed me Penny. My birth certificate is Julia Clark, no middle name, but when I started school, they had Penny added as an official middle name and so the birth certificate copy that I have is Julia typed, Penny handwritten, Clark typed. It was just, I don't know.

Ms. Upadhyava: I have never heard of someone with an amended birth certificate. I love it.

Ms. Clark: Well I've got one and it's amended.

Ms. Upadhyava: I would want to see it.

Ms. Clark: Oh, I'll bring it to you. It's the old white on black reproduction style and it's Penny handwritten in there.

Ms. Upadhyava: Did you like that name?

Ms. Clark: Penny?

Ms. Upadhyava: Yeah.

Ms. Clark: Oh sure, I was fine.

Ms. Upadhyava: I mean did you have a-

Ms. Clark: Unlike my sister.

Ms. Upadhyava: Unlike your sister, okay.

Ms. Clark: She never liked Pepper as a nickname. I was perfectly happy with Penny, it was fine. I seldom used Julia until you know law school and even maybe when I signed up for my law license. I thought let's see should I fill in the whole name and I thought, yeah, I think I'll better, so I put the whole thing in there.

Ms. Upadhyava: Does anyone call you Julia?

Ms. Clark: Only people who don't know me. My husband used to laugh back before we had caller ID and could figure out who was calling before we answered the phone. If somebody called and asked for Julia Clark, he would automatically say she's not here because he knew it was somebody I didn't know and wasn't interested in talking to.

Ms. Upadhyava: Did you get along with your sister?

Ms. Clark: Not very well. My father had a bad habit of playing favorites and I was his favorite and that was not a good thing. It was really very destructive in the family and when she grew up, she married right out of high school and moved away and was kind of distant from the family for the rest of her life. After my mother died, Beth and I would have phone conversations pretty regularly which was just astonishing and new because other than that I think sometimes we would go for years without hearing from her and I would send her cards and letters and hoped she would respond but she often didn't.

Ms. Upadhyava: Where did she live?

Ms. Clark: Louisiana. She moved to Pineville, Louisiana which is right in the middle of the state.

Ms. Upadhyava: Do you have any nieces or nephews?

Ms. Clark: I have two nephews and I stay in touch with one of them and the other one I hear from occasionally.

Ms. Upadhyava: When did she pass away?

Ms. Clark: 2011. She had a massive stroke at, right after her 65th birthday and she lingered in a kind of a twilight condition for eight months and then died.

Ms. Upadhyava: Sorry to hear that.

Ms. Clark: Yeah, thank you. No, it was a hard way to lose somebody. Her oldest son is the one I stay mostly in touch with. We were allies in that period of time in trying to sort through legal problems and get Social Security benefits to help support her in nursing homes and things like that.

Ms. Upadhyava: Your parents, are they both deceased?

Ms. Clark: They are.

Ms. Upadhyava: May I ask when they passed?

Ms. Clark: My father died in 1983 of lung cancer. He was a lifelong smoker. My mother died in 2008. She just wore out. She was in her mid-eighties and she had a variety of chronic health problems like high blood pressure and the like and it just finally caught up with her.

Ms. Upadhyava: Were they together until your father's death?

Ms. Clark: They were, yeah.

Ms. Upadhyava: In Texas?

Ms. Clark: In Waco.

Ms. Upadhyava: They stayed in Waco for the rest of their lives?

Ms. Clark: They did. Yeah, they bought a house while I was in my last year of high school and we still own the house. I'm trying to sell it now. The Waco real estate market has recovered. It was in the tank when my mother died and there was no way to sell the house at that time, but yeah, it's, they stayed there.

Ms. Upadhyava: Your mother's stint, I'm sorry I'm coming back to this but your mother's stint at the *San Antonio Light*, was it consciously any influence on you at all in deciding what path you were going to take in life?

Ms. Clark: No, I don't think so. I've come to have a real appreciation for how adventurous

she was to do that, but as a child I didn't really understand what a big step it was for her to leave the small town where her parents were and go to San Antonio which was you know not a big city as it is now but it was a pretty big city and live in a boarding house and go to work on the street car everyday which is the way she described it. And not long ago I was going through a scrap book she kept during that period of time and saw train tickets to a church conference she went to in Mexico and I was just astonished. I thought here is this young woman on her own that she would do something that adventurous was really quite striking to me. She was a strong person and that certainly had an influence on me that she was intelligent and she was strong and you know I, so yes in the sense that I didn't feel like anybody was telling me I couldn't do anything. And despite the fact that my parents had rather low expectations for what I might be able to do with an education, they were supportive, they were very much in favor of my going to college, and very much in favor of my going to law school, except it kind of ended my father's dream that I would come back to Waco and teach school, but then he shifted that to a dream that I would come back to Waco and be a lawyer.

Ms. Upadhyava: And practice law. [Laughter].

Ms. Clark: But you know, it, they really, they were really supportive, and never, I mean I knew that I was going to find a way to finance it myself.

Ms. Upadhyava: Umhum.

Ms. Clark: And fortunately, state school in Texas is very inexpensive, or it was at the time. And I was able to get some scholarships that helped, and so I came out of college with zero debt, and law school I think I owed five thousand dollars

when I left law school. So, I worked part time through college, I knew that one could work your way through school, that was my, that was sort of the pattern I had in mind. My uncle, the missionary, had worked his way through college. And I, again, that was part of the family lore, so, I knew that could be done, and that was my strategy. I had enough in scholarships to get through most of my first year in college, and I toward the end of the year, I found a part time job typing for a group of orthopedic surgeons.

Ms. Upadhyava: Reports, medical reports?

Ms. Clark: Right. They would, after seeing every patient, they would dictate a report of their examination of the patient. And, I was one of the typists to transcribe those reports, and I worked at that job until I graduated from college. And sometimes I was working close to forty hours a week. You know, I just fit it in my school schedule. I mean I had really flexible work hours. They were very, very good. They never objected if I wanted to come in at night, and type some dictabelts at night, I could pick my own hours, weekends no problem. there are a couple questions, more questions I want to ask you. And then I know, I know I promised to try to get you out of here 20 minutes ago.

Ms. Clark: Ok...yeah, no it's fine. I actually, some nights I would be saying I have to run and catch a bus at the other end of my subway ride, but I have a car parked at the subway station.

Ms. Upadhyava: I'll ask you a few more questions because what I'd like to do is, I'd like to talk about the move from Charleston to Waco, during our... start with that during our next session and go in a little bit more into the college experience. I'm really interested to know what happened and how life changed. Um, I'm

surprised to hear you say that it was less segregated in Waco than it was Charleston, to be honest with you.

Ms. Clark: I never saw the signs, the white and colored signs in Waco not that I remember. The schools were definitely rigidly segregated, as were the churches. There were no, just no one in our church who wasn't white skinned. Right, that was, in fact some people say that churches now are probably the most segregated institution in this country. Although, my church is not, it's got a very nice variety of ethnic groups there, which I like.

Ms. Upadhyava: And you're still are member of the Baptist Church?

Ms. Clark: No. I go to a Presbyterian Church now. But, yeah, I mean you know Waco, from one thing there weren't as many African American people in Waco. It's not as large a percentage of the population as it was in Charleston, I wouldn't be surprised if somebody told me that there was an African American majority in Charleston when we were living there, it could well be. Certainly, in the older downtown areas of Charleston whenever we would go down there to Sears. We drove through neighborhoods that were completely African American and it was a very, if they were minority, it was a very substantial minority so approaching half. Texas not nearly so much and particularly Waco which is right in the middle of Texas so it's not the southern part. Galveston probably has a high, even Houston has a higher percentage of African American population but Texas, central Texas as they called it, was more substantially white with some percentage of people from Mexico, Mexican Americans, what did they call them then? Probably just said Mexicans, but of course most of them were born there in Texas and not in Mexico.

Ms. Upadhyava: No that's not Mexico.

Ms. Clark: Yeah, and I had high school classmates who were from the Mexican American community. I ran into them mostly in Spanish class.

Ms. Upadhyava: Did you, the incident with your mother where her boss literally chased her around her desk happen when you were in high school?

Ms. Clark: Yes, yes. I think I was probably a junior in high school at the time.

Ms. Upadhyava: And let's I guess end with that if you could tell me what you remember about that I think we could close the session. I want to know about please if you could tell me what your time as opposed to – in the house.

Ms. Clark: Right, right I'm the person in the house and it was just the two of us. My sister was married by then.

Ms. Upadhyava: Had already left, okay.

Ms. Clark: And so it was the two of us in the house together and she came home one day and she said I've quit my job. And I said so, I mean she was clearly upset and that's what happened and she said well this guy had been making inappropriate comments, I don't remember exact words. She would have been very delicate about it because I was still innocent and naïve to know that.

Ms. Upadhyava: What grade were you in? Do you remember?

Ms. Clark: I think I was a junior in high school.

Ms. Upadhyava: Okay.

Ms. Clark: And I do remember her saying you know he was trying to hug and kiss me and I moved away from him and he came closer and I moved away and she said he was literally chasing me around the desk. I mean it was at some point kind of comical because you don't think of your parents as sexual beings, right?

Ms. Upadhyava: Yes.

Ms. Clark: And yet she was very upset because she really liked the idea of working while my father was overseas and having something to do as well as having a source of income and you know I could just, I never met the man who was her boss but she hadn't been there very long. I don't remember quite how long, maybe a few weeks.

Ms. Upadhyava: Was she crying?

Ms. Clark: I don't remember her crying at that, when she told me about that.

Ms. Upadhyava: What was your reaction?

Ms. Clark: Well this is terrible, you know, why would he do such a thing? And if, but obviously it was just I think just the two of them in the office. I don't think there were any other employees in the office. I don't even remember what kind of business it was, but there was nobody that could protect her. There was nobody she could turn to to say you know can you, can I tell him to stop? You know, nobody who was going to say don't do this.

Ms. Upadhyava: Did she tell your father?

Ms. Clark: I don't know. I'm sure she had some explanation for him for why she quit but she might have been, I mean he was in Vietnam, it wasn't like he was going to go down with his shotgun and shoot the guy.

Ms. Upadhyava: Right.

Ms. Clark: But she might have been concerned about him doing something inappropriate when he got back. She may not have told him, I'm not sure. Very interesting.

Ms. Upadhyava: Did you ever tell Pepper or did you not have much of a relationship with

her at that point?

Ms. Clark: She was still living very close to us at that time. I don't remember a specific conversation, but my mother probably did tell her.

Ms. Upadhyava: And was there any discussion of let's do something about this?

Ms. Clark: No.

Ms. Upadhyava: Or any notion that something could be done?

Ms. Clark: No notion that anything could be done other than to quit. You know, it was like he's the boss in control, if he's done this once he will do it again. She certainly had no confidence that she could draw a hard line and say absolutely do not touch me, and, she probably could not have succeeded in that if that was his mindset.

Ms. Upadhyava: What's remarkable to me is that in the, I guess it would be 1960 to '61 right? In that time period that she quit after-

Ms. Clark: Yeah, probably the fall of '63.

Ms. Upadhyava: Okay. There are individuals who endure as you know that type of harassment for...

Ms. Clark: Years.

Ms. Upadhyava: Months, years and don't quit and so it's quite remarkable to me that during that time period-

Ms. Clark: Well she was just you know-

Ms. Upadhyava: Being, you know while your father was away-

Ms. Clark: But I mean her values were this is just wrong, this is wrong and you know she was not going to allow another man to touch her. That was very clear. I mean hugs from the pastor yeah but not anything like this and I mean she really, I

mean in that sense as I said she was a strong woman and she had very strong morals/values and there was no way that she was going to leave herself in that. And you know to be fair, it was not like many women who don't have a choice because they need the income, they're absolutely dependent on it. Maybe they're the sole support for their families, she had a check coming from my father every month and you know it was sufficient to support us. Really her main reason for wanting to work as I understood it at the time was that she wanted to have something to do, I was in school all day. It wasn't like she was needed in the house and she just felt that she wanted something to do and not be there alone all day long.

Ms. Upadhyava: Nevertheless I, it strikes me if you put, if I put myself in the time and place that that event occurred that's remarkable.

Ms. Clark: It is.

Ms. Upadhyava: And strong.

Ms. Clark: It is and I sometimes wonder if that colored or made a difference as after my father died there were a number of years when she was still quite healthy and I always thought she would probably be happier if she found a job that she could do and she was a personable woman. She could have been a receptionist in a doctor's office, you know there were any number of things she would have been very good at even without typing skills. And she never even looked for a job and I sometimes wonder if it was because of that experience that she felt you know it's, she would be exposing herself to that kind of inappropriate behavior if she went out and found a job but she never did look for a job and she did a lot of church work after my father died but that only takes up so

much time. There's just really, she spent a lot of time in her house alone and I think she would have been healthier and happier if she had done something else but no she never did.

Ms. Upadhyava: The repercussions of things like that are very strong. I understand it.

Ms. Clark: They are.

Ms. Upadhyava: Well may we close out this session then?

Ms. Clark: Sure, sure.

Ms. Upadhyava: Thank you, thank you. Time is 7:17 and a half hour after I promised Ms. Clark we would end.