

Jeanne Eason Phillips

Even though they endured the pain of racism, Jeanne and Judy tell a very upbeat story of making Oklahoma a better place to live.

Chapter 01 - 1:00

Introduction

Announcer: Jeanne Eason Phillips was born August 26, 1924 , in Etna and grew up in Slick, Oklahoma, as the only daughter of eight children.

In Jeanne's younger years, the family moved near Sapulpa where they enjoyed the convenience of electricity and modern plumbing.

When the family moved to Tulsa, Jeanne attended Carver Elementary in segregated Tulsa and graduated from Booker T. Washington High School.

She recalls her family shopping in downtown Tulsa where they could buy clothes but were unable to try on garments before the purchase. Blacks were not allowed to dine at lunch counters nor could they have ice cream at soda fountains.

Jeanne attended Langston University, and when she married Garland Eason, they supported all four of their children as they each earned a college degree. Their daughter Judy Eason McIntyre served ten years in Oklahoma's legislature.

And while having endured the pain of racism, Jeanne and Judy tell a very upbeat story of making Oklahoma a better place to live.

Listen to Jeanne Eason Phillips' story on the oral history website VoicesofOklahoma.com.

Chapter 02 - 3:45

Slick

John Erling: My name is John Erling. Today's date is January 23, 2013. Jeanne, would you state your full name, please?

Jeanne Phillips: Jeanne Eason Phillips.

JE: And your date of birth?

JP: August 26, '24.

JE: And your present age?

JP: Well, eighty-nine until August the 26th. And I will be ninety.

JE: How do you feel about reaching ninety?

JP: Great! Actually, it's hard for me to really believe that all of a sudden here I am ninety. I guess time passes fast when you're having fun. Seriously, I have to think about it, I'm getting ready to have a ninetieth birthday.

JE: Well, I'm sure you're looking forward to it, aren't you?

JP: Oh, yes, oh, yes, yes. Every one of them I look forward to. I've never been one of those that say, "Well, I'm in the forties and gonna stay." No, no, no, no, I welcome every one of mine.

JE: We're recording this interview in the recording facilities of VoicesofOklahoma.com. Joining us is a lady sitting over here. Can you tell us who she is?

JP: That is my number one daughter, Judy Eason McIntyre.

JE: Judy, thank you for joining us on this.

Judy McIntyre: Thank you.

JE: Judy is a former state senator. How many years were you a state senator for Oklahoma?

JM: Oh, for eight years and then two years in the House.

JE: Judy is here to keep us on the straight and narrow on this thing, right?

JP: Ha-ha-ha-ha.

JE: She's here to keep us straight.

JP: Yeah, well, you know Judy. Ha-ha-ha-ha.

JE: So, Jeanne, where were you born?

JP: I was born in a little town, well, it must have been a community in Edna, Oklahoma, which at this time there is a sign there that says Edna, but I don't see any business or—

JE: Right.

JP: ...anything.

JE: Edna, I think, is in Creek County.

JP: Creek County, yeah.

JE: Kellyville area. So then, if you were born there you lived there a short time.

JP: A very short time.

JE: And then where did you move?

JP: Then moved to near Slick, actually in a little area called Rose Hill. Because I remember the school, the name of the school was Rose Hill. We went to school and the church was the same building. And, of course, in Rose Hill there was a minister, his wife was a teacher. Of course, he ministered the church and the school and was all—

JE: All in one.

JP: ...all in one.

JE: All right, so Rose Hill is in that same area.

JP: It was in that same area. And then I went from there to Slick, through grade school at Slick. And I remember we lived a distance from Slick, Louverture, I think, was the name of school. There was a little old lady that lived right there who kept young ladies, it was a boarding. And I boarded out there.

I happened to be the only daughter, I had seven brothers.

JM: And your dad died when you were how old? Really young.

JP: Like two months before.

JE: Well, let's talk about your mother first. Your mother's name and her maiden name.

JP: Her name was Adinia Cheatham. She came here in territory time.

JM: From Springfield.

JP: Yeah, from Springfield.

JM: Tennessee.

JP: Tennessee.

JE: What kind of a person was she?

JP: Ha-ha. Judy likes to think that she's like my mother. My mother was, of course, a no nonsense person, very active in politics. And she was an old schoolmarm. Back then you could start teaching when you finished high school, out of high school. And she was also a midwife. As a matter of fact, she delivered my second child, my daughter.

My husband at the time was back out of the service and in school and I was staying with my mom in the country. It was at Thanksgiving time and I thought I had overeaten, but that was not so, she was early. About the time the doctor was out there he said that I don't need to do a thing. Thank God! But she was a midwife and was able to take care of the whole thing.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

Chapter 03 - 5:20

Back of the Bus

John Erling: So she was active in politics? Did Judy get that from her?

Jeanne Phillips: Oh, yes, oh, yes, uh-huh (affirmative), oh, yes.

Judy McIntyre: Tell him, tell him about blacks could not go to a facility there in Sapulpa on certain—

JP: Oh, yeah, well, we—

JM: And then the letter to Roosevelt.

JP: She was very active in things like that. I'm sure she wasn't the only one that did things like this. But she had five sons in the service. And she went in to have something notarized. And when we got there they said, "Well, this is not your day. Your day is Thursday that you have to come in and get this notarized."

"But I," she said, "this is for my sons and all."

And she said, "But you still have to wait till your day."

She said, "I'll wait." And so she sat down and she sat there all day long.

JE: So she came in on the wrong day?

JP: She came on the wrong day, it was probably Monday, I'm almost sure it was on a Monday.

JE: So, so she started waiting?

JP: So she said, "Well, I'll just wait then until my time comes." That's the kind of person— she sat all day and they finally took care of her. Ha-ha-ha.

JE: By the end of the day they said, "Okay, we'll do this"?

JP: Yeah, they went on and—

JE: And that's because she was black, is that what you're saying?

JP: Yes, yes, yes, exactly. And she said, "You know, with five sons in the service," and this had to do with some kind of, you know, back then you had to have stuff notarized and documented.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JP: And we were ten miles outside of Sapulpa. We still have that little acreage out there.

JM: How did the letter to the president, Roosevelt—

JP: Yeah, I just remember her sending and she did get a response. I can't remember.

JM: It was because of Hollis fighting.

JP: It, eh (confused sound).

JE: So why did she send the letter to President Roosevelt?

JP: Well, he was at Enid, I think it was Enid, and he got into it with a bus driver.

JE: Who did?

JP: One of my brothers.

JM: Who was in the military.

JP: Uh-huh (affirmative).

JM: In World War II.

JP: Uh-huh (affirmative), uh-huh (affirmative).

JE: He got into it with a bus driver?

JP: With a bus driver.

JM: Because he didn't go to the back of the bus.

JP: He didn't, yeah, and there was an altercation, there was a fight. And I understand he drug the guy off the bus right there on the ground and had it out.

JE: I suppose authorities came and they—

JP: Yeah, yeah, yeah, but because he was in uniform nothing really came of it from the fact that he did give this guy a beating. But they got him back to the post.

JE: Yeah, so the point was, here's this young man, what was his name?

JP: Hollis.

JE: Hollis?

JP: This name was Hollis Hughes.

JE: He was black but he was serving his country with a uniform on and they still told him, "You have to go to the back of the bus?"

JP: Yeah, yeah, yeah. There was so many of those hateful things that, you know, you never even realized that people, just because I don't look like you—

JE: Right.

JP: That's the only reason.

JE: Right.

JP: That's the only reason. And I remember my father left for overseas from a little place called DeRidder, Louisiana.

JE: Who is this?

JP: My husband. He was going to be shipped out of a little place called DeRidder, Louisiana. And I went down to be there until he left. When I got there, little things like after I had gotten into this little town I got in line to get change or to ask a question about something, it's was predominantly black people in this line here and there was a little old man in front of me—that was before Judy was born, I was pregnant with Judy.

She just looked up at him and said, "I wish you colored folks would have your money ready. You know you don't know what you want."

I had never been—we'd stayed to ourselves. My communication with other whites was strictly like when I would take the kids to get shoes or something else, I'd made a good rapport with the people there so I didn't have any problem. But this was just like a slap in the face.

So I just turned around and walked outside and stood there until I found somebody black and asked him to take me to the base. Also, we went into a little thing where the drugstores used to have ice cream. And so I wanted some ice cream and so I went in and asked for some chocolate ice cream.

And she looked at him and said, "We don't have any."

And I said, "You just—"

She said, "I said we don't have any."

Well, Garland just said, "Come on, let's go."

JM: That's my dad.

- JP:** Yeah. He took me out. You know, she just looked at me and decided, “I don’t have to serve you.”
- JE:** Yes.
- JP:** Those are the kind of things that was a rude awakening as to really—
- JE:** Racism in our country, right?
- JP:** Yes. And, of course, these kids, when I would go downtown to get shoes for them, you know, there were drugstores and things and they—
- JM:** We stayed in the car.
- JP:** Well, you got out.
- JM:** Oh, I didn’t go—
- JP:** We didn’t go to the drugstores, no, because you always wanted to. But, you know, we couldn’t go in there and be served.
- JE:** Is—
- JP:** I couldn’t take them in there.
- JE:** Would that have been in Tulsa?
- JP:** That was here, in Tulsa.
- JE:** Right, right.
- JP:** That was here in Tulsa.
- JE:** Right.
- JP:** So that’s why it was really, it was a real bad thing when Judy went to OU. And that was the real experience of open, blatant racism. And it made a real rebel out of her. I still think it was all right. You know, we didn’t expose them to that and, of course at the time, we never thought about them going to college and having this kind of thing going on. Because their dad said, “Well, you can go to any school in Oklahoma, but we’re not paying out of state fees.” Because, see, all four of them were right together. You know, we had—
- JM:** Three of us at OU.
- JP:** So there were at college at the same time.
- JM:** And Daddy was the only one paying.
- JP:** Yeah. We’re from the age where you didn’t believe in the wives working.

Chapter 04 - 3:00

Passin’

John Erling: Your father’s name and where he was from?

Jeanne Phillips: His name was William Hughes. He was from Tennessee. I don't have a lot of information on my dad because he died early.

JE: How early?

JP: He was only fifty-something.

Judy McIntyre: And you were two months old.

JP: Uh-huh (affirmative), yeah.

JE: So then your mother had to earn the money then for the family and whatever?

JP: Yeah, yeah, oh, yeah. We were in the country, of course, and, you know, everybody in the country made—she didn't buy anything but flour and meal and rice. Everything else was produced in the garden; all the meats, and she canned everything. Everything we had canned everything. She canned meats, she canned veges, she canned anything that you needed was in our cellar.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative). So that's how you got through because of the farm?

JP: Yes, yes, yeah.

JE: And the ground you had.

JP: We did everything.

JE: Did you ever have any stories told about grandparents? A grandmother? A grandfather?

JP: The only thing is that on my mother's side, the Cheatham's, they were mixed somewhere along the line. Because my mother was very fair with gray eyes—

JM: Mother, Mother looked white.

JP: Uh-huh (affirmative).

JM: And her brothers had freckled and eye colors like—your mother's the darkest one out of all of them.

JP: Yeah, uh, yeah, everybody thought I was an in-law.

But, anyway, one of the things about family on her side, they were all fair with light eyes and things like that. And she had cousins who were dancing and they were passin'.

JM: For white.

JP: Yeah, they were passing, you know, and they came to the family and told them that they were going to leave the family because they could not be dancers were they were, because they were passing for white there. And they were going to leave the family. And they left the family and went white.

And we chuckled when we'd see stuff on TV and say, "Well, that may be some of my folks there."

JM: Especially the ones with the kinky hair.

JP: Yeah, but also they had a cousin, a first cousin, who used to go to the bars and things—

JE: Because he was so white?

JP: Yeah! They passed for white.

- JE:** It's interesting you use the term "passin'," that's what you used then is passin'?
- JP:** Yeah, that's what they said. They called it passin' for white.
- JE:** Right, right.
- JM:** And I did just a little bit of research on Cheatham, I haven't confirmed it, but he was a confederate general. And we think that we may be related with this confederate general named Cheatham.
- JP:** We were directly related to Harding, my mother's people.
- JM:** Oh, yeah, and President Harding.
- JP:** And President Harding. She was directly related and I don't—
- JM:** Now, how did that go about?
- JP:** I, you know what?
- JM:** He or his dad had a relationship with a black woman or something because our cousins are named Harding.
- JP:** Yeah.
- JE:** President Harding had a relationship—
- JM:** With somebody in our family.
- JP:** With somebody in my mother's, on my mother's side.
- JM:** Probably looked white.
- JP:** Pictures we had of the families, they all had long hair, all—
- JM:** We had some pictures and their hair—
- JP:** Yeah, before she cut their hair.
- JM:** The hole in their heads in their hair and they still got hair hanging.

Chapter 05 - 4:10

First House

- John Erling:** Brothers and sisters, you had how many in the family?
- Jeanne Phillips:** There were eight of us, seven boys—
- JE:** And where were you in the birth order?
- JP:** I was number six. I had two younger brothers.
- JE:** How did this work? You're the only girl and you've got all these older brothers and where—
- JP:** Well, you know, a lot of people never knew my mama had a daughter. I was just one of the boys.
- JE:** Were you a tomboy, probably, back then?
- JP:** Well, you know, I didn't do girl stuff. I never played with dolls or anything like that, I shot marbles, my brothers and I. I was a good shot.

Judy McIntyre: Good shot?

JP: Yeah, put cans on the fence and then shoot it. And that's why she sent me to boarding school. She wanted me to be a lady.

JE: Did that work?

JP: Oh, yeah.

JE: Tell us about the first house you remember. Did you have electricity in the house?

JP: Oh, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. The home in Mounds, Oklahoma, we had a big house there. I remember it was two stories. We had an upstairs. That was the one that was close to the church.

JM: Did Mama own it?

JP: They belonged to the family. It was just a big family house. We had a big barn and we had a smokehouse where they hung the meat, smoked the meat. In the country, that's what you did, you raised everything. They even made molasses, and that was an interesting thing because I remember whatever they put in the middle of this thing—there was a horse hooked on to it and he walked around and around and in the middle was the fire. I don't really understand on how it was but I just remember that horse that would walk around.

JE: So he would create energy?

JP: He would—uh-huh (affirmative). And there was a fire that made the syrup.

JE: Maybe it had to be turned a lot and—

JP: Yeah, like this big table here.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JP: And something was in the middle there that made the thing. And he walked around to make this.

JM: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: It was probably stirring the molasses, the syrup and such.

JP: Yeah, it was a stirring.

JM: Yeah.

JE: Did you have indoor plumbing? Outdoor plumbing?

JP: Oh, no, no, no, we had outdoors and bathtubs were tubs. I've got a mark from backing up against one of them.

JE: A tub?

JM: A tub?

JP: Taking a bath.

JM: Was it hot or what?

JP: Yes, it was. You know, it had to be warm in there when you was taking a bath.

JE: Um-hmm, um-hmm (affirmatives).

JM: So they boiled the water or something?

- JP:** You get to—yes, you had to warm the water to take a bath.
- JE:** Right, right. So that wasn't every night, now was it, that you took a bath?
- JP:** Oh no.
- JE:** Once—
- JP:** I'm sure we did it on Saturdays.
- JE:** Saturday?
- JP:** Yes, Saturday.
- JE:** And then I suppose many of you took a bath in the same water?
- JP:** I'm sure those boys did. I don't know. Of course, I was always—
- JM:** She was treated like a princess though—
- JP:** You know, I was—
- JM:** ...she probably didn't.
- JP:** ...the only one, no one took a bath with me, or if they took it after I didn't realize it.
- JE:** Right.
- JP:** But—
- JE:** But no electricity in the house, so how did you—
- JP:** Oh, lamps. We had lamps.
- JE:** Kerosene?
- JP:** Kerosene lamps.
- JE:** Kerosene lamps. How did you heat the house?
- JP:** With the stove.
- JE:** Wood stove or coal?
- JP:** Wood.
- JM:** Potbellies. Burning—
- JP:** Wood-burning, we had wood-burning stoves. Now, of course, you'd cut your own wood.
There was plenty of woods there. But we never had coal. I don't ever remember any coal.
- JE:** How about in the summertime though? You didn't have air conditioning, I know that.
- JP:** No. We—
- JE:** So how did you cope with the heat in the Oklahoma summer?
- JP:** You know what? You become accustomed to whatever the situation is.
- JE:** Um-hmm (affirmative).
- JP:** And if you've never had it you don't miss it. But once you get it, like I can't handle the heat.
- JM:** Oh, Mother cannot handle anything hot. Literally.
- JP:** I can't handle the heat now.
- JE:** Yeah.
- JP:** And all the years I worked in air-conditioning with a jacket on I just don't tolerate the—
- JE:** Did electricity come to that house?

JP: Yeah, well, no, the electricity in this old house out from Sapulpa where my mom sat in. That was our last move we made.

JE: To Sapulpa?

JP: Yeah, uh-huh (affirmative).

JM: The one that we have now?

JP: It was ten acres, yeah, uh-huh (affirmative), out south, out there.

JE: So when you moved to that house?

JP: We got electricity.

JM: You didn't have running water, did you?

JP: No, we had a well.

JM: Oh.

JP: We had our own well because we had a nice, big cellar out there. That's where you went when the storms came.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative). Sapulpa, then, that's when you began to get modern appliances?

JP: Yes.

JE: Like electricity?

JP: Yes.

JE: Maybe indoor plumbing then?

JP: Yes.

JE: Did you get a phone, then, in that house?

JP: Uh-uh (negative).

JE: Remember? No?

JP: We didn't have one until, I don't remember.

JM: Maybe when you were married?

JP: Uh-huh (affirmative), yeah.

JE: Okay, so it was much later on.

JM: Much later on.

JP: Yeah, it was much later on.

Chapter 06 - 3:05

White Friend

John Erling: Tell us then about your grade school. Again, then, where you went to grade school.

Jeanne Phillips: Well, that was in Slick. That was when my mom had me in the boarding school so that I would be close. You know, I was young.

JE: So—

JP: I would be close, I wouldn't have to go a long ways, so I would be in walking distance of the school. There was a little old lady there and I remember, I don't know where she came from but she was like, you know, she kept girls. We would all have to come in and she had a big, long table and we had to sit at the table and we had to do just, you know, "You don't do this." And she was one of those, that's what I remember about her, she was so prissy and so ladylike.

JE: You would have been six, seven years old then?

JP: Yes, I would have been six, seven. I was there until I went to Bristow. I was there until about in the sixth grade.

JE: But then that wasn't year round, that was just during school, right?

JP: Yeah, that was—

JE: And then you'd come home in the summertime?

JP: Yeah, yeah. And, of course, when I came home in the summertime it was fun and games. And the interesting thing is, near our home there was a white couple and they had a daughter. We used to meet, our homes were not far apart.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JP: We'd play together all the time and the thing I remember about, I think her name was Mabel, she was always wanting her hair to look like mine. Of course, she had long blond—

JE: She wanted black hair?

JP: And I had long hair too, but it was not like hers. And she was always wanting her hair to look like mine. I still remember that.

JE: Yeah.

JP: And I often wondered whatever happened—

JE: So she was the only white family—

JP: Oh, and my brothers, there was a young man there who used to come play marbles with my brothers all the time. You see, apparently the idea of black and white didn't even register with us.

JE: Yeah.

JP: With these families. 'Cause we were just friends.

JE: Economically at the same level, I suppose too, for that time.

JP: Yes, exactly, that's exactly what that amounted to, yes.

JE: Remember back then, what did you have for breakfast? What did you eat?

JP: Well, my mama made biscuits. In the country you had biscuits and gravy and we did rice and—

Judy McIntyre: Sometimes she cooked rabbit, didn't she?

JP: That's when they were hunting.

JM: Oh, okay.

JP: You know, you didn't cook that for breakfast.

JM: Okay.

JP: But, you know, sometimes we had chickens because you had chickens all the time. That was a meat that you always had because you had plenty of chickens and you had your own eggs, you know.

JM: But she cooked a heavy breakfast.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JP: Oh yes, they used to eat a lot. But with boys, you know, you have to have a lot of food. I don't know how she did, I look back at that.

JE: So, when you look back at the boarding school, was that a good experience for you?

JP: Yes, it was. And, of course, it was a funny thing because she was such a—

JE: She was Miss Manners, maybe?

JM: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JP: Oh yes, yes.

JM: And then Mother sent us to Miss Manners' school, but it didn't work.

JP: But I think all of that helps, you know.

JE: Sure.

JP: At the time you don't think too much about it.

JE: Yeah.

JP: And you think that this is a lot of nonsense. But all of this helps to develop you.

Chapter 07 - 3:15

Segregated Tulsa

Jeanne Phillips: I came to Tulsa in the ninth grade.

John Erling: Okay.

JP: And I spent one year at Carver. My ninth year.

JE: That would have been junior high school, then, wouldn't it?

JP: Yeah, junior high school.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative), Carver.

JP: That was Carver, uh-huh (affirmative). My brothers had moved here. Frank was living here, then he went to California.

And then, Willie, my oldest brother, moved here and I stayed with them and finished high school here in Tulsa.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative). You said you went to ninth grade at Carver here in Tulsa?

JP: Yes.

JE: Then you would have been how old?

JP: Fourteen.

JE: What do you remember about Tulsa then, 1936, '37, '38, '39, I suppose?

JP: Yeah.

JE: What did you do for entertainment? What did you do in Carver?

JP: Oh, let me tell you. I came here in the ninth grade and I went to Carver and when you'd come in from another school all the newcomers had to be tested. So they put us in this big room—that's where I met my very best friend. She came from Pawhuska and I came from Bristow to Tulsa. They put us in this big room and tested us so they could decide which division. You know, they had divisions that they put you in. One, two, three, four. We sat close to the young lady that I met that became my best friend. We placed in the same division, we were placed in number one. And I'm glad that they stopped doing that, because, you see, that caused problems. You were placed in one, two, three, and four.

Number one was the smart—

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JP: And children knew that.

JE: Oh.

JP: And you had problems with it.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative). Were both blacks and whites attending Carver then?

JP: No, no, no, no, all of this was black.

Judy McIntyre: And segregated in Tulsa.

JP: Yeah, yeah. And my kids, there was no whites in school when they went to school. And we all went to Booker T. Washington. I finished there and all four of my kids finished at Booker T.

JE: What year did you graduate from Booker T.?

JP: 'Forty-two.

JE: Where did you actually live when you came to Carver?

JP: It was Madison, I think it was near where Pine—

JE: So that was an all-black community?

JP: Oh yes. All of that, uh-huh (affirmative).

JE: Right, right. All of your activity then—

JP: Everything was in that area. And, of course, Greenwood had businesses, drugstores, theater, and all of that when I was there.

JE: So you could go there?

JP: Oh yes.

JE: Go in with them.

JP: It was really, talking about black Wall Street. They had come back out, apparently, from the—

- JM:** From the race riots.
- JP:** From the race riots.
- JM:** Um-hmm (affirmative).
- JP:** 'Cause I don't know what it was like during that, but when I was here, Greenwood was really up and moving.
- JM:** It had everything that you all needed.
- JP:** Yes, everything. 'Cause every Sunday I'd still go to Vernon. I joined that church when I was fifteen years old.
- JE:** Vernon?
- JM:** AME.
- JP:** AME, right there on Greenwood.
- JE:** At the church?
- JM:** It's African Methodist Episcopal.
- JP:** Um-hmm (affirmative).
- JM:** It's right across from the Greenwood Cultural Center.
- JE:** Right.
- JP:** I joined that church and everything was right there on Greenwood. After Sunday school, we would walk down not the drugstore. The drugstores had soda fountains and you could sit there. Where Jack's Memory Chapel is, it was on Greenwood.
- JM:** A few hotels—
- JP:** A hotel was right on the end of the street there. It was a big hotel there. And across the street they had areas where musicians would come in. And they had big-name musicians.

Chapter 08 - 1:20

Whites Only

- John Erling:** You never had to come downtown Tulsa, then, to shop?
- Jeanne Phillips:** Yeah, I did.
- Judy McIntyre:** In high school.
- JP:** Oh—
- JE:** When you needed to buy clothes and so forth, did you come downtown to—
- JM:** Yeah, how—
- JP:** Yeah, you could shop, but I understand that you couldn't try hats on. I was told that.
- JE:** Was that only for blacks?
- JP:** Yes, yes.

- JE:** Only blacks couldn't try hats on?
- JP:** Only, only blacks, only blacks.
- JE:** Some of the stores would have been Vandevvers—
- JP:** Vandevvers, Seidenbach's—
- JE:** Clarkes Good Clothes?
- JP:** I think so.
- JE:** Yeah.
- JP:** I think so.
- JE:** That's the only time, then, that you would have to come to the white community, so to speak?
- JP:** Yeah. The only time was to go downtown.
- JE:** And, then, weren't there restaurants that you couldn't go to?
- JP:** We couldn't go into, take the kids in there to have a soda or anything like that. No, we didn't do that. You didn't eat at the restaurants or sit at the counters and fountains.
- JE:** And how, and how did that make you feel? Or did you just—
- JP:** Well—
- JE:** ...take it as that's the way life is?
- JP:** Well, this was the rules.
- JE:** Nothing inside you said, "I'm just as good as the whites?"
- JP:** Oh, yeah, you realize that, but you realize that there was a difference. That these places were owned by the white people.
- JE:** Um-hmm (affirmative).
- JP:** They owned it all. And if they said no, you knew that it was a no. There was a no there.
- JM:** No meant no.
- JP:** It was blacks and whites. It was black here and white here and that's the way it was.
- JE:** Yeah.
- JP:** Until the time came when they really started doing the sit-ins and things.
- JE:** Oh.

Chapter 09 - 4:00

Race Riots

John Erling: Of course, the Race Riot was in 1921.

Jeanne Phillips: Yeah.

JE: And by the way, I noticed that there was an Omaha Race Riot in 1919, resulted in the brutal lynching of a Will Brown. And a public rampage by thousands of whites who set fire to the Douglas County Courthouse in downtown Omaha.

JP: Yeah, I heard about that, which I did not know.

Judy McIntyre: Oh?

JE: I didn't know that but—

JP: Yeah, yeah.

JE: ...it followed more than twenty race riots that occurred in the Red Summer of 1919.

JP: Hmm (thoughtful sound).

JM: Wow.

JE: So we have that kind of thing going in 1919.

JM: Wow.

JP: Yes.

JE: And, then, of course, there were a lot of lynchings in the South and so forth.

JP: Oh yeah.

JE: So it was not surprising that Tulsa would get involved, but we weren't the only ones.

JM: No, we weren't the only ones.

JP: Yeah, no.

JM: And I think a lot of that had to do with when those soldiers, the black soldiers, came back from World War I.

JP: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: My grandfather on my dad's side came back and they saw another world. Daddy told us the French were told by white soldiers, and my grandfather said that they told them that they were like monkeys. And the French would ask to see their tails.

JP: Isn't that ugly?

JM: You feel bad.

JE: We need to know that, we need to hear that.

JP: Yeah.

JM: So when they did come back they saw a different a world. And the thing that you were asking, "Am I as good?" that's what really started, I think, that process. With that then came the anger, the riots, the lynchings and all of that.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative). So were you, both of you then, told stories about the Race Riot?

JM: I never heard about it until later.

JP: I didn't either. You know—

JM: We didn't talk about it.

JP: I found out that Dale's, my husband now's mother, was here in the Race Riot.

JM: And she died and then that's when we found out—

JP: Uh-huh (affirmative).

JM: ...that she'd been there.

JP: Uh-huh (affirmative).

JM: She never said anything.

JP: Yeah, 'cause she was right there on Pine, they had a house right there on Pine.

JM: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JP: And he said that they had a white friend who kept them from burning their house down.

JM: Yeah.

JP: Or were you saying that?

JM: And I think they just didn't talk about it because both of them didn't want us being that angry black person. So I went to OU when I was called the N word at class. I didn't know what was going on.

JP: Yeah, see, they were shielded from all of this.

JM: Which is good and bad.

JP: Yeah, I think that's there good and bad in both ways. But we did not want them to start hating or having your mind made up. See, I had made excuses for them not being able to go in and have a soda. I made excuses for them.

JE: What, what did you say?

JP: "We don't have time," oh, I forgot, something else. You know, it was just...

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JP: It didn't occur to them, they had no idea. That it was just because they were black that they could not go in, they didn't know that.

JE: Right.

JP: They did not know that.

JE: But in your family, at least, you didn't talk about the Race Riot because you didn't want them to be angry?

JP: I wasn't familiar with the Race Riot myself.

JE: And then, and then the other side, the white side, it seemed like there was a cover-up because it didn't make it into the history books. So we're talking about the '30s and the '40s and the '50s.

JP: A cover-up.

JM: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: It still was not there.

JP: Uh-uh-uh (negative).

JE: It did not become really known—

JP: Hmm (thoughtful sound).

JE: ...because I talked to people that had lived here and it wasn't until they were sixty-some years old that there—

JP: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: ...was a 1921 Race Riot.

JP: Yeah, right, but—

JE: So both sides were trying to cover this thing up.

JM: Of course.

JP: Yeah, yeah.

JM: And we had a lot of people in our church, when I look at the survivors and stuff I was just like, I didn't know they was in the riot, they never said anything.

JP: But wait a minute. When I came here they didn't talk about the Riot. I didn't know, at my age, I didn't know about the Riot.

JE: When do you think you first learned about it and how? And how surprising that had to be that you were living in the very area where this riot took place.

JP: It was after I had finished high school. The—

JM: Did you know about it when you went to Langston?

JP: Any, any, any, that's probably when I—

JM: When you first went to college.

JP: ...first went to Langston. Then is when I remember, because when I came here in the ninth grade there was never any talk. Nobody ever mentioned anything about the Race Riot.

Chapter 10 - 1:40

December 7, 1941

John Erling: So in 1942, you graduate from Booker T.

Jeanne Phillips: Right.

JE: But in 1941, we have Pearl Harbor. How old were you when you graduated from high school?

JP: Seventeen.

JE: You were seventeen.

JP: Um-hmm, um-hmm (affirmatives).

JE: So you were seventeen, then, when Pearl Harbor Day—

JP: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: Do you remember the day that you heard about Pearl Harbor? Do you remember that day?

JP: Yes.

JE: It was on a Sunday.

JP: It was on a Sunday.

Judy McIntyre: Oh, so it was on a Sunday, I mean, okay.

JP: Yeah. And I'm thinking that after Sunday school we had left church gone to Williams Drugstore, which was right down the street. And the word came that we were in war. And,

'course, then you start thinking, "What does that mean?" You didn't know what that really meant. You was thinking that something's coming here, you know, that the war was going to be—

JE: Right here in Oklahoma?

JM: Oh, okay, yeah.

JP: ...right here, yeah. That was, I'm thinking that they're getting ready to start fighting us right here.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JP: We didn't realize that it was somewhere else. But then, it didn't take long for you to realize that they start checking the young people out. The first thing you know, the young men was being called in. We got numbers, I think, how they started off giving them numbers. And when your number came, I think you had to be eighteen years old when they first started.

JE: But right in that age bracket we knew—

JP: Yeah, we were, yeah, yeah—

JE: ...all the boys.

JP: Yeah, all of them. And then by the time I went to Langston they were cleaning that place out. All the guys.

JM: 'Cause Daddy had to go.

JP: Yeah, he went to—

JM: Virginia Tech.

JP: ...Virginia Tech, and he knew that he was going to be called, so he transferred from there to be at home, 'cause he lived in Oklahoma City. So he'd be close to home when he got ready to leave, and that's what happened. He was drafted from there.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

Chapter 11 - 3:25

Styles, Music, Boys

John Erling: Let's talk a little bit about when you were in Booker T. What about the style of clothes? Wasn't it way back when when ladies wouldn't be able to wear pants in public?

Judy McIntyre: O-hoo (excitable exclamation).

Jeanne Phillips: We didn't wear pants.

JE: You didn't wear pants?

JP: Uh-uh, uh-uh (negatives).

JM: And we didn't wear pants when I was there.

JP: Uh-uh, uh-uh (negatives).

JM: You'd get put out of school.

JP: yeah.

JM: I graduated in '63.

JE: What about style of hair and clothes at Booker T.?

JP: Ooooh, I tell you, the thing was a big—

JM: Pompadour.

JP: ...pompadour—

JM: Whatever you call it.

JP: ...roll right here. I had a huge one because I had lots of hair. And the ones who didn't, they had rollers that you would put in there so that it would stand up. I think that picture I had, that picture with you when you were a baby that I sent to Daddy?

JM: Yeah, uh-huh (affirmative).

JP: I had one of those big—

JM: Pompadour like.

JP: You had a big pompadour here and then the other hair was turned under.

JE: What kind of music did you kids like at that time?

JP: What kind of music? You know, it's been so long until I don't remember.

JM: Like Cab Calloway or ...?

JP: Yeah, that was, oh, yeah, that was the jitterbug, yeah, that's what it was. They were doing the jitterbug, I mean, fast-moving and doing under your knees, under—

JM: Did you do all that?

JP: Yes, I could do it, I was good.

JM: Okay. I can't imagine.

JP: Seriously though, I was a good dancer.

JE: You could probably do a little dance right here right now, couldn't you, huh?

JP: No, no.

JM: I can't imagine Mother doing that.

JP: Oh yeah.

JM: That was a great question.

JE: So the high school experience was good? Did you enjoy being a student? Were you—

JP: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

JE: Can you name some friends back in Booker T. days?

JP: My very best friend was Hower Davis. She came from Pawhuska to Tulsa and I came from Bristow.

JM: She got her PhD and she was being in nursing at TU.

JP: At TU.

- JE:** Your best friend?
- JM:** Uh-huh (affirmative).
- JP:** Yes, uh-huh (affirmative).
- JM:** And then William, William the physician.
- JP:** William Terrace, his dad had a drugstore right across from my church.
- JM:** Met Catherine Copeland, Robert Copeland's wife.
- JP:** Yeah, she's still, yeah.
- JE:** You must have done a lot of dating in Booker T. in high school because—
- JP:** Naaw (drawn out negative).
- JE:** But, no, we see how attractive you are here at eighty-nine, I can only imagine the way you were in high school. You had a boyfriend every day.
- JP:** I was so used to boys, boys was always my friends. I always had lots of boys for friends when I went to Langston. And this was the waker-up on this boyfriend thing. I went in the summertime when the football fellows was there practicing—
- JE:** Let me just say, then, you graduated from Booker T., and then you went right to Langston?
- JP:** Yeah, uh-huh (affirmative), yeah.
- JE:** Okay, so now you're in Langston.
- JP:** Yeah. Like I say, I'm so used to boys, all these brothers and I thought all boys was just kind of like brothers to me. And the guys was so nice when I was there in the summertime. They were practicing and I had a little job at the canteen there. There were all like brothers to me, they were so good at football.
- JM:** Uh-huh (affirmative).
- JP:** Until one of the guys said, "You know what? I don't want to be your brother. And it just kept me—I'm thanking everybody for grabbing—and they're not interested in me." He said, "I'm not interested in being your brother."
- So that, that—
- JM:** I hadn't heard that one.
- JP:** No, no. Then I thought, "Well, they're not being nice to me just because they want to be like my brothers."
- JE:** They wanted to be boyfriends.
- JP:** Yes. That was the first time I'd ever heard anything like that and I never even thought—
- JM:** Well, when did you meet Dad?
- JP:** Uh (hesitation sound).
- JM:** When did Daddy come? Was he there when you got there?
- JP:** No, no, no, he came after, uh-huh (affirmative).
- JM:** Oh.
- JP:** He came because he transferred in there.

JM: Did you date somebody before Daddy?

JP: Oh yeah. A couple of guys.

Chapter 12 - 2:30

Education

John Erling: The fact that you went on to further education—

Jeanne Phillips: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: That was a big deal, wasn't it? Was that an automatic? Did your mother say even in high school, "You're going to college"?

JP: Yeah. It was just part of, like my kids didn't realize it when they got eighteen that there were going.

JE: It—

JP: Judy always said, "If I had known that I would—"

Judy McIntyre: We were babies, we couldn't spell college but we knew we were going to college.

JP: Yeah, yeah.

JM: Didn't know what it was.

JP: High school was not the end of school, college was the end of that until you decided to do more and it was just an automatic thing with us. And they knew from the beginning that when they finished high school that Dad had already said, "You can go anywhere in Oklahoma, but we're not paying out of state tuition."

JE: So you have to give a lot of credit to your parents for driving that kind of education culture.

JM: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

JP: My mom was very, you know, my older brothers had to drop out of school—

JM: To help.

JP: But they all got trades, made good money.

JM: They—

JE: That was in the '40s, and we even have families today we're telling, "You've got to go to college," and they're not going to college.

JP: Yeah.

JE: And here you had it in your DNA way back then.

JP: Yeah, it was just—

JE: And even though your mother never went to college—

JP: Well, no, but she continued her education however they did it. But she was always into education.

- JM:** And Mother always read to us.
- JP:** Yeah.
- JM:** She read poetry, we got great books of the Western world, which I was mad about because I wanted dolls and other stuff.
- JP:** Well—
- JM:** We got how and why books when we were real young, and then the Britannica.
- JE:** So—
- JM:** So we were always surrounded by learning.
- JP:** Um-hmm (affirmative). My kids, I read all the time to them, from Beowulf to Thomas Hardy. And they all became quick readers. And they said that was because they didn't want to hear all that stuff that I was reading to them. But we was always surrounded with books—and I bought the little Britannica because it was not always easy to get to a library for things. And I still have that whole big set of Britannicas and have to get rid—
- JE:** Encyclopedias you still have.
- JP:** Encyclopedias, uh-huh (affirmative).
- JE:** Do you remember when you could first wear cosmetics? Was that a big deal?
- JP:** Not for me because I never got into it.
- JM:** Mother to this day doesn't.
- JP:** The only time I had makeup was when I used to do a lot of local modeling.
- JM:** Oh yeah, always—
- JP:** And they would make me up, but I never learned how to do it. I just never learned.
- JE:** Well, you didn't need it. You're a natural—
- JP:** Well, you know, my husband said, "You don't need all that makeup. You don't need it."
- JE:** What about lipstick? Did you wear lipstick?
- JP:** Well, yeah, I wore a little lipstick.
- JM:** Mostly gloss, clear.

Chapter 13 - 5:10

Family Supports Education

- John Erling:** Tell us about modeling. Who did you model for?
- Jeanne Phillips:** Locally, sororities and fraternities and different clubs. But I was a fill-in and when *Ebony* fashion show would come here, that was before they got to be so big—
- JE:** *Ebony*?
- Judy McIntyre:** *Ebony Magazine*.

JE: *Ebony Magazine*, right.

JM: Yeah.

JP: Uh-huh (affirmative).

JE: So they would come here.

JP: They would come and put on shows and I would fill in. That was before they got real big. They didn't have a lot of models.

JE: Was there a modeling agency then that you went through?

JP: No.

JE: It was just they knew who you were?

JP: Yeah.

JE: And they called you—

JP: Uh, yeah, and they brought them here.

JE: “Would you like to be in the show?”

JP: They needed extra models to fill in.

JE: Did you ever think that that would be a career for you? No? Did you enjoy it?

JP: Well, it was fun for me, you know.

JE: Did you get paid?

JP: Uh-uh (negative). No.

JE: You just—

JP: It was just a freebee.

JM: No, I don't think she would have been thinking about that because Daddy had her in school as PTA president and—

JP: Well, no, you guys had me in school. I followed them all the way through. I made sure I knew everybody's teacher and everybody's teacher knew me. I think that's a big problem we have now, parents don't follow up their kids. Mine, when they started to school, everybody thought I was teaching I was there that much.

JE: Because you were there so much.

JP: Yeah, because I was there—

JM: And she was always the adult sponsor there at our sock hops and stuff. I was always having to look over my shoulder because she was there.

JE: Yeah. Let's talk about Langston then. Were there particular subjects that interested you? And did you—

JP: Well—

JE: ...graduated then from Langston?

JP: No. I got married in my junior year.

JM: She got pregnant. I was speaking at Langston when I first won. They had accused me, as a black legislator, of not being supportive of Langston.

JP: Of Langston.

JM: So I said, "Listen, I got a stake here in Langston. One of these heels," I could see Mother was in the audience and wanted to kill me.

JP: And that was—that was—

JM: But she got pregnant with me her junior year.

JP: So we got married.

JM: And after that I didn't have any more trouble with Langston.

JP: Yeah.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: But anyway, tell him about Langston, your experience.

JE: You went three years there then?

JP: Yeah.

JM: What were you in, you were in English or something.

JP: Yeah, I loved the English literature.

JM: And French.

JP: Yeah, well, I had a French teacher who was a Haitian and he was so elegant, he spoke so great. We were just so fascinated with him. I did enjoy the French accent, I did well in that. But Psychology and English Literature were my favorites.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative). Was that a shock when you knew you were pregnant and you would drop out of school?

JP: Yeah. Well, it was kind of a shocker. But I was wearing a little engagement ring already and we were going to get married, so that took care of that.

JM: During that time is where Daddy got inducted into the military.

JP: Yeah.

JM: Okay.

JP: He was called.

JM: Because I was nine months old when Daddy came from France.

JE: And you were born when?

JM: 'Forty-five.

JE: Nineteen forty-five.

JM: On May 21st.

JP: In—

JE: The war was ending in 1945.

JP: Yeah.

JE: But yet your father, his name again?

JM: Garland Othello John Stanley Eason. But he went as G. O. Eason.

JE: How many years were you married to him?

- JP:** Twenty-six.
- JE:** Twenty-six years?
- JM:** Um-hmm (affirmative).
- JP:** He died suddenly.
- JM:** He was forty-six when he died.
- JP:** Um-hmm (affirmative).
- JE:** Oh, and of what?
- JM:** We don't know, in bed.
- JP:** No, he, no he got sick over a weekend.
- JM:** Okay.
- JP:** He'd never been sick and they diagnosed it as inflammatory vasculitis, which means actually nothing. Something attacked all the vital organs.
- JE:** Hmm (thoughtful sound).
- JP:** Because I asked for an autopsy. He ain't never been sick. And over a weekend he got sick. And I jokingly said we had some kind of something that weekend, somebody got married that I worked with at Springer and I said, "You know, Garland must not really be feeling good 'cause he missed work and he never missed work."
- JM:** Never.
- JP:** He never missed work.
- JM:** He never missed work.
- JP:** He never missed a day of work.
- JE:** And what was his job? What did he do?
- JM:** He was at the Post Office.
- JP:** Supervisor.
- JM:** Uh-huh (affirmative).
- JP:** He was supervisor at the Post Office and he had two jobs.
- JM:** He worked at Red Top where you clean up, maintenance.
- JP:** Yeah.
- JM:** That's why he told us, "There were three of you going to be at OU at one time and I'm the only one paying. No F's, you get an F, you will pay for it."
- JE:** So here he really was the breadwinner and worked two jobs to put you kids through school.
- JM:** All four of us.
- JE:** And he had three at OU at the very same time.
- JP:** Exactly.
- JM:** Um-hmm (affirmative).
- JE:** That's amazing, isn't it?
- JP:** Yeah, it is.

JM: You know, when I look back, Mother remembers this but, you know, Daddy was so cheap, I thought.

JP: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: I mean, when the man came we wanted to get stuff and he always said, “No, you all are going to college and I’m the one paying for it, so no. Unless you have a job, you’re not getting it.”

So when I did get a job at Southern Hills only making two dollars and something for three hours shifts—

JP: Well, all you all—

JM: ...I had to put it in a checking account with Daddy and couldn’t get it out unless he signed it too.

JE: And what did you do, Judy, at Southern Hills?

JM: Oh, I worked on the buffet line in a white uniform and served food and learned table setting, learned about foods. Yeah.

JP: All of my kids worked in high school.

JM: Yeah.

JP: All of them.

JM: And I worked until I finished OU, there at Southern Hills.

JE: Okay, now. You were the oldest of the three?

JM: Um-hmm (affirmative).

Chapter 14 - 4:28

Racism at OU

John Erling: Your mother referred to that experience at OU. And when you came to OU tell us how you were received there.

Judy McIntyre: Well.

JE: What year would that have been?

JM: ‘Sixty-three.

JE: Okay.

JM: Right after I had come from the march on Washington that I didn’t understand.

JE: And you went to that march on Washington?

Jeanne Phillips: Um-hmm (affirmative). With our church.

JM: I went on two of them.

JE: Okay, okay. I want to talk about that too, but let’s talk about your OU experience, first coming there.

- JM:** Okay, when I first got there I realized that they had one black student per dorm.
- JE:** Um-hmm (affirmative).
- JM:** Nothing to do your hair, you couldn't go to any of the beauty shops or anything there. But I remember when I got there and the white student was there and their parents were there they were telling me I had to leave.
- JP:** You were there first.
- JM:** I was there first but I had to leave.
- JP:** Remember?
- JM:** Yeah, but I had to leave.
- JP:** Yeah, they came later.
- JM:** Of course, they came, the white parent did not want their daughter in the room with me.
- JE:** As a roommate?
- JM:** As a roommate. So—
- JP:** And she called home telling us.
- JM:** Um-hmm (affirmative).
- JP:** And we said, "No, you don't leave. If she does not want to stay there she has to leave."
- JM:** So I stayed. And then I can remember—
- JE:** Okay, then what happened then? Did that daughter leave? Did that white girl—
- JP:** Yeah.
- JM:** Yeah.
- JE:** And did you get another roommate?
- JM:** Yeah, and then they left. Eventually, I just ended up—
- JE:** By yourself?
- JP:** Um-hmm (affirmative).
- JM:** Yeah, it was the best deal, of course.
- JP:** Yeah, she did.
- JM:** I never got a roommate so I had a private room. It worked out really fine.
- JE:** Oh, it paid to be black, didn't it?
- JP:** Yeah.
- JM:** It did. But, you know, that's why I was telling Mother and them, that they focused on education but they didn't tell us about the real world. People see me now and they think, "Oh, she's just angry," but—
- JP:** Um-um (negative).
- JM:** ...I evolved into that. And thank God for my parents, that I was able to move back to some sanity.
- JE:** Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: And some stability. Because I got called a nigger in the classroom and there was nothing you could do about it. J. J. Ryan, the school of social work, he was still alive when I was taking the classes and I raised my hand.

And he said, "Nigger, you answer the question."

JE: Oh, my.

JM: Yeah. And then you walked on campus and from my dorm to the library or wherever I went it was, "Black bitch," "Nigger," just the whole bit.

JP: It was really bad.

JM: Now if someone got to be friends after a while with girls in the dorm and I'd lie out in the sun with them when they were suntanning, which I didn't understand, but I had long sleeves on. But they got so red I put Noxzema on. So we were just like typical girls in the dorm.

But once we got on campus and I'd say, "Oh, hi, Margaret," Margaret didn't know me.

JE: Hmm (thoughtful sound).

JM: She wouldn't speak to me outside the dorm.

JE: How are you processing all this?

JM: I cried, I cried.

JP: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: I called home.

JP: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: Begging Daddy to let me come home and leave that place.

JP: Yeah.

JM: Daddy let me come home for a month. And then after that, he said, I heard him tell the operator, "Tell her to write." That's what I had to do.

JP: Hmm (thoughtful sound).

JE: Tell her to write.

JP: To write me. Uh-huh (affirmative).

JE: Jeanne, how were you taking all this?

JP: Well, there's a whole lot to be said for prayer 'cause since we didn't prepare them—you can't really prepare anybody for this. You can't prepare.

JE: Well, it happened to you.

JP: No. You can't really prepare, but I knew it was there.

JE: But you had—

JP: I knew it was there but I was not confronted with it and it was not in the schools where she went.

JE: Right.

JP: 'Cause there was nobody there white.

- JE:** Yeah.
- JP:** You know that this is going to happen. You know that once they get their education there's nothing that anybody can do about it.
- JM:** Yes, that's right.
- JP:** You can take everything else but you can't take that away.
- JM:** That's what they kept telling me.
- JP:** So we just grinned and beared, that was about the bottom line.
- JE:** But when she hung up you and your husband had to be—
- JP:** Yeah.
- JE:** Did you ever do this kind of talk? "Or maybe we should let her come home?"
- JP:** No, no, no. No, we never thought about, we really never thought about it. They were going to stay there until they got put out because we were not going to have them come home because of this kind of thing. 'Cause in the first place, we knew they were smart enough to make it. They had the capacity to learn.
- JE:** Okay.
- JP:** And we knew that.
- JE:** Yeah.
- JP:** You know, I didn't raise no dummies. You know, they weren't that crazy but they was—
- JM:** Watch it, Mama.
- JP:** Yeah, well, but you know. What a kid is capable of, we knew that they were capable.
- JE:** Right, right. That she would just stick it out.
- JP:** All they had to do was stick it out, apply themselves.
- JE:** She—right, right.

Chapter 15 - 3:36

Activism at OU

John Erling: Now along about this time, Dr. George Henderson, had he come to the campus?

Judy McIntyre: Yeah. Let me go back. My first year there were fifty black students. When we had orientation they told us half would be gone at midterm and half were. They found a way to get rid of you.

Clara Luper's son, Calvin, was there with me. There was this history teacher that said, "If you're black you can make no more than a C." Calvin got in the class.

JE: Calvin Luper?

JM: Luper got in the class, and, of course, he got a D or an F, I can't remember what it was. I didn't even try because Daddy said he was not going to pay for any class a second time. I'd have to earn the money, and there was nowhere to get a job.

JE: We should just say that Clara Luper, of course, let the sit-in—

JM: Exactly.

JE: ...at the fountain/restaurant in Oklahoma City.

JM: In Oklahoma City.

JE: And that became nationally known.

JM: Yeah. Then see what happened is, what for me was the beginning of the turning point, because I spent time crying. The girls would harass me at night, beat on the door, and I was scared to death. You didn't have a telephone, you didn't have a TV, you didn't have anything. And I didn't know what they were doing.

Anyway, so then, you had the beginning of the Civil Rights, you know, that was going on.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: You had the war in Vietnam and I got caught up in all of that. But I wasn't crazy, as Daddy told me, I wasn't there to save the world, I was there to get an education.

JE: Were you an activist on campus?

JM: Oh yeah. My first husband—everybody thinks I was just married to Bernard—my first husband was a basketball player there from Shawnee, Howard Johnson. People who call me J.J., Judy Johnson, they go back a long way.

JE: Okay.

JM: We dated three and a half years and we stayed married eight months.

JE: Okay.

JM: But he was kicked off the basketball team by Coach Stevens, I think it was. That kind of sport, me getting involved, because at that point, they recruited athletes differently. All the other stuff was going on, and I got right in the middle of everything. And we went to George Cross's—

JE: The president.

JM: The president, to the home, and we talked and made demands. We went to the football games and passed out literature about the language we used, the revolution and all that, that was coming.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: As a result, I think you used to have the newspaper clippings that had my name in there.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: We were able to get George Henderson.

JE: He—

JM: That was the beginning of turning OU around.

JE: He was a professor there, he came from the Chicago area.

JM: Yes, uh-huh (affirmative), African American.

JE: And he, and I have interviewed him and he's on our website. He came with a friendship with Martin Luther King—

JM: Yeah.

JE: ...and some of those people.

JM: Um-hmm, um-hmm (affirmatives).

JE: So then he came and he became your leader, didn't he?

JM: Yes he did. What was good about that is that we just had raw emotions. You know, unbridled anger and rage.

Jeanne Phillips: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: Which could have been very dangerous for us.

JP: Um-hmm (affirmative)!

JM: But when he came that was probably the best thing because he represented that parental, you know, my dad was too far away so I wasn't scared he wasn't going to be there to do it. But Dr. Henderson toned the rhetoric down and calmed the seas and helped us to see that we could achieve the goal but we don't have to be angry, ignorant, or violent.

JE: Well, he took on the spirit of Martin Luther King.

JM: Yes he did.

JP: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: And he could have gone the other way.

JP: Um-hmm (affirmative), yeah.

JE: Could have been Black Panther or anything to stir it up.

JM: He could have.

Chapter 16 - 2:00

March on Washington

John Erling: We're talking about '63 and '64. And '63 was the March on Washington.

Judy McIntyre: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: Did you go? Did you?

Jeanne Phillips: Oh, no, no, no. We sent a group from the church, that's when I said the prayer comes in 'cause we didn't know what would happen.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JP: Reverent Ben Hill was the one who set this up. And it was from Vernon, our church—

JE: He was the pastor of—

JP: Vernon AME, the church I belonged to.

JE: That you belong to now.

JP: And he said, “We’re stepping out on faith here, taking a busload and we will be going,” as he said, “on faith and you can decide whether you wanted your child to go or not.”

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JP: So—

JE: Judy, you didn’t go to that, did you?

JM: Yes, yes I did.

JE: Oh? You did?

JP: She—

JE: Did you go through the church?

JP: Yeah, like I said, I belonged to this church—

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JP: ...since I was fifteen.

JM: So my sister under me from California—

JP: Uh-huh (affirmative), and I sent two of mine to the March on Washington, Judy, and my daughter who lives in California.

JE: And her name is?

JP: Melody.

JE: Melody.

JP: Sylvia Melody.

JE: All right.

JP: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: When the bus was there, you heard about it, you were nervous, of course.

JP: Well, yeah, when I look back on it I’m glad that we had the faith that we did, you know, in there because when you look at that March on Washington and all those people there and you know all the stuff that was going on at that time, and the things that had happened to the people who were in those marches, it was something to allow your children to go all the way to Washington, DC, to be in a march on Washington.

JE: We should point out here, in ’62, there was an organized non-violent protest in Birmingham, Alabama, which attracted national attention because of the brutal police response.

JP: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: Yeah.

JE: So I’m sure you were thinking—

JP: Yes, yes.

JE: “Well, I know what happened there. Is this going to happen in Washington?”

JP: Yeah, yeah, but I don't know and I think there must have been a whole lot of prayers and things going on around. 'Cause when I look at that now and see all that mass of people and know what could have happened.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JP: And it went off without a hitch.

JE: Right.

Chapter 17 - 1:38

MLK in Tulsa

John Erling: And this, of course, is where Martin Luther King delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech.

Jeanne Phillips: Yeah, but, you know, he was here too, you know.

JE: Did you see him?

Judy McIntyre: Oh yeah!

JP: Yes I did.

JE: Okay, tell us about it.

JM: Out at the airport.

JP: Yeah, he was at First Baptist on Greenwood and when he came I went and the place was packed. First Baptist Church was packed and by the time I got there it was standing room only. And I stood there, and my pastor, Ben Hill, was the person who introduced him. Ben Hill had a way with words. He was quite a speaker.

I didn't know anything about Martin Luther King. I didn't know, you know.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JP: I said to the person standing next to me, I said, "If this man can't speak Reverend Hill will just kill him." Because his introduction was so ...I said, "He's dead." I had no idea.

And then I found out then how people followed him. I stood there for two hours with high-heeled shoes on and never moved a muscle. There was just something about him that just, you didn't even want to breathe or miss a word that he said.

But, really, what got me was when Reverend Hill introduced him and how he built him and all he said and how he said it. And I thought, "Oh, Lord, if this man cannot make a speech he is dead."

JE: Heh-heh-heh (laughing). Judy, were you there for that?

JM: I was just a kid.

JE: Yeah, okay.

JM: Yeah, I remember going to the airport, the old airport, the small airport.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).
JM: And meeting him, but he meant nothing.
JE: Right.
JM: I mean, honestly.
JE: Right, well, this was—
JM: He didn't mean anything.
JE: But this was '63 then, wasn't it? That he came to Tulsa?
JP: It was before.
JM: Before.
JE: It had to be before.
JP: It was before.
JM: It was before.
JE: Because you hadn't heard of him.

Chapter 18 - 1:30 MLK in Washington

John Erling: So, then, Judy, a bit about your experience there and how close were you to Martin Luther King when he delivered the speech and some of that stuff.

Judy McIntyre: Okay, first of all, let me just say, I did not go because I was looking at what was going on historically.

Jeanne Phillips: She was—

JM: I had never been out of Oklahoma. That was the only reason I wanted to go.

JP: They had no idea, I mean, she had no idea.

JM: I mean, to be really honest about it. And my sister reminded me that we rode until we got to, I think, Pennsylvania somewhere, I can't remember. But they kept tight reins on us. And once we got there the only thing that I really remember when we were marching was being upon the building. When I looked back down, you know, the police were security, but it didn't scare me.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: I had never been around so many whites and to see the sea of people, I was just fascinated. And so I peripherally heard Martin Luther King. We were at the Reflecting. I walked kind of close to the steps. We had tight reins, we had to be back—

JP: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: ...to get gone out of there.

JP: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: So I remember hearing him, I was fairly close but I couldn't figure out why he kept repeating himself, "I have a dream." I didn't know what he was dreaming about until I got to OU. Then I understood.

JE: Yeah. Was it life-changing?

JM: Well, not then. Not in Washington. OU was the life-changing.

Chapter 19 - 5:30

Black Panthers

Judy McIntyre: Then, believe it or not, I ended up being a part of the Black Panthers.

John Erling: Oh.

JM: Here in Tulsa with Wilbur Brown, which just about drove Mother and them crazy.

JE: What did you feel about that?

Jeanne Phillips: You know what? We—

JM: I kept it a secret.

JP: We were not aware till—

JM: Until I came home and told them.

JP: Don't ever say what your kids won't do.

JM: Exactly.

JP: Because you don't know if they're not in your sight. You don't know what they're doing. You just don't know what they're doing. Never dreamed that she would be doing anything like that, never, nuh-uh (negative). But, you see, this is how this kind of thing affects people, if you're not careful you can be—

JM: I was so angry.

JP: ...bad bitter. You know, she was so bitter after having—

JM: I was so angry after having all whites and Mother and them kept telling me, "You're doing the same thing that you're accusing whites." You know, when say, "All black people are lazy. All black people will steal."

JP: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: I was just so angry, but if I hadn't had the foundation, I don't know where I would have ended up. Because I was trying to get where Angela Davis was in the Black Panthers in San Francisco. And I was just going to be part of the revolution and get killed.

JE: And what caused you to change?

JP: She woke up and realized—

JM: Well, we had no agenda. And we went on Greenwood where the prostitutes used to ...we were going to protect the prostitutes from the police. A-okay.

JP: That's what I mean.

JM: We had talked revolution but I had never been around guns. So when the police came, we were on Archer and Greenwood, the guys handed the women the guns and the police never checked us. Never. Never checked the girls, they were busy with the guys.

JE: Huh.

JM: It was a German Luger gun, I didn't know anything about guns but they told me. And I put it in my pocket. When the police left I was scared, and all I was thinking about was Daddy. If Daddy caught, because he always said, "Go to jail, get in trouble, do not call."

JP: "Don't call me."

JM: And he meant it, we knew he meant it. And I knew I had gone a bridge too far.

JP: Yeah, I think you went way—

JM: And when the police left I handed the gun back to them and I said, "You know what? I'm finished." I looked around. None of them had gone to college, I was the only one in college.

JP: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: And I thought, "My daddy worked two jobs, cleaning up, working at the Post Office," and it just snapped. That incident snapped, but what also helped me then was I met Bernard. And he was into politics, the more establishment. And I had to tone down a whole bunch of my anger, even though I still was pretty, I mean, he always said if he lost it would be because of me and my mouth. But it wasn't.

JE: We should identify him as Bernie McIntyre.

JM: Yeah.

JE: Who became a state representative as well.

JM: And senator, but we weren't married when he was a senator.

JE: Yes.

JM: So that introduction into the world of politics—

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: I found a more legitimate outlet—

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: ...for making change.

JE: um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: And Daddy said, "It's okay to be passionate and to believe in something, but you do it from the inside, not on the outside throwing stones."

JE: Um-hmm, um-hmm (affirmatives).

JM: I never will forget. I had all the tools but the anger and stuff after OU just deleted all of it for me.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: And it was a slow process back because when I got a divorce from my first husband, came back, got a job in child welfare, I said I didn't want any white clients. They were stupid enough, can you believe DHS? I said, "I want no white clients."

They didn't give me any white clients.

JE: Department Of Human Services?

JM: Uh-huh (affirmative). As a social worker.

JE: And you didn't want?

JM: White clients. And they didn't assign me white clients, initially.

JE: Because of your anger?

JM: My anger.

JE: You didn't want to help them?

JM: Uh-uh (negative).

JE: And how long did that attitude continue?

JM: Oh, maybe about a year because I wouldn't even go to lunch with the white workers. I wouldn't talk with them except to have to answer questions and stuff.

But my good friend today, Meredith AnCue—

JP: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: ...was just determined that, "Oh no, you're not going to come here and isolate yourself from us." She stayed on me. "You going to go to lunch with me?"

"No."

She kept talking to me, and finally, finally, I was able to let all of that go and get back into liking people and choosing people not by the color.

JP: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: I understood what Martin Luther King said, "Not by the color, whether it was white or black, but by the content."

JE: So then the summary is it was reverse discrimination on your part.

JM: It was, oh yeah, they used to say I was a racist. And I proudly said, "I am."

JE: So—

JM: And Mother and them, it drove Mother—

JP: Some people—

JE: Okay, I was going to tell you, you knew she was going through all this then, didn't you?

JP: Yeah.

JE: And how did that affect you? How did that make you feel?

JP: I kept hoping and praying and my thing was, "You know what? All people are not that way. All whites are not that way. Think of all the people who marched with Martin Luther King. Think of the ones who were killed—

JM: Yeah.

JP: ...because they were mar—so you can't do like we used to feel that they classify all blacks as the same, they put it all in the same category, you know?

JM: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JP: But you can't do that. People are not all the same, we're all individuals, everybody has his own individuality.

JE: Yeah.

Chapter 20 - 2:40

OU Graduation

John Erling: It must have been a big day though when you, Judy, and for you, when she graduated from OU.

Jeanne Phillips: Oh yeah, yeah.

Judy McIntyre: In four years, 'cause that's the other thing, Daddy gave us four years. So all that politicking and raising hell, I had four years, no more.

JP: And he also said, "If you get there and you decide you're going to get married, fine."

JM: Oh yeah.

JP: "Then you'll have somebody else to take care of you and send you to school."

JM: So none of us got married in college.

JP: But they couldn't wait to finish, every one of them, the minute they got finished they got married.

JM: Got married. And then, that's the other thing that I told Mother and them, that, I mean, they were wonderful parents, but they also didn't teach us—I thought every man was like my daddy, responsible and stuff.

JE: Hmm (thoughtful sound).

JM: I didn't know that, I did not know that.

JE: Did you date at OU much?

JM: One guy, I married him.

JE: Oh, that was—

JM: Howard Johnson.

JE: Okay.

JP: It lasted eight months.

JM: See, I wanted to major in art and Daddy wouldn't let me.

JP: Yes.

JM: He said, "No money."

JP: As an artist.

JM: And so was, he played basketball. He wanted to go to the gym and stuff, he didn't want to go to the museums. And when I was standing up there getting married I knew I didn't want to be married but I didn't know in '67 that Mother and them could have called the wedding off.

'Cause I had a fairy tale wedding. I got my dress at Miss Jackson's, and nice things.

When I told Daddy eight months later, "Hey, Daddy, I'm coming home, I'm getting divorced," he said, "Hell, I haven't finished paying for this wedding!"

JE: But he was understanding and accepted that? He could have told you to go back and work it out.

JM: He said from the very beginning when Howard came to Tulsa to ask for my hand in marriage, Daddy said, "Well, I would prefer that she go and get her master's and wait to get married."

But then I told Daddy, "I did exactly what you asked me to do. I finished college and I'm in love." So he said, "Good luck."

JE: Yeah.

JM: And then he told me, when he met Bernard, he said, "That boy's immature."

"Dad, you can't tell me."

JE: You have some comments along these lines, Jeanne?

JP: Oh—

JM: I guess like Mama said, "Bulk-learning is the best learning," that's what she always told us.

JP: Bulk-learning is the best learning.

JM: Like I went ahead—

JE: Book-learning?

JM: ...and made a decision, "Okay, I'm going to marry—"

JP: Bulk. Pay for it, that's your best learning. When you have to pay for something that you learned, that's what she always told us.

JM: Daddy let you made a decision, if that's what you're going to do, then fine.

JP: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: But the lessons you learn out of it, don't come complaining to him.

JE: Hmm (thoughtful sound).

Chapter 21 – 3:13
Life Is Really Good

John Erling: Um, in your lifetime, as you look back, are these the best times or when you were sixty to seventy, seventy to eighty, eighty to eighty-nine, or has it all been good?

Jeanne Phillips: You know what? Every era has its own goodness. I can't think that there's any worse in any part of it. Life gets better all the time, the more you look at it.

Judy McIntyre: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JP: You know, it really does if you look at things in a positive area. We have too many little hangups about different things. We're too quick to judge and too quick to be upset about things. That's a problem. Life is really good if you let it be.

My feeling is, you know, life gets better all the time, and right now is no better than—it can't get any better.

JE: Yeah. Did you ever have any health issues? Major health issues at all?

JP: Well, not major.

JE: No?

JP: I got—

JM: She's in better shape than I'm in.

JP: I've got some bad knees like—

JE: Oh, that's all?

JP: That's right now, yeah.

JM: Yeah. That's it.

JE: So if I ask you, "What's the toughest part of getting old?" what would you say?

JP: You know what? There's really no tough part in getting old. You know, you change physically. Luckily for me I've been blessed not to have a lot of problems.

JM: There sure is.

JP: And like I said, you know, I got these little old knees, but I'm still, as the lady said, "Walking upright." You'd a told her how old I was and she said, "You mean she's still walking upright?" I sure am. Really, I have no complaints. I cannot really complain about anything.

JE: You—

JP: Everybody has a few little things that happen in our life.

JE: Do you take any medication right now?

JP: Oh yeah, blood pressure medicine.

JE: Okay, well that's it?

JM: And that's fairly recent.

JP: Um-hmm (affirmative).

- JM:** I was taking blood pressure medicine before she was.
- JE:** And she gave you blood pressure pills?
- JP:** Oh yeah.
- JE:** Here you are, eighty-nine. We've talked about Martin Luther King.
- JP:** Oh yes, heavens.
- JE:** We've talked about the OU days. Is racism still here—
- JM:** Oh.
- JE:** ...but it's not as bad? Or how do you feel today?
- JP:** Uh, yeah, it is, but it's out in the open. And, you know, anymore it's blatant. People who are racist don't mind you knowing that they're racist. That's the feeling I got, 'cause when I see things like with the President when they do all of these little ugly things and say all these little things, they want you to know exactly how they feel about it. So it's open, it's in the open, so you don't get away with anything anymore without being called on it.
- JE:** As an elegant and beautiful lady as you are, as you go about our town, do you feel any racism toward you?
- JP:** No. No, I don't even let it touch me. It can't even hurt me.
- JE:** No, but do you sense it?
- JP:** Well, anymore—
- JE:** Yeah?
- JP:** ...I don't come in contact with those kind of people. I just see it on TV. I see it—
- JE:** Yeah. But you don't sense it yourself?
- JP:** I don't sense it myself at all.
- JE:** Right. Students will be listening to this. Do you have any advice to high school students, college students?
- JP:** My thing is, actually, if you treat people the way you wanted to be treated it's a simple thing. Anything you don't want said or done to you, don't do it to anybody else.
- JE:** Um-hmm (affirmative).
- JP:** It's so simple.
- JE:** Right.
- JP:** Because that, to me, life is really simple.

Chapter 22 - 3:18

Praise for Parents

John Erling: So as you look back, what are you most proud of?

Jeanne Phillips: I'm proud of all these four kids of mine and their accomplishments. They did exactly what they were supposed to do. They got their education and they're using it the way that they should.

Judy McIntyre: All of us.

JP: That's what I said. I said these four kids, all four of them, I mean, in their own field, everybody has made us proud. And Ed would be very proud to know that they've all accomplished what we wanted them to do. And they're all still doing what they want to do.

JE: And you sent her to our state legislature and was effective over there.

Judy, your comments as you reflect on your parents and how they—

JM: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: ...had a tremendous influence on you.

JM: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: What would you say?

JM: I was blessed to have two wonderful parents who believe that education was the key to success in life.

JP: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: Also, while my father wasn't in church all the time, Mother had us in church and taught us the values of how to live with others and how to treat others.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: And I grew up thinking that everybody's folks went to college and did not realize how unusual that was—

JE: Yeah.

JM: ...for my generation. As a social worker, I worked in child abuse at [indiscernible] and came in contact with lots of parents and children who were born somewhat out of the loop.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: And I reflect back on my life and I'm just so blessed to have wonderful parents.

JE: Yeah, you talked about your dad—

JM: My dad died when he was forty-six.

JE: So how old were you?

JM: I was probably in my twenties.

JE: Oh, of age—

JM: I had finished college.

JP: Oh yeah.

JM: Mother got married twenty-two years after Daddy died.

JP: Yeah. I was—

JM: In fact, I didn't think she was ever going to get married.

JP: I—yeah, I was widowed twenty years.

JM: Yeah, so...

JP: And—

JE: Did you ever think you'd ever get married again?

JP: I didn't plan to. Everything set up. I was traveling and doing everything I wanted.

JE: And then you met, and what was his name?

JP: Dale, Dale Phillips.

JE: Where is he?

JP: We live out from Sand Springs.

JM: They live on six acres. He built her a home.

JE: Is he still with you alive today?

JM: Oh yeah.

JP: Oh yeah, he's younger than I am. He's six years younger than I am. Well, he didn't know that when he first—I met him with Judy at some affair. And he had seen me at several places. He was like most of the young men who knew me, they always thought I was much younger. But I never let anybody get away with the idea that I, no, I'm not that young woman that you think I am.

And, of course, I told. He needed to know how old I was when he first married me.

JE: Okay, right. As you look back, how would you like to be remembered?

JP: Oh, dear. I just want to be remembered as Jeanne. I just want to be remembered as a good person.

JE: Yeah.

JP: A person who loved life and people. Nothing spectacular. I'm proud of a lot of things, the accomplishments with four children. My biggest pride is in the accomplishments that they've made and we desired for them.

JE: Yeah.

JP: But that's it.

JE: Well, this was wonderful. I thank you both.

JP: Oh, good.

JP: Oh, good. Oh, I know you had a script that we—

JE: We basically followed it.

JM: Okay, 'cause I tend to get my talking—

JE: Oh, but I knew that.

JP: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JM: ...about my mom.

JE: You get it from her? Right.

Chapter 23 - 0:33**Conclusion**

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