

Janet Spector

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Interview with Janet Spector

**Interviewed by Professor Clarke A. Chambers
University of Minnesota**

**Interviewed on July 13, 1994
in the Office of Janet Spector, Morrill Hall
University of Minnesota Campus**

Janet Spector - JS
Clarke A. Chambers - CAC

CAC: This Wednesday July 13. I'm interviewing Janet Spector of the Department of Anthropology, also of the Commission on Women. We are doing the interview in her office in Morrill Hall.

As I explained earlier, what I try to do is get a running start on who the person is, where she comes from, and you can take it from there. How did you get in anthropology, and how into Indians, and so on.

JS: As I just told you, I wrote about this in doing this book that was published last year [*What this Awl Means* by Janet D. Spector]. I grew up in Madison, Wisconsin in a neighborhood named Nakoma. I lived at the corner of Shawnee Pass and Cherokee Drive.

CAC: [laughter]

JS: Every street name was an Indian name or a pseudo, if not a real Indian. We had Manitou Way and . . .

CAC: Of course.

JS: . . . of course, we were never told anything about those people, let alone why those streets were named that way. Actually, even before we moved to Nakoma, I grew up near [Henry] Vilas Park in Madison; and my grandfather, who was a Russian immigrant, used to take us through this park through this group of Indian mounds. My environment has been saturated with things Indian that I knew nothing about but was very aware of and very intrigued by.

CAC: Sure. Very subliminal?

JS: Very subliminal, I think. The other piece about my interest in archaeology is that I used to love to go through people's trash. You know in the old days, people threw away things besides . . . I liked gadgets, the old broken . . .

CAC: Before we recycled them?

JS: Yes, exactly. So I would walk down Cherokee Drive, snooping in people's trash all the time. This is the classic story. It must be every archaeologist would have such interest.

CAC: As the twig is bent.

JS: Yes. I loved finding things and there used to be a little creek that ran by on Cherokee Drive. There was a—I don't know what you called it—a culvert, or something. You'd sometimes find things people lost . . . jackknives. Kids used to go down, and smoke, and you'd find Zippo lighters, and things like that. I really do trace my early interests in things Indian and finding things, and sort of material things, to those days. My mother reminded me that I came home—she says in ninth grade; I don't remember this—saying "I'm going to be an archaeologist." I didn't know anything about what archaeologists did really; and it wasn't the Egyptian pyramids or the high civilization archaeology, it was somehow digging around. I went to the University of Wisconsin in 1964 and immediately started taking anthropology courses. I was just bored to tears. I couldn't believe, How could this be so boring? The books and the courses were so boring, badly taught.

CAC: Including cultural anthropology which at that time should have been really exciting?

JS: I happened to have a terrible teacher for my first course but I had two terrific TAs [teaching assistants]. The TAs really made it so interesting about large universities and the role of TAs because the instructor for my cultural course was a guy from Harvard. It took us about three weeks to realize what he was doing for his lectures was reading the book he assigned. *Profiles in Culture* it was called or something like that. But I did have a TA—not in cultural but in the physical . . . it was like [unclear] evolution, that kind of course—the fall of my sophomore year, a real nice guy who was a TA in a lab course. He said, "You know, you have no talent for this. I want to introduce you to Joan Freeman because she takes people digging." Joan Freeman was the director of archaeology at the [Wisconsin] State Historical Society in Madison. She had gotten her Ph.D. I think she was the first woman Ph.D. in archaeology at Wisconsin.

CAC: Great.

JS: She and a male, Jay Brandon, ran a field program. In those days, they paid you to be on these crews. You didn't have to do a field [unclear]. We worked at a spectacular site in

Wisconsin called Aztaland. It was so spectacular. It has very large earthen pyramids, mounds, and a long history of archaeology there. They were revisiting it to do some work and that did it. It was this combination of finding wonderful things, being totally fascinated, loving the digging. It was very athletic and just fun to do. And happily for me, there was a woman archaeologist because at that time . . . There's the T-shirt I have still from a guy about how women couldn't be in the field because they were so distracting. He was serious. He was a fairly prominent . . .

CAC: I'm sure that he was distracted.

JS: [laughter] I'm sure he was, too. Joan and Jay ran a very good program.

CAC: But you were the only woman graduate student in the field?

JS: No. I was a sophomore.

CAC: I see. Okay.

JS: I started doing field work my sophomore year and then stayed with them through my undergraduate years. I worked in the lab so despite the boring courses, I was doing the field work, and that made all the difference.

CAC: Kept you alive?

JS: Yes. That was all in Wisconsin. It was very good field training. They were very good field technicians so I learned a lot. I started graduate school. I have always been a very poor standardized tester. When I was sixteen, I was in a study of overachievers where they brought us in. In Madison they brought thirty kids from . . .

CAC: You were better than your tests?

JS: Yes, and it was a devastating experience because what they did for me—I've never talked to the others; I knew a couple of others from my high school all of whom went on to have professional careers, the two that I knew—but this psychologist said, "By your standardized tests you should be doing C work and here you are doing A and B work."

CAC: You must be working too hard.

JS: Well, they were trying to figure out what motivated kids who shouldn't be doing well because they had been spending all their time with the high testers who didn't do well.

CAC: Sure.

JS: So, he was trying to do this ground breaking work. I had always thought I was very smart and this had a real devastating effect on me, I think combined with probably what happens with socialization of girls anyway. I was always sure I wouldn't make the next step. I wouldn't graduate. I wouldn't get to graduate school. I wouldn't finish a Ph.D. anyway. Because I tested so badly on the GRE, I was not accepted at Texas, or someplace, and I ended up on a scholarship to the University of Missouri, which I hated, and left after six weeks.

CAC: Hmmmm.

JS: I came back to Madison, and got a job for the rest of the year, and then went on to Madison in the 1960s. Then, I started my M.A. program in 1967-1968. I finished in 1970. I had wonderful fellowships and really got lots of perks as a graduate student.

CAC: You did field work in Israel as well as . . .

JS: Not then. All through my master's degree was still on Wisconsin. Well, you know, if you become specialized early then it's almost hard to change.

CAC: Yes.

JS: So my master's degree was on seed analysis in archaeology and using material at a Wisconsin site. In 1969 and 1970, I went to Israel because I really did want to get some other experience. It was a fabulous program out of the University of Arizona. They were interested in people who were new world archaeologists getting experience in the old world, so it was great. It was a wonderful program.

CAC: Were you interested in Zion and in modern Israel in doing this?

JS: I became more interested. Even then the politics there were very disturbing.

CAC: This was not a primary motive?

JS: No. No, except that my family is Jewish and it was interesting to me to be in an all Jewish environment. It was interesting and the archaeology was spectacular. We worked with an Israeli archaeologist born there. We saw sites that people never see. It was great, great! The more important parts for me of that time period were anti-war, the feminist movement . . . Black Studies was a very hot issue at Wisconsin.

CAC: Particularly at Madison?

JS: Yes, very, very inflamed.

CAC: More so than here.

JS: Yes. Then the other thing that was big in Madison—I don't know if it was here—was the Free School Movement. There was all this student power stuff going on. I dropped out of graduate school in 1970 and a group of us—all anthropology—three graduate students and one faculty member started a free school in Madison for a year. I had started TA-ing a couple years earlier.

CAC: [unclear] a lot of the student staff before them came out of the experimental college which at some was a free school.

JS: Yes. I became very, very interested in issues of pedagogy . . .

CAC: Ah ha.

JS: . . . and how to create kind of a learning environment where kids really thrive and how to reduce anxiety so people can learn. That was directly autobiographical because I was a very anxious student and I knew the effect on me. Anxiety paralyzed me.

CAC: And you were beginning to read feminists tracts, I would imagine?

JS: Yes. That was really coming together. Then I did come back a year after that to graduate school and had shifted by then to doing ethnohistoric archaeology which much better suited me because you had the documentary evidence along with site material. I worked on a Winnebago site.

CAC: So you get your degree and [unclear] search you come here?

JS: There was a search. I wasn't done with my Ph.D. Somebody who had been here, got his M.A. here said, "There's a job at Minnesota. You really should apply even if you're not quite ready. You'll get your feet wet in the interview process." I did that. The meetings were in Toronto. I interviewed for the job, and the next thing I heard was that someone else had gotten the job, and it was my colleague Guy Gibbon. He was also from Wisconsin and had been out several years ahead of me. He had been at EWM, I think. I felt well, that's all right. When they brought us here to interview, it was the financial exigency. Eldon Johnson was chair of anthropology. They brought us in in December because they were sure that all searches that hadn't been completed by January would be stopped.

CAC: So they had to move along?

JS: Yes. They called me and said, "Can you come tomorrow? You don't even have to give a talk." That's how this process worked. They were interviewing two of us simultaneously because they had an archaeology job and a cultural job.

CAC: At one slot?

JS: Two slots.

CAC: Oh, two slots.

JS: No, they had two slots. Then I came home and heard shortly thereafter that they had hired Guy Gibbon for the archaeology slot; and like the next day Eldon called and said, "Are you interested?"

CAC: In the culture slot?

JS: Well, no. What he finessed somehow . . . the cultural people either didn't accept or they didn't offer. He finagled it into two archaeology jobs. Then things happened that I didn't know about but I'm mentioning them because they had a real profound effect on me that I realize more now than even then. As soon as I got here, people started telling me, "You are an Affirmative Action hire," that Guy got the real job and my job was supposed to be a one year temporary job.

CAC: I see.

JS: This was one rumor. Eldon didn't ever say that. In fact, the letter didn't say that.

CAC: That's unnerving in any case.

JS: It was very unnerving and it was a terrible way to start. Whenever people talk about target of opportunity hiring, and let's just special this and that for women and minorities, I want to say, "Do that for men. Do it for white men. Don't do it for the rest of us who already know we weren't welcome in the first place," or at least you have that in the back of your mind that you're not getting it because of your qualities.

CAC: But then you had to check out when you got here to see whether you were really wanted or not.

JS: I started hearing these things my first year here.

CAC: From colleagues as well as from . . .

JS: It was all colleagues. People were doing it in a friendly, meaning to be friendly, way. It wasn't nasty.

CAC: What else can you say about the department you came into in 1973, its specialties?

JS: It always has been very heavily oriented to cultural anthropology. There was one other woman, Claire Cassidy, who you remember from Women's Studies?

CAC: Sure.

JS: [She was] also from Wisconsin. It was a department that when you walked into it the first thing you heard . . . They tell you this in ethnography that the first people who will come talk to you are the alienated. That was definitely true.

CAC: [laughter]

JS: So, I heard about every battle that had been waged in the past fifty years, I think. When Anne Hovel was chair, apparently there were many battles, just kind of personality fights.

CAC: Not over methods of inquiry or emphases within the discipline?

JS: No, except that I think that the people in physical anthropology and archaeology always felt like we were step-children.

CAC: But Eldon who was an archaeologist hires two archaeologists, so that kind of strengthens that balance?

JS: It did. It tipped the balance. In the end, I don't think people resented it. I don't know. I had already had teaching credentials at Wisconsin. I had been nominated for some teaching awards, and people knew I was a committed teacher, and had success at teaching.

CAC: Did you know at that time that you were seeking for new classroom ways . . .

JS: Yes, because that had started in the free school. I had learned a lot in the free school. It was one year.

CAC: But you were thinking seriously of using that in higher education?

JS: I did use. Yes, because I TA-ed in . . .

CAC: For example, where's a carry over?

JS: I brought some things from my TA experience into the free school but when I started TA-ing, I was the first and only person I knew who ever divided people into small groups with very specific assignments, not just talk about the work.

CAC: Sure, sure.

JS: I worked very hard and I did that. It was absolutely a defensive teaching strategy because I was always nervous at the beginning of class, and that would calm me down; and what I found was that the students loved it, and I became a relaxed teacher. The groups would meet, and they

would do their assignment, and then we would talk. It was wildly successful, and other people at Wisconsin would try it, and couldn't do it. I never was quite sure what they couldn't do but I think it was that they were . . .

CAC: It takes the center away from the teacher.

JS: That's right. They were afraid they would lose control.

CAC: Yes.

JS: Which . . .

CAC: In a lot of classrooms is probably true.

JS: It happens. That's a teaching style that works for some people better than others.

CAC: Well, most of us were socialized in that generation to a hierarchical system where the instructor was the head of . . .

JS: But I didn't like it and the other thing is I was carrying around, even then, a fair amount of sort of personal power that I wasn't even very aware of; but I knew I was intimidating students, and that this also relaxed them. It wasn't just that it relaxed me.

CAC: Your colleagues at the University of Minnesota, when first you came, did they see this as . . .

JS: They thought it was great, yes.

CAC: They thought it was great?

JS: Yes, they did. Eldon—you knew him—was a wonderful man and he was absolutely dedicated to undergraduate teaching. After the free school experience, I worked with these kids who absolutely had refused to read and write. We went out and dug a shot tower at Tower Hill State Park outside of Madison; and these kids who really wouldn't do any work, not only did they love the archaeology, but I had them mapping and doing all these sort of technical things. I tricked them into doing . . . not tricked but . . .

CAC: Sure.

JS: Then I did a thing where I simulated. I created a simulation, a kind of idealized archaeological site. I did this for money. There was a company that produced artificial limbs and food for advertisement out of plastics and they wanted to do artifacts. I said, "I would do that if they would do it as an educational kit, not just producing replicas." They produced

replicas of things, human hearts for medical . . . So I created this whole curriculum thing that was meant to be a teacher-proof introduction to archaeology, that the teacher didn't need to know anything, that it would take the students through a kind of discovery process on their own without ever digging anything. That was a great hit. I brought that right into the Introduction to Archaeology here with minor modifications. It was really better at the college level than the high school level.

CAC: You get to shape your courses, your teaching methods? You were awarded a good deal of elbow room when first you came?

JS: Yes. Eldon, again, my first quarter here, set me up team teaching the Intro course with Dennis Puleson where I really had to do virtually nothing. I just walked in and occasionally gave lectures. Denny was a very entertaining lecturer and he liked the class. Then I taught a graduate seminar . . . that was my first quarter. My second quarter he gave me off to finish my dissertation which I did do. I was that close. But it was great that he did that. My third quarter I taught the Introduction to Archaeology and the Introduction to Women's Studies, the third of that first year's sequence.

CAC: You were twenty-nine, thirty?

JS: Yes.

CAC: Were you old enough and experienced enough to know how difficult that would have been ten years earlier? Or did you think this was kind of the way the academy . . .

JS: The Women's Studies part of it or which?

CAC: No, different methods in the classroom and giving time off for finishing . . .

JS: I didn't know. In fact, I didn't even know what a tenure track job was. I'll tell you I didn't know much about higher education at all.

CAC: Okay. So you weren't socialized really to the job?

JS: I didn't know what to expect, no. And that testimony about the Wisconsin . . .

CAC: Wasn't testimony at all.

JS: No. I had a woman professor when I got the job offer here who said, "Ask if it's a tenure track job." I'd never heard the phrase ever. I didn't know anything about that.

CAC: So you were neither surprised nor dismayed when you had this kind of liberty really to design what you could do in the classroom?

JS: I did expect that. I really did expect that. I think that's from talking to Eldon and I didn't have any reason to think that . . . I was probably arrogantly certain about things like objective tests don't work. It didn't occur to me to ask anybody whether or not I could give . . . I've never in my life given an objective exam including in these big 200 person classes but it takes a lot of working with the TAs to come up with . . .

CAC: Stubbornness is an asset.

JS: Yes. The bigger surprise to me, Clarke, in terms of coming here was again how willing Eldon was to release me to Women's Studies. They called in the summer before I came.

CAC: I know that's happening right when you're coming.

JS: Yes. I thought they must have called every woman who was coming in that year. I don't know because Andrea Hinding, I think called me and said, Would I consider teaching it? I hadn't taught any of these courses so I said, "Sure."

CAC: They did assign you the third quarter so you had a couple of quarters?

JS: Yes.

CAC: So you were part of that first . . .

JS: Carolyn Rose and Joan [unclear].

CAC: What kind of direction did you have for that spring quarter course?

JS: I loved it! None. I wrote all over the country. Oh no, I had no direction.

CAC: Locally, no one knew what the course would be?

JS: No. The three of us got together and we talked about what we would do in the classes.

CAC: Carolyn was senior so she could move in more quickly?

JS: Yes and she probably had taught gender roles or something.

CAC: I think she had before she came back to Minnesota.

JS: We talked and I started writing my fall quarter, writing all across the country to ask people what they were using. I got quite interesting fugitive . . .

CAC: In what way did the spring quarter beyond anthropology? After all, you work from your base.

JS: It didn't. That course was Comparative Study of Women and then it was political science perspectives, sociologic perspectives and anthropological.

CAC: Does that mean it was theoretical from the word go?

JS: I just found the syllabus the other day. It was very interesting to see because I'd forgotten.

CAC: Well, there weren't all that many readings in 1973.

JS: I had thought about a ten-page bibliography. I had started working with a TA, Judith Modell, and very lucky for me. She's a very talented person. We started working way in advance of that class. I had seven undergraduate TAs and they were all research teams. Each one of the TAs was assigned to a topic and the students were divided—I think they could choose . . .

CAC: How many students were there?

JS: There was about 90 or 100.

CAC: Ninety! All right!

JS: It was very exciting because we said, "There isn't a lot to read." I could do the critique. That was about it because that had been done.

CAC: What proportion were young men?

JS: I don't think there were any that year.

CAC: Okay.

JS: I don't remember that there were any men in that class.

CAC: And what was the nature of the attraction to the women who were in the courses, undergraduates?

JS: What do I think they were attracted to?

CAC: Yes. What was their expectation?

JS: Oh, probably, are we going to be able to find Amazons? Were there matriarchies? Those were the kinds of things that they would do their research on.

CAC: They were sophisticated enough by then to know some of the questions at least?

JS: I prompted them but even before I got here, anthropology, in terms of people who were involved in the women's movement—and I don't know how many of the students really were—the dissent of woman was out. There were some popular books out that were kind of anthropological . . . There was a lot of myth building in the movement about matriarchies. So I think they all looked to anthropology as Oh, wow, this will be neat. We'll see if there were places.

CAC: And everybody knew Margaret Mead.

JS: Margaret Mead. And anthropology on it's own steam has . . . students are interested so any introductory . . . I think the combination of it being Introductory Anthropology and then Introductory Women's Studies was of interest to people.

CAC: Most particularly to you?

JS: it was very interesting to me. Yes.

CAC: Was that course ever repeated in that form?

JS: It moved to a 3,000 level and I taught that 3,000 level course many times. It was the spring of 1974 was the first offering, and by the next time I taught it, which was just the next year, Women, Culture, and Society was out. Toward an Anthropology of Women was out. Anthropology was very fast early in getting materials out that were good classroom . . . There were ethnographies you could use that . . .

CAC: So you stuck with that quarter of the introductory course.

JS: I just stayed. That's the course that I just kept teaching in Women's Studies.

CAC: The other instructors must have rotated? Joan left.

JS: Joan left and Carolyn died shortly after that. What happened is they changed the introduction course altogether. I think Sherry Register, maybe Gayle [G. Yates] . . . Shortly after that first year, people came in with a very different kind of history of the women's movement, women's issues . . .

CAC: By now we have a Women's Studies Program, and they have an advisory committee, and they have boards.

JS: That's right.

CAC: And one core staff? Is there any core staff? Is someone around to direct and chair it?

JS: Toni [McNaron] was half time coordinator.

CAC: She was just put on loan from English?

JS: Yes, and then remember, they had a chair of the committee?

CAC: Yes.

JS: So sort of a cross between a . . .

CAC: And Andrea was chair of the committee at that time?

JS: That first year. The second year, I came on and Shirley Clark, I think, came in that year.

CAC: Now, did that committee discuss curriculum, assignments?

JS: Yes.

CAC: Say a bit about that because those persons must have been selected from all over, including several men?

JS: There were always men on that committee. That committee really was a cross between like a senate governance committee and an academic department because it had the chair of the committee and the coordinator of the program. I don't know if anything else was governed. It was kind of a clever, not a bad way . . .

CAC: The members were appointed?

JS: The members were appointed by the dean, I think on the recommendation of the group.

CAC: Sure.

JS: I remember Jim Wertz, Mark Schneider. You had been on it, I think not the year . . .

CAC: No.

JS: You hadn't?

CAC: No. My work was primarily on the outside doing other things.

JS: Okay. I always associate you so much with this because of the archives. There always were men. We did talk. It was such a fascinating thing to do because that was creating a field from scratch.

CAC: You bet.

JS: It was the most exciting work I've ever been involved in, I think, beside my feminist archaeology which was also creating a field.

CAC: And at the same time?

JS: Yes. The thing that I've always thought about that for many of us, we talked about curriculum all the time because we were trying to create a major. Well, what should the major look like. So those discussions were so different not having a century of tradition to base it on. It was just the most incredibly creative experience. I think those of us like . . . within a couple of years there was Sara Evans, Naomi [Scheman], and me, and Gayle [G. Yates], and Sherry. It was really a fun, wonderful group of people.

CAC: Do you think that being the case, that you managed your political business and bureaucratic business in a different style?

JS: Oh, yes.

CAC: And it would be differentiated by what standards, categories?

JS: Again, working without a model, I think, what I remember of those days is that there were always lots of committees. Those committees were very task oriented.

CAC: Did you have to wait for consensus?

JS: No.

CAC: I see.

JS: We didn't do the kind of stereotype—maybe it's more than a stereotype.

CAC: I'm sure it is.

JS: It was true in a lot of places where they did leaderless governance and consensus building. We always had strong leadership and that was elected or selected.

CAC: So you elected your own coordinators and chairs?

JS: After we were established, we had a search. I chaired that committee that recruited Gayle. That was a national search for the coordinator which wasn't a chair then. It wasn't a department then. That was the first real position. It was a struggle but there was no question but that that person was kind of running the show.

CAC: I have a sense, you see, in California and in Pennsylvania and other places, the administrative structure was quite different in the beginning.

JS: Yes.

CAC: I wonder what's operating in Minnesota that would make it revolutionary but in a traditional way.

JS: It's an interesting question. A lot of the other programs had a very strong community base so they always had community people involved.

CAC: Like African-Americans here, or Chicano Studies, or American Indian Studies?

JS: More like that.

CAC: This program did not to the same degree?

JS: Not to the same degree and some people faulted that. We did have community teachers, you know, people who were hired on a part time basis and were out in the community. It's hard to say what happened here that we did not follow the course that a lot of places did and a lot of those places didn't make it. I don't know if it's in way we had an easier time, we were smarter, we were more strategic, we had some people guiding us at times through that? I do think—not to attribute this to personalities—that Shirley Clark was an interesting figure in the history of Women's Studies here because she was very much an inside player; and she was a Central Administrator. At that time, she was like assistant vice-president or acting. She was acting forever.

CAC: She knew her way around.

JS: She came across as such a prim and proper conservative.

CAC: She dressed that way.

JS: Yes. Her physical demeanor. She really got interested in Women's Studies as an intellectual enterprise and she provided excellent leadership. She was very organized, and she really was a manager type, and so committees were structured, and by-laws were passed. People didn't rebel against that.

CAC: And the college encouraged it?

JS: I think so. We wanted to talk about working against the grain here and institutional transformation. What I remember is rehearsing, and rehearsing, and rehearsing how to go before the CLA [College of Liberal Arts] curriculum committee to argue for the major. How were we

going to answer the criticisms? We were so good at anticipating the criticisms, and again, that might have had a conservatizing effect on us. We really did a lot of strategizing and there were constant setbacks. The budget was year to year and then they'd cut it. Then we'd have to fight. We had a huge struggle about getting positions.

CAC: Mr. Sorauf replaces Mr. Ziebarth in 1973.

JS: Yes. But Fred Lukermann came in with . . .

CAC: That's later . . . 1978.

JS: Yes. Frank Sorauf was dean when the major got through and it was, I think, over his very strong objections. Again, now Toni becomes important.

CAC: Yes. But he's willing to go with the flow when he saw what the politics was. See, I've heard so many people say that in the initial stages that Ziebarth just gave a loose frame and lots of support.

JS: Yes, and I wasn't here, so I missed that phase. I came in under a little bit more resistance.

CAC: Even with retrenchment and even with all the budgetary troubles, the program is growing all through that period?

JS: Yes, it was growing. The student interest was very high. We also did things early on that I think supported the kind of research emphasis that this kind of university . . . although we were almost all junior faculty in those early years.

CAC: Except for Shirley Clark.

JS: Shirley Clark and Toni.

CAC: Yes.

JS: I kind of remember everybody going through tenure at various points but we started real early having conferences at Spring Hill. I remember the very first paper I ever wrote on feminist archaeology was presented there.

CAC: Hmmm.

JS: I believe without it, it never would have been written because people in the department dismissed it.

CAC: And the profession nationally?

JS: Feminist archaeology still is just barely there.

CAC: I see.

JS: Feminist cultural anthropology is very big.

CAC: I see.

JS: But in archaeology there was no such thing. The intellectual community in Women's Studies, I think fostered the publication of many, many books and articles here. You know, it's a funny kind of thing. In a lot of departments that is not what they did. They got into big battles about one kind of split or another kind of split. Sometimes it was community. It was town/gown. It was lesbian/straight. It was about class or around power, a lot of power.

CAC: Or around race?

JS: We got that, too.

CAC: Most of the other ones were finessed here?

JS: Yes. Also, our population is very low. The population of people of color interested in Women's Studies here, until recently, was very low.

CAC: But the straight/lesbian thing could explode anywhere?

JS: Yes. It never did explode here, although people tried very, very hard to make that be an issue here. That was always the scuttlebutt. Whenever there was trouble in Women's Studies, that was what it was said to be.

CAC: That's what the outsiders said?

JS: Some of the insiders said it. In terms of the actual participants in the program . . . I remember Sara and I going to a meeting with Fred [Lukermann] and Arturo Madrid—and who else?—at Arturo's house because we knew this rumor of gay/straight stuff was emanating from the dean's office. We knew that. One of the deans, who was not at that meeting, one of the associate deans was very busy making those statements. We just said, "This has to stop." I don't know if it did but it was kind of a fun little drama.

CAC: It is a fun drama but who was the convener? Did Lukermann and Madrid . . . ?

JS: No, Sara and I called for the meeting. We called for it through Robin Madrid, Arturo's wife, who we played racquetball with. [laughter]

CAC: I'm asking you to reflect on things that you don't have experience elsewhere but you are part of a national movement everywhere.

JS: Yes.

CAC: And that Minnesota would apparently be able to finesse these differences that occurred everywhere except for race? Could you say something about that?

JS: When I chaired Women's Studies, there was an episode in a classroom that sparked big protests against Women's Studies.

CAC: On a race issue?

JS: Yes. It happened to an undergraduate, very talented Afro-American woman in a class on feminist literature. She had a bad experience that she did not think had been handled properly. Other people who had been activists on campus, like Anna Stanley . . .

CAC: Oh, my.

JS: Yes . . . kind of got involved.

CAC: Although she was not directly involved in this?

JS: No. I had tried very hard when I came in to chair . . . There were two things I wanted to do. We had had a lot of chaos prior to that because things with Gayle [G. Yates] really crumbled. That was a very sad time in the program. There was a lot of rebuilding and community building that needed to be done and I wanted to get students more involved. Students had been very alienated. I started with a mixed group of African-American and white women students. It was one of those students who was in this class and had a hard time. I think they really had high hopes. The problem was that because it involved some people who had a long history here of kind of agitating in probably not very productive ways, it was a messy political . . . And didn't go anywhere because they weren't asking for anything. They were just causing trouble.

CAC: So you just waited it out?

JS: Well, we had a lot of meetings and I think it was important. I think issues of racism are always there, and always need to be talked about; so I think there was a lot of activity. It sparked more activity and more self reflection. The thing Women's Studies here—then we can maybe move to other things as I see us both look at the watch—we've lost ground. Although the Center for Advanced Feminist Studies . . . That was also when I was chair that that began and I feel that's a wonderful legacy. I think it's great.

CAC: Yes.

JS: I think it's a great thing to have helped organize. We have probably more feminist scholars at this university than anywhere else in the country. I really believe that's true.

CAC: This was in part because the departments were adding, for similar reasons, right?

JS: Yes. And we had some key people here.

CAC: In English and in History, this is what happened?

JS: Yes and American Studies. We had some key people, and Minnesota became a very attractive place for people doing feminist work, and many students come here.

CAC: Graduate students?

JS: Yes.

CAC: It may be that the American Studies tradition there of bootlegging women's issues for the whole decade beginning in 1969, 1970 and 1971, and then all the way to 1984, this is where it was done.

JS: Yes. I think the History Department was very important.

CAC: Yes.

JS: Sara's been just such a magnet and then MJ [Mary Jo Maynes]. You've got a group of unparalleled people in History.

CAC: You bet.

JS: And a receptive male faculty. Forget the curmudgeons.

CAC: It wouldn't be any good without them.

JS: That's right. It's true. No absolutely. I do think that in a number of departments, for whatever reason anyway, the numbers are high. The university has made it virtually impossible to have viable joint appointments. That's never been something that . . . and people would have, upon entry, been happy to have them. We have a small core with an unbelievably high student load really. There are many majors now. There are over a hundred Women's Studies majors. Undergraduates . . . many, many doing graduate programs. If you talk about functional core faculty, because there is one person who really has long ago stopped working, I think there are four; and then the rest of us on this periphery just can't take up the load, especially as we've all

matured, and gone on, and gotten tenure, and so on, and then chaired departments . . . and do you know what I mean?

CAC: Has this adjunct staff been called upon for the teaching of courses, however?

JS: Yes.

CAC: See, so the adjunct staff has really persisted in being active in the teaching?

JS: They're active but it's different. They're active so you have a department. What happens is you end up with a structure that is . . . In a way, you're serving as many students and you're producing as many courses as a major department . . .

CAC: Sure.

JS: . . . but you haven't gotten even the half time commitment of enough people.

CAC: Yes. But you see what happens sometimes, like American Studies, when they get a large core faculty then the adjunct . . .

JS: Drift off. I know.

CAC: . . . drift away and I think there's loss in that.

JS: That's happened, too. I think, frankly, they should have just gone ahead and made more hires because the demand was there. The need is there. Other schools have gotten bigger.

CAC: Of course, all programs like this phased in the 1970s, then the first retrenchment came in May 1971, and by 1973-1974, we're getting used every two years to kind of going through this exercise.

JS: Constant, yes. But it's hard with new programs . . .

CAC: You have nothing to retrench.

JS: There is nothing to retrench, and they're the first to be retrenched, and you can never prove yourself. It's one of the things that's been very hard about, I think, our Ethnic Studies and Women's Studies, even though Women's Studies has had more people and more powerful people that this business of justifying your existence over and over against opposition that constantly sees you as . . .

CAC: Marginal?

JS: . . . marginal on important political . . . Now, we're in a new wave of backlash against Women's Studies with the publication of Christina Sommer's book [*Who Stole Feminism?: How Women Have Betrayed Women*]. I have often wondered what would happen if we were left untethered; and maybe left untethered nothing would have happened but it certainly has been not privileged. [laughter]

CAC: But the program has in fact gone from strength to strength?

JS: Yes. It's hard now to tell. There's a lot of malaise among the faculty, period. So what there is in Women's Studies is no different or what there is among women, which brings us to the commission.

CAC: Sure. Why don't we go ahead with that then? This is established in 1988?

JS: Yes.

CAC: The commission itself?

JS: Yes.

CAC: And you were named as the first director?

JS: In fact before the commission, a position was created partly because the Rajender consent decree was ending . . . about to end. But prior to that, there had been a bad eruption of real harassment in the Chemistry Department, the notorious Chemistry Department, in winter of 1987. I don't know if you were in residence?

CAC: Even after all the Rajender fuss, they did it again?

JS: Yes. They did it again. When Rajender won, Chemistry was mandated to hire two women, and they did, and those women were punished horribly . . .

CAC: Yes.

JS: . . . to the point where the thing that was the precipitating event was this senior woman came into her lab one day to find excrement on her desk. This is after many months of being ridiculed in parties, kind of that stuff. It was in the *Daily*. I don't know exactly how it got in the *Daily* but a group of senior women scientists, including the two regents' professors, Margaret Davis and Ellen Berscheid, and a group of about ten senior women scientists went to Roger Benjamin and Pat Mullen together with a petition, kind of, saying despite this out of court settlement, things are very bad for women in some parts of the university. We want the appointment of a high level administrative person to assess the climate for women and to do something about it.

CAC: This was when Roger Benjamin was vice-president for Academic Affairs?

JS: Vice-president. Roger and Pat [Mullen] thought that was actually not a bad idea and Pat recruited me. She came and said, "Would you be interested at all?" She and I had been working on a committee once and said, "They should let us loose. We could fix . . ." [laughter]

CAC: I sometimes talk like that myself.

JS: The arrogance, you know. I was encouraged at that point. There were a number of reasons I was interested and we can go back to them if you want to talk about the Anthropology Department.

CAC: Sure.

JS: I was very frustrated there. By then Eldon was out of the department. We had a chair who I thought was a little petty tyrant who just drove you nuts. I'll tell you this because I had been working then on a Bush sabbatical in 1984-1985, after I finished chairing Women's Studies. I'd been simultaneously running this field project of the Little Rapids site which is a Wahpeton Dakota nineteenth-century community . . . the book as well [*What this Awl Means* by Janet D. Spector]. On my sabbatical I wanted to redesign the field program, particularly to work more collaboratively with Dakota people if I could find people who would work with me. That happened and in 1987, we ran what was the absolute high point of my long archaeological career . . .

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]

[Tape 1, Side 2]

JS: . . . program and the aftermath of that was—I don't mean to sound arrogant—I really do think it was certainly unique in the state and the region and pretty much unique in the country at that time. Things are changing now with the participation of Indian people in archaeology projects. This was a charmed experience. It was a fabulous collaboration, and maybe more so for me, but ultimately it built relationships to that community and that family.

CAC: You're coming off a high there.

JS: It was a high and I remember Russell Fridley was all excited and a lot of people were interested in that.

CAC: The [Minnesota] Historical Society did a lot and it has the last ten years [unclear].

JS: Yes. Yes. This project at Little Rapids is interesting because Sara and I wanted to work together on it, with her doing the European side of the colonial equation, and I would be doing

the Dakota side. We were rebuffed by NSF [National Science Foundation] and NEH [National Endowment for the Humanities] on that project; so, I was doing it on a shoestring but raised money internally. EDP [Education Development Program], CLA [College of Liberal Arts] honors, they loved this idea. The department paid for the basics and summer session paid for the field school. In 1987, I then had a single quarter leave when I began to write the book, and I got my salary that year, and it was like a 0.2 merit. I hadn't published that year . . . I thought I could be in the middle somewhere, and this was a new chair, and I had told them I wouldn't be director of Graduate Studies because I really didn't want to work with him. I wrote him a letter and I said, "You and I have such a different view of my year that I can't even believe" [laughter] I said I wanted to know what the range of merit was. I didn't care about the people but I wanted to know . . .

CAC: Anthropology didn't operate with an open budget?

JS: No, no, no, no, no. And it still doesn't.

CAC: Still doesn't? I see.

JS: No, no. He wrote me back a scathing letter. It was a letter that was sort of, Oh, you have so much promise but you've never really published as much as you should. That was the gist of it. In July, I walked out of my office and I said, "I'm quitting. That's it." Obviously that's after years of feeling that . . . I got tremendous support from outside the department for doing my feminist archaeology but still, you know somehow, the environment you work in needs to be supportive enough that you don't feel marginalized. In fact, I have an allergic reaction to marginalization so I work very hard not to be margin. I wasn't badly treated the way some of my colleagues have been in anthropology. Claire Cassidy was brutally treated and so was another colleague. She can tell her own story one day. I did not have that experience. I was kind of the good girl but always sort of defined as the good teacher—which is great—but the research was always, She's not doing anything; and I was doing stuff I really cared about. Anyway when Pat approached me then that next year saying, "Would you be interested in something else?" of course, this was great because I really wanted out of anthropology.

CAC: By that time Roger Benjamin had moved on?

JS: Not quite. I came on spring 1988 and he was gone I think by fall. That whole collapse happened.

CAC: The whole thing folded but it didn't fold on you?

JS: No. No. No.

CAC: What kind of a job description did you get?

JS: It was called Special Assistant to the Senior Vice-President for Academic Affairs and to the Director of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action.

CAC: A long title. That must have 1, 2, 3, A, B?

JS: It was to assess the climate for women, faculty and staff—because it was the Rajender class when it started; it was faculty and professional staff—and to develop a kind of system-wide, systematic plan of action to improve the climate for women. I started just the way you are.

CAC: The charge was at large?

JS: Yes and it was system-wide.

CAC: Including the other coordinate campuses?

JS: Yes. I was given carte blanche to just do it, however I wanted to; and I started just doing what you're doing what you're doing. I started with what I thought of as ethnographic interviews, starting with people I knew, and then expanding out. I asked people three questions. I said, "Tell me what you see as major obstacles and barriers for women—just in your experience." This was both men and women, predominately women, but I did talk to men, department chairs, deans. I asked everybody to tell me anything successful that had happened to improve or make their climate better, anything, formal or informal. Then I asked everybody to tell me their vision of the transformed university. What was it going to look like when things were really good for women. That was wonderful. The process was wonderful but it was also an organizing tool because I then assembled all the people I'd interviewed . . .

CAC: Just asking the questions of these people, it was clear to them.

JS: People loved it. I talked to some of the Rajender people but mostly I didn't. I tried to get out of CLA because that was what I knew best. From that we developed something—and it's in this green book; I'll give you a copy if you want it—called The Minnesota Plan Two which outlined a kind of framework for change. It identified four kind of major areas to work in and then an organizational structure to implement the change. That was to establish a commission on women that was system-wide, and to establish in each college or comparable unit groups that would take this Minnesota Plan—that's got some rhetoric and so on—to take it and tailor it to what they needed to do in their own areas. I knew from these interviews that the climate for women, like the climate for men, varies tremendously. A lot depends on the department, specifically on the department level.

CAC: I think finally we're a feudal structure . . .

JS: Yes.

CAC: . . . and the provinces, the lordships, the fiefdoms are still . . .

JS: Yes. The change in climate from one chair to another is dramatic.

CAC: Yes.

JS: It's just absolutely dramatic. It's a terrible burden to put on chairs.

CAC: And particularly in departments that aren't organized along democratic lines?

JS: Yes.

CAC: With elected committee, open budget?

JS: Oh, yes. Your department is so unique in that.

CAC: Is it really?

JS: Oh, maybe there are a couple of others but you're way on the far edge. History is on absolutely . . .

CAC: And you know how traditional and how it goes along?

JS: Yes. That has been a very interesting . . .

CAC: But you still do anthropology . . . I mean, teaching?

JS: I only have taught Women's Studies since I've done this. I am going to teach a feminist archaeology seminar next year.

CAC: But you still hold your appointment there?

JS: I have my appointment in anthropology.

CAC: And at some point, you surely will go back to that?

JS: I don't know.

CAC: Okay.

JS: I don't know.

CAC: You've found this kind of work rewarding?

JS: In a lot of ways, yes. It's like the Women's Studies work. As long as we're working to create something new, and we've done a lot of developing resources, and I think working fairly productively and pretty local, not big slashing. I mean you could give a report to the regents but they'd probably kind of yawn because it isn't huge stuff but it is making sure untenured women have good programs . . .

CAC: Excuse me.

JS: Yes.

CAC: You've been at this now, with the commission, five or six years?

JS: Yes, six years. Next year is the last year of another three-year. I've had two three-year appointments.

CAC: I see. Does the program itself have a sundown clause?

JS: No, but what we've done is after the first year I appointed to do a kind of internal review, and make some recommendations, and one of them was change the title; so it's Assistant Provost for Academic Affairs.

CAC: The other one, that's too much to remember.

JS: Yes. We'll do that again beginning next year.

CAC: In six years—I'm sure your pamphlet demonstrates it but for the spoken word—what are really the successes in that program?

JS: I think actively engaging a very large number of people, both men and women, in fact increasingly including men which I think is really important; since it's not like women are the ones who have to do the changing. I think that involving people in change activities is a very empowering activity itself. People feel better about the climate.

CAC: Well, apart from being interviewed, how do you engage them in the change process?

JS: They're working on developing workshops on mentoring. We spend a lot of time in workshops talking about administrative accountability, and what does this really mean, and how should we review administrators. We've done projects on how to more effectively recruit people.

CAC: These workshops go down to the departmental program level?

JS: Sometimes it's just the women. We're doing a lot of team building activity so women and Sciences and Engineering have been organizing teams of people.

CAC: Workshops for chairs?

JS: Workshops for chairs . . . kind of more consultations with administrators depending on what we're consulting about. If we're going to do a big mentoring program, we want to make sure they're on board, and that they know what we're doing, and why we're doing it. We've had a grant program that has spawned terrific activities, everything from speakers series to building up resources . . .

CAC: Where does this money come from?

JS: It's part of the budget for the commission so it's budgeted through Academic Affairs and I built in up to a \$15,000 grant budget.

CAC: For the extra [unclear]?

JS: That grant program is open to faculty, students or staff. We favor collaborative projects and we insist that diversity be recognized in the projects themselves.

CAC: So that's a regrant program? You regrant to other [unclear].

JS: Yes. Yes. It's a grant. That's right but we're giving the money out. The projects are listed in back here.

CAC: Which ones do you sponsor yourselves? How large a staff do you have?

JS: I have two graduate students and an administrative assistant . . . two little more than half time graduate students. We staff it all. Each year, we set an agenda, a specific agenda of what projects are we going to put time and . . .

CAC: And your allies in the community here are Pat Mullen and Anne Truax?

JS: Carol Carrier, very much so.

CAC: I see.

JS: We have some nice allies around. There are deans who have found the way we've operated . . . If the College of Architecture wanted to come in and do some strategic planning about how to create a more inclusive environment, or something like that, then we'll take some that's in there, some ideas for how to generate that discussion, how to come up with some projects that tie in to the work people do.

CAC: This is not a faulting question.

JS: Yes.

CAC: Really an incremental strategy?

JS: Yes. It's the most we can get because, frankly, there is not the political will here to do significant change. If anything, there's a real conservative, I feel, a very conservative . . .

CAC: This is the whole culture? You aren't talking about Morrill Hall?

JS: I think it's the culture. I think it's here in Morrill Hall.

CAC: And it expresses itself in what ways?

JS: Oh, a kind of back to the basics, let's watch our for our standards, the whole U 2000. I don't know what from afar it's looked like but from up close, it has looked to me like a retreat to the university of the 1950s; and then as people protested that it sounded elitist, that it sounded this, that, and the other thing, now it starts sounding differently. When we tried to make, say on the subject of recruiting and retaining, a diverse faculty and graduate body—and I've been very active . . . Our work has been as much about students and faculty of color as about women per se. There's a lot of good collaboration with different offices now doing this work. I've said over and over to people, "If you are serious about this, you need to look at the curriculum and what we offer in our departments. You need to look at classroom climate and what's going on in classes. And you need to look at what kind of research gets sponsored and encouraged here." When you say that to people here in Morrill Hall, they'll say, "That's all up to the faculty." Well, it is but, you know, when computers come out and we want to make sure everybody's computer literate, you see an infusion of funds coming from all over, including the computer companies.

CAC: You bet.

JS: We don't have diversity companies pumping anything in. I don't believe the radical change that needs to happen in higher education . . .

CAC: You have no sense of strategy in an ideal world to move the process more rapidly.

JS: Of strategy? I feel like I know exactly how to do it and I think . . .

CAC: Tell me.

JS: . . . without the leadership you cannot do it.

CAC: Tell me how this goes.

JS: I shouldn't say exactly how to do it. What we've seen in projects that have worked well is a combination of targeting at the right level, that is, you don't emanate things from Morrill Hall and hope . . .

CAC: You bet.

JS: . . . getting into colleges or departments where there are opportunities and willingness to make the moves, having the project sort of defined in ways that—again whether this is about curriculum change or whatever—make sure that it is kind of well integrated into the culture of the department or the location, the college. I think you have to find ways to involve all the constituencies that need to be involved. Teams are a good idea and getting people to work collaboratively will spark change.

CAC: So what you're doing in the classroom is also a . . .

JS: Absolutely! I think it's exactly the same principle and I think you can get people very excited, and reassured about change, and feeling good about change, not threatened about it. So I think there has to be this combination of the grass roots quality with a kind of administrator or leadership that not only authorizes it but believes it. I don't think we have that.

CAC: With all the agendas that top administrators at least have to carry, how do they work this to the top of the agenda?

JS: They can't and they can't because they are absolutely ignorant about it.

CAC: I see.

JS: They're absolutely ignorant about it.

CAC: So it's not a matter of too many portfolios?

JS: I don't think so. I think this is not in their realm of . . .

CAC: This is what they would say.

JS: . . . their real realm of experience. See, people think working on issues of diversity . . . We don't even have good language . . . Are you running out of . . . ?

CAC: No, something is making noises.

JS: That's my E-mail saying "Wake up. You've got a message." I don't know how to turn it off. [laughter]

CAC: Oh, all right.

JS: And I don't care.

CAC: We're talking to the machine.

JS: If you talk to men who have never had professional relationships with women, peer relationships with women, or for that matter women who haven't with men, they don't know who to behave. There's no surprise. Why would they? It's like people who haven't ever been abroad. You need to be educated and have experience. I think there's kind of an intellectual content to this work that people refuse to believe, people who are not experienced . . . I see diversity literacy as equivalent to computer literacy. There's some things you have to learn.

CAC: Janet, this has been going on for twenty-five years?

JS: Yes.

CAC: But it's still news?

JS: It's news and it's a pretty big power struggle. People do not give up power and privilege easily, I don't think. And there aren't enough of us.

CAC: I read a piece the other day, probably in the *New York Times*, suggesting that these kinds of changes you're talking about, coming from a feminist impulse but being more than that, can't work until the [unclear] incredible 35 or 40 percent. If it's 10, 15, even 25 percent, it doesn't come off. Is that what you're saying, or are you saying something different or something more?

JS: The only thing I know is that when you see good leadership—and this is again at the department, or the college or, I think, university wide—when you see, let's use the word progressive for lack of a better word, and who are talented come in to positions where they can make some decisions about priorities, hiring, rewards, things change quickly. The problem is how do you sustain the momentum in any one direction? I don't know. I don't understand really how these kinds of changes . . . You're right, it's more than how many years . . . it's probably a century.

CAC: Well, at this university, in higher education, it's twenty-five years that we've been sensitized to these affairs.

JS: Yes.

CAC: Then we had ten years of the Rajender decision. That should have been the education.

JS: No, but it was terrible polarization. I don't think legal remedies will ever . . . I think the remedies for sexual harassment are all wrong, that as long as this is about policies and rules and discipline . . .

CAC: Instead of changing styles and values?

JS: Somehow to do [unclear].

CAC: [unclear] that's the most difficult thing to do.

JS: It's terribly difficult. I know it doesn't work when you put a gun to somebody's head and say, "Do it." The sexual harassment problem is very difficult and it's made everybody so edgy now but I think that's because we've taken a kind of legalistic policy approach rather than . . . I don't know exactly what else.

CAC: When we're to move toward the style you're speaking of, what would be the criteria to judge it? What descriptors would we use for a management, administrative, bureaucratic, educational system that would arise out of different values? I'm asking your third question in a very awkward way.

JS: Yes. What would it look like?

CAC: Yes.

JS: You know, I know it when I'm in it and I know it when I'm not. There are things like people would feel and would be articulate, so that when rooms full of people got together . . . This will sound like a funny answer to your question.

CAC: No.

JS: I watch people real carefully when in groups around this university, when you see people being articulate, and when they sound crazy, or silent. You know, CLA assembly, that's a nice place to watch. I watch with women particularly because that's what I'm paying attention to and people of color. Under what conditions, what's going on in the room that makes people either silent, sullen, angry, inarticulate; and what's going on when they're being wildly, the same people, articulate, comfortable, funny, good spirited, optimistic? Part of it, I think, is a matter of respect. It is a matter of looking people in the eye and listening to them. It is a matter of not constantly marginalizing people or fooling them. I'll consult with you but I don't mean it. You know I'm not really listening to you.

CAC: It would help . . . I shouldn't be engaging in a conversation when I'm interviewing.

JS: Yes, you should. [laughter] The researcher will love it.

CAC: If you have respect for the student, let's start there.

JS: Exactly. It is the same to me what goes on in the classroom, or the department meeting, or . . .

CAC: If you respect a question and try to understand where it's coming from even though, superficially, it may seem a little bit of [unclear]?

JS: Yes. I think it's our job to make people be articulate, to make people sort of work up to peak capacity, knowing that not everybody works at the same capacity. And I don't see that.

CAC: But you see it taking place in nooks and crannies at this university?

JS: Yes, I think you see it in wonderful teachers; so I think you see it in classrooms.

CAC: Yes.

JS: I see it all the time in commission meetings . . . all the time in the programs that we do. I watch people. I watch students speak up.

CAC: Okay, in your own programs even though that is carried back home to their province, department, program?

JS: I don't know. I think it's around. I think there are places where there's more of good will and respect, and also people willing to say, "I need to change. I need to learn. We need to fight this out. I don't understand what you're talking about."

CAC: Was Shirley Clark moving toward that as provost here?

JS: I don't know.

CAC: She wasn't here very long.

JS: She wasn't here long and she probably came in with too much baggage. She was up against the worst of the worst. You know, you can't open up a system and say, "We're going to do things differently now" when you've got a few power players who have been pulling strings all their lives that nobody is going to stop. I mean, when is somebody going to stop—you can pick whatever characters you want . . . Cynicism is really bad; and this institution and others like it breed cynicism all the time because you say one thing and then you watch the other. Look what we do to bend over to support athletics, just for example. This ridiculous market system right now in employment . . . coaches, the medical doctors, your department, that will when somebody gets an outside offer for the third time, and they're still jacking their salary up . . . it's so out of sync with their quality. I've had long talks with people with this retention money to

keep faculty here. The only credibility you have around here is if you get an outside offer. This breeds contempt. It breeds bad will. We have programs like the McKnight . . .

CAC: And it breeds disloyalty?

JS: Terrible disloyalty. I would say to those people, "Good, you got another job. That's great. There are fifteen Ph.D.s standing behind you, young, bright, good, every bit as capable as you are, especially if we give them a half of what we're offering you." [laughter]

CAC: Have you observed here or elsewhere high administrative officers who carry this kind of style and regard?

JS: Yes. Oh, I think they believe in it.

CAC: I mean, you think there's a significant number in higher education that share these criteria you're speaking of?

JS: The bad ones you mean or the good ones?

CAC: Are there good models so that one can know how to move in that direction? What do you do if you're going to be a new kind of . . .

JS: I thought maybe Donna Shalala at Wisconsin was doing . . .

CAC: Hmmm.

JS: She was somebody I looked to as kind of a model of a very different kind . . .

CAC: Did you know her at Wisconsin at all?

JS: No. No. She wasn't there. And periodically I'll meet academic administrators . . . I don't know a lot of presidents or provosts.

CAC: But are we guessing that this will not happen until there is a larger portion of the faculty, and management drawn from the faculty, who share these views? You're really talking about culture change?

JS: One change would be to stop acting as if any old academic can administer, which they can't. That's just like saying, "Any old academic can teach well," which they can't. I think if we devalue teaching and we—actually let's not call it administration; I don't mean bureaucratic administration, I mean academic leadership—insist on that being second class work . . .

CAC: Which we do.

JS: Which we do . . . it means you draw mediocre people.

CAC: People make themselves available.

JS: Yes. You're tainted if you do administration. You're tainted if you're known as a wonderful teacher.

CAC: You felt that this the last six years?

JS: Sure, of course. Not so much the last six years . . . people are really glad I'm doing it, and I also don't buy into it; so I don't see it as second class work.

CAC: Yes.

JS: I'm not doing line administration.

CAC: I understand.

JS: I'm doing a project.

CAC: Sure.

JS: When you try to get somebody to be a dean and you find that you can't get anyone. First of all, if you looked like you wanted to do it, there would be something wrong with you. That's happened to some of your colleagues where people I think got to be known as wanting to be a dean and then that already discredits them. They probably would have been good.

CAC: Sure.

JS: It's real interesting to me. Pat Mullen and I talk a lot about how are we grooming people for academic leadership? The people who go through the faculty governance system route, I think are little petty bureaucrats, a lot of them. [unclear] it's a funny little way to get power.

CAC: Sure.

JS: I'm discouraged right now about the administrative scene. I'm sure there are good people out there and that good people make a difference.

CAC: Perhaps one can move toward an existential system of justification instead of a pragmatic, which is to say, you do by your lights what you think is right now and if things don't work out that's not the final test.

JS: Yes.

CAC: I hear you saying that you find great rewards in your job even though it would be difficult to say A, B, C, D . . . this progress has been made.

JS: I'm almost stumped if somebody says, "Well, what do you thing you've accomplished that's important?"

CAC: But that's an appropriate question.

JS: Sure. No, it is an important question. It's a hard question. The question shouldn't be What did we accomplish? The question should be, Has the university changed and what's holding that back? There's only so much any of us who are trying to be change agents can do. People talk about burrowing from within. In the end I'm optimistic.

CAC: Well, you must be pretty well networked, in that informal sense?

JS: Yes.

CAC: So you know lots of people, women and some men, who are doing this?

JS: Yes.

CAC: In modest ways, your office can encourage it?

JS: Yes.

CAC: But not in a massive way?

JS: I don't think so because I do think there has to be a commitment somewhere. Somebody has to say, "Of course, we really do mean to change the place. We really do mean to eliminate harassment. We really do mean we will not tolerate . . ." whatever. As soon as you do that right now, you're into First Amendment. You're into academic freedom. If I were a president of a university, I'd say, "Any liberal arts course right now that doesn't attend to matters of race and gender—it may not be a primary focus—if that isn't in there that course isn't going to be taught anymore. So you better figure out how you're going to teach differently. There's a library full of stuff for you to read." [laughter] That's fascistic but one could certainly imagine that as a criteria for excellence.

CAC: Yes.

JS: You wouldn't think to teach a course that leaves out big, big segments of the population. I'm thinking now about your introductory anything course. To not attend to that . . . it's just plain bad scholarship.

CAC: I'm going to come back closer to your home, that is, anthropology.

JS: Yes.

CAC: Do you get a sense that the guild here and the guild nationally has changed in the questions it is asking, and the modes of inquiry, and the modes of instruction? Do you think that has happened?

JS: In the modes of instruction, probably the least.

CAC: I see.

JS: I don't think that's changed much that I know of.

CAC: How about the other?

JS: I went to the triple A, the American Anthropological Association, meetings this year. I was on the plenary session. I vowed I would never do anything like that, it was so intimidating. It was me and four Indian men talking about collaborative projects in archaeology. It was sort of a career pinnacle not because the session was so good but never would I have dreamt that would have been a plenary session ever in our area.

CAC: Okay, I understand.

JS: I looked at the programs—I hadn't been to the triple A meetings for a few years—and I was very impressed with what I saw there. So I think anthropology has to change because people threw us out. We're part of the empire here so I think cultural anthropology has changed a lot. Now, archaeology is a very different story and I don't see much change. I just reviewed a book that was a survey of gender in archaeology and there's quite a bit now coming out. There are 197 entries and I looked for how many were in mainstream archaeology journals rather than special issues of, or of collected works . . . two! in the biggest journals.

CAC: Your own department has been more or less responsive to these changes within the discipline?

JS: But the department has always been very laissez faire about what people taught and did [unclear].

CAC: Well, but they can promote, and they can provide merit, and they can do all kinds of things to recognize . . .

JS: Gender has certainly been, I think for quite awhile, an acceptable area, subject to study. I don't think there's been a lot of dispute about that.

CAC: But it has remained a more traditional department as far as its internal [unclear] is concerned . . .

JS: The curriculum is still the same curriculum. I know it is.

CAC: Well, but so is your structure of governance.

JS: The structure of governance. It is changing. We have a new chair. It's our first woman chair. She's a young new person. She's only been here about maybe five or six years . . . very accomplished and she's doing some good things. Maybe there'll be some change there. I'm not there enough to even know.

CAC: You're not hungry yourself to be back now?

JS: It has never been a good home for me. I shouldn't say never but . . .

CAC: Do you find time in your work to do more research such as [unclear] was?

JS: That project took so long that I'm now still doing a lot of talking about this specifically so I haven't a new project. My guess, is I will leave the university within the next couple of years and go on to something else, just because I've been here twenty-one years.

CAC: Yes.

JS: It seems like I should do something else with my life.

CAC: The only way to keep alive though is to change career within the same general . . . and that's what you've done.

JS: Yes. Oh, my career here has been wonderful. I think luckily, because I've been able to do lots of different things. I feel like I know lots of people.

CAC: I took on the archives and initiated it. I'd been here thirteen, fourteen years and it changed things I had to do, things I had to know, how to behave, and surely saved me in my menopausal forties. It just opened up all kinds of things that I had to do that I hadn't been doing.

JS: Yes.

CAC: In just strictly career terms.

JS: Absolutely. I think it's the only way to go.

CAC: Many of us do not. Many of us have the same yellow sheet of notes.

JS: Yes.

CAC: Are there other things that you would like to share with posterity?

JS: Oh . . . no, not really.

CAC: Well, we've covered a great deal of territory.

JS: We've covered a lot.

CAC: And on pretty important subjects.

JS: Well, if it will be interesting to somebody . . . I certainly have no regrets. I've been happy that I landed here at Minnesota because in many ways there have been many wonderful things. Sometimes, like you and I talked earlier on the phone there, you have communities with people you haven't even worked that closely with but you know are there and you know these are really important people. For me, when I came, to know there were senior people like yourself, and really a number of others who were really wonderful people . . . that's always been wonderful here. I've never ever lacked . . .

CAC: Besides it's given us elbow room.

JS: But I think in terms of the institution itself, I would have higher hopes for it.

CAC: Well, I hope posterity considers itself better informed now.

JS: Yes, me too. [laughter]

CAC: If there are second, third thoughts, I have the machine, and I'm around.

JS: I'll call you, okay.

CAC: You can always call back. Thank you very much.

[End of Tape 2, Side 1]

[End of Interview]

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