

ORAL HISTORY OF UTAH PEACE ACTIVISTS
PROJECT
UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY
OREM, UTAH

INTERVIEW WITH
STEPHEN HOLBROOK

10/17/2006
Salt Lake City, Utah

Interview Conducted by
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Interviewee: Steve Holbrook
Interviewer: Kathy French
Date: 17 October, 2006
Subject: Utah Peace Activists
Place: Salt Lake City

KF: October seventeenth 2006. Kathy French interviewing Stephen Holbrook in his Salt Lake City home. Okay first of all, describe yourself.

SH: I grew up in a privileged situation in Bountiful, Utah. I had lots of opportunities to be around politics when I was very young. I met President Eisenhower when I was ten. I met Nixon two or three times, Rockefeller, Goldwater. My next door neighbor became the treasurer of the United States under Eisenhower. So I had lots of opportunities there and I organized teenage Republican clubs all over the state. So you know, one thing I would say is that I have always been socially interested, socially conscious. When I was about nine, I went to Mexico with my parents, in a time when not that many people went. It was before the days of jets and so forth. I was very moved by the poverty and came back and organized a clothing drive in fourth grade, and sent some boxes of clothes to Mexico. So just I have that propensity, I have no idea, but it's something that has been around for a long time. Growing up in a Republican, business, LDS family, I, of course, had a different background from a lot of people, say from New York, or from some other place, who I eventually ended up spending a lot of time with in various kinds of movements. You know I always enjoyed high school, I always liked, and I still like the people in Bountiful, the small town that it was at that time. I have always been kind of a bridge person in terms of the various sides. I definitely have my point of view, but having grown up in a certain environment, I kind of understand the conservative people and the, LDS people. I was a missionary when I was nineteen, in Hong Kong. Hong Kong had an impact on me because of the poverty. Again, I couldn't do much about it. I wasn't there for that purpose at that time, but it definitely reminded me that I came from a privileged situation—which I would say most Americans do and did at that time, but you know, even more so. I think growing up in that way I always had a fair amount of self confidence and feeling that I had a right to my views. I was definitely impacted by the experience of debate in high school and won some contests in debate, and the importance of that, I think, was that one of the disciplines of debate is that you are forced to present the several sides of a wide variety of issues over time. So that you have to think about things that might come outside of your normal comfort zone or the views that you already hold. So I think that was an important early experience. And you know, basically, I've developed a way of bridging, thinking and contributing. When I was a teenager, I worked for my family's business, and then I eventually worked for the state highway department in the summers because of my Republican connections. And decided to organize teenage Republican clubs all over the state.

KF: Construction work?

SH: Yes. Once I came back from being a missionary, I worked on the staff of Congressman Lloyd back in Washington D.C., and that's where I first got involved with civil rights, when I was back there. From then on I basically created my own avocations, back all the way until now, really. I had the opportunity in part because I had some flexibility income-wise, with our family business, where I could go do some work from time to time, and there was a long period of time which I lived relatively inexpensively, through the civil rights and anti Vietnam War periods. And were the things that consumed my full energy, they weren't part time things, they were full time avocations. And eventually, the creation of KRCL, where I had to find the money to do it and then enough money to

survive while I was doing it. And the same with building the homeless shelter and serving in the legislature. These were all things that sort of... I saw something that needed to be done and just decided I needed to find a way to do it. And in a way, the last fifteen years were a little bit different in that there was an existing group. I became executive director of the Coalition of Utah's Future which sponsors Envision Utah. But still it was not your typical job, it's not a career of engineering, or as an attorney. It was something that, where we were involved with health care, public policy, you know, access reform, promoting public transportation and a wide variety of issues. So, I've really done basically what I wanted to all of my life. I've found a way to do it and to survive doing it. Only recently, a couple of years ago, I retired because I got about fourteen screws and two plates in my neck and it is sort of hard to sit up for long periods of time, and it sort of restrains me from doing a lot of things I'd like to do because of the discomfort. But I'm still highly opinionated. (Laughs).

But I think that back to the bridge thing, and this really is a theme that runs all the way back through the civil rights and anti-Vietnam war. I think I've always played a bridge role between groups and between levels of society. In part because I think that everybody has something to contribute. And when we talk a little bit more about peace and its relationship to how I got into anti-Vietnam organizing the peace movement, really it's best has to assume that everyone has integrity and dignity and that sometimes you have to help pull it out of people a little bit— you have to help people be their best. And you can't always do that, not with the anti-Vietnam War movement, people weren't always polite. (Laughs). There were times when we'd veer from some of the principles that I really believe in now and did before, that I learned in the civil rights movement, that I learned from reading Gandhi and which I still, believe in. There are ideals like love and things, and we're not always perfect at promoting those ideals. But basically, you know Gandhi, the thing about Gandhi that made him so great is that he had such a respect for other people that he actually stayed in the homes of some of the mill owners, who he was conducting a strike against, and they loved him so much even though he was organizing against them at that very moment. And well, I'm not that good; I think the bridging is an important element of, what I have tried to do. And I think it's an important thing for everybody to try to do. If you don't there's a kind of arrogance that I'm right and you're wrong and you don't know what you're doing, and sometimes, while we believe those things, we have to give people the dignity at least of the possibility that they might be right. And at least they might have something to contribute

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to whatever problems we are trying to solve, so.... And frequently they are the kind of people who have the power... So, if you're trying to influence, unless you're going to conduct a revolution and take over and shoot all of them, then you have to find a way to bridge. And so, I think a lot of what I have done and contributed has been around that.

KF: You said when you were nine years old, you organized a clothing drive. Was that your first peace and justice activist experience, do you think?

SH: I think so.

KF: Uh ah

SH: OK, when I went to Mexico at that time, my dad was a Rotarian and we saw, the little kids on the street corner shining shoes and trying to pick up a few pesos, but also we were invited to go to the hacienda of very wealthy people. So I saw the extreme poverty and the extreme wealth. And that's just not typical of the United States. We certainly do have some very extreme wealth, and certainly

there is some poverty, but the numbers of people who fit into those two categories in Mexico, then and even now, was startling to me. And in fact I, not knowing any other route to get the clothing to Mexico, there was a woman who lived somewhere in Chihuahua, who's parents lived in my Bountiful, LDS Ward, and so she took the clothing down for me. It didn't go to the place where I'd seen the poverty, but it went somewhere, somebody got it.

KF: And then what?

SH: Well, when you grow up in Bountiful, Utah; you're not exactly exposed to much of the world, particularly in those times. It was a very nice time, it was a small suburban community characterized as much by fruit trees and some old truck farms or vegetable farms, as they were, and my family was in business, and everything was nice. And so I think a lot of the influence was from my mother. I watched her, she was always helping people. There were people in her ward, where she would get clothes for them and things like that. And so I was exposed to charity. I think that what happened over time though was that, while I think personal charity is a valuable thing, an important thing, that it became clear to me over time, that the public policy that deals with these things on a bigger basis, in which a you help people in a broader way so that they're able to help themselves, not that you're giving handouts to people but that you're helping them achieve their own goals. You know, whether that be better education or whether that be distribution of income or the way taxes come down or what have you. And of course, eventually civil rights, I think that was a big difference and that thing kind of eventually grew out of high school and high school debate, and things of that sort.

KF: sounds like...what was the feeling about Young Republicans to you?

SH: Well let's just say that for me it was, I knew there were Democrats but I didn't know any (both laugh). So it was something important, it was something that potentially had an impact on real things. While I was very active in things, like cheering for the football team in high school and so forth, I did all of that but I always had a greater sense of what was important or what seemed to me to be important. And that was a vehicle for me at that particular point in my life.

KF: Young Republicans was in high school?

SH: Yes, I organized teenage Republican clubs all over the state and in that experience I then was taken to Los Angeles, to Western Republican conventions. I was the page at the Republican National Convention in 1960. So I got to hold the Utah Beehive on the floor of the convention and blow the smoke out of it or whatever we did. But all of those experiences where you meet the people with real power, you know the governors, the senators, the Rockefeller kids, whatever... It just was a great experience for seeing the way things are, or at least the way they are in the power structure.

KF: Were your parents active like that?

SH: My parents were not. My dad was locally active, as president of the Rotary club, things like that, but they were not politically active.

KF: Okay, then you got out of high school; you went to college, here at the U?

SH: First I became a Mormon missionary.

KF: oh...okay

SH: I went to Hong Kong and Chinatown in San Francisco, after about a year and a half I decided I was not a believer and so I came back, early.

KF: That took courage...

SH: (laughs) Whatever it took I did it. You know, there was a period in my life when I was almost fearless and I just did what I thought I should do. You know, I was certainly aware that it was a social problem when I did it. That there were a lot of people talking about it, and again, I received letters that were unsigned, things like that, that were not very nice, shall we say. One of which I remember quite fondly that said something like "Just because a mission is voluntary doesn't mean you can leave when you want to" (laughs) I've always loved that comment. But then there was another one in which it talked about my having been on a "sacred," holy mission but they misspelled sacred so that it read scared, "you're on a scared, holy mission." I always kind of got a kick out of that. I always figured those two letters came from one or two of my aunts who were very upset about what was going on. And of course it was hard on my family, and I wasn't happy to make them unhappy but, you know, I read the words "to thine own self be true". How to be true to any man if you're not true to yourself, and it's the basic idea. I can't remember it in Shakespearean language but its something like that, and that made a lot of sense to me. And then I went to the U for a quarter and then I went back to D.C. to work for Congressman Sherm Lloyd, and when I was back there, that's when I had begun to think about the civil rights movement, and of course D.C. was very African American. And that was my first real experience with African Americans. I had seen a couple of black people in ZCMI working and in Salt Lake City in the department store, but really had no experience. And in Bountiful, I think we had a couple of Hispanic families, and certainly no African Americans lived in Bountiful at that time. And I think a couple of Asian families, and so of course everyone was trying to be like us and everybody else, and there was no sense of the uniqueness of the cultures they came from. When kids would get their names called in school, if the name was spelled Jaramillo (hara-me-o) is was anglicized and pronounced "Jar-a-mello" and such, so you know, what did I know... I didn't know how their names were supposed to be pronounced. And we had polygamist kids, we had a variety of kids but people were in the 50's and were really sort of trying to pass, and things seemed nice. And the most exciting thing that ever happened was the opening of the Dairy Queen in downtown Bountiful. But then when I got involved in Washington D.C., I volunteered to the Congressman to take care of the Utahns who came back for the great Martin Luther King March in Washington in 1963, and so that was my the first time I'd ever met a black person from Utah. And it included twenty-some odd people who came, a few white people and some African Americans who I later got to know as things developed,

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and I became involved back in Utah. But, when I was in D.C., that was my first experience, and a few weeks later Medgar Evers who was the Field Secretary for the NAACP in Mississippi, had been murdered, and there was a march over at the Justice Department, and the Congressman and I, Sherm Lloyd and his chief of staff went down to watch. When we were watching I turned to Congressman Lloyd, and I said, "I feel like I belong in this march, not just watching it." So I asked him if it would be all right with him if I joined in, and it was a march over to the Justice Department, where Bobby Kennedy came out with a bull horn and spoke to the group. So I did join in and I would say, while I had attended the March on Washington, showing the other people how to get around D.C. and what the high points of the capital were; this was really the first time where I said, "I want to do this."

KF: Was Sherm Lloyd a Republican?

SH: He was.

KF: So that was first, kind of public, civil rights...as a young man...

SH: It was...right. And then I came back out to Utah in the fall of '63, to help him organize for a run for the Senate. And he was running against Ernie Wilkinson, who was the president of Brigham Young University at that time and very conservative, I mean ultra conservative. And Sherm had kind of represented a moderate voice, he had run in the previous primary, when he was first elected, against Reed Benson, who was the son of Ezra Taft Benson, who had been the Secretary of Agriculture and a very right wing kind of person. He (the father) later became the President of the LDS church, and Sherm beat him (Reed) as a moderate, and the hope was he could do that with Ernie Wilkinson. Well, when I came back out to Utah, I started to get involved with the NAACP, and I started going to meetings, and this was at a time when things were happening nationally on a daily basis, and, and everything that was going on was being covered on a pretty consistent basis by the national networks. And in those days there were three networks and everybody saw mostly the same thing. We had a pretty homogenous society in a way, because of the similarity of experience people were having from a media point of view. And when I got involved, I started to play the role of the press secretary of the NAACP, so I ended up doing public statements and giving out press releases and doing things to get people to the events. The NAACP decided to have a march to the LDS church office building, and they were asking the LDS church to take a stand on civil rights. This had nothing to do with the Priesthood issue at that time. And shortly after that, as I recall, that was the action. I was called in by, I think it was the campaign manager for Sherm Lloyd, effectively, a guy by the name of Brazell. And (I was) asked about what I was doing, and shortly thereafter I got a letter from Sherm saying that he had understood that I felt my involvement with civil rights had taken precedence, and I didn't want to work for him anymore. Actually, I had never made that decision, and I was somewhat startled by the letter. I don't know what he was told by the person who talked to me, you know I don't know. He wrote to me and said that he didn't know that my views were extreme but that as a point of advice he urged me to be careful in my views, and you know, not to be extreme in my actions. So you might say that it was decided for me that I would be involved more exclusively in civil rights and less in partisan political activity. Even as late as Lyndon Johnson running, I was part of a group called Republicans for Johnson. Because I had not really made an affiliation with the Democratic Party, and I did not do so, actually, until about 1972 when I became a Democratic national delegate at the Miami convention for McGovern. So in between I just was active with the issues, and over time decided I was a lot more interested in the issues than in partisan politics, per se.

KF: Just out of curiosity, what was the LDS church's response to the NAACP asking them to take a stand?

SH: Well, at one point we had several demonstrations and then there was a threat of a picket.

KF: Picketing?

SH: Picketing Conference, LDS conference and...

KF: Oh...

SH: And, several of us ended up negotiating with two members of the first presidency, Presidents Hugh B. Brown and Nathan Eldon Tanner. President McKay was quite old at this time and was not available, was bedridden, so they conveyed information to him, and we said that we were going to picket conference, and they asked us, had other churches taken positions and could we bring them statements that other churches had made. Now at first in the meeting they said, "As you know the church doesn't get involved in politics," and then I repeated several occasions on which they had, such as when they spoke out on the Taft-Hartley law. It was anti-labor. They'd actually spoken out against the draft in the early, I think it was just before World War II and several other circumstances. And so then President Brown said, "well of course we do get involved if there's a moral issue" and then I made the case that there certainly was, in my view a moral issue involved with civil rights, and that they should be involved. Well he called several days later, called Dr. Charles Nabors, who taught at the University of Utah and said that, President McKay was an old Scotsman, and didn't like having a gun against his head, so he wasn't sure if there was going to be a statement. He called on a Saturday morning before the Sunday which we had intended to picket if we didn't hear something, and said that there would be a statement, and then President Brown delivered that statement, and he delivered it in such a way during conference that it sounded as if it were an official church statement from the first presidency. However, if you read the current biography of David O. McKay it was not intended to be that, and he had taken liberty as a person who believed in civil rights to strengthen what he did in conference. It was used a few years later when there was another threat of picket in an attempt to get the legislature to pass a housing law. They used it then as an editorial in the church news as an official church statement. And when President Brown delivered it, it had been printed in the Improvement Era, which was the church publication at that time, and is now called the Ensign. But in any event, if you read the David O. McKay book you can see how much in-fighting there really was and disagreement within the counsels of the LDS church about how far to go. President Benson, at that time apostle Benson, believed that everything about the civil rights movement was communist inspired and said so publicly and also made that case privately. So, it was, it was basically President Benson, or apostle Benson versus President Brown at that time, with lots of other opinions in between.

KF: That was Ezra Taft Benson?

SH: It was Ezra Taft Benson. So we did stir the embers, as it were. And the statement was good. They couldn't bring themselves to say "civil rights." I have seen the statement since and they... now it uses the word civil rights but then they called it "civic rights." They could not bear to use the word "civil" so they called it civic rights, and it was basically what we were asking for at that time, you know that everyone is entitled to the same civic rights, as they called them.

KF: So how big was this group that was going to picket?

SH: Well, we actually, we marched from the federal building, maybe 500 hundred people. You know one of the things that I learned to do was to utilize the media

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to not only sell our story to the broad public but utilize it in advance of things we were going to do to draw new people to what we were doing, and that was true in civil rights as well as with the anti-Vietnam War movement, which we will get into a little bit more.

KF: My, okay, so you lost your job. And then what? Jobless....

SH: Well in the meantime I am going, a quarter here, a quarter there to the University of Utah, but I have to say the University of Utah was sort of a secondary, you know I sort of fit it in, and I did it because I was supposed to. I did it because that is what you are supposed to do.

KF: What was your major?

SH: Political science

KF: Uh ahh...

SH: was my major. By the summer of '64, early summer, June or something like that I went up to Jackson Lake to work for the summer. And when I was up there, the three civil rights workers came up missing and were later found murdered. And I decided - I had heard about the Mississippi Freedom Summer that was coming up. I'd sort of read about it, but when those three came up missing, I just said, "I've got to go down there, this is not right." So, I left Jackson Lake came down to Salt Lake, got some money from Bob Freed, who was the owner of Lagoon, who had himself, by the way, made some major in-roads in desegregating Lagoon. You couldn't swim at Lagoon if you were black, and go to the dances and so forth, into the late 50's certainly; it could have even gone into the early 60's. I don't remember the exact date, but....

KF: And he changed that?

SH: He changed that just personally, but he came up with some money, the NAACP arranged for me to go to Mississippi on their behalf through their National Office. And so I went down and worked out of the office of Charles Evers, who was the brother of Medgar Evers, who had been killed just the year before. And I stayed in the home of Doris and Ben Allison. Doris was the president of the Jackson, Mississippi NAACP, and was very close to Medgar, and had been hauled away in garbage trucks and a whole variety of things, and you know they'd had a major boycott of businesses in Jackson because they wouldn't hire Blacks, and they wouldn't let Blacks try on clothes, and sit at the soda fountains and the places to eat in the department stores and so forth. She was very active and her husband was head of what they called the Black Guards which was a group of people who had two-way radios. Which was mostly taxi drivers, and they were in the community to sort of report and protect each other from what was going on. And they had a dog named Freedom, who was there to bark when anything unusual (occurred), somebody coming by. This was the summer in which there were 50 or 60 black churches bombed or burned to the ground, and thousands of people arrested. And this summer, after I got down there, I went with the NAACP national board on a tour of Mississippi. The Congress had just passed the Public Accommodations Law, in which you could no longer segregate public accommodations that were in interstate commerce. So they went around the state to mass meetings in the black churches speaking in each one of them. We stopped at Philadelphia, Mississippi and I met Sheriff Rainey and Deputy Price who were later charged with murdering the three civil right workers or being party to the murder of the three civil rights workers. Their bodies had not yet been found when we went there. So I had my role again, I was playing the press secretary for Charles Evers, and then other times I would go out and register people, take people to register to vote. And I was myself arrested when I went with a Catholic priest and a local young black woman who was near my age, we took a couple of women to register to vote. And while they were in trying to register I had a camera with me, and I took a picture of the "Whites Only" fountain which you saw the picture of.

KF: Hmmm.

SH: And the sheriff, not a deputy, not somebody down the line, the sheriff of Hinds County personally came and arrested me for breaching the peace. And it got a lot of publicity in Utah. And the reason that it did, which it might have not otherwise, was I had been scheduled that night to be on a radio talk show interview, a call in talk show called Public Pulse on KSL, the LDS Church station, with Wes Bowen. And then when they called to get me on the air they said, "Well he's been arrested taking black women to register to vote." So they didn't have a program. Because the three civil right workers had been missing, they decided to try to find me, so on the air they called the various jails, and they all denied that I was there. So then they started to get nervous, and they got the Senator and the Governor and everybody involved. I didn't of course know what was going on. I was inside, didn't know what was happening. I was in a place that they called the hot box. This was a Mississippi summer with all the humidity and heat, and they put us in a cell in which they turned the heat on. And we didn't know what else to do, so we just refused to eat, we decided we were going to be resistors so...

KF: Your idea I'll bet...

SH: Yeah... Anyway, eventually we got out, a group of Jewish people from Great Neck, New York came up with the bail and Charles Evers got us out. I was told later he could have gotten us out sooner but he thought it would be a good experience for me to experience a Mississippi jail. That ended up in the headlines "Utah Junior Arrested in Mississippi". I went back again the next summer, in '65 also. So both summers and was active with the NAACP in between. Somewhere there I started to get involved with the anti- Vietnam War.

Break in recording [40:00] [50:00]

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KF: Okay. Were you still a Republican while all this was going on?

SH: I had not participated in the Democratic Party yet, and while I wasn't doing anything active with the Republican Party, I guess I was because in the Goldwater Johnson election was that '64? Yeah, because Kennedy was assassinated in '63, and so the Goldwater Johnson election would have been '64, so I was part of Republicans for Johnson. Of course, Johnson was a democrat, but this had to do with my view about the Vietnam situation, so I was still identifying somewhat in that way.

KF: And were you still bringing this perspective to Utah in between your summers?

SH: Well, I would say sometime in about probably early '65, I'm not exactly sure of the date, somewhere in the civil rights movement I had met a woman by the name of Helen Kuramada who had been active with the Japanese-American Citizens League, I probably met her in the civil rights movement. And she brought some survivors of the atomic bomb from Hiroshima and Nagasaki into town. This was another case where I decided I should try to sort of amp up their visibility so I arranged for some radio interviews and I also took them up to meet the then Governor, George Dewey Clyde, who was a Republican and who I had known in my previous incarnation. So, I was still utilizing that conduit to the extent that I could. I wasn't doing anything active for Republican candidates.

KF: Okay. So summer of '64 you went back?

SH: Summer of '65.

KF: Oh, '65, sorry.

SH: And got arrested again. This time we were driving down the street in a Volkswagen, and I was in the back seat with a local African-American girl. We had been out knocking on doors trying to get people to register to vote, and this guy in a big Lincoln had kept driving by us. It turned out, later, that he was someone from the White Citizens Council, as they called it. We stopped at the five-and-dime and when we came out there were policemen on all four perimeters of our car and they took us in to the police department. And in this case, it wasn't the county sheriff, it was the police chief who was sort of interrogating us, and I finally said, "Well, why are we here? What are we being charged with?" And he said, "You're being charged with fondling the breasts of this young woman." And you know it was a real put up job, I mean they just made that up, totally. I mean, we were in the car with a Divinity student, you know a Catholic Divinity student, and this was not what was going on. So eventually, actually, they let us go but it was just one more example of harassment. But those summers were filled with these mass meetings that they would hold, in one church or another, many nights of the week, when people would come and sing civil rights songs and hear stirring speeches, and talk about the job that needed to be done and what the task was. And civil rights workers from the north [were] in Mississippi. There were about 1000 who came down, and the strategy was very good. In effect we were being used, but we were willingly being used. They knew, the Black leaders, knew that if something happened to us, that someone would pay attention. Most of the people that came down were upper-middle class, they came from Berkley, or the Ivy League schools. I mean they came from places where someone had influence and they expected to be treated properly and if not someone would do something about it. So a lot of publicity was created all over the country because of this, as things happened to individuals. And then as we went back, and this was true in my case both summers, I was invited to speak civic clubs and high school classes—which I did.

KF: Relief Society?

SH: Well, I don't remember being invited to Relief Society, but certainly there were lots of LDS people that were in the groups I spoke to such as civic clubs and high schools. I basically, gave the story, which was that there were 18,000 Blacks in Mississippi who had been allowed to register to vote but there were 250,000 eligible. There were a variety of techniques to keep people from registering but one of the typical ones was that if you came to register to vote they might ask a white person who the first President of the United States was, "Well, George Washington." But they might ask a Black person to tell you what the meaning of the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution was. Basically, it was done on a basis to disqualify Black people from registering. So I would tell this story, about the burnings and the bombings and the Allison's that I stayed with and the sacrifices they were making. [Steve's note: Ben and Doris Allison. She was president of the Jackson Mississippi NAACP and had been close to Medgar Evers who had been murdered the year before. I worked directly for Charles Evers, his brother who succeeded him as NAACP field secretary for Mississippi.]

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And that happened all over the country. I went on a vacation to Hawaii at one point, I think it was between the summers of '64 and '65, probably in the winter, and I was listening to the radio on the beach and I heard some people talking about civil rights so I called in to the talk program. They were really interested in what I had to say and so they invited me to come over to the radio station and be on the air. So I did. Before we were through half the NAACP in Hawaii showed up to the radio

station to greet me and then they held a mass meeting, the next night, and there was a headline in the Honolulu newspaper advertiser saying, "Former Mormon missionary to speak on civil rights." So there was a lot of exposure. That's what I did during much of the time, and I was going to the U, and I was working for my family to get by. But when I came back from the summer in '65, I didn't actually go straight home, I went to Washington DC. By this time my views on the Vietnam War had begun to form and I went to something called the Assembly of Unrepresented People and ended up [at] my first sit-in. We went to try to take our seats in the Capitol building. Of course we had no seats in the Capitol building, but basically I had learned non-violence and non-violent techniques in the Civil Rights movement in the south, and it was part of our training—how to minimize confrontation, how to go limp, how to defuse situations, what have you. But there were times, of course, when you were trying to make a point— you couldn't get enough publicity otherwise—so getting arrested and creating an event which had to be covered, or we hoped would be covered by the press, hopefully somewhere in that there would be some coverage of the issue that you were trying to publicize, and so I think that was my first arrest in the anti-Vietnam War movement in DC, in late summer of '65. So then I came back to Utah, and you know from then talk about a long haul... When you think about it, in a way, we weren't all that successful fighting the war in Vietnam or trying to stop the war in Vietnam because this was '65 and the war didn't get over till the early '70s in terms of American involvement. And, you know, we were still being active. I think our last big march in Salt Lake was about '73. So I basically devoted most of my time to the anti-war movement. I had to work to survive and things like that, and I went to the U off and on, but the U was more of an organizing ground for me, that had more to do with why I was there—in terms of my passions.

KF: Were you connected with some groups at the U?

SH: I think I was a charter member of SDS, Students for a Democratic Society, and we eventually created a group called the April Committee, which I think may have been the first group at the University of Utah that was purely an anti-Vietnam War group. There were eight of us who went down to the military induction center and blocked the door for the new inductees who were being sent to Vietnam, you know, obviously we weren't really going to stop them but it was the first time I was dragged off in Utah. I was still wearing a sport coat in those days in that portion of the anti Vietnam War movement I hadn't yet tried on my hipster clothes that came out of more— some of the later sixties and some of my other experiences, but...

KF: Who were the other charter members of SDS do you think? At least there toward the beginning...

SH: Well, Jim, what's his last name? The chair's name was Jim Beaver.

KF: Is he dead?

SH: He is. Died of cancer some years ago. I think there was a guy by the name of Hyrum Coon who was a part of it but I don't remember too much more of who was part of that group. Then of course, SDS was a multi-issue group whereas the April Committee was related to a specific event that was going to take place in regards to anti-war activities around the country and that's why we called ourselves that. There was a woman by the name of Susan Goodrick, a guy by the name of Hal Noakes, Hank Huey, Bob Daiglish, it was not a real big group and I think maybe virtually the whole group got arrested that day at the induction center on October 21, 1967. But that's when we began organizing and participating in debates. Things like teach-ins, and all that sort of thing happened later. And the really large movement didn't really start to take place until '68-'69 when the moratoriums against the

war occurred. So in between you would have to say we were kind of nursing things along. The really large movements did take place under the name of United Front to End the War. Jeff Fox, I think, was probably the most important player in that group. There was a core of about 50 people who participated in the planning of events. Then the groups ranged from, I think, the first moratorium there were maybe several thousand people and then the last big action, which I've got some photos of here, was the precipitating event, [of] the Tribune sit-in. There were about 5000 people who came from the State Capitol down to Pioneer Park in May of 1971. But [between] those bookends that I have just given you, there was a whole lot going on. There was a lot of foment at the University of Utah, sit-ins, teach-ins, and we can get into some of the specific activities that took place. A building was burned to the ground, [and] there was another building that had Molotov cocktails put into it, the ROTC building. There was a lot of interaction between friendly faculty members and even friendly administration members who were trying to minimize the trouble and keep the police and the FBI and the military off campus so things didn't escalate as it did in some other places around the country.

KF: I'd say Molotov cocktails and burned building was escalation.

SH: It was escalation but when the—it actually was an empty building that was slated to be torn down—it had once been an ROTC building and then later was an Intercultural Center that was one of the old World War II wooden buildings that they were going to tear down. I know this story from later, that when it burned down the FBI wanted to come on campus, and the federal law was that it had to be a certain amount of damage, a certain dollar amount of damage before they could do that. Virginia Frobes, who was Dean of Students, convinced President Fletcher, the President of University of Utah and later head of NASA, to declare the building of no value so that the FBI didn't come on to campus because they felt like it would escalate the events there, because there was a—I would have to say though, that [destruction] probably reduced the activity of the anti-war movement on campus because it scared some people.

[1:10]

Where you analyzed who the anti-war people were, they ranged all the way from what I would call flower children, or flower power kids who just want peace, to two or three political groups who, from my point of view, were out of the mainstream but who had very strong opinions about the war—the Communist Party, the Socialist Workers Party, Progressive Labor parties some of those folks—and they were always active in the group of 50, planning. And we always had to sort of work through these accommodations between various groups. I would put myself more in the group that Jeff Fox and some others who were part of what you might call traditional mainstream American political thought, you know, wanted to change the—what shall we say—change the distribution of wealth through taxes and that sort of thing but not have a revolution in which the government was overthrown and so forth. And there was a lot of push and pull between these groups and I, again, played a bridging role. I always waited until everybody had said everything they had to say, and then I would put the pieces together that I had heard from the various groups and try to come up with a, “Okay, here's what we could do.” I knew what the political leanings of some of these other groups were and I also knew that because they had an ideological base and they had people that they worked with that had a point of view about, “What should the theme of a given march be everywhere in the country” all that sort of thing. We always had to work with them and sort of bridge these gaps, so even though in this case I wasn't bridging between the Mormons and the non-Mormons, or the poor and the rich, I was bridging between sort of the flower power, and ideologues. When you had 5000 people you had a lot of flower power kids there. When you had 200, you had a lot of people who had a lot of ideological points of view and analysis of the way the world should be and so forth. Jeff Fox

was active with the Democratic Party. I definitely had an establishment view within an anti-establishment movement. In other words I believed in the Constitution of the United States, I didn't believe in the dictatorship of the proletariat that the Communists believed in, and I definitely believed in democracy. So while I would be one who would adjust the social contract, you know, how much free education we give and how much welfare there should be and all that sort of thing, and programs for the poor, but I was not one who thought that the entire structure of the country should be brought down. And then you had at a certain point you had the, I'd have to call them Black Panther wannabe's because we didn't have Black Panthers in Utah really. We had people like Victor Gordon who did some nice poetry and had some good speeches, and I met the real Black Panthers because several of us, starting with the April Committee, had a relationship with a group in Berkley called the Red Family, and they were people like Robert Scherer who was the editor for Ramparts Magazine and later became a columnist for the LA Times, and was one of the better anti-war critics. I mean he really had the analysis down well. And they were running daycare and they had a relationship with the Black Panther Party. But I met the Black Panther Party people in Berkley, and they were sexist and I mean they were...let's just say that I didn't think they were the wave of the future that I wanted to see.

KF: And how did you make that Berkeley connection? How did that come about?

SH: It probably came about from going to a march in Berkeley and meeting some folks, getting acquainted and staying at their house, and that sort of thing. Robert Scherer was great because he was part of a group that put out a lot of ideological stuff, but he was still a highly individualistic person. He'd have these long baths in which he would smoke his cigars because he had to get away from all this sort of uniformity of thought. You know, it took on a popularity in certain circles, but I mean people were experimenting...They were experimenting with women's equality, and some of the early discussions about gay rights, certainly civil rights.

KF: Solitary baths?

SH: Well, what I mean is that he would...When you're in a commune, it's not that he was supposed to bathe with everybody, but it was his only way to get away from the communal experience, so he'd have these very long baths and smoke his cigars.

KF: Close the door and keep the people out.

SH: Close the door and get away from this sort of...I mean there was a lot of push and pull and people were trying things, and they were trying things that, I would say, were borrowed from very socialist agendas and various utopian agendas, and there were all sorts of mixes of these things. And people tried, you know, did that in Utah too. There was a certain point in which alternative life experiments became a part of all of this. A group of us, from the university, put on something called the Urban Plunge, at what's now called the Crossroads Urban Center. But it was a sort of a two-and-a-half day version of mind altering experiences, in which we would bring, basically upper-middle class kids from the U, we would bring in Black Panther type speakers, we'd bring in films on gay rights, we'd take people down to Black Clubs, we had body painting, and we had all kinds of things that we were trying. And people would come away from these weekends with this sort of mind altering experience, or so we thought. Groups like the communists were not really part of that, they were sort of what I would call the conservatives in the anti-war movement, whereas, some of the new left were ideological, some were experimental. So you had such a wide variety of things going on. There are

people that I've known for years like Bonnie and Denis Phillips, who own Phillips Gallery. Who, at that time decided that they were members of the Progressive Labor Party, and they were wearing these overalls to identify with the working people or something like that. Well, none of these people had ever been working people so it was an ideological commitment. Artist Earl Jones was part of that group, actually, Bruce Plenk, as I recall, and Kathy Collard, who was his girlfriend at that time, both became attorneys, were part of that group. So you had these sorts of little manifestations and I sort of floated through all of these groups and dealt with all of them in various ways, and sort of, what would you say? I tailored my messages and so forth, to each group so that I could continue to work with all of them. And enjoyed all of them in many respects but there was a lot of...Some groups identified with the Chinese Revolution, and some identified with Cuba, and some identified with none of them but were Trotskyites, and all this sort of thing. But, I think, where Jeff Fox and I were at the heart of what I regarded as the progressive movement in the United States, in which our goal was to improve what was already going on in this country, and not to alienate or overcome everything else.

[1:20]

And I think that that was the source of the larger numbers of people who eventually became involved. [In] my role as the publicist, I raised money, bought time on rock stations to tell people when and where marches were, produced these spots, used the top DJ's at the time, used stirring rock anthems behind the advertisements. Eventually, when the U.S. bombing campaign was going on in North Vietnam, We had access to some TV spots that had been produced out of California and we actually bought time on local television. In fact there was an NFL game— or whatever it's equivalent was at the time—in which we bought a spot in which an old grandmother was rocking in her chair and eventually gets around to talking about stopping the bombing in Vietnam, and I'm sure it was the most startling thing that anyone had seen on local TV, and then on the end of the spot, of course, it said, "Sponsored by United Front to End the War." So, I think the first time—I don't remember which march but at some march in Berkley I became aware that radio stations KPFA and KPFB, which were Pacifica stations, were covering the march live. And I'd have to say that was probably the first time that it occurred to me that it would be nice to have a radio station in Salt Lake City that could do something like that. Now, it took many years beyond that to really get KRCL going, get it on the air, but those experiences motivated that. Another experience was our picketing all the local TV stations on May 11, 1972 in which we achieved air time on all the channels at a later date. We were still struggling with trying to give the real message of the anti-war movement. I mean, to me the message really went back to a guy by the name of Dr. Helmut Callus who taught at the University of Utah, and knew the history of Asia. And he, basically, is the one that taught us that the Chinese and the Vietnamese had been historical enemies and so all the United States was doing was driving the Vietnamese into the arms of the Chinese by fighting with the North Vietnamese, he taught us about the nationalistic struggle that was represented by the Communists, and the importance of the nationalist side of that revolution, and that it wasn't all Communism but it was the nationalism, and that that was why they were going to win in Vietnam, at least put up a good fight. Well, that's the kind of thing that you couldn't find in the discussion: the culture, anything about the history of Vietnam, how Franklin Roosevelt had tried to befriend Ho Chi Minh, and how if he hadn't died—you know that Harry Truman went along with the French staying there—how things would have been very different. So, I mean, I learned very early a lot about Vietnam's history that motivated me, that was not in the public discussion. What was in the public discussion was how the anti-war demonstrators dressed and whether they burned a flag or not. And so, in a way, that was always the failure of the anti-war movement, finding ways to really talk to the American public because the—I guess what you'd say is that the media would cover the sizzle and not the bacon. So one of the things that what we ended up doing was that we, several thousand of us descended on Social Hall Avenue

on May 11, 1972, which was where, at that time, all three of the local network related TV stations were located, and [we] asked for free time to speak to the public. And coming out of there was a relationship with KSL which, eventually, some years later, allowed them to give equipment to help build KRCL. But that wasn't exactly why we were there that night. What eventually ended up happening, out of that night, was that all three channels set up some kind of a debate type format where they had both sides. But even that was okay because we didn't want to—well, maybe we did want to—just get on and give our own side of the propaganda. But it was serious discussion about the war and not just whether somebody looked funny who was walking in the march or something like that.

KF: Yeah, so there was the political struggle, you know the marches and winning people over, but there was this underlying media struggle, your growing sense of how people learn things from the media or don't learn from the media. Wow.

SH: Exactly. So, while there were all kinds of events, and people and, struggles. I remember Jerry Rubin, who was then part of what was called the Yippie movement, and it was counter-cultural—it had a political side, it was kind of like, “We not only don't want to be in Vietnam, we don't want to be anything like these people who sent the troops to Vietnam” and of course, he eventually became part of the Chicago 8, Chicago 7, whatever it was called. But, we brought him to Salt Lake, in fact, I took Jerry Rubin on a tour of Temple Square—and that's the kind of thing I loved to do. You know I loved to say, “Okay, I belong here, I'm part of this community, this is what we have here.” So I took him down through the Joseph Smith exhibit so forth, and of course we were...the security guards didn't quite know what to do but I was showing them Temple Square and telling them the Mormon story so...

KF: And were you still wearing your sport jacket then?

SH: By that time I was not. I was probably wearing striped pants and a turtle neck and had grown a beard.

KF: I know that our half-hour is up. Do you want to take a break and set a time to come back?

SH: Why don't we do that.

[End recording 1:27:37]