

PRESERVING OUR HISTORY: ROTARY CLUB OF GREENSBORO
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: KATHERINE STERN

INTERVIEWER: KATHELENE MCCARTY SMITH

IN ATTENDANCE: HERMANN TROJANOWSKI

DATE: February 7, 2008

KMS: Today is Tuesday, February 7, 2008. My name is Kathelene Smith and I am with Mrs. Katherine Stern in her beautiful home on Nottingham. We are here to do an oral interview for the Preserving Our History: Rotary Club of Greensboro oral history project. We are just going to make sure that the tape is coming out right so would you like to please tell me your name?

KGS: Oh yes. You mean even my maiden name?

KMS: Everything! [Both laugh]

KGS: All right. Well, since we all eventually came from Europe, the full name is – no, I won't give you the full name but it really was Katherina Louisa Goodman, for me; and of course, I go by Katherine G. Stern.

KMS: Okay. Please tell me when and where you were born.

KGS: In Wilmington, North Carolina, at the hospital there. And I was born in August 10, 1924.

KMS: And please tell me a little about your family and your home life growing up.

KGS: All right. I guess – we lived in Wilmington all winter, in the cold months; what Wilmington had as cold. In the beginning, of course, my grandmother lived there at the house, 106 North Fifth Street, in Wilmington. And then in the summer, we would either move to Wrightsville Beach where the family had a house or we'd move down to the sound, which most people don't realize is – Wilmington is surrounded by sounds. But anyway, we would move to the place on the sound which was a small property of about twenty acres. And we would spend the summers there or we would spend the summer at Wrightsville.

KMS Now, what did your parents do at that time?

KGS: Well, mother, of course, was a housewife and father was originally, I guess, they called it ladies' ready wear and then later he became – he was in the insurance industry and the real estate industry.

KMS: And do you have any brothers and sisters?

KGS: Yes, I have one sister and she lives here in Greensboro. And we both grew up in Wilmington and we attended and graduated from New Hanover High School.

KMS: That was my next question, where you went to high school. And what was your favorite subject in high school.

KGS: Goodness. I had so many in high school. There was a grand group of teachers there, but I suppose you'd say English and maybe something we called United States Government. That was a wonderful course. I remember Miss Le Grande very well.

KMS: Now when you graduated, what did you do next?

KGS: Then I went off to Duke University. A woman's college at that time was on the same campus. Not the same campus, but anyway, it was part of Duke and it was called the Woman's College of Duke University. Maybe you knew that.

KMS: I didn't know that.

KGS: All right. We all lived on what is known as East Campus, the women did. There were a thousand of us and then the men were on West Campus and there were probably two or three thousand. Classes were co-ed, but women's student government was separate from men's student government.

KMS: I did not know that.

KGS: Duke did not unite them until about 1971. This date is not exactly accurate, but now dorms, classes, and student activities are co-ed.

KMS: So tell me about your college days. What was your major?

KGS: English major and Humanities minor.

KMS: What kind of things did you enjoy in college?

KGS: Well you know I was thinking, the things that you probably get from – not only from Elizabethan literature, say, which was where I was in English, but the things like architecture. I didn't take a course in architecture, but I was, for the first time in my life, just surrounded by Georgian architecture and Gothic architecture, both

of which are represented very well in Duke, you know. So I enjoyed that very much.

It was during the War, so most of the men were in uniform; either Navy or Army or Marine Corp. This made it very unusual because they were all going off to war, you know, suddenly you'd know some of these young men and suddenly they were gone off to war.

One thing I didn't mention, probably the biggest academic subject for me was a professor of Creative Writing and his name was William Blackburn. And we had this class where we would sit around a small room in what was known as the Music Building, East Duke, at that time. And we would have – it was an afternoon class. We'd go at 2:00 and he would serve tea at 4:00 because Dr. Blackburn had been a Rhodes Scholar. [Laughs] I'm taking too much time.

KMS: No, no, not at all. These are wonderful stories.

KGS: So he would serve tea and we would read what we had written; mostly short stories, or autobiographical. In this class was William Styron. He was a Marine. And all of us, I must say, we sat in awe of William Styron because he was so much better than the rest of us. But, Dr. Blackburn was not only a dear teacher, but he was a dear friend of mine. And during the summer school session, I asked him if he wouldn't like to go home to this place on the sound with me and another friend. And so we – there were not cars during World War II, so we all got on the bus and rode down to the sound place, middle sound, and Dr. Blackburn went with us and we spent the weekend. It was very informal because that was a small, small house, but I always remember him with such pleasure.

KMS: That's wonderful; a wonderful story. So you enjoyed college, it was a great experience.

KGS: Oh, I did. I rushed through though. I enrolled in '42 and then graduated in June of '45 and always regretted that. That was something – I am so sorry I didn't stay there another year.

KMS: Now when you graduated, what did you do then?

KGS: Then I went back to Wilmington. I wanted to go to New York and work but when I graduated in '45 both the wars in Europe and in Asia had ended and so six million men came back and got out of uniform and applied for jobs, so it was very difficult to get a job in New York. So I decided to go to work on a weekly newspaper in Wilmington called *The Wilmington Post*. The only job I could get was as a bill collector for a weekly newspaper. [Both laugh] And oh, I worked so hard at it, but I learned an awful lot and in about 3 months, that paper was bought by a daily, *The Wilmington Post*, so I went over and worked there as a bill collector for a little while and then the society editor quit because her husband was moving out of town, so they gave me that job. And I did the writing for that

paper and later joined *The Wilmington Morning Star* which is still going. Do you know anything about Wilmington?

KMS: Yes, I love Wilmington. It's one of my favorite spots in North Carolina.

KGS: Oh good. Well I worked at *The Wilmington Morning Star* as the, I think by then we changed the title from society editor, to woman's editor. I'm not sure about that. This was a really great experience. I didn't work there but two years, but it was still a great experience [Laughs]

KMS: It sounds wonderful. So now after that job, what did you do next?

KGS: Well then, I got a job in New York.

KMS: So you did make it to New York.

KGS: I finally made it to New York and it was not exactly writing at all, but in 1948, women's hosiery became known as – was made on circular knitting machinery for the first time which meant there was no seam up the back. And if you wear hose, you know that there is no seam up the back. Well, we were hired by the company that made the machinery called Scott and Williams; twelve – ten girls or twelve women. We had to be unmarried and we had to be a certain age and we were to promote these seamless nylons. [Laughs] So they sent us to Washington, they kept us in New York, they sent us to Philadelphia, and we worked in these department stores showing legs and convincing women that they didn't need a seam up the back of their hosiery. And the women would come in and the ones with plump legs would say, "Well, that seam makes my legs thinner." And the ones with skinny legs would say, "But I need the seams because it makes my legs look fatter." [Both laugh] So that was my job and then I met Sidney Stern.

KMS: That's wonderful. So you met him in New York?

KGS: No, I went home one weekend to Wrightsville Beach and a nice lady named Janet Bluethenthal who we had known all of our lives, she said, "I have this young man from Greensboro and I would like you to meet him." And so I met Sidney at Wrightsville Beach and it was during the polio epidemic. Now are you both from Greensboro?

HT: Yes, I am.

KGS: All right. Well, have you ever heard about the polio epidemic? It was in '48. It was a year full of things and Janet had grandchildren who came every year from New Jersey, and she said, "Oh, these grandchildren. I can't let you come in the house, Kay." I was called Kay by then. "Because of the polio epidemic and this young man is coming from Greensboro which is the center of the epidemic." So we met on Janet's steps I guess. And we didn't get polio [Both laugh]

But they had a great hospital here. An aside, because it is Greensboro history, Ed Loewenstein and John Foster and, wait a minute, there's another one. I wasn't here at the time but they got together and promoted, and Dr. Sam Ravenel promoted building this hospital just for polio children, victims, and it was out on Bessemer Avenue. And these children that caught polio would come from all over the state and be in that hospital. And it lasted for about three or four years but it was – that's what made Greensboro the center of the polio epidemic. I'm giving you just what I heard.

KMS: Now is that hospital still standing?

KGS: No, no. Polio was, you know, defeated, in a way, by taking the little sugar pill when they had it.

KMS: So they didn't convert that building, they just kind of got rid of it?

KGS: Yes. I think we used it for a rehabilitation center and the Crafts, Bill Craft's father, was real interested in that at that time. Do y'all know the Craft family? Bill Craft has always been the one who wanted to plant the parks. He's been great in that area.

KMS: So you met Mr. Stern on the steps. [Both laugh]

KGS: On the steps at Wrightsville Beach. Right. [Both laugh]

KMS: And y'all dated long distance?

KGS: Yes. We did. We'd meet maybe in Washington or meet in New York. It was a very short romance.

KMS: Y'all got married fairly rapidly after that?

KGS: Yes we did. Yes we did.

KMS: And where did you settle after you were married?

KGS: Sidney, as I said again, after the war, Greensboro had very few apartments. But Sidney knew – had a friend at the Westover Terrace apartments, which are opposite Grimsley High School and he wanted to live there. And I didn't care where we lived. So he got a little tiny apartment and we lived there a couple of years. But he thought it was wonderful. [Laughs]

KMS: So at that time, were you working or was he working?

KGS: No, I wasn't working. But after that, the Stern family owned a house at 826 North Elm and it was two apartments there; one upstairs and one large one downstairs and so we moved over to 826 North Elm. And my husband's family had always lived at Magnolia Court. Do y'all know where Magnolia Court is? In a house there, Number 4 Magnolia Court. And so that put us close to Magnolia Court and close to looking at the Jefferson [Insurance] Building which my husband thought – he always wanted to be close to downtown. He was a lawyer.

KMS: He was a lawyer.

KGS: Yes. His father was a lawyer.

KMS: So what firm – did he work with a firm?

KGS: It was his firm, it became Stern, Rendleman and then Stern, Rendleman, Klepfer and had a few more lawyers, but after Sidney died, it sort of broke apart.

KMS: And what about children?

KGS: Then I have the three children; Sidney Joseph Stern, III, who lives here and then a daughter Katherine Weaver, Mrs. Mike Weaver, who lives here most of the time. But they do have a house in Florida so she has gone back to Florida now. Mike Weaver, his mother died two days ago or three days ago and they were here for the funeral.

KMS: Oh, I'm sorry.

KGS: And then my other daughter is a teacher in Wilmington at the Cape Fear Community College and she teaches World History or Western Civ. I think right now she is teaching something called World Problems.

KMS: That's a lot to tackle.

KGS: And she lives at our place on the sound.

KMS: Oh that's great. So she went back to Wilmington. That's interesting.

KGS: She did. She just couldn't leave it after she was there every summer.

KMS: That's wonderful. Any grandchildren?

KGS: Yes, I have eight.

KMS: Oh my goodness. [Both laugh] Now we know that you have been very active in non-profit and volunteerism in the community of Greensboro. That has been a love of yours. What have you been involved in?

KGS: I started out with something called, The Cerebral Palsy School. It was out in ORD [Overseas Replacement Depot]; that was part of the war here. This was an old barracks that was left. And some women evidently, this was about 1950 I guess, some women got together, one had a cerebral palsy child. There were no facilities for children of that kind until then. And the Junior League and a woman named Mrs. Bennett, who had the child, Mrs. Bennett decided we needed a school or a place for these children. So that was my first board and I think that I was the Secretary. I was always a Secretary. But that was my first job in civic work.

And then, in 1950, Dr. [Frank Porter] Graham, who had been chancellor, or president, of the University of North Carolina, he decided to run for Senate. This is history, I know, for you all. But, he was a wonderful man and had really made the university at Chapel Hill a spectacular unit and when he ran for Senate I thought, "Well, I ought to help him." Naïve little girl [Both laugh]. So, we got together with another woman named Eleanor Benson, I think she was a graduate of UNCG. And Eleanor and I decided that we would work on getting Dr. Graham elected. I wish that I could remember his first name right this minute. But anyway, everybody would know Dr. Graham. And we worked so hard. He was running against another Democrat. Eleanor Benson, do you know her, did you know her? Well Eleanor and I were working daily on this thing. She was a little older than I was. But Dr. Frank Graham ran and he ran against a man named Willis Smith who was a Democrat too. Republicans didn't amount to anything. We didn't have any Republicans. And Dr. Frank lost in the primary, the second primary, that summer. And we were just so sad because he had a lot of supporters at Chapel Hill, and he lived in Chapel Hill. And he didn't make the Senate. Always sorry. But Willis Smith did.

KMS: And did you continue your interest in politics?

KGS: I did. When Rich Preyer ran, I worked for Rich. I was head of the women volunteers for him and he was – now, wait a minute, now. He ran for Governor in 1964 and Rich ran against Dan Moore, but anyway, he lost in the primary too. But we really did work for him so hard for Governor and then he ran again in '68 and won and he stayed in Congress, Rich stayed in Congress until 1980 and I worked for him every year. I mean, not every year, but every time he ran, you know, and he had to run every two years.

KMS: That's a lot of participation.

KGS: Right, exactly.

KMS: Any at the national level?

KGS: Never. No, I never got out of North Carolina.

KMS: There's enough to do here.

KGS: That's right, there really is. And since then, I really haven't worked as a volunteer. I certainly contribute, but I haven't worked as a volunteer.

KMS: Now you said that you had worked with the Cerebral Palsy school, was that in the fifties?

KGS: Say that again?

KMS: Was the Cerebral Palsy in the fifties?

KGS: Oh yes, and that became the Gateway later. We got a building for them and we moved out of the barracks and then we – I worked there trying to get – they made me sort of a publicity or promotion person volunteer to build this building and there again, Ed Loewenstein, he got the laborers together, he designed the building and we built that. And then the school stayed there until the city, I mean the school system locally stepped in and built Gateway out on Wendover Avenue and that's a huge school for handicapped children, it's not just cerebral palsy, it's other things too. And you may know – you may have seen that big school out there.

KMS: Now that was your first foray into volunteerism?

KGS: Yes, that and Frank Graham's campaign. And then, it seems to me, I was involved in Family Service, the original Family Service, and then I joined the Junior League and worked real hard for the League and later became president of the League.

KMS: Oh, wonderful.

KGS: In '58 or '59. I did that. And in the meantime there were a lot of other boards like the Children's Home Society and – that I was working on. I've forgotten some of these efforts. Oh, Preservation Greensboro which was in 1960s, late '60s, the Junior League and a group of women decided that we would save Blandwood Mansion which had been a center for alcoholism after the governor – well, let me go back. Blandwood Mansion was the home of Governor Morehead during the Civil War and before. And he had about six or eight children and the house remained in that family until 1870s or 1880s [phone rings] Let's let it ring, if you don't mind.

KMS: Not at all if you don't mind.

KGS: No, I don't. Anyway, getting back to Blandwood, it had become a center for alcoholism and drugs. And then the owners of the center were killed in a plane crash, I guess, so the house was vacant. And some women in this city, among

them, one of the leaders was Mary Lyon Caine and an heir, a descendent of the Governor, Mary Louise Edmonds. Those two women decided that the house should be saved. So, Mary Lyon came to me and said, "Will you do – be head of raising the funds for the Blandwood Mansion?" And at the time, I didn't have too much to do besides children, and one of them had already gone off to prep school. So I said yes, and we had to raise \$400,000 and in 1968, that was just enormous [Laughs]. But then again, I learned a lot. So, we got – Carson Bain was mayor and Carson said, "I can help you. I think the federal government under a program for the saving of lands and open space, might give us some money." So we went to Atlanta and saw the federal person there and he let us know they would give us \$100,000 and then we got the Junior League in back of him and I think they gave around \$50,000. And then I went to Roger Soles, and I said, "Roger, how would you do this?" I wanted to get some money from the Jefferson. And that man sat me down and said, "Here's the way you do it." And he just mapped it out how we would get that money from corporate – from the corporate part of the town and from others, you know, and we made it. We made it.

KMS: You need to publish on that. [Both laugh]

KGS: Yes, because Roger, he was so helpful, I must say. To me, he was so helpful.

KMS: How have you seen Greensboro's non-profit sector change through the years, or have you?

KGS: It has just gotten so much larger. I was talking to Neil Belenky the other day, he's head of the United Way, and he is a Rotary member too, and I just don't see how if this recession, and I call it a recession when the stock market plunges every single day, if it continues I don't see how all of the non-profits can stay in business. This isn't going to be – well, anyway, I'm done. That was another board I was on, United Way. And very interested in the United Way for awhile, and I still am. Still am very interested in that.

KMS: So is that your favorite? Have you had a favorite through the years or one that you were particularly passionate about?

KGS: Well, you know, I guess you don't call them a favorite, you just think, "Which one am I giving the most to, in a way." And my husband went on the United board two or three years before he died. I had already been on it a couple of terms. And when Sidney got involved, he thought it was the greatest. He thought it was run so well, and he always thought it was good. And they needed a new building, so the building they had was an Ed Loewenstein building down on Elm Street across from Cone Hospital and they had outgrown it. So Sidney was on the board and he said, "Well, I think I'll give you the building." So bless his heart, I thought, "Oh Sidney, Lord have mercy." [Both laugh] "You can't give \$1,200,000 for a building." But he did and that was wonderful of him. It really was. So, that is

the reason I have maintained my interest in that and the [Alexis] de Tocqueville Society. I don't know whether you know that.

KMS: No, I don't.

KGS: About the time Sidney went on that board, Mr. Joseph Bryan, Sr., had said, "I'm going to give a right large amount to United Way every year. But I think that you ought to get larger donations from individual citizens who can afford it, and \$10,000 a year would be the minimum." Well, Sidney and I took that chairmanship the second year it was organized, and I want to tell you it was rough. You'd get people who had been giving \$100 or \$500, maybe \$1000, to raise it to \$10,000. I think we got twenty-three members for the total of that year.

KMS: That's phenomenal.

KGS: Well, next year, David Grimes, another Rotarian, and his wife Joanne, they did much better. They must have doubled that. And then Bonnie McElveen-Hunter, who was ambassador to Finland, she took it over the next year and she decided she was going to raise it among women. She said that, "Their husbands can afford this, and if they can't, the women can afford it, and they ought to learn to give \$10,000 a year, at least, to the United Way." And she said, "I'm going to get – And I'll show you a picture, I've still got it – "I'm going to get the pictures of the women in Greensboro who give to the de Tocqueville," which is a part of United Way, "that much money, I'm going to get their picture in the Wall Street Journal." And I still have it in my kitchen, of those women who joined up. But the de Tocqueville has been very successful all over the United States. Well, it has been. That's part of United Way which I remain interested in.

KMS: So you're still involved with that organization.

KGS: No soliciting, I'm not, but I certainly join every year.

KMS: That's wonderful.

KGS: Any other things?

KMS: Well, we understood that the Greensboro Jewish community is small but very tight knitted and we were just wondering if you could just tell us about the role they've played in the growth of Greensboro and how you've been involved.

KGS: Well, you know when I moved here as a bride, I felt like it was much less tight knit and mainly, I guess, because of the Cone family. The Cones, of course, were so prominent with all those mills, and they were so generous. The little Temple which is down on Green Street, Temple Emanuel, they call it downtown Campus now, I think. A man named Emanuel Sternberger [Blanche Benjamin's father], Mr. E. Sternberger, I guess, he and a group in Greensboro started the Temple and

then they built that temple down there in 1924. So when I moved here it seemed to me that with Rabbi Rypins, he was the Rabbi who lived over on Woodland Drive. His wife was a teacher for a little private school she had in the attic. The Jewish population was really spread out all over civic life in Greensboro and that's changed some and I'm real sorry. Yet, there are a lot of Jewish people who contribute to the city at large, don't misunderstand me. And Randy Kaplan and Kathy Manning, they give in big ways. Alan Cone and, Herman is sick now so he can't do that any more, but there are many Jewish families who make tremendous contributions; Joan Bluethenthal and Arthur Bluethenthal. Well there just are -- a lot of them. So, I think it's because your next question was about the Federation and that's a big foundation and so there have been many Jewish families who have moved into Greensboro so I'm sure the population has tripled. The congregation voted to build that big new temple out there on Jefferson Road and it's next to the day school which was built by a gentleman named Sabbah.

KMS: I have a friend who sends her children there. That's how I knew about it.

KGS: Oh, really. Do you.

KMS: Shelly and Jeff Segal. Anyway, they are very active and have their children there.

KGS: Oh yes. You know you may know more about this than I do.

KMS: I don't. I'm just learning because of her and what she's told me.

KGS: So Mr. Sabbah built that and it's interesting. I think that's part of what you're saying. It's more of a closed group. It may be.

KMS: She just -- as far as a close knit, in the sense that -- she seems to have an idea of kind of what's going on in the Jewish community. She is very in tune with that, so I thought that was interesting, that it was kind of tight knit in that she can whip out her book and look somebody up in a minute. You know, and I find that so impressive [Both laugh]

KGS: Oh right. I see what you mean. Both congregations are in that little book and they do. It's just like, you know, I guess, First Presbyterian Church, which is a huge church on West Market has a book too, you know.

KMS: Well, I'm Episcopalian and we're not that organized. We can't seem to get ourselves together. [Both laugh]

KGS: What is yours?

KMS: I'm in Winston. I'm at St. Paul's.

KGS: Oh, I see.

KMS: So, we have a book, but we're just kind of flakey, so I'm always so impressed when Shelley can get a book and find somebody kind of across the city whether they go to her temple or not. She can just kind of whip out her contact book and find people. That's so impressive to me.

KGS: Well, it is.

KMS: And she's moved here and has found it very comforting that there is a very strong group of her faith here. She really likes that.

KGS: And this reminds me. Both congregations would have what they called sisterhoods, the women's organization, and then there's Hadassah, an organizations that does hospitals in Israel. And the brotherhoods and then both congregations and then now there's the Federation. And there'll be a senior citizens group in that, I guess.

KMS: Well, I've been on the website for the Federation and it's amazing. It really is just amazing.

KGS: It is. It raises so much money every year.

KMS: They are involved in so many things. I thought it was just great. I didn't know if you were involved in anything like that.

KGS: Right. It's – that has really grown with Greensboro.

KMS: Well, it had such a great start, with people like the Cones.

KGS: Right. Right.

KMS: Now, when did you join the Rotary Club?

KGS: Oh, I only joined back in '96. Sidney had been dead for about six years.

[Tape stops and turns back on]

KMS: We're interviewing Mrs. Stern and we were just talking about other things that you were involved in.

KGS: Right. Well, I graduated from Duke in '45 and I always say, I never got away from it. So when I got involved in volunteer work down there I became president of Women's – the Alumni Association of the Women's College, Duke University, and then later, the president of the whole Alumni Association, the General Alumni Association. And then Terry Sanford came on as president of Duke, and I had known him through politics, because I had worked for him when he ran

Governor in '60. So in 1977, I went on the Board of Duke University and stayed on the Board until '89. It's a term of six years, and if you were a pretty good board member, they would reelect you. And I still go down to board meetings because they always ask us to come back if we've served on it.

But where were we now, with somebody else. Weatherspoon. Weatherspoon Guild was started by – actually Herbert Falk, Sr. Herbert Falk, Sr., a friend of mine, had gotten involved with art, with the old Weatherspoon Gallery over at UNCG. And he called one day and he said, "We needed a women's group to work on that gallery." So, I went on that board. I think we got Jerri Darden. She was the one who may have been the first president. And then Mary Stephens came. I ran Art on Paper one year and then they elected me president of that guild. So, have we left anybody out? [Both laugh] Oh me. But I enjoyed working with Weatherspoon. I really do. It's made a real contribution. And of course, I enjoy working with Green Hill Gallery too. I don't work, I really do support.

KMS: Sounds like you work to me. [Both laugh]

KGS: No I don't. I really don't.

KMS: Usually, as it is, you volunteer so hard, you have to quit that and get a job just to relax.

KGS: Yes you do. I think it was something I picked up working on the newspaper, that you've just got to be a volunteer.

KMS: It's many times much harder work than anything else you can do; and the hours don't stop at 5:00, they continue on with phone calls and meetings into the evening.

KGS: Well, were you real active with the Junior League in Winston-Salem?

KMS: Yes, when I moved up from Mississippi. We were too small to have a Junior League so we had a Junior Auxiliary, which was really hands-on and I enjoyed that a lot too. So we moved up and I went into the Junior League.

KGS: Good.

KMS: It's very strong in Winston too. We just built a children's museum there not too long ago.

KGS: Oh yes. Let me see. Is there anybody else we've not mentioned now?

KMS: We're going to turn this off, you know, and we're going to think of something else. [Both laugh]

KGS: You work at UNCG. That certainly has been my main interest over there, the Weatherspoon, and I haven't done anything in a number of years. One thing that is real interesting is Mike Weaver's collection of art. I don't know whether y'all know about this, but Mike has collected paintings of all the artists who have some connection with either the school of art, Gregory Ivy, or with Weatherspoon Gallery. And this marvelous collection is at his building which is down on – Park Place down on Wendover, and he takes such good care of all these paintings. But it is a really interesting collection. So I thought I would just mention that. Well, he is so interesting carrying on with that. He and Adelaide Holderness ran one of the big drives back there about the time Pat Sullivan became chancellor. Gosh, really, it has been interesting to me how many names I've dropped. [Both laugh] But they're history.

KMS: No, no. That's exactly what we want to know.

KGS: I shouldn't, but they're history. I just talked about Adelaide Holderness. She has been marvelous alum over there, hasn't she? Mrs. Howard Holderness – and she's about ninety-six now I think. She and I worked together on the Museum of History in Raleigh, the Museum of History Associates in Raleigh; that's North Carolina Museum of History.

KMS: So you're volunteering out of town too. [Both laugh]

KGS: Oh, a little bit. Oh dear. I'm going to let y'all go. I'm just embarrassed.

KMS: No, thank you again so much, you have been so gracious. We appreciate it. Thank you.

[Tape turns off and then back on]

KMS: Have there been any positive changes that you've seen in Greensboro over the years?

KGS: We've gone from a manufacturing city more – but I guess that's true every place.

KMS: What about growth in the arts?

KGS: Well, certainly the Arts Council. That's another board I served on. I think that's helpful; the arts. The symphony was organized in about '68, I guess, something like that. The Arts Council was relatively new. That's right. I'm sorry I was overlooking that because I really enjoy them so much. And the park situation; I think that's been wonderful, in Greensboro, that we have so many parks and we're so interested in land preservation. Piedmont Land Conservancy is another group I'm interested right now.

KMS: You are involved. My goodness. [Both laugh]

KGS: Well, as I say, I'm not out there asking for money, though, you know. Those are the people who are really involved.

KMS: So, what do you see as the future for Greensboro? Or what do you hope is the future for Greensboro?

KGS: Well, I hope it remains probably the most egalitarian city in the state. I really think it is that. I hope that you agree with me.

KMS: I do.

[End of Side A and Beginning of Side B]

KGS: We go back to the Quaker heritage there – they have had a great influence. And I also think when the Cone family moved in here with their big mills in about 1898 that was another thing that was going to cause this city to be a little different. When you have the power structure composed of Jewish folks, and all these religions. I mean, then the Bryan family, Kathleen, and the Prices were good Roman Catholics, and then the Quakers were so instrumental, some of them. And all those good Presbyterians. [Both laugh] Well, all those good Presbyterians. [Both laugh]

KMS: So you had a good mix here.

KGS: We had a great mix. With the First Presbyterian Church, original church, turned over to the Social Services, the library. Did you know that?

KMS: No, I didn't.

KGS: Well, when First Presbyterian built the big church down there, evidently about 1927, '28. It was a couple of years after Temple Emanuel across the street. And when they built that they gave the original church, which is the Greensboro Historical Museum, another group that I'm interested in, I was on their board, they gave that to the library. Yes, there was one public library there, but also Social Services. And the first Community Chest was in that building when I moved here and Family Service was in that building down in the basement. And then, when United Way moved out, or Community Chest, which it was in those days, they turned the building over to the Historical Museum. The public library, and later the Historical Museum, took over the whole building. So, this is another thing that makes this city whole. I think it is a great city. You know I'm wild about Wilmington still, but it can't compare to Greensboro. Can't compare.

KMS: Now is there anything we haven't covered that you would like to talk about?

KGS: No, I don't think so.

KMS: Well, I know we spoke about your wonderful house before we started the interview. So, I would be interested in maybe getting a little bit about it on tape. You live in an original Loewenstein house, and he built it for you and your family.

KGS: Yes, it's been a nice house. As I say, we built it in '55. Ed Loewenstein was a very close friend because he was married to Sidney's first cousin, Frances Stern, and they were building, of course, over on Cornwallis. And they had already built – Ed had already designed an interesting house for Oscar Burnett over on what is Lafayette now. It's been torn down recently though. So, of course, we called on Ed with this house in 1955 and we didn't have very much money. Sidney was a lawyer and so it was a very, when I think about what we built this house for, it's just amazing. So then, as I say, I was so impressed with Ed Loewenstein's own home, and Frances' house, that I wanted this natural look inside. My brother-in-law always said, "Kay, you're trying to make that house look like a house in the country." I said, "That's right." I wanted to. We had more woods then. Our dogwoods have died out. I planted that magnolia.

KMS: It's fabulous.

KGS: It came – it was a little magnolia. My mother brought it from her home out on Castle Hayne Road in Wilmington and she brought it up here and I planted it and look at it.

KMS: It's wonderful. I noticed that earlier.

KGS: Fifty-one years old. Oh dear. But I think Ed Loewenstein, thanks to his daughter Jane Levy, and thanks to Patrick Lucas, at UNCG, you see what a contribution he made to mid-century modern, and that's what this, you see, is.

KMS: Well, it's wonderful. My family is from Louisiana and I'm familiar with pecky cypress, and I've never seen anything as beautiful as this pecky cypress.

KGS: Oh, well thank you. Well we had to get this from Georgia. The cypress has been so decimated – was – in eastern North Carolina. We've got some of the oldest trees – cypress trees in the world in eastern Carolina still, but we don't get cypress from our state anymore.

KMS: So, you've raised your family here.

KGS: Yes, we did. And economizing, we put two bedrooms downstairs with two baths and we put the children's rooms upstairs and I can remember Emily Prior coming over here after we were built and little Susan was eighteen months or two years, and she was up there on that step, you know. Did you look upstairs?

KMS: Yes, I took a peek at the staircase.

KGS: And Emily said, “Are you trying to kill that child? She’s going to fall down!”
[Both laugh] Oh me, Emily was a great gal. She really was.

KMS: Well, it’s a really beautiful home.

KGS: Well, I’m sorry I haven’t spoken much about Rotary. You must come to Rotary.
Have y’all ever come to our meetings?

KMS: No, I have not. That would be interesting.

KGS: Well, Kathelene, since you’re doing this, I think you ought to.

KMS: That would be great. I’ll talk to Sandy about that.

KGS: All right. Well, you can be my guest too.

KMS: Okay. Well, I’ll take you up on that. Thank you very much.

KGS: Because, especially when we have a particularly good speaker. I mean, Pat Sullivan, of course has been a good member. She and I joined about the same time and she’s been a really fine member. And, I’m trying to think the other. Yes, the president of Guildford, he’s a member, [Kent] Chabotar. And let’s see. Bennett I don’t think we have the president at Bennett.

KMS: I think they have a new chancellor at Bennett, a new president.

KGS: Yes, there’s a new president. You know, she may be coming in. I think there’s really an effort – Sandy’s been a grand member, Sandy Neerman has been a grand member, but there’s an effort to get the city at large. We don’t have all the members of foundations. I think they purposely don’t join [Both laugh] I mean the Weaver Foundation, the Bryan Foundation. Several. I’m thinking of those.

KMS: Well, it is so kind for you to have us into your home and this has been a wonderful interview. Thank you so much.

KGS: Well, you’re so nice. As I say, I’m a little guilty about Rotary. I have not given it enough credit. [Both laugh]

KMS: Well, would you like to say anything else about the Rotary? [Both laugh] Well, thank you again; we really appreciate your time.

[End of Interview]