Schlesinger-Rockefeller Oral History Project

Interview with

BEATRICE BLAIR

April 1976

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1973 the Schlesinger Library began an oral history project structured around the role of women in population issues. The project, made possible by a grant from The Rockefeller Foundation, had as its object the improvement of the record available to future scholars by documenting the vital part played by women in the birth control movement, in the delivery of health services, maternal and child care, marriage counseling, and sex education.

As the original two-year project developed, it became clear that abortion, particularly the campaign to repeal laws prohibiting or limiting abortion, was closely related to the topics covered in the interviews already conducted, and a vital issue in the lives of many women. An additional one-year grant from The Rockefeller Foundation made it possible to explore more deeply the experience of a few women who have played leading roles in bringing the abortion issue before the public and in initiating legal change.

The focus of the project throughout has been on interviews with individual women, lay and professional, in government, academic affairs and voluntary associations, where the impact of their leadership has been strong and original. Inevitably, however, the interaction between those leading and those led becomes apparent in these interviews, as do differences of opinion argued out in the

process of decision-making. In this way these tapes provide insights into historical movements in which the person interviewed is only a part.

While a three-year program is necessarily limited in scope, we view these conversations as a nucleus around which a larger collection can be built, providing an accessible source of fresh historical data in this field.

To make these interviews as accurate and thorough as possible, we have allocated a considerable part of our interviewers' time to research in the papers and publications of the women interviewed, realizing that with a firsthand knowledge of the available source material the interviewer is better able to assist the subject in describing her past. Of equal importnace, a more analytical discussion is likely to result. Every effort has been made to keep the interviews from being random, to hold them on planned course and thus to provide meaningful material for serious research.

Even the best oral history interview cannot serve as a substitute for traditional secondary reading and archival research. Indeed, the oral history interview as a source is particularly susceptible to misuse because of the impreciseness of informal speech. Schlesinger Library oral history interviews are intended both as fresh source materials in themselves and as supplements to and commentaries upon other source materials. They give the interviewee an opportunity to improve the record and to convey her view of people and events as she saw them. The interviewer, in turn, attempts to anticipate the

questions that future scholars might want to ask.

Another more elusive aim of the oral history interview is to convey through living speech the full flavor of a personality which is inevitably lost through death.

* * * * * *

Beatrice Blair directed the New York State Abortion Education Program, sponsored jointly by the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and Planned Parenthood of New York City from 1972 to 1973. The program was designed to educate the public and the State Legislature on the benefits of New York's 1970 liberal abortion law in the hope of guarding against its repeal. As a statewide organizer and registered lobbyist in Albany, Blair utilized information, tactics and contacts she had developed over a twenty year voluntary association with Planned Parenthood. As Mrs. Harper Sibley, Jr., wife of a prominent Rochester businessman, she had served as President of the Planned Parenthood League of Rochester and Monroe Counties from 1964 to 1966 and had then gone on to service in the national Planned Parenthood organization, as Northeast Region Representative to Planned Parenthood-World Population from 1968 to 1970.

In 1974, following the Supreme Court decision that proclaimed abortion as a constitutional right of women, Blair closed her Planned Parenthood operation and was named Executive Director of the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), formerly the National Association

for the Repeal of the Abortion Laws, the principle organizing and lobbying force for abortion reform in this country. She resigned from that post in 1975 in order to pursue a career in the ministry.

Beatrice Blair was born in Boston, Massachusetts on December 22, 1929, the daughter of Montgomery Blair, M.D. and Virginia Mason Blair, a leader in the American Birth Control League, forerunner of Planned Parenthood. When she was six months old, the family moved to Washington, D.C. where she was raised. She graduated from The Madeira School in 1947 and then attended Bryn Mawr College. She left after one year to marry Harper Sibley, Jr. They had four children, Liza, Harper, Blair and Durbin. From 1950 to 1972, Blair resided in Rochester where she was active in Planned Parenthood and Junior League activities. In 1974 she was remarried to John C. Robbins, former chief executive officer of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

* * * * * * *

For additional information on Beatrice Blair's work at Planned Parenthood and at NARAL, see the research materials collected in conjunction with this interview in the Schlesinger Library collection. For additional information on the movement for abortion reform, see: Lawrence Lader, Abortion (1966) and Abortion II: Making the Revolution (1973). See also the Schlesinger-Rockefeller Oral History Project interviews with Mary S. Calderone, M.D., Arlene Carmen, Constance E. Cook, Sadja Goldsmith, M.D. Estelle Griswold, Patricia Maginnis, Sarah Marcus, M.D., Emily H. Mudd, Ph. D., Lonny Myers, M.D. Lana Clarke Phelan, Sarah Lewit Tietze and Christopher Tietze, M.D., and Sarah Weddington.

Beatrice Blair

Ellen Chesler: I'm Ellen Chesler, and I'm interviewing Bea Blair in New York City. It's April 13, 1976. Bea, to begin with, could we talk a little bit about your childhood and the impact your family may have had on some of the choices that you made as a woman?

Beatrice Blair: I was born in Boston on December 22, 1929. My father was a doctor who was finishing up his internship at Children's Hospital in Boston, and when I was six months old we moved to Washington. I'm the eldest of four girls. I think as a child, at some point, I did get the feeling that the eldest should have been a boy, and I think that's why early on I wanted to be a doctor. I also think that there were pressures. I know there were pressures as I grew up, to feel that I ought to get married and have a family, and that's really what women were supposed to do. And so following that pattern I did get married when I was nineteen. I married Harper Sibley, Jr. We moved to Rochester, New York, where his family came from. And I had four children and I did a number of volunteer things, mostly Planned Parenthood, but also other kinds of community volunteer sorts of things.

Ellen Chesler: So you abandoned your career plans? But... spend a little more time...what kind of childhood experiences do you remember very clearly, or what impact may your family have had on you in a more direct way? Can you talk, perhaps, about your mother a little bit, her family and family background?

BB: Yes. My mother's family were mostly very strong women. And I think I probably picked up from them the feeling that women were okay... At the same time picking up the feeling that, you know, what real women did was get married and have children.

EC: Did your mother have a career of any sort, or was she educated? Your father went to medical school.

BB: He attended Harvard Medical School. My mother, her father was in the Army, and also a doctor. He died when she was in her early teens. She had been brought up by relatives in Belgium. So after high school she had to go to work, and she went to work for a cousin of mine who was kind of the Pearl Mesta of her day in Washington and my mother was her social secretary. My mother worked four or five years before she got married.

EC: This is about what year?

BB: This would be like 1925, '28 she got married, or a little earlier than that.

EC: Who was your cousin, just for the historical record?

BB: Oh, her name was, let's see, when I knew her her name was Laura Gross, but what was her name before that, Miriam, I think, yes, Laura Miriam, when she was being so hectic in Washington. Her home was on 1925 F Street and when the depression hit she turned it into a club; it was called the 1925 F Street Club, and it still is a place for many political meetings and stuff like that. My mother, for example, was on Herbert Hoover's campaign train...She was a big Republican, Laura Gross, she was my godmother...she's dead now...So I think I had the feeling, that women working... there was certainly nothing wrong with it...but I think the stronger thing was this getting married. And since three of my four sisters...three of the four of us did get married at nineteen, I think this was a decisive influence.

EC: You must have been something...

BB: Remember, too, this was the fifties when that was sort of the thing to do, and also that very sort of early thing, you know, sexual relations outside of marriage isn't so neat, good girls don't do that, so...

EC: Do you think there was a conflict caused by the sudden change from

EC: (cont) the nineteenth century in the direction of an ethic that endorsed women's sexuality, but then again, only allowed for it in the context of marriage? In order to have it you had to get married.

BB: I think that was the message I got. Certainly.

EC: Whereas the pattern in the earlier day had been less emphasis on sexuality...and that allowed women to postpone marriage.

BB: Possibly, yes, that could be it. I never thought of it that way.

EC: Did you go to a private boarding school, prep school?

BB: Yes, I graduated from Madeira. During the war my father went into the Army, and we went out to California, and I went to public school out there, a very short period of time, half a year I think. But for the most part, I was in girls' schools practically all the time, even when I went to Bryn Mawr, which was a girls' college.

EC: Did you graduate when you were nineteen? That was kind of young.

BB: I didn't graduate, I just went.

EC: Oh you didn't graduate, I see. Have you ever graduated from college?

BB: No, but I'll tell you, I'm going next week to an orientation course for this program that SUNY [the State University of New York] has, Empire State College, and they give you credit for what you've done in your life, so I hope with a small amount of work, I can get a degree. The only reason I really want a degree is because since I'm in seminary now, they won't give me a Master of Divinity unless I have a Bachelor's degree.

EC: I see. How many years did you have at Bryn Mawr, just two?

BB: No, I had one year at Bryn Mawr, and I've got another half a year of sort of miscellaneous credits.

EC: Do you think your father was disillusioned when none of his children finished college and went into the medical profession?

BB: No, I think he would have been more uncomfortable if I had. I mean he really thought women should get married and have children.

EC: And that they should raise their children.

BB: Yes, raise their children. And he was comfortable with us in this role.

EC: Was your mother active in any way in the kinds of volunteer organizations or services that you became active in when you were married?

BB: Yes. And I think...there was no doubt that I patterned myself on her. She was president of the Junior League in Washington, and she was president of Planned Parenthood.

EC: She was president of Planned Parenthood in Washington? Could you talk a little bit about that?

BB: Yes, I know she was active in it before the war. I was quite young then, ten or eleven, so this isn't a very deep perception of mine, but right after the war when she came back, then she became president, and I certainly was aware of it then. That was the first volunteer job I did when I went to Rochester, I went to the local Planned Parenthood clinic and volunteered. So I think...and as I tried to tell her later, as I got more involved in abortion, that abortion in the sixties was just as radical as contraception in the thirties and forties...

EC: Did she agree?

BB: Yes, she could see that. But you know...

EC: An old...A Planned Parenthood type person was, perhaps, a little queasy about the abortion issue.

BB: Well, you're talking about an older generation. And I think it was a logical next step, and she certainly took it intellectually. It takes a little longer for the emotions to catch up.

EC: Well abortion, illegal abortion was such a dangerous thing in her day. Before the use of antibiotics, even therapeutic abortion...

BB: Yes, certainly. When Margaret Sanger started, contraception was illegal too, wasn't it? But I think there was a....as I look back on it, there was a very strong sense in my mother's family.... a feeling that women could do things. Her aunt raised her after her mother got very ill, after her father died, too...her aunt,

BB: (cont) who really raised her was married to a Belgian, and she was decorated in both world wars for underground activity...and my great-grandmother, her husband was in charge of the fort that Custer went out from in Montana, and so she obviously lived a frontier life...and you know, I really admire what those women did. So I think there was a background there, it was really a dichotomy, that women can be strong and do things, but they also have to fill this other role.

EC: People have written a great deal...recent women's historians that is. ...about the conflict that was instilled in women because of the ideal of purity and domesticity and the reality of their lives which didn't conform to that ideal at all. Especially on the frontier. But can I interrupt for a minute. Every time I've mentioned that I was going to interview you to somebody, they've mentioned Blair House in Washington. As a point of identity, just to get that off my mind...is that your family, that is the family of Blair House?

BB: Yes.

EC: I don't even know how Blair House got its name. Was that a family home before it was given to the government?

BB: Yes. It goes back to Andrew Jackson's time. Francis Preston Blair was a close friend of his and ran a newspaper in St. Louis. So when Jackson came to Washington he brought his friend Blair along to start a newspaper in Washington. It was called the Congressional Globe and it was the first paper that printed both sides of congressional debate, and so it was the forerunner of the Congressional Record; it later became the Congressional Record. He bought the house across the street from the White House, which has since been known as Blair House. My uncle owned it and he died in 1940. And so, within a year, the government decided they wanted it for a guest house, so we never lived in it. It was left to my father, though, and we used to go down there on inauguration days and watch the parades.

EC: Did you grow up in suburban Washington?

BB: Yes. My family had a home in Chevy Chase when I was young, and when I was about nine or ten we moved to Kalorama Circle in Washington.

EC: Growing up in Washington, I wonder, what impact did that have on

EC: (cont) you? Did you always, or have you ever been interested in politics or in participating in politics in a direct way?

BB: I think it had an effect, in the first place, because of this background of the family. It went right through to Lincoln. My great-grandfather was Postmaster General in Lincoln's cabinet. So, I sort of knew this and, you know, my parents would go out to dinner. I remember once they came home, and my father was so pleased because Senator Taft had been at the dinner, and my father talked to him about some medical problem and thought that maybe he'd given Taft some information that might help. So you sort of knew that this was going on, and I can remember, this was later, when I was a teenager, I think, when I was at Madeira, I went down to the Senate to hear certain debates, and so I think I was always interested in this. Of course in Rochester, we became active in politics. Yes, I think this was part of my background, that led to some of my interests later on.

EC: Can you tell me a little bit about your first husband, again just for the record? What he did, or how you met him?

BB: Well, actually, our families were friends for quite a long time. His older sister...he was much the youngest of a big family...and his older sister was the wife of the Rector of St. John's Church in Washington, and we were members of St. John's, and so his niece was a close friend of mine. We went to school together and my mother and his sister were close friends. When he was at Princeton, he was in the Princeton Triangle Show that performed in Washington the year I was a debutante, and he came to the party afterward. Well, my sister had gone out to visit their ranch in California, because a younger daughter, Margie and my sister were very close friends so, you know, we knew them.

EC: And so, did he enter the family business in Rochester so you might...

BB: He started out in real estate, then he went into an insurance business and then he developed his own insurance business. And he was sort of into business dealings, kind of wheeling and dealing in Rochester, and then expanded.

EC: How long were you married?

BB: We were married almost twenty years. He got to a point where he'd really made enough money for us, and that was when he started thinking of going into politics, which I certainly encouraged. I mean I thought we had enough money and it would be interesting

BB: (cont) to get into this. And he became the Public Safety Commissioner in Rochester.

EC: As a Republican?

BB: No, as a Democrat.

EC: As a Democrat?

BB: Yes, a Democrat. As early as Ike's first campaign we both tried to work in the Republican party in Rochester. It was a very closed corporation. It was a very Republican town. So I think because there was no future there, and for other reasons, and he always sort of saw himself as something of an iconoclast...anyway, we became Democrats, got active in the Democratic Party. And that was a time, I hate to use Senator Taft again, but the Republican Party was very very conservative. We were not that conservative, and so the Democrats were really, I mean, I think intellectually we were both really happier as Democrats. It wasn't any great traumatic thing. He was active in the Democratic Party and became Public Safety Commissioner. He did some very good things. Rochester was one of the first places to have a race riot, and he came in just after the riots and appointed a black Assistant Public Safety Commissioner. He did some very good things. Unfortunately he did some things that weren't so good either.

EC: This is about 1965?

BB: A little earlier than that, 1963, I think the Rochester riots were '62, so I think it would have been about '63. I think at that time my respect for him was destroyed, but that wasn't the only thing that was happening, I think, in the marriage. I was coming more into my own, I was president of Rochester Planned Parenthood in '64, and then I became chairman of the Northeast Region Planned Parenthood. That was the first time I'd ever done anything completely on my own. It was a tremendous thing for me, because I knew I'd been picked for the Northeast Region because of what I was, for myself, and not because I was Mrs. Harper Sibley, Jr. in Rochester. Even his father was named Harper, so it was a big name in Rochester, and I always had this feeling it was because I was Mrs. Harper Sibley. Well, that wasn't me, I was Bea and when I was picked chairman of...I mean Mrs. Harper Sibley was nothing to the Northeast Region Planned Parenthood, you know, So that was an enormous ego thing for me, and I began to think that I really had capabilities of my own, and I really could do things...

EC: That you could do them apart from marriage.

BB; It did have something to do with the marriage, because Harper thought this, too, Whenever I succeeded in Rochester, it was because I was his wife, you see. This was the first thing that I did that being his wife had nothing to do with. And it isn't only that, but I was also by that time my children's mother. I had an identity in Rochester, I was somebody's wife, and I was somebody's mother. But this had nothing to do with any other living human being but me. And, this is a fairly common thing, I think. Feminists go through this...when you first succeed on your own, it does a lot for yourself-confidence. But also, he was sort of hitting that forties' male thing. He said to me once, "Why don't you redecorate the house every two years and take up gardening?" I hate gardening. He wanted somebody who was home, and who thought he was marvelous, and you know, that kind of a wife, and I was becoming more and more a very different kind of a person. And then he was needing somebody. So we really, twenty years later, needed very different things.

EC: What about your children, we haven't spoken about them at all... They were an important part of your life.

BB: Yes.

EC: You have four children.

BB: I have four children. The oldest was Liza, is Liza.

EC: Who is how old?

BB: She's twenty-four now. She's a graduate student at the University of California at Berkeley in chemistry.

EC: That seems incredible to me, that you have a twenty-four year old child, closer in age to me...

BB: Yes, she's a graduate student at Berkeley in chemistry. She does research on plutonium. She teaches, and she's working for her Ph.D. She's independent. She's earning her way, so to speak. Which is, you know, really good for her. And I'm very proud of her. Looking back, I think I might have done things differently, but more with the boys, I think. I think I always encouraged Liza to do whatever she wanted to do, and she was very interested in riding. Riding really was the only sport open to girls. And she always had a good friend. But she wasn't...I mean the three boys,

BB: (cont) I sort of have this picture of them sort of roughhousing around, but Liza wasn't really part of that so much. One thing happens as children grow up, they hit eleven or twelve and they become teenagers. There's quite a difference between children and teenagers, quite a break when they get over that line. Liza, being a little bit older, and being a girl, went over that line quite a while before her younger brother did. But then once Harper (my son) went over it, he didn't have so much to do with the other two, and then when the next one went over it, you know. So there's this natural break anyway, and then she had her friends and her riding, and so on.

EC: Are your sons in college as well?

BB: My oldest son, Harper, is just graduating from Bowdoin College. He's very scholarly and studious; he's doing very well, majoring in philosophy. My next son Blair is in his second year at the State University of New York at Morrisville, which is a two-year college, and he's president of the college, also, which has been a marvelous experience for him. He's applied for some other colleges, I hope he goes on and finishes. My son Durbin has just finished high school, and he's gone to England to work in a factory, and doesn't want to go to college right away, which is probably a good thing. Liza dropped out of school for about a year and a half, and I think it was very good for her. She was much more motivated afterward.

EC: All of us are routed on an economic, money track...thrown into colleges and universities without any real life experience to give our education a structure. How do your children feel about your returning to Bea Blair after all those years of being Mrs. Sibley?

BB: I think they feel good about it, and I think, it's been interesting as I say. If I'd known when I started what I know now, I certainly would have brought the boys up in a more, a less...

EC: Egalitarian, sexist...

BB: Right. I can remember telling my oldest son Harper, when I was just getting into this, I said, "Now, Harper, you're a bright boy, you're not going to be happy unless you're married to a bright woman, and in your generation no bright women are not going to be feminists, so you might as well learn to deal with it." And, you know, they do accept it. They tease me a lot about it. But I remember once Blair came back and said, "Now you got to talk to so and so," who is the father of a friend of his, "I was trying

BB: (cont) to tell him about feminism, but you've got to, you've got to take him on now." So I think they really like this, it interests them.

EC: But they still tease about it when they come to visit you in New York.

BB: Yes, well, I don't mind that. I think they're better off because they've been able to see me function in this kind of manner.

EC: Did you leave Rochester when you were divorced?

BB: No, I stayed there until my youngest son was ready to go away to high school. He wanted to go to boarding school, and it seemed a good idea because his brother had gone to boarding school the year before, and he being the last one was really left alone.

EC: You were divorced when, just for the record.

BB: '70. Anyway, by the time they were all off, I had this moment of saying here I am; I can do whatever I want to do, what do I want to do? I wanted to get a job. I thought that if I were going to get a job, it would have to be in family planning, because that's what most of my background was, and I thought those jobs were probably in New York or Washington. And it just seemed to me I would be better off moving to New York. I've always kind of liked New York. It <u>is</u> an exciting place to live. And I thought it better not get under the shadow of my family, better really to be on my own. So that fall I moved down.

EC: You experienced your transition from a married woman and a woman who was a member of a kind of aristocracy, such as it is, in American cities, to an independent career woman in New York...at a time when the organized feminist movement was really taking hold... of the organization of NOW, I believe in 1967 or so. Do you remember books like Betty Friedan's <u>Feminine Mystique</u>? You mentioned Kate Millett.

BB: Yes, it was Kate Millett's book that I read. I only read Betty Friedan's book a year or so ago. I remember distinctly reading Kate Millett's book and it was like some sort of light going on in my head. You know, there's nothing wrong with me, other women feel this way, it really was a turning point in my life, and I think I can almost date my feminism from that moment when I suddenly realized I didn't have to find my identity as a wife and mother, that the things that really interested me, really turned me on...

BB: (cont) that it was okay for a woman to be these things.

EC: Well, there were obviously professional women, even in Rochester, for example, the professional women ran the Planned Parenthood clinics, women doctors, women social workers. There were also women in politics. I'm just wondering why you had somehow been blinded to alternative role models. What had happened to feminism in the forties and fifties, and even early sixties to have made a woman like yourself oblivious to it?

BB: Oh, it really went underground, in the fifties, after the war. The fifties, which were the years I had my children...well, Betty Friedan says it so well, But the whole media, everything, was saying a woman's place is in the home, and you can be fulfilled and you can be happy if you take this role, and if you have any excess energy, volunteer work is an acceptable substitute.

EC: Were you aware of middle-class women who were working to supplement incomes, the kind of Planned Parenthood clientele, lower middle-class women, and how they may have felt about this ideology of domesticity?

BB: I wasn't very sensitive to it, no. I really kind of look back at myself in those years and I'm sort of horrified.

EC: Did you have women friends?

BB: Yes, that's very interesting. The sister who's next to me, Judy, is less than two years younger than I am, and we were very close growing up, as little girls we slept in the same bedroom, and she and I are very close still. I'm probably closer to her than any other living human being. It's interesting, our lives have paralleled each other so much, particularly in the early years when we sometimes wouldn't see each other for two or three years. When we would get together we'd find we'd both progressed, we'd both become Democrats about the same time. When feminism was hitting we suddenly found we were both...

EC: Is she also divorced?

BB: No, she's not divorced, but...

EC: She absorbed everything.

BB: Yes. She and her husband have worked it out. She's working now and...well, we had very similar experiences along the way, which

BB: (cont) was interesting.

EC: How about in Rochester, other than...

BB: In Rochester I didn't have any close women friends. When I would go to a cocktail party or a dinner, I wouldn't talk to women. With one exception...I would go talk to women who had children a little older than mine, if I felt the need for sort of practical advice. But boy, I could talk to the men, because I didn't think the women were very interesting.

EC: Most of them were probably like yourself, either drop-outs from women's colleges, or perhaps even some of them had finished, but none did anything more than volunteer work, and even many probably didn't even do that.

BB: That's right.

EC: Belonged to country clubs.

BB: Exactly, and I really wasn't interested in diapers and dishes; I just didn't think it was very interesting to talk about.

EC: Do you recall what you may have read in those years? I'm sure you read, or maybe you didn't.

BB: I read a lot. I read and I went to school. I read things like the Saturday Review and the Atlantic Monthly, I kept up with what was going on, as I say, I went back to school some. And this was something else, my women friends weren't interested in politics, and they weren't interested in things like this. Also, for example, a couple of years before I left, I wasn't active in NOW, but I helped found the Women's Political Caucus in Rochester. And that, although we would meet, say we'd meet at seven-thirty or eight at night, usually in my home, and we would do our formation stuff for an hour, hour-and-a-half. Then we would also sit there for an hour, hour-and-a-half afterward, and really it was consciousness-raising. Although I say I never belonged to a formal consciousness-raising group, I know that was what was happening at those meetings after we would get through with the business in them.

EC: Who was participating in NOW?

BB: Well, they were university women, and I didn't know many of them. It's interesting that I met, through being active in the Democratic Party, one of the party women who was interested in starting the

BB: (cont) caucus and she got in touch with me. So that's how I got into the women's caucus. And then I got to know some of the NOW women and became friends with them in Rochester. I left fairly soon, but if I had stayed in Rochester, I probably would have joined Rochester NOW. I'm a member of New York City NOW, and I think they do a very good job, although again, I'm not active in it.

EC: Let's go back and talk with a little more specificity about your work in Planned Parenthood. You told me in the earlier discussion we had that no more than, perhaps a year after you arrived in, or had your first child in Rochester, you had volunteered at the Planned Parenthood Clinic. Your mother had been involved, it seemed okay to do, and yet, you said that there was, nonetheless, a stigma attached. Your husband's family would have preferred that you worked for the Red Cross, or Junior League, but not Planned Parenthood. Why do you think that was?

BB: Well, I think that nice ladies didn't deal with matters of sex, basically, and that's what Planned Parenthood was talking about.

EC: And it was seem as talking about sexuality rather than talking about differential fertility and controlling the birth rate?

BB: Oh, yes. When I moved to Rochester I was immediately put on the board of the Genesee Hospital, the women's board, which was very boring, 'cause it wasn't <u>the</u> board that did anything, it was the women's board, I was put on the women's board of the art gallery, which bored me even more, that wasn't the real board. And these things were done because I was Mrs. Harper Sibley, Jr., you know, this is what the Sibleys were expected to do, and really it was... boring. So I sort of said this is what I want to do with my time, and I went down and I volunteered for the Planned Parenthood center. And I became more and more active. And I just think this wasn't as <u>nice</u> as the art gallery and the hospital.

EC: It was kind of on the very edge of respectability.

BB: Yes, Planned Parenthood wasn't a member of the Community Chest, the Catholics would never allow that, eventually they were but, you know, it just wasn't part of the really sort of nice things.

EC: What do you remember about your work in the clinic in those early days? One of the things that I'm interested in is the texture of the life of a Planned Parenthood clinic in 1950, or even earlier. You were there in the early fifties. Some of the materials that I read have working class women describing the Planned Parenthood clinic

EC: (cont) as a kind of sorority. Though the subject was sexuality, the atmosphere was to them almost like what they thought a college sorority might be, generally...but what kind of housing did Planned Parenthood have in Rochester, in the beginning? Just the structural dimension of it?

BB: It was an old house very near the downtown section, which was good, it was on bus lines, and it was really within walking distance... it was two or three blocks from the very center where the stores were. So it was a good location. It was on a back street. Probably you wouldn't call it a poor neighborhood but pretty close to it, poor middle class, near downtown. It was kept well painted and all, so it looked okay, but it certainly didn't look like a clinic, it looked like a house. I don't think you could have called it a sorority by the farthest stretch of the imagination.

EC: But it was more a house than a medical facility.

BB: Yes, it really was.

EC: And who were the professional women in your era at Planned Parenthood? In those days, I think all the medical directors of the clinics tended to be women.

BB: Well, let's see. The executive director was a woman, Mrs. Backus. When I went there and said I wanted to volunteer, she interviewed me and said they'd be glad to have me. But she was very strict about the patients I would see and the information I would get and how important it was to keep it confidential. I was impressed by the professionalism of it. And the session that I worked for...it was Friday morning, something like that, was staffed mostly by women doctors, I remember.

EC: What did you do in the medical session? The doctor obviously did the medical examination and fit the diaphragm, which I guess is the technology we're dealing with.

BB: Yes, it was. Well, each session had two volunteers, one was the clean volunteer and one was the dirty volunteer.

EC: What do you mean by clean volunteer and dirty volunteer?

BB: We took turns. The dirty volunteer would go in after the patient finished and take the paper off the table and take the dirty instruments and take everything out, and then would go back to the clean-up room and sterilize the instruments and throw the paper away. And

BB: (cont) the clean volunteer would come in and put out clean instruments and set the table up and go call the patient, have her undress and get her on the table. We had two rooms going. So while this was going on, the cleaning up and getting the patient ready in one room, the doctor was in the other room, if it was a woman doctor. If it was a man doctor, then one of the volunteers would have to be in the room with him.

EC: What do you think caused that particular policy?

BB: Because the doctors were afraid of being sued by a patient saying they had made improper advances.

EC: Actually it was typical of gynecological procedure in the earlier part of the twentieth century and the nineteenth. The nurse always had to be in the presence of the doctor and patient...Do you remember your interaction with the women...clientele of Planned Parenthood? I mean here you were, Mrs. Harper Sibley, Jr.

BB: Oh, I don't think at the clinic anybody knew who I was particularly.

EC: Well, did they know that you were an educated Anglo-Saxon?

BB: Yes, undoubtedly they did. Although we didn't get a lot of blacks in the clinic. We always had some, but I remember...if the average clinic session was twenty, maybe two or three were black.

EC: Basically we're dealing with a white working-class ethnic constituency?

BB: Not just ethnic, middle-class and upper middle-class. There were doctors...you know Rochester was fifty percent Catholic and there were Catholic doctors who wouldn't even give this service to patients, so, we had a lot of women who couldn't get it from their own doctors.

EC: Was the mix fifty-fifty?

BB: Yes, I would say so. Later, when Harper was Public Safety Commissioner, he said that all the prostitutes in town were coming to the Planned Parenthood clinic. He was always trying to put it down, and I said, "Well, that's good, I'm glad they're there. I don't think they'd make very good mothers." But I wouldn't have been able to tell. I don't think I could tell now, I might be able to, I certainly couldn't then. I mean I was sure everybody who came was a married woman.

EC: That was always a policy with Planned Parenthood until the early

EC: (cont) sixties. But really no one ever checked, did they? Did you have university students, for example?

BB: Well, after Mrs. Backus, Thelma Ellis was the executive director and I can remember, I was on the board then, and I think this must have been in the late fifties or early sixties. She did a very good job of educating her board, and she began to talk about the problems of unmarried women, and she got the board to make the policy that we could serve anyone. But she did it cleverly. She didn't just say this is what I want to do, you know, she came in, told us the problems, backed it up with case studies and by the time she was ready, after two or three of these sessions, the board was willing to go along with it. We never announced it publicly.

EC: Did you think of Planned Parenthood in those early days when you were just a volunteer, before you got involved in the organizational aspects of it, as a woman's organization? Were you aware of male participation?

BB: Not in the early days particularly. As I say, I worked with a woman doctor, and the executive director was a woman. I think there were some men on the board already, and I can remember later on there being a push to get more men on the board. The people on the board I was aware of at the beginning were women.

EC: Did you ever have a sense of futility about what you did there? Here you were, there were four clinic sessions, five clinic sessions, and you may have seen twenty women in a session, did you ever have a sense that this was really a limited kind of facility? Or alternatively, did you feel that it was very fulfilling, to help women in this very direct way through a procedure which you yourself were familiar with?

BB: I thought it was very fulfilling. I always liked working at the clinics. Even when I got to be on the National Board, I would go back in the summertime and work in the clinics. It was a very kind of rewarding thing, a one-to-one relationship, meeting and talking to people.

EC: And you didn't feel that there was any kind of hostility because of the class difference between the women who served and the women you serviced? At least in Rochester?

BB: I didn't feel it.

EC: What about money? Did you give money to Planned Parenthood in those early days? Were you aware of the problem of raising funds?

BB: Yes, because that was the first thing I did after the clinic. I got sucked into the fund raising. And I liked it. It was a challenge to me, and that's how I rose up the ladder. I became a worker and then a team captain and eventually ran the drive, and that's when I got on the board. It was an organizational thing, I enjoyed it.

EC: Fred Jaffe has described his early years of Planned Parenthood, which parallel yours in the middle fifties, as a time when what you really had to do...of course he was in the national organization in New York in public relations but...you simply had to try to persuade people that the roof wouldn't fall in if they gave some money to Planned Parenthood or mentioned it. He felt that people were, I think, even in the organization, overly conservative. He would see the women volunteers...I believe, he was a professional staff member...but I think there was that antagonism between the professional staff people and the women volunteers whom he saw as overly frightened of confrontation...of raising the issue. How would you characterize...

BB: I wasn't frightened. And I don't know that I didn't enjoy the challenge of it; my husband accused me of this occasionally, and I think there's some justification for it also.

EC: Who did you feel you were being challenged by? By the local Catholic Church predominantly?

BB: Certainly the Catholic Church. I remember writing a letter to the editor. Rochester had gotten an award for Brotherhood Week or something like that, and I wrote and said basically, what kind of brotherhood is this when this organization's not part of the Community Chest? There's one religious group that's keeping them out... that sort of a letter. Not very brave, but...yes, I saw that as an issue. I think one of the reasons Rochester is a very good money raising town is because a lot of rich people live there. Kodak and Xerox later on. Its history of giving to the Community Chest is one of the highest in the country per capita. And I think what happened was that people gave to Planned Parenthood sort of to keep us quiet, but didn't really want the issue raised. It wasn't; we applied to the Community Chest twice--in '58 and '60--something like that, and were turned down. It wasn't until a few years later when a group of research scientists at Eastman Kodak said, "We're not going to contribute to Community Chest until they let Planned Parenthood in...this is a basic thing...that we won't solve any of our social problems unless we solve this one." The Community Chest people suddenly realized their support was going to begin to go away if they didn't include us. At that time we weren't sure we wanted

BB: (cont) to be members.

EC: Did the Catholic social welfare organizations threaten to leave?

BB: Yes.

EC: Did they ever leave, was there that kind of confrontation?

BB: Oh, no. At that point they didn't and I kept saying, "Well, let them leave," because in the first place as Catholics, they were giving a much smaller amount per capita than they were taking out, they were taking out more, Protestants were sort of even and the Jews were giving much more than they were taking out, as a basic rule of thumb.

EC: This is a time when I think there is a growing emphasis on Planned Parenthood in terms of the population issue. John Rockefeller returned in 1952 to India, suddenly discovered there are all those teeming Orientals and founded the Population Council with two and a half million dollars. This is money that Planned Parenthood never even thought in terms of. The action of Planned Parenthood up until this point, particularly after the retirement of Margaret Sanger in 1940, had been really in the local affiliates. And I think, as you yourself have suggested, you did not have high goals. Local clinics were overwhelmed by the needs they saw in their own communities. The women were volunteers, this was not a full time commitment...They were really kept quite busy servicing the visible need and not growing in any way. Did you have a sense of Planned Parenthood as a national organization responding to this whole population thing in the fifties? and Hugh Moore, the Dixie Cup king and his...

BB: I was vaguely aware of it. My basic perception of the national organization, one reason I was happy to get into it, was that they weren't really very helpful to the affiliates. Now I recognized that Rochester was a very strong affiliate, and they gave a lot of money, and I recognized this leadership position and obligation through the national to help the smaller ones, but I didn't feel they were very responsive to the local affiliates.

EC: Why do you think that was, would you think alternatively, from their point of view, that perhaps the national people were too concerned with the scientists, being respectable, being a member of that elite community, rather than being activists, feminists, you know, involved in the delivery of the service rather than the promotion of an ideal?

BB: I think that what I gave the national credit for, in those years, was that they were working with the national media. They'd maybe get an article in Good Housekeeping or something like that, which was an important thing to do. And so I thought that that was fine. And later when Dr. Guttmacher came in...

EC: That was 1963.

BB: Yes. He was a very good image for Planned Parenthood.

EC: Well, what do you mean by...in the fifties, the national did not help the clinics? Of course you're talking about a group that had so little money. I think the budget for the National Planned Parenthood...I wrote this down in my notes...for 1959 was something like two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, or three hundred and forty thousand dollars, for the National Planned Parenthood in 1959. That's really nothing when you think of it. That's only fifteen years ago.

BB: I guess where I get this from...maybe it's a little later than the fifties...I think it was when I was president but it might have been a little bit earlier. We got the idea that what we needed was a TV spot. Now that's a lot for a little local affiliate's money, and so I said,"Okay, we need TV spots, have you got any?" Well, they didn't. "Well, make some." I mean that's what a national organization ought to do. I knew there was public service time, and I thought we could get a kind of happy family planning thing on TV. It would have helped our campaign. And they were, oh, three years responding to this request. And I think that's where I got the idea that they weren't...And they were pretty snotty about the affiliates, too.

EC: What do you mean by snotty? I mean I'm not sure that could only apply in the past.

BB: Right you are. Maybe this isn't just family planning, maybe this is a New York City chauvinism that just shows. Dr. Guttmacher wasn't this way, and I never got it from Clare Brighton, when we got the regional setups. But I sort of remember the first time I ever went to an Executive Committee meeting of the National Board. I was made regional representative at an off time, when the person resigned, or something. I was next for the slot, so I came in at an odd time, but I was kind of appalled by the attitude of the National Executive Committee.

EC: Well, the National Executive Committee is volunteer, correct?

BB: Yes.

EC: You're not talking about the staff.

BB: But there were a lot of New York City people. Considering it's a national organization...

EC: The money's...

BB: The money's connected. But you know a lot of the people sitting around that table were New York City people. And I just felt that they thought they were a little better than those of us from the boonies.

EC: Were they, were there also men? Or a higher percentage of men than you were accustomed to dealing with?

BB: No, not at that point, because we'd gotten...Rochester had appointed men on our Board also. But I can remember, there was a woman from Michigan at that meeting. She said something. And you know, they really challenged her integrity, really, "Well, you don't really care about Planned Parenthood." That really riled me, they had no business; here was a woman who'd obviously worked in a local clinic, and it had been a long haul, and so she had a different perception than they did. They didn't...

EC: You don't think it wasn't, that you were women, you were volunteers, you know, you performed a service, my God, there's twenty thousand volunteers working in Planned Parenthood today nationwide, according to the statistics that they put out...But that you weren't to be taken quite seriously. It wasn't being a woman that made the difference, it was simply this kind of being in the boondocks?

BB: I think so. And I think that was true of the staff. I remember a friend of mine who was interested in the clinic out in Suffolk, on Long Island. They had started a program; they got a federal grant for training indigent, if that's the right word, workers, to be kind of para-professionals. It was one of the first programs that was for women of the neighborhood...carry the word around, so to speak. And she said, the national Planned Parenthood was interested in this, and they sent out a training person. This very young girl with very short skirts came out to tell them how to do it, and this didn't go over terribly well. You know, stories of regional meetings where people would come with the word from on high. That just doesn't go over very well, when you've had experience doing things.
[I think now that being women was part of the reason we were patronized.]

EC: You're feeling the political exigencies of your particular situation. Speaking of that though, this leads me back to another question about the nature of Planned Parenthood as it was experienced at a surface level. Did it ever occur to you, when you were already president of the Planned Parenthood affiliate in Rochester, to do more about stimulating work within the community of patients that you were trying to help, spreading the word? Were you inventive in any way about expanding your horizons, or were you just kept so busy servicing?

BB: Well, we did keep expanding, and we put in outreach clinics very quickly.

EC: What is an outreach clinic?

BB: Well, we were there on Windsor Street, which is downtown. The first one we had was at the north end of town...all the way up to the lake, and there were twenty miles or so of sort of middle-class housing, people who worked at Eastman Kodak Company, and there was a church out there. We went out and ran a clinic one afternoon in the church so people living in that area could come in and get their pills, come in and get supplies, or could be fitted or whatever. And the next one we did was at Baden Street, a black area. I knew perfectly well the year that that campaign was running. When you're raising money, you always have to be raising money for something new. And so we were raising money because we were going to put a clinic in Baden Street. Well, I knew damn well that many people, in their minds, made the connection, well, we're going to keep the blacks down. I mean, I felt very badly about it, but I knew that the clinic was needed there. It was a big housing project, and there was a good settlement house, and everything was right that we should go in there, but nevertheless I knew that when people gave money to that, it was...

EC: For the wrong reason...

BB: Well, I shouldn't say all of them, but for many of them. But you know, I took the money anyway. At that point we were sensitive enough to make sure we had a black person to work with black people. And I also knew from early on that the people we got...a lot of it was by word of mouth.

EC: Margaret Sanger was always very proud of the fact that her clinic in New York had large constituencies which were achieved with literally no advertising. I mean one couldn't. Really, by word of mouth. I guess that from the other dimension, however, Pathfinder Fund-type people, for example, or as the Population Council did later on... they would say Planned Parenthood never did anything about really

EC: (cont) solving the problem of reaching the poor, or even the working class. It was a middle-class service, the word of mouth thing only really existed among middle-class and lower middle-class women. How do you feel about that, I mean, do you feel that you ever really reached new populations?

BB: I think we reached lower-class people.

EC: Before the pill?

BB: Yes.

EC: So it was a mixture. How also, jumping around here, do you feel that you existed as a service for the women who actually ran the clinics, I mean when were you introduced to contraception?

BB: Before I was married, I mean, I knew about...

EC: Well, did your mother take you to a gynecologist?

BB: Yes.

EC: Did that gynecologist, or was it also assumed that you would also learn about the facts of life as well?

BB: No, I knew the facts of life.

EC: It was assumed that you knew that?

BB: My mother told me.

EC: You had those kinds of discussions in your home?

BB: I think it's difficult for parents to do this with their children. My mother, certainly when I was quite young, answered my questions and it was all kind of clinical, but I think that's about the best you can do. I don't think I did so much better with my children. And particularly as they got older, I took, I may talk about it now, but I took to dropping little pamphlets in their rooms now and then, because I figured, it's one thing when they ask you and they did, and I always answered their questions, but I had a feeling also, that maybe they weren't always asking me. Particularly the boys. My theory had been that I would take care of, I would be sure, that Liza understood this, but I figured that it was my husband's job to talk to the boys. But as they grew older, and he was not filling his other fatherly responsibilities...he began to travel and be away a lot...I just didn't

BB: (cont) think this was being done. So you know, Planned Parenthood has a lot of little pamphlets.

EC: Well, do you feel that beyond the actual contraceptive service that the clinic provided, it provided a community for women who may not have had instruction of the kind that you might have had before your marriage. In more than just contraception, but also in preventive hygiene, health care, and sex education, or if not a direct kind of sex education, a sort of knowledge of sexuality. Did they have any kinds of specialized programs?

BB: Yes, I don't know if they still do this, but when I was there, every woman who came was first seen by a counselor, and a fairly extensive history was taken, and she was shown all the methods. I think there was a good deal of discussion about the whole area of sexuality, so that...

EC: Well, when we talk about discussion, are we talking about discussions of how one approaches intercourse, or are we really talking about more clinical discussions of a woman's sexual response? Because clearly in Sanger's clinic in New York there was a great concern about the female orgasm and all that sort of thing, but I don't know that that existed very generally outside of New York, Chicago. Was there counseling in marital problems in the Rochester clinic, sexual problems? There were specialized clinics in sex counseling in New York.

BB: I don't think so.

EC: There was no counseling, do you think it may have existed...?

BB: I think it may have existed, as I say, in that woman's first visit... we weren't really into marriage counseling, possibly some discussion about infertility. I can't say for sure, I don't know what went on in those sessions, I just know that the women would go and talk with the counselor.

EC: Who had the sessions, a trained...?

BB: A trained counselor. Mrs. Backus for some of it, but we had a person who...

EC: What was her training?

BB: I can't answer that, I don't know. I think she was a social worker.

EC: Did you ever wonder about that?

BB: I don't think so. I was very naive, I suppose, my father was a doctor and he was a neat guy, and I just thought the medical establishment was a very good thing. I began to learn more, but I really...

EC: What kind of a doctor was your father.

BB: He was a pediatrician. I think my perception of the Planned Parenthood clinic for a number of years was that it was an extension of the hospital. And for social reasons they couldn't get this service at the hospital, so therefore we would provide it.

EC: It never occurred to you that, you just assumed that the hegemony of the Catholic church dictated that you couldn't get the services as part of your general prenatal or postnatal services at the hospital.

BB: Yes. I thought it was wrong, I always thought it was wrong. And we certainly had some horror stories from the women themselves, who'd say, they'd deliver and say to the doctor, "Please help me, I don't want to have another one" and the doctor would laugh and say,"I'll see you next year." That kind of thing.

EC: Do you believe today that family planning should not be a specialized service, but should be part of a general medical service.

BB: Yes, I do in a way. One side of the coin is, maybe they get better care at a Sanger Bureau. Clinics are pretty rushed, hectic things, and well, I guess maybe I'm thinking more even of abortion really. There's good counseling sometimes, or counseling in groups of women, and women would raise problems and there would be even more consciousness-raising.

EC: You mean specialized abortion clinics. Well, this is an interesting question because even the Sanger Bureau in the old days ran group counseling in contraception and marriage problems...they're fascinating. There are transcripts of them and you know they're very modern. They are not very different in some regards than what is said to emerge from a women's consciousness-raising session in the 1970's, but they're in the early forties. And certainly Sanger was very ambivalent about giving up the service aspect of Planned Parenthood. She always hoped that it would be assumed by public health facilities, or hospitals, but she also realized, as you were suggesting, that the quality of the care might be better when, first of all, it was delivered by women. She was very good about it. And also when it was specialized.

BB: I think that's true, I mean again you're talking about group counseling,

BB: (cont) whether it's abortion or family planning. It's that isolation that we're talking about. A woman says, "Gee, I'm not the only one who's got this problem." It begins to break that down, which I think is part of what has enslaved us, this isolation.

EC: We're really roaming on the Planned Parenthood issue, but it fascinates me, and there's one other dimension of it that I'd like to talk about which is the Catholic controversy. Before we get off the subject of Planned Parenthood, maybe we should spend a little time, this is relevant to abortion.

BB: Yes, it is.

EC: Let me give you a quote from a book by Phyllis Piotrow called World Population Crisis and the United States' Response, in which she summarizes the history of the issue in the States, and she says that the emotional revulsion that contraception aroused among the Catholics was often an ethnic revulsion against the people who were promoting it. She refers to the Toryism, I think, of Planned Parenthood. This was a word that was often used by the head of the National Catholic Welfare Association in the thirties and forties, John Ryan. He used to testify when Sanger was trying to change the federal law, the Comstock laws, to the effect that, after all, all these Planned Parenthood people were Republicans who were opposed to Roosevelt's New Deal and what they were really trying to do was get out of paying taxes and taking care of the poor and that kind of thing. Can you comment a little bit about this issue?

BB: I think that's a red herring. I think he was trying to justify... well, the church was opposed to it, so he had to be opposed to it. Now to get up at a committee and say, "I oppose it because my church opposes it," just doesn't cut a lot of ice with a lot of people. So if you can bring up another reason for opposing it, obviously you're going to do so. I don't think that makes any sense at all.

EC: And yet you're willing to admit that some of the people who gave you money probably did so in the hope...

BB: Yes, I'm just trying to think this through now off the top of my head, I went into it because I really believe that having children that you wanted was a very joyful thing, and I could see that being pregnant and not wanting to have the child would just be dreadful. At nineteen years old this was the worst thing I could imagine. I think that my mother went into it for the same reason. And I ascribe these motives to the people I knew, the two directors that I knew.

BB: (cont) They were good, warm, loving people, and they didn't want the tragedy of unwanted children for the people that they served.

EC: Were they feminists? There's an implicit kind of feminism in what you're saying. Who's the tragedy for, the child or the woman? or the father?

BB: Both. I don't think the father ever particularly entered into it, except that he'll get up and leave if it becomes overwhelming, and who can blame him, that kind of thing. Now, that was early on, as I say. This really sounds awful, it sounds as though I hate men... but later on when the push came, we got to have men on our board... we've got to hire men as executive directors, it suddenly became a a problem that men could be interested in for this other reason, this awful population explosion, and we had to do something about it. This may be myself rationalizing. And I may be looking back twenty years and painting a rosy glow over it, and I may have been terribly naive, but I think that's part of the whole thing. I wasn't interested in the national or the international. I was interested in my clinic and the women that I was serving. I knew I was doing something good with them.

EC: But the Catholic controversy on an ethnic level, or a political level, was particularly acute in the Northeast. For example, in Massachusetts where probably the power of the Church over the political dimension of their constituents' lives is being lost, and contraception...I think that John Rock always said we really weren't talking about contraception, we were talking about the last vestige of clerical power over the cities. You know, the New Deal replaces the machine, the machine was controlled by the Church in the local parish, the clergy are really losing their secular or political power. Did you have a sense of that in Rochester? Did you have a sense of antagonism toward the undemocratic qualities of the Church?

BB: Oh, enormous. I think I sort of sensed it over the Community Chest issue, that they were part of what we would now call the power structure and they wanted to keep their power and this was one way of showing it. And certainly over the abortion questions.

EC: Did you have a high percentage of Catholic women in your clinics, did you have a sense, opinion polls would show...

BB: We had a higher percentage of Catholics in the clinic than there were in the population, which is natural. You know, if I'm a middle-class Protestant I can go to a Protestant doctor and probably get contraception.

EC: One of the things that is apparent is that the nineteen sixties was the decade in which liberal Catholics began to walk away from the Church in droves over the contraception issue. I'll approach this question very directly, this phenomenon dictated a kind of low profile for Planned Parenthood by the sixties, the desire for example to stay out of the abortion issue because they didn't want to exacerbate the feelings of these people who they were quietly winning over, and not always so quietly. You did have public breaking away from the Church, particularly in '63, '64, in liberal Catholic magazines like America...there was great interest in what the Pope might do in the 1968 encyclical, where he did nothing. Do you have a sense of this? Can you comment on this?

BB: Yes. It was more than just as individuals. When I was President of Planned Parenthood...to back up a bit. Early on I got a phone call one night and it was from a man called Father Bartlett and he said, "I'm the new director," or whatever it was called, "of the McQuaid Jesuit High School and I'd like you to come on the Board." And I thought somebody, as a matter of fact I know who it was, it was a Catholic friend of mine who had a sense of humor. I said, "Somebody's pulling your leg, Father, I'm the President of the local Planned Parenthood and I don't think you really do want me on your Board." And he said, "Yes, that's why I'm asking you." At which point I nearly fell through the telephone. It was that unusual then, and he came on our Board. The next year we had a joint symposium, I mean McQuaid Jesuit High School and Planned Parenthood, we had a lot of speakers. I think the most moving speech I've ever heard on sexuality was given by a nun at that symposium. So obviously things were breaking down as far as the contraception issue was concerned. But abortion was the next thing to be tackled, and some of us were ready for it and others weren't.

EC: Do you think that's a cop-out on Planned Parenthood's part...as we begin to move toward the abortion issue a little bit. This whole notion of we can't exacerbate hard feelings on abortion while we're quietly winning over these Catholics on the contraception issue, let's resolve that issue. Because that was the excuse that was used by Planned Parenthood which was a latecomer in any official way to support of the abortion reform issue.

BB: It varied from clinic to clinic. Syracuse, for example, was ready to open up an abortion clinic, and they were going to open up that clinic whether the law passed or not. And then you get other communities, and it wasn't just that we were winning over the Catholics, we were getting money. We were becoming members of the Community Chest, we were getting...

EC: The population issue was, I mean, 1968, '67 you have OEO funds, I mean, there's a huge transition in what Planned Parenthood is in '60 and '68.

BB: So then you got a real split personality. You had people who had worked to make contraception acceptable, you have the community banker on the local Board. And there were the others who either were ideologically similar or some of the few grand old gals still around, who had fought through on contraception, and abortion was the same battle.

EC: Had you been aware of abortion as a younger woman? Illegal abortion, and working in the clinics, were there women who came in with botched abortions?

BB: No, they would have come in to the hospitals. I don't know when I first became aware of it, but I think for quite a long time it was a...

EC: It got a lot of headlines in the 1930's during the depression, but then, after '43 there was a crackdown by Governor Dewey on the illegal abortion system in New York with a grand jury investigation, and then kind of no more headlines, so you were a child...

BB: I wouldn't have been aware of the '43, and...No, I think it was gradually...I became aware of what it was, I mean that made me even angrier. To fight contraception is bad enough, but to force women to go through this kind of thing.

EC: Did you have the sense that abortion was dangerous?

BB: Oh yes.

EC: And how were you convinced that a therapeutic abortion would not be, that it was a legitimate procedure? Do you recall experiencing any kind of transition? I always sensed with my mother, for example, to talk personally, that she had grown up in the thirties with this fear of abortion. And it was very very hard for her to re-do her mind set to see it as a therapeutic measure, a simple operation, tooth pulling...

BB: I can't remember thinking of it except, it's illegal and it's wrong to be illegal, and it ought to be legal. And I think that's the way I always felt about it.

EC: Speaking a little more on the contraception issue. You were President of Rochester Planned Parenthood when the pill was introduced into the

EC: (cont) Planned Parenthood clinics. There was a controversy about the introduction of the pill in the clinics. After all, though Planned Parenthood footed in a small way some of Gregory Pincus' research, there had not been widespread testing. In fact some of the testing was done in Los Angeles Planned Parenthood clinics. Suddenly there's a huge marketing of the pill, and in Mary Calderone, who was then Medical Director of the National Federation... in her papers at Schlesinger Library, there emerges a kind of controversy in the affiliates as to whether or not they should begin prescribing these things. They weren't very well tested, clinically speaking. And yet within about a year and a half there was such a demand for the pill that everybody began using it and I'm just wondering what you can recall about the introduction of oral contraception...

BB: Not a lot. And I'm sure that before I became President we were already on the pill and I think what happened is that Rochester has a very good medical community and I think our doctors earlier had said the pill is okay. It's been tested in Puerto Rico, for ten years or whatever it was at that time, five. We should be using it. And I know that my mind set at that time would have been such that, gee, if the doctors say this is good, then it's good. I never would have questioned their judgment.

EC: Did you have a sense that there was a high rejection rate on the diaphragm, that it was not a well received contraceptive? Fifty percent is the ball park figure that's used for the number of women who did not use the diaphragm after being introduced to it by a Planned Parenthood clinic.

BB: I can remember early on our saying things like a diaphragm in a bureau drawer doesn't do a lot of good, so we must have been aware that there were problems with it. And I can't remember when we started using the pill, but it wasn't right at the beginning.

EC: Obviously you've changed your point of view, certainly about the unchallenged authority of the medical profession. What do you think about the pill? Do you remember any specific incidences of fear or questioning of the pill? Thrombosis, or side effects, that sort of thing in your clinic.

BB: No. Not for a long time.

EC: One of the things I've often wondered, you know, there are a lot of doctors who would argue, if you gave women a placebo, they'd have side effects. And the pill is really statistically safe. Obviously there are individual problems. Do you have any feelings about it?

BB: Historically, do you mean, when it...I guess I just saw it as another

BB: (cont) method, you know. We were talking about how we offered this smorgasbord of methods, there's the pill and there's the diaphragm, IUD's began to come in. Every woman should use what's good for her.

EC: You wouldn't say that the Rochester clinic, that you knew best, pushed pills?

BB: No, I don't think so. By that time I really wasn't in the clinics so much. They could have. Certainly pills became a much bigger...

EC: You don't remember a public consciousness or a personal one about potential carcinogenic effect of contraception? Fooling around with hormones, none of this bothered you?

BB: No. You know, I had such faith in the medical profession. I suppose it's naive now, you read stuff about the FDA and all, but I thought if something was on the market, it must be okay.

EC: But you don't feel that way any more?

BB: Well, no.

EC: Do you attribute your change in perceptions to changes that existed in your life, your self-assuredness, feminism, or to a growing consumer consciousness, or do you have a specific concern about the pill and the IUD? Would you have your daughter take the pill?

BB: Yes, and I talk to her about it now and then. I'm not wild for her to take the pill. I'm at the end of my reproductive life, but she's at the beginning of hers and the thought of her taking the pill for twenty years I'm not very comfortable with. And yet, here she is, she's twenty-four...first year graduate student, so. Well, I think it will be three or maybe four years before she'll even want to think about having a baby. I really think the thing for a woman to do is have her family and become sterilized probably. Because, any of them are potential problems.

EC: What's wrong with the diaphragm?

BB: It's a nuisance. It's messy.

EC: One of the things I've often questioned people about is a lot of the early birth control doctors thought that the only problem with the diaphragm was that male doctors didn't want to be bothered teaching women that it's not so difficult. They also thought that sexual

EC: (cont) inhibitions on the part of women made it more difficult too. You have to anticipate the sexual act, put it in, you have to kind of handle your genitals. Do you have any particular feelings about that?

BB: I think there's probably a little something about anticipating the sexual act. I think that is a slight problem. I started off on it so early, at nineteen, it was the only method, it was the method my mother used. I mean it was just as natural to me, it never caused me to question it. I didn't want a child, so I used the diaphragm. And I didn't have any problems with handling myself so. For me personally it was okay. In my arrogant self-centered way, I never particularly thought that it might be a problem for other people.

You started off asking about my family and all. I think one more piece I'd like to add to that is my sister and I were always encouraged to succeed. We were encouraged to do well at school, we were encouraged to feel that we could do things. So even though, I felt this push to get married and all, I also wasn't brought up to feel I was inferior because of my sex or anything that way.

EC: Do you remember, as long as we're getting back to this, any discussion of women's suffrage, of the role of women as political agents?

BB: No.

EC: Your mother was in France, or Belgium, I'm sorry. How about your father's mother? Blair side.

BB: Yes, well, I can remember her. Yes, and she was very much this mother image. She had seven children, and they sort of had a big house in New Canaan, when I was quite young, no Bedford I think. Well, the summer that my sister Betsy was born, she's seven years younger than I am, my sister Judy and I went and spent the summer with a nurse with my grandmother and my other cousins there too. And it was sort of a big house, had a swimming pool, and she played the piano and we all sang...She died before 1940, and I didn't spend a lot of summers after that. But I have no perception of her doing the volunteer role, or anything like that. I have, I think, political interest from my father's side, but the volunteer, and the image of women as strong capable people comes from my mother's side.

EC: We were discussing the question of the efficacy of oral or intra-

EC: (cont) uterine contraception, and of course feminists today have become strong opponents. We were also talking about what was wrong with the diaphragm. I wondered if you wanted to continue discussing that any further, and say how you've changed or if you've changed, or how you feel that Planned Parenthood specifically should go about answering the concern about contraception for women as a health matter right now.

BB: Well, I think probably the very first thing that needs to be done, and I think Planned Parenthood has not done enough in this field, is a great deal of research, so that we can get some decent contraceptive methods for both men and women. I mean I don't have the figures at my fingertips, but if you compare the amount of money that's been put into contraceptive research against, say, cancer or something like that, it's just laughable, and where this is such an obvious need, world need. I mean it's such an important thing that it's just shameful that we don't have work being done to develop a method that's both acceptable and safe, and all that.

EC: You mentioned male or female, just to pause for a minute, would you support male contraception. Sanger was an advocate of female contraception because she saw it as a means of giving women power, and she also believed that it was ultimately women's responsibility. In an ideal world, perhaps it should be shared, but she never believed that men would really share it. How do you feel about that?

BB: Well it's interesting because I think back on raising my sons, this was an issue that I remember articulating with them. I remember saying to my daughter, "You have to think that, it would be a poor thing to bring a child into the world that you and your husband, or the man, weren't ready to care for, I think that's wrong." I said this to my sons also. But I also said to my sons, and I didn't say it to my daughter, you know, "a women can get badly hurt, and if you're going to have a sexual relationship, you better be very careful because you don't want to be in the position of having hurt somebody very badly." Now I didn't say that to my daughter, which I should have, because obviously women can hurt men also. So I certainly, and early on, had this feeling that men were responsible also, and that's why I would hope for my sons that they would feel this sense of responsibility for it, and I think that men should. On the other side, for myself, I think that I want to be responsible for my own sexuality, I wouldn't want to be in the position of depending on the man for this. Now I would and I do now, partly because I'm in a very good relationship with one man, but certainly when I first moved to New York, and I sort of

BB: (cont) wanted to keep my options open, I wouldn't have wanted to be in the position of not being responsible myself. I don't know if that really answers your question, but...

EC: No, it does, very well. Before we make the transition in your life from volunteer in the Planned Parenthood Federation to professional, which I guess would bring us into the seventies, I do wonder one thing. I notice from my notes, I haven't covered... I'd be interested in knowing what your image, as a Planned Parenthood volunteer, and as an executive in the volunteer end of things, was of Margaret Sanger. She's dead by 1966, but she clearly was an important person in the movement.

BB: I have a vague memory of meeting her as a child. I think she must have come to Washington; my mother must have introduced me. I certainly was aware of the name. I was aware of my mother talking about Margaret Sanger.

EC: Well, she was lobbying for change of federal legislation in the thirties, your mother may have been involved in that.

BB: I don't think so, but again, I was a child, I think that was my mother's sort of Junior League era. Then when I began to become active, Margaret Sanger did come to Rochester at one point, I think it was probably our big fund-raising thing. She was an older woman by then, and I bought her book and had her autograph it. I certainly looked up to her and I admired her enormously, what she did. I'm very high on Margaret Sanger. She's my heroine. We were talking about heroes once, at a Planned Parenthood meeting, we were having cocktails after a meeting, and one of the men said, "Who's your hero?" And I said heroine. I said, "Obviously, Margaret Sanger."

I'm interested, once when I was working for Planned Parenthood, the local PPNYC had a problem with the counselors, they all walked out on a job action. There were about 13 or 14 of them, walked out because they thought that Planned Parenthood of New York City wasn't doing right by its patients. I had them all over here trying to work out some sort of thing.

EC: This is since you've lived in New York. The seventies.

BB: Yes, a couple of years ago maybe. And by that time, I didn't do it at the beginning, because I thought to do it at the beginning would have been an unfair way of establishing something with these women, but when it was all over, and we were friends, I said, "I've got something to show you that I think will interest you," because

BB: (cont) at that point I had my mother's book, which is very nicely inscribed, and you know, a fellow worker in the field, and so I passed this book around to these young women. You would have thought it was the Holy Grail. I was so pleased they felt the same way I did about her. This was a wonderful thing.

EC: But do you think that was a shared perception, or that the new professionals in the movement in the fifties might have thought of her as an old dowager who was past her prime and was really a kind of pain in the neck?

BB: I wasn't aware of that but the overlap was too long. I saw her as still a sort of great figure.

EC: Did you know much about her? She was born of a Catholic family, a working class family; she was not a member of the class that she drew to her cause, the class of women. She started as a radical socialist in the teens, although I sometimes don't think there was anybody in the teens who wasn't a radical socialist, I think people make more of that than might be...Were you aware of any of this?

BB: No, because by the time she came to Rochester she was very respectable. I read her book, or a book about her.

EC: The Lawrence Lader book glorifies her a bit. Do you remember the controversy over the election of Kennedy, the presidency, when Sanger made that unfortunate comment about leaving the country if he were elected president?

BB: No I didn't. I don't remember that.

EC: So it couldn't have been that big of an issue. It got some coverage, but I think it's been overblown by some of her detractors. Is there anything more that you can think of that you would like to put on record about the years in the sixties when you began to take an active role in the national Planned Parenthood Federation? You were no longer just the President of a local affiliate, or a volunteer in a clinic but a regional head for the Federation. Do you remember something specific about those years?

BB. Well, I think the issue, at least the issue as I saw it then, was to break the New York City orientation, to make it a national organization, to, in fact, make it nationwide in scope. And I think there were pluses and minuses about that, I mean I can see some of the minuses too, but at the time I came in to it, with my

BB: (cont) perception of this organization as being run by a little group in New York City and that just wasn't where the action was, the action was out there in the field, it was a grass roots thing. As I came up into it, that was the fight. We were breaking it down, getting a regional structure going. I think as far as spreading services out, this was right. Unfortunately, I think what happened, it went too far the other way. I think maybe it's because it isn't as an--just the contraception part, isn't as exciting an issue as it might have been. But the kind of people that Margaret Sanger attracted, I don't think you find that kind of people on the National Board now.

EC: What do you mean by that? People who are devoted to it as a cause, as a real...

BB: It's not really a cause any more, do you think? Abortion is a cause, still. But who's fighting contraception? Now if the Catholic Church wins the abortion issue, we may be fighting contraception again.

EC: But there is still the whole question of implementation. Fred Jaffe, as I've said, still sees the whole fight as an implementation fight. Also there's the issue of who delivers the contraceptive service. If it's true that sixty percent of the women served, in America, are served in specialized family planning clinics as opposed to public health comprehensive medical care services, I don't know that that statistic speaks well for how well we've implemented the contraceptive programs. There's also the minority battle still, the third world battle, the teenage battle. If Planned Parenthood doesn't fight them, who will? And if Planned Parenthood isn't fighting them, why? I guess, has it become too establishment, too self-serving, does it now have a bureaucracy and an institution that it has to continue to promote even though it might not be in the best interests of this society to promote it, these private family planning clinics?

BB: Yes, I see. If Planned Parenthood were still a frontier organization, if they still saw themselves out there fighting the good fight, they might for example require, as a requirement for affiliation...and this is pretty important to the local clinics, we're affiliated with the national, you know, that's sort of... that they run teen clinics; some do, some do magnificently, but some don't. They might require...I don't think they, maybe now, but certainly a couple of years ago, January 23, 1973, which was the day after the Supreme Court decision...they might have required that every Planned Parenthood facility offer abortion

BB: (cont) service. You see, if they'd been a national organization in the sense of requiring certain standards, and requiring that their people continue to move on the frontier of this issue, then it would be a very different organization. You'd have the excitement of something new, you'd have...and they certainly should have, they certainly should have glommed on to the feminist issue. They got a token feminist on the board, well, I was the first one to change my name to Ms. on the letterhead, I think I was still Sibley then. I got a friend to do it with me, but this was considered odd.

EC: Who was their token feminist?

BB: Oh, they asked Clara Mills, I think her name is, from California, who gave the speech at her graduation from, what was it, Pomona, one of those Pomona colleges, and I think she got up, she was valedictorian or something, and said I'm not going to have any children because of the world population. She runs some sort of Mother Earth kind of news, or she did. But they've got a board of what, a hundred people, well, Gloria Steinem ought to be on that board, and Betty Friedan and Flo Kennedy, and you know...

EC: Well, who's standing in the way of putting these kinds of people on the board, the people themselves, not interested...

BB: Well, now they've structured it so the regions send up a lot of people, all these people aren't on the regional boards either.

EC: Are the regional boards, the Bea Blairs who didn't leave?

BB: Right. Right exactly.

EC: And many of them who are really uncomfortable in that position, the Bea Sibleys I should say.

BB: I shouldn't knock it, that's the way I got my way up to the top.

EC: But you know it's interesting, because the controversy in the fifties was the desire to professionalize and to replace the president. You know you got rid of Eleanor Pillsbury or another woman from the ranks and replaced her with some male professional.

BB: Yes. Well that's been my fight all along. Maybe if we'd left the Eleanor Pillsburys running it, we would be further along with teenage clinics. Because the Eleanor Pillsburys and, if I do say so, a little bit as I was Bea Sibley in Rochester, you're

BB: (cont) sort of protected, you can get out and do these things. Who's going to fight an Eleanor Pillsbury?

EC: I suppose a consumer action against Pillsbury flour isn't really going to mean much locally in Minnesóta or wherever she was.

BB: As a matter of fact, they did say this at one point. I remember my mother telling me that her action was hurting Pillsbury. So she said, "Okay, I won't do anything for a year and see if it makes any difference," and it didn't make any difference so that was very smart of her. She put it in sort of a negative way so they couldn't prove it against her. There shouldn't have to be any men around, because there ought to be an arm of Planned Parenthood doing that [making Planned Parenthood a feminist organization].

EC: Yet it's still not clear to me, and perhaps it's not clear, whether the drag at Planned Parenthood is from the national professional staff, or even the national volunteer staff, or the drag is from the volunteers and staff at the local clinical levels? Maybe it's different at different places. Who are the more or less activists? I suppose it depends on what perspective you hold. You seem to be ambivalent on the issue.

BB: Well, in the first place, particularly at the local level, I don't think there was much division between staff and volunteer. I don't think that was quite so much the thing. Take Syracuse, there was a staff woman who saw the need and moved her volunteers, Ellen Fairchild.

EC: Dr. Ellen Fairchild, who ran the clinic, and she moved the board.

BB: Yes. She moved the board into the abortion picture just as Thelma Ellis moved the Rochester board years earlier into serving unmarried people and teenagers. But then you...hire these professional men, who see the career, to whom it's very important that the president of the local bank sit on the board...who see the money raising as you know, who see it in this kind of a career picture. So there's that. You could say the same thing with volunteers. I suppose if I'd been president of Planned Parenthood in the early seventies when the law came through, I would have pushed to have Planned Parenthood of Rochester do abortions. I can't say that I would have, but I probably would have. And I was pushing, but I wasn't in the position to push as much as I might have earlier. Another president, well actually the president who followed me was an older woman than I was. She was very much don't rock the boat, and keep everything going nicely and keep people

BB: (cont) happy, and nothing would have happened under that kind of administration. It's hard to point the finger, but I think that, who knows, maybe if they'd left Margaret Sanger in charge, we'd all have been better off...Dr. Guttmacher was a pusher, he was talking about service for teenagers long before it was acceptable.

EC: And yet he had a big conflict with Mary Calderone who was big on sex education, it appears, in the early part of the '60's. Were you aware of that internal conflict?

BB: No. I was still at the local level. I just knew she'd left to set up her own thing and I thought it was too bad, because I thought that sex education ought to have been a part of the Planned Parenthood thing and she would have been able to do that.

EC: Guttmacher, I think, was a little bit unsure of himself. He always seemed to have his heart in the right place, but it was reluctantly, ...I mean he really didn't make an official commitment to legalization of abortion until after he'd served on the Rockefeller panel in '68. And, as he put it in an article I read, that was maybe 33 years after he, as an obstetrical resident in Johns Hopkins Hospital, had watched the first woman die. He questioned what had been wrong with him...yet he exhibited a large sensitivity to the issue until his death...Maybe we should move you to New York City, and talk a little bit about your entering the Planned Parenthood organization as a staff person. You came to New York in 1970?

BB: '72.

EC: '72. And what did you see yourself as doing? Getting a job in the family planning field? Did you make an attempt to get hired?

BB: Yes, fortunately it was during the summer Planned Parenthood in New York City and Planned Parenthood-World Population set up this joint program to save the New York State abortion law. If I do say so myself, I was very qualified to head up that program, in the first place, because I knew New York State very well. I knew it politically. I knew the clinic people and the volunteer people around the state. I knew how Albany worked. I was just very lucky that that job was being set up at the very moment I wanted to move to New York. It was a natural. And so I was hired.

EC: The New York State Abortion Education Program, let's explain for the record, was established after the New York legislature repealed the repeal bill. In 1970 a repeal of the existing abortion statutes was passed. In 1972 that repeal was repealed, and then Governor

EC: (cont) Rockefeller stepped in and vetoed the repeal. Planned Parenthood then took it upon itself, a combination, I guess, of the national organization and Planned Parenthood of New York City, took upon itself to try to exert pressure to make certain that in the eventuality that the governor quit, which he eventually did, and Lieutenant Governor Wilson, who was an opponent of abortion came to the helm, a similiar kind of legislative repeal of liberal abortion wouldn't be passed. The funds for this project were provided by a group of independent philanthropists. Do you remember anything specifically about the money, how it came, who solicited it, the mechanics of raising money for a program?

BB: Two big grants were raised before I came on. As a piece of my program, I instituted fund-raising and we raised a fair amount ourselves. We were...

EC: Here's the final report with a list of the money givers, I thought you might take a look at it to refresh your memory. I have here also a letter transmitting fifty thousand dollars from John Rockefeller III, and I guess there also was some anonymous money given by Laurence Rockefeller and the rest of the Rockefeller family. I was kind of amazed by this letter. We might stop and have you take a look at it, because I thought it was so smug. This is a letter from John Rockefeller in which he says to John Robbins, who was the chief executive officer of Planned Parenthood at the time, "If I may say so, we are impressed with the quality of leadership exercised by you and Mr. Moran and are pleased that your organization has continued to play such an important role in this city and throughout the country." Then he goes on to say that he has great pressure on him to give money and he also, because of new tax laws, doesn't have as much money to give, and in light of these two circumstances he is willing to give fifty thousand dollars to the united Planned Parenthood campaign and another fifty thousand dollars for the special support. Well, I don't want to seem as though I would be ungrateful, but a hundred thousand dollars from John Rockefeller is really peanuts. It's just kind of nothing considering two and a half million went to Population Council. Was there any discussion of this, or is it just me, my being ungrateful?

BB: One thing is, I bet you that's all they asked for. I don't think they probably had their sights set on the million dollar range. I don't know what would have happened if they'd asked for a million dollars, but...so that may have been part of it. I think they certainly saw this as an ongoing thing. I mean, I don't think anybody expected the Supreme Court decision. I think they saw that

BB: (cont) this was going to have to happen, this year, and then next year, and we were going to fight this battle in Albany for a while, and I certainly think they saw this as an annual contribution, not as a...

EC: So they hoped that the fifty thousand was just for a year. That's not clear here, and it struck me that the total sum of money, which I think was a little in excess of a quarter of a million, which wasn't even spent, two hundred and fifty thousand, that's really nothing.

BB: It was only two hundred and nine, actually.

EC: Two hundred and nine. Again, maybe I just am thinking too big, but two hundred and nine thousand to do what Al Moran...Al Moran being the director of Planned Parenthood of New York City, who did the proposal...what he proposes is really a much more costly procedure than two hundred and nine thousand, and I wondered whether they couldn't get more money, or whether they didn't set their sights high enough, or whether they were really just so used to being supplicant to the big money people, that...

BB: Well, you got to remember that they were going to the Rockefellers for all kinds of other monies, for other programs too, I mean this was important, but it wasn't number one.

EC: I see.

BB: It was number one, but they were going to the foundations and the individuals for a whole host of other things all the time too, so maybe that was part of it.

EC: Were you aware though that traditionally foundation money...again getting back to our discussion earlier, the establishment of the Pop Council, the whole idea there was to give the Rockefeller and Ford money for population to scientists as opposed to activists. It's always struck me that it meant giving it to men not women, as well, but I may be overly sensitive on that issue.. By the sixties of course, Planned Parenthood had established its scientific credentials and it was getting money, but still in bits and pieces. You weren't aware then of that as a problem, you figured the money would come and that it would be renewed, if the program fulfilled its goals?

BB: I think that's the way I saw it. There's another piece in it too. You've got to remember that Nelson (Rockefeller) vetoed that.

BB: (cont) And so there was Nelson sitting out the thing and he damn well didn't want New York State to do it again, and particularly if he wasn't there to overturn it, I mean it would have been politically bad for him. He needed a political force behind him.

EC: Well, we can get to this. I have a card here. It's kind of interesting. Dr. Guttmacher prepared a memorandum on a meeting you had in Nelson Rockefeller's office on December 13th of '72. It's a lovely memorandum. And one of the things he quotes Rockefeller as saying is that, "you must fight fire with fire... if they stoop low, you stoop low." He talks about Rockefeller's enthusiasm for your project on that level. Can you embellish a little more on the meeting, or do you remember that meeting?

BB: I sure do. I think I got the feeling out of that meeting--"fight fire with fire" I'm sure refers to the fact of the pictures that the right-to-lifers were using, and we talked about pictures, which actually were developed by NARAL, dead women on the motel floor, deformed fetuses, bloody coat hangers as instruments. I saw later, this was in Albany, I saw later some x-rays of women with all kinds of things up their uteruses.

EC: ...Whether or not to resort to that kind of tactic to counter right-to-lifer pictures of fetuses...

BB: I'm sure that if I'd gone back to some Rockefeller and said I need x thousands of dollars to produce these films, to produce these pictures, I probably could have gotten it. I mean I think that was what was being said there. There again the old dichotomy, do nice people do such things? The old problem, do you stoop to their level, if their level is very effective? The issue has not gone away. You know what Ellen McCormack is using your tax money and my tax money for, to put those bloody pictures on TV. And so...

EC: How do you say, our tax money?

BB: She gets matching funds. She is a Presidental candidate.

EC: Well, explain to me then what the abortion education project was conceived as. Number one, confrontation, was it...

BB: Well, I don't know what it was conceived as. I'll tell you how I conceived of it--I conceived of it as a political action group, and I had been on this kick for quite some time. Okay, the right-to-lifers were organized. They had the Catholic Church as an

BB: (cont) organizer, you could get somebody in a pulpit on a Sunday morning and you could turn out x number of people. I knew that we had that many people too, we just hadn't reached them, and they didn't realize the crisis, and so we had to somehow get organized, get organized so that we could get mail in, get organized so that we could get these people (Legislators) visited when they came home, get organized so that we could present our picture and our story. So that's why I saw this, this network...setting up this network of people around the state to do this. You have the list of who was where. One technique we had was a card. Did you ever run across a card?

EC: Yes.

BB: I think in the few months we were in business we got something like twelve thousand of those cards signed...

EC: ...The card on freedom of choice and abortion, "I believe that abortion should be a matter to be decided between a woman and her doctor." What kind of lists of people did you send these to?

BB: Well, they went to every local Planned Parenthood director, and they farmed them out through Planned Parenthood meetings, I mean, through every...through churches, through feminist groups... through every possible means we could think of.

EC: Moran cites in addition college groups.

BB: We just got the college program going...

EC: Physicians, clergymen, just for the record, professional social workers, nurses, lawyers, teachers, special audiences like union members, which intrigued me, because that was the constituency that Planned Parenthood always shied away from, because unions were so heavily Catholic. In most parts of this country, they never really made use of them except in New York and the garment unions.

BB: We really didn't get that far, in actual fact it was the Planned Parenthood people, the feminist people, some doctors. We really didn't get into, we would have I'm sure...

EC: Had the Supreme Court decision not come along ...

BB: But you see, it (the card) was coded for your Assembly District and your...

EC: Senate District...

BB: The theory was that in the case... we used this with NARAL too ... if there was a certain Senator that was beginning to wobble, we could have gone to the files and pulled out the people, we had a...

EC: You had a working group of twelve thousand volunteers. Well, one of the things that, let's say not only was it the Abortion Education Project confrontation, but it was "organization," and it was organization for a specific purpose, which was political lobbying. Now Planned Parenthood is a non-profit organization, and it's not permitted to lobby politically, save for with five percent of its funds, but there is a memorandum from Harriet Pilpel in the files suggesting that, in her view, this kind of activity could be accommodated within that provision of the law...

BB: I think that's one of the reasons that Al Moran, and I do think it was his perception originally, wanted the national Planned Parenthood to be part of it. Because then you have five percent of a much bigger budget.

EC: I see.

BB: And you're much safer. And it was right, anyway, because it had been perceived as a New York City thing, and it was very difficult to get the rest of the state, you know, they have the same feeling about New York City as Des Moines, Iowa does.

EC: ...Worse. Okay, on the confrontation issue, the right-to-lifers have always been very successful. It seems to me that conservative issues have been successful in arousing people to some out and be visible, to demonstrate. Fifty thousand people in Washington on the anniversary of the Supreme Court decision, tens of thousands working against the ERA, that sort of thing. The supporters, who I think, if the public opinion polls are correct, represent a far broader constituency, don't organize. Why do you think this is? Did you conceive of yourselves as a mechanism, a conduit for similar kinds of organization?

BB: Yes. I had hoped busloads to Albany, busloads from Elmira, busloads--there were already busloads from New York City going in, but I really saw that we would...maybe not so many...but certainly we would make visible this kind of support.

EC: And you felt that you could meet them on the media confrontation level, that you could do as well in New York State...you could

EC: (cont) descend on just as many legislative offices if it was a political lobbying effort that you were going to do...or you could have just as many numbers of people massed on the Albany Capitol's steps, or to have an equal number didn't matter, just to have a presence was important?

BB: To have a presence was important, but I didn't see that as the first issue and this may have been naive. I wanted people to go visit their legislators in Albany and at home. I felt that if the president of the local bank went in to see so and so, with a doctor, and...this is what I told my people to do, this is what I did, and I saw it work...you know, nicely dressed women, people here again we're talking about our upper class that was, but, never mind, this is important to people and it impresses legislators, going in with the doctor, and with a lawyer, and with a public health nurse or whatever. Because we really couldn't meet the issue on an emotional basis, we had to say yes, aren't those pictures awful, isn't that awful, but the fact is women have abortions anyway. I'll never forget; this made an impression on me. I'd set this up in one of the very...the most important ones (legislators) to do was Warren Anderson, who's the majority leader of the Senate, a Republican and he's from Binghamton. Well, we got the Binghamton office started fairly early, we had a good contact in there through Planned Parenthood, and I went up and saw her and said, "Can you set up a meeting with Warren Anderson?" and she said, "Yes, I can." I said, "I'd like to come up for it and would you get a doctor?" And so I went up...I did that one myself, this was before the session started in Albany. I'll never forget, I walked in with the doctor, who I think had been to high school with him, you know, it's not that big a town, and we were talking along and finally the doctor said, "You know, I've done a lot of abortions, and I have never had a patient who was ever sorry." One of the things they (right-to-lifers) were saying was these women are so sorry...

EC: Psychological trauma...

BB: Well, I could see that Warren Anderson, I mean I could see on his face that this made an impression on him. So I was sort of hoping that if we could get that sort of the establishment of somebody's constituency, as well as sort of doctors and lawyers, presenting this on an intellectual, on a legal, on a medical or humanitarian point of view.."It's going to happen anyway, do you want these women, such and such could happen to your daughter?" This was the way we could counter...I never thought that I could get fifty thousand in Albany.

EC: So you were really not subscribing to the Rockefeller philosophy of "if they stoop low, you stoop low," you really believed that you could create a middle on the pro-abortion issue, that you could be a centrist, and diffuse the emotional issue, by the... by making it a reasonable...

BB: I wanted to have those pictures though.

EC: You wanted both.

BB: That's not the same as cast of thousands, I wanted those pictures, and as it turned out, my one philosophy was if we had pictures, then nobody would use pictures. If somebody said we want you to come and debate, well we didn't like to debate, but maybe we had to debate. We'd say, "Are you going to let them use pictures? Because if you let them use pictures, we'll use our pictures." The result would be: no one would use pictures. And, in fact, later with NARAL, we were able to cancel out a lot of the pictures, really, by having our own pictures.

EC: I've gone through your NARAL debaters' guide and I was intrigued that one of the points that you cautioned, or advised, your debaters to use is that kind of tactic. Did you believe that public opinion was firmly on your side?...There's also a memo in the files of the Abortion Education Program from Harriet Pilpel saying that there was no potential for a referendum on the issue in New York, because New York State law doesn't allow for an issue to be in referendum. This leads me to believe that you may have inquired about having a public referendum on the ballot: "Do you approve of legalized abortion?" You must have been pretty sure you had the vote. Those kinds of things...for example, the referendums in the 1940's in Massachusetts on contraception didn't work very well, because although the public opinion polls showed the votes to be there, when Sanger and Loraine Campbell and others tried to organize, they found the Catholics better organized than they. But you must have felt fairly well assured...or were you exploring many kinds of ideas? It strikes me as a wonderful idea, to have a referendum, finish the issue, you know.

BB: You can check the date, but I think that was something that Al Moran asked for before I came. Because I don't think that was something that I would have thought of or even wanted. I knew the Catholic Church could get the vote out better than we could. I would have opposed it. After all, we were defeated in Michigan, we were defeated in North Dakota, I think it was.

EC: How do you feel about the protection of minority rights? Even the Gallup poll that you cite in one of your progress reports, the national Gallup poll, only showed fifty-seven percent as supporters of the liberal law at the time (1973). Now in New York State, where the law had been reformed, and where there were abortions being performed, the percentages were higher...were up to seventy percent in various polls...but what do you feel about the protection of minority interests? I just wondered, as a general matter, what about those forty-three percent who disagree, or those thirty-three percent?

BB: Well, you're asking two questions. We don't know that the thirty-three percent were the minorities, I mean, I think, they probably weren't.

EC: No, I don't mean minority in terms of racial, I meant in terms of a democracy, there's a majority and a minority, I'm sorry.

BB: Well, this I felt very strongly. I made this point often. Nobody's forcing anybody to have an abortion. They don't have to have it. But just don't let them tell me I can't. Your freedom to swing your arm stops at my nose, and that was my nose, my uterus, but, you know, I felt nobody was forcing anybody.

EC: But you felt that so long as a majority of people appeared to be on the side of the issue, to allow the state to provide freedom of choice, that's the way the state should be.

BB: I would have thought that would be the way the state should be even if the majority were opposed to it.

EC: Well, I agree with you, obviously, however I do understand the philosophy that it's a little bit of a cop-out to say all you're doing is providing freedom of choice, because clearly public policy is an incentive. Public policy for abortion is an incentive to the service as well. It legitimizes it in some way...a lot of people said who cares whether there are Comstock laws, because nobody enforces them anyway. They opposed Margaret Sanger's appeals in the thirties to try to repeal the federal Comstock laws. But she kept saying, "Look, the fact that they're there is an endorsement of some sort, as well."

BB: Figures that I have seen, although I can't back this up, but I have a strong feeling, that you're going to have pretty much the same number of abortions anyway. We know that there were so many when it was illegal. You're not going to stop abortion. Why make

BB: (cont) it illegal? Legal or illegal doesn't have that kind of a power in this situation. You know, when a woman is desperate enough, she's going to...when people are hungry they're going to steal. If people need that fix, they're going to go knock somebody over the head and steal the pocketbook and get the dope.

EC: Well, Connie Cook, certainly...when she passed the bill... her closing arguments were not talking about abortion or no abortion, but about criminal abortion or legal abortion, about abortion for the rich and poor alike, or abortion just for the rich.

BB: I think that one of the most moving things I ever read was an article in a Boston magazine. It was written by a right-to-lifer, and it was the story of taking her daughter for an abortion. I mean can you imagine the trauma that she was going through, and yet she must have been grateful that she could take her daughter to get a legal abortion...Well, this is a very paternalistic point of view...I'm doing you a favor while you're out there fighting me. But nevertheless again, the data shows that. Of course, we get more Catholics having abortions than Protestants, because they are not supposed to use contraception, so...

EC: I want to talk about abortion in the 1976 presidential election later; let's keep this chronological, but the issue that's being raised today was raised within the ranks of Planned Parenthood while you were running your project in New York State. And that issue is, "My God, we're just at the point when we really are approaching an effective contraceptive delivery system, and now you're going to ruin it with abortion. We're reaching more people, we have federal funds, we've diffused the opposition to contraception, what we really want is to promote family planning, why are you ruining it with abortion?" Certainly there are too many presidential candidates this year saying, "I disapprove of abortion, what we really have to talk about is decent contraception." So, I wonder how you felt about this. There was rather strong opposition to John Robbins, voiced by the Albany Planned Parenthood people. There's an interesting exchange of letters from a woman named Shirley Gordon who ran Albany Planned Parenthood. She was particularly sensitive to the issue, because, being in the State Capitol, where there is a rather powerful Catholic diocese, she had spent all these years achieving her Planned Parenthood status and all of a sudden felt threatened by raising the abortion issue from within the ranks of Planned Parenthood. Others of course, as you've pointed out,

EC: (cont) like the Syracuse clinic, were big supporters. Is there any more that you can say about this internal issue in Planned Parenthood at the time?

BB: At the time I started running this program, yes. This is one thing which I think I was able to understand, having come up from the grass roots in New York State, and having shared an affiliate's perception of the national not being sensitive. I understood very clearly that the only way we could do this as a statewide thing was to have the cooperation of the local groups and I wasn't about to push anybody around or step on anybody's toes. Now it was fortunate that in many cases I did have a personal relationship with the people. We got a lot of cooperation in Albany, maybe it was after this...I can remember in Buffalo Zel Alpern saying, "My board is scared of this, we can't go it, don't worry about it," and so I sort of said, "Well, okay, we can set up a separate group, but can you let your people who are interested go in?" And she said yes, that would be fine. She was surprised that I would be willing to do that. I said, "Sure, any way that's going to work for Buffalo, that's what I want." And it turned out, in the end, Planned Parenthood gave us space, we went through their telephone. And that's often the way. If people think that maybe you're going to push them, and you don't, then they come much further. So I was definitely of the opinion that in each locality we had to tailor it to the local thing.

EC: That's characteristic of the Planned Parenthood philosophy, since the nineteen teens. That local priorities dictate local responses, local situations...

BB: The other thing was, I had money, which is always something, and so I was going to hire people in these areas too. True, it was part-time, but I made it very clear that I wasn't going to hire anybody unless the local Planned Parenthood Executive Director approved of the person. This wasn't being noble on my part, I know politics, and I know that you just can't stand having a divisive thing, you know, we couldn't have had groups fighting. We weren't all that strong anyway. We had to present a united front in every district.

EC: Because you used the term "educational," I'm not quite sure we clarified one issue. You saw the New York State Abortion Education Program as a way in which to educate people who already supported you to the need to vocalize and make public their

EC: (cont) support...to the fact that legal abortion in New York was still not assured, the law could be changed...just as it had been changed to make it legal, it could be changed back. Or did you see yourself as educating the opposition, and changing their minds, or both? Because I think that's philosophically a very different thing. And it really speaks to the issue of whether you were going to educate people on these hard, moral kinds of issues. Were you raising the consciousness of your supporters, or were you trying to change the mind of your opposition?

BB: In the first place, I think that "education" in the title of the program was not a very accurate term. I think it was thrown in to help keep the tax people quiet.

EC: This was "political" work?

BB: Yes. I didn't see it as education. We had lost that bill in 1972, I think people realized, I mean I don't think I had to go around as Paul Revere and say "Look out, we've got a problem." I assumed that people knew we had a problem. So I saw that I had to get these people together and make their feelings effective, make them political. And I think, as much as it worked, that that's what I did. I don't think I was wrong in that perception. I think people were afraid of losing this. They should have been. Time and time again, we were told, "We're so glad you're showing us what to do, and you know, giving us the way to move on it." So I certainly didn't see the need to educate my own people to the problem. To educate them politically, to how to be politically effective, was the education. I didn't see educating the opposition because I didn't think they were educable. What I did see though, was certainly education in the sense of the...

EC: Of the legislature itself.

BB: Of the legislature, but also...one of the pieces, and when I told my people, I really wanted them to get a good media thing going, I really wanted them to be in the newspapers, I wanted them writing letters to the editor. I wanted them talking about----so that our side would get some...

EC: You also spent, or proposed to spend, a major portion of your budget on public relations. I think it was Howard Rubenstein Associates, I don't know what that is...

BB: It's a PR firm here, which was highly recommended to me; well,

BB: (cont) he's very close to Abe Beame, as the political public relations firm. If I would hire that firm, they would give me a lot of political contacts, and it was true, they did. They got me an appointment with Stanley Steingut, Democratic Minority leader of the New York State Assembly, and now Speaker; they got me an appointment with all these people. They really were a political public relations firm. So in a sense we hired them, but we didn't pay a full fee. If we had been a commercial client, they would have charged us a lot more. They helped us with the pamphlet we got, but they also provided a lot of just the personal kind of contact that's terribly important.

EC: Did you actually get to the point...I know that the entire operation was cut short by the Supreme Court decision, and we'll talk about that in a second...but did you actually get to the point of making your presence felt in Albany?

BB: Well, I think so. Let me just say one more thing before it goes by. Howard Rubenstein also got us appointments with the top brass at ABC, and NBC, and CBS, which was part of what we wanted to do.

EC: How did they respond? I wonder if they'd ever do anything, people who depend so much on selling "soap," and are so cautious because of the amount of "soap" they have to sell.

BB: Well I think the only thing, and then again, and later in NARAL, we had one thing going for us, which was something called equal time. Legally, so we could say to them, look if you're going to put Susie Smith on holding up the fetus in the bottle, you know, at least let us get up and say, "Here's the other side of the abortion controversy," so that they had a better understanding of the issue. I think that was helpful as far as... at least they knew what the issue was.

EC: Would you say that generally the national media, both print and electronic, were sympathetic to the abortion issue? I read through some of the reprints that you gave me, Time, and stuff like that, and I had the sense that they were part of the liberal press.

BB: Yes, pretty much. It's an issue that sells newspapers. It sells magazines, it's one of those things. And so unless you're very much one way or the other, you've got to present both sides just to keep the pot boiling. I'll never forget, remember, that fall

BB: (cont) Governor Nelson Rockefeller was going around the state having town meetings? I was very careful that we had people at those meetings, ready to speak. And, one of the first ones was reported in The New York Times. The city editor was a Catholic, and he just reported the Catholic side of it. He didn't talk about our people who got up, as it happened. We had an interview with the editors of the Times and I showed this story to them and they said, "The editorial desk never interferes with the news desk," but the coverage was much more balanced after that. So you see...now who can say, whether it was me saying that or...

EC: It's an interesting little insight, however, into the ways in which this change took place, and also to the ways in which women quietly work within the political process. I mean, that's the old boy network, right, the editor...

BB: Yes, and you know if the Times had reported on every town meeting, there were eight of them or something...every one always saying that the right-to-lifers were there, and they asked this question, and not saying the other people, you would have given people the impression that they were much more powerful than the other. But you got both going and then...

EC: There's a memorandum here which also fascinated me. It was from you, and it's a proposal that Planned Parenthood, perhaps, support a twenty-week bill. For the purposes of the record, when Connie Cook passed her bill...for reasons...some day you might want to read that interview [the Schlesinger-Rockefeller oral history interview]...it was a kind of no holds barred bill. She finally allowed the imposition of a twenty-four week limitation. In this proposal to push back the time limitation, you say that you ask for a twenty-week bill with a special provision for genetic problems, and also, young pregnancies. Your strategy, as you articulate it, is an interesting one. You say it makes us appear as "compromisers"...in the midst of our "radical friends," was the term you used, and the "right-to-lifers," who will both oppose us, and that way we'll come out centrist and reasonable. And yet nothing will change, because essentially most women do have abortions under twenty weeks, and if you have this provision for genetic problems or for very young pregnancies, you've changed nothing. What ever happened to that, can you comment on that memorandum?

BB: Yes, I can remember that I had a strong political sense...I went to Albany as soon as the legislature recessed...I kind of got it

BB: (cont) organized in the fall and early winter. And then the session started early in January, and for the three weeks before the decision... I was in Albany the day of the Supreme Court decision. They were in session Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, and I was there. I lived in a hotel and organized lobbying up there. My perception was...actually, I was hearing it, I was hearing it from the bell boys. I was hearing it all over, it was going to be a twenty-week bill. My perception was that the Legislature had to do something, had to give something. And I thought it was much better for us to be supportive. Maybe this is wrong, and maybe this isn't feminist doctrine, but, in the first place, I felt it was going to happen anyway, it just was the feeling up there.

EC: And so you might as well make it look like a victory, rather than a loss...

BB: Yes, make it look like a victory, and also get the legislators on our side. I mean if a legislator is really in a problem, and his people come in and say, "Okay, we understand the pressure you're under, and if you have to go for the twenty-week bill, we won't fight you, but that's the limit, that's as far as we can possibly go. But we understand your position," instead of screaming at them, "no change," or screaming at them the way the right-to-lifers were, and so that's why I recommended it.

EC: It intrigues me, because I think your reputation is a different one, your reputation within the field...because you moved from this to NARAL. I think you're seen as a person who's a strong feminist on the abortion issue, who promotes "conflict" between those who assert the inviolable rights of a woman's body and those who, well, how could you characterize the right-to-lifers...those who assert that abortion is murder. And that you're not...because you moved to NARAL...you wouldn't be seen as a person who's a compromiser, who's interested in diffusing the issue. Now I may be wrong about this, but...

BB: This is hard to do--put yourself back into 1972. We didn't have a Supreme Court decision, nobody was talking about this as a woman's right. We were fighting, screaming and dying to get a three-month bill in some states, you know to get anything. And I think I had a vision of these thousands of women, in New York State, really women all over the country who were coming here, as being completely lost for this very very small compromise...in politics I think that idealism doesn't work, you have to be practical. And I think I really saw that this is what we would have to do.

EC: Did you change after the Supreme Court, or did you just change your strategy. Do you think you've had a consistent ideology, you've always believed that abortion is an inviolable right of a woman?

BB: Yes, I think so, and I think the thing is, it was a change of strategy. Because after the Supreme Court decision, it was a completely different ball game. I can imagine, if say, the Supreme Court decision hadn't happened, and we'd kept on fighting...Say it was twenty weeks, and we were able to pass that and hold it, which I think we probably could have, 'cause we were just beginning to get our momentum going, and I really think we could have held that. And say that within the next five or ten years most of the other states had come to this, a twenty-week bill. I think that at that point, I probably would have been in the movement to take all laws away. But there was certainly no chance of a law passing in Albany saying no law at all. We were fighting to hold what we had. And I'll tell you something else, those live babies being born in abortions weren't helping us very much either. That is pretty hairy.

EC: I'm intrigued that you would mention it, because everyone I've questioned, in this project, and just personally, about this issue... I was just about to move to a few other questions about your personal experience of abortion, not whether you had one, I don't know that that makes a difference, but whether you've been in an abortion clinic and how you feel about this...Because, I'm absolutely fervid in my support of liberalization, that this is not a business of the state. On the other hand, I worked in an abortion clinic, and it's not a pleasant thing, particularly when you're dealing with these late-term abortions. I mean, maybe, in the end you have to condone infanticide, you know, I don't know. I have friends who are ethicists, who teach religious ethics, who have given me a kind of utilitarian view of the ethical question here, what's in society's best interest is where life begins and where life ends. I mean the same thing applies to killing a human life, but still, clearly, I worked in that clinic and I did not find tying up the bag to be a particularly pleasant experience.

BB: When I was working in Rochester, say '65-70, when they were having the hearings, when I was trying to change the law, when I was working for it, I was saying then, "I have never had an abortion, I never would have an abortion," I was sort of saying, and I used to use this argument in Planned Parenthood, too, I always wanted four children, my husband wanted four children. I don't want any more children. If I were to get pregnant again, I would have the

BB: (cont) child, because we could afford it, and we would take care of it. But still, that doesn't mean that if I were then to have another child and another child...and there were other people who weren't as well off as I was...and I can understand the need first for Planned Parenthood and then, abortion, although I don't think I could do it myself.

EC: Do you feel that way now?

BB: I don't feel that way now. I know perfectly well...I won't say, I know, I suspect, that if I were to get pregnant now, I would get an abortion.

EC: It really isn't the big psychological trauma that people say it is, and most abortions are really not a problem in terms of expelling the fetus.

BB: Well that's another thing too, I know that at the clinic at PP-NYC --married women who've had children have a much harder time with abortion, than unmarried women. If you've had the experience of bearing children and raising them, it would be to me much more like killing a child than I think it would to some younger person, who hasn't, who might not think of it.

EC: And yet it seems...

BB: Well, but you see, this has always been part of me. I go back to when I was first starting it; I could feel how women would feel carrying a child they didn't want. I could understand that feeling and that's why I was so much for Planned Parenthood in the beginning. I mean I can really put myself in the place of a woman who has more children than she can deal with and is pregnant again. She ought to be able to have a legal abortion. Or the younger...I can put myself in the place of a young girl who's in school, or not ready to take this on yet...

EC: In college, I knew a lot of 'em. I must say...seemed like all Vassar College. The big thing was to go to Yale and get a psychiatric abortion. And we were very lucky, because we had that access, but it was tough. I experienced the sexual revolution in a personal way at the college level in the late sixties. I suppose everybody feels when they're in college that they're experiencing the sexual revolution. It was very dramatic...the end of all external regulations of your conduct. And there were a lot of victims along the way, on this level. Which intrigues me...the issue of whether any contraceptive system will work for those first being initiated into sex. I don't know that anyone...although you may

EC: (cont) have used a diaphragm on your wedding night, or whenever... I don't think that most teenagers will. Now maybe.

BB: No, I don't either.

EC: What you were saying before about what you could have ever hoped for, before the Supreme Court decision...no one even thought of ending legislation on this issue, having a bill to repeal the notion that the state has the right of interference. That gives me a natural way of bringing up a memorandum that was written by John Robbins, called "The Conservative Argument for Abortion." A very interesting document. He says the following: "To get the nose of government out of what should be the business of the individual concerned, the woman and her doctor, is sound conservative doctrine." He makes the point that because of the influence of Catholics in the conservative party and in conservative politics in America, abortion has always been seen as the liberal issue, but he sees it as heartland conservative doctrine, and supports it for that reason. Again, this brings up the issue of the numbers of different political constituencies in Planned Parenthood. Even the abortion issue has served...he goes on in this memorandum to even talk about, "Let's not forget about all those welfare babies. You know that we have to pay for them." I'm not condemning your...

BB: No, that's okay, I was ready to use it too, I would have used that issue, I think I'd even done it earlier, I'd certainly gotten the costs of raising someone on welfare, as opposed to the costs of giving them an abortion, I think I released them even. Yes, I would have used anything.

EC: I don't think that's such unsound doctrine either.

BB: It's funny, two feminists sitting here talking about this, it's a very different interview than it would have been...

EC: Well, this is an intriguing issue; you know, during the thirties headlines ran in all the newspapers of this country, about all the babies, relief babies, you know, WPA babies. Sanger brandished them around the country, and used them. Although there have always been Marxists who have been Malthusians, most political radicals find all neo-Malthusianism, which this is part of, abhorrent. How difficult is it to say that it's in society's interest to allow the continual reproduction of people who aren't self-supporting, or working. On the other hand, it's a very difficult issue to appeal to, I think one has to be careful. Is the life of a poor baby, a lesser life, or a life not worth living?

BB: This is again where you get that dichotomy. Do you talk about population or talk about the individual person? Actually what we're saying is, "I think legal abortion is more of a blessing for the poor." Nobody was saying, and we were very careful not to say, people on welfare must have abortions. Now, if a poor person is pregnant and is going to have an abortion, and abortion isn't legal, you know what kind of abortion she's going to have. And that's the key issue. As far as using welfare figures, I can remember when it came up, I wanted them, and I wanted to give them to The New York Daily News. Those were the people that were opposed to it. And I just felt if the Archie Bunkers could see how it was going to hit them in the pocketbook, they might not be so strong on the other side. That's a very cynical...

EC: Did you ever, personally, have to take on a black audience which was crying "genocide" or a radical political audience that was crying "toryism"?

BB: No, I never did. But I wasn't afraid of it because, you see, we'd been through it in Planned Parenthood. We'd been through the closing of the clinic and seen the black women insisting that we open the clinics.

EC: This is something that...

BB: Oh, this happened in Pittsburgh. The black people, the black males, had said this is genocide and forced the clinic to close, and the black women said, "You're not raising the babies, we want the clinic."

EC: That's typical. What role did the Syracuse abortion clinic play in helping you to promote this issue? All of the abortion clinics ...the very positive experience they had had, number one, in simplifying the procedure, making it healthy, without hazard, and number two, in showing that they were really providing a service to a broad economic and social base, and age base, you know, a lot of married women, a lot of young women. I wonder if you might talk about the Syracuse clinic particularly, because it really was the first for Planned Parenthood.

BB: Yes. I think one of the most valuable things about it, and it was just the thing Planned Parenthood was afraid of, was that it did put the mantle of "Planned Parenthood" over abortion, and by that time we had a mantle, we were fairly well established, we were...

EC: When did Ellen Fairchild open up the abortion clinic? Do you remember?

BB: Well, yes. The Cook bill, the first...passed in 1970, wasn't it? Yes, it was in July of that year.

EC: It was implemented in July of '70.

BB: Yes, the clinic opened July of '70. The thing is, the clinic would have opened July of '70 whether the bill had passed or not, and that was what was so brave of them.

EC: Certainly there was talk about it, the Clergy Consultation Service was going to open a clinic, with or without legislation. First of all, they could just have had a staff of psychiatrists, who would give automatic therapeutic abortions and that way they could defend themselves in court...they were counseled that way. But I didn't know anything about Planned Parenthood people thinking of doing it as a test case.

BB: Yes. I don't know, I think the way to find out would be to go back to the minutes of the Syracuse board. I've talked to Ellen about it...this was considered...it takes a while just to get a clinic up and running, and it takes more than three months. And so, I know that this had been in the planning stage for a long time, and they were moving, and wasn't it nice that the law passed, because now we're legal. But, it would have opened anyway. Actually that's why she opened before Al Moran got his clinic open here, because he waited for the law, but she was ahead of him because she was moving anyway.

EC: How did the national Planned Parenthood people feel about this? I'll have to look back to see if I can find any controversy.

BB: I don't think so...I was talking about how Planned Parenthood national ought to make their affiliates do this...and that, the fact is the affiliates are fairly autonomous. If I am Ellen Fairchild in Syracuse and I get my board to say I'm going to open an abortion clinic, you PPFA can't stop me. There's nothing in Planned Parenthood national by-laws that says you, Syracuse, can't. And so I don't think they would have been able to...

EC: Well, historically, or as I talked about it, Planned Parenthood developed as a very loosely federated structure, and of course the affiliates have always raised the bulk of the money, or at least a high percentage of the money locally, so it's a little hard to have control over something you're not funding. But that's a pretty heavy issue. I don't know what would be better, centralization or decentralization, because it changes issue to issue.

BB: And another thing I suggested to people, was that they...if the legislator would...that they take them to visit a local clinic, and so all the way from Binghamton the whole Southern tier, I would say, go visit the clinic in Syracuse, the Planned Parenthood clinic.

EC: Did they provide you with data reports, that sort of thing? Did you use that...was education advanced by the presence within your organization of an actual service?

BB: I don't think it had been going long enough for us to have any...

EC: They hadn't done any real studies. There were so many studies coming out of New York, I guess. Did they service a resident population, or as in New York City...

BB: Oh, they had...I remember Ellen telling me of one case they had from way down south somewhere, who came up to Syracuse, they served a wide area. So I think there was a time when people from Rochester had to either go to Buffalo or Syracuse. Buffalo had a clinic too, Erie Medical Center it was called.

EC: Well, I'm not really questioning you too much about the dynamics of the law, and how it was implemented in New York, because I've talked to other people about it, and that really was not your specific area of interest. But it is a fascinating subject. The whole question, even today, of implementation, which we're going to talk about a little as we talk about your recent activities at NARAL. I think it's very interesting, because it's clear that still, according to Planned Parenthood studies... Fred Jaffe, at the Guttmacher Institute, the research arm of Planned Parenthood, has done a huge study to show that there are whole areas of the country where there just aren't available services. So that much like with Brown v. Board of Education, it may take many many years to implement the Supreme Court decision. While from your perspective...and I understand it, the decision was a radical kind of event, or a change that really did speak dramatically; it also leaves a lot to be desired in the way of implementation.

BB: You sort of can't put that down from on top. That's got to be local.

EC: This provides us with a logical transition to a discussion of the dissolution of the Abortion Education Program. It seems as though we've dealt with it quickly, but in a sense it didn't really exist for that long. By February 13th, 1973, a month after the Supreme Court decision, you were already talking about

EC: (cont) how to dissolve it. There didn't seem any sense in going ahead and worrying about the New York law, if you had a Supreme Court decision saying all laws prohibiting abortion were illegal, unconstitutional. There was some discussion within the ranks, that's reflected in the papers, about what to do with money that was left over. It speaks to the implementation issue, there wasn't something you should still continue to do in New York, and I wonder if you might talk about the decision to dissolve.

BB: Well, it was only eight days after the decision that Rep. Lawrence Hogan of Maryland put in his constitutional amendment in Washington to repeal. Those of us who knew the right-to-lifers recognized that we would still have a fight. So while obviously the New York State system didn't make any sense any more, there was a need to do the same thing on a national level. Now, while this was perceived, and we were certainly able to sell the big donors that this was an important thing to do, I would say that the vast majority of Planned Parenthood people, feminists, everybody, thought the issue was over. At that time, we all kind of relaxed. All the people that I had working throughout the states stopped. I moved down to the national office to direct this sort of national project, and that pamphlet I wrote, the first one--"Abortion...You can Lose your Right to Choose"--about how the Supreme Court decision was in jeopardy, was the kind of thing I did. And I started working to set up so-called public affairs division programs in different states and in different affiliates to get this political capability established. It could be used for many issues, not just abortion.

EC: I think there was about eighty-some thousand dollars left over. Thirty-seven thousand dollars of it, according to a memo here, went to Planned Parenthood's Washington office, to provide for lobbying on the abortion issue in Washington, because of things like the Hogan amendment, and subsequently, other amendments, like the Church amendment. The other thirty-seven thousand took care of you in New York, but one of the things that money was not allocated for since you all turned to the national picture was implementation of abortion services in whole areas of New York where, even though there was a law on the record, there was kind of local hostility. Like the South Bronx was one of your areas of concern, with the Roman Catholic Church having a lot of power, and where there just weren't any abortion clinics, and where the need was so great. There is a lot of anger expressed by a few people in letters, memoranda, etc. Phyllis Vinyard, I don't know who she is, but she's obviously a kind of dynamic woman, from

EC: (cont) her letters anyway--who is Phyl Vinyard?

BB: Remember I talked about my friend out in Suffolk? That was Phyl. She followed me; after I was Chairman of the region, she was Chairman of the region; after I was Regional Rep, she was Regional Rep. And when she was Regional Rep, I was chairman of the Reps, so we would go to all these meetings, and we would always room together, and we were very close friends as well as...

EC: Well, her letters are adamant about, "How can you do this, what are you talking about, the project's not over, it hasn't begun, what about the South Bronx, what about other areas of the state where no matter how the law stands, you're never going to have abortion unless we go in and do something about it." Who made the decision not to continue?

BB: Well, Al Moran and John Robbins basically...I mean they were responsible for the program and, I think, it was largely Al Moran. And that was his perception of it.

EC: ...That the action was now national, and that the money was better spent dealing with possible threats to the constitutional amendment. Has anything been done by Planned Parenthood or other agencies to extend abortion services in New York State, or do you think now that public hospitals, and other...

BB: Well, not in New York State. The national Planned Parenthood had a person on the staff who went around and helped people set up clinics, not just Planned Parenthood people. They also set up a loan fund at a bank, where clinics could borrow money to get started, and I used them when I was in NARAL, when I knew of groups who wanted to do this.

EC: Can you expand on this a little bit, because it is a question I wanted to ask...you said that John Robbins was the person who took an active interest in getting Planned Parenthood to secure this loan fund, which was responsible for the establishment of twenty abortion clinics?

BB: Is it that many?

EC: I think I read that some place. What does that mean, a loan fund, what mechanisms?

BB: Well, we went to a local bank and said, "People need money for this, and can you set up a favorable rate," or whatever it was. I think it was set up so that once Planned Parenthood okayed it,

BB: (cont) in other words, the national Planned Parenthood would go on the line saying, "This is a properly staffed clinic, it's properly set up, it's got good standards. It's an area that needs it." Then the bank here in New York wouldn't worry about whatever it was place in West Virginia, they would just give the money automatically, so it was... *

EC: Was there any official recognition of the fact that a New York bank, under the aegis of Planned Parenthood in New York, was providing funds for an abortion clinic in Wheeling, West Virginia?

BB: I'm not sure that anybody in Wheeling knows it. It probably came as through Planned Parenthood.

EC: Were these twenty clinics Planned Parenthood clinics?

BB: No, they weren't.

EC: Some of them were independent.

BB: Yes. The reason I talk about West Virginia is because I was the one that...there was no service in West Virginia. We were very anxious to start one. They were dealing with somebody that I knew of, who was of unsavory reputation in my opinion. And so I said, "How about going to Planned Parenthood." I talked to Planned Parenthood, and they said, "Yes, we'd be glad to help them out." I think what had also happened was that they had sort of hoped that lots of Planned Parenthood clinics would jump at the chance to do this and they didn't. Some did, but not very many.

EC: It strikes me as an interesting way, however, in which the national Planned Parenthood Federation exerted its advocacy of abortion, and kind of diverted the problem of affiliates who might not be as anxious to get involved. Also it strikes me as a way in which it, the official policy to do things quietly but effectively, took hold, rather than to confront the issue... for which the organization has not been given credit. We've talked about this before. Scratch a feminist and you'll find a Planned Parenthood hater, and interestingly enough, I'm sure none of them have any idea that whether it was for conservative reasons or liberal reasons, or whatever reasons, feminist reasons or other reasons, Planned Parenthood provided twenty abortion clinics in a quiet way.

BB: Yes, and the other side of that is...and this is a perception I've gotten more recently...scratch a lot of those Planned

* See appendix for list of clinics funded.

BB: (cont) Parenthood women and you'll find a feminist. And I think this was...until the feminist movement started again... that whole long period of the fifties that's where feminism was. It was at Planned Parenthood.

EC: Submerged. Well, they may have chosen not to make a political issue of women's rights, because they may have seen it as counter-productive to other efforts, or as just an issue which had for too long been a political issue...during suffrage, and maybe even into the twenties...privatized the issue in a sense, but it didn't die. I've often wondered why people insist that things die so quickly. I think they just go under maybe, but there's more continuity.

BB: Well, there's that whole thing of "nice women don't do these kinds of things." Maybe nice women weren't suffragettes. I don't know.

EC: All suffragists were nice women. That's the problem. Suffragists, suffrage was the legitimization of feminism. It was a narrowing of the feminist goal, into an area where, I think, it could be accepted, and it could be assimilated into the society. Suffragists really made the argument that, after all, women were involved in that nurturing sphere, and government was now entering into the nurturing sphere. It was in a sense a traditional role, an extension of a traditional role and not a challenge to that traditional role. But maybe you're right, from the opposite side, some suffragists were not perceived as nice women, I guess.

BB: I'm not saying that they weren't nice women, I'm saying they were perceived as being not very ladylike, I don't know.

EC: Maybe, maybe, but not quite the same. I think Planned Parenthood is a little bit different because of the sex thing.

BB: Yes.

EC: That it's always been just on the edge of respectability, for that reason, which is something that many people don't realize. I realized it because I remember going to a Planned Parenthood clinic when I was in college and I was shocked to find--it was in Boston--that it was across the street from the Bonwit Teller's. I couldn't imagine how it could be there, right out in the open. Because I expected it to be kind of...

BB: In a back street...

EC: ...In a back street. Now I understand that it was Boston Brahmin ladies who were going to shop at Bonwit Teller's on their way to and from Planned Parenthood, but at the time I didn't know anything about it. I thought it was a sort of a not quite in the mainstream organization.

BB: Right.

EC: I've always laughed about that clinic in Boston...

As we changed tapes you were about to say something about Cyril Means and the interpretation of the Supreme Court decision.

BB: Yes. He was quoted seven times in the decision, I think, his papers. It happened that he was in Albany the day that the decision was handed down. We heard the decision. I was in the NYSAEP office at that time and we were rejoicing of course. Cyril walked in about 3:30 or 4 o'clock and I had the fun of telling him about the decision, and of course he was enormously pleased. Then we decided we really had to get back to New York as quickly as possible and get a copy of the decision. He wanted to see it, so I decided to go back to New York with him. He and I took a 5 o'clock train to New York, and so we got in, what, about eight, and at that time, he'd arranged this by phone, Harriet Pilpel had a copy of the decision; it was flown up from Washington for him. So we went to Harriet Pilpel's apartment, and I think I stayed there 'til one or two o'clock in the morning, reading the decision, but also listening to these two, probably most knowledgeable people in the country, lawyers, on this, talk about the decision and it was for me a very exciting experience. We talked about what the decision contained and everything.

EC: I am intrigued. Maybe I can just raise some issues, and you can tell me whether or not in that discussion they were discussed. It's a wonderful historical episode. The decision is a first amendment decision, right to privacy, but the arguments are fascinating because they're arguments really not about the law but in some part about the historical sociology of abortion. There's great concern about the fact that the laws that were passed in the 1870's were passed at a time when they were protecting women from harmful operative procedures, and that sort of thing, and that they no longer made sense. They don't get into a very heavy or provocative analysis of privacy or the first amendment. I've asked everybody I've talked to about this, how they feel about that kind of a decision, the historical argument. Was that discussed by Pilpel and Means?

BB: Oh yes, because that was Cyril Means' argument. He was the one who first did the research and came up with that rationale, if you will, that the laws were passed because abortions were so dangerous. But now it's exactly the opposite, now the laws were making it dangerous. Therefore you shouldn't have the law. And I think, it's a nice comfortable kind of a thing. A judge can say, "This is the history and this is the reason for change." There's no refuting it. You aren't discussing an issue of when does life begin, and you aren't discussing any of these other things, but you're looking at pure history of the law, and saying this is the reason it was changed. Now it has the opposite effect, and therefore it should be changed again. In effect we are following the wishes of the legislators of the 1890's or whenever it was, because what they were concerned about was the health of the women, and if we're concerned about the health of the women we have to make abortion legal. You know, it's a lovely, lovely argument.

EC: Were you surprised, or were they surprised, by the fact that there was no concern for the husband's rights in the decision?

BB: It certainly didn't come up that night, and really hasn't been a big issue. It has been raised in a few places. But you don't even see much of that in the right-to-life literature, which makes me believe that even they know that it's a loser. I think something like the four cases that have been brought in states by men to force their wives are all cases of men who have been separated from their wives. There's obviously something very punishing going on here. I think...obviously even the right-to-lifers...that the broad broad majority of the people would understand that it's the woman who carries the child, and it's mostly the woman who raises the child, and so, that just isn't an issue that you're going to get lots of people organizing around. Although there may be a lot of men who feel this way. Subconsciously they may want to have these children as one way of supporting their own feelings of maleness or something, but I think they also know that they don't want to raise children, really.

EC: Although alternatively, one would hope, as part of the feminist program, that we change attitudes about child care, and yet in a sense, here we are making decisions saying, it's not your child. It's another one of those interesting philosophical issues, in which I come down on the side of...women.

BB: Yes, so do I. There are certain differences, let's face it. There are a lot of things that make it harder to be a woman, but one of the advantages is it's your child.

EC: It's interesting. We didn't really talk about this before, but you seem to have such positive feelings toward pregnancy and motherhood, and that intrigues me.

BB: Yes, I have to say yes, I wanted children, I like my children.

EC: Did you have easy pregnancies or difficult ones?

BB: Fairly easy. I think the ninth month is...you might as well give up...but by and large, the pregnancy wasn't so much, because I really wanted the children and that helps. But also, I think I have to say, I had help. I wasn't washing all those diapers. I wasn't, you know. And if I wanted to go, not that I did that much, but if I wanted to take a vacation, I could do it. If I wanted to go spend a couple of hours at the Planned Parenthood lunch, I had somebody to leave them with. Also there's talk now about how there are no longer extended families. I think more than just the nuclear family is good for children. And I think that mothers need more help than they often get now. So I was lucky. I had advantages. Yes, I enjoyed my kids, I still do. I mean not to say there weren't moments when I would have cheerfully sold them to the highest bidder, or the lowest bidder or anybody.

EC: You mentioned before, to return to the Supreme Court decision, that eight days after the decision, you had the first introduction of a constitutional amendment to prohibit abortion. And we have talked a great deal, obliquely again, about right-to-lifers and their presence and how you felt about them. But it is true that every time the law changed to be more and more on the side of the pro-abortion forces the right-to-lifers, with the support of the Catholic Church, became more and more vocal, and their presence more and more felt. I think that in New York, in the sixties, when there was all this talk about reform and repeal, you had very little presence. The minute the law changed so it wasn't on the side of the right-to-lifers, or the pro-life people, even the non-organized, they became more visible. What was your activity after the Supreme Court decision. You were dissolving the New York State education project, but what was your awareness of right-to-life? Can you recall some of those days?

BB: Yes, because we were following them pretty carefully. We knew they were growing and getting stronger. We saw what was happening in the Congress. I was trying to alert the Planned Parenthood network at that time to what was going on, to what needed to be done. But it was frustrating in a way, because it was...I guess I can only compare it to what I could do with NARAL, which

BB: (cont) did not get tax-deductible money, when I could write to my people and say, "Write a letter"; but in Planned Parenthood, I had to say, "The mail is running heavily on the other side, and it would be nice..."--I don't think I could even say it would be nice if we--I couldn't say write a letter, you had to be much more circumspect about what was said.

EC: There is a quotation...I think it's in your final report to the Planned Parenthood Board, on the New York State Abortion Education Project, in which you refer to the right-to-lifers as "fanatics," and you quote someone as having told you in Albany that you can spot them by the "crazy look in their eye." Now again, as a sympathizer, I still wonder what this reflects about your feeling? Do you really think that these people are crazy? You seem to be sympathetic to their point of view on a certain level, or do you think that the people that feel that they must exercise their minority point of view are fanatics?

BB: Well, there's a difference between fanatics and crazies. I didn't say they were crazies. I don't think they're mentally unbalanced or anything like that, but I think they've gotten hold of a deep emotional issue and well, I mean, obviously the men that are in it, there's something very anti-woman in this. But I think for the women themselves, their own perception of themselves as women...some of them may be unable to have children, or their whole self identity is wrapped up in their children...and I guess... maybe they feel that people are saying children aren't valuable. Something like that. It's striking at them at a very deep psychological level. And that's why I said earlier that I would never try to aim an education program at changing them. Because I think there's something so deep there...and also you've got to understand the power that the Church does have. If you've been brought up in the Catholic Church and you really believe that your way of salvation is what this Church says, and people do, you know...We were talking about Malcolm Wilson* before; I firmly believe that he felt his seat in heaven depended on what he did with the abortion law. Well, these are a couple of pretty powerful drives, you know.

EC: I'll say. If you really believe it.

BB: Well, I think they really do. You see there are a couple of things here. Now the right-to-lifers never appear until the law was changed. Didn't they care about the fetuses that were illegally aborted?

* Lieutenant Governor of New York State who became Governor when Nelson Rockefeller resigned.

BB: (cont) You know, they only care about the legally aborted fetuses. As long as it's difficult and dangerous and painful and may kill you, then it's okay. In a sense, that is what they seem to be saying. But once it gets legal, well that can't...

EC: Well, once it is legal, it is also just one more example of the loss of the Church's power over the secular lives of all peoples, but over its constituents as well.

BB: I think that's a very important point. And as you know, I'm going into the Church and I would never want any Church, my own included, to have this kind of power. I think it's bad for the Church. I don't think this is a very Christian thing to be doing. That's not our role. But I think the Catholic Church, particularly, has had political power for years, and I think they saw this as a...I'm sure they see it as...some of them anyway...as an eroding of their power, which it is. I mean, how can they go in and threaten or persuade a legislator on another issue, if this issue that, certainly publicly, they've put all their eggs in...this particular basket...has been defeated.

EC: And also, what appears clear from recent polls, is that they're losing their parishioners...

BB: Oh yes.

EC: ...On these issues. There was this recent poll.

BB: Yes. What was his name? He's a Catholic sociologist. 49% of those that leave the Church leave it over reproductive freedom issues. Greeley, Andrew Greeley, is it?

EC: You wrote an article later that year, 1973, for Ms. Magazine in which you placed very heavy emphasis on the role of the Church with its money, and of other conservative groups, in the right-to-life movement. You explained once again their tactics, what they were doing, and you made all kinds of appeals for people on the other side of the issue to employ some of the same tactics, or traditional political lobbying tactics. What kind of response did you receive? Do you remember any response to the article?

BB: I got some neat letters. I made some friends through it. The Catholics, Catholics for a Free Choice.

EC: You mentioned that group in the article.

BB: Yes. I remember writing the article, and one of the things I wanted to do was to give people specific things they could do. So I remember I called up Pat and I said, "I'm writing this article and I want to include your group in it, can I say that if you're a Catholic, this is a group that..."

EC: This is Pat McQuillan.

BB: Pat McQuillan, who since died, but she was a founder of Catholics for a Free Choice. She died of cancer about a year ago. And you know, it was out of her apartment, it was basically a New York City group, but I advertised it as a national group. She said to me later: "That's what started Catholics for a Free Choice." She said, "I got letters from all over the country, and that's how we got our first chapters going, and that's what really got it moving." I felt very good about that. I think, maybe, she got more response than I did. But this is right. Where could Catholics go? A lot of people could either call up their local Planned Parenthood and say, "Gee, I want to help with this," but if you're a Catholic, and suddenly there's a group with other Catholics, I can see that, so there was a lot of response to her...

EC: While we're talking about her, we can move ahead. She was the one who got the most publicity I think...I just noticed this yesterday...on the anniversary of the decision. She held the...

BB: She had crowning of the Pope.

EC: Pope Patricia. She was in Newsweek and Time. That's an interesting kind of thing from your perspective. Media events that will counteract the opposition. They may have had fifty thousand people...right-to-lifers...on the steps of the Capitol, but Patricia McQuinlan with a few free choice Catholics staging a service, what's the name of the Catholic service?

BB: A mass.

EC: A mass...got her picture in Newsweek and Time, it was a very effective ploy.

BB: It sure was. Well, that was the same time--January 22, 1974, the first anniversary of the Supreme Court decision--that we did a service in Washington. It was an ecumenical service held at St. Mark's Episcopal Church. We got all the press and local TV cameras that night as well as being on ABC National News. We got as much time as the...

EC: As the right-to-lifers. Well in January 1974, you were already at NARAL?

BB: No, I went to NARAL in March of that year.

EC: Would you give me a little bit of the narrative detail of that year, 1973; you stuck around Planned Parenthood working...

BB: Oh, 'til the fall some time, I think.

EC: There's a very funny memo from John Robbins saying that you would get half of a secretary and so much office space, and you were welcome to tread their office space, their corridors, as a guest, even though you weren't paying for the corridor space.* Do you remember that memo?

BB: No. But that doesn't matter, I remember the thing. And then, from fall 1973 until March of '74, yes, I worked for the Women's Lobby. That was basically fund-raising for the Women's Lobby. But what I had to do first was build an advisory board...

EC: Can you in a few sentences summarize what the Women's Lobby is, how you got there, who suggested it?

BB: Well, Carol Burris is the president of it, and I had met her when I was working on the abortion thing. I think Jeanie Rosoff, the woman in charge of Planned Parenthood's Washington, D. C. office, suggested it...that I would be interested in meeting her and I was terribly impressed with her, and I still am. She's a phenomenal woman. She's got an absolutely photographic memory. She can quote you any bill or any statistic, anything. She just, in her own quiet way, with a number of volunteers, simply lobbies the Hill for women's legislation. I thought that what she was doing was so valuable and could be so much enhanced if she really had a good budget and a good setup that I wanted to do this. Since I was finishing Planned Parenthood, I did this for about six months. I got a good board started. We got the first fund-raising letter, that Helen Gahagan Douglas signed, which was sort of interesting, since she was on the cover of the Ms. magazine that my article was in. And that sort of got them up and started on their fund-raising and...

EC: You did...I noticed, from looking at the letterhead after you had been there...give them a very distinguished group of representatives.

BB: Yes, I was pleased with that.

EC: How did you go about doing that? I mean, soliciting distinguished women to support the Women's Lobby?

* Because of the limited funds left to the Abortion Education Project.

BB: You'll laugh. Well, I made up an original list by going through Who's Who of American Women. It's very hard to find well-known women who aren't in the entertainment field. Everyone knows movie actresses, but beyond that, I mean, how many famous women doctors can you name? How many famous women lawyers? You know, that would be known all around the country. The point of an advisory board is so people think this is a legitimate cause, because all these neat women are on the board. Women college presidents were about the best. Well I went through, and I picked up a first list of about twenty. Just out of the blue. And I wrote them, and I said who we are and what we were doing, and may I use your name on our advisory list? One of the people I wrote was Betty Furness. Betty Furness at that time was the Director of Consumer Affairs for the City of New York and one of her administrative assistants knew some of the people at Ms. Magazine, and called them up and said, "What's this Women's Lobby, are they on the level?" And they said, "Yes, they're on the level." And Bea has just written this thing, and so Betty Furness said, "I'd like to have an interview with you." So I called up Carol and I said "Here we go." I got Carol up there too, and Carol is very impressive. If you've ever got any spare time, just go interview her. She's terribly funny, also. But anyway, so Carol really did a number on Betty. And Betty said, "Fine," she'd be glad to do this and so then I said, "Look, would you do something else for us? Would you sign a letter to these people, because a letter coming cold from me?.." I mean I had gotten some prominent women, some of the women's college presidents and all...but I said would you sign a letter? So we made up a list of about fifty of the women that I wanted, and Betty Furness did sign a letter, and we got the list there that we've got.

EC: What intrigues me, I guess, just to name a few women, for the record, you have women like Leona Baumgartner, the famous public health doctor and population person in New York, Sarah Gibson Blanding, who was the Vassar president, Mary Bunting from Radcliffe, Liz Carpenter, a political woman, Helen Gahagan Douglas, Claire Booth Luce, Marya Mannes. You wonder just whether any of these feminist organizations had ever bothered to go out and ask them. Were these women active in NOW and other feminist groups?

BB: No. Somewhere I probably have the letter that Betty Furness wrote. If it wasn't, I think it was stated fairly explicitly that we were not a demonstrating group. I don't want to say we weren't feminists, but we weren't feminists of the "bra burning"...and I know there were no bras burning...but what we were

BB: (cont) saying was, "This is not a confrontation action group, this is one that works on child care legislation, and things." And in spite of people saying no, the feminist thing is so bad, most women really are concerned about these gut issues, so they were willing...and I think Betty Furness said...I think the ones that I got first were Miss Blanding, and I would say, "Won't you join me and Miss Blanding and Mrs. Such and Such on this board."

EC: You just let it kind of have a domino effect. Roll it over, one famous person attracted another. It is impressive. You didn't stay there very long? Did you just independently get involved in the anniversary celebration of the Supreme Court decision (January, 1974)?

BB: Yes. Well, I saw this as something that needed to be done. I knew this thing was coming and...actually one of the women who had written me about the magazine was very interested in this, and Fran Nathan, who's a friend of mine, and who worked as my Manhattan coordinator at the New York State Abortion Education Project, met me and said we've got to do something. I got hold of Roxanne Olivo who was then the executive director of NARAL, and said, "Come on, we want to do something." NARAL had only about two thousand members then and very little money, but they were just delighted if some group of women wanted to do something, you know, that they could be part of. So we worked together and put on this church service, which as I say, got a lot of...got some...media play, at least on TV, we balanced off. We were at least a presence.

EC: ...And you showed a moral argument, a religious argument on the side of abortion.

BB: ...Which was what I was really trying to do.

EC: You told me something when we talked earlier about Balfour Brickner, a leading Reform Rabbi in New York, which I can't remember.

BB: Oh yes, how I chose him. Okay, it's all very well if you decide... if what you're going to do...is have a church service. The right-to-lifers are going to turn out...I think it was twenty thousand, so you know you're going to be lucky to turn out two hundred. But if you're going to have a church service, you better jolly well have some pretty top church people in it. The year before, when I'd been doing New York State things, one of the things I had wanted to do was organize the churches. And I had put together

BB: (cont) a planning meeting...a breakfast meeting...and Bishop Moore (the Reverend Paul Moore, Jr. of the Episcopal Church) and Bishop Ward of the Methodist Church, and Bal Brickner and another Jewish, an Orthodox Rabbi. We had agreed to send out the invitations to this breakfast, and these were the top religious people and we were getting that going, so I had gotten to know Bal, and I'd really liked Bal, so I called him up and I said, "We want you to participate in this service." And he sort of looked at it, sort of horrified, and we hadn't gotten anybody then, and he said, "Who have you got?" And I said, "We haven't gotten anybody." He said, "This is terrible if it fails, it'll be worse," and I said, "Well, we've got to do something, come on you've got to help us." So he said, "Well, suppose I say no, would you go ahead and do it anyway," and I said, "Yes, we're going to do it anyway." He said, "Well, obviously, if you're going to do it anyway, I can't let it be a failure, so I'll help you." So he not only agreed to help but then he called so we had some very good people.

EC: Is he president of the Reform Rabbis?

BB: Yes, it's got a long title...Director, Union of American Hebrew Congregations. I think he's a neat guy, helped us get together and we had some good people in Washington.

EC: We're now in the year 1974, and I don't know how you left the Women's Lobby and got to NARAL.

BB: I had worked closely with Roxanne Olivo, Executive Director of NARAL on the Church scene and worked obviously with NARAL people, Larry Lader was the president, and done this thing...

EC: And they were looking for a new Executive Director?

BB: She wanted to leave and they were looking for a new one, and Roxanne recommended me very highly and so, they offered me the job.

EC: Did you continue to work in New York?

BB: Yes. I had always worked in New York, even when I was doing Women's Lobby, I did it from New York. I worked out of Harold Oram's office, Oram Associates. He is a professional fund-raiser who does a lot of liberal causes and he does them by kind of taking them with no charge at the beginning until they work up to bigger and better things. So I worked out of his office, and that was very good for me. I got into that through Sanky Perlown who was the direct mail person at Planned Parenthood, and is

BB: (cont) a friend of mine, and helped me get this thing started. I really learned the direct fund raising business from her, and from Harold and others in that office.

EC: When you say the direct mail person, there's one person at Planned Parenthood who does nothing but solicit the funds in support of Planned Parenthood through direct mail?

BB: Direct mail, that's right. And that's their best source of funds.

EC: Is it really?

BB: Oh yes, they raise a million dollars a year, through these, I mean. She's one of the tops in the field.

EC: The letters that go out. I've gotten maybe ten of them...

BB: And Cass Canfield, former Planned Parenthood President and publisher at Harper & Row, Inc., signs them.

EC: ...Or Mrs. Edward R. Murrow.

BB: They're very good letters and she raises mints off of them.

EC: She taught you that.

BB: She taught me a lot. She taught me what I know.

EC: So is that what you really intended to do, to build a constituency for NARAL that was bigger than their...I think I have the statistics down here...a couple thousand membership and a very small budget until you got there.

BB: Yes.

EC: That's for the record. You transformed it from an eighty-nine thousand to a two hundred thousand dollar budget, from a two thousand membership to a twelve thousand membership, in the year or so you were there. That's not unimpressive.

BB: Well, the time was right for it, and that was...although I used other lists very effectively, too, it was basically the Ms. Magazine list...and Bella Abzug signed the letter. And you know, that's a pretty good letter to a pretty good list, so...

EC: Bella signed the letter saying "You may think abortion's not an issue, but look at what's going on on Capitol Hill"...

BB: "Support NARAL, send your money, write your Congressman..."

EC: There were pieces that issued...Karen Durbin, a writer, now a Village Voice editor, did a piece for one of the women's magazines based on having received that letter, so it was an effective ploy. What about NARAL as an organization? You had been the person who in a memorandum on the twenty-week bill referred to "our radical friends" and then you joined them. So I do wonder how you felt about NARAL and Larry Lader and Lee Gidding, who had run it before you. These were the women, and men really, who in some senses define the left, the most extreme perspective.

BB: No, they didn't really. The most extreme left was WONAAC, which was the Women's--have you run into them--National Abortion Action Coalition or something. They were the farthest left. I guess NARAL was left. I didn't perceive them as so far left. I saw them as Planned Parenthood fifty years ago. You know, they were a lot of good people, there were some abortion clinic people in it, but after all, to run an abortion clinic was a pretty...I think actually that was one of the things I did for NARAL that was good...was turn it from the perception of being so far out in left field--well, partly it was, then the law changed and they weren't.

EC: All of a sudden they were absorbed.

BB: They weren't violating the law or anything like this. They had the Supreme Court on their side, and so it was a question of bringing a large mass of people who weren't radicals in any sense, but felt that this was a good thing, into the fold.

EC: ...Which you succeeded in doing. You did reorganize them. But there were other goals? It seems to me you reorganized, and that was a major function. But the group's efforts were directed at continued lobbying efforts against the various constitutional amendments that were introduced and other amendments to health acts and so forth, that we can talk about specifically, that were going to prohibit the implementation of abortion services, or restrict it, or overturn the Supreme Court decision entirely.

BB: Well, you see, this is terribly intertwined. If you are going to lobby, how are you going to lobby? You got to go in to Congressman X and say your constituents want this. But you've also got to get your constituents writing the letters. So it was a complete mixture. I saw those fund-raising letters that I sent out to Ms. Magazine subscription lists as a definitely two-pronged thing.

BB: (cont) One was money, we needed money, but the other was an active membership who would form their own local coalitions and who would write letters. And we sent them out SOS's when bills were on the floor that needed work.

EC: Can we talk about some of those bills specifically? Just because I am wondering how you perceived the role you played, and whether you feel you diffused the issue legislatively. You had a representative of NARAL in Washington who directed some of this effort. Eight days after the Supreme Court decision, you have the Hogan...

BB: Who was defeated. No, he wasn't defeated, actually, he ran for Senate.

EC: Lawrence Hogan was a Republican Congressman of Maryland. And then in the Senate you have...

BB: Bartlett...

EC: Bartlett and, what's his name...

BB: Buckley, James Buckley

EC: ...Buckley of New York, introducing a similar kind of amendment. There were two different...

BB: There were two basic kinds of amendments. One was a sort of "life begins at the moment of conception," so abortion is...

EC: Killing.

BB: Yes, so therefore, no abortion. Although a few of them will say, in case the life of the mother is at stake. But some of them didn't even say that.

EC: But was it that, a fetus is a person...

BB: Yes.

EC: And a person's protected...

BB: And the other type of bill was, "Let the states decide." A so-called states' rights bill, which was the one that Gerald Ford endorsed, sponsored, put his name on.

EC: These bills came out and you began to pour mail into the Congressmen's and Senators' offices, lobby in a direct way? How effective was the procedure?

BB: Well, we turned the mail around over the year. It was running in some offices four-hundred-to-one against us, so we just simply got people writing. Other groups did too, I'm sure.

EC: Well, you worked as well as a coordinator of other groups. I have a list of them here somewhere...Planned Parenthood, Jewish women's groups, others...

BB: Yes, and that was an important thing, but they were in Washington, they...

EC: When we interrupted for a second, we were talking about the strategy of the pro-abortion people lobbying in Washington. Has NARAL acted as an umbrella organization or has it acted in concert with other groups?

BB: More of a...more a pulling together of a coalition. The basic coalition is NARAL, Planned Parenthood, ACLU, and the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, which is the religious group. They meet frequently, once or twice a week, and do the actual strategic planning, dividing the Congress among themselves and all this kind of thing. There is a wider coalition, which includes the Jewish women, and social workers' organization, and union women, oh maybe eighteen or twenty different groups. If something comes up like a particular bill, like the Bartlett Amendment to the HEW act, which would have denied Medicaid, we write a letter, say...and it's usually NARAL that writes the letter and then we get all these groups to sign it, which is pretty impressive. Then we distribute it to all the members of Congress. And you know, you've got all these groups saying, this is a bad thing, that's a very important piece of the lobbying thing we do.

EC: Is any of this a way of allowing non-profit groups to lobby? Are you concerned about their status?

BB: No, because, you see, if they just sign a letter...

EC: They're not...

BB: Interestingly enough, I had Karen Mulhauser who is the NARAL Executive Director now, and she ran the Washington office before... I had some ideas about how Ms. Magazine might help us right now. And so I made an appointment with Pat Carbine, Ms. editor, and went up with Karen, and I think Karen could have gone herself,

BB: (cont) but she hadn't been there before, and I just thought it would be nice. Anyway some of these were my ideas. So we went together up to see Pat, and Mary Thom was also there who does The Gazette, and although we did come up with some abortion things, we also came up with this idea of rating all the members of Congress who are running for office, whether they are good or bad on all women's issues, not just abortion, as well as their opponents, because with our networks there, we can get the information. Ms. Magazine will print this, but it's NARAL that's going to pull it together. We're going to use these groups like the Women's Political Caucus and NOW, we'll pull them in and we'll get this coalition of women's groups going, and I mean that, in Ms. Magazine, coming, you know, just before the election, will have an enormous impact...

EC: Be terrific, like the Civil Liberties...

BB: Like the Civil Liberties Union, or the "Dirty Dozen" that the environmentalists do, and not only will it have an impact on people voting, but in the future, we could be able to say when we go in to visit legislators, and maybe say it's child care, "Do you want to be on Ms. Magazine's bad list?" because not only do they have a subscription of four hundred thousand, but every magazine gets read by eight or ten other women, it's an enormous...

EC: Besides, it'll get covered in the general media...

BB: Well now, it'll never show that NARAL did this, but we will have done it and we've already gotten an intern. It just happened that we were interviewing an intern all afternoon who will probably pull it together. And the thing is NARAL will never appear except as one of the sponsors. But the important thing is that one issue that legislators will be judged on is abortion, and nobody will get on the good list if they've got a bad record on abortion. So that's how that works.

EC: What I find so terrific about this is that women have not been socialized to be politicos, to work within these mechanisms well. There was great discussion after the ERA debacle in New York to that effect, you know, that people didn't really work within the process. You're so used to confronting the voter on the woman's issue, rather than using the established mechanisms and this is, I think, exactly what needs to be done. And it is interesting to see that abortion has provided a kind of focus issue, or at least has provided a structure around which women's issues can focus. Connie Cook, for example, would say that abortion gave the women's movement its impetus for organization, not the other way around, which is interesting.

BB: Well, I think the ERA thing has been very badly organized. If I weren't doing a lot of other things I really would like to go be the Executive Director of "ERA in America," 'cause I just don't know that they've got people there who really know what they're doing. Somebody's got to, I went to a few of those meetings. There was a coalition before, I mean really, you know, the way NOW is fighting anyway. We just haven't got time for that kind of thing.

EC: That's a terrible problem, that we could talk on and on about. I am interested in some of these specific amendments to various bills which would have prohibited government funds...Medicaid funds for abortions...like the Bartlett Amendment, which was a proposed amendment to the Labor-HEW Appropriations Act and would have put a ban on Medicaid funds paying for abortion. And the Roncallo Amendment which was going to deny Medicare for abortion and I guess the Church Amendment, which allowed institutions where there was opposition, even though they received federal funding, not to perform abortions. I guess those are the three big ones, while you were there, that would have prohibited implementation. Can you think of another one?

BB: Yes, there was an amendment to the Legal Services Act, that bill that provides legal services for poor people, that said that legal service lawyers, those lawyers, could not take an abortion case was what it basically was. The Church Amendment, I think, was a terribly bad thing. It riles me that liberals at that point were supposedly supposed to support Frank Church for President when he did this thing, I mean, that's unconscionable, that my money goes to support a hospital that will not give me a legal medical service, which is what it's saying.

EC: Did that pass?

BB: That passed.

EC: Now the other two did not pass. The Church Amendment did pass.

BB: The Roncallo Amendment was our first victory; and that was really wonderful. We defeated it on a roll-call vote. And we defeated some of the leaders of it also; they were then defeated in the election. That was another piece, we did defeat some, you know, our record in the last election of 1974 was very good.

EC: ...On a Congressional basis.

BB: ...More of the bad guys got defeated.

EC: Can we document this?

BB: Yes.

EC: Speaking specifically about this for a moment, do you really believe that the presence on Capitol Hill of an organized lobby made the difference?

BB: Well, I would say an organized lobby that had the grass roots behind it. I mean I think that Karen and Gail, Gail Rosenberg, also worked for that. They could have floated around Capitol Hill until they were blue in the face, and it wouldn't have made a particle of difference if they couldn't show that they had people in that person's district behind them.

EC: So again, we're talking about this as not dissimilar from the New York experience, where you felt that there was a need to provide a mechanism for those people who did support abortions to make themselves known.

BB: Exactly. And that's what we set up. We set up a system of state coordinators, a coordinator in every state, who then, in theory--and this worked pretty well--had a person in each Congressional district, who was organizing a group behind that Congressperson... and of course the state coalition, to work on the Senators.

EC: Actually I wanted us to talk specifically about that structure. What amazed me is that that didn't exist before.

BB: Yes. It doesn't exist for ERA either and that's what boils me.

EC: You mean to tell me all those years of NARAL, and of course they didn't have very much money and so forth, but all those years under Gidding, or I guess really Larry Lader, there was no effort to go, either within the state of New York, or within the forty-eight, fifty states, I guess now, Congressional district by Congressional district?

BB: Oh nothing, some of the districts, no. It's interesting, because my Assemblyman, when this first started--and he was a friend of mine as well--said, "Bea, you're going to, I'll give you a list of six upstate people who voted against it, who will vote for it next time, if you just put a little proper pressure on them." They weren't Catholics, they had no reason not to vote for legal abortion. But you see, I hate to knock NARAL, but there I was in Rochester, New York. I was a pretty powerful person, and I was certainly organizing on the abortion thing, and I never heard of NARAL. Well, you know, if they're trying to pass something in

BB: (cont) Albany, you jolly well ought to touch base in Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse. I mean even WONAAC contacted me and I helped them, and they were much further left.

EC: Well what was the problem in NARAL? Just lack of political sophistication, people who wanted...

BB: Well, Larry Lader's perception is a media one, and you know, I look back, I have enormous respect for Lee Gidding. I think with the little they had, they did a lot of good. But I think it's too bad, I mean, whenever a crisis would arrive in Washington, Larry's answer was to get something in The New York Times. Well if you live in Oshkosh, you really don't care what's printed in The New York Times. The system we used was that the minute that something came up, say in a committee, we were out to the congressional districts of that committee the same day by the telephone, and our telephone bills were enormous, but we got to the people immediately, we didn't spend time just going to the press.

EC: It does take money though and, although you didn't exactly have millions, you did it on a couple hundred thousand or less. It also takes, I suppose, a certain kind of faith that the political structure can be made to work for you.

BB: Yes. You have to base yourself on something, and if you...

EC: And also again, it's easier to rally the political system for a legal issue than it would have been before to change the law. Well, maybe not though, I don't know, maybe they could have done it. Once the law was on your side, your tactics can change?

BB: Oh sure, there's a lot to that, and there's a lot to the inertia of politicians. And it isn't all grass roots, I mean, there was the threat of Hugh Scott, who considered sponsoring a right-to-life constitutional amendment, because he's a very well respected person. We sent the word out in Pennsylvania, but I also called up John D. Rockefeller's office and said it would be nice if Nelson spoke to him, and he did so.

EC: You know for a fact that he went and said, "Huey baby..."

BB: Nelson didn't tell me that, and John D. didn't tell me that, but John D.'s assistant, whose name is Joan Dunlop, I called her and she said, "I'm very glad to know about this, and move on it." And later she told me she was very pleased I had called, because this was obviously an issue that they were concerned about. They

BB: (cont) never sort of tell you, and I may be straining, but I don't think so, considering how, I mean, it would have been very poor for Nelson, after his public stand to have the Congress switch around.

EC: You lost the Church Amendment first. Let's go back and just get all this...

BB: We lost a whole series in a row. We lost about four, I think. We lost an earlier Roncallo Amendment...the bill was vetoed, I think that was the sum and substance of that. We lost the Church Amendment. We lost the Legal Services Amendment. Maybe it was only three of them.

EC: How much impact does the Church Amendment have, do you think?

BB: Well, I think it's had a lot of impact. You've said services aren't available around the country; well, that's because if you're a private hospital, you don't have to provide them. If it weren't for the Church Amendment, anybody in any locality could simply walk into their...There are a lot of private hospitals now which don't give the service, and there's no way to make them. We have, or not we, but, I think, the American Civil Liberties Union, has taken a few of these cases to court, but we've lost some of them. We win the public hospital cases. In a public hospital it's pretty clear you can be forced to provide the service, but if you're a private hospital...And that's really crummy, because a private hospital still gets public funds, and often they're the only provider in a given community, sometimes for numbers of miles.

EC: Well, I don't remember the politics or the press that that issue received. Do you think that the philosophy there was that you do have an obligation to protect minority interests? Not racial or ethnic minority again, but...

BB: No, I think it was Roman Catholic. You shouldn't force a Roman Catholic hospital to provide abortion services. Well, are they Roman Catholic, or are they a hospital first?

EC: I guess Fred Jaffe's study would show that the only voluntary hospitals have been Roman Catholic ones that aren't providing it.

BB: Oh I don't think that's true at all. I think there are...

EC: ...Lots of others.

BB: ...Small town syndrome.

EC: Right. There seem to be whole areas of the country...

BB: I will say one other thing for the small town. Just before I left I did one sort of very once-over-lightly kind of survey thing. And in some small towns, the administrators told me that, in fact, if the woman wanted an abortion in small town America, it still is considered a stigma, and she really wouldn't want to go to a local hospital. Her sister-in-law might be the head nurse, for example, and she very likely would rather go a hundred miles to Chicago, or...

EC: ...Or to a private clinic. I had this argument with Fred one night, when he was quoting this thing. It's clear to me that huge numbers of abortions, a much greater percentage than what was originally thought, are performed out of wedlock. And you know, if you're in a small town, I don't know that the doctor wouldn't do it for you, but I don't know that you'd go to your local doctor. You'd probably want the anonymity of a private feminist abortion clinic.

BB: Or if you went to your local doctor, he might do it in the office, and if he's a sensitive, good doctor...he may realize that if he goes to the...why fuss with it?

EC: Well, we are discussing this in terms of whether the established medical community is responding or whether, parallel to the situation of contraceptives, they just have never really responded. I mean it wasn't until 1937 that the AMA endorsed contraception and began to teach it in medical schools. And even after that, Planned Parenthood has been the main service oriented organization, because nobody else has really carried the ball forward. The established medical profession has just not been interested. Whether for sexist reasons, or...

BB: Well, to get into male doctors and women, we're into another subject, right?

EC: Well, the same is true in abortion, but then again, I do wonder what, if any, impact you have on the abortion situation, the fact that you have a young population that may want anonymity. Interesting question to raise for...

BB: ...Someone else.

EC: ...The next generation...When I was trying to structure a discussion of NARAL, I placed number one: organization of NARAL itself

EC: (cont) on a national basis; number two: the lobbying effort; and three: there was the question of confrontation, continued confrontation with the right-to-life groups. What happened while you were there, on the order of church services, or anniversary day festivities?

BB: Well, not much. That one that I did the first year--the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights was just getting started, and that was one of the things. People said you mustn't do it, because there's a religious coalition, but the Religious Coalition wasn't going to do anything. Well, by the second year, the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, and I think they've done a lot of good by the way, was really up and going and it would have been a real slap if we'd tried to organize a religious service. If anybody was going to do it, they had to do it. That was their turf and their thing. They didn't do it but...What did we do? The next year we had our NARAL annual meeting the weekend before; we had Dr. Kenneth Edelin, he was the main speaker, and we sort of said to the TV networks, if you're going to cover the right-to-life, cover us, and Ken Edelin was a big thing with the case of the young woman in Boston. We got press coverage and TV coverage from that, but we really haven't done a lot of confrontation, and we haven't done a lot of media stuff. And I think that represents, in one sense, my perception that it's not the way to do it, that isn't the way to win the battle you need to win in the Congress. Also it's saying that maybe I'm not very good at that sort of thing. I'm not that interested in it.* Although certainly, the manuals for our state coordinators that we wrote are very strong on how to get media coverage, and how to write a press release, and how to write letters to the editor and how important it is to get your local TV and radio. The end of that money, my New York State Abortion Education Program money, went for a commercial; we saw the commercials coming.

EC: You mean the change in the law to allow contraception and abortion commercials on TV?

BB: Well, what we saw coming was Lucy Keating last year using the fetus commercials, and we were sure that they would be used in this election, although at the time we didn't realize we were going to have Ellen McCormack to deal with. Planned Parenthood made it...but NARAL...we were in on all the planning stages...made this commercial so that when their fetus...and this has happened both in Massachusetts and in Minnesota...when the fetus commercials came on the air, at least we had commercials that we had done to go on the air; and the local groups could get them, and either buy time or often give

*September 1976: I changed my mind and took NARAL back to Rubenstein Associates.

BB: (cont) time as an equal-time thing. The commercial shows an older woman talking, who has had children, talking about her own family and about the abortion she had, and it sort of puts abortion in a nice established...

EC: ...family.

BB: ...And saying, "I'm so glad that if my children need it, it isn't illegal," and all that.

EC: Were there laws against using the TV for contraception? I suddenly realized all of a sudden that New York City Planned Parenthood now has commercials, with Margaret Sanger...late night TV. Maybe it wasn't laws, maybe it was just money that prohibited it before.

BB: It could have been money. Well, that public service campaign supported Planned Parenthood one year, and put a lot of commercials out.

EC: How did you organize in the field to influence legislation?

BB: When I started there, there were only two full-time people in NARAL, me and my secretary. Vicki Kaplan, who organized in the field, and Karen Mulhauser, were part-time--together with Gail Rosenberg, in the Washington office, their secretary, a bookkeeper. It was part-time people who pulled this together. Vicki did a tremendous job. As an example of how the thing worked: Kathy Flynn was our organizer in Maine, and Vicki had gotten her through somebody through somebody through somebody, and finally Kathy said she would do this. I met her in Boston: we had a series of regional meetings with the ACLU, only four actually, where we met a lot of people. Kathy went up to organize Maine all by herself. Now she had worked in the Maine ERA thing, which had passed, so she set out to organize the abortion. She wasn't paid or anything, she was one of our volunteers. She got a thing going, and one of the things we recommend is a telephone tree. So along comes the Bartlett Amendment. We lost it the first time. And Ed Muskie had voted...well the Bartlett Amendment came up twice, and Ed Muskie had voted with Bartlett against us...

EC: What was the rationale on restricting Medicaid funds? It's so incredible.

BB: Well, there was no rationale, you were voting for the right-to-life, voting a right-to-life position.

EC: And Muskie?

BB: Muskie is a Catholic, and he had gone along with it. So Kathy Flynn called to ask for an appointment, but his staff wouldn't give it to her. So we said, "Okay, activate the telephone tree." Then they called her back and they said, "We've gotten so many calls from all over the state that we know we have to see you." And then this is what we had said to do... she went in, and she did it the best of all...she went in with eleven people. She had a doctor and a lawyer, she had a public health nurse, she had a Roman Catholic mother, she had a welfare mother with eleven children; she just went in with the spectrum, and Muskie changed his vote. He voted with us next time. Now Maine isn't a huge state, I mean it's a big state geographically, in New England, but it isn't an enormous population, so that shows, really, what one person can do, just by putting her mind to it, pulling it together, and that's how you work the system.

EC: For the purposes again of just clarifying, the fourth element of the issue that I wanted to just siphon out...though I realize that these are all not exclusive of one another, they're inclusive ...is the whole question of implementation, which we have skirted around. Clearly by not having a Bartlett Amendment or a Church Amendment, you are affecting implementation, and yet there are specific ways in which an outfit like NARAL, or any other pro-abortion group, can go about organizing groups to form abortion clinics, organizing doctors to sit on the medical profession in hospitals, that sort of thing. Has any of that been done?

BB: Really not. Well, a little bit, it was our NARAL person in West Virginia that I helped put in touch with Planned Parenthood to get money, and that clinic is open and running now; that's one of the twenty. We didn't have a lot of money, and we didn't have a lot of people, and so we had to be very narrow. We didn't get into sterilization; we didn't get into contraception really; we didn't get into service; we got into keeping that law. And that's all we got into. Now you know, another couple of years, we may be able to...there's a big educational thing that needs to be done. We worked with the ASA, the Association for the Study of Abortion, they printed up a speakers' handbook for us. We worked with them on that. There's a need for a movie now, to counteract this film that's going into all the high schools, making all these high school kids that have abortions feel they're murdering their babies. There's a lot that needs to be done in the field.

EC: How do you respond to this sudden strange statistic showing a real interest on the part of out-of-wedlock mothers to have their

EC: (cont) babies? What do you think causes that? Some of it's feminist, I would think.

BB: A lot of it's feminist. A lot of it is the fact that society ... certainly a segment of society ... isn't so punitive about it. It isn't such a terrible thing. It's not considered ...

EC: But would you advise a woman to have the baby who let's say is not a teenage ... I mean I think that introduces another issue but a twenty-something-year-old who conceives? You, a person, who found some fulfillment, or a great deal of it, in motherhood? Do you insist on marriage as a structure? Fathers?

BB: Well, the question is the child. I think children are probably better off with two parents. I mean, who am I to say? People have certain personal, private rights, and if the woman decides that what she wants to do is have a child, I can see that, I mean I can understand it. I think it would be dreadful to have to give a child up for adoption. That's another thing when people say, "Well, why don't they put it up for adoption?" It's a very callous kind of thing to say to someone. You know, you would always wonder. You wonder how they were getting along, in the first grade, you would wonder.

EC: But the abortion issue may be approaching a similar situation to when family planning entered the sterility scene, which I have seen as very liberating, from the standpoint of, after all, women who felt that they experienced a certain degree of fulfillment or liberation or just happiness in having children but couldn't conceive had a right to be helped. And that's very freeing, particularly since women were often seen as the barren ones and generally blamed, even though half the time it isn't the woman's problem. Here is another instance where, maybe in the future, the abortion reform movement should also be the one to provide some sort of mechanism or sisterhood for women who feel they want to have a baby on their own and don't want to abort or whatever.

BB: I certainly would support the right of a woman to keep her baby. Again, I'm glad you separate it from the teenage thing ... I think I reflect my age a little bit and where I am, but ... What would you do, just go out and sleep with somebody so that you could have a baby, I can't imagine that sort of sex.

EC: There are women who feel that way. I mean, almost stud, when the time comes, they would just find a good seed, and sow it..

BB: I guess I would just have to say I don't think that's the best way for children to be brought into the world, but, I would not deny anybody's right to do so.

EC: What do you see next? When I ask about NARAL, you say "we," but you've actually, in an official capacity, left NARAL as a staff person.

BB: Well I'm still on the board and I'm on the executive committee, so I'm still very concerned. As I say I took Karen Mulhauser up to Ms. and had some fund-raising activities.

EC: Why did you leave the staff position? Did it have anything to do with feeling that although the Church Amendment had been lost, Bartlett had been won. Roncallo had been won, ...

BB: Yes. There were a number of things that happened. I felt this call to go into the ministry and I knew immediately that if I was going to leave I wasn't going to leave unless there was some way of leaving NARAL in good hands, I care too much about the issue. I also perceived that it was silly to have two offices. We didn't need an office in New York as well as an office in Washington. I also have very high regard for Karen Mulhauser, and I knew if she wanted to be the executive director, she would do a good job and I would help her. So, I went and talked to Karen about it and once Karen agreed that she would like the job, and that she thought it ought to be one office, I talked to the volunteers and brought it up at an executive committee meeting and made my recommendation. I drew up sheets showing how much money we would save. It would cost us a little bit, we would have to break our New York City lease, but we made that up within a year. We'd then save money. I think it was the right decision. I think it's better in one place. I think Karen's doing a fine job and ...

EC: You're better in a volunteer capacity? Which gives us a transition to an issue which I had meant to bring out specifically, but we can bring it out here. What do you feel about the feminist denigration of volunteer women? Having spent most of your life as a volunteer, and in a sense at least in NARAL, you fall into the volunteer category now, you're not being paid for your services, though I imagine you're working very hard.

BB: Yes. Well, in the first place a volunteer career, if you will, is not a ladder to anywhere. I spent twenty years in the system. I was a clinic volunteer and I went out and raised money, and then

BB: (cont) right up through local, regional, national, and then I would have been off the national board. I left before my term was out, because I became a staff member, but then what would I have been? After four or five years, you know, nothing, it would have all been built for nothing. There was no place for me to go beyond that. So, volunteer work in a sense is limiting in a way that a professional career is not.

EC: How about women paying their own way, too, in this society, if they want equality? Can you be free if you're living off somebody else's bank account? I don't know, because nobody's free who's earning money, and nobody's free who's not earning money.

BB: It's such a two-edged sword. It's the only outside activity that a lot of women have, or even are capable of doing, and it provides an enormous amount of ... look at all the volunteer work that women do for NOW. It's not an easy issue, how about the volunteer ... what do you do about a volunteer in a hospital, when you could be employing some woman to do that, sort of nurses' aide work? And yet, you save the hospital money, it's a very ...

EC: Well, there is one point of view which would dictate that all performance of a service be paid for, remunerated on some sort of cash basis, I mean even housewives' work, which is an undervalued commodity. Perhaps, in an ideal world, I'd rather see it go the other way, and get rid of cash as a basis for labor, and the evaluation of dignity, but in another way, as long as men are being paid, the dignity of a person is in some sense measured by what he or she earns. It seems to me you have to enter women into that.

BB: Yes, I think you do. I thought I was a pretty good volunteer, and I read on my subject, and I was pretty knowledgeable and I could go out and speak. But when you're being paid for it, you're more knowledgeable. You take it more seriously.

EC: Also, it always struck me that the Planned Parenthood staff people used to laugh about the volunteers, and they would try to do things that they thought would be controversial to the volunteer board during the summer when the women were on vacation in Easthampton or wherever; it wasn't as full time a commitment.

BB: Yes, well you see, that's a two-way street. That's very different from a Thelma Ellis (PP staff person in Rochester) really educating her board and bringing them along, and facing the

BB: (cont) controversial issues. If the staff treats you that way, you respond accordingly. It goes both ways, I'm sure there were women who spent their time at Southampton, and I'm sure there were women whose children were home in the summer, who couldn't volunteer, and ...

EC: That's an interesting point. I'd like to talk about two things in conclusion. First of all, in this period when you were at NARAL and at the Abortion Education Program, you also made some big personal changes in your life, and I wondered if you'd just talk about that. You got remarried. Was that a major decision, or did you expect to remarry once you were divorced? You discussed your divorce in terms of a need to have your own identity, and to be on your own after really never having experienced that.

BB: Well, that was a factor in the divorce in the sense that I certainly was not about to become the kind of woman that my husband really needed at that point, the sort of typical supportive wife. I think that I always knew that I would eventually remarry. Well, I suppose as a matter of fact to keep the record straight, I did marry again, and I've been divorced twice.

EC: Oh.

BB: I had a very brief marriage after the first marriage, which was a disaster. He was mentally ill. It's better now, but he was suicidal and then he was an extreme case and so ...

EC: Well, I'll ask the question, do you feel more secure in a marital situation?

BB: Well, no.

EC: I mean, it's very hard, after twenty years ...

BB: Yes, and I think that's why I went into it again so quickly. But then after that I figured no, I didn't need that, and I'm damn well not going to go into that again.

EC: This was in Rochester?

BB: Yes. When I moved to New York, although I like men and I need men, I just wasn't about to get married very quickly and I think, what was it, well I just got married last August. So this was what, two or three years, four years or something like that.

EC: Has John Robbins been married before too?

BB: Yes.

EC: And did your husband remarry?

BB: Yes. He remarried a young girl in Miami who was the type of person he needs, which is good. He married right away. That's fine. And John's the type of person I need, because he's a feminist and there's no question about what one or the other of us can't do.

EC: Do you both have children? Just again for the record, I don't mean to be prying.

BB: No, you're not prying. John has three children. He has two older daughters, they're both college age, and a son who is thirteen. But the woman my husband Stuart, married, who's younger, doesn't have any children and they certainly won't which is too bad for her, I think. If you're going to be in a role, at least you should have the fun of having children.

EC: It does strike me as interesting that having in your personal life remarried, you're in a professional sense striking out on something unusual for a woman. And just unusual for a person who, though I guess you've always been a church member, you're secular in your approach to things. And I wonder whether you wanted to talk in conclusion about this document, "Reasons for and against joining the ministry."

BB: What is that document, is that something I wrote?

EC: It's in your papers. I'm just intrigued by someone who would be entering the ministry. You articulate reasons for and against it. The reasons for it seem to be because of your interest in feminizing the Church; your interest in social service which you feel the Church will provide a forum for; your interest in finding out more about Christianity, which you might want to comment on. And your reasons against it are really personal ones: wondering whether you are up to it, personally. I think everyone who's honest with themselves would have that concern. Also what about the sexism you see in the Church? And what about the high personal stature it would give you.

BB: Okay, a couple of things. I think I touched on this a little bit when I was talking about the Catholics. If we're really going

BB: (cont) to see change in women's perceptions of themselves, this has to be at a very deep, basic level, and I really think that the Church is a very important part of this. Now I can't really say whether I'm going into the Church because I'm a feminist, or I'm a feminist, and, therefore, I'm going into the Church, or what the relationship is. But I do see the need for change in society's perception of women and women's perception of themselves. We need more than legalized abortion and a Supreme Court decision on abortion. I mean you pointed this out. We need services out there, and there's something about the attitude of people out there that's denying the vision of services. So there's that piece, there's that piece of working at change at the personal level, if you will. The Church is a very powerful symbol. You probably don't see it. You probably see it less than a large segment of the population, because young, educated, articulate, self-confident people don't feel any need for the Church, they probably see it as a repressive thing, which it is in many ways. But for a large majority of people, it is a very important piece of their lives, particularly as they grow older.

EC: I myself come from a very religious background.

BB: So well, you know what I'm talking about then. One thing, and I haven't really thought this through, so I many not give you a response one, two, three, in very good order. One thing is: women need to be visible in the Church. Not on the altar guild, but in the pulpit. It's terribly important that a woman's voice reads the lesson, as well as a man's voice, in my opinion. You need women serving communion, as well as men. The idea that women are unclean is a very basic Judeo-Christian thing, you know. And that's one of the things I've been interested in, and I think one of the things I wanted to find out was why this is so and how it's been wrongly handed down. What St. Paul did, and what St Paul didn't say. A lot of this stuff has got to be, because as I say, men wrote the Bible. It isn't that simple, but there has been a lot of stuff done that shows a lot of this is really changing. And it isn't just women who are doing this. I've heard my professors say things that really, you wouldn't think the wildest feminist might say. I think another piece of it is, somehow, I'm awfully tired of working in organizations. Now I have an awful feeling that I'm going to end up back ... I mean I can certainly see myself working for the national Episcopal Church as their Washington person, it's just my type of thing. I may end up back in organizations, but where I am right now is, I like working on a one-to-one basis. I want to work with people. I want to get back to that. And I almost have to first if later I'm going to do it on any kind of a larger scale ... to get back to that kind of change, and I know it works. One

BB: (cont) little girl whom I was helping out with something walked by and said to her friend, "There's our lady priest." Well, I'm not, but another one came up to me and said, "Can priests get married?" and I said, "In our church they can," and I explained that in the Catholic Church they can't but, in our church they could And she said, "Good, because I do want to get married, but I think maybe I'll become a priest." Well, you know, no little girl could have said that a few years ago, so it's this kind of thing that pleases me, and so we'll see.

EC: What do you see as the next few years of your life, how do you dee them shaping up?

BB: Well, I've got two more years of seminary and I also have to get my B.A., that's the SUNY thing. I'm going to work this summer in clinical training in a hospital, which is a very good program, and I'm very glad to get into that, I'm interested in how people approach death, how you help families with death.

EC: Clinical training for the clergy in hospitals?

BB: Yes, it's a good program. A woman is running this particular one, there are only going to be six of us in it, and it's a very in-depth psychological training. So that's what I'll be doing, although I work at the church too, so I'm getting a fair amount of ...

EC: Again for the record, which church, where?

BB: The Church of the Heavenly Rest, would you believe, at 90th Street and Fifth Avenue. I work there Sundays and I'm paid for it, not an enormous amount, but nobody's paid in the church.

EC: That church is called the Church of the Heavenly Rest? It's a beautiful church.

BB: Oh yes, it's nice. And yes, I participate in the service and I do some ...

EC: How does John feel about being married to a lady priest, or not a priest, clergyman? Clergywoman?

BB: Well, when we got married he knew that this was what I was going to be doing, so it wasn't as though I dumped it on him. Which is a little different, he knew what he was getting into, because he knew I would always be doing something.

EC: Do you think people perceive this as a bit fringe, a little kooky? Like your children, for example?

BB: Well, I think they perceive me as a little bit kooky anyway. When there used to be one of those TV programs on, they used to say, "That's you, mom," not "Fay" thank goodness, I thought that was an awful program, the other program about the woman who moved to San Francisco, went out on her own, now, they expect me, I mean, abortion, for goodness sakes. What could be further out than that?

EC: I guess from your perspective. Again, I've lived in New York for six years now, I was in college before that, so I forget how these issues appear ... Is there anything else you'd like to add to this record of your last twenty-five years.

BB: I can't think of anything at the moment. I think I've been pretty thorough about this whole ...

EC: Business?

BB: Business, right.

EC: Well, just one last thing, the role of abortion in 1976 politics. Let me phrase the question very specifically, do you think that abortion is just a bedrock issue with no place to grow ... There's a solid minority support for the right-to-life, but really it's not going to grow anywhere, and that there really is no threat any longer to the existing Supreme Court decision, that the threat is being played up, perhaps, in the media. McCormack doesn't seem to be getting any votes. The analysis of the '76 primary results that's been provided for CBS and The New York Times suggests that abortion is really not a switcher issue, I mean, except for about twenty-eight percent. Now I don't know whether that's an adequate analysis or whether it's wrong.

BB: Twenty-eight percent? That's pretty high ...

EC: Yes?

BB: ... For a switch group.

EC: I may have stated that wrong, it may be just thirty percent to whom abortion is a major concern, I don't think it's a switch group.

BB: I don't think that it's anywhere near that. I think it's much lower. They make a lot of noise, but ...

EC: This was perhaps in the Massachusetts and New Hampshire primaries, but it still wasn't near what the Catholic population is in those states.

BB: She (McCorm .ck) got two percent in New Hampshire. That's the vote. It's a double question with a double answer. No, I don't think that it's an issue. I don't think we're in danger of losing it, because, primarily, politicians don't want to face it, and we've got inertia, we've got the unwillingness to face an issue that there's emotional feeling on both sides. (I'm not so sure - now.)

EC: A no-win issue.

BB: It's a no-win issue so that favors us. On the other hand, if we were to fold, if we were to do what we did after the Supreme Court decision, nobody was writing letters, nobody was caring ... those right-to-lifers aren't going away. We could lose it very quickly, so we sort of have to keep our eye on it.

EC: Do you see the real push now toward implementation toward the point where abortion really is something you can walk in and demand?

BB: Well, is medical care that available? I think the next issue ... probably, if I had half-a-million dollars, what would I do? I don't think I'd go around pushing service, I think what I would do would be to get some very good films made and get them into the high schools, because I think the right-to-lifers are doing a lot of damage to people. You're a high school kid and you see this film, and you see these little baby-like things, and they're being murdered, and none of their films are documented. You're probably going to vote for the right-to-life character when you're eighteen. But four years later, you've been to college, some of your best friends have had abortions, maybe you've had an abortion, or you're in the working force, and so you see it isn't a black and white issue. But if you have an abortion, what does the memory of that film do to you? Well, I know what it does to some, it's a very devastating thing. It's devastating for young girls to see it who've had an abortion, "I've killed my baby." It's devastating in the future; I think those films that they're showing in the high schools are very evil, a bad thing, and I would like to counteract that.

EC: So you'd really push for attitudinal changes.

BB: Yes.

EC: Get rid of the stigma, before you even concern yourself about broadening the service.

BB: Yes, and then I don't think you can ... it's sort of like democracy ... you can't put abortion service down on a community. Outsiders can't come in and do this. I think maybe that's part of the reason that I wouldn't. Now if there's a group, like that group in West Virginia, who wants it, then I'd give them all the help I possibly could. But it's something that a community itself has to come to.

EC: Thank you very much. I've enjoyed it.

BB: So have I.

EC: The Schlesinger Library appreciates it.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD AFFILIATES
PROVIDING
FIRST TRIMESTER ABORTION SERVICES

WESTERN REGION

PP/WP-Los Angeles
Los Angeles, California
PP/WP Alameda-San Francisco
San Francisco, California

SOUTHWEST REGION

PP of Houston
Houston, Texas

MIDWEST REGION

Rocky Mountain PP
Denver, Colorado
PP of Iowa
Des Moines, Iowa
PP of Minnesota, Inc.#*
St. Paul, Minnesota
PP of Central Missouri*
Columbia, Missouri
PP Assoc. of Western Missouri/Kansas
Kansas City, Missouri

GREAT LAKES REGION

Washtenaw County League for PP*
Ann Arbor, Michigan
PP Assoc. of Cincinnati
Cinncinnati, Ohio

SOUTHEAST REGION

PP of East Central Georgia*
Augusta, Georgia
PP of Greater Charlotte*
Charlotte, North Carolina
Memphis PP Association
Memphis, Tennessee
PP Association of Nashville
Nashville, Tennessee

MID-ATLANTIC REGION

PP Assoc. of Maryland*
Baltimore, Maryland
PP Assoc. of Hudson County
Jersey City, New Jersey
PP Center of Pittsburgh#
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
PP Assoc. of Southeastern Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

NORTHEAST REGION

PP League of Connecticut (Norwich)
New Haven, Connecticut
PP of New York City (Three Centers)
New York, New York
PP Center of Syracuse
Syracuse, New York
PP of Rhode Island*
Providence, Rhode Island

NON-PROFIT TAX EXEMPT AGENCIES
PARTICIPATING IN PPFA'S ABORTION LOAN PROGRAM

Alternatives, Inc. *
Kalamazoo, Michigan
Cleveland PRETERM, Inc. *
Cleveland, Ohio
Women's Health Center of West Virginia, Inc. *
Charleston, West Virginia

* Participant - PP/WP Revolving Loan Fund
# Endometrial Aspiration Services Only

Francine S. Stein
Administrator, Abortion Lo
& Technical Assistance
Program
March 1, 1976

PLANNED PARENTHOOD AFFILIATES

PLANNING FOR THE INITIATION OF ABORTION SERVICE

WESTERN REGION

PP Association of Phoenix
Phoenix, Arizona
PP Association of Sacramento*
Sacramento, California
PP Assn. of Santa Clara County
San Jose, California
PP Assn. of San Mateo County
San Mateo, California
Hawaii Planned Parenthood Center
Honolulu, Hawaii

SOUTHWEST REGION

MIDWEST REGION

PP of South Central Kansas*
Wichita, Kansas

GREAT LAKES REGION

PP League, Inc.*
Detroit, Michigan
PP Assoc. Of Kalamazoo County*
Kalamazoo, Michigan
PP of Central Ohio, Inc.
Columbus, Ohio
PP of Northwest Indian*
Gary, Indiana

SOUTHEAST REGION

MID-ATLANTIC REGION

PP of Monmouth County, Inc.
Shewsbury, New Jersey
Delaware League for Planned Parenthood
Wilmington, Delaware
Planned Parenthood of Metro. Washington
Washington, D.C.

NORTHEAST REGION

PP Association of Vermont*
Burlington, Vermont

Francine Stein
Administrator, Abortion
Loan & Technical Assistance
Program
March 1, 1976

* Anticipates borrowing from PPFA Loan Fund before end of 1976

BEATRICE BLAIR

Index of Names of Individuals in the
Text of the Interview