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University of California
Berkeley, California

Leonard Cain:
Free Speech Movement Oral History Project

Interviews conducted by
Lisa Rubens
in 2001

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Interview with Leonard Cain:

Interview #1: December 22, 2001

Audio File 1

Rubens: Where were you in the fall of 1964?

Cain: I was at Berkeley; I came to the Berkeley campus from Sacramento. I was at the time a professor of sociology at then Sacramento State College. I thought I had a year sabbatical to write a book and despite Governor Brown's bare bone budget I got 60% salary. I arranged with my college administration for 60% salary by teaching a class at night and dealing with all advising and counseling roles. So I would come over to Berkeley on Tuesday night and Wednesday morning. I negotiated a research position and had an associate role with an office in Barrows.

Rubens: What department were you sponsored by?

Cain: Sociology. And it's just behind Sproul Hall and on the fateful first day of the Free Speech Movement I had been then invited to lunch by some of the distinguished sociology professors. I very reluctantly said "No thanks I have something else to do." I had just gotten wind that the students were in some turmoil that there was a little flap there at Sather Gate and so just as I went around the Sproul Hall I saw a crowd congregating there was a group of people around it turned out around a campus police car and (inaudible) then I came to see this tall gangly sort of long haired young man it turned out Mario Savio in stocking feet climbed shakily on top of this car and I guess begin a long time denting of it and he started speaking without any amplification. It was 5 minutes at least before a bull horn

Rubens: The sit-in had begun just at noon; what time do you think you arrived?

Cain: Just after noon because we were going to lunch.

Rubens: And how many people roughly would you say were around the car at the time?

Cain: Well they just kept coming they were just 100 or 200 by the time I got there and it came to hundreds and maybe thousands. Then all afternoon there were speakers and they came, there was a socialist candidate for president, there were professors, not very many sociologists (inaudible). There were graduate students from a rather far range of the political and logical spectrum, but there was always a deep lamentation over denial of freedom of speech, denial of access to promote civil rights.

Rubens: Is that what you think ultimately the free speech movement was about? About having the access to recruit people for the civil rights movement or to advocate civil rights reform?

Cain: I have reflected quite a bit on this The (inaudible) casted in that and the focus but there was a much deeper yearning. I had taught at Berkeley two summer sessions in '59 and '61. I was on faculty substituting for Philip Selznick in the Spring of '60 when the House Un-American Activities met in San Francisco and the students were flushed down the stairs by the fire hoses have a story or two about that but that's not -- and so I was aware that the public relations image of Berkeley being the liberal arts place and learning, unimpeded by anything that the student did not necessarily see it that way. There was a type of competition a type of a type of forlornness, no access to professors, being taught by graduate assistants, so on. So I was not surprised in '64 and so I filtered all Berkeley speeches and all other activity through previous experience of an alienation, of a frustration and maybe I highlighted but I picked up along the way evidences that the administration tended to speak from the notion of power rather than from the notion of reconciliation, the notion of listening

Rubens: How are you using - what do you mean by power in that sense.

Cain: Well just taking over the charge by the Oakland Tribune and the press in general, labeling Savio and company Maoists, Fidelists, Commies, all these sorts of things. Saying that, portraying them as completely irresponsible, the classic case that I picked up on with my frame of reference was the announcement after 800 or more were arrested, and that Chancellor Strong, he had been given an office in Sproul Hall apparently, that is had been vandalized by the students. That definitely went out over the national and international news; that the students are irresponsible and then when they thought the story wasn't highlighted that much in the press the 47 year secretary or something like that for Sproul came and looked and she was supposed to start crying and say "Oh all our records are gone!" and said, "That's the way we keep the place all the time anyway!"

Rubens: Oh that's funny.

Cain: Yea, I attended a press conference, the only outsider as it were, I forgot where it was, might've been in Westchester house, you have a reporter there and you had Savio, and Weissman, and you had a faculty member and who I don't remember their names, this is after the arrest, and the press guy was trying to get this, you know, the stories that would perpetuate the image of irresponsibility, and then the question came up of Dr. Kerr's use, this story about vandalism and the reporter, I remember, said something like this: "That got cleared up so that is no longer a story." And Weissman, Steve Weissman said, "But sir I," he said much more eloquently, than this but "that's not the story, it's that here is additional evidence that the university administration is

willing to believe at third hand story that is not accurate, to use it without any consultation to destroy our notion of being responsible people. Completely in error, and there has been no apology, just a minor correction, Oops made a little mistake and go on as though that didn't happen." And he was a in a very lamentational, emotional mood and those are sorts of things I picked up maybe in lesser degree but I continue to pick up those notions about Berkeley in '64 that which I had picked up in a more subdued way in 1959 and 6'1.

- Rubens: So, you said that you don't mind if I call you Leonard. So, I need to back up then because this is an unusual set of observations that you have at the time and, by the way, to me, its impressive that you were about to go to lunch with the, you know, some of the most uh, well known leading sociologists.
- Cain: They were kind to me.
- Rubens: Did you have one that was particularly your sponsor? Or someone that you particularly liked working with? .
- Cain: Well, I had some rather peculiar Berkeley connections, not necessarily those that invited me to this particular lunch, but I came to Sacramento State in 1952, I gained a new colleague, Wilson Rutgard who just got his PhD in sociology from Berkeley and Blumer.
- Rubens: Who is Blumer?
- Cain: He came from University of Chicago, the distinguished department to Berkeley to be chair of the revitalizing Department of Sociology. It had been identified as Sociology and Social Institutions or something and had not been on the side burner even but had not had fascinating and very competent people. So Herb Blumer turned out to be not only a brilliant but also very earthy. He came over to Sacramento, he came over by bus in 1958 to roll with three of our local people all the way to Eugene, Oregon for a civic sociology meeting. He told yards about being a football player and Jim Fork having a (inaudible) shoulder pads you know? And about (inaudible) was written.
- Rubens: How what was written?
- Cain: Jack-Roller, a book about juvenile delinquency.
- Rubens: I was gonna ask you what his specialty was.
- Cain: He was a student of George Herbert Mead. A distinguished social psychologist. The interpreter, a major interpreter of Meade for sociology, Herb Blumer was. He was a distinguished administrator. He did lots of things a national-

- Rubens: Then when you said he explained the work of Jack-Roller. Whose work was that?
- Cain: Shaw, I believe.
- Rubens: But it was somebody that was very important at the time?
- Cain: The University of Chicago spawned all sorts of specialties including juvenile delinquency and urban sociology, and so on and so on. And the basic plot here was, that this was not the case of a single youth, there were collections of people involved, it was condensed as though it was one person's behavior.
- Rubens: This is not Blumer's work?
- Cain: No, No.
- Rubens: I'm going to have to edit this part out so let me focus on, how do you become associated with these kind of people and interested in these questions? Let's do it very quickly so we can get back to the FSM. Where did you go to college?
- Cain: I was at the University of Texas, PhD product.
- Rubens: I mean before, before your PhD.
- Cain: I began as a Texas Aggie, before I was 17 I was drafted in the army and was no longer an engineering major, became a sociology major before I knew how to pronounce it.
- Rubens: So did you serve in the army?
- Cain: Yes.
- Rubens: Where?
- Cain: during WWII in Germany.
- Rubens: How old were you when you were drafted?
- Cain: 18 and then (inaudible) before I was 20.
- Rubens: So you were drafted in 43'?
- Cain: Yes.
- Rubens: And you had what, one or two years already as an Aggie?

- Cain: Well I just went one semester, the summer semester, I had 18 units of engineering at—
- Rubens: Why did you think you wanted to be an engineer?
- Cain: Well, my high school people told me I was good at math, later when I went back to see high school teachers many years later when they asked me what I was doing and I said that I'm a sociologist she said 'I thought you might become an accountant. You were good at numbers.'
- Rubens: A few more questions. Your family background, where were you born?
- Cain: Born in Fort Worth, Texas.
- Rubens: What'd your family do?
- Cain: My father was a post office clerk for many many years.
- Rubens: Had he gone to college?
- Cain: He was the only one of eight children from a share cropper farm who had a little bit of college, I think University of Texas, before WWI which he was in. And my mother had her mother's death at age eight, father's at 17, was a school teacher from age 17 until I was coming along and seven or eight years later she taught school for several years.
- Rubens: And where had she been raised?
- Cain: Both my parents were born in Texas. She was born in Coryell County where Fort Hood is. And that is seen as a miserable place by most outsiders. My father was born in Johnson Country just south of Fort Worth.
- Rubens: And how did they meet?
- Cain: They met in Fort Worth. My mother's brother had come up and had become a postal employee and she had a little apartment, as I recall, next to them or stayed with them some of the time. My dad, who went back after the war to the sharecropper farm said, "I can't do this," and came up and said, "I can get a job." And so he got a job that he never liked but he did it for 37 years. And so they met and my mother has notions of him washing his old car.
- Rubens: So she met him through her brother then?
- Cain: Yes.
- Rubens: Now is there anything particularly important to say or distinct about how you were raised? Were they politically active or were they religiously involved?

- Cain: I can say this, my mother comes from a long line of Presbyterians. We're in the Presbyterian Church right now and so there (inaudible) genes in my blood I guess. My dad identified himself as a Bresh Harbor Methodist, a revival Methodist. And growing up, my mother remained very faithful, I was the oldest of three to go to Sunday school and every Sunday to a neighborhood church. My dad became disillusioned with the church and sort of dropped out. When I was 15 in 1940 just after France fell my dad, who had an older brother who had served and been damaged in several ways in artillery runs and in the trenches and so forth, came back partly deaf and strung out, had one son before his wife died and this son was backed for immediate drafting and my dad knew that we were gonna get in WWII and he had a bleeding ulcer and was close to death and so he tells us in the Veterans Hospital, "God if you let me live I will turn back to you and serve you." He became, I shouldn't say distinguished or famous, but he became sort of a late preacher, had a Sunday School class at our local church and I go back now and there are people still alive remember my dad as a teacher.
- Rubens: So you were how old when this conversion took place?
- Cain: I was 15.
- Rubens: So you kind of formed in a certain sense, but maybe not. I mean—How would you say that religiosity or that turn to religion helped shape you?
- Cain: Well I just grew up in the Sunday School class and learned for example right there in Jim Crow world that Sunday school teacher Mrs. Few, can't remember her first name. She at Sunday school class taught us to sing a song "red and yellow, black and white, they are precious any sight, Jesus love the teaming millions of the world." Jim Crow could not go the same church even, did not go to the same school, rode on the back of the bus—
- Rubens: So did your church as well as your parents take an attitude for civil rights? Or conversely, if not for civil rights were they against discrimination?
- Cain: Well my dad grew up in a place that had had one of the last lynchings in the state of Texas just outside of Fort Worth. He remembers stories about that, he did not see it apparently.
- Rubens: So was this talked about as you grew up?
- Cain: Well, I can tell you, in our neighborhood, one family owned a little photography studio and both mother and father worked there, they had two children, the girl had what was called (inaudible) at the time. So there was a Negro, African American maid who lived in our block, lived in a little shady behind, the garage. Minnie was her name. Well I remember when I was five years old very vividly, Minnie had just been in the neighborhood a while my dad just as the Depression was about to come on, bought some secret posts

and picket fence and we fixed in our backyard. Minnie lived across the street would go around the neighborhood and always come in the backdoor and talk and she did some ironing for people and she knew more about the gossip and women's pains and so forth than anybody else. But on this particular occasion after I'd helped my dad and we put in a little gate. Minnie, and my parents saw this coming, Minnie instead of going down the driveway and coming through the back door, came to out front door and knocked. This was 1930. And I remember mom and dad saying do we let Minnie in? And yes they opened the door and Minnie, I knew already that she had great skills and so she played the role of "these old hands, I just can't get in your back gate, I know that, so can I come see you." And so Minnie stayed a while and then left and so there were neighbors who began to see us as traitors, that we had violated the code. So from that point of view my parents were not too certainly above the general culture of the South, the Southwest and Jim Crow.

Rubens: Christianity then was the main impulse that was the manifestation of the social consciousness.

Cain: Well just a notion that God, Jesus loves all humankind. There was not open protest, there was not letter writing or marching that I know about but there was an awareness that there was injustice. And we were taught to respect everybody.

Rubens: And a willingness to buck some of the uh--

Cain: A little bit, and yes and in segregated service, that was the army, one day we were moving (inaudible) across Germany in the last days of the war. We had stopped for a little break and we had some (inaudible) and something to drink and we were parked there and the red ball express, the big big trucks driven by African American fellas usually parked just across the highway and they got out and it appeared that they didn't have any food they were just there stretching and I remember our master sergeant looking on, and several people from the South, many of them not well educated at all. He came and said, "Look there are fellas over there in our army who don't seem to have refreshment we have some things I'd like to invite them over." And we had a meeting, these people came over they were afraid of us

Rubens: How many?

Cain: Probably three or four. There were two big long trucks, a driver and an aid so probably three or four. We had a communion service as it were, a rope tied together black and white, then—

Rubens: The army of course was completely segregated--

Cain: yes it was segregated—

- Rubens: Was not going to be integrated until Truman—
- Cain: Yes Truman, three or four years later, and so those were crystallizing times in my mind, and just to warrant it I befriended a family and I was (inaudible) and there was a young (inaudible) we celebrate our birthday on the same day by the way, it's a peculiar picnic uh, and she would chime me "Nigger Nigger, you are in an army with inferior people." Cause she didn't know much about integration but she saw black soldiers in her town. So I had to explain to her in embarrassment that yes we had this although we are integrated like we ought to be.
- Rubens: This is worth an interview in itself but I'm making notes about this. The one quick question I have is well. Had you been aware of anti-Semitism in your town. Were there any Jews where you grew up? After all you must've known by the time you were in Germany during the end of the war that there had been death camps and --
- Cain: Yes yes, I can speak on that a little bit. There had been Jewish jewelers in town, and others, and there was in the language like you (inaudible) and vocabulary like that but there was not anti-Semitism in my family or in my church to my knowledge. I was one who as a child would learn that short wave, that in the middle of the night, Adolf Hitler the new kid on the block in Germany would make speeches and in German, I would get under the quilts and turn the radio on at one o'clock and I'd go to school the next day and I'd listen to speeches I didn't know they were German but I would listen to Adolf Hitler making speeches at Nuremberg, and places like that. And so I was (inaudible).
- Rubens: I have to ask one other question. Were you parents Democrats or Republicans or did it not matter too much?
- Cain: Well my mother was Democrat, and my dad was, I don't want to say Libertarian or not, he was against Roosevelt because of centrality (inaudible). Yes.
- Rubens: I was going to say: were they against Roosevelt or not--
- Cain: He never paraded that and he never said we must be fearful of central government but as far as I know probably the only one on the block that voted Republican.
- Rubens: Oh really, so the whole neighborhood was Democratic?
- Cain: Oh oh yes, everybody was a Democrat. In fact in my 6th grade I remember a young lady, Richter I think, young lady from the Midwest joined the class and this was the 1936 election, with Roosevelt, and somebody was talking about politics and every kid in the class came from a Democratic family and

she proudly said, I'm a Republican for Albert Landon and kids looked at her, I remember looking, and thinking where'd you come from? Who are you? What are you? I remember things like that.

- Rubens: So your dad probably never voted for Roosevelt? But did he ever comment on, you know the appointments of a woman or --
- Cain: No there was never—
- Rubens: Didn't he appoint some blacks? Well Eleanor Roosevelt was the crusader for—so then that wasn't the realm in which he taught.
- Cain: No there was none of that right wing ideology which I normally pick up in the South. No Hate. Hate was not an issue at all.
- Rubens: The war obviously was a transformative experience and you came back to Texas A& M--
- Cain: No I did not come back to Texas A&M, I was discharged on such moot points and hadn't been (inaudible) in a whole lot of years , 28 months I guess, and I didn't get discharged until February and the very next day, February of 46' and the very next morning I went up to campus. Other than the working class – in my parents' part of town and there was a little college, Texas Wesleyan, it had been Texas Women's College, then Texas Wesleyan, and so I went there. Also I happened to with my sister's help, got invited to a Valentine Party the day that I came back. It happened to be at the (inaudible) of a new young lady of our church and I met her and I had been girl shy and I had hardly dated at all. Anyway I invited her out to (inaudible) or something. And anyway, by May I was engaged, I proposed to her I was engaged and we got married the following year.
- Rubens: This is the dear woman I've talked to on the phone.
- Cain: Yes, we in fact, just last night. She's been paraplegic for nearly 12 years. She got colon cancer and is now undergoing chemotherapy and I told her that we only have 11 and a half years to go until our 60th. She has a 60% chance of survival of five years if she takes the chemotherapy faithfully and so I said 60th purposefully because its more than five years. We were married June the 20th 54 years yesterday.
- Rubens: So rude to just be passing over all this richness , would you have considered yourself a teenager or the young generation, the word teenager didn't really exist but there was after the war an opening up of an extended young person's world. You know Frank Sinatra is starting to sing, and Bobby Socks and the economy is picking up and after all young men like you had seen the world. You said you went to Diannachi (?), that doesn't seem rebellious but did you have any consciousness of yourself as a generation?

Cain: I can tell you this, that my doctoral dissertation which I began about 1951, did not complete, I got a job before I finished the dissertation which I completed in 1955 but one of the chapters is on the Townsend movement which in my (inaudible) newsletter or newspaper “Youth for Work Age for Leisure” which I had a chapter on the Nazi movement, I was doing social movement theory, and I read and just gobbled up issues of Hitler Jugend, the youth movement and all of that. So I was aware through the dissertation of age phenomena.

Rubens: So get us to the dissertation, so you marry having had a year or less, no no less at this Wesleyan Methodist. Was this informative, were there good teachers there that made you—ok so you were just putting in your time?

Cain: My wife in 46’ when I first met her she was enrolled in a course in marriage and the family (inaudible) at Texas Christian University which was across town.

Rubens: Well not that many women went to college at the time, that was impressive.

Cain: She had come from a very poverty stricken background during the Depression. Her father was orphaned, his father died when he was just one or two years old. He had about a 5th grade education, became a construction person and did very well in mastering carpentry, steel work and cement finishing and so worth and so on. But during the Depression he would lead the family wherever he would find a job, go by rail to find the job and whenever he would get one or two paychecks he would bring the family with him so my wife went to six, eight, or ten places for one year of school.

Rubens: How could she even afford to go to a Christian college?

Cain: Well my father in law was so much needed as a construction specialist during WWII that he was responsible for being general super intendent for a massive plant in the Chicago area. So he saved up money to start his own construction company building grate elevators in the southwest. I was a grate elevator worker on a number of jobs in the summers and when they needed me, when they had the pour, you pour 24 hours a day and the stick form climbs on itself until you get 100 or 120 feet in the air. And they needed people like me as laborers.

Rubens: So are you saying that you worked, so you’re married and you’re going to school. Did you also work?

Cain: Well I had jobs in the summer, I worked at the post office, I had the GI Bill, my wife graduated with a master’s degree before I finished since I had two and a half years interruption and she worked and then when I went down to the University of Texas for doctoral work, I got a teaching fellowship and we were living in 25 dollar a month rental barracks and so my teaching fellow income and my GI bill we were able to achieve (inaudible).

- Rubens: So how did the decision come that you would go to graduate school and study sociology?
- Cain: Well I can tell you this very quickly, I'm just finishing a biography of my mentor Austin Porterfield. I sent out a rough draft to people and one of them used more red ink on every page than I used pen ink and I'm now more than halfway through correcting, using his very able insight. But anyway before I got my baccalaureate degree I went in to see Professor Porterfield and said, "Sir I'm graduating, can you give me ideas for jobs for people trained like me?" I remember he looks over a little bit and says "don't you still have some GI Bill left?" I said, "Uh yes." He said, "You're a pretty good student why don't you stick around and get a master's with us here." And I said, "Well I have to consult my wife." She agreed, so we stayed an extra year for that.
- Rubens: At Wesleyan?
- Cain: No this is at TCU, we had transferred over to TCU.
- Rubens: And Porterfield is at TCU? He was already known by then?
- Cain: Oh yes.
- Rubens: And his field was?
- Cain: Sociology, his doctor dissertation which I was just editing, things I've said about it just yesterday dealing with sociological imagination is still recognized. "Creating Factors and Scientific Research" I think is the name of it. It was an upgrading of his doctoral dissertation.
- Rubens: And so this is the kind of thing that he talked about and so was he magnetic did you--?
- Cain: Oh yes, he was one of these earlier generation sociologists who came from a Protestant Preacher education background and then added sociology to his repertoire.
- Rubens: So it sounds like a kind of matching of backgrounds or a kind of way of seeing things.
- Cain: Yes, in fact, in my prelude or introduction I point out that both my father and Porterfield were both born in 1896 from big families. Porterfield was a real (inaudible) like my dad's mother was and that they both worked in the post office. Porterfield started at the post office and then went on with education. But my father became sort of a late pastor and (inaudible) in the same type of church that Porterfield did while he was in TCU many many years. So I saw a somewhat parallel there.

- Rubens: So you did get your master's under Porterfield and then--
- Cain: I came to him after I finished my master's thesis I thought and then one year I went to him again all obsequious like. He said, "You know Leonard you're a pretty good student. You have any GI Bill left?" I said, "Well yes, a little bit more." He said, "Oh well the southwestern sociology meeting is going to take place in a few weeks right here in Fort Worth, there will be some University of Texas people come up. What if I get you an interview with somebody. Could you consider a doctoral study?" That had not been in my domain of thinking at all and I had no role model in the family or in the neighborhood and so I said oh I have to talk to my wife. And she told me that she had dreams once of marrying a rich person who wore a certain kind of suit and smoked a pipe and was a professor, I said I ain't that. But anyway I met one of the University of Texas professors and within weeks after I had gotten some transcript down there to Austin and had a couple of pre letters of recommendation I got back an invitation to come back down as a teaching fellow.
- Rubens: So how many years then before you had your PhD?
- Cain: Three years there, they had a rule that you could take only, or be involved only with 15 units a semester. So sometimes I taught two classes and took nine units, sometimes I taught three classes and took two courses. In the summers I wound up enrolling in courses getting X's, incompletes, then working in law and so I was able to speed up a bit and did not have a dissertation completed, I took a job in California.
- Rubens: How did you get that job?
- Cain: The president of the University came to Austin interviewing, the California system was, the state college system, well Berkeley the UC system also, mainly the state college system had a circus of students ready to go because of the population growth and the war and all of that, and the GI Bill. So they were expanding and there were new colleges starting from scratch, post WWII and Sacramento State was one of them. In fact when I came out in Fall of 52' there was no campus yet, our classes were in the 3rd and 4th year were on a community college campus. This was Sacramento Community College, Junior College it was called. And so we didn't move to our new campus until, which had been hop fields and peach orchard fields on the American River until January of 53'.
- Rubens: How would you characterize your state of consciousness, your sociological awareness, your, maybe politics '52, '53; your taking a job, your trying to finish your dissertation, this is the heart of the Korean War period and McCarthyism.

- Cain: Oh yes and I had a child born to us before we came to California in the fall of 52.' And another child born in 54' before I finished, my wife would say "Leonard do you think our son is going to get a degree before you do?" But we had humor like that within. You stated it, we had work ethic, and you had a spouse, you had loyalty, you had trust in each other, and—
- Rubens: But beyond that which I think is very important to talk about and your wife seems like one of those, very capable and supportive and also thinker and someone who was an educated person in her own right. But now, young men are going back to war and there's McCarthyism and what is your sociological imagination? You are working on these youth movements, how did you kind of?
- Cain: Well let me just deal with one or two things you mentioned earlier about generation. Let me pick up that very quickly. I remember in a class, when I was a teaching fellow in Austin dealing with social problems, an issue of race came up as I recall and there were these young men, you know the jocks or whatever, they sit up there, as I was speaking sort of liberally, said "Would you want your daughter marry a Nigger?" And I remember stating something like this, "You know I think your question says something about yourself. Are you trying to get me on the spot to say that I don't, that a relative of mine, a sister or a daughter of mine can't compete with what you consider the better people? You're insulting my relative if that's what you mean." So anyway I turned the table pointing out the absurdity.
- Rubens: Now were you reading anyone who was enlightening you about racial discrimination or would your professors seem to be liberal?
- Cain: I can tell you, just going back to Porterfield, it's all a jumbled thing and I haven't sequenced very well, that spring of 52' when I met Carl Rosen the University of Texas professor that helped me get my teaching fellowship in Austin, Porterfield learned that the Hotel of Texas had a rule that negro people could not ride the main elevator. And we had sociology sections, meetings on the 2nd floor but the African Americans would ride the service elevator. Porterfield said no. He went to the downtown church of his denomination, the Disciples of Christ Church, three or four blocks from the hotel, by the way I was there last Spring at the same hotel and went by the church just to reflect on this. He transferred all sociology meetings to the church and said, "We will not validate Jim Crow and racism among professional people or anybody." That was very bold, in 1952. TCU had a practice, claimed that they didn't put it down in black and white, but they did not allow American dark skinned people to enroll until 1964, I think it was. So Porterfield in that type of domain was as liberal as you get. From that time people had tried to get the president to fire him, called him Commie and things like that. Although he was never to my knowledge a big activist, never an upfront member of the NAACP, didn't march, or anything. His life, his actions of this sort, made it

possible to show civil rights to students and not ruffle the bird of the arc conservatism, the big dough, the big money. So he walked a tight rope on this.

Rubens: So what we're about to do, does such injustice to your life right now, but to now get you from 52' to 64' because the focus here is the Free Speech Movement and how influential you were on Marilyn Noble who became a critical member in Free Speech Movement. Could you say that there then was an evolution of your social consciousness in those years?

Cain: Shortly after I became a faculty member at Sacramento State, the native instruction began to send out messages, hey we have an opportunity to expand, pioneer, if any of you new faculty people, and everybody was new, have ideas about new subjects, submit them to the curriculum committee, we would like to be able to put our staff as someplace innovative. So help me, I, and it's difficult to understand why I did this, I wrote out a course outline and strategy for a course that I called "Sociology of Age status." I knew a little bit about anthropology, fieldwork and all these had rites of passage, and the children becoming adults and (inaudible) about old folks being treated in various ways. I was aware through the diligent reading of the Townsend movement and sort of working on this theoretically, that's out thing, I remembered on D-day I was still in the states and a group of us still just 18 years of age, and we talked and guessed that many of us would be in Repple Depple, that is, replacement depos because already the killing was great and we were all privates and so forth. And I remember the thing that we were old enough to fight and were going to be put in positions to be killed, some of us, but not old enough to vote. I remember that was the first crystal clear illustration of what I later, in most theoretical terms called, age status asynchronization. This is to be not be synchronized, you don't move into a new age status holistically, you move into adulthood by leaps and bounds or by stages, you're old enough to fight and old enough to be a man, carrying weapons and killing, but you're not enough, not responsible enough—

Rubens: And of course that wouldn't be realized until, and in the context of the Vietnam War.

Cain: It was Eisenhower I guess who, I think, the point here is, and this became my specialty. If I had known nationally or internationally now it is because of a few writings that I did in the sociology of the life course.

Rubens: Now, couple of quick questions. Did you follow the Cold War? Were the young teachers that were all starting out with you, were they, like minded or did they get along or did you see yourself as having kind of a mission or was it—?

Cain: Well I can tell you, here I thought through this and actually written a few little things for the Sacramento State. I romanticized a bit, that you had a category of people who came from the middle or sort of upper classes, were educated

and had a chance to go to PhD through their parents wealth, and they were the ones who were available to chairmen of departments and the deans and so on and so on of the newly established college in 1940. And then there was the new PhD's coming out of the GI bill and from '48, '50 and on that the president had to go to get trying to get PhD type people. And virtually all of us, many of us, who went into academia had come from some poverty, ethnic minority and had a new deal, a new deal notion and so we had a chance to establish a general education program at a place like Sacramento State and it was only later while I was still there, I think, and I'm conspiratorial here, a (inaudible) effort to overcome this wave of honorary types and we got the expansion of this administration, we got an expansion of a finer engineering program and social work was IDed as an undergraduate program.

Rubens: So you were involved in this curriculum expansion?

Cain: Oh yes, involved and one of the many quote liberals mentioned all sorts of times speaking on the campus. I got spat upon by football boys, this was in '55, '56.

Rubens: You're already developing that conscientiousness and that public presence in '55, '56?

Cain: I taught minority groups and followed closely –

Rubens: Gosh, you taught minority groups? What would you use as text?

Cain: We had the standard text books which were tawdry (?) but you had notions of discrimination and notions of assimilative models, yea you had a language in fact sociology pioneered conceptualizing, theorizing—

Rubens: It would be the assimilation that would be so argued against by the 60's. I don't know in sociology but where it seemed the young people were saying it's not gonna happen slow and steady.

Cain: There was a contradiction by anybody with any heart can see, you had the assimilative model that America takes the concept of sausage grinder you take these immigrants from Europe and you crack them to public school in New York City and they come out, by the 3rd generation you come out red blooded Americans. But there was a lid, certain groups had to stay down in the basement, because of race primarily. That disturbed me from early on, I remember, for example I raised the question of whether we could have equality, justice and pluralism at the same time rather than the assimilative model. I would say things like this. You have the idea of starting down here and working hard and teaching your children and so you can move, and so validation of becoming an American is to learn to speak the King's English, becoming Episcopalian or at least a Baptist. But my model was can we have distinctiveness without exclusiveness. I remember reading, we have more

Jewish language newspapers and Italian language newspapers and more this and that than in Rome, Jerusalem, you know things like that. That gave me the notion that we were pluralistic, but we were stratified. I raised, early on the question, can we have horizontal pluralism rather than vertical pluralism.

- Rubens: There was a big guy in Berkeley who talked about pluralism in the Political Science department. By the late 50's and right before HUAC demonstrations, now are you looking to or talking to Lipsid or the other people?
- Cain: Herb Blumer was (inaudible), now Kingsley Davis, was at Clemens University, I had permission to teach this new course that I mentioned a while ago, Sociology of age status, I began to desperately, I gotta have some reading material, and I had nothing at all. I came across three or four articles by Kingsley Davis, who is a Texan, at the University of Texas earlier on. He had a course again sociology of childhood, adolescence, something about adult and childhood and then he had a chapter on old age in a demography book. He also had about this time came out with a textbook with a chapter on age, so I knew he was a pioneer. I sat down and wrote him a letter, "Dear Dr. Davis, I have discovered these articles for my new course in sociology of age status. Will you please, number one, tell me if I missed any and could you give me a reprint and so on and so on so I can understand completely your contribution. And number two, you have done more than anybody else I have seen in sociology, will you please write a textbook for my class?" He wrote back briefly "Leonard, if you're smart enough to find my articles you are smart enough to write the textbook yourself." Anyway, next year he moved to Berkeley I contacted him, he invited me over, he was of the virility cult and on a cold November day we walked up all around the Berkeley campus and I poured out my insight on the age status and he coached me, he encouraged me, he subsequently sponsored me to write an article for the journal of sociology and (?), to write a whole issue on the sociology of age. He was partly responsible, if not mainly responsible for getting in with a batch of people from big universities to contribute a chapter in the Ferris handbook of modern sociology. There were 20 chapters supposedly about the cutting edge, the new fields emerging in sociology emerging in the '60s. I was invited to do the one I called lab course and social structure. This is 1964.
- Rubens: So all of this is brewing in you, this connection to Davis, and –
- Cain: I had a section in the chapter about generational phenomena, the key conceptual tools to understand the life course. I already had that in mind about generational phenomena, and I had read about the intergenerational and the interactions between the generations.
- Rubens: When did Marilyn Noble become your student?
- Cain: I think it was the fall of '62 probably. One of the most peculiar students I could ever imagine having, even when I didn't have an office hour and she

wanted to see me she would come and sit down and knit until I came to my office and she'd come in and talk. She became a very close friend. We still talk. When I go down that way I still stay with her. This is crucial, there was a student unrest movement on the Sacramento campus, the spring of '63' Marilyn was one of the leaders in it and that became her master's thesis. She in the fall of '64—

Interview #2 May 2003
Audio File 2

02-00:00:00

Cain: I'll introduce you or do you—

02-00:00:02

Interviewer: No, no, don't even worry about introducing me.

02-00:00:05

Cain: Okay. So then if you want to start out, start the way, and let's just go.

02-00:00:07

Interviewer: We'll just start. We'll just get going.

02-00:00:09

Cain: And let's just go.

02-00:00:10

Interviewer: Okay. We're recording. Okay, why don't you tell who you are and why we're here today?

02-00:00:18

Cain: I am Leonard Cain. I am a professor of sociology and urban studies emeritus from Portland State University. We're at this recording session because I was an observer and participant in much of the Free Speech Movement activity in 1964. There was a tape recording effort made to deal with my reminiscences and interpretations sixteen months ago, but the machine broke down after a while on the tape recording that will be attached to today's tape. There was quite a bit made about my childhood and my preparation and so forth, but very little regarding my experiences and my understanding of the Free Speech Movement. So in these next moments I may repeat a little bit to get started on my story. I may do that.

02-00:01:24

Interviewer: When you were growing up in Texas you observed a lot of things in terms of, for lack of a better term, man's inhumanity to man.

02-00:01:34

Cain: Yes. Oh, yeah.

02-00:01:34

Interviewer: That probably shaped you in terms of becoming the person that you are now. Tell us some stories about that.

02-00:01:40

Cain: Oh, yes. Well, I come from a working class background. My father was a post office clerk. My mother had been a teacher before I came along. Both of them had been from sharecropper backgrounds in the state of Texas. Clearly a Jim Crow South experience. Segregation in the schools, in my Sunday school. I lived on a street in east Fort Worth that was a thoroughfare for a Negro

community, people who had been able to escape the inner-city slum and built their own little shacks at stop six, six miles out of town in urban Dallas. And for the teenagers, for example, who wanted to go to high school, they had to walk—I'm sure it's more than a mile—to the bus stop and they passed by our house, two and a half more blocks, catch the bus, pay for it themselves, get downtown, transfer, and come back out to the only black high school in town. I was aware of that from eight or ten. I was aware of segregation of buses. Had to sit to the back of the bus.

We had in our neighborhood one family that hired a Negro maid. She lived in a little tack-on to a garage at the back toward the alley. The girl across the street had polio at the time, paralysis it was called, at the age of eight. She had a younger brother. So Minnie came and was in our neighborhood. Minnie came, and she was a link. She knew about the ailments of all the mothers and the children down the way, and she would visit, always come to the back of the house, back door. I helped my dad when I was about six years old build a little picket fence around our back yard that had a little gate and a hasp. Minnie came across the street to come see us one day. I remember vividly. I was maybe six years old. And instead of going around down a driveway to the back, she came to the front door and knocked. My mother and dad saw this, and they looked at each other, "Do we let Minnie in?" and they agreed, "Okay." Minnie, who had great skill with her hands, with all sorts of things, was there. "These helpless old hands, I just know I can't get in your gate, those fancy things. I want to see you." My mother let her in and had a visit. Within hours neighbors knew about this, and we were stigmatized for breaking the code.

I have memories like that that I am proud of. Although my parents environment not active civil rights promoters at all, I had, I think, a deep appreciation and never did develop that arrogance and that language of contempt. In service, for example, I was a combat infantry veteran in World War II in Germany. We had a segregated Army. I remember being taunted by a fraulein. She had seen some black soldiers in Ruhpolding, I remember, and, "Nigger, nigger." Here she was, defeated. We just had defeated Germany a few days before and she was rubbing it in. I had those types of awkward experiences.

But from the time I was a teaching fellow, I started my university teaching in 1949, so I have many decades of being in the sociology classroom, three years at the University of Texas as teaching fellow teaching social problems. Always got talks from some white males about, would you want your daughter or your sister to marry a minority group. I had sharp tart answers. But through the years the burden of racism has been just within me and has bothered me.

In Sacramento, when I got a position in 1952, I was able to join a Democratic club movement, Adlai Stevenson versus Eisenhower. Civil rights were not top

on the platforms, as I remember, the platform. But there was a difference there, recognized. Celebrated the 1954 civil rights decision regarding *Brown v. Topeka* schools. So I taught minority groups throughout my life. Published a few articles on Japanese Americans and so forth and so on.

In preparation for being in Berkeley in the fall of 1964, let me say two or three things. Our campus at Sacramento State—I'd come there in 1952—had a student uprising. There were two faculty members, one in social science, general education, another one in education, who attracted students. Both very articulate, very bright, but they rubbed raw the moderates and conservatives and apparently in each case their departmental faculty had voted not to extend tenure. You'd get tenure after three years, I believe it was. And students from all over the campus protested. Had signs, had marches, had speeches, had letters to the editor, and then stormed the president's office on one occasion and made demands at least as strong as the Berkeley demands later on. And a student of mine there was active. She was a very active participant. Then did her master's thesis, she was a graduate student when she came, on the movement in Sacramento. I happen to have this big volume here. "Confrontation on a California Campus" by Marilyn Noble. Marilyn followed me to Berkeley at the end of September 1964.

I had been given an associate role and office in Barrows Hall just behind Sproul Hall. I had thought I had a sabbatical at Sacramento State, but then the budget for the state crumbled, Governor Brown canceled all of those. I manufactured a quasi-sabbatical, agreed to teach on Monday and Tuesday nights in Sacramento and do advising and counseling and serve on committees for 60% salary for my wife and three children, small children. And then I could come to Berkeley. I had a book I was supposed to write on sociology, then a course. Well, I got there on the last day in September and acquainted myself. Got my little office in Barrows lined up. And I heard about activity, concern, upset by students. So the next day, just before noon, I got invited to go to lunch with four or five of the sociology faculty. They were very nice to me. And I turned them down. Seemed like a very stupid thing at the time. But I wanted to see what was going on in the campus. And honestly, as I peeled off around the right side, the way I was looking, Sproul Hall, I saw this carport, a growing number of students, twenty or thirty, surrounding what turned out to be, I learned later, the campus police car. And there was a man in the backseat, turned out to be Weissman.

02-00:10:02

Interviewer: So he was arrested and they were—

02-00:10:05

Cain: He had just been arrested.

02-00:10:07

Interviewer: And they were keeping the car from moving?

02-00:10:09

Cain:

Yes. There were some students who instantly, apparently, kept the car from driving off. As I got closer, from the other side of the police car a head showed up and then a tall skinny guy, his hair sort of out like this and he had his socks on, shoes off, and he balanced himself on the not yet dented police car and he started speaking. This was Savio, Mario Savio. And I was puzzled. I couldn't understand him. He didn't have any amplifier at all. After a few minutes, one of the old type megaphones came and I could hear him and he was introducing the cause the students were protesting, beginning to protest. And then several minutes later, an amplifier, an electronic thing that squeaked, that came on and so the crowd could hear him. The crowd continued to grow and speaker after speaker climbed precariously on top of this more and more easy to stand on police car because of being dented all the time. There were some professors, including some sociology professors. There was this socialist candidate, I think for president, I can't remember his name. There were some students, probably some others who spoke on into the evening. I was a witness to that.

02-00:11:33

Interviewer:

But at that time it was mostly students? It wasn't like a mix of some professors and others? Mainly students?

02-00:11:39

Cain:

Mainly students. I remember Martin Lipset, a bit bulky guy, got up and he had a little difficulty standing on it. And there were some other people, including faculty, but commingled. There was no lining up to be there, sort of debate back and forth, anything like that.

Let me jump back just a moment. I had hinted a while ago that the concern for civil rights had been active, participated in by me and others in Sacramento. I learned only in reading the book edited by Robert Coyn and Zelnik, *The Free Speech Movement*, that Savio apparently did not get involved in the Free Speech Movement in political terms until the spring of 1964, years after we'd already had fair housing and marches and so forth and so on. I don't want to boast about that but it ought to be on the record, I think.

Another strange item that I think is of some passing interest. In August of 1964, shortly after my father died, I, by prearrangement, boarded a bus in Fort Worth, Texas, drove through Jackson, Mississippi, through the south, on up through Washington, DC, and up to Buffalo, there to meet a sociology fan and we drove over to the convention that I think was in Chicago, somewhere, I've forgotten now. But I was on a bus in 1964. When I got to Jackson, Mississippi, I called the NAACP headquarters. Medgar Evers, the leader, the year before had been assassinated. His brother Charles was in the office. I talked with him. He invited me out. Had to go down West Lynch Street, of all things, to get to the headquarters. I had an interview with Charles Evers while he would apologize and interrupt. He was on the phone with the Democratic Party, the Democratic Convention, I think it was in Atlantic City, and this was

when the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Movement was trying to get its delegates there instead of the ultra-conservative right-wing racist delegates from Mississippi. Had a very fascinating conversation, interrupted all the time. When I had to leave he said, “Do you have time to go to the headquarters of the voting registration people, of SNCC? It’s just down—“ I think still on West Lynch Street, to the east. I said, “Well, yes. Yes, I have an open bus pass.” So I went down there. But he told me, before that he said, “Let me tell you this. We appreciate the students from across the country coming and risking their very lives. But they don’t understand, and I guess you don’t need to, but the white folks are on fairly good behavior while they’re here but when they leave and go back to their classes they’re going to take it out on minorities. We know that that’s going to happen. I want you to know that. But enjoy the festivities. They’ll be having fun.” So I went down and indeed, exactly like he said, the boys were meeting the girls and they were talking and having fun. Little seriousness. And I left after fifteen, twenty minutes. Savio may have been there. In this book he was there in Mississippi at the time and obviously worked out of that headquarters. So I didn’t learn that until reading.

But the movement intrigued me. The most intriguing thing, I think, to me, as a sociologist was the notion of instant community membership in this October 1st and 2nd meeting. Let me see if I can reconstruct some things that haven’t necessarily been preserved by the scholarly historians. Speeches, speeches, speeches. There was refreshment and nourishment that came, I didn’t know where. Sometimes I ate a little bit because I was sitting with the people. Little sandwiches, make a sandwich and cut it into sixth or eighths or something. Peanut butter and jelly or cheese or whatever. And put it on a plate, use a paper plate, and pass it down. And people would take one and eat it, pass it down. Then a jug of Kool-Aid, lemonade or something would come and with no thought of germ theory, would take a sip and pass it on. And I, with my religious background, said, “You first.” And that was done on several occasions. Lasted through the night. You had this egg throwing situation that I haven’t seen recorded anywhere. A group of young men, identified very quickly by some there in the sit-down group as frat boys. They knew—

02-00:16:56

Interviewer: ROTC?

02-00:16:58

Cain: They identified as frat boys. And the name of the fraternity I don’t remember.

02-00:17:02

Interviewer: So it was a specific group of people.

02-00:17:04

Cain: Yeah. It was a group of six or seven fellows, they came swaggering in and they shouted verbal taunts, called them commies and all that sort of thing. And the group sitting down maybe batted an eye but that’s all. Finally, in

frustration they reached in their pockets and grabbed eggs. I don't think they were rotten, I don't know, and threw them. And you'd see people getting hit and egg yellow going down. There was not one response of anger or hostility. The students—

02-00:17:36

Interviewer: And, of course, there was no action by any police or anybody to go after the people who were throwing things?

02-00:17:41

Cain: No. That's right. No arrests or anything at all for this effort of making violence. And they finally just looked at each other and they marched on off, sort of, in not exactly lock-step.

02-00:17:52

Interviewer: Frustration.

02-00:17:52

Cain: With events, yeah. The next day was extremely intriguing. Things settled in. I wandered around the campus. There would be clusters, four, five, or six students, talking, clearly building their knowledge from the classes they had been talking. At the time I learned how to, if I remember correctly and I was correctly taught, to pronounce Thucydides. I had read sometimes but I didn't know how to pronounce it but here was this young man saying, "Well, Thucydides said." So I learned some things like that. Learned Greek, whatever it was. But I was amazed at the level of insight and dedication for understanding that these clusters of people had strung all out.

Then Marilyn Noble, who I mentioned earlier, I think, a student of mine, came on the scene. Had a camera around her neck, a purse, had a tape recorder or something or another, maybe another little bag, book in a hand. She said, "I've got to find out where these leaders, these Free Speech Movement leaders are. Will you take care of this?" And she [phfew], right there in the middle of the campus.

02-00:19:13

Interviewer: Everything.

02-00:19:13

Cain: Yeah. I wanted to roam around. What she did, she found the headquarters there, I think it was 2536 College Avenue, as I remember. She planted herself there and for the next month took over the management of the household. She clearly bought the food, usually prepared it, trimmed the hair, checked the sports coats she insisted the people wear, cold medicine, thinking that the cops may say, "That's taking drugs." She orchestrated, did laundry, as I remember well. There was a back door to this place and I would go look for her there. Two or three occasions I caught her in the little bathroom bent over an old rusty tub washing socks of the Free Speech Movement leaders. Socks and underwear and maybe a shirt or something like that. She did that for all those

months, to my knowledge. I still correspond with her. I stay with her when I go down to Oakland for a convention or something in the Bay Area.

02-00:20:22

Interviewer:

Well, that was part of the energy of it, wasn't it, that there were a lot of people who saw that some people were sacrificing different things and to become part of it they knew that there was—like you said, maybe an unspoken element that made them think about, “Okay, so this is going to be my role to play. I may not be a great speaker but I might be able to help in other ways.”

02-00:20:40

Cain:

Yes. Very well put. Just being there and being a witness, a lamenter, a protester, a non-violent protester was a great contribution. And that the people already in the fold would accept a newcomer, no presumption that they might be a spy. That you already had the credentials just by exposing yourself to the FBI cameras, whatever, was enough to say you're now a member.

02-00:21:11

Interviewer:

Well, it's like you said about the feeding thing. People all joined a circle, if you will, and as the food was being passed around, it didn't matter. Nobody was looking at your credentials. Here's the food. Take a bite, take a sip. What a real sense of community that was.

02-00:21:28

Cain:

Yes, that was a marvel. I marveled that all the time. Well, let me quickly describe, not necessarily in chronological order, some other little episodes that emblazoned in my memory. After the beginning of the arrest of the eight hundred—I was not present at the time that Savio apparently led students in, including Joan Baez and lots of others. I got there shortly thereafter. I went into Sproul Hall and came out. I listened to Joan Baez give guitar lessons. I went around. I heard rumors like, “Hey, the custodians are going to lock all the restrooms. You better go in the john now.” Things like that. And then the crunch time came. The Berkeley police had come and they cordoned off, produced a cordon sanitaire, I think somebody called it, around the south end, where it was going to be the exit, where I guess primarily the Alameda sheriff's people dragged the eight hundred out, often by the heels and bouncing down the stairs, I was told. The most vivid description I had was from a person who was a resident of the W house, Westminster House, Presbyterian Catholic ministry. And he told me about how the police purposefully knocked his glasses off and sort of put them under him and then forced his body downstairs to break his glasses, his body to be ground into his glasses. And he had scars. He had lacerations to prove that. I remember his story a few days later.

I was probably one of the first people there to look what's going on. Then faculty began to come, this network. They didn't have cell phones, I don't think, but faculty came. John Leggett was one of the first sociologists, one of the first I know and they would beg the policemen to let—“I've got to get in

to meet with my students. That is my professional obligation.” And the cops said no. An item that I don’t know if anybody else experienced. I was going up and down this police line of Berkeley policemen. They were rigid. They were focused. Their eyes were just out in space. And there was one man that somehow intrigued me and I would go about him and I would stop and I’d look at him, just look in his eyes. Just look. Not gesture, not show any anger. And lo and behold, all of a sudden he became animated. He talked with me. And I remember it, not verbatim exactly, but something like this. He said, “You know, these students, they don’t know what they have and they’re destroying it.” He said, “I was in high school in Berkeley from a blue collar background and I knew that I wasn’t destined for Berkeley. Didn’t have the grade point average. And then the war came and the student enrollment dropped and there was opportunity for me to go to school at Berkeley. And joyous. I tasted it. Tasted it. And then the war was over before I graduated and I was useless and I didn’t get to finish. But these people who had the grade point average, who were smarter and better trained, went on. And now these people following them are ruining it.” He said, “I simply can’t understand how they would do that.”

02-00:25:27

Interviewer:

Was he speaking dispassionately or was he speaking with anger?

02-00:25:31

Cain:

Well, bewilderment, I think, and there were two or three others that came out and listened. This person, rigid like this, an automaton, a robot, silent robot, all of a sudden was talking sort of animatedly. And then he finished. Didn’t ask me to comment. He finished and went back and no muscle moved. But only that little conversation gave me a world of insight. So when I would hear later on, “Off the pigs,” I would always remember that image. I said, “No, no, no.” I would tell my students, “Don’t say that. These are human beings with their agonies and their dreams and their views that are different. But they’re not pigs. They’re not pigs. They’re human beings.” That was my feeling, that I was responsible for so criticizing the powers-that-be that my students would associate piggery with corruption of institutions. I still feel really guilty over that.

02-00:26:40

Interviewer:

Well, I want to ask you one thing that just brought that to mind. In any large effort, it’s hard to get people to focus. Can you talk about maybe some anecdotes about how people were able to maybe think with one mind and how they became so focused and dedicated on one specific kind of thing.

02-00:27:00

Cain:

Yeah. But I can tell you, describe a little bit the serpentine situation and sort of got sidetracked myself. But there was the targeted place on the edge of town, Oxford Street, I think it is, and across the street is the statewide headquarters for the Board of Regents. And they were meeting that afternoon. I’ve forgot, I don’t remember the date. So the students had this big emotional

pep rally in front of Sproul Hall and a group, I guess Savio was the leader and some others, led them snakelike across the campus trails and they parked on a downward slope, across the street overlooking the headquarters. And there was some talk from leaders about plans and for several moments there were—I don't know how many, five, six, seven hostile, agitation type of people, inflaming rhetoric. "Let's go down and storm the barricades. Let's enclose all these people. Let's kidnap"—I've forgotten the words they used—"until they right the laws that give us the type of free speech we want." Savio calmly rose and started speaking and his main point was that this action is exactly what the powers-that-be want us to do. That they will have the goods finally on us, that we are irresponsible, that we are out to destroy the university, to destroy any chance for learning in the future. He then, out of his own thoughts, suggested that we have a thirty-minute period of complete silence. Everybody turns inward, please, meditate on the strategy. Then we'll take a vote. There was silence. You could not believe. I don't even think people breathed. Nobody coughed or sneezed as far as I could tell. And then they were brought back and had a vote and I've forgotten. I think people stood up and there was one-in-ten, much less than one-in-ten, who stood up to go now across the street. During this whole time, just behind the students, on sort of the top of this little hill, this little slope, there was this TV camera setup and there was a national reporter, television reporter, not remembering his name now but I recognized him, and a crewman, and throughout all of what I just described they didn't have the TV on.

02-00:29:45

Interviewer: They didn't run the camera?

02-00:29:45

Cain: I would go by every few minutes. Especially as Savio started to speak. I'd go and say, "Please, please, this is history. This is fundamental. Listen to what the student leader is saying. Look at the responsibility." They just turn their noses up at me. And throughout this whole situation, as far as I know, there was not a recording of the words or the silence or the gestures of Savio or anybody else. As it became apparent what did happen, I don't know whether I became angry, but I just was upset terribly and just was saying, "You wanted blood, didn't you? If those people had gone across you would have run over there and when you saw blood, when you saw violence, you would have taken that and it would have been on the news in just a few minutes."

02-00:30:40

Interviewer: And then you'd say that that was exactly what happened rather than this thirty-minute period.

02-00:30:42

Cain: That would have been the only thing that happened in the image given to the public. Well, throughout the whole time, that fall when I taught my courses on Monday and Tuesday nights, I took a little bit of liberty with academic freedom. I was able to take my sociology/religion class and relate just about

anything I wanted to say about the press said this but the truth is this, whatever I saw. I could give something of a religious twist. And then, of course, with the {H-status?} course, everything was intergenerational. So students could expect fifteen or twenty minutes at the beginning of a three-hour class to be on my correcting the press.

02-00:31:26

Interviewer:

Do you think that the media didn't understand? That they expected it to be very similar to the Civil Rights Movement and the kinds of things that you experienced and saw in the South, the violence? And because it wasn't as prevalent they really didn't understand not only how to write about it but also how to cover it?

02-00:31:44

Cain:

Yeah. Well, that's an interesting point. Whether there was a genuine intellectual sizing-up of it and just not being able to understand—my own inclination has been, with my liberal views, to say that it was conspiratorial or that it was planned, that it was market dominated and that sort of thing. You sell more products if you sell blood rather than students being nice and sweet and using intellect and calmness. But you raise a good question. I think on balance I'll go with my view because it's manifesting itself now, in my view, regarding the whole Iraq situation.

02-00:32:31

Interviewer:

Now, let me ask you something. You had talked about some of your colleagues. Talk about how your colleagues were involved. You mentioned one person there and some others that you were wanting to talk about.

02-00:32:42

Cain:

Yeah. Well, I should say, I had a—I can't say unique obviously position at Berkeley to equip me for my snoopiness and concern. I had been on the faculty in 1959 first, the spring of '60 I substituted for Philip Selznick, who became one of the faculty leaders during the movement itself, taught a course in organizations and institutions, and a number of my students were washed down the city hall steps in the spring of '60 when the HUAC, the House on Un-American Activities demonstration went forth. And I've told people, to my embarrassment, the next day a number of my students came with bandages on their eyebrows and on their elbows and so forth and so on. I said, "Ah, you people were there, weren't you?" And then I looked around the class and there were a number of other students who didn't have these badges of honor and I sort of chided them. And before I could finish my chiding some wise acre got up and said, "Professor, where are your bandages?" Whew. I needed a hole. I couldn't dig a hole fast enough to get into. That whole lecture was a little bit skewed, a little bit non-paced, not on target. But the point is that I had been there.

Let me give one story that gave me a perspective on the Berkeley campus. In 1961 I was called at the last moment by acting chair Kingsley Davis to come

in. A summer session professor had become ill. And so I had very quickly to get a textbook or two and I used the library, what do they call it, the reserve library to get some things lined up. And so I went to my first class and had an announcement. And I mentioned how it had come about and what I was still doing and I cited an issue of the *Annals, Annals of Political and Social Science*. And I said, “I know that there are copies of that in three or four libraries and I asked them to be put on reserve.” Very quickly a student said, “But Sir, you made a mistake. First of all, the library don’t put paperback journals on reserve.” He said that, “As soon as possible, in fact, there are probably going to be some people to leave a little bit early. They’re going to go to these libraries, take the copy that I said we’re going to use on reserve off the shelf and hide it so that they alone in this class will have it. That’s the way some of us make better grades than others.” I don’t want to believe that but that was exactly—and nobody in the class disagreed with that.

Off to one-side again, don’t want to sound arrogant, haughty too much, but there, in my view, were students at Sacramento State College, not all of them, but a sizable number that could stimulate a faculty member, who had as many brains and could think as sharply as the standard packaged big guy scholars did at Berkeley and at Davis where I also taught a couple of times. A number of the people made it to Berkeley or to other UC campuses had learned well how to take exams, how to make grades, how to write papers in order to maximize their knowledge and to stifle—this is pretty harsh to say—to stifle unbounded curiosity. In that sense, from my agenda and my notion of learning, there were sometimes better students at Sacramento State, more enraptured by having their eyes open by a lecture of mine than the Berkeley people who were there listening and wondered how are we going to make this into a multiple choice and that sort of thing.

02-00:37:00

Interviewer:

So is there a thread there between some of the other sociologists that you were coming in contact with at this time? You wanted to tell some stories about some specific—

02-00:37:10

Cain:

Yeah. The second part of my distinctive role but not unique role, I had peculiar contacts. For example, I had known well the campus pastor at W House. He had gone off to Nigeria and you had this young whippersnapper, what’s his name, come in at pastor time. Keith Chamberlain. Excuse me, Keith, for calling you what I did. And so he was there. I had access to W House and that made it possible for me to be in as the only, I’m sure only outsider, to one especially big formal free speech movement committee meeting. And I was able to sit there and listen to the comments of people that dealt with fundamental ideas about where to go. The absence of a presiding officer that said, “Here’s my agenda and we vote. Let’s have a vote.” The people listened to each other and came up sort of collectively with pretty much a consensus.

Another item. I was invited to be present at an effort by a radio recorder to interview Savio and Weissman. There was one professor there. And the vivid memory I have is this, and I haven't seen this written anywhere. This first part has been written about. A sheriff's department member, I think from Alameda, climbing around on the outside looking in to see if there was vandalism and what's going on. And he came across a window that looked in on Dr. Sproul's preserved office space. He had been given the courtesy of his papers stored. And this sergeant, "Ha, the vandals are here. There's papers scattered all over the floor." And he alerted the police and they alerted Kerr's office obviously. A news release came out, "At last we have the goods on the students. They are vandals, they are irresponsible," and so on and so on. That went out over the press. Those students were bewildered by this. Somebody, I do not know who it was, enterprisingly, though, brought in Dr. Sproul's personal secretary of forty-some odd years. They opened the door and said, "Oh, look at the mess here." And her response was, to the effect, "What? This is the way he always keeps his office." And so this reporter was trying to get scandal, trying to get the goods on the students. And I think it was Weissman who brought up this and the reporter dismissed it and said, "Oh, but that's been settled. The lady said that it did not occur, so that's not a story." And Weissman's response was, and I can't put it verbatim, something like this. "But, Sir, you don't understand that you have the present university taking an unchecked story, an inaccurate story about us, leaping at the opportunity to present it to the press, put us in the worst light possible rather than being a defender and a protector of us, which you'd think you would try to do." And that plays out. And then when it's proved to be completely wrong, completely fallacious, he doesn't bother to apologize. And you come along and say it's not a story. It's a major story according to Weissman. So those are the little tidbits that I pick up. Our time I guess is going to run out soon.

02-00:40:56

Interviewer: We got twenty minutes.

02-00:40:58

Cain: Twenty minutes. Care for the little, I'll call them, vignettes or not? I remember well a conversation with Robert Scalapino. He had given a speech. He sort of landed in the middle. He was hurt. I think it was hard because I didn't have any classes to teach {inaudible}. And after class I was able to talk with him.

02-00:41:22

Interviewer: Physically hurt?

02-00:41:24

Cain: No, emotionally hurt.

02-00:41:26

Interviewer: Emotionally.

02-00:41:26

Cain:

That the students were accusing him of being not for civil rights and so and so on. And I may be fuzzy on some things but here's crudely what I remember of what he told me. He said, "I had a family. World War II came. I was a specialist in governmental affairs and I spent not only the war but years after the war," I believe for the United Nations or some international organization, "trying to get governments back in shape and I was away from my growing family. I worked hard trying to get civil rights, all these sorts of things for peace. I come back here and step back into my professorial role. I've been, I think, liberal. And students begin to accuse me of not—because I didn't rush out to the barricades. Of not having done anything. Not being a contributor to justice and to peace." He was suffering. He was not angry exactly but bewildered as far as I could tell. And I remember that fifteen or twenty minute piece.

I remember talking with Professor Arthur Mandell. He was identified as Polish. German background when they divided borders in World War I or something. Anyway, he had been a German Hitler refugee. He'd come to this country and he wasn't able to bring his academic credentials. He had studied with a famous economist in one of the major German universities. All I can remember is the economist's name started with a W. My memory, it slips me. Anyway, he was working in some factory in the Palo Alto when Stanford, as I remember things, Stanford economist found him and they brought him onto the Stanford faculty. Berkeley, discovering him, breathed a little harder, had a little bit more money apparently, and brought him to Berkeley. I was introduced to him because I had a new office mate in Sacramento State, Alicia Evanska, who had been in the Polish underground and so forth. The Polish, they knew everybody else. They really had a floating community. And so I got to meet with Arthur Mandell and his wife, who was an anthropologist. One day I had this talk about the Free Speech Movement with him and his basic theme was that exiles from Hitler's Germany primarily were in a trap on the Berkeley campus. That their hearts went out to the students but when they first saw police come onto the campus, that frightened them more than whatever the civilian administration could do the students. And so that which they wanted to do, leading the marches, writing letters, petition and so forth and so on, many of them were blocked from doing because that will mean the police will come and the police have always destroyed academic freedom, the police. So they had that fear.

02-00:44:44

Interviewer:

It's like some of the Iraqi-Americans who are fearful that if they spoke out prior to the military campaign, that it somehow would get back and any relatives might be harmed because of it. It's one of those kinds of things where, as close as we are to war, there is that fear to speak out.

02-00:45:01

Cain:

Yeah. So those are the types of {inaudible} tidbits that I would like to put sort of on the record.

02-00:45:08

Interviewer:

Well, there are a couple of other gentlemen that you mentioned that you haven't talked about here.

02-00:45:12

Cain:

Well, let me remember, reminisce a little bit about someone who didn't make it in here—almost all the other sociologists did—into this book about the Free Speech Movement. A brief bit about Herbert Blumer. He had come out of Chicago a decade before to build a sociology department. Had been amazingly successful in it. He had been a labor union negotiator, arbiter, and so on and so on. I had the peculiar privilege of being invited to go to the ad hoc, I guess you would call it, faculty meeting just after the eight hundred were arrested. There was a meeting the following week that was an official faculty senate meeting but this one didn't require credentials at the door and I went in there invited by some of my sociology faculty friends. And I heard lamentations you could hardly believe. There were professors with distinguished degrees and awards. I remember mainly some from the physical sciences but others, too. "We did not know our students had this part of themselves. We did not know that they were in any anguish at all, that they felt that we were not their complete friends and confidantes of sort." And there was a gnashing of teeth. There were some resolutions that were trying to get going. On more than one occasion, as I remember it pretty well, Herbert Blumer would speak and try to stay calm. "Let's hear this out more," and so forth and so on. I talked with him just a little bit. I had learned to respect him very, very highly. He had come over from Berkeley to Sacramento in 1958, I think it was, and rode in one of the first of the foreign cars with three of us from Sacramento State all the way from Sacramento to Eugene, Oregon. And he told about his football prowess days and about the early days at the University of Chicago and so on and so on. Just a wonderful man. And I talked with him just a smidgen. I did not press him as to where would he vote and so forth and so on. But his heart was clearly liberal but he chose to play the reconciler and the moderator and so forth and so on. That I remember well.

I talked a little bit about John Leggett. He was firey, supported the students. I remember a little bit about Reggie Zelnik, who was the co-author of this book. I remember that the sociology department had, surprisingly to me, some ultra-conservatives. Kingsley Davis, Peterson. I can't remember. Will Peterson. William Peterson. Lipsit, after being on the top of the police car talking about his socialism background and labor union background, his books and so forth and so on is published, faded out and so forth and so on.

One of my biggest encounters came with a non-Berkeley faculty person. There was Dean Robert Fitch from a, I think, Methodist theological seminary just up the hill a little bit from Berkeley. I attended a two-week conference in that seminary I think two or three years before and I think met Fitch at the time and knew him and knew about him. He was an ethics professor in a seminary. And he wrote a piece for *Christian Century*, I think it was, that just

condemned the students. He acted as though he knew that they had to have outside help. They couldn't possibly have managed things as well as they did. So I wrote a letter to the editor of the journal saying, "It's got to be corrected," and so forth. And I took, item by item, and pointed out how he clearly was in error. And that's in the archives. I contributed that letter. It did not get published.

02-00:49:38

Interviewer:

Considering how the implication of everything that was going on was, to know that your students have the skills and the ability to do that must have made you really proud.

02-00:49:53

Cain:

Yes, yes. Oh, yes. And if you go back just to the celebrative dimension, that there were these students who were drawing on what they had learned. Not necessarily in my class taught there but from professors, literature, history, philosophy, science, so forth and so on, trying to deal with the turmoil, trying to make sense not as overthrowers, not as radical destroyers of anything, but trying to give their two-cents worth or two-dollars' worth or whatever to consensus building or to clarification building. Well, our time is running out.

I have not been able to draw my own great philosophical conclusion as to the Free Speech Movement, where it stands and where it will stand in survival. But I can state this. That I quickly cast my lot with students. In one of my papers I concluded, and I will still take the stand, that it was the students teaching the professors about responsibility, about justice. I've forgotten all the words I used. But those who were in the saddle *de facto* were the students, not in parroting what they had learned but in making their own sense in applying that which they had gotten from the very mouths of the people that they needed properly to turn around and abate and clarify. Those memories linger.

The question of civil rights, the question of long-term consequences, very difficult. I think right now we have backslid as far as we can. I'm absolutely embarrassed at the unwillingness or inability of the press to support any counter-notion, to provide the whole picture of what's going on when we went to war on the basis that we had this mass destruction weapons and we had ties with Al Qaeda and not one iota of evidence apparently has come out. The press is not reminding us. We hop to another explanation, another explanation, another explanation. There is the CVS syndrome. Even Ted Koppel and certainly Dan Rather and all these people. And the public broadcasting people, Jim Lehrer to me has chickened out, if that's the word, over and over again in not asking the proper question. But for a while there was a flame of possibility. It's not been snuffed out now. There are still Free Speech Movement people, including some who have made millions, who are devoted to justice, to the little guy, to honesty, fullness, to openness and use of ideas. So I have a very cautious hope. To go down my long track record of being in

the classroom since 1949 and forties, fifties, sixties, and seven decades. That there is hope that it gets snuffed back but not snuffed out. I think we're in a very difficult situation now and, oh, if we just had the Free Speech Movement types around to demand a voice, what they were demanding of Clark Kerr and company. The saddest position I'm now in, and I've abused, I'm sure, pronunciation of words and Latin and everything. I did have a dream that with the trail left by the Free Speech Movement, with some civil rights tacked on, the women's making progress, Clinton, in spite of all his scandalous behavior, getting a balanced budget and some environmental progress made and so forth and so on. And now that we were the uni-power, not a bilateral power in the world, that with our heritage, shaky though it's been in all sorts of ways, that as a new century came upon us, there was a possibility of a pax Americana, a P-A-X Americana. With the selection of Bush and what he's done and the taking on of Israel, of making the word Christian the most bigoted word in the English language in my view, and so forth and so on. It looks as though, at least in the first half of the century, instead of having a P-A-X Americana, we have already, for fifteen more years, a P-O-X Americana.

02-00:55:27

Interviewer: Pox.

02-00:55:28

Cain: We are scarred. We have scars, the equivalent of smallpox on our being.

02-00:55:34

Interviewer: And instead of rising from our brilliance we have refused it.

02-00:55:38

Cain: Yeah. We turned our back on the potential. I think lots of us could taste it with all the warts. They were not pimples. Not scars, smallpox, they were little warts that you could erase with certain acids. But those hopes need to be rekindled and there are still little pockets of students around, some demonstrate, marching, right here in Portland. But the misuse of television, the misuse of freedom of the press. I listened, I don't know whether I was supposed to do this, but I went to an emeritus luncheon for the Portland State faculty just this past week. I was at a liberal arts table, four sociology retirees, an economist, and a psychologist. We listened to about thirty minutes of slideshow on a big screen and then, none of us knew, pointing out what Portland State was already becoming and what was going to happen in the next ten or twenty years.

02-00:56:46

Interviewer: Oh, showed you the engineering school?

02-00:56:48

Cain: Yes. There was not one whisper about anything that any of us could identify with our disciplines or liberal arts at all. All posting about grants and new buildings and new dormitories and endowed chairs.

02-00:57:06

Interviewer:

So it wasn't about the shaping of lives. It was about bricks and mortar.

02-00:57:07

Cain:

It was about making technocratic robots and catering to business administration, to engineering, and a few other applied areas. And we all left absolutely disheartened. And to think that with the countless resources we have in this society, with, if you didn't manufacturer {inaudible} and threads, with the freedom to lead the world, and our botching it, our making pax into pox.

And final point. I think the Free Speech Movement legacy, in so far as it still echoes, has a little heartbeat. Support me on something like this. Maybe I'm too far here. But just before I left Sacramento there was a chaplain I had befriended at the Mather Air Force Base, Air Force chaplain. He was a minority. He was an African American. He had heard that I was going to give a lecture on the notion that the culturally deprived children of our day are children growing up in white suburbia. He attended that one evening and after we started talking of developing a curriculum to overcome the culture of deprivation of white Air Force officers—he had had a long-time dream of spreading democracy. He said that he had visited all around the world and we had bases in all but behind the Iron Curtain and there were people crying out needing and wanting democracy. We had the teachers if they weren't afraid of people of dark skin color and the noises and the smells of poverty. And so how to enrich our best and brightest to be comfortable with poverty and dark skinned color? And so we actually sat down and started to think of a curriculum, then he got transferred to Germany for a year. I joked with him about his calling the Air Force bombers peacemakers. So anyway, he came back and he saw me and we go up and hug each other. What did I do? I blew it completely. I said, before we got the big hug, I said, "Hey, let me tell you something. You said that your people flew peacemakers. With the bombing of Cambodia, that super saturation bombing of Cambodia, I've changed the name to pieces makers. P-I-E-C-E-S." His face. He just crumbled. I've never seen a person change facial expression from joy to seeing me and he was willing to talk to having been abused utterly and slandered. And when he regained his composure and all, here's what he told me, something like this. He said, "Let me tell you." He said, "It was the White House and the Pentagon that ordered the Air Force officers in Southeast Asia to engage in more and more and more saturation bombing. We have the idea of so and so who's in charge." He said that the officers in charge there fussed up, misrepresented what they had accomplished. They destroyed the bombs, hid them somehow, and reported we dropped so many tons and so and so on, but they actually dropped less and they dropped them in non-dangerous, non-human destruction places and forestry places. And I looked to him and I said, "Look, but they're risking their lives, their training, their careers certainly. And why would they do that?" He looked at me and said, "We are trying to buy time to see if America will come down and join the human race."

In a sense, although I'm romanticizing the Free Speech Movement—maybe Savio did have this in his vocabulary—I see the efforts of the students and their use of past knowledge and the vested legacy of this country. They were trying to say, “America, you’ve got good props. You’ve got good lines, one and two of an act. Let’s keep it up. Let’s get back on the trolley. Let’s keep it up.” So I see an echo of the Free Speech Movement in what that chaplain was telling me and what those Air Force officers learned and dreamed about. And that’s one more sticking ground. I’ve never been afraid as I am now. I lived through the Depression with Huey Long and Father Coughlin and all sorts of other fascist nincompoops. I stepped into my career with McCarthyism. I was aware you could survive that. I lived life in California under Reaganism until I could not tolerate it anymore. And that was barely endurable. Sort of survived that. But now the people are smarter. They have more control of the press in my view. I don’t want to conspiracy theory but there is just not the dialogue. I can’t even believe the posters anymore. It’s hard for me to believe that 90% of Americans are swallowing the lying, the untruths, the manufacturing of threats and so forth and so on. These are dismal times. And to be able to spend a time reminiscing and drawing up on those thrilling moments of the Free Speech Movement, that’s gratification and I think you who has interviewed me and the staff for allowing me, and maybe just hope that the people down at Bancroft will consider this archival material. There are obviously some things that I left out and maybe I’ll write them down. But I think you’ve helped me cover. And the method—

02-01:03:32

Interviewer: Did we run out of tape?

02-01:03:33

Videographer: Two minutes.

02-01:03:33

Interviewer: We got two minutes left.

02-01:03:36

Cain: Yes. You may have some notion that a big flair.

02-01:03:43

Interviewer: Well, the one thing I was just thinking of was you obviously didn’t mind changing your life and you were involved in Sacramento and some things. Tell me how it’s changed your life. How did it make you a better person when you were involved and observing and how you became a better professor for people up in Portland, Oregon, that wasn’t really directly involved.

02-01:04:16

Cain: Yeah. Well, this is interesting. I was early, I would say under the yolk, but accepted the notion that a professor was supposed to be sort of ideology free and spend the full fifty minutes. They paid for fifty minutes of disciplined stuff about the textbook and so forth and so on, although I’ve always fudged a little bit, I guess, with some news added. But I think I learned to appreciate

that the unfoldingness of history, the existential, and the case study might draw forth more truth than a survey research of a hundred people checking yes or no on this. That one story in-depth, one agonizing commentary by a Scalapino, one diagnosis about the trap of Jewish intellectuals, one little peek at effort at negotiation, that sort of thing. Maybe I can comment about Keith Chamberlain. I mentioned him early on. He played down his role but I learned—Marilyn Noble, I need to check with her about saying it. I think she said it. But that the ecumenical campus pastors, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, randomly met with the leaders. A rabbi may meet with Savio, the Catholic and Protestant maybe with Waxman, the Jew, and so forth and so on. But the role of Keith Chamberlain, and apparently the other campus pastors, including being called upon in the middle of the night to deal with some of the students, Savio particularly restless. I was told that there were times in which Keith Chamberlain came and literally sat down on Savio to keep him from just going in agony and absolute frustration, to going to pieces sort of. There are heroes, hidden heroes. Chamberlain was too modest to say that he had—he said, “I didn’t have any counseling roles.” He had physical control roles according to the information, on pretty good authority, that I have. So I guess maybe, to end it here, there are hidden people. You don’t need to call them heroes but there were amazing numbers of people with not big titles, maybe not a lot of talent who rolled up their sleeves, who did scut work, who came in, had the proper idea, who had the glue, who gave a little pep talk, who were just there, gave reinforcement. Kerr, as put here, said, “Well, there were just three or four thousand at rallies, four or five thousand, and there were 30,000 students, so I could treat it as a little minority.” He had that notion. But he was there to negotiate from power, not to deal with a voice—

[End of Interview]