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Oral Interview of Lou Chamberlain by Andrea Hawks and Sharon Jackie for the Feminist Oral History Project (Part #1)

Andrea Hawkes

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Recommended Citation

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Oral Interviews for the Feminist Oral History Project.

Interviewer: Andrea Hawks (AH), Sharon Jackie (SJ)

Interviewee: Lou Chamberlain (LC)

Date: 08/20/1993

Recording number: MF223-ChamberlainL-T1a

Length of recording: 46:14

[Transcript begins]

SJ: Today it's Friday, August 20th, 1993. This is Sharon Jackie and this is Andrea Hawks and Lou Chamberlain. We are meeting in Coburn Hall at the University of Maine. To talk about Lou's experiences with Spruce Run association. These tapes are intended for use with the women in the curriculum feminist oral history project. And will be deposited for public use at a later time.

AH: Lou, you did a wonderful job at the Founders Day meeting talking about how you got involved in Spruce Run. But would you like to kind of talk about that again? Just sort of from your own starting point.

LC: I got involved with Spruce Run almost by accident. It was a fluke. I had just moved up to Bangor as I remember and I'm trying to remember, I was trying to remember if we were living at the Hammond St House then and we were living at the cottage St house and I had moved out and I was working for the center aligned Community Land Trust and Ralph Green was involved with that. And also was living at a cottage St with Kay and some other people who were some of the people that started Spruce Run and the women center and a bunch of other organizations in the Bangor area. And they were incorporating, and they needed one more person to sign the incorporation papers and Ralph said, you know we finished a piece of work and he said, well, why don't you come with me and help these people incorporate this Spruce Run and I said. I remember being concerned about what the lead, you know what that meant for me to sign on the papers and said don't worry about it. You know they just need one more body so I said alright so that's what I did. I came up and I was, signed on the papers and you know, and as I remember we were at Cottage St so I

already in Kay. I mean I knew that this was happening and stuff like that. So after that I don't think we had a formal Board of Directors or anything like that. I mean there was, of those first incorporators, some of them had been involved with Kay in the conception and the thinking about Spruce Run, and some of them had not, and, and it was that core group of people, and I, the only person I remember is Nancy Gal, Nancy Harrington and Kay were really good friends, and she was involved. And then a woman named Judy Moody and I don't know whether she came a little later or at that time but was sort of a core group about four or five women that took it on and I was one of those women.

AH: But at that point before you signed the incorporation, were you aware of what things they were doing? What Spruce Run really was all about or why they were incorporating or? So you were aware of the group?

LC: Oh yeah. Sure, yeah, 'cause I had lived with Kay the year before, I lived with K in in the Hammond St House for almost a year, I think, until she had to move out. And her daughter Sandy lived there. Al Smith, who I later married, was there, Ralph Green was there and a flow of people. So I was part of that community...

AH: So many things happening, every room had some kind of meeting.

LC: That's right, I mean, we just had continuous meetings and I was thinking driving up here about we used to call it Hammond St. We'll meet you at Hammond St, we'd say, and it was a real gathering place, and the stuff that came out of that house was unbelievable, you know? It was the start of the, it was the Women Center for a while. We had a room downstairs. It was where Spruce Run was born. It was the real center of activity for Community services and the Maine community Land Trust. 20 years ago, when people didn't talk about land trusts, you know, thought we were all crazy. It was the Center for all the antiwar activities that were happening in the Bangor area, it was the weight station for guys going up into Canada. The you know, in the middle of the night you get up in the morning and they'd be two, three bodies on the floor, you know? And all these people used to come by the house and the Bangor tenant's union. You know the people that lived in the house were involved in there or congregated there. United low income, which was a statewide organization, but the Bangor contingent of it was the same people. The food Co-op. We had a food Co-op that we started all this stuff, you know. Just and I don't know. I was telling Anne, I don't know how we did it because we were really poor. I mean we didn't have two cents about together

amongst the half dozen of us and it used to be a joke. You know what's for supper, stone soup like every night because we had this case to keep this big pot on the stove. And whatever anybody would find or be given, or you know, we just put in the soup and then when it was time for supper everybody got a bowl of soup and a piece of bread. You know we did that from one side and so I don't know where we found the money to, I suppose we put all our money into postage and mimeographing, but somehow, we get all kind of survived, you know?

AH: So once you sort of signed your name to this incorporation, did you then sort of feel, certainly a part of this particular group? At that point.

LC: I think so. I mean I, you know, I was new to the area, I had just moved to the Bangor area from Brunswick. But yeah, I felt a part of that group. And in the beginning it was just, you know. I mean, I was involved in all those things. You know, the tenant's union and United low income and you know and Spruce Run and the women center, and it was kind of a blend, I mean. Where my connection really came as the Land Trust had gotten a grant and so we had the funds to get an office downtown. And Spruce Run and the women center. When Kay had to move out of Hammond, St had no place to go and so they shared the Land Trust office. And so I kind of by default became the staff person for Spruce Run because they publicized the office and they publicized the number. And so on. I had one number for Spruce Run and one number for the Land Trust and who paid my salary. I was a Vista volunteer at that time, so you know, as a Vista I was supposed to be working with the Land Trust and with Pine Tree Legal assistance, but Pine Tree was also involved in the whole process. That was also the time when we were trying to publish the process divorce manual to help women do their own divorces. And Pine Tree was involved in that, so it was kind of really almost mashed in together, you know, yeah.

AH: You've mentioned that I have feeling, so you were running from phone to phone and, with a different voice every time you picked it up?

LC: Well, you never knew you know what was going to be on the other end, whether it was going to be, you know, somebody needing a divorce or a woman who had just gotten beat up or somebody wanted to talk to you about, you know a piece of land they had in Brooksville. You know it was just. Or some new problem with the Bangor City Council or revolving around the tenants union. Even you know the tenants union had their own office for those with low income, but again, it was the

same people involved, you know? So, we were like around the corner we were on Central St. They were in Franklin St. So just you know.

AH: But at some point, you must have felt that this is pulling you more to do more things with Spruce Run?

LC: I did, yeah, yeah it did, and I think it was when Spruce Run moved into the Land Trust office and then you know the needs were just so great and there were no resources to do this and we all felt really committed in the in the women issues area, you know it was very up front for us as well. So a lot of energy got concentrated into the women center and Spruce Run and the free woman Terrell lengthy hotel was born out of that place also.

AH: Can you describe some of the nitty gritty sort of things that you picked up and started doing? For Spruce, that you know when you make something the wheels start turning.

LC: Typing up minutes. Typed up a lot of minutes, getting them out, so probably...

AH: Did you tape them also? Were you the builder secretary for that too?

LC: Yeah, I was acting kind of the staff person, you know, because I was the one that was... I mean I had a Vista salary, so I had money to be paid for doing this work. And so I ended up being the staff person and so I would take the minutes and type them up and get them out and call meetings and do the books. And I think I said in the video. I remember spending hours. You know doing this bookkeeping and it's and it seems really comical to me now, because, you know, we didn't have any money, so I don't know what I was doing. But I can remember spending lots of time on ledger sheets and you know, keeping track of finances for both Spruce Run and the Land Trust. And they were, you know, I had a set of books from the Land Trust and set of books for Spruce Run. Uhm, taking phone calls from people. I guess I did more of that kind of administrative work than the out-front public work.

AH: Is that because you were sort of doing that for the Land Trust, so that seemed like the natural thing?

LC: Yeah, I think, probably.

AH: And did the other women, did they sort of just go, yes, it seemed like the natural thing for her to do, I mean?

LC: I don't think we ever. I don't remember talking about it.

AH: You must have just accepted it also.

LC: Yeah, I mean, yeah, I guess if you think of the various people involved, I was the one in the better position to be able to do that. I mean, Nancy was at home and going through a really horrendous divorce and had children and she heard she was really stretched out. Judy Moody I think at the time was going through a divorce as well and she had another job. Sue Pace at one point was involved, but she worked for Family Planning Association. So it was nobody. Yeah, I guess I was just the logical person to do it. Sandy probably did some of it too, 'cause Sandy, I think for the first year Kay's daughter floated in and out 'cause she was at Goddard finishing up a degree and she'd come home the holidays and stuff and then I forget when she finished Goddard and she moved back to Bangor. And she was involved.

AH: So how many hours do you think you probably spent? I mean time wise, can you even put a number on that kind of thing? You must have gone home with you also.

LC: I mean there was no, everything we did revolved around the work that we did, so I mean there was no personal life.

AH: The personal was political and...

LC: Yeah, I mean it was the same thing. You know you get up in the morning and you'd go have breakfast or you'd have breakfast at home and you talk about you know some new issue that was coming up or how were we going to pay the rent, or you know the next issue of the Freeman channel or the next issue of the Mainland advocate or the Tenants Union or whatever it was you know at the breakfast table, and that's how the day started and it just went on until 11:00 o'clock at night. And I remember working really long hours. I remember when it was deadline on the newsletter for the newspaper. Couple of times working through the night trying to make deadlines. Because you had a job to go to Pine Tree, you know and do my intake and stuff like that and several issues of those newspapers we just worked right through the night trying to get them out and I can remember having this Spruce Run meeting, Board of Directors meeting with three or four people there at one end of the table and the only way I could participate in meeting, 'cause I had to get the mainland advocate I was at the other van doing the layout on the newspaper. You know? I mean, it was that kind of thing, so it was just, you know, and you'd finish and then and then always meetings of one kind or another. And so you kind of grab something to eat in between or on the

run and then you go to meetings and then you'd wind up the day. I remember at Hammond St, one side of it had a kitchen, and then the other side had this room that it that was like a living room, and it's kind of where everybody fell at night. You know, after your meetings, everybody just kind of wander in and everybody crash out on the couch or the chair. And you know, get caught up with what had happened and what the new crisis was and what you had to do. So, it was just like round the clock, you know it was just...

AH: Now you said you were married at this time?

LC: No. At that time, I wasn't.

AH: So, sort of this was your personal life with your friends where you were working, and everything was all mushed together.

LC: Just a seamless existence, and my, Al who I ended up married was involved in this whole thing as well. He was a Vista volunteer and his assignment with Vista was working with the Bangor Tenants Union, but Pine Tree in Bangor worked with them. So, you know there was like not a whole lot of divisions between what was going on. You know, sometimes he did tenant union work and sometimes you did other work, and he was also involved in the Land Trust, which is what I was assigned to it. So, he was on the Board of directors' meetings of the Land Trust. So, you know, I mean, our relationship revolved and evolved around the work that we did.

AH: Now, you mentioned the board. When did that come together? When and..?

LC: I don't remember.

AH: Just it was just sort of there at one time.

LC: Well in the beginning. It was a steering committee. I remember we had a steering committee that met. And I don't know whether that was before or after incorporation, or whether after we incorporated there was like three or four or five women who were the steering committee and then we felt the need to constitute a formal board of directors. But at some point we made that transition between being sort of an ad hoc loose steering committee to being a board with regular meetings. Those kinds of things.

AH: In the Founders Day meeting, I know you talked about organizing that first board and being obsessed with finding or capturing a house, and another really big issue was the jeopardy that you

were... each one of you personally was in, particularly after that first sort of running to Aroostook and what not. And you talked about that you had to sit down and talk about things weren't really working out the way that you thought they were going to, and I wondered if you talk about some of the before and after like what kind of notions that you thought were going to happen, or how you're going to deal with the problems, and then realizing that indeed those solutions weren't going to work. And how did you formulate new ones and how did that all sort of, I know that's a long. But you can start with the first part. When did you except for that one particular time what made you say I'll hold it, we got the wrong idea here, this isn't working right?

LC: Well, I think that experience with that lady is what really brought into focus. I mean where we said wait a minute. And I think. I mean, in the beginning you know things were so desperate personally, for the people involved in K was going through a really horrendous divorce and her husband was violently had done things and Nancy was getting beat up and the original idea was just a safe place, meaning there was a place that people could go to that you know. Then I mean, and that was the constraint. I think that like Nancy, for example felt you know she had children and there was literally no place for her to go to get away from her husband and so that's where the I think the idea in the obsession with a place, especially after K lost Hammond Street, you know, through the divorce. And she had no place to live. I mean, you're talking about being out in the street, you know. And trying to piece together rent money to keep a roof over our heads. And it was fairly desperate and so in that situation to think of provide writing a safe haven for women and their children, you know? It's kind of ludicrous. So that I mean that's where we started from, if you had a place then people could go there and they'd be safe. At least they be safe, and then they could, you know, I don't think we thought much beyond that. It was like an immediate thing of getting people out of danger so they didn't get beat up and broken. But then when that happened with the Portuguese lady, we realized that it wasn't so simple. You know it wasn't just a matter of having a safe place to go that you still had the matter of survival, and if you had small children. It wasn't so easy. You know you couldn't have children live on sole stone soup for months at a time. You know they needed sneakers and you had to have money and with that came an awareness of the dependency that abuse victims have on the abuser in the, in all of self-esteem issues. It's not just a matter of walking out.

AH: Beyond economics.

LC: Beyond economic, yeah. I guess for me, that wasn't even the basic issue at that point, 'cause I think you know. I mean, I was really young and I grew up with a mother as a role model that always said you can do whatever you want to do you know, and so for me at that age I think I saw things much more black and white than older people did, like K. It gets a lot grayer as you get older. Yeah, well for me. You know I had this conviction and this fire that said, you can do whatever you want to do you know and you don't have to stay here. You know you can. You can go and people would look at me, you know. And I think in that enthusiasm I mean I conveyed that, but I didn't have enough awareness about, you know, psychological, it wasn't it as easy and the psychological issues you know, I think. We were just really. It wasn't shocked. It was really sad when that woman went back to her husband and realized how heavily invested, we had become in her not going back to him. And we said this is wrong. You know this is not, you know we're not here to play God, you know, and I think that that was a real change in the thinking. At that point we started thinking about not rescuing women or whatever. We still were obsessed with having a safe place with having a shelter, but it was more like this is available if you want it, this is available and that it was OK if somebody chose not to do that and it wasn't. Didn't make her bad, didn't make us bad. It didn't, you know it was jus, there was a safe place if you wanted to do that. You could do that, and if you didn't want to, that was OK too. And you could come at some other time and you could still, you know, come to consciousness raising meetings and you could still be a part of that community and live in whatever situation you found yourself in. But if you wanted to, there was a place that you could go.

AH: Accepting sort of feeling as opposed to, I will tell you how to live your life. Like this is the right way or.

LC: It wasn't. I don't think that's...and Kay, I know that Kay never came from that place, so I'm going to tell you how to live your life. But there was a feeling of almost of thinking, well, if anybody had a choice, they wouldn't stay there, and so it was a matter of giving them a place. It was just like this assumption that of course they would leave. And of course, that's not true, so this is real. These are painful processes. Agonizing over there saying, Oh my God, what are you doing? You know?

AH: Yeah.

LC: Are we as bad as the people that were, you know, trying to deal with and what are we about? And you know, just going to the whole process.

AH: Was there a lot of talk? A lot of discussions?

LC: I think so. I remember a lot of late night discussions. And a lot of it, you know, Kay was really the one with the clarity in that you know she was real clear about what we should and shouldn't do as a group, you know that... And I think she's probably the one that came to that realization first, like with the Portuguese lady and I remember she was really pissed off when that Lady went back, because she put all of us in jeopardy. I mean that man came and picked her up at Cottage Street where we were all living. And we were paranoid for a week, you know, we kind of we didn't know what was going to happen, you know. And Kay was really angry, but I think she's also the first one that realized, what had happened and processed it and came to clarity about. You know this whole kind of issues.

AH: So in a way she was almost angry with herself?

LC: Oh yeah, she was saying, you know we were angry with ourselves.

AH: Now this is the question I was going to ask you later but used to present itself here. And you had said in the transcripts that you were really young, 19 or 20, and I guess, I wonder. And it's for me personally, I wonder where that sort of social consciousness comes from, you know? And for someone so young to really feel those kinds of, it's an issue that people talk about today that our young people don't feel those kinds of things you know and it just constantly surprises me that most of the people doing these things were very young. And people blanket it like the Vietnam War and those kind of things, but I haven't sensed, and I think it is something else. And I was wondering if you'd ever thought about that?

LC: Yeah, I thought about it a lot. But I don't know that I have any answers. And I don't know that my thinking is correct. I mean I don't know that I have clarity on what happened to me as an individual person that made me live my life the way I lived it? But I know some elements of it are that I grew up French in Maine, and for a long time I had no awareness of those issues or what that meant, because I grew up in the Saint John Valley and so 99%. I mean, when I grew up and it was 100% French, there was no English people. And it was a real shock for me to leave that environment. And come into the rest of Maine and start developing an awareness of how French people are put down and because I haven't grown up with that, I think that for the Acadians in Saint John Valley, we come from a real, our mindset is really different than the French Canadians who came to Maine. We were never immigrant, you know, we, my farm where I grew up on has been in my family for

200 years and there was no doubt in my mind that I was an American, you know. Other people didn't think so, but you know it was a real shock to come out of that and to face that kind of, real subtle discrimination. But not have the inside that told you were bad, you know? I don't know how to describe that, but...

AH: Well, you said, if you grow up they said you could do anything.

LC: I think, if you if you grew up in in Old Town or Augusta, or Biddeford as a Franco-American that there's a feeling inside you that you're not quite good enough that you're different that you're... you know there's a real self-esteem problem. And I didn't grow up with that because everybody I knew was that we were all friends. So we were all equal. You know, until I left home, I considered myself the equal of any other high school kid in Maine. So it's really a shock to come into the society and have these things thrown at you when people make these comments and you say, Why? Where di that come to you? You know? So that's one element of it, I think it's growing up poor working class, going up French. And all of those issues that operate in America society and coming out, and being in a different space, you know having left home and then dealing with those things from my own perspective. The other thing that made a difference for me is that I went to Upward Bound in my junior year in high school during the senior year. And Upward Bound is a program designed to take kids that have potential and give them an enriching educational or cultural experience so that they will increase their aspirations. From my adult perspective, I think that that's what that's about. And that made a real big difference for me because for the first time in my life, I was 15 when I first went to Upward Bound, but I had never left home. I'm the oldest of 10 children. I had never been not working, I never had an outside but working at home, we lived on a farm. You know my days were work. And I had never not had that. So all of a sudden what I was expected to do was go to class and read and learn and talk to people and I've got exposed to art for the first time. I got exposed to people who thought differently. Who talked about issues, who talked about... that's why I was really interested in education. People who discussed education, and how you're educated and, you know so it really started opening my eyes in my mind to different things and then at that time at Upward Bound, the first 2 summers that I went, you could go to the bookstore. We were at Bowdoin College. You could go to the bookstore and get any book you wanted. And just take it and they paid for you to have books, you know. It's just like whoa. And I have always really loved to read. My mother is an avid reader. And we had a small library at home and I had, I mean, I read constantly and so for me, I mean, I went home with a suitcase full of

books. You know, other kids brought home other things. I brought books, poetry, books, political books, books on education, novels, you know, just a whole suitcase full. And I read them. I read them so that was really, you know that helped shape me. And then when I left home I went to Simmons College. Got a full scholarship and Simmons is an all girls school, in Boston, and it's mostly rich women that go there. And that was a real eye opener for me. I mean I it was very hard for me to reconcile the environment I was in with my home and where I come from and what I knew about Maine. And I really struggled with that for that whole first year, and that that was in 1969-70, and that spring is when the bombings happened in Cambodia and the Kent State killings and the whole antiwar thing. And I was in Boston, that was the heart of it and I started getting involved in that stuff. And also all through that winter, there was Cap agencies then were just, I think Cap was created in the late 60s and the whole Anti-War movement I mean and the poverty movement, the Great Society. All of that kind of stuff. So, and my mother went to work for Cap, in 1969 or '70. And we were familiar with it from Upward Bound, because, you know, with Upward Bound was an anti-poverty program. But some people that were involved in Caps really felt that Caps needed more involvement from the people they were supposed to serve and saw the potential in Cap agencies of doing organizing, rather than just providing services, and I think, that was a real pivotal struggle in probably the antiwar movement. As well, and I'm familiar with it in the Caps. And that there was a battle. There was a real struggle going back and forth between providing services and empowering people. And there were some of us that felt that what Caps were doing was keeping poor people down by providing the services and not empowering them. And we didn't want to do that and there was a New England wide organization called NECAP. Who was composed of people who worked for Caps, that were angry and political and whatever, and I remember all through that first year that I was, I don't know how I got involved with them? Oh, I know, when I was in Boston my last year in Upward Bound I was a counselor and there was a commune on the King Street in Brunswick that was the same kind of fermenting place, and those people had gotten involved in a Cap movement, and so when they came to Boston or Connecticut, I would hook up with them. And then I started attending meetings and getting involved in that in NECAP. And then come that spring, I decided that I couldn't stay at Simmons that if I stayed there, you know, and this I mean, now I mean it's all kind of you know I'm talking about it as if it's all of a piece, but it wasn't. I mean, I was 17 years old. Going into 18 and I was very very confused so I didn't know what was going on. I was very depressed and now I know that what I was going through was a major depression. And I didn't know. I couldn't process all the things that were happening to me, but I knew that if I stayed

where I was that I was going to be a really different person and so out of desperation I left and I said I can't stay here and be the same person that I am. If I stay here, I won't be able to talk to my people and so I left and when I left, I went to Kings St in Brunswick. And by Fluke I got involved in the Land Trust movement. Again, I was working for a professor on campus and he called me up. Went Saturday morning at home and he said, so I got this bunch of guys here. They're trying to get out of mailing, they don't know what the hell they're doing, so would you come in here and help them? I said alright I'll come in, you know, and it was. It was the first Land Trust mailing they were trying to get this thing out and they couldn't run the mimeograph machine, they couldn't run the folding machine, and you know they're really nice guys and stuff, so and that's how I got involved with the Land Trust. So what made the difference? I think for me was the combination of my own experiences. Like I said, growing up in the class and culture that I did and then being and then running right smack up against the dominant culture being in a space at a time when things are just, you know. I mean, the woman movement thing was really hot which just started. I mean all this stuff was going on and I and I was fortunate to be able to be connected with it and I think what enabled me to do it, 'cause there's lots of other people who didn't. It was probably my mother. You know who had always said. Do what you think is right and you can do anything you want to, which is incredible when you think about a woman who never went past the 8th grade and had ten children. You know who used to work 16 hour days, seven days a week telling me that I could do whatever I wanted to, you know, and she really believed it, you know. And she gave me that conviction so I felt that I could do whatever I wanted to. Till I got out in society and I said, whoa! Wait a minute. And then, through that coming into an awareness of what it meant to be a woman in society. And I think personally that gender issues cut across class, and they cut across race that I have more in common with a poor black woman from the inner city than I do with a rich white woman from Maine. You know, in some ways I mean, just the perspective is so different. And the culture is more similar. I feel more at home, in a poor black culture than I do in a middle class or upper or a wealthy culture in Maine.

AH: It makes perfect sense to me now.

LC: It does? So you tell it back to me.

AH: Let's sort of go in a different angle and have you tell me what your most vivid memory of Spruce Run.

LC: Trying to figure out how to get money to make the rent. We were so obsessed with trying to raise funds you know. I mean, 'cause there was no money and every single month it was a constant struggle to make and I don't even remember. I mean, the rent couldn't have been that much. You know maybe it was \$100 or sort of. And when it came down to having to give that check to the landlord, it was like whoever had money that week, you know, Kay did you get paid yet or did you get your Vista check? And if you did like you just kicked in and helped make the rent. And so we were constantly doing all these fundraisers and couple that really stand out in my mind. One was the Black Valentine's and that was so much fun. We had fun doing that, and we spent a whole afternoon and Susan Nickels was the impetus for a lot of this stuff. She's got a, she's really quirky sense of humor and we were talking saying, you know we were going to do something for Valentine's, and somebody said, you know, there is something not right about, you know, an agency or organization helping victims of abuse making Valentine's. So we said, well, we could do black Valentine's or gay Valentine's you know, so we had all these black broken hearts and really and they sell like hotcakes. You know we sold them at the university and then I had this idea of making cookies. I think it came from me. I don't remember we made these big cookies and we went to Shop and Save and got all these tubes of decoration stuff and you could make your own cookie. You paid a buck and you could decorate your cookie however we wanted to. We made you know, for then I don't remember what we made. You probably could look in the books and see, but I remember we were so excited about the amount of money we made and then at Christmas the other one that stands out, is we made Christmas ornaments, and I still have two of those on my Christmas tree, actually, I did that acrylic plastic stuff and Susan again is the one that you know, pull all that together and then we sold them out at the University. Thank God for the University.

AH: So, can you remember some of the other fund-raising sort of things that you did or participated in?

LC: Well, we had bake sales and I can remember, it used to be Zares right where Ames is, I remember having a bake sale up there. Then it was finding the money together to make the stuff for the bake sales. But it was those, it was bake sales and craft, some craft things.

We were just starting to think about proposals and that kind of thing. We were trying to work with the city of Bangor, general assistance people. To try to get funds from them, but that was a long time come. And then we went, it was Hope Bjorn at the Bangor Baptist Church encouraged us to submit a proposal to them and we got \$300.

AH: That was your first speaking engagement.

LC: That was my first speaking engagement. Actually, the Quakers gave us money too. AFSC had a funding thing and Ralph was the one that helped us and I think they gave us a couple of hundred dollars. So that was the first moneys that we got. But beyond that, I can't remember. I mean I know in later years, you know, after I stopped being involved with Spruce Run in 1977-78, and I know that they had a lot of other fundraising, it kind of became a tradition or something. All of these quirky fundraisers, those are the ones that I remember.

AH: I sort of want to talk about how decisions are made or were made. And I know that you did talk a lot about consensus and voting, and I was wondering if you could sort of elaborate on how those decision were made, and I think you mentioned even that at one point you were eight or nine hours in a meeting and...

LC: A lot of times we spend a lot of hours in a meeting. Specifically, about Spruce Run?

AH: Yeah.

LC: I think we probably did, you know, I don't remember. And I may be wrong, but I don't remember having as much difficulty with the Spruce Run people with us coming to decisions as I do within the Land Trust. I mean, the Land Trust is where you know we would have meetings that would start Saturday morning at 9:00 and finally at 5:00 o'clock, we'd say that's it, we got to go. I don't remember that happening in Spruce Run. And I think there was more of a, there was a healthy dose of practicality, you know. I mean, it was one thing to do consensus and to include everybody and we did that. I mean I don't have clear memories of it, but...

AH: That's your overall sense.

LC: That's my overall sense, and that's how we would have operated because that's how we operated with everything. Uhm, but I don't remember it being such a painful process to come to decision either as it was in some other organizations.

AH: One of the things you talked about also was, this sort of relationship between men members and women members and I think as a matter of fact, you said you were sort of pissed off about it, about how things that happened and whatnot, and I was wondering if that anything to do with Land Trust, having men members as opposed to Spruce Run, did you see that? And yes, did you see that as a gender issue or do you now?

LC: Oh, I think it was. I mean, I think it's a lot easier. It was a lot easier, probably still is, a lot easier for women to come to agreement and what happened in the Land Trust was things got intellectualized a lot. You know, and people would take different positions and get stuck on the principle of that thing. You know that didn't happen in the women's groups. And it wasn't real intellectual.

AH: Is the practicality your speaking of?

LC: I just, I'm going to take that back. I mean what just came out of me is that it wasn't intellectual, and yet. When I talked to a while ago about the whole process by which we went through this thing with the Portuguese Lady and process what had happened and did read it and we read and we talked and that's intellectual.

AH: It was very intellectual.

LC: It was very intellectual. So what's the difference? Maeby because it was from our hearts, you know. I mean, it was really an integral part. It wasn't posturing, and it wasn't holding onto a principle and it wasn't... you know, kind of theoretically talking high flying out there, which is fun to do sometimes, and we did some of that, but I think it was more it just really came out of. It was really where we were as very authentic, you know. Out of who we were and what we were doing and it was real. It wasn't just an intellectual exercise, it wasn't just theorizing or whatever was really trying to take the theory and take the thinking and make it work you know in some kind of fashion. And actually, that's what the women did in in the Land Trust too. I mean, it's fine. You know, in terms of the staff this really is kind of comical. You know my, If I think about the launch of staff, we had several, you know, great guys but my memory is of them sitting in the front room reading magazines and talking about you know different things and of the women folding and stapling and stuffing and writing out minutes at the same time as we were talking. You know? And somehow, we let that happen. But that's how it was. I mean, it's not that we didn't participate, it's just that we kept busy while we were doing it, you know. It's practical stuff.

AH: Would it be fair to sort of intersect the word ego in any part of the discussion?

LC: I mean, I think, men have larger egos or get more hung up in them, or they're more a defining thing for them than they are with women. I think women and, I think you saw it operate within Spruce Run, and with the women center and things like that. You know there was much more of a flow of things than... And giving in or letting go you know, it's like. Some of it is based on practicality, some of it based on an assessment of where people were at, you know. I mean, if Nancy just got beat up.

Yeah, you know you're not going to ask Nancy to come in and do whatever you know or if Kay is going through a divorce and she doesn't have income, then obviously she can't contribute to the rent. I mean, it's just, you know.

AC: It's an awareness.

LC: It's an awareness of stuff and... But at the same time, I think that there wasn't a stomping on people either. I mean, I think that people in terms of the decision-making or in terms of the moving forward of things. I think that people we were inclusive, you know we didn't drop people or whatever, or somebody hadn't been around for a while. You know, maybe Nancy, she's going through a hard time or whatever would say, geez, I know we haven't talked to Nancy about, you know what's been going on and people who make an effort to go and talk to her too, you know? Take her out of the house and have lunch and say OK, this is what's going on. Stuff like that and that didn't happen in the Land Trust.

AH: And sounds as that the accepting attitude that you were giving your clients with was sort of something that you passed around through each other. What I hear you saying.

LC: I think we were pretty accepting. Not that we didn't, I mean, it wasn't all you know, peace and happiness either.

AH: I was going to ask you that, can remember any real issues of contention, or when the consensus was really, seemed to be very hard.

LC: I can't remember any specific issues. And I think if it came to a hard place you know, or where there's some real disagreement. I think the tendency of the group, or of us as individuals, would have been to go along...

[End of transcript]