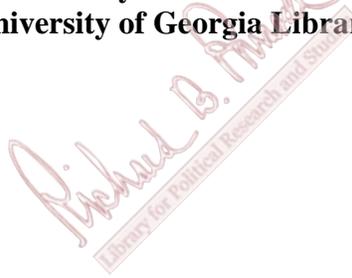


Lorena Weeks interviewed by Kathleen Clark
9 November 2009
Wadley, Georgia
Richard B. Russell Oral History Documentary Collection
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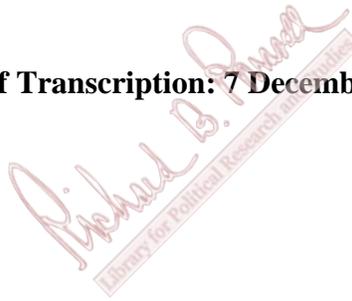
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Lorena Weeks

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KATHLEEN CLARK: Well, it's November 9 2009 and we're here at the home of Lorena Weeks in Wadley, Georgia. And my name is Kathleen Clark. And we're just so -- just really delighted to be here, Lorena, and --

LORENA WEEKS: So glad to have you here.

CLARK: We're just really thrilled to have you tell your story. So, where would you like to begin?

WEEKS: Well, should I begin -- oh, when I started work with the telephone company?

CLARK: Sure.

WEEKS: I graduated on Friday night and caught the train. I was living in Louisville at that time, ten miles from Wadley. And I caught the train -- the Nancy Hanks -- to Atlanta on Saturday, and Monday I went down for an interview with Southern Bell. They were at 51 Ivy Street then, and after the interview they did a physical and put me to work that morning at ten o'clock.

And right here I would like to say that I have nothing against Southern Bell. I have nothing against men. I have a wonderful husband and a son and two brothers that I adore. And I had nothing against anyone. I just felt like this was a point of law that needed to be changed, because women were having to take the back seat in so many jobs.

And anyhow, let me get back on the line. I went to work with Southern Bell and worked

there a few months. And my mother had passed away, and I had my 9-year-old brother and 15-year-old sister and they both wanted to come back to Louisville to go to school. So, I made arrangements, and we had a one-room apartment to live in.

CLARK: In Louisville?

WEEKS: In Louisville. And I went to work at the shirt factory, because I did not have enough time in with the telephone company to transfer to Wadley. So, I worked at the shirt factory in Louisville for about 2 1/2 months. And then --

CLARK: And you were supporting your --

WEEKS: Brother and sister, right.

CLARK: Right.

WEEKS: And they slept at night, and I worked as a telephone operator in Wadley. I did get on in Wadley. There was a vacancy for a night telephone operator, and I worked from 11 at night to 7 in the morning. And I caught the mail carrier from Wadley back to Louisville the next morning. And, of course, I rode the bus. I didn't have an automobile, I didn't even know how to drive. And I caught the bus from Louisville at night at 8:30. But before I went -- before I caught the bus, I went to work at 4 o'clock in the afternoon and worked until about quarter after 8 every night.

CLARK: At the shirt factory?

WEEKS: No, at a restaurant. I got -- this was another job I had in addition to the telephone company job. And I worked there just for tips and for my brother -- a meal of vegetables -- because I didn't have time to cook and do all that. So, that's what -- I worked for the tips and for him to have a free meal.

CLARK: And you were about 18-years-old?

WEEKS: Hmm-mm.

CLARK: You had just graduated, right?

WEEKS: Hmm-mm. I worked only as a telephone operator in Wadley for a long, long time. And then they did away with the telephone office -- all telephone operators in Wadley. They were either transferred or retired. But there was an opening in Swainsboro, which is twenty minutes from Wadley for an outside Plant Clerk. And it required typing. It was just secretarial work, and I qualified for that and got the job.

So, I worked there until Johnson signed that Civil Rights -- Title Seven of the Civil Rights Act into law. And that was something that had been going around in the back of my head, "If I ever have a chance at one of these better jobs -- better paying jobs, I'm going to go for it." So, soon afterwards, the telephone company posted a bid -- that's how you go up the ladder

with the telephone companies -- by bids. You have to have seniority plus qualifications. Well, I wasn't qualified, but they had schools they would send you to to train you.

CLARK: Okay.

WEEKS: So --

CLARK: And this was for -- ?

WEEKS: The job.

CLARK: The switchman job?

WEEKS: Pardon?

CLARK: This was for the switchman job?

WEEKS: Right, it was for the switchman job in the Louisville and Wadley, Georgia, central offices.

CLARK: And what does a switchman do?

WEEKS: Well, it's changed so much since I was a -- what they called a step by step



switchman, where you actually saw your line find -- you go up and find the group and turn the labor on and go around, you know, all over the office -- about six steps before a number would ring. They would wind up on the connectry, you know. And this work required maintaining the troubles and all within the central offices. And it was easy work! I mean, a woman could easily do it!

So, I bid on the job. And anyhow, they returned my bid stating that they appreciated me wanting to advance within the company, but it was not a job that was awarded to women. Well, there was a poster in the central office -- and in all the telephone company places -- on discrimination, and to get in touch with Franklin Roosevelt if you feel you've been discriminated against. He was head of the EEOC.

CLARK: Okay.

WEEKS: So, I wrote a letter to them, and it took several weeks. It came back and I was told in the letter that one of the -- that there was a branch in Atlanta, Georgia, and Keith MacDonald was head of it, and that he would be getting in touch with me in the -- soon, you know, in the future. So, sure enough, I think it must have been six weeks or two months later -- or longer -- he did come down. And went over to the central office in Louisville, and he went over to the one in Wadley. And told the telephone company there was absolutely nothing -- he didn't see any reason why a woman couldn't do the job. But the telephone company refused to give me the job, so then --

CLARK: What were you thinking at that point?

WEEKS: I was thinking, I'm going to have that job one way or the other! Somebody's going to listen to me if I have to go all the way to Chief Justice Earl Warren. I'm going to sit on his doorstep, so maybe he'll listen to me. Somebody will listen to me, because I was desperate. I knew how hard my mother had worked. She died at age 38. She was left, when she was 29-years-old, with 4 little children. And the day my daddy was buried, my youngest brother was 10 months old. And my mother worked her heart out for us, so I knew that women -- that men were not always the breadwinners.

So, I filed a grievance with the union when they returned my bid and said that they couldn't give it to a woman. And the President of that union told me -- he said, "Loreena, there's nothing that I have against you. But you know that if we let -- if we get it to where you get this job, there are going to women all over." And I told him -- I said, "Well, that's -- that's what it's all about. It's not just for me. It's for every woman." And he said, "Well, you know the man is the breadwinner in the family." I said, "Oh no. I know better than that too." I said, "When I check out of the grocery store with a loaf of bread, they don't say 'you're a nice little lady and you can have that for 50 cents.'"

Laughter

WEEKS: I said, "If anything they'll charge me more for it!" I said, "And the same way with getting your automobile worked on. In so many ways, women are taken advantage of." I said, "I've got a mother, I know." And I know how hard she worked for what -- just to feed us. My mother used to get up in the morning, at 5 o'clock in the morning, and go hunting and kill a

squirrel or two, and come home and dress it for us to have gravy and something to eat at night. Now, that sounds terrible, but that is the truth. After daddy died --

CLARK: She did what she had to do.

WEEKS: And I have seen her dress a pig, a hog. She could do anything. And when she took that shotgun, she'd go out and she'd kill the birds, but we ate! Oh my. Well anyhow, I had it from the phone company that they wouldn't let me have the job, and the union wouldn't back me in it. And, like I said, I got in touch with Washington, D.C., and then Keith MacDonald came down and investigated, and they still wouldn't give me the job. He said, "The only way you're going to get it is to go to court." So I said, "Well, good. I'll go to court."

So, I had an appointed attorney in Swainsboro, a local attorney. And he didn't know -- well, nobody knew the terminology of the telephone company. The terms that they use, you have to be in the system, I think, to understand it really. And he didn't understand what was going on. But the men that testified for me, I subpoenaed them, because I didn't want the phone company to come back and, you know, take up something against them. And so --

CLARK: So that they could say that they needed to testify.

WEEKS: Right.

CLARK: So you were thinking of their --

WEEKS: And I delivered the subpoenas too.

CLARK: Did you?

WEEKS: Right down in the cafe of the telephone company!

Laughter

CLARK: Wow!

WEEKS: I sure did! I marched right down into that cafe. They were all having breakfast. And I think I broke up that breakfast!

Laughter

WEEKS: But anyhow, they were wonderful, and all the men respected me. And I said, "I would rather have their respect than anything else." And so, when they -- in District Court, when they got up there -- when they testified they had pictures of Jerry Hadaway, who go the job that I bid on, and I remember Jerry when he was a tiny little blonde-haired boy. I mean, I had nothing against Jerry, and he had a good job, and he was trying for a mail carrier's job at that time anyhow. I knew that.

So, they had pictures of him up the ladder with this relay time and test set. And I have forgotten, but it weighed over 30 pounds. We had a Georgia Rule 59 then that stated that women

and minors would not lift weights in excess of 30 pounds on a job. So, I think that relay time and test set was about 30 and 3 quarter pounds or something like that. Well anyhow, that's actually what kept me from getting -- from having a favorable decision, I think, as much as anything. But Jerry was perched up on top of a ladder with that thing, just working up a breeze on those connectors and all -- line finders and all that. And I had Bellsouth -- well, back then it was before the company split. It was AT&T. Our practices stated that under no circumstances would that relay time and test set be used on a ladder, because it was an expensive piece of equipment. And there was a little dolly with wheels on it and it sat on that, and it had the leads long enough to reach everything in the office. But yet, Jerry was sitting on top of that ladder with it.

CLARK: So they had made up this picture. Basically, you're saying that --

WEEKS: Right.

CLARK: The company had perched him in a position he never would have been in to use as false evidence.

WEEKS: They were fooling the judge, because he didn't know and my lawyer didn't know what was going on. And then they came up with -- that I would have to move this generator -- thousands of pounds -- this generator from one office to the other if there was a power outage, you know. And Harry Moore, bless his heart --

CLARK: And who is he?

WEEKS: He was an installer and repairman for the phone company.

CLARK: Oh, okay.

WEEKS: He was subpoenaed, and I was so proud of his testimony. He said, "The switchman doesn't even have a vehicle, and the switchman doesn't put a hand on that generator." And the judge said, "Well, how does it get from Louisville to Wadley?" He said, "The cable repairman with his heavy duty truck is the one that moves it around. She wouldn't have to touch it."

So anyhow, Judge Scarlet ruled against me. And I went back to the office that afternoon, and I was just -- oh, I was so hurt I didn't know what to do. And the next day, I believe it was, I got a letter from the lawyer that he was getting off the case. So there I was, left high and dry with nobody, nothing. I didn't know what to do. And I called -- I guess he's clerk of the court in Savannah, and asked him, "What should I do?" I wanted it to stay in there, and I knew I just had so long. And he told me I would have to have a transcript of the trial, and he told me how to get in touch and what to do. And I did that. I got a transcript of it.

And then a day or two later, I got this call at home, and it was Marguerite Rawalt. And I told her -- I said, "Oh, I don't know which way I'm going." I said, "I've been so upset and you are an answer to prayer." I said, "I have prayed so hard." She said, "Well, I'm at the Pentagon." And she was an attorney also. She said, "The papers came across my desk that you had lost this case in District Court." She said, "And I am very interested in women's issues, and NOW is

getting organized." She said, "We have an attorney, Sylvia Roberts." And I said, "Oh Ms. Rawalt, you don't know. I do need help." And she said -- well, I believe she said that she would have Sylvia get in touch with me. And so that's how we got together. And then for about five years it was off and on, on and off, in and out.

CLARK: And this was -- you had first tried for the job in 1966, right? Was it 1966 that you first tried for it?

WEEKS: Johnson signed that act in what -- '64?

CLARK: '64. Hmm-mm.

WEEKS: Well, it was shortly after that. It must have been '65.

CLARK: '65? Okay, and this was -- and you'd lost in the first court in '66? Or round about then?

WEEKS: Yes, and then we appealed.

CLARK: With Sylvia, right?

WEEKS: Right, with Sylvia then. Oh, she was wonderful.

CLARK: Tell me about Sylvia. What was she like?

WEEKS: Oh, she's smart and a little firecracker. I don't think Sylvia weighed 100 pounds at this time. She is a tiny little thing, and just as feminine as she could be. Long black hair, and she didn't even own a pair of pants. She was a little lady.

Laughter

WEEKS: Oh my, and we had such good times.

CLARK: Was she in Louisiana then?

WEEKS: Louisiana. Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She's still there and practicing. I'm in touch with her every once in a while. She's a very busy little woman.

CLARK: Yes she is.

WEEKS: But anyhow, I went to a conference in Los Angeles, California. And Sylvia carried me all over that place. She hadn't been to bed in twenty-six hours and she was going full speed ahead!

Laughter

CLARK: Well, she sounds like a very determined woman.

WEEKS: Yes she is.

CLARK: With a strong sense of justice.

WEEKS: She's smart as she can be.

CLARK: Just like you.

WEEKS: She sure is.

CLARK: And what was that like for your family at the time? What did your husband think of all this?

WEEKS: Well, I came home crying one day I was so upset. And he said, "Now listen, if it's going to upset you like that, and you come home crying one more time, you won't go back to work." My husband, really, at first -- he told me when I first started with it -- he called me Butch. He said, "Butch, you know we're going to lose a lot of friends if you do this thing." And I said, "Well, Billy, let's look at it like this. If that's the kind of friends we got, we don't need them anyhow, you know, if they can't see what I'm trying to do and understand. They know I wouldn't do anything wrong, and I feel led by the Lord to do what I'm doing."

And that's the first thing this appointed attorney told me when I went to his office. He



said, "Ms. Weeks, I hope you know you're fixing to lose your job." I said, "Well, Mr. Clark, no. Let me tell it to you like this." I said, "I'm not realizing -- money-wise, I'm not realizing anything from the job I'm working on." I said, "I'm having to commute 20 miles a day." Of course, that doesn't seem -- *cough* excuse me -- doesn't seem like very far, but when you have to buy an automobile to do it, and make payments and insurance and all that, it can get pretty expensive. I said, "Just look at it like this, I'm just getting another day closer to Social Security." I said, "I'm not realizing anything with this job, and it's taking me away from things that I wanted to do." I was a girl scout leader. I had to give that up. I was --

CLARK: How old were your girls then? You had three girls, right?

WEEKS: I had two girls and I've got three girl granddaughters.

CLARK: And your son as well, right? Three children?

WEEKS: Yes.

CLARK: And how old were they when this was going on?

WEEKS: Oh, they were still in high school. And then Bruce graduated and went to college in '67 or '68. And then Iris was right behind him. I had two who graduated from the University of Georgia. And then Jenny, the baby, the youngest, went to nursing school until they sent her to the operating room, and she couldn't take it and she took off to Jacksonville, Florida!

Laughter

WEEKS: She sold her car and bought her a ticket on the airplane to Jacksonville. But now she's in her fourth term, I believe it is, as Jefferson county tax commissioner, so she's doing all right.

CLARK: That's pretty impressive.

WEEKS: But she's a smart -- she called me from Jacksonville and said, "Mama." I said, "What Jenny?" She said, "I'm at Uncle Edward's in Jacksonville." I said, "What are you doing there?" She said, "Well, I've just left nursing school." I said, "Why?" She said, "Mama, I just couldn't take it anymore. I was about to have a nervous breakdown." I said, "Well, why didn't you come home?" She said, "Because you'd have put me in the car and taken me back."

Laughter

WEEKS: So I guess that was a pretty good idea! But anyhow, everything worked out fine and far.

CLARK: It sounds like it did. And what were they -- so they were teenagers? What did they think of everything that you were doing?

WEEKS: They didn't know what was going on -- a lot of it, because I didn't bring it home. Billy told me, "If you come home crying again..." So I just left it all when I walked in the door of the house. I left it all, except for telephone calls and things like that that I would get.

CLARK: Loreena, I don't know how you did it! I mean, you were doing your job, you were doing the case, you were taking care of your family.

WEEKS: I felt like about five people. I couldn't get myself together, and I couldn't sleep. And I stopped going to church, because too many preachers were preaching about these bad women and all that kind of thing. And I'm very sensitive. And nobody understood what was going on, and they were just getting a lot of flashbacks or whatever from what we were trying to do. And I was just trying to make things better.

CLARK: It must have been hard for you to stop going to church.

WEEKS: Oh it was hard. I was so -- oh I was so lonesome. I mean, my life was just completely turned around almost. I knew I -- I felt I was doing what the Lord wanted me to do. And our Sunday school lesson Sunday was about God's chosen people. And I feel like God -- I'm nothing special, I know that, but he chose me. I could never have done it if I hadn't had the faith I had, because he held my hand the whole way through it. But there were moments, there were times when things would just go so bad, and I'd be so worn out, and I would call Sylvia and she'd always build me up. She'd say, "You know, that's part of it -- litigation, you just being torn down." She said, "That's part of it. Litigation, and just being torn down." But I could have

reported it to EEOC, but I didn't want to keep it on all the time -- have something going on all the time.

CLARK: Because the people -- some of your coworkers were -- ?

WEEKS: It was the bosses -- more the bosses.

CLARK: The bosses?

WEEKS: Yes. The day after the trial -- after I lost in District Court, my first level supervisor and the second level supervisor were right outside the door. And I left the door -- it was still warm weather, you know, and it was a screen door. And they were out there just laughing, just having the best time you ever heard over me losing that case, you know. So I was fixing up my disbursement reports and everything that I had to send in every day. And I just hand wrote all of them and put them in an envelope and put them outside. They called it a mule train, the telephone company mule train that got the mail everyday. And I put them in the thing to be sent off that night.

So the next morning, the first thing -- right after I got to work, the first thing -- the second level supervisor walked in and just threw them on the desk. He said, "Lorena, is this your writing?" I said, "Yes it is Jim." He said, "Well, I --" I said, "No. Just wait a minute. The way you acted yesterday in court." I said, "I saw exactly what kind of gentleman you were." I said, "Now, I'm not going to answer anything else until somebody comes in to represent me. Now get a CWA member or somebody on my side that I can -- a witness to it. I'm just not going to do it."

So, he turned around to one of the men and he said, "Well, go get Jack Overstreet." And Jack was out in the -- I think he was out somewhere right outside, I don't know -- in the storage room or somewhere. He came right on in in a few minutes. I said, "Alright now, Jim." I said, "I've got representation. You ask me anything you want now. Ask me and I'll answer if I know the answer." He said, "Is this your writing?" I said, "It sure is." "Well, don't you know these forms are supposed to be typed?" I said, "Yes, that's been the usual procedure." He said, "Well, they're not typed. They're handwritten." I said, "I know that." I said, "Yesterday in District Court I lost a case, because I couldn't lift a 30 and 3 quarter relay time and test set." I said, "Now that typewriter under my desk weighs 34 and whatever pounds it was." I said, "I'm having to lift it up and sit it on the desk." It was an old manual typewriter. I said, "And I am not going to break Georgia Rule 59 by lifting up that typewriter." He said, "Alright young lady, get your things and go home. You're suspended." And that's when I started crying and I cried all -- I cried and cried, because I loved the telephone company, and I was being taken advantage of. And from the way they had been laughing and carrying on outside -- and I heard -- they were just going to get rid of me if they could.

But anyhow, after Marguerite called me and Sylvia got into the picture, it was just altogether different. And Judge Bell in Atlanta -- Griffin Bell, who was Jimmy Carter's Attorney General when he was in -- he was the judge that listened to it. We went up when Sylvia got up here -- with him. We went up and talked with him and -- gosh, let me see, I --

CLARK: One of the things that was really important to you is that you wanted to -- you filed a grievance, right? After you were suspended?

WEEKS: Right.

CLARK: So that -- because, yeah, it was wrong.

WEEKS: Yes, I filed a grievance, and won the grievance --

CLARK: You missed pay, right?

WEEKS: And got my pay, so --

CLARK: You won that grievance?

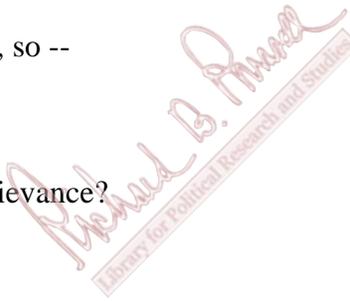
WEEKS: Won that grievance.

CLARK: Well, that was a real triumph.

WEEKS: And then we -- after we got here, Judge Bell, he --

CLARK: You had an appeal, right? And he was the presiding judge at the Appellate level?

WEEKS: Right.



CLARK: And did you take the typewriter into that courtroom?

WEEKS: No, I didn't take it. I just told them.

CLARK: You didn't take it. But it was there, right?

WEEKS: I think it was there. The relay time and test set -- everything -- was in there, everything was in the courtroom, because Sylvia lifted up -- lifted some of those things. Nothing was all that heavy, but that's what they were playing against, you know, was that Rule 59, which got changed right after that. But some states had regulations of 12 and 13 pounds for women to lift.

CLARK: Is that right? 12 or 13 pounds?

WEEKS: Yes, for women and minors.

CLARK: Well, that would kind of cut people out of a lot of work.

WEEKS: To lift. But anyhow, after Griffin -- Judge Bell listened to us and -- let's see. The three judges had ruled in my favor in the Fifth Circuit, I suppose.

CLARK: Now that was in 1969. So, already it had been going on for quite a few years -- that you'd been --

WEEKS: And Judge Bell told them that day. He said, "I want ya'll to give Ms. Weeks a job, because it's been ruled against you, and she has won and I want her put on the job." So, I left there that day and I was really happy, you know, and I came back to work and waited and waited and waited. And they never put me on the job.

And I think it might have been about six or eight months later when we got another hearing with Judge Bell. And when I walked in there that morning, he was surprised to see me. He told me I wasn't supposed to be there, and just sit over there in the corner! *Laughter* I could sit in the corner. I wasn't supposed to be there. And he started talking, you know. Well, he always -- he got it all backwards -- that a switchman with the telephone company was like a switchman out there on the railroad! *Laughter*

CLARK: Oh gosh!

WEEKS: So, if I hadn't been there to explain to them, you know -- they didn't know what they were talking about! I mean, I'm not all that smart, but I was with the phone company and in schools and all that, and as long as I'd been with the company I knew some of what was going on and they didn't. But anyhow, he told us, "You're just going to have a few minutes of my time. That's it." That, "You women and minorities are not going to tear up this telephone company." He said that!

CLARK: Did he really?

WEEKS: He did! *Laughter*

CLARK: Did he know that you weren't in the job at that time?

WEEKS: No, and the second time when I went back and I told him -- I said, "Well, I hope --" That's when he told me I wasn't supposed to be heard, you know. And I told him, "Well, just let me say this. I hope all of you had a merry Christmas." I said, "Because I had one of the worst ones I have ever had." I said, "My husband, who was a rural letter carrier, was in a wreck and was almost killed." I said, "And my children, my two daughters, got portable sewing machines for Christmas to make their little blouses and skirts -- their clothes, because we are just drained. We are not able to buy them clothes anymore."

And Judge Bell said, "You mean you aren't on the job yet Ms. Weeks?" I said, "No, sir. I am not on the job." And he looked at those two Southern Bell attorneys and he said, "Let me tell ya'll one thing." He said, "There will be a court order written before she leaves here today, and she'll be on the job in the morning." And so, I've got that court order somewhere!

Laughter

CLARK: You do.

WEEKS: Oh, I was just thrilled to death! God answered my prayers. It was a long time getting there, but they sure were answered for me and for so many more.

CLARK: What an amazing feeling that must have been.

WEEKS: It was. I had that court order and I was on the Nancy Hanks coming from Atlanta and showing it to everybody.

Laughter

WEEKS: The train does slow up good in Macon, and I jumped off the train and called Billy, my husband, and the conductor was out there just hollering for me to come on!

Laughter

CLARK: You were enjoying the moment!

WEEKS: Oh I tell you, it was just wonderful. It really was.

CLARK: I mean, after all you had been through, you know. I think that was 1971. I think you'd been fighting for more than five years at that point.

WEEKS: And NOW was just having all sorts of -- I went to so many things and they had a standing ovation for me in Los Angeles. And all I did was get up there and say 'hey' back!

Laughter

WEEKS: I'm not a public speaker, and I was timid back then!

CLARK: Well, they were thrilled. I mean, what you had done wasn't just for yourself, but what it did for all women. I mean, it was an amazing victory.

WEEKS: I was on a mission, I know that. But Southern Bell was good to me. I tell you, if it wasn't for -- that retirement. They were good to me.

CLARK: Well, then do you -- they needed to be good to you at that point. So you started -- now tell me a little bit about -- so you started -- you won the case and you got on the job. But then did you need to go to school or were you on the job the next day like Judge Bell said?

WEEKS: Yes, I was on the job the next day. And I went to Louisville. I had to report to the office over in Louisville, and I got there a few minutes before 8 o' clock. And I knocked on the door and I didn't have a key at that time. I knocked on the door -- knocked on the door, and walked around the side of the building. I couldn't get in. And finally, Jerry and John Garrick -- Johnny was an hour install repairman -- came to the door. And they said, "Well, you're late!" And I said, "No, I'm not late. I've been here knocking on this door for ten or fifteen minutes."

CLARK: So, they'd locked it.

WEEKS: They had had the door locked. And so, I went in. Then I went with Jerry and

I followed him around.

Laughter

WEEKS: He was a switchman and I followed him. And one thing that I forgot to say. I told Judge Bell, I said, "I don't want this job if -- I mean I wanted to win the case, but I didn't want the job if it meant putting Jerry back outside and taking a cut in pay." I said, "Jerry is not responsible for what happened, and I think he should stay on the job."

So they -- and Jerry didn't even know -- he didn't know until now that I said that. But they left him on the job until he just resigned. Just left the phone company -- oh, three or four years later, I think.

CLARK: So, what was it like with your coworkers that day. Did they --

WEEKS: Oh, they were -- they were all nice to me. They were all -- they were all respecting me. I was older than all of them -- than most of them. No, I was older than all of them!

Laughter

WEEKS: And little Tommy Austin, who made switchman later, he was like my son. He was younger than my youngest daughter. And I don't know, I just loved all of them. And then I went to school in Columbus, Ohio -- well, actually Dublin, Ohio for the electronic training when

the office switched. Should I tell her about --

CLARK: Yes.

WEEKS: Okay. We switched to ESS.

CLARK: And what is that?

WEEKS: That's an electrical --

CLARK: A new system, right?

WEEKS: Electronic Switching System -- ESS. Wadley was scheduled for that. So, the head man in Augusta came down with the second level man, and they didn't tell me in the office. And I don't know if they had -- if they thought I had it bugged or -- anyhow.

Laughter

WEEKS: They took me outside in the car to tell me that that office was being cut to ESS and that I would be transferred to Waynesboro, which is 30-something miles from home to work in a step by step office, just like Wadley was then. And so, I said that -- I didn't say anything to them. But I knew that wouldn't happen.

Then the big boss from Augusta called me. I was working over in Waynesboro. And he

called me and told me that I would be posted regular over there. That that would be my regular job, you know, my regular place. Well, I didn't do a thing in the world but pull that court order. And I think Sylvia must have reminded them too, that that court order said that I would work in the Louisville and Wadley offices. It didn't say whether I'd be a step switchman or an ESS switchman. It just said that I would be in those two offices.

So, it wound up that that was the way it was. And they sent me off to Dublin, Ohio for my training. And I loved it. Oh, I did love it. You could just type an order in, where I used to have to climb up and test all those switches. You could type an order in and that -- you'd hear them going click click click click.

Laughter



WEEKS: And I'd be running all over the place testing those switches.

CLARK: So they were still trying to make things a little hard for you?

WEEKS: Hmm-mm.

CLARK: Not your coworkers, but it sounds like more your supervisors?

WEEKS: Well, this is kind of ugly to say. But one of them -- one day the cable repairman and then my foreman out of Augusta -- the district plant manager out of Augusta went in the Wadley office. And I thought I had forgotten to turn the solder iron off or something.

And I went back in the office, and they didn't know, obviously. And I heard one of them say -- I don't know if I ought to say this or not -- but he said -- the cable repairman said, "Well, now that you've got her, what are you going to do with her?" He said, "I'm going to work her ass off." That's exactly what he said.

And so, you see, it wasn't Southern Bell. It was these -- it was these -- they were trying to get brownie points. Trying to build themselves up. And the more they downed me, the higher they got on the ladder, they thought. So that's who made it hard, it was the supervisors. But I could have reported them to EEOC and it would have -- I mean, it would have been tough. But I didn't. Like I said a while ago, I didn't want to keep the commotion going on all the time. And I said, "Well, I'm strong enough that I can take it."

CLARK: Were they the ones who didn't give you the right equipment one day as well?

WEEKS: That was Jerry, who was a switchman. He gave me a pair of sunglasses and told me they were frame glasses and I had to work with them. And he gave me a wire cutter that was completely obsolete, because it would just cut your hands anyhow. So, I thought I was doing the right thing. So I was stripping wire with those things and my fingers at the same time! And trying to wear those sunglasses in that office -- I couldn't see what I was doing!

Laughter

CLARK: Was he worried for his job at that point?

WEEKS: Well, he didn't know what the outcome would be and I never did tell him, because I didn't know what it would be either. But I got the job, so I figured they were going to leave him on anyhow.

CLARK: And you were also trying to get your back pay for quite a bit of time, right?

WEEKS: Well, Judge Bell told me that it would be 16 thousand dollars from what he had figured of it, I think. And all I asked for was the difference in my salary and the salary of what Jerry had drawn. Plus, four dollars a day commuting pay for what I was having to ride up and down the road for about five years. I asked for four dollars a day commuting pay, and I've forgotten what I asked for a meal a day to eat out.

CLARK: Hmm-mm. And they --

WEEKS: So they came over with all of it, but we went to Savannah. The final meeting was in Savannah, and Judge Bell ruled on it down there.

CLARK: And so you got it.

WEEKS: So I got it!

CLARK: Yeah! And this was -- let's see now -- I was looking at some of your papers and I noticed you filed another -- you thought about filing another grievance in 1979. I don't

know if you can remember what -- this was quite a few years after everything else had been settled. I don't know, maybe that was when they tried to move you? Was that when they tried to move you down to Waynesboro, maybe?

WEEKS: It might have been.

CLARK: Maybe that was what I was looking at. And so how many more years -- how many years did you get to work as a switchman? Or when did you retire?

WEEKS: I think I went back there for 12 or 13 years. I retired in '83.

CLARK: Okay. And you had started working there in 19 --

WEEKS: '47.

CLARK: '47. That's quite a career.

WEEKS: And Social Security. The lady, when she figured my Social Security, she said, "You must have had one good job." I said, "Why?" She said, "This is the highest Social Security that I have ever seen for a woman." I said, "Well, I got what was traditionally a man's job." But I didn't go into all the other -- to explain it to her.

CLARK: I know you didn't, Loreena.

Laughter

CLARK: What do you think, if you were going to -- you know, what do you want young women today to know about what you did back then?

WEEKS: I didn't discuss it with anybody. You know, you can lose a case by letting everybody know what's going on, and I just sort of kept it quiet.

CLARK: You did.

WEEKS: I stayed to myself. Became a hermit almost.

CLARK: That sounds like it was pretty lonesome.

WEEKS: It was lonesome. But the children came home from college each weekend and I washed and ironed clothes and got them ready to go back. They came home every weekend!

CLARK: Did they? *Laughter*

WEEKS: They sure did.

CLARK: They were at UGA? Were they at the University of Georgia?

WEEKS: Yes. Well, they went two years to Middle Georgia. We wanted them to go to a smaller college, because they were from a small town, and not put them in with older people, you know, like at the University. So they went two years to Middle Georgia. And then, well, Bruce has his Masters from the University.

CLARK: Okay, so you put all your children through college.

WEEKS: Yes. Well, now Jenny didn't go, because she ran away from nursing school.

CLARK: That's right.

Laughter

WEEKS: Oh my.

CLARK: Well, you kept it all so quiet then, but I think this is a story people should know. You know, your grandchildren, your great-grandchildren.

WEEKS: Well, I do want my little granddaughter -- I have three little great-granddaughters. I have three granddaughters and three great-granddaughters. I have nine great grandchildren.

CLARK: Seems like they should know a little bit about what you did for them.

WEEKS: I never bragged about it or talked about it. They didn't bring it up. They don't talk about it. They know I worked with the telephone company. They know I liked the telephone company.

CLARK: Well, you did a lot. You really did, and you met a lot of really remarkable people. We were talking earlier about all the people you've met and known along the way who do know what you've done.

WEEKS: Through NOW -- Eileen Hernandez, she wrote a wonderful letter to the President of Southern Bell. Muriel Fox and I don't know -- just -- Betty Friedan, Marguerite Rawalt, oh she was such a gentle little lady. And Sylvia.

CLARK: Did you join NOW?

WEEKS: Yes.

CLARK: Yes?

WEEKS: Sure did!

Laughter

CLARK: That sounds like Sylvia just was really remarkable person for you to work with. I'm glad the two of you are still in touch. Would it be nice to take a break and then maybe we could talk a little bit more? Would that work?

WEEKS: Whatever.

BREAK

CLARK: Well, Lorena, I was just thinking about that second trial with the -- at the Appellate level.

WEEKS: Hmm-mm.

CLARK: And I was wondering what you remember about the way that Sylvia argued -- argued your case, and what kinds of evidence you brought in. You brought in a typewriter, right? Or somebody did? What was that? Do you remember how she -- ?

WEEKS: I don't remember. I think we had that in District court.

CLARK: In the District Court? Okay.

WEEKS: The relay time and test set and all that -- because we didn't actually go back

into a court room. We went into Judge Bell's chambers -- just in his chambers.

CLARK: What do you think made the difference in that second time around? Was he just more open-minded?

WEEKS: Well see, we had -- I had Judge Scarlet in the District court and he passed away. And then I had Judge Alexander Lawrence, who disqualified himself for conflicting interests.

CLARK: Okay.

WEEKS: And then that's when Judge Bell came in. He was actually in the Ninth Circuit, I believe, but he came over into the Fifth Circuit to hear this case.

CLARK: And he listened to the case? And do you remember anything that he said when he his opinion? Did he say why he decided, "I'm in your favor."

WEEKS: You know, I really don't remember.

CLARK: It's been a long time, hasn't it? It's been a long time.

WEEKS: It was so long and drawn out and I was so tired. And this final decision was handed down in Savannah. See, I went to Atlanta twice before that, and then to Savannah when

the final decision was told. I mean, it was on the pay -- on the money actually.

CLARK: And were you there when he rendered his decision?

WEEKS: Yes.

CLARK: You were right there.

WEEKS: Hmm-mm.

CLARK: Yes. It must have been another exciting moment.

WEEKS: Yes, it was. It really was.

CLARK: It was a really long road that you had been on at that point, really. What were some of the different places that you traveled into after -- after everything was over? I know that you said you went to Los Angeles?

WEEKS: Right. I went to Washington, D.C., and Nashville, Tennessee.

CLARK: And you testified in Washington, right?

WEEKS: I testified in Washington before the FCC. I was subpoenaed.

CLARK: Okay.

WEEKS: Two of those lawyers came down here and talked with me, and then I was subpoenaed to go to Washington. *Cough* Excuse me.

CLARK: What was that like?

WEEKS: It was nice. It was cold! That was in January and I thought I'd freeze to death up there. It was really cold.

CLARK: Yeah. *Laughter*

WEEKS: And I could tell you something funny that happened. I don't know if you want to hear?

CLARK: Please, I'd love to hear it.

WEEKS: It was during -- the Indians were up there. They were having a case, and my sister-in-law went with me. Beth -- Beth Weeks went with me.

CLARK: Okay.

WEEKS: And we were on -- I suppose -- I believe it was Pennsylvania Avenue. Anyhow, we were in this hotel, and when we came in that evening we went flying to our rooms. You know, I've never seen -- well, I haven't been to a lot of hotels, but we had the room right at the end of the hall. So, we rushed in there, closed the door and went to bed, and the next morning we got up and we couldn't find the key!

Laughter

WEEKS: We couldn't find our key. We were both looking for it, and Beth said, "Well, you had it." I said, "Well, I think you had it." So we looked everywhere and we finally found it hanging on the outside on the door!

Laughter

CLARK: Oh, how funny!

WEEKS: I don't know which one of us left it there, but I don't think I could have slept if I'd known it was hanging there all night.

Laughter

CLARK: And so you went in and you testified that day? You told your story?

WEEKS: Hmm-mm. That's when we went before the FCC. And when the judge asked me -- oh well, what judge handed down the final decision, I said it was Judge Bell. He said, "Judge who?" I said, "Judge Griffin Bell. B-E-L-L. Like Southern Bell." They all just laughed.

Laughter

CLARK: I bet they did.

WEEKS: And that was when I was testifying up there and told how I was sent home -- how I was suspended, you know, for not lifting the typewriter. And that's when the little attorney, I thought he was going under the table, you know, he just didn't want me telling that I don't think.

They tried to get that relay time and test set. I kept it tied up for a long, long time. They said they needed it, you know, it was a piece of equipment that they needed. And I wouldn't release it. We had that piece of equipment.

CLARK: And why were they trying to get it back?

WEEKS: They said they -- Southern Bell said that they needed it, you know, to work with.

CLARK: They didn't want you to use it in your trial?

WEEKS: And see how little it was!

CLARK: Right.

WEEKS: And I've got a picture somewhere. It might be over there in those things -- where it's sitting right next to the typewriter and it's about half as big as a typewriter.

CLARK: That's a great picture. I have seen it, and that's exactly right. It's about half as big.

WEEKS: Hmm-mm.



CLARK: Yeah. So, they didn't want you to have that?

WEEKS: Mm-mm. No. But I wouldn't turn it loose.

CLARK: I bet you wouldn't.

WEEKS: So.

CLARK: Good for you.

WEEKS: Well, Sylvia was advising me. She was behind it all!

Laughter

CLARK: Well, I was wondering if you could -- well, actually, first of all, what about Los Angeles? What were you doing out there?

WEEKS: Oh, it was a convention. A NOW convention.

CLARK: And were you a speaker there?

WEEKS: No, that's the time that I --

CLARK: Oh, you got an award?

WEEKS: No, they just invited me up on the -- you know, stage, and I just said hello and good-bye.

Laughter

WEEKS: I told them I was not a public speaker and it just scared me to death to look out there and see all those people in that audience. And I got up there, and I couldn't say a word.

CLARK: Oh!

Laughter

CLARK: But you've told your story so many times, and you tell it so well. I mean, I know that I've seen a video -- when I first came here -- the first time.

WEEKS: Hmm-mm.

CLARK: You showed me a video that I think was made up in Cambridge, Massachusetts?

WEEKS: Boston.

CLARK: In Boston. And that was another conference, I guess?

WEEKS: No, this was done about three years ago.

CLARK: And they loved the way that you told your story there.

WEEKS: It was -- it was different women that had been discriminated against in that -- I think she was a professor. She really had a hard time.

CLARK: As a professor?

WEEKS: Hmm-mm.

CLARK: Yeah. Yeah. Well, I also was wondering -- we don't have to talk too much about this, but I was thinking about -- if you could talk just a little bit about back when you were a little girl. What was Wadley like then? What do you remember?

WEEKS: Well, actually --

CLARK: Did you live in Wadley?

WEEKS: I was born in Columbia, South Carolina --

CLARK: Okay.

WEEKS: And shortly afterwards my parents moved to Augusta, Georgia --

CLARK: Okay.

WEEKS: And lived there until -- oh, I was 9-years-old, and we moved to Louisville --

CLARK: Okay.

WEEKS: And that's when Daddy was killed. 2 and a half months later Daddy was killed in a sawmill ball explosion, and left my mother with 4 children. And life was hard. We lived good in Augusta. It was just a change from everything. I took dance lessons, and we had a live-in nurse that drove Mama's car and carried us to the -- we had 4 theatres in Augusta and we never missed a movie. I mean, we just had a good time.

And then after Daddy got killed, he didn't have any insurance or anything. My mother had to work so hard. And I'm 9-years-old and I had to take care of my 10-month-old brother. And then after Mama died 9 years later, I was left with him and the 15-year-old sister.

CLARK: What did your mom do? What did your mother do to --

WEEKS: She had never worked for the public; never worked out until after Daddy died. And the only thing was the shirt factory in Louisville. And she worked at that shirt factory 5 days a week and clerked at a grocery store on Saturday from 8 until almost 11 Saturday night.

But we had the same thing to eat every Sunday for lunch. She'd fix us -- get up and fix us meatballs and spaghetti. That's what we'd have! And we had a wooden stove, and she'd push them back on the back of the stove, you know, and that's what we would have when we came in from Sunday school and church.

CLARK: Do you remember why your family moved from Augusta?

WEEKS: Yes. Daddy had -- let me see, 4 -- 4 uncles, I believe, and 3 aunts. My granddaddy was the only one in a family of 9 -- is what it was -- that was married.

CLARK: Okay.

WEEKS: And my great uncles and aunts and all were getting older, and they wanted Daddy to come down and help, you know, with the farming. And they had everything. They had their own saw mill, and that's what Daddy got killed with, was their saw mill.

CLARK: I see.

WEEKS: And we left Augusta because of -- and the school system was better in Jefferson county, my mother felt like. And she made us all repeat the grade we were in when we left Augusta -- Richmond county. She made us repeat it, because she felt like we hadn't learned anything at the school we were going to. So that put us all a little behind, you know, for graduating.

CLARK: So, you all repeated when you got to Louisville?

WEEKS: Pardon?

CLARK: So, you all did that grade again?

WEEKS: Hmm-mm.

CLARK: Was that about third grade for you?

WEEKS: It was.

CLARK: Do you remember anything about the school or your teacher?

WEEKS: Oh yes, Miss Sims. She was my third grade teacher and I just loved her to death. And then when I was Sunday school director, I started a new class of the people -- the handicapped ones that weren't able to come to Sunday school. And Miss Sims was my first -- was the first one I would visit each time. And she would teach me the Sunday lesson so when I left I could, you know, teach it to the other -- whoever I visited.

CLARK: That's great.

WEEKS: And then my fourth grade teacher was Parlene Weeks. And the fifth grade teacher was Miss Murphy. Sixth grade teacher was Nell MacBride. I remember all of them. I remember them all.

CLARK: My goodness, you can remember -- I couldn't remember my teacher's names, I don't think. That's remarkable.

WEEKS: Oh, they were so good. I mean, they were all so good to me.

CLARK: It sounds like you liked school?

WEEKS: I loved school. There were only 13 in the class when I graduated. 13.

CLARK: Wow. Things have changed.

WEEKS: They really have. But we only had 11 grades then.

CLARK: Has the town changed a lot, do you think?

WEEKS: Oh yes! I used to have to walk to school on mud streets. We didn't have any pavement, even downtown in Louisville. It was not paved back then. And we were talking a while ago about the REA and electric lights? Well, when we moved to Louisville from Augusta, I thought it was the cutest thing I'd ever seen, those oil lamps that we had to use, because we didn't have any electricity. But I soon learned that you had to wash the shades every day. Mama would make us wash those shades every day so they'd be clear, you know. But I soon learned that oil lamps weren't --

CLARK: Weren't so cute.

WEEKS: They weren't so cute after all.

Laughter

CLARK: Well, you've really --

WEEKS: And that 9-year -- that 10-month-old brother -- they used to -- the ladies would tell -- Mama's friends would say -- I'd walk with him on my hip, you know, holding him on my hip because he was about just as big as me. And they would say, "You're going to be so humpbacked."

Laughter

WEEKS: Carrying around that big boy.

CLARK: So you were almost like a second mother to him, it sounds like.

WEEKS: Yeah, because he was just a little fellow when Mama died.

CLARK: Were your brothers and sisters -- were they around during the case?

WEEKS: No.

CLARK: Were they in the area?

WEEKS: No.

CLARK: Oh.

WEEKS: Well, my oldest brother was overseas, and he said he and some of the officers were sitting at a table, you know, watching television, and he said that all of a sudden it flashed me on the television. He said he got up and hollered, "Well, that's my silly little old sister!"

Laughter

CLARK: Well, I didn't know that. Lorena, you never told me that. That's great.

WEEKS: He was overseas.

CLARK: And there you were.

WEEKS: Yeah, he wasn't expecting anything like that.

CLARK: I bet he wasn't.

Laughter

WEEKS: That was Roger Mudd's -- I think that was a Roger Mudd.

CLARK: Oh, okay. An interview.

WEEKS: He's always called me his silly little old sister.

CLARK: It sounds like you've been able to stay close.

WEEKS: He picks at me. He's always at the family reunion. Oh, he says my grand-babies' are prettier than your grand-babies. He's on to me all the time, arguing and just cutting up; just having fun.

CLARK: Well, that's a good brother for you.

WEEKS: Yes, he is. I looked up to my big brother. I remember when I started school. I remember what I wore to school. It was a little yellow dress. I remember it just this well, because I outgrew it and I had to give it to my sister Betty, and it made me real mad, because that was one of my favorite dresses.

They told me -- Mama was telling me what to do at school again on the first day, "When the bell rings, now you just go out and stand out there at the flag pole, and your brother will come out and get you and you all will come on home." But they forgot to tell me they had recess and had the bell, you know. So, at recess I went out and stood by the flag pole, and I was just standing out there crying and crying because it had been a good while and my brother hadn't come. And I didn't know where he was and everybody was gone and there I was. And they told me that was recess, you know. There would be another bell. I looked up to him and he came

back.

CLARK: Do you remember what it was like for you when you started having to take -- when you were a senior in high school and your mom passed away and you were taking care of everybody?

WEEKS: It was rough. Well actually, I lived with friends -- this very good friend of mine. And I taught with her. She was the one I was telling you about -- was just so happy about everything. And I lived with Jean. She was Jean Rivers then, and she married a doctor from Augusta, Dr. Chernansky. Jean Rivers Chernansky. And I lived with her until I finished -- until I graduated. We were very close. We grew up together, you know. When I came from Augusta in the third grade on through school. And I talked her into going into nursing, and that -- we had been accepted. That's what I wanted to do, but then after Mama died, you know, the plans just didn't go through.

So then I tried to make a nurse out of my youngest daughter, and that didn't go through either! Jenny ran away from nursing school! But now she's tax commissioner and enjoying it and doing real good.

CLARK: Well, you've really accomplished a lot with your children and your work and your case. That must have been something having -- all three children were born within -- how many years apart, do you think?

WEEKS: Oh goodness. There's just 1 year and 28 days difference in the oldest and the

middle, Iris. And then there's a 16 month difference in Iris and Jenny.

CLARK: Wow.

WEEKS: So, I've got one right now -- 61, 59. And Jenny will be 58 in January, I believe that's right.

CLARK: How did you do it?

WEEKS: Oh, I just loved it. I wanted four. I wanted two boys and two girls. And I just never could have my other little boy. I wanted Bruce a brother. But he and Jenny are so close. He eats with her every night, and when he gets -- you know, you met him -- he gets up and he says, "Well, baby sister, I sure did enjoy that."

Laughter

WEEKS: He calls her baby sister.

CLARK: But you were working. Were you working the whole time or did you take some time off?

WEEKS: When they were born?

CLARK: When they were born.

WEEKS: Oh, I took leave -- maternity leave. And I was out almost 5 years after -- no, 3 years after Jenny was born. I waited until she could pick up the phone and call me if something went wrong. We had a manual office and I was a telephone operator and we wore those old things that fit down on your chest -- you know what I mean? Over your head. And the lights would come in on the board and you would just, you know, plug in and answer. And when my light would come up our number was 241, and none of the operators would answer it; they knew, you know, it was for me. And I mean that's just a courtesy. We didn't answer each other's calls. And I didn't go back to work until I knew Jenny could pick up the phone. You know, until she could talk.

CLARK: And so she could just call you up?

WEEKS: Hmm-mm.

CLARK: And that's how you were able to go back to work. Wow. Well, that's -- you were still doing a lot to be back at work and to have 3 young children like that?

WEEKS: I worked hours, though -- I managed to get a trick nobody else wanted. That's what the trick was -- split hours from 11 until 2 in the morning and -- let's see, 11 to 2 -- and 7 until 11 at night. I worked a split trick. And I could take them to school in the morning, because I didn't go to work until 11. Then I got off at 2, and I could pick them up at 3:15. And then I

could give them their supper at 6 o' clock, and I'd go back to work at 7 and Billy would be home by then -- my husband.

CLARK: Okay.

WEEKS: And he would keep them. And I worked until 11 at night.

CLARK: Wow.

WEEKS: And I did that for years and years and years.

CLARK: Wow. That's remarkable -- I've never heard of that before, to have a split -- you called it a split --

WEEKS: Split trick.

CLARK: Split trick?

WEEKS: Split trick.

CLARK: Wow.

WEEKS: 11 to 2 and 7 to 11. But the worst trick there was was from 1 to 10. Those

were the longest hours. And sometimes on Sunday I would have to work 1 to 10s.

CLARK: Is that 1 in the morning or --

WEEKS: 1 in the afternoon till 10 at night.

CLARK: That would be hard. Do your daughters know a little bit about the case now?
Do they ask you questions?

WEEKS: They don't ask me questions. We don't talk about it.

CLARK: Don't talk about it. Hmm. Because I know teenagers, they might not -- you know, when they were teenagers at the time they probably were --

WEEKS: Well, I didn't want to embarrass them anyhow --

CLARK: Right.

WEEKS: -- By telling them a lot. Iris got a nice letter from one of the professors up there at the University of Georgia congratulating her on her mom's success. They were busy with their little doings. Iris was a little socialite. She was a cheerleader, she was homecoming queen in high school in Wadley. And then Jenny was homecoming queen too, and Iris crowned Jenny. And then when Iris was at Middle Georgia she was a cheerleader down there. And of

course, when she went to the University of Georgia she fell in love, I think, or something. Anyhow, she was just having herself a good time at college really. I hope she doesn't hear that!

Laughter

CLARK: I hope maybe they'll watch this movie someday. I think that they would -- it would be great for them to know about everything that you've done. I bet they would love to know about it.

WEEKS: They were good children though. We were really blessed with 3 good children. Bruce is a Gideon now, and he's at some church every weekend just about speaking. As a matter of fact, he'll be speaking here in Wadley at the Methodist church. On the 15th, I think it is, if that's a Sunday. That might be. No, today's the 9th. He's supposed to speak this weekend at the Methodist church in Wadley.

CLARK: Sounds like your husband -- sounds like Billy really -- well, you were going to tell the story about when you met, actually. You could tell that a little bit.

WEEKS: Oh goodness, I hate for people to see -- know that --

CLARK: Oh, you do? Well, you don't have to tell the story if you don't want to.

WEEKS: Well, it's really -- it's really right comical. I was the night telephone operator,

and I'd come down, you know, and I'd get off the bus and go on to the telephone office. And I'd have to sit there for a while, you know, before it was time to go to work at eleven. So, one night this 9103 number, which was a pay station, came up -- *cough* excuse me -- on the board and I answered it. And it was Billy, and he said, "I've been watching you." He said, "I saw you sitting in the cafe eating a piece of apple pie."

Laughter

WEEKS: That's how he knew who I was. I didn't know him from Adam's house cat, even though we both -- we had the same last name, you know. So that went on for about 2 or 3 months, and I never saw him. I didn't know what he looked like or anything, but he'd call me every night from that pay phone -- 9103 -- and talk with me for an hour or so while I was doing tickets. I had to do the tickets every night -- the long distance tickets.

So finally I got tired of it, and I went down to the theatre. We only had one in Wadley -- the Pal Theatre. And this friend of his came out. I was standing out in the lobby and his friend came through, and I knew his friend and I asked him. I said, "Elijah is Billy Weeks over there in that cafe?" It was right next to the theatre -- to the picture show. He said, "Yes, he is." I said, "Will you take this dime and give it to him, and tell him to bring me a package of potato chips?" And he said, "Alright." And in a few minutes here comes this big old thing just grinning from ear to ear! And that's the first time I'd ever seen Billy that I know of -- that I can recall -- that I'd ever seen him.

CLARK: And you got married pretty soon after?

WEEKS: No that was about eight months later, I believe it was, that we got married.

CLARK: And how long were you married?

WEEKS: We were married 50 years in October, and he died the 12th of January.

CLARK: 50 years. Well, are there any things that you feel you would like us to ask?

JILL SEVERN: Is there anything that we haven't asked you that you want to tell us about?

WEEKS: No.

CRAIG BREADEN: Do you think things have changed since the time you had your case for women? Or do you think the challenges are still there?

WEEKS: I think they're still having a hard time as far as the money part goes. Of course, I had a -- I guess he was just a lawyer -- tell me that he mentioned my name several times a week, you know, in cases that he was trying. So, if the women know enough about it, you know, they can file something, you know, and get things worked out, I think. Because the law is already there! But I think there area lot of them that still don't know about it maybe. I don't know what the problem is.

CLARK: I think that is definitely a part of it. Well, I think we all have a lot to be grateful for with you though.

WEEKS: *Laughter* I have a lot to be grateful for -- that the Lord picked me, I feel like, and led me and held my hand. And if women would just have faith in the Lord and faith in themselves, and try for something that they know they can do. Don't just try for something because they can. You know, try for something and be sincere about it -- the work that they know they can do. I think they can -- they'll get the jobs and whatever.

CLARK: Alright. You did such a nice job. Thank you.