

Narrator: Dorothy Sale
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Boswell: It is December 18, 2008, and this is an interview with Dorothy Sale, recorded by Sherry Boswell at Mrs. Sale's home in Seattle, Washington. Well, let's get started. One of the things I want to talk today about is the ERA and your role in Washington State and around the country, really, in advocating for it. But to start, tell me a little bit about your own background and how you came to an awareness of and interest in women's issues.

Sale: Well, it did not start with women's issues. Let me tell you where I was born and grew up. I was born in Manhattan, New York City, but immediately went to Queens and really spent most of my growing up years in Manhasset, an Indian name for a town on the north shore of Long Island. I spent my first thirty years all in the Northeast. I went to high school in Manhasset, and then I went to Swarthmore College outside Philadelphia in Pennsylvania, where I met my husband.

The things that happened in those years before college, really, were as much about what was going on in the world in a funny kind of way for us to think about it now, and how my parents responded to it and what I learned from that.

My mother grew up in Chicago, from a family that had been there just for two generations before. My father grew up in Alabama, in a family that had lived in the South for a long time. And he still was prejudiced about—

The most important person in my life was Jackie Robinson. My father also liked baseball, and he gave that to me, which I still enjoy greatly. So does my husband. But it was the story of Jackie Robinson and the Brooklyn Dodgers that really put the cap on my learning about racism, and about how I felt about it, and the fact that my mother didn't agree with my father. I don't remember exactly how old. I was like fifteen, sixteen, or seventeen when he broke the color line in Major League Baseball. I think it was 1947. Is that right? In that case, I would have been fifteen when that happened.

One of the things that Roger and I had in common when we met at Swarthmore College – my husband is Roger – was loving the Dodgers and feeling the same way about Jackie and how brave he was. I couldn't understand how he could put up with what he put up with. Then, of course, there were all the other black ball players who appeared. I was very discouraged with various of my previous Dodger players who I lost some respect for. So that's my background.

We were married in 1955 and the civil rights movement was beginning. We were both with that kind of background. I should say that in my high school and in my town, there were not very many African-American people, so I didn't really know many. I did have one friend, but we didn't do much together. She was as awkward about it as I was, you know?

The same thing was true in college. There were some African-Americans. Well, they weren't African-American. They were Africans, rather like our new president.

[laughs] So we had a lot to learn, and we were trying to learn as best we can as this all went around.

The upshot of this is that when we moved to Seattle in 1962, the year of the big show— [laughs]

Boswell: Right. The World's Fair.

Sale: The World's Fair. Yes. There we go. Everything was happening. I mean, Malcolm X was just getting really going well, and things had been happening for some time. We had one year when we could live in university housing, and then we had to go live someplace else. We decided to live in the Central Area. We'd managed to find a house, with my father's help, that we could buy in that area. It was a little less than Capitol Hill because it was a little closer to the Central Area, where all those African-American people are, and so on.

Our children were Tim, who was just in first grade or second grade, and Maggie. She was in kindergarten—not kindergarten, but nursery school.

Boswell: Pre-school?

Sale: Pre-school. Pre-school, which was not a phrase at the time.

Boswell: [laughs] Sorry. Anachronism.

Sale: No, no. [laughs] Things change. Period. At any rate, that's how we lived in the Madrona area. We lived in that house for forty-five years, which we just moved out of this summer. We're now in December, and we got here at Horizon House in September, so we were there for a long time. A lot of things, including all my work with women, happened from that house. So there's that background.

Boswell: So your idea of racism and how it affected people, and the changes, including the civil rights movement, that you experienced were really important in your life and in your thinking. Did your interest in women's issues come out of that? Or was that something else?

Sale: We'll get to that in a minute.

Boswell: Oh, okay. We'll do that. [laughs]

Sale: For about five years, I think, Roger and I were—I, more than he, because he had a lot of teaching to do—very active in the community. It was a wonderful PTA, with black and white together. I made some very good friends. I think I gradually began to understand the sexual differences within the black community as well as the ones in the white community and where we shared things. I ended up with a lot of friends. I think at that point I was looking at what the rest of my life was going to be.

And I had joined—I must go back to this because it's very important. I never mentioned that we were at Amherst College for five years before we came here, from

1957 to 1962. Amherst College is in the town of Amherst, Massachusetts. It's an old town. All kinds of important people have been there in the past, but it was an all-male school when we went. It isn't anymore, but while we were there, it was an all-male school. The University of Massachusetts, which currently has a campus there, was not there at that point. There were two things for young women, for wives, to do. One was a garden club, and one was the League of Women Voters. I joined the League of Women Voters in 1957. I am now one of the over-fifty-year members because I have never dropped my membership. When we moved to Seattle, I had it transferred.

Indeed, I did a lot of work about racial matters here with the League of Women Voters. I was co-chair—I think it was co-chair—of a subcommittee when the Seattle League was dealing with three issues: housing, education and employment as discriminatory in our culture. I co-chaired the education one, which was partly the result of having all that work with the PTA in the Madrona School. So I got a lot of learning about how to be part of a group and how to study something and all of that.

Boswell: So you had been with the League in Amherst, and then you transferred your membership here.

Sale: Here. Right.

Boswell: Aside from education, were there other areas of League activities that you got particularly involved in?

Sale: Not as much as that one. Then something happened after that which kind of took me out of things. I wasn't very well for a while. I didn't quite know what I wanted to do next, I think, after this big effort about what I just was talking about—discrimination in education

So I wasn't very active until 1970, when I read in my League letter that there was going to be a new state study on the status of women in Washington State. I think that is what it was called, so it was all over the state. I started going to those meetings. Then the League had its office in the Central Area, and I had been going there for a long time. We ended up with a big group of women in the Seattle League doing the state study. I don't know what other parts of the state did about it, but we had two years with this study. We were all somewhat shocked at the first things that we learned, which were all small things. This, as I said, started in 1970, and, well, it led to everything else. I met all the people, or the majority of the people I later worked with, including Jean Marie Brough, on that study.

In 1972, after all those years, Congress passed the Equal Rights Amendment out to the states. The women who had felt that Congress was never going to do that, that we should have a state equal rights amendment, had gotten one passed through the legislature in the spring of 1972. So you see how those things go together. If I had it in front of me, I could mention what some of the areas were that we went over. Maybe we could do that later. Suddenly the Equal Rights Amendment was an issue because it had been around since 1923, when Alice Paul created that. That can be talked about later, too.

Well, just all kinds of things happened. There was a group, Jackie Griswold, Jean Marie—

Boswell: Brough?

Sale: Brough, yes. Another friend, who changed her name, was Elizabeth Ellisor. Who am I forgetting? Oh, Beverly Corwin, who was the chair of the League study and has been a friend ever since. Those people became my core friends, and we worked together and are still working together—except we're not working so much anymore. We're doing things like telling you what we used to do. [laughs]

Boswell: Which is also important.

Sale: Yes. Yes. So what happened that summer was that Jean Marie— well, we'll go back from that. One of the founders of the NOW chapter— NOW is the National Organization for Women—*for* women, not *of* women. The chapter started in 1970, but there were people already working on things they wanted to see changed in the state and the legislature. Suddenly some of them decided, as I said before, that what we needed was a state equal rights amendment. And Helen—

Boswell: Sommers?

Sale: Helen Sommers, yes. Exactly. Helen Sommers was the second president of NOW in 1971, I guess it would be. She decided that she was going to run for the legislature, so she came to Jean Marie and said, "Well, I'm sorry, I can't do the treasury." She couldn't be the treasurer in this campaign to get the state ERA passed. She said, "Jean Marie, you're going to have to do it." So Jean Marie did do that. I was not part of the group that worked on this. These are people who became friends, but I was just really taking in what they were doing and what was happening, and what this Equal Rights Amendment was, anyway. I had not heard of it. I guess none of us were taught about it. Anyway, it had just been going into Congress and being put aside for fifty years, or whatever.

Boswell: So in the beginning, then, the League hadn't really taken that up the ERA as an issue?

Sale: No. No. It wasn't an issue. It didn't exist! It was just someplace in some committee that was doing nothing about it in Congress. So there wasn't an issue. When all of a sudden, there was this issue because we also knew that we were going to have to go to the legislature, the 1973 legislature, to get ratification of the federal, the national one, right? So it was very important whether the people would vote for the state equal rights amendment. I was watching all of this happen, trying to take things in and learning the other things that they were doing then.

We had to wait six weeks, I think, to get the vote. It was under four thousand votes—that was the amount that passed it. Yes.

Boswell: It was very close.

Sale: It was close. We were anxious.

I had a wonderful moment there. I remember meeting Susan Lane around then. She was in the group that started the state equal rights amendment. At some point when we were waiting for results—it may have been the night of the election, I don't know—but I was sitting with her and some other people, and this is the way I remember it. I don't know if she remembers it or whether it's accurate or not. But somehow or other, she got a phone call from Alice Paul. I was not clear who Alice Paul was. Later she told me her story, which you're going to talk to her about, and she told me who Alice Paul was. I think I knew by that point some of the history of suffrage and so on. Actually, I had read a very good book about suffrage. I read a lot in those two years. In 1969, 1970, 1971, I was reading a lot of stuff like Betty Friedan and Simone de Beauvoir, and so on. So I knew something about where she was in the suffrage history, but I didn't know she was still alive.

She called to find out whether we had passed it because Susan had met her and had been designated for—I've forgotten what her party is—a women's party of some sort. There were six members in Washington State, and Susan was the seventh, she told me. So Miss Paul wanted to know how the election had gone here, you see, and was very pleased. That connection over all those years, and Susan's story, was the big thing that happened for me then.

But the rest of us had to start getting ready for the legislative session, right?
[laughs] I mentioned Jackie Griswold, didn't I?

Boswell: Yes.

Sale: She is deceased, unfortunately. There are a lot of things to say about the work that Jackie did, which I hope I'll get to. Maybe I can focus on that.

Boswell: Sure. Do you want to step back and talk a little bit about NOW and how NOW came to be? I'm curious as to whether ERA became the main reason for NOW to grow here or not.

Sale: Are you talking about NOW locally?

Boswell: Locally.

Sale: Locally, not nationally.

Boswell: Maybe we should step back nationally. I mean, early on, as NOW got started, did ERA become one of its major issues?

Sale: Yes. Yes, but only one. Indeed, locally, it was never the only one, but it became more and more important as a deadline came. I can get to that later because it's part of a development through the 1970s of what happened within the NOW chapter, within Seattle NOW. I don't remember exactly what happened. It might have happened in my early first years on the board when we passed a motion to make the chief work the ERA until the deadline. That didn't mean that other things couldn't happen, but that's where the major focus would be, and where most of the money went. You raised whatever

money you could for that, but I don't have real details. I think I just ran across some of that when I was looking at things last night. Does that answer that question?

Boswell: Yes. But in terms of your own involvement, it evolved from the Status of Women study and then –

Sale: That's right.

Boswell: –getting involved in NOW?

Sale: I joined NOW with Jackie Griswold in November 1972. That fall, and Jackie and I did a lot of going back and forth. Jean Marie Brough, too. Jean Marie had a small child. She wasn't quite as free as we were. Our children were older, Jackie's and mine, and so they were in school, among other things. [laughs] But we went back and forth to Olympia a lot. We would go to the chair of the committee where the legislation was, where the ERA was, and ask if they had any questions. They'd give us questions and we'd come back here and find somebody who could answer that question and go back. I remember doing some of that. I remember a lot of trips down. It wasn't just the two of us. Jean Marie came down when she could, and so did other people who were working.

I am sorry to say that I cannot find something that I have kept all these years, something very precious, which is a photograph of everybody who had come down the day for the final vote outside the legislature on the steps. If I ever find it again, I will certainly get to you or to somebody about it. I know that Bev is on the front with Jean Marie. Let me see. They're holding a sign. And it's Elaine LaTourelle and her friend and, oh– the person that she worked with so much.

This is just talking about who are in the front row holding an “ERA Yes” sign. I'm up there, and practically everybody else I've mentioned. There were a lot of others. I kept it so long, I don't know what could have happened to it. I took everything out of the house. It's here somewhere.

Boswell: Well now, building up to that moment when you came into NOW, how were they structured and how did they divvy up responsibilities? Take an issue like ERA. How was it organized, and how did they divide up responsibilities for different people to work on an issue like that?

Sale: Well, mostly it was people who came to NOW who wanted to do something. We always said, “Yes, fine. Find some other people to work with. What do you want to call your group? And then tell us.” We had several meetings every month. We had a general meeting; we had an action meeting; we had a coordinating council meeting. If I could get one of my many yearly calendars, I could get it very straight. Coordinating was usually a lot of people. We had regular officers. We had presidents, and I say that because it was often—not always, because in the beginning it wasn't. I think when I joined Sue Lane or Jean was president. No, is that right? Jean Withers? That's not right.

Boswell: I think it is—they were co-presidents.

Sale: It is Jean Withers. Yes. Yes. All right. I just was afraid I'd get her name wrong.

Boswell: No, I'm sure you're right.

Sale: They were co-presidents when Jackie and I joined, but we joined in November.

Boswell: Well, I'm just curious how—

Sale: How it worked. People could come with something that was a concern to them. It became a new concern to us, then. We had many issues, and people were working on them and had been right from the beginning, taking some things to the legislature, some things to the city. Some things we just were trying to learn about, and get more people involved in, and figure out what the way to approach it would be, so it was very open. We had to raise money. It was the Golda Meir poster. We had all these wonderful ideas for fundraising. Later we did T-shirts, and we put on garage sales.

There was a wonderful woman, no longer with us, Roberta Mar. She was wonderful at that. She was wonderful at fundraising. She got it, and she had a wonderful sense of humor, and always had us laughing.

All of those things needed to be done. If I grabbed hold of minutes from a meeting, I could tell you more. It was a group of women really interested in what they were doing, really wanting to make a change, really wanting to figure out things about their own lives. They were happy to be with other women like them because many of them felt by themselves.

Well, this is just reminding me of a letter I found last night from a woman in Oklahoma, who wrote to me thanking me for being there and for helping her learn. It's a lovely letter. Maybe I'll read some of it at some point. I kept it because she wrote it so well, and it meant so much to me. It meant something to me about the whole movement. It's the kind of thing that shows how an organization like this—people who were caring about other people like themselves—can change the life of somebody, make them feel part of something other than the family alone. I mean, all of us have families, but these were other like-minded people.

Boswell: Did you find that among those like-minded people in NOW, was it pretty much a certain age group or ethnic group? I mean, how much diversity was there within the backgrounds of some of these people?

Sale: I think it was practically all white. We had relations with African-American people. I had one person I talked to fairly frequently about it, but it was mostly white. I think I'm older than most of them, actually, but it didn't feel like much—five years, maybe. I'm five years older than Jean Marie. Jackie was a year and a half older than I, but that was kind of rare. Elaine is younger, but not by much. I never felt that difference much, but I knew I was. I had been active in the African-American community and those issues. Other people hadn't been quite old enough to get into that. They were still in school or whatever.

Boswell: Now tell me about the first kind of tasks you took on. The ERA became *the* issue—is that fair? When you first started with NOW, it would have been November 1972. You moved into a particular area, I think—legislative lobbying for the federal ERA in Washington? Am I correct about that?

Sale: Yes. That was something we could do. I had done some of that kind of work in the League, which had very strict rules for how you could do it. The national League, I only just realized, okayed the ERA. I mean, it became part of League beliefs. [laughs] I think at the time, I didn't realize that national had done it. I discovered in all my stuff a big magazine that the League created after the ERA didn't pass with the whole history of League involvement in it from the national level. I don't really know what happened locally. From what I knew—from what we all knew—the League did not have a national position on the ERA. They didn't until some point in 1973, I think. I frankly don't know. I wasn't paying attention then to what the League was doing locally. I was still going to those meetings. I think we would have known if the state League was working for it, but I don't think they knew that national was finally doing it.

So we thought the League was not involved because the way League operates is studying a lot of things, taking time to get consensus on what its positions are. You're always in danger of being behind if something is moving fast, and that's what we thought was happening there. I know that League is a very multi-issue organization. It covers a lot of ground and has developed a lot of positions over all the years since suffrage. There are people with many, many different issues that are particular to them. So the ERA would have to pick up all of that. The timing was unfortunate, but it ended up being fine working with League nationally. In all the years trying to get ERA ratified in other states, I worked with various League people in some of the states I was in when they happened to be “gung-ho” about it in that state. Then sometimes they were not; that was not an issue for them.

Boswell: While lobbying in the Washington legislature for passage of the federal amendment, tell me a little bit about how you prepared and what it was like, and what kind of reception that you got from them.

Sale: [laughs] I wish I remembered it better than I do. It's not something I took notes on, so I don't remember. I wish Jackie were here; she would remember every little bit. Jean Marie might remember.

Boswell: So would you go down to Olympia very frequently?

Sale: Sure. The issues of the ERA would be in one committee, maybe in each house. I don't even remember. I think I told you earlier, what we did was go to those committees and to the chairs of those committees, and say that we were pro-ERA people. We would like to know if they had any questions we could help with, what they felt about things, what questions they had that we could go find out about. That's what we did.

It must have gone through one house easily. I think it was the senator from West Seattle who had a lot of questions. I just remember having to answer a lot of his questions, find out answers, and so on.

We would come back here to people who had expertise in that field. There were plenty of women around, but a lot of them were working. Jackie was on leave from the Seattle schools, and she never did go back, actually. I was not working. I never have worked for much money, actually.

I had a graduate degree, a master's degree in library science, and I was going to be a librarian. Every place I went was not hiring when I was there, and it never happened. Every now and then I would try, and it never happened. I don't regret it. So there we are.

I got that degree just before everything started changing. Right? You didn't have card catalogs, and everything is totally different now.

Boswell: Right. Yes.

Sale: So I think it was meant to be, somehow. I was just not meant to do that. That's what I wanted to do as a child because I loved my librarian in grade school. Anyway, that's neither here nor there.

So you got to the people who have the information or could find it, in answering the questions. I know that we had trouble getting it out of the committee that things in the senate get into in order to be sent to the floor. It has a name, and I've forgotten what the name is at the moment. I think it had passed in the house, and we were trying to get it out of the senate, and it was sitting in the "X" committee.

Boswell: Is it Rules? Or would it be—

Sale: It might be Rules. I don't remember, either. I haven't done this in a long time. I know they met in a long room around a great big table. It was a big committee, and everything had to go through it that went down to the floor to actually be worked on. We ended up coming and sitting in chairs behind them with ERA stuff on us, not saying a word, but just sitting there as frequently as we could when they met. They may have met every day, towards the end, and we may have been there every day. We might have gotten people who would come down and sit every day. It finally did come.

There's a wonderful photograph from the *PI* of Jackie and Jean Marie and me sitting in the balcony. It's a wonderful picture. We were sitting in the balcony, or where you sit up there, while this was going on. I think it was in the senate that that picture was taken. Oh, I must find that. It's one of my favorites.

Well, at any rate, I remember the senator from—where was he from? Just north of the Columbia and east of—

Boswell: Not Vancouver?

Sale: Oh, Vancouver. He was east of Vancouver, Washington. He wasn't from there, but he was in a more rural area. He was very funny. He ended up saying, I think, "Well, if we ever want to get rid of these ladies, since they're going to stay around until the end, we might just as well vote on this." [laughter] Something like that. He was very amusing. I'm sure we had been trying to lobby all of those people all along. I know that there were other people involved, probably doing things in ways they could, so it wouldn't have been just the handful I saw when I happened to be around it.

Boswell: What were the concerns that many of these people had about ERA? Were there specific things that they were really worried about in Washington?

Sale: I think you'd have to ask them. [laughs]

Boswell: Yes. I just was curious whether a lot of the questions had to do more with the legal changes that would be required? When we read anti-ERA literature, people were worried about women and the draft or undermining family values. But I would think in the legislature—

Sale: It wasn't questions like that, that I'm aware of.

Boswell: Right. It would be more about the legal and—

Sale: Yes.

Boswell: —legislative ramifications of what had to be done.

Sale: Yes. Yes....

Boswell: Now didn't you give some testimony, though, before the legislature?

Sale: I did. I did. [laughs] Oh, I haven't thought about that. Did somebody else tell you about that? Or did you read something?

Boswell: No. I just read it somewhere.

Sale: You read it someplace. Well, at this time, I was an elder.

Boswell: An elder?

Sale: I was a regular elder in the Presbyterian church in the Central area—Madrona Presbyterian. I decided that I would dress in a dress – at that point, I wasn't always wearing slacks – and go and testify as an elder in the Presbyterian church, supporting the Equal Rights Amendment. It's funny, I haven't found my writing about that, either. I don't remember exactly what I said. It's too bad. That was fun. I liked acting. [laughs]

Boswell: Were you nervous, though?

Sale: Of course.

Boswell: Was that an intimidating situation or not?

Sale: Well, no, it's not intimidating, but it's a little scary. You've got to be on your toes.

Boswell: And so you prepare something and then they ask you questions? Tell me a little bit about—

Sale: Oh, they don't. No, I think a lot of people were testifying. I think they said thank you to all of us. I don't remember anybody asking me a question. That could easily happen. I'm sure that individual legislators could have a question for an individual speaker, but I don't remember being asked. I remember doing it with a lot of other people, wearing a dress—a very pretty dress. [laughs]

Boswell: That's great.

Sale: I thought, well, that was one thing I could do, anyway.

Boswell: Did you feel like they were listening and taking it to heart?

Sale: Yes, yes, yes. Yes.

Boswell: That's great.

Sale: I may have used Jackie Robinson again.

It was wonderful, feeling that you were really trying to make a difference about something you really cared about. That was there always. That's what made all of the work from beginning to end so wonderful, so rewarding and important to you. You know, when it was all over, gradually, the NOW chapter became very weak. I'm still a member. In the last few years it has activated itself again, but not in the same kind of way. I thought that at this point in my life, I can't really get into the middle of that, and who would want to have a seventy-six year old coming around out of the past. Anyway, I just haven't had the energy to do anything about that. That was kind of sad because there were so many other issues to go on with, and I don't really know quite what happened. I know I was active trying to help with it for a long time.

Boswell: Concerning the ratification in Washington of the federal amendment. Looking back, how big of a role do you think NOW played? What do you credit with the success of that effort?

Sale: Well, I don't know when the League got into it. There were other organizations that came into being that didn't exist yet. So I think what we did really helped.

Helen Sommers was there, and that could make a lot of difference. She will be able to say more about what happened. You probably have realized that there was legislation to change all the things in existing law that needed the language changed because of this amendment.

The other thing we haven't mentioned, that really made a difference, is the Washington State Women's Council. Was Gisela the head then?

Boswell: Yes. Gisela Taber.

Sale: Gisela was there at this point. Have you talked to Gisela, too?

Boswell: I haven't personally, but someone has, yes.

Sale: So she can give answers to what was going on there. We always went to her first to find out what was going on before we did anything when we went down there. We would meet other people there. I don't know whether the political caucus had started by then, but the already existing organizations did,

Boswell: I'm sorry. Not the Women's Political Caucus—

Sale: No, not the Women's Political Caucus. It's an old, respected women's organization.

Boswell: Oh. AAUW?

Sale: Yes. American Association of University Women. Yes.

Boswell: Do you remember your reaction when it did pass? When the federal ERA passed in Washington? You mentioned the picture of all of you on the stairs.

Sale: Oh, yes. We were grinning! We were all grinning. Oh, yes. We were jumping up and down. Oh, yes. It was wonderful. We had done both, you know? It all happened in less than a year. It was crazy. We were very happy with our legislature, I'll tell you, and with the state. There were times I came back from other places, and coming over the mountains, feeling I was getting home and saying, "Thank god for this state to be where I live." [laughter] You look at things in this state and you know it's mostly the people who are around Seattle who are so strongly—what?

Boswell: Well, activists, if nothing else.

Sale: Well, yes. The other people, the anti-ERA people, were active, but they were mostly being primed by people from out of state, I think, like Phyllis Schlafly in Illinois. Yes, she's from Illinois. Is she still around?

All of their help was coming from out of state. Not that there's anything wrong with that, but there are still people who feel the same way about these things.

Boswell: Was there much interaction between the pro-ERA people and some of the anti-ERA groups that were in Washington State, too?

Sale: When there were public meetings and we were asked to go. Jean Marie did that a lot. I was no good at doing that, so I didn't do it. There were meetings, but I have the feeling that a lot of them were after this and were about abortion and not about the ERA.

Boswell: Not so much about—

Sale: The ERA all happened so fast. I think that the opposition took a while to figure out, from their point of view, what the most effective reasons for not supporting it were. I mean, what could they sell to the most people? I heard a lot of that in Oklahoma. I was on the radio a few times, and one of the first things they would do is segue from talking about the Equal Rights Amendment to talking about abortion, as if there was a connection. They convinced a lot of people that there was a connection there. There isn't the foggiest connection. So they developed a lot of things that would segue to other things that would be frightening, annoying, to people they were trying to reach. It was very successful and it's still successful. You know how hard it is to get enough support, and they get lots of money.

Then there is the fact that medicine has changed in these thirty years, so that it's not just a question of a baby not being able to survive at eight months the way it was. Now you're down to eggs. [laughs]

Boswell: So it has changed.

Sale: Yes. The same kind of difference is there that was there with the ERA. Pro-choice people are talking about a woman, her body, her life, what is possible, who should make a choice—that whole way—whereas the people who are anti-choice talk about babies, and infants; not infants, but babies. Everything “pre” we used to say, when we were talking about it. It's been true for a long time. They're always talking about babies *in utero*. They're never talking about the baby after it's born—where it's going to go, what its home is going to be. Does the woman have a home? Is she healthy? Any of those other questions never seem to come out.

Boswell: I wanted to talk a little bit more about post-ERA ratification in Washington and its effect on NOW, and your own role in NOW after that. So tell me a little bit about the effects on NOW and on your activities as the ERA campaign in Washington came to a close.

Sale: Well, I think there were so many other issues and the fact that the ERA was closed and positively made us all feel very good and gave us confidence that if we learned what we needed to learn and were careful about it and smart and so on, that we could go on having an impact. Learning how to talk well about issues that we care a lot about makes a huge difference. This is something for all of us, so there were all kinds of issues.

I've got one piece of paper here. I thought at some point it would be probably useful to know something like this, so I wrote this down. These were all things that are in the *NOWsletter*, the monthly publication of the chapter. Here are issues for 1973 that start with the ERA, but they simultaneously continue with women in religion, discrimination in credit and insurance in the state, divorce reform, family, marriage licenses, athletics, sports of all kind for young women, which really became a very big subject. I like to think it was the beginning of the change in athletics, and particularly in higher education institutions, but all over, just the attitude of all of us who watch them on television, if nothing else. We gave that to young women, really, so that became bigger than any of us knew it was going to at the time.

At the other end, we also had a group dealing with aging, women's aging. Abortion was a subject; that's another subject, actually, I don't know too much about. And then childcare, and a big one, really, was women and justice. It really had to do with rape. My close friend Jackie Griswold and Elaine LaTourelle were involved, but Jackie started it. After we got the ERA passed, Jackie did not join NOW right away. She asked for and was made a member of the Women's Commission of the City of Seattle. That involved an office for the city called the Office of Women's Rights. A year earlier, we were just getting involved with all of this. The city was trying to do something that we didn't approve of, dealing with a much smaller women's commission and women's office, with Millie Henry – there's a name I didn't forget – who was the only staff person, I think. They decided that they wanted to put it into some larger group, where it would be lost.

There was a NOW meeting in the downtown YMCA, in the evening. The city council was having some kind of an evening public hearing, and all those women got so angry about this issue that we all left and walked down Sixth Avenue, I guess. We walked in there and said that we had grave problems with their proposal to do this to the women's office.

Well, I was brand new here, but I had done a lot of League stuff with the city council. And Melissa Thompson and I, and somebody else I can't remember ended up rewriting the legislation to create the Office of Women's Rights, and not merge it into some other bigger umbrella organization, but have it come directly out of the mayor's office. At my very beginning of all of this, before the ERA stuff and everything, I was helping to write that. I still have all those things, different drafts that we had before we got them finished. So that was Melissa Thompson, who is another name that would be interesting. That was, because we were Seattle NOW; therefore, Seattle's government and what was happening in the city was important to all of us. Any time we could work on one of our issues in a way that had to do with the city, then we did that. That was one of the examples, and we were very supportive. And indeed, my first co-president applied for and got the job as the first director of the new—

Boswell: Office of Women's Rights?

Sale: Office of Women's Rights, yes.

Boswell: Now you mentioned co-president. So take us back and tell me how you got involved in—

Sale: How that happened?

Boswell: Yes, in the political structure of NOW.

Sale: Okay. I remember it very well. We were in Jackie Griswold's house for some kind of a meeting, like a general meeting. We were both not a year yet in membership. I knew Susan Magee. I think we liked each other. I have a photograph when everybody who wanted went to somebody's cottage in the San Juans. Elaine and Betty Kersh, who were seniors to all of us. They had a lot to teach us about how to go about organizing things,

and so on. We were given lessons, and so I think Susan and I got to know each other better there.

Subsequently we went to a meeting and other people, older members, came up to us and said, "Will you consider running for office?" Oh, what were we called, anyway? Co-presidents. We talked about it, and we decided we could. And we did. Given the Office of Women's Rights thing, she decided that that was something she would like to do, so she did. Linda Miller, who was the vice president, came up with me, and we had six months of good time together. I really enjoyed all of the people that I worked with.

Then I decided I'd run again. I don't remember whether anybody asked me, but nobody said that I shouldn't. That was because Jean Marie and I were going to do it together.

Boswell: And had you gotten to know Jean Marie Brough through NOW?

Sale: Not through the ERA, but through the League meetings. We met on the League Status of Women. At any rate, that's where we got to know each other better, but I'd liked her for a long time. She was a League member. She had a money background; she handles money.

Boswell: Finance or something?

Sale: Financial person, yes. So she did that for the ERA campaign, the state one, and then she stayed. For League, I think, she did a year of legislative lobbying work.

Boswell: So now tell me about, as co-president, what were some of your duties?

Sale: What we did was divvy up things. I mean, we divvied up the number of groups that were doing subjects. Then there were things like fundraising, and whether we could get a decent office, and where that would be—all those ordinary kinds of organizational jobs.

Boswell: You and I have also talked about the fact that outside of NOW, you were involved in other activities that had to do with women's rights and also built on your knowledge of organizing. One we just were talking about was a handbook that you did for the city. So tell me just a little bit about that.

Sale: Well, my husband and I were going on his sabbatical to England. I decided that we could use some more money. I may have met this woman somehow through NOW, but I don't remember it...I applied and was hired and did it.

Boswell: And it's called *To Whom it Does Concern, A Procedural Handbook*.

Sale: That was my title. It was very much like a similar thing I had done for the League of Women Voters of Seattle. We had done something that was not as specific, not as detailed as this one that the city wanted. I think it was a relatively new office that people could come to for information about the city. How do I get this done? How do I get that done? Where do I go to do this? Where can I find that? All those kinds of things. They

decided they wanted to have one like this that citizens could use. This was all my League stuff coming to the fore, but I'm a pretty good organizational person. It was fun doing it. I learned a lot about the city.

Boswell: It's a neat publication.

Sale: I made some money. Then we went off in July or August or something.

Boswell: In 1976, right? To England?

Sale: Yes, yes, in the fall of 1976. That's why I did not get involved in the work to put on the Ellensburg convention. It had not been made public as something that was going to happen by the time we left, and nobody told me. [laughs] Nobody wrote me.

Boswell: Were you able to keep in touch with ongoing activities in Seattle while you were gone, or not?

Sale: No, no. I couldn't. I got a couple of letters early on, but I wasn't very good at writing them back, so it didn't happen. It was all brand new to me when I got back. It was only like three weeks before the convention.

Boswell: Yes. The International Women's Year Conference in Ellensburg.

Sale: Yes. I don't think I knew about International Women's Year. I might not have read it in any English paper.

Boswell: I was going to ask you if while you were there, did anything strike you about the women's movement in England?

Sale: In England? Yes. Yes.

Boswell: Some of the differences?

Sale: I'm glad you asked that. My favorite picture was taken by a photographer from the *Seattle Times* when I came home and was asked the same question. I wish I could have an original. [laughs] Anyway, I'll have to show you that. It's my favorite picture of myself of all time. The answer was that it was very discouraging and that there wasn't much. It only existed in London. I managed to go to a meeting with an English friend of mine at the time at Oxford, an ancient university town. They had a sign up saying they were going to have a meeting at some point, and we went to the meeting. I wish I could remember what it was called. I just found a very small group of very timid women who didn't have any sense. I asked them a lot of questions. They must have wondered where I'd come from. Well, I was clearly American, so that was no problem, but I meant it metaphorically.

They had a national publication that came out of London. Everything was based in London, but then, that's kind of what England is like. I bought it all the time we were

there and brought it home with me. I've forgotten what it's called, but they were trying to do what they could do in London, and maybe the London area. That's a big hunk of the population, but I didn't find anything going on there that was close to what we were doing in Seattle, let alone the whole country. So that's the answer to that question.

Boswell: But so then you came back and were thrust almost immediately into International Women's Year at the Ellensburg conference.

Sale: That's right. Yes. I did what I was asked to do. I followed Jackie around, and Jean Marie, and tried to make sure they got something to eat, or they could take a nap or something. [laughs] The last night was really very dramatic. I'll never forget it. What happened is that the people who put it on and had done all the organizing for having this happen imagined that every women's group or any group who wanted to come could come to this event, and so you would have a lot of women with different interests. I think they anticipated three thousand women, or something like that, and so you'd expect there to be maybe half a dozen kinds of approaches to issues. Then you'd have a vote on whether you liked this one or this one. That's the kind of thing that we would normally anticipate happening.

Instead, you had three thousand people show up without having registered ahead of time, so that you immediately have trouble with where they can sleep, where they can eat, let alone what they're interested in. Plus the fact that they're all going to vote the way they're told to vote. I say that knowing that I looked and saw men with headphones to communicate with other people, and saw them telling these women how to vote on a given issue.

So we felt that in order to have any chance to have some of the things that we cared most about pass, we were going to have to get together and decide: a) what those subjects would be; b) who would be the person to speak about it.

At any rate, that night there was a big meeting after everything else that was official, so it didn't start till like 10:30 or 11:00 PM. Everybody who was representing an organization with issues came together. Jean Marie, I think, co-chaired that meeting. We were in a big room. People were sitting on the floor. She was standing up. There was somebody else who was doing it with her. I don't remember at this point who that was. I was there partly out of curiosity and partly to be a runner if things were needed. I listened to all this happen. It was really a remarkable example of how people can—and maybe women can—get together and change things when it's clear that change has to happen or everything will fail.

It worked. I think it must have left a lot of people with a good feeling about being able to do something like that with women. A lot of women got into all of this, not normally seeing many women. If they were working someplace that had women, instead of being around men all the time, that would make a difference. But if they were homebodies, like me—I didn't see a lot of women all the time. So it was getting comfortable with and learning how to talk, how to think so that you can talk, and then we could all get somewhere. It was a wonderful thing, and all kinds of women learned it through the women's movement.

We used to go after NOW meetings to a restaurant kind of place that had a big round place around a great big round table. A lot of us could get in there, and we talked

just about life for an hour after meetings. I have a vivid image of that. I really, really liked that. Anyway, it took me off in that direction. I think that more or less finished it?

Boswell: Yes. There is another whole website on the International Women's Year, and I think there's some interesting and important information there. You eventually went on to take on some other issues, and ultimately to become involved in national NOW activities, and I wanted to talk a little bit more about that. In terms of post-ERA ratification in Washington, I know the issue did come up of rescinding the ERA in Washington State. Is that something that you got involved in as well?

Sale: Yes. Well, I got back in June from England, just in time for the Ellensburg convention, and for the big one that was happening in Texas later. It was quite a while before I settled in anyplace else.

An important thing happened, which was in October of that year after Ellensburg and all the rest of it, the national board came and had its meeting in Seattle. The national board did that because it wanted to get to different parts of the country and meet NOW members in different places. As a result, I got a lot of information about new things that were happening that I didn't know about. A lot of that was talk about the fact that the Equal Rights Amendment was originally created with a seven-year period, which Congress had gotten in the habit of doing. We could see the end of the seven years coming, so the talk was of extending the ERA ratification process. That was an important thing to learn about.

Then, there was also the question of this suit that had been drawn up in Idaho for some states. Idaho was one of them that had previously supported the Equal Rights Amendment and now wanted to rescind their support. It was called a rescission issue. There were a number of other states, but I've forgotten exactly which ones. Indeed, there were three male members of the Washington State Legislature, who had been trying to do the same thing in Washington and ended up unsuccessfully in Washington. They went and became part of the one that was in Idaho. This was a great underlying annoyance, but it was also a real threat. It became something that I dealt with in Wyoming and North Dakota afterwards. Is that all clear?

Boswell: Yes.

Sale: ... This is called "The Extension/Rescission Lawsuit," and it began March 23, 1979, when three legislators from the State of Washington filed suit against the governor and the secretary of state of Washington. They were Claude Oliver, Kent Pullen and Richard Guess. They were plaintiffs versus Dixy Lee Ray and Bruce K. Chapman, defendants. The issue was the constitutionality of the ERA extension, which is a subject we haven't talked about.

Boswell: We haven't talked about it.

Sale: I did some real stuff in there, and that's what happened before my going on the road and after I was president. A lot of things happened. The plaintiffs were seeking an order to compel the governor and the secretary of state to retrieve Washington's

ratification document because the original time period for ratification had expired on March 22, 1979....

I became someone for national NOW to work with when there were things that they wanted to do more locally. It was interesting that the Washington starters agreed to give up their case and go with the one that started in Idaho. That's where it went on. The judge was a Mormon, and the Mormon Church was clearly anti-ERA, so that was a problem for all of us. It went on being a problem until the end of the extension period, actually, but a lot of things had to be done. It took a lot of time and energy from national as well as me. I don't remember whether anybody else needed to do any of that. Of course, I had a lot of help from other local NOW people.

Boswell: But so, during this period, there were some states who wanted to try to rescind their vote on the ERA.

Sale: Yes. Yes.

Boswell: How did you get involved in field work to educate people in some of these areas? Tell me how you first got involved.

Sale: I don't remember how I first got involved. I'm sure I got something from national telling me that this had happened. We had to learn all about what this history was. One of the interesting things was, although it made no difference in the long run, but Congress had started adding a time limit on things that they sent to the people only fairly recently. Not this century, but the last century. There wasn't really much in the way of precedent.

Decision-making about how to organize things in Congress is up to Congress, not to the courts. The courts are really interfering with congress, which is a different third of the government, right?

Boswell: Right.

Sale: But as so often happens with court cases, which is why I think people do things like this in the first place—if there's something that there's an argument about, they go to court because it will take forever to get out. In fact, it kept on going until the extension itself expired. I think maybe by that time, most of us had realized that there had been what I like to call a change in direction. The pendulum had swung as far as it was going in that direction, and it was now going in another direction. Indeed, it is now almost thirty years later, and I hope that it will turn out to be again going in a new direction now. I've been holding my breath ever since. Almost thirty years worth, I think—twenty-nine. At any rate, we had started realizing that we're probably not going to have enough time to get to all the states

I was a state vice president of NOW in what, 1977, 1978 or something like that? We were having a meeting which Jean Marie was attending. Jean Marie was a national NOW board member at this point. I think Grace Van Horn at that point was president of Washington State NOW. At any rate, Jean Marie came up to me and said she had just come from a board meeting, and she had had a demonstration for a new way of handling phone banks. She asked me if I'd be interested at all in learning this new process that

national had developed, I guess, to get a more efficient way to use the telephone. It seems odd in the year 2009, but that's all we had then.

I said, "Yes." Frankly, I can't remember how I learned it. I must have gone someplace, but I did. She asked me if I would go to Oregon, in our region, because there were several chapters down there that wanted to learn how to do this. The immediate problem to address was extension of the period of time that we could get the ERA ratified.

So I did. I hadn't done anything like that before. It was before I did all that traveling. I drove to Oregon and went to several NOW chapters, met a lot of people who were interesting to me later, and made a difference. I got to know how to do this better than I had, just learning it by watching other people do it.

Then I came back and told Jean Marie I thought it was good. At that point, I realized that in just the little time that I had been gone, everybody had been talking about extending the ERA period, when we could get it ratified.

It was about time for a national convention—we don't call them conventions, but conferences—a national NOW conference. I suppose maybe it was taking place in Washington, but maybe not. We usually traveled to national conferences. While I was on the board, I went to a number of different places. It was only at the end of the ERA when we went to Washington every time for a little while.

So I began to realize that if we were going to get some help extending, we were going to have to have a good phone bank in Seattle. I thought I could do that. I don't remember whether I was asked to or not, but I ended up doing that. I had a friend who volunteered the use of his law firm with eight or nine phone lines in it, which is the most we'd ever seen.

I stayed home. Everybody else went to the NOW convention. We got League involved, and any other organization that was involved at all, and we trained everybody in this way of doing it. You have a piece of paper. Now everybody does it. All those people who were doing phoning for Obama this year were using this way of doing it. That was kind of nice to know. Everybody's been doing it for a long time now. We hope that made a difference. I don't know. I think when everybody came home, they also did it. I don't remember how long we went on doing it. So that was a real change. I've forgotten which year is this?

Boswell: Well, 1978 was the year Congress voted for the extension, but it didn't start until 1979. I believe you were saying 1977 or 1978.

Sale: Well, if 1978 was when they voted, that's probably when we were doing the phoning, because that's when you want to phone.

Boswell: Right.

Sale: You want people to call their legislators and vote the way you want them to vote. So it was probably 1978. Jean Marie was on the national board in 1977 and 1978. I started in 1979, so that timing is about right. I had been starting new chapters in Washington, and then this came up. That was what I was up to at the state NOW level.

Boswell: And it was the state NOW position that was a stepping stone to a national position? Is that how it works?

Sale: Yes, it helps. Yes. Sure. You get to know more about your state. Every time you do something like that, you have a larger group of people to learn about and also how different various parts of the state are. I know that a number of people have said that our current governor was reelected because she really spent a lot of time in Eastern Washington, and in all different kinds of places there. It is what Hillary Clinton did when she ran for the Senate for the first time. She went to upstate New York, all over. In New York State, most of the emphasis is all on New York City. That really made an impact on those Democrats who had been given no wherewithal for a long time because everybody assumed that they were all Republicans. It made a big difference to them and to her, too. It's the same kind of thing. You want to go farther with your message and with your concerns, and try to involve other people, help people to think about things they may not have thought about before.

Boswell: Was that your primary motivation for getting involved in the national NOW board or for running for that office?

Sale: Yes. I knew increasingly how hard the work was, and I wanted to help and have some kind of impact. It was very important to me. The ERA is still important to me. For a lot of people, it's not important to have one of these simple generalized statements. But when they're attached to the constitution of the country, and they will affect everybody, and it's very important to women, it's like going back and being a suffragist, having a chance to make that kind of a change. It makes things better for women. Here we are, more than 50 percent of the voters, and not being treated the way we should be—equally.

Boswell: Right.

Sale: Still, thirty years later, it is not much different. I knew that. I had a daughter. Still have her, by the way.

Boswell: [laughs] In terms of the national NOW, could you just give a little bit of background about the relationship of the national board to the state and local organizations? Can you tell me a little bit about how it was organized regionally, so that what you were doing on the regional level, how that fit into it?

Sale: When I first joined, I think all the western half of the country was one area. I don't remember at what point the country was broken up into nine regions. That made a big difference. Elaine LaTourelle must have been involved in that at some point. At any rate, I can't answer that.

I think it works. When you've been on a board of a local organization, you know that the higher ups are just a different variation of the same thing. You learn the important things: how to talk to each other, how to encourage things to happen by working together, following whatever the reasons are for existing that are written down somewhere for your organization. That's true of national, also. The national board is

made up of people elected by those regions. I think that must have happened while Elaine was on the board, but anyway, there was a period of great unrest in NOW. It came out of it, but there was some hard feeling there and real difficulty. I think Elaine talked about it in her interview.

I remember wondering whether I would be taken by board members who'd been on the other side. That never happened. I got plenty of respect and had plenty of respect from others. I was impressed if Ellie Smeal would call me up when I was in North Dakota, Wyoming somewhere, to find out what was happening, where I was about this. It was that kind of connection.

Boswell: When you got involved in the national organization—

Sale: There were a lot of things other than ERA going on.

Boswell: Yes. In terms of NOW in the Northwest region, what states were part of the area that you represented once you were elected to the NOW board?

Sale: Oh, oh. Six very large states, of which I guess Washington was probably the smallest: Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. I spent time in all of them. I helped to start chapters in all of them. Actually, my first and last trip to Alaska was after the ERA was dead, but I started a couple of chapters up there. It was wonderful to go up. Kay and I, and then Betsy and I, went to a lot of state conferences. They were electing state representatives and getting together on issues. What are we going to do about this that's happening, and how can we make that better? And also just getting to know each other, and how to help local chapters if they needed help.

Boswell: Right. So you mentioned Kay and Betsy. Would there be always two representatives from a region to the NOW board?

Sale: I can't remember whether there were some regions with three. I simply don't remember.

Boswell: But the Northwest region had two. Is that right?

Sale: Yes. We chose to both be the same. Some regions had one person who was local and one who was national. I mean, they divided differently. We decided that each of us would have responsibilities within our region and for national board things. With us, that worked very well because we could help each other in both ways and learn the same things at the same time. You go to Alaska; I'll go to Oregon.

Boswell: When you first were on the national board, then, you served with whom?

Sale: With Kay Keskinen and then Betsy. I was trying to remember Betsy's last name, who was my second partner between 1981 and 1983. My first two years were 1979 to 1980 to part of 1981. What can I say? Both experiences were very rich and fine. Betsy is no longer with us, but Kay is, and we're still in touch with each other.

Boswell: So aside from keeping in touch with chapters throughout the six-state area, you ended up doing a lot of fieldwork.

Sale: And tried to grow new ones.

Boswell: Right. Add to them and support them on issues?

Sale: Support them on issues and be somebody they can get information from or tell me things to take to national. I should tell you what kind of work we did on the national board, which I don't have that in front of me at this point. I know I was on a membership committee. We had different committees, like any board, to do in-house and out-of-house things and to make major decisions. We did have a permanent hired president, and four—I think it was four—positions. I haven't paid much attention lately, whether it's changed or not. I do know the current president. I met when she was a brand new person on the national board, and she's been an active person ever since. She's been president for some time now, and she was a different officer before that.

Boswell: Tell me who was president at the time you joined, and a little bit about your relationship with her.

Sale: Ellie Smeal. Ellie Smeal. Yes.

Boswell: Tell me a little bit about her.

Sale: Well, she's from Western Pennsylvania. She's younger than I am. She just never lets go. Actually, I had two presidents because she left. I've forgotten whether she was starting a different organization or she was doing other things. My second term was with a different national president from Wisconsin, Judy Goldsmith.

Boswell: That's okay.

Sale: Then Ellie came back after that again. I don't know how long she stayed. She has another organization, the Feminist Majority, which she founded. She's always been the one the media go to, but also to the current president. They often do things together, I think. Whereas at least around here, the local NOW chapter found ways to continue with other issues. I'm not quite clear what happened here, but it took a long time for it to fade and not really be active. Now there are some young people who started it back, but it's not the same political situation that it was then. We're pulling ourselves out of a thirty-year period when women, feeling this way about themselves, had to work against the pressure of the majority feelings at this time or the people in charge.

Good things have happened. There are a lot more women elected to public office. That makes a huge difference. The National Women's Political Caucus has been great about that. I think national NOW has also done that and there are other women's organizations that have come into being to do that, and that's been good. I think a lot of us realized we had to get in and take over as many legislatures that we could in order to do this kind of thing. Maybe it would work now that we've had a change of the pendulum

and we have a new president coming from a different direction. I'd love to have it happen all over again. I'd be there. [laughter]

Boswell: Didn't you do some of your first field organization for NOW before you were on its board?

Sale: Just at the very beginning.

Boswell: Tell me a little bit about that.

Sale: Well, Jean Marie asked me to go or invited me to go with her to a board meeting because I had just come back after volunteering my time and work to Ellie Smeal. Jean Marie gave me a good push. I was in Wyoming and also, I think, North Dakota. Legislators meet in the winter, especially in farm country, because that's when they're not needed outside. So I went to both of those states that were trying to rescind. The word was to just go and be very low key, low, not publicly there, saying, "Here's NOW come to help you." No, after some training, I went to Wyoming first to a wonderful woman with a lot of experience with her legislature. She knew all of them. She lived in Cheyenne. I think that she was in Cheyenne. I fell in love with Wyoming, which I'd already been through once or twice with family. I always liked it, but this was even nicer. It only took a couple of weeks to keep the rescission from being passed.

Then I went to where Roger was at that time, Roger being my husband. He was in California, teaching in a different place. So I went to California and got warm and waited to be called by Ellie and told where to go next. I was called, finally, and I went to North Dakota. [laughs] I flew from California to Seattle, spending the night with Jean Marie and getting up to date on what was going on, and then taking off and getting to North Dakota, where the situation was the same, but the nature of the land and the place was different. I had a lot of people to work with. I could tell you more if I looked in my book, but my book is mostly about phone calls. Most of this work is phone calls, or maybe phone calls ending up with a meeting someplace. Rather than having one person to be out in front who knew exactly what to do—who to go and see and ask about something—I rented a car and went and did it. The same thing happened in North Dakota, but there were a lot more people, although it's a very small population. So is Wyoming. It was very cold, I must say. We did keep it from happening there, too.

But that's what happened. Jean Marie said, "Come to the board meeting in the spring," so I could meet Ellie Smeal. Ellie could lay eyes on me, and we could talk more. At the end of that, she asked me if I'd be willing to go to Florida and talk to people, both up in the northwest and then I ended up going down north of Miami. Something happened while we there, and whatever my reason was for being there no longer existed, so I went home. But it's that kind of trying to be available to people when there is something that they want help with. Sometimes just being there is a help, feeling that you're part of something more than your state or your city or whatever can help.

What did I do when I got home? I got ready for our regional conference and got elected to the board with Kay Keskinen. That's the next story.

Boswell: This is a second interview recorded with Dorothy Sale on March 31, 2009. We're working with the Women's History Consortium on a project to document the ERA in Washington State. I want to get started today with Dorothy, perhaps stepping back just a little bit. We've talked a lot about your field organizing efforts early on, but I want to bring people up to date about your involvement in NOW, the national board of NOW, and how you came to that point. So let's get started by having you tell me a little bit about your move onto the national board of NOW.

Sale: How that happened?

Boswell: Right. In the Northwest, and I guess, perhaps, the state of Washington in particular, was there a representative on the national NOW board prior to you?

Sale: Oh, yes. Both Elaine LaTourelle and Betty Kersh had been on the board from 1973 to 1975 as well as 1975 to 1977. Then Jean Marie Brough followed from 1977 to 1979. We were co-presidents of Seattle NOW together. When Jean Marie ran for the national board, she said she only wanted to do one election, and she asked me if I'd do it afterwards, and I said, "Yes." I thought that was very nice and would be very interesting. It was after we had had our time in England. I was working with Jean Marie, to a certain extent. I was trying to be helpful to her in all the time this was going on, when I didn't have any major work. I had no major responsibility, but hopefully I was being helpful in other ways. [laughs]

Boswell: So in terms of actual election to the national board, how did that process work? There was a vote on the regional level, correct?

Sale: Yes. Yes.

Boswell: To choose people for the board?

Sale: Maybe I should describe what the region was. Have I done that?

Boswell: No, I think that's a good idea.

Sale: Okay. Our region had six states in it. Each one was very large, and the kind that the East Coast is not familiar with. Okay? So we start with Alaska, and then Washington, probably the smallest. Also there was Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Wyoming, if you can imagine. The population doesn't add up to some of the biggest states, but it's one heck of a lot of ground to cover, and very beautiful, also. Regions like that are required by the laws of the organization to meet every two years and elect members to go to the national board to represent everybody in the region on the national board. Jean Marie was elected in 1977. Elaine LaTourelle, especially, was important nationally, and she did not want to run again. I had said that I would run in 1979, and I did, and then again in 1981.

I went to a board meeting before I was actually elected because of what I had been doing. Also I had talked to Jean Marie about it, and she knew what was happening at the national level in terms of the Equal Rights Amendment and also about this

rescission problem. She had sent me off, she had given me information about a new method that national had developed to use telephones— this was all pre-computers. So it's very different. You'll have to imagine it's a different world, if you're a young person listening to this. You really had to use the telephone to connect with people. This was a matter which you could teach people. It was easy. All you needed was the phone in order to really get out into your community and try to find people who were interested in your subjects—if they had other people they could tell you about, if they would write, if they would call, or whatever the issue was at the moment.

So I learned how to do that. She got me the information. She then asked me to go to Oregon to three different local chapters. I worked on learning how to teach it by doing that on one weekend, I guess, and came back. At which point Jean Marie was about to go to a board meeting, and she asked me to come along with her.

After I had been to Oregon, Jean Marie had talked to Ellie Smeal, who was the national president at that point, who was looking for people to go to the states that were threatening to rescind their ERA support and become a “field organizer,” that is the term, and she asked me if I would be interested in that. I said, “Yes,” so she talked to Ellie and, sight unseen, it was agreed that that would happen. At that point, my husband was going to teach in California instead of in Washington, and we had somebody living in our house.

I ended up going to Wyoming actually first. Just when he was leaving I also went to Idaho, where the person who was going to train me was, and I spent time there and met Kay Keskinen, with whom I was elected to the national board the next year. Then I went to Wyoming and worked with the contact person we had there to help that state *not* rescind. We were successful doing that. Then I came back to Washington until I was told where to go next. That's when I did go to California to see my husband (laughs).

I came back through Seattle and saw Jean Marie again, and ended up in North Dakota. These are northern states with great amounts of snow, which was all pretty exciting. That was a much longer stay, but for the same reason. I made a lot of great contacts there, people who I still really have great regard for. I was back in North Dakota two years later when similar things were happening.

Boswell: So then the regional convention for the election to the national board took place in 1979?

Sale: After that, in the summer. You see all of these things were taking place in the winter. A lot of states, like Washington, start in January and end in March. It is all based on a farm background. So, by early spring everything was finished. We had our regular, every-two-year convention in the summer. I think it was July or August. I don't remember exactly—probably July. That was when Kay and I were elected to the national board.

Boswell: Can you tell me quickly a little bit about Kay?

Sale: We liked each other very much. She is the first person I know who worked with a computer. She was working at the University of Idaho. Moscow, Idaho, was where she lived. She took me in to see the computer. It took the floor space of two huge rooms.

She was very early in getting into this, and later, I think, did national things while it was all changing. We liked each other very much, and we worked very well together. We had a good time.

I think I got a computer around this time. It was a small one, an Apple—an Apple box. I loved it. When I had problems I called her. I had some other friends, too, who could do that.

So that was who Kay was. She was very good about all kinds of things, and we had a really good time

Boswell: When you are elected to the national board, you really have more than one role as a national board member. There really are a lot of very complex responsibilities.

Sale: How can you tell? [laughs]

Boswell: Can you tell me a little bit more, first generally, about the different hats that you wear as a national board member for NOW and then we'll talk more specifically

Sale: We were regional co-directors, Kay and I. Not all regions had the same way of organizing themselves, and this is how our region had chosen to do it. We each had both jobs. In other places, one might do one job and one the other. We both wanted to do both. We were there for the connection between everybody locally and at home, and what was happening nationally—on the national board. It's a very interesting connection, and we both tried to get out as much information out as possible. We had limited funds, and that was because the region didn't have much in the way of funds. We started something called the *Northwest Regional Times*, but I don't think we made more than one or two issues, partly because we didn't have the funds. We also got very, very busy [laughs] with the national board stuff, which was mostly the Equal Rights Amendment.

It was a very interesting way of being in between, and having your hands, your mind, your ears in both places. The connection-making is very important. You can't be a good national organization without a way to connect with the people who support you, both with money and with other kinds of working. We were very glad to be that way. Not all of our six states had a state organization. Two of them, I think Alaska and Wyoming, had local chapters, but they didn't have a state organization where everybody in the state could get together. That was something I worked on later, after the ERA died.

Boswell: How did you and Kay deal with six states in such a huge area?

Sale: Well, we tried to make contact with the way the local people are organized. When they had conventions, we went to them. When we were asked to come, we went. We often went together. We met Sonja Johnson, the Mormon woman who supported the Equal Rights Amendment and was excommunicated as a result. She must have known somebody in Montana. We were going to Montana because they were having a state-wide meeting, I guess. What I remember mostly is being in a comfortable big room somewhere with a lot of NOW people, and Sonja Johnson talking to us. We were asking her questions and figuring out whether this particular thing that was happening would

have an impact. Maybe it would, and how she was. She had a family with children. I don't really know what happened to her finally that way.

Boswell: Because of her activities with ERA, she had essentially been...

Sale: She wrote a book. They were interviewing her on national television and things like that.

Boswell: But she had literally been forced out of the church?

Sale: Yes, she had. Yes, she had. She refused to do something. The church is very funny. It is very stern with its members and probably loving also. It tries to stay away from more public knowledge.

This is jumping ahead a bit. They build new churches, and while they are new, they are open to the public. For a period of time, they want people to come and see it and what it's like and so on. When it is consecrated—or whatever word they use for it—it becomes only open to Mormon people. Later on, there became a group called the Twenty-one or something like that. The Mormon Church was very much against the Equal Rights Amendment and while this new building had been going up, people—mostly NOW background, but not all—had been picketing outside the fence. When they were about to close it, a number of people—21 of us, I think—went and used metal to attach ourselves to the fence. We were arrested and fingerprinted and went to jail and so on. It made the national papers, and we were getting our point across, I guess. I think that was right before I went to Oklahoma. It was in the fall of 1981. I was one of them. I have always been rather proud of that. I was a little nervous about it,

It was kind of interesting, but the police force over there had a—I don't know what his proper title is—but the man who ran the police had a pro-ERA wife. We thought we would not be really badly treated, and we weren't, but we were treated exactly right. We were in jail for a while and we were fingerprinted. We ended up paying a good deal of money, which I paid with Susan B. Anthony dollars, those coins that nobody ever wanted to use. I still have a boxful.

Boswell: Good for you. That's great.

Then as co-directors, you did do a lot of work visiting in all these states. How did you divide all that it up? You had six huge states. Did the two of you have your own territory?

Sale: Well, theoretically we do, according to this thing that we wrote for everybody at the beginning. That was our intent. I suppose to a certain extent that might have been true. We might have used that division to do most of our phone calling and that kind of thing, but when there were meetings, we usually both went. Not always, I don't think, but I don't have any record of that. I guess I would have a record if I hadn't gone. I don't remember because we often did go together.

I did Washington, Oregon and Wyoming, and she did Alaska, Idaho and Montana. After the ERA died I went to Alaska and started a couple of NOW chapters. And we both went to Idaho and Montana. I know things happened in Montana when I was doing

something else someplace else and so Kay must have handled what was going on. It was right next door to her.

Boswell: So another hat you wore was as a member of the national board. Tell me a little bit more about how often you had to go and what those duties were.

Sale: The national board met about five times a year. It was about every two-and-a-half months and that went on consistently. No matter where I was, I went to the board meetings. I would go from wherever I happened to be, and I saw Kay mostly that way when I was traipsing around.

The national board had a lot on its plate, as you might imagine. I can just generalize. You have internal things for an organization, and then you have your major things, of which the ERA was one of them. There were other things too. As it got closer and closer to the end, it got more and more important and took more and more of the time.

We had major work to do for the health of the organization, in the first place, and you can imagine what those things would be. And then there were other issues, and they changed somewhat as time went on, but everything was covered. We had the usual kinds of responsibilities about finances, membership and things that keep an organization going. How were we doing financially? There was a lot of work about how we could get more money for the work that we were doing, ERA and others. I imagine it was a fairly typical kind of national board. There were a lot of us because there were nine regions, and each region had at least two members and some three, so that added up. That was also very interesting, particularly meeting new people coming and hearing more about states you knew nothing about. What was it like, not just for ERA, but the whole idea of women doing things, which was a change?

Boswell: I think it would be fascinating.

Sale: The whole thing has been fascinating since then. I have been thinking about this lately. We didn't win the Equal Rights Amendment, but I think things changed because of that campaign. I was reading some things about what changes people thought having the Equal Rights Amendment would make. The most obvious thing that happened without the ERA was the change in women's athletics of all sorts. That happened immediately. That happened immediately in Washington at any rate; I don't know about other places.

It has been, what, almost thirty years now? I have been telling myself happily that it's twenty-nine years after the Republicans took over, the last time we had a Democratic president who approached life in a different manner. Yet things changed for women over those years. I knew after Reagan was elected that we were going to have real trouble with the ERA. I think of a big pendulum—like a grandfather clock, but a great big one—that can take twenty-nine years before it gets to the top and starts in a different direction. We know historically that that happens in American history with what goes on in government. So what's happening now is very nice to have lived long enough to see, unlike some of my friends and colleagues—to see this happen. I want to stay around as long as I can to see what direction we are going in and how it is going to happen.

Women have really changed in those thirty years, regardless, but in different ways. I think that enough of the messages were out so that the younger women got some of them. I might have liked it in a different manner, but yes, yes.

Boswell: In that time that you were on the national board, how big a role did the ERA play in that organization's agenda?

Sale: It was the major issue, the major work.

Boswell: As part of that board, beginning in 1979 when you were elected, what role did you end up playing in terms of the ERA campaign?

Sale: I was a field organizer and I went on being one. I ended up eight months in Oklahoma, where we had hoped to get ERA passed in January, and it didn't work.

Boswell: Tell me a little bit about how that came about. As a field organizer, the places that you eventually went to help in those different states, were you still sent by the organization?

Sale: Yes, there was always a connection with the people, who were working on all of this and knew what was going on everywhere, in Washington where NOW headquarters were. I didn't do absolutely the same thing all the time. I was in Illinois. I mentioned Illinois before where we had a huge parade in downtown Chicago while I was there. That was the only time I had been given a bullhorn. A friend took a picture of it, which my family laughed at. It didn't have the effect, but it was a big deal, and I was coming from southern Illinois where nothing was happening. That was a change.

Boswell: So you were sent by the national board.

Sale: Yes, the national board, and I was there for several months, trying to work on it. It was a great big legislative district, and the person in question was a man who was a senator. The work was all taking place in the House. The Illinois legislature is different than other states in that it required a 3/5 vote on anything like this. We never made 3/5. What I had was a district that was rural—there must have been at least ten, maybe more, counties, each one with one town in the middle and not much in the way of population. It was hard to develop it in any way because there wasn't that much there. It was a lot of counties to get to know people in. I tried to get to know Democrats mostly in each county. The vote never got to the Senate, so that was a little frustrating.

The biggest job was in Oklahoma at the end. I wasn't doing the same thing. I was supervising and teaching the people who were going out into the state, or into one town, and trying to develop that area and have an impact on the legislators from that district and so on.

Ellie did a funny thing. She called me up and asked me to run an office. It was in Norman, Oklahoma, which is just outside Oklahoma City. It's where the university is; Oklahoma City is where the legislature is. I had never run an office, and this was a real learning experience. I guess I was pleased she thought I could handle it. I knew she

really needed help to do this. We had a supporter who was willing to pay for all this, and it was a very nice office. It was a good place to have meetings and to train people before they were sent out someplace. I didn't go there until November and the legislature started in January, so it was not quite two months when a lot of people came and were trained and went out to various parts of the state, found pro-people in various parts of the state and started working. Then what I described before happened, and it just all died right away.

What happened—this is my information—we had an agreement to help each other from the state teachers' association. I never had the details, but this is what I was told—that the teacher's association was granted something that they cared a great deal about, if they would not support the Equal Rights Amendment, and they did not. That just changed everything. I was never part of the work that was going on there, for us, with the plans for dealing with the legislature. I was in the legislature several times, but I was never part of that group. My job was to get people out in the country and not to work with the people in the Senate and the House. I don't really know, or at least I don't remember.

Boswell: How long were you in Oklahoma?

Sale: Until the end of the session. A group of us got on a bus. I think it was probably June 29th and we went all night to get to Washington, DC, on June 30th, where there was a big outdoor gathering of ERA people. One of the things that really got me very well was that the national board—maybe they had been planning this, but I just realized that it happened—that we were halfway into July, and we were out about abortion rights and reproductive choice and two or three other issues. Choice was obviously the other huge issue, as we know; we've had it for thirty years now as an issue. It never stopped, and everybody knew that. And then we flew home

I just discovered in one of these things that are here on the floor around us—I was good at writing what was happening all the time in different books. In one of the books was still my ticket—when you got the airline ticket you used to get two or three pieces of paper as part of it—I have the one for that return ticket. So that was what happened.

Boswell: So it was months and months literally. You were there November through July?

Sale: I went in November, yes. I got home, for Christmas anyway.

Boswell: Tell me about the life of a field organizer. You literally go there and live where?

Sale: The man who was supporting the office had rooms in a big house that he had, a modern house that was spread out. I stayed there for quite a while. At some point, I think in January probably, he decided that I had done something wrong, and he sort of kicked me out. At which point our leader found me places to stay, and I had a long time with a very interesting woman and family who took me in. They had a one-story house, but with a one-room attic kind of thing with windows all the way around, which I discovered was very scary when you were getting tornado warnings on the radio. I think I went downstairs.

She took me with her when her family was going to a place they went in eastern Oklahoma close to a lake. It was wonderful. It was getting out of the city; it was in the woods; it was with water. I think there were jigsaw puzzles and I really had a weekend to catch my breath. I was very grateful to her.

Boswell: And otherwise it was day after day...

Sale: Right, day after day after day. I had people all over the state I was staying in touch with and I did some traveling. I did get to the other big major town in Oklahoma—Tulsa, Oklahoma. The state is interesting because it is very western in its western half and more eastern in its eastern half. It is just very different. There was one time I was there in an ice storm, and I was afraid we were all going to fall down and break legs. One person did. We were walking in Tulsa on a sidewalk, and she fell down behind me, and I could hear it when she broke her leg. That was not nice, but when you are doing these things in the winter, it is what can happen.

Boswell: What kind of effect did that have on you emotionally or mentally? I am just trying to picture going to a strange place, living with other people, spending every waking moment focused on what was obviously a very important issue, but how did it affect you? I guess there was always the prize—the hope that you were going to get it passed.

Sale: I got increasingly depressed. Yes. What you rely on is the other people you are working with, but I was missing home. I went home briefly several times, not just Christmas, and Roger came down one time for a weekend. He was teaching, so he didn't have that much time either.

But, yes, especially after being blindsided in January. We had all kinds of things we hoped might happen. We were one of, I think, three states that national was focusing mostly on. I was in Oklahoma so much, I kept going to board meetings from Oklahoma, but I never picked up a lot of what was going on in the other parts of the country. We did know that there were several others that people felt had a chance. We need three more just like suffrage. Suffrage needed three more states. Cary Chapman Catt decided that wasn't going to happen, and so we had to have the constitutional one. The same thing happened here, and in very similar states. Miss Catt decided that the South was never going to vote for suffrage for women, which they didn't. This was also again the South and practically the same states, and they didn't either. There were some iffy ones. I am afraid I don't remember what the other two were, but we thought that if one state did go, it would make it possible maybe for the others to go—or one or the other—so that is really what we were hoping would happen. That something would happen somewhere else and that would mean that we could make the difference in Oklahoma.

Increasingly it didn't happen, and most times when the legislature is in session—I don't know about the South, but anyplace north—it is going to be January, February or March or sometime in there. And some states don't meet every year, they meet every other year. I don't really know about all that. We stayed there until the end.

Boswell: Did the national board provide resources?

Sale: Oh, yes, and people came from different states. A lot of people came from Washington, people that I had worked with who were friends. They would come and try to find a way to work. If we didn't need any more, they would go somewhere else. There was a lot of action, and you had a lot of connections with other people. You had a lot of sharing of this with other people; you weren't just alone. You knew that it was a very important thing. That period will be—should be, at any rate, but I doubt it at this point—but ought to be part of history books for major changes that have tried to be made.

Boswell: You mentioned that it was ultimately somewhat depressing. What about the toll on the family and back home? Was that difficult, too, or were you able to maintain that without a problem?

Sale: What do you mean, my relationship to my family? Well, my husband was wonderful. I wouldn't have done it if he hadn't been so supportive about it. He is good at that. He doesn't want to do it himself, but he can be very supportive. You couldn't do it otherwise. The children weren't living at home any more. They had their own apartments, and Maggie was in college. I think at some point in this she must have been back. She spent two years at Reed and then she decided she didn't want to be a mathematician, so she took a couple of years off and ended up going to the University of Washington as an English major. She was living in Seattle then, so they were quite independent. It would have been different if I had had children still at home. I saw them every month.

Boswell: So other field organizers around the country—obviously they had their own situations—but there was a whole group who were doing this in these key states?

Sale: Yes, yes, there were. It wasn't just local people; it was helping local people. It is much harder to stop everything you are doing or have what your normal life is invaded by doing something locally, which we do do. I guess only certain kinds of people are willing to do it, or something has to really get you, because there are plenty of people who do do it all the time. It certainly is harder to leave home and go away, and people who were working couldn't. We also tried to raise money to enable people to go from people who stayed in the state. Washington had done it such a long time ago that we really had to focus and say, "We have to help this in other places."

Boswell: So back home in Washington, while you were out doing field organizing work, there was still support at home and people were willing to do lots of things here.

Sale: Lots of support at home. We had a whole series of runs of one sort or another. It was a fundraiser; it was fun; it was a way to get information out; it was a way to make you feel that you were doing something. I remember my children both did it one time on bicycles. Towards the end there was one raising money partly for me just before I left for Oklahoma. There were also all the other issues to deal with that were going on.

There are current, wonderful members of our legislature right now who were feminists working on this then, and who later became legislators. Senator Karen Fraser is one and Representative Mary Lou Dickerson.

Boswell: Mary Helen Roberts, too.

Sale: Mary Helen Roberts, yes. I remember when she came. She came to be the staff person at the Washington State Women's Council. I was so pleased. I have supported her in her running, and it was nice to see that she stayed.

Oh, there were so many good people here. You knew you were being supported at home, and that in some way you were being missed. And so did your other states that you weren't getting to in those last years. I mean, I got to them in those last months, and sometimes people would come and work for a month, or a couple of weeks and see what they could that would be helpful.

Boswell: You continued on the board during this period.

Sale: That's right. I had another year to go after this happened. Actually, just before we did this, I found a book down there that says *August 1982 to July 1983*—that's that book. I opened it and looked at the first stuff, and it is full of phone conversations about what to do now. I was organizing to go to Alaska to meet people who had never been talked to before. There was a group who wanted to start a new chapter. So, I was right into my other work, and that probably made me feel a lot better because I knew there were other issues and that we still had a lot of work to do. That didn't always work that well. The Seattle chapter gradually got less active. There were fewer people involved—fewer younger people.

Boswell: So you see the failure of the ERA as a sort of watershed then?

Sale: Yes, I do. Yes, I do. I did Alaska and then back to Wyoming. That's what I did; I went back to Wyoming, where I had already been twice. I think this was the third time. I wanted them to have a state person who would get in touch with us. Interesting things were going, but that is really a different subject. Interesting things were happening in Wyoming. I learned a lot from those women about what that kind of a state is like.

Boswell: When you say *that* kind of state, do you mean just small or ?

Sale: No, it's a huge state with a very small population. Well, a lot of cars with rifles on the back. What it is like for women in those circumstances where they are by themselves on lonely roads all the time. I mean it is long distances, but it is a gorgeous state. I love it; I love driving around it. The woman I went to first in Cheyenne is very much in my mind. It is gorgeous. I don't know what happened to them since things let up here.

There is now a Seattle chapter which is renovated some. I think that what happened is that the focus on the issues focused on reproductive rights, and there were already existing organizations as well—Planned Parenthood and NARAL and so on—who have been the leaders for the last thirty years about that subject. The focus went

there, so it wasn't as special a thing for NOW. NOW had a lot of other issues but the whole tone of the country was changing and did change. It has changed, as we know; the pendulum swung and we're changing in a different direction. But that was at least one generation, if not one and a half, of young people becoming adults and families. The economy was different; the opportunities were different; what was happening in the world was different.

Boswell: When you look back more specifically at the field organizing piece of all this, what do you think were the greatest successes?

Sale: Do you mean of the effort?

Boswell: Yes, of that effort. Or maybe what were you most proud of may be is a better way of saying it?

Sale: That's different. All right. Generally it is one of those subjects—it is “equality of rights under the law shall not be denied...” I used to be able to do it perfectly. It is a simple sentence, and it is an idea, which I think made it into the brains of people in the country and maybe young people. Maybe in the back of the mind, it was that attitude which helped some of the younger women to do what they did, which was to start asserting themselves. I mean, that's been a change in the last thirty years, hasn't it? Women attorneys, women doctors, women teachers, and women saying, “This is the way to do it and not that.” That all changed, and maybe some of that came from all of the talk that was underneath going on. I'd like to think so. I'd also like to think that it is going to come up into the legislature again, now that things have changed again. Somebody will decide to do that at some point.

Boswell: I think it has always been introduced, hasn't it?

Sale: That's true. It gets set in committee. It has been introduced ever since Alice Paul first did it, and I don't think it ever stopped. Now, that's the external one. You said personally.

Boswell: Yes, I just wanted to hear from your personal perspective. Having been out in the field like that, looking back would you have done anything differently? Is there another way it could have been approached? It didn't seem like it, but I just wondered.

Sale: No, no. I loved knowing that I could go anywhere and find women and we would have a good talk. We would have things in common that we cared about and didn't care about or didn't like. It certainly taught me a lot more about other parts of the country, which has been useful and interesting. And I suppose that states that had people come in could learn that people could come in and not dominate but really try to be helpful, and that is another way to get work done, if you want to do it but you don't see how you can.

Boswell: It really was a network that expanded around the whole country.

Sale: Yes, network, a good word. Yes, yes, it did, and we were everywhere. I know that there were people in states where it just wasn't going to be. There were always people from the deep South on the NOW board, and you would hear from them what it was like where they lived, and they had somebody to talk to and not feel isolated.

Boswell: When you look back, why do you think that ratification was not successful? Why do you think that the deadline ran out and you just didn't get those last states?

Sale: I just read in the paper, the *New York Times*, that the legislature in Illinois has changed that rule. That would be one state that would make a difference. That's unique. You remember I told you that it required a 3/5 vote, so that is no longer a problem. But that is only one state. I've forgotten exactly what you asked me.

Boswell: I just wondered why, generally, you think that the ratification effort was not successful?

Sale: Why it didn't last? I think that you get to the states which are, and always have been, very conservative; the states which are dominated by men who believe that men should dominate women. There weren't enough of the other states to get the amount of states that we needed.

It is interesting how other parts of the country are. You are reading about Lincoln now and the Civil War, right? Roger and I were also reading it just a little while ago, and I was really struck by how strong an idea it was that people did not want to divide the country. For the first time I started wondering, "Well, what would it have been like if the South had been its own country?" It is still taking the role. It would have been too hard for the African-Americans, I think, to be isolated in that way. Maybe they would all have managed to get out? I don't know. We have had this difference now for 150 years or more.

Boswell: Regionalism certainly can play a role. Maybe it is less regionalism than...well, I think the political parties have changed. It is hard to pinpoint where opposition is really coming from. So many things play a role: gender, politics, economics, even race, to a degree. There are just so many issues. But having read about how there seemed to be so much groundswell for ERA when the amendment was first started, to have that slowly grind and grind and never quite make it...

Sale: Well, the country was changing. We said that earlier, and I really think it was. It's the pendulum bit again.

I am at the point almost of thinking that our real threat is what we are doing to the world. I don't have the book to show you, but I have just read one and have seen other things, and I am beginning to believe that what I'm told is probably true, namely that we have a very, very short period of time—like less than ten years or maybe five years—to make major changes or we're all going to be up the creek. We'll start losing cities that are near water. I don't think it is all made up.

Boswell: So you are talking about global warming and the whole environment.

Sale: I think it is more than global warming.

Boswell: That may overshadow, I suppose, the relative importance of equal rights, perhaps, but when you look back now at the ERA campaign, what impact do you think the failure has had on women's issues?

Sale: Well, it led to a real focus, as I've said before, on reproductive rights. Other issues had gotten enough ground rules started, that people went on working on them, a lot of them. I haven't thought about them in this way. I need to make a list of what all the issues were.

A lot of things stopped happening because there was this political change in the country altogether. When there is a big change like that, and what comes out of Washington, D.C. is what's in most newspapers, that is all we learn about what people are talking about and thinking about. You can join some organizations that are taking care of the wildlife all over the world as well as here, and things like that, and people who are not agreeing with the people who are running things find other places to work. I think there is going to be real change. In one sense, as I was saying, I hope it will really work, necessary change. I think this issue will come back in another way. It is still in public talk—men and women and rights are being debated all the time. It would have been easier if we'd had the ERA as a foundation from which we would make these other decisions. To a certain extent, we have been trying to make it work without having the ERA, or at lot of people have.

Boswell: Are you optimistic? I was thinking about this notion of optimism. Do you think we still need a national ERA?

Sale: It would help. Yes. It would be an overall law that everybody understood what the point was.

Boswell: Yes, and a protection that it's there.

Sale: Well, it's certainly a protection. Yes. If major change comes in other ways, we maybe could use the protection. There are certainly parts of the country where people need the protection—women need the protection.

Boswell: What about in Washington State? Based on your experiences since that time, Washington State has had its state ERA, which is obviously still in place. Has that had any direct impact on you or do you think it has had an impact generally on women in the state?

Sale: Oh, yes. I do. I can't think of anything directly, because the whole thing directly impacted me. It created the most important thing in my life, and I hope a contribution of some sort. But I was thinking about my daughter at the time, I'm sure. What was her life going to be like, and what would she be able to do? My son was always A-1. Yes. It's interesting to have seen things that have happened because there was an ERA attempt, and some changes have been made as a result. I mean, some young women took it to

heart, and they went off and did with their lives what they really wanted to do, or a lot of them did. We have some wonderful organizations as a result.

Northwest Women's Law Center just changed their name. I don't remember what it is. I just got an email telling me, but they're terrific. I don't know if there's anything like it in the Northeast someplace, but they're a wonderful. They do wonderful work.

Boswell: How would you describe it?

Sale: They're a law firm, more or less, and they go to court with the issues that are important to women. They've been around for a long time. I was involved in the very beginning, and then I wasn't, but I was strongly in favor of starting one. It focuses on women's issues.

At this point, it is still—now if I can say this right—a question of birth control pills, the ones that you take right away. There has been a debate with pharmacists for three or four years now about whether a pharmacist who didn't believe in birth control would have to give somebody who came in with a prescription, or if it's something without a prescription. They're still arguing about whether if you're in a public role like that and you're doing a job, whether you can suddenly become your individual self and say, "Well, I won't do it." The law center has been doing that court case for a long time. That's the most recent one, but they've done a lot of other things over the years. I mean, that was thirty years ago they started.

Then there are wonderful clinics, also. The Aradia Clinic folded—I don't know if it was one or two years ago now—which is where I took my daughter when she was fifteen. It was upstairs on the Ave. before it had a place of its own that was more like a clinic. I was sorry to see it go.

Planned Parenthood also has a very interesting history in Washington State.

Boswell: Aside from reproductive rights, do you see other issues in this state, particularly related to women, which are also important?

Sale: I should have thought of that. There are always other things. I haven't been focusing on them. Something will occur to me as soon as we turn it off, you know? But of course there are. Sometimes they're created by the people who are impacted by it now, so then it becomes an issue to deal with now, obviously. We really have done a lot in this state, as states go. I used to think when I got to the mountains, oh thank goodness, I'm going home!

So I think for the Democrats now, they need to know more about Washington State because we're doing things that they think they're doing for the first time.

Boswell: Right.

Sale: This has been a very forward-looking state right from the beginning. I mean, Arthur Denny proposed giving women the franchise. There were only six people voting, or he needed six votes and he only got five.

Boswell: Right.

Sale: That was shortly after we started getting in the way of the Indians. [laughter]
Native Americans.

Boswell: Yes, that's true. Is there anything else that you want to mention about the role of the ERA or its relationship to other issues that we didn't talk about?

Sale: I don't think so. I think it's one of the general statements like, like women's suffrage. Women would also be able to vote. You know, changing one word, or it would have.

Boswell: Right.

Sale: It's one of those simple things that are absolutely basic. You wonder why it took seventy-five years for women to get the vote. You know that a lot of it was because they were having trouble with men who drank too much. The liquor industry, I know, killed attempts to pass it, particularly in California. The last one I read about was in 1896 in California. I've just been dealing with suffrage as an issue.

Boswell: Sure.

Sale: The liquor industry got itself together in San Francisco and a surrounding county, and just barely killed it. When Susan B. Anthony started out as—what do you call it?

Boswell: Temperance.

Sale: Temperance person. Yes, before she met Stanton in 1848. So many women had problems with men getting paid, particularly people who didn't have that much money, coming home with a week's worth and going into a bar on the way, and spending what she needed for food for the family. That kind of thing is most often described as what the reason for temperance was. It wasn't to make you more healthy. It was to get the men to bring the money home. Of course, the liquor interests don't like that.

Boswell: What do you think is the biggest thing today that stands in the way of an equal rights amendment?

Sale: Well, the part of the country that doesn't believe in it. I don't think it has changed. I can't really think that what in this state makes me know enough about the rest of the country to give a good answer, because I don't. Maybe women in general, the younger women, what they've done in their growing up in the last thirty years and going to work and so on, maybe they have made enough difference. That will only have happened in places where they could do what they've done. In places that are still very retrograde, there will still be a problem. I don't know. I don't know what kind of changes. I used to think that there were changes being made in the Deep South, but recently I've been reading things that make me think it hasn't changed that much. I don't really know.

We have friends who have been teaching in Mississippi for thirty years, and we went to visit them recently, and I asked them questions. Mostly it was the way it's been.

Boswell: But in Washington State, you're hopeful. [laughs]

Sale: In Washington State, I know it's already been happening. Yes.

Boswell: Well, you helped to make it happen. So thank you, and thank you so much for doing the interview, too.

Sale: Well, thank you for saying that. I'm very happy to be able to tell my story for somebody else who wondered what the heck happened, and why it didn't pass. Why did it matter what we did? Because I think it changed the way a lot of women felt about themselves, let me just end by saying that. We're important. Yes.