Jont Allen: JA
Tracie Wilson: TW

TW: Okay this is Tracie Wilson. I am interviewing Jont Allen in Urbana, Illinois in his office—

JA: 2061 in Beckman Institute

TW: And it is July 9th 2007, and this is part of the Campus Folksong Club Oral History Project. Okay. Well, my first question— I know I sent you these, but I don't know if you've thought about them— is how did you become interested in traditional music?

JA: Well, I think Archie Green takes credit for this. I was interested in learning how to play the guitar and that was mainly a social outlet. I was in electrical engineering and I heard about the guitar and about the folksong club, and I figured that would mean I could play the guitar and get a group together and make some music. And Archie Green took people like me under his wing and taught them about the rigors of good country folk music. And when I came here I didn't know anything about country music or about anything, I mean, as far as I was concerned a bunch of hillbilly music was below my— below my liking, let me put it that way. I didn't dislike for it, but I didn't have any respect for it. But after meeting Archie Green and getting to know these old people that he would bring in and, um, I can't remember the names but here was Frank somebody-or-other who played the banjo, and Big Joe Williams, and you know, blues men and Mike Seeger was here. Mike Seeger isn't quite in the same category, but he's certainly a very important figure in folklore story. And a little teeny bit of information with me went a long way. I immediately bought Alan Lomax's book which was packed filled of folk songs and I learned dozens of Leadbelly songs and bought a 12 string guitar and got very interested in the personal stories of the individuals involved. And if I was telling you a few minutes ago when Doc Watson came here I interviewed Doc Watson and I was told recently that this may have been his first concert because my girlfriend of the time saw him in Chicago. She just called me, I hadn't talked to her in 40 years and she called me up cause my father passed away and she wanted to talk about that and she told me that she had seen Doc Watson some years ago and she went up and told Doc that she had seen him at the University of Illinois and he says "Oh, that was my first concert." Uh, I, so I don't know what role Archie Green played in discovering Doc Watson but you'd have to ask Archie, I think that would be an interesting question. But Archie certainly played a role. But Doc Watson was such a spectacular guitar player it was so clean and fast and smooth and wonderful that you couldn't help but instantly love it. And he loved the music and he respected it and cared about what was going on. And he had family. Archie also knew Johnny Cash and would talk about June Cash and the Carter family. So he never, he got us all involved through stories that he would tell and through his connections that he would bring to the University of Illinois with a very small budget. But you couldn't help— or I couldn't help but be infected by his enthusiasm and his love for folklore. So I, I don't know if I under or over answered that question.

TW: No that's great. Uh, so how did you end up at the University of Illinois?

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JA: Well, I grew up in Illinois, and the University of Illinois has a very serious reputation in electrical engineering, and I was headed for electrical engineering from the age of— when I was in third grade I told my teacher I didn't know if I wanted to be an electronic or electrical engineer, could she tell me what the difference was, so I was pretty, pretty focused on what I wanted to do. And the University of Illinois is presently like number three in engineering, and I think it was pretty good back then as well, so it was a cheap education of the highest quality.

TW: Where are you from originally?

JA: Batavia. Batavia is in the Fox River Valley between Elgin and Aurora. It's where Ferme labs is, which is the accelerator— particle accelerator laboratory. Ferme labs was not there when I was there. But I kind of grew up a sort of Huck Finn, Tom Sawyer of a life. I mean not really, but we used to go swimming in the Fox River, and we'd— nobody— my mother, who is a loving soul and certainly cared about my daily existence, pretty much— back then, back in the forties, when I was born in '42, they just— you just wandered around and you did what you wanted. You'd go play with the dog, or you'd go down to the river. I had a gun and I'd shoot bottles. I mean nobody paid any attention. Today, that's not the standard but back then we all just wandered around and did whatever we wanted and climbed trees. People died, it was rare for someone to die, but it was a pretty loosey-goosey, free-wheeling life style.

TW: So how did you become part of the Campus Folksong Club? How did you— do you remember first becoming involved with people who were attached to it? Or you were you one of the first people?

JA: It was— no I, well— they were mostly graduate students, as best I can remember, the ones I communicated with. So I had several, quite a few acquaintances. There was Bill Becker, John Walsh, a mathematician, Becker, I'm not sure what he did. John Munday was— became a close friend of mine. uh, he is in biochemistry. So it was a broad mix. There was a bunch of other people, of course Fritz Plous. Oh, I know what happened, I was one of the— I was in the first group of people that lived at Orchard Downs. This is exactly what happened; it had to do with a stroke of rooming. Across the hall— I was rooming at Orchard Downs. It was the first— excuse me about my throat. It was the very first time they opened up Orchard Downs. It was built for graduate housing, but they had too many undergraduates and so they filled us— they packed us in there and put a bus service on. There were no trees; it was really primitive, it was really awful place, And so far out. And across the next, um, house, apartment over was Fritz Plous and Jarvis Rich, Jerry Lazar, I don't think he had anything to do with the Folksong Club, were in that apartment. And Fritz and Jarvis were very much interested in the Folksong Club and probably had been here for awhile, so they introduced me to it and they played music. Plous tried to— Fritz tried to play the fiddle. He wasn't terribly good at it, but Jarvis was pretty good at the fiddle. And he also played the banjo, and I played the guitar and the banjo and a bunch of other things. And so that became a fun— that definitely was a daily

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exercise of getting together and playing music. And of course we sang and played, and it was old-timey music. So Jarvis had— knew a lot of old-timey music and he sort of passed it along to Fritz. Maybe, I mean Fritz is a pretty well educated pretty smart guy so he probably knew a lot of it himself but I think Jarvis was a key person

TW: Do you recall what year that was? Was your first year?

JA: That was ’61. Yeah.

TW: You were a freshman then?

JA: Yeah. And I was here for that one semester and then I decided to take my guitar on the road, so the second semester I left school my parents were pretty worried about this but I was pretty clear what I was doing and I went to France and hitchhiked across France and ended up in Barcelona and then dro— took the train back and I was there for— I worked in Kansas City for a summer to earn the money and then the next semester— so maybe I was here 2 semesters. I was here for my first year at Orchard Downs and then I left for the third semester, and then from the fourth semester on I finished up. But I was always heavily involved in the Folksong Club, mostly as a musician. I was president at the end of the tenure and then I lived with Archie because he was leaving, moving to California I guess and

TW: Was that the sixties or the seventies?

JA: Well that would have been in ‘66, it was either my second to last semester— or no, it was probably in my junior year, because he put me— he got me out of housing. If you were an undergrad you had to be in student housing, but he went to the dean of housing or whatever administrations and he got me out of it. And he rented the house— the 2nd floor of the house next door to his house, which was on Indiana Avenue. The house is still there. And so we had the 2nd floor, and he moved in and I moved in and then that semester after— he was there— he was finishing up what he had to do but he wanted to sell his house, so he needed a place to live. So he took advantage of the situation, so then he left the next semester, and I got a whole bunch of roommates— he was— he got one of the roommates. The guy was a strange guy, but really brilliant, a graduate student. His room was just— you wouldn’t believe it. Such a mess. You just couldn’t walk across the floor. So I think I—

TW: Yeah. So were there many people who took off and went to Europe in those days? It seems like that must have been a kind of an unusual decision. Did you know—

JA: Probably. Well, my mother was very much a traveler, and I had been to Europe once at the age of 14. And so the idea of going to Europe was not foreign to me since I’d been there. Going to Europe was a big deal back then. Yes, that’s true. So the number of people who packed up with their guitar and went to Europe was probably pretty small,

but it was a good experience. And I certainly played a lot of music there because— I met—I played on the streets of the Champs-Elysées and went up and down the streets playing the guitar and the banjo and—

TW: And you played traditional tunes there?

JA: Yeah. They love it.

TW: Really?

JA: Yeah. They— the Europeans are more sophisticated about American folk music than the Americans are. They see it as a bunch of hillbilly music, but the English and Europeans in general, especially— you certainly— I'm sure know about blues. Blues in Europe is big and jazz and— some American musics are much, much bigger there than it is here. I don't know about today because I don't follow it anymore, but back then that was certainly true.

TW: Well, I think it still might be true.

JA: Yeah we just don't appreciate— like, uh, the river music down on the Mississippi you know where— I mean starting— well not starting with Chuck Berry, I mean he was a late comer, but the delta blues music that came up the Mississippi and went up into Chicago— Chicago is still— North Street still has a lot of that going on. The whole history of how that came about, I mean, Leadbelly and then Blind Lemon Jefferson, these amazing people, musicians, who were the music. And I'm sure you know a million times more about this than I do, but RCA came in and recorded it all. Lomax played, I guess played some role in commercializing a lot of the music. I heard an interview of Lomax on the radio the other day. There were two Lomaxes of course, there was a father and a son.

TW: So it was Alan Lomax?

JA: What was the father's—

TW: The father was John.

JA: Okay. Alan. Yeah, I'm sure it was Alan. And it was a taped interview. I don't think WILL does that kind of thing anymore, so maybe it was WEFT, I'm not sure. I also listen to internet radio a lot so, but I imagine it was WEFT.

TW: What role did the Campus Folksong Club play at the University of Illinois in the sixties when you were here, from your perspective?

JA: Well, it was significant in my opinion, because first it was just a big social event and that was one aspect of it. It was extremely popular. Joan Baez I'm sure had something to

do with all this, and Bobby Dylan. And there was a pseudo-folk craze with the Kingston Trio leading the pack, and many other groups, all of which I of course completely disdained. I actually have to admit I liked the Kingston Trio, and that was an early thing that we used to play, but after Archie touched me on the head then it became less acceptable. But it was nice music. But it wasn't folk music. And Joan Baez was just such a talented person you couldn't do anything but love her. And Bob Dylan, same thing, he's just an incredibly talented person. And I don't think they tried to sell what they were doing as traditional music so you couldn't— nobody was blaming anybody, but we certainly had our opinions about what was— what we liked and what we didn't like. Doyle Moore was also very important player in all of this, as a he was a statesman for the music and a player and just an incredibly all around talented guy, active today. Do you have a copy of the record?

TW: Their record? I don't have a copy. I've heard parts of it.

JA: I have a copy of it. Yeah, he gave me a CD which I was just playing the other day. It's a great little—

TW: Is it available somewhere?

JA: Well its available from Doyle Moore, and he lives here in town.

TW: Yeah I interviewed him a couple weeks ago back at the beginning of—

JA: Well, you should ask him to give you a copy of the CD because it's wonderful music. And it's a very, it gives you a very good feeling for— there's two- there's a record and then there's the CD of the Philo Glee and Mandolin Society, which I presume that was a record too. So, uh— what's the question here?

TW: Oh, I was talking about the role that the club played on campus.

JA: The role of the Folksong Club, yeah. So first there was the social event and then there was the intellectual aspect of it. The there was a pseudo-political side to it which I can tell you about, but for me it was largely— I enjoyed the intellectual— I'm sorry, my throat is bothering me. I enjoyed the intellectual side of the traditional folksong music. The people— the Proffitts, that was one of the names I was trying to think of, the Leadbellies— I got into the persona of these people. I was interested in who they were. And there was the social side of it. It was just a big social event. We had concerts every Friday evening, probably at eight o'clock, and we'd fill Smith Hall or we'd fill Lincoln Hall, those were the two main places that we performed at. And I would frequently be the emcee, or Fritz Plous or Jarvis. A lot of people played that role. Archie never was the emcee that I can remember. It was usually the people who played would be the emcee, and we'd have like 6, 7, 8, 9 acts that would get up and perform, and we packed the place. I mean there'd be 1,000 people. I don't know how many people you can seat in

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Lincoln Hall or Smith Hall. You can check on that. But we'd fill the place no problem, so the word on the street was that there were 1,000 people there. And we'd put up little fliers around the campus, but it wasn't even necessary. They knew to come. I've never seen anything quite as popular as this, I mean, even Krannert has trouble getting audiences like that. So part of it was the pure commercialism of popular folk music due to the Kingston Trio, so it was "in" at the time. It was "cool." There was the anti-war aspect of things, an Arlo Guthrie kind of attitude, so there was a lot of people who were kind of anti war, much more so than today. Then on the campus it was really acceptable to be anti war, here still— it's funny, the students are just square as bears. Then there was the— there was this important political side, the SDS, Students for a Democratic Society were, I'm told, very active on campus. And there was this guy from Geneva, Illinois, and I can't remember his name, and he was extremely active in SDS and he tried to get me involved in SDS. And I can remember feeling kind of guilty that I wasn't all that interested in doing it. I don't think they were militant at the time, but I think they later became militant. I don't know if they became militant on the U of I campus because I was gone by the time that happened. I was in Philadelphia, and there were storm troopers walking down the streets in Philadelphia, and riots. And I lived in south— I lived one block off of South Street in Philadelphia. 22nd and South Street was at the center of a black neighborhood, and bad things were happening there. But that was a few years later, in '68, so it was building. So the Folksong Club— Archie Green kept a very strong reign on it. He said look— folk music his style, folk music doesn't have anything to do with social— with politics, which of course is completely untrue. Woody Guthrie— I mean, what a crazy thing to say. But he didn't want us getting and turning— he said "keep the politics and keep the music separate from each other" 'cause he cared about the music. Oh, another thing that happened was that we used to go to IU— Indiana University in Bloomington, and they had the counterpart— they had their own Folksong Club, and apparently they were going strong, too. And we'd have exchanges. We'd bring up people from there, and we'd drive down with a group of people and put on a performance. And I rode with Judy McCulloh and her husband one time to do one of these events. So there's— we had some interaction with those people. And I gave my banjo to a guy there and he rebuilt, he did some work on the banjo and then I got it back, I think, a year later. But so—

TW: I'm hopefully going to be speaking with Neil Rosenberg who was a grad student at Indiana at some point during the sixties that had some contact with the Folksong Club here and there. So I don't know if you didn't— you don't recall him by some chance. He's a folklorist. He—

JA: There was a guy who went to the— what's it called? The archives, the National Archives

TW: Oh, Joe Hickerson?

JA: Joe Hickerson. Was he at IU?

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TW: I think he was.

JA: So Joe Hickerson came here, and he was friends with— he was very friendly with Archie. And I spent time talking to Joe Hickerson. He was an interesting guy. Unfortunately for me, I wasn't a folklorist. I was interested in the people. I was interested in the music, the social, blah, blah, blah, but when it got into the heavy duty folklore I stepped out. So somebody like Joe Hickerson I really didn't have the depth to explore this guy for all he was worth. And Archie was my closer friend, and he told me a lot of stuff but I never read— I mean, he had a book right? I never even cracked the book. So that was— I was too busy doing my electrical engineering— learning differential equations and stuff like that. But I cared, but not to the point where I was going to make it a career.

TW: Right. Was there rivalry between IU and Illinois? Or not? Was it pretty amicable?

JA: Not in my opinion. If there was, I sure didn't see it. They were very— at the level that I saw it was very friendly. Now I don't know about some—

TW: Well, you kind of answered this question already, but maybe I'll just ask it and if there's any other component that you think might be relevant— so did the political climate of the sixties have an impact on how the club's members perceived themselves? As I said, you touched on this a bit.

JA: I touched on it because I remember reading the question, and I thought about it a little bit. So yes and no. I mean we.— I can speak for myself, and probably— cause I'm sure you got this answer to this question from Fritz Plous. He'd be an excellent person to ask this question of. I'm sure he had something significant to say, as would Roger Ebert, who is our dear friend as I told you before over the phone. So my answer for myself which is most reliable is there was this guy from Geneva, Illinois and he was really pushing on me to become involved in the antiwar movement. I was one-hundred percent, two-thousand percent behind antiwar movement, I was, but not to the point where I was gonna be— put time on it, because as I said, my number one primary objective was to get an education. I spent an incredible amount of time playing music and being distracted, but I wasn't gonna get a double or a triple distraction, so I was sympathetic. There was no doubt that there were people who were interested in the Folksong Club because they were interested in antiwar. There was some people who were interested in it because they wanted to hear the music. It was a nice social thing, and they liked the Kingston Trio which we hardly represented in any way, shape, or form. And then there were people who were interested in the political statement of the music. Some people were singing antiwar. I don't remember if Tom Paxton— I think Tom Paxton lived not to far from here or something. He came through here at least on one occasion. Joan Baez was here, but not for the reasons of the Folksong Club. Earl Scruggs and Flatt, they came here, that was invited by the Folksong Club. Anyway, so there was this political side to it, but Archie reached out and, in my case was, very effective in suppressing any guilt that I had. I felt something

needed to be done, but I wasn't gonna go standing around on street corners and holding plaques and that sort of thing, because I needed to be studying. And I was already spending too much time practicing my guitar and singing songs and that kind of thing. So getting a third avocation or vocation or a third job, responsibility was something I avoided. But I think there was a small percentage, like maybe ten percent, of the people who were interested in some aspect of the political environment that we were finding ourselves in in Vietnam. I don't remember how active we were in Vietnam, but we were certainly in Vietnam right ? At that time? And people were just coming out of their shells saying it's not right. It was right near the beginning.

TW: How would you describe the impact that your involvement in the club had on you then and later in life?

JA: It was quite influential because of who I was. It was a— well, when you come to college, it's a very growing experience and I had limited experiences in life. I spent an awful lot of time in my younger childhood playing with radios in the attic and building electronics and pretty antisocial— not antisocial, just asocial— I wasn't antisocial I was asocial. I was spending a lot of time being— trying to learn how to be an electrical engineer and do science in my basement, except I was in my attic. And I came here and got involved in the Folksong Club, and all the people and the hysteria, wonderful hysteria of the music and the involvement, and it became a lifestyle and a social thing. And knowing Archie was obviously special. I could be wrong, but I think I was special to Archie. I think he took me— in fact, he chose me to be a roommate when he needed something. He appreciated me, and he liked me. He came to my wedding. We invited him to the wedding, and he came. So it had— Archie had a big impact on a lot of people. He was a powerful guy. He didn't look powerful, and he didn't act powerful, but mentally, he was. He had credibility, and he had a lot of punch.

TW: Yeah, if there's one theme throughout all these interviews I've done, it's his influence on people really stands out.

JA: And he had a—I'm sorry about my throat. But he had a beautiful relationship with his wife Liz-Anne? Lou-Anne? And that was important so you could see a relationship that worked, that was loving. And he'd take me over to his house and they made lentil soup, which I'd never had a lentil in my life. And they'd serve us lunch or dinner or something. Lentil soup for dinner. It was a cultural experience. I never really knew any Jewish culture. Coming from Batavia, Illinois, I think there was one Jewish family in the entire valley, and I mean, it's just— it was different then. Okay? There was a reasonable sized black population in Batavia. Not in the next town over, in Geneva, but I always grew up very sympathetic to other cultures and socioeconomic classes. I was inclined to want to help them and be their friends— peoples' friend regardless of race color and creed. And so when I got here and met Fritz, who was Jewish I suspect, I'm pretty sure that Jarvis was, a lot of people— this was a 50% Jewish population. It was a very, very large number of Chicago Jewish kids came down here. They could get a reasonable

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education. Fritz was from Wisconsin, but— so it was a cultural— it wasn't a shock because I wasn't shocked, but it was a cultural bath of mixtures. I mean, nothing like you would find today, lets say, like, in New York City, but certainly a lot different than we were used to. So this— and of course it was because of— if— I could have come here and never experienced any of this, but being in the Folksong Club bathed me in all these different personalities and people. So it was a common experience that we all shared together, and it was exciting because it was popular. You know, 1,000 people would come to the concerts, and we had to put the concerts on and organize the program and blah, blah, blah, so there was a lot of activity. And I had some social relationships with wonderful young ladies, and that was very exciting. And they were kind of hippie— I won't go into the details, but it was— that was— there was at least 3 that I— 3 young ladies that I got heavily involved in— with. We became good friends. I don't know where they are today, but I think, at least in one case, Archie set it up.

TW: Really?

JA: Yeah.

TW: Interesting.

JA: And Fritz Plous was madly in love with this young lady, but somehow she picked me. I don't know what was going on there, but Archie had something to do with it. I remember that. But so that was— that was— also, I mean, when you're a young person and you go away to college and you start having some serious relationships, it's obviously— and that was all so— there was a social aspect to the Folksong Club that was critically important. So did it have an impact on my life? You bet. And I think it was unique because it was— there were so many people, and there was so much activity, and it was orthogonal to what I was doing, which was electrical engineering. So it was a social interaction that was a real and deep and true— it was family. This was a family.

TW: Do you continue to play and listen to traditional music?

JA: No. I listen, yeah, but I don't play. And I have a— I listen to two kinds of music, basically. Country music and classical. My daughter Elizabeth, whose picture is over there, she plays the viola, the violin, and the piano, and she plays classical music. But I take her violin and play a— I said the guys name, the father-in-law of Doc Watson, I mentioned his name earlier.

TW: Frank Crawford?

JA: No, no, no, no. So he— he had some songs, and I can still remember a few of those songs. Gaither. Carlson or Carlton? Gaither Carlton? You can— if you go through you'll find— It would be on Folkways records. They have recorded all of that stuff. I don't know how you'd get a Folkways record today, but— and I had all of it on tape. I had a

huge tape collection, all of which got tossed unfortunately, including this interview with Doc Watson. So that interview exists someplace in some basement stuck away who knows where, because John Schmidt had a copy of it. I mean, it wouldn't be a very high quality copy.

TW: Right. Is there anything else we haven't covered that you think is important for people to know about the Campus Folksong Club?

JA: They— did you look at all their publications? I mean Judy would know that because she was probably involved in that.

TW: You mean the newsletter? Or—

JA: There were— or— yeah, there was a newsletter.

TW: Yeah the newsletters been digitized recently, so hopefully it'll be available online soon if people are interested in it. They've been digitizing a lot of Illinois material.

JA: That's cool. So you have a complete set?

TW: Yeah somebody deposited a complete set in the library. Maybe Archie.

JA: That's good. And you spoke with Judy, I think this guy John Munday, M-U-N-D-A-Y, he was very, very involved in the Folksong Club. He was a president early on. And being a graduate student, he was a sophisticated guy. He met his wife, I think, through the Folksong Club and he— oh the Mayfields. Did you talk to the Mayfields?

TW: I talked to them by phone once, and I'm hoping to interview them in the next couple of weeks.

JA: So he was good friends with them. Very good friends. There was this guy who played the fiddle— he used to be in the Grand Old Opry. He was over in— it's not important. I used to go over and— I can't recall.

TW: I know you said you had an appointment at 10:30, and I don't know what time it is.

JA: My students— it's with my students. It's 10:00. We have a meeting, my group. It's gonna be small today because people are away, so—

TW: Right. I don't know, I mean, I don't have any other questions. If you don't have anything else to add then I guess we're okay.

JA: Well it was 40 years ago right?

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TW: Yeah. Yeah.

JA: So what is your goal in doing this research, and what do you hope to get out of it?

TW: Well it's an online project that I'm hoping to link to the University Archives web page so that it's available. There's at least one other oral history project on students from the depression era, so this is kind of another version of that from the 1960's, and I just stumbled— I'm a folklorist, and I've only been here since August. It's a one year kind of position. The library had me come in to assess their folklore resources, and they, you know, said "Okay, well you can do some sort of other project, too." And as I was talking to people on campus, people kept mentioning this club and Archie Green, and initially it didn't sound that interesting. You know, a student club from a few years ago. But people kept talking about it, so I started digging. And I looked at some of the archival stuff that Archie had left behind. Club— you know, notes from meetings and copies of Autoharp and it seemed kind of interesting. And someone I was interviewing, or speaking with, a scholar from the folk revival music was saying "well, anything Archie gets involved with becomes interesting," and I think that's maybe why it stands out from some of the other clubs on other campuses at the time. But its impact was quite different.

JA: So because of the Folksong Club I got to know several people who were significant. I consider then to be significant, and I think the world considers them to be significant. And I got to know them reasonably well, better in some cases than in others, and there's two examples I'd like to mention. And of course because I was just a little kid and didn't think of myself as being particularly anything except, you know, a blob here on earth, this was important to me to get to know these people. So the two people that come to mind are Doc Watson, and I told you a story about him, and I'll repeat it, And Roger Ebert. Now Roger I knew actually quite well, because he used to come over to my apartment. I was on Green Street at the time, and we'd practice playing. He loved to sing union songs. And of course he has this film festival here, and now he's not able to talk. So I saw him at the last one a few months ago. It was in May, but the year before I had a nice conversation with him, and he thought of me as— I was his guitar teacher, which— as far as I'm concerned that wasn't the case. I wasn't his guitar teacher, I was his back up. And we'd sing union songs, and it was mainly his idea to sing union songs because union songs weren't particularly my favorite kind of music. I like old-timey stuff and— "union maid"— he liked Woody Guthro-type Woody songs and so— "there once was a union maid who never was afraid," that kind of thing. But and he wasn't a particularly good singer, but he had style and boy did he care. And he's so articulate that he could get up there and just talk. He was editor of the Daily Illini— the student editor of the Daily Illini. He was in graduate school. He's just an amazing guy. And then he went on to have this music— I mean the, uh, movie career, of course. And we'd watch him on TV and be impressed, and Fritz knew him probably too well, because Fritz became a little dis-enamored with Roger. They were at the Sun Times together, and I guess they— probably was— I never went into the details, but Fritz obviously didn't have all good experiences, but I had all good experiences. And then this other wonderful experience was flying with

Jont Allen: JA
Tracie Wilson: TW

John Schmidt down to Tennessee to visit Doc Watson. And so the two of us— he had an airplane. I assume he didn't rent it, he owned it, and we flew down there. It made me ill. It was a couple hour flight, at least. We left from Champaign, and it was rough. Made me understand that I don't really want to become a pilot. But so we flew down there, rented a car, drove to Doc Watson's house, spent several hour visits, went to see the family playing music together at some social event. They had a caller, they had square dancing, they had music— Doc Watson was playing with his relatives and friends, and that was just a really cool experience. And remember his son— what's his son's name— was at the house and the son had a 22. And I had learned how to shoot in camp when I was a kid and so we were shooting clothes pins off the clothes line, okay. And I just had— he was shooting and shooting and shooting and it was one clothes pin and he couldn't hit it. And I said "let me try," and on the first shot I got the clothes pin, which was just amazing because it was quite far away and it was a bit of a stroke of luck. And so I took my one shot and blew the clothes pin away and said "okay that's it for me." And— but his son played very good guitar and then he died in a car accident. That wasn't too cool. But anyway those were important experiences for my life's experiences so that was—

TW: Thanks for including those. Well we're probably almost out of time, and I probably have to go check my parking meter, so thank you very much.