

TRANSCRIPT (uncorrected)

An oral history effort forming part of the 1996 Rice University Women's Conference, hosted by the program then known as Rice University Women's Studies  
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Mary Tobin: This is going to be Mary Tobin interviewing Alice Tinsley Cole on February 10, 1996. What was it like for Rice women when you were here, Alice?

Alice Tinsley Cole: Well to begin with, there weren't very many of us, uh, in the '50s. I believe there were five men for every woman.

Mary Tobin: Mm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: And most of the men we couldn't see. We saw the architects, we saw the jocks, and, uh, we saw the people in our classes and that was about the extent of it because the scientist for the most part were all in their labs. The engineers were in the engineering school, and, uh, of course there was no college system. Probably the greatest thing that ever happened to Rice was the college system, in my estimation, in terms of, of, uh, building a suite core –

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: – and getting people acquainted with one another, so there wasn't any of that. Everyone lived at home. All the women lived at home, and so, uh, uh, you know, uh, Rice for a woman was very, very different. We had to be off the campus in the evening. We couldn't wear blue jeans, even if it was appropriate for, for, uh, labs and so on. Um, it was just a very different place than I, than I've seen now.

Mary Tobin: Oh, yes, I should say. Um, what was your favorite spot on campus?

Alice Tinsley Cole: Oh, probably something that was then called the music room in the Fondren Library. And then when I came to Rice, uh, the Fondren Library was quite new and it was the hub of all student activities, and of course I was a Thresher editor, and the Thresher had, uh, offices, the \*\*\*\* offices, the student association offices were in the basement of the Fondren Library, but our crowd used to meet up in the music room.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: There was a wonderful, wonderful librarian up there called Helen Chillman, and she was James Chillman of the architecture department's daughter, and Helen wasn't that much older than we were. She was, obviously she'd graduated. She'd come back as a professional librarian, but she, we didn't think of her as that much older than we were. And we used to meet up there and listen to music and do our studying. And actually we used to sit on the roof of Fondren Library, which was not supposed to be done, but we used to crawl out of windows on pretty spring days and sit out there, so that's, that's, that's, was a very special place –

Mary Tobin: Yes.

Alice Tinsley Cole: – when I was here.

Mary Tobin: I haven't heard about that before. Uh, what did bring you to Rice?

Alice Tinsley Cole: Uh, well I graduated from Lamar and wanted very much to go off to a girls' school, and was, my father said very well, I can afford to help you go to Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri which was where I wanted to go for two years. But I, then there will be no more money for your education. And, uh, I said that's fine. I don't really want any more education. I want to go two years to school and that's it, Daddy. So, um, one of the things that Stephens taught me was that I did want more education. So when I came back, uh, the only option for me, interestingly enough, was Rice because of the \$25.00 blanket fee.

Mary Tobin: Ah ha!

Alice Tinsley Cole: Which was all we had to pay then. So, he said you better go and apply, and I said sure, sure. And I just didn't. Well at that time, Bill Hobby was a very good friend of mine, and so finally Bill said we are going over and you are going to apply. So I did, and I was, I had very good grades. I'd had scholarships at Stephens and, and, um, I, you know, I was technically a very good student and an intelligent woman, so I, they took me as a junior taking all freshman and sophomore courses. Now I'm sure the fact that, that Bill brought me over and said, you know, here she is –

Mary Tobin: Uh huh.

Alice Tinsley Cole: – didn't hurt anything frankly, because they knew he was gonna come as a freshman that year and they wanted very much for him to come.

Mary Tobin: Oh.

Alice Tinsley Cole: They didn't want him to go to another school, so that probably didn't hurt anything, but I'd like to think that I got in on my own recognizes as well. So that was it. It was essentially it was Rice or nothing –

Mary Tobin: Uh huh.

Alice Tinsley Cole: And it was one of the, you know, one of those decisions that was made for me by someone up higher that was wonderful.

Mary Tobin: Yes. Describe your first impression of Rice. When you saw it the first time.

Alice Tinsley Cole: Oh, well of course the physical beauty of the campus. And at, at one time, it had a whole, had whole hedges of gardenia bushes.

Mary Tobin: Mm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: In front of Sallyport and between Sallyport and the library and, uh, I remember those being, I remember the azaleas being in bloom. I remember just the, the beauty of the campus. I've always thought that Rice looked exactly like a university should look.

Mary Tobin: Where did you live while you were at Rice? All the time at home did you say?

Alice Tinsley Cole: Well, uh, no. No. When I came back to go to Rice, my family had, uh, built a house in Bellaire. After all, you see, this was right after World War II which all came about, and, uh, I keep trying to remember, I graduated in '53 and I had four years here, three years here? I had two senior years here, so I guess I had three years here, because I had five years of college. So I must have come in '49, and, uh, then my father was transferred to Tyler, and so four of us, so with Ms. Lane, who was then the dean of women's approval, set up an apartment over on Norfolk.

Mary Tobin: Mm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: And that a-, we had a wonderful time, 'cause of course there was no housing for women whatsoever.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: Um, no authorized housing, and, uh, Sara Lane was willing for us to have this apart-, apartment because Eugenia Harris, who had been Blue Bonnet Queen and president of the Owls, uh, was going to be one of our number.

Mary Tobin: Oh!

Alice Tinsley Cole: And Eugenia had graduated. She was gonna teach at River Oaks Elementary School, and so, um, a woman named Marilyn Mars who was I guess a junior that year, and I, and I was a junior that year I think. Anyway, but and then a young soph-, a young freshman named Ann Lingenfeld formed the first apartment. And then Ann married, and then we brought in an older friend of mine, so we had a wonderful time. Sara Lane would've died a thousand deaths if she'd known what we did, but we didn't do anything, particularly by today's standards, we didn't do anything harmful. And, uh, one of the things we did, which would shock your soul I'm sure, was we took in a boarder. We felt, and I think this is very '50s, we felt that if we had a man in the house that we would have a higher standard of living.

Mary Tobin: Oh!

Alice Tinsley Cole: And so we had a young starving actor that Marilyn found who was just the nicest person in the world and has gone on to do some pretty good things, named Gerry Hiken, and so we made an arrangement with Gerry that we would feed him dinner every night if he would contribute to the \$10.00 that each of us contributed to the food pool, and he would be our boarder. So, and then we put food on the table \*\*\*\*. We wouldn't fight at the table. \*\*\*\* all

kinds of good \*\*\*\*, so Gerry was our boarder for a while, and then, then, uh, he moved on and we had another boarder who was a nice man, but he wasn't nearly as much fun as Gerry was, and so, but I'm not sure Sara Lane would have approved of that.

Mary Tobin: Right.

Alice Tinsley Cole: But it worked out very well for us.

Mary Tobin: Do you remember what you liked best your first year at Rice?

Alice Tinsley Cole: Well I was, I immediately became part of the Thresher group.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: And, uh, uh the Thresher that year was a man named, editor that year, was a man named Emmett McGeever, and he had a marvelous sense of humor. He was just a charming guy. And I liked the ambience of the Thresher. Um, then I got involved in the Rice Drama Club, and, uh, so I'm afraid it was more extracurricular things that I liked, because at, you see, I was taking freshman and sophomore courses –

Mary Tobin: Uh huh.

Alice Tinsley Cole: – and they were talking earlier today about culture shock, and I had culture shock when I came, 'cause here I was, had been a straight A student at Lamar. I had done very well at Stephens with the exception of, of math, and, uh, then I came to Rice and I, you know, I got C's and this was a shock to my ego.

Mary Tobin: Uh huh.

Alice Tinsley Cole: But, uh, you know, I managed to pull through.

Mary Tobin: Do you remember what the most challenging course you took was?

Alice Tinsley Cole: Probably the most challenging course I ever, I took – when you say challenging, are you talk, are you saying difficult?

Mary Tobin: I think so. I think that's –

Alice Tinsley Cole: Oh, well Math 100.

Mary Tobin: Uh huh.

Alice Tinsley Cole: Math 100, because all I did was teach me enough to pass the exam.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: Just get me out of this thing. And I don't, I, no, no way I'm gonna understand the concepts or anything else. Just show me how to get, make a D. So, yes, that would have been the most challenging. The most interesting course that I had, uh, probably was a course I had my second senior year, which was taught by an economist who was here. And one of the professors, Mr. Giles, I think, came to me and said, um, Alice, we, we don't have enough people for this seminar, and I don't remember the man's name. Isn't that terrible? But we, he was doing a seminar on, on the makeup of the population in the year 1000 of the world. And all of his students were gonna do research on various parts of the world, and he said I don't have enough students in there and I'm really sort of embarrassed, and I know that you, you, you, your \*\*\*\*, you don't have any real schedule, and you can take what you wanna take. Would you consider taking this course?

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: And, uh, I said sure, why not. And it was fascinating, just fascinating. I enjoyed it thoroughly, and it certainly is not anything I ever would have taken on my own.

Mary Tobin: Uh huh. That's interesting.

Alice Tinsley Cole: I thought it was very interesting.

Mary Tobin: How would you describe the professors as far as the, I mean the relationships they had with students and just the general, uh, interaction that you observed?

Alice Tinsley Cole: Well you must remember that I had come from a school where there was tremendous faculty involvement with the students on all levels. We had advisors. Uh, the president of the school had a counseling body that spent Sunday nights at his house so he would know how the girls were feeling.

Mary Tobin: Mm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: And so, um, Rice was very, very different from that. However, I had, uh, made some wonderful friends and had professors interested in me, partially partly because I was editor of the Thresher at, at one time.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: Uh, but, uh, Dr. Dicks, the librarian, Harden Craig in the history department, wonderful people. Just so nice, and George Williams.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: Uh, and then was Will Dowden. We had a faculty advisor for the Rice, well, the old drama club had a faculty advisor, and then after we started the Rice Players, they had a faculty advisor, and so we always had close relationships with, with those, uh, faculty members. And then I worked part time in the summers in, uh, Dr. McBride's office. He was

dean of students I think then. I don't really remember what he was, but, uh, and he was, you know, I had a nice relationship with him too.

Mary Tobin: That's good. Do you remember, uh, how much time you spent studying?

Alice Tinsley Cole: I spent an awful lot of time here. How much time I spent studying was probably problematical because the library was open until 10:00, and so all our crowd used to stay here. Most of our crowd, uh, which was basically the Thresher, uh, dramatic society crowd, or much of it, were, uh, did not live in Houston. Or they were, they were out of town students, and, um, so they were, we would all go out to dinner together, and then we'd come back and study at the library. So I put in a lot of time here. I put in, I put in enough study time to pass my courses, and in many cases to make good grades. So I obviously did what was needed, but I have no idea how much it was.

Mary Tobin: Now you've mentioned some of the things you did for fun. Uh, can you expand on that subject a little bit?

Alice Tinsley Cole: Yes, I'll be happy to. Uh, the Thresher editor, of course, was the big thing, one of the biggest things that I did and I fell into that. I ran against Bill Hobby and lost to him, and then it was my good luck to have him, uh, fail to pass a math course. And so I got to edit the Thresher for the last part of his term, and then, um, the Thresher had went to bed, uh, and had to be put, put together and, and taken to the printers at the time that I had scheduled an Italian course, and, um, the Thresher came first in my estimation, and I was doing quite well in Italian, but the Italian teacher, Mr. Batiste came to me and he said, Mrs. Cole, uh, 'cause I was married then, he, and he said, uh, I'm sorry, you know. You're demoralizing my class. I can't have you cutting class. If you continue to cut, I'm going to have to throw you out, and then you won't graduate. So I told him I'd do the best I could, and if I could get there, I would, but if the Thresher needed me I had to take of that first, and so, uh, I cut class, and he threw me out. And so I was lucky enough to have a second senior year, and that was fine, you know. I was, Arthur and I had been married that fall. I was having a good time. Uh, I was ready to go to work, but I wasn't in any great hurry to go to work. Arthur was in graduate school in the physics department. We had an apartment over here on Shakespeare, and so I was happy to have the excuse to have a second senior year, and that's when I took this interesting economics course –

Mary Tobin: Uh huh.

Alice Tinsley Cole: – and, uh, uh, so, and this was also when we started the Rice Players.

Mary Tobin: Mm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: And so it was the most fortuitous thing that ever happened, and Mr. Batiste and I used to meet on campus all the time, and we were great friends because I, stupid me, I understood why he had to throw me out, and, but I wasn't gonna let the Thresher fall apart just because I was supposed to be in Italian. And of course at the time I had scheduled the Italian course, I did not know that I was gonna be Thresher editor.

Mary Tobin: Uh huh.

Alice Tinsley Cole: So, that's the way life works, but it was really neat. So I guess, and I guess we should talk a little bit about the Rice Players, because that was probably, um, if I left a legacy at Rice, that's the, that's the legacy I leave and I, and I, I really wanna get it on this thing, because I don't get credit for it and that irritates me in the, in the, uh, current history of the Rice Players.

Mary Tobin: Mm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: Uh, I was one of the first three coordinators of the Rice Players. The history says my husband was. My husband was never a coordinator of the Rice Players. My husband was the last president of the drama club.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: And the drama club, uh, we had no money, and we, we couldn't get any royalties, and so we were always fighting over what plays we were going to do, and so some of us just decided we were going to disband the drama club. We were going to set up a play giving, play sponsoring institution which would not be democratic. It was going to be run by a small group and we were going to produce plays on this campus. And one of things that happened this second senior year was that a man named Willard Thorp came down from Princeton, and he was here for a one-year tour, and he was teaching American studies, and that was another fascinating course I had, just fascinating. Uh, and, uh, so I was scheduled to take his course. Well Willard Thorp's attitude was that probably the Thresher editor, or the newspaper editor, was someone he wanted to get acquainted with. He, he and his wife had no children. They'd been very active with student affairs there in Princeton, and he wanted to get to know Texas and Texans and, and the student body here. So he came down to the Thresher office, much to my surprise, and introduced myself, himself to me. And, uh, he became great friends with all the drama students, and he thought this was perfect, a perfectly beautiful campus, and he said we have got to produce Shakespeare under the arches. And he talked about that from the time he got here, so when we set up the Rice Players, we did it in his living room, and, uh, the three coordinators said okay, we will do, and there were two others, uh, Tom Allclat, James Gorgeous. Gorgeous is now dead, and I don't, Tom's an engineer. Um, um, so we said okay, we'll do Shakespeare under the, under the arches. And we did that first, that spring. And we moved our audience from place to place.

Mary Tobin: Mm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: We did, uh, Hamlet's Father's Ghost on, on the balcony of the physics department. We did Romeo and Juliette under arches somewhere, which I've long since forgotten.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: And Sandy Havens –

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: – uh, who you all know very well now was a sophomore at that time, and he was our Romeo.

Mary Tobin: Oh!

Alice Tinsley Cole: And, uh, they came and they said wow! Have we got a wonderful guy out of Midland, Texas to be Romeo. He is so, well we didn't say smooth, cool, or whatever, but he's, he's just, well we would say super.

Mary Tobin: Uh huh.

Alice Tinsley Cole: That's what we would've said in my, so. And Sandy was. And so, um, that was the start of Sandy Havens' involvement with the, with the Rice Players. And then the Rice Players have moved on and, uh, it's very interesting. They have kept essentially the same format that we started. They still have their coordinators. They still are, are self appointing, so to speak. They, I don't think they elect them at all any more than we did, and, um, you know, that, that's, uh, something I, that I really feel very good about. I feel it was an achievement, one of my life achievements.

Mary Tobin: Yes. Yes. Did you –

Alice Tinsley Cole: But somewhere, I'm gonna get that history revised –

Mary Tobin: Yes.

Alice Tinsley Cole: – because –

Mary Tobin: I think that certainly should be done.

Alice Tinsley Cole: Yeah, excuse me.

Mary Tobin: Did you know from the beginning what you were going to major in?

Alice Tinsley Cole: Yes, I did and there, you know, again, that's the crazy thing. Uh, I wanted to be a modern European history major, and there was no modern European history to study here. Uh, Dr. Craig had a course called History, European History Since 1900, and it went, or 19, 1948, 1840, I guess it was. 1840, 'cause, 1848, 'cause that's when the big revolutions were.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: And uh, that ran up through the end of second, first world war, but then history stopped as far as the Rice history department was concerned.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.



Alice Tinsley Cole: He had a course called Napoleonic Arm-, Armaments, because he was interested in that, and Dr. Dix taught a course in current events, which used the New York Times as a uh, a textbook.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: And so I skipped Napoleonic Arna-, Armaments, but I took Harden Craig's course on European History, and then I took Dr. Dix's course and then the rest of it, I took Dr. Leer's courses in Medieval History and I took uh, American History courses and so on, but uh, did fulfill uh, the requirements for a BA in History, but every time I look at the catalogue today, I think oh my, would I love to be a student here now. They teach so many things I would like to study.

Mary Tobin: How did you decide to be a history major? What uh –

Alice Tinsley Cole: I've just always been a history buff.

Mary Tobin: Uh huh.

Alice Tinsley Cole: I was uh, a sickly child. I had asthma, and so I read and read and read and read, and I read, uh, the biographies of queens –

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: And then I read a lot of the Dumas.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: And uh, you know, I just, I just have always been interested in it.

Mary Tobin: Good answer. Did you have an advisor here, helping you plan your schedule?

Alice Tinsley Cole: Not that I remember, and I think I would have remembered if I'd had. I, no, I don't think so.

Mary Tobin: Uh, do you remember any person who was particularly influential as far as planning your future was concerned? Any –

Alice Tinsley Cole: No, not as far as any faculty was concerned.

Mary Tobin: Okay. All right.

Alice Tinsley Cole: I don't think that was done very much in our day. I presume, now, my husband was a physicist, and he had contact with the physics department faculty in a way that I didn't have, because I wasn't a serious historian.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: Uh, Dr. Craig was nice enough to ask me when I graduated if I wanted to come back. He said he'd take me as a, an una-, a graduate student, and I really appreciated that.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: Because, but I said no, I'm not, I'm not interested in graduate work. I'm not a serious student.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm. Okay.

Alice Tinsley Cole: And uh, so I don't know.

Mary Tobin: Uh huh. Uh, do you associate any one person with making you think what you, about what you would be doing in the future? Uh, it's true that career thinking was not nearly as commonplace with women then as it is now, but –

Alice Tinsley Cole: No, because it, well, no, it wasn't accounted for at all.

Mary Tobin: Uh huh.

Alice Tinsley Cole: I wasn't gonna be a teacher.

Mary Tobin: Uh huh.

Alice Tinsley Cole: I knew I didn't wanna teach.

Mary Tobin: Okay.

Alice Tinsley Cole: I wasn't gonna be, I would probably, I would, I had secretarial skills. I figured I'd probably have to be a secretary in some way, shape or form. I certainly wasn't gonna be a nurse.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: And those were the three appropriate careers for a woman in life. Uh, fortunately I had a husband who really said, you can do whatever you want.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: If it makes you happy to work, go ahead and work.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: Pro-, one of the facets of this apartment that I lived in was the summer after I was, after I married out of it, they took in some new roommates who had graduated here, and they had gone to work for Braniff Airways. And they were stewardess-, not, they weren't stewardesses, but they were in reservations. I think. I don't remember. Anyway, but they were, they kept talking about all these wonderful trips they took, so I decided that's what I wanted to do when I graduated from here.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: So that is what I did, I went and uh, talked Braniff in, into hiring me as a reservationist, and then I worked for Braniff, and then uh, we went, Arthur had a chance to go to England for a, a post-doc, which was rare in our days. They just didn't do post-docs. But his Auset Anderson Hospital where he was working was a New Zealand man who had gone to England for a post-doc.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: He really wanted Arthur and his, his younger, uh, department people to do that, so Arthur went over and worked at the uh, British equivalent of uh, Oakridge.

Mary Tobin: Mm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: Which was a place called Harwell, and uh, so then when I came back, Braniff didn't have a job for me, but BOAC did, SAS did, and then uh, and then I worked for BOAC.

Mary Tobin: Mm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: And then I stopped.

Mary Tobin: Uh huh.

Alice Tinsley Cole: Working for a while and uh, and got the experience that added onto what I do now. I administer volunteer program for Center for the Retarded.

Mary Tobin: Mm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: And uh, have been on their staff for 13 years administering their programs, so, and all along, from the Thresher days to the Rice Players days to going back into high school to doing things as a volunteer, when I stopped working for SAS, um, and BOAC, um, I've always administered volunteer projects.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: Whether I was the paid staff or whether I was just the head honcho.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: So you know, I've gotten my life's experience in what I do. But it did not particularly have anything to do with anything. I, what I studied here was for my pleasure.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: And to expand my mind, and that's, that's what I think an education is.

Mary Tobin: That's the ideal way to look at it, yes.

Alice Tinsley Cole: And um, you know, I think, in this sense tacky in this context, but I think as a woman I had the privilege of doing that, and the luxury of doing that.

Mary Tobin: Uh huh.

Alice Tinsley Cole: Whereas my husband is a focused physicist.

Mary Tobin: Uh huh.

Alice Tinsley Cole: You know, he knew that he had to earn a living and he needed to get the skills to support a family, whereas I needed, if I, the odds were, I could be a dilettante.

Mary Tobin: Uh huh.

Alice Tinsley Cole: So.

Mary Tobin: Now what do you think was the most important thing that happened to you at Rice?

Alice Tinsley Cole: Well, probably being editor of the Thresher.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: Because that led then to uh, the establishment of the Rice Players, and those were the two things that probably were the most important. Was that and meeting my husband.

Mary Tobin: Uh huh. And, if you had to single out the one thing that you were proudest of? Would that be the Thresher or the Players?

Alice Tinsley Cole: I think, I think really starting the Players, then probably because again, the Thresher editors come and go.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: We try to leave our mark and uh, I did edit an exciting paper. We \*\*\*\* Chris and \*\*\*\* told me we had a crusade against the literary societies because they weren't literary and we believed in truth and packaging, and we said, call yourselves something else, you're not literary societies, even though I was an owl, and the owls have always been really nice to me.

Mary Tobin: Uh huh.

Alice Tinsley Cole: They've kept me on all their mailing lists and even when I was –

Mary Tobin: Leading a crusade against the lits why \*\*\*\* continued to speak to me on campus and invite me to an occasional meeting and so on. But um, uh, the uh, when we had a literary supplement my year, my year and \*\*\*\* editor too, which was something interesting. Um, so, you know, that was, that was interesting, but you know, all, all Thresher editors leave their mark somehow.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: So, I think the Rice Players probably was the \*\*\*\* I'm proudest of.

Mary Tobin: Good. What do you think was the most difficult or threatening part of being at Rice?

Alice Tinsley Cole: Um, threatening, I don't think, I don't think that there ever was any threatening involved. Um, in any way, shape or form. Difficult? I guess difficult was coming back and taking all of those freshman and sophomore courses.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: When I was so used to an entirely different way of studying. The Stephens courses had all been taught in seminar with a lot of independent thinking and papers.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: And to have to come back and the freshman and sophomore courses then were essentially regurgitation courses.

Mary Tobin: Mm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: You had to learn the facts, and it didn't matter what you thought.

Mary Tobin: You memorized. Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: But you had to memorize.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: And that was very difficult for me.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm. Yes. Was there anything that you wanted to do that you couldn't do while you were here?

Alice Tinsley Cole: Doesn't sound like, does it?

Mary Tobin: No, it doesn't.

Alice Tinsley Cole: I don't think so. I really had a good time.

Mary Tobin: And how did you feel when you graduated? That day itself?

Alice Tinsley Cole: Oh, I think you always feel sad. This is such a wonderful place and you don't wanna leave it. Uh, you know you must, and you know even if you came back as faculty, uh, you'd never go back to the same way.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: That part of your life is over, and so uh, you've got to feel sad. But you also, you know, obviously you feel relief. You're not gonna have to study any more. You're gonna move on, you're gonna do other things, and of course, again, I was married, I was looking forward to going to work for Braniff. I was looking forward to traveling, so there was that element –

Mary Tobin: Uh huh.

Alice Tinsley Cole: In, in my feelings that day too. But certainly there, there was a sadness.

Mary Tobin: What was the social life like while you were here at Rice?

Alice Tinsley Cole: Well, that was one function the lits served, and the lits did serve some very good functions. It just was not a literary \*\*\*\*.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: Uh, because since there were no colleges, all the social life revolved around the literary societies and the Rally Club and uh, I'm having a flashback to when I was at Lamar, but I think there, there was only the Rally Club –

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: For the boys here, I think. And then of course, uh, there was Archy Arts, there was a wonderful Archy Arts ball that the, the architects did every year, which was just, the

costumes, wonderful, wonderful, wonderful, it was a great \*\*\*\*. Um, but my social life, and, and our crowd's social life really revolved around Fondren Library for Thresher.

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: – the, uh, uh, my office. Every Thresher ef-, uh, editor could decorate their office the way they wanted to, so we went out and got light blue bul-, uh, blackboard paint and and painted all the walls in the office light blue. And then, I had the headline counts, because that was before the days of computers, and, and the headlines were all set in hot type. All the paper was set in hot type and the printer's out in, in Harrisburg at Scardino's. And, uh, Mr. Scardino did all the papers in the city. He did all the high school papers. He did the college papers. He did the Cougar. He did the Mortician's Journal.

Mary Tobin: Oh.

Alice Tinsley Cole: He did all of it. And we, this is, this is what I would have to do during Italian class was go out to his –

Mary Tobin: Uh huh.

Alice Tinsley Cole: – print shop and check out the Thresher and be sure it was all right before he locked it \*\*\*\*. Okay. So not only did I have the headline counts on the wall, but I had notes. People could leave notes on there because it would all wash off because I used blackboard paint. And, uh, then, um, one of my friends who is an architect had drawn, uh, flowers up the wall of the telephone cord, and I had tropical fish in there in a bowl and a big easy chair to sit in. So, uh, that – and everybody used to congregate in there, uh, after class and decide where we were gonna go to dinner and what we were going to do and, and leave messages for one another. So that was sort of the hub of our –

Mary Tobin: Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole: – our social life. And, uh, another thing we did was play charades. Um, and we represented Rice on a television program, uh, which a group of, of, I guess professional actors, played charades against school teams and so on, so we, we used to practice charades and play charades and, uh, at our parties, so. But, I, we were the bohemians then. We really were. And, uh, I guess that's, that's what you'd call it. So that's, that's what our social life was. But the rest of the social life at the campus revolved around \*\*\*\*. Revolved around, uh, the lits and that's it.

Mary Tobin: How would your life have been different if you'd gone to another school, for instance, like the University of Texas?

Alice Tinsley Cole: Well, you know, obviously it would've been entirely different. Entirely different. Um, I don't know. Uh, what I really wanted to do was be a diplomat and go into the consular corps in the diplomatic service, but I didn't have money enough to do that.

Mary Tobin:. Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. Uh, to go to school in Washington. Have, maybe if I had gone to, uh, UT or SMU or someplace like that, that had the necessary, uh, courses for that –

Mary Tobin:. Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. – or if I had had the money and could've just gone off to the consular corps, uh, to diplomatic school in D.C., my life would've been very different.

Mary Tobin:. Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. I wouldn't have met my husband. I wouldn't have done all the things that I've done. Um, it, you know, how can you say, how can you say what it would've been? It would've been different.

Mary Tobin:. Right. What was the most important thing you learned about life at Rice do you think?

Alice Tinsley Cole:. About life at Rice.

Mary Tobin:. I think they're looking for a values kind of answer here.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. Well, I should have looked ahead and thought about that \*\*\*\* I could answer. Values? Well, you know, I learned the value of hard work.

Mary Tobin:. Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. I learned the value, or it was reinforced that that was important. Um, I had come from a school where there were ten ideals, and one of them was self-discipline, and I learned, that was reinforced –

Mary Tobin:. Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. – while I was here. I think I learned not to give up and not to quit.

Mary Tobin:. Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. And that probably has stood me in, in, well, I think that was probably –

Mary Tobin:. Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. – the important lesson that I learned.

Mary Tobin:. Mm hmm.



Alice Tinsley Cole:. Is that what you're looking for?

Mary Tobin:. I think so. Can you think of anything that you didn't learn that you wish Rice had taught you?

Alice Tinsley Cole:. Modern European history. Yes. But, oh. Maybe if I'd had, maybe if I'd had enough history courses to take, though, I wouldn't have done some of the other things I did.

Mary Tobin:. Sure.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. So I, who knows.

Mary Tobin:. If you could say just one thing about your time at Rice, what would it be?

Alice Tinsley Cole:. Mm. You want one word?

Mary Tobin:. Or a phrase.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. I guess I would say exciting, stimulating and fulfilling.

Mary Tobin:. Mm hmm. Can't top that. What have you been doing since Rice? You mentioned working for the airlines and now the voluntary work you do.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. Well, I, I, I'm a staff member –

Mary Tobin:. Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. – is what I am now, and have been for 13 years. Oh, I've done everything from, uh, serve as executive vice president of the Contemporary Arts Museum during an \*\*\*\* period when it did not have a director, a paid director, when the volunteers were trying to run it.

Mary Tobin:. Mm.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. And I ran the day-to-day operations of it as vice president. Um, I've worked for the opera. This is one of my great loves. Um, I still volunteer for them. I teach in the schools, prepare kids to go down to the operas.

Mary Tobin:. Mm.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. Um, I, mostly I've just done a variety of volunteer work. I was a den mother and I was, you know, I did the normal things when my children were in school. Oh, how can I forget? Golly, I blocked out one of the big things that I did. I was the executive director of the United Nations UNICEF Gift Shop. Uh, for many years, I was co-chairman of the Houston Harris County Committee for UNICEF, and that was strictly a volunteer operation –

Mary Tobin:. Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. – and two of us alternated. One year, uh, we, the chairmanship. One year, I was chairman and the next year I was co-chairman.

Mary Tobin:. Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. So, uh, and it was strictly volunteers. And then, uh, we decided, uh, the time was ripe, and we got enough money together, and we opened a gift shop to support UNICEF and the United Nations Association down on Kirby.

Mary Tobin:. Oh.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. Uh, right across from where, uh, West Coast, um, Video –

Mary Tobin:. Uh huh.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. – is now, and \*\*\*\* and so on, down at Kirby and –

Mary Tobin:. Uh huh.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. – Westheimer. And then we moved it out to Woodlake Square, and so for seven years, roughly, I was the executive director of that and ran a gift shop.

Mary Tobin:. Mm.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. So that was a big thing that I, I did.

Mary Tobin:. Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. And almost everything that I have done has built and given me experience for what I do now –

Mary Tobin:. Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. – because, uh, I've got a widely varied job –

Mary Tobin:. Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. – and I have three small businesses that I'm in charge of, and –

Mary Tobin:. Mm.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. – and, uh, uh, my volunteers do a variety of things, and, uh, I don't do much marketing and I don't do much, uh, public relations work now, but I have in the past.

Mary Tobin:. Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. And, uh, I write newsletters and I do, you know –

Mary Tobin:. Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. – I just do a bunch of things. So almost everything that I've ever done in my life, either here or through the Thresher and, uh, through the players in terms of learning how to manage people and deal with people and, and, uh – manage sounds like a terrible word, but you know, that's essentially what you do.

Mary Tobin:. Uh huh.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. You're getting people to do what –

Mary Tobin:. Needs to be done.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. – what needs to be done.

Mary Tobin:. Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. Um, has all contributed to that.

Mary Tobin:. Uh huh. Sounds like you've had a very nice life.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. I have, and you know, and, and I also have two lovely children.

Mary Tobin:. Mm hmm.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. I have a 43-year-old son and a 30-year-old daughter, and I have three wonderful grandsons.

Mary Tobin:. Ah.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. And, you know, and, you know, my husband is, he's a, he's a, uh, abstractive scientist, but he's also a delight and I've enjoyed living with him all these years, so, you know, I think it's been a very good life.

Mary Tobin:. Yes. It certainly has.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. I can't complain.

Mary Tobin:. It's been a pleasure to hear about it.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. Well, I hope I haven't bored you.

Mary Tobin:. Not at all.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. I probably told you more than you ever wanted to know, but anyway, thank you for asking.

Mary Tobin:. I enjoyed it very much.

Alice Tinsley Cole:. And I hope your history comes out very well.

Mary Tobin:. Thank you very much.

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